

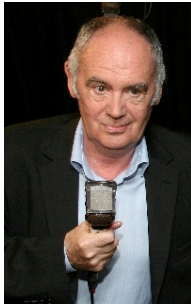
DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 29 September 2012



INTRODUCTION

Welcome everyone to a special September issue of *DDN*.



On 11th August the sport of darts lost Sid Waddell ('The Voice of Darts') to cancer at the age of 72. I hope you will all understand that, for obvious reasons, much of this issue will be about Sid. Thus some pieces which I intended to feature this time have been postponed until the October issue.

I begin this issue with my personal tribute to the great man and this is followed by tributes from Dr. Eddie Norman (Darts Entrepreneur), my sponsors the WINMAU Dartboard Company and Irish darts organiser and historian Arthur Hook plus others from the world of sport. (Image © PDC/Lawrence Lustig. Used with permission).

SID WADDELL – AN INSPIRATION

I first met Sid in Manchester in 1988. He was one of two men in those early days who encouraged me to research darts history, persuading me that the work I was undertaking had real value. It did not take me long to discover the key role Sid was playing in the promotion and development of darts' 'modern era' and which he continued to play until the end of his life.

The son of Martha and Bob Waddell, Sid was born on Wednesday 10th August 1940 in Alnwick, Northumberland. From the very beginning Bob and Martha were determined that neither Sid nor his brother Derrick would follow their father down the mines. In 2009 Sid stated that he would have been nowhere without the sacrifice and dedication of his parents who he said gave him "the material and moral support to live my sporting dreams and realise my academic potential."

Sid was educated at Ellington County Primary School and later gained a place at Morpeth Grammar School where he excelled at English and History. In 1958 he was awarded an Open Minor Scholarship to St. John's College, Cambridge. Whilst at Cambridge, Sid captained a darts team, regular members of which included 'a Chinese fan of George Formby...and a Jean-Luc Goddard freak'. He later claimed that on one historic occasion his team was well beaten 'by a team of trainee vicars'.

After three years at Cambridge, Sid was awarded a 2:1 degree in Modern History. In the summer of 1962, he applied for a job as Clerk at the colliery offices in Ashington but was turned down as 'too qualified'. He then obtained a post as a research assistant at Durham

University and toyed with the idea of a career in academia. However, in 1965 Sid became a TV researcher, eventually working his way up to producer of current affairs programmes.

In 1972 Sid became involved with the production of one of the most eccentric English television programmes ever produced; Yorkshire Television's *The Indoor League*. The show, which ran for six series, set champions of pub games against each other. It is generally accepted that *The Indoor League* directly led to darts being more regularly featured on television in the UK. The programme launched the TV darts commentating careers of not only Sid but also Dave Lanning. They shared the commentary box for many years.



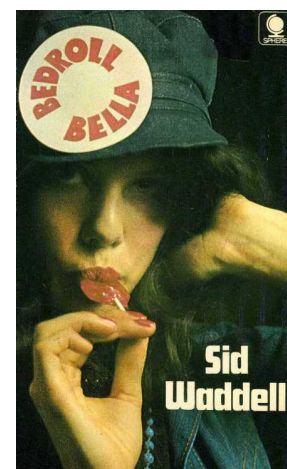
In 1977 Sid commentated on his first darts match for the BBC and soon became renowned for his skill at manipulating the English language to suit the unbridled excitement that he personally felt about every dart thrown, thereby transferring his own passion for darts to the viewing public. Sid then successfully moved from the BBC to Sky in 1994. (The image (copyright unknown but courtesy of the DW/PC archive) shows Sid in the commentary box back in those early days.)

Famous phrases such as “There hasn’t been this much excitement since the Romans fed the Christians to the lions” and “There’s only one word for that – Magic darts” endeared him to darts fans and his fellow commentators. Mike Walters of the *Daily Mirror* summed up Sid’s appeal thus: ‘If puns, pathos or peerless analogy is your currency, nobody does it better.’

Sid believed that the key to being a commentator was ‘to know when to shut up’ and when asked, after thirty-five years in the darts commentary box, what was his proudest moment Sid replied, “Being voted ‘Sports Commentator of the Year’ in 2002 by seventy-five other sports commentators.” Other awards included being elected (along with Dave Lanning) to the Professional Darts Council’s ‘Hall of Fame’ in 2008.

After being diagnosed with bowel cancer in September 2011 Sid underwent treatment and eventually rejoined the SKY commentary team on the opening night of the McCoy’s Premier League Darts at the Manchester Arena in February 2012.

During his lifetime Sid was author and compiler of over a dozen books including *Bedroll Bella* (1973) a story of a ‘17-year old Geordie lass using foul language to pushy randy lads’ which was banned by both W. H. Smith and John Menzies and several books on darts. These included *Bellies and Bullseyes – The Outrageous True Story of Darts* (2007), his autobiographical account of the modern era of darts in which he played such a key role. Also, during his time with the BBC, Sid had written ten episodes of the



children's TV series *Jossy's Giants*.

Sid always regarded Phil Taylor as 'the greatest living sportsman' and ghosted Phil's *The Power – My Autobiography* (2003). Sid also ghosted his friend Jocky Wilson's autobiography *Jocky – Jocky Wilson's Own Story* (1983) and in 2006 announced that he was planning 'Jocky Wilson – The Movie'; a project I understand he was still working on at the time of his death.

Always ready to defend darts Sid said in 1981, "I defy anyone not to consider this sport of the highest calibre". Earlier, in 1978 he wrote, "Sport is about mind over matter, competition, developing the senses, giving pleasure to player and spectator. Just like Lowe v Rees for £3,000, or the barmaid and I for a half of Pennine bitter."

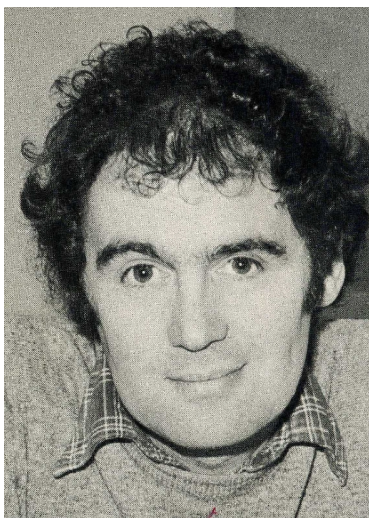
In *100 TV Moments from Hell* (2000) Sid, when asked how he would like to be remembered replied, "I'd love to be remembered as the first man to put shove ha'penny on the television." Although Sid said this with his tongue firmly in his cheek we all know that Sid will be long-remembered as one of the fathers of the modern era of darts. We darts fans owe Sid a great deal. Personally, I would not have set out of the path I did back in the 1980s pursuing the, up until then hidden, history of our sport without his encouragement and support.

He is survived by his wife Irene, their children Lucy, Emma, Charlotte and Daniel and Irene's son Nicholas.

Sid's funeral took place on Wednesday 22nd August at 12.30 p.m. at Pudsey Parish Church, West Yorkshire. A wake followed at the Pudsey Cricket Club.

MEMORIES OF THE LATE SID WADDELL – DR. EDDIE NORMAN

It was with extreme sadness that I heard of the passing of Sid Waddell after a long illness.



Sid was without doubt the most well-known voice of darts and many people with not a great deal of interest in darts, including my own mother, watched the sport just to hear Sid with his unique knowledge of darts use his comic but well-informed catchphrases. My mother, probably like many millions more people, loved to repeat them, especially to me when I called to see her.

Sid had a way with those phrases that no one could match and his idiosyncratic use of the English language on his darts commentating was unique and will be sorely missed by his many darts followers worldwide.

In early 1973 I had a telephone call from Sid to ask if I could sort out a 'few of the Welsh Boys' to take part in a

TV programme he was producing called *The Indoor League*, which he wanted to expand. Indeed it was a pleasure to go up to the Irish Centre in Leeds in 1973 with a 'few of the Welsh Boys' to meet up with Sid.

Sid's enthusiasm for darts was absolutely immense, he talked darts for the whole two days we were there, and Tommy O'Regan won the final that year defeating Alan Evans. When we drove back down South, we heard a rattle in the boot of the car, and stopping we discovered two crates of beers, and a note from Sid attached 'for the journey home'. The following year Sid again invited me to invite a 'few of the Welsh boys' and this time Leighton Rees won and again a now familiar rattle in the boot 'for the journey home' was a note from Sid with three crates of beer.

Sid always supported the underdog and when Wales played Great Britain in 1976 at Weston-Super-Mare organised by the fledgling United Kingdom Darts Federation, Sid incurred the wrath of many in London and beyond and turned up and sat in the front row of the match to make sure he was photographed there and offer his support.

Over the years I have met up with Sid as our paths have crossed from Exeter in the Premier League to Las Vegas for the Las Vegas Desert Classic and Sid has always found time to stop and talk to everyone and enjoy a pint.

A great gentleman of darts who will leave us behind with a legacy of his darts books and catchphrases, and will be sorely missed in the great world of darts and way, way beyond darts. There will never be another Sid Waddell in the world of darts.

Dr. Eddie Norman, MBE., PhD.
Washington. DC.

SID WADDELL - A BROADCASTING LEGEND

It is with great sadness the darting world has heard of the loss of commentator Sid Waddell.

Sid was the mainstay of televised darts, and had been manning the microphone since the first-ever World Professional Darts Championships in 1978, becoming synonymous in sports broadcasting for his words-punching technique and eccentric style, often combining the two to create some memorable lines, unequalled in modern TV sport including "If we'd had Phil Taylor at Hastings the Normans would've gone home!" and "This lad has more checkouts than Tesco's!"

It is hard to find anybody who has championed darts on such a large scale as he did, using his popularity to advertise the game he adored. His boundless enthusiasm helped take darts up to the dizzy heights it now finds itself, and so often at the big occasions, Sid was there to pelt us through the action.

The author of eleven published books, including biographies of darts' greats, as well as the hugely popular *Bellies & Bullseyes – The Outrageous True Story of Darts*, Sid was a BAFTA-winning director and a former nominee for Best Scriptwriting from the Screenwriters Guild – a true wordsmith of his time.

His popularity was reflected by the number of tributes left to him [*following his death*], from the sporting world and beyond, who recognise there is now a void in the sport that had been ever-present, and is also irreplaceable.

Our deepest condolences go to his family during this sad time.

Ian Flack

Sales and Marketing Director, WINMAU Dartboard Company

A MAN PROUD OF HIS IRISH ROOTS - A MEMORY FROM ARTHUR HOOK

Sid Waddell, whose grandmother travelled to England from the Republic of Ireland in 1894, was proud of his Irish origins. His grandmother's name was Mary Jane Quinn and she spoke didicai and hawker slang as she was from the tinkers population in County Roscommon, the west of Ireland, not too far from Castle Bar where the world cup of darts was held last September. This was roughly the time Sid discovered his illness.

Personally, I can only go back to the early Seventies and *The Indoor League* on the TV every Monday from 1 p.m. Sid was probably my reason for getting into darts more than I should.

The last time I met Sid was in the City West Hotel in Dublin in 2003 when he signed my copy of *The Power – My Autobiography*, Phil Taylor's book. Sid had no small part to play in the writing and publishing of that book. He wrote in my copy, 'To Arthur, A Broth of a Boyo, Cheers, Sid' which to me said it all in Sid's special way of his world famous 'Darts talk'.

Arthur Hook, darts organiser, researcher and historian, Eire

THE SPORTS WORLD MOURNS SID'S PASSING

Immediately upon the news of Sid's death stars from darts and other sports were quick to pay tribute to 'The Voice of Darts'. On Twitter footballers Wayne Rooney, Michael Owen and Robbie Savage, plus broadcaster and author Stephen Fry and TV anchorman Gary Lineker were among the famous names to mourn Sid's passing.

Five-time World Darts Champion, Eric Bristow MBE told *The Sun* "Eric was top dog. He's not going to be replaced. He was a one-off" whilst SKY Sports anchorman Jeff Stelling said, "Back when I was working with him he made more of an impact than any of the players did. He is totally irreplaceable."

PDC Chairman Barry Hearn said, "Sid was iconic, immortal, irreplaceable. He wasn't just the voice of darts, he was part of our national culture. Darts has enjoyed a spectacular rise in popularity, but it would have been impossible without him. As a mark of respect we have decided to commission a new trophy for the PDC world championship. The next man to win it at Alexandra Palace in January will be lifting the Sid Waddell trophy – that is the least we can do."

I cannot think of a more fitting tribute to Sid. He would have loved the idea.

DARTS AND THE OLYMPICS – THE CONTINUING DEBATE

I've received some very interesting responses following my article about darts and the Olympics in Issue #28. Dave B. wrote 'Interesting article about darts and the Olympics. I see that the next games in 2016 will include golf and rugby union. Well, I can accept that rugby union should be included but *golf*? Surely more people play darts than golf. (Perhaps I am wrong here with that assumption!)' I'm not sure you are Dave but the point is well made. Always ready to defend darts against any onslaught Sid Waddell once wrote, "I defy anyone not to consider this sport of the highest calibre" and when asked if darts would ever become an Olympic sport he said, "If they [*the IOC*] can get little girls with their legs sticking out of the water [*darts*] can."



Another subscriber wrote saying, "I loved the piece on the darts and the Olympics...like you...I think the chance has been missed. People ask me as I travel about darts in the Olympics but in all honesty I do not think it will happen." (Cartoon courtesy of *Darts World*/PC Archive © Ed Coombes 1973)

Jan J. from India wrote, "Good one yet again Patrick. And about the Darts not being included in Olympics, I just happened to read a post about it...and posted the same on my Facebook profile hours before I got the *DDN* from you. The link can be found at

<http://sports.yahoo.com/news/olympics--darts-champion-pushing-for-sports--inclusion-in-2020-olympics.html>

...and Jan's Facebook post can be seen at

<http://www.facebook.com/pjjanani/posts/139742596165730>

From Robert Holmes, Public Relations Officer for the British Darts Organisation reacted to the article by stating "I must say that I am surprised that the real efforts of the BDO in gaining Olympic recognition for darts have been overlooked. Surely history must record that it was the BDO that succeeded in gaining unanimous recognition from the sports

councils of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for darts to be recognised as a sport and was campaigning for Olympic recognition for darts even before the London Olympics were awarded?”

Robert then attached a document that was only part of the BDO’s campaign ‘to get darts recognised as a sport (which we did in 2005) and ultimately included in the Olympics, using London 2012 as the springboard.’ Robert added, “To this end, the BDO have had meetings with IOC officials and IOC members have also visited Lakeside.” What puzzles me here is that the President of the World Darts Federation (WDF) has already told me that it is the WDF and not the BDO that is pressing for recognition by the IOC. Confusing? I think so.

Robert continued, “I might add that throughout these Olympics we have dealt with many overseas media organisations and arranged features on darts for a variety of journalists including those from the USA, Europe and Australia...Barry Gilbey [*Chairman of the BDO*] has been interviewed by an Australian film crew for a feature on darts.

Part of our argument is that if rifle shooting (especially air-guns) and archery are Olympic sports (aided by the most sophisticated technology) then surely darts, which relies solely on individual skill, has every right to be considered.” I agree wholeheartedly that darts has the right to be considered but wasn’t London 2012 really the target rather than the ‘springboard’.

Robert added “I was part of the lobby to get darts recognised as a sport from 1996 and almost 10 years later we achieved it. The goal posts have kept moving, but as an organisation the BDO is determined that darts should be given the kudos that it deserves.”

I had my say in Issue 28 and my position is clear and I am, of course, more than happy to highlight, at Robert’s suggestion, the ‘real efforts’ made by the BDO to secure Olympic status for darts but remain a little confused about who should now be doing what to ensure it actually happens. The President of the WDF tells us that darts is being represented by a composite group, an ‘Alliance of Sports Federations’ and that a working group will be lobbying the IOC ‘with the view of obtaining a blanket approval’ yet I am told that the BDO is working towards the same end.

Subscribers’ further views are invited to be submitted to this on-going debate. Send them to me either via the Contact page of my website www.patrickchaplin.com or e-mail me direct at info@patrickchaplin.com.

FEEDBACK FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES

(a) The Darts Dollies

I received an enthusiastic response from a subscriber who told me ‘Patrick, yet another brilliant *DDN*. How do you do it? Your ability to knock decent interesting information to

a non-playing punter like me is unsurpassed. I love reading it over and over again. Particularly the bit about the Darts Dollies! Well done.'



Subscriber H de H told me "I enjoyed reading the article on the Halex Darts Dollies. We produced the promotional flights for them and MY Sports/Halex were big customers of ours at the time. MY Holdings PLC sold MY Sports in about 1992 to two South African brothers called Wolman [*but the company went*] into receivership within about 3/4 years.

Their distributor in the states was a company called Regent Sports in New York. Regent bought the brand Halex from the receivers and continue to this day to supply Halex branded darts..."

Thanks H de H. The trouble is that I still haven't heard from anyone who actually played with a Darts Dolly. This way please!

(b) Facebook

I seem to be building a good number of friends on my Facebook page. Jan J. has welcomed me to the 'tech savvy world' and will start following my page. I've still a bit of work to do and information and images to upload so bear with me.

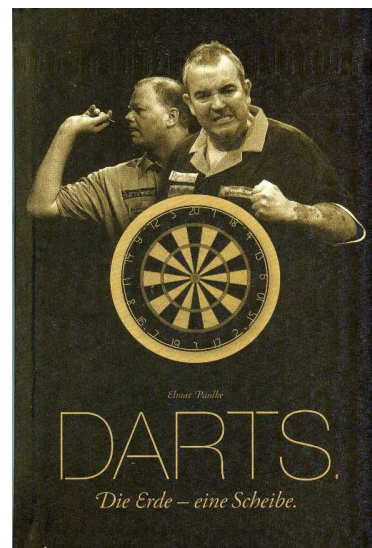
(c) *Der Tagesspiegel* interview

I mentioned in *DDN* #27 that back in May I was interviewed by Julia Proisinger a senior reporter on the prestigious German newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel* for an article about darts. I am pleased to say that the article finally appeared on my birthday 22nd July and those who wish to look at it can simply access the following link:

<http://www.tagesspiegel.de/zeitung/darts-jeder-wurf-ein-treffer/6904086.html>

Talking of darts in Germany, I have forgotten to mention a very original German language book on darts recently published by darts enthusiast, researcher and commentator Elmar Paulke. Forewords by both Phil Taylor and me are featured in the book.

Although there have been dart books published in Germany before, including Peter Seitz' *Alles über Darts und zwanzig verschiedene Dartspiele* (1988) and Richard W. Sohlbach's books *Darts – Ausrüstung – Technik Spiel* (1994) and *111 Darts-spiele* (1997), I believe that Elmar's book *Darts. Die Erde – eine Scheibe* is the most extensive and authoritative ever written on the sport of darts in Germany. If they have not already done



so, all German-speaking darts fans should purchase a copy of this book *immediately*.

(d) Dartitis

I have mentioned this darters' torment several times in the past in *DDN*, most recently in issues #27 and #28. My good friend David K. now adds to the mix. He wrote to say, "Patrick...I have two pages on Darts501.com dedicated to Dartitis [*and*] one of these pages allows for viewers to enter their own experiences and cures! I have a total of 66 entries so far."

It seems to me that those still suffering from this irritating and infuriating condition would best be advised to visit <http://darts501.com/Dartitisviews.htm> to see if it can help.

Thanks David.

SOUTHSIDE DARTS LEAGUE



My thanks to Sharon Huffman of the Southside Dart League in Chicago for sending me a complimentary t-shirt celebrating the 25th Annual Southside Dart League Cup (1985-2009) (modeled here exclusively for *DDN* readers by yours truly).

Sharon loves *DDN* and told me to 'keep up the good work.' Sharon, I'll do my best. Thanks again and please send my very best wishes to all the Southside darters. To find out more about the league visit www.southsidedartleague.org.

SPONSORS NEWS – THE EDO INTRODUCE THE WINMAU ENGLAND MATCHPLAY

The England Darts Organisation (EDO) has announced that they will be introducing a Men's and Ladies' Matchplay tournament, with WINMAU as the main title sponsor. The inaugural event will be played on Sunday 23rd September at Bunn Leisure, Selsey, West Sussex as part of the England Classic weekend.

The top four ladies and top eight men in the England rankings will be invited to take part, with all twelve players being guaranteed prize money.

At the time of writing (24th August), the players sitting in the qualifying positions were Trina Gulliver, Lisa Ashton, Deta Hedman, Zoe Jones, Scott Waites, Glen Durrant, James Wilson, Martin Atkins, Garry Thompson, Paul Hogan, John Walton, and Scott Mitchell. For updated information please go to the EDO website at www.englanddarts.co.uk.

Every match will be played on stage at Bunn Leisure and will be streamed live on the England Darts Organisation web page.

Tommy Thompson of the EDO said “The EDO are delighted that both of the Matchplays will be sponsored by WINMAU. They have been a constant supporter of the EDO since its formation and we are proud to use their Blade 4 dartboards at all our events.”

Ian Flack, Sales and Marketing Director of WINMAU, added “The EDO are one of the most pro-active darts organisations in the world, and the addition of the WINMAU England Matchplay shows their commitment towards creating new and exciting initiatives for the country’s dart players.

It is fantastic that this new tournament will be streamed live via the England website, and their continued investment in this technology gives viewers the world over the opportunity to watch the amazing talent on display”.

AND FINALLY...

I cannot end this special issue without mention of one of my favourite Sid utterances. The legend was on the mic at the World Championships at Purfleet, Essex in January 2002. John Part was playing in his first round match against England’s Mike Manning and on his way to a 4-2 victory when Sid said, “Like they say in that old Canadian-Indian proverb, “When the squirrels march backwards, the forest is on fire” – and Part is *ablaze!*”



Priceless.

RIP Sid.

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