

DR DARTS' NEWSLETTER

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CONGRATULATIONS!

Before telling you all what else is in this issue of *DDN* I want to congratulate a very special couple.



On 14th July 2010 eight-time Lakeside Women's World Darts Champion Trina Gulliver married her partner, fellow England darts player Sue Biddle, in a civil partnership held at Banwell Castle, Somerset. The ceremony took place in the presence of close family and friends. Trina told me "Sue and I had a wonderful day. It was such a very special time for both of us." The image shows the happy couple cutting the cake.

Unfortunately Trina and Sue have not had time (as yet) for a honeymoon although they did manage to spend a few days together in a log cabin in Norfolk after the ceremony. Trina told me, "We are waiting to fit a proper holiday abroad in the sun in the near future."

I know both Trina and Sue well and wish them all the very best for their future life together.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Issue Seven.

As promised a couple of issues ago I have at last produced a compact history of darts on Gibraltar and once again apologise to my friends out on The Rock for not getting my act together earlier.

Also in this issue I'll be looking into the OPUS 'Marble' dartboard and asking if you can help a contact who is trying to record the details of all the matches that Eric Bristow played in his professional career. YES. *All* of them!

I'll also be reviewing not one but TWO new books from Paul Seigel (aka 'Dartoid') and relating the story of a young man who was given some National Darts Association of Great Britain (NDAGB) memorabilia whilst fixing a lady's plumbing!

Oh yes and there's more about Trina later. But for now...

ONWARD! ISSUE SEVEN!

FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES

(a) Wheelchair Darts

You will probably recall that in a couple of previous issues I mentioned the fabulous work being undertaken in Australia by ex-pat Russ Strobel and his invention the 'Wildfire 137' dart frame which enables wheelchair-bound darters to play with able-bodied players.

It has proved such a revelation in his adopted country that the Darts Federation of Australia (DFA) has approved the dart frame for use in its competitions. Not only that, the DFA has recently appointed Russ to the newly created position of Disability Support Officer. He told me recently, "My role is to further promote the Wildfire 137 dart frame and troubleshoot the inclusion of those with disability within the new ruling as we begin its initiation on a National level."

Russ added, "I will mediate on behalf of those in wheelchairs where needed to resolve any issues that may arise in relation to their inclusion in leagues and events. Dealing with enquiries from other countries and offering support through the sharing of established programs and manuals will hopefully become a regular part of my job."

"Australia has taken a huge step forward in its bid to promote the benefits of our sport to others by welcoming those with disability. The challenges of the game along with the supportive nature of the darting fraternity has so much to offer. If ever there was a sport that was tailor-made for rehabilitation after a traumatic event darts is it. It's all about sharing the sport we love and making it accessible to everyone."



I don't think anyone would disagree with any of that and I offer my whole-hearted congratulations and support to Russ and wish him every success in the future. I also hope that darts organisations throughout the globe will consider what *they* are doing to bring the most adaptable of sports within the reach of all those with disabilities. The least anyone can do is to visit Russ's website www.vicdartsCouncil.net and check what exactly he is doing for wheelchair darters.

[The image shows Russ (left) with Kelvin James, President of the DFA and Vice-President of the World Darts Federation.]

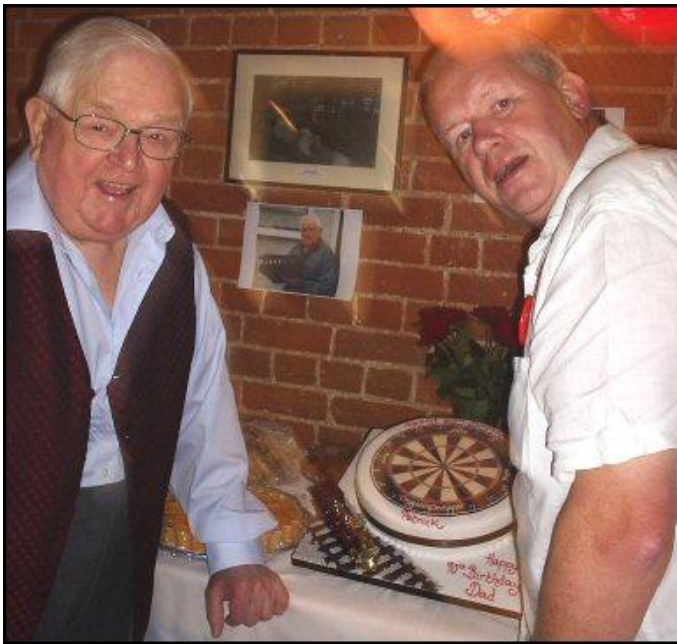
(b) Trina Gulliver – A Question of Sport



Over here in the UK Trina finally appeared on the BBC TV quiz programme *A Question of Sport*. When asked to name the three winners of the men's Embassy/Lakeside World Championship whose surname began with the letter 'B', Trina immediately answered 'Barneveld'. Host Sue Barker said "No." and that threw Trina completely. The three names were Bristow, Burnett and Beaton.

I think Trina should have been given the point as, looking back to the early reports on Barney appearing in the world championships and in the Embassy programme for 1998, the year he first won the Embassy title; there he is shown simply as 'Barneveld'. His full name (including the 'Van') was not used until later.

(c) 60th Birthday



Thanks again to all those who sent me messages of sympathy for reaching the age of 60. However, I was confused by one correspondent who said that neither my dad (who was 90 about the same time) nor I looked our age. That confused me because my dad wasn't even shown in that issue of *DDN*! So, here we are cutting our joint dartboard / train birthday cake.



(d) Further media attention

Yours truly 'Dr. Darts' has been interviewed by the media a couple of times during August. On 10th of the month 'The Bachelor of Darts' Justin Irwin interviewed me for his extremely popular website feature 'The Wrong Bed' and shortly afterwards he confirmed the interview was live at www.justinirwin.com/audio and on iTunes.

The section involving me starts about 19 minutes in. Justin told me "You will hear that we only used one section of the history stuff so far, with the intention to use the other three in upcoming episodes. I hope this is ok." That's certainly OK with me. Justin added "It also means we will plug your *Official Bar Guide to Darts* at least a couple more

times.” So come on folks, if you haven’t before now, is the time to experience ‘The Wrong Bed’.



On 24th August I was interviewed by my *really* local community radio, Saint FM. Presenter Steve ‘Youngie’ Young made me very welcome and we chatted in between songs, weather and news for nearly an hour. I thoroughly enjoyed it and Steve is going to invite me back later in the year to do something similar again. The image shows Steve and me in the studio. Next time I’ll make sure the microphone is moved!

DARTS ON THE ROCK



You all know how keen I am to encourage other darts enthusiasts across the planet to research darts history in their own countries. Even if I had three lifetimes I could never carry out this work myself so I am grateful to all those who are interrogating archives and/or interviewing people involved with the early days of the sport.

One such person is Justin Broton. Justin lives on Gibraltar and is currently President of the Gibraltar Darts Association (GDA) and we first came into contact with each other when Justin was researching darts on the Rock; research that would later be included in the celebrations of fifty years of darts-playing in Gibraltar.

Justin has now traced darts on the Rock to 1952 where a player named Joe Goldwin established the Gibraltar Darts Civilian Association (GDCA). Matches and competitions were played in various venues across Gibraltar. By 1956 the GDCA had enough members to create a league.

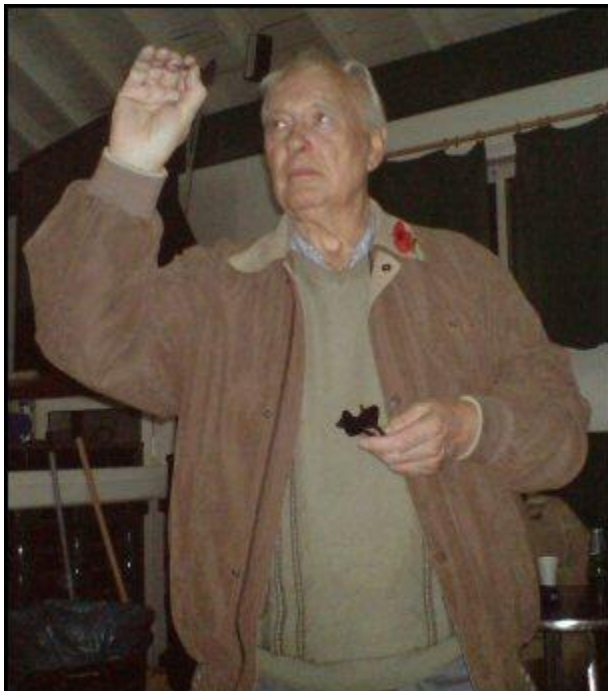
Evolving in parallel with the GDCA was the interest in darts by the military services and the Ministry of Defence. In 1958 the civilian and military darters amalgamated and the Gibraltar Darts Association (GDA) was born.

Since then darts has thrived on the Rock and this has been recognised over the years by top professional darts players paying a visit. Way back in 1960 the famous Joe Hitchcock came to Gib for a series of exhibitions. Joe was, according to Justin, “armed only with a set of three-inch nails.”

In 1991 Phil Taylor came to Gibraltar for an exhibition and for the presentation of trophies. Other world champions who have made the trip in the past include Jocky Wilson, Eric Bristow and Dennis Priestley.

In 1974 Gibraltar became associate member of the newly-formed BDO and in 1977, the inaugural year of the World Darts Federation (WDF), Gibraltar became a full national Federation member.

In the 2003-2004 season the GDA ran its first international event; on offer a place in the WINMAU World Masters. The Gibraltar Open was established that same year. In 2007 eighty-nine players from the Professional Darts Corporation (PDC) arrived in Gibraltar for the first PDC Players’ Championships.



In 2008 the GDA celebrated its 50th anniversary with a gala dinner at the Gala Casino. Special guests included the GDA’s first President Dave Obee (pictured in that same year), Carmelo Ellul, lifetime member and a former President, plus the Rock’s Minister for Sport Hon. Edwin Reyes and Joe Hernandez, the Head of the Gibraltar Government Sports Authority.

Since then the GDA and darts on the Rock have gone from strength to strength and history continues to be made there. In 2009 Bristol player Stuart Foale achieved the first on stage nine-darter on Gibraltar soil in the semi-finals of the Gibraltar Open held at the Central Hall.

In 2010 there was even more cause for celebration when Gibraltar hosted the Mediterranean Cup and won its first overall gold. Dylan Duo, George Federico, Francis

Taylor and Dyson Parody won the team gold, Dylan and George won the Pairs gold whilst Dylan was awarded silver in the Singles.

(Special thanks to Justin Broton. Long may darts thrive on 'The Rock'.)

THE OPUS MARBLE DARTBOARD

Never heard of it?

Neither had I until Denise O'Malley of the Professional Darts Players Association (PDPA) e-mailed me asking if I could help with a question she had received via the PDPA website. The question from David John read as follows:



'I was given a like-new, bristle dartboard that appears to be high-quality sisal construction. It has the staple-free blade wiring (which looks very similar to my NODOR Supamatch). It reads 'OPUS' at the top, 'Marble' on each side (I assume it's because the white bristle sections have a marble-like appearance), and 'Made in England' at the bottom.

The gentleman who gave it to me said he purchased it in 1995. An ink stamp on the back of the board had the retailer info (B&D Darts, San Marcos, Ca.)...however, when I called the telephone number it was no longer in service.

An internet search for 'OPUS dart boards' turned up NOTHING...so if anyone there is familiar with this manufacturer, any info would be greatly appreciated!!'

Once again I made enquiries and it was (once again) Harry Kicks jnr (he who solved the 'Malian' dartboard mystery in Issue 6) who came up trumps. Harry told me that the OPUS 'Marble' dartboard (pictured) was manufactured at Haverhill, Suffolk, England in the mid-1990s by Johnny Leach (jnr) (son of the famous English table-tennis champion Johnny Leach OBE). Johnny Snr ran a company called Jubilee Sports that made table-tennis equipment but his son thought he could add darts cabinets to the product line in the first instance. Jnr then experimented with dartboards.

Although the material of the OPUS Marble *looks* like bristle it is not sisal. It is actually polypropylene (plastic). This material was treated in a similar way to sisal being converted into biscuits (as with the sisal bristle process) and it can be pressed together to form a dartboard. As with sisal the polypropylene was crushed and flattened by using heat to produce a smooth surface on the face of the dartboard which, in the case of the OPUS presented a marbled effect. However, that was where any similarity to a sisal dartboard ended.

The main reason the OPUS 'Marble' dartboard was not a success was that when the darts entered the dartboard the plastic fibres were pushed back into the board but (unlike the bristle) those fibres did not spring back when the darts were removed. Thus the 'Marble' soon became matted, pitted and knotted and began to show early signs of disintegration. Because of this the 'Marble' dartboard (unlike the genuine bristle which has been around since the 1930s) had a relatively short life and for the reasons stated it did not sell in great numbers. According to Vince Bluck, Managing Director of NODOR, "The fibre went rock hard within a matter of hours and rendered the board unplayable. I think that they were only made for a year or so."

If the 'Marble' dartboard had been a success there were plans apparently to produce a 'luxury' version of the dartboard which had a clear plastic backing with integrated lights. This would have the effect (like fibre optics) of illuminating the dartboard from the back without the need of overhead illumination. As far as is known this idea never left the drawing board.

The company David mentioned ('B&D Darts of San Marcos, California') were retailers of the product in the USA.

(My thanks to Harry Kicks jnr and Vince Bluck for providing information relating to this dartboard and to David John for the image of his OPUS 'Marble' dartboard.)

NATIONAL DARTS ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN (NDAGB)

There have been more than six 'national' darts associations over the years controlling the sport in Britain and the fourth of these was the National Darts Association of Great Britain (NDAGB).

Recently Duane Garfield from Rochdale contacted me. Duane has been playing darts for about fifteen years and is Manager and Captain of the Rochdale Borough Super League team which play in the Lancashire Super League.

In his e-mail Duane told that he had been working in Manchester in early August outside 'repairing a water leak' when the elderly lady he was working for 'came outside with our brews' (That's cups of tea for those not from that area.). Duane told me, "She noticed my darts pendant and she said "Do you play darts?"". Duane said he did and after five minutes chat the lady went back into the house.

A little later the lady returned and presented Duane with 'an old blue tie and a badge' which she believed might have belonged to her late husband. The accompanying photograph shows Duane with the items.



I identified both pieces as relating to the National Darts Association of Great Britain (NDAGB) (formed in London in 1954). The tie was a symbol of membership of the NDAGB and was mostly worn at tournaments or other special events, such as annual dinners or awards ceremonies. The metal badge was awarded by the organisation and was their way of acknowledging players scoring 180 in a NDAGB tournament. (Back in those days to score 180 was still a feat to be celebrated. (It still is if I ever hit one!))

The NDAGB was the national body responsible for darts in the UK from 1954 until the early 1970s and organised top county- and country-wide tournaments including the NODOR Fours and *The People* newspapers Lord Lonsdale National Team competition.

Although the tie and the badge are of no great intrinsic value it is good to see that they have found a safe home with an excellent young darts player.

BRISTOW MAD?

At the beginning of September, just before the *DDN* went to press, I received an e-mail from a darts enthusiast named Phil who, as we'll see, is a great fan of Eric Bristow. Phil wrote:

‘Hi Patrick - any help will be a bonus. Basically, I'm trying to find as many matches for Eric Bristow in his professional career.

I have been on "dartsmad" and other databases but it is the results from early rounds of e.g. British Opens, British Matchplays, News of the World (qualifying), Europe Cup, North American, Swedish, Finnish and Danish Opens that I require.....they must be out there somewhere.....

...any ideas who I could contact?

There are Snooker, Cricket, Tennis, Football books with match-by-match records but no Darts - however, I'm just interested in ONE player!!!

I sympathise with Phil.



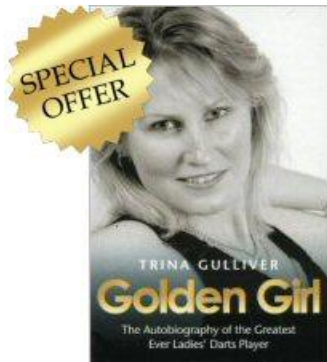
A young Bristow (image courtesy of the BDO)

Years ago Tony Wood (the former editor of *Darts World* magazine) and I toyed with the idea of writing a ‘Who’s Who?’ of darts. We also talked about a dart players’ *Wisden*; a book of darts statistics and records but sadly there was simply not the level of interest to support either of these projects.

I suggested to Phil that perhaps the BDO might be able to help or he could interrogate back issues of *Darts World*. However, it is highly unlikely that *all* the data he required would be within the pages of that magazine. Reports, especially about the early rounds of tournaments (and particularly the *News of the World* or any other contest where there were preliminary ‘Area’ or ‘Divisional’ finals) would be patchy.

I have a couple more contacts who might be able to help but in the meantime if any reader of *DDN* has any detailed records about ‘The Crafty Cockney’ or can help Phil in any way, please contact me via my website and I will pass any information on to him.

‘GOLDEN GIRL’ ON OFFER

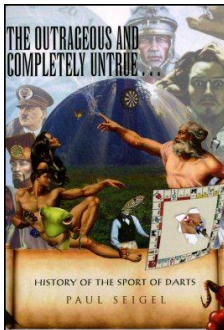


Most darts fans will be aware that I helped Trina write her autobiography *Golden Girl* which was published by John Blake Publishing back in 2008. At the time the book was well-received. Well, the good news is that *Golden Girl* is still available and the eight-time Women's World Champion is currently running a special offer on her website for those who want to purchase a copy. For more details checkout www.trina-gulliver.com.

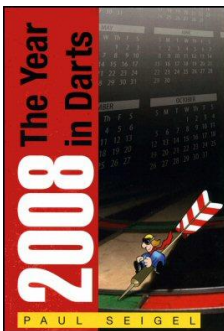
And talking of books...

DARTOID'S DOUBLE

Paul Seigel (aka 'Dartoid') who published the excellent *It's a Funny Game, Darts. Life* in 2005 has now come up with a double whammy. He has recently published not one but two new books both of which will be of interest to those who love reading about darts but for two completely different reasons.



First we have *The Outrageous and Completely Untrue History of the Sport of Darts* which Paul showed me an early draft of a couple of years ago. I thought the book was crazy then and the intervening months have not changed my mind. If you want an outrageous and untrue history of the sport of darts then this is for you. It contains exactly what it says on the tin. I said it at the time of reading the draft and I'll say it again, "I can solemnly attest that it is...quite the most historically inaccurate and stupid thing that anyone has ever put to paper...Having said that IT IS FUN!"



At the serious end of the scale Paul has published *2008 The Year in Darts*. This is a different animal (or rather book) altogether. This is surely a labour of love. Paul records all the major tournaments and winners through an entire year and his attention to detail relating to the North American darts scene will be of high value to researchers of the sport there in years to come.

True to form *2008...* is interspersed with 'Dartoid' wit and much of this had me laughing out loud. Whilst *The Outrageous...* is clearly that, *2008...* is a book that will be of interest to all lovers of the sport of darts looking for a serious (but at times funny) record of a single fascinating year in darts.

Both books are published by Xlibris and can be purchased via Paul's website www.dartoidsworld.com

SPONSORS NEWS



During August the WINMAU Dartboard Co., announced that 2004 Lakeside World Professional Darts Champion, Andy Fordham, had signed a new three-year deal with the company. This may sound a bit of a cliché but when I met Andy a couple of years back I found him to be one of the nicest blokes I have ever met. This photo of Andy and me was taken a couple of years ago when Andy was on the road to recovery.

Even though he has not returned to regular winning ways, Andy is still a great crowd-puller wherever he goes and I am thrilled that he will continue to be an ambassador of the sport of darts with WINMAU until at least 2013.

COMING UP IN ISSUE EIGHT



‘Shaun Greatbatch with Dr. Darts – August 2010’

In the next issue of *DDN* I’ll be featuring an interview with the man who hit the first-ever perfect nine-dart game on ‘live’ TV - Shaun Greatbatch.

You’ll also find out what Dr. Darts did on his recent holidays and whether or not I was successful in winning the

Lord Aberdare Prize for my book *Darts in England...* Add to that the story of DORWIN Darts and I think we have a great start to Issue Eight.

Cheers!

Patrick Chaplin

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