DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 101 **August 2018**

DARTS *AL FRESCO*

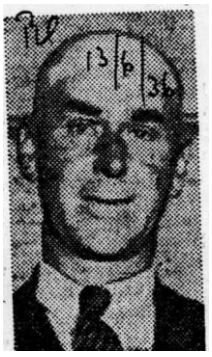
What a summer we're having in the UK! Well, that was the case in late July when I was preparing this edition of *DDN.* However, it might all have changed by the time you read this!

Many people, mainly outside of our sport, assume that darts playing stops with the arrival of the warmer weather but we all know that local summer leagues flourish and the PDC and BDO programmes continue apace apart from a few weeks' break here and there. All of these events are played inside and are weather-resistant but has a major darts tournament ever been played *outside*?

Certainly the first Home International held 45 years ago in 1973 was played in Bristol in the open air but on a covered stage (see photo above). Global darts ambassador Dr. Eddie Norman who was responsible for organising the event told me recently

"The First Home International was played on a blazing hot summer day in 1973 in a 2,500-capacity marquee on Bristol's Durham Downs. The twelve practise boards were situated in the open air outside the marquee and all the sides of the marquee were rolled up as this was pre-air conditioning days and inside was a cauldron. So people thought basically they were outside.

The stage was a revolving one so the back half was open to the elements as we had to tie the flaps back. But the actual board and front stage where the matches were played were under the marquee [as] we never knew what the British weather would throw at us."



The earliest evidence that I can find of a darts match being planned to be played *al fresco* dates back to 1936, a time when darts was first in vogue at a nation level. It was the time of the first darts boom.

In June that year the *Bradford Telegraph & Argus* reported on a series of recent matches between Bradford's Harold Barker (pictured right), 'the Yorkshire champion' and local champion and contender for Barker's title, Jack Butterfield of Methley, a village south-east of Leeds; matches which on at least one occasion, were witnessed by crowds of nearly 2,000 people.

The *Telegraph & Argus* report stated that wherever Barker and Butterfield played 'a big crowd is assured' and that 'suggestions have been made that to accommodate all enthusiasts

the two men should play at least one game this summer in the open air so that everybody interested would be able to watch.'

Whether or not this open air match ever took place I am unable, at present, to ascertain.

Remaining in Yorkshire, I must mention the Embsay and Eastby Garage Darts League (E&EGL) who will play their darts *anywhere* and on *any board*. Having tried most if not all of the UK regional dartboards, Richard Phillipson, Secretary of the E&EGL, has been in search of French javelot (miniature archery) target. (See later in this issue.) During the summer months they often play outside and always, as the photo shows, turn their matches into a social event.

And, of course, darts features in fairgrounds, many local fund-raising fetes and other events as a side stall in which punters try to win prizes. Readers may recall a couple of decades ago the totally unforgiveable *Topless Darts* which featured on a cable TV channel where topless models allegedly played darts on an Australian beach. (In fact the girls just threw the darts while the TV crew actually played the game. (No! *Really*!)) It was described as a novelty by some but nowadays it would be so out of step with political correctness.

So my question to you is this. "Have you ever played darts in the great outdoors? On the beach? In your back garden? In a field? Where was the most unusual place *outside* you have played darts? Let me know by e-mailing me at **patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com**.

FEEDBACK FROM 100th ISSUE

Thanks to everyone who replied so positively to #100 sending me congratulations on the achievement of the 'ton'.

Here are a few of the responses received:

Congratulations Pat on the 100th edition of DDN!! ☺ All the best (Duncan S.)

Wonderful 100th issue. Congratulations. (Ron Sz.)

Hi Patrick, Fantastic work as usual. Each month I keep meaning to reply but never get round to it so apologies for taking so long. I appreciate your hard work and look forward to the Newsletter every month. Cheers. (Donald P.)

Congratulations on this milestone & thanks for yet another great issue (Brian H.)

Great read. Great way to top off #100 (Warren A.)
Hi Patrick. Greetings from the North East corner of Thailand close to the border with Laos. Have to admit my continuing failure to bring darts to the local populace but am most grateful to be kept up to date on the darts world with DDN and continuing contact with John Lowe,

Paul Siegel and the irrepressible Howie Reed. The recent issue is most illuminating as ever and a joy to peruse. But most of all I wanted to congratulate you on …the achievement of the 100th Edition of DDN… Great job!! Best wishes from the dartless part of Thailand!! (David Brook)

Hello Pat. Congratulations on the Ton. It's been a disciplined Ton I must say. It's your perseverance, passion and knowledge about this wonderful game. Darts has bridged every corner of the globe and I am proud you have been a major force instrumental in doing so. I am also pleased to inform you I have once again tied up with WINMAU… You were responsible for the partnership of WINMAU and myself. Thank you Pat and God Bless. (Ashfaque Sayed)

Congratulations on your 100th issue of DDN by from all at Embsay & Eastby Garage Darts. It's great to know there are so many like-minded darts nuts around the globe. Here's to the next 100 issues! (Richard. E&EGDL)

Morning Patrick. First of all congratulations on 100th DDN. It has been a fantastic journey through the history of darts so far. Needless to say I look forward to many, many more editions please. (Mick S.)

Good Morning my good Doctor! Once again, greetings from America! Congratulations on Issue #100 of DDN! I look forward to it each month! As always...excellent reading. Thank you again, Patrick, for all you do!! Keep up the great work! I have no doubt you will reach 200 with ease! (Steve Doyle)

MOBILE GAME LAUNCH - Darts Match Becomes 'PDC Darts Match' As Motionlab Interactive Secure PDC Backing

People who know me will be aware that I have little knowledge of, or much use for, technical devices. However, I am, of course fully aware that there are millions of darts fans out there who access news and play darts games through the developing forms of media. Here then, for that reason, is news of a recent mobile game launch.

Tarriq Ibrahim of Motionlab writes:

Fans of the hugely popular multi-platform mobile darts' game ***Darts Match*** *can now throw off against the world's best darts' players as its developers Motionlab Interactive have secured licencing rights from the Professional Darts Corporation (PDC).*

Now called 'PDC Darts Match' and relaunched on 23rd July to coincide with the 2018 World Matchplay, users can put their tungsten skills to the test against sixteen of the PDC's top players including Dutch darters Michael van Gerwen and Raymond van Barneveld, and current PDC World Champion, England's Rob Cross.

Available as a FREE download on iOS and Android, a number of other new features have been incorporated into the new game:

- *Five new playing environments (including the venue of the World Matchplay, the Winter Gardens in Blackpool)*
- *Dynamic camera angles*
- *Weekly leagues*
- *New game modes (301/501 double in)*
- *Completely redesigned UI*

The old version of the game was a worldwide success and attracted over 1.5 million downloads, so existing users will be happy to know that all of its popular features have been retained. They include:

- *Authentic swipe motion to aim and throw darts*
- *Live online play*
- *In-game chat*
- *World and friend leaderboards*
- *Player/game statistics*
- *Game modes of 301, 501, Cricket and Around the Clock.*

Motionlab Interactive CEO, Simon Iredale, said: "Ever since we launched Darts Match, the single biggest request from users has been the ability to compete against their favourite darts' players and we're thrilled to be able to deliver this. Now that we have the full backing of the PDC it gives us a great deal more scope to grow the game over the coming years. We have a host of other exciting new features currently in development that we can't wait to unveil to our extensive user base."

Chief Executive of the PDC, Matthew Porter, said: "We have been hugely impressed with how Darts Match has engaged globally not just with the ardent darts' fan, but also casual admirers of the sport. Integration of the PDC brand and our players into this definitive mobile darts' game gives us added opportunity to expose professional darts to a worldwide audience and expand its global appeal."

iOS and Android users can download PDC Darts Match for FREE now from Apple's App Store and Google Play or via http://www.dartsmatch.co.uk/.

101-UP

Although this issue is #101 I thought I would just mention that I still enjoy the practice game of 101-up, straight start with a possible finish in just two darts (treble 17, bull). It doesn't matter how well or badly I've played over the years, I still return to 101-up which can be played with a friend, a group of friends or alone on my dartboard at home.

If you miss the treble 17 with your first dart you *should* still leave a two-dart finish. However, sad to say that my first dart so often strolls into the single 2 leaving no outshot until next time…if you opponent allows you another shot.

COLLECTOR'S CORNER - DARTS DRINKING VESSELS

Carl H. e-mailed me via my website telling me

I have a set of twelve, 0.5ltr plastic beakers with printed on players [including] Taylor, Barney, etc. Cannot find anywhere any info was told were made only for one foreign competition. Any info appreciated. (See image below)

I can recall that, during the time that I collected *everything* to do with darts, I did purchase numerous darts drinking vessels, including pint glasses (bearing legends such as 'GAME ON!'), pewter tankards (some awarded to teams that entered *The People* team championships back in the day) and coffee mugs ('I love darts', 'Greatest Darts Player' etc., etc.). However, as far as I can remember, I never purchased anything like the plastic beakers Carl has in his possession (see image).

Given the players depicted on the beakers it doesn't take a genius to work out that they were something to do with the PDC. CEO Matt Porter was quick to confirm:

...this is a reference to plastic glasses produced by PDC Europe which were produced for our European Tour events there.

VOGELPIK - FEEDBACK

Long-time *DDN* subscriber Thierry Gellinck from Belgium was very quick off the mark and contacted me re. Richard Phillipson's enquiry in #97. Thierry wrote

It's been a long time since we've been in contact. I just read the question about the Belgian vogelpik board, [pictured] *and on this link you'll find a Belgian web shop that still has this board.*

https://www.amusement.be/belgisch-vogelpik-bord.html

Maybe that helps.

It did indeed Thierry. I passed the link on to Richard and he replied saying that he'll definitely check out the link. Richard also said that he will be writing something for *DDN* about his, rather unusual, Garage Darts League for a future *DDN*.

Before he signed off his e-mail Thierry added "Btw, love reading your Dr. Darts News!!"

DARTS LANGUAGE – FEEDBACK

Back in #97 subscriber Mat Coward wrote

In North London, in the late 1970s/early 80s, if anyone left a required score of 123, the cry would go up "One-two-three never won a game!" It was considered to be a superstitious

bogey number, a bit like 111 in cricket, and some players would really go out of their way to avoid leaving it. Wonder if that rings any bells with readers – and whether anyone knows why 123 might have become so unpopular?

Mick Simpson was quick to respond

'123 never wins a game' was also said in the South of London. My own belief is it was quite a hard finish to get so you never left it if you could help it. The reason I say this is because you have to hit a treble and if you do hit, say, treble 20 (60) you have to hit another treble or try for the bull [to leave a finish]. *Back then I don't remember too many people trying to leave the bull!*

Chris M. added

For what it's worth, back in the day (1970s) in east London it was (as cricket?) 111 never won a game as I recall.

Thanks Chris. Does anyone else recall '111. Never won a game'? I don't but I do remember years ago when playing at the *Blue Boar* in my hometown of Maldon, Essex that if you had 111 left in a friendly game *sometimes* you were allowed to throw one dart at treble 1 to win. If you missed then any score with that dart was void and you could not throw your two remaining darts. A score of 111 has also been known as 'Lord Nelson'. As Rupert Croft-Cooke so eloquently put it in his book *Darts* (1936)

This means the number 111 – the three ones. The origin is one eye, one arm…but really some of these terms need not be too fully investigated.

CRICKET

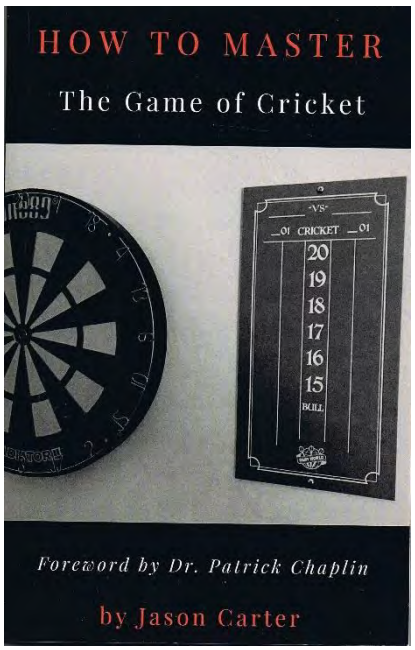
Before the Second World War, darts in the USA was rarely played in a properly organised way and was regarded by at least one contemporary writer as a 'diaper game', played primarily by young children.

The popularity of darts in the United States increased significantly after 1945 when American servicemen and women previously stationed in the UK, and having experienced English pubs and pub games at first hand, returned home, many bringing darts home with them.

Darts didn't exactly thrive immediately back home but with the foundation of the American Darts Organization in the mid-1970s, co-ordinating and organising darts on a previously unheard of scale, and its affiliation to the World Darts Federation in 1977 darts expanded in the US at an amazing rate.
Essentially the format played in most areas of the States was the imported standard game of 501 but, of course, that was soon to be threatened by the alternative darts game which was given the name of, for whatever reason, 'Cricket'; a far more serious and updated version of what we had known for many years in the UK as 'Tactics' and, occasionally, 'Mickey Mouse'. It should be noted that this game had nothing whatsoever to do with the very English game of the same name.

I was first contacted by Jason Carter (pictured) from Mesa, Arizona in 2016 when we exchanged information and theories about Cricket and I published parts of that exchange in DDN's at the time but there remained a number of unanswered questions. I sought advice from my expert contacts across the pond, including Jay Tomlinson (founder and long-time editor of *Bulls-Eye News*) and Chris Carey (author of *The American Darts Organization Book of Darts*), and very soon Jason and I had a clear picture of the history and development of the game.

From the very first e-mail I received from Jason it was clear to me that he had a passion for darts and for Cricket in particular. He was keen to research the game even deeper; to find out everything he could about Cricket, especially how to play the game and, most importantly, how to play it *well*. Jason's research revealed, surprisingly in my view, that, to date, no book had been published dealing exclusively with Cricket.



What better catalyst did a first-time darts author need?

In early 2018 Jason contacted me again to say that he was nearing completion of his book and asked if I would write a Foreword for his book.

No problem.

I have to admit that, as a traditionalist, I continue to play 101, 301 and 501 on a regular basis in my local pub and Tactics - Sorry! ***Cricket*** - only very occasionally. That said, as a darts historian, I am eager to support research into areas of the sport of darts which have not previously been comprehensively covered in a single volume.

Thus I welcome Jason's book *How to Master the Game of Cricket* (ISBN 9781983046759) that focusses the attention on one of the most popular darts games in the US today and trust that everyone who buys it will learn and benefit from it.

I wish Jason and his book every success.

A REMINDER

Every so often when sending out *DDN* I receive one or two returned mailings flagged up as 'undeliverable'. I have no way of being able to contact those subscribers to ask if they have changed their e-mail address so, please, if you do change your contact details and still want to receive *DDN* please let me know. Simply let me know well in advance by contacting me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com. I can then amend my records and ensure that you continue to receive *DDN*. Also, remember, if you do not receive your copy of *DDN* by the 10th day of the month please let me know. Thanks.

TONY SONTAG

As this issue of *DDN* was being finalised I received news from Bobby George's wife Marie that Tony Sontag (pictured), a long-time member of London county darts and who was selected a number of times to play for England during the 1970s and 1980s, had passed away. He was a great friend of the George's. Tony died on 24th July at the age of only 62.

Born on 2nd March 1956 Tony was a beaten semi-finalist in the 1978 British Open and made the semi-finals of the WINMAU World Masters that same year. Selection for England followed. He also won the first BBC2 (television) *Bullseye* tournament in 1978 and the Swedish Open in 1980. A more detailed obituary will appear in the next issue.

COMPETITION WINNER

Thanks to all who entered the 100th issue celebratory competition for the signed dartboard and ten sets of DR. DARTS' flights.

The question was "Which darts player was known as the 'Treble Twenty Wizard'?" The answer could be found on page 4 of #100. It was, of course, **Joe Hitchcock**.

My wife Maureen pulled out the winner from all of the correct answers so it's **"CONGRATULATIONS!"** to **PHILIP GRAY**. Well done Philip and thanks to all of you who entered the competition but were unlucky this time.

NEXT MONTH – A treat for *News of the World* fans as one of Tom Barrett's *NoW* trophies continues to be fought for in Scotland. Also 'Dr. Darts Does Flight Club', a report on my not one but *two* visits to two different Flight Clubs in London which are themed around our sport.

MY DARTS RESEARCH IS SPONSORED BY

WINMAU®

THE FORCE BEHIND DARTS™

Winmau.com

NOTE: Text © 2018 Patrick Chaplin or as shown. Images © Patrick Chaplin or as stated or sourced. Neither text nor images can be reproduced without prior permission of the copyright holder(s).