

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 51 August 2014

AN APOLOGY



I have no idea what went wrong last month but I realise that a good number of you did not receive your copy of the celebratory 50th DDN until the *third* attempt whilst others received all three! My wife Maureen took this snap of me trying to come to terms with the challenge of sending DDN out to subscribers.



My sincere apologies to all of you who received your copy later than planned.

As you may already know the closing date for the four competitions contained in DDN #50 has been extended to **12 noon GMT on 14th August**. If you have *still* not received the celebratory 50th issue of DDN please contact me *immediately* at info@patrickchaplin.com and ask for that back issue. The revised deadline date and time for the submission of entries to the four competitions will be strictly adhered to. So, all of the prizes are still up for grabs.

I have now wire-brushed my 'In' and 'Sent' boxes so hopefully any problems have now been overcome. However, from now on I will restrict DDN to ten pages per month just in case size is a problem (so to speak).

I always plan to issue DDN at the beginning of each month and by the eighth day of the month *at the latest*. So if the 8th day arrives and you haven't seen DDN then please let me know.

That all having been said, I have been totally overwhelmed by e-mails from readers congratulating me on achieving fifty DDNs. Here are extracts from just a few of those received from around the world:

'DDN fantastic as ever. 50 up and still going strong. It's the double bull's-eye I'm looking forward to.'

'Congratulations...for hitting the Big 5-0...Another great read.'

'Congratulations on reaching the 50th issue of DDN which I find both interesting and informative.'

'Many congratulations on 50 consistently enjoyable issues.'

'Congratulations on this milestone Patrick. That's an immense amount of work you've put in. As a subscriber, I can't thank you enough for your efforts. Many of us love learning about darts, its origins, quirks and how it's developed worldwide.'

'Another great instalment. 50 editions. That's some going. Thank you for all your hard work.'

'CONGRATULATIONS! 50th DDN – Very good!'

'Excellent as always.'

'Congratulations on producing fifty issues so far. Hope to say the same on 500th edition which I'm sure you will achieve.'

And finally from Ridgeville, South Carolina:

'Even though most of it pertains to your side of the world I still enjoy DDN very much.'

IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF DARTS...PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE



In issue #50 I referred to darts players gathering in a Manchester recording studio to put on to vinyl the song *180!* Well, now photographic evidence has emerged of that historic vocalising event (see photo, left).

I do not recognise the person on the far left but second from the left is MC Freddie Williams, Vince Williams (lead singer), Angus Ross,

Kevin White, then one I don't know, then Bobby George, Tony Sontag, Jocky Wilson, Olly Croft and finally the man with the dart who I don't recognise.

It's a great image but can you help me fill the gaps? If you can please e-mail at info@patrickchaplin.com. (Image copyright holder unknown. Source: DW/PC Archive. Used with permission.)

THE QUADRO 240 DARTBOARD – FEEDBACK FROM #50

'Great read, as always,' wrote Ed H of Brooklyn, New York who also told me, 'I remember having a negative reaction when the Quadro board came out. Something like, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." (I think I had the same reaction when automatic scoring was introduced into ten-pin bowling.)'

I remember using the Quadro 240 for the first time. I took the board down to my local pub and watched the faces of friends who tried to play on it. It was the outshots that did it for us: so many more because of the addition of the quadruple ring. I think it had the same effect on some of the top professionals. However, despite manufacture ceasing in 2000 I seemed to recall being told of a league that continues to play regularly on the Quadro 240 dartboard but could not remember the name or where it is.

Then, spookily, up pops an e-mail from Richard Phillipson, the Secretary of the Embsay and Eastby Garage Darts League, North Yorkshire. Richard wrote, 'Congratulations on your 50th issue of *DDN*. It will be the 100th night of the Embsay & Eastby Garage Darts League on 28th August and I thought you might like to see our annual Quad board knockout in action this year.'

Congratulations Richard on your 100th night. The image, right, (©EEGDL 2014. Used with permission.) shows Richard in action in this years' doubles competition.



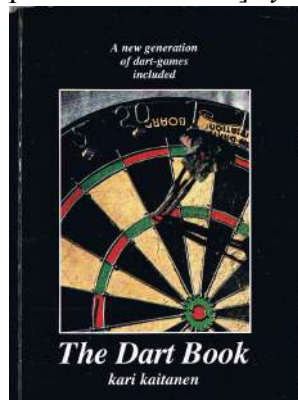
Richard added, 'Quad boards are notoriously difficult to purchase, rarely appearing on auction websites and if they do so, often demand three-figure sums! Luckily one of our members discovered our board in a derelict office block! We play a doubles tournament on the board starting at 690 (still allowing for a possible nine-darter!). Our rules state that each pair must hit a 'quad' before finishing the leg, otherwise that pair's score reverts back to 690.'

Wow! Sounds like a tough competition to me but good to know that my memory *did* serve me correctly even though I'd forgotten the name of the league!

OUTSHOTS

Scott Harrison, inventor and manufacturer of the Circumluminator, contacted me from the USA following discussions about outshots that have featured in the last two issues of *DDN*. Scott wrote:

The chat regarding out shots in DDN 48 and 49 made me think of a couple of things I should mention to you. I'm sure you know of The Dart Book [pictured below, left, first published in 1994] by the Finnish statistician and computer systems expert, Kari



Kaitanen. But you may not have read it carefully on the subject of outshots as it is very mathematical.

I became fascinated with it because Kari ran a computer for quite a long time calculating the probability of succeeding with every possible combination for each of the achievable values from 170 down based on the skill of the player. He talked about 'Optimised Play'; which means, inter alia, taking into account your shooting skill and finding the most probable path to success for a player of your skill level. As I said, his book is very deep and a bit hard to follow, not because of bad writing but because the subject matter is difficult. [That's probably why it remains practically unread on my bookshelf Scott. Believe me, I have tried! - Patrick]

But he does divide dart players into four levels of skill, Pro, Expert, Average and Beginner. His easiest to understand measure for this division is related to hitting the

triple with the Pro able to hit a triple [treble] nearly every other dart, the Expert once in about five darts, the Average player once in ten darts and the Beginner once in twenty darts. Kari then lists the highest probability combination for each possible outshot for each of the four categories of players.

To simplify the use of these carefully calculated instructions for myself, I've created four Outshot Cards, one for each level of skill. I created the four sets of outshots with a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet which made it possible to see clearly the differences in Optimal Play for different levels of players. There is a huge difference in the path of Optimal Play for each of the four categories Kari describes.

Subsequently Scott has assembled printable pages for use by DDN Subscribers. He told me:

The first page is outshot charts for remaining scores of 11-90 for the four classes of players identified by Kari. The second page is charts for remaining scores of 91-170. I've tried to center the material properly so that you can print the first page on the front of an 8.5 X 11 sheet and the second page on the back of the sheet, then cut the printed page into four cards that fit neatly into your darts case...

If you or any DDN readers would be interested in seeing the Outshot Cards and the lists of differences from one to the next, let me know and I'll put them in an e-mail.

Thanks Scott. Anyone interested in seeing Scott's Outshot Cards, or indeed wishes to find out more about the Circumluminator, can contact him by e-mail at scottharrison@nuvolux.com.

I must mention Scott's other comment which was, 'I've got to tell you Patrick that DDN is my favorite monthly. I thoroughly enjoyed our meeting at The Montana Hotel in London a few years ago and regret that distance has prevented us from meeting frequently since that time. I sincerely appreciate your published review of The Circumluminator on your website www.patrickchaplin.com. A local darter commented on seeing it just a few days ago.'



Scott, I remember our meeting well and your presentation to me of my very own 'DOCTOR DARTS' circumluminator (pictured above. Image ©Nuvolux). I'm sure we'll meet up again at some stage. I'm certain we have lots more to talk about.

BOXLEY, KENT AND THE KENT DOUBLES DARTBOARD

Some time ago I helped Les Ellis, from the village of Boxley, Kent, with some information about the rather unusual **Kent Doubles** dartboard. Les is editor of the St. Mary and All Saints Church parish magazine. I think this is the first time I have assisted a church publication in this way. Les's question to me about the Kent Doubles Board was prompted by another contributor, Robin Ambrose, writing:

'Bill Stephens [*a local man*], remembers the *King's Arms* (pictured below) when landlord Bert Hollands was still alive, though possibly having passed the tenancy over to his son-in-law, Jack Murrell. Jim tells of there being two dartboards, one near the door for regulars and another for visitors. Bert had been quite a darts champion in his younger days, but his eyesight began to fade. Bill Stephens tells that the *King's Arms* then was so thick with pipe and cigarette smoke rising upwards, that darts players had to bend down to get a better view of the board.' (*Yeah. Right.*)



Following on from Robin's article Les asked me about the Kent Doubles board and later in the magazine Les wrote:

'I have some knowledge about what was known as the "Kent Doubles" dartboard. Traditionally, dartboards have been constructed of wood, usually elm or poplar. Both are soft woods and are thus easy to cut and shape and to receive the incoming darts. The first dartboards were cut from the end of a tree-trunk and it is believed that the circular pattern of the rings and the way the wood eventually cracks, suggested both the design of the dartboard in terms of its double and treble rings and the separate scoring segments. By the late 1920s a standard dartboard was introduced and remains the most popular dartboard today across the world. However, it was not an overnight success in the UK. Initially it had to compete with other different existing target boards played on in some localities. These have come to be known as 'regional dartboards' and were usually named after their region of origin, for example, "Kent Doubles" board.

The Kent Association for the Blind (KAB) raised tens of thousands of pounds from



darts competitions played all over Kent including Bromley and Bexley, once part of the County. Until Dutch Elm disease reached our shores the KAB purchased blanks cut from elm trees. These were dyed black and wire "spiders" added. The Kent doubles board had no trebles and only an inner bulls eye and were not easy to obtain in the 1970s hence the KAB being one of a very few suppliers.' In addition the playing

area extended to the outer edges of the board; the numbering having to be written or stencilled on the wall or cabinet.

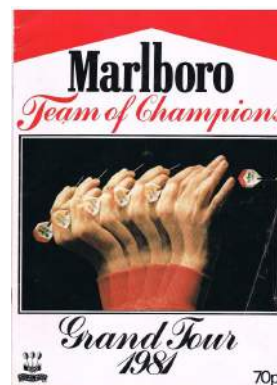
The photo (above) shows the Kent Doubles board and the team of eight darters from the *Prince of Wales* pub in Sittingbourne, Kent in 1973. That year the team claimed a unique world record for scoring 1,000,001 on a Kent Board in a time of 31 hours, 43 minutes; an average of more than 31,500 points per hour. The team comprised Barry Carter, Ken Bishop, Dave Drury, Mick Bishop, Del Breeze, Peter Wyeth, Del Sweeney and Terry Witt, all of whom played in the local Courage brewery league.

I wonder if their record was ever challenged or even beaten...

THE MARLBORO TEAM OF CHAMPIONS

For the past two issues I have mentioned the Marlboro Team of Darts Champions, a British team of darts stars that toured the UK during the late 1970s/early 1980s. I gave readers a potted history of the team, gleaned from back issues of *Darts World* plus an e-mail exchange with John Lowe. Dr. Eddie Norman (who used to manage team member Leighton Rees) provided very interesting feedback which I published in #50.

But would you believe it, when I was sorting through a box of old darts programmes (the aim being to auction spare copies on eBay) I came across a copy of the programme for the *Marlboro Team of Champions Grand Tour 1981*. I didn't even recall having seen it before! (See image, right, from my personal collection.)



The programme included the history of the team so here, at last is the official version:

Team I

The Marlboro Team of Champions was born in the autumn of 1978. The line-up was: John Lowe, Leighton Rees, Rab Smith and Alan Glazier. It was to blaze a victorious path of skill and new-style entertainment throughout the British Isles.

Eventually, Tony Brown stepped in to replace Glazier, then the Team was extended to include the young Londoner – Colin Baker.

It was this squad that the fans would see on the 1981 Grand Tour. The programme continues:

Their achievements and long list of successes, must rank as one of the most outstanding displays in the far-reaching world of darts.



tournament atmosphere.

It's a Team with a difference, a self-contained Roadshow, initially travelling with their own, Chauffeur-driven, white Rolls-Royce. They wear hand-tailored outfits unique to the game. They were greeted with fanfares and spotlights, generating for their opponents and the eager crowd, the big

The demands of a 16 days Tour has kept the Rolls in the garage. It has been replaced by a luxurious Motorhome [pictured above]. (Image courtesy DW/PC archive)

Their unbeaten run ended [in] November [1980] on a gale-swept Eastbourne Pier. It was the Team's 27th match and an inspired Sussex side triumphed after so many had failed.

Team II

1981 has seen an alteration to the time-honoured format of a four-man team game, followed by two pairs matches and four singles.

Now, every member of the Team plays all four opponents in a 'Round Robin' exercise of 16 matches of 1001. Already this year, the Team have experienced an exciting 8-8 draw, against a talented Bristow-led London side.

The players face a gruelling fortnight, when they will be asked repeatedly to produce dart-throwing of the highest quality. One way or the other, these demanding sixteen days look certain to provide a history-making Tour.

Never before has any darts team undertaken such a challenge.

So, the question to readers is 'Did you ever play against the Marlboro Team of Champions or see them on tour?' Did you witness that defeat against the Sussex squad? If so, please tell me about it. (info@patrickchaplin.com).

RON CHURCH

The death of 'The Leaning Tower of Shoreditch,' London's Ron Church, reported in the July DDN, brought back memories for some readers. George Hakim, author of *The Darts Player's Handbook* (1977), wrote to say, 'Sorry to hear of death of Ron Church. He was a very nice man and great fun to be around.'

Dr. Eddie Norman said, 'Wonderful article on Ronnie Church, and I remember the 'Holie' jumper only too well. He was a really nice guy.'

SOFT-TIP – A VIEW FROM THE STATES

Jake D. from Utah has provided some feedback relating to soft-tip darts. Jake writes:

I play both soft and steel darts and enjoy each version of the game on its own merits. To me it's like comparing table tennis and the video game pong, or 9 ball billiards and snooker. They are different versions of a similar sport and should be played by those that appreciate that particular version not argued about which is superior.

I suspect the popularity of soft darts in the USA, Asia [including Japan, see right] and some parts of Europe is due to the lack of history, tradition, therefore nostalgia that comes from the history of the sport. The lack of tradition means there is a lack of infrastructure at the grassroots level to arrange leagues and tournaments. The coin drop with soft tip, however modest, brings an economic incentive for the pub and equipment owners to manage local leagues and events.



Technology also provides convenience. My soft tip Super League team here in the states is completely automated. The league schedule is available inside my Dartslive

iphone app. The game order wins, loses, statistics, feats and awards are calculated automatically and available in real time on my app. I just show up, put \$5 in the board order a pint, and start my warmup.

Some excellent feedback from Jake. Thanks. Does anyone wish to add to the debate? Of course you do. Drop me a line at info@patrickchaplin.com or via the covering e-mail to this issue of *DDN*.

Before I leave this issue for now, Jake added ‘Also, there are now Dartslive soft tip machines at the Slug & Lettuce, Leicester Square.’

That is indeed the case, Soft-tip darts has reached London.

Back in April, Bruce Terrett provided me with a link and said that it showed three locations for soft-tip in the UK. I recently checked out the link

<http://search.uk.dartslive.com/list/?p=0>

and there are now *eight* Dartslive soft-tip locations in the UK, mainly in the capital and the south but there is one in the Midlands in Sheffield too.

Invasion by stealth perhaps?

THE ‘SKILTHRO’ DART SCORER – CAN YOU HELP?

Some time ago subscriber Mike C. contacted me about a purchase he had made on eBay and asked if either I or readers of *DDN* could help him learn more about the ‘Skilthro Dart Scorer’ (pictured).

Mike wrote, ‘I’ve not been able to find any information out about this scorer. All I can say for definite is that it is made of hardboard and the dimensions are 12” x 10” x ½” thick. As you can see the scores are entered using pegs of some sort – most likely one colour for each side, but unfortunately these didn’t come with the board.



Apart from the actual scoring portion there are four holes at the bottom and six at the top in the corner. My best guess for these is the ones at the top are for keeping count of the legs won in a match (i.e. a best of five match), and the ones at the bottom hold the scoring pegs while the board is not in use. There are a

further six holes along the top edge and I am assuming that these hold the pegs for the legs won.

Other than the above assumptions I don’t have any ideas as to the age of the board, although I would guess at possibly the 1950’s, and the only site I could find on the internet was a Swiss site.

Would you or your readers be able to shed any light on this board for me please?’

It's a new one on me Mike so I'm handing this question over to my readers. Does anyone, anywhere remember the 'Skilthro' scorer? Did one hang on your pub wall way back when? Any information please direct to me at info@patrickchaplin.com. Mike and I look forward to hearing from you.

DARTS IN MONGOLIA

I'm still playing catch-up with items *DDN* readers have sent me from months ago and I am pleased to say that, *at last*, I am able to report about the growing fever for darts in **Mongolia**. The press cutting shown below from *The Guardian* dated 26th October 2013 came to me via Dr. Eddie Norman in April this year.

In a country better known for sports such as wrestling, riding and archery, it seems that darts is taking the country by storm with already 2,000 sports men and women 'converted' to darts. The first Premier League darts tournament took place on 6th June 2013, co-organised by the British Embassy in Ulaanbaatar and the Mongolian Darts Federation when the top ten players from 300 entries competed in a round-robin format.



2013 was the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and the United Kingdom and, believe it or not, the 20th anniversary of the foundation of the Darts Federation in Mongolia. Erdene Mandakh, President of the Mongolian Amateur Darts Federation told *The Guardian*, "When we began entering darts competitions people would say, "How can you guys play? We thought you lived in gers [felt tents] and rode horses; do you even have any buildings? Now they have stopped asking; they just see us as competitors. But this is only a start."

Twice national women's champion, 49-year-old Baatar Tsend, tried darts once and became hooked. She said, "There is nothing bad about darts. I am in love with darts." Smitten? I should say so. On one occasion she continued to play even though a nearby stove had set her fur coat on fire! Baatar added, "Since ancient times our people have been practising archery... They've got great aim, so maybe this is in our genes or something: our special Mongolian genes."

President Erdene Mandakh said, "Of course our dream is to play against English people and beat them. Our dream is to become world champions." Nearly one year since that article appeared, I wonder how much more the sport of darts has grown in Mongolia.

I wish the committee and players of the Mongolian Amateur Darts Federation every success and hope to see their representative at the Ally Pally or Lakeside sometime soon.

AND FINALLY...

In the last two issues of *DDN* I mentioned that I had co-authored a local history book about the tiny Essex village of Langford, the place I was brought up in from the age of two until I left to be married (1952-1973). In the book I even managed to mention darts being played at the Langford Men's Club in the 1960s and 1970s.



Great news then that another work of local history has appeared, this time published by the Crook and District Local History Society (County Durham) which goes out of its way to mention its sports stars of the past. Foremost amongst the darts stars named is Doug McCarthy who was capped for England no less than 19 times and won 13 international matches between 1977 and 1985. Doug's name is also mentioned as a member of the *King's Head* team that won the first-ever darts tournament televised by Tyne Tees Television in 1972; the rest of the team being Bonner Thompson, Peter Hawkins and John Burdess.

Also mentioned is Bobby Lauder from the town who was capped for England twice and won on both occasions. The only image I have of Bobby is shown above. (Image copyright holder unknown. Source DW/PC Archive. Used with permission.) I have no other information about Bobby. The legend on the back of the photo reads *NoW Grand Finalist England International* but there is no date. The winner of the match was a player named Ron Peel. Can anyone help? (info@patrickchaplin.com)

'Til next time...

Patrick

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