

Winking World 103



The Geoff Thorpe Memorial Edition

~~April 2019~~ March 2023

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Preliminaries

Editorial

Edward D. Green

This will be the editorial.

Not the Editorial

Katherine Drew

Thankfully, the document I received from the previous editor already included an Editorial for *Winking World 103*, which has spared me the daunting task of having to write one. I can only assume that this was how he wanted to be remembered: as a man of very few words.

This edition is dedicated to the memory of Geoff Thorpe and contains some pictorial and prosaic tributes, along with a spectacular poetic contribution from the man himself. Some memories were provided by Harley Jones and Nick Inglis (according to Ed anyway; apologies if that is incorrect). Any further contributions for future issues would be warmly received.

Credit where credit is due (or perhaps blame where blame is due), Ed had pretty much finished this edition when I rose to power so most of my work here has consisted of copying and pasting. This means that any errors are absolutely in no way my fault and you can therefore send all of your complaints to edgreen@edgreen.eg. All praise and adulations can (and should) be sent to winkingworld@gmail.com.

I hope that you will enjoy a blast from the past by the way of some tournament write ups that nearly predate my winking career. Other

notable highlights of this issue include an opportunity to test if your knowledge of the rules surpasses that of the previous rules sub-committee, and a CUTwC-themed murder mystery (I have yet to see any evidence that this is not the greatest piece of fictional literature ever created). Notable lowlights for me included a lot of faffing around with results tables, most of which I ended up deleting anyway, and the resurfacing of some memories from my first Somerset Invitation.

I can only hope that everyone is so grateful for the revival of *Winking World* that they are all very nice about it, lest I too feel the need for a four year hiatus.

I am now left with an awkwardly large blank space, which I find unnerving, so I shall fill it with details of the current ETwA committee, elected in October 2022.

Chair: Harley Jones

Treasurer: Tim Hunt

Secretary: Andrew Garrard

Winking World Editor: Katherine Drew

Publicity Officers: Sophie Brawn and Sarah Knight

Tournament Organiser: Edward Brown

Rules sub-committee: Edward Brown, Andrew Garrard, Christian Gowers, Ed Green, Tim Hunt, and Harley Jones

Submissions for *Winking World* 104

Bar the following exceptions, submissions are not requested for *Winking World* 104.

Owing to the interval since the last publication, there has unsurprisingly been enough tournaments to fill up an edition of *Winking World*. Or at least there would be if they had all actually been written up.

Therefore, if you believe that you won any of the following tournaments then do kindly get on with it and submit your write up using the guidelines on the following page by the **14th of May (2023)**:

ETwA National Singles, 27th–28th April 2019 (including the Geoff Thorpe trophy and the Plate)

NATwA Pairs, June 22nd–23rd 2019

World Pairs 45, 20th July 2019

York Open, 3rd–4th August 2019

London Open, 7th September 2019

National Handicapped Individual Pairs, 23rd November 2019

NATwA Singles, December 7th–8th, 2019

Varsity Match, 29th February 2020

Teams of Four, 20th August 2022

London Open, 4th September 2022

Golden Squidger, 28th October 2022

ETwA National Pairs, 29th–30th October 2022

NATwA Pairs, December 3rd 2022

Frankly we're all lucky that a global inconvenience put all winking activity on hold for nearly two years, otherwise I suspect there would be enough for two issues solely dedicated to write ups, and no one wants that.

Submissions for *Winking World 105*

If you were not fortunate to win any of the above tournaments, but are yearning for a way to creatively express your love or loathing of tiddlywinks, then fear not, for I shall generously give you the chance to contribute to *Winking World 105*.

Victors of any tournaments subsequent to those mentioned above are reminded that it is your solemn duty to prepare a write up of dubious quality and send it to me, lest I write something incredibly scathing and damning about you in lieu of a write up.

However, if you aren't tedious enough to win a tournament then you can contribute to the more interesting side of *Winking World* and submit an article on any theme relating to 'winks, the people who play the sport, or the social side.

My predecessor's ever unpopular essay competitions have received no submissions to date. I shall therefore continue rolling over the titles until somebody submits something. Essays are therefore requested which cover any or all of the following:

- An answer to the question: 'What one change would most improve the sport of Tiddlywinks?';
- A statement beginning 'I think Alan Dean is both marvellous and important because';
- An essay with the title 'My Favourite Squidger';
- An evaluation of whether you think your world rating is an accurate reflection of your ability and why or why not this might be.

Please send all submissions to winkingworld@gmail.com. A word document or equivalent is fine. For the love of God please stop sending things in .tex format.

The deadline for submissions for *Winking World 105* is Thursday 31st August.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I note that in many recent issues of WW I have not been near the top of tournament result tables. Please could this be rectified by inverting the tables i.e. by putting the highest score at the bottom?

Yours &c.,

Phillip Buckham-Bonnet

From an Editor: Thank you ever so much for your letter. Perhaps if you encourage your opponents to invert the tables during the tournament, you will achieve the same result. I'm sure it is within your ability to annoy them that much.

Correction

Feinting with Damn Praise

Sir,

I am confident in the depth of the scriptural knowledge both of the editor of this organ and of the author of the article concerning the 2018 teams of four competition; however, whereas the psalmist may well walk in the shadow of his deathly valley, the team of four defending their title that year instead walked in a valley shaded by Geoff, named as they were Yea, Though I Walk in the Valley of the Shadow of Geoff (YTIWitVotSoG). Interestingly this was reported correctly in the table of results that accompanied the article but incorrectly in the article itself. With such inconsistency how are we ever to trust in the accuracy of the press??

Yours,

Someone With A Better Memory Than Andrew Garrard

From a different Editor: Though I may not be the Editor you had in mind when you wrote in with your pedantry, I hope to reassure you that the scourge of inconsistency is certainly something that I aspire to purge from all future editions. Indeed, my personal motto is 'Consistency, Consistency, Consistency'.

National and International Tournaments

2018 NATwA Pairs

Ithaca, June 23rd–24th 2018

Alan Dean

As last year, the event was held at the Ithaca Centre, the shopping mall containing Jordan Mathew's barber shop. Thankfully, this time they avoided selecting the weekend of Memorial Day and the Cornell University graduation, so transportation and moving around the town were easier. I flew into Boston on Wednesday 20th, after spending some time in the Bedford office the previous day, and an overnight stay with Keith Seaman. There was an email from the airline during the night to inform me that my flight had been delayed by one game of Go, so Keith was able to take his revenge for the four-point victory I had achieved in the second game the night before.

I spent two nights in Boston before the tournament, and two more afterwards, and enjoyed the hospitality of Pam and Severin for three nights around the tournament. I booked two excursions, and did an e-bike tour on the Thursday, and a whale-watching sea trip on the Wednesday I flew back. To get between Boston and Ithaca I took a Greyhound to Springfield, where Ferd met me and drove me the rest of the way. Conveniently, Severin and Pam were driving to Boston on the Monday, to stay with Pam's sister, so I got a lift with them.

Sadly, the tournament was rather depleted by several last-minute withdrawals of established players: Mac due to a family emergency, Bob

due to a car breakdown, and Rick, apparently because he was having work done to his apartment, and needed to move stuff around.¹

Five of Severin's Ithaca High School students wanted to play, but not if that involved any two of them having to battle against an experienced pair. I suggested that the experienced players should split up and each take on one of the IHS students, but the Lockwoods were against this idea, especially Dave, who was keen to get another World Pairs challenge, but Larry came up with a very neat plan which we were all happy with, so was adopted. The draw was for a six pair all-play-all twice, plus an additional game between the top two if they are no more than seven points apart, and included two IHS pairs. Whenever a match involved an IHS pair against an established pair, the established pair split up, and each took a partner or partners selected by the students. In some of these games two students shared a colour, playing alternately. These games did not count towards the championship, but the meant that the students were not involved in hopelessly one-sided game, and they were able to learn from a variety of much more experienced partners.

The results tables show only the championship games. Other games are listed separately, and will be rated, apart from the ones where two people shared a colour. The parents and grandparents of Dylan Myler turned up, and his mother and grandmother joined in with him and Ferd for one game. As far as any of us could recall this was the first match involving players from three generations of the same family.

Main tournament: first half	LK & DL	SD & AD	FW & JM	JL & BL	Total
Larry Kahn & Dave Lockwood		4 2/3	4	6	14 2/3
Severin Drix & Alan Dean	2 1/3		6	5	13 1/3
Ferd Wulkan & Jordan Mathews	3	1		4	8
Jon Lockwood & Ben Lockwood	1	2	3		6

Main tournament: first half	LK & DL	SD & AD	FW & JM	JL & BL	Total
Larry Kahn & Dave Lockwood		4	6	5 1/2	30 1/6
Severin Drix & Alan Dean	3		7*	6	29 1/3
Ferd Wulkan & Jordan Mathews	1	0*		4	13
Jon Lockwood & Ben Lockwood	1 1/2	1	3		11 1/2

So, the favourites, Larry and Dave, were victorious once again. All being well, Severin and I shall try again next year.

¹ From the Editor: It strikes me that the Sport of Tiddlywinks is in essence a form of moving stuff around.

From the results, it looked like a two-horse race, but both Ferd/Jordan and Jon/Ben gave Severin and myself some tough games, and we had to fight back from behind. The pot-out was my fifth round shot, off a doubleton, and it meant that after the first day, with just Dave and Larry to play again, we were in first place, one sixth of a point ahead of them. Our $2\frac{1}{3} - 4\frac{2}{3}$ defeat by the champions had a particularly silly ending. In each of the last three rounds Severin attempted to pot large winks, from distances varying between 6 and 9 inches. He missed all three, any one of which would have guaranteed us first place, and the last attempt freed an enemy wink, so I had to use my final turn to re-squop it to bring it back down to equal first with two other colours. Had he simply missed the pot there was a trivial squop of the other enemy colour that I could have taken, so we would have only lost 3-4.

In our next game against Larry and Dave, Severin brought in well and looked like having a good chance for an early pot-out. I'm not sure why they believed it after the debacle of the end of our previous game, but they were sufficiently worried to try for a pot-out themselves, and Dave went for it, but only got four in and we captured the other two, but they continued to press hard, and the time seemed to go by very quickly, leaving me with only a few turns in rounds to pot enough to get first place. Our chances died when I missed an easy pot and landed on the back of a pile, so we had to settle for a 3. The extra game was fairly one-sided, with both Larry and Dave playing near the top of their games, and we were maybe a bit demoralised after squandering so many points at the end of our previous two games.

The top seeds won all their games. Ferd and Jordan must have played well to get a 3-4 against them. I emailed both for comments on that game, and Ferd responded that all he could recall was that they brought in well, and Jordan played some good shots. Our hopes were raised when there was a huge whoop of joy from Jon and Ben at the end of their second game against Dave and Larry, but they had not potted out. They were just celebrating taking more than one point from them: they had scored $1\frac{1}{2}$!

Golden Squidger revived at last

Patrick Driscoll's House, Girton, 2nd November 2018

Tim Hunt

On Friday 2nd November 2018, the day before the ETwA Pairs, Alan Dean drove me to Patrick Driscoll's new house in Girton to find no-one there. That is because Sibbo was fetching his parter Harley Jones from the station. They soon returned, and we were reassured to find that we had been loitering with intent outside the right house.

This match had been literally years in the making. Alan had, for nearly a decade, been half the defending pair, but his former partner Matt Fayers seems to have decided that fatherhood is incompatible with winking. Alan, looking for a substitute, settled on me (although I don't really have the hair to substitute for Matt; or the winking power, for that matter).¹ Patrick Driscoll had decided that the trophy should be revived, and with Harley had challenged. Then years passed (literally) while we tried to find a time and place where the four of us could all meet to play the match. Finally the momentous day had arrived.

The match was played in one of the many sheds that populate Patrick's garden, which has a fine collection of apple trees. The largest of the sheds doubles as the library, and one of the two rooms is just large enough for a winks table. We played surrounded by books, while sunlight streamed in through the floor-to-ceiling window on one side.

The winks was less interesting than the setting. Alan and I had warmed up with a Jubilee match and shots worked for us. Our opponents were struggling, so we won the first 2 games 6-1. We played a third game before lunch where we potted out for a 5*-2*, leaving the score at 17-4. That meant that, after a pleasant walk across the fields to the Red Lion in Histon, where we partook of a good lunch and better beer, Patrick and Harley needed two sevens. That does not engender sensible play, and we were able to take control again and wrap things up with another 5* pot-out.

Hopefully we will be able to arrange the next Golden Squidger match with slightly less difficulty and delay than this one.

Alan Dean & Tim Hunt	6	6	5*	5*	22
Patrick Driscoll & Harley Jones	1	1	2*	2*	6

¹ *From the Editor: I think we can all agree that you make up for it in Horror Rating*

2018 ETwA National Pairs

Downing College, Cambridge, 3rd–4th November 2018

Harley Jones

“Will you partner me in the National Pairs?”

A question that from some players can inspire trepidation; from some, hope; but, as here, from Patrick Barrie, surely a question that the Latin teachers would say expected the answer “yes”. Though the older CUTwC gang usually offer to partner novices, should they turn up, I gave my conditional yes, and then tried quite hard to find partners for anyone else that showed an interest. I had to put in no effort to pair up Eds Green and Brown; they had discovered that they were something of a dream team in a Wednesday meeting earlier in the term. Michael Higham, lately returned from Spain where he had spent the last four years researching for a PhD rather than practising winks, was also in need of a partner, and, although not a complete novice, had not quite recovered his earlier form in the London Open; so I asked Andrew to take him under his wing, on the grounds that as Michael was staying with me I could ensure that the tournament started on time, without Andrew, if necessary (not that that worked, as we shall see).

That left Kat, who, though one would hesitate to describe the CUTwC President as a novice, had nevertheless only half a year’s experience; her friend and frequent CUTwC partner was otherwise occupied. I advised her to turn up on the basis that experienced players often turn up unannounced in search of partners; as willing as I am to partner her in life [information correct at time of writing] I was loath to yield Patrick.

I was proven right when Steve Phillips arrived in the morning and immediately offered to join Kat. Geoff, minutes later, heroically offered to not play if it would help the numbers of the tournament; on learning that that would condemn us to an 8-pair double APA, he even more heroically decided to play with himself for two days, despite my efforts to render that unnecessary.

Andrew was merely five minutes late, and would not have held the tournament up (I having failed to bring my prepared seeding list – Timmy heroically reconstructed it while I worried about mats) had he not also brought copies of the latest issue of *Winking World*. The ensuing distribution faff meant that my own disorganisation went largely unobserved the tournament was held up by several precious minutes.

The field was strong and very well-balanced from the outset; all 8 ½ pairs had others to whom they appeared well-matched. At one end, Hunt and Dean, Rose and Driscoll, and Barrrie and Jones were aware that they were likely to be battling for top; at the bottom, the pairings with novices – Green and Brown, and Phillips and Drew – were not only contending with each other but also wondering how rusty Higham (partnering Garrard) was likely to be. In the middle, Team Kninglis, Sage and B-B, and Geoff and Thorpe were under attack from both ends, and battling to make it into the top league - the format was such that the first APA would not be over by the end of Saturday; the field would split into two leagues of four, who would battle internally after lunch on Sunday, with the lowest-placed pair remaining at the pub.

There were occasional upsets, with both the Eds and Kat and Steve achieving good scores against competent players; but what I was most shocked to see at the end of Saturday was how few points Stew and PBB had scored. I expect that this was the result of Strategy; they had carefully arranged for two other pairs to buy champagne, and would need to play very well on Sunday morning to have to return after lunch. As it turned out Patrick and I were their last opponents, against whom they needed 6; as so often happens, when employing pot-out tactics, any slip-up allows ones opponents to take control, and so we did, ensuring a lazy afternoon for them.

Meanwhile Geoff had proved himself to be a Good Loser – with a losing PPG of $2\frac{3}{4}$ over 6 games - and Team Kninglis had stormed into third place. Across the field there had been a large number of close scores, mostly due to Geoff, and 6 pot-outs; Hunt and Dean had not dominated as much as I'd expected, with a couple of 4s and a couple of 1s – perhaps suffering winks fatigue from a Jubilee match and a Golden Squidger match over the preceding Thursday and Friday. However, the top bracket were separated by less than 7 points, with three games left; so each of us had a reasonable chance. In the lower league there was a split between Geoff and Geoff and Garrard and Higham on 28 each, and the pairs which included the novices, trailing nine points behind. Ed Green and Ed Brown were almost caught out by their own strategy of causing colour confusion – I don't know how many times Green played yellow, but it didn't help anyone – but nevertheless managed to climb above Kat and Steve for a respectable 7th place. Despite Steve's attempt to give Geoff a score of $2\frac{1}{5}$ in one game, he ended up yielding 5th to Higham and Garrard by a mere half point.

In the top league, neither Hunt and Dean nor the Kninglises had managed to scrape enough points from either me and Patrick or Patrick and Matty to be in contention going into the final round; although Nick and Sarah were less than 7 points behind the lead, after our game's score was added

on they would not be able to top it whatever happened. So I was feeling somewhat tense going into what was effectively the final.

We had managed to gather an extra $1/3$ on the end of our score; so a 5-2 win was our minimum winning score for the trophy. Having had two successful pot-outs over the weekend so far, and a few near-misses, we found ourselves aiming for that once more. Patrick was the potting colour. Our opponents were unfortunate enough to roll off at a couple of key moments, but I still ended up on rescuing duty. Patrick potted well once freed, and the sixth went in beautifully to claim the trophy. Though hands were shaken at that stage, there was the small matter of the score yet to be decided. Matty and Patrick had ended up with several winks near the edge on account of pile-breaks, the aforementioned bad fortune, and through prioritising defence of their squops; so I was able to follow in, eventually, for a 7*-0*, obligating myself to do the third champagne run of the weekend.



“And if you look over here then you’ll see why I haven’t published a Winking World in years!”

You’ll note that this report is low on comments about individual well-played or excitingly poorly played shots. I confess that my excitement and nerves upon coming close to actually winning something rather took over; I have a fairly poor memory for these at the best of times and so can only apologise for this. However, as far as I could tell, most of the winkers present played very well; there was some very high-quality long and

longish potting, and excellent pile play from Driscoll, Dean and Geoff that I noticed especially. I felt that my own competence at the more complex shots was high and improved over the weekend – bristolling off piles, odd nudges, grompy things, clicking off – the sorts of shot that are difficult to practice because of how different they are each time they come up. Perhaps I can con myself into thinking that the missed centimetre squops were due to nerves.

Downing continues to be a very pleasant venue for Tiddlywinks. The Panton coped admirably with serving us lunch, giving us time for some enjoyment of other games and still to get back not long after 2:00. Our presence was briefly graced on Sunday afternoon by the new Master of the college, who I hope will continue to take an interest when we return in April.

As pleased as I naturally am about this result, I must point out that Patrick remains an all-round master of the sport; and that Driscoll and Rose are a superbly high-powered team, who I hope will remain a significant force to be reckoned with in future open pairs tournaments.



The 2019 Cambridge Open (with Jubilee Trophy):

Selwyn College, Cambridge, 18th–20th January 2019

Alan Dean

Over recent years, around Cambridge tournament weekends, I have had an arrangement with Tim Hunt whereby he provides an evening meal on the Friday night, and bed and breakfast, and I drive him to and from Cambridge. Leaving from my Exmouth home at around 4:30 on the Friday morning means that I can miss much of the heavy traffic, and spend a day in the Bedford office, before going on to Milton Keynes. It also gives Tim and myself a chance to get some winks practice in before the tournament, and we have recently taken to adding a little more edge to these practice sessions by making them Jubilee Trophy challenges. This was how my long run of successful defences finally came to an end last April, before the National Singles. I had planned to wait at least a year before re-challenging after that, but Tim persuaded me to challenge him in November, before the Golden Squidger defence, and the National Pairs, and I won it back, so this time it was his turn to challenge me.

However, Ed Green challenged before Tim, so this would have to be an 'if' match, to be counted only if I went on to defeat Ed, unless Ed agreed to allow Tim's challenge to jump the queue. I emailed Ed a couple of times to ask this question, but there was no response, so we began the 'if' match after the evening meal and played three games before it got too late. Tim took the first 4-3, and I won the next two 6-1 and 5-2. The standard of play was generally good on both sides.

After breakfast we played game four. This was a tight squopping battle, fairly evenly poised until, early in rounds, I approached the main pile with my last mobile wink, a large one. It squopped another of my large winks, and subbed, so I lost two big winks in one shot, and things suddenly looked fairly hopeless in that game. I tried hard to recover, by successfully Bristolling a pair of small winks onto the main pile from about an inch away, but Tim competently took the squop and I had no more chances: he won the game 5½ - 1½. So Tim needed five or more points from the final game to regain the trophy, but game four took so long that we didn't have time to play it before we needed to leave for Cambridge.

There was a new venue for the Cambridge Open, Patrick Barrie's college, Emmanuel, and Patrick thoughtfully arranged for two visitor cars to be parked in college, and he offered the places to Andrew Garrard (because he carries heavy equipment) and myself (maybe because I'm old, or have

the longest journey). The Saturday games were played in the Old Library, a good sized room with excellent tables, firm, and just a little narrow, with the only problem being the lighting, which my old eyes struggled with once the sun went down.

The usual format was employed: randomly drawn games with the main criteria that no two players should partner each other than once if possible, players could opt in or out at any time, but you only qualified to win if you played in the final round and missed no more than two rounds. Places amongst those who qualified were based on points per game. The luck of the draw is an obvious factor, and I certainly benefited from that: I didn't get a single game with a beginner partner against two experienced players and, on two occasions, a draw had been announced in which I would have been playing tough matches against Patrick Barrie when, just before play began, another player arrived, prompting a call of 're-draw', and I got an easier draw as a result! (Note to myself for future such events: take a friend along who is prepared to hover just outside the tournament room, and then arrive to play on receipt of a message indicating that I don't like the draw. Maybe two friends, in case the first re-draw is also not to my satisfaction. Then again, maybe not. It would get a bit silly if too many of us tried this!)



Gosh wasn't my hair red?? Also please do appreciate the CUTwC nail polish.

After this round we adjourned to the Free Press pub for lunch and Ed Green and I returned to Emmanuel early so we could play some Jubilee

games. We actually managed to play the complete match, because it only needed three games. Ed went for an early pot-out in game one, but I caught him after he potted two, and converted to a 7*-0. I was expecting this to be his strategy, because I know he is a skilful potter (I lost the first round game of a recent National Singles to him in this way). My squopping was too good for him¹ in the other two games, so he didn't get any more chances to pot out. I took the next two games 6-1 and 5-2, to retain the trophy by 18-3, and it just delayed the start of our next Cambridge Open games by a couple of minutes.



A truly nail-biting game. Meanwhile Geoff tries to strangle himself.

I was quite tired at this point, having unnecessarily woken at 4am again, and the lighting had deteriorated, so I considered skipping a round, but I have never done that before and decided it would be a bad precedent. I found that moving a table onto the stage increased the illumination, but that idea was vetoed as it created some heavy shadows. Anyway, in the event it made no difference that I could not see particularly well. Given the choice, early on, to squop either Nick Ingles or Zach Bond, I chose to squop Nick, and two rounds later Zach had potted out! So that's another improving Cambridge player that I shall need to keep a closer eye on in future. I ended day one in the lead, with all my games being 6-1, and this last one being my only defeat.

¹From the Editor: Perhaps giving him his own issue was a mistake (see WW101).

The CUTwC Annual dinner was help that evening. I was not in attendance so cannot comment on it except to say that, whilst helping to move the tables to the new venue on Sunday morning, I did see the room where the dinner had been held, and it did contain evidence that a certain amount of alcohol had been consumed. Perhaps a report will appear elsewhere in this edition of Winking World. I don't know if it was due to something he ate or drank at the dinner, but Geoff Thorpe was reported to be unwell the next day, and only arrived to play his part in beating me in the final round.

The same venue was used again for lunch, and this time it was Tim Hunt and myself who went back early, because my defeating Ed Green meant that our 'if' Jubilee match did actually count, so we needed to complete it. I was on top form and comfortably won the squopping battle 6-1, to retain the title with a 21½ - 13½ scoreline. We played the game on Tim's mat, which we had used for the other games in the match

In round ten we had one of Patrick Barrie's winks safely squopped in an area we strongly controlled, and we hoped to attack his other winks in for a fight, but Patrick was too canny for that, and just slowly adjusted, keeping five pottable winks as he slowly approach us. Then I played a shot that I really can't understand. I was trying to play a large wink a little higher onto a big pile that it already controlled, and it shot forward and right off the pile. It must have gone about ten times further that it was meant to. My next shot, in an attempt to remedy some of the damage was to get back on that pile with my last free, small, wink. It subbed, so it now it looked like we were now sure to lose 6-1. However, Paul had two free winks and we decided if he could pot them both we could still get something from the game, if the opposition failed to pot. Amazingly, Patrick missed an easy final round pot, so the six tiddlies that Paul achieved was enough to tie for first place, and we considered ourselves very fortunate to suffer only a 3-4 loss.

Going into the final round the only player who could catch me was Tim Hunt, and to do so he had to win his game 7-0 and I needed to lose mine 0-7. Paul brought in well, and it was clear he was going to try for a pot out. I had a few of Geoff's winks squopped, so rather than use my turns attempting long squops I decided that the safest plan, to ensure tournament, if not game, victory was to just shoot a few of Geoff's winks off the mat at the far end, and keep my winks near the pot. This way, I would either catch a missed pot attempt from Paul or just rely on my potting to ensure one of my colours beat Geoff. Paul didn't miss his pots and, mostly, neither did I so I easily got a 2-5* to take the tournament for the first time in 31 years, so almost half of the competitors this year were born more than a decade after my previous win. As it turned out, Tim went on to lose his final game so it would not have mattered, other than for rating points, if I had got a 0 in mine.

On paper, perhaps the most impressive result was Sophie Brawn and Paul Moss defeating Patrick Barrie (solo). Patrick was obviously not at his best, but I understand he also suffered from the very slow play of his opponents, and didn't wish to hold up proceedings too much by always enforcing the 30-second rule. Taking over a minute and a half to decide to take the only squop that was on offer does seem a little excessive.

Biggest improver was Christian Gowers, who gained a whopping 138 rating points (and 12 places up the list) from his nine games. Ed Brown, climbing 8 places with a 101 ratings points gain, was not far behind, and honourable mentions must go to the progress made by Daniel Baryshnikov (+85) and Natasha Holmes (+80). There were eight new entrants to the Ratings, and almost a third of the players were women, so the future of the game is looking a little brighter at the moment.

The trophy was presented by Kat Drew. Thanks to CUTwC for hosting and organising the event.



I mean why bother becoming the Editor of Winking World if I'm not going to fill it with pictures of myself?

Jubilee Match¹

Patrick Driscoll's House, Girton, 8th March 2019

Alan Dean

Hi Ed,

I was ill for three weeks immediately after the Ely weekend, and then forgot that I should have sent in a report of the Jubilee match I played against Patrick Driscoll, at his home, on the Friday. I expect I have missed the deadline for the next WW by now,² so I shall just write a few words about it, from the photo I took of the notes he made during the match, in case there is time to squeeze it in.³

Game one was a very easy 6-1 to Patrick, after I squopped myself and subbed several times, and Patrick played quite competently. The reverse happened in game two, with Patrick playing a few very bad shots, including knocking himself off a triplet on of my winks, so this was a 6-1 to me. By game three we were both playing well, and it was a closely fought battle until rounds, when I first managed to take control, and eventually won it 6-1.

In game four Patrick potted a green from the base line and decided to go for an early pot out. I caught two greens but good play by Patrick and a very careless shot by me allowed him to free them, leaving one easy pot and a more distant one. I was then torn between bringing my one far wink in, to minimise the chances of my losing 7-0, or to try a long squop with my nurdled wink at his final green. I decided to try the squop, got it, and went on to take a 7-0 myself, so the final game was not needed: I won 20-8.

Afterwards we played some games with Patrick's son. Then I went to Ely to collect Harley after evensong and went back to his place for another Jubilee match, which Harley said he would write up.⁴

¹ *From the Editor: If you have come to Page 20 from Timmy's article, tough. I refuse to comply with his outrageous demands.*

² *From a different Editor: Yes you have. The published submission deadline for Winking World 103 was clearly Monday 8th April, 2019, and this write up was submitted on Tuesday 16th April, 2019. I am therefore judging you on behalf of my predecessor.*

³ *From a different Editor: Oh go on then. But do understand that such leniency is not characteristic of me, and in future I expect articles to be submitted by the deadline, even if that is four years before my intended publication date.*

⁴ *From a different Editor: He has not.*



What a cruel world we live in that children of such a young age are forced to endure the horrors of squopping one's own wink.



Alan Dean, Patrick Driscoll, and his son. Oh, wait, hang on; due to spacing issues this image actually accompanies the article overleaf.

Local News

Royal Match anniversary meeting:

Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25th November 2018

Patrick Barrie

It was in 1958 that tiddlywinks shot to national prominence, largely because of the publicity surrounding the tiddlywinks match between CUTwC and the Goons as Royal Champions. Sixty years on, an extra CUTwC meeting was held to enable guest appearances from three members of the 1958 team: Bill Steen, Lawford Howells and Peter Downes. During a tea break, we heard first-hand reminiscences of the events of that year and looked at Peter's collection of fascinating memorabilia. Some of the photos, in particular, are outstanding.

At the meeting, 18 people played at least one game, with three rounds being played. The game involving Lawford and his grandson was notable for having an age range of more than 70 years between participants.

The friendly competition involved all game scores being adjusted by the normal tiddlywinks handicap system, but with handicaps set AFTER the tournament using an algorithm that minimises the variance of adjusted scores. A weird idea - first proposed by Gary Shrimpton in the late 1980s - that can give a final order that is quite random.

As it happens, this format does not work well when several winkers only play a single game, but it was still possible to identify a winner. The winner of the dram of whisky was eventually found to be Patrick Driscoll (with an adjusted PPG of 4.06), who narrowly pipped Stew Sage (adjusted PPG 3.93).

Somerset Invitation 2019

Tim Hunt

Another year. Another Somerset. A cynic might suggest that nothing changes. Certainly, the Old Down Inn provided warm hospitality, and a light, well-tabled, though not particularly warm function room. As last year, we decided to play on the so-called 'York' mats, which provided useful excuses when shots did not work. There was certainly one game when I had a sequence of horrific subs, which were clearly the fault of the mats. That was just like the sequence of horrible subs I had at the Pairs which must have been due to the horrible fuzzy tables in Downing College. What other common link could there be? To give them their due, the York mats may be a bit different, but they seem to be extremely consistent and hard-wearing, while also being more affordable. If ETwA decided to embrace them wholesale, I would not consider it a mistake.



Toby assesses whether York mats could replace pillows.

Also traditional was Stew worrying about the Selwyn's bids to the Cambridge Admissions Pool for prospective students, an activity not helped by the extremely limited Internet availability. Fortunately Harley's phone stepped up and became ISP to the CUTwC.

However, the aforementioned cynic would be wrong in several ways. For example, three players were experiencing the joys of Somerset for the first time. Or, perhaps, one should say one and two halves, since Molly and

Toby had not realised, or at least were unable to maintain the commitment, that once you have started there should be no escape. Fortunately, more by luck than judgement, we were able to play a draw that coped. We started out with a 9 players explosion with three games of three in each round, and on the first day we had played exactly half of that (six rounds) which we assumed would be a reasonably fair selection of games. So, on the second day we played an 7-player all-partner all (or 8 players with an R. T. Fishall, if you prefer) for a further seven rounds of winks.



Stew completes a vital stage of the Cambridge admissions process.

We also suspect that this might be the Somerset Invitation with the highest proportion of female players, even though Sarah Knight was unable to join us due to lack of leave. The proportion in this tournament was 3/16 female once you account for people leaving in the middle. That does not include Steph (Andrew Garrard's better half) who spend most of the time when we were winking in knitting an interminable mauve thing in a corner (apparently a baby blanket).

The last evening brought us a Jazz band in the other room of the pub, while we were celebrating with a range of nice beers and Thatcher's Haze cider. Our enjoyment of the Jazz was as nothing to the parrot's. Later enquiries revealed that the two things that really got the parrot going

were music, and a funeral. Despite PBB's best efforts, the parrot continues to say "Hello!" rather than "E-up!".

There was also novelty in the incidental games. Some of us had our Organs Attacked by a range of strange diseases in a tasteful card game provided by Andrew. Naturally that included cirrhosis of the liver. Meanwhile other people were playing a card game that seemed to be about wrangling unicorns, but I missed out on that. We also got to play honest dice with panda-shaped dice, which some people thought looked like Andrew Garrards. In more traditional games, Mr Darcy was married (by Steph) and everyone drank lots of fines thanks to pigs, yogi's whist and so forth.

In the less serious games, the rules of tiddlywinks only had to be consulted once, when my parter inadvertently played blue when I should have been playing my red in round 4. Do you know what the options were for our opponents? None of the rules sub-committee members present were were sure, but the Internet co-operated to let us consult the ETwA web site and fortunately Rule 23.3.ii is worded very clearly and play could continue. Can you get this right? Note down your answer, then turn to page [XX] to check it.¹

In order to accommodate PBB's wish to be at the top of the table, Andrew Garrard re-programmed his computer to show the rank list with last place at the top. PBB had that spot sewn up with a round to spare. And, when all the dust had settled, and all the Christmas decorations taken down, the list somehow showed that I was the rankest for the second year in a row. I think we should leave the closing remarks to Somerset neophyte Kat. At breakfast before we all departed, I asked her if she could sum up the experience for Winking World. She opined "Oh dear! Oh dear!"

Name	Score after day 1	Position after day 1	Score after day 2	Position after day 2
Phil Buckham-Bonnett	11	9	32	7
Katherine Drew	21 ½	7	40 ½	6
Harley Jones	23 ½	3	48 ½	5
Stewart Sage	22	=5	52	4
Andrew Garrard	22 ½	4	54 ½	3
Nick Inglis	34	1	57	2
Tim Hunt	30 ½	2	58 ½	1
Toby Bruce	22	=5		
Molly Birch	14 ½	8		

¹ From the Editor: There is no Page [XX] in this edition of WW, and it was jolly presumptuous of Timmy to assume there would be. You'll have to turn to Page 20 instead.

Answer to the rules problem:

In general, when the opponents have played out of turn, the other players have the following options:

- * They may have the shot put back, and then have the game continue with the correct colour to play.
- * Or they may accept the shot, and then continue with whichever of their colours that they choose.

We knew that, and since Stew Sage had missed the pot with is out-of-order blue shot, it was clear that Andrew Garrard was going to accept it. The bit we had to check up on, was which round would we be in depending on which colour played next. As I said before, fortunately the rules make it very clear. "If this situation arises during the round limit period of the game (Rule 18), the counting of rounds should be such that no colour that is played in its correct order has more than one turn in any round." Green had already played in round 4, so it would be either Green to play in round 5, or Yellow (who ended rounds) to play in Round 4. Since green/yellow was winning and yellow did not have anything particular to do, Andrew correctly chose to play next with Green in round 5, however, Stew and I seem to have pulled something out of the bag and won 5-2. I don't really remember, but that is what he score sheet shows.

Occasional Articles

Some Inaccurate Thoughts on Geoff Thorpe

Geoff Thorpe may well have been born in 1954. He was probably educated at Manchester Grammar School and went on to read Mathematics at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he joined CUTwC in 1971. He stayed on for Part III of the Mathematical Tripos and then proceeded to a job at Ferranti in Manchester, where he may have been involved in high-tech stuff for the Thai navy. At some point the relevant bit of Ferranti was taken over by BAE and Geoff moved to work in Portsmouth.

Geoff was very proud of the four pot relay record that he and some Cambridge colleagues set in the 1970s and lasted until the late 1980s. While working for Ferranti, Geoff hosted several invitation tournaments at his house in Stockport. He was not, at this time, notably house-proud and at one such tournament the lack of hygiene in Geoff's toilet induced Jo Mitchell-Soares to bravely don rubber gloves and clean things up.

Geoff was a regular attender at the CUTwC Dinner, invariably accompanied by Teddy, a small teddy bear, who would inhabit the breast pocket of Geoff's dinner jacket. Geoff would usually tell the Noddy and Big Ears joke (or Noddy and Buggers as he said one year). In the early 80s Teddy was subjected to repeated attacks by Paul Hilditch, who drowned him in a glass of port, and then bit his head off. The head was reattached with a tiny CUTwC scarf.

At one club dinner in the 1980s in Queens' College, some of the other attendees decided it would be amusing to throw Geoff into the Cam. When the drunken revellers found it difficult to lift Geoff over the guard chains, he broke free, climbed over the chains, and then allowed them to pick him up again. After emerging from the Cam, he spent the rest of the evening in Queens' MCR dressed only in a towel. Another CUTwC dinner

incident in Queens' showed Geoff's quick thinking. As guests were leaving the Armitage Room and descending the FF staircase, Geoff sensed that his old friend Andrew James was about to lose his dinner. With one deft movement he directed Andrew's head down to centre of the stairwell, so that departing diners were able to spiral round the spectacular cascade.

Geoff's playing career included a productive partnership with Geoff Hull. Perhaps the highlight was the 1983 Pairs, a tournament in which only six pairs entered: Alan Dean and Jon Mapley, Dave and Deja Lockwood (Deja was heavily pregnant with Samantha), Cyril Edwards and Dennis Opposs, Geoff Hull and Geoff Thorpe, Nick Inglis and Steve Ramsden, and Paul Hilditch and Stew Sage. The tournament consisted of three all-play-alls. Alan Dean and Jon Mapley won the title, but the the middle all-play-all was won by Thorpe and Hall.

Nick Inglis

Geoff was an extraordinary person – truly one of a kind. He was a great raconteur, and, of course, CUTwC were very fond of his telling of the Noddy Joke. As a winker he had a peculiar style of play that resulted in a lot of 3s and fractional scores; I can only assume that he was an excellent strategist, as I never understood what he was up to! My memories of him are primarily of discussing our shared love of sci-fi and fantasy literature, and we were looking forward to seeing each other at WorldCon in summer 2019. As part of the Hugo Awards ceremony – the central event – members of the Sci-Fi community who had died in the last year were listed, simply and movingly, and it was an emotional moment to see Geoff's name in this context. I think we were all very fond of Geoff, and if anybody were to have further memories, or feels able to write a proper obituary, please do so.

Harley Jones



Poetry Competition

In *Winking World 102*, readers were asked to contribute poems on the title 'My Favourite Squidger'.

My favourite squidger is green
It's useful for many a shot
I choose it for squopping my foes
And for flicking winks into the pot.

My squidger came from Marchant Games
Who used to make our winks
I ground it on a sanding block
To a perfect shape me thinks.

For bring ins and for Bristol shots
My favourite's not so pukka
The squidgers that I use for these
Were made by ole Rick Tucker

I tap out with a copper coin
From the reign of King George Three
And though these squidgers all are good
They don't mean the same to me.

†*Geoff Thorpe*

Old faithful.

ETwA blank.

Slightly warped.

Blunt thick edge.

Good for cruds.

Not much else.

Will I ever get on top of the pile?

Patrick Barrie

It is very clear that the winner of this essay competition - brimming over with such literary merit as to make the reader feel physically sick - is the late, great Geoff Thorpe. This means I don't have to buy anybody a pint, which did not affect my decision.¹



¹ From a different Editor: Since when was this supposed to be a poetry competition?? The only evidence I can find of this is in the Editorial of Winking World 102, and that clearly asked for essays on the subject of 'My Favourite Squidger'. If anyone submits a poem ranting about their rating then I shall be absolutely furious.

Sophie and the Amazing Tripleton: A CUTwC Murder Mystery, by Sophie Brawn

Katherine Drew

Charlotte Manser was dead, but that wasn't the mystery.¹ Not to me anyway. After missing one squop too many, she'd had to go if I was in with any chance of being on the winning Cuppers team this year. After the winks meeting was over, I had lured her into the kitchen under the pretence of washing up after the cake that our great and generous President had brought, and then choked her to death with her own squidger, leaving the body for someone else to deal with. No, the real mystery was who had squopped the tripleton while I was busy murdering Charlotte. Oh, and who had killed Ed Brown.

Let me explain. We had been playing the Paul Thorpe, and I had had the misfortune to be paired with Kat. It was the semi-final round and we were against Tash and Zach. It all came down to the final shot: all Kat had to do was squop the tripleton of enemy winks from three inches and we would win. Obviously she missed. God only knows why Tash hadn't already killed her to improve the Peterhouse Cuppers team. That shot ended the game and we left the winks as they were. No one had touched that table since our game ended, so why was that tripleton now squopped?

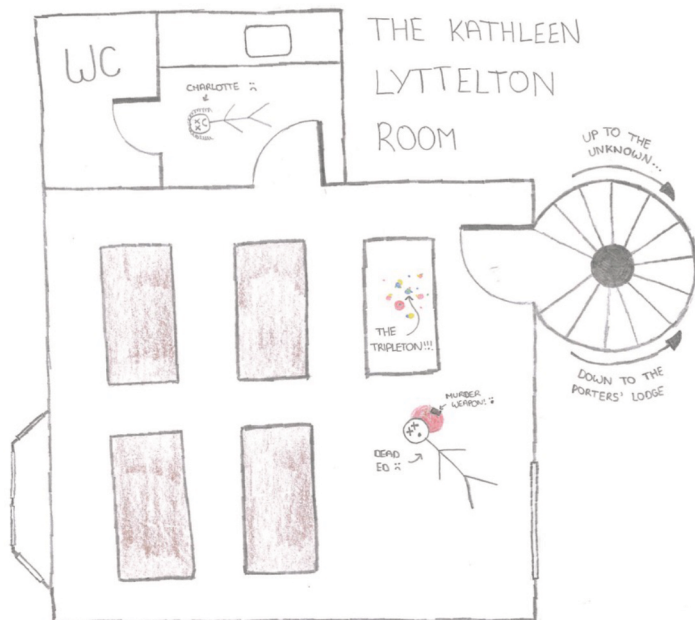
After Kat had single-handedly ensured our elimination from the competition, Tash and Zach then went on to lose against Ed and Ed in the final, and then at last it was time for the bar. Most of the mats were cleared away and everyone else headed off straight to the bar, while Charlotte, Ed Brown, and I had stayed to clear up the last few bits, including the mat with the amazing tripleton. That was when I seized my opportunity in the kitchen, running the taps on full blast so Ed couldn't hear from the main room. When I had emerged, I'd found Ed Brown lying on the floor with the Paul Thorpe trophy lying next to him, covered in blood.

I had heard footsteps coming up the stairs and I froze, just as Zach had come through the door. He quickly took in the scene before him. "Oh." He looked at me.

¹*From a different Editor: Considering it's been nearly four years since I wrote this, I think I've been quite lucky that the only character from Sophie and the Amazing Tripleton: A CUTwC Murder Mystery, by Sophie Brawn who hasn't made an appearance at any sort of winks for nearly four years is dead in the opening line.*

“I didn’t do it! I just came in from the kitchen and this was how I found it!” I had protested. Zach frowned.

“Hmmm. I think the only logical thing to do here would be for me to go and get everyone else so we can all work out what to do.” Zach had then left to round up the others, while I just stood there. A few minutes later he had returned with the rest of the group in tow. Upon seeing the bludgeoned body of their fellow winker, there were a few murmurs of ‘tut tut’, ‘oh dear’ and ‘how unfortunate’.



And that brings us up to now. Here we all are, gathered around a crime scene, with the underwhelmingly small murder weapon in clear sight. Kat was the first to speak.

“So are we going to call the police then?”

“What? Are you mad? Back in the old days we solved the murders ourselves.” replied the Ed who hadn’t just been murdered. Everyone else nodded in agreement.

“I suppose you could say that this is dead exciting!” exclaimed Rupert.

“I have always wanted to be a detective!” piped up Molly through the groaning. More excited murmuring followed.

“Seriously guys? This isn’t a murder mystery; it’s real life and someone’s just been killed. None of us have any experience in solving murders, we’re not detectives, and one of us is definitely a murderer,” Kat replied.

A sudden hush fell upon the group. In a highly uncharacteristic move, Kat was right. I looked round at the ten people and one dead body in the room. Only the people here had known where dead Ed would be in the moments before his death, and the calculated blows from the Paul Thorpe trophy proved that there had been a serious motive to kill. Thankfully my alibi was airtight: I wouldn’t have had enough time to kill both dead Ed and Charlotte in the short amount of time the three of us had been left in this room. I had to find out what everyone else did when they left the Kathleen Lyttleton Room earlier.

“What did you all do when you left the Kathleen Lyttleton Room earlier?” I asked.

Everyone else suddenly looked very suspicious.

“Well we all sort of split up,” said Harley. “Only Patrick and I actually went straight to the bar.”

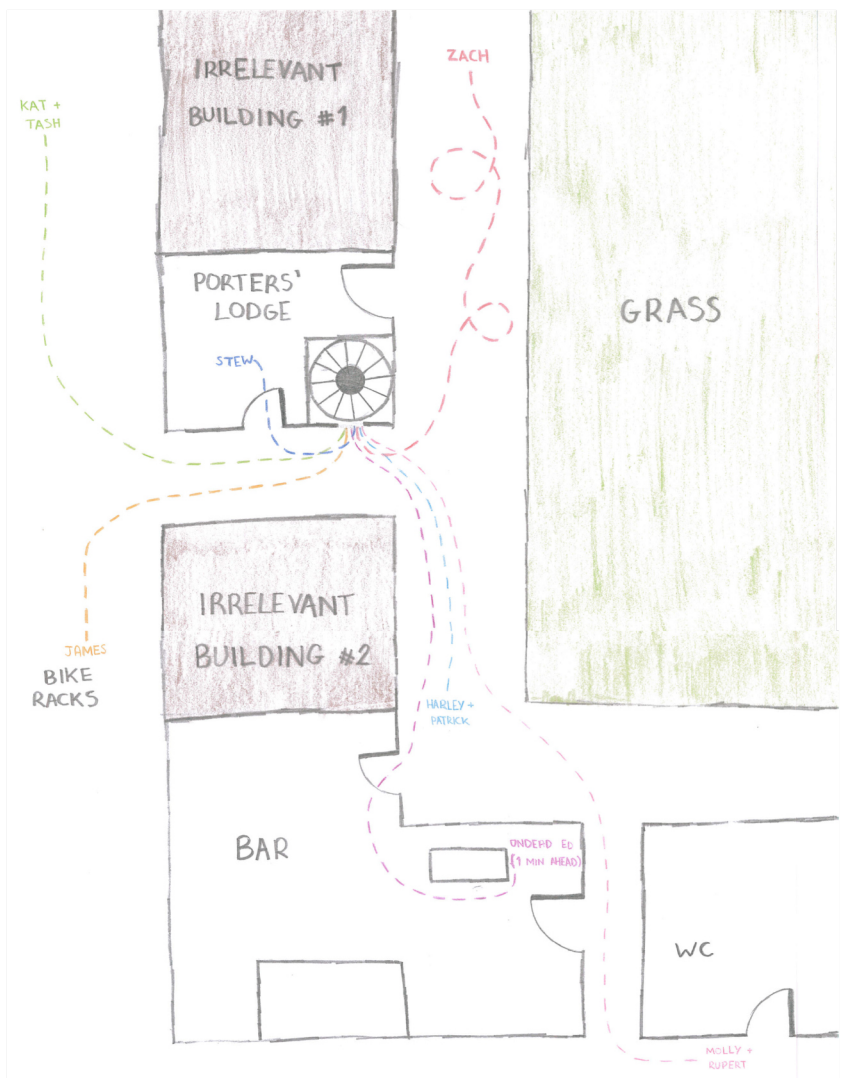
One by one everyone revealed their location at the time of the murder, and it turned out that the group really had all split up. Undead Ed had left about a minute earlier than everyone else to grab a table in the bar, with Harley and Patrick following soon after. James had gone to unlock his bike and then head straight home. Kat and Tash had taken some of the winks equipment across to Stew’s room while Stew was speaking to the porters, and Rupert and Molly went to the bathroom. Apparently a sudden gust of wind had blown Zach’s hat off his head and he had run after it, chasing it to the other side of Old Court before returning to the Kathleen Lyttleton Room. He confirmed that he had found everyone exactly where they said they had been.

I thought for a moment. One of these people had delivered dead Ed a blow to the head that bled red, and then fled. Perhaps Stew had doubled back, or undead Ed had circled back round from the bar. James’ story in particular raised my suspicions: the idea of him not going straight to the bar seemed preposterous. And then of course there was the mystery of the tripleton. Whoever had killed dead Ed must have squopped the tripleton at the same time, which proved Kat innocent straight away. But was there any reason to rule out the possibility of two murderers? Kat and Tash would make the perfect co-conspirators, as would Molly and Rupert or Patrick and Harley (but not quite as perfect as Kat and Tash), so maybe Tash did the squopping while Kat did the murdering.

“Hang on.” James interrupted my detectively musings. “Sophie, how do we know it wasn’t you? Zach literally found you next to the body and you and Charlotte were the only other people left up here.” He paused. “Actually, where is Charlotte?”

“Oh I killed her in the kitchen while one of you was killing dead Ed. She was bringing down my Cuppers team.” A perfect alibi.

Tash looked sympathetic, glancing at Kat. “Fair enough, I totally understand that.” Everyone else shrugged and nodded at each other. There was an awkward pause.



“But how did Zach know where to find us all? And how did he manage to run around Selwyn so quickly? It seems oddly convenient and not very well explained.”

“Oh shut up Kat. It’s happened now and we’re all conveniently here in this room together so we might as well not question it at all and just get on with trying to solve this murder.” I said, frustrated. Another awkward silence fell upon the group.

“Well, bar then?” said Stew. Sounds of approval came from all sides.

“The finalists still need to drink the whisky!” exclaimed Patrick. He looked down at dead Ed. “Except for the dead ones of course. I even brought a bottle of whisky especially! I’ll go and wash up the trophy.”

After gesturing to a half-empty bottle of That Boutique-y Whisky Company whisky on the windowsill, Patrick picked up the blood-spattered trophy and took it into the kitchen. I heard him stepping over Charlotte’s body as he made his way to the sink. He promptly returned, beaming. “Shall we?”

The bar was packed. It was a shame that undead Ed had had to leave the table he’d grabbed in order to come back to the Kathleen Lyttleton Room, as we were all now crowded round a table that was only really big enough for three. After a few excellent rounds of squop-bristol, and several more not-so-excellent ones, someone got some straws so the finalists could down the little shot of whisky. Patrick filled the trophy with his whisky, and Tash, Zach, and undead Ed crowded round. All inserted their straws and the whisky was promptly drunk, accompanied by laughter and merriment all around. Another round of squop-bristol began.

Undead Ed suddenly stood up and started coughing violently. He looked Patrick straight in the eye. “Y-y-you,” was all he managed to choke out, before he fell forwards onto the table.

“I always said that dwinking fwom a stwaw was whisky business!” cried Rupert.

Undead Ed was dead. Bugger. How could we distinguish between the Eds now?

To be continued...

Fantastic Squidgers, and Where to Find Them

Harley Jones

Novices who start out in 'winks are often bemused by the array of squidgers that more experienced players carry about with them as a matter of course. This is not usually helped when they are given a thick blank squidger, perhaps with moulding burrs on it, and left to get on with it. The making of squidgers can be quite an arcane art, and the article that I discovered as a beginner on how best to file them down is very tricky to find now for some reason (it was on the old NATwA site) so beginners are often at a loss, both with respect to what they need from a set of squidgers and as to how to make or obtain them. This article attempts to address these issues.

1. Types of squidger.

Squidgers are often categorised according to what job they are designed to do. Players often refer to their 'bristolling squidger' and similar. This is necessarily an imperfect classification. Squidgers vary by three main factors: diameter; thickness; and flexibility. There is occasionally a fourth factor, the smoothness of edge; however, the great majority of squidgers need to have a smooth contact with the winks and so this is rarely relevant.

a. General purpose squidger.

Most players have one of these: I use my large green; Alan has his yellow; Patrick Barrie his marbled pink; Stew, a large clear one. They tend to be of a mid to large diameter, be fairly robust, and are of a medium thickness. They are used for all manner of shots: bringing in, squopping, potting. Other squidgers are used when this one won't do. So it is important to obtain a good squidger of this type.

b. Bristolling squidgers.

These seem to vary from tiny to medium in size. There are always funny shots where a different touch is required, but for a standard Bristol I use

either my smallish black squidger – which was snapped off the bottom of a cocktail stirrer and is unfiled – or my small thin squidger. Patrick sometimes uses a larger squidger for these than I would be comfortable with. I feel that the curvature of a smaller squidger is better-suited to Bristol shots; possibly either works well but it affects the way you play the shot.

c. Gooding squidgers.

The Good shot can be more important as a threat than as a shot to actually play. Nevertheless it does require a particular squidger to be effective. I have a small chunky button for this and other shots where force is required in combination with precision. Ed has a new gooding squidger which has a thick edge and is slightly larger – you want something no larger than a £2 coin really so that the wink slides out from underneath it properly.

d. Small squidgers.

For use near the pot and in fiddly pile play. Nobody should be without a small. They are often thin – I often find that to click off or chip out of a pile a thin footprint is necessary to avoid other bits of the pile. These should be as small as possible, obviously.

e. Tapping-out squidgers.

These are not really necessary, but lots of players have them. This is for the shot where you tap down on a pile to release a wink at the bottom that is only tenuously squopped. Some players have a cork squidger for this – the surface friction avoids accidental movement of the top wink; Geoff has an old gold half-sovereign for these. I have a very thick thing for these. Actually, you can effectively play these shots with a normal squidger, but it adds to the general effect to have a separate one.

f. Medium-sized squidgers.

Small squidgers are tricky to handle, so if you have a large general-purpose squidger you may also want a medium. I use mine for close-range squops and shots in zones where there is high risk of squidger damage.

g. Phone cards.

Now that phone cards themselves are a collectors item, a substitute material has to be used. These are large, very springy, very thin squidgers.

h. Other squidgers.

It is crucial to have an array of other discs of plastic, to daunt the opposition with. One who has few squidgers looks less experienced, even if they aren't; if you turn up, especially as a relative novice, with about ten different squidgers, the message to the opposition is that you can do different types of shot and therefore have the equipment to deal with that. Even if you can't do a Good shot, having a Gooding squidger may fool them into thinking that you can. I keep about seven of these of various sizes and thicknesses.

2. Sources of Squidgers

Though squidger shops are not yet lining the high streets of England, there are some bespoke services that are gaining ground over the old (and still reliable) ETwA stock.

a. Zach's engraved, machined squidgers

No longer the scratchy prototypes that were given out at the CUTwC dinner the other year; Zach has refined his technique and can now produce very high-quality squidgers in a range of colours and with any design etched on one side. However, it's a right pain and takes forever, so he may not want to become an official supplier just yet. If you are a Cambridge beginner and play in Cuppers you are likely to receive one of these as a reward for taking part.

b. 3D-printed squidgers

These are much more plausible as you can set them printing and go away. They still need filing down at the end; but since you can print to any diameter and thickness there is great scope here I think for custom-making to a required design. Ed is experimenting with this and has had success so far, particularly with his Gooding squidger.

c. Dragon squidgers

These are branded and supplied by Dave Lockwood, of the US. Some top players do use these, after filing the edges, and report that they are very good (though perhaps not quite fulfilling the 'never-miss' slogan). They are of a medium-large size and thickness and would make a good general-use squidger.

d. ETwA-supplied squidgers

The small ones that come with a set of winks are not brilliant and react poorly to being filed down. The larger ones that are available can be very good to bring in with as blanks, or as general-purpose ones when filed down; one of the finest squidgers I ever saw was made from such.

e. Phone-card substitutes

I use an old EHIC, cut into a circle, with the shiny coating stripped off and the edges smoothed by hand. It works well enough. I expect any similar entity to work equally well (Railcards, university cards, credit cards...) but be careful of any chips inside RFID-enabled plastic cards.

f. Waitrose tokens

Tesco do them as well but the Waitrose ones are much superior. When blank they are decent for bristolling with; I filed one down and have a very good small squidger as a result.

g. Other

Buttons can make very good squidgers with a minimum of effort. They do not generally have manufacturing burrs round the edge so do not need filing down to be effective.

Poker chips can also be very effective. Patrick's general-purpose squidger is a sanded-down poker chip, and I have in the past used one as a good bringing-in squidger – the heavier the better with these, I have found.

As to filing squidgers down at home: the method, as I do it, is as follows:

Equipment:

Blu-tack

Towel

Three increasing grades of sandpaper

Water

Paper towels

Toothpaste

Take the squidger and affix blu-tack to one face of it. This is to use as a handle. Fold the towel over – how thick the towel is will affect the curvature of the face of the squidger; a greater thickness will be squishier and therefore make your squidger more convex. On top of the towel goes the wet and dry or sandpaper – coarsest grade first. Then use the blu-tack handle to swirl the squidger round and sand it down. I damp the surface of this as I found the plastic dust that results otherwise to be quite nasty; I'd suggest a face mask if you don't want to use water. Do both sides (the paper towels are to wipe off the water when swapping sides) until it's almost the thickness you want; then change to the next grade and repeat; then to the finest grade. The finest grade should be very fine; you need a smooth edge.

Finally, take some toothpaste and polish the squidger with it. Toothpaste is mildly abrasive – I would go for the cheaper brands (but then I do anyway) and so should polish the squidger nicely.

It takes a bit of experience to know how far to go with this, so I would try it out on a couple of the poorer sorts of blank before trying one that I wanted to keep and use.

Lest this article be thought to in some way count towards the essay competition, I shan't reveal what my favourite squidger is; but I will reveal that it isn't one that I own, nor one that is owned by any rated player [information correct at time of writing].

Many, many thanks to Andrew Garrard for the majority of the images included in this edition. Exceptions include the picture of Patrick Driscoll's son which was submitted along with Alan's write up, the picture of Geoff Thorpe on page 30 which was taken by Toby Bruce, and the exquisite works of art that adorn pages 32 and 34 which were masterfully created by Yours Truly.

