

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 73

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WELCOME!

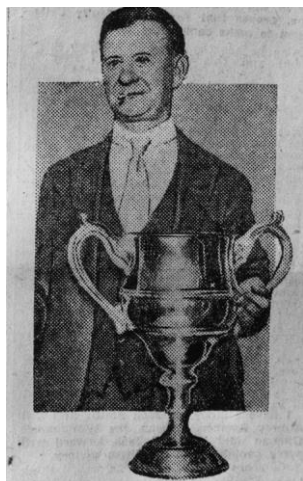
A very warm welcome to you all and especially those who have subscribed to *DDN* since the May issue. Thanks to all those who entered the amazing WINMAU 70th Anniversary competition. The lucky winner will be announced in the July issue.

There's a lot to cram into this issue so without further delay...

NEWS OF THE WORLD INDIVIDUAL DARTS CHAMPIONSHIP

It has been clear more or less since the first issue of *DDN* published back in February 2010 that many readers are fascinated by the *News of the World* (*NoW*) Individual Darts Championship and eagerly look forward to that tournament being featured.

The competition began in the 1927/28 season organised by the recently formed National Darts Association (NDA) on behalf of the *NoW*, the most popular Sunday newspaper ever. The *NoW* provided the trophy and other prizes. (The image, left, shows the first-ever *News of the World* champion Sammy Stone who won the title from an entry of just over 1,000 players.)



To begin with the *NoW* was run solely in the Metropolitan Area of London but by the outbreak of the Second World War there were six separate Divisional titles across England and Wales. The war put an end to the planned development of the competition to a national one; a process that began in 1947. Later still other countries became involved.

The *News of the World* championship restarted in the 1947/48 season but was suspended after the 1990 tournament mainly due to the lack of sponsors and the waning popularity of darts on television. One last *NoW* was held in 1997 which became known as the 'Taylor final' even before 'The Power' won the title. That final was the first to be held outside of London and the last ever.

No other *News of the World* tournaments were run and any possibility of a further recovery ended with the closure of the newspaper; the last issue (No. 8,674) being published on Sunday 11th July 2011 with little mention of darts.

But nearly twenty years since the final *NoW* final was staged and nearly 90 years since that inaugural final in 1928, the *News of the World* tournament still holds a fascination for darts players and fans from all over the world.

All this is leading up to me announcing that, over and above any articles I may write in the future about individual *NoW* winners, I will be including a new, occasional,

DDN feature titled ‘*News of the World* snippets’ in which I reveal some fascinating facts about the *NoW* and answer questions I receive from *DDN* readers and elsewhere. So here we go...

NEWS OF THE WORLD SNIPPET – FIRST SILVER STRIKE

In issue no. 6,513, dated Sunday 22nd September 1968, it was announced that the first set of silver darts had been awarded during the early stages of the 1968/69 *News of the World* tournament. (Silver darts were awarded for ‘special achievements’ at any stage of the competition.)

On this particular occasion the award seems well-deserved as they were awarded to Ronald Humpage of the *Ship Hotel*, Lancaster. The report reads:

Ron beat four opponents without losing a game, notching one maximum and 12 140s on his way to the house championship. His final game was won in 12 darts, scoring 140, 140, 100 and 121 (51-54-16).

With a performance like that Ron would grace any oche today.

Sadly Ron failed to make it to the Lancashire & Cheshire Divisional Final, that place was taken by David Morrow of the *Crown Hotel*, Barrow-in-Furness BUT he did qualify for and win the Divisional Finals of the Players No. 6 Competition held at the same venue and run in parallel with the *NoW* competition which challenged darts players to hit as many 6’s they could in six darts.



So Ron had his day at the Alexandra Palace on Saturday 19th April 1969 achieving third place in the No. 6 event.

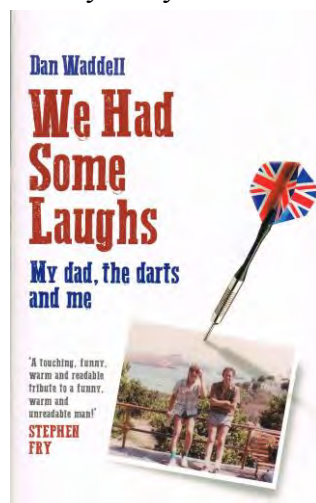
BOOK REVIEW - *WE HAD SOME LAUGHS – MY DAD, THE DARTS AND ME* - DAN WADDELL

Sid Waddell was there back in the early 1970s when the foundations were laid for what would eventually become a monster – darts on television in the UK.

He was devoted to the sport and after the success of the quirky Yorkshire Television series *The Indoor League* (of which he was co-producer) where pub games champions, including darts, arm wrestling and pool, Sid joined the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and commented on major darts events for many years to come. Sid was also an established writer, ghosting the autobiographies and both Jocky Wilson and Phil Taylor. His knowledge of the sport of darts was extensive and will probably never be equalled.

Known as ‘The Voice of Darts’ his commentaries became notorious for their rapid-fire comments and their bending of the English language. Sid died on 11th August 2012.

In May last year Sid's son Dan wrote to tell me that he was writing a book about his dad that would be 'part memoir, part biography and part social history'. The result, *We Had Some Laughs. My dad, the darts and me* was published in May; a book eagerly awaited by darts fans throughout the UK.



Dan's book reveals a side to Sid Waddell that Sid's own books failed to. Dan being taken along to the Embassy World Professional Darts Champions instilled in him a love of the sport and an understanding of why his dad, and many thousands of other people, simply *loved* darts. At times Dan makes you feel that darts was the glue that held together his relationship with his 'legendary' father. Dan reveals how much Sid's passion for and involvement with the world of darts had an impact on family life. The book is

also interlaced with fascinating, short, family-related non-darts anecdotes.

We Had Some Laughs, will appeal to anyone who wants to find out more about the personal and family life of 'The Geordie Lip'. The book is a delightfully refreshing memoir, revealing Sid for the first time through the eyes of his son Dan. It is a warm, moving and funny, sometimes hilarious, account of Sid's colourful life and career: a son's memories of an often unconventional dad.

We Had Some Laughs. My dad, the darts and me is published by the Bantam Press in hardback at £16.99 (ISBN 9780593076026)

WINMAU – 70th ANNIVERSARY

Following the article in last month's *DDN* regarding the WINMAU Dartboard Co. Ltd., celebrating their 70th Anniversary this year, the company received the following e-mail from global darts ambassador, lecturer and former owner of The House of Darts, Dr. Eddie Norman in which he recalls his own working association with the company. What Eddie has to say will be of interest to anyone who wishes to learn more about the history of the darts industry. Eddie (pictured above) writes:



Gentlemen, Many Congratulations on Winmau reaching their historic Platinum Anniversary.

Reading the amazing and very professional Winmau story written by Ian Flack with help from Dr. Darts in Patrick's latest DDN. I would like to give you some personal thoughts on my experiences with Nodor/Winmau over the many years that I have dealt with the two great firms.

On my travels and at Question and Answer time at the end of my lectures, I am amazed how darts people like to find out more about the 'behind scenes' and history

of British darts firms and the people who have been behind their success with starting the firms.

Questions on the players in darts are very rarely asked of me, as people realise what more can be said about players like Phil Taylor, Michael Van Gerwen and Raymond Van Barneveld that is not already known.

Every darts magazine includes the same players, hence the popularity of Patrick's DDN that goes down a different route. The same players month after month was without doubt the main cause of the decline of Darts World and other darts magazines, people are fed up with the same revamped stories of the same players.

Some of the lesser known darts players that are signed up by darts firms are rarely known outside their own country. For example, in comparison, if one was asked in the UK who were Tony Bryant, Alfred Morriss and Dez Bryant, who would know that they are the well-known superstars of The Dallas Cowboys famous across the USA but unknown outside?

I have found that people want to know more about the darts businessmen and writers behind the masks who run darts firms, like "Who is Patrick Chaplin?", "Who designs the latest dartboards and where do their ideas come from?" and "Which is the oldest darts firm?" The history of darts still plays an important part of question time.

People and players are thirsty for darts knowledge and for much of this darts can thank Patrick.

I now incorporate a talk in my lectures on John and Dave, Tom Pope, Frank Lowy, Eric Beard and Harry Kicks to name but a few great British darts names and my personal experiences in dealing with some of those people. These go down well and people then ask for more and where can they read about these great founders of darts. The answer is nowhere as all firms concentrate on players only.

I will on this great Platinum anniversary of yours recall some of my dealings with the great Nodor and Winmau firm(s). It has always been a pleasure to do so.

I first met Harry Kicks (of Kicks Brothers, later WINMAU) (with Olly Croft) in 1972 when I met up with him to discuss the possibility of Winmau sponsoring a new joint venture being planned by us to be called 'The British Darts Organisation'.

The meeting was at the T.L. and R Club in Tottenham, London where London (Olly's team) were playing The West of England (my team) in a county match; a precursor to the forming of the BDO in January 1973.

Harry came with his wife Winnie and, very suitably impressed, agreed to sponsor the BDO.

Olly had previously driven to Bedwas (in Wales) to ask Nodor to sponsor the BDO but unfortunately no one was available to see him so Winmau filled the gap and the rest is darts history.

Harry and I took to each other... and whenever I rang Winmau, my calls were always diverted to Harry no matter how busy he was and vice versa if he rang me on my private House of Darts line. We had a great relationship, as indeed I also had with Geoff and Harry Kicks Jnr.

My connections with Nodor go right back to 1962. The firm was always great to me, I have great recollections of dealing there with Harpo and Gill Wooten and many others. When I made my first visit to Bedwas the workshop had individual metal cabinets obviously ex-army where the workers hung their coats. In fact it resembled an army barracks.

When I went into the factory, I heard someone say, "Close the doors of the cabinets", the reason being because there were Page 3 Girl's pictures inside the doors, and 'important visitors' like myself could be offended. Today those same or similar photos or worse can be found on darts flights. How times have changed!

Dave Scillitoe became top man at Nodor, a giant of a man bigger than Tom Fleetwood and at least 22 stone. Then came John and Dave Bluck. We loved them at The House of Darts. My lunches with them were immortal and insane, from two to four hours duration.

I caught up day with John (and Jack Price) by chance in New York one day where he was visiting Bob McCloud of Darts Unlimited who had an office at 516 Fifth Avenue. I was there to run the Annual US Open for Bob and the winner represented the USA at the News of The World in London. Bob had a private plane and wanted to fly us over the Big Apple after a nights drinking, but we all politely refused.

The evening before the US Open we met for dinner on West Main Street, Bay Shore, Long Island with a friend of mine who ran K-bar-K darts and ended up crawling back to our hotels at 5 a.m. We were just chatting about darts and Bob and John saying they could make me the greatest player ever. Then they saw me play and the subject was dropped, never to be discussed again.

Harpo. What can one say about the fabulous guy? What a credit to Nodor. He delivered dartboards to us, but could not switch off the engine in that famous Nodor red lorry as he was worried it would stall and we would never get it started again.

One day he arrived and the fumes from that diesel lorry had people waiting at the nearby bus stop moving away from the black smoke emanating from the lorry...If you have ever been to Beijing in the smog you will know the feeling.

Harpo also brought over in the back of the lorry, the pigeons belonging to Wayne Eckman, which he would release in Bristol and they would fly back to Wales.

In emergency, whilst awaiting a delivery, my wife started collecting dartboards for us from Bedwas in her Mercedes sports. We first told her to collect only thirty but then rang Nodor unbeknown to say could they try to get eighty in, which they did. My wife used to come back and say they had put eighty in again. We told her we would complain...in the end she gave up as Nodor got a new 'smokeless' lorry.

Another experience for us was Jack Russell of Boston purchased a complete container of Nodor dartboards. All was well but the ship went down in the English Channel and all the dartboards were lost. Luckily Jack had his own insurance.

At the House of Darts we had three rooms devoted to darts relics - Not me! - that visitors loved and many spent a couple of hours there. John and Dave visited several times. One day John said to me, "Eddie, that Par Golf Board, did we make it?" I said "Yes", and he asked me what the rules were. I told him there were no rules as Nodor did not have any but that I had written some. He was fascinated by this fact. Such a great businessman but a little thing like that he thought was amazing. (It had taken me just an hour to write the rules.)

I could reminisce on my Nodor and Winmau memories for hours but in truth all I wanted to do was congratulate you all at Winmau on your Platinum anniversary.

Kindest regards to you all on this wonderful achievement in business

Eddie

I am grateful to Eddie and all concerned for allowing me to reproduce his e-mail which gives such an interesting insight into the history not only of WINMAU but also NODOR International. Without such memories written down this history would undoubtedly be otherwise lost.

IS THIS THE EARLIEST DARTS TROPHY?

Earlier this year I received an e-mail from Jeff B. which read,

Hi Patrick, I have recently purchased a large solid silver Edwardian darts trophy hallmarked indicating that it was made in that it was made in 1910. How does this rate in the history of darts? Are there trophies from much earlier around?

It is a fact that, at the turn of the twentieth century, a number of breweries were starting to see the value of darts as a recreation in their pubs but these were the exception rather than the rule.



My previous research has revealed one or two brewers organising darts leagues amongst their houses but the trophy Jeff has acquired is the first pre-Great War darts leagues trophy I have ever seen. However, the words 'brewery challenge' might indicate that it was contested by employees of the brewery rather than between the brewer's public houses.

Described by the seller as

A unique opportunity to purchase a huge and heavy solid silver trophy shield piece. A very large and heavy shield shape trophy. Full English hallmarks, antique piece.

Chester Brewery Challenge engraved to the top and a finely cast design of two Edwardian era dressed men playing darts. The whole piece is solid silver including the screws to reverse.

Hallmarks; lion, Sheffield crown, date letter for 1910 and makers initials for Robert Mosley. Weight; 1148 grams. Size; 36 cm x 52 cm, a large shield.

Condition; Very good. Crisp design. Clear hallmark. Complete with lion hallmarked screws. A stunning piece, fantastically made throughout.

The only 'Chester Brewery' I can trace is Robert Fenwick & Co of Chester-le-Street who also traded as the 'Chester Brewery Co.' and were acquired by George Younger of Alloa in 1898 but which, presumably, continued to trade under the Chester name.

The fact that the trophy is hallmarked 1910 does not necessarily mean that that indicates when the trophy was used in a darts tournament. For example, in the 1920s and 30s the *News of the World* bulk-bought trophies (presumably to save money) for competitions that would have been planned years ahead. Similarly the trophy *might* have been used for something else before it was used for a darts tournament so the hallmark does not always indicate the year of competition. Sadly there are no inscriptions on the trophy to confirm the date(s) that it was contested for.

So is this the oldest brewery darts trophy?

I know it's probably asking too much but if anyone has *any* information about this brewery and/or the trophy please contact me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

ROYAL APPROVAL

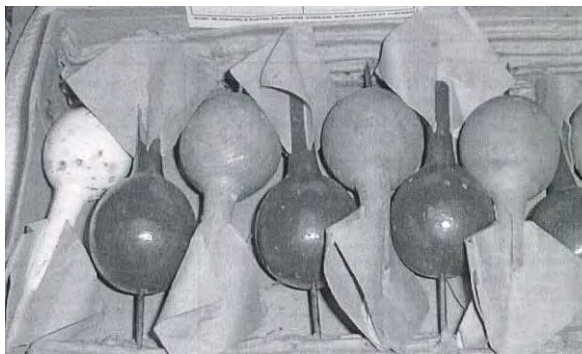
Every so often members of the UK's Royal Family are seen playing darts. The most famous of these was when King George VI and Queen Elizabeth played a short game at the Slough Centre in Berkshire, England on 17th December 1937 which resulted in the nation's women becoming 'darts conscious.' HRH Prince Charles is well known for his appreciation of everything to do with British pubs (including darts and beer) whilst Prince Harry has been spotted at PDC World Championships, not playing but just enjoying a night of darting action with friends.



More recently, in April this year, Prince William and his wife Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, travelled to Bhutan for what appeared be a very informal state visit. Whilst there they tried the national sport of archery and then the second-most popular, called *khuru*, dart-throwing.

On closer examination the darts (shown left) are seen to be nothing like those we throw in what we know as the standard game. The Bhutan game utilises what we might compare with early lawn darts such as those manufactured by company's such as Spalding's of Norwich, Norfolk, England.

Arthur Spalding set up his company just after the end of the Second World War and traded under the name 'Spalding's Darts' making both standard 'French-style' wooden darts and his own patented 'Spalding Bowls-Darts' which were for outdoor use only. Presumably as they were called 'bowls-darts' the main rule was that they must be thrown under-arm.



The image (right) shows a box of Spalding's Bowls-Darts. The actual lid of the box was marked 'War Grade' even though they were not made until circa 1947. (The post-war austerity years would last into the 1950s here in the UK.) (Image: PC Archive.)

I am unsure if I have a *DDN* subscriber in Bhutan. However, if I do, or if anyone can provide further information about the sport of *khuru*, I would very much like to hear from them.

AND FINALLY...A FASCINATING FACT

On 7th June 1945 a man in Southend-on-Sea, Essex, England was fined ten shillings (That's £20 sterling (or \$29) in today's money) for stealing a set of darts from a local branch of Woolworth's store. In his defence his counsel told the court, "He did not know why he did it, because he never plays darts."

Crazy! But this is only one of hundreds of unusual and often hilarious, darts facts that you will find in my book *180! – Fascinating Darts Facts*. (Please note that *180!* contains no statistics whatsoever; just fascinating facts many of which you will not find on the 'net.)

Signed copies of my book, with the dedication of your choice, can be purchased direct from me. Each book comes with a **free** set of 'Dr. Darts' flights (WINMAU 'Rhino' brand). Contact me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com for full details.

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