

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

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EXCLUSIVE

THE MISSING LINK? AMAZING DARTBOARD DISCOVERY

Back in March I received a very interesting e-mail from Michael Oliver of Letchworth in Hertfordshire, England which throws some doubt on previous wisdom relating to the development of the dartboard in England. It's an amazing story. Michael wrote:



Hi Patrick. I have a dartboard that was found inside a wall in my Nan's pub many years ago. The pub was the Queen's Head in Hempnall, Norfolk. The board was discovered some 20-30 years ago when my dad removed a wall next to a chimney breast in the bar area.

The board was there in a small area with dust and rubble. Like someone had hidden it to be found in the future. For the next 20 years it hung in my dad's office until he died then it was passed on to me 10 years ago.

Although not in the best of condition, (it has a crack and some dart holes from usage) I am curious to know the type of dartboard and how old it is as I am unable to find any images like it on the internet and unfortunately the pub is now closed down and converted into a house.

Can you help me please?

In all of my 35 years of researching darts I have never seen a dartboard like this.

Most people interested in the history and development of darts (myself included) believe that there is an either direct or indirect link between archery and darts. Indeed I examined that theory as part of my PhD research and my findings were published in *Darts in England 1900-39 – A social history* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009, paperback 2012).

Nothing was ever proven and I rested on my theory that the sequence of development was (a) miniature archery target (with the bullseye valued at 100 points with 75, 50, 25, etc. radiating out from that centre) (b) the Fives Board (no treble ring, bullseye valued 50 and outer bull worth 25 whilst the 12 segments of the board were valued 20, 15, 10, 5, times three), (c) the Yorkshire Board (20 segments as we know today but with no outer bull or treble ring, the bull

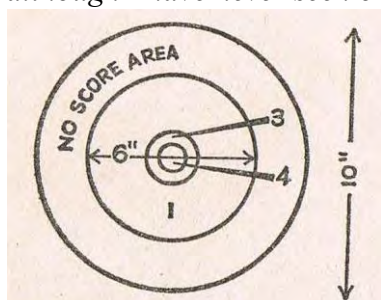
scoring 50 points) and then finally (d) the London Board (now standard) with the same 20 segments but with the additions of the outer bull and the treble ring.

But this dartboard throws my theory straight into the bin as it shows a combination of an archery target in the centre with the modern numbering system 1-20.

The board is made of wood (probably elm or poplar) and has clearly dried out in the niche where it was finally discovered by Michael's father all those years ago.

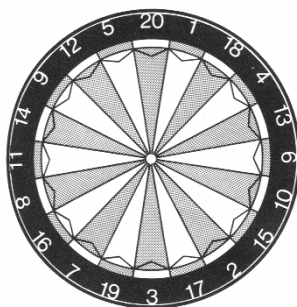
Way back in the mid-1970s pub games expert Arthur R. Taylor (*Pub Games* (St. Albans: Mayflower Books, 1976) wrote

It is a fair guess that the first dartboards were, like archery targets, simply concentric circles, although I have never seen one. On a recent trip to Norfolk, however, several people told me that a similar-sounding board made of elm was used in many rural pubs as recently as the 1940s. This had four concentric circles, although outer area did not count. The bull and the inner, about the same size as those on a modern board, scored 4 and 3 respectively with the third circle, or 'magpie' scored 1. The over-all diameter of the board was about 10 inches, but the actual scoring area was only 5 or 6 inches across. The standard game was 31-up, scored on a cribbage board.



Arthur Taylor also pointed out that Rupert Croft-Cooke, the earliest-known chronicler of darts, cited an example of a dartboard as having 'three concentric circles for the bull'. (Rupert Croft-Cooke, *Darts* (London: Bles, 1936)) about which Taylor wrote would 'surely have been the Target, or Norfolk, board.' Note the 'No Score Area' on the above artist's impression of the Norfolk board, such areas being, of course, a feature of all modern dartboards.

Even more amazing, or should I say 'confusing' (?) is the *reverse* of the dartboard (pictured right) (or is it the front???) which again has an archery-type target at its centre but with the numbers 1-12 featured plus four triangles giving the target a star effect.



Did these triangles on both boards eventually lead to segments? I know that the Tonbridge dartboard (pictured left) has small triangles *and* segments but no allusion to the archery target.

Is this linked to the dartboard discovered in Norfolk?

It's a complete mystery to me.



It is going to take me a while to come to terms with the potential of this discovery in terms of the possible re-writing of any and all theories relating to the development of the dartboard and indeed the game of darts.

Is it the 'missing link' or merely a hybrid, a localised version of darts peculiar to that single pub or area? Your ideas please to patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

WORTHINGTON'S DARTS CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS 2017 LAUNCHED

After reporting on the demise of the *News of the World* tournament (last contested in 1997) in last month's *DDN* I was more or less immediately contacted by Simon Hall, Head of Marketing for Red Dragon Darts, that the 'Champion of Champions' competition launched in 2014 is based on the legendary 'best of three' format.

The first winner of the event was Steve Degville, 39, of the Newtown Premier League. Professional darter Gerwyn Price won the title in 2015 and last year Jonny Clayton, a



plasterer for Pembrokeshire Council beat former World Champion Ritchie Burnett 2-1 in a tightly-fought final. (The photo, left, shows, left to right, Martin Anderson, Regional Director of Coors, 2016 champion Jonny Clayton and Simon Hall. © Red Dragon Darts. Used with permission.)

Now the search is on for the 2017 Worthington's Darts Champion of Champions, which is sponsored by Molson Coors and Red Dragon Darts, and promoted in partnership with useyourlocal.com - the UK's leading website for pubs - with pubs and clubs across the country signing up to hold heats to find local champions for the £20,000 grand final which will be held at the SSE SWALEC stadium in Cardiff on August 26th.

Simon told me:

"The tournament mirrors the best of three legs 501 format of the iconic News of the World competition with heat winners automatically qualifying for the 256 player grand final. To take part, players must first register at www.reddragon.darts.com/info/player-registration and can play in as many qualifiers as they like. The tournament is open to men and women of all abilities, as well as children over the age of 14 with the permission of landlords. Players can register right up to the day of the last event. We try to get them all over by 31st July.

The Worthington's Champion of Champions is the people's darts tournament. Pubs and clubs are at the heart of the sport and, as we have seen in previous years, they produce some fantastic darting talent. The event gets better and better and this year's will be an incredible experience for everyone taking part."

Last year's winner was Jonny Clayton, a plasterer from Pembrokeshire. In addition to the trophy and title of Worthington's Champion of Champions 2016, he picked up a cheque for £5,000. It's a marvellous event. The organisation is second to none and the tournament pits some of the best-known names in the game alongside pub champions. The tournament has a great, major TV feel to it and I'm sure the 2017 event will be even bigger and better."

More details on the Worthington's Champion of Champions 2017 tournament, including a list of venues already signed up to hold qualifiers, is available at:

<https://www.reddragonarts.com/events/worthingtons-champion-of-champions.html>

The tournament is clearly gaining in popularity and is expanding at an amazing rate. Simon added:

"Numbers have increased from 128 pubs in 2014 to 256. The number of entrants has grown 200% every year from 2014 with a forecast 5,000 players taking part in 2017. The event has grown from 90% South Wales and West to a truly National UK Event."

So, the spirit of the *News of the World* lives on, thanks to Red Dragon Darts and Molson Coors.

THICKNESS OF A DARTS MAT

I recently received a question via my website www.patrickchaplin.com from someone simply calling himself 'Keith'. He wrote:

Great site! Quick question I have been [un]able to find an answer to: if you're throwing from a mat to protect the floor, should the thickness of the mat be considered when measuring the correct height to hang the dart board?

My immediate thought was that it *isn't* taken into account and that mats were not employed in top competition as free-standing toe-lines would be used.

I decided to ask Ian Flack, Sales and Marketing Director for the WINMAU Dartboard Co. Ltd. Ian replied:

That's a great question and not one I've come across before. I would be confident in saying that 99.9% of people don't take into account the height of the mat when setting up a home oche.



The mats are so thin (our Heavy Duty Rubber mat is approx. 3mm thick and the Soft-Feel Mat [pictured] is approx. 4mm thick) that it won't make a huge difference to most player's throw, but I would think that if you were to take the letter of the law that the mat should be accounted for (as the height is measured from the bull to the floor, and the "floor" in this instance would be the mat).

You are spot on that this wouldn't be an issue in a professional competition as there would be a free-standing or raised oche that wouldn't use a mat.

(Image of Softfeel darts mat ©WINMAU. Used with permission.)

FLIGHT CLUB 2 – BLOOMSBURY

Following the success of the first Flight Club (the home of 'social darts') based in Finsbury Park, London, a second venue has been opened in Bloomsbury.

I was pleased to be involved with the first club and then again with this second venture by way of providing darts memorabilia, darts, programmes, back issues of *Darts World* and an antique penny-slot machine called 'ELECTRODART'.



Steve Moore, Founder and CEO of Flight Club, told me “Guess what a prime attraction is? The penny slot!” You can see the ‘ELECTRODART’ on the right-hand side of the photograph. See also how the fairground has been included in the design of the main part of the bar. Brilliant!”

You’ll see that the darts facilities provided are far different from anything else you will ever see. Not for the usual darts player this. You won’t find standard dart games being played but electronic variations of some games you’ll recognise. To really appreciate what these new revolutionary concepts in darts have to offer go to flightclubdarts.com.

CHANGE OF E-MAIL ADDRESS - A REMINDER

A recent e-mail from subscriber Simon E. notifying me of his change of e-mail address has encouraged me to mention this again.

Just lately I have experienced a number of returned mailings of *DDN* where the issue was shown as 'undeliverable'. It is clear that these subscribers have not advised me of a change of e-mail address and thus *DDN* is lost to them.

So, this is just a reminder that if you do change your e-mail address and you still want to receive *DDN* please send your new details to me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

JOHN LOWE – NEW APP.

Ben Holmes, of Bubble Creations, who is on my LinkedIn contact list, wrote to me recently to let me know that he was launching a mobile App game that will be backed by darts legend John Lowe and will be titled **John Lowe's Darts Arcade**. The product was launched in Chesterfield at the end of May. John told me:

"Ben designed this App a few years ago, convinced it would be a success. He never gave up on his dream. Now it's come to fruition, produced by Route 1 Games, the creators of Millionaire, Deal or no Deal, and Bullseye games. I was delighted when Ben asked me to put my name to it. I am now trying to reach the higher levels of play. It may take a while!"

The link to the App Store is <https://appsto.re/gb/oUBujb.i> and the Twitter page is @JLDartsArcade; Facebook - John Lowe's Darts Arcade.

THE HISTORY OF DARTS IN GERMANY



I am *very* pleased to inform DDN readers that my good friend Charis Mutschler recently published her revised version of her *History of Darts in Germany* on her website.

Charis (pictured) and I have only met on a few occasions but have been e-mailing each other, exchanging views and information about darts, for a good number of years. For all you need to know about the history and development of darts in Germany go to:

<http://www.globaldarts.de/globalDartsEN/global/Europa/HistoryGermanynew.html>

PETER MANLEY'S NINE-OUT-OF-NINE DOUBLES.

Tamas Gyorgy, a *Darts World* reader from Hungary, has e-mailed me as follows:

First of all, many thanks for your interesting articles in the Darts World magazine. I enjoy them a lot.

Those who read *Darts World* will know that I write a feature for that magazine titled *The Last Word* where I discuss a recent or past darts issue and seek responses from readers. Tamas continues:

For some time now I've been intrigued to find out who hit the most perfect doubles/checkouts in a row in a televised darts match (or as a matter of fact also in an untelevised one).

I did a little research and learned that Michael van Gerwen achieved 8/8 doubling perfection vs [Peter] Wright in the 2016 Sydney Darts Masters semi-final. In the video of this match the commentator mentions that Peter Manley hit 9/9 doubles (and lost the match) at a World Matchplay some years ago...However, I couldn't find any trace on the 'net which of [Peter] Manley's matches that could have been.

Do you know which match that was and if that is available online? Also, if you are aware of even better 100% doubling achievements, please let me know. Many thanks!

I was unable to find the answer to Tamas's question in my archive so contacted Peter Manley (pictured right) direct. He replied:



Hi Patrick. I vaguely remember doing it, but sorry I have no recollection of when and who I played. Still busy with Exhibitions and enjoying the rising standard of players. All the best, Peter

Great to learn that 'One Dart' is keeping his hand in and keeping an eye on standards.

So, I'm throwing that question open to you. Does anyone know when Peter Manley achieved 9 out of 9 doubles in a Matchplay and lost? If you do then please contact me. My e-mail address is patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

(Image of Peter, above, © Peter Manley. Used with permission.)

'CLAY PIPE'!

Back in July 2016 issue (#74), I mentioned darts terminology or 'lingo'. In reply subscriber Brian Hutchinson wrote:

Many thanks for the July News Letter. Very interesting & informative, as always! The News of the World history is of particular interest to me and also seems to be a great favourite with many of your readers.

You brought up the subject of 'darting lingo' which reminded me of a question I've been meaning to ask: Not long after I first started playing (around 1974-75) in the North East pub I used to frequent, the shout for hitting 3 consecutive doubles in a game of 20 Doubles was: "Clay pipe!" I don't know if I was told, or just assumed, but I always thought it meant at one time the scorer was awarded a clay pipe by the landlord for his achievement. Since my revived interest in the game I have tried Googling this, thinking the question may have been asked before on one of the dart forums but nothing came up. I would be interested to know if you or any of your followers has come across this expression & may know / confirm the origin?

I replied:

In all the years I have been researching darts I have never come across the expressions "Clay pipe!" nor have I heard of the game '20 doubles'! I assume the latter is literally the first to hit twenty doubles, but is that sequentially as in the popular northern game of Round the Board on Doubles?

My guess is that you have the answer to "Why 'Clay pipe'?" but I will, with your permission, ask the question of my readers to see if they come up with anything.

'Clay pipe' is an interesting expression because the use of clay pipes in pubs was superseded by cigarettes after the Great War which makes this darts expression (possibly) one of the oldest. By the way, just out of interest, which north-east pub did you used to frequent?

Brian replied:

The pub I used to go to was the Mill Inn, New Seaham, Co. Durham; many of the regulars were miners from the nearby Knack pit. The pub is still there but not the pit. Yes, 20 Doubles IS Round the Board on Doubles, where your turn continues as long as you hit at least one double, sequentially, with your three darts. I refer to it as 20 Doubles as I remember that was the version played as a league cup tournament, where the bull was excluded as a double - in those days it was always a bit 'flash' to try to finish on the bull!

I look forward to seeing if there is any response to my enquiry: it would be very strange if it were an expression peculiar to my home town.

I asked my good friend former England darts international Doug McCarthy who also lives in County Durham whether he had heard the expression where he plays. He had not. I contacted the National Pipe Archive and Dr. David Higgins told me:

I have never come across the use of this term before. But I can tell you that pipes were often given out by landlords when the customers purchased tobacco and there is one reference to a seasonal worker from East Anglia who came back from the midlands each year with dozens of pipes that he had collected from the local pub)....so it is quite plausible that a pipe could have been claimed by someone hitting three consecutive doubles!

THE PROBLEMS OF RESEARCHING DARTS – PART 2



Back in issue 79 (November 2016) I asked what I thought was an impossible question, "Who was darts player 'J. Fermor'?" I had never heard of him so published what little data I had (inscriptions from darts trophies bearing his name and a reference to the *Birmingham Mail*) and - *Voila!* – almost immediately *DDN* subscriber Ken Herbert came up with information. (For details see #80). That was incredible in my view. It was a pleasure to help my enquirer.

But let me tell you now about an aspect of my research that irritates me beyond measure: when people ask for information, I spend time researching their query and then send them a detailed reply, charging them nothing for the hours spent on the task and then **nothing**.

For example, a few months ago I received the following enquiry:

Hi Patrick, I came across your website while doing a search about darts. I was hunting for some information on Darts played during the 1930s and 40s as I found out from my half-sister that our father won a silver cup playing darts and I was interested in whether there would have been team or individual tournaments or both played at the time. Did they do the rounds of the pubs and how would they have got there - walking? Dad lived in...and went to one of the working men's clubs there according to my half-sister.

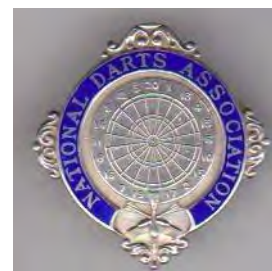
I'd love to find out some more information on this and was wondering where the good places are to research the information?

Knowing I could help, and with a possible story for DDN in the making, I replied:

Sadly, apart from my work, there is very little accurate information of the 'net relating to early darts history. As you probably know, there is some information about darts in the 1930s on my website but it's not exactly what you are looking for.

For a better overview of darts in those days (especially the 1930s) I suggest you order my book Darts in England 1900-39 - A social history (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009) from your local library.

In essence the interwar years saw the first 'boom' in darts with the first national darts organisation, the National Darts Association (NDA), being formed in 1924 and the brewers beginning to introduce numerous darts leagues. Contrary to general belief many women participated in darts at this time and some brewers even had ladies' leagues. 1927 saw the first News of the World darts tournament started in London which became so popular that, by 1939, it covered all of England and Wales.



The war years saw darts helping to maintain morale throughout the theatres of war, both home and abroad. After the war things went a bit quiet, the boom had ended although darts continued to be played in hundreds of pubs across England and Wales. In 1954 the National Darts Association of Great Britain (NDAGB) was set up and controlled the game and organised provincial and national tournaments up to the mid-to-late 1970s.

While the News of the World offered darts players the opportunity to become a national champion, the brewers offered a league structure in which silver cups and medals were awarded. Most of the local brewery leagues were played inter-house (that is, only in pubs owned by that particular brewery) and usually between pubs that were within walking, bus or tram distance of each other. Some darts clubs were based in other establishments such as village halls and working men's clubs. In fact there was a specific competition organised for individuals in such clubs by the Club and Institute Union (CIU).

During the periods you mentioned there would have been hundreds of leagues plus numerous friendly matches played between pubs within close proximity of each other. The latter would include pubs of various brewers just meeting for a social game and not vying for league positions. All good friendly stuff!

Up until the 1970s the one tournament that all serious darts players wanted to win was the News of the World and it may well be that your father was awarded his silver cup for competing in that event. If he had made the final stages of that competition I may be able to help you but, in order for me to do that, I would need to know your father's first name, surname and, roughly, the year in which your half-sister thinks he won the cup. I need the year to be narrowed down otherwise it will be impossible for me to find him.

Thousands upon thousands of silver cups and medals would have been awarded for darts competitions throughout the two decades you mentioned so it will probably be like looking for a needle in a haystack. However, if you can provide with the information I've requested I can certainly take a look through my archive to see if I can track him down.

I look forward to hearing from you again soon.

Then *nothing*. Weeks passed with no acknowledgement (despite a follow-up e-mail from me). No “Thank you”. Nothing. However, not wishing all my research to go to waste, I thought I would publish my reply in *DDN* and trust it is of interest to you my readers and, therefore, not completely wasted.

(The photo of me, above, during my last gloomy mood was first published in *DDN* #51, August 2014. Image © Moppix International. Used with permission.)

But then... along comes ‘Eddie48’ from Germany who e-mailed me:

Dear Mr Chaplin, Actually I found your address in your book 180! Fascinating Darts Facts and it is fascinating indeed! Just ordered your Official Bar Guide to Darts. Sid Waddell, Phil Taylor and all the others are right. If someone is looking for information on darts you are the best address. Hope you'll go on like this. All the best and good darts.

That makes me feel a lot better.

CORRECTION: #86 Thanks to *Darts World* reader Alan Whitehouse who correctly pointed out that the *News of the World* Ladies darts tournament was, of course, contested in 1997 and the winner was Linda Jones.

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