

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

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RONNIE WIGGS RECEIVES MEDAL FOR SERVICES TO DARTS

In the October issue, I featured dartboards manufactured by Bernard Young who was awarded an MBE (Member of British Empire) for exports by HM Queen in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in 1973. I also mentioned that Mr. Young had sold his interest in the company M.Y. Darts to retire but that that retirement was short-lived as he formed another dartboard company.



Well. When looking through my archive relating to M.Y. Darts, I discovered that one of the company's employees, a man named Ronnie Wiggs, was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) in HM Queen's Birthday Honours in June 1981 for 'Services to Industry'. (Photograph © MY Darts)

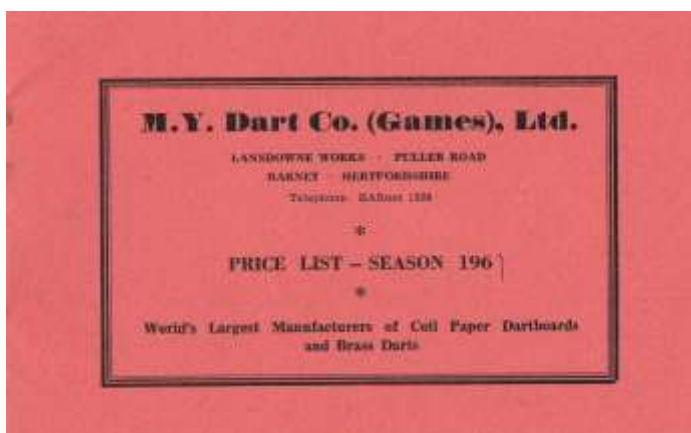
Walter Ronald 'Ronnie' Wiggs was born on 30 April 1922, one of eleven children (Ronnie being the tenth child) of Albert and Elizabeth Wiggs (married 1901). In the 1911 census Albert's occupation was shown as a stoker.

The 1939 census showed Ronnie living with his parents and siblings in Eastern Avenue, Cheshunt, Hertfordshire and his occupation was given as 'Dartboard Maker'. In 1946 Ronnie married Eileen Phyllis Bacon (born December 1926) in Hertfordshire and they had seven children.

Ronnie had joined M.Y. in 1935 when he was only 13 years-old. At that time, M.Y. was making wooden dartboards (usually of elm) at its former factory at Ponders End, Enfield, north London.

At the time of the award, Ronnie, his wife and family lived at Waltham Cross, near Broxbourne, Hertfordshire and had been a long-term employee of M.Y. Darts Ltd., based in Barnet, Hertfordshire.

Subsequently, when the company moved to Tottenham and later to Barnet (see front cover of catalogue shown right), Ronnie remained with them, taking a major role in the invention and subsequent mass production of 'compressed fibre' dartboards.



Ronnie became production manager until 1981 when ill-health compelled him to relinquish his position in favour of a less hectic, but equally rewarding, role in innovation and development of new dart products.

In that August, M.Y. Dart estimated that 'about' 100 million dartboards had been made and marketed by the company during the forty-six years Ronnie had been with them, a large percentage of their products going overseas.

Ronnie died on 9th February 2001.

(My thanks to Shirley Cole for genealogical information.) (Main source of information: *Darts World* August 1981)

RAY HATTON

'Ray Hatton made local history way back in 1964 when he became the first player from Rochdale to reach the News of the World darts final. Hatton lost on the big day, but it was no mean feat to have been on the stage for what was then the bees-knees of world darts. (Manchester Evening News 2nd July 2011)

Hatton has perhaps been the most consistent local player over 40-odd years, although he is not on his own in the list of great Rochdalian players, having been joined by Nobby Clarke, George Forrest, Paul Whitworth and Les Fitton, amongst others....



In the *News of the World* Individual Darts Championship of England and Wales held at the Alexandra Palace, London N22 on Saturday 18th April 1964 the programme stated that Ray was 'a 33-year-old Rochdale scaffolding erector, is here the champion of the Lancashire and Cheshire division and a host of friends wish him luck'.

Ray had won through to the Grand Finals at St. George's Hall, Liverpool, where he won the Divisional Final.

Councillor J. P. Moyses officiated at the prize-giving. (Image, left, shows that presentation. Photograph © *News of the World*. Used with permission.)

In the quarter-finals of the Grand Final in London, Ray (playing out of the *Flower of the Valley Hotel*, Rochdale) was drawn against Claydon Whitlock, a 36-year-old glass-blower, the Midland Counties Divisional champion, representing the *Smith Arms*, Nottingham. Ray beat Claydon 2-1 and moved to the semi-finals where he met Jim March. Jim was a 39-year-old Welsh collier, the Wales Divisional champion, playing out of the *Foresters Arms*, Blackwood, Monmouthshire. Ray took the match 2-1.

In the Final, Ray met the London and Home Counties Divisional champion, Tom Barrett, a compositor of Hanworth, representing the Odco Sports Club, Long Acre, London. Tom had

already appeared in the Grand Finals in 1962 but had lost in the quarterfinals to the eventual champion that year Eddie Brown, the Eastern Counties Divisional champion.

Tom beat Ray 2-0 in what *News of the World* reporter ('The Champ') described Tom's performance as 'a devastating display of accuracy' adding, 'A large audience acclaimed him as he set the seal on a wonderful performance beating Ray Hatton...in two straight legs...'

Much later, when a reporter from the *Manchester Evening News* was looking back at Ray's career, he informed the readers that Ray Hatton won the *News of the World* Rochdale area knockout, for the *eighth* time, in 1997, a great achievement, and then performing well on the one occasion he lifted the Lancashire and Cheshire Divisional championship and earned his right to attend the Grand Finals in 1964. The *Manchester Evening News* also added:

Ray Hatton picked up 100 guineas, a trophy and the promise of a free holiday after winning the final of the Pontins All-Season knockout in Lowestoft during 1967. [He] and Bill Lennard became the Lancashire pairs champions for the fifth time in 1970. Lancashire Lass became the Lancashire team darts champions in 1973 when they beat Read Constitutional Club in the final played at the Talk of the Town nightclub in Blackburn. The team was George Harling, Roy Baker, Barry Clarke, Mel Faith and Ray Hatton.

Ray was also a member of the well-known darts team in Manchester from the *Cotton Tree Inn* who became well-known nationally in 1961 when the team won the first *national* NODOR Fours tournament. (The Fours had begun as a purely Essex event in 1957, then other areas were added over the next three years until it was established as a national tournament in 1961.) The *Cotton Tree* comprised of George Barrow, Jimmy Berry, Alec Dixon, Bill Lennard and Ray Hatton. Teams always carried a substitute player. In the 1961 final they beat the team from the *Hope Inn*, Gloucester.

The *Cotton Tree* was there or thereabouts in the NODOR Fours for some years, being defeated finalists in 1965 (losing to the team from the *Queen's Head*, Bishop Auckland) but returned the following year to lift the title again in 1966, beating the Pioneer Social Club, Newcastle.

Ray, of Halifax Road, Hamer, pictured here in later life) also won the National Darts Association of Great Britain (NDAGB) pairs title in 1967 and 1975 with *Cotton Tree* star, Bill Lennard. Bill had made the finals the previous year with Alec Dixon but had been beaten by Bert Norman and Dennis Nutt of the *Kings Arms*, Hampton Court, Surrey in that 1966 final. Paired up with Ray in 1967, Ray and Bill beat George Lloyd and Eric Evans of the Cwmbran Workingmen's Club, Monmouthshire to win the NDAGB Men's Pairs title. Ray and Bill won the title again in 1975 when they beat Ray Curel and Michael Meah of *The Compasses*, Bewdley, near Kidderminster.



At the age of 72 Ray continued to win local titles including the Ormes League individual knockout and the CIU individual KO. He organised the area finals of the *News of the World*

championship for two years in Rochdale and Manchester and was regularly asked to appear at presentation nights.

Ray passed away at the age of 79 on 27th June 2011.

Ray left behind his wife Mary, three children, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Eldest son John told the *Manchester Evening News*: “He was a very popular man in Rochdale. He enjoyed life and being in the company of friends. He took great pride in his family. We were a sporting family and he was a very fierce competitor.”

SUBSCRIBER MICK SIMPSON SEEKS THE HELP OF DDNs DUTCH READERS



Mick writes

Morning Patrick. I don't know if you can help me. This is a dartboard that I made in 1999, celebrating that year's Embassy. (See left.).

In 2002 at the 25th anniversary of the Embassy I made a board the same as this but with 2002 on it. The board has the 32 players autographs on the back. It was auctioned off for youth darts. It raised £280 and was bought by a Dutch bar owner?

What I am hoping is... Could you please put it in your DDN as I'm hoping someone in Holland will know what bar it is in? Carol and myself would love to see it in situ. So, here's hoping you can help me? Thanks again Patrick as ever, yours in darts Mick.

So, it's now over to my Dutch readers to, please, help Mick. If you know where that dartboard is displayed, please drop me a note at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com. Thanks.

DARTS IN SCHOOL – FEEDBACK

In response to my article in the October issue about darts played by schoolchildren, subscriber Bill Bell commented

I agree about the dartboards in schools. I've played with accountants and teachers and they're useless at counting compared to regular chalkers.

I'm sure there were many of us who have found the same over our darts lives.

David King went into the matter deeply. He wrote

Hi Patrick,

I hope all is well. I read your latest issue of DDN and picked up upon 'The case for children playing darts' section. Although you have stated that the article was initially published in Darts Weekly News, 12th February 1938, it is still very relevant today and is a bit of a hot topic.

The photograph, right, from the 1938 article mentioned last time, had the caption 'Darts for both young and old'. Darts for children was clearly an issue over eighty years ago but nothing was ever done. David continues:

I have two articles regarding children playing darts on my websites. The first is about darts and maths, as your anonymous journalist contributor has suggested. Although you are correct, darts has never been part of the school curriculum; it has featured in the classroom!

You may recall Bobby George visiting Woodland Middle School circa 2010. Philip New, the head of year six, set up a dart club and explores darts as a vehicle for teaching different areas of KS2 maths (Key Stage). The darts club was filmed with Bobby George in attendance, and the classroom section was also recorded as part of 'Teacher TV Broadcast', which was then part of the UK Department of Education. I wrote to them and gained permission to broadcast the video on Darts501.com, which they gave. Teacher TV was then scrapped, and their videos would have been lost. However, they permitted others to broadcast them as long as they also hosted them. A few sites still make a wide range of Teachers TV videos available covering loads of subjects. I just host one!



On the Dart501.com website, I talk about basic mathematics and how a dartboard can help mental arithmetic. Although, maths these days is taught differently when both of us was at school.

My brother, John, used to be a maths teacher in a secondary school. He used the dartboard in a fun lesson to teach mental arithmetic. He said the kids gave big yawn when he said no calculators allowed! He stated that when they were old enough to play the game in a pub, some old chap they would not give a second thought to would be able to score faster than they could work it out on the dreaded calculator. My brother isn't a dart player but could see the value of using such a game to highlight the importance of mental arithmetic.

<https://darts501.com/Maths.html>

On the Darts-UK.co.uk website, I have a different article relating to Youth Darts. I have been often asked where a child can play darts. In my day, and probably yours, it was a local youth club or after school club activity. However, both of these don't seem to be as common as they used to be.

How high should a dartboard be for a young chap or girl? There is no guidance other than to state there is no difference in height for a youth player than an adult. But as many of us would have started with a dartboard rested on a chair or hung at a lower height so we could retrieve the darts.

I have taken a leaf out of the history of the dartboard height you explained and used it as a guide for parents to help the very young play their first darts. However, my suggestion has no universal agreement but give some logic to help the very young. You can see from my text and graphic on the Darts-UK.co.uk page what I suggest.

I also explore soft-tip darts as many don't want their young children playing with steel tips. I also provide a few links to the Junior Dart Corporation and local countries that are likely to know what is available in their local area than I can provide.

http://darts-uk.co.uk/Youth_Darts.html

Hopefully, both pages might help anyone looking for some basic information.

Thanks David. Your input is always appreciated,



And, of course, adults have not been forgotten in the learning stakes. I have this beermat in my archive which was issued at either the WINMAU World Masters or the Lakeside World Championships (I cannot recall exactly which) where former world champion Andy Fordham helped to promote free maths and reading and writing courses as part of the 'Get On' initiative. Andy set a simple darts question, the answer of which was on the reverse of the beermat, together with the number to contact for free courses in any local area.

Andy was always keen to be involved in these sorts of initiatives.

WINMAU LAUNCHES BLADE 6



The team at WINMAU proudly told me

The latest in the Blade Series of dartboards offers stunning design, innovation and craftsmanship, featuring Winmau's latest, Sixth Generation, dartboard technology. The Blade 6 dartboard delivers outstanding playability, durability and performance. Blade's pioneering web design features the latest 'Density Control™' wire for optimum fibre density and improved dart retention in the double, treble and bullseye zones, for maximum scoring

power. The ultra-thin 60° angled wire deflects darts into the scoring area for absolute minimal bounce outs.

The fully hardened bullseye and outer bull, both featuring 'Density Control™' wire, are now 25% thinner. Fitted with the easy adjust Rota-Lock mounting system, the Blade 6 fits any wall allowing you to start playing within minutes. Made from the finest East African sisal for the most demanding players and environments. Blade 6 is Professional Tournament approved and made to official World Darts Federation specifications.

So, you all know now what to put on the very top of your Christmas list this year! And if you don't celebrate Christmas or are already on Santa's 'naughty list', treat yourself to one and see how the BLADE 6 compares to any other dartboard you have ever played on ever.

Great job WINMAU!

FEEDBACK AND A REMINDER

Brian H. writes

Hi Patrick. Thanks for yet another great read. Particularly liked the News of the World story (as I always do).

The Phantom dart... Maybe he lost those first few games getting used to the gloves!
[Subscriber Bill Bell also liked the Phantom Arrow article commenting "Great idea for the time...he played well, in a tight mask and gloves as well. Very difficult."]

Brian added

Great to see the ladies game integrated more with the men: unlike many sports there is nothing to stop men & women competing on an equal footing and as has been shown, the top women like Fallon Sherrock & Lisa Ashton can compete at the highest level. They just need to be constantly playing the best players week in week out just like the other PDC hopefuls. I look forward to seeing more truly competitive games from the ladies without the pantomime booing of their male opponents which only cheapens their efforts. [Image of Fallon at the World Championships © PDC/Lawrence Lustig. Used with permission.]



Finally, after your interesting article about Bernard Young & Deebee dartboards, I hope you don't mind me reminding you about the Dorwin Pencil Co. A while ago you said you had an article from your Web pages about this dart manufacturer & promised to revisit it for DDN. 😊. Otherwise, keep on doin' what you're doin'. Thanks again. Best wishes.

Great news for Brian. I will be including an article about DORWIN darts in the December issue.

NEWS OF THE WORLD SNIPPET AND A CELEBRATION CANCELLED

The following news published in 1949 was made available to me by someone to whom I am thankful but, unfortunately, I have lost his/her name! The following report was culled from a Sussex newspaper. It was titled 'BEATEN BY WINNER.'

DES COLES, Sussex darts champion from the Dragoon Hotel, Worthing, was beaten in the quarter-finals of the News of the World championship of England and Wales (London Division) at Shoreditch on Friday.

He lost to an experienced championship player, J.Boyce, of Southgate,, who went on to win the divisional final, and thus qualify for the grand finals at Wembley on April 9.



Coles reached the last 16 stage this season without dropping a "leg," but on Friday he went out by 2-0 – because of Boyce's remarkable finishing powers. He needed only one dart for both his winning doubles.

Des Coles might well have taken some solace later when he learnt that the player that Boyce (pictured left) went to the Grand Finals at Empire Hall, Wembley on 9th April and won the title, beating the Eastern Counties Divisional champion Stan Outten 2-1.

In the same darts report from Sussex at the time, was the non-*News of the World* news that

...I hear that the Downlands Hotel darts team had a bad shock recently. They were all prepared to receive the championship cup of the Lancing Invitation League, for the position was that even if they lost their last two games by more than 5-4, they would still be at the top of the table.

They lost their last two games 6-3, 6-3, and the Balltree, by winning handsomely in their last two, pipped the Downlands on the title post. A celebration by Downlands had to be postponed at the last minute!

MY RESEARCH IS SPONSORED BY



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