

WORLD OF TENPIN

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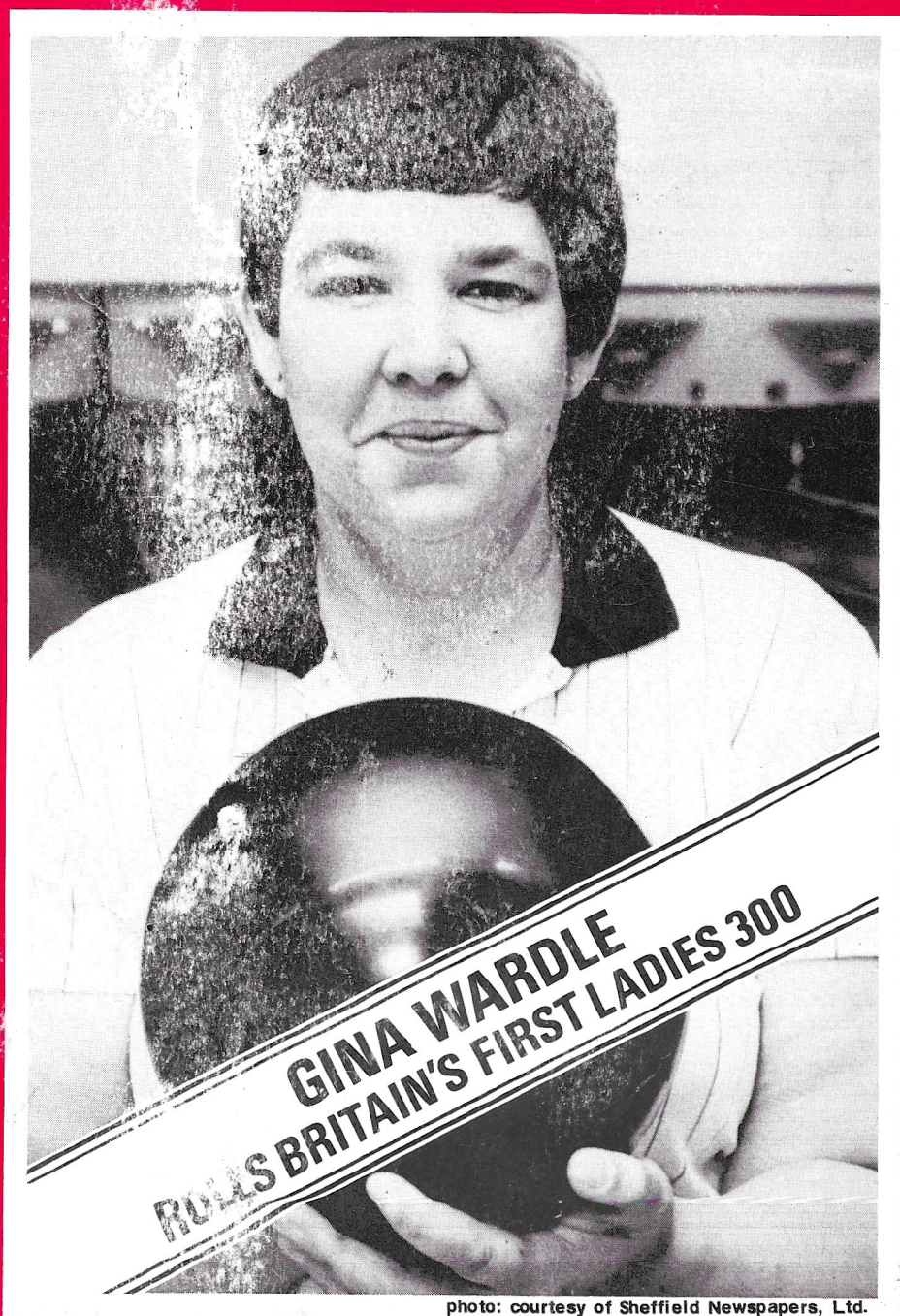
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FOR SHELAGH



GINA WARDLE
ROLLS BRITAIN'S FIRST LADIES 300

photo: courtesy of Sheffield Newspapers, Ltd.

NORTHERN SCRATCH TOUR

The Day Belonged to Gina

We waited twenty-five years for the first 300 game by a lady bowler in Great Britain. It came, almost to the hour, on the anniversary of tenpin bowling's arrival in this country in 1960.

Report and picture by JUDY ROBINS

How on earth can I write about the NST Tournament at Sheffield as if it were just another NST? Of course, I can't. There can't be many bowling people in the country who don't know already that Gina Wardle became the first woman in this country to shoot the magical 300 whilst competing in the NST.

It was the second match of the round-robin. Gina was already in the lead, where she'd been since the beginning. She was already averaging 205. Cathy Hill got the privilege of being beaten by 97 pins in a perfect, perfect game. Every strike was a good one, bang in the pocket, the pins didn't stand a chance.

For the record, Gina won the title as well, averaging 210.2. It was, we think, the highest scoring stop on the NST tour yet, certainly for the ladies. The cut for the top 12 came at 885, (177 average), the top six at 1518 (189). Five out of the six finalists averaged over 190 for their 14 games.

The men's section was also high scoring. Nev Robinson and Nigel Ogbonson were tying for the lead on 1145 after the first five games, with 27 bowlers hitting over 1000, and the cut on 989. Twenty-one players were still over the 200 mark after the semi-final, but of course only ten qualify for the final. The necessary score was 1638. Nev held the lead on 1775, thirteen ahead of Nigel.

Simon Tomkins, another of the growing band of ex-students in the bowling world, came up to challenge for, and take, the lead before Nigel put in a spurt starting in the sixth round and held on to win from Gregg Turvey, with Simon third and Nev fourth.

So the NST road-show moved south to Nottingham. The men's section bowled on February 24th, the ladies a week later so that they could compete in both the NST and the Woolwich Singles at Sunderland.

Nev Robinson again led the field after the qualifying round on 1077 (and that included a 155 game). This time the cut was 922, with just four players - Nev, Paul Bennett, Roy Matthews and Ron Deacon over the 1000 mark.

An American presence in the final was assured when Jim Chapman shot 620 to pull himself up from 23rd to fifth, and Mike Rogacs rose from 30th to seventh with a 637. Jim even moved into the lead after the second



Gina Wardle

round before Nev took over again. Local bowler Phil Bosworth held the lead for three rounds but then Ron Oldfield and Paul Bennett came to the fore to fight it out.

In the closest finish the NST has ever seen, any one of Paul, Phil, Nev or Ron could have won this event. There were a mere 35 pins between them going into the position round and, with 30 bonus for the match-play win, it was still all to play for. Fourth-placed Ron Oldfield put in a 233 to beat Nev to take the title by just two pins from Paul Bennett, 3758 to 3756. Ron averaged 197 on the day.

The following week saw the ladies' competition, and into an early lead went Helen Tomkins, Simon's sister and a student at Nottingham. She rolled 1037 over her five qualifying games. The cut for the top twelve came at 881, with eight ladies over the 900 mark.

Tina Darvill, the winner of the first stop of the season at Coventry, just made the cut for the final in sixth place on 1472, but from then on there was no holding her. In a very exciting and high scoring position round final against Jane Boneham, Tina shot 230 to capture her second title of the season. Jane finished second, Gillian Wandless in third place.

The next stop is at Sunderland at the end of March, then on to Stevenage in late April.

N.S.T. ORDER OF MERIT AFTER SIX TOURNAMENTS

(Number of tournaments in parenthesis).

MEN:

1. Gregg Turvey (5) 240
2. Nigel Ogbonson (6) 229
3. Nev Robinson (6) 226
4. Ron Oldfield (6) 211
5. Tom Marshall (4) 202

LADIES:

1. Judy Robins (6) 134
2. Jane Boneham (6) 123
3. Tina Darvill (2) 110
4. Gina Wardle (6) 105
5. Judy Bunce (6) 102

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