

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 52 September 2014



INTRODUCTION

Welcome one and all to this month's *DDN*.

It seems that, despite my best efforts, there were still a few problems with my 'Sent Mail' last month, as a result of which some of you received *DDN* later than expected. Following discussions with a couple of my IT friends I'm hoping that all the gremlins have now been expunged.



In this issue I'll be telling you about a visit I made recently to interview Joan Morland, one of the daughters of that renowned darts maestro of the past, the late, great Joe Hitchcock (pictured. Image: PC Darts Archive). And, sadly, I record the passing of two more darts players, England's Reg 'Horse' Harding and Wales' Kenneth Crook.

The good news is that I have received some fine feedback from previous issues plus a request from some pub research friends of mine for information relating to a Hastings (Sussex) player.

AN ELUSIVE AUTHOR, THE LOG-END BOARD AND SOFT-TIP DARTS

DDN subscriber and regular contact Scott Harrison from Texas has written in response to #51 and was clearly pleased with my mention of Kari Kaitainen's book in that issue. Scott also took time out to comment on a couple of other matters. He wrote:

'I was delighted to see your mention of Kari Kaitainen's "The Dart Book" along with some of my comments and mention of The Circumluminator... I forwarded a copy to the three eMail addresses I have for Kari, hoping that at least one of them is still a working address.'

Your comments on the Kent Doubles Board reminded me of an elm log end doubles board I purchased some years ago from an online store from Northern England. I constructed a small tank for it from sheet acrylic cut and welded together with solvent. I kept it on the patio in my yard and used to take it out and hang it on a tree for play during evening yard parties with darter friends. I've lost track of it and the online store from which I bought it appears to have gone out of business. Definitely a thing of the past.

Darts in the US is definitely a mixed bag of steel tip and soft tip. Professionals play both because there's money to be made. Many casual players play both and for others there is an emotional debate over which is better.

If anyone can help Scott track down the elusive Kari Kaitainen or knows where the log-end dartboard can be purchased, please contact me via info@patrickchaplin.com.

JOE HITCHCOCK – A DAUGHTER’S STORY

Several years ago I tracked down Joan Morland, one of Joe Hitchcock’s daughters (see image below. © 2014 Moppix. Used with permission.) We talked on the phone a few times and corresponded by snail mail but we never met – until a few weeks ago when I travelled up to the county of Bedfordshire for a chat.

Joan was one of Joe’s three daughters. Joe did have a son, Joseph, who tragically died at the age of only seven weeks. Joan told me that her father was a draughtsman/tool maker by trade, a man who liked a drink and who was ‘a natural darts player’ who ‘never practised.’

Although well known for his darting skills and trick shots and his ability to throw nails as easily as he threw darts, Joe was also the captain of the St. Dunstan Four, a team of top sighted darts players who, after the war, raised thousands of pounds for St. Dunstan’s, a charity supporting the war-blinded which still exists today.



Famous too were Joe’s battles on the hockey against that other notable darts player of the post-war period, Jim Pike. Pike led the well-known *News of the World* Team of Darts Champions which raised incredible amounts of money for the Red Cross during and after the Second World War. Hitchcock and Pike met regularly in both team and individual darts matches but, when it mattered, when they met on three occasions between 1946 and 1947 for what many darts fans viewed as the unofficial ‘world’ title, it was Joe who won through every time. Joan told me, “Dad and Jim were good friends but were bitter rivals on the dartboard.”

Joe’s darting feats earned him the nicknames ‘The Treble Twenty Wizard,’ ‘The Marathon Marvel’ (as he enjoyed playing games of 1,001 and was rarely defeated), ‘The Demon of the Dartboard’ and ‘The Wizard of the Elm Board.’ Post-war, Joe never entered the *News of the World* competition as by then he was regarded as a professional darts player so was ineligible.

Joe died of cancer in 1982 at the age of 67. At that time John Ross, President of the National Darts Association of Great Britain (NDAGB) said, “Joe was one of the greatest darts players of all time.”

I will be featuring more about the legendary Joe Hitchcock and Jim Pike in a future issue of *DDN*.

(My thanks to Joan for her memories of her father.)

WINMAU UPDATE THEIR FAQ

My sponsors, WINMAU, have recently updated their ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ (FAQ) and Glossary sections of the company’s website. Ian Flack, Sales and

Marketing Director of the WINMAU Dartboard Company Ltd., said, “Patrick, I couldn’t help but think that the hints and tips on dartboard and point maintenance might be of interest to your readers.”

Not just that Ian. I’ve taken a look at the link you sent me...

http://www.winmau.com/pages/709/FAQ_Glossary/

...and there is some fascinating stuff on there, including the ‘Dartboard set up’ which includes reference to disability darts. Just click on the link above.

PRIZE WINNERS

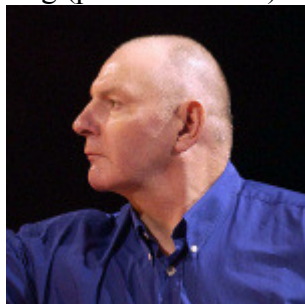
Thanks to the many *DDN* subscribers from all over the UK, Europe and the rest of the world who took time out to enter the *four* competitions featured in the celebratory 50th issue. My thanks again to Ian Flack at WINMAU for donating a set of that company’s top-of-the-range Zagato darts and to Paul Booth for the personalised darts shirt. Signed copies of two of my books plus a ‘mystery prize’ were also up for grabs.

Just after noon on 14th August my wife Maureen picked the four winners from a massive hat. All four winners will have been notified by the time you receive this *DDN*. Congratulations to them and thanks again to everyone who entered the competitions. The response was amazing.

OBITUARY – REG HARDING

It was former England player Doug McCarthy who texted me with the sad news that former Sussex County and PDC player Reg ‘The Horse’ Harding had died of cancer on 11th August at the age of 68.

Reg (pictured below) was born on Thursday 27th September 1945 at Shoreham, Sussex, England. According to the Sussex Darts website (www.sussexdarts.com) Reg first made his mark on the sport of darts in the late 1970s/early 1980s as a member of that county’s Wealden darts team which, at the time, dominated the Sussex County Super League, winning the league on no less than five occasions. That team folded in 1984 so Reg transferred his allegiance to the Brighton Edwardians, helping them to become league champions in the next two seasons.



In 1978 Reg joined the Sussex County team and over the following five seasons won more than 70% of his ‘A’ team matches. *DDN* readers will recall my mentioning in a number of previous issues the one match the Marlboro Team of Champions lost in Eastbourne in 1980. The Hemeling team that beat that star-studded line-up at the Showbar on Eastbourne Pier that historic day included Reg Harding.

Always keen to play darts at the highest level, Reg joined the London County team in 1983 and played nearly two hundred games for that BICC Premier League side. He was also a leading member of the Leyton darts team for six years in the London Super

League during which time he won the prestigious De Oliver 1001 Championship Trophy on two occasions, first in 1986 and then again in 1990. Reg also won the London Men's Gold Cup Singles in successive years beating Southwark's Bobby Semple in the final in 1985 and Terry O'Dea (Edmonton) in 1986.

Between 1995 and 2006 Reg played in numerous Professional Darts Corporation (PDC) tournaments, appearing in the World Championship on five occasions (1999-2003), four times in the World Matchplay (1998-2001) and in the first two years of the UK Open (2003 and 2004). Reg's best run with the PDC was at the 2002 Ireland Open Classic where he lost 6-5 in the semi-finals to the eventual champion, Canada's John Part.



Some avid darts fans may also recall the Second Round of the 1999 PDC World Matchplay at Blackpool's Winter Gardens where Reg, described by a *Darts World* reporter as 'persistent,' gave Phil Taylor what the magazine called 'the fright of his life.' Reg achieved an average of 94.40 that day but was eventually beaten 13-10 by Taylor (99.87).

On hearing the news of Reg's death, big names in the world of darts queued up to pay tribute to 'The Horse,' Phil Taylor commented, "I am saddened by the loss of a lovely man," whilst friend and former rival, Denis 'The Heat' Ovens said, "This is very sad news and Reg will be missed... I got to know Reg well over the years and he was good fun... I first came across him when he played for Sussex. He moved across to the London Super League... so he'd play against my team and then we played for a lot of years together on the circuit." PDC Tournament Director, Tommy Cox added, "I am so sad to hear this awful news. He was a top, top man. [It was] a privilege to have known him."

(Images of Reg Harding © PDC. Used with permission.)

DENNY GOWER

Talking of Sussex darts players, a friend of mine, David Russell, who is the pub historian for the towns of Hastings, St. Leonard's and Rye is searching for information about the Hastings darter **Denny Gower**.

Denny and his wife Helen moved into the *Warriors Gate* public house, Hastings in 1976. Moving in with them were his collection of over 200 silver cups that he had



won at darts. There was no dartboard so Denny installed two in the public bar, an action that was enthusiastically welcomed by the customers. At the time Denny (then 38) commented, "They love the game and everyone wants to beat me. We shall probably turn out some more champions from among them."

In May 1976, *Darts World* reported that Denny had

been ‘Sussex champion for the last eight years...and won the *News of the World* Sussex Singles in 1975.’ As far as I am aware Denny’s finest hour came in 1979 when he was runner-up to Cornwall’s Paul Gosling in the Marlboro Masters. (See image above. Copyright holder unknown. Photograph courtesy of the PC/DW Archive. Used with permission.)

That’s all I know about Denny Gower. Can you add anything to his story? If so, please contact me at info@patrickchaplin.com and I’ll pass the information on to David Russell.

DR. DARTS’ LATEST BOOK

I am pleased to tell you that I have now completed the first full draft of the text of my latest book *Darts – Skills. Techniques. Tactics* and submitted it to my publisher for his consideration. It’s been a long haul but as long as he is happy with the text then I can concentrate on providing the illustrations and images to accompany the words. The book is scheduled to be published in 2015. I will keep you all advised.

No more news about the forthcoming BBC TV *Timeshift* programme mentioned in previous *DDNs* but I will let you all know as soon as I know.

‘THE POWER’ AND YOUR LADDER TO SUCCESS

Have you ever heard of a top professional darts player being sponsored by a ladder company? I don’t think I have but all praise to Phil Taylor’s management for securing what I believe to be a unique deal with ‘Werner’ the ‘world leader in ladders’ and securing too a chance for *you* to win an amazing £180,000.

Werner is celebrating the start of a ‘high impact relationship’ with the sport of darts that includes ‘a never-seen-before league table’ plus sponsorship of 16-times World Champion, Phil ‘The Power’ Taylor.

Developed in partnership with the Professional Darts Corporation (PDC), the online ‘Werner Ladder’™ will give fans access to players’ essential stats for the first time. With players ranked alongside the PDCs Order of Merit for total prize value won, the Werner Ladder will include data on 180s scored, the highest check out and the three-dart average for the world’s top 50 players.

Together with Phil, Werner is urging darts fans to join in the celebrations by entering its ‘£180k for 180’ competition, where five winners picked at random will get the chance to play a special game of darts live on stage during the World Championship at Alexandra Palace, London, which takes place this coming December.



The lucky five will get to meet the legend that is Phil Taylor before trying their hand at scoring a 180 while playing an exciting new version of the game 'Werner Gravity Darts.' (See image above of Phil. © WernerCo. Used with permission.)

Aiming at the board while standing on Werner's new podium fibreglass ladder and armed with just three darts each, the challenge certainly lives up to its name. The organisers told me, 'With contestants able to compete for £180 for one treble 20, £1,800 for two treble 20s, and a prize pot of **£180,000** for a maximum three treble 20s, there are plenty of chances to win leaving lots of scope to bag some extra cash just before Christmas.' After the contest, the five VIPs will enjoy the tournament, with free tickets, food and drink for them and a friend, plus an overnight stay and travel expenses.

Chris Filardi, Vice President of Marketing at WernerCo, said, "We're extremely excited about working with Phil and the PDC, and are looking forward to bringing something new to a tremendous sport. Now is the chance for all those passionate darts fans out there to take their place in the spotlight, competing at one of the greatest UK venues during the World Championship. It's a 'money-can't-buy prize which could see one lucky winner bag £180,000."

For more information about the Werner Ladder visit www.thewernerladder.com. To learn more about this exciting competition go to www.werner180for180.com and enter your name into the '£180k for 180' competition.

Entries close on 30 November 2014.

OBITUARY – KENNETH CROOK

Former Welsh darts international Kenneth Crook (b. 10th February 1949) passed away on Monday 14th July this year.

Another Welsh darter, Kevin Thomas, asked me on behalf of Ken's family if I could find any record of Ken's achievements as they had searched and found little except that Ken had played Eric Bristow in the 1983 WINMAU World Masters and had represented his country on two occasions and won both times. Checking back through my archive I found a record in *Darts World* of Ken's appearance in the 1983 WINMAU World Masters in 1983. Sadly the report did not mention Ken (pictured here, image courtesy of his family and used with permission) playing Eric Bristow but it did include all of the results which recorded Ken's progress to the last sixteen. Ken was in Group 1 and his results were as follows:



Group 1

Ken beat Kjell Jorgensen (Norway) 2-0

Ken then beat David Kelly (USA) 2-1

In the Group 1 final Ken beat John Joe O'Shea (Ireland) 2-1

Inter group play-offs (The last sixteen)

Ken was beaten 2-1 by the eventual winner Eric Bristow.

I also tracked down a copy of the WINMAU World Masters programme for 1983 and found the short biography of Ken which read:

A 33-year-old gas layer from Swansea. Was Welsh pairs champion in 1980 and the Glamorgan Gold Cup pairs champion this year [1983]. Plays for Glamorgan at county level, also in the Gowerton Super League. Now, after sixteen years in the game, his principal target is a Welsh cap...

Ken achieved his 'principal target' soon afterwards playing twice for Wales, once against England and once against the Republic of Ireland and won on both occasions.

COLLECTING...*News of the World* programmes

Mick Simpson is a great fan of *DDN* and he and I often exchange e-mails about anything and everything to do with darts. However, one of Mick's favourite darts-related hobbies is collecting programmes from the Grand Finals of the *News of the World* Individual Darts Championship. Mick told me, "Collecting these programmes gives me great pleasure. However, I don't have any programmes before 1953, nor, strange as it may seem, do I have the last finals programme [1997]."

In recent years I have helped Mick fill a few gaps in his collection but, at the moment, I cannot assist him any further *except* to offer *DDN* as a potential source of contact with other collectors. Mick said, "I would love to hear from any other serious *NoW* programme collectors. There must be more out there."

As for Area and Divisional programmes, Mick has 'a good collection of them' but for the time being his main focus is on filling those gaps relating to the Grand Finals.

From my own personal point of view I have a full run of post-war *News of the World* programmes and a goodly number of Area and Divisional programmes. I have no pre-war programmes. These are amazingly scarce and rarely, if ever, appear on auction websites.

So, can you help Mick? If you can, he would be very pleased to hear from you. Mick can be contacted at micksimo@btinternet.com.

THE EMBSAY & EASTBY GARAGE DARTS LEAGUE

In issue #51 I mentioned, with reference to the Quadro 240 dartboard, the Embsay & Eastby Garage Darts League, a league from North Yorkshire, members of which still play on the Quadro from time to time.



I was intrigued by the e-mail I received from the league Secretary Richard Phillipson about the peculiarly-named league so asked for more information. Richard was good enough to oblige. His reply was titled 'Probably the best darts league in the world.' Richard wrote:

Embsay & Eastby Garage Darts League was established in 2008 by a small group of keen (and not so keen but willing) darts enthusiasts from the villages of Embsay and Eastby in rural North Yorkshire.

Not content with playing only in the local pub winter league, the idea was to create a new league to occupy the summer months too. Based loosely on the format of the PDC Premier League, each member plays one or two matches each week (on a standard trebles board) until all members have played each other once, creating a champion darter.



As of 2014 we have 16 members (of which 14 play regularly). Matches are played in a different member's garage each week, although a woodshed and a barn are staple venues on the fixture list too. As well as league matches, we contest a variety of cup competitions (every fourth week) on a range of regional dartboards including a Harrows Quadro 240 dartboard, a London Wide 5s board, a Manchester log-end board and a Yorkshire board.

We also stage an annual "open" open (played at a different outdoor location including venues as diverse as our local railway platform and cricket club pavilion), an outdoor tournament where players must play wearing Hawaiian shirts whatever the weather with only the threat of lightning able to postpone play!

At the end of each season a plethora of homemade trophies are handed out at our presentation night – the only condition being that no-one goes home empty handed.

Richard also mentioned that league member Robin Towler has already hit a 13-dart leg this season, 'our best to date.'

The image here shows one of the occasions when the League play *alfresco*. (Image © E&EGDL. Used with permission.)

So have you played darts in any unusual locations? Why not share your story with DDN readers? Send it to me at info@patrickchaplin.com?

DDN – CONQUERING THE WORLD?

This may sound like I am blowing my own trumpet but for ages I have been telling DDN readers that the newsletter has subscribers in over 50 countries. Now I discover that it reaches more than 100 countries, many of them courtesy of global darts ambassador, Dr. Edward Norman.

Eddie and I have been friends for some years. He has always been very supportive of my work and spreads the word of *DDN* wherever he may travel. Now Eddie has informed me that he alone forwards *DDN* on to contacts in no less than *ninety-six* countries. Eddie (pictured below) recently e-mailed me and said,

The House of Darts International used to ship to nearly 100 countries. Every main agent that we had in each country has been getting DDN for well over a year and are thrilled to death receiving it, with it now being translated into quite a few languages including Japanese, Spanish and Mandarin, to name a few.

We had a main agent in every one of the fifty US states and all receive DDN. In Australia, the Marshall Islands and Fiji, where we had customers, it is forwarded on each month and avidly read.



Each month I send DDN to over 543 (and growing) correspondents, friends and highly influential people I have met over long years in darts and other business and it goes to people in 96 countries worldwide, including places that you would not think darts had never been remotely heard of and places that you may not have even heard of.

DDN is forwarded to St. Petersburg, Belarus, Argentina, the Falkland Islands, Chile, Uruguay, Colombia and many Caribbean countries. Many friends in British and other national Embassies worldwide also receive a copy. On top of that it is sent to many of our ex-customers around the world who serve in US forces, and darts players serving in the military in Afghanistan also receive copies. All are grateful to receive DDN.

I am a great admirer of DDN as you can gather and always appreciate your hard work each month.

Eddie added that during September, all of October until the beginning of November he is undertaking a tour of Australia, Japan, China, South East Asia and the Pacific Islands and 'as always will give *DDN* a plug.'

What can I say but 'Thanks Eddie' – yet again.

Now that *DDN* has a truly global reach I am thinking that it is probably time to seek financial sponsorship through (non-darts) advertising.

What do *DDN* readers think? Would this be 'Dr. Darts' selling out?

If you have a view, drop me a line at info@patrickchaplin.com.

CONGRATULATIONS DAVE

Congratulations to Dave Allen who at the end of September celebrates ten years with the PDC, initially as 'Press Officer' and now as Media Manager. Dave, who has kindly helped me answer many PDC-related questions and provided images for many

of the articles in *DDN* over the past decade, told me, “It doesn’t seem like ten years. More like two minutes.”

Time does indeed, hurtle by, so Dave - and everyone else - bear that in mind.

AND FINALLY...

Allied to my passion for darts is a similar-sized passion for the great British pub. Imagine then how proud I was when, in late July, at the *Hoop & Grapes* pub in the City of London, I was elected Chairman of the Pub History Society (PHS). The photo shows me giving my ‘maiden speech’ to members at the AGM. (Image © 2014 Chris Murray.)

The PHS was founded in 2001, its purpose being to research and promote the heritage of British pubs and the people associated with them. We are a group of like-minded men and women, keen to record and report on all matters appertaining to pub history.

I have been a member more or less from Day One and write regularly for the PHS *Newsletter* sometimes about darts but more often than not about the life and times of the great British boozier. For more information about the Pub History Society and how to join our happy throng, please visit www.pubhistorysociety.co.uk.



The website also includes some of my pub- and darts-related articles that have been featured in the PHS *Newsletter* over the past decade.

‘Til next time...

Patrick

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