

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 28 August 2012

INTRODUCTION

Hi Everyone,

On 22nd July I celebrated the completion of yet another year on this planet and I thank everyone who sent birthday wishes, many coming for the first time via my Facebook page. To be honest I haven't put much information on there as yet but hope to do so soon. It seems that I already have a good number of new friends across the world of darts.



Over here in the UK the 2012 Olympics are well under way and, of course, darts, the most traditional of English sports, is conspicuous by its absence. John Lowe and I will have more to say about that later.

The lead article this month is titled 'Sexist marketing at its best' a *DDN* exclusive written by guest writer Judy E. Sharp and featuring the Halex Darts Dollies (pictured). Don't forget, if you'd like to write a piece for *DDN* on any darts-related subject please contact me at info@patrickchaplin.com. This is also the e-mail address to use for any feedback from this or any other issue of *DDN*.

OK. Let me reveal what else is in Issue 28...

FOLLOW UP FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES

(i) *Inside Darts* magazine

In a number of previous issues I have heralded the fact that I was contributing a regular feature, 'An Appointment with Dr. Darts' to the new darts magazine *Inside Darts*. However, during July I decided for both personal and professional reasons that I would no longer contribute to *ID* and have made the editor/publisher aware of my decision. Thus I now have no connection whatsoever with the magazine.

(ii) Facebook presence and website

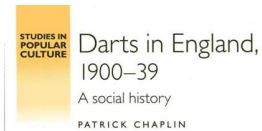
As mentioned in the introduction to this issue I now have a Facebook page; two in fact, one under my own name and the other under 'Doctor Darts'. Both are fully functional but it is the one under my own name that is attracting the attention at the moment. I look forward to many of you linking up through this social medium but bear with me. At my age these things take time to develop and I will be issuing missives to my friends in due course.



As for the new website, I have now gone through and checked most of the 300+ pages and updated and corrected the text and plan to add a few new articles as soon as I can. My new webmaster is doing a great job and we're hoping to announce the date for the site going 'live' in the September issue of *DDN* and, of course, via Facebook.

(iii) *Darts in England* – A correction

I know a good number of you who wanted to buy the book based on my PhD, *Darts in England 1900-39 – A social history* but were unable to do so because of the high price (£55 sterling). As I reported in *DDN* #27, the good news is that it will be published in a paperback/softback version this coming November at a more affordable price of £15.99 sterling (plus £3.00 postage and packing).



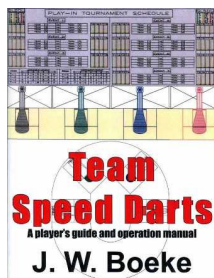
In the last issue I informed you that the book could be pre-ordered from Manchester University Press by going to their website. This was an error. In fact *Darts in England* (ISBN 978-0-7190-8904-6) should be ordered from a company called NBN International. Telephone orders can be placed by e-mail at orders@nbninternational.com, via phone at +44 (0) 1752 202301, by post at Orders Dept., NBN International, 10 Thornbury Road, Plymouth, Devon, PL6 7PP or via their website www.nbninternational.com.



(iv) Book Review – Silas Singer

In Issue #27 I reviewed Silas Singer's *The History of Darts and Professional Play* and, as you may recall, I was not impressed. Nor was subscriber Duncan S. who, after praising *DDN* as being 'Excellent as always', said, "That book culled from Wikipedia is ridiculous!!! That must surely be a first in history, let alone sport. I assume it was self-published?"

I confirmed to Duncan that, as far as I could ascertain, the book was self-published. However, the work bears no ISBN number, publisher name or address or anything else one would expect to see inside the book about the author exercising his/her right, etc, etc. There are a few numbers at the back of the book but nothing to link 'Silas' with his work. It made me wonder if 'Silas Singer' is his/her real name.



If anyone else has discovered any similarly bewildering darts books on sale anywhere in the world, please contact me with details.

Certainly *Team Speed Darts – A Player's Guide and Operation Manual* (pictured) written by J. W. Boeke and self-published in 2004 is one of the few darts books I have in my library which features a text that I am simply unable to embrace. This may not be anything whatever to do with J. W. himself but probably everything to do with

me. In comparison to Singer's work Boeke's book must have taken him months if not years to create, majoring as it does on a computer programme devised by the author and featuring 'numbering combinations and timing factors that will entice...'

(v) New *Bullseye* website launched

I've mentioned the legendary TV game show *Bullseye* a number of times in past issues and this time Andrew Wood, writer and producer of the legendary TV game show has informed me that in mid-July the new website was launched. It looks great and Andrew told me that feedback from fans has been 'terrific'. So *Bullseye* fans should check it out at www.bullseyetvgameshow.com. (Bully image used with permission)



Andrew also said, "The show is doing great business on the Sky platform on the Challenge channel. The viewing figures are tremendous for repeats of *Bullseye*; shows that are 30 years old. He added, "We recently had over 200,000 viewers for a show. It is constantly one of the highest rated shows on Challenge TV. Challenge sent me the viewing figures with the comment, 'amazing'." In addition, *Bullseye* has over 32,000 Facebook fans. As they say, "You can't beat a bit of Bully!"

(vi) **Dartitis**

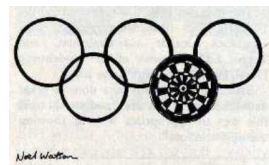
Dartitis, the affliction that affects a good number of players during their careers was mentioned in Issue #27 and prompted subscriber Chris M to write:

"The mention of dartitis brings back my own problem with the condition. One day I simply forgot how I held my dart. I used to have an unusual grip whereby the dart was held vertically, tip steadied by the fingernail of my little finger before release. One evening I just could not replicate this grip for the life of me and I went from being a pretty good player to a struggler. I had to completely change my throw before I could compete anywhere near my former standard."

So there's another possible solution to the trauma that is 'dartitis'. Thanks Chris.

DARTS – OLYMPIC DREAM OR OLYMPIC NIGHTMARE?

'It happens every four years. The Olympic Games come along and darts players begin wondering aloud why their own game never gets a chance for the medal honours. Even more so this year with international interest in the game at its highest level ever.'



Whatever happened to darts in the Olympics? Why wasn't darts, surely the most English of recognised sports, included in the 2012 Olympics if only as a demonstration sport? Surely there's been time for the case to be made to the IOC in the seven years since darts was recognised as a sport...

Recently three-times World Champion John Lowe wrote to a number of his contacts stating, "I need a little help. I would ask you deliberate, circulate, even demonstrate... I have been asked by many to join the 'Darts for the Olympics' supporters. For many years, until now, I have stayed on the side lines, leaving it to the powers that be [*to deal with the issue*] but I feel they are missing the biggest opportunity yet to make an impact on the IOC. We have the Olympics 2012 in London and not a word from the BDO or PDC. The press is full of expectations for our athletes, a writers dream, just sit in the office and put fingers on keyboards. I am sure they will have a little space for us, if not, at least we can say we tried."

I agree that now is the time to raise this issue again but isn't it rather like shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted? Perhaps not. With many influential reporters and sports organisers and representatives in the capital perhaps there is still time to raise the profile of darts on home soil and press for recognition. But, sadly, that won't happen.

The question of darts in the Olympics has been put to John many times over the years with fans and especially at Q & A sessions at exhibitions. John said that his reply until now was "I do not really care if it is included or not. It is what I know I am good at, and what I represent to the best of my ability." But now things have changed for John. He told me, "I now realise darts, for many millions, players and supporters alike, is of an enormous magnitude. It is played both socially and professionally and it can represent itself at and within any internationally organised event and in particular the Olympic Games, be it a demonstration sport, or a full participating entry."

John is keen to promote the entry of darts on its own merits with no comparison to other sports already accepted being made. He tells me that he is aware that the ruling bodies of the sport, the World Darts Federation (WDF), the British Darts Organisation (BDO) and the Professional Darts Council (PDC), have all lobbied the IOC but feels now is the time to "bang the drum the loudest". He says, "The London 2012 Olympics is on our own doorstep, in our own back yard. We have the support. We need to voice that support and hope that the IOC will accept a request that we can be part of the Olympics 2016."

My personal view is that it is all too late.

Since 2005 I have (every so often) been communicating with top man, Roy Price, President of the WDF, asking what was happening about recognition for darts as an Olympic sport. Some months ago in reply to my request for an update he told me that sports that had not, as yet, been recognised by the IOC but that the WDF were joining forces to form an International Sports Federation (ISF) but that such things take time. A little later the President informed me that:

"An International Sports Federation must be IOC approved before its events can even be considered for inclusion in an Olympic Games. At the SportAccord Annual Meeting in London earlier this year the International Federations which are not IOC recognised joined forces. We formed the "Alliance of Sports Federations" and elected a working

group which will lobby the IOC with the view of obtaining a blanket approval. Our Group comprises 23 International Federations which is in fact 25% of the International Federations which hold membership. By working together our group will now present a considerable force within SportAccord and we hope to put a strong case to the IOC with the assistance of SportAccord.”

He added, “I am aware that efforts were made to include Darts as a demonstration Sport in the 2012 Games. This was done by the BDO, the WDF was not involved. As you are probably aware, the wheels of the IOC turn extremely slowly so I would not care to speculate on anything at this early stage and consider that a statement would be pointless at this time. Our committee is working but as yet I have not received any information which can be made public.”

And at the end of March this year, after I asked for an update on the position, the President of the WDF wrote, “Nothing new to report at this time. Our committee are in active dialogue with SportAccord and the IOC. Hopefully there will be further developments during the SportAccord Conference which will be held in Quebec in May.”

Having heard nothing from Roy Price by July, I e-mailed him asking for any feedback he could provide relating to that May meeting. He replied “Yes the meeting did take place, when anything of significance emerges a public announcement will be made.”

I believe the reason why the BDO failed to gain approval for darts to become a demonstration sport for 2012 was due to a number of key factors. Firstly, time... As most of us in the UK know, darts was only recognised as a sport by the Sports Councils of the UK in 2005. But I understand that all cases for *Olympic* recognition had to be dealt with by a 2007 deadline so that left the WDF, the BDO or anyone else very little time to put their case. As the President of the WDF has said the IOC wheels ‘grind slowly’ so, let’s face it, what chance did darts ever have of achieving that tight deadline?

Secondly, the BDO wasn’t the recognised international body for darts; the WDF was. The IOC would only talk to a recognised international body so why the BDO were involved at all is puzzling. Thirdly, by the time the WDF picked up the baton it was already far too late for London 2012. Hands up all those who knew that already...

What about 2016?

While I am pleased that the WDF are pursuing formal recognition with the IOC via a newly constructed International Sports Federation, the opportunity for darts to be a demonstration sport in the Olympics has, in my view, been lost for ever. Hello! Is it only me and a couple of others who realised that the London 2012 Olympics was *the* opportunity?

As for the ‘growing army’ of supporters John mentioned in his e-mail, I’ve never seen or heard from them. Where are these people? They certainly aren’t petitioning their MPs or writing letters of protest/support to the national or darts press demanding recognition. I

honestly don't think the support within darts is actually there (the majority of fans don't seem to be bothered) but that doesn't actually matter given that the WDF (and not the BDO) is now the IOC-recognised global organisation representing darts.

It's surely all too late. If the WDF knew that there was strength in numbers why wasn't the ISF set up much earlier? Rio in 2016? You're joking right? I just can't see it. However, I will stay in touch with the President of the WDF in the hope that positive news will be forthcoming...eventually.

By the way, the source of the quote at the start of this article is not recent. It is extracted from the very first issue of *Darts World* magazine dated November/December 1972 nearly *forty years* ago. (Cartoon © 1972 Noel Watson) This then raises another issue which I put up for discussion... Why did it take *thirty-three years* for darts to be recognised as a sport?

As the 2012 Olympics in London move towards their conclusion I am sure that this is not the end of the discussion. Indeed, 'The Old Darts Coach', Houston Hartwell 'Howie' Reed II makes his own views known in an excellent article 'X-Rated Olympics', Column 73 in his series 'Toeing the Oche'. Read it now at www.dartoidsworld.com. It's quite an eye-opener.

SPONSORSHIP NEWS - WINMAU LAUNCH 'WINMAU TV'

My sponsor, the WINMAU Dartboard Company has recently launched a dedicated online television channel for unique in-depth darts coverage, taking viewers 'under the skin' of the sport.

From June this year, via WINMAU TV fans have found themselves closer than ever to the sport they love and the players they follow. This new online channel is a superb place to enjoy exclusive coverage of WINMAU's players and insights into their life on tour, their practice routines and to access exclusive footage of hot new products.

From the very start WINMAU TV has featured some exclusive content via YouTube including interviews and practice tips from Dean Winstanley and Steve Beaton plus a promotional video for their prestigious Blade 4 dartboard.

Announcing the new channel, Ian Flack, Sales and Marketing Director of WINMAU, said: "The television and media exposure for our sport is growing at a vast rate and darts fans are hungry for more exclusive content with regard to the products that they buy and the players they aspire to be. We won't be showing every minute of every darts game (as the major channel providers do that already) but WINMAU TV will be a channel devoted to darts which will provide something very different to anything else out there at the moment.

We can help tell the whole story of the darts season, with behind the scenes footage from our players on tour. We have big plans for a rich line-up of exclusive programmes



dedicated to the players, conveying the drama of the year on tour and exploring the technology behind our products. WINMAU is demonstrating yet again the value we create for our customers and darts fans through our content and product leadership”.

That’s great news and I recommend that you all check out WINMAU TV. Let’s hope it also includes the fabled lost video of Sales and Marketing Director, Ian ‘Flacky’ Flack accompanying rock band *Here’s Jonny* live on stage in Hull at the WINMAU World Masters a couple of years ago.

Here we see Flacky thundering into the chorus of the *Kings of Leon* hit ‘Sex on Fire’. (The photographer of this precious image wishes to remain anonymous for obvious reasons so *DDN* is happy to claim

copyright.)

HALEX DARTS DOLLIES – SEXIST MARKETING AT ITS BEST! A *DDN* EXCLUSIVE BY JUDY E. SHARP

In 1979 darts was just emerging as a serious spectator sport. Leighton Rees beat John Lowe in the first BDO/WDF World Championships in 1978 and, with Embassy as a major sponsor, exposure and popularity were rising.

Back then I was Marketing Manager for Halex Sports, part of the MY Dart Group. The company sold dartboards, darts, shafts – including the then revolutionary titanium shaft – and flights. Darts was a man’s world: Leighton and John, Eric Bristow, Jocky Wilson and the rest, and the vast majority of spectators were men too.

What better way to attract the attention of darts players – potential customers for our products – than with some very attractive young ladies who also happened to be excellent darts players? Enter the Halex Darts Dollies. It was blatant sexist marketing – and it was very successful!

Our widely-publicised search for Dollies ended at Butlin’s at Clacton in early 1979. The original Dollies were Janis Gullaine, Sharon Vandenburg, Chrissy Smith and Janette Sontag. Lynn Donovan joined in 1980. The Dolly “uniform” comprised a silky green polo shirt and a (very) short dark green skirt (from the company’s schools’ sportswear range); frilly underwear; high-heeled silver strappy shoes and beauty-queen style silky sashes. And they still managed to play darts!



The Dollies were an instant hit, first making the cover of *Darts World* in May 1979 (see above). They supported the Embassy Team around huge beery, smoky clubs in the north of England, the spiritual home of darts in those days, and always received a rapturous reception. “Punters” were invited on stage to “play with a Dolly”. Invariably, the Dolly would drop a dart and bend over to pick it up, always causing a cheer. If the Dolly won, the punter got a set of Dolly flights and a big “Halex Darts Dollies played with me” badge. If he won, he received a very nice set of Halex darts – and a kiss from the Dolly! (‘Dolly’ Lynn Donovan is pictured here on the front page of *Darts World* magazine, issue dated May 1980)



Photos of the Dollies were everywhere in the sports pages of the tabloids: Tony Wood (editor of *Darts World*) and Dave Lanning were particular friends. It was a battle of wits with the media: they did not want to show the Halex logos on the shirts, we wanted to promote the company’s name as much as possible. When editors started cropping photos above the logo on the shirts, we commissioned silver “Halex” necklaces for the Dollies!

The Halex Darts Dollies toured all over the UK, with the Embassy Team and in their own right, raising lots of money for charity along the way. They were hugely popular and I believe they did much to introduce the game to ladies who had previously been intimidated by its masculine image. The girls loved the spotlight and the attention, and being Dollies helped their careers enormously. It was blatantly sexist, yes, but it was also brilliant marketing: harmless fun, not degrading in any way, and it was absolutely right for the time.

Would it work now?

I doubt it: it wouldn’t make it past the Politically Correct Police, would it? Ah yes, those were the days, my friend . . .

© 2012 Judy E Sharp

If you have any memories of seeing or perhaps even (for want of a better expression) playing with a darts dolly please contact me at info@patrickchaplin.com. And while we’re on the subject of sexploitation and darts, Paul Seigel (aka ‘Dartoid’) has a view which is revealed in his online column #434 entitled ‘Darts, Sex and Elephants!’ Find it at www.dartoidsworld.com/columns/434.html.

BOOK REVIEW – *LAKESIDE - THE COMPLETE RECORDS*

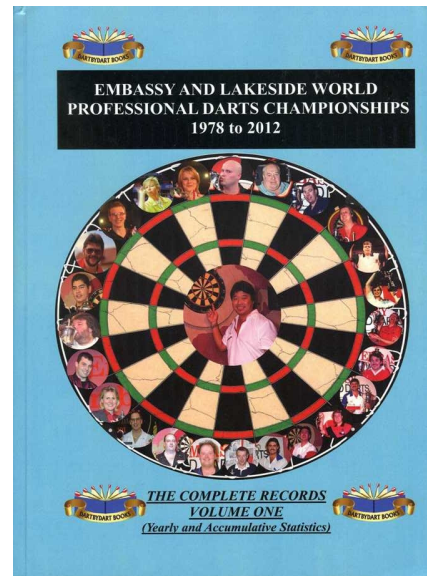
As you all know, in issue #27, I had no praise whatsoever for Silas Singer’s book *The History of Darts and Professional Play* but now it is my pleasure to turn away from the banal and pile praise on a genuinely unique piece of darts research.

Back in the late 1980s, the then editor of *Darts World* magazine, Tony Wood, and I had a discussion during which time he told me of his dream to write a '*Wisden* of darts', a book recording every county match and major darts tournament and a '*Who's Who*' featuring biographies of top players. This we decided would be an herculean task and I recall thinking at the time that even attempting to compile a complete record of the Embassy (later the Lakeside) World Championships would be impossible.

Well I can now announce that the latter *is* possible and has been done. An ex-BDO stalwart and long-serving organiser of darts, Colin Saunders has proved that and succeeded in such a fashion that it takes your breath away.

Colin began the task of documenting the Embassy/Lakeside at the turn of the millennium with, as he recalls, 'a lot of enthusiasm and a very naïve belief that it would probably take three years'. In point of fact it took Colin more than four years just to collect the information and set up a system to deal with the hundreds of thousands of fragments of data he was able to cull (with the assistance of others) from BDO records and former colleagues' brains.

Throughout the next decade Colin held on firmly to the belief that the Embassy/Lakeside World Professional Darts Championship should be fully documented. At the beginning he could not understand why no one had done it before - but now he does! Ten years on and the fruits of his intense labours has resulted in not a one- but a two-volume mega-work titled *Embassy and Lakeside World Professional Darts Championships 1978 to 2012*. Volume One is subtitled *Yearly and Accumulative Statistics* and Volume Two *The Score Sheets*.



Every single dart thrown and who threw it and against whom, every single player that ever toed the oche, every set, every high and low outshot in the Embassy/Lakeside between 1978 and 2012 and much, much, so much more is there; indeed, every single fact you could ever want to know about the world's most prestigious darts tournament is within either the 322 pages of Volume One or the 538 pages of Volume Two. The book also features many images by one of Britain's best darts photographers, Steve Daszko plus colour images of the front covers of every programme since that first Embassy at The Heart of the Midlands nightclub in Nottingham back in 1978.

In his Foreword to the books, Bobby George calls Colin's work 'a labour of love and patience'. That's undoubtedly true but over and above that these books constitute a masterwork and an indispensable reference work that all serious-minded darts fans and journalists and those who genuinely care about the history of our sport should possess.

I recommend it to you all without reservation.

For full details of this amazing two-volume work, *Embassy and Lakeside World Professional Darts Championships 1978 to 2012* (the volumes can be purchased individually or as a set) visit Colin's website www.dartbydartbooks.com.

COMING UP IN ISSUE 29

At the end of July my wife Maureen and I visited 'The Curator of Darts', Patrick Dee at his home in Suffolk and I was amazed how much his collection of darts memorabilia had grown since my last visit there in 2009. Where does he find it all? I'll be telling you about that and more in next month's issue.

Also in issue #29 I'll also be looking at the history of the WINMAU Blade series of dartboards and featuring news from our darting friends on the island of Malta. If that wasn't enough I'll be revealing the story of Jip, the 'famous darts-playing dog' (pictured). (Image © 2012 Thwaites' Brewery. Used with permission.)



I hope you've enjoyed this issue and I look forward to receiving your feedback as usual.

See you in September.

Stay safe!

Patrick

Text © 2012 Patrick Chaplin. Images © Patrick Chaplin or as stated or sourced. Neither text nor images can be reproduced without prior permission of the copyright holder(s).

**PATRICK'S DARTS RESEARCH IS
SPONSORED BY THE WINMAU
DARTBOARD COMPANY**

WINMAU.COM