

“Well, hello there”

My, it's been a long, long time

How am I doing?

Oh, I guess that I'm doing fine

It's been so long now

And it seems now that it was only yesterday

Gee, ain't it funny how time slips away

That's the open stanza from the Willie Nelson tune written in 1961 for the late Patsy Cline. Nashville recording studios rejected the song. That same week, Nelson wrote “Crazy” which became a classic for Patsy Cline. Both songs are considered classics today.

So, why the music lesson?

Toeing the Oche caught pneumonia (pronounced PEE-MOAN-YA) forcing the Old Dart Coach to play Florence Nightingale (no nurse Ratchet at Casa ODC). Missed during the ODC's recuperation was the opportunity to say Kung Hei Fat Choi and welcome in the Year of the Wood Dragon. The last Year of the Wood Dragon was 2012. One might wish to look back to see what 2024 has to offer.

According to a Syndey Research Study the snake is the descendent of the Dragon. For the PDC's Nathan “The Asp” Aspinall and Peter “Snake Bite” Wright that should propend a banner 2024. But so far both have had a slow start...

Peter Wright showed a possible return to his old form in last week's UK Open, losing a decider to “Family Guy” Steve Bunting 10-9. Wright broke Bunting's serve to force the decider only to have Bunting break back with a 13 darter.

The current Premier League standings show that Aspinall is doing okay as he sits 4th which, if he holds his place, would see him in the May playoffs. A PDC flack calls him “resurgent”- he's slightly ahead in legs won: 45-44. On the other hand, Peter Wright so far looks like a replay of last year. He inhabits the bottom of the standings, winning 18 legs against 33 lost.

Aspinall faces Luke Littler this week in Premier League play.

The surprise of the Premier League, to some, has been the play of Luke Littler. Littler sits second in the standings to seven time Premier League champion Michael van Gerwen. Littler's losses have all been 6-5 except for a 6-3 loss to Rod Cross. Littler lost a pair to Michael van Gerwen. This week, he opens against Nathan Aspinall. A win there would propel Littler against Michael Smith who will probably dispose of Peter Wright.

Like Wright, Nathan Aspinall forced a decider against Damon Heta by holding in 13 darts. Heta held in 14 for the 10-9 win. Heta would end the UK hopes of Luke Littler. Littler came from 9-6 down, narrowing to 9-8. In the 18th leg Littler had 4 darts to force a 19th leg but fell 10-8.

There is a particularly unorthodox part to Littler's game - he plays to leave a bull out. If he's then left with 25, rather than toss a 9 he'll go for the 5 to leave d10. Works for him... sometimes.

Heta would go on to lose a semifinals match against eventual winner Dimitri Van den Bergh 11-6. Van den Burgh would deny Luke Humphries a second major TV win on the trot winning 11-10. Humphries came back from 7-2 to 10-9. The plot thickened as Humphries used 14 darts to level. In the 21st leg Van de Burgh, as is his want, slowed the match to a crawl as he took time between each dart, bringing a cascade of boos from the liquored crowd. Still, Humpries had 3 darts for 52 to silence the crowd and capture the UK Open crown.

The ODC's late mom, Irene Reed, would often vocalize under a similar circumstance: “My God The Bridge”. Being English that could well mean anything...

In this case it was a howling moderator mod calling Van de Bergh's actions “cheating” and “gamesmanship”. What a load of “Bravo Sierra”.

There's an old rodeo saying: “If you ain't cheating you're not trying hard enough”. “Gamesmanship?” A part of any game. You're playing a person. In auto racing gamesmanship is defined as “rubbing is racing”.

Wayne Mardle defended Van den Bergh, saying his actions “underscore the complexity of competitive darts, where psychological tactics play as crucial a role as physical skill.”

Stop press!

If you play darts and you're not aware of that fact then take up another sport. Old timers would flick darts and whistle. Gary Anderson turned to "pumping", "trumping", "blowing off", "pooting", "passing gas", "breaking wind", "backfiring", or simply "wind". The ODC knew one player that, if the board lights came from behind, would stand in the light to cast a shadow on the board.

The ADO Follies continued to the surprise of no one, least of all the ODC. The Camellia Classic in Sacramento has always been the opening event of the Northern California darting year. This year, someone on their board forgot to add the ADO logo to their flyer. ADO President Jim “Captain America” Widmayer took to social media to point that out. His words were answered by someone with less awareness than a rock. “Yes, and they took our \$1 like Tom Fleetwood use to do.

Dear Moron: Once you pay your entry fee the money is no longer yours. Tom Fleetwood did not take your \$1 - the ADO did to run the organization.

Wishing a Happy Birthday, belatedly, to “Dapper” Dave Justice who turned 74 in the Mother Country. Justice, in addition to being a great player, also had the distinction of playing in a coat and tie.

The definition of "Paradise" has changed from Costa Rica to Cancun Mexico. Not only has the definition of "Paradise" changed, the venue has changed, the date of the event has changed and prize money has changed with an increased total payout of \$65,000. It'll still be a great darting experience. Like the old Royal Hawaiian: “be there or be square”.

Another conclusion of the Syndey Research Study was that men are descendants of apes and not far removed. The study was somewhat confused however when it came to ladies. One theory has them coming from Eve which seems a stretch at best. Today's females would never accept an apple from a naked man.

Money, jewels or a Rolls, yes.

An apple? Fuggeddaboutit!

Stay thirsty my friends.