

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 35 March 2013

INTRODUCTION



Hi everyone and a very warm welcome to you all and especially those new subscribers who have joined our happy throng since last month. These include Lukasz from Poland who told me, "I love darts and I'm trying to find more information about this. It is not easy, because in Poland where I'm living there are not too many sources of information about darts." Well, Lukasz I hope *DDN* will help add to your knowledge of the great sport of darts and that of all our new friends.



In this month's issue the key features include Anastasia Dobromyslova's 'Olympic Gold Medal' (pictured left, image by Henk Westerdaal, used with permission), the 'Optimal' Dartboard (which some of you might have seen demonstrated on BBC TV during the Lakeside World Professional Darts Championship at Frimley Green in January), news of a new darts world record attempt and, as promised in last month's issue, the obituary of yet another darting great, Kim Brown. Plus of course lots of other stuff I hope you'll find of interest.

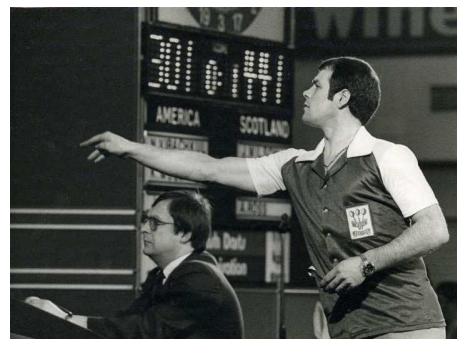
OK. Here's #35...

FOLLOW UP FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES

(a) Rab Smith

Subscriber Mick S. was pleased to receive his February *DDN*. He wrote, "Welcome back Patrick... I am thankful that Xmas has passed now. At last I get to read your fantastic *DDN* again." As you all probably know I do not produce a *DDN* for January but – Who knows? – this might change this year.

Mick added, "Great to read about Rab Smith. I was hoping you would have a recent picture of him." Well, good news Mick. When I spoke to Rab last year he rather was reluctant to provide a recent image but talking to him again recently he has promised to send one to me fairly soon so watch this space. For now let's see Rab again during his playing career (right) (Image courtesy PC/DW Archive).



Ex-England International Doug McCarthy texted to say how much he enjoyed the Rab Smith article saying that Rab was a 'Great guy.'

(b) John Gwynne

Glen H. from Seattle wrote "Thanks very much for DDN! Fantastic work as always Patrick! That was neat to read your interview with Rab. However, I am saddened to hear of John Gwynne's retirement from darts commentary for Sky.

He always did such a fantastic job, and it was such fun to be able to meet him, Dave Lanning, and the late Sid Waddell in Las Vegas about 7 years ago. Listening to the darts commentary won't be the same with Sid's passing, and now John's retirement."

(c) 'Darting Jewel in the Irish Sea'

In Issue #34 Wayne Baker wrote a superb article about the history of the Isle of Man Festival of Darts. Eagled-eyed subscriber Andy S. spotted an error in the piece. Andy said, "I'm sure someone has pointed out the typo in Martin Holt's 9-darter: 1997 not 1979." Well Andy, no one else did so thanks for bringing that to my attention. I'm happy to set the record straight.

Tom F., the Secretary of the World Airline Darts Association (WADA) from Ireland wrote, "Patrick, Read the article by Wayne Baker and loved it. Met Wayne last year in the Isle of Man after corresponding with him for years and was very disappointed when his column was dropped from the *Darts World* magazine." [I am sure Tom speaks for a lot of *Darts World* readers when he says that.]



However, Tom added, "Just for the record Pat Clifford [pictured] from Ireland was better known as Paddy Clifford and I was fortunate to play with him and for Donohoe's darts team for a number of years. He also constructed a simplified version of the Electronic Dartboard/Scoreboard operated by himself or his wife Vera at many events throughout Ireland. Donohoe's was formed by Louis Donohoe, who also organized the *News of the World* darts competition in Ireland originally. Donohoe's continued to run for many years after that by his son Ken." (Undated image of Paddy Clifford ©Terry Butler from PC/DW Archive. Copyright holder not traceable at the time of writing)

(d) 180! Fascinating Darts Facts in Japan

Dave F. wrote to me recently, "I along with many ex-pats live here in Ibaraka in Japan. We play both soft tip and steel tip darts and have two darts leagues set up by Eddie Norman about six years ago on one of his frequent visits to the city. I have just had your new *180!* darts book sent out to me by my brother in UK, CONGRATULATIONS, what a great read."

Thanks Dave. It's always great to receive positive feedback about any of my books from subscribers from far-flung corners of the globe. It's also good to hear *yet again* of thriving darts leagues which have been set up by the multi-travelled Dr. Eddie Norman.

Eddie's role in spreading the sport of darts across the world can never be underestimated. He has been the catalyst for darts leagues in so many countries since the 1970s one of his most recent darts leagues being formed in Greenland.

(e) Encouraging more *DDN* subscribers

Jake D. has dropped me a line saying how much he's enjoying *DDN*. He tells me, "I've enjoyed your newsletter. I moderate a darts group online at www.reddit.com/r/darts. I'm going to post a link to your subscription page today. Hopefully it'll bring you more subscribers." Thanks Jake.

The influx of new subscribers increased since Jake's e-mail so I would like to encourage anyone else who enjoys my newsletter and who moderates or who has influence over similar groups to please mention *DDN*. I also recommend subscribers to click on the link (above) and check out Jake's darts group.

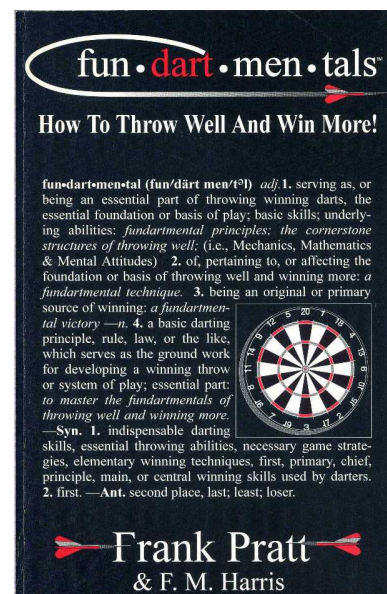
DEATH OF DARTS AUTHOR FRANK PRATT

US subscriber Ron S. wrote to me recently to let me know that Frank Pratt, author of *fun.dart.men.tals – How to Throw Well And Win More!* had passed away. When it was published in 1995 Frank's book was acclaimed by US darts players including Larry Butler who stated that it was 'The most informative book on darts I have ever read whilst Canada's John Part said, "...it's the most important book you will ever read to become a winner."

Frank's book was lively and informative and tackled the sport of darts in an original 'in your face' way with no holds barred. When I received a copy of the book from Frank he had signed it for me and wrote, "Patrick... May the only problem you face in life be to hit the damned double!" It must also rank as having the most wordy front page of any dart book ever published!

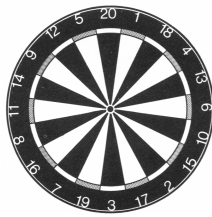
Ron S. told me, "Frank wrote the book that is considered by many to be one of the best books ever about how to play the 501 game... As a novice to this sport his book and advise is referred to often. He was truly a great ambassador of our sport. RIP."

Tributes to Frank and an image of him can be found at



THE OPTIMAL DARTBOARD MATHS PROF REDESIGNS DARTBOARD

Some time during the last years of the nineteenth or the first few years of the twentieth century, wireworker Thomas Buckle of Dewsbury, West Yorkshire devised the numbering of the dartboard which is recognised around the country and around the globe today as 'standard'.



Buckle had in his possession a London 'Fives Board'; a dartboard comprising of twelve segments numbered (from the top and clockwise) 20, 5, 15, 10, 20, 5, 15, 10, 20, 5, 15, 10. The wireworker toyed with the board and then expanded it to twenty segments reading clockwise from the top, 20, 1, 18, 4, 13, 6, 10, 15, 2, 17, 3, 19, 7, 16, 8, 11, 14, 9, 12, 5. The board (pictured, courtesy of NODOR International) was marketed locally and sold so well that it eventually became known as the 'Yorkshire' or 'Doubles' board. During the subsequent decade or so the board was 'exported' to London where a treble ring was added but the numbering sequence remained the same.

For nearly ninety years Buckle's devious numbering system was memorised and played by millions of darts players, no one giving much thought to whether or not it was perfect *mathematically*. However, all this changed recently when Professor of Mathematics David Percy, of Salford University, reviewed the situation publishing the results of his research in the academic journal *Mathematics Today*.

As a result of Professor Percy's deliberations, the board was to a large extent re-numbered, that action removing the apparent bias towards those relatively new to the game. Percy dubbed the new board the 'optimal dartboard'. As soon as the research became known the WINMAU Dartboard Co. Ltd. produced it in very limited numbers. Some of you will have seen one being demonstrated on BBC TV by Bobby George in the presence of Professor Percy at the Lakeside World Professional Darts Championship tournament at Frimley Green, Surrey last January.

I think it's truly amazing to think that a professional mathematician has taken time out to look into the numbering of the standard dartboard. Well done to him. Professor Percy's board does actually remove the bias towards the beginner by ensuring that the segments run odd-even-odd-even whereas the standard dartboard has groups of odd and even numbers which help anyone new to the game.

But how did professional darts players greet the 'new' board?

I spoke to a few top players at Lakeside and some simply couldn't see the point whilst others understood what Professor Percy was trying to do but believed, as I do, that it

would never catch on. Bobby George later commented, “It’s a Mickey Mouse gimmick. It’s the same board and same numbers but in different places; not much difference counting wise.” Ian Flack, Sales and Marketing Manager of WINMAU told me, “It was great to transfer Professor Percy’s ideas from paper to dartboard. Our specially adapted WINMAU BLADE 4 dartboard went down well at Lakeside and has generated a lot of interest elsewhere.”

Talking of which I was lucky enough to obtain a specially adapted BLADE 4 dartboard from my sponsor WINMAU. The blatantly posed image of me shows the Optimal Board within a cabinet surround which shows the standard numbering. Thus darts fans can clearly see what has and has not changed following



Professor Percy’s deliberations. (Image © 2013 Moppix. Used with permission)

So with the reception from the professional players at Lakeside being mixed I decided to take the board into a couple of my local pubs to see what the grass roots players thought of it. First stop was *The Carpenters Arms* where I invited customers to try out the dartboard. At first they were slightly confused by it. The key numbers 20, 19, 18 and 17 all remain in the same places on Professor Percy’s board but the change that irritated most was that the 16 segment, usually next to the 8 segment had been moved way up the board to where the 12 segment used to be and the double 4 is where the double 7 used to be! My best friend Colin and I then took on two of the best players (Sean and Marcus) in a best of three 501 using the Optimal dartboard. We lost 2-1. Our next port of call was the Maldon Constitutional Club where folks were equally intrigued but similarly bewildered by the ‘optimal’ numbering.

The general view of customers and players was that the optimal dartboard would never catch on. I don’t ever expect it to either but it’s a worthy experiment and brings some fresh attention to the sport.

WORLD RECORD ATTEMPT

What’s the longest distance you have ever hit a bull’s-eye from? Eight feet? Nine feet? Ten feet? Well, what about 22.5 feet?

That's the claim made by Wave Vidmar from the USA (East Coast (Georgia)) who is planning to earn himself a place in the *Guinness Book of Records* by beating the current world record for throwing a bull's-eye from the greatest distance which stands at 16.4 feet. Currently in training (and seeking sponsorship) Wave tells me that he is an 'Adventure Athlete/Explorer' and will be attempting to go for the record as soon as his practice regime has been completed. It was during his first proper practice session that he achieved 22.5 feet.

Wave told me, "I had the bull's-eye at 5'8" regulation height. My style is disturbing to other dart players (last time I played was in 1984). When I throw, it is fast, probably in the 25-30 mph range. There is very little arc during the dart flight."

ANASTASIA WINS OLYMPIC GOLD!

In past issues of *DDN* I've discussed whether or not darts should be an Olympic sport which, of course, at present it isn't. However, more recently Daniel O'C from Ireland wrote "Hi Patrick...I got *180! Fascinating Darts Facts*...and it's a great book! Regarding darts in the Olympics, Anastasia Dobromyslova [pictured here with her 2013 Lakeside World Championship trophy] won a gold medal in the Moscow World Youth Games when she was 14 years old. It was run by the IOC [International Olympic Committee] making her the only darts player to have won Olympic gold. I read this online so I thought this might be a good story for 'Dr. Darts' to investigate in 2013 for the true story! Keep up the good work! All the best, Daniel."



I'm always up for a challenge, but, Daniel, this was quite easy. I wrote to Anastasia and her husband Tony Martin and they replied were good enough to reply as follows:

"Anastasia can confirm that she did win Gold at the World Youth Games in Moscow in 1998. She actually does not have the medal as the Russian Darts Organisation kept it due to her age the time only being 14. So I guess you can say she is the only female player to have an Olympic gold for darts." Tony had also tried to Google the event but told me "There is not much info around about it that I can see."

In addition I researched back issues of *Darts World* magazine but found no report of the tournament. Perhaps one of my Russian *DDN* subscribers can help with the detail. If anyone can help, please e-mail at info@patrickchaplin.com.

(My thanks to Anastasia and Tony. (Image © Chris Sargeant. Used with permission))

MIDDLE FOR DIDDLE

I'm still catching up with notes and queries from ages ago and the note from Peter M. is no exception. Way back he wrote to me, "Patrick, with reference to your article in a

previous issue about dart sayings, 'Middle for Diddle' a song about darts can be found on *The Wurzels Collection* CD downloadable from Amazon...and on the website www.mostdartgames.com can be found a game called 'Diddle for Middle' where you use the area inside the trebles including the Bull & 25 for scoring. I am sorry this is so long after the original article was published to comment on it but various things have got in the way." I fully understand Peter and regret the delay in publishing your e-mail.

There was a game called 'Middle for Diddle' that was featured in Noel E. Williamson's book *Darts* published by Elliot Right Way Books of Kingswood, Surrey in 1968. I met Noel several years ago and he presented me with a signed copy of his book. His game 'Middle for Diddle' sounds very much like the one mentioned by Peter and is quoted here in full.

'This is a game of my own invention, though it may have been played by others in some form or another, as nothing is new! It is simply explained. Two players each throw a dart for the centre of the board to see who starts first. Nearest the 'bull' throws for a double, and each player after obtaining a double then throws for 'bulls' and twenty-fives until arriving at a finishing double. Trebles and numbers outside the treble circle do not count in the scoring, but numbers inside the treble circle all count towards the player's score. The more 'bulls' and twenty-fives scored, therefore, the sooner the finish is reached. A total of 501 must be scored to win. This game is excellent practice for attaining accuracy in the centre of the board!' [Reproduced with permission of the Williamson family]

On the subject of alternative games that can be played on a dartboard I am thinking about including examples in future issues of *DDN*. Do you have a favourite? If so, please tell me about it. Send details to me at info@patrickchaplin.com.

KIM 'THE FOX' BROWN

Darts legend Kim Brown (b. 30th December 1930) (pictured) died of cancer in the early hours of 29th December 2012 at his home in Knowle, near Bristol surrounded by his family. He was 81.

Known as 'The Fox' because of his canny and crafty darts play and the thinking way in which he approached tournaments, Kim first played darts as a young man when his father took him along to the pub. He earned his reputation by being practically unbeatable. His friend Gary Pinker, who knew Kim for many years and who runs the League of Experts in Bristol, told the *Western Daily Press* recently, "Kim certainly hated losing any game of darts but then again he didn't lose many."



Tom White, a friend of Kim's who played in the same team as him in the 1980s told the *Press* "At the time there was no bigger name in Bristol when it came to darts than Kim Brown. If he was playing the pub would be full by 7.30 p.m. and they didn't start playing until 8.30 p.m.!"

What little I knew personally about Kim up until about 2009 was recorded by Derek Brown in his book *Darts 78* (London: Mirror Books, 1977). Derek wrote, “Kim is a fencing contractor living at Knowle, Bristol. Is the father of seven boys and two girls but still finds plenty of time for darts. Plays for the West of England... Won the Swedish Open in 73 and was runner-up in 74. Has also visited the US and Europe darting.”

Then in 2009 I became custodian of the early *Darts World* photo library and when sorting through the hundreds of images came across the photo of Kim Brown (shown left). On the reverse of that photograph was typed the legend, ‘Kim Brown – Unofficial Champion of the World 1974’. Darts entrepreneur Dr. Eddie Norman, who knew Kim very well, explained that, “Before the BDO had its own rankings we [*the West of England Darts Organisation*] had our own ‘world’ rankings and in September 1974 Kim was No. 1. closely followed by Tommy O’Reagan (2) and Leighton Rees (3) so I think that must be the answer.”



Eddie added, “Kim was a brilliant player (almost the Phil Taylor of his day) who more often than not went on first for the West of England County side, and he very rarely lost.”

When I was lucky enough to interview Kim in 2010 he told me that Gary Pinker (mentioned above) was ‘the man who put me in darts’ and that Eddie was to be thanked ‘for what he had done for me.’ Kim was also very proud of the fact that he won the *Western Counties News of the World* Individual Darts Championship Divisional title in 1977. He went to the Grand Finals at Alexandra Palace on 30th April 1977 but lost in the first round 2-1 to the eventual champion, the London and Home Counties Divisional Champion, Kent’s Mick Norris. Kim told me proudly, “I was the only player to take a leg off Mick Norris that day.”

Kim also put his high success rate in darts down to his name; the fact that his prowess on the dartboard strode before him wherever he went. He was renowned for his darting skills and competitors were already at a disadvantage before Kim had thrown a dart. He told me, “Your name is as good as a ton.”

And so it was the Kim wrote himself into the history of darts not only in his home town of Bristol but across the world. RIP Kim.

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Additional source material: *Western Daily Press* 10th January 2013, page 30.

(My thanks to Mat Coward and Eddie Norman for their help in compiling this obituary.)

HOMEWORK

When Mick S. wrote to me in response to the Rab Smith article in *DDN* #34 he raised another matter. Mick wrote, “Patrick a question...Do you remember when I think it was Polo mints gave away solid gold Polo mints for anybody who could put 3 darts in a polo mint without breaking it?”

For those who do not know what a ‘Polo Mint’ is, it is a sweet mint-flavoured confection known as ‘The Mint with the Hole’. (In the USA I think they are called ‘Lifesavers’.) Mick confesses never to have won gold ‘but did try hard to.’ Unfortunately I cannot trace the competition. Has anyone any ideas? (Write to me at the usual address please.)

I’m wondering if this competition was inspired by the legendary Alan Glazier allegedly throwing a dart through the hole of a Polo mint while it swung across the front of a dartboard. Any help on this would be appreciated.

OK. That’s it for *DDN* #34. I’ll see you next time.

PATRICK

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My academic work, *Darts in England 1900-39: A social history* is now available in paperback at £15.99 (plus p & p) and can be ordered from www.nbinternational.com.

