

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 96

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THE GULF CUP OF DARTS

While the Professional Darts Corporation (PDC) makes great strides towards the total globalisation of darts there are a large number of independent darts organisations around the world that are working hard too to bring the social side of darts to the fore. The PDC tournaments include the Middle East but in this issue I'll deal with something more 'local'.



I was recently contacted by Ross Hampton, General Manager of Dart Players Middle East (DPME). He told me

The DPME was originally set up by five people and intended as a social club for which authority approval was required. During the application process it became evident that in order to get local sports council approvals for events, we would have to set up as a company. This was done by myself and Mark Washburn (one of the original founders), and we are joint

shareholders, to ensure that our legal obligations were being met. We organise local leagues, super league, competitions and exhibitions and are based out of Dubai but try to promote the game further afield.

Towards the end of last month DPME embarked on the 2nd Annual Gulf Cup of Darts being held in the Middle East region. This year's event is being held in Bahrain. Ross continued

The event was first organised last year by Dart Players Middle East and is intended on being held annually, moving around the different regions of the Middle East each year to help promote the sport and bring communities of players together. There is a large expatriate community of darts players within the region, most of whom have their own organised leagues or competitions in their respective countries, and as you touched on with your recent review of darts in Iran, in some areas, there is also a large following of local players.



The aim of the event is to bring together all people, regions and nationalities to compete in the sport, and while this is currently being done at a social level, it is hoped that once the regions government bodies see the progression and the interest, that this will develop into formal competition with the backing of local authorities and sports councils.

The competition is a team event, constructed of ten singles matches and five pairs matches. (15 matches in total against each opposing team). One point is awarded for a match win and nil pts for a loss. Every match is played in the group stage as each point counts towards a team's overall total.

Teams are drawn into groups and play a round robin group stage before the group winners face off in the finals. The team with the highest points at the end of the group stage proceeds to the finals.

The inaugural event last year was held in Dubai and saw participating teams from Dubai (UAE) Abu Dhabi (UAE) Sharjah (UAE) Bahrain and Qatar. Ross told me *"I've recently been contacted by the men's and women's national team coach from Iran, so it will be interesting to see where this leads."*

To add to the excitement of the tournament last year the event was also coupled with a professional exhibition featuring Ian 'Diamond' White and Jamie 'Jabba' Caven, darters who Ross described as "Two top guys."



A full report of the outcome of the 2018 Gulf Cup will be featured in the April issue of *DDN*. In the meantime if any reader wants to find out more about DPME then check out their website www.dartplayersmiddleeast.com or Instagram: #dartplayersmiddleeast, Twitter @dpmedarts and the organisation's Facebook page.

CAN YOU HELP SOLVE THE MYSTERY OF THE 'BATH DARTBOARD'?

Some years ago I was contacted via my website www.patrickchaplin.com by Dr. Karen Francis of Cardiff, Wales who had decided to research her family tree and had discovered a connection with darts.

Karen told me that her family had lived in Bath, in the south-west of the UK, at the turn of the twentieth century. Her great-grandfather Henry Ollis was shown to have kept a pub in the city (circa 1906) which Karen believes was the *Walcot Wine Vaults* which used to stand at 114-116 Walcot Street in that city. Karen managed to secure an amazing photograph of her great grandfather and his darts team (see photo) sitting outside the pub. In front of the team sat a most unusual dartboard.



Karen's enquiry centred round the dartboard, the style of which I had never seen before. At first I thought it was a Tonbridge dartboard but then I quickly realised that, though there were similar elements, the Bath board (see enlarged photo below) was not the same. In fact it appears to be unique.

What confused me was that, up until I saw what I have dubbed 'The Bath dartboard', I had believed that skittles was the more popular game in the area. My research had always indicated that darts did not reach that part of the West Country until at least the 1930s so this discovery has turned my thinking about the development of darts in that region upside down.

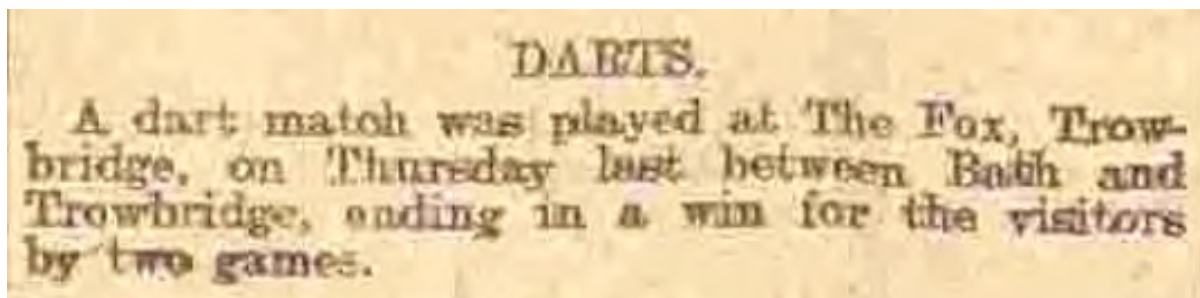


I subsequently had a letter published in the *Bath Chronicle* hoping that someone - perhaps a local researcher or pub historian - would come forward and solve the mystery but no responses were received so the mystery remains.

This is a most unusual dartboard and is, except for the famous Grimsby dartboard, one of the earliest photographs of a regional (or local) dartboard I have ever seen. I don't like to admit to have been beaten by this enquiry but, so far, all my research has drawn a blank. And so the matter rested.

On 5th February this year Dr. Francis contacted me again saying that she is writing her second family history book and the dartboard story will start off a chapter on her Bath Ollis family. Karen told me

Strangely it had never occurred to me to just search the British Newspapers Archive with keywords of 'dart' AND 'match'! I attach the article that I mentioned, from the Bath Chronicle & Weekly Gazette, Thursday 17th December 1908. (See below)



So, obviously darts was being played in Bath by 1908; the city could field a team that beat the lot twelve miles away in Trowbridge!

Also...I found a much earlier article (Wiltshire Times and Trowbridge Advertiser Saturday 16th March 1901) about illegal gambling in licensed premises where men were discovered betting on the outcome of a darts match taking place in Westbury - it looks like the game was well established in Wiltshire by ~1901.

In any event, my 'dartboard photo' may represent a team drawn from several local Bath pubs who were evidently enjoying a recent victory (they're mostly either holding or smoking cigars). The paucity of newspaper articles mentioning darts in Somerset during the early 1900s could just perhaps reflect a perceived lack of newsworthiness at the time?

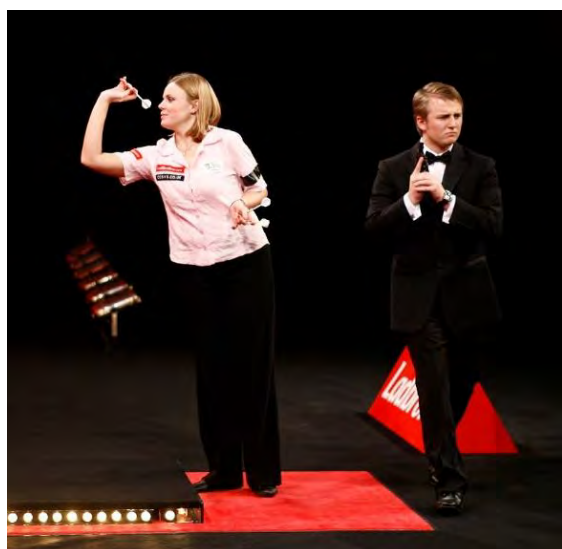
I'll let you know if I discover anything more...

One of the things that made researching my PhD so difficult some years ago was indeed what Karen refers to as 'the paucity of newspaper articles'. Even today there are few mentions of darts in the national press here in the UK and local papers only seem to be interested in darts reports if all other sports are cancelled by bad weather and even then...

NOT LOST TO HISTORY AT ALL

As you may recall, last month's issue of *DDN* featured a lead article about the demise of the darts walk-on girls. Although the article was primarily about the girls, I did mention that, in the interests of equality, the PDC had used at least one walk-on man at one of its top tournaments. I wrote

In 2009 Anastasia Dobromyslova qualified for the Ladbrokes.com PDC World Championships at the Alexandra Palace. Clearly it would be wholly inappropriate to have a walk-on girl accompany her to the stage so, for balance, the PDC provided a 'walk-on man'. (Sadly his name seems to have been lost to history.)



Indeed, when my book *180! – Fascinating Darts Facts* was published by The History Press in 2012, I included the same 'fact' that the walk-on man's name was unknown.

However, thanks to Matt Porter, the Chief Executive of the PDC, the name of that walk-on man is no longer 'lost to history'. Matt wrote:

Hi Patrick, Enjoyed your balanced and accurate assessment of the walk on girl matter! For the record, the walk on man for Anastasia was Kristian McDonald, an actor and the son of our MC John! (Image (left) © PDC/Lawrence Lustig. Used with permission.)

Thanks Matt and thanks too to all readers who wrote to me with their views. These included 'PC' who commented

For what it's worth I never bought into the girls walk on razzmatazz, but accepted that it was part of the marketing of the game, at the time, but glad it has now gone.

'BB' wrote

The walk-on girls being taken off is terrible. Just a load of lefties getting involved after the idiot blokes from the night at the Presidents club. The girls enjoyed the job and now they're all unemployed. I thought they added to it all. Not happy on that one.

Subscriber Tom Firth told me

I am also sorry to see the loss of "The walk on girls" but agree that the female darts players should have walk on "boys". Ha! I think it adds to the atmosphere and think it is really the case of Political Correctness gone mad. I am sure the girls will find further employment but it would have been some form of regular income.

Globe-trotting darts ambassador Dr. Eddie Norman e-mailed me to say

I am completely reading from the same hymn sheet as you on this, certainly time for a change.

LEN HEARD - FEEDBACK

Thanks to all those who gave feedback on Steve Chapman's article about Len Heard in the last DDN.

Owen Walters wrote:

Just like to say "Thank You" for another cracking DDN. Nice to read about players from the past like Len Heard, who I had no knowledge of before your article. Keep up the good work.



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Julie Buffington has only been playing darts for 2½ years and is already an international. She is from Cincinnati, Ohio and enjoys pubbing, people and skiing. Thirty year old Julie, single, is a television producer-director and today she is on the other side of the camera and could become a Sky TV star.

English born Len Heard emigrated to the United States and won the North American Open title in 1980. Ten years later he's made the return trip as a US international in search of the big one. Len works as a plumber in Poway, California and is married with three children.



Patrick Corrigan e-mailed to say

Hello Patrick, Great reporting on Darts history again. I really enjoyed the article regarding Len heard, especially as I am originally from Plymouth.

And from the USA Jerry Feather wrote

One of your best Patrick! Len Heard was a great player and a gentlemen!

(The above image is from the 1990 *News of the World* Grand Finals programme (the year when both a men's and ladies' final were held) showing both Len and the USA Ladies' representative Julie Buffington.)

DARTS TERMINOLOGY – DARTS LINGO

Bill Bell e-mailed me to say that his friend Chris Kelly sent him a message asking what hitting treble 1, treble 20 and a treble 5 in three darts was called. Bill told me

I didn't have a clue. It was on a TV quiz. The answer: Champagne Breakfast!!! Have you heard of that one?

I told Bill that I was watching that very TV quiz show, called *Tipping Point*, and heard the question to which the answer was 'Champagne breakfast'. I'd never heard of that phrase before. However, I suppose it does make sense as 'bed and breakfast' is the name given to scoring 26 in three darts: single 1, single 20 and single 5. (The derivation of 'Bed and Breakfast' was discussed in depth in *DDN* #90, September 2017.)

Was 'Champagne Breakfast' something that the question compilers invented? Although the expression is not known to me that does not mean to say that it is not used or had been used *somewhere*. Any ideas? If you have heard the expression 'Champagne Breakfast' before please contact me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com with details.

Still on the subject of darts language, I mentioned in #95 the fact that my definition of the word **Shanghai** in my book *180! – Fascinating Darts Facts* was used during the commentary on the Lakeside World Darts Championships in January. I had assumed that one of the commentators was reading from my book but I was wrong. I am grateful to Ireland's Tom Firth for setting the record straight. Tom wrote

On that issue of Shanghai. I was watching that event on the television and when I heard that question, I immediately looked it up, as I do, and found the contact address of Channel 4 and sent them an immediate response...

THREE BULLSEYES - FEEDBACK

When I wrote in #95 that I had achieved three bullseyes with three darts for the first time in my life (and over 50 years of throwing darts) it struck a chord with subscriber Ray Anderson who wrote:

Dear Patrick, Thank you for continuing to send me DDN. It is much appreciated. You do a splendid job in marshalling news, recollections and, of course, history.

Your item on getting three bull's-eyes in three darts sparked memories. Whilst I have never achieved such a feat, finishing on the bull has a special feel to it. I recall playing a league game some 40 years ago when the team was already 7-0 up in a nine-person match when I scored two bulls in finishing on 100. It would be nice to say that it was planned, but of course it wasn't. My first dart for treble 20 'slipped' and hit the bull, my second followed it.



Ray's message also provides me with a great excuse to publish my three bulls photo again!

POINTLESS CELEBRITIES

Thanks to David King (he of Darts501.com fame) for bringing to my attention that multi-world titled Trina Gulliver and Eric Bristow have recorded an edition of 'Pointless Celebrities' here in the UK which will be broadcast on BBC1 on Saturday 31st March. The time is yet to be confirmed. David has placed an article on Trina's website <http://www.trina-gulliver.com/Pointless-Celebrity.html>.



The show is a Celebrity Special in aid of charity where Trina and Eric are joined by other sports World Champions. David wrote:

See if the pair make it to the final and win the Jackpot prize or did they score more than they hoped too! Scoring nothing isn't in either Trina's or Eric's DNA, so let's hope they both understood the rules! Pointless is a TV quiz in which contestants try to score as few points as possible by plumbing the depths of their general knowledge to come up with the answers no-one else can think of.

HAMLEY'S DARTS

Recently I have been working my way through my box file titled 'DDN' which contains lots of paperwork relating to things that I plan(ned) to feature in my newsletter *at some stage*.

I cannot believe that *three years ago* I set aside an enquiry about Hamley's darts that I received and replied to all that time ago and yet it has never appeared in DDN.

Back in February **2015** I received the following enquiry via my website from Matthew Silverwood. He wrote

Hi Patrick, I am hoping you can shed some light my way regarding some darts I have recently been given. The darts look very old, but have never been used and come in their original box, which is also mint. On the box it says 'Hamleys Fleetville Feather Darts 1/6 L' and 'Hamleys 200-202 Regent Street London (our only address)'.



The darts have yellow and black feathers, and the base of the stems look Ivory? I was wondering about the age and any information you may have. Thank you for your time.

I checked my records and, to my surprise, found that I had written to Hamley's back in 1985 about their branded darts. However, the company was not able to help very much as they did not keep old catalogues but the person who replied to my enquiry did speak to one of their staff who had been with the company for a number of years. The Personal Secretary to the Managing Director of Hamley's told me:

I have enquired of our Sports Buyer who tells me that darts were on sale when he joined the Company in 1968 but it was only in 1977 that we started to promote them in a big way. Of course it is possible that Hamley's have sold them for a number of years, and this seems quite likely but we have no record to show when they first appeared.

Hamleys Sports & Leisure

Wigmore St W.1

Would you like a set of darts made of platinum? We've got them for £1,400! Or gold – they're only £800. Silver then – a mere £60. Ask to see them some time – they prove our point that we have the most complete range of darts, brass, tungsten or stainless steel, in what must surely be the finest darts department of any shop in Britain.

Famous makes in stock include: Durro, Elka, Jim Pike, St. Peters, Silver Trim, Trulon, Unicorn, Kwiz.

Come and see us any week day between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. Eric Bristow, Willie Etherington, Tony Bell, Linda Batten and other well-known players are here from time to time ready to meet all comers.

For a bit of one-upmanship, how about one of our electronic score boards. We make to your requirements – and they do save the cost of chalk!

Everything else for the game of course. Boards in pine, bristle, paper. Cabinets. Accessories. Mats.

For people who take their leisure seriously



Open 9am-8pm
six days a week

My view was then and remains today that the darts Matthew had were introduced circa 1977/78 to cash in on the massive trend for the sport at that time. (Harrods did a similar thing in the 1980s.) If the 'Hamley's' darts were not being sold in the store in 1985 that would narrow down the time-line substantially.

Following further research I discovered a Hamley's advertisement (see image, left) on page 29 of the April 1978 issue of *Darts World* which boasts that

Eric Bristow, Willie Etherington, Tony Bell, Linda Batten and other well-known players are here from time to time ready to meet all comers.

And, just in case you're flush with cash, asks

Would you like a set of darts made of platinum? We've got them for £1,400! Or gold – they're only £800. Silver then – a mere £60...

Darts manufacturers mentioned included Durro, Elkadart, Jim Pike, Kwiz, Silvertrim, Trulon, Unicorn and St. Peter's. I've heard of them all except St. Peter's. Have you heard of them?

Can anyone help on this? If so please contact me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

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