

DARTS HISTORY

(aka *Dr. Darts' Newsletter*)

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THE END OF THE JINX!

That was the title of a short article in *Darts World* in June 1976 when Irishman Shay O'Brien brought the five-year 'Jinx' to an end at the *News of the World* finals at Alexandra Palace on Saturday 8th May. What was 'The Jinx'?

Having been awarded a 'Bye' in the first round, Shay O'Brien, the Eire Divisional Champion, (pictured on the left of the photo right, (Image © *News of the World*. Used with permission.), met Billy Lennard, the Lancashire & Cheshire Divisional Champion, in the quarterfinals.



During that match, Shay registered the first maximum 180 seen in the *News of the World* Grand Final for *five* years. Thus the 'jinx,' or 'the drought of 180s', came to an end. However, hitting a 180 and adding a score of 140 in the second leg, could not save Shay from a 2-0 defeat at the hands of Billy Lennard.



But the five-year jinx was truly forgotten when both Tony Money, the United States Darts Association representative (having qualified as the 1976 USA Open Champion) (pictured, left. Image © *News of the World*. Used with permission), hit a maximum during his quarterfinal tussle with George Champion.

Although that maximum helped Tony win the second leg, it did not help him as George Champion beat him 2-1.

The third maximum of the tournament was hit by Wales' Leighton Rees who made short work of George Champion in the semi-finals, securing a 2-0 win; the second leg featuring the third 180 of

the Finals and a 16-dart finish.

Before the beginning of the Final, Billy Lennard was one of three joint favourites to lift the trophy; the others being Wales' Leighton Rees and Peter Chapman (London and Home Counties Division champion).

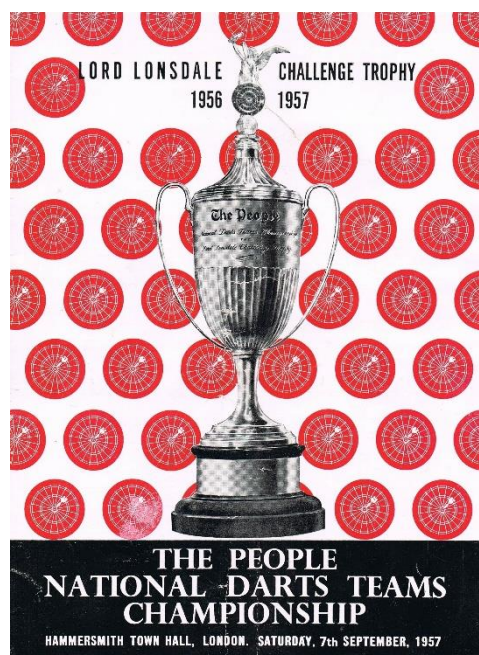
One of those three, Peter Chapman, lost 2-0 to George Champion, the Western Counties champion, in the First Round. However, the other two favourites, Billy Lennard, and Leighton Rees, made it to the last two where Billy beat Leighton 2-0.

THE ROYAL MARINE PUB, TAUNTON – FINALISTS IN THE LORD LONSDALE

Last month's issue was very well received, as it revealed what really happened to the enormous *People* Lord Lonsdale National Teams Championship trophy. This month I return to *The People* and to a team who made the Finals in London but, unfortunately, failed to lift the title.

I am grateful to darts expert and fanatic, Chris Lovell who was interviewed by and contributed to his local newspaper about the nearly winners, runner ups, the *Royal Marine* in the competition in the 1956-57 season.

Chris said that all eyes in Taunton, Somerset, had been fixed on a local pub as its darts team competed in the final of a national competition more than 60 years ago. The darts team from the *Royal Marine* pub - which used to be in East Reach - had an amazing run to the final of the Lord Lonsdale Challenge Trophy in 1956-57. They competed for the handsome 3ft 3in solid silver cup in September 1957.



The finals of 1957 were held in London at the Hammersmith Town Hall on Saturday 7th September and the *Royal Marine* had qualified to be there by first winning the Somersetshire County section, beating the *Lion & Lamb*, Bath, 2-1 in the semi-final and then overcoming the *Royal Oak*, Crewkerne, 2-1 in the final.

They then moved on to the Western Counties Area. There they first drew the *Artillery Inn*, Exeter in the quarter-final and won 2-1. Next came the North Portland Workingman's Club, Portland which the *Royal Marine* despatched 2-1. In the final *Marine* found them faced with the *Benett Arms*, Tisbury, who they beat 2-0. London was calling!

The 1956/57 programme featured information about each team and about the *Royal Marine*, Taunton, was written:

The Marines take the stage with all flags flying. They have won a cup of some kind every year for the last seven years. And won their local league knock-out championship in three successive years; runners up this year. So now let's peek at their National performances. Average scoring rate: 52.68 per throw. Throws needed to win a game: 19. Scores of 100 or higher: 8. (G. HONEYWILL scored six of these). Game shots: 8 (E. MADDOCK (3), J. GRIFFITHS (2), W. WALBYOFF (2), G. HONEYWILL (1). One point to remember: that

scoring rate of 52.68 rose to 57.2 in their County Finals but crashed to 48.7 in the Area games.

The *Royal Marine* team, detailed in the programme notes 'Sidelines on the Teams,' were:

ERNIE MADDOCK (Captain). Two detectives set these West Country aces on the doubles trail, Detective Constables GERRY HONEYWILL and STANLEY CHIFFERS, playing at Nos. 1 and 2. Next to them sits skipper ERNIE MADDOCK, who makes sweets, and if he sits on his own bullseyes instead of scoring them, there is another detective, Detective Constable WALLY WALBYOFF at hand to keep order. ERNIE WOOD, No. 5, is team secretary and also runs the Supporters Club for Somerset Cricket Club. HARRY MASON supervises heating engineering; DICK GRIFFITHS drives a taxi and GEO. WAYGOOD drives a railway van.

Reserves? Yes, four stalwarts in plumber JIM (forgotten his darts) FUDGE; van driver HAROLD (Tiny) HURFORD; baker JACK GRIFFITHS and taxi driver EDGAR GRIFFITHS.

In the quarter-finals (the first round) the *Marine* was drawn against the R.N.V.R. Club 'C' and clearly, they won through but, sadly, the actual semi-final result is currently lost to history. Certainly there was some darting talent in the *Marine* team as they won through to the Final where they met the *Royal Oak* team from Paddington, London W.2. The *Royal Oak* had made it to the Finals having made 'London darts history' that season by winning the Taylor Walker (brewery) 'treble,' of the League Championship, League Knock-out and Champion of Champions Tournament.

Even given the *Royal Oak's* pedigree it may have been the *Marine's* scoring rate that finally let them down. I don't know. (More research needed!) (Can anyone help?) But, whatever the reason, the Tauntonians had to settle for the runners-up position.

Chris Lovell asked of his readers, "I wonder how many local people today recall or have even heard of such a feat. At the time it was, alongside the *News of the World* darts individual championship, the darts tournament to win. Are any of these players around today does anyone recall the moment perhaps your readers may know?"

As far as I am aware, Chris's hard work fell on deaf ears, as no further information came through. I'm now wondering if any *DH* readers can help. If so, please contact me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

MY FIRST SET OF DARTS – MAT COWARD

Mat wrote

Dear Patrick. In September's DH, you asked where we bought our first set of darts. Mine came from a barber's shop in Weston-super-Mare, where I then lived. This was about 1977.

It was a narrow shop, as I recall, shaped a bit like a galley kitchen, and once you'd chosen the darts you fancied, the barber would close the door to reveal a dartboard so you could try out your arrows. You just had to hope that no customers came in at that moment!

I'd love to know if any of your other readers remember this place, and have more details about it.

Can no longer remember the brand; I reckon they were probably 21g. I'd been told I needed a new thing called "tungsten," in place of the little yellow plastic and brass darts [Something like this Mat?] which came with the dartboard my mum had bought me from what people used to call "the book," meaning a type of home shopping catalogue which older readers will remember! They were good arrows, but sadly I had to replace them a few years later after I broke them - trying to break into my own flat, having lost my key after a slightly lively night out...All the best.



DARTS HISTORY AVAILABLE ONLINE

As you are all probably aware, *Darts History* is usually sent only to subscribers who can then forward them to their friends in darts. That way I try to keep out trolls and other irritants. But from last month and with thanks to my sponsor WINMAU, *Darts History* is now becoming a regular feature on winmau.com. So, while you are selecting your latest darts and accessories from their catalogue, *everyone* can catch up with *Darts History*. My thanks to Arlene at WINMAU for facilitating this.

HALEX DARTS DOLLIES - UPDATE

Many of my readers may remember that I published an article about the Halex Darts Dollies in *DDN* # 28, August 2012, with follow-up in # 29 (September 2012) and then uploaded it to my website www.patrickchaplin.com in 2019.

A few months ago one of the Dollies, Sharon Vandenburg (third from the left in this photo) wrote to me via my website as she was not very happy with the way I described the girls and stating 'there was no bending over to show it,' as I seemed to imply.



Their manager, Judy Sharp did confirm that the girls **did not** bend over **deliberately** but only if a dart was accidentally dropped, at which time, picking the dart up might meet with a round of applause.

The Halex Darts Dollies toured all over the UK, with the Embassy tour and, raising money for charity along the way. The amended article can now be seen on my website at <https://patrickchaplin.com/2019/09/15/the-halex-darts-dollies/>.

DARTOID'S DARTS TOURNAMENT IN PARADISE



My good friend Dartoid has asked me to promote what is planned to me a wonderful tournament played in a wonderful place – PARADISE!

For full details and follow-up posts check out

<https://dartoidsworld.net/2023/10/column-636-its-coming-a-dartoids-world-tournament-in-paradise/>

And *please* let me know if you make it!

THE WORLD AMATEUR DARTS CHAMPIONSHIP

Good Morning Patrick. Thank you so much for the brilliant great read of latest Darts History [#163] really enjoyed it, writes James King of the Europe Expats Darts Federation.

One article I found particularly interesting was the World Amateur Darts Championship, you mentioned a write up in Darts History number 120, at your convenience would it please be possible to have a copy.

Loved the photo of Willie Etherington who I met once in London, amazing how you find out darts history I never knew he worked for Trulon Darts and I still have a set of Trulon bullet darts.

We were watching World Darts Grand Prix this week from England on TV and reference was made to the fact that the matches were started on a double and was a unique tournament.

I only mention this as when I lived in UK all our local leagues started on a double and I believe many still do and I thought the darts changing to straight start was for spectators on TV and in fact made the game easier but I might be wrong but noticed Chris Dobey says his local leagues in his area still play double start and he was brought up on double starts

Do any leagues still play double start in UK or have they switched to straight start do you think?

[I then sent a copy of #120 and James King.] Thank you for sending Darts History No. 120 it is, as always, a fantastic read. Absolutely awesome!!!

Reading No. 120, I think Eddie Norman has done so much for darts it is really unbelievable and his darts' footsteps must be across the darting world as one of the most travelled darts organisers ever. His name comes up so often when talking to darts people.

AND FROM CANADA...

John Thornton from London, Ontario writes:

Thanks for the latest edition Patrick. As usual very interesting. Interesting in particular as you mentioned Dave Yeo in the Panama City piece. I knew Dave from years back, played against him and lost. If my old memory serves me, he was from St. Thomas, Ontario.

I cannot recall exactly when I played against Dave Yeo but it had to be in the 80s or 90s. It was a doubles match in one of the Open Tournaments that were popular back then. We travelled around quite frequently all over Ontario. The biggest of these was an annual event in Elliot Lake where it would draw up to 90 teams. We would travel on Friday play Saturday and return home on Sunday. Good times well remembered.

*John Thornton,
London, Ont.*

THE LAUNCH OF CHALKIE

In response to my mention of 'Chalkie,' the electronic darts scorer, in last month's issue brought a response from Marcus Robertson who wrote

Hi Patrick. Very enjoyable to read as ever - it brought back fond memories of starting my own business in 1981 with two PR clients, one was the recently retired cricket commentator John Arlott who had just launched a limited edition of cricket sculptures, and the other was.....Chalkie!!



(Marcus is shown here (on the right) on the night that the late John Gwynne was inducted into the PDC Hall of Fame.) (Image: Lawrence Lustig/PDC. Used with permission.)

Without that I would not have ended up with an agency that majored on Darts at a time many media people were snobbishly dismissive and meant we won the PR account in 1988 for the newly formed trade Group WDC to fight for more TV coverage, which led to Sky and then the breakaway when Olly withdrew, which then later became the PDC and then Barry came in and the rest is history!

I was very lucky that such a small darting acorn led where it did - and it was all so much fun!

Thanks Marcus. Great to hear from you.

T.X. DARTS – CAN YOU HELP?

Michael Paul Glennon from Co Offaly, Ireland, first wrote to me in **April 2020** asking if I knew anything about "Bulls-Eye" Dart Set (pictured on page 7). At that time, I told Michael that I would show them in *DDN/Darts History* as I knew nothing about them. I then promptly forgot. (Put it down to my age.)

But then, in October this year, over three years on, Michael sent me the following polite reminder:

“Dropping in again. Did you ever publish that pic in your newsletter? It came up in my mind again as the owner, my friend Val, passed away recently and left me his father's darts.”

I have asked around but no-one seems to have heard of either the darts or the company name. So, it's over to *Darts History* readers too see if they can help.

I may be wrong but my guess is that T. X. was a short-lived company name which, probably ordered the darts in from a manufacturer in bulk and then boxed them and sold them under their own brand name.



I might be wrong. I am always happy to be proved wrong. Can any of you help me and Michael? If so, please mail me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com. Thanks.

DARTS HISTORY REACHES ARGENTINA!

It seems that nowhere on the planet can escape *Darts History*.



Joachim wrote to me from Argentina asking to subscribe to *DH*. On receiving the latest issue, he replied

Dear Patrick. Thank you so much for your kind reply and enclosing Darts History it was very kind of you. I am trying to build up interest in Darts here in Argentina, albeit very small to start, circulating your magazine will certainly help interest grow.

I was lucky to attend a darts lecture on darts by a British promoter last year who gave me your address. I only found it again recently.

No prizes for who the 'British promoter' was. I replied to Joachim,

“Thank you. I am so pleased that you are trying to build up interest in darts in Argentina and that Darts History may be helping. Please keep me informed. Good luck. by the way, the 'British promoter' was definitely Dr. Eddie Norman. That man gets EVERYWHERE!”

AND FROM THE U.S. - JERRY FEATHER REPORTS FROM LAS VEGAS.

“Hi Patrick. Jerry Lucky here...you may not remember me, [Of course I remember you Jerry] but I certainly remember you!”

Just wanted to let you know that sometime back you did an article about the Flight Club darts pub and I was in awe at the layout and general look of the place. So, imagine my surprise when my daughter said...hey next time when we are in Las Vegas, lets go to the Flight Club in The Palazzo Casino and play some darts! I thought great...having seen your review and photos.

Having just come back (October 6th, 2013), I have to say what a fun experience it was! A bit



*pricy in our books but fun none-the-less. They really have a system that makes you feel special. I love the way their electronics records all the dart play of the various games and takes the mental stress out of the picture. **PLUS** they even give you video replays of the winning shots and we just broke down in laughter watching ourselves being the fool.*

Then, if that wasn't enough, when I got home, there was an email that linked to a web page that was specifically for us! All our photos and "stunning" darts play recorded to rewatch and laugh at yet again. Truly one of the highlights of our...what was it...oh yeah, our 30th visit to Las Vegas!

Thanks for everything you do for the world of darts...your monthly emails are looked forward to in great expectation. All the best,

Thanks Jerry. The image above shows Jerry with his wife Sue and daughter Rachel, enjoying Flight Club in Vegas.

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