

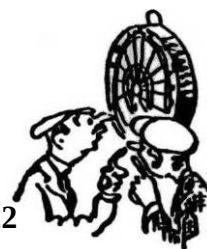
DARTS HISTORY

(aka *Dr. Darts' Newsletter*)

Issue 150

www.patrickchaplin.com

September 2022



150th ISSUE!

Can you believe it? I can't. *DDN/Darts History* has reached another milestone, one hundred and fifty issues in which I continue to reveal aspects of darts history much of which has never appeared on the 'net unless via my website www.patrickchaplin.com. I have tried to make *DDN/DH* exclusive to subscribers, those who are genuinely interested in the history of the greatest sport on the planet.



I sincerely thank those of you who have been with me since the beginning, those thousands who have joined along the way and to those who have 'spread the word' since February 2010 (when the first issue was published) which enabled *DDN/DH* to today have subscribers in more than **120** countries.

Right from Day One *DDN/DH* and my general global research has been supported by the WINMAU Dartboard Company for which I will be eternally thankful. And for this special 150th edition they have chosen a set of **Joe Cullen Signature Edition 21g darts AND a BLADE 6 dartboard**, as a fitting prize that one lucky reader will win in an easy-to-enter competition featured at the end of this special issue.

Even before the publication of Issue 150, I have received congratulatory messages from around the world. From the UK, Dr. Eddie Norman, such a supporter of my work from the start, sent a card sending me

'Many Congratulations on reaching the 150th Edition of 'History – Dr. Darts News'. Wishing 'History' every success for the future. Kindest Regards.'

And from Dubai:

Dr. Darts. Wishing History/DDN a very happy 150th Birthday on September 1st. Thank you for all your hard work you put into producing such a magnificent darts history magazine. With Best Wishes, Ben Sheppard and Friends in Dubai.

And from David J. Mason comes the message

Dear Patrick. Thank you for your August edition of Darts News (History). It was a great edition as always and I really appreciate you sending me the magazine each month. I was talking to Eddie Norman recently on his Diamond Road travels and he mentioned September will be the 150th edition of your magazine. May I offer congratulations to you and look forward to edition 200. Kindest Regards, David J. Mason (Darts Europe)

Over the last twelve years, it is clear that DDN/DH readers maintain a place in their hearts for the late-lamented *News of the World* Individual Darts tournament. So, this celebratory issue will include not one but *three* articles focussing on that competition, starting with an enquiry which does not relate to a known champion but a man who loved his darts and made his family proud.

NEWS OF THE WORLD – 1968 – 'ONE DART AWAY'



Earlier this year, Beverley Avery wrote

Hello Patrick. I am hoping you can help me.

My father John James Henderson [pictured left, second from the right in his dart winning days] passed away peacefully at home on Thursday 21st April. We are busy sorting his final journey out.

My uncle told me my dad played at Newcastle in some [darts] tournament to go to London. My dad didn't get to the finals. Apparently, he was one dart away. He did win the game in Newcastle 1968. Then he had to go to Tynemouth to play the last game. It was there he was one dart away.

I am trying to find out any written information that I can. Is there something that you can maybe help with please?

I replied

Hello Beverley. My condolences to you and your family for the loss of your dad. As regards your question, I can tell you that your dad played in the News of the World North of England

Divisional final which was held at the Plaza Ballroom, Tynemouth, North Shields on Thursday 13th March 1969 (not 1968 as you stated).

According to the programme for that match your dad had won his way to the Divisional finals by winning the 'Newcastle-on-Tyne' Area final. (I guess it should have been 'Newcastle-upon-Tyne but the newspaper spelt it as 'on'.)

As you may already know, your dad played out of the Nags Head Newcastle. To make the Divisional Final was a great achievement. He would have started his campaign by playing at least one 'house' final from which the winners would go on to the Area final.

Fortunately, the copy of the News of the World North of the England Divisional programme I have in my archive shows that, in the first round, your dad played against Bill Tilson, the Sunderland Area champion who played out of the Elmfield Social Club, Hebburn. But, sadly, Tilson beat your dad 2-0 (the games were always 'best of three') and went out of the contest in that first round. However, you and your family should be very proud of your dad making it as far as he did. (Many hundreds would have fallen along the way and never reached that far.)

If your dad had won that night, he would have gone on to the Grand Finals of the News of the World Individual which were held in London at the famous Alexandra Palace.

The other place you might like to check is in the local newspaper(s) which sometimes (but not always) covered the Divisional finals. Your local library would be able to help you.

I trust this information is of use to you and, in small way, assists you to 'sort his final journey'.

So, effectively, John James Henderson had not been 'one dart away' from Ally Pally but 'one round away'. Still, something to be very proud of.

Bev replied to my information as follows:

Hello Patrick. Thank you so, so much.

Yes, my dad played for the Nags Head pub. His mam and dad were the landlords for that bar. I didn't know any of this until yesterday. I know he was a good darts player though as he played for the Peacock pub team and also the Empire clubs' team.

I will check the local 'pink papers' (sports results papers) in archives to see if I can find anything written and printed so I can get a copy. Once again thank you for taking the time to reply. Kind regards, Bev.

A few days later Bev reported back to me

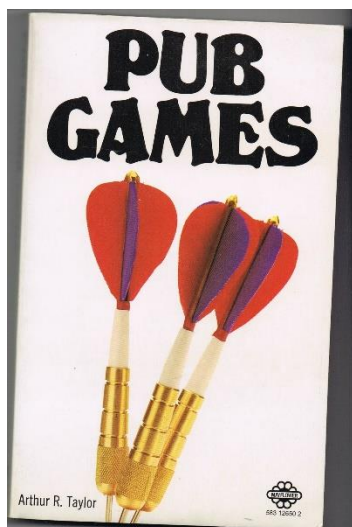
I've spent the morning at the city library in Newcastle. There's absolutely nothing on their archives. They've searched, my dad's name, the name of the tournament, the date, the winner. Still nothing. But I will just reword your email and get that printed off so we can put it against the photos of him [at the funeral]. [In the photo on the previous page] That's my Mam and dad in the middle. I'm unsure who the elderly people are either side.

Bev has illustrated how difficult it can be to obtain information about ‘local’ darts matches. So, clearly, I was very happy to help Bev looking for information about her dad’s adventure in to the *News of the World* and I am sure that darts was a welcome addition to family discussions after the funeral.

ARTHUR R. TAYLOR – A PERSONAL TRIBUTE

I lost a great friend on 22nd July. *The pub games expert* Arthur R. Taylor.

Back in the mid-1980s when I first decided to research darts, I looked around for books about pub games and found only two. One by Timothy Finn *Pub Games of England* (1975) (an updated version of his *The Watney Book of Pub Games* (1966)), the other, *Pub Games* (1976) by Arthur R. Taylor.



Having obtained and read both of Finn’s books, I set my sights on Arthur’s book which had been out of print for some time. (No Abebooks back then.) On 20th January 1988 I wrote to Grafton Books asking for Arthur’s address and was informed that the only known address was ‘c/o Granada TV, Manchester’.

On 2nd February 1988 our friendship began. Arthur, a Producer and Director at Granada TV wrote

“I’ve enclosed a copy of the book [see left]: I’m not sure if it will help much, since darts has come on a lot on TV since it was written: I’m sure better research than mine must have been done over the last decade...”

I’d love to know how you get on – please let me know when your book is out, who publishes it etc... If you need to contact me again, you can write direct.”

Arthur’s book was in fact extremely helpful. We remained in contact, Arthur living in Shaw, Lancashire and me in deepest Essex, until a few months before his death.

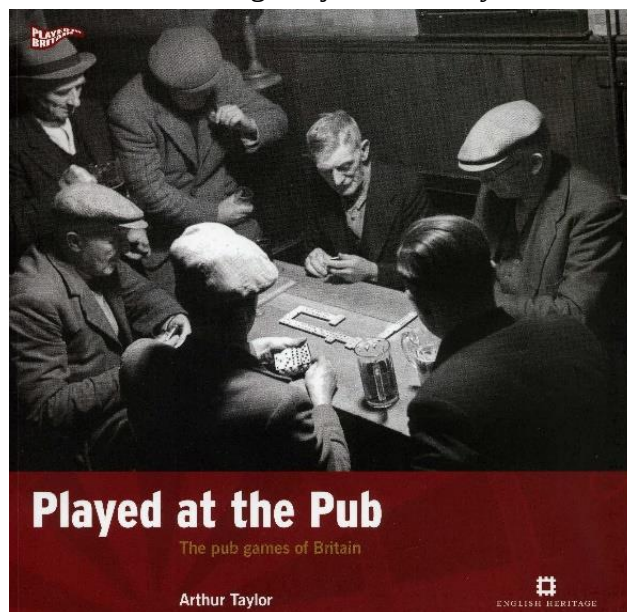
Over the years we would exchange information and theories about many, many pub games; too many to list but, clearly covering darts and Arthur’s personal favourite skittles, and all its variations. In 1991 Arthur invited me to review the darts chapter of his then forthcoming *The Guinness Book of Traditional Pub Games* (Enfield: Guinness Publishing 1992).

What a privilege.

After over twenty years of letters, emails and telephone conversations, Arthur and I met face-to-face for the first time at the launch of his, later award-winning, major work *Played at the Pub – The pub games of Britain* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2009) which was held at the *Freemasons Arms*, Hampstead in London. What a pleasure that was.

In 2012, when a member of the Pub History Society (PHS) of which I was the Chairman, Arthur contributed an article to the Autumn issue of the *PHS Newsletter*, titled *Gnurdling, Leathers and Toads*, being a response to my earlier piece *Gnurdling and Signage* which had appeared in the Summer PHS Newsletter.

The only other time Arthur and I actually met was when we shared the stage at the Gallery in Cowcross Street, Farringdon, presenting *Trebles and Floorers – the real London Games, darts and skittles* hosted by the series editor Simon Inglis, as part of the ‘Played in Britain’ celebrations before the 2012 Olympics. The photograph at the top of the previous page shows Arthur and I enjoying a well-deserved drink afterwards.



One of the last emails I received from Arthur was to inform me that he had been unable to place his latest book, titled *Skittles and Beer*, with an (unnamed) academic publisher. He told me:



‘[They] seem very dull folk. The lady in charge somewhat sniffily said she could look at a straightforward academic history of skittles - but my book concentrated too much on present practice and atmosphere. Ho hum.’

I do hope that his family take up the cudgel and press for *Skittles and Beers* to reach the general public in Arthur’s memory. (The image, left, shows skittles set up at the *Freemasons Arms* 2009.)

On the future of pub games, speaking to me on the phone during the pandemic in December 2020 Arthur said

“My immediate worry about the pandemic is that it might still have a long way to run. The 1918 outbreak lasted two years.... My favourite pub has reopened, but I can't raise the enthusiasm to go. You have to sign in, stay apart and sit at a table, drinks brought by the

barmaid wearing a plastic mask. No question about the dartboard or the football table. Not at all an attractive proposition.

As to the long-term effect on pub games - I think games will take a massive hit. (A lot more pubs might go too.) Skittles in the West Country will get by - London skittles will vanish. Maybe those amiable fun-in-the-summer games like bat and trap and Aunt Sally, will still be there. Darts and dominoes and cards will still be played by a few ancients, but young people will not be interested - they will be glued to their tablets or mobiles.

In my worst moments, I wonder whether we might not end up like the bars of Northern France - a handful of these estaminets have consciously gone back in time and re-discovered old games. Enjoyable, but a bit like a living museum with beer."

So now, I will have no more discussions with my friend Arthur about darts, skittles or even 'Sticky 13s', 'Fly Loo' or 'Games within the tables'.

I miss him already.

[Bearing in mind Arthur's words about the effect of Covid on pubs, what has happened in your village, town or city? Let me know. Write to me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.]

NEWS OF THE WORLD – SERVICES BEING AWARDED

Subscriber Chris Lovell writes

Hi Patrick. Thought you would be interested in seeing this Certificate from 1937-8 Awarded for Services to the News of the World London area. [See below, left.]

I presume it must have been some Area organiser or similar and not a player. Would you happen to be able to shed any light on the named individual? All the Best, Chris.

I replied to Chris saying that I agreed with him that 'C. W. Harris' must have been an

organiser for the NoW, even an Area Organiser, or possibly a member of the organising committee of the National Darts Association (NDA). The NDA organised the competition for the *News of the World* pre-war. I also mentioned to Chris that had 'C. W. Harris' been involved with a pub or a specific house round of the tournament, the pub name would have been included in the text on the certificate.

Interestingly, Chris pointed out that the original tube the certificate came in was date stamped either 1940 or 1942. With the certificate being dated 1937-38 this would suggest an understandable delay in posting due to the War.



Can any DDN/DH readers help to add more to this story? Who was 'C. W. Harris' and why did the *News of the World* 'gratefully acknowledge' his efforts. If so, please contact me via email at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

WAS THE NEWS OF THE WORLD ALWAYS 501?

Mark V. writes from San Diego:

Hello Patrick! Quick question. Was the News of the World championship always best of three, 501? I have a dart friend saying that it was 301 at some point. But I think he's confusing NOTW with the North American Open.

I replied:

Hello Mark. I can confirm that 501 best of three was always played in the NoW Divisional Finals pre-war. (As you know there wasn't any 'national' tournament pre-war.) However, your friend is sort of right as the organisers of the NoW allowed 'local rules' to be allowed up to the Area finals. After that it was best of three in the Divisional finals. [See extract from the London and the South of England championship programme 1938-1939, right.]



'Local rules' usually referred to the board (for example the Yorkshire Board) or the length of the 'hockey' (as it was called back then) or other such local changes. Talking of your friend's mention of 301, a friend of mine has discovered that pre-war, the 1937 Wales Area final was played best of three, 301. Presumably the 'standard' at the time in Wales. However, the winner had to play best of three 501 in the Divisional final.

SPRING DARTS

Robin Coggins writes:

Hi, I have a set of spring made darts very old I believe the set I have were either made by a German soldier or a British prisoner of war what makes me think this the original cardboard flights have German writing on the flights. Many thanks. Robin.

I told Robin that they certainly looked 'homemade' but on the other hand they could have been made 'to order' in someone's shed (like the famous Schofield darts which started life in that



way). I pointed out to the Perranporth Victory Spring darts produced in Cornwall after the Second World War were something that looked very similar.

Indeed, there is an article about the Perranporth darts on my website which I recommend to Robin or indeed anyone interested in unusual darts to check out:

<https://patrickchaplin.com/?s=Perranporth>.

150th ISSUE - YOUR CHANCE TO WIN!

To be in with a chance of winning a set of Joe Cullen Signature Edition 21g darts, AND a BLADE 6 dartboard, courtesy of WINMAU, please answer this question:

Which annual darts competition held in the UK, sponsored by Worthington's brewery, and first run in 2014, is based on the format of the News of the World? Winners have included Gerwyn Price (2015), Jonny Clayton (2016) and Ryan Searle (2018).

When you have your answer, email it to me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com ensuring that you include (a) your name and (b) the capital letter that is featured in the subject line of the covering email accompanying this issue. The closing date for receipt of entries is noon 1st OCTOBER 2022.



GOOD LUCK!

(The lucky winner will be notified by mid-October.)

MY RESEARCH IS SPONSORED BY

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