

Arthur Wint and E. MacDonald Bailey in the background at the Torquay Recreation Ground, July 1949.

Picture: FROM THE COLLECTION OF BILL BAXTER (PR25249)



# Olympic sprint stars in action in Torbay

**To celebrate Black History Month, Torquay Museum has delved back over 70 years into its archive to discover the history behind a forgotten image from the collection of Bill Baxter, former mace bearer for the Mayor of Torquay between 1938 and 1950.**

**BARRY CHANDLER**  
Torquay Museum

4 x 400m relay after collapsing with cramp.

Wint's gold was Jamaica's first Olympic gold medal, securing him a place in the Jamaica Sports Hall of Fame.

Bailey was born in 1920 in Trinidad and also came to Britain as part of the RAF in 1944 and joined the same athletic club the Polytechnic Harriers.

He dominated RAF Athletic Championships in the 100 yard and 220 yard events from 1945 to 1948 and left the RAF unbeaten.

Bailey took part in the 1948 Olympics but had struggled with injuries the previous year and had to fight to make the final of the 100m where he finished sixth. He returned to the Olympics with Team GB in Helsinki in 1952 where he secured a bronze medal in the 100m.

Bailey was at the peak of

his fitness in 1949 when this image was taken. In that season in Reykavik he recorded times of 9.5 seconds for the 100 yards and 10.2 for the 100m event.

The pair of track stars toured Britain in 1949 and also appeared to a crowd of 5,500 spectators at an event at Queens Park in Paignton as part of the Paignton Regatta where Wint was presented with a late wedding gift by Mr Cooksley on behalf of the Paignton AAC. Wint went on to become a doctor and then Jamaican High Commissioner to London 1974 to 1978.

However, his greatest day of glory was in Helsinki in 1952 in the final of the 4 x 400m relay. As the lead-off man, he gave his country the narrowest of margins and there followed an epic battle with the U.S.

In the end the athletes from the tiny Caribbean island triumphed by one-tenth of a second for Olympic gold and a new world record.



Paignton Regatta sports committee welcoming Arthur Wint at the Paignton train station, August 1949. Picture: FROM THE COLLECTION OF PETER TULLY (PR12727)

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The image was taken in July 1949 at the Torquay Recreation Ground at the Devon Police Athletic Championship meeting.

It shows two unnamed athletes in the foreground but in the background are Arthur Wint and Emmanuel MacDonald Bailey inspirational athletics stars of 1948 Olympic games.

Wint known as the 'Gentle Giant' because of his 6ft 4ins (198cm) height was born in Jamaica in 1920 and aged just 18, won gold in the Central American Games in Panama.

In 1942 he was sent to Britain for active combat as a pilot in the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan where he also joined the London Polytechnic Harriers.

In 1948, Wint took part in the first London Olympic Games as part of the Jamaican track team.

He competed in three events winning gold in the 400m, silver for the 800m, but missed out on a medal in the




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