

DARTS HISTORY

(formerly *Dr. Darts' Newsletter*)

Issue 189

www.patrickchaplin.com

December 2025



NEWS OF THE WORLD – A TEAM COMPETITION?

I know that many of you are interested in anything to do with the *News of the World* Individual Darts competition, especially if it is a little different. OK. So what about the possibility that the *News of the World* ran a **team** competition in the 1970s? No. I don't believe it either.



I am, of course, aware of the *News of the World* Team of Dart Champions, captained by the legendary Jim Pike, which was created by the newspaper in the early 1940s to replace the actual *NoW* individual competition which was temporarily discontinued until after the war.

The team toured the UK during those dark days, playing local teams and individuals, raising thousands of pounds, primarily for the Red Cross war charity.

(The photo, left, shows the usual line-up of the Team of Dart Champions, (left to right) Johnny Ross, Harry Head, Leo Newstead and Jim Pike. © My collection.)

In fact, that Team raised more money for charity than any other sport! They also helped maintain interest in *News of the World* darts so that, when the competition returned in the 1947/48 season, it was still in the memories of players who entered in their thousands (the newspaper stating that 289,866 players had applied) to be part of what had become a 'national' (meaning at that time England and Wales) tournament. The 'Team of Dart Champions' continued to play and raise funds throughout the 1940s and into the early 1950s.

But, as far as I am aware, there has never been another *News of the World* Team and certainly not one that was around in the 1970s. I am certain of this. But am I?

Sharon Oldham contacted me:

'Hi Pat. I'm contacting you on behalf of my husband who you previously helped a few years ago with confirmation on an unusual set of NOW darts from News International archives.'



He now has another quandary puzzling him. He has an extremely large collection of NOW memorabilia and posted much of his collection on Darts Nutz... He recently took a punt on a large, heavy, solid, brass dart around [pictured] 10 inches in length, engraved with the

words NEWS OF THE WORLD DARTS TEAM 1974.



Neil is certain no such team existed and yet it is of the period and very well made. He assumes it could have been commissioned for a pub to present to a house champion and the maker mistakenly added the word team. Neil is not on Facebook so asked me to message you and shed some light on this? Thank you, Sharon.'

Regular contributor to *Darts History*, and also a *News of the World* ephemera collector, Chris Lovell, suggested that there may have been teams, like the Royal Mail, and others such as the omnibus leagues in London and elsewhere, that had in-house teams that modelled themselves on *News of the World* rules, and included the *NoW* name, but not officially recognised by the newspaper that would have made and presented their own trophies to the winning team. I tend to agree with Chris. The trophy now owned by Neil Oldham, looks to me to have been a 'one-off' and, in my view, 'home-made' but very well made for an independent league.

Looking at the quality of the actual *NoW* trophy, if the newspaper had promoted something like that, they would have advertised it heavily and then provided details in the Grand Final programme in 1974, like they did with the Player's No. 6 special event in the sixties.

Just checking, I have found no reference to an official *News of the World* team being arranged in 1974, the year that Peter Chapman, the London & Home Counties Divisional champion, beat the Western Counties Divisional champion, Paul Gosling, 2-1 to lift not only the precious *NoW* trophy but also a cup to keep and H.M.V. 22-inch Colour television plus a two-week Pontin holiday for two! (No money in those days.)



(Image of Peter Chapman and the *News of the World* trophy (above, right) © *Darts World*/Elkadart.)

So, what Neil has is a very unusual and unique piece of *News of the World* memorabilia, the original owner and builder of which will probably remain unknown, unless, of course, you my subscribers know different!

DARTS AND BEER (AND LAGER) MATS

I thought that I would produce something a little quirky for this end of year issue.

In addition to preparing *Darts History* every month, I also write regularly for the Pub History Society's quarterly, *Pub History*.

Occasionally, those articles for the PHS are illustrated by the inclusion of beer mats, of which I have a substantial collection, relating to both pubs and pub games but focusing especially on darts.



In August I began preparing an article for *Pub History* relating to darts-related beer mats and, as it developed, I became confident that the same (or very similar) article would appeal to my *DH* readers. In fact, up until now, one subject I had never written about for *Pub History* had been lager. I simply don't write about lager. However, on this occasion, I have broken the habit of a lifetime. I present here a lager, darts-related, and beer/lager mat article, first published in the Autumn 2025 issue of *Pub History* and now gently amended for *Darts History* readers.

For more years than I can remember, I have been collecting beer mats, most 'borrowed' from pubs I have visited, ably assisted by my wife Maureen, unpaid, who swiftly moves each mat from the table or bar into her handbag whilst I provide a distraction. The only rule is that it has/had something to do with *darts* or other pub games but essentially darts.

ENTRY NOS.	HEINEKEN STICKERS	FAKE POSTER NOS.		
1				
2				
3				
4				

The poster numbers and designs are:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. HAMMOCK | 11. W G GRACE |
| 2. LARRY HAGMAN | 12. UGLY DUCKLING (2) |
| 3. HUMPTY DUMPTY | 13. SANDCASTLE |
| 4. DARTS | 14. ROBIN |
| 5. UGLY DUCKLING (1) | 15. SAY "I" |
| 6. MOUSTACHE | 16. CAVALIER |
| 7. HAT | 17. SNAIL |
| 8. TOBY JUG | 18. WALLPAPER |
| 9. INDIAN | 19. REINDEER |
| 10. TOWER OF PISA | 20. BUTTERFLY |

Despite that restrictive rule, I have still been able to attain a decent collection of darts-related beer mats which includes the one shown above, part of the "Is this the real Heineken?" series of 20 mats, issued to pubs that sold the product. However, the customer's challenge was to identify the three designs in the series which 'never appeared as posters: they are not the real Heineken...'

The competitors were given the names of the 20 poster designs depicted on the 20 mats they collected (see left) and obtained a Heineken sticker from the bar every time they bought a pint of that particular lager. Then they could enter four times *per beer mat*.

Anyone who discovered the three that were not real Heineken posters won a share in £50,000. Closing date for entries was 16th September 1983.

I didn't enter because (a) I was only looking for darts on beer mats and (b) how was I, a real ale drinker, expected to switch my allegiance to lager after so many years, just to drink 20 pints of it to try and win a share of £50k? And, of course, I had little interest in which of the designs were unpublished. Until now.

I forgot all about the beer/lager mat and the competition for many years, until recently, when, for no other reason than it was within reach, I drew Peter Mayle's *Thirsty Work – Ten Years of Heineken Advertising* (1983) from my library/archive and then chanced upon a section towards the end of the book entitled 'Unpublished Submissions.' Mayle wrote:

'Creative people in agencies, who have a fondness for the unprovable claim, like to say that their best work – the really brave, outrageous stuff – is always rejected. This is never the result of any misdirection of creative effort, but timidity in high places. They were scared of it!'

adding

'In fact, advertising tends to operate on the iceberg principle. For every advertisement or poster or commercial that surfaces in public there are nine that remain submerged. They are rejected for all kinds of reasons, and they are often interesting in the same way that a writer's notes are interesting – they give you some idea of the process which leads to the finished piece of work.'

Mayle then published three of the ideas that never became posters and, of course, I thought, for a moment, that I had solved the 1983 competition 42 years too later. Of the three, one was '4. Darts' the 'Heineken refreshes the darts other beers cannot reach,' (see above) and another '6. Moustache' (which grows as the pictured Greek sentry sips his pint) but the third example shown in *Thirsty Work* was a design based on the reverse of the then £5 note showing the Duke of Wellington enjoying a pint of Heineken with his men resting and supping in the background but shown as a £6 note. This rejected design was not included amongst the 1983 competition's 20 designs.

But why wasn't the 'Darts' design used as a poster?



Amongst my collection of beer mats, I found that Carling had produced one promoting their Black Label Lager (see above) which employed a similar idea to Heineken: three darts stuck into each other. However, with the Black Label promotion, part of their 'I bet he drinks Carling Black Label' series of cartoons by Joliffe Gray (b. 1937. The creator of Wicked Willie), showed three darts stuck into each other but in this case in the treble 20. But who was the first to produce that idea, Heineken, or Carling?

So, if the Carling beermat was produced before the Heineken one, this might well have been the reason why Heineken did not release the 'Darts' poster. It had been done before. The difference of bullseye or treble twenty was enough to indicate that it was not original. If the Heineken design was pre-Carlsberg, I couldn't explain it but someone else might. So, I contacted the British Beermat Collectors Society (BBCS) and asked about the two beer mats. I received a splendid reply from Russ Murfitt who told me

"I know both sets you refer to. Funnily enough I presumed it was only one of the 20 which wasn't used but I never knew which one. I could only remember two or three of the ads. ... It's a great story, but alas probably untrue, since the Carling set came out in 1986, then reissued in 1987. There may have been others."

And indeed, there were.

Having been encouraged by Russ's response and the thought that there *may* have been others of a similar theme, I referred myself back to my beermat collection and found two more.



Above, on the left, is the achievement of hitting treble twenty with three darts thrown into each other, deserving a large Haig; the reverse/front bearing an image of a bottle of Haig and two glasses, beside the well-known legend, 'Don't be vague. Ask for Haig' and below that the logo 'Haig 350.'

On the right is my other discovery, a beermat, or rather a 'lagermat,' advertising Clausthaler Special Low Alcohol Lager which was 'Only 0.6% Alcohol.' We are back to three darts thrown into each other in the bullseye (but blindfolded, balancing on a chair and juggling four pints) which, of course, proved that Clausthaler did have 'certain other advantages.'

Russ Murfitt was approached again and this time responded stating that the Haig mat was 1970's, and that the Clausthaler one was 'reissued a few times from 1983 to late 80's' adding that 'Even Heineken wouldn't want to be associated with 0.6% lager (well ahead of its time), tho' now of course, they do.'

So, in conclusion, I can record that the Haig mat came first (1970s) with Clausthaler and Heineken coming joint second in 1983 with Carling turning up later, in 1986. Thus, perhaps, Clausthaler edged the idea and was too close for the Heineken design to be used. Whatever the case, this article has certainly managed to reach parts of my brain that other research has never reached.

By any chance does anyone know what the third non-poster design was on the Heineken mat? (No prize – just my thanks.)

And thanks to Russ Murfitt of the BBCS: www.britishbeermats.org and Chris Murray (PHS): www.pubhistorysociety.co.uk

ENRIQUE FORNER – A SPANISH CHAMPION

Back in June I received a couple of enquiries from Kevin D. in Edinburgh, one of which related to the Scottish darts player, Robert Mackenzie, which I dealt with in #185. His second question was "I wonder if you can tell me what happened to Spain's Enrique Forner (pictured) who once played Cliff Lazarenko at the 1987 World Masters? He was the first Spanish player to play on UK TV."



The 1987 WINMAU World Masters programme mentioned that Enrique was making a returned visit to The Rainbow Suite, Kensington, London that year.

Looking at the 1986 programme I discovered that Enrique was one of four Spanish male players who had qualified that year. Enrique was accompanied to the tournament by Pedro Martinez, Josep Garcia, and Jose Molina. The programme told us that Enrique was

'A 22-year-old painter from Alicante. Was immediately attracted to darts when he saw the game played – now he has four years' experience behind him. Competes five times a week, his local team being Bolera Juventud. Has come third in the Alicante Singles and he also finds time for diving and underwater fishing. Nicknamed Kike [sic].'

On this occasion neither Enrique, nor any of his compatriots, made the cut. Indeed, Enrique fell at the first fence, the Preliminary Round, being beaten by Germany's Colin Rice. By the 1987 event Enrique's mini-biography in that year's programme told us that 'his immediate aim is to do better than a year ago.'

And he did.

His updated mini-biography in that year's programme told us that Enrique was known as Kiki, and was a 24-year-old chauffeur from Alicante who had won the Spanish sub-championship in eight years of playing darts and that his interests had changed over the past year from diving and fishing to 'rallying and girls.'

In the 1987 finals of the WINMAU Masters, not one overseas player reached the quarter-finals but *Darts World* reported that Enrique provided the best performance by any overseas player by winning his Board final. The World Darts Federation (WDF) records (<https://dartswdf.com/players/enrique-forner>) confirmed that Enrique beat France's Jean Noel Troadec 2-1 in the Preliminary Round, then Roy Master (Northern Ireland) 2-0 in the last 128, Angus Gillis (Canada) 2-0 in the last 64 and then England's Alan Johnson 2-0 in the last 32.

I then discovered via YouTube which records the first five minutes of the match (Commentator: Dave Lanning) in the last sixteen, Enrique against England's Cliff Lazarenko, that Enrique surprisingly went ahead with double 20 (19 darts) but then Cliff shot a 12-dart leg to level things up and then went on to win. Interestingly, Presenter, Dickie Davies of ITV World of Sport pointed out that Enrique did not play any seed as he was supposed to have played Wales' Alan Evans who had to withdraw. But this should not detract from Enrique's achievement losing only one leg before meeting and being beaten by 'Big Cliff.'

Enrique did not return to the WINMAU World Masters in 1988 to attempt to repeat or better his success of the previous year. But then, research-wise, the trail goes cold. Thus, the question remains, "What happened to Enrique Forner?"

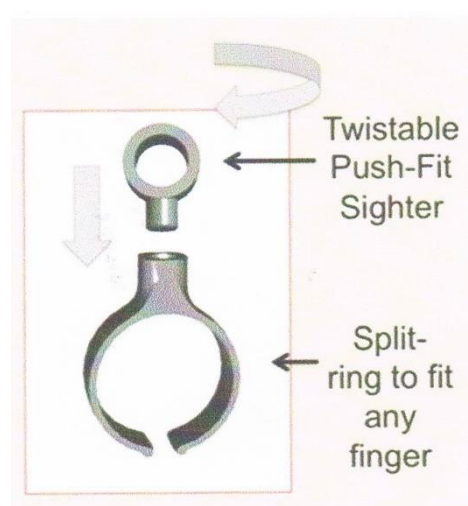
If any reader can help, please contact me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

DARTSIGHT – AN AWARD WINNER

Many of my readers will recall an invention that I have featured in *Darts History*, the Dartsight, a small plastic device (see right) comprising a twistable push-fit sighter that seats onto a split ring designed to fit any finger. Well, co-founder, Stuart Needham recently advised me of some great news. He wrote:

"I am thrilled to announce that DartSight, our innovative dart training system, has been awarded the prestigious Sports Technology of the Year Award 2025 by CorporateLiveWire.

DartSight is revolutionising the sport of darts by helping players develop a straight, reliable, and repeatable throwing action by using the patented DartSight and the DartSight Alignment System and Training Programme. It enhances player performance with personally tried and tested alignment method. Available for use by both amateur and professional darts players for measurable improvement. [Check out www.dartsight.com.]



This award recognises DartSight's outstanding innovation, performance impact, and contribution to sports technology. Winning this award is a testament to our dedication to innovation and supporting darts players at all levels," says Stuart Needham, Co-Founder of DartSight.

Congratulations to the Needham brothers on their award. I wish them further success in 2026.

IT IS THE SEASON...

I appreciate that not all of you recognise the festive season but it is a tradition with me to recognise and celebrate Christmas. Over the years, I have featured Maureen Flowers in festive garb, an unknown model dressed as Santa with a dartboard, and numerous appropriate cartoons that have been featured over the years either in *Darts World* or my local darts club publication *Out of the Blue – The Official Organ of the Blue Boar Men's (and women's) Darts Club* which ran from September 1980 to May 1988.

Previously, I have delved back into the 1970s and 1980s for inspiration but, this year, I could not resist publishing this cover of the December 2009, issue 445, featuring Anastasia Dobromyslova. As we all know, Anastasia is the three-time Women's World Professional Darts Champion (2008, 2012, and 2013), including the Women's World Masters title in 2014 and many, many other titles.



All the best to you all for the season.

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**.