

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 134

www.patrickchaplin.com

May 2021



DDN REACHES TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Even though I have been writing *DDN* for more than twenty years, it never surprises me how far my small publication reaches. This month I received an email from Stephen Goddard of Trinidad and Tobago Darts centred in San Fernando. Stephen wrote:



Dear Sir. Your address was given me by a darts person Senor Eddie Norman from England, who gave me a copy of your Darts Magazine when he visited and I and my friends loved it. He told me that you would send me a copy each month if I wrote to you. I am trying to get darts established here with his help. It is very hard to get things off the ground at the moment with Coronavirus across the world.

Having sent Stephen copies of the last two issues of *DDN* I received a reply from him:

A note to say thank you again for the Darts News that you kindly sent me. Fifty copies were printed off and been distributed; hopefully getting more darts enthusiasts involved in darts here in Trinidad and Tobago. We have Eddie Norman to thank for getting darts off the ground here in the Caribbean and we now have you to thank as well. Through your good self or possibly your great magazine can we here in Trinidad and Tobago wish Eddie all the best for his 'Sage of Darts World tour' on his amazing 60th Anniversary - Diamond Road Tour and send our warmest greetings to you and sincerely hope that you are getting better after your stroke. With our kindest Regards Stephen Goddard Trinidad and Tobago Darts.

Thank you, Stephen. Best wishes from me to you and all members and friends of Trinidad and Tobago Darts.

'THE SAGE OF DARTS'

As *DDN* readers will be aware, Dr. Eddie Norman has been travelling the world for sixty years promoting darts and during the past decade bringing *DDN* to the attention of all those he met.

Although, Eddie (pictured, right, in Colombia in 2018) 'apparently' retired a year or two ago, this has not prevented him to more or less immediately come back out of retirement and set on the global 'Sage of Darts – Diamond tour'. Stephen of



Trinidad and Tobago darts asked me when Eddie was coming to see them again (coronavirus permitting). He wrote:

Eddie was coming to see us on his Diamond Road Tour this year again but this was postponed so I do not know when he is coming again. But we are hoping it is soon. He came here two years ago on his Sage of World Darts Tour...He is a wonderful darts ambassador loved by us all here.

Great news for Stephen and all Caribbean darts fans. Eddie has told me, "I am hoping to get back there in the not-too-distant future."

Also, on the subject of the 'Sage of Darts', I received the following from David Mason, a recent subscriber to *DDN* who wrote:

Hello Patrick, Thank you for your welcome great newsletter. In passing, would you by chance have any latest updates on 'The Sage of World Darts, Diamond Road Tour' by Eddie Norman. We in Europe are really looking forward to the tour.'

Well David (and Stephen) here is the update from the man himself. Eddie told me

The Diamond Road Tour is or has been ready to go for months but I can do nothing at the moment until Boris [our Prime Minister] gives the green light.



But hopefully in June/July I will be on the road in Europe starting in Lisbon, and taking in amongst others Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Yugoslavia, Italy, Greece, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Belarus, and the Czech Republic, finishing in Sweden.

In September/October, the tour will take in Singapore, Fiji, (hopefully to include Australia and New Zealand) and back to Vanuatu, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea and American Samoa. (The photograph, left, shows Eddie on one of his tours, relaxing in Brunei in 2014 with two of my darts books for company.)

The South America part of the tour due in November is in abeyance owing to Covid, and will probably be substituted with a repeat tour of the West Indies, taking in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Barbados, Belize, and for the second time returning to Cuba and Panama.

Everything is in place but the tour will overrun into 2022, when a Middle East followed by a Japan tour has been provisionally confirmed. But Covid is still a travelling problem for me.

From that itinerary (and many others over many previous years) readers can understand how *DDN* is now read in over 120 countries. Thanks Eddie. The *actual* number of readers *DDN* is unknown as subscribers are encouraged to pass on copies or forward on the newsletter to all of their friends in darts. I guess that by now it is in *thousands*.

I will, of course, keep 'Sage' fans aware of any further details as I am advised.

DARTS ECHO MAGAZINE- FEEDBACK

Thanks to *DDN* subscribers Juergen Schmitz and Martin Gehrke for responding to the article in last month's issue featuring the Germany darts magazine **Darts Echo** (which I called 'Darts Ech' by mistake). Juergen replied:

I have a whole bunch of these magazines here (picture attached). The ones with the red cover start in September 1991. In 1993 they changed to the white cover. My collection goes to 12/1995. By the way, the name of the magazine was DART ECHO – the dartboard stands for the "O".



Martin wrote:

Probably hundreds of readers may have written already: the German darts magazine should read 'echo' (echO, the O should stand for a dartboard). 'Ech' makes no sense. So: 'Darts Echo'. I have never heard of this magazine before.

How did I not see that dartboard making up the title 'ECHO'?

NEWS OF THE WORLD INDIVIDUAL DARTS CHAMPIONSHIP 1959

After the 1959 Divisional Finals had been completed and the eight finalists were known, the *News of the World* Sunday newspaper ran an article in which the darts journalist "The Champ" reported



"I have worked out the winning average of all eight title-winners. This is the average number of darts taken by each champion to complete each leg in his three games.

"The Champ" then printed those figures in the form of a 'merit table' as follows:

Tony Wright (Eastern Counties)	19.4
Albert Welsh (North of England)	22.7
Jim Ayres (Midland Counties)	22.8
Vic Parsons (London, Home Counties)	22.9
George Lloyd (Wales)	23
Frank Whitehead (Yorkshire)	24.5
Gerry Trimm (Western Counties)	25
Ernie Watson (Lancs. Chesh. I.O.M)	26.9

He pointed out to his readers that Tony Wright '*the confident champion from Wisbech*' (right) was '*way ahead of the field*' as he was the only player of the eight finalists in the Divisional Finals who consistently registered fewer than 20 darts for each leg of 501.

"The Champ" wondered if "*These ratings will be reflected in the play at Wembley*" at the Empire Pool on Saturday 9th May. Let's find out.



In 'list' order, Tony Wright (19.4 darts) (Eastern Counties champion) was described in the *News of the World*, on Sunday 3rd May the weekend before the Finals, as the 'outstanding character of the evening' who

carries a do-it-yourself kit for tuning up his darts on stage, and has really promoted the business of darts playing to the highest level of organisation.

This 'kit' came in very handy in the Divisional Finals when bearded Wright, used to playing on bristle boards, found the elm dartboards at the finals at Norwich far too blunt and several fell out. "The Champ" reported

Tony was not perturbed. He calmly produced a large file on stage, and sharpened his points up on the spot. [In addition, Wright had a] well organised Darts technique [with] numbered Darts... Throw in [the] correct order [with] Reserve flights in numbers for the same number dart. – all Home Made... Confidence – Abundance of it.

Tony Wright was playing out of *Black Horse Inn*, Thorney Toll, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire.

Second on "The Champ" list was Albert Welsh (22.7), the North of England Divisional champion, a 33-year-old miner from Horden, Co. Durham playing out of the *Horden Hotel*, Seaham. His win at Newcastle was his first big win at darts: a man who 'has no special fads or fancies when he is playing.'



Third up was Midland Counties champion Jim Ayres (left) close on the list from Welsh with 22.8 darts. Ayres, a shoe operator from Leicester, playing out of the *Horse and Jockey* in that city, won through to Wembley with a set of darts he made himself. Vital ingredients were 'two pennyworth of cane and some brown wrapping paper'.

Next in the ranking came Vic Parsons (22.9), so close to Ayres and Welsh as to divide them between the width of a 'fag paper'. Parsons, from the village of East Hagbourne, Berkshire, was described as the London and Home Counties No. 1. 'who has been one of the most consistent players in the South for many years' and was reported to have won 152 trophies up until that week. He had appeared in the *News of the World* in previous years at different levels always playing out from the *Fleur de Lys Inn*. "The Champ" reported that

Now 44 he [Parsons] will make his bid with a set of darts he won in a pre-war News of the World tournament,

Fifth in the ranking in this list was George Lloyd (23.0), the Wales Divisional champion who had appeared in the Grand Finals in 1953 and reached the semi-finals stage. Lloyd was a 34-year-old steel erector from Maesteg who played out of the *White Hart Hotel* there.

The next on the list was the Yorkshire Division champion Frank Whitehead (24.5 darts). Frank was a 33 years old miner from Doncaster whose wife Freda 'brings him luck with her calls of "Come on Whitehead!"' He played out of the *White Rose Hotel*, Rossington, near Doncaster.

Seventh was the Western Counties champion Gerry Trim (25 darts) from Larkhall, near Bath who played out of the *Hat and Feather*, Walcot. He was reported to be

a very steady plodder...instead of chewing gum...relaxes by sucking wine gums, and only hits his best form when he plays slowly and deliberately.

Last on the list in eighth place was Ernie Watson (26.9 darts), the Lancashire, Cheshire and Isle of Man Divisional champion playing out the *Aintree Hotel*, Bootle, Liverpool, Lancashire. Described as ‘one of the most colourful players’ Ernie was 29 years old of Liverpool who ‘usually wears a bright red sweater for luck and rubber galoshes to keep his footing.’ (I so wish I had a colour photograph of Ernie playing darts!) “The Champ” added that Ernie, being a bookmaker’s clerk, he can, ‘of course, reckon up with lightning’. M.C. and Compere, George Glover was heard to comment, “He has the answer before me!”

With thanks to Andy Scott, who is researching the *News of the World* Individual championship, I was able to bring to you exactly how the ranking “The Champ” mentioned came out on the night.

In the Quarter Finals Frank Whitehead beat Vic Parsons (2-1), Tony Wright was victorious over Jim Ayres (2-1), Albert Welch beat Ernie Watson (2-0) and George Lloyd overcame Gerry Trim 2-1. Thus, in the quarter-finals, the two highest numbers of darts in the list (Watson (26.9 darts) and Trim (25.0 darts) were eliminated. So, things were going to form with the favourite, Wright still in with a chance.

But in the semi-finals Wright met Whitehead on form and was beaten 2-0. In the second semi-final North of England champion Albert Welsh beat George Lloyd by a similar score.



Thus the ‘second favourite’ Welsh became the favourite based on the ranking and that it turned out the case when, in the Grand Final, Welsh was victorious over the Yorkshire champion, Whitehead, by two games to one.

(The photograph, left, shows Albert being presented his North of England Divisional trophy by Miss Christine Langford, Tees and Tyneside Television Star.)

During the years that statistics meant little in darts and it was just winning that mattered, however you played this ‘merit table’ compiled by “The Champ” was ahead of its time. It is wrong to point at 19-27 darts averaged per leg because there are so many other considerations to take into account comparing today with sixty years ago. (Too many to be discussed here but I am I can make space for them in future *DDN*’s.)

What one can deduct from this article is that in 1959 an average (by added up the rankings (187.2) and dividing by the number of players (eight)) is 23.4 darts per leg. How good was that at that time?

As always for the Grand Finals the organisers of the *News of the World* arrange a ‘star’ of sports or radio or TV to present the prizes. In 1959 was of course no exception and the newspaper informed readers on 3rd May that

A FEW hours before he leaves England for Arsenal’s Summer tour of Italy, Manager George Swindle has an important date – at Wembley. For once it will not be connected with football.

George will present the prizes at the Grand Finals of the News of the World Individual Darts Championship of England and Wales.

For whatever reason, George didn't make it to present the prizes but the sports fans, especially those from Wales, weren't disappointed as the presentations were made by Welsh rugby international, Lewis Jones, later to become a 'legend' in Welsh rugby. Earlier in the month Jones (above left) had presented the Yorkshire Divisional champion cup to the eventual Grand Final runner-up, Frank Whitehead.



So there ended another *News of the World* successful darts championship. According to "The Champ" 'nearly half a million' darts players had begun the journey and, in this year, it was Albert Welsh who stood alone on the stage that evening as the 1959 *News of the World* Individual Darts Championship of England and Wales Champion.

JOE HITCHCOCK – THE MARATHON MARVEL

I have often featured items relating to Joe Hitchcock, in *DDN* but this time I feature a scrap of paper found in a copy of the scarce 1949 *Darts Players Annual* printed in 1948. I placed this item in the Facebook page of 'Darts in the Past' merely because fans were asking what the scoring was 'back in the day.' This item shows the scores hit by 'The Marathon Wizard' during an unnamed match of 3,001-up.



Take a look opposite. Joe completed his game in '35.1 throws' (106 darts) which one period of seven consecutive 'tons', a standard which I suggest would measure-up to anything quality darters today could achieve.

The 'N.B.' scribbled mentions that in

1948 Londoner darts star Jackie Boyce took over captaining the famous St. Dunstan Four from Joe. Although well-known in the south at that time, Jackie was soon known further, far and wide.

As the London and Home Counties champion he won the *News of the World* individual champion at the Empire Pool, Wembley on 9th April 1949, beating the Eastern Counties champion Stan Outten 2-1.



DAVID 'ALAN' EVANS – WELSH DARTS LEGEND

While recently looking through a file of photographs of Alan Evans, the Welsh darts legend, in my archive I came across this relaxed group picture with a scribbled legend on the reverse



‘Alan Evans with wife & mother & father with Charles Smith (manager) in the middle.’

I had thought that Dr. Eddie Norman had been the only manager Alan had had in his career so I checked with Eddie who provided names for the family. Eddie explained

His dad was Dai Evans (David?) but always Dai. His mum was Myra. His wife was Jean [and] his two children [not pictured] Mark and Claire. I am not sure about Charles Smith. To be honest I do not know about him,

unless he was the ‘Charles’ from Silvertrim who were selling Alan’s darts? I think the photo, at a guess, is about 1980/81.

Can anyone tell me who the ‘man in the middle’ is?

The reason I was looking through my archive for photos and information was that I was visited on Thursday 13th to be interviewed by BBC Wales about Alan’s legendary status for a series titled ‘Mavericks’ where the lives of a variety of famous Welsh sports names are being examined.

TRINA GULLIVER MULTIPLE WORLD LADIES CHAMPION

It is a decade that I worked with England’s ten-times women’s world champion Trina Gulliver on her autobiography *Golden Girl* and it is clear that much has happened to the star during that time. (The image, right, shows Trina having won the 2010 women’s championship.)

In early May the newspaper and the ‘net were full of stories of Trina having suffered from a ‘secret’ alcoholic problem ‘downing four bottles of wine a night’. The story was deliberately and bravely released by Trina herself.

Trina’s recovery began after she had collapsed while working as a TV pundit in December 2019. She said,



I had lost so much weight I was down to seven stone and my organs were beginning to shut down. I spent a month in hospital. I’ve not had a drink since then. Sometimes you have to hit rock bottom to make you realise.

Trina has vowed to use her experience to help others with alcoholism. To release the video was very brave of Trina and has been very warmly received across the world of darts. I wish

Trina all the very best and look forward to seeing her back on the oche again soon. To view the video in full please go to <http://trina-gulliver.com/>.

BACK ON THE OCHE?

As we all know here in the UK, pubs were all allowed to open their doors again on 17th May to enable customers to drink and eat indoors. It has been a long time coming so we hope that nothing happens to bring lockdown again.

As far as darts is concerned, I remain worried about exactly how many pubs that used to include a dartboard and support darts teams before the plague will continue to do so now. I worry that the dartboards may be taken down to enable more space for tables. I also wonder if darts is capable of complying with rules relating to social distancing to allow games to be played.



The photograph (above right) is shown as an example of the pictures that appear in local newspapers of victorious darts teams in the past. This example is the team at the *Cherry Tree* in Witham, Essex a few miles from where I live. The *Cherry Tree* closed a few months *before* lockdown and was feared to close for ever. It had always supported darts teams. In fact the lady (seated) in this photograph is the former Miss Eileen Turnage who in May 1936 became the first woman darts player to win through the last eight of a *News of the World* area final. For the full story of Miss Turnage see my website at <https://patrickchaplin.com/2019/08/21/beating-the-men-at-their-own-game-the-eileen-turnage-story/>

Surprisingly, it has now reopened with brand new licensees who are looking for teams. I wish them well. I wish good luck to all dart-pubs and pub darts teams post-lockdown.

MY RESEARCH IS SPONSORED BY



NOTE: Text © 2021 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).