

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 61 June 2015

WELCOME!



Lots of feedback this month and a good number of new subscribers have joined our happy throng during the past four weeks or so. Welcome one and all.

Belated thanks to Justin of the Gibraltar Darts Association for assistance he has given me over the past couple of years. It's been much appreciated Justin. I hope we meet again soon.

This month's issue takes us just down the road from where I live to meet Trina and Sue Gulliver for the first time in ages, then across to Malta for the 1990 Europe Cup in which the Belgian team did extremely well then 'across the pond' to the Colorado Rocky Mountains then back again to my home county of Essex here in the UK.

Recently I have been in correspondence via e-mail with Scotland-based darter Keith Watkins concerning, amongst other things, the late Brian Vaux. In his latest e-mail Keith said of *DDN*, "Keep sending editions please. Interesting reading," adding "Any chance of a mention?"

Keith. I'm happy to oblige.

HOW WOULD THE PLAYERS OF THE PAST FARE TODAY?

That's the question posed (below) by subscriber Mick Simpson this month and on which I would appreciate your feedback and, of course, the reverse scenario, how would the stars of yesterday such as Joe Hitchcock (pictured left) perform against the 'stars' of today? As we know Hitchcock excelled at both darts and six-inch nails.



Always one of my first subscribers to provide me with feedback each month is UK-based Mick Simpson. I particularly enjoyed his feedback relating to last month's *DDN*. Mick wrote:

Hi Patrick, Thanks for the latest DDN...as ever another fantastic read...I love to hear about players from yesteryear. It makes me wonder if they would be as great today what with the shorter throwing distance, different dartboards, not the elm that most of them would no doubt have played on, smoky pubs, chalk boards, unlike today fancy shirts, etc. In my opinion they would have beaten a lot of the greats of the modern game.

Great to see Weatherspoon's running a dart tournament for children suffering from cancer. Also great to see Alan Evans being remembered. He was a great player. I know he had his problems with Eric but he was a great player all the same.

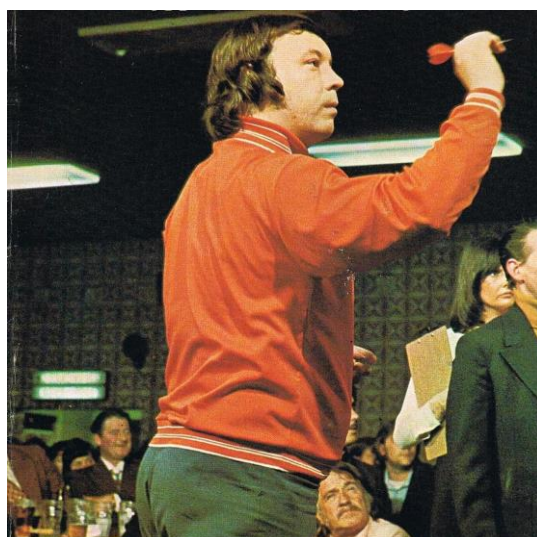
Mick's raised an excellent point. So what if the greats of the 1940s, 50s, 60s and early 1970s, Jim Pike, Joe Hitchcock, Tom Barrett, etc. could step up to the oche today armed with top-of-the-range tungstens and multiple sponsors financing their every move. Would they beat the stars of darts in 2015? Similarly how would the stars of today fare if they went back in time and threw wooden French darts or weighty brass darts at an elm dartboard from *nine feet*?

Please let me have your views by e-mailing me at info@patrickchaplin.com.

ALAN EVANS

Above Mick Simpson remembered Alan Evans as a 'great player'. In response to the appeal for memories and anecdotes about Alan, Ken Herbert (he of the *Sports Argus* charity darts team fame) told me:

In the early 70s I was Secretary of Warwickshire [County darts] and on one occasion travelled with the lads to the De Montford Hall, Leicester, taking part in several local competitions. It was full. I was drawn against Alan Evans in the very early rounds. I think I had a couple of supporters but I shall never forget the amazing number of supporters who surrounded the throw to watch Alan. The word was 'FREEZE' and I did: 3-0. I never hit a decent score as the 'Welsh Wizard' went to town. A brilliant player and a gentleman to speak to.



Thanks Ken.

GRACIE FIELDS ST. DUNSTAN'S BADGE

Sadly no information has been received as yet to Vance Hardman's request for information (featured in last month's *DDN*) about a darts-related medal/badge awarded in respect of the *Gracie Fields: All Britain Darts Championship*.

However, I'm still hopeful that readers will come up with some information but in the meantime I apologise to Vance who I described in #60 as 'one of my many US subscribers.' Why I wrote that is a mystery as Vance is actually a resident of Bolton, Lancashire here in the UK!

There now follows an item written by a subscriber who actually *does* live in the USA...

ROCKY MOUNTAIN DARTS ASSOCIATION

Jerry Feather has written to me as follows:

Hi Patrick, Your articles are very enjoyable and enlightening. I love the fact that you bring on some either obscure players or short-term highlights.

I am doing a history of all the Teams and awards for our dart league, the Rocky Mountain Darts Association in Colorado, which I helped found back in 1974. So much has been lost but as I ask old-timers about specific teams and pubs, all seem to remember something that helps and some of these guys have given me schedules and standing sheets from 30 plus years ago. It's fun.

Keep up the good work. I'm glad I went to England during the great years from '77 to '95 and met the great in Willie Etherington, Barry Twomlow, Leighton Rees, Eric & John and your guy in this month's DDN Alan Evans. What an explosive shooter.

If anyone can help Jerry piece together the Rocky Mountain Darts Association results please e-mail him at darts2@aol.com.

Nearer to home, well my home anyway, is someone else undertaking serious darts research...

INFORMATION ON ESSEX COUNTY GAMES NEEDED

If you have ever researched any subject seriously you will know how frustrating it is when, after years of study, you come to a point that all obvious and not-so-obvious having been exhausted, you still have gaps in your knowledge that simply must be filled.

One such researcher is Essex County Darts Executive Committee member Kevin Stammers. Kevin (pictured here with 2004 Lakeside World Champion Andy Fordham) has been working for years on tracking down every single Essex County match result from when the County played its first match in October 1975. Kevin has now reached the point where he has exhausted all possible avenues of research and he is now asking *your* help in filling in the gaps.



Kevin told me recently:

The information I have pre-September 1980, who played and the results, is very limited. BDO Offices have no records, Darts World magazine only reported on selected 'A' games in the early days and regrettably some past Essex officials failed to pass on any old records. I could really do with some help with tracking down those remaining 288 missing names, results and, if possible, averages.

The results of Kevin's labours thus far can be found under the 'History' section of the Essex County website. To see the gaps that need to be filled go to

http://www.essexdarts.com/kevin_stammers/County/County%20History.htm

And then click on 'List of Counties Missing Info.'

If *your* County is shown there, merely click on it and see what information Kevin is looking for. To make things easier also check out the section 'Missing in Date Order'.

If you can help then please pass whatever information you have to Kevin at kjsdarts@talktalk.net. He will be thrilled to hear from you.

(Image of Kevin with Andy Fordham ©KJS Darts. Used with permission.)

DR. AND MRS DARTS MEET UP WITH TRINA AND SUE GULLIVER

Still in Essex, Warwickshire County played my home team at the end of April at the Chelmsford Social Club which gave my wife Maureen and I a great opportunity go along to see our team play and to catch up with our friends Trina and Sue Gulliver who we hadn't seen for nearly two years.

The photo shows my wife Maureen with Trina and Sue after they had both played their matches. (Did I mention that Essex won the match 25-14?) (Image © Chippix)

A few days before the WINMAU Dartboard Co. Ltd., announced the continuation of their sponsorship agreement with Trina: the most successful ladies player of all time. Trina has been part of the WINMAU family for seventeen years and the new contract will see her reach the amazing landmark of 20 years with the company. She has, of course, achieved every major honour in the game and is largely responsible for the huge increase and participation in the women's game in recent years. And she's not finished yet; not by a long chalk. Trina said:



I have reached many milestones in my career, including nine world titles and five WINMAU World Masters victories. These rank as some of the proudest moments in my career along with being awarded the MBE for services to ladies darts. However, my new contract with WINMAU that will see our friendship exceed 20 years is up there with all these amazing moments. They really offer me so much support both on and off the oche and I can't thank them enough for helping me realise my dreams over the past 17 years.

The standard of the women's game has increased dramatically in the past few years and it's great to have so many new competitors and tournaments to compete in. I am hungry for more titles and proved at the Lincolnshire Open recently that I can still beat the best players in the world.

Ian Flack, Sales and Marketing Director of WINMAU added

I know I've said it before but Trina is a true friend of myself and the company. I've had the pleasure of knowing her for 15 years and she has been a shining light for our brand and for the sport of darts. No other women's player has had such a positive impact on the sport, and Trina works tirelessly to promote the ladies' game at all levels. I doubt any player will win more than nine women's World Championships in the future, but I know that Trina is keen to add to this tally to make the target more difficult!

Will anyone be able to beat Trina's *nine* world titles?

LORD TAVERNERS SEVEN DARTS TOURNAMENT

Whilst undertaking some research recently into the Player's No. 6 competition, a tournament run in conjunction with the *News of the World* between 1966 and 1970, I came across a competition I had never heard of, namely the 'Lord's Taverners Seven Darts Tourney'. It was seemingly a one-off event.

The Lord's Taverners is a UK organisation comprising radio and TV personalities, film stars, etc who raise millions of pounds for national and local charities. At the start of the 1966/67 season the seven-dart tournament was launched, organised by radio personality Peter Haigh to raise funds for the National Playing Fields Association.

According to a report, 'a million players from more than forty thousand pubs' entered. The rules were simple, score as many points as possible with seven darts, doubles and trebles all counting their full value.

In the preliminary stages of the competition a player named Farrell, playing out of the *Prince of Wales*, Bow, east London achieved the extraordinary feat of scoring **414** points. That's only six short of the maximum possible score of 420. Unfortunately Farrell did not make it to the grand finals of the competition which were held at the Criterion Restaurant, London in May 1967.



Ten players from an eliminating tournament played for the major prizes of the evening, the ultimate winner being Alwyn Mullins (pictured) from the *Horse and Groom*, Doncaster with a score of 285 points. (If the name is familiar to you then yes, you're right. Mullins won the *News of the World* national title in the 1956/57 season.) Mullins and his pub landlord, George Bryant, were both rewarded with new cars. H.R.H. Prince Philip presented the prizes.

The runner-up, with 250 points, was Bill Duddy who played out of the *Rose & Thistle*, Frimley Green (Yes, *that* Frimley Green), Surrey. Duddy won a 'free return flight for two to Istanbul'. In the following autumn Duddy entered the *News of the World* competition and eventually was crowned the 1968 champion.

Tenth and last place in the seven-dart tourney went to C. Lucas of the *White Horse Hotel*, Openshaw, Manchester, with 145 points. His prize was a TV set.

I wonder what scores the stars of today with their ultra-slim tungstens would achieve. I tried it and scored more than Lucas's score but then realised I had thrown *nine* darts rather than seven...

DARTS AND THE INCAS

I do hope that no one was taken in by the 'Did the Incas invent darts?' item in *DDN* #60. As you know, I usually include something daft for the April issue but, for the reasons stated, this did not happen this year. So taking Dartoid's April Fool piece as my lead, I replied to his expounded theory and hope that you enjoyed it.

One thing though...

The 1937 *Darts Weekly News* article 'How did darts originate?' referred to in the piece was genuine.

EUROPE CUP VII – MALTA 1990 – BELGIUM EXCELS

Back in January I received an interesting enquiry from Rudy Weymeersch of Belgium who had been over in the UK during the PDC Q School in Wigan. Rudy wanted to know more about the Europe Cup held in Malta in 1990 because, as he said, "The Belgian team did good on this Europacup."

Rudy was right of course. Belgium did indeed 'do good' coming equal fifth (out of seventeen) in the Men's event (behind the England, Wales, Sweden and Scotland) whilst the Belgian Ladies' team came second; runners-up to England.

Although the short report in the December 1990 issue of *Darts World* titled 'Clean sweep for England' was clearly biased towards England, the results show that Belgium's Erik Clarijs reached the last eight of the Men's event whilst his countrymen Felix Smout and Bruno Raes reached the last sixteen.



In the 'Fours' event Belgium reached the semi-final whilst in the ladies' events Vicky Prium (pictured above right) was runner-up in the final to England's Sue Edwards and Rita Lagace and Vicky were runners-up to Sharon Colclough and Sue Edwards in the Women's Pairs. (Photo: PC/DW Archive. Used with permission.)

Is this the best-ever performance by a Belgian team in the Europe Cup?

WETHERSPOON'S CLIC SARGENT DARTS TOURNAMENT

In last month's issue I mentioned the sterling work being undertaken here in the UK by the pub chain J. D. Wetherspoon (JDW) raising hundreds of thousands of pounds for CLIC Sargent, the charity for children and young people with cancer.

Shortly after *DDN* #60 was published I received the following additional information about the tournament from Richard Marriner, Senior Area Manager for the company. Richard wrote:

We couldn't have got this up and running if it wasn't for the support from several people including McCoys and WINMAU, who helped supply dartboards and equipment.

The tournament was teams of five, all employees of JDW. One team game worth two points (501), followed by five single games (301) worth a point each. In the early rounds they didn't need to finish on a double to keep momentum in the game and many were first time participants to the sport.

The semi and final of the heats and regional and national finals all were straight in and doubles to finish. The area heats also had some fun games such as 'Killer' and 'Round the Clock' which participants paid to enter to win spot prizes. This helped us raise further funds for CLIC Sargent.

The National finals had two groups of six, with the top four going through to a knockout round. Lots of ladies took part throughout the whole competition and several teams in the national finals had lady players.

Richard then revealed that, at a recent meeting, it had been agreed to look into the possibility of running 'a customer tournament' at each host venue in the same week the company holds the heats for the staff competition (late Jan 2016). Richard added that, if the tournament went ahead it was likely to include a small entry fee, with prizes.

I sincerely hope the customer competition goes ahead and that the staff tournament continues and raises even more money for CLIC Sargent.

You will recall that I once believed that there were no dartboards in JDW pubs but I am wrong! How times change! Richard estimates that 'around 50-60 of their outlets now have *permanent* dartboards.

JOCKY WILSON

Back in 2005 I was asked by the editor of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* to write an entry on Leighton Rees, the Welsh darts ace who won the first-ever Embassy World Professional Darts Championship in 1978. This contribution was the first entry in the *ODNB* for a darts player. The entry was first published in 2007.



Last year I was again approached by the editor of the *ODNB* to write an entry on John Thomas 'Jocky' Wilson and needless to say I was thrilled. I submitted my entry in early April this year and am pleased to confirm that it has recently been approved for publication. Thus Jocky has secured a place amongst the 'notable people' of the UK in this most prestigious of

publications.

AND FINALLY...

I am indebted to my life-long friend (and new subscriber to *DDN*) Martin Driver for bringing my attention to the cutting (below) culled from the *Daily Express* earlier this year.



The story reveals that two ladies playing in an all-women's league in Canvey Island, Essex, UK have a combined age of (Wait for it!)... *One hundred and eighty!*

Joan Dawson (left in the picture) is 88 and her friend Joan Burrows is 92. Total 180 years! And not just that, these girls recently actually won a doubles final.

Great grandmother Joan Burrows told the *Daily Express*, "I do think playing darts keeps us young." If that's the case Joan then Martin and I should live forever! Joan added, "I am quite good at adding up and taking away which is really important because you have to have to know the best numbers to go for to win."

So it doesn't look as though Joan B. will be wanting to buy a copy of my new book *Darts. Skills. Techniques. Tactics* when it is published by The Crowood Press later this year!

That's it for this month. I hope you have enjoyed this latest issue of *DDN*. Please send all feedback to me at info@patrickchaplin.com.

Patrick

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