

DARTS HISTORY

(formerly *Dr. Darts' Newsletter*)

Issue 188

www.patrickchaplin.com

November 2025

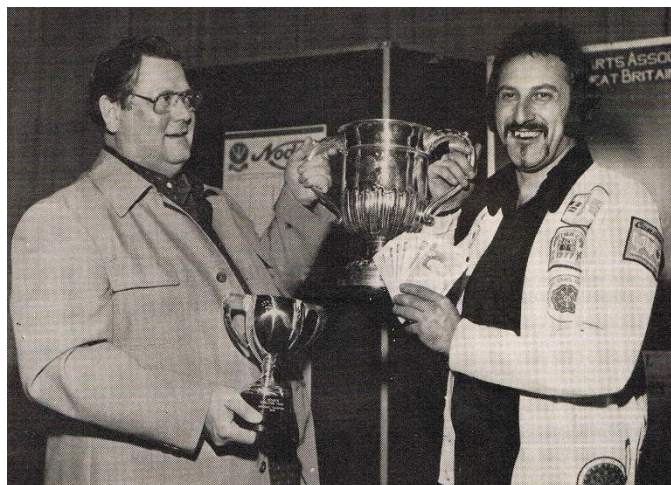


NODOR FOURS 1978 – THEN IT ALL CHANGED

Welcome to all , recent subscribers to *Darts History* which includes amongst them Dean Lord, from Littleborough, Lancashire, who told me:

‘My dad was a member of the 1978 winning Nodor Fours team from nearby Rochdale. He was also friends with the great local players Billy Lennard and Ray Hatton.’

That’s all I needed to examine my archive...



That year the victorious team was from the *Printers Arms*, Rochdale, comprising of Dean’s dad, Jim Lord, Mel Faith, Norman Coombes, and George Harling. They beat *The Calendar* of Wellingborough, Northampton.

(Image, left, shows *The Printers Arms*, team captain, Mel Faith being presented with the trophy from NODOR Managing Director, David Sillitoe. © NODOR/*Darts World*.)

Eleven regional champion teams had made it to the finals which were held on 25th November in Caerphilly, South Wales. It was the 21st year of the NODOR Fours and a record of 5,000 teams had entered. Thankfully, *Darts World* (#74 January 1979), recorded the progress of each of the finalists:

‘The preliminary round of the finals put an end to the hopes of the champion teams from London and Southern Counties (*Druid Arms*, Maidstone), Eastern Counties (Kempston Constitutional Club) and Ireland (The Diamond Bar, Tempo, Fermanagh).

Teams going out in the quarter-finals were the Western Counties (*Horse Shoes*, Bristol) Northern Counties (Sparton Hotel, Blyth, Northumberland), Southern Scotland (Labour Club, Dumfries) and North Home Counties (Grove Social Club, Chadwell Heath, Essex).

The Southern Scotland team went out as victims of Northern Scotland’s team from the Lion Hotel, Nairn, Inverness-shire who finished their winning 801 games in 23 and 24 darts.’

In the first semi-final Rochdale’s *Printers Arms* dispatched the host team from the nearby Royal Hotel, Penarth, Glamorgan, in two straight games.

‘The Midlands team was in fine form (starting the first game with 135, 140, 121, 125, 100) to beat Northern Scotland also in two straight games.

The Calendar continued their winning streak to take the first game of the final. But then the *Printers Arms* came back with a 26-dart second game.

With two throws of 100 and 180, the *Printers Arms* took a lead in the deciding game that they never lost. It was appropriately captain Mel Faith who hit the last double of the day, a double 18, for the championship.’

The *Darts World* reporter recalled that the last Lancashire team to win the NODOR Fours was the *Cotton Tree Inn*, Manchester back in 1966. That team just happened to have included the two players that Dean mentioned in his email to me; Bill Lennard and Ray Hatton. In fact, Bill and Ray had been in the *Cotton Tree Inn* team which had won the first *national* NODOR Fours in 1961.

Darts World named the *Printers Arms* team as: Mel Faith (captain), Norman Coombes, George Harling, John Lord and Steve Lord whereas *The Guinness Book of Darts* named Harling as ‘Gerald’ (actually ‘George’) and did not mention Steve Lord who was, presumably, a reserve.



Unusually, the runners-up team, *The Calendar*, included one of the few ladies taking part in the tournament, Miss (also cited as *Mrs*) Pat Young. With team mates Gerry Gordon, Steve Draper, Terry Williams and Mel Colby had beaten the Shropshire champions *The Fox*, Bridgenorth in

the Midlands Area final.

The Last Year

The traditional format was best of three games of 801 but 1978 would be the last year that was used and the last year the competition could correctly be called the Fours. It was abandoned by the organisers as it was believed the team play was outmoded. Thereafter, the company chose a best-of-seven format: one fours of 801, two pairs of 501, and four singles of 401.

The toss of a coin would decide who threw first and the winners of that would throw first in the first, third, fifth and seventh legs. Introducing the new format, the organisers stated:

“We hope it will give added interest to the players and more incentive to achieve personal performances.”

My thanks to Dean Lord. I am sure that there are many, many NODOR Fours stories out there. If you have information, like Dean, which can trigger more research into this famous tournament please drop me a line at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

BALTIMORE PODCAST

It's been a while since I was asked to participate in a podcast but October brought the following invitation to me:

Hello Dr. Chaplin. I host a show and podcast in Baltimore at 98 Rock and WBAL Radio. I'm interested in having you as a guest to learn about darts, the upcoming European Darts Championship, and why darts is not an Olympic sport.

Please let me know if you're available to record a 10-15-minute interview, preferably by Zoom, on 7th October 10:30am eastern time, 3.30 p.m. GNT.



Thanks! Josh Spiegel' (See right)

Before replying I Googled the radio station and discovered that Josh is 'one of the most unique news voices in Baltimore, who brings his own spin to the stories of the day...' The station is also the flagship 'Home of the Ravens,' American football team, named after Edgar Allan Poe's famous poem, *The Raven*,

Anyone who has read my book *Darts in England 1900-39...* may recall that I mentioned Poe (page 49, footnote 57) citing an early, and fatal, form of darts - puff and dart - in his 1844 story *The Angel of the Odd – An Extravaganza*. This was probably one of the earliest literary references to darts, certainly in the USA and probably in the UK. (Poe had died in Baltimore in 1849.)

Unfortunately, there was insufficient time to talk to Josh about Poe but I did manage to cover all of the subjects he raised, him being particularly interested in why darts wasn't an Olympic sport. I enjoyed the experience of podcasting and invite anyone else to contact me.

EARLY DARTS IN GERMANY (#186) – MORE FEEDBACK

My article about early darts in Germany generated feedback from subscriber, David Mason, who wrote:

'Patrick. Thank you very much for your latest Darts History.

Currently living in Hamburg I found your article on the early days of darts in Germany and the pioneers of the sport in the country so interesting.

Joe Scott, Bill Perry, and Hans Wilder are names that have often been mentioned several times in our sport but your article has put a light on them for us and great to see the photos of Bill, Joe, and Hans. The House of Darts International and Eddie Norman we all know about as one of the first firms to sponsor and arrange darts tournaments here in Germany.

What made your article so interesting was that it showed there was darts life in Germany in the 1960's and was the precursor of the PDC darts we see today here in Germany. We now know where it started as they say from 'small acorns.' 'What was also interesting was that Eddie Norman and his team also took darts into the Netherlands in the 1960's.

Patrick. Keep up your amazing research enjoyed by so many around the world.

Kindest Regards, David'

I replied:

'Thank you, David. I am pleased that you and your friends enjoyed the article about early darts in Germany. You mentioned the Bristol team taking darts to The Netherlands too. I have been asked on a few occasions to research darts in Holland. It's on my list!'

And the man who started this thread, John Jardine wrote:

Hi Patrick. Thank you so much for the great write up on the early days of darts in Germany.

When I enquired, I thought my enquiry might get a brief mention but the information and interest you gave in Darts History was beyond what I or any of my darts friends expected. It was amazing.

Your knowledge of our sport is absolute supreme. I feel sure no one else could ascertain information on those early days. I expect you get lots of compliments on your research work. Please may I say "Add me to your list."

Sadly, I read Jamie Harvey had passed. A great player. Was he a member of the Darts Hall of Fame as I believe he was a founder member of the WDC (now PDC)? I believe Jocky Wilson was also a founder member who missed out on becoming a member of the Darts Hall of Fame but may be wrong. I'm not sure who nominates the members.

You mentioned previously that you will be doing memories of the early days of darts in The Netherlands which will be a great read for many players as there is not much history out there of darts in that country..

Many thanks again. Yours Sincerely. John.'

DOUG PRIESTNER – 'WORLD RECORD HOLDER'

English International Doug Priestner (pictured, right. Courtesy: PC Archive) was a reserve for the United Kingdom Darts Federation (UKDF) International Match, Great Britain versus Wales, held in May 1976.

In the mini-biographies provided, Doug was described as the 'World Record holder of the most consecutive 180's, recording five on the trot.'



What a wonderful record which I initially assumed could only have been achieved during a game of 1,001 or higher. I wondered where he would have achieved the feat and whether it was ever beaten.

Ex-England international Doug McCarthy told me, *"I think I read somewhere [Doug] once hit 5 x 180s consecutively in practice."* Chris Lovell then clarified matters when he wrote:

'To be a World Record of Five 180s, Doug's [achievement] would have to been witnessed and, as such, any claim would be officially recorded as a World Record. Wouldn't Guinness World Records hold any information on such?'

Darts journalist Derek Brown does not mention Doug or his record in *The Guinness Book of Darts* (1981) so the likelihood is that, as Doug McCarthy mentioned, it was achieved in practice, then recorded somewhere but, importantly, not formally by the boys and girls of Guinness Records. There is nothing about Doug Priestner in Derek Brown's book *Darts '78* or in Roger St. Pierre's *Unicorn Darts Year Book 1978*, two of my usual starting points.

The name Doug Priestner triggered a memory for Steve Brown:

"I do recall one interesting fact about Doug. His first shot in the Indoor League one year was 180. The following year, he hit a 180 first shot again!"

Bob Anderson, the 1988 World Champion, (pictured below, left. Image © *Darts World*. Used with permission) remembered Doug Priestner well. Bob told me:



"I played with Doug for Gorse Hill Club, Swindon. I'm not sure about the five consecutive 180s but I am sure he was capable of such a feat. I remember one instance of Doug's brilliance however. We played a CIU [Club and Institute Union] knockout round in Basingstoke one time and won the match very comfortably."

Afterwards Doug was challenged to a money race; one leg of 1001. Doug won easily. The challenger wanted more, so Doug played him but took the flights off his darts – and again won! Just for fun he then removed his stems, and won using barrels only. He was my local hero!"

So far, I have traced Doug's participation in the 1974 Home International where the England Captain was Willie Etherington. In the programme, Doug is described as 'Three times National Champion [presumably the NDAGB tournaments], Twice Wiltshire News of the World Champion' and 'Great Britain International.'

According to the notes written on the programme, Doug won all three of his matches in 1974 for England against the other three home countries. The reference to 'Great Britain International,' I am certain, refers to his participation with matches organised by the United Kingdom Darts Federation (UKDF).

I have also checked records of those attending the Embassy World Championships from 1978 onwards. Doug doesn't appear, so I'm guessing that his darts career was over by then because, as I mentioned above, his name does not appear in *The Guinness Book of Darts* published in 1981, a place where I would expect to see him if he was still playing at that time.

HOW MANY ICEMEN?

I recently received this email:

"Dear Dr. Darts. Could you possibly answer the following question from a local quiz? How many darts players have called themselves 'The Iceman,' and who they were (are). I thought it was three but others say it is four. Hoping that you can solve this for us."

I replied

"Off the top of my head, I'd say there are/were three:

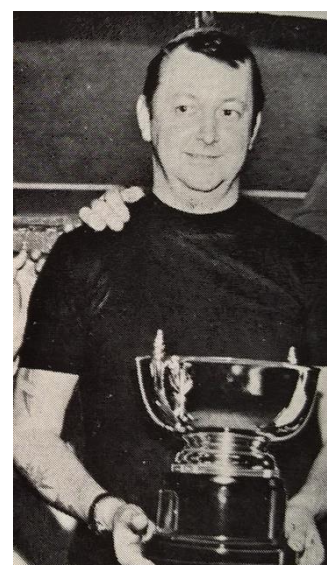
Al Lippman (USA), who died in 1976, was the original 'Iceman.' (Pictured here in 1973 when he played in the *News of the World*.)

Alan Warriner (England) (who changed his name to Warriner-Little when he married, adding his bride's maiden name). The nickname was suggested to him by Tommy Cox of the PDC as Alan was the coolest darts player he had ever seen.

Gerwyn Price (Wales) - The latest 'Iceman.'

I don't know of a fourth but there may have been but not in the top flight."

Was there a fourth?



JAMIE HARVEY – FEEDBACK (#187)

Via my website GX wrote:

"I'll always remember one week at Butlins Wonderwest World near Ayr, around '93, Jamie appeared in the bar doing an exhibition. He was challenging all the kids, the kids started on 101 and didn't need to finish on a double. Jamie on 501 and had to throw his darts flight-first. I gave it a go, needless to say he thrashed me!"

And Brian H wrote:

"Thanks for another great read, Patrick. The in-depth bio of Jamie Harvey was very interesting; a fitting tribute to another great player from the past, sadly gone but here, not forgotten. To echo James King's words: your hard work in highlighting the early days of the sport IS very much appreciated. Take care, Brian."

GASKELL AND CHAMBERS – PRE-WW2 ADVERTISING

Subscriber and friend, Bob Foster, wrote to me from Llandudno to say:

Dart Boards, etc.



No. 5308B. The "Bristle." Needs no soaking. Made of compressed Bristles. Very popular ... 25/- each

No. 5308C. The "Dunlop." Also does not require soaking ... 25/- each

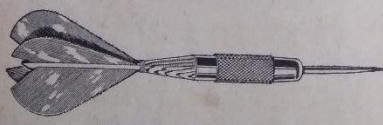
No. 5308. The "Nodor." Made of Coloured Plastic Clay. No wires ... 30/- each
Rollers for smoothing face of board after play ... 2/- each

No. 5308D. The "Manda." Elm dart boards 12/6 each
Galvanised Tank for soaking ... 12/6 ..

DARTS



Darts are made in a great variety of qualities and sizes and these vary in different districts. The most popular types are stocked at market prices by our various branches.

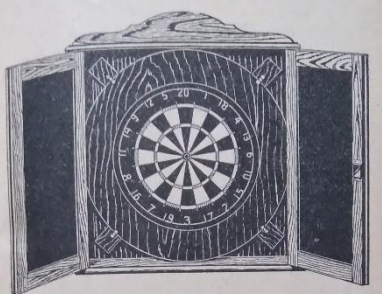


TOURNAMENT DARTS
Brass bodied darts with fixed steel points and loose flights
1/3 set of three in box
Spare flights, 1/6 doz.

"Truflight" Darts ... 1/6 set of 3 in box
Spare Canes, 1/- doz. Flights, 6d. gross

130

Dart Board Cabinet, Scorers, etc.



No. 5309
Dart Board Cabinet, in Oak
Size: 29in. x 29in. The Dart Board is placed in a wood ring and held in position by bolts. The insides of the Doors are painted black for scoring. Extreme width of Cabinet when opened out is 58in. ... 27/6 each
Other qualities available — prices on application.

Dart Score Boards.

The Nodor Score Board
No. 5308
Shows the Score, got and wanted. Price 25/-, includes 2 boards (one for each player).

No. 5308a
"THE EASY" Scorer
On similar principle to above, smaller size. Price, 12/6, 2 boards.

No. 9211
Darts Scorer, Blackboard Type
Size: 17in. x 22in. with white dividing line and shelf for chalk. 4/6 each.

Dart Board Backs.
Painted Green with Black Numbers on White Ground. 24 ins. square. Protect the wall and make the game easier and quicker. 5/6 each.

Rubber Mats.
With line at regulation distance. 18/6 each.



No. 5310
Dartboard Tray
To hold 16 darts
Light Oak, 2/6 ea.

No. 4570
C.P. Dart Ash Trays
Suitable for prizes.
3in., 2/- each
4in., 2/6 each
4 1/2in., 3/- each



No. 4037
Pewter Dart Tankard
With enamel replica of dart board, very suitable for prizes.
1 pint, 10/6
3-pint, 9/-

131

"Hi Patrick.

Hope you're keeping well.

I've been sorting (well trying to, and mostly failing) my books and I was going through a little catalogue I have for Gaskell and Chambers, the bar-fitting firm.

There's a couple of pages on darts items they sold that I thought, if not already seen, you may find interesting. If I'm right, going on JC-50M/9/38 printed at the bottom of inside cover, it dates from Sept 1938."

Thanks Bob.

The advertisements, placed by NODOR, shows their extensive

range of products from the Bristle dartboard, and the company's wooden barrelled and brass darts, to dartboard cabinets, to tankards and ashtrays. Notice also that the original NODOR board, made of colourful clay, was still on sale at five shillings (25p) more than the bristle board. In addition, the clay board boasted 'No wires' and for an extra two shillings (10p) you could purchase rollers 'for smoothing the face of [the] board after play.'

After launching their 'silent' 'no odour clay dartboard in the early 1920s, NODOR (founded in 1921) soon progressed to wooden dartboards and, of course, invented the 'bristle' dartboard, which gained its patent approval in 1934, and would, four decades later, take over from elm and poplar dartboards as standard. Interestingly, on the left side advert, can be seen 'Manda' elm dart boards. 'MANDA' is a compression of the names of the Manchester Board and the NDA (the National Darts Association), a special dartboard made for those who played on the smaller Manchester Board.

THE SILENT DARTBOARD – AMENDMENT

In #186 I ended 'The Silent Dartboard' article with 'and that...' which, of course, should have read 'and that led to...' to indicate that the company continued to grow and prosper and, indeed celebrated 100 years in 2021.

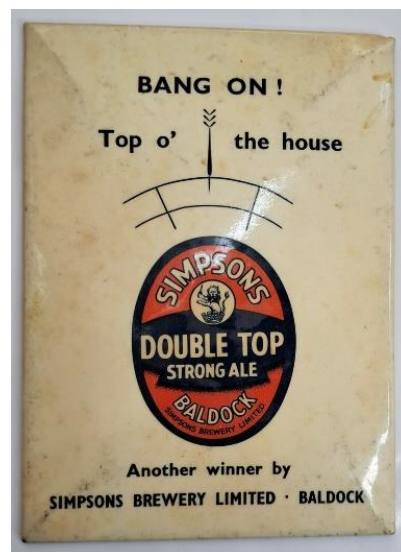
DART PUBS

In #187, I ran a short article about *The Dart Inn* that used to stand in Ber Street, Norwich, and asked if anyone knew of any similarly named pubs anywhere else in the UK or elsewhere.

I am grateful to Paul Woolf who wrote, '*Patrick. Not a Dart Inn but, in Inkersall near Chesterfield, [Derbyshire] there is the Double Top pub.*'

Unfortunately, the *Double Top* website does not link the pub with any darts-related activities but does ask us to join them '*to watch the live sport with a refreshing pint of your favourite larger [sic] in hand...*'

But talking about 'Double Top,' I am grateful, again, to Bob Foster for discovering the image (right); an advertisement for 'Double Top Strong Ale,' promoted by the Simpsons Brewery Limited of Baldock, Hertfordshire. Undated ephemera. All I know is that the brewery was closed in 1965. However, the advertisement looks a lot earlier than that. Any ideas?



PLEASE REMEMBER:

If you change your email address and still want to receive *Darts History*, please let me know and I'll amend my mailing list. If at any time you wish to unsubscribe, just drop me a line at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com and I will remove you from the list.

MY RESEARCH IS SPONSORED BY

WINMAU®
THE FORCE BEHIND DARTS™

NOTE: Text © 2025 Patrick Chaplin or as shown. Images © Patrick Chaplin or as stated or sourced. Neither text nor images can be reproduced without prior permission of the copyright holder(s). Sponsors website: **winmau.com**