

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 40 August 2013



WORLD MASTERS SPECIAL EDITION

It's been a trying time for me recently with various things going wrong at home including the 'death' of my laptop which has meant that I've had to replace all of my computer kit *and* take a giant leap from Windows XP to Windows 8!

Apologies to all those subscribers who received their July *DDN* a little late and to those of you who receive hard copy, even deeper apologies for the fact that you probably received both the July and August issues at more or less the same time. That's the trouble with being a one-man band. If one thing goes wrong big time there's only me to deal with it as best I can. However, despite plummeting into a vat of gloom when such things happen, I am always put back on track by subscribers who encourage me to carry on. I am particularly indebted to one *DDN* fan who told me recently that my newsletter is 'the best darts magazine'. Perhaps...one day.



As promised, this month's *DDN* primarily focusses on the 40th anniversary of the World Masters but of course I never produce a single-focus *DDN* so there will be other items which I hope will be of interest. In addition, I am dedicating this special edition of *DDN* to my great friend Glen Huff who recently came all the way over to the UK from Seattle to visit me and other friends in the UK. (The image shows Glen with Bobby George who we went to visit while Glen was staying with us. (Image © 2013 Moppix).) There's

more about Glen's visit later in this issue.

OK. So let's move along...

SUBSCRIBERS FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE

I know I keep on about how far *DDN* is spreading around the world but I don't think that I would ever have imagined my *Newsletter* reaching the Republic of Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides) which is described in the *Cambridge Encyclopedia* as 'an irregular Y-shaped island chain in the south-west Pacific Ocean.' Keith L., of the Port Vila Darts Organisation e-mailed me to say that, following a visit from an 'English gentleman' (none other than Dr. Eddie Norman) it was suggested that Kevin contacted me and subscribe. Of course, I sent the latest copy of *DDN* to Keith and he replied:

"Thank you for your Darts News and placing our darts organisation through me on your mailing list for future issues. With regards and thanks to you and all your staff at Darts News."

I simply had to point out that I have no ‘staff’ and that there is only me (well, plus my wife Maureen who proof-reads each issue). Amazed by this Keith replied, “It surprises me greatly that you say you are the only staff at your office, you must be very proud of your achievement. I have never heard of a one-man printing firm. It must be unique and very hard work for you.”

I am very proud of what I have achieved and hopefully will continue to achieve through *DDN* but let’s have less of me and more about darts on Vanuatu. Keith told me:

”We are a very small darts league in Port Vila the capital (*on the south coast of the island of Elate*) and largest city in the Republic of Vanuatu. Our city population is approximately 45,000.

Five years ago there was no darts played here in the city at all and the game of darts was not really heard of. Then in Sydney on a working visit, I went to a darts lecture by Eddie Norman who was out from the UK. He explained all the rules of darts to me and my colleagues and we were hooked.”

Two months later Eddie visited Port Vila and he helped Keith and his colleagues set up a steering committee for a darts league. At the beginning, the league had a mere thirty-eight members but as Keith told me, “We are very small but growing slowly.”

Eddie Norman has been back to Vanuatu twice since that first meeting and he has organised the league into three divisions of ten teams. Keith told me, “We have relegation and promotion and the season, including cup matches and singles, is played over thirty weeks of the year.”

Keith added, “I work between Sydney and Port Vila a month at a time and our committee is very keen to get darts established in the rest of Vanuatu Islands. We are progressing slowly but surely in the game of darts. Hopefully we may get a sports grant soon for the darts league that will help to see us grow.”

I wish Keith and his committee good luck for the future in the continuing development of darts in the Republic of Vanuatu and, as a small token, have sent him two copies of my book *The Official Bar Guide to Darts* in the hope that this will be of use to the newer members of the leagues or be used as raffle prizes to raise funds.

I was hoping to publish an image or two of teams from the Port Vila League but Keith is currently in Australia and will do his best to provide some for a later edition of *DDN*.

THE WORLD MASTERS – 40th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

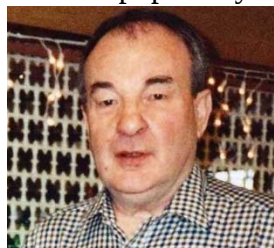
Although not originally known as ‘the WINMAU’, the World Masters is the longest-running major darts tournament and this year celebrates its 40th anniversary.

Winners, runners-up and venues can be found in other darts books and on-line but in this article (a revision of the chapter featured in my book *180! Fascinating Darts Facts*) the origins of the tournament are traced and recorded together with details of how this led to the WINMAU Dartboard Company and the British Darts Organisation (BDO) working together

for approaching four decades to bring the very best of world darts (Men's, Women's, Boy's and Girl's) to fans and players throughout the world.

Eddie's idea

In 1973, darts organiser and entrepreneur, Eddie Norman (pictured) (Image © Chippix) had successfully run the first Home International Darts Championship in Bristol, England. At that time the popularity of darts was advancing rapidly across the UK but slowly across the world.



The key question was how to interest the rest of the planet in the sport of darts. In September that same year Eddie was flying back from New York after a business trip, meeting Bob McLeod, of the United States Darts Association. Bob also organised the annual United States Open.

Eddie was sitting in the plane, relaxing and daydreaming about how darts could possibly grow into an international sport when he thought of the idea of a 'World Masters' of darts, hoping that enough players from overseas could be found to make it look like a proper *world* darts event.

But Eddie's idea, however good it was, would never be a success unless a sponsor could be secured and this was the early 1970s and potential sponsors were still very thin on the ground and the game had a low media profile.

Involving the world

When Eddie returned home he sounded out a number of his darts contacts across the world. Tom Fleetwood, a renowned darts organiser in California was contacted and as a result he formed an American darts organisation focusing on the West Coast from which a player would be drawn for the tournament. Then another contact Bob McLeod heard of the event and immediately wanted to send a representative from the East Coast.

Eddie contacted Patric Eneroth and Kent Seagren who were heavily involved with darts in Sweden and they agreed to arrange a play-off to decide the Swedish entry. Things were progressing well. The interest was there and all that was needed was organisational resources and financial backing.

Back at home in the UK two great darts characters Frank Quinn, Chairman of the Scottish Darts Association and Louis Donohoe, who ran the All Ireland Darts Association became involved and produced Scottish and Irish play-offs to enable those countries to send representatives to the tournament.

The BDO comes on board

Back in 1973, Eddie approached the head of the BDO, Olly Croft, and they discussed the World Masters proposal. Once Olly was on board Eddie knew they had a winner. According to Eddie, Olly and his wife Lorna were the 'dream team' to have to help launch the World Masters (or any tournament for that matter).

Securing sponsorship

With planning well and truly underway, the next major tasks were to secure a sponsor and decide on a venue. Whilst a sponsor was being sought, it was agreed to stage the event at the

West Centre Hotel, Fulham, London. The hotel was booked amid promises that they would 'get their money back on drinks.'

As for a sponsor, West of England BDO Council members Ken Nicholas and Bill Sheppard agreed that if one could not be found in time then they would each put up £200 to ensure that the event went ahead. Eddie said, "That may not seem much but it was a lot of money in those days." However, in the end Ken and Bill's kind offer was not required as the record company Phonogram offered to sponsor the event. The company, which had such famous and diverse artistes on their books as UK rockers Status Quo, the Greek songstress Nana Mouskouri, Welsh singing star Harry Secombe and soon-to-become-a-megastar Rod Stewart, agreed to put up £400 and also supply the hit-making easy-listening duo of the day, Peters and Lee, as the cabaret.

The line-up and sell-out

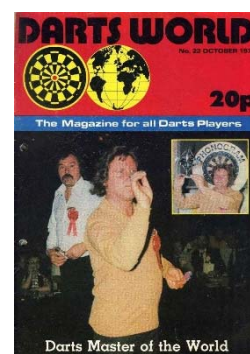
With everything in place, the date for the inaugural 'World Masters Individual Darts Championship' was set as Saturday 31st August 1974; a historic day for darts. The first darters toed the hockey (as it was spelt then) at 12.30 p.m.



The twenty-two man line-up comprised of (in alphabetical order) Joseph Baltadonis (USA), John Bassett (England), John Craine (Isle of Man), Andre Declerq (Belgium), Duncan Dinnie (Scotland), Dalys Elias (Wales), William Glassey (Isle of Man), Joseph Goodwin (Gibraltar), Harry Heenan (Scotland), Clifford Inglis (England), John Kellard (England), George Lee (England), Barry Luckham (England), Joseph McKenna (Ireland), Douglas Melander (Sweden), Ceri Morgan (Wales), Seamus O'Brien (Ireland), Charles Pitchers (England), Douglas Preistner (England), Jody Simpkins (USA), Ronald Stouchbury (England) and Frederick Turner (England); champions all.

The tournament was a sell-out (not surprising when you learn that a ticket cost a mere 40p) with the programme (pictured) costing 20p. Ticket-holding darts fans were queuing outside

the West Centre Hotel three hours before the event was due to begin. According to *Darts World* magazine the standard of darts was 'in the most cases exceptional with many of the relative "unknowns" giving good account of themselves.' Two of the best known players, England's Cliff Inglis and Scotland's Harry Heenan met in the close-fought best of five legs final with Inglis just edging out Heenan 3-2 to become the first 'Darts Master of the World'. Cliff collected the winner's cheque for £400 and '£200 worth of equipment' and thus



secured his place in darts history. (The image on the previous page shows the cover of *Darts World* (October 1974) featuring Cliff with Harry watching on.)

Eddie Norman told me, “This was the first World Darts event and spectators and players had smelt darts blood and they wanted more.” Little did Eddie know that the event he thought up on a plane in 1973 and financed on a shoestring would still be fought for by top darters from across the world four decades later.

Although the Phonogram record company sponsored the second World Masters event in 1975, they withdrew their support thereafter and the search was on for a new sponsor. The most natural place to start was the WINMAU Dartboard Company; that company’s dartboards being already endorsed by the BDO and were certainly used in the second World Masters, if not the first too.

The first WINMAU World Masters

The first WINMAU World Masters was held at the West Centre Hotel, London on 20th November 1976 and featured representatives of no less than thirteen different darting nations. The inaugural WINMAU World Masters was won by England’s John Lowe who whitewashed Wales’ Phil Obbard 3-0 in the final to earn the title and collect the £1,000 winner’s cheque. As if to reinforce the true international status of the event and to show how the sport was spreading across the globe, the losing semi-finalists were Javier Gopar (USA) and the Australian darter, Kevin White.

Thereafter the international reputation of the WINMAU World Masters surged achieving everything that Eddie Norman and the BDO had hoped. WINMAU’s association with this prestigious tournament has continued up to the present day. From small enthusiastic beginnings and a men’s winning cheque of £400, ‘the WINMAU’, as it is now commonly known, became the richest two-day tournament on British TV when it offered a top prize for the Men’s Masters Champion in 2007 of £25,000 (part of a total prize fund of £60,000, which included £5,000 for the Women’s World Master (a tournament inaugurated in 1982)).

Major rule change

In the first ever WINMAU World Masters in 1976 players from thirteen countries had participated from a standing start. This meant that all players had to play in the first round, the seeds mingling with the non-seeds from the very first round. For over 30 years this system worked extremely well with, usually, a ‘name’ lifting the title. Despite this, in 2007 a major rule change was introduced following a decision apparently made by BBC TV which ensured that the top names were present during the televised stages. Basically this meant that the top eight seeds progressed automatically through to the last sixteen whilst the other eight places were taken up by players who had fought their way through via the traditional route of board finals, through to group finals then to stage finals.

Many traditionalists saw this action as not only giving the eight seeds a clear and obvious advantage over the other eight finalists (which it obviously did) but also as devaluing the tournament. However, the viewing figures seemed to support the BBC’s decision when it was revealed that the average viewing figures for the two-day World Masters event were 1.2 million for the Saturday (peaking at 1.6 million) and 1.5 million for the Sunday, peaking at 1.9 million (the latter figure representing a 12.8 per cent share of the available audience) for

the final between Scotland's Robert Thornton and England's Darryl Fitton staged at Leisure World, Bridlington, West Yorkshire.

Record breakers

For the record Eric Bristow triumphed in the World Masters on five occasions, 1977 (beating Paul Reynolds), 1979 (beating Allan Hogg), 1981 (John Lowe), 1983 (Mike Gregory) and 1984 (Keith Deller). Bob Anderson and Martin Adams are the only players to retain their title at the first time of asking, Anderson in 1987 and 1988, Adams in 2008 and 2009.

Bob Anderson was the first to achieve 'three-in-a-row' when he lifted the title again in 1989. Anderson had beaten Canadian Bob Sinnaeve in the 1987 final and then overcame John Lowe in the finals of 1988 and 1989. Martin Adams achieved his hat-trick in 2010 when he beat England's Stuart Kellett in the final. His 2008 and 2009 victories were over Scott Waites and Robbie Green respectively. But again hardened traditionalists viewed Adams' three victories as hollow as he, like the other seven seeds, merely had to sit and wait to see who they would face in the last sixteen as the non-seeds fought their way from board, to floor to stage.

In 2011 the BBC withdrew from televising what has become known simply as 'the WINMAU' and cable network ESPN took over. Although no official viewing figures were available a BDO spokesman said, "This was their [ESPN's] first foray into televised darts and they were more than happy with the audiences it attracted."

As for celebrating the 40th anniversary of the WINMAU World Masters, Sales and Marketing Director Ian Flack told me, "Clearly this is a very special year for the company, the World Masters, the BDO and of course the global darts family. WINMAU is proud to continue to be associated with the Masters and long may it continue." Ian then added, "DDN readers can find out more about our exciting plans to celebrate this auspicious year in darts by visiting http://www.winmau.com/pages/783/World_Masters/"

Some fascinating World Masters facts

Since the Men's WINMAU World Masters began in 1974 and up and including the 39th WINMAU held last year, **3,152** dartsmen from **64** countries have played **6,006** matches and there have been **29** different men's champions.

Of the 29 champions only six have won the title on more than one occasion. These are: Eric Bristow (5), Martin Adams (3), Bob Anderson (3), Raymond van Barneveld (2), John Lowe (2), and Dave Whitcombe (2).

My thanks to Colin Saunders for providing these fascinating facts. Colin, as you may know, is author of *Embassy and Lakeside World Professional Championships 1978 to 2012* (Volumes I and II) and is an absolute mine of information. Hopefully there'll be more to come in future issues of *DDN*.

During our exchange of information Colin has asked for *DDN* readers' help in clarifying one fact about the World Masters. He wrote, "I have a record of one player who definitely played in the 1989 Winmau World Masters but whose name did not appear in the programme. To add to the mystery there was no country identified and his name was spelt differently on the two sets of results issued from the BDO. His name was either Jean Le LucClero or Jean Le

Clero. If anyone can help me identify this man I would very much appreciate them contacting me via Patrick's website, www.patrickchaplin.com."

So there you are. Can you help?

COMPETITION TIME!

Ian Flack, Sales and Marketing Director of the WINMAU Dartboard Company has generously agree to make three sets of Scott Waites 90% tungsten steel tip darts (pictured) available for this competition which is *exclusive* to *DDN*.

To stand a chance of winning just answer this question:

In what year did the WINMAU Dartboard Company become the main sponsor of the World Masters? Was it (a) 1974, (b) 1976 or (c) 1996?

E-mail your answer to me at info@patrickchaplin.com or via my website www.patrickchaplin.com. to reach me by no later than **Friday 30th August**. (No entries received after that date will be valid.)

Correct entries will then be placed into an appropriately-sized hat and three lucky winners drawn out at random. Winners will be notified as soon as possible and their names will appear in the September issue of *DDN*. Good luck to you all!



NEXT MONTH: Eddie Norman looks back over forty years of 'the WINMAU'.

THE 'ROOSTER' DARTBOARD

Ruth W. from the USA e-mailed me to ask me for information about 'The Rooster' dartboard. Not only was Ruth interested in learning more about the board but also her husband thought the board (pictured) was 'special.'

Thanks to a contact within the darts industry I was able to answer Ruth's question but had to tell her straightaway that she had not unearthed a darter's Rembrandt. The board was made by WINMAU during the late 1980's and early 1990's to the company's usual high-quality specifications. However, my contact told me that there is a quirky story behind the photograph.



He said, "The 'Rooster' brand was owned by Darts Unlimited Limited, founded by Bob McLeod and based in New York. Bob's loyalty to Winmau was without equal. That was until 1993, when Winmau's US distributor, Accudart, actually acquired the Winmau Dartboard

Company. Darts Unlimited and Accudart were serious competitors in the USA and as soon as news broke that Accudart had acquired Winmau, Bob picked up the phone to the management at Winmau and said that his 30-year allegiance to Winmau was over. From that day on, all 'Raven' and 'Rooster' boards were made by NODOR.

So, given all the rivalry between Accudart and Darts Unlimited, it's interesting to see a 'Rooster' board married with an Accudart cabinet....."

I am also reliably informed that collectors can identify a WINMAU-made 'Rooster' dartboard (and hence made prior to 1993) by the style of 'clippets' used to secure the number ring, and the size of the sisal biscuits.

CAN YOU HELP?

1. MURMET 501 DARTS

I've received a request for information from Selby S. He writes, "I would like to get some information about a set of darts that have come into my possession. They are a set of original



boxed Murmet 501 match darts, box number 440. They are wooden darts with original feather flights made by M.M Industries in England. I have tried the usual google stuff to no avail."

I've not heard of this company but I'm hoping *you* the *DDN* readers can help.

2. THE GILBOARD

Avid dartboard collector Mark B. has sent me this image of a dartboard he recently acquired.



Mark told me, "It is a 100% cork dartboard, 18" in diameter and 1 ¼ inches thick. It has the tag 'GILBOARD' on the top as well as an Abercrombie & Fitch Co. tag."

Again, as with the Murmet darts above, I have no record of this item so I'm hoping that *DDN* subscribers or fellow dartboard collectors may be able to help.

PRESIDENT OF THE EMERALD CITY DARTS LEAGUE VISITS 'DR. DARTS'

During July it was my wife Maureen and my pleasure to host Glen Huff from Seattle who was visiting the UK for the first time in over 25 years. It was in 1986 that I first received contact – a letter – (Remember letters?) from Glen who, having read an article of mine in *Darts World* magazine, decided to drop me a line. Since then we have exchanged letters, then e-mails and parcels of darts memorabilia but until last month had never met.

It was a great pleasure to meet with this great darts fan and enthusiast after such a long time.



The three of us spent three days together during which time Maureen and I took Glen to a couple of traditional English pubs in my home county of Essex, went to see Bobby and Marie George at George Hall and on our last day together to visit Patrick Dee's darts museum in deepest Suffolk. The image (left) (© 2013 Chippix) shows Glen with Patrick.

All-in-all we had a superb time with Glen absolutely gob-smacked to meet Bobby (and throw a few darts against him) and Marie. Glen was also visibly overwhelmed by Patrick Dee's collection of darts memorabilia. I believe that Patrick's collection must be the largest of its kind in the world.

Now safely settled back in Seattle, Glen tells me that he has plans to return to the UK once funds allow.

Glen, my friend, you'll always be welcomed to our shores.

YET ANOTHER WORLD MASTERS FASCINATING FACT:

This time not from the archives of my good friend Colin Saunders but from my own work *180! Fascinating Darts Facts*, a 'fact' witnessed by me on the Saturday of the WINMAU World Masters weekend at the City Hall, Hull in November 2010. By late afternoon darts fans had exceeded themselves by drinking the place dry of draft beer and lager. A barmaid was heard to say, "I told 'em. I said these were good drinkers but would they listen?" Fortunately supplies were replenished in time for the finals on Sunday.

ROBERT HOLMES

Just as *DDN* was going to press the news came in that Robert Holmes, PR Consultant of the



British Darts Organisation for almost 20 years, had resigned his position. Without making any comment about Robert's contribution to the sport of darts over nearly two decades, the message on the BDO website merely stated, "The BDO board would like to thank Robert and his wife Sylvia for the dedication that they have given to the sport. We wish them every success for the future in whatever path they take."

Robert, pictured left with Sylvia, was brought into the BDO fold by Olly Croft in September 2003, mainly to handle the infamous 'split' and the 2004 Lakeside World Pro which was by then devoid of players such as Eric Bristow, John Lowe and Jocky Wilson. Robert told me, "It is very sad, but I have been delighted with some of the responses from players, officials and many others. I must have done something right because my 'temporary role' lasted twenty very enjoyable and fulfilling years."

Robert added, "Not only will I miss people like you Patrick, but also the players, officials and everyone within BDO darts. I have loved being part of the BDO and promoting its players and officials and the very important concept of darts for all. I don't want to elaborate on my

reasons for resigning, but I do so with my head held high in the knowledge that in my own small way I have made a difference to the public perception of darts and its players.”

Even though his involvement with BDO darts spanned two decades Robert had no problem in identifying the highlights: every World Pro and every World Champion since 2004 - beginning with Andy Fordham's famous victory in 2004 - and initiatives like helping to gain recognition for darts as a sport (2005) and Olly Croft's OBE in 2004.

I am sure that readers of *DDN* will join me in wishing Robert and Sylvia all the very best for the future.

AND FINALLY...

Special thanks to Justin B. from Gibraltar for converting my *DDN*'s to pdfs whilst I was trying to come to terms with the new technology. Justin, I think I'm OK now but hope that, in an emergency... Thank you so much for your help.

That's it for this special edition of *DDN*. I hope you've enjoyed it. News from Greenland will be carried over to #41.

I'll see you next time.

Patrick

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PUBLICATIONS:

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.