

# DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

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## “IT’S ALL BEEN A BIT MAD REALLY!”



That’s what Scotty Dog Mitchell said to me when my wife Maureen and I congratulated him on his Lakeside victory. I hope you all enjoyed the two World Darts Championships that concluded during January. Congratulations to Gary Anderson, Scott Mitchell, Lisa Ashton and Colin Roelofs on their victories. (The image (left) of ‘Scotty Dog’ and me was taken at the Lakeside a year or three ago. Image © Moppix International. Used with permission.)



Anyway, a warm welcome to one and all to the February issue of *DDN* and particularly to all my new subscribers who this month include Francois Van N. and his fiancée from Johannesburg, South Africa. Francois said of my website, ‘Thank you very much for such a great website. I definitely learned more in one night from it than what I learned in my 32 years of age.’

## THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Subscriber Nick D., after e-mailing me to say that he thought the January *DDN* was ‘awesome’ told me he was ‘totally stoked’ about the Gary Anderson win as that was what won him the Darts Forum ‘world’s prediction competition’. Nick added

*It was close at the end as had Taylor won it there would have been three of us tied for the win. Not to mention I am a Taylor fan but Scottish roots so I had to go with my home boy Gary and I truly felt the way he was playing he was going to take it. Eagerly awaiting my signed Stephen Bunting darts to arrive from Darts Corner who sponsored the comp. Thanks again for all your hard work every month and will be waiting for next month’s.*

During the week, subscriber Bill ‘The Eel’ Bell e-mailed me:

*I’ve just finished watching the Martin Adams, Glen Durrant semi-final. What a match! And what a shame Martin Adams didn’t hit the 9-darter. It would have meant a lot to him and for all of the BDO. But he played so well to stick in there to the end. Glen Durrant was completely gutted but he played excellent also.*



Bill had attended Lakeside on the first Saturday with his team ‘The Matadors’ and

was duly impressed. (See image (above) of Bill and his teammates standing in front of the famous Lakeside stage. Bill can be seen on the extreme right. Image © Eelpix. Used with permission.) Bill told me:

*I thought the games we saw were better than the ones [we] saw last year and all the team loved it. It was all topped off with the Scott Mitchell/Tony O'shea match where I almost lost my voice shouting for Scotty Dog. I met him last year and what a top man he was. We met him again this year outside, right at the end. Again, really nice man. I gave him my pep talk about how he can win it!*

I can vouch for Scott being a 'top man' as I've met him several times in the past but I'd never seen him play as well as he did throughout the week.

But we mustn't forget the ladies. I don't think I have ever seen such darts as those produced by Lisa Ashton and Fallon Sherrock in the women's final at Lakeside, Lisa retained her title but oh how different things might have been if Fallon had hit her doubles!

## **DR. DARTS AND THE MEDIA**

During the week of the BDO/Lakeside tournament I was approached by Henry Tang, a producer for the BBC World Service, asking if I would appear 'live' on his 'Weekend' programme on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> January to talk about the history of darts. How could I resist? Henry estimated the audience for that Sunday morning as between 1 and 1.5 million listeners, so no pressure then!

In addition Henry wanted me to play darts with a couple of other guests on the show and my sponsor, the WINMAU Dartboard Co. Ltd., was good enough to courier a BLADE 4 Dual Core dartboard (the board used at the Lakeside) for use in the studio.

My wife Maureen and I were chauffeured up to Broadcasting House in central London for the programme. I answered a few questions about the history of our sport and then proceeded to be beaten by both of the guests in throws of three darts each. (What I actually scored will remain a secret: unless of course you were tuned in!)

Needless to say it was a great experience which hopefully helped spread the word of darts even further across the globe.

## **GEORGE EDWARD JONES – DARTS INVENTOR**

Last month James Masters, of [www.tradgames.org.uk](http://www.tradgames.org.uk), sent me an interesting e-mail he had received from Crispin Jones. Crispin wrote:

*In my family there was always the story that my great-grandfather invented darts. Obviously this seems far-fetched but maybe you could shed some light on it. His name was George Jones and had a factory in east London, probably Bow, around the time of the First World War. It seems he took out patents for 'darts as a missile' and added feathered flights.*

*Anything you could shed on this would be greatly appreciated.*

I thought “That’s a bold claim!” and set about finding what, if anything I held in my archive about George Jones. I was surprised to find that I *do* have information on file about George and while it does not substantiate the family’s story, he was clearly a man into his darts in a big way. Otherwise how would he have bothered to invent an ‘improvement’?

Here’s my reply to Crispin:

*The modern game of darts is a hybrid of the French game 'flechettes' and the English pub game 'puff and dart' and the dartboard numbering we know today, the invention of Thomas Buckle just before the outbreak of the Great War.*

*Your great grandfather, whilst he did not invent the game of darts, did submit a patent for approval under the general category of 'Improvements to Darts or like Missiles' by the Patents Office on 16th May 1922 (application no. 13,769/22, approved 31st May 1923 with the number 198,201), [see extract below] his invention aiming to 'provide an improved construction of loaded dart or the like by which the weight is brought nearer the dart-head and the throw, and appearance of the dart are improved.' According to the patent, George's invention was 'particularly applicable to toy darts or the like provided with radial tail or their equivalent...'*

198,201. Jones, G. E. May 16, 1922.  
Projectiles.-A dart or like missile, of the kind in which the shaft terminates in a heavy cap. or mount a, has the needle f



secured by a driving-fit in an axial hole in the shaft. The mount a is either screwed or pushed on to a shouldered portion of the shaft, as shown, or is provided with a stem that fits or screws into an axial hole in the shaft.

*At the time the Patent was approved, your great-grandfather's address was given as '186, Usher Road, Bow, London E3', an area of east London that, at that time, included a number of darts and dartboard manufacturers including Jack Hood Darts & Accessories and the NODOR Company, the latter of which is still trading successfully today although now based in south Wales and not the capital. The East End of London was then a hot-bed of darts in terms of both darts manufacturing and darts-playing and doubtless your great-grandfather played his part and played darts himself in his local pub.*

## **WHERE ARE THEY NOW? - STEFAN LORD**

I still cannot believe it but have to admit that my interview with Swedish darts star Stefan Lord via e-mail took place in **May 2010** when *DDN* was only one issue old! Now, *five years* later it is, at last, seeing the light of day.

Stefan is perhaps best remembered for his two victories in the *News of the World* individual darts tournament, the first in 1977/78 and the second in 1979/80. But, of course there was much more to this top Swedish dartist.



Stefan was born on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1954 in Stockholm. He first became interested in darts when he was about 14 years old when he went to a café after school where the new owner had put up a dartboard. Stefan continued to hone his darts talent whilst admiring the skills of two English darts players, Barry Twomlow and Tom Barrett who he had seen playing on their tours of Sweden. However, he told me recently, “I also learned a lot from Leighton [Rees], Alan Evans and Alan Glazier.” (Image (left) of a young Stefan Lord courtesy of *Darts World*/PC Archive.)

Stefan first went to England to play darts in 1972 but his first big win outside of his home country came in the Santa Monica Open that same year. Stefan told me, “I went there with Olly [Croft] and the BDO tour for the Santa Monica Open, Golden Gate Classic and North America Open.” He added, “Olly and [his wife] Lorna were like my extra parents as I was only 17 at the time.”

Stefan’s first appearance in a *News of the World* Grand Final was at the Alexandra Palace in May 1976. At the tender age of 21 and, according to the programme ‘at present engaged on military service’, Stefan was beaten 2-1 in the first round by the North of England divisional champion, Stewart McCleary.

Two years later, in 1978, Stefan was back. By then the Grand Finals were being held at the Empire Pool, Wembley and Stefan won the title for the first time. Representing Sweden and playing out of the Stockholm Super Darts Club, he beat the North of England divisional champion John Coward (representing the White Hart British Legion, Sedburgh, Cumbria) 2-0. On his way to victory Stefan beat the London and Home Counties champion, Kent and England’s Tony Brown 2-0 in the first round, the Lancashire and Cheshire champion Jack Bentley 2-0 in the quarter-finals and Scotland’s Jocky Wilson 2-1 in his semi-final. This victory meant that Stefan was the first continental winner of the *News of the World* title.

At the time there was some discussion in the darts media about how the time it took Stefan to throw his darts. In 2010 Stefan told me, “I think I became ‘slow’ at the *News of the World* 1978 because I didn’t want to make mistakes. I took my time between throws to have a score look at the score. Someone had told me, “Take your time. Don’t rush it.”



He was back the following year to defend his title but met an on-form Alan Glazier, the Yorkshire divisional champion and lost 2-0 in the first round. Undeterred he was back *again* in 1980 this time at the Wembley Arena and took the scalps of George Forrest (the Lancashire and Cheshire divisional champion, 2-1 in the first round, then the North of England champion Alan Turnbull in the quarter-finals 2-0, followed by John Lowe, the Midland Counties champion (evens favourite for the title that year) in the semi-finals 2-1. The final was between Stefan and Dave Whitcombe, the London & Home Counties divisional title holder. Stefan won 2-0. Derek Brown (author of *The Guinness Book of Darts* wrote in 1981

that Stefan was ‘quite unflappable in the face of the uproar’ at the Wembley Arena whilst Stefan himself told me, “The atmosphere was great...like a football match where I was the away team...although I was treated nice and with respect by both players and spectators.”

Stefan said, “The *News of the World* 1980 is the most memorable...when I beat John Lowe, who was the big favourite, in the semi-final and Dave Whitcombe in the final.” (The photo (above) shows Stefan after being presented with the *News of the World* trophy by footballing legend Malcolm MacDonald. Image courtesy *Darts World*/PC Archive.)



Yet again the gallant Swede was back in the Grand Finals in 1981 at the Wembley Arena but his bid to win the *News of the World* title for a third time came to grief in the quarter-finals when Stefan was beaten 2-0 by Scotland's Rab Smith. Surprisingly Sweden did not send a representative to the *NoW* in 1982 or 1983, that country's next champion being Douglas Melander who participated in the 1984 Grand Finals.

Stefan gave up playing top competitive darts in 1991/92 and then opened a restaurant ‘with darts and pool tables’ ([www.jolo.se](http://www.jolo.se)) in Stockholm. He sold that business in 2008 and moved to Thailand where, back in 2010, he told me, “I am playing golf and do nothing. I don't play darts at all apart from a local league game sometimes when I need a drink.”

On talking with Ian Flack, Sales and Marketing Director of the WINMAU Dartboard Co. Ltd., he told me, “We produce a Stefan Lord range exclusively for our distributor in Sweden (Biljardexperten), and his name is still legendary in his home country (and further afield!).” As it is not a darts set WINMAU has photographed for its catalogue no image was immediately available but Ian arranged for the WINMAU design team to mock up the image (left) showing the front and back of the packaging. Ian added, “We also produce a dartboard for them.”

So it is clear that, despite being away from serious tournament darts play for more than twenty years, Stefan remains popular in his home country and renowned around the world as one of the best darts players ever to emerge from Sweden.

A couple of weeks ago I e-mailed Stefan to check if anything had changed in the five years that have passed since I last made contact and he told me, “Nothing changed. I am still hacking around the golf course and play darts maybe once a month for the same reason as before!” The photograph (above right) shows Stefan enjoying a meal with his lady friend of eight years, Geo, is extracted, with permission, from Stefan's blog <http://mrlord501.blogspot.com>. Of his blog Stefan said, “It's only pictures. Too lazy to write anything!”



It sounds (and looks) like Stefan is *really* enjoying life after darts!

## ALAN EVANS and FAREBROTHER DARTS

Nigel J. recently wrote

*Ayup Patrick. Could you please help me with a couple of [questions]? Firstly what darts did darts great Alan Evans use and what weight? Seems to be a lot of suspect sets turning up on eBay!*

*Secondly, the first tungsten darts I bought in 1976 cost me £16.50, two week's wages!*



*They were made by Farebrother darts, 25 g 95% nickel tungsten, purchased from Bennett's sports shop in Worksop, Nottinghamshire. If I recall rightly there was only two styles. I've still got the darts. Any information on Farebrother tungsten darts would be highly appreciated. Regards Nigel.*

### Answers:

The original Alan Evans darts were marketed by KWIZ Darts circa 1974. The barrels and flights were manufactured by Retriever Sports and the white nylon ('DEFLECTA') grip nylon canes by a firm called Hillcrest Design. The darts were sold in a mahogany box and retailed at £20.00 per set.

Alan's former manager, Dr. Eddie Norman, told me recently, "These were the very original Alan Evans darts and were 22grms nickel tungsten. If a set of these turned up in the original wooden box they could be the originals. The boxes had his name on them."

After the contract with KWIZ was ended, Eddie and Alan met Tom Pope at Retriever Sports who then brought out 'Alan Evans' darts; 22 grms nickel tungsten in the Alan Evans red leatherette wallet and at a much cheaper cost to the punter. By February 1979 'Silvertrim' were marketing Alan Evans darts products. (The image (above) is the front cover of *Darts Northern News* (issue dated February 1979) showing Alan signing with Silvertrim 'to promote their products.'

As regards the second part of Nigel J's question re. **Farebrother Darts**, there is the story of the company on my website at [www.patrickchaplin.com/Farebrother.htm](http://www.patrickchaplin.com/Farebrother.htm).

## PLAYING IN THE PDC AND BDO

Peter F. recently contacted me asking:

*Hi Patrick, Can I ask you questions about darts? How do I go about playing in the PDC and are there any open competitions you can enter. The same goes for the BDO. Can you tell me please?*

I wrote to both organisations seeking advice but have so far only heard back from the PDC, courtesy of Dave Allen who wrote:

*Players can compete in PDC events through the following routes:*

*By entering the PDC Qualifying School at the start of each year, where ANY player can try to win a PDC Tour Card.*

*Players aged 16-23 can compete in PDC Unicorn Development Tour events throughout 2015. Entries will be available via [www.pdc.tv](http://www.pdc.tv) in due course.*

*By entering the Amateur Qualifiers for the UK Open. These are being staged in Riley's Sports Bars in Jan/Feb 2015.*

*By entering any open qualifier for the Grand Slam of Darts. Details would be available at [www.pdc.tv](http://www.pdc.tv) later in the year once any open qualifier was confirmed.*

*Players can also check [www.pdc.tv](http://www.pdc.tv) or [www.pdpa.co.uk](http://www.pdpa.co.uk).*

I have yet to hear from the BDO yet but my guess is that the route generally is play Super League, then County and hone your skills and then look to enter advertised BDO events to build on your reputation. I will let you (and Peter) have the BDO's official response as soon as I receive it.

### **‘DR. DARTS NEWSLETTER’ BINDERS?**

I am indebted to one of my Scottish subscribers, Jim MacNeil from Inverness, a man who is undertaking sterling work to recover and record the history of darts in Scotland, who recently wrote to me saying, ‘Hi Patrick, Thanks for DDN. Excellent as usual. I thought you might be amused with the attached photo. I've created binders [see image below left] for your newsletters to keep it all neat and tidy, filed beside my Darts World magazines.’

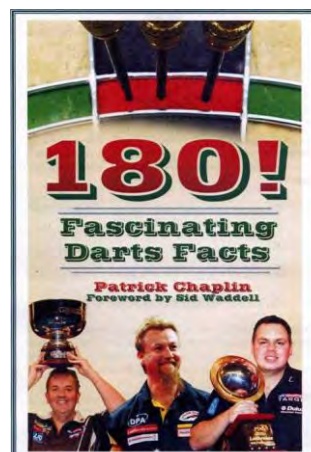


What a brilliant idea! But unlike my books and flights which are readily available (just contact me at [info@patrickchaplin.com](mailto:info@patrickchaplin.com) for more information) one product that is *not* available is a binder for your back issues of *Dr. Darts' Newsletter*. However, if you follow Jim's lead, they can look as smart (or perhaps even smarter) on your bookshelf as back issues of *Darts World*. Thanks Jim.

### **DR. DARTS' PRODUCTS AND PUBLICATIONS**



As mentioned in the previous issue of *DDN* my DR. DARTS flights, are now being produced by WINMAU as part of their ‘Rhino Long Life’ range, (see image, left). You can now purchase your very own ‘Dr. Darts’ flights through



suppliers including Red Dragon Darts and Darts Corner.

My books *180! Fascinating Darts Facts* and *The Official Bar Guide to Darts* continued to sell well during the run-up to the festive season (one copy of *180!* was even used as a 'Secret Santa' gift!) as did the book based on my PhD *Darts in England 1900-39: A social history*. For details of how you can obtain signed copies please contact me at [info@patrickchaplin.com](mailto:info@patrickchaplin.com).

### AND FINALLY...



How can I possibly end this edition of *DDN* without including a photograph of all three (Yes, *three*) Lakeside World Champions, Lisa Ashton, Scott Mitchell and Holland's Colin Roelofs. Congratulations one and all!

Colin became a new star of the Lakeside stage as he won the inaugural Lakeside World Youth Championship. His opponent England's Harry Ward was not able to get into his stride and the young man from Holland won nine legs in a row to take the title. (Image © DGmedia. Used with permission.)

OK, so that's it for this month. I hope you've enjoyed it.

Patrick

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