

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 59 April 2015



TINGED WITH SADNESS

Welcome to the April edition of *DDN* and a very special welcome to all those subscribers who have joined us since the March issue.

This issue of *DDN* is tinged with sadness as the sport of darts bids a fond farewell to three men who have all earned their places in darts history. Any thoughts of my playing an 'April Fool' on you my readers dissipated on the news that organisers Ken Glidle and Frank Quinn and Plymouth's Tim Green all passed away within a few weeks of each other. Obituaries for all three of these darting greats can be found elsewhere in this issue.

DR. DARTS AND THE MEDIA

During the past two months I have been contacted by two media studies students from different universities in the UK asking me to be interviewed on the radio as part of their final year projects.

The first was Robbie Dove (pictured) who wrote:



Hi Patrick, I'm currently in my third and final year at Bournemouth University, studying for a BA (Hons) in Radio. For my final major production, I'm required to create a 30-minute radio piece, and I've decided that as I'm someone who can only be described as a darts fanatic, I'm creating a 30-minute documentary entitled, 'The Progression of Darts'; looking

at the differing aspects of the darting world that make it such a spectacle.

Having read about you with interest, I feel that you'd be an extremely intriguing contributor, and am just wondering if there would be any possibility I could ask you a couple of questions (recorded), so I can include your answers within my project?

Robbie had already interviewed numerous darts personalities including Bobby George and the ladies' former Number One, Jayne Kempster, referee Russ Bray and commentator John Gwynne. With a list of participants like that, how could I refuse?

I was all for it anyway of course. The interview took place on 18th March and I received the finished project, a CD of the programme 'The Progression of Darts' a few days ago. I have to say that it is brilliant and told Robbie so.

Robbie then informed me that he has recently been accepted on a Masters course in Sports Broadcast Journalism at Staffordshire University which starts next year. I wish Robbie every success in the future.

The other approach I received was from Dan Harrington who, by sheer coincidence, is a student at Staffordshire University who is also working on a radio documentary about darts for his university project. Dan said that he would like my expertise on darts history and interview me about 'the working class correlation with darts and its rebirth as a titan of sporting endeavour.' The interview takes place in a few days' time.

Finally on the media front, I was interviewed on 10th March by Jason Mohammad of BBC Radio Wales relating to darts history and the rise of the sport under the PDC and on 30th March I was featured on BBC Radio Tees. The latter broadcast was in my capacity as Chairman of the Pub History Society (www.pubhistorysociety.co.uk) and concerned micropubs; small pub endeavours that promote the community culture of public houses, are generally one-man or one-woman bands and promote, amongst other things, traditional pub games including, of course, darts.

NEW SUBSCRIBERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Apart from the UK dart fans joining the ever-growing *DDN* family of subscribers I also welcome those from overseas, Adrian Wong (Canada), Valentin Ivetic (Germany) and, from Papua New Guinea, Achilles LeCoute.

Adrian called my website (www.patrickchaplin.com) 'a treasure trove of information' whilst Valentin had read some of my books and said, "I love your work around darts" (I do my best.), whilst Achilles learned about *DDN* via globe-trotting darts ambassador Dr. Eddie Norman (pictured right) during his visit to Papua New Guinea in 2014 but took a while to subscribe. He wrote:

I have just found your e-mail address at last. I had lost it. It was given to me by Eddie when he came to Port Moresby last year. He said that you could send me a darters magazine if I asked you.



I live just outside Port Moresby and we just play darts for fun. We have a few US Embassy folk play with us and Eddie gave us a dartboard and darts when he came. He says you know more about darts than anyone else in the world. We are keen to learn more. We will never be good but we are interested. Eddie told us a lot about darts and says you are the best writer in the world on darts. He gave us a book that you had written on darts. He said we can buy more on Amazon.

Wi-fi is not so good here so hopeful it will work to send this to you.

Received loud and clear Achilles. Thanks for your kind words and thanks too to Eddie who does more than anyone else on the planet to spread the good news about darts and encourage people to play all across the globe.

My new UK subscribers include Rod R. who told me:

I am 63 this year and I have been playing darts since I was 15. My first set was a set of Jim Pike's which I used till the mid-70s. I am still in a local league on Tuesday nights and I still enjoy playing. I think I'm a darts addict.

Rod, I think we all are!

FEEDBACK

Talking about the globe-trotting Dr. Norman, he seemed to enjoy DDN #58...

Eddie wrote:

Thank you for another excellent and great DDN which I have just picked up and reading today. [9th March] I loved the story on Jim Pike's signature and the News of The World team of champions. Wonderful memories. More please!!!!

The largest collection of dartboards I found amazing. Extraordinary. Mark Bridza's collect is something that I have never envisaged seeing. I pass through Warminster regularly as I have an office in New Jersey and can hardly believe I have almost 'passed' near this collection. Many of the boards I recognise but there are many I have never ever seen. Absolutely amazing collection. I shall be looking again at the pictures of that collection in the next few days. Amazing.

I remember when Leighton [Rees] lost that final leg of darts to Reg Harding. He really took it to heart. Felt he had let the 'boyos' down.

Eddie's comment about Leighton Rees v Reg Harding refers to the match between the star-studded Marlboro Team of Champions and a select Sussex four in Eastbourne in November 1980 in which Reg beat Leighton in the deciding game to bring about the first-ever defeat of the Marlboro team. (See DDN #58)

LOCAL HEROES

As we all know, darts is not all about the big names of the sport. OK, they are the ones you cheer on at the big venue, the top tournaments and in front of the television but, of course, darts has bred many, many local heroes; darts players who never achieve permanent national fame yet stay in the forefront of darts in their own area for many years.

In 1997 I wrote a feature for the August edition of *Darts World* magazine titled simply 'Local Heroes' which focussed on local darting legends Yorkshire's Mick Smith, Berkshire's Cyril Webb and Kent's Tommy Fox. The image (below, left)

shows Mick Smith (left in photo) being awarded the trophy for winning the *News of the World* Yorkshire Divisional title in 1964 by *NoW* organiser Ron Bacchus. (Image courtesy of the *Darts World*/PC Darts Archive. Used with permission.)



The following year my article 'Local Heroes 2' was published in the September issue of *Darts World*, this time featuring brief biographies of Dewsbury's famous son Frank Radforth (a *News of the World* regular and a maker of elm dartboards), Bradford's Harold Barker (one of the first-ever exhibition darts players of the 1930s) and East Anglia's Wally Seaton (winner of the *News of the World*

Individual title in 1967).

Local heroes one and all.

Sad then to report in this issue that another local legend has passed on to that great oche in the sky...

PLYMOUTH'S TIM GREEN – OBITUARY

One of the legendary Devon darts players, Tim Green died in February. I genuine 'local hero' I feature here an obituary written by Steve Chapman, Darts Correspondent of the *Plymouth Herald*, commemorating the life of this exceptional darter. Steve writes:

PLYMOUTH'S darting community have been saddened at the death of one of its greatest ever players.

Tim Green (*pictured right*) was brash, he was flamboyant, but he had charisma like no other. He first graced the oches of the city's darting venues playing in the now defunct Ind Coope League at the James St Vaults but two seasons later was turning out for The Mermaid.



It was at that Egguckland hostelry that he first met another great player of his generation Des Stabb and in 1969 the two of them became members of the famous side which won all before them at the Longroom Inn at Stonehouse.

The 1970-71 season saw Longroom win the treble, the first time that this feat had been achieved in the Courage PB League which, at the time, was the biggest brewery league in the country. The treble was made up of the league title, Knockout Cup and

Johnstone Trophy. It was also in this year that Green lifted the Devon County Mixed Pairs title with Hazel Hendry who also sadly died just days after Tim.

The following year Longroom clinched the treble once again and Timmy Green won his first individual title.

The early Seventies saw the birth of the county set-up under the guidance of the British Darts Organisation (BDO) and in 1973 Green became Devon Super League champion for the first time, claiming the crown again in 1974 and 1976.

In 1975, Green played for another prolific Plymouth side that resided at the Hyde Park. This team played in the Devon Super League and went on to win a national title when beating a team from Scotland in the grand-final.

Arguably the greatest day of Green's darting life came on Sunday, March 28, 1976 at the Top Rank Suite in Plymouth. Timmy had won through to the final of the national individual darts championship, sponsored by Golden Games.

In front of a capacity crowd and the cameras of Westward Television, only one man stood between Green and the national crown and that was an up-and-coming young Londoner by the name of . . . Eric Bristow.

The partisan crowd were in raptures when Green beat Bristow 2-0. In the best of three legs of 1001 final, the Plymothian won the £500 prize money with legs in 31 and 29 respectively, for a three dart average of 100.10.

The then President of Devon Darts Organisation John Owen was so impressed by Green's performance that he put up £1,000 to anybody in the world who could beat the Devonport marksman over 21 games of 1001 . . . there were no takers.

Also in 1976 a newly formed darts body, the United Kingdom Darts Federation (UKDF) hosted a challenge match between Wales and the rest of Great Britain. Green, who was ranked number eight in Great Britain at the time, had the honour to be chosen as vice-captain under the captaincy of Tommy O'Regan, who without any question, was the greatest player of his generation.

Green was still playing county darts in 1976 and was involved in what was reported at the time as "one of the greatest matches you will ever see."

Devon entertained London at the Top Rank Suite, Plymouth, and the visiting team consisted of such illustrious names at the time as Tony Bell, Ronnie Church, Alan Glazier, O'Regan and the great Willie Etherington, who Green defeated 2-1.

These players from the Capital were not only county standard, they were also seasoned English internationals. The match ended 6-6.

Devon captain Mike Brown when asked what made Timmy Green stand out said, "He was special because he was a darts showman and entertained people."

Tim Green was still successful in the Plymouth Leagues and he followed up his initial singles success of the 1972-73 season when he regained the Courage PB individual title in 1976-77 and 1977-78. He was only denied becoming the first player to win an unprecedented hat-trick of titles the following season when he was beaten in the 1978-79 final by one of Green's Longroom compatriots, Tom McIntyre.

One story that really sums up the personality of Timmy Green was reported long ago in a South Devon publication and was the tale of a young man who one night walked into the Kings Arms at Ivybridge.

He took out his darts and began slotting them into treble 20. Unknown to the locals, he challenged a few of them for a pint over legs of 1001 and despite giving them all a 300-point start, was never beaten. Someone remarked that "he's played this game before." He had. He was Timmy Green and at the time was Western Area champion.

He won one leg in 29, a three dart average of 103.55, but still insisted he was off-form.

Before he left Green told his admirers: "Some people call me big-headed, but I can't be – I think I'm only half as good as I really am."

(Image and text © Steve Chapman. Used with permission.) (Thanks Steve.)

KEN GLIDLE

Sad too to read of the death of Ken Glidle (pictured below left), a man who pledged so much of his life to the sport of darts and was there at the very beginning.

An announcement issued by the British Darts Organisation (BDO) on 16th March read:



It is with great sadness that we have to report the passing of Ken Glidle, former BDO Chairman. Ken was a well-known figure amongst the darting family and a proud supporter of darts wherever it was played.

Ken was BDO Chairman at the very early days of the organisation in 1973. He was also one of the main officials of Warwickshire County Darts

Organisation from its inception in 1974 and was also the first MC to grace the Lakeside stage following the World Championship Tournament move from Jolley's Nightclub.

Our sincere condolences and deepest sympathies go to Ken's family.

Amongst the tributes to Ken was the following from his long-time friend Ken ('Top Cat') Herbert who wrote on the double16.com forum:

As a long-time friend of former B.D.O. Chairman Ken Glidle it is sad to hear of his recent death. As Warwickshire's first Secretary I met Ken who became Chairman of Warwickshire and what a superb Chairman he proved to be, always willing to help players with top advice. We always like to think that the pair of us set Warwickshire on the right road in the early 70s. Next up, we both became members of the Board of Directors of the B.D.O. and very soon Ken was elected the second Chairman of the B.D.O. following Norman Byron. Ken was also the first Master of Ceremonies at the Lakeside World Championships. A well-known gentleman throughout the world of darts. If you wanted advice Ken was the right man.

Commiserations to his family.

Rest in Peace Ken.

Ken Glidle's funeral took place on 1st April at Canley Crematorium, Coventry, West Midlands.

(Image courtesy of DW/PC Darts Archive. Used with permission)

FRANK QUINN

As if losing a legendary darts player and one of the hardest-working BDO officials within a few weeks of each other wasn't enough I was then saddened to learn of the death of Frank Quinn (pictured below, right, in the early days) had also died. The notification on the Scottish Darts Association website written by the SDA Chairman Len Mutch read as follows:

It is my sad duty to inform you of the passing of Frank Quinn, former Chairman and Team Manager of the Scottish Darts Association. Frank was in at the start of the Scottish Darts Association with one of the original members, Greater Glasgow. He was also instrumental in helping to secure recognition of Darts as a Sport.

Frank's funeral was held on Monday 9th March at the Corpus Christi Church, Glasgow.

Although I never met Frank, he and I had been exchanging letters, information and photographs and having chats about darts in Scotland regularly for almost ten years. He was a mine of information about the sport which I suppose was to be expected of a man who was there in the very beginning, one of the instigators of the SDA back in 1971.

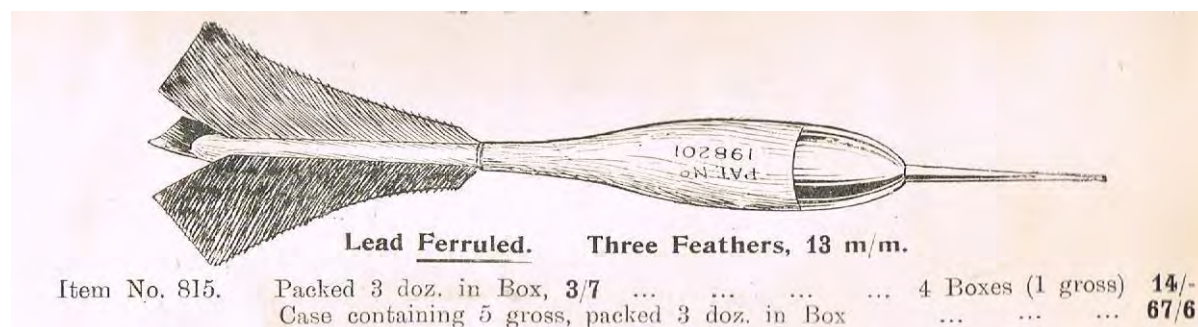
I learned so much from Frank. It is to my eternal regret that I never met Frank face-to-face.



GEORGE EDWARD JONES AND THE NATIONAL DART – PART 3

Regular readers will know that in issues 57 and 58 I featured information about the ‘darts inventor’ George Edward Jones who ran a darts company out of Bow, east London during the 1920s, trading under the name of ‘National Darts.’ The original article in *DDN* #57 (February 2015) referred to George Jones’s invention of the lead ferruled dart which was patented in the UK and given the Patent No. 198201.

During a recent search of my archive for something not George Jones-related, I came across the Wholesale and Shipping Catalogue of Indoor Games published by Kent & Cleall, Ltd., for the 1929/30 season, a company based at that time in Upper Clapton Road, London, E.5.



The catalogue provides an excellent overview of darts products available in the late 1920s/early 1930s including the NODOR ‘Trueflight’ dart, ‘The Royal Safety Dart’ and, on page 18 (see above), Jones’s ‘lead ferruled dart’, the latter being available ‘Packed in Handy Card Boxes of 3 doz. Darts.’ One gross (144) of Jones’s darts, clearly marked with the Patent number could be purchased for fourteen shillings (about 70p in today’s money).

SO THAT’S IT...

I do hope you’ve enjoyed this latest issue of *DDN*.

Patrick

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