

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 31 November 2012

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Issue 31.

Once again *DDN* is tinged with sadness.

I recently learned that Chris Helms, President of the American Darts Organization (ADO) (pictured) suffered a skull fracture following an accident at work in late September. He



was 'life-flighted' to University Hospital, San Antonio where he immediately underwent surgery. Chris was put in an induced coma as he embarked on his long road to recovery. He is now, very slowly, responding to treatment.

I thank Scott H. from Austin, Texas for bringing this news to my attention. Scott told me, "Chris is a man of intelligence and good humor and is a very good darts player, having ranked somewhere in the top ten players in the US as long as I can remember. Inclusion of this news in your next edition of *DDN* would certainly help ensure that Chris's friends outside the US are aware of his condition."

David Hascup, ADO Communications Officer, wrote "We will be posting updates on Chris's status on the ADO Website (www.adodarts.com/chris-helms/) and on the ADO Facebook page." David added, "On behalf of the American Darts Organization, I am asking you to all to keep Chris in

your thoughts and prayers." I am sure all *DDN* readers will join me in wishing Chris a speedy and full recovery.

FOLLOW UP FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES

(a) New website

At last my new website is up and running. This has only been possible thanks to my sponsors WINMAU. Sales and Marketing Director, Ian Flack has already taken a look and said, "The old website was good, but the new one is much slicker and more professional! Good job on this." My new webmaster Sean and I have been working all hours to amend the site and its 300+ pages. Yes. I can honestly say I've looked at every one! Nothing's perfect and there are still a few amendments to be made. Let me know what *you* think of my new site by sending any comments to info@patrickchaplin.com.

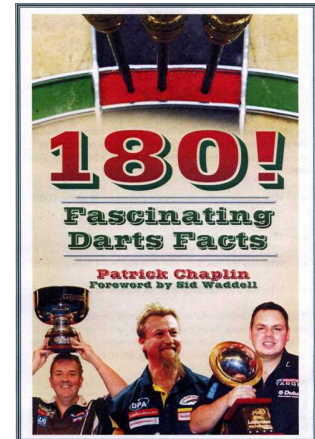


(b) 180! Fascinating Darts Facts

As my new book *180! Fascinating Darts Facts* is being published later this month I do not feel at all guilty about plugging it again here in my own newsletter.

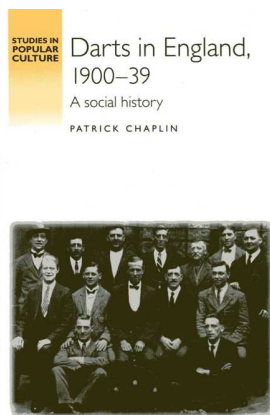
It's full of quirky facts about the great sport of darts and certainly is *not* a regurgitation of previous trivia that has appeared in other books or online over recent years. Much of the book features facts gleaned during the years I was researching for my PhD but also contains numerous more recently unearthed facts.

“Why do darts games start at 301 and 501 and not 300 or 500?” “Why is the popular US darts game of Cricket named after an English summer sport?” “Who were the first walk-on girls in UK darts?” “What was the BDO’s reaction to Barry Hearn’s ‘indecent proposal’ to buy the BDO for £1m?” “Who scored the first nine-darter?”



These and many more questions that darts fans have been worrying about for years (or not as the case may be) are answered in *180! Fascinating Darts Facts* so why not order your copy now? It would make a great present for any darts fan. You can pre-order online at www.thehistorypress.co.uk.

(c) And don't forget my other book...



Back in 2009 a lot of darts fans were keen to buy the book based on my PhD *Darts in England 1900-39 – A social history* (ISBN 978-0-7190-8904-6) but found the £55 price tag (which is not unusual for an academic work) far too much. Now the good news is that from 1st December *Darts in England* will be available in a softback edition retailing at only **£15.99** so this should make the book (someone once called it my ‘masterwork’) available to all. Anyone wishing to pre-order can go to www.nbinternational.com. If you prefer to e-mail then the address is orders@nbinternational.com. Postage and packing in the UK is £3.00 but overseas purchasers should either e-mail cservs@nbinternational.com or ring +44 (0) 1752 202301 for

shipping costs.

OK. That's the plugs over...for this month.

(d) The Curator of Darts

I have mentioned Patrick Dee (pictured below, image © 2012 Chippix) several times in *DDN*. Patrick is the avid collector of darts memorabilia who has (more or less) his entire

collection housed in a specially-constructed building at the bottom of his garden in Suffolk, England.

It is not an officially recognised museum and thus it is not generally open to the public. However, private individuals can visit by arrangement. There is no charge for admission although Patrick does ask visitors for a donation towards the local Air Ambulance and through this he has raised hundreds of pounds for the charity.



I first visited Patrick several years ago and am pleased to say that I popped in to see him again a few weeks ago. How his collection had grown! The image shows Patrick standing by a mere fraction of his collection. Two years ago I had a photograph taken with Patrick in this part of his museum but there was no room for me this time around! Patrick's collection is becoming so well known that he regularly receives donations of darts, dartboards and ephemera sometimes from total strangers who want to ensure that the items have a good home. Most recently he had donated from a well-wisher an early boxed set of the ground-breaking Unicorn *Silver Comet* darts, circa 1940s.

Carry on the good work Patrick. Most of my collection is in my loft. Who knows? Let's hope that one day, with the help of a generous benefactor or two, we'll realise our dream of setting up a National Darts Museum.

(e) Who is the Greatest Darts Player of all time in India?

In the last issue I mentioned Indian dartsman Arnab Raha (pictured) and the great work he is doing to involve his fellow darters in his mission to find out who was the best Indian darts player *ever*. His work continues with many darters responding to the challenge. Hopefully the result of his work will be known soon.



Arnab was clearly thrilled at being mentioned in *DDN*. He told me, "It is perhaps one of the proudest moments in my darting career to have found myself featured in one of the articles Dr. Patrick Chaplin has published [*in issue 30 of DDN*]." He continued, "Dr. Chaplin I would like to add to this by saying that this compilation will be conducted by representatives of The NGA Darts Club and I also assure you that November 2012 we will dedicate ourselves to the valuable suggestion made by you to look into the origin of Indian Darts."

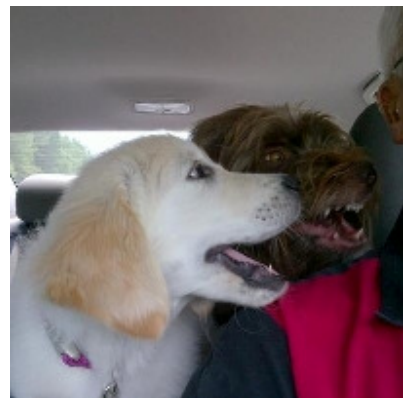
Arnab then asked if I could become ‘Chief Advisor’ to the organisation, an honour which I, sadly, had to decline. However, I have asked Arnab to keep me advised of progress and he has agreed, adding “Once again I thank you for finding this endeavor of ours worthy enough of being featured in the highly prestigious *DDN*.” (I’ll have more about the origins of darts in India in issue #32)

(f) Jip – The Darting Dog

In response to the story about Jip in last month’s issue of *DDN* the famous (or perhaps that should be ‘infamous’) US darts author Paul ‘Dartoid’ Seigel wrote,

“Hey Patrick. Just read your most recent issue of *DDN*. You spelled all of the words right. Good job. I was most impressed with the story about Jip, the darting dog from Lancashire. I have two darting dogs myself, Romy "D" (she's from Romania - the "D" is for Dracula) and Marky. Neither retrieves darts but they are both pros at eating flights (particularly Marky who is an English Cream Golden Retriever). Go figure.”

Thanks Paul. It’s always good to hear from you and – Hey! – you must be due to publish another book soon. Here Paul’s two ‘best friends’ are about to take a piece out of Dartoid’s ear. (Image © 2012 Paul Seigel)



DARTBOARDS

Mark D, of Co. Kildare, Ireland wrote to me recently. He told me, “I’ve been a huge fan of darts ever since watching the World champs where Deller beat Bristow in that epic final. I’ve always had a dartboard hanging somewhere and now have a darts room with many different dartboard styles on show. The one board I would love to have but cannot get is the famous Harrows ‘Quadro’ board which I just love for its obvious quirkiness.”

Mark then asked me, “Have you ever tackled the subject of dartboards in their many guises through your *DDN* newsletter? I love the old Yorkshire, London 5s and Log End especially. The novelty versions featuring golf, poker and snooker etc are also fantastic fun and great when hung up. I wonder if there are any one-offs out there.” I’m not sure I can help with the Quadro Board Mark except perhaps to include information about it in a future *DDN*. I’ll also be seeking out information relating to the ‘Bingo’ dartboard which I hope you will find of interest.

A while back another avid dartboard collector, Mark B. from the USA, who I have mentioned in a previous issue of *DDN*, also suggested that I feature a series on dartboards. So I have thought about it and have decided to write occasional features on dartboards and to set the ball rolling with, as Mark D calls it, ‘the old Yorkshire’.

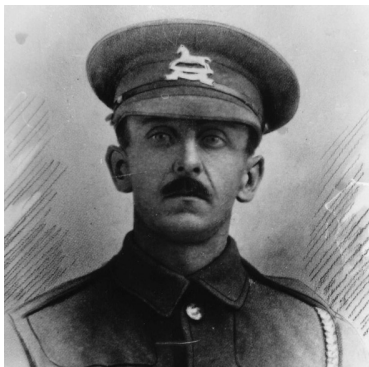
THE YORKSHIRE BOARD - ITS PART IN GLOBAL DARTS HISTORY

Although I have been researching the social and cultural history of darts for over 25 years one of the facts that had eluded me for years was “Who was responsible for the bizarre and irritating order of the numbering of segments on a standard dartboard?”

For years the prime candidate was Brian Gamlin, a 44-year-old journeyman carpenter allegedly from Bury, Lancashire, who, according to Dave Lanning in his book *Leighton Rees – On Darts* (1979), invented the numbering in 1896 ‘with the help of three other people’ but died in 1903 ‘before he could patent the idea.’

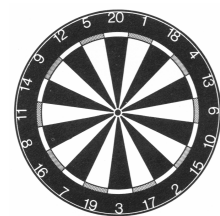
From then on the story became embellished by author after author so in the 1980s I set out on a serious search for Gamlin. By the early 1990s I had found no contemporary mention of him anywhere. Newspapers were bereft of any primary data and even Dave Lanning admitted that his source had been the ‘Old Codgers’ column in a 1970s issue of the *Daily Mirror*. Eventually I wrote the whole thing off as a carefully constructed figment of someone’s imagination but if Gamlin wasn’t responsible then who was?

The answer lay not in Lancashire but in *Yorkshire*.



Thomas William Buckle of Dewsbury (pictured left. Image © Patrick Chaplin Archive), a one-time craftsman, fireman and steeplejack, was also a hobbyist who, during the early years of the twentieth century, made dominoes in his spare time, selling sets to local pubs and clubs in and around the Dewsbury area.

By 1910 Buckle had transformed the cellar of his home in Dewsbury into a workshop and it was there, according to his son Thomas Edward, that he converted a London Fives Board (a dartboard with twelve segments all multiples of five and numbered 20, 15, 10, 5, 20, 15, 10, 5, 20, 15, 10, 5) into a more complex twenty-segment dartboard with the numbering (from the top) 20, 1, 18, 4, 13, 6, 10, 15, 2, 17, 3, 19, 7, 16, 8, 11, 14, 9, 12, 5. Buckle’s dartboard included a ring on the outside of the scoring area which had a value of twice the segment and a single bull’s-eye scoring 50 points. Buckle’s invention very soon became popularised in local pubs and spread across the county not surprisingly becoming known as the ‘Yorkshire Board’ (Dartboard image © Nodor International and reproduced with permission).



Between 1913 and 1916 Buckle moved from Dewsbury into a workshop in Crown Court, Leeds. He is listed as a ‘wire worker’ in the local *Robinson’s* trade directory for 1916. By 1938 *Robinson’s* showed Buckle as a ‘Dartboard Maker.’ The process of construction of the board described to me during an interview with Buckle’s son back in 1992 at his home in Tilbury, Essex, was as follows:

‘A local timber merchant supplied the Dutch Elm boards in ‘raw’ form, 14 ins, 16 ins and 18 ins diameter and 1½ ins thick. All of the wiring, numbering and colouring were undertaken by hand using basic tools. The colours were compiled from powder-based materials, mainly red, yellow and blue, and were water repellent. The numbers themselves were hand-made from 18g wire using pliers adapted to suit the purpose. The wiring of the dartboards [was] also by hand, 20g wire being used for quadrants and 18g for the doubles. Staples were used to fix the wire to the boards.’

In London after the Great War the fives board remained for a short while the dartboard of choice until the Yorkshire Board was imported to the south-east, initially via the coal fields of Kent. Here Buckle’s board was adopted and then it began to move into the capital. (It is still played on today in some areas of Kent.)

At some time between 1918 and 1924 someone (and, sadly, I have *still* to discover who) added the outer bull’s-eye (scoring 25 points) and the treble ring. This ‘Trebles’ or ‘London’ board quickly became popular in the capital and the Home Counties, so much so that when the National Darts Association (NDA) was formed in London in 1925 the organisation set down the first-ever formal rules and regulations for the game of darts and chose the trebles board as ‘standard’.

So Buckle senior not only gave us the numbering of the dartboard which is now globally accepted as standard but this also led to the creation of the board that became the national and then the world standard, a format upon which the today’s game and the modern darts industry is based.

Many regional dartboards fell by the wayside as a result of the introduction of the ‘London’ dartboard but the Yorkshire Board held firm well into the 1970s until a large number of leagues adopted the ‘London’ board. This was primarily because the ‘London’ board was the dartboard of choice not only of the newly-established British Darts Organisation (BDO) but also of all major darts competitions including the long-established *News of the World* Individual Darts Championship.

However, whilst other regional boards are now extinct, Buckle’s Yorkshire Board can still be found in specific areas of the county of Yorkshire. Recent sightings have included a league in both the Bradford area and Skipton. Mrs. A. Chapman who organises the Bradford Invitation League told me recently, “no one of our teams in our League would want to play on the treble board” even now.

I am keen to log the locations of the Yorkshire Board where it is played on as in an organised league or simply as a facility available to all in a local pub so if any UK *DDN* readers can help with this then please contact me at info@patrickchaplin.com. And of course if there are any sightings outside the UK I’d like to hear about them too.

WINMAU WORLD MASTERS

My wife Maureen and I thoroughly enjoyed ourselves at the 39th WINMAU World Masters in Kingston-upon-Hull over the weekend of 13th/14th October as guests of the sponsors.



We saw some fantastic darts thrown throughout our time there but I have to say that Wales' Julie Gore's sensational 130 outshot against Deta Hedman in the first leg of the Ladies' final really made the weekend special. Well done Julie. Julie (pictured with Men's winner Stephen Bunting) went on to win the title 4-1. Julie's emphatic 4-0 win in her semi-final against Tamara Schuur of The Netherlands and her Masters win meant that nine-times Lakeside Women's World Champion, Trina Gulliver is in the line-up for the 2013 Lakeside World Pro and by one of those extraordinary coincidences was drawn to play Julie in her opening match next January!

Congratulations too to the Men's Master, England's Stephen Bunting. Stephen played confidently throughout the weekend and eventually met Tony O'Shea in the final. Some magnificent darts were thrown by both men but it was Stephen the number one seed who achieved a 7-4 victory over Tony with a fantastic 146 checkout. This win was Stephen's first major title and by doing so became the first male darter to do the 'WINMAU Double' winning both the Winmau Boys Masters (2001) and the Men's Masters title (2012). (A full report of the Masters can be found at www.winmau.com.)

Maureen and I had a really great time and even managed to witness WINMAU Sales and Marketing Director Ian Flack (pictured right) not only playing darts but also managing to balance a lampshade on his hand at the same time.

Let's not forget the younger darters who also performed incredibly well at the City Hall, Hull. Two keenly contested Youth Finals provided great entertainment for the crowd. In the Boys' Masters Jeffrey de Zwaan of The Netherlands won the 2012 title with a 4-3 victory over Kenny Neyens of Belgium. Jeffery hit two 180's and recorded an impressive 25.68 average. In the Girls' Masters final, England's Fallon Sherrock triumphed 4-1 against Ann-Kathrin Wiggmann of Germany. Fallon hit the only 180 of the match and recorded a 25.46 average.



The Boys Final also provided a unique moment in World Masters history when Scotland's Jordan Forbes became the youngest referee ever to grace the WINMAU World Masters stage as he called the final at just 13 years of age.

(Image of Ian Flack ©2012 Chippix. Image of Julie and Stephen courtesy of the BDO: Photography by JON MATTHEWS.

SPONSORS NEWS

My sponsor, WINMAU, the world's leading darts brand, has announced their three-year partnership with the newly formed Ladies Darts Organisation (LDO).



As *DDN* readers will recall the LDO is the brainchild of Julie Lambie-Boyles (pictured), who felt that the ladies game would benefit from their own organisation. Julie and her colleagues have made amazing strides in such a short space of time including organising the inaugural Ladies Classic held recently in Lincoln.

The LDO have selected WINMAU as the official darts equipment supplier for the next three years, which means that WINMAU dartboards will be used at all LDO events.

Ian Flack, Sales and Marketing Director said, "Our company has always been focused on and supported the ladies game. Our sponsorship of nine-times World Champion Trina Gulliver dates back over 13 years, and we have one of the largest prize funds on the planet for the ladies game via the WINMAU World Masters tournament. Julie and all at the LDO have already achieved so much and there is no doubt that the future of the ladies game is safe in their capable hands!"

For further information about the LDO visit www.ladiesdartsorganisation.com.

AND FINALLY...

I am pleased to announce that, after a number of visits to an osteopath, my frozen shoulder has recovered sufficiently for me to be able to play darts again; this after a break from the game of nearly one year. On 24th October I toed the oche at my local, *The Carpenters Arms* for the first time since November last year. The result? I won only one game out of five but...that's a start. Thanks to all those subscribers who wished me well in eventually overcoming the condition.

COMING UP IN ISSUE 32

Les G. has contacted *DDN* for help in learning *something* about '**The Northwood Collapsible Dart**' (pictured). This is an intriguing piece of darts memorabilia. Constructed almost entirely of brass (the metal of choice until tungsten arrived) the three

darts could be assembled into a single unit so as to be transported in a coat pocket without causing damage to the clothing.



Les told me, "I can find no details about it on the Internet and wondered if any of your readers could remember anything in their past about it. I have recently been to the Antiques Roadshow but had no success only that the expert thought it was made between the first and second world wars, hope some of your readers can help. Many thanks."

I would like to hear from any reader who ever played with these darts but

the good news is that the story of 'The Northwood Collapsible Dart' will be featured in the December issue of *DDN*. (Image © Les G.)

I'll also be featuring a brief **History of Darts in India** and be asking if you know anything about **William Jewiss** 'the first world darts champion' circa 1927, plus much, much more that you'll only find here in *DDN*.

See you in December.

Patrick

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