

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

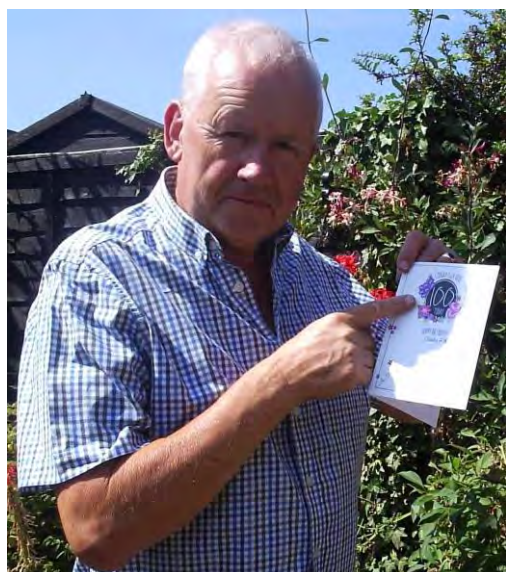
Issue 100

July 2018



100th DDN!

Who would have believed it? This is issue #100 of *Dr. Darts' Newsletter*!



I published #1 in February 2010 and sent it out to a handful of friends and darts contacts just as a way of keeping them aware of what was happening in my research and what new discoveries I had made.

From that small number of original subscribers the list has grown rapidly to today when *DDN* circulates in more than 120 countries. Much of the worldwide reach of *DDN* has been achieved not only by word of mouth or via the internet but also by my great friend Dr. Eddie Norman (pictured below, right) who travels the globe lecturing to darts fans about his life in darts and also promoting my work.

Knowing that *DDN* was approaching 100 issues Eddie sent me a card (see above) congratulating me on my achievement with the newsletter. (Image © Moppix) He later e-mailed me to say

Hi Patrick, Just catching up with things and sat here at Milan Airport in the sunshine reading DDN No 99.

A wonderful edition, as always. Who would have thought at edition No. 1 DDN would be such a success? But I always had great faith in your 'keyboard' skills after reading that very first edition and never doubted No. 100 would duly arrive.

I love reading some of the old editions of DDN and as you know I do hard copies of DDN and I regularly read and distribute extracts of them, crediting you as author, on my world darts lectures tours and everyone enjoys them immensely so as you already know you are in darting folklore.

You must be congratulated on such a wonderful contribution you have made to the sport of darts with your writings. Patrick, without you and your great supporting



'proof reader', the history of the sport of darts as we know it would never have seen the light of days.

In eight years' time, at the end of 2026 I hope we are all celebrating edition 200.

Congratulations to a great writer and good friend

Eddie, I will be 76 years old by #200 so I am not sure what condition I'll actually be in to celebrate but thanks for the commendation of my work. By the way, the 'proof reader' Eddie refers to is my wife Maureen without whom...

And look out later in this issue for a very special 100th issue celebratory easy-to-enter competition **for subscribers only**.

FEEDBACK AND THE PIT

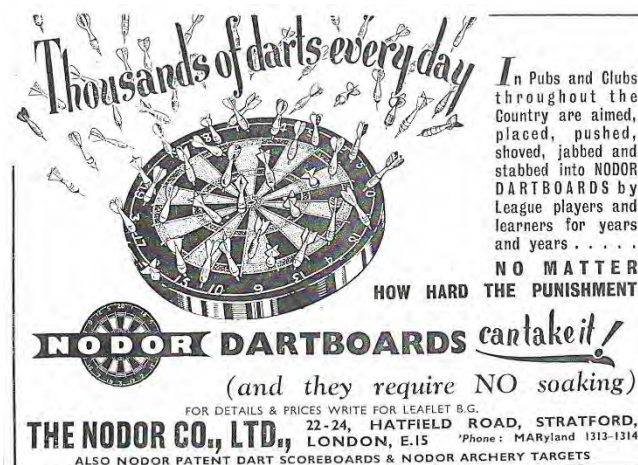
Regular contributor Mick Simpson enjoyed the 'International Pub Darts and the Pit' article in #99. In fact it brought back some memories of quirky stories of the oche. Mick wrote

The pub with the hole in the floor must have been quite strange to play...I have no doubt we have all played under some strange circumstances.

I have played in a pub where the landlord had no way of fixing the dartboard to the wall so he bashed a 4" nail through the bullseye! Another pub put up a brand new NODOR board only the landlord had soaked it first!

Mick's reference to soaking a brand new NODOR dartboard, reminded me that before the advent of the bristle dartboard, boards were made from wood, either elm or poplar, and needed to be soaked overnight to enable them to retain their subtlety so as to not harden and become unusable.

The NODOR company was keen, from the very start, to make it absolutely clear to customers that their bristle board did not need soaking. The advertisement (above right) appeared in the *Brewers' Guardian* in November 1953 and clearly emphasises that point but, with the company even printing a 'DO NOT SOAK' notice on the reverse of every bristle dartboard, numerous customers, out of force of habit I guess, soaked them.



Finally, on the matter of the 'pit', former *Darts World* reporter Wayne Baker wrote

I once played a game of arrows in The Blue Peter in Polperro (round the coast from Looe) where the low ceiling meant there was a lower floored area where the darts throw was!

Have you any unusual oches to report?

THE OLLY CROFT TROPHY? – A THOUGHT

My personal thanks to the Professional Darts Corporation (PDC) for honouring the late, great Eric Bristow MBE with the naming of the Bwin Grand Slam of Darts trophy in his memory.

This news prompted an e-mail to me from Sterling L., an ex-pat darts player living in Spain. He wrote

Reading how the PDC have named three of their major trophies after major figures in darts, The Sid Waddell Trophy, The Phil Taylor Trophy and now The Eric Bristow Trophy we wondered if the British Darts Organisation had ever thought of naming [any of] their major trophies after major darts figures who have done so much on the BDO side of darts.

Sterling and his friends suggested that the British Darts Organisation's (BDO) Lakeside World Championship could be retitled 'The Olly Croft Trophy' as 'Olly got the World Championship off the ground' and that the WINMAU World Masters trophy be renamed 'The Eddie Norman Trophy' in honour of the well-known, global darts ambassador who masterminded the first World Masters. Would the BDO also name one after Eric Bristow?

Correct me if I am wrong but I cannot recall any *major* BDO tournament being named after any player or organiser. As for the BDO naming a trophy after Eric, I doubt very much if this has been a consideration as Eric played a key role in the emergent PDC (then WDC) when they broke away from the BDO in the early nineties.

I wonder if the BDO has ever given any thought to such ideas. Whether they have or not, I would be interested in knowing what *you* think at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

DEATH OF BOB JOHNSON

Over the years a good number of darts players who suffered from dartitis (the inability to release a dart) consulted Robert Earl 'Bob' Johnson (pictured), an ex-pat living in Cyprus and an acknowledged expert in that field.



I have always regarded Bob's work as extremely important, so much so that I published a special edition of *DDN* (#83, February 2017) specifically dealing with dartitis thus bringing Bob's work to the attention of all subscribers. I know that many readers found Bob's advice very helpful.

Sadly, on Saturday 26th May, I received an e-mail from Bob's son Craig informing me that his father had died that morning of cancer. Bob's funeral was held at St Helena's Church, Larnaca, on Saturday 9th June, followed by the burial at the British Cemetery, Larnaca.

Although Bob is now gone, I am prepared to make his advice available by sending anyone who is experiencing the debilitating effects of the condition known as Dartitis, a copy of issue #83 by e-mail free of charge. Just contact me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

JOE HITCHCOCK - 'THE TREBLE TWENTY WIZARD'

One of the darts heroes of the past, about whom few articles have been written, is north London's Joe Hitchcock (pictured below) who, during the 1940s to the late 1970s was one of the most popular darts stars of his time.

Whilst recently visiting my darts history website www.patrickchaplin.com darts fan Ben Paul read the information I provide about Joe at <http://www.patrickchaplin.com/JoeHitchcock.htm> and, as a result, wrote to me as follows:

Just read the article [about] Joe Hitchcock, the marathon man, and it sparked off some great memories of the great man.

My name is Ben(edict) Paul and I studied at the Polytechnic of North London from Sept 1977 to May 1981. In 1977/78 I lived in the James Leicester Halls of Residence off Caledonian Road right next door to the White Horse pub. Of course, the White Horse immediately became our local watering hole; a proper old fashioned pub in the old Edwardian style with small lounge bar, big long public bar and a games room with a pool table...and a few dart boards dotted around.



Of course, as spotty little 18-year-olds, my friends and I had no idea who Joe Hitchcock was though some of the regulars intimated he had a famous past! I recall several generations of his family living in the pub too.

I also remember being teased by the 'cockney mafia' for being 'bleeding posh' and for having a 'plum in his marff'. To be honest we were more interested in our new favourite pint (Ben Truman bitter), the pool table and were most impressed by the fact that famous rock bands (I remember Black Sabbath and possibly the Clash) popping in after rehearsing in a nearby studio.

*Anyway, around Feb 1978 Joe put on an impromptu exhibition (there were about 30 people in the long public bar) and I was encouraged with the offer of a free pint of Ben Truman to be one of his human trestles. Of course, I was **** scared as Joe was getting on a bit by then and I noticed his hands used to shake when he was pouring the pints. Anyway, a bunch of old and young cockney regulars thrust me forward ("Go on me old son!") somewhat against my wishes but it was Joe's confident demeanour that convinced me that I was probably in safe hands.*

I can picture Joe now standing there very smartly dressed (he always seemed to wear a jacket I recall) watching his latest victim being selected. He positioned me in front of the board, tilted my head back and stuck a cigarette in my mouth and quietly told me not to move. He then took five or six steps back, a quick focus and unleashed



his first dart knocking the cigarette out and somehow still getting it to stick in the board. Then half a cigarette knocked out with a nail and finally...half a shirt button off the end of my nose. I was so scared I can't remember if he used a nail or a dart.

Lots of back slapping ensued and from that day on I like to think there was a bond of sorts; he was always happy to share a joke, and I always seemed to drink more beers than I ever paid for!

One day I explained that I was from Guernsey and that pork trotters were the main ingredient in my national dish (that being Guernsey Bean Jar). Joe's eyes twinkled and he made me promise to visit him at the pub the next day for lunch. I duly arrived and was promptly ushered upstairs to his private kitchen where he proudly opened the fridge door to reveal a dish of cold jellied pig's trotters. My abiding memory was the joy on his face as he watched this little posh kid from Guernsey tucking into those pork trotters.

Thank you Patrick. Your article stirred memories of a very special time and man that had lain dormant for over 40 years.

Thank you Ben for those great memories of your Joe Hitchcock experience.

The cartoon on page 4 by 'Harlequin' shows Joe captaining the St. Dunstan's Four, a sighted darts team that raised thousands of pounds for the war-blinded charity during the 1940s and 1950s. It appears courtesy of the late editor of *The Dart*.

KHURU MEANS DARTS

I don't think that I have ever mentioned Bhutan in *DDN*...until now.

Khuru is a town in the Punakha District in central-western Bhutan. There the game of khuru (darts) is a popular outdoor team sport involving large darts (similar in size to English lawn darts) often played during festivals and archery tournaments. It is played all across Bhutan and can take the entire day and late into the evening to complete.

Earlier this year Tashi Dorji from Bhutan wrote

I gained lot of knowledge after viewing your web[site] in regard to Darts. I am a Researcher of Indigenous Sports of Bhutan. The dart or Khuru is one of the indigenous sports of Bhutan. As of now I am in process of finding how Khuru or Darts has evolved in Bhutan. In order to get authentic information, I would be grateful, if I can interact with sir in e-mail.



I was, of course, very pleased to be questioned via e-mail by Tashi. Here are Tashi's questions and my responses.

TD: I am not sure how dart is really linked with Khuru. I feel dart could be origination of Khuru. The Khuru could be evolved after dart only. So, I would like to find out whether Khuru is really originated from Dart or not.

PC: It is unlikely that the modern game of darts would have originated in Khuru but I am sure that, like many countries, the people of the past would play with spears or small knives in various throwing games.

TD: *How did the sport of darts start?*

PC: It is my view that the game of darts (as we know it today) originated in England during the early 19th century with other forms, such as 'puff and darts' (which involved blowing small darts through a tube at a target, preceding it. The English game was a combination of elements of 'puff and dart' and 'flechettes' a French game involving wooden darts which was imported from that country by showmen/fairground people as a form of entertainment.

TD: *Is it true that Darts originated from England during Henry VIII?*

PC: Absolutely not. The 'dartes' that Henry VIII were long hunting darts and although they were used in hunting wild boar, etc., there is no direct link, as far as I can tell, with the modern game. (The origins of darts in England has been covered in my book *Darts in England 1900-39 - A social history* (Manchester University Press: Paperback, 2012)

TD: *And the journey of Darts from Britain towards Asia?*

I believe that darts reached parts of Asia during and after the Second World War when English men stationed there brought the game over with them. In recent years a number of darts organisations have been set up in India and India does have national championships today most based on the standard game of 501, straight in, double out.

‘THE RABBI’

Martin Lawrence contacted me recently via my website. He wrote:

Patrick. This is bugging me no end. I've searched high and low for this but can't find the answer anywhere. What dart player in the 70's was known as 'The Rabbi'? I'm sure it wasn't Ceri Morgan because the chap had a much bigger beard. All I get from Googling is Rab Smith and [I know] it wasn't him. Many thanks.

To be honest 'The Rabbi' didn't mean anything to me at all so I contacted three-time World Champion John Lowe and asked him. Within minutes of sending John an e-mail he came back to me with the answer "Dyfri Jones" he said, "Played for Wales."

Armed with this information I checked through my archive and found some information about Dyfri (pictured, right) in Derek Brown's book *The Guinness Book of Darts* which was published in 1981. Brown wrote:

Jones, Dyfri (b. 5 May 1943) comes from Pontlottyn, Mid-Glamorgan. Is 6ft 2in (1.88m), nicknamed 'the Rabbi' because of his wispy beard. He still has a poster advertising Glamorgan's first match, at home to Cornwall, dated 24 March 1974. They lost 8-7 that day, but Jones won, and he has been around ever since. Has an outstandingly successful record county



record, captaining Glamorgan to victory in the British Knock-Out Cup in 1978 and 1979, and he ultimately made a four-man Wales team when he was picked for the Europe Cup of 1980. Won the Welsh Winmau Open in 1979.

Dr. Eddie Norman told me:

The late Rabbi was a good friend of mine and Leighton Rees. Dyfri Jones was a former captain of Glamorgan and earned 21 caps for Wales; his beard being his trade mark. He died aged 67 in 2011. A great character.

Despite his death the player's name lives on in a dart competition named after him which is still being played today at the Rhymney Social Club in South Wales.

(Photo of Dyfri at World Cup III courtesy of PC/DW Archive.)

COMPETITION TIME!

To celebrate the 100th issue of *DDN* my sponsors the WINMAU Dartboard Co., has put up a brilliant prize; a unique bristle dartboard (pictured below) signed by many of the top players of today. Steve Beaton, Mervyn King, Paul Nicholson, Robbie Green, Jamie Hughes, Andy Fordham, Gerwyn Price, Scott Mitchell, Bobby George and Mark Webster.



PLUS the lucky winner will receive **ten sets** of DR. DARTS top quality WINMAU flights.

“That’s one hell of a prize!” (Indeed it is.)

My sincere thanks to Ian Flack, Sales and Marketing Director at WINMAU for making this happen. To win the prize simply e-mail me the answer to this question. “Which darts player

was known as 'The Treble Twenty Wizard'? Answers to patrickchaplin@btinternet.com to be received by close of business on 27th July.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Please ensure that you also include in your reply the capital letter(s) that appear in the subject line of the covering e-mail to this issue otherwise your entry will be disqualified.

GOOD LUCK EVERYONE!

AND FINALLY...

ERIC BRISTOW TRIBUTE – A NOTE OF THANKS

Following my special edition of *DDN* in tribute to The Crafty Cockney, subscriber Mark Lawrence e-mailed me.

Thanks for the newsletter. As usual it was a great read. I feel proud that you put my tribute to Eric in this month's issue. You must have had lots of readers telling you stories about Eric so using mine and my daughter's story was special.

It is nice to read about how normal non-celebrities felt about the sad loss of Eric. Tributes poured in from fellow pros and celebs alike but Eric (liked or hated) was a part of our lives for most of our lives. Thanks.



The photo, above, shows Peter Wright's extraordinary personal tribute to Eric. (Photo © 2018 PDC/Lawrence Lustig. Used with permission.)

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