

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 65 October 2015

CATCHING UP



First and foremost a warm welcome to all new subscribers to *DDN* which include my first-ever subscriber from Guyana, Roland Kanhai.

In this issue I'm also catching up on some news and feedback which had to be put on the back-burner for all sorts of reasons over recent months. These include more on the first professional darts player, a report of success for a university student I was interviewed by a few months back, an information request relating to Schofield Darts and a question posed to *you* my readers about the most prestigious darts tournament of all.

But first some sad news...

OBITUARY – EDDIE BROWN

It was with sadness that the world of darts learnt of the passing of Suffolk darts ace Eddie Brown in August.

Eddie (b. 7th November 1936) (pictured below) played out of the *Magpie* pub in his home village of Stonham Parva, near Stowmarket, and reached the finals of the *News of the World* Individual Darts Championship a record six times as the Eastern

WINNER 1962
"News of the World" Individual Darts Championship
ENGLAND AND WALES



Teddy Brown

Counties Divisional Champion, in 1961, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1970 and 1974.

Losing finalist in 1961 to Alec Adamson, the North of England Divisional Champion (who played out of the *Prince of Wales*, Hetton-le-Hole, County Durham) 2-1, Eddie was to return to the Empire Pool, Wembley, on Saturday 28th April the following year, this time to lift the prestigious trophy.

On that day, at about 10 p.m., in front of a massive crowd, he defeated the Western Counties Divisional Champion, Dennis Follett (who played out of the *Cadeleigh Arms*, Cadeleigh, near Tiverton, Devon) 2-0 in the final. Eddie had defeated strong opposition on his way to that final including the legendary Tom Barrett (London and Home Counties champion) 2-1 in the quarter finals. At the time of his victory Eddie was the youngest-ever winner of the championship at 25 years and 172 days.

On hearing of Eddie's death, fellow Suffolk darts player and 1983 Embassy World Professional Darts Champion Keith Deller told the *East Anglian Daily Times*, "I was very young when I knew Eddie. I remember playing him in competitions... He was a brilliant darts player and a great character." Winning the *News of the World* did not

phase Eddie. Keith Deller said, "Eddie could have gone on the circuit but he was a farmer who enjoyed what he was doing. He was a country boy who used to love his darts."

Janet Wright who, with her husband Alan, was a friend of Eddie's for many years, told the *East Anglian Daily Times* that Eddie was "devoted to his darts but he got as much pleasure going round the village on his bicycle dropping off vegetables to people as he did anything." Another villager and long-term friend, George Finbow said that Eddie was "modest about his darts but we all knew him to be an absolute genius when it came to the sport.

So fame did not interest this wizard of the dartboard. Eddie worked on the same farm for around fifty years and played his darts for pure pleasure.

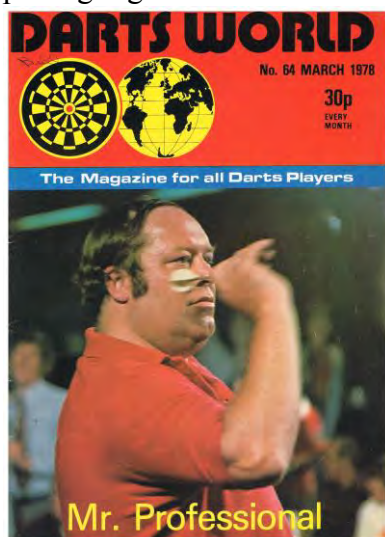
Eddie died at his home in Stonham Parva on 26th August.

(My thanks to Eddie's nephew Graham Kerridge for providing additional information and the photograph (used with permission) from his archive.)

BRITISH DARTS ORGANISATION (BDO) EVENTS ON YOUTUBE

DDN readers will remember that in last month's issue I mentioned Steffen Heinrich's request for more information about where videos of players of the past could be found.

Purely coincidentally I have now received an e-mail from Andy Scott who is busy pulling together the full archive of BDO televised matches for a discrete channel on



YouTube. Andy was looking not only for a list of all televised BDO events but also for copies of Colin Saunders's two-volume, masterwork *Embassy and Lakeside World Professional Darts Championships 1978 to 2012* but also. (The image, left, is the front page of *Darts World*, March 1978, showing the first Embassy World Professional Champion, Wales's Leighton Rees.)

I appreciate that this may not be what Steffen has been looking for as he was searching for videos of Jim Pike, Joe Hitchcock, etc., but this new venture is something that will surely be a valuable source for anyone looking for recordings of BDO events over the past four decades. Andy wrote:

Thanks for your help finding Colin. We have purchased both books from him and it was really nice talking to him. I am sure he is the sort of person (like yourself) who I could listen to for hours when it comes to darts history.

Basically, I am working for a company who has acquired the full archive of BDO televised darts for archiving on YouTube. We are currently going through a number of large boxes of old VHS tapes and DVDs and listing them accordingly.

As a darts players with a keen statistical brain myself, I thought I remembered that such a book was produced a few years back and thankfully you have confirmed that I didn't just dream it all! The reason we would want copies of these volumes is for the future creation of compilations including high finishes, 180s, early appearances of players who have gone on to become household names in darts (Peter Wright, Gary Anderson, etc.) and just for a general interest.

That would be fantastic if you would mention our YouTube channel in your newsletter. We are looking to increase our subscribers but obviously, because it is a work in progress, it's not the only place that you can view BDO darts online (although eventually it will be!).

The footage has come from the BDO and this channel is the official BDO archive for all their darts through the years. There are boxes and boxes of VHS tapes, DVDs etc. to go through (and they aren't labelled so it's like a lucky dip!) so we have no idea what we have (yet) but currently I am uploading all the videos from 2003.

For DDN readers' information, John's ever-growing BDO YouTube channel can be viewed via

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC92zCMeQJdH8ChEamXZxSeQ>

A COLLECTOR'S LOT

Sadly I have no news for subscriber Phil Brown whose miniature set of 'Tru-Flite' darts were featured in DDN #63. However, in our continuing e-mail exchange, Phil told me a little about his passion for collecting darts memorabilia and how he has seen many of the greats of the sport play. He told me:

As you may or may not be aware I am a collector of darts memorabilia etc., including "Bully". At present I have accumulated over 200 sets of darts from boot fairs and eBay; Jim Pike's, Tom Barrett's etc. My intention is to build a games room in my garden and have all the darts etc., on the walls.



I must admit I don't play much but I enjoy collecting. I started playing darts when I was 12 and the great Charlie Ellix use to live in the same flats as me and took me under his wing. From that I used to go to all the dart tournaments with him and on Mondays to Kings Cross to watch the super league darts with all the greats; Tony Brown, Tony Sontag [pictured left in 1975], Kevin Saxty and Ray Cornibert...

I used to know Eric Bristow quite well but I doubt that he would remember me but I did used to look after his beers while watching him play in the preliminary rounds. On the Thursday before the 1977 WINMAU World Masters in which Charlie had to qualify on the Friday, Charlie had a night at our local "The Royal Scot" where he just played on bulleyes & 25's...he was hitting three bullseyes with three darts but the icing on the

cake was when he hit nine consecutive bullseyes which was fantastic to watch and people who were in the pub at the time will always remember that night!

Ellix qualified for the 1977 WINMAU World Masters and made it to the quarter finals where he met an on-form (Wasn't he always back then?) Eric Bristow and was beaten 3-1. Bristow went on to claim the title beating Paul Reynolds by the same margin in the final.

TALKING OF BULLY...

Andrew Wood, creator and writer of the TV gameshow *Bullseye* wrote to me recently to say

Thank you for the July issue of DDN. Always welcome.

Just in case you don't know Challenge Sky have bought Bullseye Series 3, 4 5, 7 and 8. As I'm sure you are aware Bullseye has been on TV in an unbroken run for the past 35 years. It will be on till May 2017 and beyond. It is a record that I am very proud to have on my CV. I thought that Bullseye would be a hit when I first wrote it but I never dreamed it would last so long. A big thank you to all the loyal Bullseye Fans. Bullseye has over 60,600 Facebook fans so please come and join us on Facebook. My daughter Laura spends hours working on the Bullseye social media.



Laura told me “We have had up to 250,000 viewers as that has been our highest viewing figure to date since being on Challenge TV.”

Andrew added

I recall having a long conversation with Phil 'The Power' Taylor in the studio in Leeds about Bullseye. I said darts on TV in the UK can say “Thank you” to Bullseye for help making darts a sport that is now much more friendly to TV broadcasters and that Bullseye has helped darts have a much wider audience than ever before.

Phil at that time agreed with me. He said that Bullseye was such a big and important show that any Pro Dart Player should want to be on it. It gave lesser known Pro Dart Players the chance of being seen with the show being in over 14 million homes each week and help make a name for themselves.

(Note: ‘Bully’ logo © Andrew Wood. Used with permission.)

THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS DARTS TOURNAMENT OF THE LATE 1970s AND 1980s

Way, way back in January subscriber Paul Gilles wrote:

I have been a darts fan since the late 70s and that was my favourite period. What I would like ask is in the 80s they said that the Embassy World and the World Masters were the two most prestigious. After those what tournaments would you have said were the next most prestigious?

Was it the Unipart British Prof, British Open, MFI World Matchplay, Butlin's Grand Masters, Gold Cup, News of the world or any others? ...I really want to know what the top five most prestigious tournaments were in those days.

I replied:

You're right of course. The Embassy was always the most prestigious tournament of not only the late 1970s but through the 1980s and a good part of the 1990s. Some might even argue that it remains the one to win – the original.

That, of course, is what the News of the World was for many, many years, 'The title that every darts player wanted to win.' It was the only chance back in the day for an 'ordinary man' to become a national champion. Some winners became famous (like Tom Barrett) whilst others just went back to their local and played on.

Then came the Phonogram (later the WINMAU) Masters. I could argue that this was a much more difficult title to win than any other with every player, known or unknown, starting from the same point. Sadly that changed in 2007 when the top 8 were allowed free passes to the final 16. It was never the same after that.

Apart from those three major tournaments it's difficult to decide what the other two (of any Top 5). The Gold Cup perhaps but what about the short-lived Unicorn World Pairs? That's worthy of my vote. Others would disagree I'm sure.

So, with Paul's agreement, I'm throwing his question over to you, my DDN readers. Do you agree with my top three? What would be *your* top three (or five) and why? (Our overseas darts fans might say the North American Open.)

Send me your views to info@patrickchaplin.com.

FOLLOW UP ON ISSUE #59 - ROBBIE DOVE ACHIEVES A 'FIRST'

Some DDN readers may recall that in the April 2015 issue (#59) I mentioned that I had been interviewed by student Robbie Dove (pictured below, left) who was in his third and final year at Bournemouth University for a BA (Hons) in Radio.



Robbie had interviewed numerous darts personalities including Bobby George, referee Russ Bray, commentator John Gwynne and former ladies' Number One Jayne Kempster and

wanted to talk to me about darts history and the culture of the modern game.

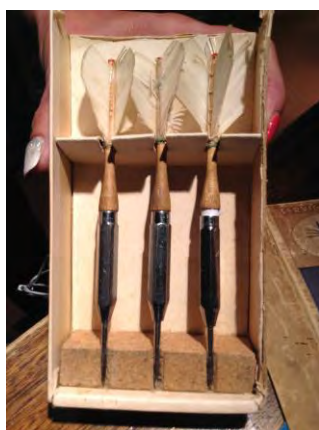
A short time after my interview Robbie e-mailed me to say:

I'm just writing to inform you that I achieved a grade in which I'm very satisfied with, for my documentary on darts. The piece got 76%, which equates to a first. There was particularly positive feedback given on your contribution, saying how having a darts historian gave some interesting historical insight to the piece. My piece wouldn't have been as good as it was if it wasn't for your contribution, so I'd like to thank you once again for your willingness to help me!

I am always happy to help and encourage students who choose darts as their subject. Indeed I was contacted only a short time ago by a young man who is planning to research a PhD in a darts-related topic.

CAN YOUR HELP? – SERVICES BRAND 'HEXAGON' DARTS

Andrew Clennett e-mailed me recently about a set of vintage darts discovered during the refurbishment of an old house in Great Limber, Lincolnshire. Andrew wrote:



We have found some old darts. Services range. Hexagon plated (6-sided) darts fitted with feathers. But we can't find anything about them on the Internet. Would you be able to help with the history? We can send pictures.

Andrew has been good enough to provide some photos of both the darts and the box, two of which are shown here.



Sadly I can find nothing about the company in my archive and the box reveals no clues as to where the company was based. I told Andrew the major problem is that, especially post-World War Two, there were *hundreds* of companies selling (but not necessarily making) darts. Many had their darts made for them by light engineering companies and simply added their brand name and packaging.

I know for a fact that there are many darts collectors out there so perhaps you can help by providing more information about this particular company – **Services Brand**.

THE FIRST DARTS PROFESSIONAL

Following on from earlier discussions about who was the first-ever professional darts player, global darts ambassador Dr. Eddie Norman joined the debate by writing to me last April with his views. With apologies for the delay in publishing his thoughts here's what Eddie (who used to manage both Alan Evans and Leighton Rees) had to say:

As far as my memory goes Alan Evans was always recognised as the first professional darts player of the 1970's era, and Alan always billed himself as such and was introduced at county and international matches as such and also the 'true' Prince of Wales. (Obviously... he was behind Jim Pike and Joe Hitchcock.)

Alan had no job around in the winter of 1970 and was earning a living with his £50 nightly exhibitions and challenge matches, and Rothmans [a cigarette company] actually paid him a fee to play county games along with his expenses unbeknown to many of his county team members 98 per cent who had full time jobs when he first played county matches even before the BDO was formed. Then when he hit the News of the World final, his fee went up to £75 a night plus expenses, the same as Leighton. Quite a fee then!

So I would stick my neck out and say definitely Alan Evans was the first professional player of the era.

In his reply above Eddie mentions both Pike and Hitchcock as preceding Alan Evans as professional players but I think that they were both *part-time*, each having other jobs (Pike having his own darts company and Hitchcock running a pub) so let's agree for now that Evans was the first *full-time* professional darts player even though I know there are a good number of fans supporting Alan Glazier's case in this regard.

DARTS. SKILLS. TACTICS. TECHNIQUES.

Word from my publisher is that sales are going well for my new book *Darts. Skills. Tactics. Techniques*. All the details you need can be found at www.crowood.com or by e-mailing me at info@patrickchaplin.com.



My thanks to all those *DDN* subscribers who have purchased copies and who are, hopefully, enjoying it. 'Battling Billy' certainly is. He wrote:

Very thorough job Patrick. I think that if you had to pick just one book to set you up in darts as a beginner or already as a player, yours would be it. I've already picked up a few things that have altered my throw, coming back further towards the cheek and getting yourself right to make sure you are playing at your best in matches. Loads in there. I've read the first two chapters so far but have flicked to the back a bit to check out the throw and improving your skills.

Great pictures too, a good mix of old and new ones, plenty of practise routines and loads of different games I didn't know of. Fantastic book Patrick. It should sell well for many years to come.

Steve Metalman has written a very positive review for thedartsforum.co.uk which can be viewed via the following link:

<http://www.thedartsforum.co.uk/showthread.php?24210-Book-Review-Darts-Skills-Tactics-Techniques&p=656503#post656503>

As Steve told me, "Playing darts is such a diverse subject, but there's enough in there to point folk in the right direction."

Anyone in the UK wishing to purchase a signed copy of my new book 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. For readers outside of the UK wishing to purchase a signed copy, please contact me at the e-mail address shown above.

AND FINALLY...

Probably my worst-ever record is that it took me nearly *two years* to reply to subscriber Alec Hird's request for information about Schofield darts (pictured below, right) and it's taken me another six months to find space in *DDN* to reproduce the data. Alec was enquiring about the dimensions and weight of the famous Schofield Darts which were originally made in York with the business transferring later to Bridlington, east Yorkshire. So, eventually, with the help of the 'Curator of Darts', Patrick Dee, I was able to forward the following information to Alec:



Heavy - Weight (including the point but minus stem and flight) 26gram; Length (from the point of the point to where the barrel meets the stem) 3.5ins; Diameter of barrel 1cm.

Light - Weight (including the point but minus stem and flight) 17gram; Length (from the point of the point to where the barrel meets the stem) 3ins; Diameter of barrel 7mm.

I am certain that, at this very moment, collectors across the globe are checking these measurements, etc., against their own sets of Schofield's...

MY DARTS RESEARCH IS SPONSORED BY



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