



DR DARTS' NEWSLETTER

ISSUE TWO – MARCH / APRIL 2010

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Issue Two of my *Newsletter*.

I am pleased to say that a number of subscribers let me have feedback on Issue One and to my relief none of it was negative. Subscriber Dave liked it so much he wrote 'Wot a fantastic newsletter', whilst Amanda said, 'I really enjoyed it. The highlight was the 'Out of the Blue' newsletter. I can draw comparisons with my own team!' Eddie added, '...very interesting and I hope that it is a great success for you...' and Teresa was enthusiastic too telling me she 'Absolutely loved the newsletter' whilst Charis thought it 'a great idea' and 'liked it very much.'

So it seems that I am doing *something* right. Indeed, more and more people are subscribing every week. The record for the furthest subscriber away from my house comes from Fiji!

Issue One has now been archived so anyone subscribing in future can easily download a pdf of it from my website www.patrickchaplin.com. As each new issue is published the previous issue will be archived.

I was absolutely delighted when *We Love Darts* (the darts magazine which hit the newsstands here in the UK in 2009) gave my website a five-star rating in their February 2010 issue. *WLD* advised readers that 'If you're true darts fan, bookmark this page now!' Thanks *WLD* and 'Happy 1st Birthday to you'.



**'Dr. Darts at the Carpenters Arms,
February 2010'**

The past couple of months have been very busy for me research-wise and I've also featured on local TV here and on national radio in New Zealand (more of which later).

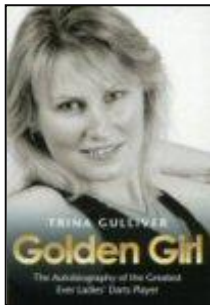
OK. Let's plunge into Issue Two. It's twice as big as Issue One. I just hope you guys can handle it!



FROM ISSUE ONE...

(a) Trina Gulliver

Sadly John Blake Publishing has turned down my idea of publishing a revised and updated paperback version of Trina's autobiography *Golden Girl*. That's a real pity as it seemed to work well with John Lowe's *Old Stoneface* last year. John Blake confirmed what I think a lot of folks already know that "the book trade has become incredibly tough during the recession and supermarkets now dominate everything." Apparently John had a long talk with his sales advisors but they felt that Trina's paperback "would not work at this time for us."



The original hardback version of *Golden Girl* is still available on-line. I have one or two copies for sale too so, if interested, check the 'Darts Bookshop' on my website.

By the way Trina's new **VERY PINK** website went live in February...Take a look. David King at Harlequin Web Design has done a great job.

<http://www.trina-gulliver.com/>



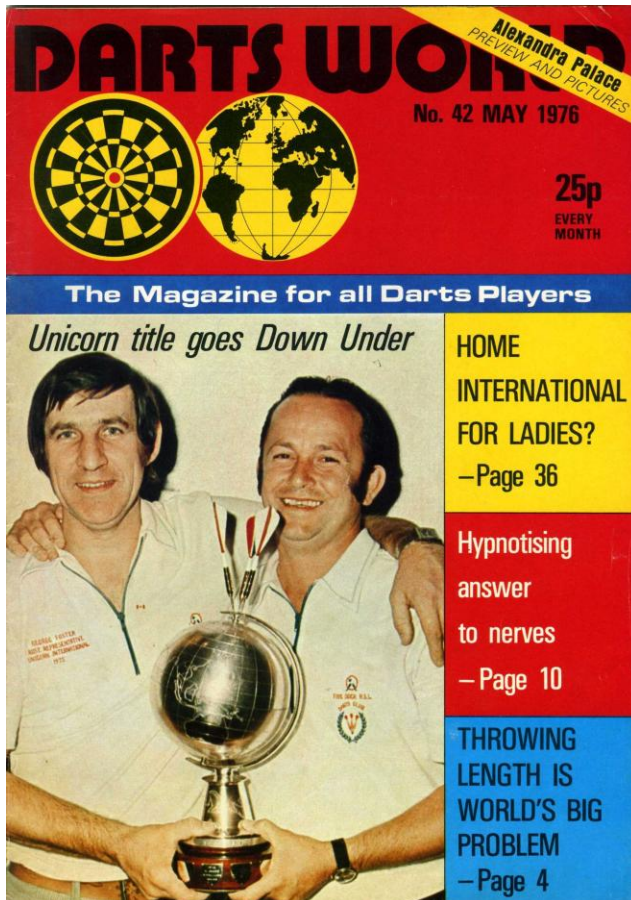
(b) Dr. Darts at the National Archive

A near-capacity number of delegates attended the Pub History Society's inaugural annual conference at the National Archives at Kew, south-west London on Saturday 20th February. My 30 minute talk *Women, Darts and the Pub in the Interwar Years* was well-received. One lady delegate told me afterwards "When I saw that you were talking about darts I was going to go off and do some research but I'm glad I stayed." Praise indeed.



My next scheduled talk is at the British Society of Sports History (BSSH) conference (10th-11th September) at the Wellcome Collection in central London. The subject this time will be the early darts industry.

(c) George Foster



‘Front page of *Darts World* May 1976 showing George with Kevin White’

I am pleased to say that Mick Beeken, the editor of *Darts World*, has shown an interest in publishing my ‘Where are they now?’ article about George so its appearance on my website will be delayed until a decision is known. Ex-pat George won the Unicorn World Pairs Championship with Australia’s Kevin White in 1976 (see front page of *Darts World* reproduced here with permission).

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Following on from my interview with George Foster I can now announce that my next ‘Where are they now?’ subject will be Canadian Bob Sinnaeve, five-times Canada National Champion and WINMAU World Masters finalist in 1986. Bob recently told me that he walked away from the

sport in February 1992 but that fate led him back after 17 years. I feel a fascinating interview coming on so watch this space.

BANNED

Some of you might have read the piece on my website about darts being banned in Huddersfield (West Yorkshire) during the interwar years. Well, the good news is that the guys of the Huddersfield Darts League are looking into the ban in more detail at their local archives and are hoping later in the year to put the results on their website www.huddersfielddarts.co.uk.



MEDIA

(a) Health and Safety – The Scourge of Darts?

On Friday 20th February I was approached by BBC TV concerning news reports in the national papers that dartboards were being removed from local pubs in the UK because of fears over health and safety. (Subscribers in other countries probably suffer from the scourge of health and safety where people with nothing better to do go around trying to spoil people's fun.) This time it was the 'inherent danger' of rebounding darts striking innocent onlookers.

In all my two and a half decades of researching darts I have only ever found three cases where bystanders (or in one case a by-sitter) were hurt by darts. Only one of those went to court.



'Image courtesy of Chippix'

The folks from regional TV (BBC Look East) met me down at my local pub The Carpenters Arms, Maldon where the licensee, some customers and I were interviewed for a programme screened that evening. The image here shows the licensee Richard Henfrey (left), BBC TV reporter Felicity Simper (centre) and me.



(b) New Zealand – ‘This Way Up’

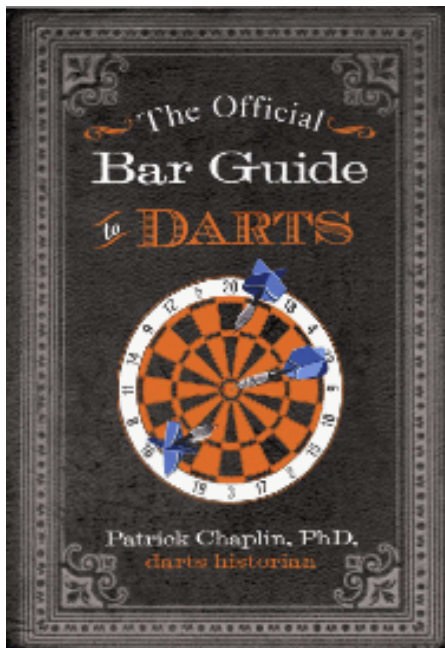
That’s the title of a show on Radio New Zealand National that I recorded in February with presenter Simon Morton (produced by Richard Scott) and which was broadcast on 20th March.

The discussion focused mainly on the history and global development of the sport. I’m not sure if the programme will still be downloadable by the time you read this but, if interested, please try <http://www.radionz.co.nz/thiswayup>.

New Zealand darts hit the headlines back in 1985 when Lillian Barnett won the WINMAU World Women’s Masters. Further success followed for the NZ ladies who won the WDF women’s World Cup in 1991 and were runners up in both 1995 and 1997. The New Zealand men have had little impact in world darts thus far although kiwi Philip Hazel qualified for the 2009 Las Vegas Desert Classic and produced some excellent darts in his first round defeat to James Wade.

Interestingly, as far as I am aware, the New Zealand Darts Council was the first national darts organisation to produce a coaching manual back in the 1980s authored by Barry Thomas the then National Coaching Director of the Darts Federation of Australia. It was and remains an excellent manual and the type of document that is becoming increasingly relevant in these days when more and more youth darts academies are being founded not only in the UK but elsewhere across the world.

BOOKS



My new book *The Official Bar Guide to Darts*, referred to in Issue One is to be published in New York in May with publication in the UK in June. The promotional folk at Sterling Publishing and I are working hard to raise global awareness of the book and of course it can be pre-ordered via Amazon.com or Amazon.co.uk.



By the time Issue Three is published I will have all the information you need about *“Scoring for Show – Doubles For Dough – Bobby George’s Darts Lingo* which will be on the bookshelves later in the year. With only the cover design to be completed Bobby and I are on schedule to bring this hilarious book to the shelves in time for Christmas.



(The photo (by Chris Sargeant) shows Bobby and me signing the book deal at Lakeside at the World Championships.)

CAPITAL DARTS

For any darts player visiting London from within the UK or from abroad it is becoming increasingly difficult to track down pubs where you can find a dartboard. Justin Irwin (aka ‘The Bachelor of Darts’) has undertaken some rigorous research – visiting every pub must have been really hard work – and produced the quintessential guide to darts pubs in central London. Visit www.justinirwin.com for full details.

There is also an article on my website where Justin tells you where you can still find the East End Fives dartboard still in play. The East End Fives board was the grandfather of today’s standard trebles dartboard.

FINLAND DARTS

I was contacted recently by a Finnish darts author Mikko Laiho who, having published *Enemman Dartssita!* in his native country earlier this year, was asking for my help with some aspects of darts history for his next book.



It turns out that Mikko had represented Finland no less than four times (in 1984, 1985, 1987 and 2004) at the WINMAU World Masters and made the last 32 on two occasions (1985 and 2004). In 1985 his opponent just happened to be Eric Bristow. Mikko told me

‘I lost to Eric 1-2, 1-2 and when he made 170 shot out to take the first set, I shook his hand to congratulate him. He remembered that after the final dart and he told me that he likes me. Me, being a little cocky and trying to be at least funny, told him that will NOT be the case after we would have met the next time! He burst into laughter and told me having an attitude like that would take me a long way.’

Talking of the World Masters...

WINMAU WORLD MASTERS DATES SET

My sponsors, the WINMAU Dartboard Company has recently announced that the World Masters will be held at The Spa, Bridlington from Friday 29th to Sunday 31st October 2010. I certainly hope to be there and perhaps I'll meet up with some of you there too.

CHARITY DARTS – THE SPORTS ARGUS

In Issue One I apologised to my darting friends in Vietnam for taking so long to put an article about the sport in Saigon on my website. This time I am pleased to say that the article I promised to write about ‘The Sports Argus Charity Darts Squad’ (a Birmingham, England-based team) has now been published on my website, only about a year after I first spoke with Sports Argus’ top man, Ken Herbert.



Ken reckons that his team has been raising funds for charity for longer than any similar team on the planet. So there's the challenge. Read the article on my website at www.patrickchaplin.com/SportsArgus.htm and then tell me if you know of any darts team, specifically set up to raise funds for charity year-on-year, who have been doing it for longer.



FACT, FICTION OR FACTION?

What is the point of me debunking myths?

In my book *Darts in England 1900-1939: A social history* I showed that darts did not arrive in the USA via *The Mayflower*, I proved that the famous ‘Foot’ Annakin legal case was nothing but a local issue inflated by other darts writers and I also debunked the ‘fact’ that the original length of the oche was based on putting three beer crates together.

After all that, imagined how *stunned* I was when a friend sent me a cutting from *The Independent*, a top-quality UK newspaper, which indicated that something I had written for fun seven years ago had been printed as fact. The article was titled ‘Minor British Institutions – Darts’ and was written by one of *The Independent’s* most senior reporters, Sean O’Grady. Sean wrote, ‘The ancient origins of the game are poorly chronicled, but the “oldest oche in the world” – dating back about 350 years – was uncovered in a former pub in Essex, naturally, and it seems an English invention.’

The *only* place Sean could have sourced that from is my article “Is this the Oldest Oche?” which can be found on my website at www.patrickchaplin.com/Oldoche.htm. It was an April Fool’s item that I wrote back in 2002!

The lesson surely is, check your sources, and don’t be fooled by April Fool pranks.

HORSE HAIR DARTBOARDS

I am sure that a good number of darts fans out there will have heard of the theory that dartboards in the past were made of, amongst other things, pig bristle or horsehair. I always thought this was yet another myth perpetuated by itinerant darts scribes but I may be wrong.

It appears that English and Korean academics have discovered startling new evidence to support the horsehair theory. We indeed live in exciting times and a report from my international correspondent Gerald O’Lapane and his assistant is included as an Appendix to this *Newsletter*.

QUESTIONS I CAN’T ANSWER... It’s not cricket surely?

While I was writing *The Official Bar Guide to Darts* I received a good deal of advice and guidance about darts in the USA from Chris Carey, author of *The American Darts Organization Book of Darts* (Guilford, Connecticut: The Lyons Press, Revised Edition, 2005) for which I sincerely thank him.

Chris and I exchanged e-mails about all kinds of issues but one thing we could never find an answer to was why the game which in the UK is called ‘Tactics’ is called ‘Cricket’ in the USA and Canada. What has always puzzled me is why a word like ‘cricket’ should be



applied to an American game when as far as I know the only time the word is used over there (other than in darts) is when they're talking about Jiminy Cricket, the famous cartoon character. Folks across the pond certainly have no interest whatsoever in the English field game of cricket so for the moment Chris and I have agreed that the origins of the name remain uncertain.

So here's my theory:

Once upon a time during the early 1940s US troops came over to England and invaded our pubs. They became involved with darts and played not only the standard 301 and 501 but also a range of alternative games. One US guy played, amongst others, both 'tactics' and 'cricket' (the latter based on the English field game). When he returned to, say, Philadelphia, he remembered the most interesting of those games ('tactics') but accidentally called it 'cricket'. Over time the game became popularized in the US as Cricket and spread across the country until it achieved the position of being more popular than even the '01 games.

How else could such a totally English word have entered into the American darts and indeed the American language?

What do *you* think? Was the game named in error once it had been brought over from England? If you have any other theories or perhaps even know the real answer then please contact me.

COMING UP NEXT TIME

In Issue Three I will prepare you for the holiday season and recommending places to play darts on Cyprus and the Greek island of Zante. There will be more information about my books and whatever else I get up to – dartswise – in the interim.

FEEDBACK

Well, that's it for Issue Two. I hope you've found something of interest. If you wish to let me have any feedback about any of the content just drop me a line via my website.

Cheers!

Patrick

31st March / 1st April 2010



ACADEMICS REVEAL NEW EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HORSEHAIR DARTBOARD THEORY

There has been a great deal of speculation in the past about what exactly the first dartboards were made from.

For years it was believed that they were made of slices of tree trunks. This is bound up in the myth that Mediaeval soldiers used broken arrows (commonly called ‘arrers’) thrown at tree trunks to amuse themselves after a weary days battle. Yet there has never been any primary source material found to bear this out. Other theories, such as the first darts targets being made from clay or gum are similarly devoid of contemporary evidence.

But today such theories can be cast to the four winds thanks to a breakthrough by researchers at the Karl Chontae University (KCU) in Korea. They have discovered evidence to show that the first dartboards were actually manufactured from *horsehair*.

Professor Karl Manhart of the Ancient and Traditional Sports Studies Department at the KCU said in a recent interview for local network Po-Liflaro TV, “For years my colleagues and I were convinced that horsehair dartboards preceded wooden elm or poplar dartboards and that horsehair boards were used for centuries before the sisal dartboard became standard in the 1970s. Yet despite compelling theories and argument, we had been unable to find that vital piece of information to prove our theory.”

However, all that has now changed.

An excited Professor Manhart added, “We came upon the evidence purely by accident. A casual remark during a reception for visiting academics from the UK led to me discussing my theories with Max Calverton, Professor of Equine Studies at the Ulting University, England. Professor Calverton just happened to mention his research which shows conclusively that there was a period during the 13th century in English history where, for some unknown reason, all the horses were bald and tailless.”

Everything clicked.

The two academic giants then talked and drank into the night, Professor Calverton telling of a time when alehouse patrons after having imbibed and stayed overlong at the inn went out into the darkness of the night and found that the hair from the manes and tails of their steeds had disappeared. No horse was safe and many thousands, especially in the London area, were disfigured in this way. Yet despite the best efforts of veterinarian expert Dr. Shaun Talesenmains (University College Hospital, Langford, England) the exact cause was never determined.

But thankfully the mystery has now been solved. When Professor Manhart spoke to Professor Calverton of the period when the game of darts became a popular recreation in



England and that it was played on horsehair dartboards it all fell into place. The two geniuses realized that the period of mane-shaving corresponded *exactly* to the period of the rise of the dartboard as an alehouse recreation.

Furthermore their combined research revealed another coincidence; that 1630, the year in which horses began to re-grow their manes and suffer no further interference or damage, was *exactly* the same year as dartboard manufacture (until then an underground operation) came out into the open with the introduction of the wooden elm (later poplar) dartboard. Rather than destroy the surplus horsehair the board-makers sold it to local mattress makers.

Whilst the exact process by which the horsehair was gathered together and held in place to form the target board remains a mystery both Professor Calverton and Professor Manhart will be having more meetings in alehouses across England (as their packed research schedules permit) to further expand on this fascinating co-operative academic endeavour.

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