

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 30 October 2012

INTRODUCTION

Hi everyone and welcome to the latest issue of *DDN*.



Here in the UK the summer seems to be over and the cold and damp weather is busy setting in. Winter is upon us but that, of course, means an increase in darting activities.

Talking of which, there's been a definite increase in responses to *DDN* from you the subscribers especially with regards to the September issue. Thanks.

The key article this month relates to darts in Malta both today (the Maltese Government Darts League) and yesterday (the inaugural Malta Open held in 1976). This issue also includes a summary report from Julie Lambie of the Ladies Darts Organisation (LDO) on the first Ladies Classic Singles held last month. (The image above shows Julie presenting the winner's cheque to Kent's Donna Rainsley. © 2012 LDO)

OK. Here's Issue 30!

FEEDBACK FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES

(a) Sid Waddell

The September issue which featured tributes following the death of Sid Waddell clearly moved a good number of you. Several wrote to me with their memories of the great man. Mark D. wrote to say, "I just wanted to say a quick thank you for your *DDN* publications. I really enjoy them and eagerly await the arrival of each. This month's feature showcasing the mighty Sid Waddell was just lovely and well balanced."

Mick S. wrote, "As ever a great but [*on this occasion a*] very sad read. I was, as thousands of other darts people, very sad to hear 'The Voice of Darts' is no more. I think Sid made darts commentating a [*true*] profession. Sid was such an incredible person and where he got some of his sayings from well God only knows. He was fantastic with his "You can't get a gnat's eyelash between them." Incredible. A one-off. R.I.P. Sid. You will be sorely missed and never forgotten."



George Foster (Unicorn World Pairs Champion 1976 with Kevin White) and his wife Vicki e-mailed me from Australia to say, "Thanks for the wonderful tribute to one of the greatest ever - the amazing Sid Waddell. He will be sadly missed, even from over this side of the world. We were delighted to have had the pleasure of meeting him at The Winter Gardens at Blackpool during our visit there several years ago."

Bob S. from Australia contacted me and said, "Thank you very much for the newsletter. It is making the rounds here in Northern Territory, slow but sure. It is a brilliant read. Eddie Norman said you were a great writer and you are. So sorry to hear about Sid Waddell. We have heard him on Sky over here, loved the obituaries; thought they did a fine gentleman proud."

Eagle-eyed Mikko L. from Finland added his appreciation for the tributes but pointed out that I had quoted Eric Bristow as saying, "Eric was top dog. He's not going to be replaced." I apologise for that error. Of course, it should have read, "*Sid* was top dog..."

(b) Southside Darts League

In *DDN* #29 I (in my fashion) modeled a brilliant t-shirt sent to me by Sharon Huffman of Chicago's Southside Darts League. Sharon's reaction to the piece was "Hey Dr. Pat, Love it! Love it! You look fabulous and thanks for wearing the shirt." 'Fabulous?' Me? Mind you, I did have my back to the camera!

Sharon said, "Will try to remember to send you another after the cup this year... [*Thanks Sharon.*] We also have a great event every year when we challenge the north side to an all star challenge: kind of like a Cubs/White Sox rivalry. Cub fans live up north mostly and Sox on the southside. (Aahh American baseball.)" Hey Sharon! Let me have a brief report and a couple of images of that challenge and I'll publish them in a future issue of *DDN*.

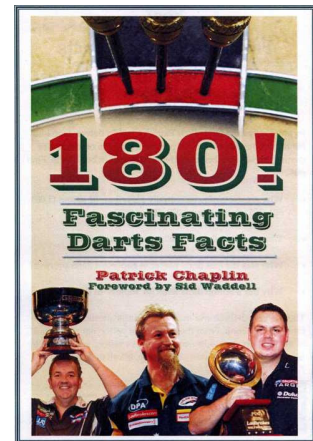
Sharon added, "Love your newsletter...and we keep them on our website www.southsidedartleague.org. I hope you know how grateful people are that you take the time and effort to write about darts. There really are a lot of people dedicated to the sport and work hard to keep it going. So once again thanks and keep up the good work."

(c) Facebook page

As mentioned in #29, I have not one but *two* Facebook pages, one under my own name and the other under 'Doctor Darts'. Both are up and running but I need to add more information to them to make them at least a little bit more interesting. I'll try and sort that out before the next issue.

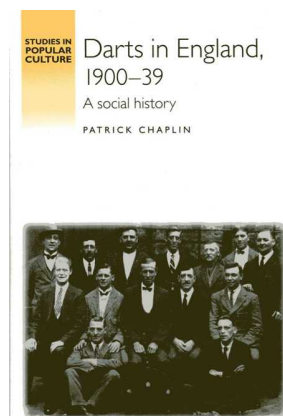
(d) 180! Fascinating Darts Facts

There already seems to be a lot of interest being generated in



my new book, *180! Fascinating Darts Facts* which is now scheduled for publication in mid-November. It's full of quirky facts about the great sport of darts and certainly is *not* a regurgitation of previous trivia that has appeared in other books or online over recent years. Much of the book features facts gleaned during the years I was researching for my PhD but also contains numerous more recent facts. One of the chapters is titled 'Unknown Waddell' featuring some little-known facts about Sid which sadly of course I had to revise to take account of the great man's death.

For those who wish to pre-order *180! Fascinating Darts Facts* you can do so online at www.thehistorypress.co.uk.



And while on the subject of books, just a reminder that the book based on my PhD *Darts in England 1900-39 – A social history* (ISBN 978-0-7190-8904-6) will be available from next month *as a paperback*. I know that many darts fans wanted to buy the hardback edition but at £55 (!) it was just too expensive. However, at **£15.99** in softback/paperback darts fans can at last read the history of our great sport that took me over twelve years to write.

To pre-order just go to www.nbinternational.com or e-mail orders@nbinternational.com. Postage and packing in the UK is £3.00 but overseas purchasers should either ring +44 (0) 1752

202301 for shipping costs or e-mail cservs@nbinternational.com.

(e) Website

I had a very successful meeting with my new webmaster earlier this month and we're now finalising and fine-tuning my brand new website so the launch date may well be later this month. Whatever the case, I'll bring you up-to-date news in the next *DDN*.

(f) Darts and the Olympics

You may recall that back in *DDN* #28 I wrote about darts as an Olympic sport and detailed the hard work the World Darts Federation (WDF) was undertaking to press the IOC to achieve recognition. Recent contact with the President of the WDF asking for an update generated the reply "There is nothing new to announce." I'll ask again later in the year and let you know of any progress.

A fascinating fact that emerged from my research (which is not featured in my new book) is that, although following application made by the British Darts Organisation (BDO) the five UK Sports Councils agreed to recognise darts as a sport in 2005, currently the Sports Councils have received no applications from any national UK darts association to become the recognised Governing Body of the sport.

(g) Shropshire Darts

I've mentioned Shropshire darts in the past both in *DDN* and on my website and in particular the hard work darts stalwart Eddie Austin has been undertaking to trace the full history of that county team. Well, the good news is that Eddie's work has now been completed and he has set up a new website to display the results of his labours at www.shropshiredartshistory.co.uk.

Eddie is a fine example of a dartsman who wanted to collate and preserve the history of his county side. He has spent many, many hours seeking out the final pieces that completed the jigsaw. Anyone else undertaking similar work is well-advised to check out the Shropshire website. Well done Eddie.

DARTS IN MALTA

Back in June Hector Gatt from Malta wrote to me saying, "I've been subscribed [*to DDN*] for quite a few months now and I've always wanted to write to say thanks and well done for your newsletter which always makes very interesting reading!"

Hector went on to tell me that he is 36 years of age and works in the Social Security Department in Valletta, the capital of his country. He said, "Darts was originally introduced in Malta by British Servicemen and has been popular ever since in our pubs. Although Malta has been independent since 1964, the British connection still lives on till this day as a good number of enthusiastic British expats form part of some teams playing within the Maltese National Darts League. Every November the Malta Darts Association holds an international darts open competition and a good number of foreigners come over specifically for this event."



Hector clearly plays a good game. The image (above) shows from left to right Hector and his colleagues Charlo Spiteri and Vince Muscat after winning the Maltese Government Darts League in 2011.



The second picture (left) shows (left to right) Joe Chircop presenting the shield of the department's internal darts league to the 2012 winner Charlo Spiteri. The league has so far been won by Joe Chircop (2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010), Tano Borg (2011) and Charlo Spiteri (2012).

Hector told me, "My interest in darts began in

March 2005 when a colleague at the Social Security Department discovered a dartboard that was moulding away in the department's store since the 90s. We cleaned it up and around six of us used to spend our lunch break playing darts every day. Eventually we bought a new dartboard and in 2006 as the number of players grew, we organised the department's first darts league."

At one point the number of participants grew so much that Hector and his colleagues had enough players to set up both a 'Division 1' and 'Division 2' complete with relegation and playoffs. Hector added, "The year 2007 was a memorable one for us as we formed a team that participated in the Third Division of the Maltese National Darts League." Unfortunately, due to other commitments the team had to disband after just two seasons but, as Hector told me, "All in all it was a wonderful experience. We still organise the departmental league every year, and the Social Security Department's team won the Maltese Government's darts competition in 2011 and was runner-up when the same competition was held last April."

Hector's e-mail made me think about the history of darts in Malta. Clearly there must have been, as Hector stated, many ex-pats who stayed on in Malta after the Second World War and set up darts clubs (perhaps based in British Legion clubs) but when was the Malta Darts Association (MDA) first established?

Well, not surprisingly, my research led me to globe-trotting darts entrepreneur Eddie Norman. He told me, "In 1975 I helped get the Malta Darts Association off the ground with Louis Florian, their General Secretary (who was the split image of TV detective *Columbo*) and Benny Pace the MDA's Chairman."

In November 1976, once the MDA was properly established, the first Malta Open Singles was held and Eddie flew over to help set it up. He told me, "Then we had forty players fly out to take part adding to the 120 entries from Malta."

The tournament was successfully held at the Palace Theatre, Pawla on the island but not before a problem had to be overcome. Eddie explains, "When we flew out for the championship, everything was fine until we saw the venue. Louis had *one* dartboard set up and expected every match to take part on it! I had to get a taxi to chase around Pawla, Luqa and half of Malta to get another twelve boards and hang them on swiftly-erected doors and walls. In the end it worked OK."

The winner of the inaugural Malta Open Darts Championship was Scottish international Harry Heenan (pictured right) who defeated Malta's R. Manaire 2-0 in the final. (I would like to know more about 'R. Manaire'. Perhaps one of my Maltese subscribers can help.) Harry had also played in an Invitation match that took place in 1975 and had beaten Reno Manara 2-0 in the final. (More about



Reno Manara as well please.) (Harry Heenan image above © PC/DW Archive. Original copyright holder unknown)

In addition to the Open a 'friendly' International match was played between the home country and the UK. Surprisingly the very strong UK team was held to a 6-6 draw by Malta. At one stage the visiting team was 4-2 down. In a ladies' match the UK team won 2-0 but sadly I have no further details. (Yet again perhaps someone can help.) After the match Eddie Norman told *Darts World*, "We congratulate the Malta Darts Association on their excellent arrangements. They are certainly now a force to be reckoned with in international darts."



Unfortunately, *Darts World* never published the results of the twelve matches. But that kind of inconvenience has never stopped me before and so here, for the very first time, (and with grateful thanks to Hector, Noel Gauci, Secretary General of the Malta Darts Association and Malta's John Formosa) I am able to present the results of the dozen matches that comprised the Malta v UK international match back in November 1976 (Malta

players names first.)

Frank Bonnici lost to Leighton Rees	0-2
Lorry Galea beat Billy Geary	2-1
Sylvester Zammit beat Alf Jeffries	2-1
Reno Manara beat Allan Cox	2-0
P. Galea beat Roy Shaw	2-0
M. Bugeja lost to Harry Heenan	0-2
G. Scicluna lost to Mike Butt	1-2
John Magro beat Roger Smith	2-0
C. Abela beat Peter Smith	2-0
Louis Barbara lost to Ken Shaw	1-2
Francis Mifsud lost to Gordon King	0-2
F. Dimech lost to Peter Norman	0-2

The image above left is of UK team member Gordon King. (Image © 1976 UKDF) Other data relating to the MDA and the UK team was obtained from the book *The Leighton Rees 1978 Darts Year Book and Diary* (1977) edited by Eddie Norman.

THE LADIES CLASSIC

In *DDN* #27 I mentioned the setting up of the Ladies Darts Organisation (LDO) led by Lincolnshire's Julie Lambie. Shortly after the 2012 Lakeside World Championships Julie and the LDO promised the ladies that they would have their very own tournament and

she's been as good as her word. I don't normally include reports of recent tournaments but in this case I make an exception.

On Saturday 15th September the first-ever Ladies Classic took place at Rileys', Crofton Road, Lincoln the home venue for Lincolnshire County Darts...and what an inaugural tournament this turned out to be! Julie told me, "With ninety-seven ladies entering the Singles and forty-six pairs, this turned into one of the greatest ladies darting events of all time. For a Ladies stand-alone competition this really has made history.

With a guaranteed singles first place prize of £1000 and England Category 'A' ranking points and BDO Grand Prix Points, and with a total of £2,860 being paid out in prize money for the singles and pairs; we really couldn't go wrong."

With top lady professionals and England players Deta Hedman, Lorraine Farlam, Lisa Ashton, Zoe Jones, Linda Ithurradle, Mandy Smith, Josie Patterson, Casey Gallagher, and Fallon Sherrock attending its success appeared to be guaranteed before a dart was thrown and so it was. Julie added, "The atmosphere all day was truly outstanding. The whole of the event ran smoothly, no hiccups whatsoever, and the enthusiastic crowd of over one hundred supporters had plenty to cheer about."

The Ladies Classic Pairs tournament ended with a win for Norfolk's Amanda Mallett and Kerry Jobson against the very strong pairing of Lisa Ashton and Zoe Jones. The image, right, shows Amanda and Kerry being presented with their winning cheques by Julie.

Julie said, "The main game of the day was the one that all the ladies who had entered had hoped to be in; The Ladies Classic Singles final." This was to be between Lorraine Farlam (Cheshire) and Donna Rainsley (Kent).



Julie reported, "The support for both ladies was amazing throughout the contest; the crowd applauding nearly every dart thrown and holding their breaths between throws." It was nip and tuck all the way and when Lorraine leveled the match at three legs-all the crowd knew they were in for an exciting final leg. Julie said, "The last leg was really going to be a game that required nerves of steel." And so it proved. Julie talks us through that final leg.

"Lorraine started with a great 140, followed by 60 and 26. Donna's first score was 60 but she then hit and followed with a 100,140 and another 100 leaving only 22 required to win the title. Lorraine needed a big checkout of 154 but only scored 60, leaving her needing 94 if she had another shot. However, with her hands trembling Donna took to the oche

and checked out on 22. The crowd erupted in applause and cheers and whistles of appreciation for the winner and her more than worthy opponent.

The two ladies really did play a fantastic game of darts and it was an honour to watch the ladies games in all their glory. Both of the ladies received a standing ovation, and rightly so. It really was a superb game of darts and the standard from both girls was stunning. Who says Ladies Can't Play Darts?"

Thanks Julie. The good news is that the date of the second Ladies Classic has already been set for 31st August 2013. Ladies, note your diaries **now**.

JIM PIKE

One of the greatest names in pre- and post-war darts was the legendary Jim Pike and I am often approached for information relating to him. Thus it was a pleasant change to receive an e-mail from subscriber Bill B. who provided me with some fascinating photographs of the great man.



Bill told me, "I've recently got hold of five old photo's showing Jim Pike and the *News of the World* team doing one of their exhibition matches. Jean Simmons the actress is also there and there are photos of Jim Pike showing her how to throw! I think it was at Denham studios and they came in an envelope dated 1947."

Having undertaken some research Bill said, "The photos may have been [*taken in*] 1946 as I've just looked up that Jean

Simmons was filming *Great Expectations* there in that year. (I should have been a detective!!)" The photo (above, copyright unknown) shows Jim helping Ms Simmons with her aim. Thanks Bill. I appreciate you sending copies of the images for my archive.

CAN YOU HELP?

(a) Darts for the visually impaired

I have received an e-mail from Jane Allen, Project Officer for Croydon Visual (Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind) here in the UK and I am hoping that subscribers may be able to help. Jane wrote:

"I work with people who have sight problems. One woman has told me that she used to be good at darts until she lost her sight. I have been trying to find out if there is such a thing as a darts club for blind or partially sighted people but I haven't been having much

luck. I know that there are magnetic darts sets available but I wonder whether they are rather a poor substitute for real darts.

Perhaps you have information or advice to offer on this subject. I did read your article about the war veterans using a piece of string to locate the bull's eye. I would be interested to hear your opinions. Thank you.”

In response to Jane’s request I contacted a couple of my friends in the world of darts who raise money for various charities and work with the disabled but neither they nor I can find any darts club for the blind or visually impaired. However, *you* may know different so please if you can provide information about any such organisations anywhere in the world please reply direct to Jane at jane@croydonvisual.plus.com with a copy to me please at the normal address.

(b) ‘Cock of the North’ darts trophy

Dudley L. has e-mailed me from Bulgaria and has asked a question I cannot answer (at the moment). He writes:

“Do you know who was in the Foaming Quart team in the 1970's, maybe 1972/73? Who was in the four-man team that won the ‘Cock of the North’ trophy on TV and what was the date and where was it held (sponsored by Watneys [*brewery*] maybe).”

Dudley has some names from the period including Harold Cartwright (who threw first in the match), Teddy Holdcroft (who hit the winning double), Jack Hancock (who had a massive reputation in and around North Staffordshire), John Flowers (the footballer) and his wife Maureen (pictured right in the days when she was sponsored by Durro). (Image copyright holder unknown. Source: PC Archive)



I couldn’t trace the 'Cock of the North' TV event only the NODOR Fours (the NODOR Challenge Cup) team from the Foaming Quart when they won the event in 1979. The team for that tournament comprised Roger Machin, Ken Stringer, Ron Gregory, Alan Dawson and Geoff Langdon.

But Dudley is asking about a much earlier event. Can anyone help? If so, please e-mail me at the usual address.

WHO IS THE GREATEST DARTS PLAYER OF ALL TIME (IN INDIA)?

That’s the question that’s been posed by Indian darter Arnab Raha.

Arnab has posed the question through his Facebook page and has already received numerous suggestions for the top male and female darter on that continent. He wrote:

“Organised darts has seen innumerable darts players come up from India even before the inception of the All India Darts Association (AIDA) in 2000 and the numbers have continued to multiply. I wish to start the most in-depth nationwide search to establish the following

1. To build a database of darts players from India (Past and Present)
2. To identify the greatest darts players (male and female) of all time from each state and eventually India as a whole.”

To kick things off Arnab has asked for suggestions from anyone and everyone. However, he told me, “People have been asked to remember that to be enlisted as a darts player in our database an individual must have played at least one competitive tournament in the World Cup or any other international event, at national level, State/District level, Inter-Club, Inter-School, Merchants Cup or Intra-Club.”

From the information gathered Arnab will compile a comprehensive list of darts players in India and eventually identify the greatest of them. Information is coming in thick and fast and Arnab has agreed to keep me informed of progress.

This made me think that perhaps when that task is completed Arnab may decide to look into the origins of darts in India...

AND FINALLY...

JIP – THE DARTING DOG

Earlier this year a talented dog at a Rochdale pub hit the bullseye with drinkers after amazing them with her skill with darts.



Regulars at The Royds Arms, owned by Lancashire-based brewer Thwaites, have made ‘Jip’, an 18 month old border collie (pictured), the official pub mascot and an honorary member of the pub’s darts team.

Jip, trained by landlord and dog lover Ken Hughes, retrieves the darts from the dartboard by leaping into the air and carefully plucking them out. The athletic pooch then places the darts at the feet of the darts player ready to fetch again.

Ken told reporters, “Jip really is a great asset to the pub and the darts team! Visitors to the pub are amazed by how friendly and welcoming she is – it’s like having an extra member of staff. I’ve always had dogs and like to train them as they are so loyal and friendly.”

Drinkers and darters from all over Lancashire have visited the pub to witness the two-year-old border collie's amazing darts-fetching talent.

Then, in early June, Jip hit the headlines again; this time with a 'Nine-Pup Finish'. Jip gave birth to nine puppies: six female and three male and they have all been named after beers in the Thwaites range. The males have been called Wainwright, Old Dan and Bomber and the females Nutty Black, Crafty Devil, Good Elf, Hobnobber, Egg Roller and Half Nelson. (Pictures © 2012 Thwaites. Reproduced with permission)

Everyone say, Ahhhhh...



COMING UP IN ISSUE 31

Coming up next time will be the story of the Yorkshire Board, a report on the 39th WINMAU World Masters plus loads of other stuff I haven't even thought of yet.

So that's it for issue #30 of *DDN*. I hope you've enjoyed it. See you next time.

PATRICK

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