DARTS HISTORY

(formerly *Dr. Darts' Newsletter*)

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NUMBER 200

I'm not sure if many of my subscribers who have been with me since the beginning would have believed that we would still be here 200 issues on. But here we are.

What started out as a newsletter to a handful of, mostly already known, darts enthusiasts has grown like topsy with me not able to tell you how many readers I have, let alone how many I have since *Darts History* went truly global with all back issues now accessible via Darts501.com.

To celebrate the 200th issue I intend to spend the day…probably sleeping.

It is also now forty years since I started to research our sport and yet there is so much more to discover as you will read in the other main article in this issue where we discover *another* possible link with darts' origins.

Sorry. No prizes this time.

You may have noticed that I parted company with Winmau/Nodor a couple of months ago after 20+ years of their sponsoring my research. They were great times.



Vince Bluck, the then Managing Director of Nodor/Winmau, used to send me occasional product for prizes on special occasions and even produced exclusive 'Doctor Darts' dartboards when our sponsorship first began.

(Image, left, shows Vince (on the right) presenting me with the dartboard (of which I was given ten).)

A few years later, Vince produced another for me to celebrate my 70th birthday in 2020. In that event, there was just one produced.

It was through the generosity of Vince and Nodor/Winmau that I was able to create *Dr. Darts' Newsletter (DDN)*, now *Darts History*, and it was through my great friend Dr. Eddie Norman that the word of darts history has spread across the world. Thanks also to my wife,

Maureen, who has tolerated my enthusiasm for darts for more years than either of us can remember. Thanks too, to all of **you**, my subscribers, who have submitted feedback or have simply just been there.

However, I have no intention of ending *Darts History* at #200, even though one or two of my contacts have wondered if that day had come. No. It hasn't yet. So I will continue to researching and scribbling until my ink runs out.

But now, back to darts history.

For this 200th issue I present a latest 'discovery' something that makes me (and hopefully you my readers) think again about the origins of our great sport.

THE MISSING LINK?

I have used this phrase once or twice in the past but have never been more certain that it has been found. I have also been convinced that, despite those who do not believe or wish to deny a link between modern darts and archery and others who are convinced it is, fighting the corner that says "It **is** a form of miniature archery target."

However, although discovering a link between early days of English darts and the French game of flechettes (meaning small arrows), I have never found a target that linked darts with the usual archery target. That has all changed now thanks to an email titled ''Antique' tree slice dart board,' I received in early May 2026, from Fiona Kingdon of West Yorkshire.

Fiona wrote:

'Hi Dr Patrick,



Firstly, my apologies if my inquiry is of such common occurrence as to be of zero interest to you, but I recently found an old dartboard [see below, right] *in a recently passed relatives understairs cupboard.*

It is very wormy in places and every instinct of my woodcarver's heart makes me want to chuck it on the fire, but part of me feels I have to check in with someone better informed just in case it is of enough significance or interest to keep it safe from the flames!

It is double-sided, has the modern number layout, and I think it's likely to be hardwood (Elm? The beasties love it!) [Probably elm but often poplar too.]

I have attached a couple of images and would be grateful- if it's not a nuisance if you have any insights about it? I don't have a burning desire to keep it, so if you have any thoughts as to anyone who might like it then let me know.

All the best, Fiona Kingdon.'

A little later Fiona added

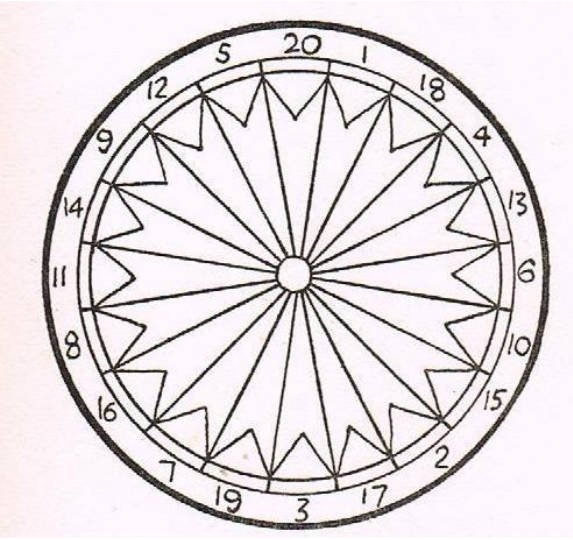
'The board was found in Northamptonshire (Oundle) not far from the Cambridgeshire/ Huntingdon border.

My relative was a quite a collector of stuff, but wasn't a particular collector of pub game paraphernalia. So it is not likely that he acquired it from very far away.'

Being made of wood, very old, and having been stored in a dry place for some years, the wooden dartboard has dried out and split, thus displacing the wires and distorted the shape of the spider (the wires forming the segments).

Readers of *Darts History*, studying the board on the previous page might, at first, assess it as being a Tonbridge or Reading dartboard, boards that I have discussed in back issues. I thought it was. But let's compare Fiona's dartboard with the Tonbridge.

I first discovered the Tonbridge (Kent) dartboard when author Rupert Croft-Cooke mentioned it in the 'Dart-Boards' section of his book *Darts* published in 1936. The numbers are 'standard' but there is no treble ring. Croft-Cooke confirmed that



'On these boards the outer scores treble, the little triangle behind it is the double, and this gives rise to some almost fantastic possibilities…'

Croft-Cooke's illustration (left) shows that the Tonbridge board has no outer bull; just a bullseye.

A dartboard of the same design was found in Reading, Berkshire, in the late 1930s.



Looking again at Fiona's dartboard (on Page 2), it is clear that, unlike the Tonbridge/ Reading board, there is no outer double ring. Thus, the triangles on the outer edge of the segments *must* represent doubles as there is no treble ring or scoring area.

This then made me think that perhaps Fiona's dartboard is a variation of the Yorkshire Board (right) that has never had trebles. But only a double ring and a single bull.

What is even more interesting than the front of Fiona's dartboard is what is revealed when you turn it over.

It is not uncommon to find a miniature archery-type on the reverse of modern small 'toy,' coiled paper dartboards but on Fiona's board we discover an alternative dart game (see below, left) which is clearly a miniature archery target. So is the target game on the reverse actually the main game and the 'dart' game on the front the secondary target?



If modern darts has, like I've always believed, evolved from archery what we see in this second image provided by Fiona (left) is clearly a miniature version of an archery target.

The outer concentric ring seems to be marked with a figure 0 or 2 (which is strange) and then followed inward by 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 and then the outer bull and bullseye which would have comprised 50 and 100 points respectively, (the latter two rings being too small to accommodate the metal numbers), figures that would be well known to toxophilites (lovers of archery) trying their hands at the smaller version of their favourite sport: a version of archery that can be played indoors, in the pub with ordinary darts, as Croft-Cooke wrote in 1936

'...a game to play with the golden glow of beer in one's brain, to the sound of tinkling glasses.'

To which I would add, '…No matter what version of darts you play."

My belief is that Fiona's dartboard is the closest I have ever seen to being the clearest evidence of the direct link between modern darts and toxophily/archery. I believe that because of the dartboard's historical importance it should be saved from the fire.

However, in view of the 'wormy' board's infestation with 'beasties,' this was not possible for me to take into my archive. Fiona's excellent photographs and this article seem to be the best and safest record.

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URGENT INFORMATION NEEDED – REGIONAL DARTBOARDS

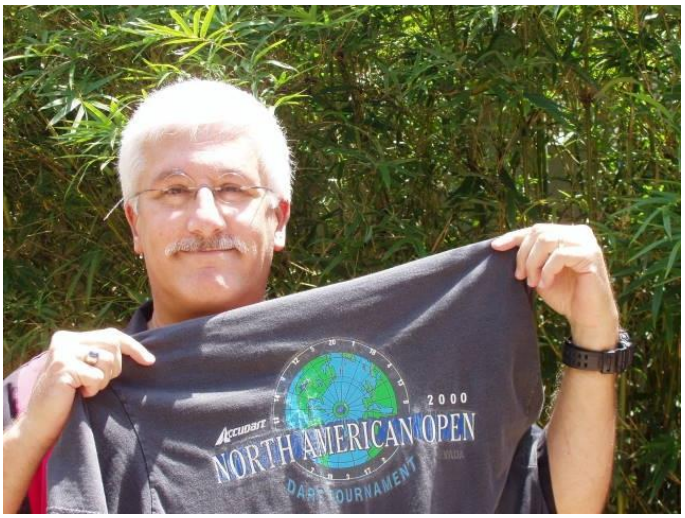


Some of you may be aware that contacts and I have been busy trying to 'save' some of the regional dartboards from extinction by pressing the Winmau Dartboard Co., Ltd., to continue producing those boards which, along with the 'standard,' featured in the company's catalogue for many years, up to recently. These were the Wide Fives, the Narrow Fives, (pictured right) the Lincoln, and the Yorkshire Board.

Certainly not manufacturing these boards will result in the eventual closure of a number of local leagues that have existed for many, many, years, unless another source can be found.

The purpose of this appeal is to ask for anyone whose darts team is playing on any of the four threatened dartboards to contact my colleague James Masters at play@mastersofgames.com, who has been kind enough to coordinate responses. Please ensure you include in your response, your name, the league, the specific dartboard you use and what might happen to your league if the supply of such boards cease.

The 200th issue – Some early celebrations



"HOLY CRAP!" That's the cry of surprise when Dartoid (Paul Seigel) (pictured right) realised the number *Darts History* had reached. He wrote:

'Hey Patrick...

It's amazing how time flies! I think I was a teenager when you published your first newsletter in 2010. I'll be turning 28 when you publish number 200. From puberty through college, you've been an integral part of my life - and I've learned SO much about darts history.

I didn't know that Jocky Wilson ran a sub-4-minute mile in high school. I didn't know that Bobby George was an early member of the Beatles. I didn't know that John Lowe once smiled. And I had no idea that if you replace the numbers on the board with their corresponding letter in the alphabet and rearrange them a bit and add some letters that it spells: "An American will win the world championship in 2065."

Patrick, your research and writing has educated a generation. What you have brought to the sport is unchallenged and never will be. CONGRATULATIONS on reaching the 200th newsletter threshold. I'll write again when you hit 300 or when I finally take out D1, whichever comes first.

And Team Horsham in Singapore wrote:

'Hi Dr Darts. A very big thank you for Darts History and many congratulations to you for reaching the 200th Edition. Best Darts Magazine ever - so precise and knowledgeable darts information every month. Thank You Dr Chaplin.'

From 'across the seas' Roger Christian wrote:

'Dear Patrick.

My wife, Wendy, and I would like to wish you many congratulations from across the seas on the amazing news that the November Darts History will be the 200th edition. I look forward to receiving the magazine in my inbox every month, thank you so much for all your hard work each month. Best wishes to you both.'

My friend of many oches, Dr. Eddie Norman has prepared a super poem for me (and Maureen) comprising over twenty verses of which the following are just a couple of verses:

'🎯 TWO HUNDRED NOT OUT! 🎯
An Ode to the Legends of Darts History

Two hundred editions! Good heavens above!
That's a lot of darts history, knowledge and love.
Month after month, like a well-thrown dart,
Patrick and Maureen have captured our hearts!.....

For Patrick and Maureen have conquered the year!
Two hundred editions, a wonderful score,
And here's hoping they publish two hundred more!'

Eddie then added:

'A very special congratulations to Patrick and Maureen! Two hundred editions of a free magazine, reaching readers in more than 100 countries, is a magnificent achievement. And with Patrick's extraordinary knowledge and Maureen's eagle-eyed proofreading, it's a partnership that deserves a standing ovation — preferably delivered while aiming at treble twenty! 🎯'

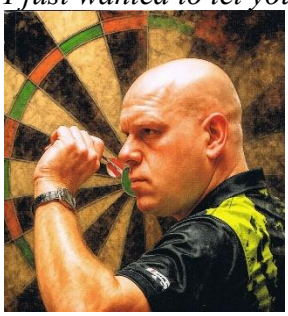
Thanks Eddie. Thank you so much. Sorry that I am unable to publish the entire, breathtaking, poem but if any subscribers would like a copy of it all, just email me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com and I'd be very pleased to send them a copy.

AI AND THOSE 'SLOP BOOKS'

Tom Cole wrote:

'Hi Patrick. Bravo on another riveting edition of Darts History (as always!).

I just wanted to let you know how much I'm enjoying your demolition jobs on the current crop of AI slop darts books. Your selected quotes from these publications are always eye-opening, and I love your combination of wry humour and expert dismissals of their nonsense.



While I wouldn't want to encourage the people behind these books to keep churning them out, I'm sure I'm not alone in hoping that you'll continue to expose these books for the rubbish they are in future editions of the newsletter.

And I can imagine it's painful to have to wade through all that AI nonsense, especially for someone of your expertise. My brother got me a dreadful AI darts book (well, pamphlet really) for Christmas and I hadn't the heart to tell him that he'd wasted his money. Let's hope

all these command-prompt driven works of drivel don't lead to too many falsehoods entering the public consciousness.'

The problem is indeed that such 'slop books' (Tom: I love that phrase!) will have no end and darts history and indeed *any* history can and will fall victim to AI interference and 'correction' eventually.

So, be aware readers. Ignore any darts books that profess, for example, that:

'In the professional scene, some players have even bet on achieving a "Nine-Dart Finish" ***without looking*** *[My emphasis] completing the perfect game without directly observing the dartboard. Although they did not manage to complete the feat on the original attempt, they did achieve a high score, showcasing their muscle memory and coordination.'*

Or those that tell you that a bullseye can be easily hit whilst **riding a bicycle**. Please note that the player's accuracy could be affected by the 'movement' of the bicycle. Indeed, it was only 'after multiple attempts,' the anonymous player completed the challenge.

Of course, he/she did.

By the way, did I ever tell you, dear readers, that I once stood outside my favourite pub in the rain and threw three different darts, without flights, through the open public bar window and all three of them landed in my mates' beer as he was drinking it? Sadly, I have no formal record of this feat.

David King (Darts501.com) has his own view and commented:

'AI-generated dart graphics with dartboards tend to be wrong; they do get the numbers wrong, or duplicate the numbers! I was sent an article [for consideration for placing on Darts501] *with an AI graphic. The whole article was AI-generated.*

I pointed out the errors and offered to correct it, but the client decided not to proceed with the placement. No worries. I wouldn't have published it in the state it was sent but I guess others might.

I use AI to create the odd graphic, so I know the good, the bad, and the ugly. However, expect to see a lot more; all picking up the untruths surrounding the sport! Happy Days!'

Thanks David. One has to wonder if, in time, there will exist no truth, only the history that AI amends on a regular basis which, of course, smacks of *1984*. (If you have not read George Orwell's book, please do so.)

Feedback – Bobby George's *News of the World*

Phil Barrow added some information following my article about Bobby George in #199:

'Patrick: A couple of FYIs:

I've found that Bobby George beat a certain Keith Deller on his way to qualifying from the Eastern Section in 1979 (plus Kevin Cushing and John Sibley in the final). Bobby beat Steve

Talbot in the final in 1980. In 1982 he beat Mick Banyard (semi-final) and Steve Brennan (Final) in 1982.' [Thanks Phil.]

And Mick S.:

'Morning Patrick. Great as ever. Fantastic to read about Bobby. Am I right in saying Bobby went through the N of W one year without losing a leg? If this is right, did he start at the pub level or further into the Tournament? [Mick: I'm checking.)

The question about tungsten being so expensive…My first set were Saturn Junior made by Paxman. I bought them mid 70s and they cost me £22: half of my wages for a week! I still have them.'

STEFAN LORD

Sad news reached me in October that darts champion Stefan Lord, the 'Ice-Cold Swede,' had passed away.



Although I never met the two-time *News of the World* champion (the first and only European darts player to win the title twice), a few years ago, I undertook an interview with Stefan via email which was published in my *Dr. Darts' Newsletter* (now *Darts History*) and was published on my website in 2019. Please check it out at

https://patrickchaplin.com/2019/08/21/stefan-lord/ .

RIP Stefan

The image, left, taken in 1982, shows Stefan aiming seemingly oblivious of the actions of England's Bobby George to distract his game. (Image: DW/PC Archive.)

PLEASE REMEMBER:

That every issue of *Dr. Darts' Newsletter/Darts History* is available to download at

https://darts501.com/patrick-chaplin.html

AND 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.

COMING IN ISSUE 201:

When BULLS became BEAZD.

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