

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

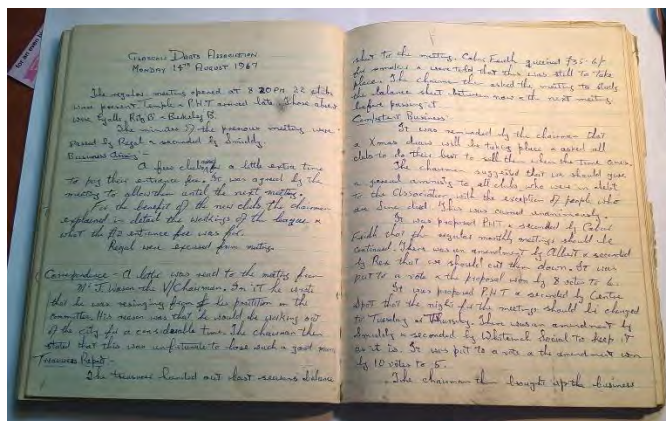
Issue 107

February 2019



OLD NOTEBOOK PROVIDES AMAZING INSIGHT INTO EARLY DARTS IN SCOTLAND

I was recently contacted by Ann Miller who is the daughter of the late Frank Quinn. Frank was a legend in Scottish darts organisation. He was a very well-known figure in the darts world for many, many years. He was the President of the Scottish Darts Association (SDA), Manager of the Glasgow DA, Secretary of the Glasgow DA, and contributed so much more over his years for his beloved darts. Frank passed away in 2015.



Ann told me that she had found 'a load of his darts memorabilia' that belonged to her father and wondered if I would be interested in any of it.

The memorabilia was mainly early issues of *Darts World* and some programmes but amongst the material was a well-thumbed notebook. The title inside read 'BALLINGALE DART LEAGUE 9 Newton Terrace' and the contents consisted of Minutes of

meetings held, beginning on 4th June 1964. The league had been formed two years earlier in August 1962. The notebook showed that, at the meeting held on 3rd September 1964, the league was renamed the GLASGOW DARTS ASSOCIATION (GDA) and the first meeting under that name took place on 1st October that same year.

As always Minutes of meetings can be incredibly dull and, of course, are, by their very nature, brief and rarely reflect the more vigorous discussions that take place. Matters discussed range from the recording of the names of the teams that are represented at the meeting to more important league matters, such as playing an 'illegal' player (that is someone who was not registered for that team) or non-payment of 'dues' and, of course, league competitions and the end of year dance.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 1965 reveal that up until that meeting only the amount of score remaining had been recorded on the scoreboard. Under the item 'Competent Business' team 'McKenzies' moved and 'Planet' seconded that '*markers to mark players score on board as game progressed*'. In other words each players' individual score would be recorded on the scoreboard as well as the amount left. This, of course, is something that has been commonplace for many years.

At that same meeting, team 'Smiddy' '*complained of [the] distance of Windsor board*' and the Minute confirmed that 'Windsor' would look into the matter. Clearly 'Windsor' were being accused of using either a longer or shorter oche length.

At the meeting on Wednesday 4th May 1966 complaints against three clubs were raised with regard to the condition of their dartboards. The clubs were the Stirling Castle, Dewdrop and Windsor. After due consideration the Chairman stated that *'all clubs should endeavour to display a playable board at all times'* and the Minute then read

Following this it was again stated that any player who thinks the dart board is not fit for playing, he should consult all concerned with the game that night & complain before any game commences. If the majority agree with the complaint they can then refuse to play.

The notebook did not feature the rules of the league but the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 1966 reveal that *'all teams should have an 8ft mat'* which clearly defined the throw-line.

On 29th November 1967 the 'Ritz' darts club asked the Chairman what the rule was regarding an incident in the match between the 'Berkeley' and 'Dawsholm' clubs where

A dart was thrown at the double and unknowingly finished the game & carried on thinking it was out & then on retrieving his darts found that his dart was actually in the double.

The Chairman replied

The game is finished as soon as the dart is in the double whether he carried on or not.

I am sure such incidents are still be debated today.

As the league grew sponsorship was gained both through the Glasgow *Evening Times* and Scottish & Newcastle brewery. On 22nd February 1967 the Association agreed that the vice chairman, P. McGee, should be *'disposed of his services due to lack of attendance'* Mr. McGee was duly 'disposed of'.

Frank Quinn, pictured here later in life, is first mentioned in the Minutes of the GDA on 12th July 1967 when he became accepted into the Social Committee and would *'take care of results'*. Whether or not this was Frank's first serious involvement with the organisation of darts is not clear but what is known is that Frank then dedicated his life to darts. He became one of the key instigators of the formation of the Scottish Darts Association (SDA) in 1971 and a leading light in the sport right up until his death in 2015.



The fact that this fascinating notebook has actually survived is due entirely to Frank. So often darts history is lost by records simply being thrown away out of disinterest but Frank, all those years ago, knew and appreciated the value of retaining such a record and knew that at some stage in the future it would pass into the right hands.

Whilst I value the notebook I know of one other person who can utilise it to a greater extent than me. Jim McNeil, from Aberdeen, is compiling a history of the sport of darts in Scotland and, with Ann Miller's permission, I will be forwarding the book to Jim on permanent loan.

The value of such notebooks to historians cannot be underestimated. I too have in my possession some Minute Books dating from 1954 relating to the setting up and running of the Sussex County Darts Association (SCDA) as part of the then recently-established National Darts Association of Great Britain (NDAGB).

To date time has not allowed me to read them through thoroughly but merely skimming them indicates to me that they are probably the most complete record of the early days of an English county darts team and that they, and indeed the GDA notebook, will be invaluable to me when writing the history of our sport in post-war Britain for my forthcoming publication *The Sport of Pints – A People's History of Darts*.

FLIGHT CLUB 3 – LONDON, VICTORIA

Back in the September issue (DDN #102) I recorded the fact that my wife Maureen and I had visited not one, but two Flight Clubs in the capital in recent months; one in Shoreditch, the other in Bloomsbury.



Well, some of you will doubtless be aware that a *third* Flight Club opened in London last October, at Victoria. Maureen and I were privileged to have been invited to the VIP launch the day before it opened to the public. We are pictured, left, just before the crowds arrived. (There is also a Flight Club in Manchester and in Chicago which Maureen and I have yet to visit.)

I have already praised the first two Flight Clubs in the city and now find myself, not surprisingly, praising the third. It has as many dartboards as the previous Clubs but has much more of a fairground theme which you have to witness to fully appreciate.

Maureen and I had a great time and look forward to visiting Flight Clubs again in the coming months. Our thanks to Flight Club co-founders Paul Barham and Steve Moore for the invitation to the VIP launch. To learn more go to <https://flightclubdarts.com/>.

COMPETITION RESULT

Thanks to everyone who entered the competition to win a copy of Ned Boulting's book *Heart of Dart-ness – Bullseyes, Boozers & Modern Britain*. The answer to my question was Joseph Conrad's **Heart of Darkness** and the lucky winner is Ed H. of Brooklyn, New York. Thanks again to all who took part.

HOW OLD IS MY DARTBOARD?

Mark S. contacted me via info@patrickchaplin.com. He wrote

Would you be able to tell me the age of this old Accudart board? It looks like it's been used very little & in very good condition and I wonder if you would know of its resale value?



The key things to look out for on this brand of dartboard, as confirmed by one of my key contacts at WINMAU, are the bullseye and the staples. In Mark's board, the bullseye is still retained by 2 staples. WINMAU upgraded this to a staple free version (in order to keep pace with NODOR's Supabull) around 1992/3.

The wiring system on this board also uses traditional round, wire staples which are positioned outside the doubles and trebles. WINMAU started to switch to a slimline "Cliple" system which was positioned inside the doubles and trebles around 1990. Therefore Mark's dartboard predates 1990 but it's difficult to be more exact.

With regards to value, WINMAU has exported many hundreds of thousands of premium bristle boards to the USA over the years, many of which are probably still in use. However, whilst Mark's board could be some 30-40 years old, its resale value may be limited (only a few dollars/pounds). Mark's dartboard still looks in good working order and therefore should continue to provide many more years of darting fun and entertainment.

FIRST VENEZUELAN DARTS CHAMPION

Back in November I was contacted by Marie and Ross Alexander (and friends) from Maracaibo, Venezuela asking to subscribe to DDN. No problem of course. They are I believe my first-ever subscribers from that country. Marie wrote:

Dear Dr Chaplin, I write to you from Maracaibo and recently attended a darts lecture with my husband on the sport of darts and your name came up as the author of a Darts Magazine and how you are in fact 'the greatest darts historian on the planet.' These were the exact words of the darts lecturer, an English gentleman who was visiting our country as a darts ambassador trying to promote the sport of darts. He spoke throughout in Spanish and English.

My husband and I were told that if we e-mailed you, you would be kind enough to put us your e-mail list to receive your monthly darts magazine. Several copies of your magazine were given out at the lecture by Eddie both in English and also translated into Spanish by him. They are very good, very, very good, we were very impressed.

The darts lecturer was called Eddie [Eddie Norman, pictured right] and he also arranged a darts singles event last night Saturday November 17 for us at Valencia, which is the third largest city in our beautiful country and the capital of Carabobo state. There were 82 entries for the First Venezuela Open; a great start for us here in Venezuela where darts is not well known.



The winner of the Venezuelan Open was Alejandro Ramirez from Barquisimeto, capital of the state of Lara, who played very well and had one game of 501 out in 14 darts and another in

15 darts. He defeated Matias Bracho who is just 17 by seven legs to two in the final which was enjoyed by all. Matias had a 160 check out. The final was played on Eddie's own NODOR board that had his own name on. Mateo Cabello a 19-year-old medical student from Caracas had two 180's and two finishes on the bull in his last four loss to Matias Bracho.

I am sure with Eddie's groundwork darts although very new will start to take off here, as a lot of interest has been shown since the lecture and tournament. Eddie is a true ambassador for the United Kingdom and the sport of darts. He spoke very highly of you and your work and showed us two of the books you have written on darts. We were amazed. We never knew Darts was so worldwide.

What a fascinating report and it's all down to Dr. Eddie Norman who, he tells me, will be ceasing his perambulations across the globe in 2020.

HOW MANY DDN SUBSCRIBERS ARE THERE?

Subscriber Mick Simpson has asked the question "How many people receive *DDN* every month?" I haven't actually counted the hundreds of names in the various e-mail groups I use. In fact doing so would only tell me the number of subscribers: not recipients.

I encourage all subscribers to forward *DDN* on to their friends in darts and this multiplies the readership by hundreds. I know of at least one subscriber in Asia who forwards *DDN* to every player and official in his *four* darts leagues and at least one other reader closer to home who forwards my newsletter on to approximately 100 business contacts every month. What I do know is that *DDN* has subscribers in more than 120 countries.

BOOK REVIEW – 25 YEARS OF THE PDC WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

When former BDO Director Colin Saunders published his two-volume, 860-page, masterwork the *Embassy and Lakeside World Professional Darts Championships 1978-2012* back in February 2012, I had nothing but praise for a man who, at his own expense, had spent years pulling together all the Embassy/Lakeside stats. Self-published and self-funded, Colin's books sold in small numbers. However, I am proud to say that I purchased copies and often dip into his books to clarify information about the BDO World Championships for articles and responses to enquiries.

Now a similar but much more wide-ranging book has been published covering the first quarter century of the Professional Darts Corporation (PDC) world championships. *25 Years of the PDC World Darts Championships* is compiled by Steve Morgan, of Sportradar, the PDC data partners.



This book is absolutely brilliant.

As far as I can recall, I have *never, ever* used that phrase in any darts book review I have written: and I've written a few!

One of the reasons is that I concentrate on darts history and tend to overlook, or even ignore, darts stats, unless absolutely necessary, for example when answering questions that have come direct to me or via my website www.patrickchaplin.com.

When I received my review copy of this book from the publishers I could have easily assumed it would be boring, stat-after-stat, and never opened it but merely placed it on my bookshelf as a key reference work and never write a review. I could have done that but I didn't.

Within this book you have *everything* (as far as I can see) and I mean *everything* that you would ever need to know about the history of and the stats relating to all of the PDC World finals up to 2018.

The original intention of the book was to provide a comprehensive media reference source for use throughout the 2019 PDC World Darts Championship but it developed way beyond that fairly restricted circulation to become, as compiler Steve Morgan states, 'a celebration of 25 fantastic years of the PDC World Darts Championship history alongside all the originally intended statistics.'

This book is statistics made interesting with the data being interwoven with memories of players, referees and officials; all kicked off by a Foreword by PDC Chairman, Barry Hearn who writes 'this great book, which is a must-have for darts fanatics, stats lovers and fans of top-class sport.

I read the main text and much of the statistical information at one sitting. I didn't even know that I would be interested to learn about 'The Highest Score Remaining in a Leg' (383 by Kevin Spiolek v Peter Manley, 2004/5, Last 16, Set 3, Leg 3 *and* Vincent van der Voort against Colin Osbourne (2008/9, Last 32, Set 3, Leg 3) but I do now. Do you want to know how many times a particular score has been hit over those 25 years or who has achieved the highest average for India or Guyana? The answers are all here plus so much more.

The only problem with a work such as this is how it is ever going to be updated for us, the book buyer. When Colin Saunders wrote his statistical history of the Embassy/Lakeside his intention was to issue updates every year. However, due to ill-health Colin was unable to do that. My only criticism of this work is that, as an historian, I would have liked it to include a brief history of the walk-on girls (and one walk-on man): now sadly lost to the World Championships.

25 Years of the PDC World Darts Championship (pp. 228) is published by Scratching Shed Publishing and can be ordered direct, either online at

<http://www.scratchingshedpublishing.com/products-page/darts/25-years-of-the-pdc-world-darts-championship/>

or by calling Phil/Ros at 0113 225 9797.

PLAYING WITH 'ODD DARTS' - JUSTIN PIPE

Subscriber Robbie Dove (who was actually featured in *DDN* #59 (April 2015) whilst studying at Bournemouth University) recently wrote

I thought I would contact you re. December's Newsletter, when you were asking for stories about throwing [darts] with differing weights.

Numerous years ago (6-10 years maybe), I seem to recall Justin Pipe [pictured] playing on TV, when one of his darts broke and he couldn't fix it. His opponent, who I think may have been Mervyn King, let him borrow one of his darts as he had a spare. I also remember that the dart borrowed was one gram heavier than the other two.

I may well have got the players and time frame wrong, but it was definitely a PDC televised event on Sky Sports. I'm not sure if anyone else can remember this with a little more detail, but it's the first story that popped into my head when discussing throwing with darts of different weights.



I couldn't recall the match but fortunately Dave Allen, Head of Media at the PDC, did. He told me:

I remember this, it was Mark Walsh in the 2013 World Championship second round (Justin eventually lost 4-2). (Sorry if that makes me sound very sad by knowing it off the top of my head!) I've just looked on YouTube and found the clip at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnvkDUFMdqE>

The issue was that when the stem snapped he couldn't get the broken part out of his barrel.



(I've since learned that you can use a lighter or other flame to melt the plastic, then put the point of a dart in and twist out/unscrew the broken part from the barrel. Simple!)

That all sounds a bit too dangerous a technique to me. Fire on the oche! There is a simpler answer to the broken stem extraction problem and that is to use the WINMAU Shaft and Softip Point Remover. Andy Jones, Sales Manager at WINMAU confirmed that the remover is still available and can be viewed at

<https://winmau.com/shaft-and-softip-point-remover-plain-aluminium-8406>

Mind you if any *DDN* reader has any other ways of dealing with this problem I would be very interested to hear from you at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

(Images: Justin Pipe © Tip Tip Pics Ltd. Used with permission. Extractor © Hermanpix.)

WHAT ABOUT A PRIZE FOR THE MOST DIFFICULT FINISH?

Long-time *DDN* subscriber, Mat Coward, has raised an interesting point. He writes:

Patrick. It occurred to me the other day that the prize for highest finish at tournaments is a bit odd, since the highness of the number doesn't necessarily equate to the difficulty in

making the finish. 170, for instance, is easier than some of the lower three-dart outs. So – if instead the prize was given for Most Difficult Finish, which number do your readers think would qualify?

I replied

In answer to your question re. Most Difficult Finish, that was mentioned during the commentary on the BDO Worlds last month but I can't remember what the number was. The point the guys were making is that, as you said, 170 is two of the same trebles and bull. With 143, for instance, you have to hit two different trebles in different parts of the board (T19, T20, D36).

What do you think is the most difficult three-dart outshot? E-mail me with your ideas at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

JOE HITCHCOCK – FEEDBACK

As you probably know, subscriber Mick Simpson (already mentioned above) *always* provides me with feedback on each and every issue of *DDN*. Way back in #100 (July 2018) I mentioned the late, great Joe Hitchcock, in response to which Mick wrote:

As you know I love reading about the greats of yesteryear and of course the Treble Twenty Wizard is one of the people I would have loved to have met...

A lady county player from years ago (Barbara Howe) who played for Surrey once told me she saw Joe Hitchcock (pictured) at an exhibition where he had a man stand put his spread out hand on the dart board and he put a swan vesta match under all four fingers and his thumb and he lit all five with five nails. Incredible...



Joe Hitchcock's exhibitions were legendary and the fact that he specialised in performing tricks by throwing nails at various volunteers or stooges merely raised the level of excitement at each and every venue. But Joe was also famous as the Captain of the legendary St. Dunstan's Four, the team that raised many thousands of pounds post-war for St. Dunstan's, a charity supporting the war-blinded. Not all of the Four's matches included exhibitions.

The image (above, right) of the cover of *The Dart* dated 3rd November 1945 shows Joe shaking hands with E. Horastend, the Captain of the darts team from *The Cock*, Kilburn. Joe had travelled to that pub with the other members of the St. Dunstan's Four on 25th October that year. The teams played 'Best of Three' games of 1,001-up which the Four won 2-0. Joe hit the winning double in both games; the second with a 151 outshot. However, *The Dart* reporter believed that Joe's 36 outshot in the first match was 'a better one'. The reporter wrote

His first and second darts were tight to the wire of the double 18 and Joe stepped to the left and 'went in off', this being the only possible way to obtain the double.

Today I suspect any darts commentator would say “Great marker” as the first and second darts came close. I also think any player today would be very pleased to hit a 151 out. *The Dart* reporter at *The Cock* also interviewed a man named R. Vincent, then 24 years of age, who had lost his sight and both his hands fighting for his country. He wrote

St. Dunstan's have taught him to be happy and have set him up in a car hire business. On enquiring if he used to play darts his answer was “I still do.”

The reporter added

Mr. Vincent was overjoyed at having the opportunity to tell the audience that they could not do enough for St. Dunstan's, who had made him independent, and thanked the teams for their efforts. Mr. Peter Crow, the licensee of The Cock, showed great enthusiasm, and auctioned several gifts. Over £50 was raised.

£50 translates into over £2,000 in today's money. What a fantastic sum!

(The St. Dunstan's charity changed its name to Blind Veterans UK in 2012.)

AUSTRALIAN LEGENDS – FEEDBACK

Darts legend George Foster e-mailed me recently to say

Thanks for including the article about the "Australian Darts Legends" as you promised you would try to do. As always, your publication is a great read. The depths you must go to with your research is amazing. Keep up the great work. Cheers: Vicki & George Foster.

Thanks George and Vicki.

After reading #106 subscriber Tom Firth from the Republic of Ireland wrote concerning an exhibition given some years back by Australian darts legend Terry O'Dea. Tom, pictured here, on the left, with Terry (Image © Tom Firth), wrote:



Always great to read your newsletter Patrick. Here is a photo from a couple of years ago; well quite a few years ago really. Terry was giving an exhibition in the lounge of Dublin Airport. He was one of the first to play in the UK and really is a Legend. Those were the days when the staff had some say in running the airport. I was playing for Aer Lingus Darts Club at the time.

Terry O'Dea reached the BDO Embassy World Professional Darts Championship finals every year from 1979 to 1987. His best performances were to reach the quarter-finals twice. In 1982 Terry lost in the quarters 4-1 to England's John Lowe and in 1986 to Alan Glazier (also England) 4-3.

But where is he now?

When I asked a similar question of my key Australian contact Warren Ackary back in 2008, he found out via his darts forum that Terry lived, at that time, on the Gold Coast, Queensland but was no longer interested in playing darts. Steve Duke jnr, another Australian darts star, told Warren:

[Terry] lives on the Gold Coast but doesn't play darts anymore! I played with him two years ago [c. 2006] and that was the last time he played!

AND FINALLY...

Didn't we see some great darts (and some not quite so) during the two recent World Championships? I had no doubts about the PDC tournament. That was fantastic as always but, as you will have noted from *DDN* #104 (November last), I did worry about whether or not the BDO World Championship would ever take place.



However, as it happened, I had no need to be concerned as the 'new' BDO certainly stepped up to the plate.

Thanks to my sponsor, Maureen and I were able to witness the Men's Final between Glen Durrant and Scott Waites at first hand, from the sponsors table right at the front. It had been a while since we had been to Lakeside but the magic was still there...and the noise! Well done to everyone involved. (Image © Chippix. Used with permission.)

NEXT ISSUE: BBC Scotland interviews 'Dr. Darts' as part of the production of a forthcoming new TV documentary about the legendary Jocky Wilson.

MY DARTS RESEARCH IS SPONSORED BY

WINMAU®
THE FORCE BEHIND DARTS™

Winmau.com

NOTE: Text © 2019 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).

