

DR DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue Eight October 2010 www.patrickchaplin.com



www.winmau.com

Dr Darts Newsletter is sponsored by Winmau Dartboard Company

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Issue Eight.

I am pleased to report that the number of subscribers continues to increase month on month and no one has yet asked to be taken off the list, so I'll assume I'm doing something right. So it's a special welcome to all new subscribers and thanks to all of you who have sent me feedback.

Ian writes "Just a quick thank you for *Dr. Darts' Newsletter*. It's interesting, informative and makes easy reading. Keep it coming!" while Trina Gulliver writes "Great newsletter and thanks for the write up on both me and Sue." Mick confirms that Issue 7 (as far as he was concerned) was "Another great read" adding "Roll on next month" while the 'Big E' says "Thanks for your latest darts news magazine, an excellent read as always." I'm not sure I've reached 'magazine' status yet; but who knows?



The main item in this month's issue is my interview with ex-England International Shaun Greatbatch (pictured). I was absolutely thrilled to meet Shaun and chat with him about his career. Also in this issue I have further feedback on the OPUS dartboard (featured in Issue 7), an image of some very rare darts medals, a brief history of the company that made DORWIN darts and a story about John Lowe's eyes (!) – and lots more.

Here we go then...

FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES

(a) Coming up in Issue Eight

World-renowned MC Freddie Williams and his wife Pat (who have worked tirelessly in darts for many years) absolutely loved the picture of Shaun Greatbatch and me in Issue 7. Pat wrote "It was nice to see Shaun looking so well BUT who was holding a gun in your back? You looked just as if someone was behind you telling you not to smile and stand up straight and pull your shoulders back as on Parade!"

Fred added "You looked like I did when I went in the RAF to do my national service and first met the Regimental Sergeant Major!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" Thanks guys! I hate to say this but, looking at it again, they're right. I won't reproduce the image again here but, if you'd like a laugh at my expense, refer back to page 12 of Issue 7.



My photograph shows Freddie and Pat when they paid me a visit in July 2004.

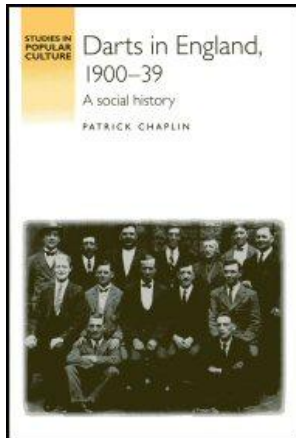
(b) Further media attention



I was thrilled to be invited to talk to listeners to Colchester Hospital Radio and spent a great half-hour with volunteer DJ Penney McAvoy (pictured) on the evening of 30th September talking about darts and playing some of my favourite songs. The show was called 'Mersea Island Discs' (a reference to the famous BBC radio show 'Desert Island Discs'). The radio broadcasts not only to hospital patients but can also be picked up in Colchester and the surrounding area.

I answered some interesting questions about my research and career as a darts writer. Penney and the rest of the crew were most friendly, helpful and accommodating and work so hard to produce quality programmes every time. My stint was all over so fast but I am pleased to say that Penney hopes to invite me back in a few months time to talk about my other passion – local history.

(c) Shortlisted for Literary Prize



In the August issue I mentioned that my book *Darts in England 1900-1939: A social history* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009) had been shortlisted for the prestigious Lord Aberdare Literary Prize for Sports History. It is my sad duty to report that at the British Society of Sports History conference last month I was not awarded the prize. However, as so many friends and colleagues have told me, I did really well to be shortlisted and, given my subject, have really helped put darts on the academic map. Thanks everyone.

(d) Darts on the Rock

My key article in Issue 7 sparked a couple of memories for a man who has spent a lifetime in darts, Eddie Norman OBE. He e-mailed me from Chicago to say "Talking about Gibraltar, when The West of England [*a top darts team at the time*] went there in 1974, we missed the plane at Heathrow (too much to drink and we never heard the announcement) our luggage went with it but BA flew us out next day via Morocco."

Eddie added, "My good friend, the late Bill Sheppard, did the welcome speech to thank Joe Goldwin at Government House for arranging the visit. Unfortunately Bill had had a few drinks and instead thanked Joe Gormley for inviting us!" [Joe Gormley was in fact the President of the National Union of Mineworkers at the time and, as far as I know, was not renowned for his darting skills!]

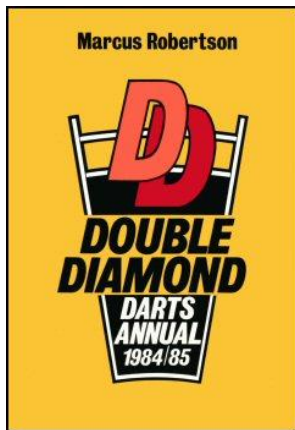
Eddie also pointed out that “Gibraltar never played off in 1974 for the World Masters. I just invited Joe Goldwin to represent them; he did and stayed with my family and me in Bristol.”

(e) The Opus Marble Dartboard

Eddie had something to tell me about the Opus dartboard too (again featured in the last issue). Eddie who used to own the highly successful House of Darts International based in Bristol, England told me “The Opus board was the second worst mistake that I made in business. We bought 500 off of the Leaches and I sent 100 to America. When they got there green spores were growing out of the boards and they were refused entry and scrapped, costing us \$3000! They were just too expensive to be marketable. We lost a fortune on them.”

A tough lesson learned. I wonder what the FIRST worst mistake was.

(f) Bristow Mad?

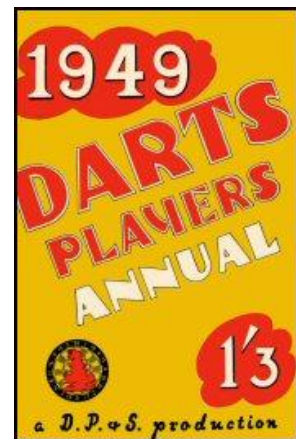


In Issue 7 I reported that Phil was working hard to gather match information about the Crafty Cockney. Ian contacted me and said, “I am the proud owner of a copy of the *Double Diamond Darts Annual 1984/85*, showing a lot of results from various competitions in 1983.” Ian added, “If Phil is lacking any info for that year then please forward my mail to him, I could scan the relevant pages and send them on.”

Thanks Ian. Your offer is being passed to Phil through this issue of *DDN*.

The *Double Diamond Darts Annual 1984/85*, (pictured) written by Marcus Robertson, was published in London by Robert Hale on 18th October 1984. (Copies are available via the Darts Bookshop on my website.) As Ian suggests Marcus’s book is a marvellous compilation of facts and figures and records the year’s darts action for the 1983/84 season from grass roots to top professional tournaments.

Unfortunately, like others before it (such as the *1949 Darts Players Annual* (also pictured) and the *Unicorn Yearbook 1978*) this ‘annual’ was a ‘one-off’.



(g) Pegasus darts

Still no luck in tracking down the 'Pegasus' darts brand that I featured in Issue 6 but the good news is that I was able to help an enquirer in respect of the manufacturer of DORWIN darts (see later in this issue).

JOHN LOWE'S EYES



In the past I have settled a lot of darts-related arguments but one of the most unusual I have ever received came from Andy Gait who wrote:

'Hello Patrick, I wonder if you could settle an argument for me? Is it true that John Lowe suffered from an eye complaint called CSR during his playing career? Be great if you could help out. Many thanks.'

Well, what could I do but ask the great man himself. John replied:

'Patrick,

I think the guy is relating to CSR, (which I understand is: Central Serious Retina Disease), and has probably mixed up my motorcycle accident of many years ago when one of my eyes was first red, then yellow for 6 months.

To answer him correctly, my vision is only -.5 from 20/20. In short I have cheated nature. Everything wears out, especially the eyes. My parents and my sister all wore spectacles from an early age and I resigned myself that I would have to do the same one day.

In 2004 I visited Manchester University. I wanted to find out if they could make me a pair of specs that would give me perfect vision when standing at 7' 9", Denis Taylor, the snooker player, had his 'upside down' glasses made there by the country's leading optometrist. I went through many tests, including cameras that took photographs behind the eye. I was dismayed, but thankful when I was told they could do nothing for me. In short my dart playing was aidless!! (I guess this is a story in itself.)'

Indeed it is John; that's why I've published it in *DDN* (with John's permission of course).

Andy was thrilled to receive John's reply and has confirmed that the argument is well and truly settled.

(The image of John shown here dates back to his Marlboro Team of Champions days. John has just received the *Darts World Tons Trophy*.)

SHAUN GREATBATCH

It is Sunday 3rd February 2002. The occasion is the Dutch Open; the venue the Koningshof Hotel, Veldhoven, Holland. We are watching the final where two relatively unknown Englishmen, Steve Coote and Shaun Greatbatch, are fighting for the title. There are 5,000 spectators and the match is being broadcast live by Dutch TV station SBS6.

It is the second set, third leg. Steve Coote had won the first set 3-0 but Shaun was 2-0 up in the second. When Shaun started the third leg with back-to-back 180s the crowd fell silent. He then struck his seventh treble 20, then treble 15 and finally double 18! As referee Steve Nicholas calmly announced 'Game shot' the audience went mad and continued to applaud and cheer Shaun for a full five minutes or more.

After the raucous crowd had calmed down, the game was resumed and Shaun went on to take the Dutch Open title 4-2 but by then he had already carved his name forever into the history books.

BE UNDER NO ILLUSION. HISTORY WAS MADE THAT DAY. SHAUN HAD ACHIEVED THE FIRST-EVER PERFECT NINE-DART GAME ON 'LIVE' TV.



But what was his reward for this historic achievement? £100,000? No. £50,000? No. Shaun told me recently, "I didn't win any money for hitting the nine-darter, although after the event someone phoned in and offered two thousand Euros." Shaun also made front-page news in *Darts World* magazine (pictured) and thereafter the Dutch fans in particular dubbed him 'Nine Dart'.

Shaun was born in Newmarket, Cambridgeshire, England on 13th July 1969 the son of Barry and Sandra Greatbatch both of whom played top-level darts. Shaun told me, "I became interested in darts through my mother playing and watching it on TV." A Norfolk county player by the time he was 15 years old, Shaun soon moved to the Cambridgeshire team and only retired from serving that county at the end of the 2010/11 season.

His major breakthrough was playing for England in 1997 and one of his best-ever games "the first five sets of the Lakeside semi-final in 2006 against Jelle Klaasen." Shaun also remembers with pride his performance at the 2001 Lakeside World Championships play-offs where he told me he was 'awesome' throughout, beating Gary Anderson in the play-off final. However, his form eluded him in the first round of the World Championships proper where he was beaten 3-0 by Ted 'The Count' Hankey. (That was also the match that featured an interruption by the first-ever stalker at Lakeside.)

On 13th June 2008 Shaun was diagnosed with myeloma (bone cancer). He told me, “It was horrendous.” A long period of treatment has seen Shaun lose four and half inches in height (from 6’ 5 ½” to 6’ 1”). At the Lakeside World Championships in 2009 a guard of honour of fellow darts players lined the route to the Lakeside stage as Shaun came out to play his match. Shaun said, “It was very emotional for me.” The myeloma is now controlled but he has to undergo blood tests every three months to monitor his condition.

On Sunday 9th May 2010 Shaun played his last match for Cambridgeshire (against my county, Essex) and he has not thrown a dart since; not even socially. When I asked Shaun if he had any regrets he replied, “I was never 100% committed to darts. I was never one to prepare for matches. I preferred the social side of the darts; a side that got progressively worse once I met Bob Taylor!”

Shaun, who married the top lady darts player Barbara Lee in June 2009, continues to work part-time as a Training and Safety Co-ordinator for SCL (a local company owned by Scottish darts international Trevor Nurse). The rest of the time, when not relaxing with Barbara, Shaun pursues his other main passion: fishing.



Shaun with the 2002 Dutch Open trophy. In his right hand is the Seashore Junior Winners Cup from 1986 (Image: Chippix)

Shaun Greatbatch may have retired from darts but, as the man who hit the first-ever perfect nine-dart game on ‘live’ TV, he has etched his name into darts history and earned his place in the Darts Hall of Fame.

TRINA’S COMPETITION



An exciting competition is being run on the Bullseye website courtesy of eight-time women’s world darts champion Trina Gulliver.

For your chance to win a genuine, signed Trina Gulliver match shirt from the British Internationals in Bridlington earlier this year, all you have to is visit the Bullseye website www.bullseyetvgameshow.com and answer the following question ‘How many times has Trina won the ladies World Darts Championship?’ and then in a maximum of 50 words state why in your opinion Trina is the greatest ladies darts player ever?

Visit Trina's website too for an opportunity to purchase a signed copy of her autobiography 'Golden Girl' at a special online rate of only £5.00!

<http://www.trina-gulliver.com>

TWO NATIONS CHALLENGE – SCOTLAND v ENGLAND

Paul Gillings (a regular reader) wrote to me a short while ago to ask me to bring to subscribers' attention to another Scotland v England clash that is being featured at Harley's Sky Bar at Rutherglen, Glasgow on Friday 29 October.

As we know, the Professional Darts Corporation recently staged an England v Scotland event, which was won by England, and starred Phil Taylor and James Wade for England and Gary Anderson and Robert Thornton for Scotland.

Paul tells me that "The Thorn" (who is currently 17th in the PDC world rankings) now has a chance of revenge against the 'auld enemy' in this Scotland v England "Two Nations Challenge". Also starring is "Bravedart", the ever-popular Jamie Harvey, and these two top players form the basis of a formidable Scottish line up. The England team will be captained by "The Iceman", the former World Number 1, Alan Warriner-Little who will be playing alongside current PDC player Dean Allsopp.



The event is being organised by Scottish dart player Tommy McIntosh (aka "Hot Scot") (pictured) and proceeds will go to pancreatic cancer awareness. Tickets are available for £9.00. Details of the tournament, profiles of all the players, ticket availability plus how you could possibly qualify for a chance to play a leg against one of the star players can be found at www.glasgowdartsnight.co.uk.

Best of luck on the night to all players. Let's hope they raise stacks of cash for such a worthy cause. I am sure Paul will let *DDN* readers know the outcome in time for the November issue.

WHAT I DID ON MY HOLIDAYS

It's amazing that I go away on holiday, deliberately leave my darts and my laptop at home yet I *still* cannot get away from the arrows.

For my birthday my wife Maureen took me to the north Norfolk coast to stay in a top hotel for a few days. (For those who don't know, Norfolk is a very rural county in England (in East Anglia to be precise). The north coast of the county meets the North Sea and The Wash where the weather can be at one time very sunny and warm and the next minute rough and overcast. It's still beautiful either way.

Whilst in Norfolk we travelled to Holkham Hall, an 18th century ancestral pile home to the Coke family and Earls of Leicester. One of the attractions is a Bygones Museum housed in the stable block. We paid our money and walked in and what was one of the first items to confront us? A dartboard! (see image) It's a 'DEE-BEE' compressed paper dartboard and beside it can be seen a rather unusual darts scorer. (I am looking into the scorer and hope to reveal the outcomes of my research in a future issue of *DDN*.)



A few weeks later we were back in Norfolk on a day trip to Bressingham Gardens and Steam Museum with my father. You might imagine that darts would not be present at such a place but not only was there a fairground darts stall on site but also the 'Dad's Army' exhibition featured a dartboard hung at a most ridiculous height! (see image) (For those not aware of what 'Dad's Army' is, it was a very popular BBC TV situation comedy a few decades ago about the British Home Guard during the Second World War.) No matter where I go darts seems to follow me *everywhere*.



If you find a dartboard in an unusual place when you are on holiday/vacation why not take a photo of it and send it to me? Add whatever details you can (date, location, etc) and I will publish it in *DDN*. I look forward to hearing from you.

THE PEOPLE LORD LONSDALE NATIONAL TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

I have mentioned this important national team competition in previous issues of *DDN*. The inaugural season for this prestigious tournament was 1938-39 when it was won by 'The Hercules' pub of Mansell Street, Aldgate, London; that team defeating the 'King Harold' of Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire in the final. With the commencement of the Second World War the competition was suspended and was not to return until the start of the 1946/47 season.

I have only recently begun to research in any detail this famous competition and so you can imagine how I felt when a guy named Martin Stamp contacted me via my website. He wrote

My father-in-law's name was Oswald Walter Eve (called 'Oz' or by his nickname 'Spango') and he lived on the Essex/Hertfordshire borders. I think the pub he played for was the King Harold between Waltham Cross and Waltham Abbey. I have three medals that he won in the 1938-39 The People Team Darts Championships.



Martin went on to ask for information about the competition and I provided him with background data confirming that his father-in-laws' team (they played teams of 8 (plus reserves)) made it to the last two but were defeated by The Hercules pub. But what was important to me was the fact that Oz's medals had survived. I told Martin "What you have in your possession is a set of medals that he won as the team progressed through the various stages of the competition. They are significant pieces of darts memorabilia being as they belonged to a finalist in the very first season of the competition."

As I understand it, Martin intends to keep the medals (pictured here and reproduced with Martin's permission) in his family's possession.

DORWIN DARTS

Julie Kirk e-mailed John Lowe during August and asked him if he could provide any information about a set of darts she had in her possession. As is sometimes the case with historical stuff John forwarded Julie's e-mail to me saying, "Pat, I think this is one for you."

Julie wrote:

"I have a set of unusual very old darts. They were my grandmother's before my mother's but I can't seem to get any information on them... They are DORWIN darts. The flights are very unusual as they look like they are made of card! Very short barrels also the flights are held in by only what I can describe are hair grips. The name on the bottom says 'The Dorwin Pencil Company, Colnbrook, Slough, Bucks' so if you can help me please e-mail me. Thank you. Julie."

There must be loads of darts collectors out there who have also searched the web for information about DORWIN and found nothing. I think I am the only person to have researched the company so I thought I would include my full reply to Julie in this issue of *DDN*. I wrote to Julie as follows:

"As far as I know there is nothing on the 'net about The Dorwin Pencil Co but I am able to provide you with some information from my archive.

The Dorwin Pencil Co was established in the late 1930s in Colnbrook, Buckinghamshire and went into actual dart production during the Second World War. Initially they manufactured the kind of set you have in your possession which comprised of a metal barrel with a rubber grip and that rather complex construction for the stem and flight holder which you described in your e-mail as 'hair grips'. They do in fact work on a similar principle. The flights are vulcanised card which was much stronger than ordinary cardboard (which some flights were still made of at that time) and this additional strength meant that incoming darts could be deflected into the board rather than piercing (and probably ruining) the flight.

The company manufactured darts throughout the 40s, 50s, 60s and 70s and into the 1980s at which point the company failed. The set you have was produced during the 1940s or 1950s. I know this because the company moved on in the early 1960s to manufacturing brass darts which a transparent push-on barrel into which was often inserted advertising material, and a push-on plastic flight. These Dorwin darts were popular in pubs where the 'advertising darts' were used as house darts with the name of the charity inside the clear part of the barrel and players made a donation in the charity box to use the darts."

I also told Julie that some early examples of Dorwin Darts featured a paper insert about a darts champion named George Caley who was sponsored by Dorwin during the late 1940s/early 1950s. I attached for Julie's information a copy of the advertisement that appears on the back of George's book 'How to Improve Your Darts' which was published in 1950 and which showed the type of darts Julie had in her possession. That advertisement is also reproduced here.

To improve your game play with the darts *always* used by **GEORGE CALEY**

EXCLUSIVE FEATURES

"Centre Poise" quick-change flights. Spare set of flights with every set of darts. Dorwin darts can always be kept in perfect match trim.

Precision turned, silver-tint, unbreakable alloy flight holder mounted on shaft with barrel nose dual point to give perfect alignment. Dorwin darts are a real engineering job.

Dorwin patent non-slip coloured cushion grip provides a really firm hold. Attractive pastel colours available that give the dart a beautiful "finish".

Specially hardened cast steel point. Patent construction allows weight to be located at nose—giving true balance and absolute accuracy in flight.



GEORGE CALEY
says

"The use of Dorwin True Balance Darts has given me a feeling of confidence in making difficult shots that leads me to believe that most players would improve their play if they used these perfectly balanced darts consistently. I firmly believe there is no better or more accurate dart made than the Dorwin with the patent Non-Slip Cushion Grip. I always use them."

Make the most of your natural skill by throwing real precision made darts! The Dorwin "Championship" model illustrated here are the most perfectly balanced and accurate darts yet made. That's why George Caley always uses them. No other dart has the same streamlined, aero-dynamic shape. No other dart has the non-slip, cushion grip. No other dart has the "centre-poise" quick-change flight. Just to handle these beautifully balanced darts gives you a feeling of confidence! Every set is supplied in a handy pocket wallet of grained leatherette. Ask for the Dorwin "Championship" if you want to play with the dart that's been designed and precision made to improve your game! Three weights—LIGHT, MEDIUM, HEAVY. Price 10/- Including Purchase Tax. Standard Model 6/6d. Including Purchase Tax.

DORWIN

TRUE BALANCE
DARTS

Of all stores and sports dealers or sent (post free) from the makers
THE DORWIN PENCIL CO. LTD., COLNBROOK, SLOUGH, BUCKS

So that was a darts question sorted now what about *this* dartboard?

WHAT'S THE STORY...?



My webmaster, David King, discovered this unusual dartboard (pictured) during a recent trawl of darts sites on the 'net. The dartboard, which looks like a mixture of a standard trebles board and a fairground dartboard had me foxed for a moment but then I realised...

Do you know the answer? (There's a hint in the title of this piece.)

No prizes for giving me the right answer; just a mention in the next issue of *DDN*. E-mail me via my website www.patrickchaplin.com before the end of this month.

SPONSORS NEWS



If you are in a competition mode then log on to the WINMAU website www.winmau.com to see if you can come up with new walk-on music for Mervyn King (it's currently 'King of Kings' by Motorhead) and/or a new nickname for Jelle 'The Matador' Klaasen both of whom are sponsored by the company.

WINMAU has also announced the signing one of the biggest, most popular names in world darts - Darryl "The Dazzler" Fitton. Simon Hall, Head of Marketing at WINMAU said "Darryl is easily one of the best players in the game and a huge favourite with darts audiences around the world. It is a real honour to have signed a player of his stature. I know there are lots of darts fans who follow Darryl, and his signature is a tremendous endorsement of our company".

The team at WINMAU has been very busy of late finalising arrangements for the WINMAU World Masters that takes place at the end of this month in Hull. I'll be going along so I hope to meet some of you there. In any event I'll be reporting back in the next issue of *DDN*.

By the way 'CONGRATULATIONS' to WINMAU on its 65th birthday. (A history of the company can be found on my website.)

www.patrickchaplin.com/NodorWinmaustory.htm

COMING UP IN ISSUE NINE

A while ago I promised subscribers that I would write a piece about the Suffolk-based darts memorabilia collector Patrick Dee (pictured) who has constructed the first-ever darts museum in his back garden.



Well, I'm sorry to say that it will not appear BUT I am thrilled to say that the article *will* be appearing in a forthcoming issue of *We Love Darts* magazine as part of my regular *Darts History* feature. (To subscribe to *We Love Darts* go to www.welovedarts.com and tell them I sent you.)

So that's what's *not* being featured next month so what is?

Well I'll be talking to statistician Ryan Tibshirani of Stanford University, USA about his work taking an academic and seriously statistical approach to our sport.

I'll also be revealing the story of the unique Perranporth Spring Dart and of course revealing the answer to the question I raised above about the mystery dartboard. That should do for starters.

See you at the Masters!

Cheers!

Patrick Chaplin

Text © 2010 Patrick Chaplin. Images © 2010 Patrick Chaplin or as sourced