

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 20 November 2011



Welcome one and all to Issue #20.

I've had a fascinating few weeks recently darts-wise which have included interviewing the twice *News of the World* champion Mike Gregory. Darts fans may recall that in the 1987/88 season, Mike became only the third man to retain the *News of the World* Individual Darts Championship title, following in the footsteps of Eric Bristow (1982/83 and 1983/84) and Tom Barrett (1963/64 and 1964/65). Many will also recall Mike's oh-so-close battle with Phil Taylor in the 1992 Embassy World Professional Darts Championship.

Mike and I chatted on the phone for over an hour and so I'm now busy writing up my notes in preparation for a *DDN* feature on Mike in the New Year. The image here shows Mike being presented with the 1988 *NoW* trophy by Page 3 model, Maria Whittaker. (Copyright holder unknown. Image courtesy of *DW/PC* Archive.)



Mike tells me that he is still playing super league darts and hopes to be back on the exhibition circuit very soon.

In mid-October I was approached by Mike Rudkin, webmaster for the new BDO website, asking if I would like to have a presence on the site, writing an article per month on not only darts history but any other darts issues that spring to mind. Of course I've jumped at the chance. An introductory piece has already been posted on the site www.bdodarts.com and the first major article, titled *A Brief History of Darts*, will appear on 1st December. As the Embassy/Lakeside is celebrating its 35th anniversary in 2012, the January article will look back on the very first Embassy World Professional Darts Championship held in 1978 which was won by Wales' Leighton Rees.

As promised last time, in this month's issue I will be providing more information about the late Brian Netherton and his sensational win in the 1972 *NoW* final against Wales' Alan Evans plus I've further follow-up about dart flight collecting (posh word 'belopterophilist') and much, much more.

Onward Issue 20...

FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES

(a) Dart flight collecting

It's good to see that my second reference to Martyn C's dart flight collection (*DDN* 19) and to his new website resulted in an approach to Martyn from fellow collector Kent B from Denmark. Kent, who has a small collection of players' flights, told me, "I've never really told anyone about my collection, so it was interesting to read about Martyn's collection. I contacted him and he was very interested in taking over my collection in a swap but then we discovered a little difference in collecting."

The difference was that Martyn collects sets of three flights whereas Kent's collection consists of single examples, Kent utilising the other two to swap with fellow collectors. While Martyn's method of collecting is logical, Kent asks, "So now I'm just a little curious as to find out how flight collectors of today collect?"

I know for a fact that back in the 1980s and 1990s serious flight collectors, including Freddy Olievier and Marc Van den Avond from Belgium, Michael Everton (South Africa) and Wilfried Hinsch (Germany), collected single examples. My own collection, accumulated over 25 years, is similar, but a lot, lot smaller. However, I do tend to keep vintage paper flights (usually advertising tobacco) in their original sets of three.



Whilst my flight collection mainly rests in four albums, I did produce a 'flight of flights' to accompany an article I wrote for *Darts Player* 89 which is shown here comprising entirely of brewery-related flights. (Image © 1989 Ian Hughes)

It is sad to look at this image now and see how many of these brewers have folded over the past two decades.

To view Kent's collection of players' flights go to <http://kentbovin.com/darts/flights/>.

Martyn has also been contacted by Wazza, one of *DDN*'s Australian subscribers, with a view to sharing information about their flight collections. Hopefully this will lead to a world-wide group of enthusiasts perhaps forming an internet group and possibly setting up a website specifically for darts flights collecting. If it is then, don't forget, it all started here with *DDN*.

I'll have more about dart flights in the next issue and maybe darts badges too.

(b) Darts in Germany

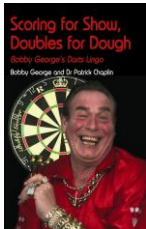
In the last issue of *DDN* I mentioned the German darts star Bernd Hebecker and the fact that my friend Charis had posted an interview with Bernd on her website. The good news is that, since then, Charis has produced an article about the actual history of darts in her country. I am always thrilled to learn of darts fans who are researching the history of darts outside of the UK. Charis is a great example of what can be achieved. Her *History of Darts in Germany* (in English) can be found at

<http://www.globaldarts.de/globalDartsEN/global/Europa/HistoryGermany.html>

Clearly I don't have enough years allocated to me to be able to undertake very much research into the history of darts elsewhere in the world so if anyone else is researching the history of darts in their country I would be very pleased to hear from them via my website www.patrickchaplin.com.

(c) *Scoring for Show, Doubles for Dough – Bobby George's Darts Lingo*

I received a rather strange e-mail recently which read "I see that you and Bobby Dazzler have written a book *Scoring for Show – Doubles for Dough*. Could you tell me what it's about please?" (Er, excuse me. Are you having a laugh?)



Surely the person could find that out via Bobby or my website, our publishers' website or via Amazon but, no. I guessed then that the request was genuine and so decided to send my enquirer a copy of US author Dan William Peek's review. It's probably the best review Bobby and I have received thus far and will be appearing in *Bull's Eye News (BEN)* in the USA and Canada in December and hopefully in slightly amended format in *Darts World* at the same time.

So over to you Dan.

Scoring for Show, Doubles for Dough

Reviewed by Dan William Peek

This is a unique book, in just about every way. And it all works.

The front cover features Bobby George, veteran British darts pro decked out like a Christmas tree in shiny red shirt and enough gold chain and diamond rings to fund another trip to Hollywood for William and Kate. He appears to be laughing manically, his face as red as his shirt. Surely several blood vessels did not survive the photo shoot. Behind him is a Bobby George signature dartboard.

Inside the back cover is another photo of George and his co-author, Dr. Patrick Chaplin. Dr. Chaplin contemplates the camera with quiet elegance, while Bobby seems to be only

somewhat calmed of the fit of mirth on the front cover. If you weren't familiar with Chaplin's chosen profession, you might think something like "My God, what has Patrick gotten himself into?"

What Patrick Chaplin, Ph. D of Darts, has gotten himself into is a rollicking, spot on romp through the culture of the sport of darts. Even if Dr. Chaplin were not credited with authorship, it would not be difficult to recognize his imprimatur. For example, alternative phrases or terms are preceded by the words "also collected". That's a folklorist and etymologist tag, a tip off I think that the Dr. has worked Bobby George's Darts Lingo like the veteran, determined scholar that we know him to be. And the proof is there, in the proverbial pudding.

For his part, George is the perfect pairing for Chaplin in this endeavor. Profane – self-censorship an alien concept, it seems. Irreverent, non-stop and rapid fire, his prose wafts the scent of intense competition laced with hi jinks, guffaws, smoke filled pubs and pints of ale, the odd shot of whisky tossed off now and then to stir things up a bit. In short, Bobby George embodies the sport of darts. Bobby *is* darts, real darts - authentic and authoritative darts. His voice is gritty and good to the last turn of phrase.

Here's a sample George-ism from the book. This is something he tells disgruntled pub shooters: "The doubles are all the same size; they just live in different places".

The book is about what it says it is about, "darts lingo". And a special language is very important in the development of a sport. Sports are games or exercises that have attached additional requirements having to do with things like language and style and methods of expressing emotion. A sport is created through the development of a culture specific to the contest of skill or strength from which it arises.

This book is, however, no mere glossary of darts phrases and terms, it is an exacting fun filled examination and analysis of the language and culture of darts in the English speaking world. The history of the phrase is often revealed. There is, for example, a terrific discussion of the origin of the terms "hockey" and "oche", as well as "bull's-eye", "middle" and "cork" and many others.

American readers will be pleased with the number of terms shared with the overseas practitioners of the sport there are more than a few. The only shared term I found that was not as I have heard it a few times in the darts venues of America was "Middle for Diddle". I have heard it here as "Diddle for the Middle". The book correctly points out that in the USA people "shoot" darts rather than "play" the sport.

The only discussion in the book that I would perhaps take issue with is the one about a "Friendly Match". The authors say that this means a casual round of darts and that it arises from the way in which brewers initially presented the idea of leagues to pubs and patrons. So there is justification for including the phrase, but I have witnessed a significant number of darts contests and I have yet to gaze upon a truly "friendly match".

I think this book substantially advances the sport toward a universal language. I doubt that much of the rhyming cockney darts slang that has been around for decades will ever really cross the Pond. But there are enough terms in common to indicate a general melding of global darts lingo. This is an essential progression for any sport.

As noted, though, this is a book about the culture and history of darts as revealed through its language and traditions. Best example: there is included a delightful, Joycean anecdote about Jack Hood, who manufactured dart boards in England during the early and mid-twentieth century. When asked what material he used in the manufacture, he replied that he used the wood of the Elm tree. In darts he explained, “Men play with the same wood as they are buried in.”

Just perfect – buy this book at once.

Dan William Peek

[Dan William Peek (pictured) is a writer who lives with his wife, Joy, near Columbia, Missouri. Dan is the author of To The Point: The Story of Darts in America (Pebble Publishing, 2009).

My review of Dan’s ground-breaking work on US darts history can be found on my website www.patrickchaplin.com.]



With the festive season fast approaching and people having to make serious decisions about what to buy their darts fan friends, subscribers will not be surprised to read that I’ll be puffing *Scoring for Show* even more in the December *DDN*.

(d) Stan Allen (and now Gerry Goddard) – Elm Dartboard Maker

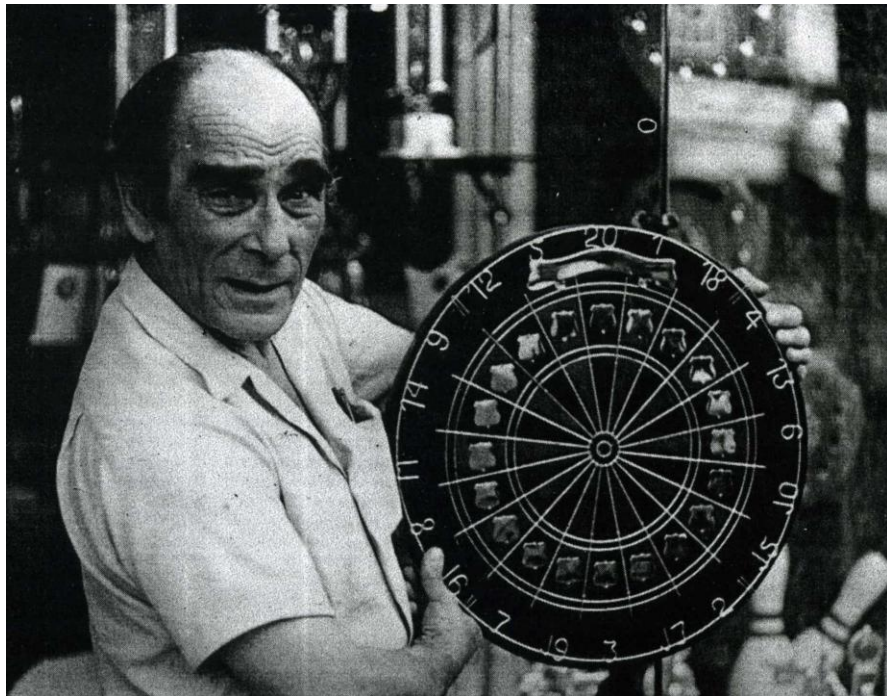
Back in August (*DDN* #17) I featured Stan Allen who made wooden elm dartboards in Oxford in the 1950s. It brought back some fond memories from Eamonn W. (see *DDN* #18) and for my good friend H de H who after issue 17 e-mailed me asking “Did you know about Gerry and Sadie Goddard, trading as Magpie’s Nest in London Road, Norbury, South London?” adding, “They had a retail premises selling darts and trophies and in a shed at the back Gerry would make elm boards. I watched him do this in 1979/1980. The shed was quite cosy as it had an elm tree in it waiting to be sawn...!”

The reason I did not include H de H’s comment until now is because I recognised the name ‘Magpie’s Nest’ but could not recall where I had heard of it before. When time allowed only recently I had a chance to search through back issues of 1970s darts newspapers and magazines. My patient and relentless research paid off eventually in the form of Issue 2 of the long-defunct *Double Top* newspaper dated September 1976. There, on page 11, was a feature about the ‘Magpie’s Nest’.

According to the article, Gerry and Sadie Goddard entered the sport of darts ‘almost by accident’ and that their ‘now encyclopaedic knowledge of the game and its intricacies’ were ‘a long throw’ from their initial faltering steps four years ago, in 1972, when they found that the antique shop they had taken over (called the ‘Magpie’s Nest’) also sold darts.

By 1976 the Goddard family’s involvement with darts was almost total, by then carrying an impressive stock of 200 patterns of tungsten darts, 400-500 different brass sets (still the most popular darts at the time) plus approximately 200 different flights. The article added that Gerry’s son Terry, who with his brother Derek worked full-time at the shop, spent most of his day ‘making up Magpie’s Nest’s own range of elm board’, clearly those referred to by H de H above.

Terry told *Double Top* “We choose best quality elm rounds, free from knots, and our boards are made up double-sided. We also use sprung steel rather than alloy wires as players prefer these because they keep their shape.” As a ‘top tip’ Terry advised purchasers that the board should ‘go into soak about twice a week and be hung wet.”



Those were the days! (Thanks H de H.)

By the way, the image above (copyright holder unknown) shows Gerry Goddard with what seems to be a unique ‘Magpie’s Nest’ dartboard designed as a darts trophy. I would imagine that there are not many of those about today. (Now prove me wrong!)

Research note: The darts newspaper *Double Top* was the brainchild of Roger St. Pierre (later editor of the *Unicorn Darts Yearbook* 1978). The editor was Mike Williams and the first issue appeared in August 1976. In 1977 *Double Top* was incorporated with a new darts newspaper *Darts News*, published by *Darts World* editor Tony Wood; the first issue appearing on the newsstands on Friday June 17th that year.

(e) Pegasus Darts

It was way, way back in an early issue of *DDN* that I was asked what I knew about



‘Pegasus Darts’ (pictured) and the answer was, quite literally, nothing. Now, thanks to subscriber Steve P., I do have *some* information about the company. Steve wrote, “I was looking through some back issues of *Darts World* for information about Leighton Rees when I found an article called ‘The New Pegasus Range’.

The article, which appears in the March 1978 issue of *Darts World*, opens with the comment ‘Over the past eighteen months

Pegasus Darts of Great Missenden, Bucks has been steadily developing an interesting range in darts’ and thus this suggests that the company was formed circa 1976.

The original aim of the company was to produce ‘a complete and different range which could appeal to everyone from the casual pub player to the serious match contender’. Having achieved that by 1978, the company began to seek suitable wholesalers in the UK ‘to extend its sales coverage and reach a far larger market.’

Managing Director, Chris Hatton told *Darts World* that the products he had designed comprised a ‘unique range’ which featured a number of ‘firsts’ including the CF90 match shaft made of carbon fibres. Chris was also convinced that his real winners for 1978 were the company’s ‘Everbrite’ tungsten nickel/copper alloy range ‘with red rings on the barrel’ and his new combination dart range ‘with blue rings’.

So we appear to have *part* of the story of Pegasus darts. Clearly the company’s darts (pictured above) are brass so there remains the early history of Pegasus to track down. Then there is the question, “What happened to Pegasus darts?”

If anyone can help complete the picture please contact me via my website www.patrickchaplin.com.

BRIAN NETHERTON – NEWS OF THE WORLD DARTS CHAMPION 1972

In issue #19 of *DDN* I included a brief obituary about Brian Netherton, one of the many unsung heroes of the sport of darts, who died in September this year and promised to include more about his magnificent performance against hot favourite, Wales’ Alan Evans in the final of the 1972 *News of the World* Individual Darts Championship. In

beating Evans, Brian (pictured, copyright holder unknown) became the first Cornishman to win the coveted title.

Subscriber Mick S. watched the display of darts on ITV with the commentary by Dave Lanning. Mick told me, “I believe the final you mention was when Brian Netherton beat the late, great Alan Evans when Brian hit the bull (if it’s the match I recall) to win the title. Before he threw the dart Brian bent down to see where his last dart had hit the board and then in one move came straight up and threw his dart, almost on the move and ‘bang’ straight into the bull. To this day I remember that fantastic shot.”



Well Mick you remember it well. It was that match and what a finish it was!

(Incidentally, 1972 was the first year that the *News of the World* tournament was televised by ITV’s *World of Sport*.)

Eddie N., who managed Alan Evans at the time, goes one better than Mick in as much as he was there at Alexandra Palace, north London on 29th April 1972 when Brian Netherton confounded the punters and doubtless pleased the bookies with a 2-0 win over the Welsh champion who was billed as ‘David (Alan) Evans’.

Eddie told me, “Yes I was there. Alan Evans, the Pride of Wales, was favourite for the title. He had at least a thousand Welsh supporters to see him through, singing ‘Land of my fathers’, etc. The ‘Ally Pally’ was a bedlam of Welsh voices.” But despite this build up it was the 30-year-old Cornishman who took the title in sensational fashion with a bull’s-eye finish.

Brian was playing out of *The Welcome Inn*, Par, Cornwall and was the Western Counties *News of the World* Divisional Champion. Alan was playing from his father’s pub, the *Ferndale Hotel* in the Rhondda. His parents Dai and Myra were his No. 1 supporters. The London and Home Counties Divisional Champion, Dennis Filkins, who had won the championship the previous year, was bidding to emulate Tom Barrett by retaining the title but was defeated in the semi-final 2-1 by an on-form Evans.

Brian had defeated both the Eastern Counties champion (Peter Crane) and John Walker (the Yorkshire champion) on his way to the final where he was to meet Evans. Brian won the first leg (remember this was always ‘best of the three games’) and then stunned the Ally Pally by winning the second leg (and thus the tournament) with a bull’s-eye finish. The *News of the World* trophy, which was presented to Brian by Arsenal football club stars Pat Rice (not Peter Marinello as stated in the programme) and Bob McNab, was going to Cornwall for the very first time.

As was normal at that time, the winner of the *News of the World* Darts Championship, Brian was invited to contest the 1972 Sweden Open as guest of the Sweden Darts Federation and was sponsored by Pripps Brewery for the trip. Brian went to Sweden and won the title.

Eddie N. told me, “The Palace was stunned when Alan lost” but, despite the defeat, Eddie said, “Alan made his name that day on TV, galloping across the stage, skipping and jumping up and down. When he got home he was the player everyone in the UK wanted to see and he turned full-time professional.”



As for Brian, who Eddie described as ‘a true quiet gent’, he went back to work in Cornwall but a month later, at The Patchway Labour Club in Bristol, *three-thousand* people including, 1,500 welsh men from the valleys, turned up to see Alan play Brian in a rematch which Alan won 5-2. Eddie told me, “Brian did a brilliant speech afterwards and his punch line was “I won it when it mattered”. As for Alan, he told the huge audience “Brian is a true gentleman of darts and his *News of the World* victory on the bull I will never forget.”

(This image of Alan Evans is from a promotional card circa 1975/76 from the author’s collection.)

ANOTHER BOOK?

A few darts fans have contacted me over the past three months asking if I will be writing anymore books on darts. A while back Bill B. wrote

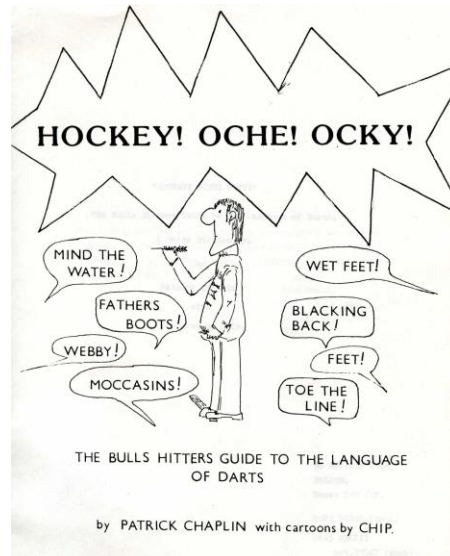
Patrick,

I’ve just been looking through your past issues of DDN looking at the memorabilia pieces which interest me the most and was wondering whether you had considered doing a book on vintage darts and memorabilia. There are a lot of collectors out there and with your knowledge I’d think you’d be on to a winner! I would definitely buy it!

In fact, some years ago, I did send a proposal to Shire Publications in the UK outlining a proposed book about ‘Darts Memorabilia’ but at that time the publishers thought it would not work. Perhaps it’s time to revive the concept. Thanks Bill. I’ll give it some more thought.

On the book front, I am currently writing a book called *Fantastic Darts Facts*. I did receive a contract from a publisher to publish it in 2012 but with no money upfront - that's apparently the way publishers have to work these days – I declined because at present I cannot afford to work for nothing. However, I have faith in *Fantastic Darts Facts* so will persevere with that idea.

I've had false starts before. I first had the idea for a 'darts dictionary' back in the mid-1980s and drafted a book called *Hockey! Oche! Ocky* circa 1985 (see cover proof shown here). After failing to secure a publisher (being fed up of being turned down) I shelved the idea until Bobby George and Ray Stubbs performed their legendary 'lingo' sketch during the 2008 Lakeside World Championships broadcast by the BBC. Following that Bobby and I had the same idea. We met and he rest, as they say, is history...



Talking of history I am still working on the draft of my *People's History of Darts*, the first complete history of our sport from Day One. That's a mammoth task and will build on the detail of my *Darts in England 1900-1939 – A social history* (Manchester University Press, 2009) but will not be so 'academic' and appeal, hopefully, to all; thus the title.

BULLSEYE ON TOUR

When responding to *DDN* #19 ("Thanks Patrick, a very good read, as always.") top darter Bob Anderson reminded me about the Bullseye Theatre Tour which is currently touring the UK with the familiar *Bullseye* TV quiz game format.

The players featured include Bob, Eric Bristow, John Lowe and Martin Adams. Bob told me, "We're doing a total of fifteen venues across the country. It's been a great laugh so far and the audiences are growing as the word gets around." He added, "The show is attracting a lot of very positive comments, with most saying what fun they had, and how close to the original Bullseye experience it is." (Image courtesy Andrew Wood)



There are a number of remaining dates for the tour during November. For details of the

remaining shows go to <http://www.bullseyetvgameshow.com/Theatre.htm>.

Thanks Bob.

CAN YOU HELP FIND THESE 'EMBASSY' DARTS?

Darts enthusiast Lee H. of Northumberland, UK has contacted me with a plea for help.

Lee is searching for a set of 'Embassy' tungsten darts like those that could be purchased some years ago with vouchers collected from packs of Embassy cigarettes and exchanged for goods through the Embassy 'Focus' catalogue. Lee has contacted Imperial Tobacco but alas the stocks ran out years ago.

He's also tried e bay and other internet auction sites without success so I'm wondering if any *DDN* subscribers can help. If you can then Lee would be very pleased to hear from you. He can be contacted by e-mail at: dart2darts@yahoo.co.uk.

NDAGB HISTORY

I've made a major breakthrough in learning more about the setting up of the National Darts Association of Great Britain (NDAGB) in the 1950s.

Last year I was contacted by a lady from Sussex whose mother had recently been placed in a nursing home. While sorting out her mother's flat she found a box of papers that belonged to her father (who had been a darts organiser but who had died in 1972). The papers dated from 1953 and showed how darts organisers worked with *The People* to form the NDAGB *and* formed the beginnings of what would very soon become the county darts structure.

Needless to say I was thrilled to receive these papers into my archive. Although I am still sorting through them, I have already gained a great insight to those early post-war years of darts and the birth of the NDAGB *and* the real beginning of darts' UK county structure. The letters and minute books have, even in this short space of time, increased my knowledge of an organisation that was to look after darts for nearly three decades thereafter. The final results of this aspect of my research will eventually be included in my aptly titled *The People's History of Darts* (forthcoming).



Included in the box of material was a trophy, a ladies' doubles trophy (pictured above), which was contested for only three years (1958 to 1960) and sponsored by Guinness. When I took possession of it, the 'Toucan' (the famous Guinness logo for many years) trophy was in four pieces and seemingly beyond repair. Here you can see it now restored to its former glory. I doubt we will ever see its like again. *This*, I am sure you will agree, really is a striking, quality piece of darts memorabilia.

AND FINALLY...

“Have they ever played darts at the north pole?”

This must be one of the most extraordinary questions I have ever received via my website www.patrickchaplin.com.

I trawled through my files and the first few years' worth of *Darts World* and have been able to send the following reply:

As far as I'm aware no official darts match has been played at the North Pole. In Norway in 1973 there was an English-style club/pub which had a darts team. It was in the town of Gradval, 70 miles north of the Arctic Circle. In the late 1970s the Swedish town of Lulea, just south of the Arctic Circle claimed to be the most northerly darts club in the world. With only 1 ½ hours of darkness during the summer, they had plenty of time to practice!

Also, in 1977, Leighton Rees' tour of America took him to Alaska which is probably the furthest north any professional darts player has travelled for a match.

Given the periods of isolation various British and American military and scientific groups spend at those extremities I think I'd be safe in saying that 'yes' darts would have been played on a casual basis near to the Poles – indoors of course.

If any *DDN* subscriber has evidence of darts-playing at either the South or North Pole please send me details.

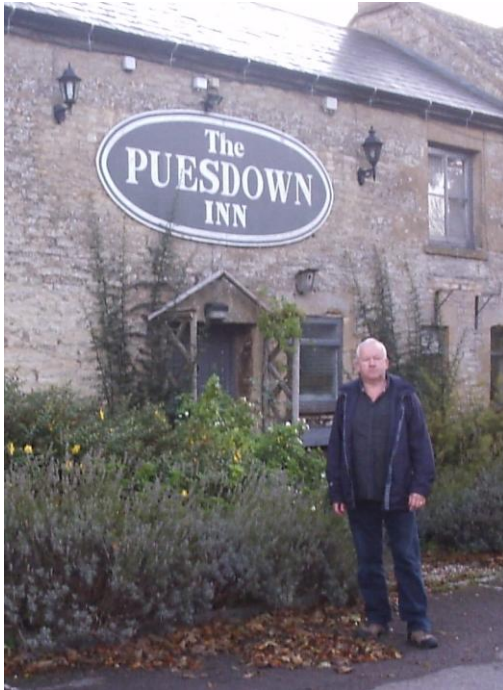
IN THE NEXT ISSUE...

Issue 21 will include

- The Houses of Parliament darts being **BANNED** from sale
- The 'Pouff Dart' Champion of 1938

- Darts as an Olympic sport

PLUS



I'll be telling you why I am standing outside this gastro pub in Gloucestershire and what it has to do with darts. (Image © 2011 Moppix)

So that's Issue #20 of *DDN* done and dusted.

I hope you've enjoyed it. As usual, any and all feedback is welcomed.

Until next time...

Patrick

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