

30 YEARS ON ...

In September 1981 JOHN GWYNNE wrote his first column in *Darts World*, "Piccadilly Line". Nine years later, as he moved from Piccadilly Radio in Manchester, where he had been working as a sports commentator, to BBC Greater Manchester Radio (GMR), he changed the name of his column to "Mancunian Way". Here John recalls the stories which, for him, stand out.

MY first ever feature highlighted the fact that the North East Manchester Log-End League, which comprised 38 teams, had decided not to permit professional players to participate during the coming season. Clearly directed at the only "pro" in the area, Billy Lennard, I was happy to report, a couple of issues later, that the ban had been lifted.

The first nine-dart leg of 501 I was able to report was that of Bolton hotshot Roy Pendlebury in the summer of 1982. The next, six years later, came from Macclesfield's Brian Nolan.

Only once have I been able to report the seven-arrow log-end leg of slip-up, Eccles left-hander Phil Pickford achieving it in October 1983.

He was one of ten players to take on Eric Bristow in January 1984 when, a week after winning his third Embassy title, the "Crafty Cockney" first played on the Manchester board.

The result for each of the ten players was the same, as reported in March 1984, a win for their opponent. Bristow won 30 legs and only lost three, one to Moston's Fred Thorpe and two to Stalybridge's Dave Allen.

I have since reported on many visits by the big named players to compete on the Manchester board, the most notable being that of Peter Manley in March 2008 when, at Baldy Bobs in Failsworth, he missed the bull for a seven-darter. He did it in eight, then he proceeded to beat Gary Thompson with two ten-darters!

It was in December 1986 that I reported a full house of successes for both the Lancashire GMC and Cheshire county squads. While the Red Rose Men and Ladies' 'A' and 'B' teams were beating their Premier Division counterparts from Durham, Cheshire were doing the same to Division Two rivals Northamptonshire.

In August 1993 a young man called Tony O'Shea won the first Cheshire Open, coming from two legs down to beat a certain Richie Burnett 5-3.



Peter Manley, one of the big named players to compete on the Manchester board.

Aussie ace Russell Stewart (February 1990) has his roots in Manchester, his parents having emigrated Down Under in the early 1960s when the M62 motorway was being built, not to their liking, right past their Eccles home.

Ronnie Peel received a ban for two years from the News of the World competition for "bringing the game into disrepute", as highlighted in January 1987, while, in August 1989, I commented on the remarkable comeback from 4-0 down of the Pear Tree, Wigan, to beat the Stanley Arms from Liverpool 5-4 in the final of the popular Burtonwood Rosebowl. The famous five were Steve Cusick, Dave Bennett, Brian Scully, Tony Blundell and Mick Smith.

Over the years I have offered my sympathies by way of obituaries for many who have offered much to the sport in my area – Bill Lennard in 1995 – is one which obviously stands out, Mal Faith from Rochdale a couple of years ago, and Eva Holden and Frank Smith from Bolton in the past 12 months.

George Walsh from Stockport in 2008 and Oldham hotshot Frank Ashcroft in 1981 are two of the great players who have departed. It was in November 1988 that Leigh's "Mr Lancashire", Ken Osborne, died. He is still talked about with great fondness 23 years on!

Here's to the next 30 years, by which time I'll be a sprightly 96!

LETTERBOX

Your chance to have a say

THE August edition of *Darts World* published the British Pentathlon report and results and stated that the round the board on doubles record is held by Andy Jenkins from 1998 which he achieved in 31 darts.

My father, Brian Langworth, who recently passed away, went round the board in 26 darts in the Pentathlon, a record that still stands today.

My question is, how can it say the record is 31 darts?

Sandra Langworth Spain

There was an obvious error in the copy supplied, for which *Darts World* apologise. *THE EDITOR*

The following was written by John Lowe.

Brian Langworth played in the Yorkshire Doubles League which is not a pairs format but uses a dartboard that only has doubles, and that includes no 25, just the cork. They play 01 matches, and the scoring is difficult. Obviously you cannot afford to throw outside

of the double wire, so the idea is to lay the dart below the double 20 wire, then lay the next dart on top, hopefully, into the double 20.

Mathematics comes into this kind of game, especially when you need to finish, as no triples are available. Brian was a master at this game, and I played him twice round the board on doubles, finishing on the cork. If you scored a double with any one of your three on your turn, you threw again. Brian went round the board five times, missing on double six on the sixth time round.

In the British Pentathlon Brian went round the doubles in just 26 darts, a record that still stands today. In 1975 I travelled with him to Wales where we had a big money match against the mighty Alan Evans and Leighton Rees. In total £6,000 was placed on the two matches, which we won.

Brian's finest and proudest moment was when he was chosen to play for England, and I was his captain. Sadly, Brian Langworth, "Langy" to his friends, passed away recently. RIP, "Langy", the legend of Yorkshire.

AN APPEAL

I HAVE been playing darts for 43 years and am the President of the Jersey Winter Darts League.

My 11-year-old son, Joseph De Sousa, loves the sport and before he was 10 had hit an amazing 40 maximums. When he was eight years old he played for a Division One team and won four out of six matches against adults.

Unfortunately, he has developed dartsitis which started about three months ago when he struggled to release his final dart. Recently, during a match against me, he was struggling to release every dart and lost 4-1.

I have never seen a youngster with this problem and I am hoping this appeal may lead to a response from someone with a positive solution. It is heart breaking to see such a young, talented player with a great future suffering in this way.

**David P. Moore
St. Clement
Jersey**

DARTS MARATHON

MY name is Rohit Rabadia from Hendon, London. I am a darts player, playing in local leagues and on the BDO circuit all over the UK and Europe. I am writing as I have planned a 24-hour darts marathon to raise funds for Cancer Research and Macmillan. My target is to raise a total of £5,000.

The event is being held at Chiswick Memorial Club, Chiswick, London, from 6.30pm on Friday, September 23, from 6.30pm, to 8pm on Saturday, September 24. Myself and seven friends will be playing around the clock for 24 hours to raise money for a good cause.

On the day of the event I have also organised mini-tournaments in which spectators can take part by donating a small fee. There will also be auctions, a raffle, and also a chance for spectators to play two of the best players in the world who were both at Lakeside this year for the BBC-televised World Championships. Dean Winstanley and Stephen Bunting have been invited and confirmed to attend.

To help reach my target, I am asking businesses to show support by donating prizes, advertising in our A5 booklet or making a donation.

Please call me on 07764 491139 to arrange this. Anything will help, no matter how big or small. A donation can be made through my fundraising page at www.virginmoneygiving.com/rohitrabadia

Make sure you put your company name on the donation message so all other donors can see you're supporting me.

Thanks in advance for your generosity and we hope to see you at our event.

**Rohit Rabadia
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All letters (including photographs) can be e-mailed to mb.graphics@virgin.net or posted to **Darts World, 25 Orlestone View, Hamstreet, Ashford, Kent TN26 2LB**