

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 60 May 2015

60 TODAY!



No it's not my birthday. It's the *sixtieth* issue of *DDN*.

It only seems like yesterday that we were celebrating the 50th issue. Where has all that time gone? Ten months ago I was completing the draft of my next book *Darts. Skills.*



Techniques. Tactics and now the publisher (The Crowood Press) is telling me of a probable July publication date. Just in time for my birthday!

Due to lack of space, a number of items had to be dropped from last month's issue, one of which was a request from British sports journalist Dave Bracegirdle for information relating to the Welsh darting legend Alan Evans (pictured left). Details of Dave's request can be found later in this issue. (Image: Author's collection.)

A warm welcome to all new subscribers to *DDN* who this month include Kornel Gajewski from Poland, Cal from the USA and Filatov Maksim from Russia. One subscriber from Canada has unsubscribed, the reason being that 'Here in Canada (by law), you have to include the remove me from the sending list in every e-mail sent with a newsletter.' Most unusual...

FEEDBACK

Issue #59 was tinged with sadness as I reported that another three men from the world of darts had passed away within a few weeks of each other.

After reading the April *DDN* England's Dave Whitcombe contacted me. Dave wrote:

I did not know that Tim Green had passed or Frank Quinn. It was, of course, mentioned many times on Facebook that Ken Glidle had died. I knew all of them and have fond memories of having a pint or two with Ken Glidle at many darts events. He was an English Gent who loved darts and the players.

Tim Green [pictured, right] was a character, and I remember very well when he beat Bristow in that final in '76, because we (Kent) played Devon (at Devon) the following month...I watched Tim play 1,001 and he was good. I think that was his game rather than 501 but darts was starting to move forward in '76 and if you had trouble with 501 you were left behind. He was brash, as stated, but not unlikeable brash because he was a character.



Tim Green's victory over Eric Bristow was recorded in *Darts World* magazine (Issue #42, May 1976) under the title 'Tim's maximum effort.' The report read:

With no fewer than three scores of 180, Tim Green stormed on to win the first Golden Games Championship at Plymouth in a brilliant final.

With Westward television cameras covering the event, Tim held the edge over his finals opponent, Eric Bristow, from London, and never let go.

He won the match 2-0 and received £500 cash, plus trophy. Eric's runners-up prize was £100 and trophy...

Tim's performance so impressed the Golden Games sponsor, bookmaker John Owen that he declared: "The quality of darts was the finest I have ever seen. I am prepared to back Tim in a series of 21 games, starting at 1001 against anyone in the world."

As we learned from Tim's obituary written by Steve Chapman, Darts Correspondent of the *Plymouth Herald* and published in last month's *DDN*, there were never any takers for John Owen's 21 legs of 1,001 challenge.

Dr. Eddie Norman wrote:

What a lovely write up on Frank Quinn and Tim Green.

*I first met **Frank Quinn** in 1972, when he organised the first-ever international match in 1973 for Scotland when they entertained the mighty West of England (WOE) team at The City Halls in Glasgow. Rothmans sponsored all the match and even flew the WOE to Scotland.*



Frank [pictured, left, in 1973] then brought the Scotland team to Bristol in July 1973 to play in the first Home International, along with Tom Frost (RIP). A wonderful man and a man I spent many happy hours on the phone with. I wrote that Hermitage Road address where he lived down so many times with correspondence over the years.

Eddie added, **Tim Green**, I knew well and he played at The Hyde Park Hotel in Plymouth. The landlord George Ashley became the Chairman of the United Kingdom Darts Federation [UKDF] and Tim played in the UKDF.

He played for the UKDF as vice-captain versus Great Britain match in 1976 at The Webbington near Weston Super Mare, and later played for BICDO, the British Inter City Darts Organisation for Plymouth.

THE NODOR CHALLENGE CUP – 1959 – THE GLOUCESTER ARMS

It's time for yet *another* apology for being tardy.

Back in **2012** I had an e-mail exchange with Surrey darter Colin Woolman who wrote, *'I have some darts history on the winners of the NODOR Fours which I would like to share with you. My dad Bob (pictured below, right. Bob is on the left in the photo) won the trophy back in 1959.'*

Colin added, *'My dad captained a team from Surbiton, Surrey to victory called the Gloucester Arms. I recall him telling the story that he had won the trophy but he was not the most informative father about his past.'*



That was nearly *three years* ago. I have only recently re-discovered the correspondence...

It was not until his father (Robert Ernest, b. 1929, d. 2006) had passed away that Colin undertook some research by examining back issues of his local newspaper, the *Surrey Comet*; research based on what little he remembered his father telling him. Colin said, *'We always knew dad was a good darts player from the stories my mum told us and by the many trophies indoors. People we met would mention him.'*

According to Colin his dad always needed a few beers before telling the family of his many darts victories.

Colin added, *'In the 1950's dad played a lot of darts; mum said five nights a week! He worked as a milkman for United Dairies (UD) and it was while playing for UD that he won the All London Individual Singles Championship three years running, 1957, 1958 and 1959.'*

It was about the time that Bob met and played with some of the great darts players of that era, including Tom Barrett, Chris Barker and Bert Norman from the famous *Brown Bear* darts team. (Colin's mother always recalled Tom Barrett being 'a gentleman of darts.') Colin's father also played for the *Jenny Lind* pub in Hampton Hill with Ron Glazier, Alan Glazier's brother.



Colin's father also played against the famous London darter Joe Hitchcock, nicknamed 'The Marathon Marvel', in an exhibition match. Colin recalled, *'In those days they played a game called 'Marathon 3001' and it was in one of those games that dad beat him. Joe called dad back up at the end of night and said to the crowd, "This man was lucky to beat me earlier in the evening and I would like to play him again." So he did and dad beat the great man again.'*

After that Joe became a friend of Colin's father and he would often accompany Joe and other top players and do some 'warm ups' on exhibition nights. In return Joe taught Bob to throw nails and other trick shots.

The NODOR Fours darts tournament began in 1957 as an Essex-only competition, the first winners being the *Hare and Hounds* from Braintree. In 1958 London, Surrey and Sussex joined in and the trophy was won by the *Old Queen's Head*, Stockwell Road, south west London. In 1959 the NODOR Fours became an eight-county contest as Hampshire, Staffordshire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire came on board and it was in this year that the *Gloucester Arms* team made the finals of the tournament and won, beating the *Four Ways Inn*, Cradley Heath, Staffordshire. The photo on the previous page (left) shows Bob with his *Gloucester Arms* team-mates with some of their numerous trophies. Clearly a team to be reckoned with!

Colin recalls that his father had to work on that Saturday morning delivering milk in his 'horse and cart' but then, *'Dad told me he had to get his a*se over to east London [Stratford Town Hall] with the other three lads as quick as he could. His biggest moan was they only managed to get one pint in before they had to play their first game. All the rest of the finalists had been put up by NODOR due to the distances they had to travel.'*

Bob told his son Colin how lucky he had been to meet and, as captain, be presented with the cup by former England football captain Billy Wright, CBE. Colin's mother remembered meeting Billy Wright's wife Joy (one of the famous 1950s/early 1960s vocal group, The Beverley Sisters). Mum actually had no interest in darts but felt lucky to have 'a rare night out'.

After 1959 the NODOR Fours competition went from strength to strength. In 1960 the number of county's entering the tournament doubled to sixteen and in 1961 it became what it remained for many years, a national competition. That first national tournament involved over 2,100 teams, the organisation of the event being headed, as it had been from the start, by the legendary darts organiser and player, John Ross, of the National Darts Association of Great Britain (NDAGB).

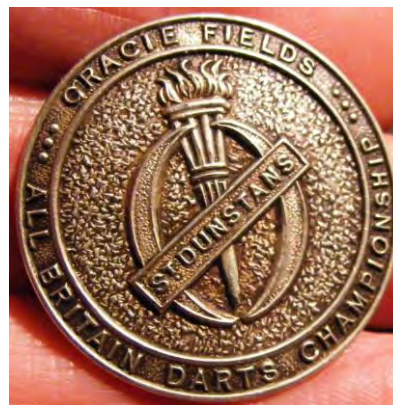
The winners of that inaugural national event were the *Cotton Tree Inn*, Manchester (a team which included a young but eventually to become equally legendary, Bill Lennard) who beat the *Hope Inn*, Gloucester in the final.

(Images for this article provided by Colin Woolman. Used with permission.)

GRACIE FIELDS' GREATEST (DARTS) HIT

Vance Hardman, one of my many US subscribers wrote to me in the autumn/fall of last year about a darts badge he had purchased. Vance does 'a little darts collecting' and buys and sells them, as well as manufacturing 'vintage-style feather flights'. Vance wrote

'The other day I came across a metal badge/disc [pictured, right] possibly off the front of a trophy. It reads around the edge 'GRACIE FIELDS: ALL BRITAIN DARTS CHAMPIONSHIP. In the centre it



has an Olympic type torch and [the words] 'ST DUNSTANS. Do you know anything about it?'

Although I knew the name Gracie Fields (a famous singer and entertainer during the war years and way beyond here in the UK) I had never heard of the Gracie Fields All Britain Darts Championship. However, I was aware of St. Dunstan's, the charity supporting the war-blinded. A sighted darts team known as the St. Dunstan's Four (originally captained by Joe Hitchcock) raised thousands of pounds for the charity for a number of years after the cessation of the Second World War.

The torch design shown on the medal/badge was the logo of ST. DUNSTAN'S.

In attempting to answer Vance's question (originally posed in October 2014), made more difficult because no year is indicated, I wrote to the Gracie Fields society but never received a reply. In fact I am now lost for ideas as to where to look next so I am hoping that *DDN* subscribers can help. Does anyone know *anything* about this all-Britain darts competition? If so, e-mail me at info@patrickchaplin.com. I would be very pleased to hear from you and to pass the information on to Vance.

By the way, I mentioned above that Vance runs the company 'Phoenix Feather Dart Flights'. I occasionally receive enquiries regarding where feather flights can be purchased so what better place to start than accessing Vance's Facebook link:

<https://www.facebook.com/phoenixfeatherdartflights?ref=hl>

Thanks to Vance for his enquiry.

WETHERSPOON'S CLIC SARGENT DARTS TOURNAMENT

When the J. D. Wetherspoon pub company was established in 1979 in the UK it had only one pub but by 1993 its 50th pub was opened and by 2011 the doors were opened for its 800th outlet.

I have to admit that when the Wetherspoon chain began to expand I was one of those who thought that music, fruit machines and pub games, including darts, were banned as a matter of company policy. Today I cannot recall if someone just told me that or I simply 'read it somewhere.' No matter, whatever the case was back then, I am sure that darts is alive and well in numerous Wetherspoon outlets and that a number provide a permanent oche.

For the past two years the company has been running a darts tournament fought out between teams of Wetherspoon's staff, raising loads of cash for CLIC Sargent, the charity for children and young people with cancer (www.clicsargent.org.uk).

Last year *The Quay* pub, Poole, Dorset was victorious but could they retain their title this year? Yes they could. Richard Marriner, Senior Area Manager for J. D. Wetherspoon sent me the following report:

The Quay, in Poole, was victorious for the second successive year in the annual Wetherspoon CLIC Sargent darts competition. The winning team, pictured at The Soloman Cutler in Birmingham, where the final matches took place, beat The Friar Penketh (Warrington) in the final.

They are (left to right) pub manager and captain Geoff Press, bar associate Andy Tallant, kitchen shift leader Paul Lumber, shift manager Dan Dewson and kitchen shift leader Harvey Camp.



Geoff said: “It was fantastic to retain our title, with this year’s standard being so high. The team put in a great effort, and a big thank you to Paul and Harvey who were new to the team this year. We will be looking forward to defending our title next year, which will be harder, as I am sure a lot of teams would like to stop us defending our title for a third year. And a big thank you to senior area manager Richard Marriner and his team for organising another great darts event for CLIC Sargent again this year.”

The tournament, which began as a London event in 2012, continues to grow every year, with a total of 550 teams, comprising five staff member players in each, taking part nationally this year. Area heats in January were followed by regional finals in February, with two teams from each of the six regions taking part in the final in March.

The other finalists were The Electrical Wizard (Morpeth), The Pilgrim Oak (Hucknall), Wetherspoons (Milton Keynes), The Gold Cape (Mold), The Picture Palace (Braintree), The Bishop Vesey (Sutton Coldfield), The Regent (Walton-on-Thames), The Windmill (Stansted), The Van Dyck Forum (Bristol) and The James Watt (Greenock). (Image © 2015 J. D. Wetherspoon. Used with permission.)

Richard Marriner told me, “The tournament continues to be a great success for Wetherspoon, CLIC Sargent and the pub teams. The competition went really well and the standard continues to improve. We had almost 180 more teams involved this year than last – and they have collectively raised an incredible £180,000 for CLIC Sargent.” He added, “Well done to all of the teams which took part, congratulations to *The Quay* on retaining its title and many thanks to everyone who helped to organise and support the event.”

Ian Flack, Sales and Marketing Director of the WINMAU Dartboard Co. Ltd., told me, “This is the second year we have supported the Wetherspoons charity darts event, and it is a privilege to be helping such a great cause. CLIC Sargent provides invaluable funding and support for children with cancer and their families, and we would like to thank all the members of staff that participated in the event who have helped to raise such a significant sum of money for the charity.”

Coincidentally the J. D. Wetherspoon chain reaches my home town of Maldon, Essex this coming summer. The company recently took over and is completely renovating

the former *Rose & Crown* in the High Street. Its existing name is being retained. I have no information, as yet, as to whether or not there will be a dartboard installed.

ALAN EVANS – JOURNALIST SEEKS INFORMATION

Sports journalist Dave Bracegirdle (pictured) is currently writing the life story of Alan



Evans and would love to hear from anyone who can share any information, anecdotes or photographs on the former Welsh international.

Dave would particularly like to hear from anyone who remembers Alan in his younger days or played darts with or against him, as well as any supporters who followed his career closely.

If you can help, please contact Dave on dave.bracegirdle1@btinternet.com

AND FINALLY...

Did the Incas invent darts?

That's the fascinating theory examined by Paul Seigel on the first day of last month through his regular column 'Dartoid's World' on his website at the following link:

<http://dartoidsworld.net/2015/04/column-484-did-the-incas-invent-darts/>

It is entirely coincidental that, whilst Dartoid was revealing the 'true' history of darts on his website (dartoidsworld.net/) I came across apparent verification of his 'Incas invented darts' theory; a story written over *eighty* years ago.

I was searching through my extensive darts archive for evidence that 1930s London and the South Coast socialite Rail Loofa (pictured here on the left accompanied by her ancient, loyal maidservant Vera and Rail's ultra-loyal dog Scruffy) was the first Debutante in England to score a maximum 169 with three darts on the legendary (some might say, mythical) Flop O'Liar Irish dartboard. For those unfamiliar with this board, it was designed by Jimmy 'Flop' O'Liar the famous (some might say infamous) Dublin bar owner to brighten up dreary Monday evenings at his pub. His dartboard was unique having not only a treble and double ring but a quintuplet ring and the entirely unforgiveable ½ ring, the latter scoring half of the score of each segment.

It was during this research that I happened upon an article in the very first issue of that scarce (some might say, mythical) English newspaper *Darts Weekly News* published in the late summer of 1937. The editor asks the hoary question "How did darts originate?" Answering his own question, the editor cites the work of W. D. Maydwell, a journalist for a national UK newspaper; a man who 'suggests that it is An Old Peruvian custom' (His unusual capitalisation, not mine.) Maydwell states that 'many believe that it owes its origin to archery or the Greeks throwing the discus' but he was convinced that the true origins lay in the 'Inca Empire of Peru.'

Noting that Incas ‘built cities in tiers on hillsides’ Maydwell opined that when communication was desired a ‘dart was the usual form of message.’ The journalist continued:

‘The number and colour of the darts’ feathers signified what the message meant, i.e. green or golden meant an immediate command from the Chief Inca himself. The job of dart messenger was a coveted one so it was customary for aspirants to make a mark on the hillside at which to practice; the best marksman being selected for the post.’

Not content with this weakest of connections to the modern sport of darts Maydwell continued:

‘The Peruvian deity was the Sun. When competitions were held for the selection of messengers those who hit the bull or centre were chosen messengers of the Government as representing the Sun.’

Finally, Maydwell provided more details of the dartboard utilised by the messengers at play:

‘Then the board was divided into twelve sections representing the twelve astrological hours, each governed by a planet with the Centre, the Sun, portraying the Chief Inca deity.’

This description of a dartboard with twelve segments made me think (but only for a fragment of a moment) of the London Fives dartboard which, as we darts historians know, had/has twelve segments, thus its nickname the ‘Clock Board.’ I had no idea that this possibly linked back to ‘An Old Peruvian custom’ and the twelve astrological hours.

However, I have one concern. Surely the piercing of an image of the Sun/Chief Inca deity with a dart would result, at the very least, in the darts messenger being bodily hurled from the top of one of those tiers built on the hillsides.

In that respect I fear Maydwell’s theory completely misses the target.

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