

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 39 July 2013



CONGRATULATIONS!

Many congratulations to nine-times World Champion Trina Gulliver (pictured) on being awarded an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) in The Queen's Birthday Honours announced on 15th June in the *London Gazette*. Trina becomes the first ever female darts player to be recognised and honoured in this way.

A spokesman for the British Darts Organisation said, "The BDO sends its congratulations to a player who has played a major role in creating awareness and success for women's darts worldwide." The England Captain has been awarded this prestigious honour in recognition of her 'Services to Darts and Charitable Fundraising' and will now be formally known as 'Catrina Elizabeth Gulliver MBE' – but, of course, she prefers to be called Trina. She will collect her MBE from St James's Palace on a date yet to be confirmed. However, I understand that this is usually within a seven month period of the official announcement.



Amongst those messages of congratulations Trina has already received, my wife Maureen and I have sent our own personal congratulations to Trina, a great darts player and a good friend to both of us. Further information about the award and of course to find out

whatever else Trina is up to at the moment can be found on her official website:
<http://www.trina-gulliver.com/>.

'LITTLE' RICHARD ASHDOWN

Congratulations are also due to 'Little' Richard Ashdown for becoming the new top MC/Referee for the BDO. In addition Richard, who, despite his nickname, is one of the *big* personalities on the professional scene today, has been signed by WINMAU.

Richard has been an MC for WINMAU-sponsored legend Bobby George since 2002 and he has worked alongside a significant number of the top names in the sport including Scott Waites, Andy Fordham and Trina Gulliver. He has vast experience as both a master of ceremonies and a referee at countless tournaments across the world.

Richard said, "The last couple of months have been like a whirlwind! I was honoured to be selected as the BDO's MC and to then be recognised by the sport's largest brand

WINMAU is truly unbelievable.” Ian Flack, WINMAU’s Sales and Marketing Director, added “We are so pleased that Richard agreed to join the WINMAU team! I have known Richard for many years, and he has an impeccable reputation in the darts fraternity for his professionalism and friendly personality. I have no doubt that he will be a great ambassador for our brand.”

DAVE KING

And while we’re in the ‘Congratulations’ mood I’d like to wish Nottinghamshire’s Dave King a very Happy 60th Birthday for 12th July. Dave has been playing darts since he was a boy and has played in the BDO inter-county darts league for Nottinghamshire since the 1990s. He has also played in the local Mansfield darts league.

The highlight of his career was reaching the quarter finals of the 1999 WINMAU World Masters held at the Lakeside Country Club, Frimley Green, Surrey over the weekend of Friday 3rd and Saturday 4th December that year. Dave beat the No. 13 seed England’s Steve Coote to earn a quarter final place against Wayne Jones. Dave lost 3-0 and Jones went on to become runner-up to the eventual champion Andy Fordham.

One of Dave’s other highlights was making an appearance in the 1979 John Samson 30-minute short film about Eric Bristow. Dave played ‘The Crafty Cockney’ in an exhibition match in the film. Dave is a printer by trade and lives in Mansfield with his wife Linda and son David.



(Thanks to Dave’s sister, Christine for her assistance in the preparation of this celebratory piece and for the photograph.)

180! FASCINATING DARTS FACTS IN DUBAI

Salman, the General Secretary of the Middle East Darts Association (MEDA), wrote to me on 22nd June regarding my latest book and a rather interesting use he had put it to. He told me:

“On Thursday night in 39 degrees heat here in Dubai we held a barbecue and darts quiz night; many of the questions set with the greatest of help from your book *180 Fascinating Darts Facts*. The equivalent of nearly £550 sterling was raised for local children's charities. I have been asked to thank you for 'the greatest darts book' we have seen. The *180!* book was auctioned after the quiz for your equivalent of £40 sterling. A grateful thanks speech for you in putting the book together was read out before and after the quiz.”

Praise indeed. Thank you Salman. That's a fascinating application of my book but, when you think of it... Why not? There's a thought: a whole new market, selling my book to the hundreds of quiz compilers and hundreds of thousands of quizzers across the world. (Go to www.thehistorypress.co.uk for more information.)

Salman also asked, "Is there a second edition to be planned of the book?" adding, "We certainly would hope so." In answer to that question all I can say at the moment is "I do not know." I understand from my publisher that *180! Fascinating Darts Facts* is selling well but whether or not that will be enough to command a second edition (perhaps called *501!*), I cannot tell at this time. (I certainly have sufficient 'fascinating facts' to produce more similar books.)

WALES LOSES ITS 'MR. DARTS'

I am very grateful to Bob F. from north Wales for bringing to my attention the recent death of Llandudno's 'Mr. Darts', Arthur Williams who died of cancer earlier this year at the age of 81.

For many, many years Arthur (pictured) had kept readers of the *North Wales Weekly News* up to date with news from the Llandudno and District Darts League. Arthur was Secretary of that league for 43 years and it is believed that this made him one of, if not *the*, longest serving darts league secretary in Wales.



In addition Arthur helped establish the Gwynedd County Darts Association, served on the Welsh Darts organising committee and was an agent for both the British Darts Organisation (BDO) and the *News of the World* darts tournament and became known locally as 'Mr. Darts'. The Llandudno and District Darts League

Chairman told the *Weekly News*, "It is with regret that the league says a very sad farewell Arthur. [He] struggled for years with illness, but he never gave up and kept darts a priority to the end. Arthur lived and breathed darts and did everything to keep this league alive and exciting. Even from his hospital bed he was always doing darts work."

Here then is a prime example of men dedicating their lives to the sport of darts for little or no financial gain but only for the sheer pleasure and love of the sport. When interviewed by the *Weekly News*, Clive Davies, who plays for the Penrhyn Arms 'A' in the League, paid Arthur the ultimate accolade after dedicating his latest win to Arthur. Clive said, "It is foolish and wrong to mourn the man who died...rather we should thank God that such a man lived."

It is to such men as Arthur that we here in the UK owe a huge debt of gratitude for ensuring the longevity of the sport of darts both locally and nationally. Without such men (and women) darts would have been forever confined to the doldrums. RIP Arthur.

LES AND HAROLD TREBLE

Talking of men dedicating their lives to the sport of darts, you may recall that in *DDN* #38 subscriber Mick S. listed his top three darts people which included the official, the aptly named Les Treble. Mick wrote, “[Les] had a lot to do with the greatest dart tournament in the world, the *News of the World*. From at least 1951 Les was involved in this great tournament as Divisional Secretary for London and the Home Counties. In 1990 his name is still on *News of the World* programmes. To be involved all those years is to me dedication beyond belief.”

Les (pictured) was involved with darts from a very early age, his dedication to the game starting in his days as a scorer in his local league in Balham, South London in 1933. He subsequently became involved with the *News of the World* Individual Darts competition and rose through the ranks until, after the Second World War, he became the recognisable face of the tournament, travelling the length and breadth of the UK as MC of Divisional tournaments. His cousin Harold who accompanied him is perhaps lesser known but equally as involved in the organisation of ‘the tournament that every darts player wanted to win.’



The names Leslie Treble Esq., and Harold Treble Esq., first appeared together in a *News of the World* Grand Finals programme in 1959 when the competition was held at the Empire Pool, Wembley, as being jointly in charge of ‘Other indicators’. At that time the giant ‘Electric Score Board’ which showed the results to the crowd was operated by A. M. Roberts of Portsmouth and Bill Holland of the *Bell Hotel*, Kennett, Cambridgeshire. I was unsure what exactly these ‘Other indicators’ would have been. However, John Morris, former darts correspondent for the *News of the World*, has suggested to me that these might have been electronic indicators at stage level which showed both the players and the audience what score remained for each participant.

In 1968 Les became Master of Ceremonies (MC) and Compere for the Grand Finals whilst Harold was the named operator of the ‘Electric Scoreboard.’ In 1970 Les’s tasks were split with George Humble taking over as MC with Les as Compere. In 1971 Humble was replaced by Bob Evans and so it was that these three men remained until the last *News of the World* Grand Finals held in London in 1990; although for this event Les and a man named Tony Barstable were joint comperes and a Johnny Young was operating the Electric Scoreboard with Harold.

Neither Les nor Harold was involved with the organisation of the ‘revived’ (and final) *News of the World* championship that took place in 1997.

Sad to say that Les and his cousin Harold are no longer with us; Les died in May 1999 and Harold in 2000. In his obituary to Les, John Morris asked, “Did any darts tournament ever have more aptly named officials?” John also wrote, ‘To many players Les Treble was the *News of the World* Championship.’ Indeed John quoted Eric Bristow as saying, “Les was one of the old school callers. He thought the *News of the World* was the world championship, and he wasn’t far wrong.” So both of the Trebles are now lost to us but I do thank Mick S. for bringing Les to mind and giving me the opportunity of writing about these famous and long-serving darting cousins.

(Unfortunately I do not have an image of Harold Treble in my archive. If anyone can provide me with one please contact me at info@patrickchaplin.com. Thanks.)

BADGE COLLECTING

In *DDN* #38 Mike C. asked if any *DDN* subscribers could help him identify the origins of a darts badge he had acquired on e Bay and provided readers with this link:

<http://i1108.photobucket.com/albums/h408/scrumpy10/mccwales.jpg>

As a result, Metalman e-mailed me to say “I was going to make sure forum members knew this issue was out like we do every month but Mike C beat me to it.” He added, “We have tried hard to track down the MCC badge, but it’s proven elusive. I play in the Caergwrle District Darts League: my team is The Miners Arms, Brymbo, Wrexham. One of the teams in the league is called 'The Cricket Club.' So I've suggested that maybe Monmouth may have a cricket club who had/has a darts team.” However, Metalman admits that he may well be ‘clutching at straws’ but added, “I’m a great believer in looking under all the stones and nothing is too ridiculous when it comes to darts lol!”

Let’s see if we can bring this enquiry to a successful conclusion.

NEW ZEALANDER’S PERFECT 12-DART 701

New Zealand ‘Darts Enthusiast’ Peter P. contacted me recently with some exciting news. Peter (who also writes the westcitydarts.blogspot.co.nz) told me:

“Just recently a New Zealand Player, Lou Tai, playing in a round robin competition to select the Bay Of Plenty Region team (equivalent of English County team) hit the perfect 12-dart leg of 701. His scores were 180, 180, 180 and 161 finish: a remarkable achievement. To your knowledge has it been done before in any official competition? Are there any world- wide organisations that recognise this type of record?”

The good news for Peter and Lou is that, despite checking through my archive and the *Guinness Book of Records* I could not find another perfect 701 recorded (either in official or unofficial competition) *but* that doesn’t mean it hasn’t been done before. It means

simply that I do not have (or cannot find) a record of it. But this feat is worth recording in *DDN* so here's Peter's full report on Lou's fantastic achievement. Peter told me:

"Lou [*pictured*] was playing at the Whakatane Memorial Hall in Short Street, Whakatane on Sunday 19th May 2013 in a New Zealand Dart Council Region 4 Bay of Plenty play-off to select a team for the New Zealand Dart Council darts championships to be held in Nelson in August. (It would be the New Zealand equivalent of a play-off for selection for a county team in England.) There were sixteen players playing a round robin of one leg of 701, straight start, to select a team of ten.



Lou was playing Jed Campbell of Rotorua when he hit 180 with his first three darts. He thought to himself "Okay that is good, a 180, let's try and do it again." He hit the second one and thought, "Try and repeat for the third." He hit the third one. Lou is not usually a demonstrative player but he let out a yell. He is quite a humble person and by no means loud. He told me that was the first time he ever yelled out at the oche at a darts match and he has been playing for over twenty or more years.

By this stage all the other games had stopped and all the players, chalkers, officials and spectators had gathered near Lou's board to watch him try and finish on 161. He threw the first dart and hit his tenth triple 20 in a row. He did not hesitate at the triple 17 and went straight for it as it 'felt good'. It went in. He stopped and walked back from the oche. He walked up to the board and threw for the bull. It went straight in the middle and for the second time in Lou's darting career he let out a yell on the oche."

Lou, 54, is a forestry worker and lives in the small community of Kerepehi on the Hauraki Plains. He plays his club darts at the Waihi Memorial Returned Services Association (WMRSA) club rooms in Waihi. He later told Peter that at the next club night at the WMRSA, a speech was made by officials praising him for his feat and he was 'shouted' many beers by the other players."

So, *DDN* readers, has Lou set a world record? Despite my best efforts I cannot find that anyone else has achieved a perfect 701 but, of course, I am always happy to be proved wrong. As Peter told me, "There was some debate as to whether it has been done before. Not because players are not capable but because singles games of 701 are not played as often so there is less opportunity for it to happen." Good point.

If you know of an earlier perfect 701 then please contact me at info@patrickchaplin.com.

FACTS, FACTS AND MORE FACTS

Baz e-mailed me many months ago from Enfield, UK, regarding 'a couple of facts' that he thought I had overlooked on my website www.patrickchaplin.com. Baz, who has been a darts enthusiast for *fifty years*, wrote:

‘FACT 1- Joe Hitchcock used to be able to throw a drawing pin from 8ft and stick it in the board; FACT 2 - As far as I know Johnny Bell was the only man to be runner-up in consecutive years in the *News of the World* [and] FACT 3- Leighton Rees was the first man to win the Embassy world championship and to have won it from a throw of 7ft 6ins. The following year it was changed 7ft 9 ¼ ins. (I think?)’

It's always good to hear from someone who has been interested in darts for such a long time and I guess that the facts Baz revealed to me are only a fraction of what's contained inside his head. I have a lot of information in my archive relating to Joe Hitchcock (pictured right) but was unaware of his drawing-pin-throwing exploits. (Image copyright unknown. Source: PC/DW Archive. Used with permission.)



As for Johnny Bell, Baz is right in stating that he was the only player to be runner-up in the *News of the World* in consecutive years; 1953/54 (losing to Oliver James) and 1954/55 (losing to Tom Reddington). For a moment I thought Eddie Brown, the Eastern Counties champion) did the same thing as Johnny but on checking I discovered that Eddie was runner-up in 1960-61 and then won the tournament outright in 1961/62. (No mean achievement there Eddie!)

Baz thought right about Leighton Rees winning the inaugural Embassy World Professional Darts Championship in 1978 from 7ft 6ins; the same distance that for many years was standard for the National Darts Association of Great Britain (NDAGB). Three-time World Professional Darts Champion John Lowe told me, “Everyone commented that Leighton was a better player from 7' 6" than 7' 9 ¼." Ironically, the year before that first Embassy the World Darts Federation had agreed a global oche length of 7ft 9 ¼ ins which was eventually introduced to the Embassy in 1979.

Before ending his e-mail Baz said, “I’m not sure if it is your website that does unusual 180's but I played a man called Alfie Green in the *Wheatsheaf*, Baker Street, Enfield years ago, when he hit two 60's, walked to the bar to have a drink, rolled a fag, then went back to the hockey, lit the fag [*a cigarette*] then hit another 60 for the 180.”

As all *DDN* readers will know I am always on the look out for fascinating darts facts so “Thanks Baz. Your offer to send me more stories is accepted!”

THE ‘NORMAN’ EFFECT

Robin C. jnr recently attended a darts lecture in Atlanta, Ga., and immediately afterwards wrote to me saying, “The English gentleman giving the lecture told me if I e-mailed you that you would reach out and send me a monthly dart magazine that you produce and it is

the best magazine on the market today and you are the greatest writer on darts, and a good player yourself.”

I sincerely thank ‘the English gentleman’ (none other than Dr. Eddie Norman) for his praise of my work and for pointing Robin in my direction and have, of course, sent him the latest *DDN* and added him to the subscribers’ list. There is indeed a rumour going round that I am a ‘good player’ but, in truth, that really depends on a very flexible interpretation of that word. I was a good pub player back in the 1970s and 1980s, played in a local friendly darts league and won a few in-house trophies but I was never good enough even to contemplate genuine serious competition. I simply loved (and love) the game.

On receipt of *DDN* Robin came swiftly back to me to say “I can assure that it will be well read and well circulated.” He is forwarding his copy on to members of his darts league. Robin then added, “I think there must be hundreds of players here in the US that would love to receive your magazine if they knew about it. To say it is great is an understatement.”

Of course I encourage all subscribers to forward *DDN* on to anyone they think would be interested in reading it. *DDN* now has a global reach having already reached parts of the world that I never even knew played darts! (I’ll be mentioning the Republic of Vanuatu in the next *DDN*!) In order to try and sustain *DDN* I hope to be able to offer some advertising space very soon. (Anyone interested in preliminary discussions about this proposal can contact me at info@patrickchaplin.com.)

Another new subscriber is Tony U. from San Pedro Garza Garcia a city municipality of the state of Nuevo Leon in Mexico. Tony U. wrote to me in June asking to subscribe to *DDN* and having added him to the list I sent him the latest issue. He replied, “Thank you for your sending of the darts brochure to us here in San Pedro. I will pass it on to our members. They will be thrilled.”

When I sent *DDN* to Tony I asked about darts in San Pedro and he replied, “We are very, very small and our membership is only 216. We have two divisions of eight teams. We play darts on a Wednesday night: eight men in a team playing three legs each of 401.” Tony is a Canadian from Vancouver who has a Mexican wife and three daughters. He told me, “We have lived here twelve years and would never leave this beautiful city.”

As regards his interest in darts Tony told me “It started about four years ago when I met an Englishman in Los Angeles whilst on vacation, who was giving a charity darts lecture and my wife and I became intrigued and [*as a result became*] completely hooked with the game.”

That ‘Englishman’ was... Yes. You’ve guessed it!

Tony added, “We communicated by e-mail and Eddie visited us in 2009 and helped set up the league for us. He again visited us early last year to help us arrange darts supplies.”

Things appear to be going well even though it is difficult to grow. Tony told me, “In a way we really do not wish to do so as the game is so small here but we have many large headquarters of corporations here in San Pedro, including ALFA, Gamesa , Pyosa and Home Depot amongst others and sponsorship of the league has been oversubscribed.”

Tony added, “We are happy staying small and everybody enjoys their darts here in a friendly relaxed very family atmosphere on league nights where a buffet is put on by the ladies of each home team.” (That sounds like a home away from home to me Tony.) I have asked Tony to send me an image or two of the team(s).

And, of course, a very warm welcome to all other new subscribers who have joined our happy darting throng recently whether from here in the UK or abroad.

AND FINALLY...

HOW *NOT* TO TREAT A BRISTLE DARTBOARD

When the revolutionary ‘Bristle’ dartboard was launched by NODOR in 1935 the reverse side of the product was embossed with the legend ‘DO NOT SOAK’. This was because up until then the majority of dartboards utilised in public houses and clubs were made of wood, either elm or poplar. In order to retain their subtleness the wooden boards needed to be soaked in a tub of water over night. Usually pub landlords would have two such boards; one in use, the other ‘in soak.’

Nearly eighty years on and the lessons are still being learned. Sandi C. from Ontario, Canada has told me that she still has customers wanting to ‘soak their boards’. Shani has been good enough to send me this image of one of the mistreated bristle dartboards.



Dampened and exposed to the air and heat, whatever else would you expect to happen?

NEXT ISSUE: IT’S COMPETITION TIME!

The August *DDN* will be celebrating *forty years* (Yes, *forty* years) of the World Masters first won by Cliff Inglis back in 1974. In order to help celebrate this auspicious occasion Ian Flack, Sales and Marketing Director of WINMAU has agreed to put up three sets of former World Masters winner and current Lakeside World Champion Scott Waites’

professional steel-tip darts as prizes. So be sure to read Issue #40 to learn how *you* could win a set.

Plus I'll have news of darts in Greenland and the Republic of Vanuatu!

That's it for *DDN* #39. I hope you've enjoyed it.

I'll see you next time.

Patrick

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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 at last available in paperback at £15.99 (plus p & p) and can be ordered from www.nbinternational.com.

