

Obituaries

Hulk Hogan

Wrestler and actor who became a superstar in the gaudy world of sports entertainment

HULK HOGAN, who has died of an apparent heart attack aged 71, was a wrestler widely acknowledged as one of the greatest – and certainly one of the most recognisable – in the history of his sport; standing at 6ft 7in and weighing 21 stone, with his trademark bandana and horseshoe moustache, he dominated wrestling in the 1980s and 1990s, and became one of the most ubiquitous figures in American popular culture. He attracted renewed attention latterly for his avid support of Donald Trump, tearing off his shirt at last year’s Republican National Convention to reveal a bright red vest emblazoned “Trump/Vance”.

Hogan began his professional career in 1977, but made his name after signing for the World Wrestling Federation (WWF, now WWE) in 1983. His persona of all-American hero was instrumental in the 1980s wrestling boom, and he was the usual headliner at the annual WrestleMania event. His Main Event match-up with André the Giant in 1988 attracted 33 million viewers.

He dealt lightly with the charge that wrestling is fake. When a journalist asked him about it in 1991, Hogan replied, smiling: “If you’d asked that question 10, 15 years ago, it would have been important to punch you in the face and knock all your teeth out.”

He was born Terry Gene Bollea in Augusta, Georgia, on August 11 1953, the son of a building foreman, Pietro “Peter” Bollea, and a dance teacher, Ruth, née Moody; his family had Italian, Panamanian, Scottish, and French roots. His older brother Allan died aged 38 from a drugs overdose.

When young Terry was a year old, the family moved to Port Tampa, Florida, where he was a promising pitcher in Little League Baseball. He attended Robinson High School, and became a wrestling fan aged 16, inspired in particular by Dusty Rhodes and Superstar Billy Graham.

He was also a promising musician, playing fretless bass in a variety of bands. He attended the University of South Florida, but dropped out to carry on his music



Hogan in 1985 at the height of his renown: he had started out as the masked ‘Super Destroyer’

career, forming a band named Ruckus. Through contacts at a local gym where he worked out he took up wrestling; almost immediately he suffered a broken ankle but, undeterred, he began working with a noted trainer, Hiro Matsuda – who broke his leg in their first session.

After a year with the Japanese man he began fighting as the masked “Super Destroyer”, then in 1979 joined Vince McMahon’s WWF under the name Hulk Hogan. A glorious few years followed, with five WWF Championship titles, and he also

established a thriving career in Japan, where he was known as Ichiban – “No 1”.

In 1985, on his cable TV show, the comedian and *Homicide* actor Richard Belzer asked Hogan to put him in a hold. Hogan obliged with a chin lock, making Belzer unconscious and dropping him to the floor. Belzer hit his head and sued Hogan for \$5 million in damages – from which he bought a house in the south of France that he and his wife called “Chez Hogan”.

Hogan’s appearances regularly set pay-per-view records, and in 1987 “the slam

heard round the world”, WrestleMania III, unfolded in front of 93,173 fans at the Pontiac Silverdome in Michigan.

As WWF became a global marketing giant, Hogan was a key figure, but in 1993 he joined the rival set-up World Championship Wrestling, winning their heavyweight title six times, and in 1996 he adopted the “heel” or bad-guy persona of “Hollywood” Hogan. He became one of the biggest figures of the “Monday Night Wars” television slot.

In 1994, he was given immunity from prosecution when he testified at Vince McMahon’s trial for allegedly trafficking steroids. Hogan admitted that he had himself taken steroids, but insisted that they had not been supplied by McMahon, who was eventually acquitted.

In 2012 a sex tape featuring Hogan and Heather Clem, estranged wife of the radio personality Bubba the Love Sponge, emerged, and Hogan sued the Gawker website for \$100 million for invasion of privacy, infringement of personality rights and infliction of emotional distress. He won \$140 million in damages, after which Gawker filed for bankruptcy protection and put itself up for sale. He eventually reached a \$31 million settlement.

As well as a flamboyant cameo as Thunderlips in *Rocky III*, Hogan appeared in films, including *No Holds Barred*, *Gremlins II*, *Suburban Commando*, *Muppets in Space* and *Mr Nanny*, and fronted the Wrestling Boot Band, whose *Hulk Rules* reached No 12 in the US in 1995. He was inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame in 2005, but 10 years later was removed after making “inappropriate and racist” comments.

Hulk Hogan married Linda Claridge in 1983; they had a daughter and son but divorced in 2007. In 2010 he married Jennifer McDaniel, but they divorced in 2022, and in 2023 he married a yoga instructor, Sky Daily, who survives him with his children.

Hulk Hogan, born August 11 1953, died July 24 2025

Judy Loe

Actress much in demand for TV roles in the decades after husband Richard Beckinsale’s death

JUDY LOE, the actress, who has died of cancer aged 78, was a busy leading lady on television in the 1980s and 1990s; her ability to play strong and witty women saw her dubbed the “quintessential Eighties heroine” by *The Sunday Telegraph’s* TV critic Philip Purser.

By a sad irony, however, her career only took off after the death of her husband, Richard Beckinsale, who had become much-loved for his roles in the sitcoms *Porridge* and *Rising Damp* by the time he suffered a fatal heart attack, aged 31, in 1979.

He had died in his sleep while she was in hospital having an operation; his body was found by a family friend, and the BBC kept the news out of its bulletins until she had come round from surgery and been told.

As a young widow with a five-year-old daughter – the future film star Kate Beckinsale – she was obliged to take on more stage and television work, and sold the family home in Sunningdale, Berkshire, to be closer to London. But she made the most of this new professional lease of life.

“Before, I had to combine work with keeping Richard’s busy life and the home going,” she told *The Sunday Telegraph* a few months after her husband’s death. The paper reported that she was “determined [to be known] in her own right rather than as the widow of Richard Beckinsale”.

Judy Loe began to command leading roles on television: as the wife of a dyspeptic game-show host (Donald Churchill) in the ITV comedy *Goodnight and God Bless* (1983); a woman who finds herself working by chance for her rich ex-husband (Paul Freeman), prompting a renewal of his interest in her, in the drama *Yesterday’s Dreams* (1987); and one of the lovelorn ensemble, alongside Susie Blake, Roger Rees and Simon Cadell, in Eric Chappell’s sitcom *Singles* (1988-91).



Judy Loe with *Rising Damp* star Beckinsale: she was determined to build a career in her own right

Poignantly, she was particularly good in the thriller *Missing from Home* (1984) as a woman trying to hold things together for her young children when her husband suddenly vanishes.

She went on to be the forthright wife of Tim Pigott-Smith’s chief constable in *The Chief* (ITV, 1990-92), gave what one critic described as an “inappropriately classy” performance in Russell T Davies’s overwrought soap opera *Revelations* (Sky One, 1994-96) and was convincing as a steely space station commander in the sci-fi series *Space Island One* (Sky One, 1998).

She also romanced two of television’s most eligible eternal bachelors. As Adele Cecil in *Inspector Morse* (1997-98), she was the only love interest who managed to continue a relationship with Morse (John Thaw) beyond one episode. And as the ethically dubious hospital chief executive

Jan Goddard in the medical dramas *Casualty* and *Holby City* (2001-03), she gave Charlie Fairhead (Derek Thompson) a promotion while they were secretly dating.

Judith Margaret Loe was born in Urmoston, Manchester, on March 6 1947, the only child of Norman Loe, a travelling salesman, and his wife Nancy, née Jones, a model and department store worker. Her mother died when she was 11. “My father did a wonderful job in carrying on... I had a full and happy childhood,” she recalled in later life. “Perhaps he was a little over-protective, [and] I have learned from that where Katy is concerned.”

After Urmoston Grammar School, she studied English and drama at Birmingham University. In 1968 she made her professional debut in weekly rep at Crewe, where she met Richard Beckinsale. “He was an Eric Morecambe clone, a shambling kind of a guy with thick, heavy horn-rimmed

glasses. His beauty slowly revealed itself,” she recalled on Radio 4’s *Great Lives*. “He was funny but very desolate; his [first] marriage had broken up two months earlier. One of his friends from Rada who was also in the company said: he needs somebody to talk to and to listen to him. I did, and then it all got a bit difficult because I started to fall in love with this man.” They were together for several years before marrying in 1977.

Judy Loe made her West End debut as one of the periodically naked cast of the counter-cultural musical *Hair* (Shaftesbury 1969-70) and became well-known to young television viewers as the telepathic orphan Lullai Palmer, heroine of the ITV fantasy series *Ace of Wands* (1970-71). Later in the 1970s she made one-off appearances in *Z Cars*, *Dixon of Dock Green* and *Robin’s Nest*.

She was Princess Mary of Teck, future daughter-in-law of Timothy West’s King, in *Edward the Seventh* (1975). In Michael Palin’s *Ripping Yarns* she was the ostensibly male but obtrusively female Chief Petty Officer Mr Russell in the episode “The Curse of the Claw”; being “not well-endowed in that department”, she had to have a false bosom fitted to enable Palin’s captain to ask in some confusion: “What are those?”

Her later stage work included Noël Coward’s *Present Laughter* with Tom Conti (Globe, 1993) and on television she made guest appearances in *Silent Witness*, *Trial and Retribution* and *The Bill*. She was perhaps most visible in her later years as a wry and mischievous presence in Kate Beckinsale’s prolific posts on social media.

Judy Loe married secondly, in 1997, her long-term partner, the television director Roy Battersby. He died last year and she is survived by her daughter.

Judy Loe, born March 6 1947, died July 15 2025

Diana McVeagh

Biographer and authority on the life and works of Edward Elgar

DIANA McVEAGH, who has died aged 98, was the author of landmark biographies of the composers Edward Elgar and Gerald Finzi; her book on Elgar was the first major account of that quintessential Edwardian figure and, despite later works by Michael Kennedy, Jerrold Northrop Moore and others, has more than stood the test of time.



Also an expert on Gerald Finzi

Much of Diana McVeagh’s information was gleaned at first hand from those who had known Elgar, including his daughter Carice and his friends and associates. She also had access to a considerable amount of hitherto unpublished correspondence, and examined manuscript sketches of the major compositions.

Edward Elgar: His Life and Music (1955) was well received, not least because of her neat summation of the contradictions in the composer’s complex character: “Caustic yet considerate, suspicious yet warm-hearted, reserved yet impulsive, intolerant yet sympathetic, rude yet gallant, boisterous yet sensitive: provocative though his character may be, the man is less important than his music.”

Gerald Finzi wrote to a friend that “the new Diana McVeagh book on Elgar is first-rate”, adding that “she really has more acumen than most of the little pipsqueaks who write musical criticism.” *The Daily Telegraph’s* reviewer concurred: “No lover of Elgar’s music will quarrel ultimately with her devotion or feel inclined to question her qualifications.”

published anonymously, as was the custom. In 1964 she became assistant editor to Andrew Porter at *The Musical Times*.

Meanwhile, her reviewing led to an invitation from Eric Blom, editor of the Master Musicians series, to write a biography of Elgar, though she was unaware that several established writers had already turned down the commission. After it was published, Finzi suggested that she write a biography of the composer Hubert Parry. She declined, but the approach led to a lifetime interest in Finzi’s own work and *Gerald Finzi: His Life and Music* (2005) was published shortly before the 50th anniversary of his death.

In 1950 Diana McVeagh married Bill Morley, a pathologist more than 20 years her senior who had worked with Sir Alexander Fleming on penicillin at St Mary’s Hospital, Paddington. In 1969 they moved to The Lee in Buckinghamshire, which rendered reviewing impractical, and instead she wrote entries for *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, including those for Elgar and Finzi. The couple shared a passion for holidays on passenger-carrying cargo ships. After Morley’s death in 1994, Diana McVeagh discovered *Patricia*, the Trinity House lighthouse vessel that also carries passengers.

She became a supporter of the English Song Festival in Ludlow, Shropshire, and the annual Bard Festival at Bard College in New York state, after it adopted an “Elgar and His World” theme in 2007. She returned to biography with *Elgar the Music Maker* (2007), a biographical analysis of the composer’s music, and a comprehensive edition of *Gerald Finzi’s Letters 1915-1956* (2021). In May her work was marked in Celebrating Diana, a concert given in London by her many friends.

Diana McVeagh, born September 6 1926, died July 2 2025

SUMMER SALE

5 ISSUES FOR £5

THE ENGLISH GARDEN
JULY 2025
For everyone who loves beautiful gardens

6 Glorious Gardens
Summer's in full swing from Suffolk to Scotland

PERFECT BORDERS
Combine flower shapes like a pro

DREAM GARDENS ROOMS FOR EVERY SPACE

SAVING 83%

July ideas & inspiration
• Nic Howard's COLOUR masterclass
• FOLIAGE plants for shady spots
• Pretty DEUTZIA for flowers now
• Polly Mabel's flower PAINTINGS

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

Order online at chelseamagazines.com/ZTEGSS25
Or phone **01858 438833*** and quote **ZSS25**

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: This offer is open to UK customers only when paying by Direct Debit or Continuous Credit Card. Offer ends on the 31 September 2025. *All percentage savings are calculated from the usual shop price. For our privacy policy, visit chelseamagazines.com/privacy-policy. Lines open weekdays 9am-5pm. Saturday 10am-4pm. £1.49 is charged on your standard network rate.

Gary Bunt

Rock guitarist turned self-taught artist whose naive pastoral paintings commanded huge sums

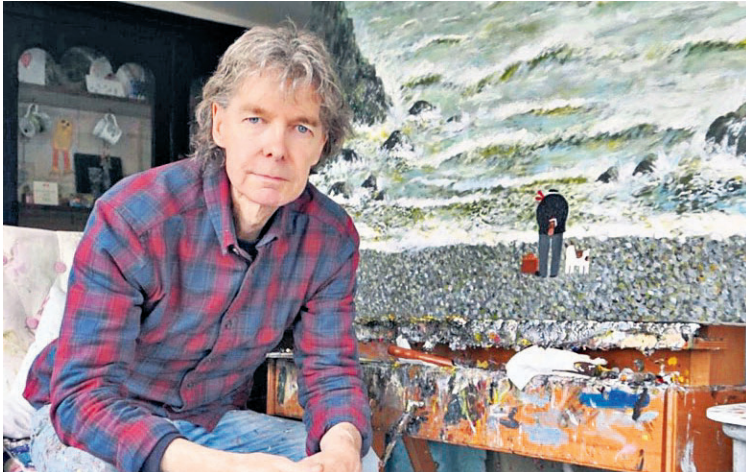
GARY BUNT, who has died aged 67, was a Kentish bricklayer who emerged as one of the most remarkable stories in recent British art; his naive, nostalgic paintings of a burly farmer and his dog in a lost pastoral England attracted waiting lists of more than a thousand and traded hands for five-figure sums at auction.

Self-taught, Bunt studied the modern British masters, Stanley Spencer above all, but also the fisherman painter Alfred Wallis, Christopher Wood, Winifred Nicholson, LS Lowry, Cedric Morris and Eric Ravilious.

The world of his paintings is slow-paced and contented: Bert, his everyman farmer in white shirt and red braces, tends the vegetable patch, sits on a shingle beach or reads a paperback, his dog a faithful and perky companion. Mid-century tractors co-exist with horses and carts. On the back of each canvas is a poem in the voice of the dog.

As Laura Gascoigne put it in *Country Life*, these simple scenes might seem “ideal subjects for greetings-card illustrations. What elevates them to the status of art is the ingredient X identified by Constable: emotion.”

While it was perhaps not surprising that the British public warmed to work that hymns the bond between man and dog, more remarkable, in a secular age, was that Bunt’s paintings were more or less overtly religious. *Say a Prayer for Me*, for instance, which fetched £47,880 at Sotheby’s in March 2021, depicts Bert and his dog leaning on a stile by the village church.



Bunt with his painting *The Storm* depicting everyman farmer Bert and his dog: ‘From the mess inside my head, I only paint the nice bits’

“The dog – well, it’s the same relationship, a man and his dog, that I find in Christ,” explained Bunt, who converted his garage into a four-seater chapel. The whiskered white-haired farmer, meanwhile, was a vision of himself – “because I didn’t think I’d survive till old age.”

A “wrong turn at 17” had taken him into the rock’n’roll life of a professional guitarist, consuming 15 pints a day plus cocaine, weed and speed, and working on building sites to pay his way. He gave up alcohol when his daughter was born in 1994, but in 2001 he was diagnosed with cancer of the vocal cords, which left him permanently unable to eat solid food.

Thinking he had less than a year to live, he had the epiphany that “it doesn’t matter any more”. He abandoned his “safe” figure paintings and scenes of Venice in favour of a raw new approach – and found he had an uncanny ability to evoke, in a few loaded brushstrokes, the simple joy of being alive.

“From the mess inside my head,” he observed, “I only paint the nice bits.”

Gary Bunt was born on September 29 1957 in a council flat in the Kentish village of East Peckham, surrounded by hop fields. His father Bert had been a foundling, abandoned on the steps of Thomas Coram’s hospital; he worked as a building contractor while his wife Ivy worked on farms.

Gary recalled his early life as an idyll: “Orchards, bird-watching, walks, Vimto and crisps in the local pub, walking a mile to school”. He taught himself guitar chords on a cardboard cut-out with strings made from his grandmother’s wool. Leaving school with no qualifications, he worked in construction: “I used to sit on building sites reading my Thomas Hardy or Virginia Woolf books and everyone else would be looking at Page Three. I was ridiculed something rotten.” He began painting local scenes and pub signs for beer money.

In 2007, having recovered from cancer, Bunt presented himself at the Portland Gallery in London. “A stick-thin bundle of nervous energy arrived with paintings under his arm and a bag (which I later discovered contained box drinks – his only food) over his shoulder,” recalled Tom Hewlett, the director. “We were treated to some brutally honest self-criticism, some medical details which I was surprised to hear from someone I had just met, and an artistic vision of unusual clarity.”

Bunt’s profile grew explosively – at one exhibition there were 2,500 calls in 15 minutes when his work went on sale. This year his Saatchi Gallery exhibition *Marrows, Spuds & Onions* attracted 17,500 visitors.

Gary Bunt is survived by his wife Lynn, by their daughter, and by a son from an earlier marriage.

Gary Bunt, born September 29 1957, died July 4 2025