

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

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“WHAT’S HAPPENED TO THE BDO LAKESIDE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS?”

Over the past few months I’ve been receiving a number of enquiries basically asking “What’s happened to the British Darts Organisation (BDO) Lakeside World Championships?” the world famous international darts event established in 1978 (as the Embassy) and long-time the must-watch darts tournament.



For weeks my answer to that question was “I haven’t a clue.” There was no news coming out of BDO HQ and, as time passed, rumours abounded that this prestigious tournament would at best be postponed and at worst cancelled. There were major changes made to the BDO board during August but still no news. Thus the rumours continued. No TV coverage. No Lakeside. Venue changed to Preston, etc., etc.

Now, at last, the BDO has announced the signing of a new three-year, nine-event deal with dedicated sports broadcaster, Eurosport. According to the BDO:

The ground-breaking agreement will see Eurosport screen all three BDO Majors – the BDO World Darts Trophy, the BDO World Masters and the BDO World Professional Darts Championships – for the next three years, commencing in January with the 2019 BDO World Professional Darts Championships.

adding

Eurosport have long been a broadcasting partner of the BDO across the UK, Europe and globally but this exciting development will see Eurosport become our primary broadcaster and will bring live darts action to homes across the UK, The Netherlands and Australia.

Additionally, in a commitment to ensure the BDO World Professional Darts Championships are delivered terrestrially for the 42nd consecutive year, free-to-air channel Quest will share rights to each tournament with Eurosport, providing both live coverage and full highlights, which will be easily accessible in the UK via Eurosport and Quest Channels on Freeview, Freesat, cable and satellite and Eurosport Player.

The press release mentioned that despite only being voted on as BDO Chairman/CEO in August, Des Jacklin (pictured above, left) and his team, alongside Sporttotal, have been working hard behind the scenes to secure a broadcasting commitment which provides the foundation for a structured long-term commercial strategy and allows the organisation to plan and commit to venues and much more in advance. Des explained

Even with the tight time constraints and the on-going pressure to announce details of the upcoming BDO World Professional Darts Championships, both myself and my team weren’t looking for a quick fix. We have been committed to securing this long-term broadcasting

contract so we can focus our attentions on further improving the BDO for the players and supporters alike.

Eurosport have for many years been a great broadcast partner and supporter of the BDO. It is fantastic to see them get the opportunity to show the BDO World Professional Darts Championships in the UK for the first time and to give us a nine-event, three-year commitment to the UK, Netherlands and Australia.”

At the time of writing the venue was believed to be Lakeside and tickets for the 2019 World Championships are available.

So fears for the future of the Embassy/Lakeside have been allayed for 2019...

NEWS OF THE WORLD – TREVOR PEACHEY

Trevor, who lifted the prestigious *News of the World* darts trophy at the Empress Hall, Earl's Court, London in April 1956 had left a message on my mobile phone recently so, of course, I rang him back as soon as I could. He asked if I was “still looking into the darts”. He was checking how I was.



Trevor, now 89, told me that, when he went to Earl's Court for the *News of the World* tournament that he won, he had not ‘flung a dart’ before he stepped on to the stage that day and didn't even see the practice board(s). He remembers having dinner there. He also told me that he only had one bottle of beer all afternoon and that he didn't drink much anyway as it affected his concentration.

He reaffirmed what he had said to me years ago that nowadays “The targets are much bigger” and that players today “Can nearly touch the board as they throw.” He also told me “I've not flung a dart in years.”

Trevor admitted to being “a bit deaf” and suffering from ‘tingling in the feet’ although he can still walk, with discomfort. His two sons who live locally look in occasionally and he has a grandson. Trevor still has his allotment but now restricts his activities to his favourite veg, runner beans, etc.

How kind of Trevor to contact me. It just shows that *News of the World* winners in those early post-war days were just ordinary working men who care.

ANOTHER BOOK ‘DR. DARTS’?

Jerry Lucky from California e-mailed me recently. He wrote:

Hi Patrick, Just want to say how much I enjoy your newsletters...you do a splendid job. Thanks. [I have] a question for you. I really enjoyed your book Darts in England, 1900-39 and the detailed historical overview is second-to-none. So my question is what books would you recommend that do justice to covering the history from 1939 to today?



I replied

Regarding your question about books covering darts history 1939 to today, there aren't any.

It has always been my plan to write such a book and in fact at this time last year I was in negotiations with a publisher in London for a book tentatively titled The Sport of Pints - A People's History of Darts. In fact we had reached the point of discussing terms. Then my father died and the project was shelved.

Nearly a year later I am reaching the point where I can focus again on that project. I call it the 'people's history' to indicate that it will not be an academic work but one for the general reader and darts fan. My PhD, which eventually led to Darts in England being published by Manchester University Press, took 12 years to research and another two years to refashion into the book. If I started out on a similar journey now, I would be in my eighties by the time The Sport of Pints was published!

I have most if not all of the information I need here at home in my research archive to write the book, so once I started I guess it could be completed within 18 months. I think maybe the New Year will see me resurrecting The Sport of Pints so, please, watch this space or, better still, ask me in a couple of months' time how The Sport of Pints is coming along.

BULLING UP AND ODD SHOTS – FEEDBACK

Subscriber Chris Kelly wrote to me from sunny Benidorm:

Thanks, as always, for the latest DDN. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it on the way to London this morning. Firstly, the bully up question. I always believed that for a dart to count it had to be retrieved from the board. But perhaps this rule doesn't count in the bully-up situation.

Secondly, I don't recall ever seeing any strange shot worth mentioning but have always wanted to see the shot where the player 'Robin Hoods' the first dart and then with the third dart 'Robin Hoods' the second one. Apparently it's not as rare as you might think!!!

Funnily enough Chris, Paul Garratt contacted me about the same time you did. Paul told me:

About your request for strange darts shots. I've seen a double 'Robin Hood'.

It would have been 10 to 12 years ago. It was in the Swindon & District Thursday Night League. I was playing at the Gorse Hill Club for the Nationwide-sponsored team against the Coleview Community Centre.

It may have been in the warm-up than the actual game but a Coleview player landed his first dart in the 20 and then followed up by putting his next two in the first, either side of the stem. They were in so firm he could lift the dart from the board with the other two in place. Never seen it before or since. Sadly no pictures.

On a different tack but still 'odd shots' I received the following from subscriber and darts author George Hakim. George told me

I had a strange dart shot a few months back when I scored 180 and as I walked towards the board to retrieve my darts the middle dart fell down hanging in the air held up by the other

two flights with the point sticking into the bullseye, thus scoring 180 and 170 in the same shot.

Gravity-defying stuff there George!

FLIGHT CLUB – CHICAGO

You will all know that I have been involved in providing information and darts memorabilia for a series of Flight Clubs ('Social Darts') here in the UK but perhaps what I hadn't mentioned was that I also helped with materials for the Chicago club at 111 W. Wacker Drive.



According to the company advertising this 'Flight Club is an energetic social experience that turns Chicago's entertainment scene on a point. Socializing meets an unparalleled food and beverage program coupled with a super-charged gaming experience that is sure to make this holiday season the most memorable.' What better place to spend Christmas?

Thanks then to my good friends Carol Mack and her husband Colin who visited the Windy City recently. Sales Manager Robyn Lerman gave them a brief tour and then Carol took this photo for me. So, if any of my Chicago subscribers visit and play there I'd be pleased to receive your report(s).

Watch this space for news of yet another Flight Club being opened soon in Victoria, London.

THE DARTBOARD MADE OF 'BISCUITS'

As you may be aware, in addition to *DDN* I still, after all these years, write regularly for *Darts World* magazine; a feature called *The Last Word*.

A couple of issues ago I published a piece about darts *al fresco* and included the front page of *Darts World* magazine from 1973 which showed a young lady walking through the UK with a pack and a dartboard on her back. Eagle-eyed *Darts World* reader (and *DDN* subscriber) James Hope noticed that on that front page was an article titled 'The dartboard made of biscuits'. James was curious and asked me what was meant by 'biscuits'.

Inside that 45 year old issue of *Darts World* reporter James Hudson had written a piece called 'The living, breathing dartboard – made of 'biscuits.' He wrote:



ASK a darts player what goes into a top quality bristle dartboard and it is ten to one he will say pig or hog bristle. He couldn't be more wrong. The dartboard bristles are not animal but vegetable.

The 'pig bristle' myth dates back to 1939 when Foulsham & Co published a book titled *How to Play Darts & New Games For the Dart Board* by John Young. Page 13 reads:

A more expensive board is the "Bristle" board, made of compressed pig bristles on end, again with the grain, as it were, running through the board.

During the ensuing years the pig bristle story gained momentum and became 'fact.' Over forty years later *How to Play...* was issued in 1981 presumably in response to the demand for dart books at that time. The publisher still credited John Young but updated the book in places. Unfortunately page 11 perpetuated the 'fact'. Young states:

...the bristle board, usually made from compressed pig bristles facing end on...

(See my book *180! Fascinating Darts Facts* (pp 34-35) for the full version of this myth.)

Hudson's article back in 1973 continued

They are compressed tufts of sisal, a fibre made from plants, which is more commonly used in the making of ropes. The bristle boards, though more expensive, are winning a larger share of the dartboard market. Their big advantage being the fact that they do not have to be soaked regularly like the elm and wooden counterparts.

At the time of writing his article Hudson told *Darts World* readers that the bristle dartboard manufacturers were working 'full out' to keep up with the demand for their product from all over the world.

It was a man named Ted Leggatt (pictured, right) who had formed the NODOR Company based in London in the early 1920s who turned eventually to making dartboards and who then hit upon the idea of using sisal bristle. He patented the idea in 1932 but the company had to wait until the 1970s before the bristle board became popular; mainly due to the cost of a bristle board compared with a wooden one.



James Hudson's report continued

New machinery is now perfecting the process of manufacturing the bristle boards. This compresses the long skeins of sisal into a continuous "pipe" wrapped tightly in brown paper. Inch thick "biscuits" are then chopped off...The biscuits are put into a press and with a chipboard backing are compressed to the size of a dartboard. The face of the board is smoothed down with a sander....After the board has been sprayed to the required pattern with the spirit dye it goes to the expert "wirers".

Each board is hand-wired with high-tensile galvanised wire to withstand the point of a dart travelling at 40 m.p.h.

But an innovation, originally introduced in the boards made for South Africa, are thin steel bands sunk into the board to a depth of about half an inch. These strips are used for the bull, treble and double rings more and more but the radials still have to be wired by hand. It is estimated that the bands increase the target areas on a board by 14 per cent.

Back in 1973 about 40 per cent of NODOR's production of 2,500 boards per week was exported to most countries throughout the world.

But what of today? (See the next issue of *DDN*.)

PUB GAMES

As many of you will know, in addition to darts I am interested in all kinds of pub games and have featured a few of them in previous issues of *DDN*.

Whilst looking back to some of last year's media contacts I was reminded that Dave Gilyeat of the BBC e-mailed me on 12 August 2017 asking if I would be interviewed for a feature he was writing entitled **The Weird and Wonderful World of Pub Games**. I was, of course, very happy to contribute to the article. Also interviewed was my great friend (and the world's greatest expert on the subject) Arthur R. Taylor. The resulting article can still be found on the BBC website at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-40422372>.

If you are unfamiliar with the Great British pub games (some of which are extremely eccentric) then, after you have read this link, you should read Arthur's book *Played at the Pub - The pub games of Britain* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2009).

And talking of Swindon...

BOB ANDERSON – STILL PLAYING AND STILL ON THE EXHIBITION TRAIL

One of the first 'facts' I learned about darts star Bob Anderson was that he was 'a civil servant from Swindon'. I culled that piece of information from Derek Brown's *The Guinness Book of Darts* (Enfield: Guinness Superlatives, 1981). Brown added that



[Bob] began playing [darts] when he was five, and 28 years later realised his ambition of representing England. Coincidentally that happened in Hampshire, where he was brought up. The match was against Wales, and Anderson won. Picked again in 1981, and in March of that year he won the CIU [Club and Institutes Union] individual.

Bob is pictured here participating in the 1985 WINMAU World Masters. He did not win that year but instead came back in 1986 and 1987 and 1988 to take the title, the best performance *ever* in the Masters and a record that was never broken. (Martin Adams' treble doesn't count as it was under much easier rules.)

I have known Bob and his wife Sally for some time so it was great to hear from him again recently in response to #103. Bob wrote:

Hi Patrick. A great read as always, and interesting stuff about Lilian Barnett. I remember her well. I am now 70, but still playing West of England Super League! I am captain of The Salthouse in Clevedon, Somerset.



Bob then sent me a photograph of him and his Salthouse teammates together with their nicknames. They are (Back row, left to right): Clive Strong ('Strongman'), Darren Davies ('Double D'), Kelvin Hart ('Hitman'), Bob ('The Rhinestone Cowboy'), Ryan Camp ('Ruthless'); (Front row, left to right): Russell Joyner ('RJ'), Barry Weaver ('Hon.Sec.'), Mike Norton ('Iron Mike'), Jimmy Hunt ('Sir James'), Dave Baker ('Deadly Dave').

Bob also told me that he is still very much involved on the exhibition circuit but uses Super League to maintain his sharpness.

Bob will be in Ireland next month appearing at Fozzy's Bar, Clonmel on Friday 7th December, at the Three Counties Darts League Fundraiser, Templemore Arms Hotel, County Tipperary on Saturday 8th December and at the Cill Dara Golf Club, Kildare, County Kildare on Sunday 9th December for an exhibition in aid of the Youth Darts School. (Facebook: Bob Anderson Darts: Twitter @BobAnderson180.)

CAN YOU HELP FIND THESE ELUSIVE COPIES OF *DARTS WORLD*?

Alan Brown from Southend-on-Sea in the UK in my home County of Essex contacted me via *Darts World* magazine on 21st November **2017** but his e-mail was inadvertently stapled to the back of some research papers and only re-discovered last month. Fortunately Alan is a very patient man...

Nearly a year ago he wrote:

I contacted Darts World...to ask for some advice on how to obtain some old back issues of the magazine and the response from [editor] Andy Till was to contact you to ask if you knew.

However, my main reason for wanting to obtain the back issues is because I'm trying to find historical information on the PDC (WDC) from 1993 to 2000; information on tournament results, end of season world rankings, what tournaments carried ranking points and the systems used, etc. There is a lot of information around on other sites but I know there are details missing and I don't know where to find them.

This is all purely for personal interest (when I have an interest in something I like to know as much as possible) and I was wondering if you may be able to help or point me in the right direction please. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

The issues of *Darts World* that Alan is looking for are **1992** (#231 (Feb), #239 (Oct)); **1993** (#245 (Apr)); **1994** (#257-259 (Apr-Jun)); **1995** (#267 (Feb), #269 (Apr)); **1997** (#291 (Feb), #294-297 (May-Aug), #300-301 (Nov-Dec)); **1998** (#302-304 (Jan-Mar), #306 (May), #308-312 (Jul-Nov)).

If you can help Alan please contact him direct at alan.brown.1892@gmail.com.

TONY LITTLEWOOD

Finally, my thanks to Sylvia Smart for confirming that Tony Littlewood, who was featured in last month's *DDN*, played 43 times for Yorkshire, 36 times in the "A" Team, and 7 "B" Team appearances.

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