

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 33 December 2012 - Supplement

INTRODUCTION

Hi Everyone,

I know that you will all be probably surprised to receive another issue of *DDN* during the month of December.



The reason is that I was feeling a bit guilty about the fact that a few articles I had promised readers over recent months simply have not appeared in *DDN* due to other pressures on space. You are probably all aware that I do not publish *DDN* in January so I thought I would try to rectify matters by publishing this 'Supplement' as a seasonal bonus for subscribers.

However, before I do any of that, I'd like, on behalf of us all, to wish Ted 'The Count' Hankey (pictured) a speedy recovery. As you may know Ted suffered a mild stroke during the Grand Slam of Darts; this coming at a time when he should have been celebrating with his wife Sarah, the birth of their son Aaron. Congratulations to them both on the arrival of Aaron and Ted, get well soon. (Image © 2012 Courtesy of the Winmau Dartboard Co. used with permission.)

OK. What shall I start with? What about...

WILLIAM JEWISS – THE FIRST WORLD CHAMPION?

Some while ago 'Metalman' brought my attention to a curious posting on www.thedartsforum.co.uk relating to an extraordinary claim. The post that follows (which contains minor grammatical corrections by me) was made by George Jewiss who stated that he is "the son of William Jewiss, born 1885, who won the first world championship organised by the NoW [*News of the World*] and a brewer named Dodd. Their [*sic*] were a 1000 entrants. Google mail has information more detailed."

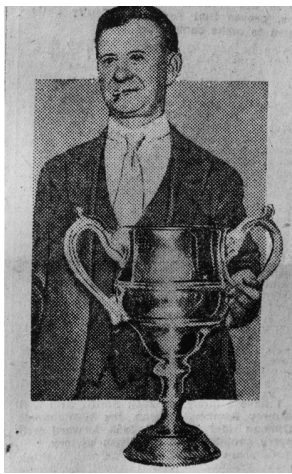
George added, "I have a gold medal dated 1928/29 and (in poor condition) a set of tube si[l]ver-plated darts. These were well used by my Dad. The medal is engraved SBDL. I was born 1933 now 79 aged. Dad's pub was the Dorset Arms now gone. The DA pub was a Truman House with Doubles only board. It is possible he played after the win with a group run by a Mr. Fox. I would like to here [*sic*] from any person who knew of Him."

I was eager to learn more about this 'world' event and indeed to help George in his quest for information but despite Metalman making determined efforts to contact George again, no further communication has been received.

I 'Googled' William's name and found an entry on Wikipedia which related to the *News of the World* championship. Confusingly, the entry includes the following reference:

'The tournament was first organised in the 1927/28 season thanks to the help of the staff on the *News of the World* newspaper and other volunteers, who helped set up the competition. William Jewiss won the 1927 darts challenge cup sponsored by News of the World and C. N. Kidd & Sons brewery in Dartford. There were around 1,000 entries in the first event, which was held in the Metropolitan area of London.'

It is true that the *News of the World* competition was first run in the 1927/28 season solely for darts players in the Metropolitan Area of London and that just over 1,000 (1,010 in fact) competed for the title. The winner was Sammy Stone (pictured) who played out of the New South-West Ham Club. (Stone image probably © News of the World)



But this was no 'world' title and to the best of my present knowledge, the *News of the World* never ran any darts tournaments until the publishers invited representatives of the National Darts Association (NDA) to their offices to discuss a 'darts test' in 1926. In 1926 darts was not a global pastime and any thoughts of a 'world' championship were not bandied about until Joe Hitchcock and Jim Pike played for an unofficial 'world' title in the late 1940s.

Going back to George's original posting, I think that the initials 'SPDL' stands for the 'Shrimp Brand Darts League'; Shrimp Brand being beer produced at the time by Russell's Gravesend Brewery Ltd., Kent; the brand name being so popular that many thought that Shrimp Brand was the name of the actual brewery. (The image (right) shows the Shrimp Brand logo in brickwork on the former Russell's depot (sadly now demolished) in my home town of Maldon, Essex (Sadly now demolished.)) (Image © Stephen P. Nunn). Russell's (established in January 1893) was taken over by Truman, Hanbury and Buxton in 1930.



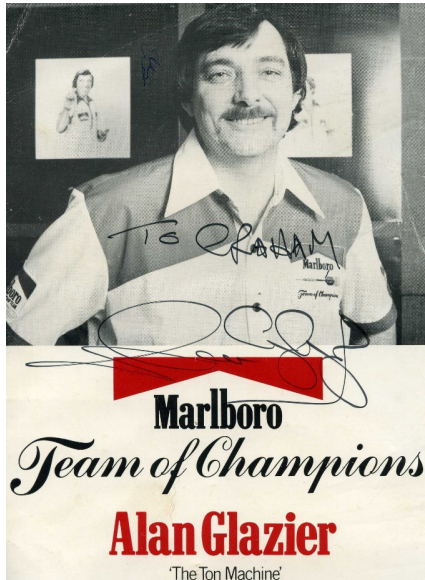
Sorry. I lapsed into brewery history there for a moment. Back to George's claim...

In the Wikipedia information it mentions the C. N. Kidd brewery of Dartford but this *may* be a red herring. The brewery did exist at that time but had no link with Truman's, the owners of the *Dorset Arms*. My guess has to be that the details of the story of William Jewiss's achievement have been inadvertently modified over time but, as always, I could be wrong.

Perhaps *DDN* readers can help.

ALAN GLAZIER, HIS DARTS AND THE HAANTJE CAFÉ

Way, way, way back in issue 15 of *DDN* (June 2011) I answered the question “Who currently holds the record for the least darts thrown in a pro game of 1,001?” My research showed that the darts player who held that record was Cliff Inglis with a 19-dart 1,001 back in November 1975.



Naturally my enquirer mentioned England's Alan Glazier's claim of achieving the perfect (but unofficial) 17-darter achieved in practice at *The Crown* public house in Wetherby in 1976. In June 2011 I e-mailed Alan (pictured). (Image courtesy PC Archive) to check the claim and ask the question and his partner Kris replied saying, “Alan's 17-dart 1,001? As far as he knows, no-one has done it.”

So there you have it. (I think.)

That short article also brought forth a couple of responses; one from the UK, the other from Holland. As a result of my mentioning Alan, subscriber Richard F. from Andover, Hampshire contacted me and said, “I really enjoyed the article on Alan Glazier. As a footnote, I met Alan during the mid-nineties, at a

county match in Fareham, Hampshire. He was really nice to me and signed my dart case as it contained my Winmau Alan Glazier darts (24g). He was chuffed that players still used them.”

And talking of players still using ‘The Ton Machine’s darts, Ad Kobbenhaegen from Holland wrote to tell me about his darts team in which *everyone* plays with Alan Glazier arrows. Ad told me, “We are playing darts in the south of The Netherlands in a town called Valkenburg near Maastricht. We started our league ten years ago with four teams but by September 2011 we have over 25 teams competing.” One condition of participation in the competition is that all teams must come from Valkenburg. Ad's team is ‘D. C. Haantje’ playing out of the Haantje café, the oldest café (1890) in the town. The image shows Ad's team who (left to right) are Jo Neus (Ad's father-in-law), Ad (who is Chairman of the league), Roy Paulssen and Loe Geraards. The only team member missing is Ed Ackermans, the inn keeper of Ad's pub.



Ad explained why all members of his team play with Alan's darts. He told me, "The reason why our whole team and so many other players in our competition play with Alan Glazier darts is simple. We have a darts shop called Jelti Darts (www.jeltidarts.nl) in Brunssum about eight kilometers from Valkenburg. The owner of the shop, Ric de Wit, organises regular darts workshops and about six or seven years ago he introduced me to Alan Glazier darts." Ad added, "We agreed with 70 or 80 players that they had a very good grip and balance. Since then we have played with these darts. Also young players who are beginning to play like those darts."

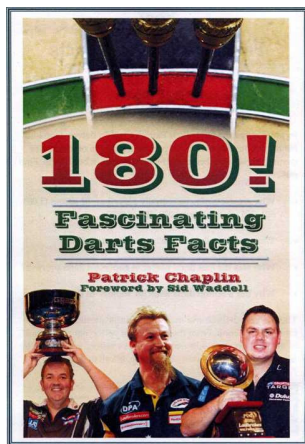
Bearing in mind that Ad told me about his team some time ago, I decided recently to check with him and he replied enthusiastically, "Yes, my team is still playing with Alan Glazier darts. For us they are still the best darts ever."

(For more information about Ad's club and the Valkenburg darts league check out www.valkenburgsedartcompetitie.nl and www.dcthaantje.valkenburgnet.nl.)

So do *DDN* readers know of any other darts team that plays exclusively with one 'signature' dart? If so, please contact me via my website www.patrickchaplin.com.

180! FASCINATING DARTS FACTS

The word from my publisher is that *180! Fantastic Darts Facts* is selling very well and it seems that a good number of *DDN* subscribers took advantage of the special offer featured in #32. In fact the book is doing so well that it has had to be reprinted which, of course, is always a good sign!



My good friend Steve 'Metalman' was one of the first people to review *180!* and his very pleasing review can be found at

<http://www.thedartsforum.co.uk/showthread.php?10484-Review-180-Fascinating-Dart-Facts-By-Patrick-Chaplin>

Thanks Steve.

Of course there's still time to buy *180!* for Christmas or that special occasion. More information is available from www.thehistorypress.co.uk.

FEEDBACK FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES

Mick S. writes "Thanks for yet another great read. It's so sad that yet another great player [*Harry Heenan*] has passed away. I would like to offer his family my respect and sadness at their loss R.I.P."

Mark from Ireland said "Thanks for issue #32; bursting with 'Dartifacts' for all darts enthusiasts! Keep 'em coming my man." Mark, I'll do my best.

‘THE CRAFTY COCKNEY’ IN THE JUNGLE

Congratulations to Eric Bristow for doing so well in the jungle on ITV’s *I’m A Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!* Eric’s home-spun in-your-face philosophy was delightful and refreshing although he did upset one or two people to start with but in the main they gradually warmed him. The general consensus seemed to be that with Eric there was no grey. Everything was either black or white. Of course there’s nothing wrong with that. At least you know where you stand. Well done Eric. You did yourself and darts proud.

THE NORTHWOOD COLLAPSIBLE DART

As mentioned in Issue #31, I was approached by Les G. earlier this year asking me if I knew anything about ‘The Northwood Collapsible Dart’ (pictured below).

He wrote, “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 [*a long-established UK TV antiques valuation show*] but had no success only that the expert thought it was made between the first and second world wars...”

My original response to Les was “I’ll see what I can find out about it and get back to you” but then my old brain whispered, “Pat. You’ve been here before.” I checked through my files and ‘Voila!’ I discovered that I had researched that very dart back in the late 1980s (I was *so* much younger then...).

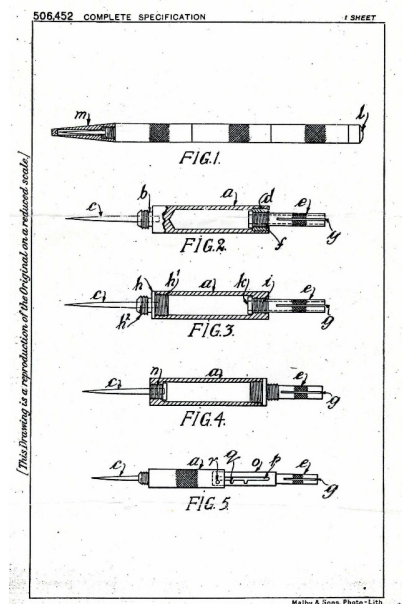
Constructed almost entirely of brass (the metal of choice until tungsten arrived) the three darts could be assembled into a single unit so as to be transported in a coat pocket without apparently causing damage to clothing.



The Northwood Collapsible Dart was invented by a man named Robert Bowles in the mid-1930s and he patented the idea in 1938. The shaft of each dart was contained within the hollow body of each arrow and had to be screwed out and tightened before flights could be inserted. The patent specification (below) shows a number of alternative methods of construction. FIG 5 is merely an extension of Bowles’ idea which allows for a longer dart by way of a telescopic shaft.

The collapsible dart was expensive to make and had other disadvantages. For example, the construction of the dart would, by its very nature, have to be lightweight; the body of the dart having to be fairly large in order to contain the shaft. This led to an unusual centre of gravity, which made the darts clumsy and awkward to throw. In addition, the metal-to-metal thread connections had a tendency to work loose during the course of play; darters finding this irritating and off-putting. Also, even though the darts collapsed neatly into the compactness of a large propelling pencil and could be slipped into the pocket without injury to the person, there was still the risk that the pointy end might pierce a shirt or jacket plus the player would still have to carry his or her flights separately.

The Northwood Collapsible Dart was, not surprisingly, produced by The Northwood Darts Co., and was, as shown on page 5, presented in a smart blue box. A similar design was apparently produced by Magnatex but I have yet to see one of their collapsible dart products. (Perhaps *DDN* readers can help.)



Back in the late 1930s and 1940s the collapsible dart was of some value as a novelty but I doubt that any serious darter would have purchased a set as a serious replacement for their 'old faithfuls'. Having said that it is an intriguing piece of darts memorabilia...

(Images of dart © 2012 Les G.) (Patent © HM Patent Office)

DARTS IN ENGLAND 1900-39: A SOCIAL HISTORY

Bill B. contacted me recently about *Darts in England 1900-39*. You'll recall that the price of the hardback (£55) had been prohibitive for most darts fans but now it is available in paperback I know that many of you are buying it.



Bill wrote, "Patrick, I got your book, at last, from Amazon. I've just started it. It's very good and must have taken you ages to research it all. It's nice to have the original beginnings of darts all in one book. I can see how you got to be 'Dr Darts.' If you hadn't done all that work, it may have been forgotten and lost forever. Johnny Ross was right!"

For those who don't know, Johnny Ross (pictured) was a man who dedicated his entire life to darts, first as a fan, then as an organiser, player (including being a member of The *News of the World* Team of Darts Champions) and sales representative

for NODOR. He was also a founding member of the National Darts Association of Great Britain (NDAGB). When I interviewed John in 1988 and told him about my research he told me, “Darts needs someone like you.”

(The image shown above is of John acting as Jim Pike’s stooge; Pike pinning a cigarette held in John’s mouth to a double. Image © PC Archive.)

THE HISTORY OF DARTS IN INDIA

In Issue #31 I mentioned the response I had received from Arnab Raha who was intending to look into the history of darts in India.

In the meantime, Jimmy Medhora, a friend of Arnab’s wrote to remind me that some years ago he and I exchanged e-mails about that very matter. Jimmy, originally from Kolkata, India but now based in Hoylake, Wirral, UK, reminded me of how he believes darts started in India. He wrote:

“Darts is a game which actually has been in Kolkata for quite a few years before the formation of any association. My earliest recollection would actually date back to the 1980’s when as a youngster I used to play the game as a “bar sport” at the Calcutta Cricket and Football Club (CCFC) (The CCFC is incidentally the second oldest cricket club in the world and was founded in 1792 by the British) which however was even then at a fairly decent level. I am hence presuming that this could well have been how the British at some stage brought the game to India, though only as a bar sport.

Since the 1980’s till his departure from Kolkata in 2010/11 to settle in France, there was no better darts enthusiast than my friend and well known personality in the darts circle even today David Purdy who spent his younger years in England and passed on his knowledge of the sports to all those willing to learn. I doubt if even today there is anyone who can say that they have beaten him as he always was a cut above the rest. Due to the fact that he maintained his British citizenship he never did get the opportunity of representing India but did assist a number of times in their training.

In the early additions of the state level tournaments the teams from CCFC were normally far superior to the rest as long as drinks and beers were in attendance. I recollect winning the team tournament a number of times in the early years of its formation and in fact recollect fondly having beaten Arnab in the first addition of the State level singles tournament. That wouldn’t happen today but then that’s another story!

Unfortunately for most CCFC club members, we always treated the sport as a way of socializing and having some fun and never took it any further, hence no one from the club has ever taken part in the National tournaments or further.”

Thanks Jimmy. That’s a great start to tracing the true origins of darts in India. Let’s hope Arnab is able to find even more about it as his own research progresses.

(In the next issue I'll be reporting on the India National Darts tournament courtesy of Ashfaque Sayed one of my key contacts in that country.)

THE LORD LONSDALE TROPHY AND DARTS ON THE WIRELESS

Another item that has been in the 'pending' file waiting for space in *DDN* is an e-mail I received back in 2011 from Kevin H., from Harlow, Essex.

Kevin wrote to say, "I was at my parent's house...and my mother was showing me her father's darts medals (the People's Darts championship 1938/39). After researching on line I found Issue 8 of your news letter. His medals are the same as in your pictures."

Kevin's grandfather's name was Alexander Leslie Shepherd and he played for the *King Harold* public house in Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire. 1938/39 was the inaugural running of the Lord Lonsdale Darts Team Championship sponsored by *The People* Sunday newspaper and the *King Harold* were runners up to the team from *The Hercules* from Mansell Street, Aldgate, London. As the championship was shelved after that first tournament due to the outbreak of war, the medals are of substantial value. The event was next contested in the 1946/47 season.



The 1938/39 final was also transmitted on the wireless. Kevin told me, "The thing that always makes people laugh is when I tell them that my Grandfather was on the radio... Playing Darts..! (Those were the days!)". Yes, indeed.

HANDS THAT DO DARTING...

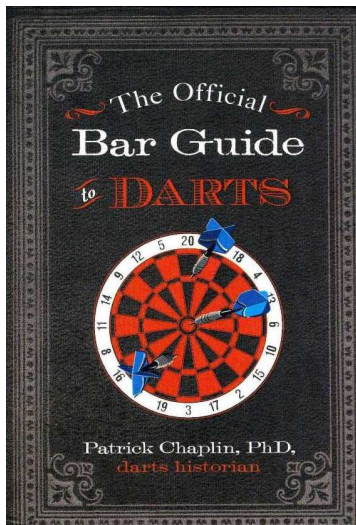
Yet another enquiry that I failed to include in *DDN* when the matter was first raised many months ago was from US subscriber Russell H. of Ridgeville, South Carolina. He wrote:

"I just thought of something I have not seen in any dart book or reference to playing darts. Maybe you can ask in your next news letter and see what kind of response you get. The question is: "How do you prep your hands before a match?"

I know people use wax, water, or lick fingers during a match. Does anyone do anything before a match? Personally my hands are very rough and dry from a lifetime of using them. My hold is very light using the tips of three fingers and my thumb on opposite sides of the dart almost under the mid-line. I have a hard time feeling the dart because of dry skin and calluses so I use darts that have full length knurls or grooves with a sharp edge for grip.

I prepare ready for a match the day before and the day of [*the match*] by putting a good moisturizer on my hands to soften the finger tips. During the game I use a small amount of a lip balm called Blistex just on my finger tips. The one I use comes in a squeeze tube not a round tube like other lip balms or lip stick. It goes into the skin very quickly and is dry to the touch. With my skin softer the dart grooves and knurls do the job intended to grip the skin and I get control during the throw.

I think the things I do make a difference to my game. I know some people must have their own thing they do to prep their hands. Can we hear from them?"



That's a good point Russell and thanks for your advice. I know that grip can be a problem for some darts players. I recognised this in my book *The Official Bar Guide to Darts* (New York: Puzzlewright Press, 2010) and on page 21 wrote:

"If you have basic problems gripping the dart, perhaps the darts barrel is too smooth or even greasy, switch to a set of darts with knurled barrels. Alternatively, carry a stick of chalk or a small resin block with you to rub on the barrels to enhance your grip."

Finally, check your own hands. Make certain they are warm and clean before a game. Cold hands and stiff fingers will not enhance your play. Warm them up. Greasy fingers can cause your grip to slip. Check your fingernails too. Rough nails can catch on the barrel and sometimes result in a wayward dart."

If any DDN readers can offer further advice to Russell, please contact me via my website www.patrickchaplin.com.

INTO THE DRAGON'S DEN

Having mentioned Eric Bristow being on TV in the jungle I have to mention another darts TV 'star' Barry Steptoe from OckesRus.com. Barry (pictured) didn't go into the jungle. No, he did something even more terrifying. He appeared before the dragons on TV's *Dragon's Den* the programme where inventors try to obtain funding for their inventions from a formidable panel of business tycoons.

Barry, whose business is primarily manufacturing quality portable oches, told me, "It was filmed last March in the new BBC studios in Manchester. I asked the dragons for £50,000 for a 10% interest in the



business.”

To even qualify to appear before the dragons 10,000 applicants had to be whittled down to around eighty-five who would actually be filmed. Barry said, “To get into the last 85 you have to jump through hoops and fill in loads of forms, answer loads of questions and undergo a close scrutiny and a whole series of checks...but it was still worth it!”



Barry added, “During my pitch in which I demonstrated the portable oche (see image) they didn't tear me apart at all, in fact quite the opposite. They said it was a good idea and I had done well to get it to where "I was at that moment" (Last March remember). I even got on very well with Hilary Devey [*one of the Dragons*]. So much so that she actually promised to send me a birthday card and on June the 8th a card and a signed photo turned up on my doormat. I have the photo framed and on my office wall. She is a special lady that one.”

Barry's one minute of fame (out of 45 minutes of filming) was televised in the UK on BBC2 on Sunday 21st October 2012 but of course Barry already knew the outcome. He told me, “I knew I wasn't given the funding but I couldn't say anything or they would have not included my part in the series.” However, the good news is that since the programme was broadcast Barry's sales have really grown. Barry added, “In fact I set myself a sales target to hit before Christmas and by last Thursday [*the last week in November*] I had hit that target already. FIVE WEEKS before Christmas. Things are going really well for me just now. Better than I could have hoped.”

Well done Barry. Congratulations to you for making it into the ‘den’ and coming out the other side unscathed. Anyone wishing to learn more about Barry and his products should go to his website www.ockeysrus.com.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Clearly all darts fans' attentions will be focused on the two World Championship darts tournaments that will entertain and thrill us (to differing levels I guess) through the second half of December and into January 2013. I am making no predictions about who will win as I am never, ever correct.

There has been a lot of talk about the 2013 Lakeside being (as it was in 2012) more a UK versus Europe event than the 'multi-countries' PDC tournament. This may be the case but I was reassured recently by a senior member of the British Darts Organisation that the BDO is working on a plan to ensure that the 'world' is put back into the Lakeside **World** Professional Darts Championship in time for the 2014 finals.

I'm wondering if that will all be too late. What do *DDN* readers think?

HARRY HEENAN

My thanks to Jim MacN who e-mailed me about the Harry Heenan obituary I featured in the last issue. Jim wrote, "Great article on Harry H; much appreciated North of the Border." He also pointed out a small error in my article. I mentioned 'Willie Hetherington' which should have read, 'Willie Etherington.'

Jim also recalled 'a fantastic visit' from Willie and Tony Bell in the early Seventies in Inverness which was the first 'exhibition-style' visit he had ever seen in Scotland.

COMING UP IN ISSUE 34...

When I interviewed Scottish darts legend **RAB SMITH** over a year ago I had no idea that it would take me this long to tell his story but rest assured Rab that it'll be in the February issue.

REMINDER

As many of you will know **there is no *DDN* in January** so the next issue will be published in February 2013.

So, that's it for *DDN* #33 and for 2012. My thanks to you the readers and especially to Justin of the GDA and my sponsors WINMAU.

I hope you've enjoyed this issue. All the very best to you all.

Patrick

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