

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 47 April 2014

WELCOME



A warm and hearty welcome one and all to the April edition of *DDN* and especially to Adam F. who is my first subscriber based in Jamaica.

No massive 14-page issue like last month (which Dave B described as "...absolutely fantastic..." and "...the best yet...") but I can promise an exclusive report and photos of the Vietnam National Championships held in Ho Chi Minh City in February, some views of darts in the USA by a resident and an ex-pat, plus news of how long John Gwynne's retirement (see *DDN* #46) actually lasted.



I also feature a short piece about Charlie *Ellis* (as opposed to Charlie *Ellix* who was featured in issues 45 and 46 in response to an enquiry received from the Secretary of Middle East Darts) and ask your help in learning more about that great Bradford player.

Sadly, I have to report the death of yet another skilled and well-loved darter, this time the popular Scottish player Bryan Whyte (pictured above left) who was killed in a road accident in the Highlands on Friday 28th February.

JOHN GWYNNE...ONE YEAR ON (continued)

In last month's issue I featured a report from John Gwynne about how he was doing having been away from the darts commentary box since last summer and how proud he felt at becoming a member of the PDC Hall of Fame. In conclusion I wrote, 'What are the chances that we'll hear John's dulcet tones from the commentary box again in the not-too-distant future?' No sooner said than...

David King (of Darts501.com fame) wrote to me on 26th February and said, 'It is not the end of John Gwynne just yet! He commentated on the WINMAU Six Nations Cup last weekend.' David added, 'It made a massive difference to the viewing and I was pleased to hear a professional commentator working with the BDO for a change.'

That same day the man himself sent an e-mail thanking me for the feature in #46. 'As usual, a brilliant publication, Patrick,' wrote John, 'and I really enjoyed reading the piece on my induction into the PDC Hall of Fame.' John then added, 'I did my first TV commentary on darts since Blackpool last July, when I covered the WINMAU Six Nations Cup in Fife, Scotland, last weekend.'

I *knew* he'd be back!

John also wrote, 'Being the perfectionist you are Patrick – and which I try to be – you won't mind my pointing out to you that my son, Andrew, is M.P. for the Denton and

Reddish (not *Redditch*) Constituency in Greater Manchester.' Apologies John. I am, of course, happy to put the record straight.

Space last month did not allow me to publish John's open letter dated 12th February which he sent to me, and others, which I now present here. The letter records how John felt at being inducted into the PDC Hall of Fame. He wrote:

Dear Sir,

Monday January 20, 2014 was one of the proudest days of my life and I wish to thank the Professional Darts Corporation who, on that night, at their annual Awards Dinner at the Dorchester Hotel in London, made it so. They inducted me into their Hall of Fame, joining my fellow 'partners in crime', the late Sid Waddell and Dave Lanning, many other servants of the sport and some of its greatest players.

One of the most pleasing aspects of the award is that it is in recognition of my overall contribution and service to darts, as administrator, sponsor, referee/mc, journalist and, yes, radio and television commentator. It is as a part of the original Sky Sports' team - Dave Lanning and I commentated on the first World Championship at the Circus Tavern in January 1994 - that, not surprisingly, I am best known and I wish to thank Sky Sports for giving me 20 years of enjoyment.

My decision to retire from their broadcasting team last July came as a result of my feeling marginalised. However, my sense of gratitude to them is undiminished by that. I consider myself to have been a very lucky man.



I also wish to offer my thanks for the numerous congratulatory messages I have received from the darting public, many of whom will be regular readers of Darts World (a publication I was a monthly contributor to for 31 years!) and, of course, Dr. Darts' Newsletter.

I continue in my voluntary roles as an administrator and I remain busy on the exhibition circuit as an mc/referee. Although my days as a journalist might be behind me, I am hopeful that, one day, I might pick up the commentary microphone for someone, somewhere, again.

If I don't, I still have many happy moments to look back on!

Yours sincerely,

John Gwynne.

As we have already seen, less than a month after writing that he *might* pick up the commentary microphone again, he'd actually done it.

Good luck John.

(The image above (right) shows John as he was depicted during his days writing for *Darts World* magazine. Copyright holder unknown. Image courtesy of the PC/DW Archive. Used with permission.)

DARTITIS – ANOTHER POSSIBLE SOLUTION

It never ceases to amaze me how much interest has been generated about ‘dartitis’ since I published Bob Johnson’s excellent article about the condition in the November 2013 *DDN* (#43). Subsequent issues have highlighted how useful Bob’s advice can be. And now from Holland Ad K. has written to me.

Ad found the November issue ‘mighty interesting’ and wrote ‘Maybe I can help Ashley D. with a tip.’ Ad told me that a player in his darts league named Roy suffered from dartitis and he came to Ad asking for help.

Together they worked up a scheme to cure Roy which began with two weeks’ rest. Then they returned to the oche. Ad said, ‘Then we throw paper at the board. After three weeks we throw marbles to the board. Then we start with fifteen darts to throw. Every day three darts more.’ After six weeks Roy’s game had improved by 80% but it took almost four months before he was 100% match fit again and the dartitis gone.

Well done to both men and let’s hope that their success and advice will encourage others to confront the curse of dartitis and beat it.

DDN, MAILINGS AND OTHER THINGS

It’s always of concern to me that my monthly *DDN* mailings are reaching all subscribers. Gary McR from California, USA wrote to me recently on this matter. He said:

Hi Patrick, Hope everything is going well for you. I've been terribly busy here and am just now catching up. I was going through the DDN's and I haven't received any newsletter past #44. Are you still having trouble with your mailings?’

It’s true that some e-mailed *DDN*’s were being returned as ‘undeliverable’ but in Gary’s case they seemed to have simply disappeared into the ether. Fortunately I was able to send Gary the issues he had missed and all seems is back to normal now.

However, if *you* miss issues (*DDN* is issued every month without fail) please drop me a line at info@patrickchaplin.com and I’ll ensure that those missed issues are sent to you. Also, if you change your e-mail address please advise me as soon as you can so as not to miss an issue.

In the absence of those ‘lost’ *DDN*’s Gary told me

Since I didn't have anything to read I went out and bought your book ‘The Official Bar Guide to Darts’. NOW at least I can resolve some differences that some of my friends get into. There’s nothing like resolving an issue by saying "Alright mate let’s see what the book says." It's Bloody Brilliant!

Now we can get in at least two more games per night. Darts might be a friendly game but it certainly is competitive, OH and loser buys a round!!!

Thanks for your kind comments Gary. They are much appreciated and I am very pleased that *The Official Bar Guide to Darts* (New York: Puzzlewright Press, 2010) has helped. Other issues can be resolved by buying *180! – Fascinating Darts Facts* (Stroud: The History Press, 2012).

For any eBay fans out there, watch out for a very special offer from me to you for the chance to purchase signed copies of both *The Official Bar Guide...* and *180!...* together at an amazing price. More soon.

DARTS IN THE USA

In the October and November issues of *DDN* I featured some comments about darts in the USA and how some folks who have mentioned 16-times world darts champion Phil Taylor over there have been met with blank faces. (I suppose the same would happen to me in conversation if someone named famous baseball or American football players.) Subsequently I received further comments which, only now, I have found space to publish. Here's what Mike D. Del C. had to say:

Patrick, I am from the United States, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania to be specific. Home of the Pittsburgh Steelers! (although they are not much to brag about this season so far!)



I was reading the newsletter and I agree that many people in the US have no idea who the big names in darts are. Except for a few friends who frequently travel, most would never know if Phil Taylor, John Part, Simon Whitlock or Mighty Mike walked into our local pub! Not to mention the ladies Anastasia Dobromyslova, (pictured) Trina Gulliver or Fallon Sherrock.

(Image of Anastasia © Henk Westerdaal. Used with permission.)

I know I would have no idea who they were either if I had not found several dart subscriptions on YouTube and reading dart web pages (such as yours). I was looking for training videos to improve my game. I enjoy watching the tournaments and seeing the way the pros throw. I usually play a better game after watching an hour or two.

I have been e-mailing BBC America and asking if they could broadcast the dart tournaments. I think the added exposure would greatly increase the name and face recognition here in the States. Not to mention the interest in the game itself and let people know it is a real sport not just something to do while drinking at the pub.

Once again, thanks for the newsletter: I know I will be sharing it with my friends.

Good Darts!

Thanks for your feedback Mike and thanks too for approaching BBC America to try and encourage them to broadcast more darts in the USA. Let me know if you make any progress on that.

Then there's soft-tip...about which ex-pat Rich B-H living in the USA had something to say:

Hey Patrick, Just read the first (for me) newsletter, it's a fantastically interesting read! It also makes me proud to be fighting the good fight in America.

I recently moved from Stourbridge (UK) to Myrtle Beach (USA). I've only recently got into darts, a year and half or so, but absolutely love the sport/game. Unfortunately down in my new home, plastic tip darts, which in my book is a soulless, money driven farce of a game is dominant. I'm doing all I can to revive Steel tip darts though. I've managed to get steel tip darts into two pubs that didn't have them previously. I started a weekly beginner's meet up, to help encourage fresh blood and am currently working with the local Dart Club to push Steel tip. It feels like a losing battle, but each player I convert feels like a huge win.

So there's one man's fight for steel-tip where previously only soft-tip seems to have thrived. But is soft-tip, as Rich suggests, a 'soulless, money-driven farce of a game'? How do my other US subscribers feel?

I know that is the common view of most Brits as we tend to perceive electronic darts as being our sport 'messed about with.' Various manufacturers have tried over here to convert us to soft-tip/electronic darts and failed miserably. Subscriber Chris M. from London asked me recently, "Is soft-tip played in any pub in Britain?" Well Chris, as far as I know, no it isn't but there may be someone out there who can correct me.

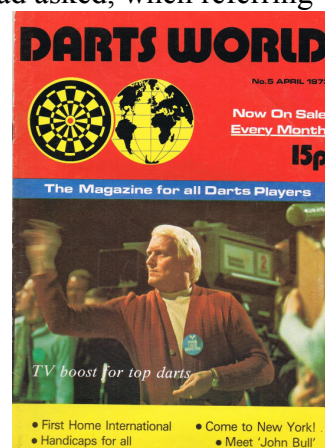
If you have a view about soft-tip or have spotted the game being played anywhere in Britain, please contact me at info@patrickchaplin.com.

CHARLIE ELLIS

In the past two issues I have mentioned the career of Charlie *Ellix*. This was following a question from Sadiq, the Secretary of Middle East Darts had asked, when referring to the first British Open, 'We [*would like to*] learn more about Charlie Ellis? Ellix?' The same question 'Ellis or Ellix?' had been asked of me back in 2011 so it seems that the two Charlie's, over the passage of time are (and possibly were) occasionally muddled up.

The life and career of Charlie *Ellix* has now been recorded in *DDN's* numbered 18, 45 and 46 but what of Charlie *Ellis*? Here's what little I know...

Charlie Ellis (pictured left on the cover of *Darts World* in 1973) came from Bradford playing his darts at *The George* pub Wyke. In the very first series of Yorkshire TV's legendary pub games programme *The Indoor League* broadcast in 1972, Charlie was



runner-up to York's Colin Minton. (Colin's pub was the *Royal Oak*, Easingwold.) In that series of *The Indoor League* darts was played on the Yorkshire Board (no trebles and no outer bull.

On the front cover photo of *Darts World* (May 1973, Issue no. 5) shown above is a photo of Charlie Ellis in action. On page 3 of that issue readers were informed that the picture was of 'Bradford darts champion Charles Ellis competing in the "Indoor League" darts contest being televised nationally by ITV at 1 p.m. on Thursdays starting on April 5.'

Sadly *Darts World* carried no reports of the individual matches but did mention in the July 1973 issue that, as a result of its success, of which Charlie was of course a part, *The Indoor League* was in future going 'national'.

Despite his undoubted success as the Bradford champion, Charlie is not mentioned in either of Derek Brown's books (*Darts 78* or *The Guinness Book of Darts*). Was this an oversight? Whatever the answer I'd like to learn more about Charlie Ellis.

Can you help? If so, please e-mail me at info@patrickchaplin.com or contact me via my website www.patrickchaplin.com. Thanks.

THRILLED?

Chris M., already mentioned above, also commented on 'The Lightning Darts Scorer piece in issue #46 saying, 'Is that you looking "thrilled" on page 2? LOL as they say.' (See image, right) Chris was of course referring to my reaction to receiving an *original* blueprint of the 'Lightning Darts Scorer' from Martin Hilson, grandson of the inventor Oliver Hilson.



I told Chris that the trouble is that I do not consider myself to be very photogenic (especially as I'm getting on a bit) with the result that it is difficult for anyone to take pictures of me smiling, let alone looking thrilled, particularly when the sun is shining in my eyes.



Faced with the major task of rectifying this matter my wife Maureen dragged me out on to the patio and took some more snaps. The result was the image (left) (©2014 Moppix) which, rather than making me look 'thrilled' seems to indicate that I am in some pain. A paper cut perhaps. Anyway Chris, I fear this is the closest I'm gonna get.

OK, let's move on...

ALTERNATIVE GAMES – PANTATHLIAN

It's been absolutely ages since I mentioned alternative games that can be played on a dartboard in *DDN*. In fact, although I featured a goodly number in my book *The Official Bar Guide to Darts* (New York: Puzzlewright Press, 2010, pp 48-79), I

cannot actually recall raising the subject in any *Newsletter* at all! However, subscriber Bill B. contacted me a short while ago bringing my attention to a 1930s darts game called PANTATHLIAN: no not Pentathlon, *Pantathlian*.

The game certainly has a similar structure to a pentathlon consisting as it does of no less than five different darts events. The Pantathlian was devised as a game to be played in the club as it was, according to its inventor, ‘hardly suitable for drawing rooms where valuable vases, expensive pianos, etc., are liable to be in danger.’ As you read through my descriptions of the five events you will realise why no drawing room could possibly cope with Pantathlian. Here we go then:

Game 1:

Each player throws three darts singly, and counts to his score anything over twenty scored with *each single dart*.

Game 2:

Each player throws three darts singly with the left hand. All scores registered are added to the player’s total. (For naturally left-handed players, of course, the reverse would apply.)

Game 3:

Three darts are thrown together with the right (or left) hand. The total is again added to the player’s score.

Game 4:

After removing all breakable objects, the player is blindfolded (or tight “shut-eye” will do). Others then revolve the player three times and leave him facing the dartboard. It is then advisable for everyone else to retreat to a safe distance while the player throws three darts singularly with the right (or left) hand and adds score, if any, to his total.

Game 5:

Each player in turn stands with his back to the dartboard and ‘heels to the line’; then, bending forward, throws three darts singly and with the right hand (or left), at the dartboard through his legs. Any score adds to the player’s total, and thus the highest score wins and the loser, we hope, ‘will be a very popular fellow.’

So there you have it: Pantathlian. Probably the most progressively dangerous series of darts games known to man (or woman). Nowadays I doubt if it could be played as it probably transgresses Health and Safety rules.

April Fool or actual game?

You decide and then let me know. And why not send me *your* favourite alternative darts game? Please ensure that you send the rules too. There’s a signed copy of my

The Official Bar Guide to Darts up for grabs for what I judge to be the best (or maybe the silliest) one I receive. Closing date for replies is **12 noon, Tuesday 22nd April**.

VIETNAM NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Vietnam National Men's and Women's Championships (Men's and Women's), was held on February 22nd at the RED Bar in District 1, Ho Chi Minh City. This season's Men's champion is Guppyliem Than and the Women's champion Oanh Pham.



The photo shows (left to right) Bilu Nguyen (2nd runner up), Oanh Pham (Women's Champion), Guppyliem Than (Men's Champion), Tran Thai Dung (1st runner up) and Do Thi Nhung (1st runner up). (Image © 2014 Lee Dunton. Reproduced with permission.)

The tournament was sponsored by both the Vinyl Bar (to which my correspondent Lee Dunton is co-owner) and the RED Bar. Lee told me, "We sponsored thirty million Vietnam Dong (approximately US\$1500)" which attracted a large field of players. Lee added, "We had lots of entrants (both men and women). We had groups playing a 'round robin' system on six boards from 2pm to 9pm. We then took the top player from each group to play in the semis and then on to the final."

Lee informed me that the Men's champion Guppyliem Than lives in Gò Vấp district Ho Chi Minh City and plays with Unicorn 21 gram darts. Lee added, "Guppy, as we call him, has played darts for thirteen years. He used to park the bikes outside a bar and practice darts in his free time. One day the team were short. Guppy was called in to play and the rest, as they say, is history." Guppy currently plays for a team known as 'The Really Rottens'.

The women's champion, Oanh Pham is 25 years old. Lee told me that she originally came from Dak Lak province in the centre of Vietnam but that she now lives and works in Ho Chi Minh City. Lee said, "Oanh has only played darts for two years. She was given a second-hand set of 22 gram darts when she showed interest after watching darts in a bar. Oanh currently plays for 'ACDC' (Asian Chicks Darts Crazy): an all-girl team (pictured above). Left to right the team are Nguyen Thi Nhu Nguyet, Trang Honour, Nguyen Thi Minh Phuong, Pham Oanh (Women's champion), Nguyen Nhu Bi, Huynh Thi Ngoc Bich and Do Ai Ni. (Image of ACDC © 2014 Lee Dunton. Used with permission.)



Darts remains strong in Ho Chi Minh City. Lee told me that there are three Divisions in the league with eight teams in each. The league is, as Lee told me, 'truly cosmopolitan' comprising as it does of players from *twenty-eight* different countries. The league is sponsored by Tiger Beers.

(My thanks to Lee for his exclusive report and my best wishes to all darts players in Ho Chi Minh City and beyond.)

OBITUARY – BRYAN WHYTE

The Scottish Highland darts fraternity was stunned earlier this year to learn of the death of one of its own, Bryan Whyte (pictured, right). Bryan, 34, a mechanic from Spean Bridge, died on 28th February after his car was involved in a collision with a pick-up on the A82 near Torlundy.



Len Mutch, Chairman of the Scottish Darts Association (SDA) formerly announced Bryan's death on the SDA website stating, 'It is my duty to inform you Bryan Whyte, newly selected for Scotland, was tragically killed in a car crash. Our thoughts are with his family at this very sad time.' Bryan leaves behind his partner Dawn and their four children.

Jim MacNeil, Secretary of the Highland Darts Association, told me, "Bryan started his darts career in Lochaber playing in Friday night competitions in the Tradeswinds, Corpach and then moved his attention to the Inverness darts scene playing for Clachnaharry Spikeys, then Culloden Moor Inn and latterly Portland A.

Then Bryan's darts went up another notch and he was asked to represent Highland in the British Inter County league where he rapidly moved to the top of the averages both in Highland and on a national basis. Just before his tragic death those averages had resulted in Bryan being selected to play for Scotland at the International series in Halifax in April."

Jim added, "I spent some of the selection day on the phone with Bryan as he tried to find out if he was in the team or not and my nerves were shredded so I don't know how he was coping. Then the great news, he was in! I've never heard of a prouder player in darts."

According to tributes on the internet, Bryan, who reached the last sixteen in the 2013 Scottish Open, won the Western Isles title in the 2013/14 season and the 2014 Buckie Open, was 'universally loved on the darts circuit', a 'larger than life character' and a 'legend of a guy'.

Jim MacNeil added, "In all the teams he played for, his humour, honesty and integrity shone through and he endeared himself to everyone he met. Bryan was taken from us far too early but will always remain in our hearts. We will never forget him."

RIP Bryan Whyte.

(My thanks to Jim MacNeil for his assistance in the preparation of this obituary. Thanks too to www.dartsdatabase.co.uk and to David King (of Darts501.com) for Photoshop work enhancing the image of Bryan.)

AND FINALLY...

Can anyone tell me who this darter is?



He's clearly a *News of the World* Divisional winner (probably from the 1970s/1980s and *possibly* from the Midlands or north of England) but there is no clue either in the photo or on the back of it just who this champion is.

Do you know him?

It's the only image from the former *Darts World* photo archive (donated to my archive by the then editor, Tony Wood) that I don't have a home for. Surely *someone* must recognise him.

Please, put my old mind at rest by telling me who he is.

So that's it for another month...

I hope you have enjoyed this issue and, as usual, all feedback is welcomed.

Best wishes,

Patrick

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NEXT MONTH: Another TV appearance for 'Dr. Darts'?