

DARTS HISTORY

(aka Dr. Darts' Newsletter)

Issue 156

www.patrickchaplin.com

March 2023



JAMIE CAVEN IN VANUATU

Hi everyone. Following my article in #155 I was thrilled to receive this message from Jamie Caven (second from the left, below) who wrote:



Nice read as always!

Good to see the section on the South Pacific comp as I went to Vanuatu at end of November/ beginning of December to give the national team some coaching and a couple of exhibitions during a trip of Oz!!

So I went with my wife, Debbie, to Sydney in late November with a week in Vanuatu scheduled as part of the tour.

The drill was that they wanted a couple of days of training and two exhibitions. The hospitality was amazing and we were put up in Warwick Le Lagon which is a beautiful resort and one we will never forget.

On the Monday and Tuesday I met the players and gave them some tips to follow to help enhance their game, including their throw videoed in slow motion to see the breakdown and to iron out any imperfections. At the end of the week I did two nights of exhibition which went well and as I say some memories that will fondly be stored. It was nice to see that Phil Taylor had visited a few years beforehand and there was a shirt of the Power in a couple of the bars across the island.

Thanks Jamie. Feel free to drop me a note anytime relating to your future globe-tripping.

EL AMRI – FOLLOW-UP

After I raised the issue of Moroccan darts players in issue 154 (January 2023) Martin R. emailed me to add some information about El Amri. He wrote:

Good afternoon Patrick,



I hope this email finds you well. I am not playing darts for that long, it could be like for 6-7 years for now, but I was always a bit more interested in e-darts than steel tips, as this phenomena still prevails in Czechia a lot.

All I know about El Amri, he is 39 years old and comes from Fes. Unfortunately, I do not have any information about how he got to Germany, probably as a war refugee? Hard to say or even imagine. Anyway, due to one of his interviews, he is a waiter and a very good

friend of Nico Kurz, because they are also teammates.

Even though his big dream is to win a Tour Card and to play on a big stage, he is mostly known for his achievements in electronic darts - 2019 European Champion, won with Germany, the World Cup in Las Vegas in the same year and many others.

Anyway, Sapphire Darts is rather a fashion brand, it is not a dart producer. El Amri himself uses Evo Darts. There are a couple of links that could help you to get some info. Unfortunately, it is in German, so you will probably have to use some translator.

<https://sapphiredarts.de/pages/el-abbas-el-amri>

<https://www.wetterauer-zeitung.de/sport/lokalsport/europameister-abbas-amri-sein-grosser-traum-13850257.html>

Sending regards,

Martin Redr

PAXMAN PRECISION DARTS

For some years (Yes. *Years.*) I have tried to pull together information about Paxman Precision Darts, especially in response to an enquiry from Neil Westgate more than three years ago.

Neil had sent me this photo of his father's Paxman 'Star' darts and told me "I'm now pretty sure that the darts and case are not meant to go together and that our only clue was the Paxman case."

When I started looking into Paxman Precision Darts the only clues I had was an advertisement that appeared in *Darts World* August 1974 (see on next page) and subsequent year which identified the company's address and indicated Paxman's products were of top quality.



Eddie Norman, who has been in the darts business for more years than any of us has probably lived, recalled that the company was set up and owned by Colin and Sandra Paxman. Eddie told me, "I was in business with them for many years until they retired.



PAXMAN
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We have now introduced
ten new designs to our
range of
**TUNGSTEN ALLOY
DARTS**
Weights from 20-40 grams
Send for our leaflet
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CHESHUNT, HERTS.**
WALTHAM CROSS 37425
32809

In 1975 Colin and Sandra sponsored Kim Brown and Peter Lally, through Eddie Norman, both of whom were champions in the famous West of England Team. Eddie also told me that Tony Ridler was also sponsored by Paxman but, to date I can find no record of that. Eddie sponsored all three at that time.

Kim Brown had won the Sweden Open in 1973, played on the World Amateur Individual Darts Championships on three occasions, whilst Peter Lally played for Ireland.

Paxman advertised 'Superb Tungsten Alloy Darts' made to Kim and Peter's own designs 'each weighing 26 gms.

approx.'

Many years later, Paxman were taken over by Harrows but Colin and Sandra's son Geoff is still part of the company.

However, this is as far as I know at the moment but I am hoping to contact Geoff at some stage in the future in order that I may complete the history of Paxman Precision Darts.

I would very much like to hear from any readers who remember or even played with Paxman Darts so like I can build up a better picture of this company. If you can help, please contact me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com. I am also looking for information about the STAR range.



PAXMAN PRECISION DARTS
5 FIELDINGS ROAD,
CHESHUNT, HERTS.
*GET OFF TO A GOOD START
WITH PAXMAN TUNGSTEN ALLOY DARTS.
20 POPULAR MODELS FROM 18 to 40 grams.*
SEE OUR RANGE AT YOUR LOCAL STOCKIST OR WRITE FOR OUR
ILLUSTRATED LEAFLET AND YOUR NEAREST STOCKISTS ADDRESS,
TRADE ENQUIRIES WELCOME
Telephone Waltham Cross 37425

'OCKEY

From the US, Jerry Feather writes

Another great issue Patrick! On the "ockey". I always thought it was like the Thames River where the H was silent. Just opinion from mid 70's

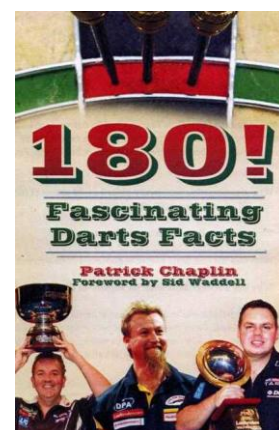
I never thought of that!

“DENIS JUST MISSES NINE-DART WONDER”

It doesn't seem long ago that we were all wondering about the achievement of hitting a nine-darter: how many years and then how many months we had to wait to hear of a player hitting another one.

Back in 2012, in my book *180! – Fascinating Darts Facts* (Stroud: The History Press) (Still available) I recorded that between November 1996 and March 2012, Phil ‘The Power’ Taylor had scored no less than sixteen nine-darters in major tournaments and, of course, many, many more in practice.

But, more than a decade on, nine-darters are commonplace and indeed *expected* by the fans; fans who are disappointed if one isn't achieved in their presence. No money is awarded for achieving ‘Nirvana’ anymore. We have come a long, long way since 1984 when John Lowe hit the first televised nine-darter and pocketed £102,000!



Back in 1974, readers of the then newly-published *Darts World* were still dreaming of a nine-darter but in August that month the Darts North West section of the magazine announced that ‘Denis just misses nine-dart wonder’. The reporter wrote:

They're still talking about that ten-dart finish by Lancashire County player Denis Welsby... and probably will be for a long time to come.

Denis just missed the least-possible dart finish for 501 in the News of the World house championship at the Three Crowns, Little Lever.

In his game with Jim Rhodes (county association vice-chairman and no mean player himself) Denis scored 140, 180, 131, bull. Jim commented:

“We think that this was the best darts performance we have ever watched.”

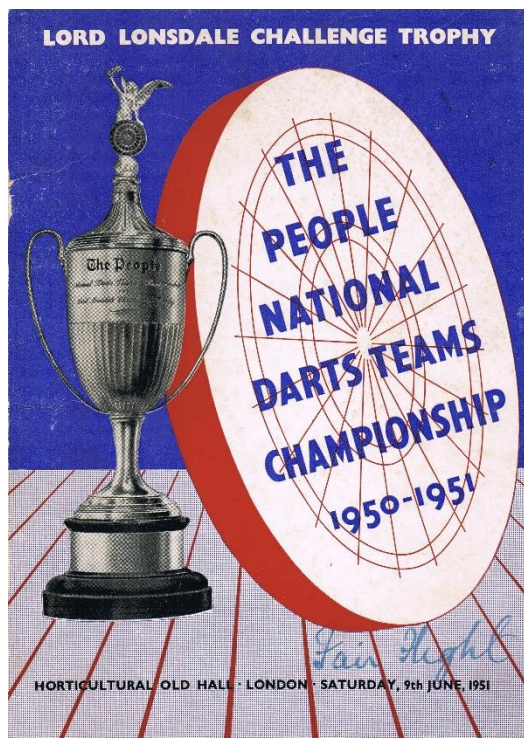
Denis was to receive a set of *News of the World* Silver Darts for his achievement. Sadly, his ten-darter did not appear to help Denis to win through to the next round.

But let us not take anything away from Denis's achievement. Hitting a ten-dart 501 was an achievement back in those days (and indeed today) when (I guess) he was playing with cumbersome brass darts and feathers.

Back then *Darts World* readers would have to wait only to 1976 when the very first nine-darter was recorded. On Monday 18th October that year, Albert Gamble, a former Cheshire County player, hit the perfect game at the *Finger Post* in Stockport. Albert received nothing for his achievement except congratulations from his colleagues. In the following January the BDO was offering £50,000 up for grabs for a nine-darter in the British Open!

Sadly, Albert's nine-darter was not accepted by the *Guinness Book of Records* when he claimed his 'first' as they declared "Your records are too fragmented."

THE TOAST OF TOWCESTER



The *People* Sunday newspaper launched its National Darts Teams Championship competition in 1938. It only ran for one year before Hitler intervened. Recommencing in 1948, the championship, for the prestigious Lord Lonsdale Challenge Trophy, went from strength to strength. In this article, I look at a team from Northamptonshire who became 'The Toast of Towcester.'

It was a Canadian friend of mine, John Thornton, who originally set me on the trail to find the 'Wheatsheaf 'A'' darts team from Towcester back in 2006. We had been exchanging e-mails about darts in general when John wrote "I do remember a team from Towcester in the early 1950s. They were beaten in the final of a team championship. These fellows would tour around the pubs doing the Joe Hitchcock thing; exhibitions with nails and electrician's screwdrivers."

A letter placed by me in the local *Towcester Post* brought forth a good deal of information about the team who were still fondly remembered by many in the Towcester area. The season was 1950/51 and the "Wheatsheaf" "A" had become Midlands Counties Champions at their first attempt, defeating the 1950 Midlands winners, "The Foaming Quart", Norton Green, in the Area final. The "Wheatsheaf" had played impressively since the first round, only dropping three legs of darts on their way to the national final.

The competition programme reveals that much of the credit for the success of the team went to team member Arthur Bound who scored four of the eight game shots in the County and Area matches – 'finishing one game on 92'. Game stats showed that the eight-man team required 20.6 throws for each leg in the series, scoring an average of 48.5 per throw whilst 'a finish of 60 or below took an average of 2.6 throws.' Also, in the run up to the Grand Finals at the Horticultural Old Hall, London, "Wheatsheaf" captain George Buckland 'made seven scores of 100 to 140.'

The team that travelled down to London for the final consisted of George Buckland (captain), Bob Bruce, Arthur Bound, Bill Berry, Frank Salmons, Stanley Britton, Bert Tapp and Cyril Buckland. Reserves for the day were Herbert Wetherell, William Brice, William Collins and William Coles. The Team Secretary, and landlord of the "Wheatsheaf", was Harry Furness, described by the *Northampton Mercury and Herald* as an 'ex-Coldstream Guardsman who weighs 20-stone and lost a leg in the 1914-18 war.'



Wheatshaeaf Darts Team, 1951 with the Lord Lonsdale cup. Back row - Bill Berry, Martin Costello, Reg Tarry. Middle row - Bob Bruce, Frank Salmons, Bill Brice, Bert Tapp, Cyril Buckland, _____, Harry Furness. Front row - Stanley Briton, Harry Collins, George Buckland.

On the morning of 9th June 1951, the teams that had qualified for the Grand Final arrived in London where they were met at the railway station by representatives of *The People* and then conducted to the Imperial Hotel. After a 'Celebration Luncheon' at the hotel the teams were taken on a short trip through the western outskirts of London, which took in a quick visit to London Airport, and then on to 'Tea' at 4 p.m. Slater's Restaurant in Kensington High Street; leaving at 5 p.m. for the venue.

Battle commenced on the hockey at 6.20 p.m., the format being best-of-three legs, 1001-up. The "Wheatshaeaf" team were on fine form and fought through to the final by defeating the "Stag and Pheasant" (Stamford, Lincs), the Eastern Counties Area Champions 2-0 and the "Newent Comrades Club "A"" (Western Counties Area Champions), 2-1. Meanwhile, in the other half of the draw, the strongly fancied team representing the "Black Horse", Ilford, Essex, (North Home Counties Area Champions), captained by the 1936/37 *News of the World* London and Home Counties champion Stan Outten, progressed to the last two.

The "Wheatshaeaf" led the "Black Horse" throughout most of the first leg of the final but, with them left wanting 76, the "Black Horse" captain, Stan Outten stepped up to the hockey and shot out on 60 (20, 20, double 10). In the second leg, the "Wheatshaeaf" trailed slightly despite a 138 from Arthur Bound. In a reversal of the first leg, it was the "Wheatshaeaf" that

snatched the second leg from under the noses of the “Black Horse”, with Stanley Britton shooting out on double 8 as the “Black Horse” sat waiting on double 2.

In the decider, both teams ‘went all out’ for the win. Bound and Tapp both hit scores of 100 and Bruce 96, but the “Black Horse” replied and a score of 111 left the Ilford side on 6 and the “Wheatsheaf” requiring 32. The “Wheatsheaf” team could only wait and hope that the “Black Horse” would miss double 3. The player did but then he hit single one, double one, to secure the Lord Lonsdale trophy for the Essex side.

Despite losing, the weekend was not over for the teams. On the morning of Sunday 10th June the players left the Imperial Hotel and were taken to Westminster Pier where they all boarded a launch for a trip (and luncheon) on The Thames. After lunch they disembarked for a visit to the South Bank Exhibition (part of the Festival of Britain), teams then later leaving for their points of departure ‘under their own arrangements.’

From the photograph of the team (above), it looked as though they had a great weekend. Exactly how many of them actually made it to the Exhibition is unrecorded.

Of their own ‘exhibitions’ little is known, although back in 2006 a number of local residents of Towcester recalled the “Wheatsheaf” captain George Buckland touring pubs in Northamptonshire with his brother Cyril taking on the best the area could offer and beating most of them either with darts or six-inch nails. Sadly, apart from John Thornton’s memory, I was unable to find any other evidence of the team throwing electrician’s screwdrivers.

Like *The People* National Darts Teams Championship, I suspect that most of the team are no longer with us.

The “Wheatsheaf” closed many years ago and is now a private house. But all of these memories remind us of the halcyon days of darts, when teams played in such competitions for the pure enjoyment of taking part, of representing their pub and their community and hopefully, by winning, bringing some kudos to their area and a brief taste of fame for themselves.

Over and above this, the material rewards for the “Wheatsheaf” “A” was a Runners Up Cup for the team, each team member (including reserves) receiving a Ronson lighter ‘mounted with the Championship Grand Finals medallion.’

[In the next issue, with the assistance of reader and friend Mick Simpson, I will be looking into the very first *The People* National Darts Teams Championship. Very little has been

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For the 1951-1952 Championship

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Special Challenge Cup and Prizes for the best Ladies' Team.
Challenge Cup for the Works or Factory Team recording the best over-all performance.

Make the first move now to put the Lonsdale Trophy in your team's Headquarters next season. Fill in and post the Form below, or write to:—

The Manager,
National Darts Teams Championship,
"The People,"
191, Fleet Street,
London, E.C.4.



RULIS AND ENTRY FORMS WILL THEN BE SENT TO YOU IMMEDIATELY THESE ARE READY.

-----CUT HERE-----

Please send me advance details of the National Darts Teams Championship 1951-1952 immediately these are available.

NAME

ADDRESS

.....

.....

recorded about the match in which the final was played out between the team of the *Hercules*, from Mansell Street, Aldgate, London and the *King Harold* pub of Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire.]

THE 'SECRET' NO-SOAK BOARD

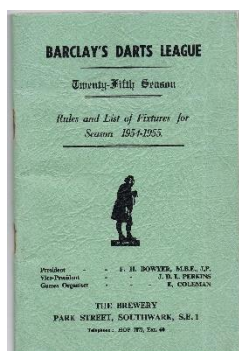
I have received an enquiry relating to the **BRINOR DRY BOARD**.

I have found an article in an early *Darts World* and will provide as much information as that does in the forthcoming April issue. Enough to say at this stage that it was 'a revolutionary concept in the manufacture of wooden dartboards' which 'does not require soaking and can be safely stored without any further attention for twelve months or more.'

In the meantime, I would be grateful if any readers can provide an image of the Brinor Board or any advertising material that they may have collected.

Darts World were told that the inventors were travelling to Gibraltar in January 1976 with members of their Oxford team 'on their annual trip' and intended to present a board to their hosts. So far, I am unable to find any further reports about the Brinor Dry Board. Any ideas? Please contact me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

BARCLAY'S DARTS LEAGUE



I am sure that some of you have read my book *Darts in England 1900-39* and discovered that the first brewery in London to properly organise darts leagues in the capital was Barclay's.

I am very thankful to Bob Foster who obtained this 25th Season Rules and list of Fixtures for 1954-55 for me on line. I have already learned that the *Regent Tavern* at Bow won the league in both the inaugural year 1924/25 and again in 1925/26 and, not surprisingly, the League was 'cancelled' in 1939/40, returning in 1946 as soon as Peace returned. Such booklets show a light on the leagues, information that might never be revealed.

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