

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 36 April 2013

INTRODUCTION

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to *DDN* #36. That means *DDN* is celebrating its *third* birthday! (I celebrated the event by beginning to draft issue 37!)

And it's also that time of year when April Foolishness is rampant in the UK where newspapers, radio, TV and ordinary people try to catch other folks out with a trick or two. Do *I* engage in such endeavours? Sometimes I do, as witness the appearance of the 24 year-old Guatemalan darts ace Fal Priolo who came to the UK in 2008 to play darts against Britain's best. I selected Guatemala because I didn't believe darts had reached that country. It hadn't but now it has. One of my latest subscribers, Andrew E., is based in GUATEMALA! Last month also recorded my first subscriber from Panama; more of which in a later issue.



Welcome to all new subscribers which this month include Lakeside Women's World Champion Anastasia Dobromyslova and her darts-playing husband Tony Martin and Belgian darts star Kim Huybrechts (pictured) (Image © PDC/Lawrence Lustig: used with permission.)

Welcome all!

Let's see what *DDN* #36 has to offer you this month...

AND TALKING OF BIRTHDAYS...

A very Happy Birthday to one of my *DDN* subscribers from India, darts player Akshay Mehta who is 18 years old on 18th of this month. Akshay is a very keen darter and recently performed well in both of the national finals his country. Akshay (pictured) told me, "In the Chennai National I reached to the Finals of the Men's Doubles with my partner Shubham Agarwal and the semi-final of the Youth boys' event. And in the Goa National Ranking Tournament I reached to the final of Youth Boys and reached to the



semi-final of Men's Singles." Akshay is currently ranked Number 5 in India.

Enjoy your birthday Akshay and let's hope we see you on stage at the Alexandra Palace very soon representing your country in the World Championship.

FEEDBACK FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES

(a) Pat Clifford

In Issue #34 I featured the 'Darting Jewel in the Irish Sea' an article about the Isle of Man Festival of Darts written by Wayne Baker. In last month's *DDN* I published feedback from Tom F. This month the much-travelled Dr. Eddie N. has written to say, "How nice to read about Pat Clifford, I visited The Kings Inn Bar run by Louis Donohoe many times in Dublin. Louis was a wonderful man and chose the Irish team for the First Home International and I think Pat was in that team."

The history of the First Home International was recorded in a special article in *DDN* #26 (June 2012) and on checking my archive (and with thanks to Arthur Hook) I can confirm that Pat 'Paddy' Clifford was a member of the Ireland team at that prestigious and historic event at Durdham Downs, Bristol on Sunday 29th July 1973. He played in the Ireland v Wales match, which he lost to David Porter, and for his country against England where he was defeated by Willie Etherington.

(b) In praise of *DDN*

It's always good to receive positive feedback to *DDN*. It makes all the work worth it. Here's what Larry A. from Palm Coast, Florida USA wrote recently:

'Thanks so much for your recent news letter Doctor. The history of the numbering of the current boards is fascinating and the Anastasia gold medal winner is good stuff. I eagerly await your next letter to increase my knowledge of the game we call darts.'

(c) Rab Smith

In last month's issue subscriber Mick S. thanked me for the Rab Smith article in *DDN* #34 and asked if I could provide an up-to-date photo of Rab. Initially Rab declined but I am pleased to say that he has now agreed to provide one and here it is. Rab is shown here holding his original darts. (Image © Rab Smith 2013. Used with permission.) Thanks Rab.



(d) World Record Attempt

Also in #35 I mentioned Wave Vidmar of Georgia, USA who is seeking to set a new world record for throwing a bull's-eye from the greatest distance; the current record standing at 16.4 feet. In practice Wave had already achieved 22.5 feet.

Wave has already inspired another darts enthusiast, Daniel D. from Ireland who wrote to me saying, “I have noticed in your newsletter you mentioned the world record attempt of furthest distance to hit a bull. I am actually in the process of trying this. Last week I have been hitting it from 16 feet [*which is*] still a little off the 24 foot mark but it’s part of the training. I hope to hit this in the next few weeks.”

I’m sure Daniel will keep me informed. In the meantime is anyone else out there going for the record? If so, contact me at info@patrickchaplin.com and tell me all about it.

(e) Alternatives games

I’m pleased to say that ‘Metalman’ has contacted me, responding to my request for details of your favourite alternative games that can be played on a standard dartboard. ‘Metalman’ wrote, ‘As you can imagine, being a darts forum we have quite a lot of alternative practice games on our site. However, to get you started on your project here is the link to my simplified version of Shove Halfpenny’:

[http://www.thedartsforum.co.uk/showthread.php?958-Metalmans-Shove-Halfpenny-\(-Novice-to-Advanced\)](http://www.thedartsforum.co.uk/showthread.php?958-Metalmans-Shove-Halfpenny-(-Novice-to-Advanced))

‘Metalman’ continued, “This is very much part of my practice routine. It’s simple and very effective as a warm up device.”



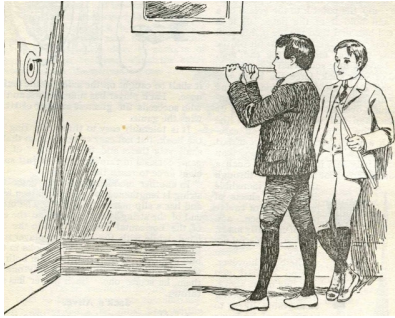
For those subscribers who are not familiar with the pub game known as Shove Ha’Penny it basically comprises a wooden or slate board (see image © English Heritage/Simon Inglis: used with permission) marked out with horizontal lines; the aim being to ‘shove’ (or push with the palm/wrist) coins so that they land in the numbered sections *absolutely clear of the lines*. Players earn one point per successful ‘shove’ and must clear each number three times. Once all of the numbers 1-9 have been hit three times that player is the winner. (For a full and much more detailed description of shove ha’penny and the rules of play see Arthur R. Taylor’s book *Played at the Pub – The Pub Games of England* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2009, pp 118-125.)

(f) The Optimal Dartboard

Following on from the mathematical mysteries of the Optimal Dartboard, revealed in *DDN #35* courtesy of Dr. David Percy of the University of Salford and ably assisted by the WINMAU Dartboard Co., I was surprised to receive recently an e-mail from Scott M. who is employed at a national laboratory and, with colleagues, undertaking academic work in relation to darts.

Scott wrote asking for permission to reproduce an illustration which appears on my website for inclusion in the computer science paper he is writing. Scott wrote, “I would

like permission to reproduce your graphic of the boys playing ‘puff the dart’ as it provides inspiration for the name of our algorithm. Part of the algorithm is dart throwing, generating random points. It solves the problem of Probability of Failure; POF - puff. Hence the name POF-Darts.”



As *DDN* readers will know, I am happy to help anyone who is/are examining any aspect of darts as much as I can and so have agreed that Scott can use the image shown (Image dated 1895. Copyright holder unknown and untraceable at time of publication) provided of

course that he cites both my book and website. Scott thanked me and then informed me that he and his colleagues who are jointly preparing the paper will, once completed, submit it to the *SIAM Journal of Uncertainty Quantification*.

Whatever next??

(g) John Gwynne

When I featured John Gwynne’s notice of retirement from darts commentary for SKY in issue 34 for some unknown reason I included no image of the great man. So, to remedy this I have examined my *Darts World* photo archive and come up with this undated image of John interviewing the great Alan Glazier. (Note the hi-tech tape recording device!) (Copyright holder presently unknown. Source: PC/DW Archive: used with permission)



‘TUMBLE’ TOMPKINS - ANOTHER *DDN* EXCLUSIVE

Way, way back probably even before the first issue of *DDN* was ever published, I received an e-mail from Dennis D. an itinerant woodsman asking if I could help with any information about his great-grandfather Thomas ‘Tumble’ Tompkins apparently a well-known darts player in both the mill towns of Lancashire and the paper mills of North Somerset during the 1950s.



Dennis said that ‘Tumble’ won an enormous amount of trophies at his local pub the *Torment and Gusts* and always entered the *News of the World* individual darts tournament but never made it past the ‘house’ competition.

Dennis had trawled the internet for information about his granddad but had found nothing; thus his e-mail to me.

I found nothing but then, years later, in the early hours of this morning when I couldn’t sleep, I went to my office to sort through some papers. I cleared out a cupboard to which

I had not gained access since 2005 and to my surprise found an envelope marked 'Tumbler' Tompkins. I honestly did not recall ever seeing this before.

Within was an outline of 'Tumbler's' life plus some photos. The youngest image of him (shown here © PC/DW Archive) shows 'Tumbler' at an early age with quite obviously a Northwood Collapsible Dart (see *DDN* #33) sticking out of his top pocket.

Disintegrating notes describe 'Tumbler' as 'intelligent', 'highly skilled' and 'a bit weird' and record his early darts matches at school between the ages of five and fourteen. It also recalls 'Tumbler' winning his darts badge' in his local Boy Scout troop. Another photo (above © PC/DW Archive) shows 'Tumbler' in his mid-twenties when he was well into his purple patch of darts-playing.



Further delicate handling of the notes failed to save the fragile text so I was unable to learn as much as I had wished. However, I did find one last fragment; a photograph of 'Tumblers' lounge at his home (shown here ©PC/DW Archive). A



carefully scribbled note on the reverse of the photo states, 'A corner of our lounge. The dartboard is on the other side of the door and the dog has just died.'

Despite the problems identified I had great pleasure in sending all the information and photographs I had gleaned from hours of research to Dennis. Obviously it was the first time he had seen the photos or read the information and I anticipated him being thrilled to learn of my discoveries.

Almost immediately he replied, "Thanks for all your hard work Patrick but it's not him. My granddad never smoked a pipe, was completely bald since birth and his nickname was 'Tumble' *not* 'Tumbler'. Best wishes, Dennis."

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MURDER ON THE DARTS BOARD ON KINDLE

Justin 'The Bachelor of Darts' Irwin announced recently that his book *Murder on the Darts Board*, originally published in London by Portico in 2008, is now available on Kindle with an added chapter *exclusive* to the Kindle version.

Those of you who have read Justin's book (If not, why not?) will know that it is the story of his attempt to become a professional darts champion within twelve months. Justin failed gloriously but during that year he fell in love with the sport and has been involved with darts one way and another ever since.

Justin told me recently, “The new chapter is available as a digital book exclusively on Kindle. If you do not own a Kindle you can read it on your computer, laptop, tablet or Smartphone by using a Kindle App.”

Justin was good enough to send me a copy of the exclusive chapter. It’s excellent and brings readers right up to date with what ‘The Bachelor of Darts’ and his sidekick ‘Tricky D’ have been up to during the past five years.

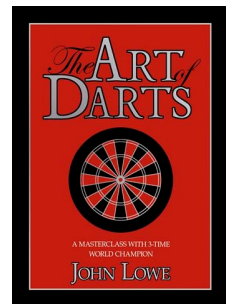
My original review of *Murder on the Darts Board* can be found at:

www.patrickchaplin.com/Murder.htm

WHAT’S GOOD FOR THE ‘BACHELOR’ IS GOOD FOR THE ‘DOCTOR’ TOO

As many of you will know, I co-wrote *The Art of Darts* with my good friend and three-time World Darts Champion, John Lowe which was published in London by Hodder & Stoughton in 2009. Last year I reported that John had produced a *The Art of Darts* app which complimented the book admirably and continues to sell well.

The Art of Darts in its original hardback format is very difficult to find; second-hand bookshops offering ‘rare’ copies for up to £60 sterling! But I have two pieces of good news for readers of *DDN*. Firstly, I have a few copies of the hardback edition of *The Art...* available for sale for a lot less than sixty pounds sterling so, if you’re interested contact me at info@patrickchaplin.com.



Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, for all those who download and read electronic books, our publisher has announced that the eBook of *The Art of Darts* is now available for pre-order on Amazon and will be published on 25th April.

ROMAN NUMERALS

James E. contacted me recently with memories of his late father. James told me, “Years ago my Dad told me there was a pub in Peckham when he was young, between the wars, where they used to score darts games in Roman numerals.” James then asked me, “Was this a practice just in South London or was this a one off?” I replied to James stating that in all of my 25+ years researching darts I have never seen or heard of a game being scored using Roman numerals. I mentioned to James that I did feature Roman numerals in a cartoon I drew for Bobby George's (and my) book *Scoring for Show, Doubles for Dough* (Apex Publishing, 2011) but that really had nothing to do with his question.

Not questioning James’ dad for one moment, I couldn’t help but think that scoring a game of darts using Roman numerals would have been very complex and unlikely to be popular with the working man so suggested that the players might have been university

undergraduates or something like that as the players would have to have had an in-depth knowledge of that numeral system and both scorer and players would need to understand it otherwise the matches would have gone on forever! I further suggested that as it was a very quirky idea and perhaps a possible one-off witnessed by James' dad.

James replied, "I found it amazing when dad told me the first time and did question him. He never went to Uni or associated with anyone who went to Uni. He was just an ordinary working class bloke working for the London Underground."

So, can UK-based *DDN* subscribers help? Have *you* or anyone you know any knowledge of darts being scored utilising Roman numerals? If so, please contact me at info@patrickchaplin.com.

JOHN WESTWOOD MEMORIAL KNOCKOUT DARTS TOURNAMENT

'Postman Phil' has reminded me that the annual John Westwood Memorial Knockout darts tournament will take place at the Pensnett Welfare Club, 130 Commonsides, Brierley Hill, DY5 4AE West Midlands on Saturday May 18th.



I mentioned this event (and ran a short biography of John's life last year (*DDN* #23, March 2012). In brief, John was a very popular darts player from the West Midlands who died suddenly on 21st July 2006 at the age of only 59, following a massive heart attack. His memory is kept alive and his life in darts celebrated by his friends and John's widow Anita (pictured here with John) and son Carl by the annual running of the 'John Westwood Memorial Open Darts Knockout'. (Image copyright the Westwood family: used with permission.)

Postman Phil told me, "This year it's a 1 p.m. start with registration up to 12.45 p.m.; entry fee £5." If you want to participate or just attend the tournament as a spectator full details can be obtained from.... Phil added, "As usual all raffle and auction proceeds are donated to John's favourite charity, Guide Dogs for the Blind." For more details ring Shaun Breeze on 07827461845 or e-mail Anita as neatbaggie@hotmail.co.uk. I'm sure all *DDN* readers will join me in wishing the event every success.

'WEIRD' BRASS DARTS – HELP NEEDED

'Daz' has e-mailed asking for some help relating to some darts and flights he has in his collection. He has trawled the 'net and found nothing and, unusually perhaps, I cannot help either (at the moment). So we're both hoping that *DDN* readers can assist.

First off Daz is asking about a set up darts with paper 'R.A.F.' flights which he says 'spin like a sycamore seed when thrown.' These can be viewed at:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/dazdart/8384447788/in/photostream>

Daz commented, "I don't know if the barrels are original with the stems, it is the stems and flights that are unique. They have a pin with a small alloy tube around it which has a spiral groove and the flights fit over the tube and spin when thrown.



Secondly is a set of darts (pictured left) that Daz describes as 'weird brass with an all-in-one piece barrel and stem with a kind of brass stem clip.' Presumably the 'clip' pushes up to secure each flight in place.

The barrels bear a legend that indicates a patent has been applied for but, frustratingly, that's not helpful. A patent number would have assisted Daz's search but without a number or the name of the person applying for the patent a search of Patent Office records would be very difficult indeed. Daz added, "I've never seen this kind of dart before."

Daz, mate, neither have I.

Finally Daz has another set which neither of us knows anything about. Daz writes, "I'm not sure if it's a home made set or not, also not sure if the barrels are a resin or ivory, it's hard to say." See what *you* think as you check out

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/dazdart/8384484548/in/photostream>

Please contact me if you know anything about any of these three sets of darts.

HOMEWORK

In the last issue the homework I set you asked what *you* knew about a darts competition where the winner received a solid gold Polo mint for managing to put three darts into the centre of the mint without breaking it.

Well, I've had a good deal of feedback from readers including Peter M. and Cainey. I have spoken to Dave Lanning who confirmed that it was featured in *The Sun* here in the UK when Dave ran a regular darts column in that newspaper. However, no one has yet come up with the *exact* year. So research on this continues but I hope to be able to bring you the full story in next month's *DDN*.

That's it for *DDN* #36. I hope you enjoyed the 1st April edition.

I'll see you next time.

PATRICK

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AND DON'T FORGET... My latest book *180! Fascinating Darts Facts* published by The History Press is now available. Copies can be purchased direct from www.thehistorypress.co.uk or Amazon.com. UK subscribers can obtain signed copies direct from me at an inclusive price of £7.50. Contact info@patrickchaplin.com for details. (It is hoped that this service will be available to international subscribers soon.)

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.

