

DR DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue Thirteen April 2011 www.patrickchaplin.com



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AMAZING DISCOVERY TURNS 'DARTS IS ENGLISH' THEORY UPSIDE-DOWN

Dateline April 1, 2011

Time 10.23 (British Standard Time)

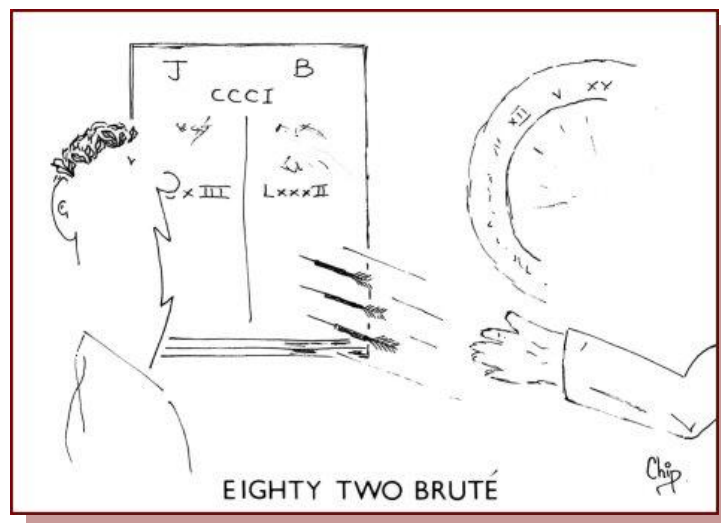
Welcome one and all to Issue 13 or, if you are superstitious, Issue 12A.

I know I normally begin *DDN* with a proper Introduction and feedback from earlier issues but that will come later. This month is different because I have some breaking news for all those interested in darts history which must take priority over everything else.

News has reached me of an amazing discovery made by a group of amateur archaeologists in Italy in the early hours of this morning.

Whilst working in an area believed to be either a Roman spoil heap or rubbish tip on the outskirts of Rome, members of the Langford Archaeology Group, from East Anglia, England, have excavated a body which is believed to be that of a Roman dart player.

The body, which is that of a man, is extremely well preserved and by his dress, mainly consisting of sackcloth and a pair of leather sandals, is assumed to be a Roman peasant. Amazingly, grasped in the peasant's left hand was found a goblet bearing the inscription in Roman numerals 'CXXC' followed by the legend 'Dartus Maximus' and under that 'Silas Geronicus' and beneath that the phrase 'Polo far lir' (roughly translated as 'Congratulations'). Therefore, it is assumed that the goblet was some form of trophy and that 'Silas' was the name of the unfortunate peasant. (The *DDN* resident cartoonist 'Chip' has provided us with an image of how a Roman game of darts might have looked.)

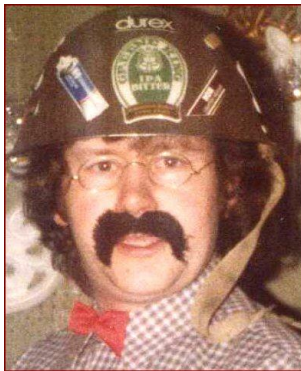


However, what is of intense interest to darts historians - and which has sent excited rumblings around the darts world - is that the peasant was found to be holding in his right hand a set of three miniature arrows, possibly small pillums (a Roman throwing spear or javelin). These 'arrows' are made of soft wood with fairly long metal points, not unlike

the length and metallic construction of a Roman brooch clasp. They are well preserved and have fragments of feather flights still clinging to them. The similarity between these small Roman arrows and the modern dart was immediately and plainly obvious.

Any doubts about the probable darting connection were suppressed when, upon moving Silas's body, a small archery target was discovered beneath him. About 12 inches in diameter, the target was constructed of cork and features 20 segments with inlaid Roman numerals (I to XX, non-sequential) of tessera mosaic and a bulls eye. It is assumed that Silas had been to a match in which his own personal board was used; either that or he was a league official who had special responsibility for the target and was taking it home.

Up until this morning all darts and weapons historians had been certain that darts was a derivative of archery dating back from medieval times in England (the battles of Crecy, Agincourt, etc). The established theory is that battle-weary soldiers invented darts whilst sitting relaxing on a grassy knoll. They took a number of broken arrows (with fletching), sharpened them and then threw them at exposed log-ends of trees and 'Voila!' darts was born. From thence 'darts' developed as an indoor pastime played in taverns and inns for centuries until the game was standardised in the 1920s. Until now there has been no evidence to suggest that the origins of the game lay within the ancient Roman Empire.



Professor Bertram Singleton-Pratt, leader of the Langford Archaeological Group, (pictured) told a reporter, "This is a most fantastic discovery indeed. As soon as we are able to examine the body and dartefacts in a more secure and safe environment and under rigid laboratory conditions we should be able to ascertain exactly how old our Roman darter is and *possibly* how he ended up in the spoil heap." One theory, already postulated, is that 'Silas' was under the influence of a surfeit of wine or mead (or both) and fell into the spoil heap on his way back from a darts match, sunk into it and suffocated.

Professor Singleton-Pratt added, "This could mean that darts was played at the Forum. It could even mean that darts might have been featured in the early Roman games or even the Olympics! If so, then that would certainly be one in the eye for those cynics who even today fail to accept the Sports Council's decision in Britain made in 2005 to recognise darts as a sport."

The outcomes of the tests on Silas in the laboratory are expected by the end of this week and are eagerly awaited by all darts players.

DOCTOR'S NOTE: I hope to bring you more about this breaking news in the next Issue of *DDN*.

INTRODUCTION

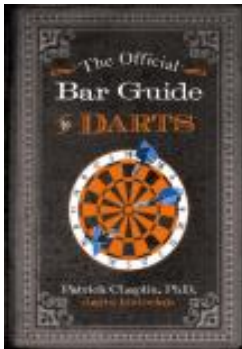
I hope you didn't mind my delaying this Introduction.

I usually begin with a few unsolicited references and this month is no different. Dave B. says, "I simply don't know how you manage to get better and better. As always a fascinating and interesting read." Well Dave, I have to say that it does hurt sometimes. Each *DDN* takes between 2-3 days to put together. An e-mail from Ad in the south of Holland said, "Every time when I receive your *Newsletter* I learn something new, so please don't stop with it, and go on as long as you can." On a similar theme, from Bill B, "Patrick, love the newsletter. Look forward to it arriving. Keep doing it."

Did I hint at some stage that I was thinking of closing down *DDN*? That must have been a very off day. I promise you all that I will continue with the *Newsletter* until there is no more need for my ramblings. Mind you, I could do with a couple more sponsors...

FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES

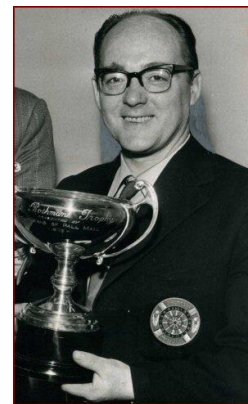
(a) *The Official Bar Guide to Darts*



New subscriber Fran Boyle promised me that he would review my book *The Official Bar Guide to Darts* (New York: Puzzlewright Press, 2010) and he's been true to his word and here it is... Click here... [Blue Bit](http://tectonic-tungsten.blogspot.com/2011/03/darts-books-official-bar-guide-to-darts.html) or copy and paste the full address into your web browser

<http://tectonic-tungsten.blogspot.com/2011/03/darts-books-official-bar-guide-to-darts.html>

Plus Frank Quinn one of the founders of the Scottish Darts Association recently wrote of *The Official Bar Guide to Darts*, 'Congratulations Patrick. You made a wonderful job in putting together your book. You have done a great service to the sport of darts...' Thanks Frank. That's praise indeed. Frank is pictured here during the early 1970s. (Copyright *Glasgow Herald* and *Evening Times*)



(b) Tom Barrett (mentioned under 'Jim Pike on Film')

Someone has questioned whether or not Tom Barrett actually threw 'household drawing pins' as referred to on page 5 on *DDN* #12. Thinking about it that's something even the great Tom Barrett might have had problems with. "Is someone having a laugh?" writes an enquirer. Probably not but the old memory does play tricks sometimes.

(c) Bob Sinnaeve back on the oche

My report on Canadian darts champion Bob Sinnaeve's comeback seems to have gone down well with a good number of you. James H. 'loved the interview with Bob' whilst another regular provider of feedback, Mick S., asks, "In how many other sports can a player stop playing for years then come back and have another big impact? Not many." Mick added, "Fantastic to see Bob Sinnaeve back on the darts trail."

The article brought back memories for another Canadian darter, John Thornton, who wrote "Thanks for the *Newsletter* Patrick and congratulations on it's anniversary. Back in the 70's I was knocked out of a singles tournament by Bob Sinnaeve and I said to my colleagues at the time 'that fellow is going places'. He did."

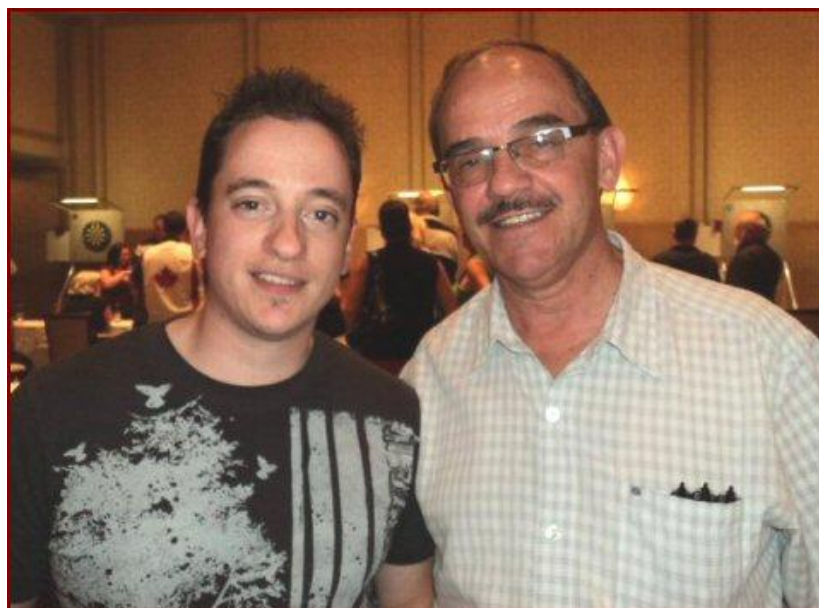
And here's what Bob and his wife Judy had to say about the article:

"We couldn't be more excited and pleased with the great article about Bob. What is even more amazing is the interest you took to find out about where our life has gone. It is truly appreciated and the content touched on so many aspects but told the story of the last 30 years.

I hope we can continue for a few more years with a trip to England being included if not as a player but certainly a spectator and we look forward to meeting you and having a drink together."

Sounds good to me. Just let me know...

Thanks to both Bob and Judy for that kind reply. As I included an image in Issue 12 of Bob and his son Adam when Adam was only three years old Judy also provided a more up to date image of the darting father and son.



(d) The Lightning Darts Scorer – More errors

Oh dear. After having confessed to a spelling error in Issue 12 (page 4) relating to Issue 11, I then, in the same paragraph, botched up the entire text!

‘Mr. Picky’ (Who else?) was the first to spot it in the Lightning Darts Scorer article and thanks to the swift action of my webmaster David King the issue has been amended both for new subscribers and for those looking at the issue on-line. The aforesaid ‘Mr. P’ also pointed out that in the article about Bob Sinnaeve I wrote that Bob found he had ‘a natural *flare*’ and added “Surely he was disqualified for using very lights?”

OK. ENOUGH!

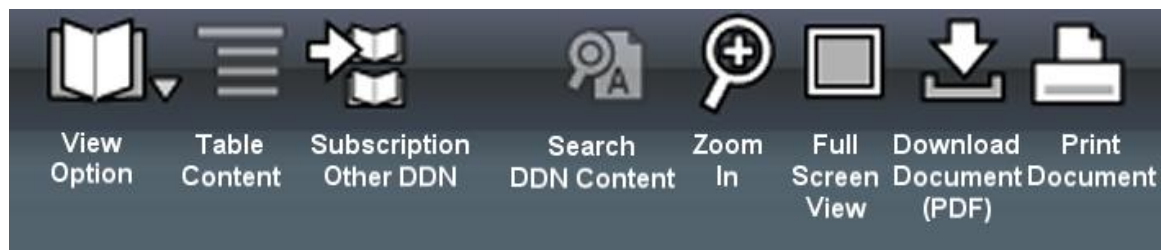
(e) Calaméo link

When my webmaster David King first established the Calaméo link for *DDN* I had one or two e-mails from subscribers saying that they preferred the PDF version. So instead of going over to solely the Calaméo link and access to all issues of *DDN* via my website, David and I agreed to keep providing both versions.

A few weeks ago Groover, one of *DDN*’s subscribers from the USA, wrote to say, “I don’t much care for the way Calaméo works. Much of my screen is turned over to ads and the directional keys and mouse work strangely. It makes your newsletter very hard for me to read on the screen.” I spoke to David and he advised me as follows:

“We use a free service therefore the access link does show ads top and bottom. However, if you click on the *Full Screen View Icon* it removes the ads. Also the newsletter can be downloaded in PDF format from here and also if required printed. A PDF version is also available from the main website. But for those of you using an iPad to read the newsletter you will find Calaméo offers one of the best free online services we can find”

Calaméo on-line controls



For those of you that have not seen *DDN*’s in the full electronic magazine format here is a screen shot of what it looks like.



And for those who are viewing in tablet (iPad) format the newsletter works very well.



I hope that sorts that out and, yes, we will continue to make both the Calaméo link and the PDF versions available for the foreseeable future.

(f) Rules is rules

I have received further feedback from Steve 'Metalman', who originally raised the issue in last month's *DDN* regarding throwing another set of darts during a throw. He tells me that 'Dartnut' from the Netherlands has posted on a forum that:

"It was a rule in the BDO rules which said you can only switch to another set of darts after the leg was finished..."

Steve is not sure if 'Dartnut' has translated that from a Dutch rule book, or translated an English rule and interpreted it into Dutch. However, as Steve wrote, "It does hark back to my original impression that there was something that made me think I'd read somewhere. Maybe it was something like that I had read but how it would fit in with the three minutes

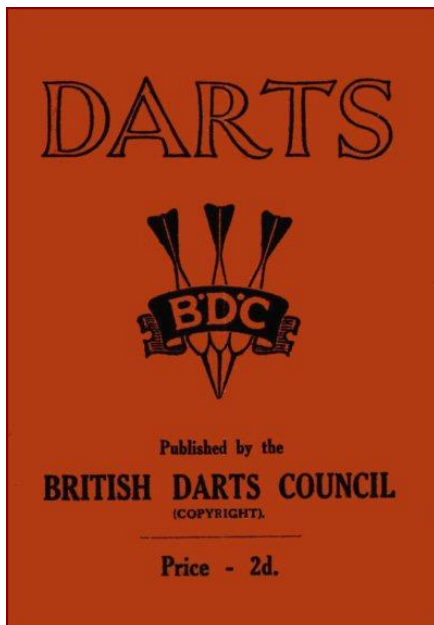
to change your equipment rule, I'm not sure. But it does bring an interesting point on 'The translation of the rule' in another country.”

Into the debate comes Dave Whitcombe who wrote saying,

“I actually saw Tom Barrett do this somewhere around 1974/5. I don't know whether this was a normal thing that Tom did, or whether he was just trying something different. But he did do it during a London super league match that I was part of, so it was in an organised event played under the rules of the BDO. I also saw him do exactly the same thing when he represented Surrey in the inter-counties league around the same time period.”

Dave added

“Until I saw your piece on this question asking whether it's legal under the rules, I have never bothered to know the answer, but to be honest I don't think it matters. It certainly is a novelty thing to do and possibly psychological but in my book I don't think that it can be deemed cheating in any shape or form.”



Does any other reader have a view? Do you happen to have a copy of early BDO or super league rules that might clarify the matter? Are we that worried?

(The illustration shows the front cover of the British Darts Council's rule book (c. 1938). The BDC were a breakaway group of members of the National Darts Association (NDA) who believed that the NDA was not doing enough to promote the setting up of more county darts associations. The BDC was short-lived, failing within twelve months. The former NDA representatives who joined the BDC were never allowed back into the NDA ranks.)

(g) Crowd noise

Mick S is back with a comment about crowd noise. He wrote “I used to go to every session of the Embassy as it was known in those days. I very rarely heard noise and if somebody did call out it was very quickly stopped.”

I seem to recall hecklers being thrown out at Lakeside a few years back but do you agree with Mick? Were the Embassy crowds well-behaved and did they respect the player at all times? Mick's absolutely sure where he stands on the issue. He told me, “We don't have

to put up with this [*the noisy crowds*]. Keep the idiot brigade watching football and stay away from darts.”

‘Krispy’ contacted me and said that the PDC events, often described as ‘rowdy’, have quite a few people on darts forums saying that they are "out of control" - "gone too far" even that they are a "genie that the PDC have let out of the bottle, and it's too far gone to change".

Is that a view you would subscribe to?



Krispy (pictured with BDO World Champion Martin Adams) went on to say that he had recently viewed some great video footage of a *News of the World* event where thousands of fans were packed into the large hall of the Alexandra Palace. He described what he saw. “It had a small stage...fans hanging from the rafters. It looked like they had bottles/pint glasses etc (maybe taken their own)...and many were carrying huge national flags...there were running fights and battles...people running on to the stage...looked like organised chaos.” Krispy’s conclusion was that “Today's events may seem rowdy but it's nothing new. Many things run in cycles and everyone thinks things are worse today than before.”

Legendary darts commentator and sports journalist Dave Lanning (who regularly commented on the *NoW* for ITV’s *World of Sport*) told me during a phone call recently, “The *News of the World* crowds were the craziest ever because it was just about the one day a year the most dedicated of Britain’s darts devotees had a day out. But the Premier League crowds are now running them close.” Dave was once quoted by *The Sun*

newspaper as saying that the atmosphere at the *NoW* was ‘a cross between the Olympics and the Munich Beerfest’.



(The photograph shows the almost passive crowd at the Empire Pool, Wembley *News of the World* Grand Finals 1948 image © News of the World)

So perhaps those legendary subscribers to *DDN* who have stood on stage at the *News of the World* finals (at any of its venues) might like to let me have their personal views on crowd behaviour back then compared to the major events today.

(h) Scoring for show...

In Issue 12 I included the cutting from my local newspaper the *Maldon Standard* of Bobby George and I celebrating the completion of our book *Scoring for show, doubles for dough – Bobby George’s Darts Lingo*.

As a result, Mrs. Marion Wylie contacted me to say that in 1982 her late husband Alec played Bobby in an exhibition night down at the Bentall Social Club, Heybridge, about two miles from where I sit typing this newsletter. Marion told me, “It was a wonderful night. I was Chairman of the social club at the time and one of our customers said they knew Bobby and reckoned they could get him to play at the club.” True to his word the customer made the arrangements and Bobby arrived at the venue on 28th April 1982.

Marion added, “He arrived in a limousine looking every inch a star. I remember he wore a green velvet jacket. What a great night we had.” For playing Bobby, Marion’s husband Alec received a certificate (see scan).



Alec was one of many thousands of players who have played Bobby over the years and although Alec died some 15 years ago, Marion still treasures that certificate and another that Bobby signed just for her.

STEFAN LORD

As promised months ago I am now able to present here the result of my e-mail interview with one of Sweden's greatest darts legends Stefan Lord.

Stefan was born on 4th December 1954 in Stockholm. As a teenager (around the age of 14 years) he used to play pinball and listen to music with his friends at a bar near to his school. Stefan told me, "In 1968 the new owner put up a dartboard and changed it into a country music bar!" Later a dartboard was put up at his school and by 1970 Stefan had become proficient enough to start playing league darts.

Did any particular dart players influence Stefan in those early days? Stefan said, "I don't think that I had a darts idol but Barry Twomlow [*News of the World* Individual Darts Champion 1969] and Tom Barrett [*Double News of the World* winner 1964 and 1965] were in Sweden in the early 70s" and they clearly impressed the young Swedish player. Stefan added, "When I first went to England in 1972 I made my first "Stefan Lord" darts, similar to their darts with the teardrop shape." The image shows Stefan in the early part of his career. (Actual date, venue and tournament unknown. Image © Dagens-Bild Ab Studiobild)



Stefan's first big win outside Sweden was the Santa Monica Open in 1975. He beat Californian darts shooter Jesse Wilch to lift the title and also played in the Golden Gate Classic and North America Open. Stefan told me that he learned a lot on that BDO tour from the likes of Wales' Leighton Rees and Alan Evans and England's Alan Glazier.



In 1978, at the Empire Pool, Wembley, Stefan, representing the Stockholm Super Darts Club, lifted the *News of the World* Individual Darts Championship title beating Jocky Wilson 2-1 in the semi-final and John Coward, the North of England Divisional Champion 2-0 in the final. In 1980 Stefan was back in the finals, this time at the Wembley Arena, and it is this tournament he describes as his ‘most memorable’. He told me, “John Lowe was the big favorite and I beat him 2-1 in the semi-final. I then faced and beat Dave Whitcombe in the final 2-0.” The photograph shows Stefan with the 1980 trophy and England International footballer Malcolm Macdonald.
(Image: Bob Williams)

Stefan described the *News of the World* as ‘special’. He told me, “The atmosphere was great. It was like a football match where I was the away team but off the stage I was always treated well and with respect both from spectators and players.”

Off stage maybe but on stage Stefan was very much ‘the away team’. Top darts writer, John Morris later wrote in his book the *News of the World Darts Annual 1988/89*, that ‘...you could probably have held a convention of his [*Stefan’s*] assembled British supporters in a garden shed.’ Morris gave a number of reasons for this but the objection that the players and fans had which has transcended all others over the course of more than 30 years was that Stefan threw his darts very slowly indeed.

So, was this a deliberate act on the part of the Swede?

Apparently not. Stefan told me, “I think I became “slow” at the *News of the World 1978* because I didn’t want to make any mistakes. I took my time between throws to have a second look at the score, etc.” He then added, “Someone told me “Take your time - Don’t rush it.” I looked at Tom Barrett when he was in Sweden in the early 70s. He was very slow and took his time.”

In 1978 Stefan became the first person outside of the UK to win the prestigious, essentially **British** *News of the World* title. This wrenching away of the title from the Brits was another of the reasons John Morris gives for Stefan’s lack of popularity with the fans.

After a successful career in darts Stefan retired from the sport in 1991-1992 and opened a restaurant in Sweden called Jolo & Co (www.jolo.se) which had dartboards and pool tables. Stefan told me, “Over three years ago I sold the restaurant and moved to Thailand. Now I am playing golf and do nothing. I don’t play darts at all apart from a local league game sometimes when I need a drink.”

As for darts in 2011, Stefan said, “I watch the PDC on the internet sometimes but it’s not the same when you are not there, but I think that anything that brings viewers and sponsors together is great!”

DOLF DARTS

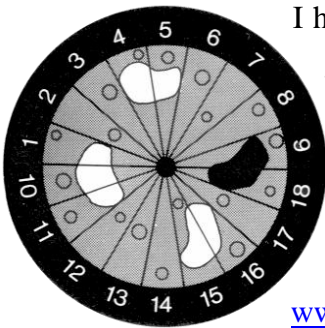
When I was writing regularly for *We Love Darts* magazine I contributed to a zany column called *Madhouse* and each month I featured an alternative game to play on a standard dartboard and one of those was Golf (see *WLD* Issue 4, July 2009).

Exciting as that version is there is no comparison to **DOLF**, the brainchild of two brothers from Canada, Keith and Mike Meyer (pictured). Dolf takes darts golf to another level. Due to pressure of space I cannot provide details here but you can go to www.dolfdarts.com and check the game out. You will be amazed at the way the Meyer brothers have breathed new life into darts golf.



Mike, who is President of the WDF (no not *that* one; the World *Dolf* Federation), said to me, “I was hoping you could add a section of dart variants to your site and include Dolf.” Sorry Mike, I don’t want to go over the ground I’ve already covered in *We Love Darts* magazine but I can find room to highlight **Dolf**.

AND TALKING OF GOLF...



I have received an enquiry via my website asking whether or not I know the rules of the NODOR 18-hole Golf dartboard which was originally produced a few decades ago. (See image provided courtesy of NODOR International).

Unfortunately I can’t help and neither can my good friends at NODOR so it’s over to you. Does anyone out there have the rules? If so, please contact me via my website www.patrickchaplin.com.

(Please don’t confuse this golf dartboard with another NODOR product PAR DARTS, which was originally produced in the late 1980s, the rules for which can be found on-line.)

SHANI'S DARTS NIGHT

On Saturday 26th February I attended a darts match with a difference at the Jolly Sailor pub at Heybridge Basin, about three miles from where I live. A former work colleague of mine, Shani Carey, who suffers from the eye condition retinitis pigmentosa (RP), invited me along to play darts BLINDFOLDED. The purpose of the evening was not only to raise people's awareness of the condition but also to raise funds for Shani's daughter Sonja to be able to enter the London Marathon and make even more money for RP.

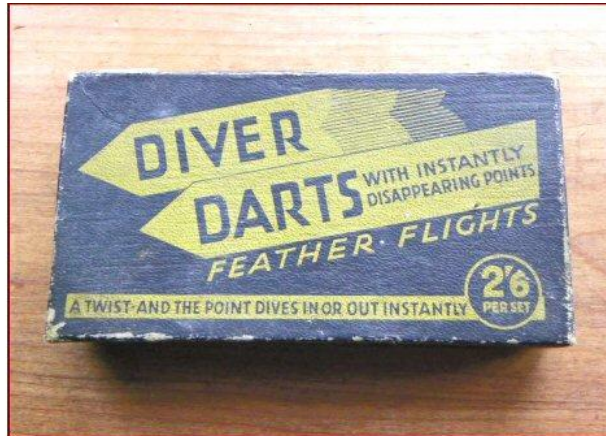


The image (© 2011Chippix) shows Shani and me enjoying the evening. Needless to say 'Dr. Darts' partnered Shani, donned his blindfold, and went out in the first round. I scored nothing at all and Shani equaled my score! In total a big fat zero. Much fun was had by all and nearly £300 was raised for this most worthy of causes.

UNICORN DIVER DARTS

Subscriber Steve P. contacted me about an unusual set of Unicorn darts he had recently purchased (for quite a large sum of money) on the internet auction site e Bay.

Steve wrote, "Did you know that Unicorn made a set of darts called 'Diver Darts' where the point retracted?" I hadn't. Steve added, "The original price was 2s 6d and the seller stated '1930??' They are not in any Unicorn catalogue back to 1950 so I don't know." To be honest neither did I but I do have a very valuable contact who was able to provide all the information Steve required.



He revealed that the Diver Darts (pictured) were yet another invention of the founder of Unicorn Products Ltd., Frank Lowy and that they date from 1938 and were available from then until about 1947. My contact added,

“This was an ingenious idea so that darts could be carried loose in a pocket with the points out of harms way. If Steve is able to unscrew the two halves he will see that the design relies on the point being mounted eccentrically in a cylinder of brass and there is a corresponding eccentric hole in the upper portion of the barrel also.

When the point is in the retracted mode the brass cylinder housing the point engages with the eccentric hole in the upper portion of the barrel and is not in line with the hole in the lower portion of the barrel so that it cannot go through that lower hole.

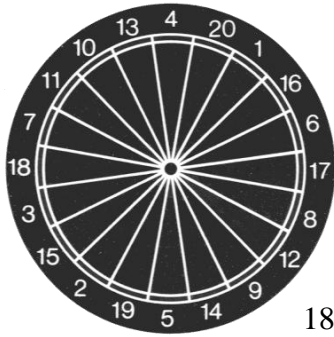
As the two halves of the barrel are gently unscrewed there comes a time when the point is aligned with the hole in the lower part of the barrel and if the whole is held vertically downwards the point slips through the hole to the playing position. The two parts are then screwed together again and the point element is locked in position.

When play is ended the point end is held vertically upwards and the two halves of the barrel are unscrewed a little and the point slides back into the barrel. The instructions urge slow operation to avoid jamming, but in reality the jamming happened frequently and the dart, although many were sold, was never a huge success and was withdrawn.”

And the name?

My contact said they were called Diver Darts “Because the point just “dived in” the dart barrel.”

THE MANCHESTER BOARD – DOES DAVE FRANCIS’ RECORD STILL STAND?



On Friday 21st February 1975 the *Prestwich and Whitefield Guide* featured local player Dave Francis, who, the reporter announced, had just created a world record on the Manchester Board (the one with no trebles and a much smaller playing area) by scoring the first-ever recorded 11-dart game of straight start, straight finish 301 (130, 60, 80, single 13, single 18).

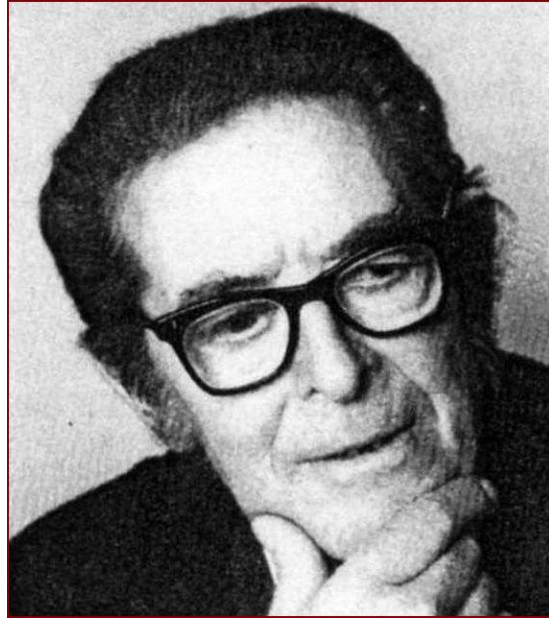


Dave (pictured in the attached cutting from the *Prestwich and Whitefield Guide* and now) has now asked me if anyone has bettered or even equalled his world record over the past 36 years. Does anyone out there know? Let's hope we can have an answer for him by Issue 14.

DARTS POETRY

When John Lowe was holidaying in ‘a very sunny and warm Tenerife’ a short while ago, he waxed poetical and sent me the following:

The Dart
Is it an art?
One quite apart
Delicate of poise
Absent of noise
It's Neep, a path
Designed to thrill
Guidance, all of human skill,
Position, well astute
Hand held high, almost aloof
Elbow in, eyes transfixed
Focus, thoughts, never mixed
Smooth release, onward bound
Sisal opens, target found
Arms aloft, thumping heart
Victorious, the Dart.



“All mine” wrote John. Thanks my friend. (John, it’s the ‘elbow in’ bit that I still have trouble with.)

John’s poem made me think about whether there are/were any other darts poets of the past. The most well-known over here in the UK was the late Noel E. Williamson, ‘The Poet Laureate of Darts’ (pictured here) who contributed darts-related poetry to *Darts World* for many years. But there must be others.

AND FINALLY...

ERIC BRISTOW’S WASH DAY

I am indebted to Kent Bovin from Denmark for sending me another gem from his collection of darts memorabilia, ‘The Crafty Cockney’ advertising Creda tumble driers. The exact date is unknown but the legend reads, ‘Eric Bristow is more used to rolling out the barrel than hanging out the washing...’ Still Eric seems to be smiling away those wash-day blues.

STOP PRESS

TRAGIC ERROR CAUSES LOSS OF ROMAN DARTSMAN AND DARTEFACTS

Dateline April 1, 2011

Time 12.04 (British Standard Time)

Just as this issue of *Dr. Darts' Newsletter* was going to press, news was received that 'Silas' the Roman darter, his darts, prize goblet and target board have been lost to posterity due to the foolhardiness of a less than amateur archaeologist.



Phil 'Ant' Carpick, so nicknamed because of his industrious nature, decided to lay Silas and the dartefacts out in the sun, in his own words, "To let them dry out a bit cos they were all sticky like." The error was soon discovered but it was far too late. Just after midday today as archaeologists rushed to the spot, the goblet, darts, target board and Silas disintegrated.



The leader of the Langford Archaeology Group, Professor Bertram Singleton-Pratt, was inconsolable. He told a reporter, "I'm inconsolable." He added "This was a very important discovery. Major pieces of irreplaceable historical evidence have now been turned to dust by that interfering ne'er do well." When asked if 'Ant' was to receive any punishment for his foolishness the Professor replied, "Well, to begin with I'm going to

stick him on the rough end of a pineapple."

DOCTOR'S NOTE: On hearing of the discovery of Silas earlier today I chartered a private jet to fly my wife Maureen and me to Rome to see the dartefacts for myself. However, on hearing of the tragic news my wife Maureen has decided that we will now be flying to Paris to go shopping instead.