

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 24 April 2012

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Issue 24 of *DDN*.



Yes, it's that time again and, as is appropriate here in the UK at this time of year, I have an exclusive story for you that will set the true history of our sport back more than one hundred years. However, it is a story that needs to be told and I have no qualms about publishing it.

THE NUMBERING OF A STANDARD DARTBOARD - EXCLUSIVE

More than three decades ago the news broke (from an anonymous source) that the inventor of the devious numbering of the segments on the standard dartboard was a Bury (Lancashire) carpenter named Brian Gamlin. Apparently Gamlin 'invented' the sequence circa 1880. However, over time, this claim has been thrown into doubt. Historians and those who are merely curious have attempted to track down evidence of Gamlin's existence so that it could be verified and all counterclaims dismissed. They have all failed.

After years of debate, documents recently discovered in a wooden box that had been bricked up in an inglenook of the ancient fireplace of the 15th century inn, *Ye Olde Sack and Duvet* in the tiny village of St. Clements-on-the-Hill, West Yorkshire reveal that Brian Camlin, not Gamlin, is the true inventor of the sequence. The box was retrieved during the demolition of the ancient public house to make way for affordable housing and a general access road to a new landfill site.

Camlin is a surname usually associated with the county of Somerset so it is assumed that our Brian was an itinerant jobbing carpenter who made his way from, say, Bath to Yorkshire to find work. The misspelling of the surname explains why no trace of him

could be found in relevant censuses (more popularly 'censi'). Look there now and there he is aged 44, a carpenter with no wife or dependents.



The box which has caused such a stir in the darts world measures 12 inches by 8 inches by 4 inches in depth was discovered by Pal O'Foril (pictured), an Irish/Lithuanian unskilled labourer in the employ of the Max Calverton Demolition Company (Stockport) Ltd.

Pal made the historic discovery whilst carefully dismantling the old pub's chimney

breast. He told *DDN* “I was hoping that it would contain something interesting, money perhaps, but no, only a note about making a dartboard, twenty fragments of parchment, five small coins of the realm and something small and furry which was quite dead.”

Piecing together the torn copy of the note reveals that Brian Camlin walked into *Ye Olde Sack and Duvet* on 1st April 1888 when the pub was then known as the *Star and Trumpet* and saw the game of darts being played. The board being used was a miniature version of an archery target with five rings radiating from the bull's-eye (which scored 50 points), the value of each ring reducing the further away they were from the centre.

Camlin took to the game like a duck to water and was very soon fleecing the locals of a quart of ale per game. Being a sensitive craftsman and aware of the poverty-stricken nature of the village population he decided to make the game more difficult. In his note he recorded, ‘On that first day of April 1888 I repaired to my workshop and created from the log-end of an elm tree (pictured) a board for the playing of darts upon comprising twenty of the most comfortable segments with a bull's-eye scoring 50 points and a narrow outer ring round the edge of the target area which would score double the value of the segment.’



But the most amazing truth revealed in Camlin’s notes is how the numbering system was achieved. Not for Camlin the complexity of mathematics or calculus. Camlin stated that the segments were ‘comfortable’ suggesting that more than twenty would have made the segments too tight and less than twenty easier to hit. Fixing on twenty Camlin reveals in his note that in discussion with the landlord of the *Star and Trumpet* about the design of his new board the publican commented, “Twenty segments eh? How will you be ordering those numbers around the board? There be no mathematician in this village.” Camlin records “The landlord Ned Meeley then produced a scrap of parchment which he carefully tore into twenty pieces, numbered those fragments 1 to 20 and placed them in his rather tatty cap. Camlin and Meeley agreed, that whatever order the numbers came out, the highest, number 20, must be placed at the top of the dartboard.



As an historian I was thrilled to learn that the original order of numbering pulled out of Meeley’s cap which Camlin records was 2, 17, 3, 19, 7, 16, 8, 11, 14, 9, 12, 5, 20, 1, 18, 4, 13, 6, 10, and 15. After placing the 20 at the top the now standard numbering is revealed.

There is an old saying in the UK, “It’s a lovely day. Now watch someone come along and spoil it.” One could say the same about Camlin’s dartboard. Long after it had been popularised in pubs in Yorkshire and Camlin’s creation had become known, not surprisingly, as the ‘Yorkshire Board’, his invention found its way down south via the coalfields of Kent and thence by the early 1920s to London.

Such was the enthusiasm for the game that a group of London-based publicans, brewers and the licensed victuallers’ press established the English Darts Association (EDA) and formulated rules and introduced the ‘standard’ London dartboard which was exactly the

same as Camlin's board but with the addition of an outer bull (scoring 25 points) and a treble ring (scoring three times the value of the segment).

The 1920s pub-goer, pub writer and pub games enthusiast Phillip K. Duck wrote at the time, "I am devastated that such a rural pastime target should be defiled and disfigured in this way. How can darts ever catch on now?" The point Duck was making was that by introducing the trebles ring meant that, unlike any other target game before or since, darts was the only one where players could score more points by avoiding the bull's-eye and going for treble 17, 18, 19 or 20 than hitting the bull's-eye itself. "It's madness," wrote Stephen Hockey, founder of the West Country brewers S. Hockey & Sons, and inventor of the 'hockey' throw line, adding "I think I'll stick to skittles."

But defiled or not, Camlin's board has stood the test of time and today hangs proudly in thousands of pubs, clubs and private homes throughout the UK and the world. Without that chance discovery by Pal O'Foril, none of this ground- and myth-breaking evidence would have ever have seen the light of day.

I am hoping to see Pal later today in order to secure the box and its historic contents for the nation.

FOLLOW UP FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES

(a) Ton-forty, T80, etc.

David K has been good enough to contribute to the debate featured in the last two issues of *DDN*. He writes:

'As regards 8T0 7T0 I have rarely seen this before; T, T80 yes. However, most of this was dropped with exception of T = 100. I asked the same question thirty years ago to a regular darter that had played for more than forty years at that point. He said it was to save chalk and is quicker than writing 100! I have also seen 100 written 1—with the same reason given.

In competition scoring you crossed out the previous score; I use an example of the on the Darts501.com checkout page a small animation. Pub games I have again seen only the remaining number crossed out when it becomes a score that can be hit with three darts. Up until that point the score isn't crossed out. Again this saved the chalk. These days electronic scorers are used but the reason we have adopted 'shorthand' for darts scoring was to save the marking chalk and time. This form of scoring is still used in various forms today.'

Cheers David.

(b) Homework

In issue 23 I introduced a new feature entitled 'Homework' where if a subscriber asks me a question I cannot answer then I set it as homework for *DDN* readers.

Last month I featured Conrad T's enquiry where he wrote saying, "I have searched the net but can't seem to find any info regarding a nine dart game in doubles. Would you perhaps have any?"

For the purposes of this enquiry I suggested that we were looking for any nine-dart perfect game in a top-level doubles darts tournament; that is something that could be proved and ratified, say, through reference to the pages of *Darts World* in the UK or, in North America, *Bull's-Eye News*.

DDN subscribers deliver!

Andy S. wrote to say that his 'trusty old notes' revealed two nine-darters achieved in top doubles tournaments (actually the same one), the German Open.

Firstly Andy cited the German Open Friday Warm-up Doubles 1997 where Wolfgang Boge and Andreas zum Felde from Hamburg hit the perfect game. *Darts World* (May 1997) confirms the feat not surprisingly calling it the 'Quickest game of the tournament' and states that Wolfgang and Andreas were awarded 'a special prize of £400.'

Andy also cited the 1999 German Open Men's Doubles held in Herne-Bochum and stated that Erik Clarys (pictured) and Tanguy Borra from Belgium achieved the perfect 501 as a pair in the third round. Again this is verified by *Darts World* magazine in the May 1999 issue. A 'Special Prize' was mentioned in the report but what exactly that was *DW* did not specify. (Perhaps *DDN* readers can help us out here. If so, please let me know via my Contact page at www.patrickchaplin.com.)



Thanks Andy and, of course, if anyone else can cite other instances of perfect games in a major pairs event just contact me.

(c) Darts history research

DDN fans will know that I'm always trying to encourage more interest in the history of the game, so I was delighted to be told by 'Metalman' that a history section has been started at www.thedartsforum.co.uk; the full link being

<http://www.thedartsforum.co.uk/forumdisplay.php?76-History-of-Darts>

Take a look.

(d) Darts car registration numbers

A few issues back I mentioned darts-related car registration numbers such as my own number plate DAR 161 T.



While researching something completely different I came upon this image of Ken Francis which was featured in *Darts Player 1986*. Ken, then of Bradfordville, New South Wales Australia with his splendid **POM 180** number plate. Ken was described as ‘originally...from England’ who went to Oz to live in the mid-1960s. In 1985 Ken was playing his darts for the Goulbourn Bowling Club “All Stars” in a local league comprising between 22 and 27 teams. I wonder if Ken still plays...

In feedback received from Eddie N. I am informed that the late Welsh darts ace Alan Evans dreamt of owning the registration number AE 1. Regrettably that was not to be, the number last being spotted on the Rolls-Royce belonging to the Lord Mayor of Bristol.

(e) The Curator of Darts

I have mentioned Suffolk’s Patrick Dee on a number of occasions both in *DDN* and on my website. Patrick, you may recall, has a massive collection of darts memorabilia housed in a small building at the bottom of his garden. Over the years he has raised a good deal of money for the local Air Ambulance. Well, at last, Patrick achieved TV fame when on 15th March he appeared on the BBC 2 programme *Antiques Road Trip*. The special guest at Patrick’s museum was non-other than darts professional Bobby George.

JOCKY WILSON (22nd March 1950 – 24th March 2012)



Just before I was completing this issue of *DDN* I received the sad news that Jocky Wilson had died just a few days after his 62nd birthday. He had been suffering with the lung disorder chronic pulmonary obstructive disease and passed away on the evening of 24th March at his home in Kirkcaldy, Scotland.

In my view Jocky was one of the greatest darts players of all time.

Embassy World Professional Darts Champion on two occasions, in 1982 (pictured), when he beat John Lowe 5-3, and 1989 with victory over his old adversary Eric Bristow 6-4, Jocky was one of the genuine characters of the sport and also one of the most unpredictable. He was also a three-time Scottish Masters Champion, represented his country on numerous occasions and lifted hundreds of trophies during his 20-year career.

Jocky was also one of the sixteen 'rebels' who transferred their allegiance to the World Darts Council (later the Professional Darts Corporation (PDC)) in 1993 although shortly after that he faded from the darts scene as illness began to take its toll. Thereafter he lived as a virtual recluse being nursed by his wife Malvina until the moment of his death.

As his death was announced, top professional players queued up to pay tribute to Jocky. Phil Taylor described Jocky as 'a true legend', Bob Anderson said that Jocky was 'a wonderful character' whilst Eric Bristow said, "He was a brilliant player to play against, unpredictable..." Former manager Tommy Cox told reporters, "It's a very sad day because Jocky was so loved by so many people for the great character that he was."



Wayne Mardle Tweeted "What a character, I loved watching him play" and I did too. In fact it was Jocky and Eric that fired up my own enthusiasm for darts. They were great adversaries and there was always a unique humour on stage when they played against each other, especially in the Home Internationals. It was the unpredictability that I loved; that and Jocky's unusual style of throw, once described by sports journalist Deryk Brown as 'a pronounced flick of the fingers (and sometimes *accompanied by* a small grunt)'; a throw if utilised by anyone else would have surely seem their darts miss the board completely. (The second image shows Jocky in the 1980s promoting his darts sharpener, 'Jocky's Barb'.)

Jocky had not thrown a dart in a major tournament since the early 1990s. Suffering from depression, diabetes, arthritis and a serious lung disorder he rarely, if ever, left his home. He told a reporter in 1996, "I've been let down once or twice in my life, but I don't want anyone feeling sorry for me. There's only one person to blame for the situation I'm in, and that's me." The following year bankruptcy was added to the burdens he had to bear.

Despite being out of the darts scene for more than fifteen years Jocky's achievements, personality and behaviour on and off the oche has kept him in the public's consciousness. If you were to go out today and ask people on the streets to name three professional darts players, I am absolutely certain that a high percentage of them would include Jocky Wilson; once seen, never forgotten.

This man's contribution to darts in the modern era cannot be underestimated.

Rest in Peace Jocky

I thank Nico from Belgium for being the first to alert me to Jocky's death. Nico wrote 'In loving memory of two-time world darts champion Jocky Wilson, who sadly passed away this night, two days after his 62nd birthday [a] true gentleman, true legend'.

Russell E has already posted in my guest book, "Very sad to hear about the death of Jocky Wilson. Great player, sportsman and entertainer who will be missed by everyone."

Do you have any memories of meeting or playing Jocky? If so, please write to me via the Contact page of my website www.patrickchaplin.com.

SPONSORS NEWS

In July the impressive Ricoh Arena, Coventry (pictured) will host a unique collaboration between the British Darts Organisation (BDO) and the England Darts Organisation



(EDO). It will be an exciting long-weekend of darts from Friday, July 13th to Sunday, July 15th.

The line-up will combine two major events on the darts calendar, the **WINMAU** BDO British Classic and the EDO England Masters. Both

will feature Men's and Women's events carrying valuable ranking points. Of course, both of these tournaments will be played exclusively on Winmau Blade 4 dartboards.

For details of the schedule of events visit either the **WINMAU** or BDO website.

ARTHUR'S 70th

In Issue 23 I recorded and celebrated the 70th birthday on 10th March of Irish darts legend Jack McKenna. On 31st March it was the time for another Irishman, Arthur Hook to celebrate his 70th birthday. Arthur has been involved with playing, organising, writing about, talking about and recording darts in Ireland for more years than he cares to remember.

Arthur and I first met over twenty years ago at the Darts and Cue Exhibition held at the G-Mex Centre in Manchester in 1989. We then lost touch until about five years ago when we re-established contact and have been talking on the phone and exchanging books and information ever since. Arthur is a mine of information and is doing sterling work in preserving the history of the sport of darts in Ireland. It was an absolute pleasure to actually meet Arthur face-to-face again at his birthday party on 24th March (see image © Moppix).



HAPPY BIRTHDAY ARTHUR!

COMING UP IN ISSUE 25

Due to my adding my tribute to Jocky Wilson some items that were planned to be included have been put back to Issue 25.

However, subscriber H de H has reminded me that, towards the end of last year, I promised to publish an exclusive interview with Mike Gregory but didn't. As usual that was entirely due to sloppy planning on my part and I apologise to H de H and others who have been patiently waiting for the interview to appear. I can assure everyone that it will appear in the May *DDN*.

HOMEWORK

This month's homework is set by the 'Oche Jockey' my good friend Mark from my local community radio station SAINT FM. Mark, a darts fanatic, asks: "Which three men's World Champions defended and regained their world titles at the first time of asking?"

There are no prizes. This is just for fun. Please send your answers to me via the Contact page of my website.

I am now being featured once every month on Mark's show 'Oche on the Radio'. As soon as we've sorted out exactly when I'll be appearing for the rest of the year I will let you know.

So that's it for Issue 24.

Best wishes,

Patrick

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STOP PRESS

Before being able to secure the documents for posterity and place them in my archive, Pal O'Foril, under pressure from work colleagues to sell the box and its contents to the highest bidder placed the lot on an internet auction website and sold them within hours for £243.68 (including postage and packing. Bought by an anonymous and seemingly possessive collector of darts relics it is now unlikely that Camlin's papers will ever see the light of day in public, at least for many years to come.

Thus it is no longer possible to verify the revelations expounded earlier in this issue of *DDN* by reference to those original contemporary primary documents, documents now considered lost to the nation.

PC 12 noon. 1st April 2012