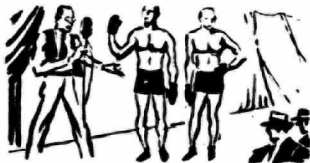


# A Tough Guy At Home

## Dave Sands and His Clan

**D**AVE SANDS, Middleweight boxing champion of the British Empire, and Heavy, Light-heavy and Middleweight champion of Australia, is a nice quiet family guy . . . out of the ring. Inside the ring he is a different fellow altogether, as his record proves.

It would be rather hard to imagine this pugilistic killer sitting down quietly with a needle and thread weaving decorative woolen mats, but that often happens in the Sands family, particularly on the last few nights before a big fight.



So expert is Dave's mat making, it even amazes Bessie Emma Sands, the pretty young mother of his two tiny daughters, Margaret and Lilian. Mat making, you see, is completely beyond Bessie.

Dave, on the other hand, mastered the art in one short evening about three years ago.

"I just saw it, picked it up, and did it straight away," he says, as modestly as possible in the circumstances.

Dave's patterned masterpieces, in the form of Bengal tigers, Sahara camels, etc., adorn the walls of the five-roomed, two-storeyed, converted shop that is the Sands home.

The dwelling is sandwiched in a row of ancient weatherboard and weatherbeaten structures fast outliving their usefulness near the Stockton landing stage of the Newcastle-Stockton ferry.

In this diminutive building, Dave, his wife and children, and his brothers, Clem (33), George (27), and Alfie (22), live, move, and have most of their congested being.

Occasionally the fifth brother, Ritchie (30), journeys down from West Kempsey to make it eight under one small roof.

No wonder a grocer, with a hankering after security of tenure, has set up his fruit and vegetable stall immediately outside the Sand's front door.

He does far better out of the family than the hotel-keeper next door because the brothers don't drink when training.

### Real Teamwork

Whereas most young wives would not welcome the more or less permanent presence in their homes of three or four sturdy brothers-in-law, Bessie doesn't mind.

Fortunately for her, the fighting Sands brothers are men of peace when out of the ring . . . a real family.

The only time they fight is to help with the washing up, according to Bessie.

Besides living together, the brothers cut and carry timber together, do their road and beach work together, play Rugby League and cricket in the same teams, and have never had one serious row.

In the gymnasium the Sands "light-and-fast" spar together, but when they want to hit someone really hard, they go outside the family for a target.

Apparently the nearest they ever came to a row was when "big" brother Clem (Welterweight Champion of New South Wales) told *Sporting Life* reporter R. S. Whittington of the needlework of "young" brother Dave (Heavyweight Champion of Australia).

For a moment there was an ominous silence. Dave obviously was far from happy. Well, he might ponder; what are they going to say at the Stadium when they hear this?

Then he relaxed. Perhaps he reckoned he had the appropriate answer for any catcallers in his left and right fists. Anyhow he seemed to become resigned to the disclosure of his secret and agreed to pose in an armchair with needle and thread for his photograph.

Asked who was boss of the family, Dave said "We take it in turn. There's not much bossing necessary."

"Sometimes we have to jump on young Alfie," chuckled Clem. "He's lazy. One day he was painting a house and fell asleep with the wet paintbrush in his hand."

Alfie, whose fight with Harry Hayes at Griffith is recognised as the most terrific contest ever held there, smiled rather sheepishly.

### Keen on Boogie Woogie

Quite a part of the living room of the Sands home is filled with a huge radio set, for Dave is particularly keen about his boogie woogie, but Beethoven sends him to sleep . . . something no fighter has ever been able to do.

While on the subject of music Dave said his favourite singer and film star was Bing Crosby.

"If Bessie wasn't here he'd tell you it was Betty Hutton," cracked kid brother Alfie, definitely not asleep with his paint brush on this occasion.