

DARTS HISTORY

(formerly *Dr. Darts' Newsletter*)

Issue 180

www.patrickchaplin.com

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ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY!

Can you believe it? I can't. *Darts History* reaches its 180th issue this month!

Borne out of my 1980s in-house newsletter, *Out of the Blue – The Official Bullsheit of the Blue Boar (Maldon) Men's Darts Club* (which also encouraged ladies), *Dr. Darts' Newsletter* was first issued in February 2010. (The photo, below, shows the *Blue Boar* team at around the time I started my research. I am standing directly in front of the dartboard with my arms folded holding my darts.)



DDN was sent to a relatively small number of darts fans and friends to begin with but, within a few years, had subscribers in more than 120 countries, including Australia, New Zealand, Peru, Panama, Gibraltar, Portugal (and the rest of Europe) and the Far East - everywhere. One of the most recent subscribers lives in Aruba.

Although I produce original material relating to darts history every month, the success of *Darts History* (formerly *DDN*) has also been due to the support of my sponsors, the WINMAU Dartboard Company, who have been with me from the start. Also, to my good friend Dr. Eddie Norman whose knowledge and his globe-trotting spreading of the word of darts since the late 1960s has resulted in the expansion of my global audience, to David King (he of Darts501.com (and other darts websites)) and, of course, to my readers many of whom provide positive feedback every month. Thanks to you all.

In recognition of the 180th issue, WINMAU has put up an exceptional prize; a BLADE 6 dartboard bearing the **eight signatures of the quarterfinalists** of the 'remastered' WINMAU World Masters competed for last month. The competition is exclusive to *Darts History* subscribers so please ensure you check the rules for entering. One question remains and that is



“In what year was the very first WINMAU World Masters which was won by England’s John Lowe?”

Was it (a) 1974; (b) 1975 or (c) 1976?

IMPORTANT NOTE: To stand a chance of winning this special prize, put your answer in an email to me making sure that the initial(s) letters shown in the subject line of the email that accompanies this issue, (for example ‘DDN,’ ‘A,’ ‘XX,’ etc.,) is clearly included with your answer. Replies received *without* an initial letter (or letters) will be discounted.

Answers must be received by midnight on Wednesday 16th April 2025. Any received after that time will not count.

My wife/research assistant, Maureen, will then draw the lucky winner out of the hat and the person notified soon thereafter.

GOOD LUCK!

FEEDBACK

Every so often I spend a little time catching up with feedback received from you, my readers, about recent issues.

FEEDBACK #177 xtra

Reading in #177 xtra, the *Darts Kings* special, Rob G. wrote:

Hi Patrick. ...I watched the first episode only last night and it brought so many memories back to playing darts in that era when it was a “working class” game so every darts player felt they had an affinity with the people watching on TV.

It was great to see the game moving on and getting more and more exposure and even people in the pubs and clubs felt part of it and as everything developed it became bigger and bigger.... It needed the input from the “PDC” (as it became) to make it into what it is today and I have no qualms with what has happened.... it has been great for the exposure of the game.

BUT (there always has to be a but) - the grass roots (i.e. the pub game) seems to be disappearing (though it has been happening for a good few years since the 1980’s with closure of so many pubs anyway).

In the “old” days you could walk into a pub and put your name up and there’d be eight or nine players so you knew you had to win to stay on the board which made you a better player. Now you’ll be lucky to find a pub with a dart board .and if you did you’d have to ask for the light to be switched on before you could play because nobody else is actually playing.

Rob makes some important points here. How do you feel about dartboards disappearing from pubs? I’m sure boards have disappeared to a great extent as the culture of pubs changes, with

the increase demand for food and ‘family’ facilities. But is that the picture across the world of darts? Or is the ‘Littler Effect’ reversing that trend to any extent.

Let me know what you think. What is happening in your neck of the woods? You know where to write: patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

A ‘LUKE THE NUKE’ MURAL



Subscriber Tom Cole wrote:

‘Thanks for another informative and entertaining newsletter, Patrick. I loved the celebratory tone of your coverage of the Worlds final and Luke Littler’s success.

His success really has been far-reaching. My dad, George, lives in Peterborough and

recently sent me this photo of a mural dedicated to Luke which appeared in the city in the past week, which I thought you might enjoy seeing. All the best, Tom’

Thanks Tom and particularly thanks to George.

FEEDBACK #178 – THE PIONEERS

Thanks to everyone who provides me with feedback. I try to include it as space allows. Last month Chris Lovell wrote

Another good read Pat. As to the pioneers, I guess, like anything, unless you are into the past history of the game or around at the time, this part of the game is quickly forgotten there can’t be many that turn up to the darts, pay their money, drink their beer, and think where it all began.



But the pioneers shouldn't be forgotten. They are an important part of the darting past and need to be remembered before it is too late. You only need go on to the Darts from the Past [Facebook] to see the knowledge Roger [Nickson] and everyone else there at the start brings to the table.

Talk about 'Table,' who can't but name those 38 players? Every one of them has left their stamp on darting glory. Champions one and All. Never forget the start of modern darts. Thank you all.

[Thanks Chris. I'm doing my best.]

In #178 I featured the photo (above) of the pioneers and asked readers if they could name them all. No one did. That didn't surprise me to be honest as there were at least two or three that I didn't recognise myself!

So, to put the record straight here they are. **Back row:** Moving left to right, the photo shows Leighton Rees (Wales), Terry O'Dea (Australia), Steve Brennan (Northern Ireland), Russell Stewart (Australia), Rick Ney (USA), Alan Evans (Wales), Avtar Gill (Canada), Tony Payne (USA), Jocky Wilson (Scotland), Robert (Rab) MacKenzie (Scotland), Mike Gregory (England), Dave Lee (England), Paul Lim (Singapore), Ray Farrell (Northern Ireland), Linda Duffy (England). **Front row:** Left to right shows Dave Whitcombe (England), Bob Sinnaeve (Canada), Bob Anderson (England), Roger Nickson (WPDPA Chairman), Ritchie Gardner (England), Cliff Lazarenko (England) and Jayne Kempster (England).

Bristow and Lowe were involved with the WPDPA at this time but were strangely absent from this photocall.

FEEDBACK #179 – WINMAU REMASTERED WORLD MASTERS

From Mick Simpson:

'Morning Patrick. Very different and interesting read again this month. I always enjoy reading your Darts History. It's fascinating the different facts you find out about. I watched the Winmau World Masters. I found it very refreshing to have a tournament run a different way. Shorter games for me made it a lot more interesting. Not surprised Luke won it, though more surprised that Jonny Clayton made the final. Great to see him playing some great darts.'

Brian H wrote:

'Great to see the Winmau Masters back as a prestigious competition.'

FEEDBACK – ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF DARTS ORGANSATION (PART ONE)

Jack J. contacted me from Porto, Portugal about the 'One Hundred...' article:

'Dear Patrick. Thank you for the tremendous read this month of Darts History, the article on the century of darts was amazing, and gave an insight of that initial meeting almost made you feel as I could have been there. Darts History is a really great read. Thank you for sharing. Kind regards.'

Ben S. stated

'Patrick. Numerous people I forward Darts History on to have asked if there will be further instalments of this brilliant feature of NDA. It was such a great read.'

I am always keen to learn of *Darts History* being forwarded to friends. I always encourage this. It helps spread the word. Of course, anyone ever wishing to receive *Darts History* direct, all they need to know is to send a request to me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

Regular contributor, Brian wrote:

'Thanks for another great read Patrick! Look forward to part 2 of the NDA story.'

Tom L said:

'Hi Patrick. Thank you for 179 edition of Darts History and thank you for the exciting 100 years of Darts Story. I found it so interesting and amazed that you found out so much of Darts of 100 years ago. Thank you.'

Note: Much of my research into the National Darts Association (NDA) was undertaken at the British Museum Newspapers Library in Hendon, North London, during my research for my PhD in the late 1990s and early 2000s. I can still remember when I first discovered the 'birth' of the NDA in the licensed press in 1924. I punched the air, shouted "Yes!" and was immediately told to be quiet by the Librarian!



James K., who lives in Costa del Sol, was impressed with the *One Hundred Years...(Part 1)* and wrote

Dear Patrick. Thank you for Darts History. Congratulations on your next edition being 180.

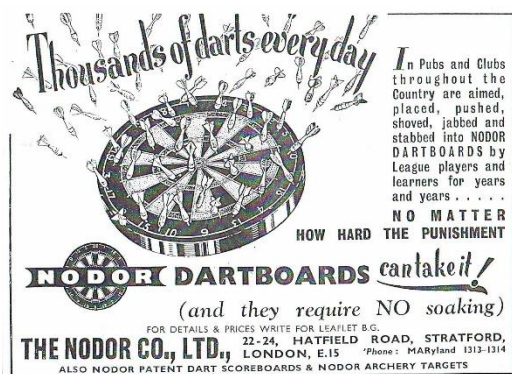
Darts History gets better every month and the lead story on 100 years of darts was so good. Is Mr Leggatt of NODOR still alive? His must be a very interesting story in darts. Darts does not have many characters today like Bristow and Wilson. Sadly, to us, it has become a money-making sport for players at the top.

I replied to James,

Thanks for your email and kind remarks about issue 179 and the 100 years of darts organisation.

Mr. Leggatt, who invented NODOR modelling clay in 1921, passed away many years ago but he will be mentioned again in Part 2 of the 100 Years story which will appear in Darts History later in the year.

NODOR is owned by the Bluck family.



[‘NODOR DARTBOARDS can take it!’ advert, right, from the *Brewers Guardian*, November 1953. © NODOR]

In addition, I totally agree with your comment about the lack of characters today. Only Peter 'Snakebite' Wright adds a bit of character to the sport these days but even his antics (if I can call them that) are wearing a bit thin. I'm expecting him to appear on stage soon in a suit and tie as a way of telling the fans that his acting days are over. No

one else makes an effort these days to entertain, except one or two who dance about a bit on stage following their walk-ons. In fact, some of the fans in the audience have more character. When, back in the 70s and 80's, would you have seen the cameras seeking out 'Wally' and people dressed as bananas?

No. As you say, it's all about money but then, years ago, Barry Hearn told me that the PDC is for the professionals (as it says on the box) and that's what he has achieved: a moneymaking machine for the top players. So, there's certainly no time to mess about or you'll miss out.

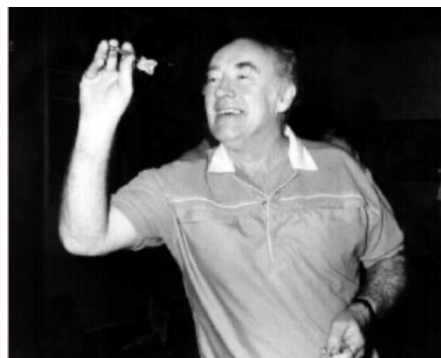
However, rest assured ‘characters’ still exist but they are ‘off-screen’ and appearing in your local darts leagues and public bars.

Despite promoting Part 2 as appearing in this issue, space has dictated that I follow 'The Century...' in a couple of months' time. Part 2 will show how well the NDA was actually received by the end of the 1930s, which might surprise you.

BERNIE BRAMWELL

The reason I have focused on Bernie Bramwell (pictured, right) is because his son Mark and his wife Jane visited me from Australia in January. Bernie was involved with Essex County (my own County team) for a long time.

Mark and Jane were over in the UK, attending a family funeral and sorting through some darts memorabilia that had remained in the family after Bernie's death more than two decades ago. (Image of Bernie © *Darts World*/PC Archive.)



The purpose of Mark's visit to my home, was to donate a number of items, collected by his dad, into my care; newspapers and ephemera which dated back to the 1930s! It was also an opportunity for me to learn more about Bernie Bramwell.

Bernie Bramwell joined the British Darts Organisation (BDO) in 1977 and rose through the ranks to become a Board Director. On Bernie's death in 2002, *Darts World* published an obituary in which Sam Hawkins (a long-term BDO Director) wrote

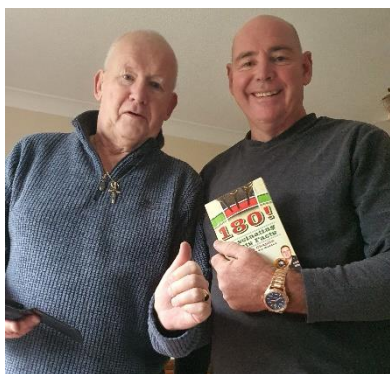
“Bernie was a man of honour and great integrity, a loyal husband to Ann and a devoted father to son Mark and daughters Ann-Marie and Clare. He also doted on his four-year-old grandson, Josh.

Bernie became involved with the BDO in 1977 and rose through the ranks to become a Board Director. He had plenty of ideas and the enthusiasm to back them up, but regretfully had to retire in 1996. His input was solely missed by the Board as well as the BDO counties...

Dr. Eddie Norman recalled: *'...I knew Bernie Bramwell. In fact, he was a man living on your doorstep. A well-known name in County darts, he was a BDO Director I think in the late 1970's. He resigned as a Director in 1996. He was President of Essex Darts Organisation and he and his wife Ann were heavily involved in Essex Darts and he founded, or was co-founder, of the Essex Super League and the Essex Darts Organisation.'*

Indeed, writing to *Darts World* in November 2002, Alan Robson, the Chairman of Essex County Darts wrote:

[Bernie] was the President of the County and a great friend to all those who knew him. Together with one or two others, he was the founder of the Super League and county darts within Essex back in 1973. He always made certain the county had a sound base and indeed remained interested right up to the present day. [2002] We have a great deal to be thankful to him for...



He knew how to enjoy himself, was a good sport and liked his tippie of barley wine. Essex has lost a long-time friend, a marvellous ambassador for darts and a good President.'

(Image, left, shows Mark and me at my home on 29th January.) (By the way, my book *180!* is still available.)

It is not often that I am able to turn the spotlight on those who play such a significant role in the organisation of darts. There have been, and are, many such organisers who deserve praise.

Some of what I learned from the items I was given for my archive provide me with more information about the early days of organised darts; the 1930s, some of which I will publish in *Darts History* in the forthcoming months.

In the meantime, I sincerely thank Mark (and Jane) for entrusting the ephemera into my care.

FEEDBACK - FROM MY WEBSITE – www.patrickchaplin.com

It is always great to receive feedback via my website and the message left by Brian D. Dunn on 8th January who had been visiting and looking for references to Farebrother darts. He wrote:

My father (born pre-1900) was a lifelong darts player, also a Member of the News of The World – Treble Twenty Guild, (see right) to which acknowledgement he always wore a badge depicting three darts in a treble 20 Board Slot.) I was born 1937, two doors from the Kings Arms pub in Chesham [Buckinghamshire] (Image, of the Kings Arms, below, left, © Hania Franek. See www.closedpubs.co.uk)

My father frequently 'ran' the pub when Wally and Bertha were 'tired.' He was both a popular Landlord, Pianist, and Darts Player keeping the Kings Arms 'popular' throughout



member when they won (several times) the local town's darts league.

Brian attached this image (right) of his father's "Fairbrother" darts, still in their preserved "orange" box, as he played with them, before passing them on to his son for use in the local Boys Club.

According to the website 'Lost Pub Project' the *Kings Arms* at Chesham was a 'small, generally, neat pub at the corner of King Street and Amy Lane [and] after a period of closure, eventually converted to residential use circa 2010.'

the war years, especially with locally stationed US Airforce personnel, also Scots Tank Regiment personnel, located in local woodland, preparing for the D-Day invasion, neither we or they knew anything about at the time.

After the war, my father worked for a large manufacturing company which had staff recreation, including a serious darts team. He was a Team



NEXT ISSUE

FALCON DARTS – Do you remember them? Or the follow-up company Pinnerton?

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