

# DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to this latest issue of *DDN*.

The last few months have taken its toll of at least three darting stalwarts here in the UK, Angus Ross (ex-Scotland international), Dave Opee (instrumental in forming the Gibraltar Darts Association) and George Rogers (the North of England *News of the World* divisional champion, 1985) so, once again, there is a tinge of sadness pervading this issue. This means that a number of items which I had planned to feature in this issue have had to be rescheduled.

However, there's lots more to report this month including a celebration of Trina Gulliver's *tenth* ladies' World Championship title, plus the search for photographic evidence of a unique darts and football event in rural Suffolk (England) back in 1962.

## OBITUARY – ANGUS ROSS

It's always sad to record the loss of a great darts player. This month *DDN* pays



homage to Angus Ross, the well-known and very popular ex-Scotland International (pictured left) who passed away on 17<sup>th</sup> January. Jim MacNeil, who is currently undertaking research into the history of darts in Scotland, has provided the following obituary:

*The North of Scotland lost a true Highland gentleman this week as the news of Angus Ross' passing filtered through to the darts fraternity. Angus was a former Scottish International darts player and took his darts playing ability to the highest level.*

*Angus was born in 1953 and spent his formative years on the Auchentoul Estate where his father was a gamekeeper, an occupation that Angus would eventually follow in his father's footsteps. He won his first local junior event at the age of eleven and it was not long before he was beating the seniors too.*

*His early local darts successes were representing Castletown, some 36 miles from his home, and they became a feared team in Highland circles, never far from the winners podium. Eventually Angus' exploits spread throughout the North and he started playing for Northern in the Inter Counties league which would then lead him to International status. When Northern withdrew from the County set-up Angus was forced to travel to Aberdeen to represent Grampian to maintain his International status and indeed most of his International honours came as a result of a Grampian team shirt.*

*His International career started in 1979 and he played 16 times for his beloved Scotland, winning 9, and also a World Cup in New Zealand 1981 and two Europe Cups in Wales 1980 and England 1982. Who could forget that magic moment when*

*he defeated the then World No.1 Eric Bristow 3-2 in his debut International match in Newcastle and Angus was caught on camera leaping into the air on stage in celebration. Truly a magic moment.*

*Angus had a truly magical period in 1979/80 when he won almost everything he entered including the NDAGB Doubles, the Gold Cup Doubles, both with long time darts partner George Bain, the Scottish Singles, the Scottish Doubles and every title available both in his local league and in the North of Scotland Area.*

*I was fortunate enough to be part of a party which attended the Mediterranean Open at Torremolinos in 1980 when Angus took the title to great celebration defeating Hertfordshire's Les Rothwell 2-0 in the final. The camaraderie and craic generated at this event was talked about for many years after.*

*Angus played at the highest level and briefly gave the professional circuit a go in 1981, unfortunately this meant leaving his beloved moors and hills in Scotland and taking up residence in Manchester. While there he widened his circle of friends playing super league and pub darts wherever he could. However the lure of the Highlands was too strong and Angus eventually moved back North about a year later where he more or less let darts take a back seat for a while.*



*Other major events involving Angus were the 1980 Nations Triples in London when partnered by Jocky Wilson and Rab Smith and the Unipart World Matchplay with Alistair Forrester and Rab Smith where Angus hit an eleven dart leg, the fastest of the tournament, before losing 7-2 to England in the semi-final.*

*Angus, Jocky and Rab returned in 1982 for the Nations Triples and defeated England in the final with Angus hitting the winning dart against Cliff Lazarenko.*

*Angus won the Guinness Golden Darts Doubles with Jocky Wilson in 1979 and appeared as a professional player in the Bronze Bully section of Bullseye scoring 179 for the charity.*

*In the past few years however Angus made a return to attending competitions and renewed his connections with County darts representing Highland several times.*

*However apart from his undisputed darts genius Angus was the most likeable person you could ever hope to meet, always willing to pass on tips to younger players and ever keen to talk to the older ones regarding past escapades and tall stories from tournaments. It's true to say that time spent with Angus at darting events and further afield were very entertaining and rewarding and never forgotten.*

*Angus is survived by his wife Marina and sister Catherine.*

*Angus Ross was simply a legend in his native Highlands and will never be forgotten. RIP Angus we are all better people for knowing you.*

(Image of Angus (above, right) courtesy of PC/Darts World Archive.)

## TRINA'S TENTH

Congratulations to my good friend Trina Gulliver for winning her tenth Women's World Championship at the Lakeside on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> January.

After her success Trina (pictured) told her local newspaper, the *Cheddar Valley Gazette*

*I'm absolutely thrilled to win my tenth title and I still can't quite believe it. 2011 was the last time I won it and it's eluded me for a while, so I did wonder if it was going to happen. It was an incredible feeling and you could see how much it meant as I was*



*jumping up and down on stage afterwards and I had a little cry, which was unusual for me. All of my titles are just as special to me. The first one was special because it was the first time the tournament had been held and then to win the next six was special as well.*

[Special indeed as these seven victories helped me persuade Trina to write her life story and for John Blake Publishing to publish *Golden Girl* in 2008.]

*It was always going to be a tough final against Deta [Hedman] as she is number one in the world and we have had some great battles over the years. We are probably about even when it comes to the head-to-head record but my tournament couldn't have gone any better.*

Now all Trina fans are looking forward to number *eleven!*

(Image ©2016 Sue Gulliver. Used with permission.)

## EDDIE BROWN AND IPSWICH TOWN – A DUAL CUP CELEBRATION

It was with sadness that, in the late summer last year, the world of darts learnt of the passing of Suffolk, England, darts ace Eddie 'Teddy' Brown who died at his home in the village of Stonham Parva on 26<sup>th</sup> August. (*DDN* readers may well recall the obituary I wrote about Eddie in issue #65 (October).

Eddie (b. 7<sup>th</sup> November 1936) played out of the *Magpie* pub in his home village of Stonham Parva, near



Stowmarket, and reached the finals of the *News of the World* Individual Darts Championship a record six times as the Eastern Counties Divisional Champion, in 1961, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1970 and 1974. (Eddie is pictured (right) with the *Magpie* darts team in 1957. Eddie is seated, front row, second from the right) holding the darts shield.)

Losing finalist in 1961 to Alec Adamson, the North of England Divisional Champion (who played out of the *Prince of Wales*, Hetton-le-Hole, County Durham) 2-1, Eddie was to return to the Empire Pool, Wembley, on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April the following year, this time to lift the prestigious trophy.

That Saturday in April was indeed special for all Suffolk darts fans but it was also a day of celebration for fans of Ipswich Town Football Club as the team won the First Division title on that day. As a result, shortly afterwards, a unique event took place at *The Magpie*.

The huge *News of the World* darts trophy, already on display at the pub following Eddie's victory, was joined in the bar by Eddie and the First Division trophy during a visit by members of the victorious Ipswich football team; two magnificent trophies for two magnificent achievements standing side-by-side, albeit for just one evening. Doubtless a great time was had by all.

Unfortunately, it appears that no formal record of this event survives. But my letter to the regional newspaper the *East Anglian Daily Times* in November brought forth memories from readers.

WINNER 1962  
"News of the World" Individual Darts Championship  
ENGLAND AND WALES



Teddy Brown

Eddie's sister Della remembered the event stating that Town players Roy Stevenson, John Elsworthy and Roy Bailey joined the celebrations. Reader Marian Cocksedge told me:

*My parents Ben and Vi Gorham ran The Magpie from 1956 until 1968. My father started the dart team at the pub when we first moved in and Teddy (as we always knew him) and his brother Cyril joined from the Mickfield Dragon.*

*After a while and having beaten all-comers at the pub Teddy eventually won through to the News of the World final. The day he won the cup my parents and a team of supporters were at the venue. It was left to me to go to Ipswich to see our team win the league. Both my parents were season ticket holders for years.*

At the time *The Magpie* was owned by the Ipswich brewer Tolly Cobbold. John Cobbold, as well as being co-owner of the brewery, was Chairman of Ipswich Town Football Club. Marian's father knew John Cobbold well enough to write to him and suggest a 'two cups evening.' Marian recalled that the event took place at *The Magpie* at the end of May 1962 but the exact date is unclear. Marian continued:

*My mother organised a dinner for the football and dart teams and a photographer was sent from either the Evening Star - the local Ipswich paper - or the East Anglian*

*Daily Times, I cannot remember which but everyone was so disappointed when no photos were produced, the camera was faulty!*

Marian's mother, now in her late 90s, searched through her photo albums to see if by chance a private photograph or two had been taken and had survived but all to no avail. Marian added

*As a 14 year old all I remember was a footballer dancing on the table - I believe it was Stevenson! My father had a special shelf built behind the bar to hold the darts cup as it was so tall and for the first few weeks he carried it upstairs to bed every night as he was so worried that someone would break in and steal it!*

George Finbow who lived in Stonham Parva was a darts team-mate and close friend of Eddie Brown. In early January he recalled:

*I remember so well the joint celebration at Stonham Magpie of Town's winning of the old First Division title in April 1962 and Eddie Brown's winning of the News of the World darts crown at the same time. I was team-mate of Eddie's in the Magpie side and a close friend from schooldays. We were both Stonham born and bred. It was such an honour for me to be at an occasion when both huge trophies stood on the pub bar. Magpie landlord Ben Gorham, a Town season ticket holder, hosted the event and his wife Vi did the food. Ipswich chairman Johnny Cobbold led the Town contingent and present were Roy Bailey, John Elsworthy, Roy Stephenson and Kenny Malcolm.*

*The village vicar, the Reverend Shrubbs was present. Among the other men of Stonham on parade were Eddie's father Harry and brother Cyril. As an avid Town fan, it was wonderful to meet some of my heroes. Eddie was a hero too, a world class darts player from my home village. Town's achievement was incredible. So was Eddie's. Eddie was modest about his darts but we all knew him to be an absolute genius when it came to the sport.*

So we know that this unique darts/football event took place but we're still not sure *when* and we are still lacking any photograph(s) that may have been taken on that evening.

I have therefore written an article for the *East Anglian Daily Times* in a bid to obtain this outstanding information. I will, of course, keep you informed.

## **OBITUARY - DAVE OBE**

Many darts players who have ever visited 'The Rock' will have heard the name Dave Obee. Dave (pictured right in November 2008) was instrumental in forming the Gibraltar Darts Association in 1958 by amalgamating the Civilian and Services Darts Associations alongside the late Carmelo Ellul and Joe Goldwin.



Thus it was with great sadness that the Association

recently reported the death of the GDA's longtime friend, supporter and founding President.

Current GDA President Justin Broton told me, "Dave was a regular visitor to Gibraltar until his more recent health issues prevented this. He will be fondly remembered and missed by many. Our deepest condolences go to his wife Dianne and the rest of his family. RIP Dave."

### **THE FIRST FULL-TIME DARTS PROFESSIONAL – ANOTHER VIEW**

Globetrotting darts ambassador has written to me concerning our on-going discussion concerning the first *full-time* professional darts player. He writes

*Thank you for sending DDN, as always another fascinating read, absolutely great and your News of The World article brilliant, in fact all was brilliant.*

*I would not wish to get involved in a disagreement with Dave Whitcombe putting Barry Twomlow (pictured below, left) up as the first darts professional. However, I think he is wrong.*



*I knew Barry quite well and our tracks often crossed across the world. However, Barry did not earn his living as a professional playing darts. He was an employee of Unicorn, promoting Brand Unicorn. His holidays were paid by Unicorn. His wages were paid by Unicorn. His travel, hotel and food was paid by Unicorn. His map of what he had to do was set out by Unicorn. If he played a tournament anywhere he was representing Unicorn and it made no difference if he won or lost, his wages were there.*

*So he was a Unicorn Darts Ambassador promoting sales for Brand Unicorn not a professional darts player solely earning a living from his darts. He did any exhibitions for Unicorn shops and customers.*

*With respect I would never call him a professional darts player. He never earned a living from playing darts but promoting darts for Unicorn for which he received a wage.*

*So as I say I think Dave Whitcombe is wrong.*

*Now take Alan Evans, Bobby George, John Lowe, Eric Bristow, Alan Glazier and Leighton Rees. They earned their living actually playing darts, doing exhibitions, tournaments, etc.*

*If they lost at a competition they received nothing. If they got no exhibitions they received nothing: no firm to pay their wages. They were the risk takers and proper darts professionals. They paid their own travel, their own hotel bills, their own food.*

*These were professional darts players. They might have had some sponsorship by some firms but they were not employees. No work they got no pay, unlike Barry who only had to turn up and promote Unicorn.*

*Long before Barry even signed for Unicorn, we employed Pete Smith as a shop manager and darts ambassador in 1965 to promote the House of Darts International at home and abroad (he stayed with us until 2003). We employed him, paid his holidays. If he was off sick we paid him. He travelled all over the world for us, promoting our brand, same as Barry did for Unicorn.*

*He was News of The World Gloucestershire champion seven times.*

*He was a darts ambassador but he was not a darts professional. We paid his wages, travel and he promoted Brand House of Darts. He was captain of the West of the England Darts Organisation and was, like Barry, a great ambassador. But like Barry, neither, were darts professionals. They earned their living from Unicorn and The House of Darts International respectively.*

*As I say I do not wish to knock Barry as the first darts professional but in my opinion he was not, and Pete Smith even beat him to being the first darts brand ambassador.*

*Both of them were not professional darts players. They were employees of two darts firms.*

## **OBITUARY – GEORGE ‘PODGE’ ROGERS**

The death has been announced of the County Durham County player George Rogers. George played for Durham on 84 occasions, 50 times for the ‘A’ team and 34 times for the ‘B’ achieving around 50% success rate in both teams, a total of 41 wins.

In early 1985 George became the *News of the World* North of England Divisional Darts Champion and attended the Grand Finals at Wembley Arena on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April that year. The programme notes read:

*You can't accuse George Rogers of being short of "bottle" – as guv'nor of Darlington's Havelock pub, he's got thousands of 'em! The heavyweight County Durham star, "Podge" to his mates, doesn't get much time to practise in opening hours – but the 13-dart leg that won him our Divisional title showed what he could do.*



(George is pictured above, on the left, receiving his North of England divisional trophy from Councillor J. Pearson, North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough.) (Image PC/Darts World Archive. Used with permission.)

At the Grand Finals George met Martin Deverell, the Western Counties divisional champion in the first round and came out the winner by two games to nil. In the quarterfinals George met the Canadian champion Bob Sinnaeve. Bob, an international player well-known in world darts for over five years, had beaten Dave Whitcombe, the Eastern Counties champion, 2-1 in the first round but George overcame Bob's challenge 2-1 to move into the semi-final. There George met the Wales divisional champion Dave Lee. Dave had dispatched Sweden's Jan-Erik Paulsen 2-0 in the first round and America's Dan Valletto 2-0 in the quarterfinals.

Sadly George fell one match short of victory as Dave Lee beat him 2-1 in the semi-finals, Dave going on to win the title with victory over the London and Home Counties divisional champion Billy Dunbar 2-0.

But it is for his darts playing for his county and for Darlington leagues that "Podge" will be most fondly remembered.

George Rogers died on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2015. He was 67.

### **AND FINALLY...in 1976...**

Forty years ago this month *Darts World* reported that the National Darts Association of Great Britain (NDAGB) and the British Darts Organisation (BDO) had made the 'first moves...to set up an overall governing body for darts.'

Officials of both organisations had met and reached agreement 'on many important points'. They agreed that a 'Joint Council' be set up to encourage 'existing harmony' between the two bodies. The organisations assured 'every dart player in Great Britain that both darts bodies are united in their individual approach to the sport of darts' and that a full statement would be issued at a later date 'detailing all the points of agreement.'

From that point the BDO forged ahead, leaving the remnants of the NDAGB in its wake.

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