

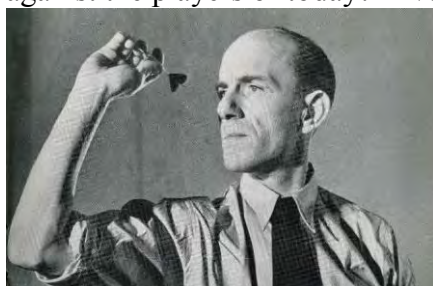
DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 64 September 2015



PLAYERS OF THE PAST v PLAYERS OF TODAY - THE DEBATE GOES ON

I don't think that, in the four years since I started writing *DDN*, I have had such a response to one simple question, "How would the darts players of yesterday fare against the players of today?" I've had some really positive feedback from last month's *DDN* and the on-going 'players of the past v players of today' debate. It's also amazing how one question can set people off at a tangent, leading to memories of those great players of the past.



Talking of great players. The man in the photo, left, was a famous British match and exhibition player of the 1940s and 1950s and was the first man to produce a darts tuition book. Who is he? He's a forgotten hero of the hockey. Find out more in this issue.

I am very happy to continue the 'greats of today v greats of yesterday' discussion for this issue and the October *DDN* (if necessary) but will draw a line under it after that if only because so many other items have been put on the back-burner while the debate ensued.

RETIREMENT? NO...

Thanks too to all those who have written telling me not to retire. Amongst them was Mike Bailey who contacted me to say

Hi Patrick, great issue as always...Thanks again, and never stop doing the Darts' Newsletters as it is the only thing I seem to enjoy reading nowadays.

Seems like I'll be around for a while yet.

This month's issue was nearly full before I started trying to embed the photos so it's less images and more words this time.

THE 'GREAT DEBATE' CONTINUES...

Phil the Postman wrote:

Great DDN this month. Following on from last month's issue, I have spoken to many of our more senior local past players and they have given me the impression that the best of yesteryear would not be able to compete with the best of today. In their opinion the improvement of darts technology and the more competitive mind set of today's players enables them to concentrate over long matches of several sets.

Globe-trotting Dr. Eddie Norman e-mailed me to say:

Thank you so much for another wonderful DDN, which is always a great pleasure to receive. I particularly liked the article regarding 'Would players of yesteryear beat today's players?'

Leighton Rees [the first Embassy World Professional Darts Champion who Eddie used to manage] at one stage played with brass darts and years ago to get 14, 15 or even 16 darts legs regularly was great; a 12 or 13 darts leg would be fantastic. Today players are hitting 10, 11 and even 9-dart legs almost every day.

I do not think anyone [from the past] could ever compete with some of today's players like Phil Taylor and Michael Van Gerwen but years ago, like in any sport, top darts players were the best of their day.

I bet Jim Pike and Joe Hitchcock didn't make the same victorious facial expressions that we have come to know and love with Michael van Gerwen! (Photo: Tip Top Pics. Used with permission.)



The DDN reader who started all this, Mick Simpson wrote:

Well it's safe to say that about old and new players has opened a great debate!

One more thing I would like to throw into the debate is I doubt if the greats of yesteryear played for hours a day just practicing? Do you happen to know if any proper old players are still around to ask that question? I would love to know.

Brilliant write up about Leo [Newstead]...He threw on so many different boards at so many different lengths and different games yet still managed to beat most of the best the country had to offer! I know Dave Whitcombe is a very good player. If you talk to him could you ask him if he could do that?

Thanks again for one fantastic read. Well done Patrick and thank God you're not stopping.

I asked Dave and here's what he had to say:

In answer to the question about players from yesteryear practising for hours on end, I think you have to weigh that against how many times they may have done exhibitions. Pike and Hitchcock probably played the most during the war years, and afterwards for breweries doing exhibitions.

Most pro's today class that as practice rather than just pounding the board on their own. As the tournaments were nowhere near the amount of today, my guess is that apart from exhibitions, they played down the pub to keep their eye in.

I have played on many different throws and different games. I started at 8 feet on a doubles board, then 7 foot 6 on a treble. However, the News of the World remained 8 foot as you know.

Travelling round I have done exhibitions on both double and treble boards at different lengths in different parts of the country - local rules applied. This included anything from 6 foot 6 inches to 8 feet, and 301, 501, 1001, and sometimes double in and out.

Ability can never be blocked no matter what the game or board. A pro player can adapt to anything. They can even adapt (within reason) to darts different from their own.

Give Lionel Messi a pair of hobnail boots and he will still run rings around an amateur.

In his reply regarding 'yesteryear v today' Phil the Postman also wrote:

Your piece about Bob Anderson reminded me of when a few years ago now, I had, courtesy of Unicorn Darts, the opportunity to ask him several questions.

I asked Bob that whilst he had had a glittering career as a player, was he disappointed that he failed to win a particular title such as the coveted News of the World championship? His reply was that he could never get excited at the prospect of three legs of darts from eight feet!

I mentioned this to Bob and he replied:

Yes, that sounds like what I said, and I would just add that I was not intending to undermine the value of that tournament, but in my opinion, the best of three legs is always a bit of a lottery!

Phil continued:

I feel this answer goes a long way to prove the point that a fairly competent league player has a good chance against most professionals at the short game and at the longer distance, as reigning World Champion Jocky Wilson, Welsh stalwart Alan Evans and the flamboyant Bobby George were to find out in 1982 when our local lad Roy Morgan playing from the Wheel-O-Worfield [Worfield, Shropshire] took the title, along with the five grand [£5,000] prize. [Morgan, pictured right, (Image: PC/DW Archive. Used with permission) the Midland Counties champion, a 33-1 outsider at the start of the tournament, beat Jim Hughes, the Wales Divisional champion, 2-1 in the Grand Final at the Wembley Arena.]



ROY MORGAN
Represented by:
T. G. K. Promotions, The Crown Inn, Abbey Foregate,
Shrewsbury. Tel: Shrewsbury (0743) 242972

I also had the opportunity to have a chat with the late, great Barry Twomlow at the Coventry Open some years ago and the conversation came round to what he considered to be his best achievements in darts. He said along with

winning the Swedish Open, being News of the World champion would rank as his greatest achievement.....not bad for best of three from eight feet.

After winning the *News of the World* Individual Darts Championship in 1969, Barry Twomlow toured the world as global Darts Ambassador for Unicorn Products.

Finally from Phil:

Great piece about the Chaplin Cup medal.....fingers crossed you get to hear something about it.

Nothing yet...

DR. DARTS' NEW BOOK – YOUR CHANCE TO WIN

Early signs are that my new book *Darts. Skills. Tactics. Techniques* is proving popular with fans. All the details you need can be found at www.crowood.com or by e-mailing me at info@patrickchaplin.com.

Anyone in the UK wishing to purchase a signed copy of my new book by cheque can do so by sending me a cheque for **£16.00** (which includes postage and packing) made payable to 'Patrick Chaplin' and sent to me at **50 Norfolk Road, Maldon, Essex, CM9 6AT**. Please ensure that you include your name and postal address and, if you would like a specific dedication, like me know what to write.

BUT NOW, as promised, I have one signed copy of my book up for grabs which, as a subscriber to *DDN*, you have a chance of winning. All you need to do is answer the following simple question, the answer to which can be found within this issue.



Question: Which *DDN* subscriber was responsible for starting the ‘greats of yesteryear v greats of today’ debate?

E-mail your answer to me at info@patrickchaplin.com. The deadline date for entries is **30th September 2015**. The winner will be announced in the October issue.

OLD DARTS VIDEOS AND FILMS

Steffen Heinrich, one of my subscribers from Germany wrote to me recently thanking me for the ‘news v olds’ feature, adding that for years he has been looking for old videos, stories and information about the old darts champions like Joe Hitchcock and Jim Pike.

Clearly my research published in *DDN* helps Steffen with the stories and information but what of old videos? Steffen wrote:

I found some small videos at British Pathe on the web but this cannot be all. Do you think so? I have some old videos from the News of the World championships 1974. This is the earliest date I have videos from. Can you help me with some more?

My dart guys here in Germany should like to learn a little bit more from the earlier days from our fantastic game.

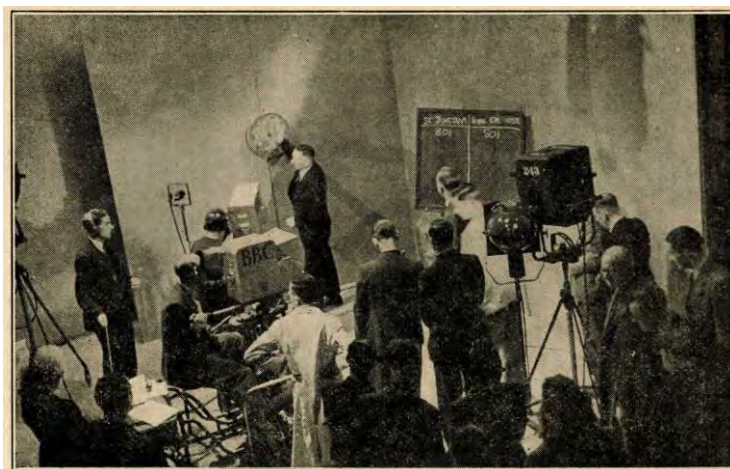
*All the best and don't retire! But take care of yourself... *smile. We need you!*

I replied to Steffen as follows:

I am so pleased that you and your darts friends in Germany are enjoying looking into the early days of darts.

Pathe News is probably the best source of old film/videos of the great players of the distant past such as Joe Hitchcock and Jim Pike but also check out YouTube as some really unusual darts stuff can be found there too. Pike and Leo Newstead can also be seen in a pub scene in an old 1950s English film 'It Always Rains of Sunday.'

*Very little TV footage has survived pre-1974. However, you might be interested in the attached photograph of a televised darts match dating back to the late 1930s. [See photo below, left. Image ©Patrick Chaplin. **Correction:** The photo is from the mid-1940s.]*



If you enjoy darts and other pub games you could look at The Indoor League footage which is available on DVD and dates back to the early 1970s.

As far as the very early days of darts is concerned, my book Darts in England 1900-39 - A social history (Manchester: Manchester University

Press, 2012, paperback) would be the best place to start...

As for retiring, I have been overwhelmed by the number of DDN fans who have told me not to. Clearly there is still a demand for my work so I'll carry on researching and writing about the sport we all love.

So can any DDN subscribers help Steffen to find more old videos of those early stars?

If you can help, please contact me at info@patrickchaplin.com.

I forgot to mention to Steffen that one of England's forgotten darts stars, George Caley can be found on Pathe News. A star of the hockey (as it was then) back in the

1940s and 1950s, George, from East Anglia (see photo on the front page of this issue) took on all the other darts stars in his time and, like Leo Newstead, beat most of them on at least one occasion.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE GAME OF DARTS (1950)

Stanley Lowy MBE of Unicorn Products wrote to me recently regarding his father Frank Lowy's *A Short History of the Game of Darts* which was an excellent early attempt to reconstruct the history of our sport. Stanley, a long-time *DDN* subscriber who I first met back in the mid-1980s when I was just starting out researching darts, wrote:

As always I have read your August DDN with great interest and indeed have at once ordered a copy of your book, which I look forward to reading. 65 years ago in our first comprehensive catalogue "The Unicorn Book of Darts" my father included brief articles on the History of Darts, The Rules of Play, Equipment and Techniques and Hints. You may care to read them at

<http://www.unicorn-darts.com/community/book-of-darts/Detail.aspx?dbid=1>

This was the work of a pioneer in the industry and curiously in the year when you were born.

Thank you so much Stanley. I recommend that everyone takes a look at the above link and indeed all other sections of *The Unicorn Book of Darts*. It's a fascinating book – and the same age as I am!

LEO NEWSTEAD – PART THREE



In a series of three articles which began in #62, I am tracking the history of one of Britain's greatest darting legends, Leo Newstead. Newstead was known as 'The Champion of Champions'; a player who had beaten all his top darting contemporaries at one time or another. Not only was he a champion but he also a member of both the famous *News of the World* Team of Darts Champions during the Second World War and, after the war, of the equally famous (here in the UK) St. Dunstan Four.

In this issue I publish the second half of an interview that first appeared in a darts annual dated 1948 between *The Dart* newspaper's Frank Roberts and the great man himself.

At the outbreak of War, Leo enlisted in the Police Force and, when in 1942 the Police Championships were resumed, he entered and won what was then the Metropolitan Police Individual Championship. The following year the Chief Constable of Derby offered prizes for a National Championship and, again, Leo won, beating P. C. [Police Constable] Brown of the City Police in the final. In 1944 the Police Athletic Association recognised the competition as official. Leo again won to complete the hat-trick. And yet again in 1945, in which year the runner-up was that fine player

Sergeant Bill Jacobs who, from October 1945, to July 1948, played regularly for the St. Dunstan Four.

Newstead was afterwards demobbed and unable to defend his title which was won in 1946 by Jacobs; the latter was runner-up in 1947 to P. C. Hooper (Hampton).

Leo cherishes memories of many fine “battles” against players some of whom he considers to be the country’s best.

Newstead toured as an exhibition player during the 1950s and 1960s, much of his time spent on playing for charitable causes. He died in 1980, aged 71, following an operation in a North London hospital. In his obituary for Newstead, darts author and coach Noel E. Williamson, in *Darts World* (February 1980) wrote that he was

always consistently good, and his style of throwing was superb, and a perfect example of arm movement for the beginner to follow. Standing perfectly erect when throwing, feet firmly behind the ‘oche’, and no movement except for the right arm. It was said that it was this action that made him the player he was – the Champion of Champions.

If you are a new subscriber and have missed the first two parts of this story, please contact me at info@patrickchaplin.com and I will send you issues 62 and 63.

HAPPY TO HELP – THE HARROWS/NODOR SUPABULL DARTBOARD

Doug Schofield, from Chicago, contacted me a while back about a dartboard he had bought for \$3 at his local ‘Goodwill store’ (See image, below right). Doug had written about it on darts forums, received several replies but none that were definitive. He wrote:

What I received as responses were primarily theories. ...the board says ‘Harrows’ at the top and ‘Nodor Supabull’ at the bottom with ‘Made in Britain’ below that. Now in my short research I have seen plenty of Harrows and Nodors and Supabulls but not one that says all three on the same board. Also wouldn't it say ‘Made in Wales’ or ‘Made in England’ normally? Do I have something unique here or is it nothing special? Either way I like it. I know nothing about these things so any information you can provide is appreciated.



The definitive answer came from Robert Pringle, Sales and Marketing Director at Harrows Darts Technology. He told me:

Patrick, I know all about this as I was involved the development of it. The board dates from about 1983. At the time we were not known for boards...more darts and parts. NODOR were renowned for boards.

We had a very active distributor in Holland called JDC sport who were promoting NODOR boards. To help raise our profile over in the Netherlands we got NODOR to make these “double billed” boards. We ran them for 2 or 3 years and then switched to Harrows only branding.....

As far as I can remember we did not sell them elsewhere, so it is surprising that this board is in the states..... Anyway...I don't suppose there are many left in the world after all these years so it might have some rarity value for a collector. I'm not sure how many boards were made 3000 or so perhaps. That is a guess.

The reference to ‘Made in Britain’ was because that sold product back in the 1980s. In any event Harrows was based in England and NODOR in Wales so ‘Made in Britain’, as Robert pointed out was ‘a good mid position from a marketing perspective.’

Vince Bluck, Managing Director of NODOR International Ltd., also verified these facts.

AND FINALLY...



A good friend of mine who knows I collect darts memorabilia recently sent me a ‘BULLS EYE’ pocket darts sharpener (see left) which was provided (presumably) free by the Greenall Whitley brewery possibly during the 1970s. Greenall Whitley are based in St. Helens, Lancashire and I was wondering if any UK subscriber can help date this unusual item more accurately.

If you can help please contact me at info@patrickchaplin.com.

That's all for this month.

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