

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 49 June 2014

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Issue #49.



It's been a busy few weeks for me, trying to complete the text of my latest book on darts and planning the launch of my local history book but I found time to accept an invitation from *DDN* subscriber Billy 'The Eel' Bell (pictured, left, with me) to travel down to the south coast of England and help him celebrate his 40th birthday by participating in an unusual doubles darts tournament. It was great fun and the full report is featured within this issue. (Image ©2014 Moppix)



Great news too for lady darters in the UK and elsewhere with the announcement that the British Darts Organisation (BDO) has formally recognised the Ladies Darts Organisation (LDO) and will be working together on a number of lady-centric darts events. More later.

Plus, in this issue, we have some top darts players answering the question posed by subscriber Mick S., "How do you prevent practice becoming boring?"

But first, what about the rule changes suggested in #48?

TIME TO CHANGE THE RULES? – YOUR VIEWS

Rudy van den E's thoughts in *DDN* #48 about changing the rules in relation to finishing on the 'bogey numbers' generated significant feedback from readers.

You may recall that Rudy, from Holland, e-mailed me about his 'bewilderment' or 'long-term frustration' about the seven 'bogey' outshot numbers; those impossible to finish in three darts, namely, in descending order, 169, 168, 166, 165, 163, 162 and 159. Rudy wanted those bogey numbers to become 'finishable numbers.'

By this Rudy meant that if a player is unfortunate enough to leave himself or herself any of those seven numbers, that player should be allowed to finish on the next higher 'finishable' number, thus, 160 for 159, 164 for 162 and 163, 167 for 165 and 166 and 170 for 168 and 169.

So, over to you...

Mick S. was first off the mark. He said, 'I agree with you Patrick. The bogey numbers for me are all part of the game. If you start finishing on a treble it takes a lot of fun out of the game.'

David K. wrote, 'I think Rudy is on a losing battle. I for one wouldn't change the rules as Rudy would like. Let's take 165. Is Rudy saying allow the next highest possible finish in this case 167? What if he missing scoring 99? Is that taken off the possible finish or the original bogey finish?

The game of darts is also about knowing your mathematics and the best set-ups to score during what I call the middle game to avoid bogey finishes.

Why 501 and not 500?!!!? Well, at least you have to hit another number other than 20 to finish a game. I am afraid to say I am not a supporter of Rudy's proposal.'

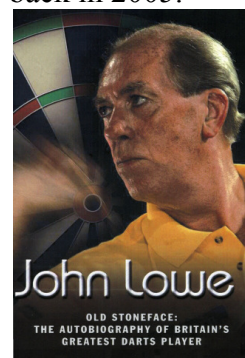
David then went on to talk about something else – house rules. He wrote, 'I have played in matches where there have been 'local' rules. One I recall was that you couldn't bust your last double. Example: require 12 (D6) you hit 6 to leave 6 you may throw for D3 and hit 3 and you may not like the thought of 1 and D1 finish so you throw a higher number to bust the score. The local rules say you are still on 6 (D3) or combo.'

David added, 'I hated playing these silly rules but hey! I won anyway!'

I tend to agree with both of these responses and practically said so in issue #48. However, while we're on the subject of change, why not let me have your feedback on an idea John Lowe outlined in his autobiography *Old Stoneface* back in 2005.

When considering the future of the sport of darts John wrote:

'I would like to see a change in the starting number for certain tournaments – specifically, an increase from 501 to 601 or even 701. If this was adopted, the number of legs or sets could be cut slightly, which would also add a new degree of difficulty to the game.'



John then made the point that, since achieving the first perfect nine-dart 501 in 1984 (an unbelievable thirty years ago), the same feat has been captured on TV many times, and the point has been reached where fans *expect* a nine-darter and go away from a major tournament disappointed if that has not been achieved. John continued:

'If 601 or 701 was introduced as a new discipline, this would offer a new challenge and a new 'perfect' game of darts: eleven darts in the case of 601 (180-180-180-61) and twelve in the case of 701 (180-180-180-161).'

John concluded:

'The odds would increase because of the higher level of difficulty. We'd still be playing the same numbers game, but we'd have moved the finishing post.'

Nine years on since the publication of *Old Stoneface*, nothing has changed and, as far as I am aware, neither of the two darts organisations in the UK have even considered the change. (I am, of course, happy to be proved wrong on this.)

What do *DDN* readers think?

Are you tiring of the nine-darter? Is it time to introduce 601 (the 'eleven-darter') or 701 (the 'twelve-darter')?

Let me have your views by e-mailing me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

(Quotes are from John Lowe (with Patrick Chaplin) *Old Stoneface – The Autobiography of Britain's Greatest Darts Player* (London: John Blake Publishing, Hardback 2005, paperback (with extra chapter) 2009). Used with permission.)

HOW TO PREVENT PRACTICE BECOMING BORING

Back in the Autumn of last year, Mick S. dropped me a line and asked 'How do professional dart players practice? I know from personal experience it is hard to keep practicing. You get bored.'

I contacted some professional players and the first to respond was Bob Anderson who told me, 'Patrick, practice should always keep your interest and not be boring. That's why I never practice just 501. I use a variety of practice including a game I invented many years ago, called 'Bob's 27s'. This game is a great little practice routine and concentrates on doubles accuracy. You can keep a note of the running score on paper, in your head, or on your chalk board.



You start off with 27 points and go round the board throwing three darts at each double, from double 1 to Bull in sequence. Every double you hit earns you that doubles score and is added to your total but missing a double with all three darts means you must subtract the value of that double from your total. Once you're down to zero or less the game is over.'

Bob told me that his best ever score in 'Bob's 27s' is 811, achieved 'a long time ago.' Although Bob said, 'I now regularly get in the 600s, and consider that a very good score.' (Image of Bob, courtesy of the DW/PC Archive. Copyright holder not identified.)

Next up was Jamie Caven (pictured below, image © Team Caven) who replied, 'In answer to your question, I think most pros will answer similarly.' Like Bob, Jamie confirmed that it is vital to ensure that practice is kept interesting. Jamie continued, 'If you become bored you will lose interest quickly,' adding, 'My practice consists of mainly finishing.'



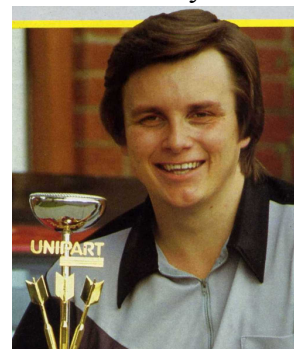
Here's an example of Jamie's practice regime. Jamie told me:

'I would probably have five or ten throws at the bull first to obtain my range. Then do three throws at 81 finish. If I hit single 19, then single 12 and miss the bull you go

back to 81 so you have to check out each score as it stands. If you do it within three attempts you then go to 82. If you don't do it you go down to 80. The idea is to get to and finish 100,' Jamie adding, 'This game can be tailored so an amateur could start on 41 to 60 maybe.'

Jamie's practice then continues by concentrating on scoring in the twenty segments only until he has score at least 1,000 points.

Keith Deller told me, 'I found the best way to practice is to start off with a thirty minute warm-up. Then for two hours practice finishing. Start at 80 then once you hit that go for 81 and keep doing that and see how close you get to 130.' Keith then advises, 'Once your time has finished, write down how far you get and then try and beat it next time. The good thing is that you are practicing all trebles. Phil Taylor used to practice that a lot.' (Image, right, shows Keith on the front page of the 180th *Darts World* magazine, November 1987, after winning the Unipart British Professional Darts Championship at Redcar.)



So, excellent, sound advice from all three top players. My thanks to Bob, Jamie and Keith for their top tips on how to make practice 'not boring.'

Next month: Tony West, John Part and John Lowe tell you about their recommended practice regimes.

VINTAGE DARTS (AND DR. DARTS) AT 40th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

It's not every day that I am invited to a unique darts event but that is exactly what happened when Bill 'The Eel' Bell, a long-established subscriber to *DDN*, dropped me a line asking me down to the East Sussex coast on 17th May to help celebrate his 40th birthday. The venue was the *Dewdrop Inn*, Peacehaven at which would be staged a rather unique darts match.

The town of Peacehaven rests on the south coast of England and is best known as the place where the Meridian Line leaves Britain. My wife Maureen and I walked to the obelisk that celebrates this fact which overlooks the English Channel and, indeed,



'walked the line.' But then it was time to find the *Dewdrop Inn* and meet Bill for the very first time and where mine hosts, Gerry and Lyn and their son John were waiting to serve those present for as long as it took.

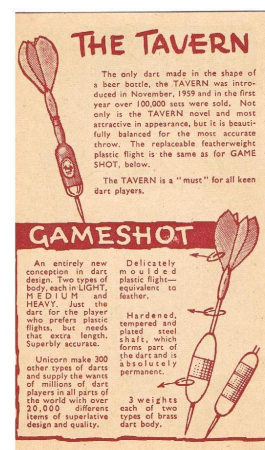
Bill, pictured here with his wife Charlotte and daughters Lily (on the right) and Emily (left) (Image © 2014 Chippix) is a great darts fan and an excellent player. Both of his daughters are keen throwers too. Bill seemed to be marking his 40th birthday with a whole sequence of celebrations, this particular one being a special darts tournament of his own invention. Bill had come up with a great idea for a variation on the concept of 'blind doubles.'

For those not familiar with that title, 'blind doubles' is where the names of all of the players are put in a hat and the names simply drawn out one by one. The first one out of the hat plays with the second name out, the third is paired with the fourth and so on. This means that, until your name is drawn out of the hat, you have no idea who your partner will be.

So far so good but, at the *Dewdrop Inn* Bill added a twist. Players could not play with their own darts. In fact they couldn't play with their friend's darts either and, to top it all, tungstens were *banned*. Instead Bill had brought along six sets of vintage darts and numbered them 1-6 on a sheet of paper. The six sets were Unicorn Gameshot, Unicorn Tavern, Long Toms, Jim Pike, Schofield's and a set of Dorwin darts. (The illustration, right, shows the Tavern and Gameshot darts as featured in a Unicorn promotional insert, circa 1961. From my private collection.)

Once pairs had been decided and the first two teams called to the oche, a member from each side threw a dice and whatever set of darts that number corresponded with that was the set you used.

In a packed public bar the draw took place and my name was second out of the hat which meant that my partner was to be Bill's nephew Archie. With a throw of the dice we had selected the Unicorn Gameshot darts whilst our opponents' Matt Miller and Keith 'The Calculator' Callister had selected the Dorwin's. The weapons decided, the first match (one game of straight in 501) was underway.



Whilst Archie and I adapted to our selected darts fairly well, our opponents were performing better with the Dorwin darts. There was a lot of good-humoured crowd noise and encouragement for both sides. It was a generally tight game and, believe it or not but it's true, WE WON, with me shooting out on 45 (treble 5, double 15).



After that Archie and I feared no man, or woman, and, again, fate selected the Gameshot set as our darts for our second match. We played better than we had in the initial round but we were up against Chris Didcott and Bill's brother Dan. Archie and I were in sight of a double when Chris shot out with a magnificent 108.

We couldn't argue with that. Archie and my moment of glory was over but at least we have a photograph (above) (Image © 2014 Moppix) showing the joy of winning that first game.

The eventual winners of the Vintage Blind Doubles were the birthday boy Bill 'The Eel' Bell and Cris, the only lady taking an active part in the event. They beat Chris and Dan in the final, the winners playing with Schofield darts.

Later, in the second tournament of the afternoon, the Tungsten Blind Pairs, Chris and Matt Miller lifted the title beating my Vintage Blind Doubles partner Archie and Keith 'The Calculator' in the final.

But, before that, Maureen and I had bid our fond farewells to all and were on our way home. (We would have loved to have stayed, much, much longer, but business early the following day dictated a reasonably early night.) (Image © 2014 Eelpix)



The welcome we had received at the *Dewdrop Inn* was very warm and the guys and girls exceptionally friendly, making us feel right at home from the moment we walked in. The beer was Harvey's Best Bitter (of which I was only allowed two halves: more's the pity) brilliantly kept by Gerry the landlord. The *Dewdrop Inn* is everything a proper pub should be.

Our thanks to everyone and especially Bill for the invitation. Hopefully we'll see you all again sometime.

IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF DARTS...

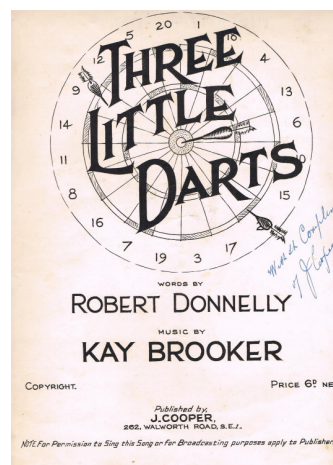
Those of you who purchased *180! - Fascinating Darts Facts* may recognise the title of this item from that book which was published in 2012. In the music section I referred to a number of incidences where darts players sung on record or darts was sung about on shellac or vinyl, among them *The Dart Song* by The Two Leslies (1937), *Middle for Diddle* by The Wurzels (1976) and *180!* sung by the BDO Choir (1981), the 'singers' on the latter including Bobby George, Tony Sontag, Tony Green and Olly Croft.

I'm always on the lookout for additional musical darts items so I am indebted to *DDN* subscriber and fellow pub historian Chris Murray for sending me the sheet music to *Three Little Darts* (words by Robert Donnelly, music by Kay Brooker) published by J. Cooper of London in 1936. This seems to pre-date *The Dart Song* making *Three Little Darts* the earliest piece of music that I am aware of in which the game of darts is the theme. *Three Little Darts* tells the story of two men fighting over the same girl for her hand in marriage and settling matters with a 'dual by darts.'

The chorus goes:

*Three little darts sealed the fate of three hearts,
A story strange but true
Once men were fools, killed each other in duals,
But games for a wife is quite new.*

*Yet the boy of her dreams was the winner, it seems,
And now there are two loving hearts
United for life they are husband and wife,
With the aid of those three little darts.*



They don't write them like that anymore...

Was it ever recorded I wonder and, if so, who by?

Of course there have been many songs written about *Cupid's* darts but very few about our sport so if know of any others then please contact me.

(My thanks Chris Murray for providing the inspiration for this piece.)

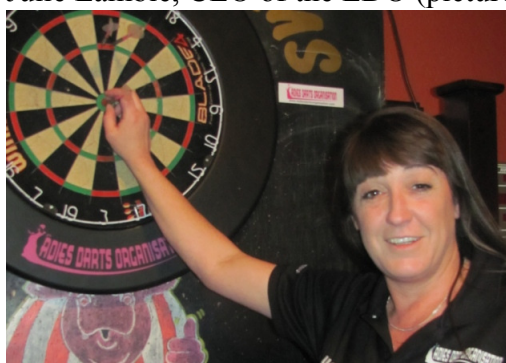
LADIES DARTS ORGANISATION RECEIVES BDO RECOGNITION

I've mentioned the Ladies Darts Organisation (LDO) in previous *DDN's* and I know how tirelessly the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Julie Lambie, and her colleagues work to raise the profile of ladies' darts.

Despite the positive progress made, the LDO had not secured the recognition of the British Darts Organisation (BDO). However, at the County Delegates meeting on Sunday 11th May, Sue Williams, the Chairperson of the BDO formally announced the unanimous agreement of the Board of Directors, stating, "It was with great pleasure that I was able to announce to the delegates at the meeting, that the Board had agreed to formally recognise the LDO."

Sue added, "The LDO Board have worked very hard to increase their membership, organise and deliver very successful tournaments, with their main aim to promote the best for the game of ladies' darts. This can only help and improve the image and coverage of the ladies game. It has been long overdue."

Julie Lambie, CEO of the LDO (pictured) said, "Since the Organisation was founded in February 2012 our aim was to gain official recognition from the Governing Body of darts. I am absolutely delighted that this has now happened and look forward to working with the BDO for the benefit of lady dart players all over the world."



We have been successful in holding several well attended tournaments over the last 18 months and look forward to a bright future.

This decision from the BDO Board of Directors is a show of confidence in the strength of our organisation."

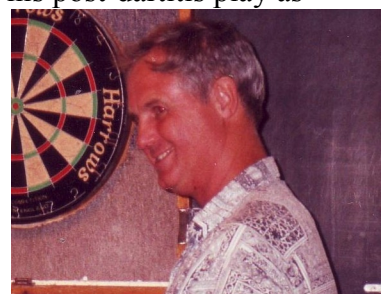
In an exclusive statement for *DDN* readers, Julie told me, "The response from the players, both ladies and men, and supporters is very positive regarding our recognition. Although it has taken time to get the LDO to where we are now, we believe this is the best thing that has happened for many years for the ladies' game. We will be working with the BDO in some future events and are very excited to be able to give the ladies more recognition and support and hopefully more media coverage in the sport that they so love."

Two years of hard work have paid off for the LDO. I add my congratulations to Julie and her Board for achieving so much in such a relatively short space of time. I am sure that the LDO will go on from strength to strength and continue to raise the profile of ladies' darts on local, national and international stages.

DARTITIS – THE STORY CONTINUES...

Regular readers will recall that, in the November 2013 issue of *DDN*, I featured Cyprus-based Bob Johnson's fine article about dartitis. Subsequent issues have included praise not only for Bob's article but also for the positive effect his advice is having on dartitis sufferers, including examples of actual cures. These have included one US darter who was featured in *DDN* #46 describing his post-dartitis play as 'awesome' and 'fan-freaking-tastic!'

In July last year Bob (pictured right) was contacted by a darts player named Hans, from Bavaria. Hans told Bob that he wasn't sure if he had dartitis or not. He wrote, 'For the past ten months I have lost most of my competitions although in practice at home I average 60-75 per throw which would let me win most of our league and tournaments. But now when a match begins, I totally cramp. At home I can throw for hours, no pain, tons in a row, every double in less than six darts, but now...'



That was then. Regular e-mail exchanges between Hans and Bob have led to marked improvement in Hans' play but the problem remains; one that Bob now recognises not as dartitis but more likely inconsistency. Hans told Bob that he was planning to use a video cam to try and analyse his problems further. Bob told Hans:

'It may be difficult to see on video unless you have a very visible bad action. You throw very well in your best games so I would look for signs of tension or being not relaxed. Tension can creep in if faced with a difficult match or if wishing to better your game over the previous good form. Relax and rely on your form with a bit of luck thrown in and you should throw with accuracy for a greater percentage of your play.'

So not exactly dartitis on this occasion but surely a problem that many darts players have when trying to transfer their practice-at-home form to the tournament oche. Tension and stress can lead to dartitis but in this instance it looks as though between them Bob and Hans are well on the way to overcoming the difficulties identified but clearly in Hans' case there is still a little way to go. Good luck Hans. (Image © Bob Johnson. Used with permission.)

MARLBORO TEAM OF DARTS CHAMPIONS

Subscriber Adrian W. sent me an e-mail asking about the 'supergroup' of darts players, the Marlboro Team of Darts Champions. Adrian wrote, 'Hi there Patrick. Could you please tell me [who was] the fourth member of the Marlboro darts team along with Leighton [Rees], John Lowe and Tony [Brown] please? Is it Rab Smith? Regards, Adrian.'

Many of my older readers may have witnessed the Team as they initially took to the road in October 1978 in the first of their series called 'Match of the Month.' In the November 1978 issue *Darts World* reported that the team comprised England's John Lowe (Captain), Leighton Rees (Wales), Alan Glazier (England) and Scotland's Rab Smith.

A photograph in that issue showed the team accompanied by Charles Cornel of the cigarette company Marlboro, with Leighton Rees, pen in hand, about to sign the contract in which the players agreed to appear for Marlboro in a series of matches throughout the country and overseas. However, they would still be available to appear independently for exhibitions. The Team's first 'Match of the Month' had been against a select team from Mitchells & Butlers brewery and had been held at the T. I. Social Club, Warley, Worcestershire on 24th October.

By the time *Darts World* reported on the team in December 1978, England and Kent county player Tony Brown had joined. Later Colin Baker (No Adrian, he's no relation to the *Doctor Who* actor!), winner of the 1979 Marlboro Masters joined as reserve. Additional information came from John Lowe when I contacted him about the team.

John confirmed the line-up and told me, 'Dave Lanning and Tony Green were hosts and presenters.'



On telling Adrian the additional information he thanked me and added, 'Why can't you get a pic of Colin Baker?' Well, no one has ever asked me before so Adrian, no sooner said than done.

The image (left) shows Colin being presented with his trophy for winning the 1979 Marlboro Masters. On the left is George Mackin, Sales Director of Philip Morris Ltd., manufacturers of the Marlboro brand and, centre, Angela Jay (a *Sun* Page 3 girl). (Image: Copyright holder unknown. Photo courtesy of the DW/PC Archive. Used with permission.)

I wonder where Colin Baker is now. Can anyone tell me?

'ROLL CURLING' – A NEWLY DISCOVERED OLD PUB GAME

I know this is a *darts* newsletter but regular readers will know that I sometimes wander off and chat about other pub games.

Whilst undertaking research recently I came across an outdoor pub game I had never seen or heard of before called 'Roll Curling'.

The photo (right) depicts Mr. and Mrs. Victor H. Bailey of the *Duke of Edinburgh*, Brixton, south London playing 'roll curling' in the garden of their pub in 1965. The accompanying article informed me that, 'There is only one place in England where



roll curling is played and the rink is situated in the garden of the Duke of Edinburgh, Brixton.' The photo (Copyright holder unknown) is captioned 'In play on the roll curling rink.'

I contacted pub games expert and great friend Arthur R. Taylor who replied, 'I have never ever heard of "roll-curling" - I wonder if it means that the stones are on castors?' I never believed that in my lifetime I would find a pub game that Arthur had never heard of but, then again, the *Duke of Edinburgh*, Brixton is/was purported to be the *only* pub in England where the game was played. (But was it?)

Surfing the 'net I found one solitary mention of 'roll curling' in Canada so I'm wondering if the example found at the *Duke of Edinburgh* in Brixton was 'imported' via a visitor to that part of London from the Dominions. Do any of my Canadian readers recognise the game? Is roll curling still played at a pub near you?

Please e-mail me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com if you can help.

AND FINALLY...

It is hard to believe that with the next issue of *DDN* I will have reached the bull's-eye: the **fiftieth** *Dr. Darts' Newsletter*! Who would have thought it?

Best wishes,

Patrick

MY DARTS RESEARCH IS SPONSORED BY



Winmau.com

NOTE: Text © 2014 Patrick Chaplin or as shown. Images © Patrick Chaplin or as stated or sourced. Neither text nor images can be reproduced without prior permission of the copyright holder(s).

Check out even more fascinating darts facts by visiting my website www.patrickchaplin.com.