

Winking World 105



70 Years of CUTwC

January 2025

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Preliminaries

Editorial

Katherine Drew

Welcome to *Winking World* 105, which celebrates the 70th anniversary of the Cambridge University Tiddlywinks Club (CUTwC). Naturally this means that there is very little mention of CUTwC in what follows.

You will notice (but hopefully not care) that I have largely done away with individual results tables. This is because they are tedious. For anyone who mourns this loss then I am delighted to inform you of the digital companion to *Winking World*: www.cutwc.org. A far more notable omission from this issue is, regrettably, the third instalment of *Winking World*'s most popular CUTwC-themed murder mystery, though rest assured that this will (eventually) see the light of day.

Having written at length about what is *not* in this issue, I shall now turn to what *is* in it. You can do this too by turning back to the contents page.

Thanks, as always, to everyone who has contributed. I probably could have done it without you, but it would have taken much longer and would be much worse. Enjoy!

Submissions for *Winking World 106*

Winking World 106 will be published when you, dear readers, have sent me enough material for a complete issue. To that end, the deadline can be whenever you want it to be, although for those of you who need an external deadline to motivate themselves then might I suggest 1st October 2025?

Submissions of all kinds are welcome, particularly but not limited to:

- Write-ups of tournaments that are still unreported
- Expostulations of high strategic notions
- Learned considerations of tournament formats
- Responses to any of the previously announced Essay Competitions (see previous issues for details)
- Articles regarding Latin Tiddlywinks Terminology that have been promised to the editor for over two years
- Fan fiction based on the excellent murder mystery ‘Sophie and the Amazing Tripleton: A CUTwC Murder Mystery, by Sophie Brawn’
- Letters to Auntie Gertie (the *Winking World* agony aunt, for anyone not in the know)
- Applications to be the new Auntie Gertie

Please send any submissions to winkingworld@gmail.com. Submissions should include the title of the article, the name of the author, and (for tournament write ups) the date and location of the tournament.

Get writing!

Recent Results - Rated Tournaments

Date	Venue	Tournament	Winner
12 August 2023	The Old Dispensary, Ely	National Teams of Four	Team Megan (Katherine Drew, Natasha Holmes, Harley Jones, Megan Vaughan)
10 September 2023	The Haverstock Tavern, sort of Camden way	London Open	Ben Fairbairn and Tim Hunt
October 14 2023	The USA	NATwA Pairs	Dave Lockwood and Jon Lockwood
28-29 October 2023	Downing College, Cambridge	National Pairs	Patrick Driscoll and Andy Purvis
29 October 2023	Downing College, Cambridge	National Pairs (Plate)	Molly Birch and Katherine Drew
18 November 2023	Downing College, Cambridge	National Handicapped Individual Pairs	Alexei Newton
December 2 2023	The USA	NATwA Singles	Dave Lockwood
20-21 January 2024	Downing College, Cambridge	Cambridge Open	Alan Dean
17 February 2024	Newnham College, Cambridge	Cambridge vs Oxford Varsity	Tie
April 20 2024	Probably Cornell	Smith vs Cornell	Cornell
20-21 April 2024	Selwyn College, Cambridge	National Singles	Patrick Barrie
20 April 2024	Selwyn College, Cambridge	Geoff Thorpe Novices' Trophy	Jack Murphy
21 April 2024	Selwyn College, Cambridge	National Singles (Plate)	Jack Murphy
17 August 2024	The Lighthouse, Ely	National Teams of Four	Team Oxford Boys (Patrick Driscoll, Tim Hunt, Nick Inglis)
8 September 2024	The Old White Bear, Hampstead	London Open	Nick Inglis and Bertie Politi
26-27 October 2024	Downing College, Cambridge	National Pairs	Jon Mapley and Matthew Rose
27 October 2024	Downing College, Cambridge	National Pairs (Plate)	Katherine Drew and Natasha Holmes
November 9 2024	The USA	NATwA Pairs	Dave Lockwood and Jeff Tokman
16 November 2024	St Hilda's College, Oxford	Cambridge vs Oxford Silver Wink Match	Cambridge
17 November 2024	St Hilda's College, Oxford	Oxford Open	Harley Jones (overall) Alison Craig-Greene (beginners)
December 7 2024	The USA	NATwA Singles	Prabhas Pokharel

Recent Results - Challenge Matches and Invitationals

Date	Location	Tournament	Winner
13 August 2022	Ely	Golden Squidger (Driscoll & Jones vs Holmes & Hunt)	Patrick Driscoll and Harley Jones
13 August 2023	Jones/Drew residence, Ely	Golden Squidger (Driscoll & Jones vs Fairbairn & Winebar)	Patrick Driscoll and Harley Jones
30 September - 1 October 2023	124 High Street, Hurstpierpoint	Brighton Invitational	Harley Jones
13 October 2023	Driscoll residence, Girton	Jubilee Trophy (Driscoll vs Drew)	Patrick Driscoll
27 October 2023	Patrick Barrie's Office, Emmanuel College, Cambridge	World Pairs 48 (Mapley and Rose vs Driscoll and Purvis)	Jon Mapley and Matthew Rose
4-5 January 2024	The Old Down Inn, Emborough	Somerset Invitational	Patrick Driscoll
10-11 February 2024	Presumably Driscoll residence, Girton	Jubilee Trophy (Driscoll vs Hunt)	Patrick Driscoll
6 April 2024	Patrick Barrie's Office, Emmanuel College, Cambridge	World Singles 75 (Rose vs Barrie)	Matthew Rose
3 May 2024	Driscoll residence, Girton	Jubilee Trophy (Driscoll vs Murphy)	Patrick Driscoll
19 June 2024	Driscoll residence, Girton	Jubilee Trophy (Driscoll vs Jones)	Patrick Driscoll
August 3 2024	Deane residence, CO	Colorado Invitational	Ben Deane
31 August 2024	Driscoll residence, Girton	Golden Squidger (Driscoll and Jones vs Brown and Murphy)	Patrick Driscoll and Harley Jones
19 October 2024	Holmes residence, Hurstpierpoint	Brighton Invitational	Harley Jones
25 October 2024	Downing College, Cambridge	World Singles 76 (Rose vs Lockwood)	Matthew Rose
3 November 2024	Barber Rooms, All Saints' Church, Faringdon	World Pairs 49 (Mapley and Rose vs Lockwood and Lockwood)	Jon Mapley and Matthew Rose
30 November 2024	Driscoll residence, Girton	Jubilee Trophy (Driscoll vs Jones)	Patrick Driscoll
3-4 January 2025	The Old Down Inn, Emborough	Somerset Invitational	Patrick Driscoll

Tournament Write Ups

Rated Tournaments

London Open

The Haverstock Tavern, 10th September 2023

Marc Mills

You may be surprised to learn that I did not win this tournament. I do however provide this write-up despite coming last, proof that tiddlywinks is not immune from rampant corruption and oppression of the losers by the winners.

The London Open 2023 of all tournaments was one of endurance in extreme conditions. Journeying through the stench and smog of the vast metropolis on the tenuous narrow artery known as the Northern Line, our brave heroes found their way to the one refuge in the barren land: The Haverstock Tavern. As we forced our way in, the perspiration running in rivers down our winking fingers, we seemed on the verge of salvation. I'm sure for some, the prospect of no beer for two hours was too much (apparently this wasn't the reason for the absence of Andrew Garrard). Nevertheless we made a solid band of 8 pairs (myself playing singles until the arrival of Spike), nicely intermingled amongst the non-winking pub tables.

Arriving late just as the first round was ending, I was thrust into the second round and forced to engage the powerful pair of Timmy and Ben with scarcely a quarter-gill of Diet Coke within me. The game that proceeded was actually quite thrilling if

anyone had cared to watch it. No-one did because they were also playing which is how tournaments are meant to work.

Some rather more fortunate bring-ins for myself than my adversaries enabled me to prevent an excess of knavish tricks on their part and by the middle game I was looking at the bizarrely uncomfortable possibility of victory. Ben was without winks to play and Timmy only with only one or two fairly tenuous squops on smaller piles.

This however, was all he needed and the tide soon turned, accelerated by my missing some crucial but fairly easy pots in rounds. No longer burdened by the prospect of straining the ranting system with an upset, I settled down for a comfortable 6:1 to Hunt and Fairbairn.

With barely time to lick my wounds, Karley and Hat kindly offered to catch up my missing round by letting me lose to them at lunchtime. By now, the sun was getting towards its zenith and it was so hot I can't remember what happened. It was a more deserved 6:1 than the previous game, as I recall.

Outside of catching up on missed games, lunchtime saw us spread out to forage the local area. In a nearby chip shop I was surprised by something called a Tuna Surprise. Other spoils included pizza and the pub's own bar food which appeared to be more substantial than advertised. Attempting to eat outside was not as good an idea as it seemed. Other winkers had better ideas; including Timmy, Bertie and others playing dominoes underneath the air conditioning unit. Patrick bought us all a commemorative pint (thanks!) which was served at a delicious blood temperature.

You'll be pleased to read that I remember little of the remaining games. In the first or second game after lunch I gained Spike as my partner – a much needed reinforcement. A game against Michael Higham and Tony Ren scraped us 3 points before it was time to face the most terrifying pair of all.

The tournament had seen the debut of two new players (Abraham and Mike) who apparently stumbled across competitive tiddlywinks as a result of an argument with one of

their mothers. They were paired by Nick and Patrick. I think it is likely the London Open 2023 will go down in history as the setting for Patrick Driscoll's greatest defeat. SiBo's partner Abe utterly out-SiBoed him. The game descended into near farce – Patrick warned of the danger of a 7†:0† (not something he'd know about) – but the antics continued. For our part, Spike and I just watched the timer and smiled. Much of the game was spent searching for a missing squidger lent by Patrick to Abe. By the end I think he was regretting more decisions than owning a clear colourless squidger. Still, there was only so much schadenfreude we could allow ourselves. We still lost 5:2 which leaves me uncertain as to what that means about us.

I recall little of the following game but I'd like to blame the 7*:0* to Nick and Mike on a heat exhaustion-winks fatigue/winks fatigue-heat exhaustion combo.

After this round, Spike left me to continue alone. This game was rather better, pulling out a 5:2 victory over Toby and Molly. I had finally got to play on the table next to the open door so perhaps this helped.

This proved to be my last game, with Sunday evening trains to Norfolk being what they are. In my absence, the tie for seventh was considered to be broken in the favour of the pair I declined to play (Bertie and Alexei).

The quality of my winks may have been a rather poor showing, but despite the swelter it was an enjoyable day and held in a pleasant venue. I particularly enjoyed having the tables scattered through the pub, giving the crowds who had come to see South Africa vs Scotland a dual sport spectator experience. I believe a good time was had by most but hopefully next time the winks club mats will not be soaked with sweat.

National Pairs (Plate Tournament)

Downing College, 29th October 2023

Katherine Drew

I thought it would be a shame if there was no written record of the Pairs weekend, not least because I emerged victorious with my shorter and more stylish partner.

The relatively new Pairs plate, now necessary due to the higher number of Pairs entrants, is an excellent and similarly jolly companion to the Singles Plate - perhaps more so as you get to keep your excellent partner throughout the tournament.

It was certainly an exciting day, with the winner being decided by the very final game; we were obviously delighted when it went our way. Details of the games themselves escape me but the excellent trophy served as a sufficient reminder of our glorious victory.





Clearly a very friendly partnership



Someone should tell OUTS that only one person can play at a time

Pictures from the National Handicapped Individual pairs (aka NHIP Pics)

Downing College, 18th November 2023



If this picture is any indication of how interesting this tournament was then it's a good thing that no one bothered to write it up



Fortunately Andrew was on hand to document the attendees

Pictures from the Cambridge Open

Downing College, 20th – 21st January 2024



Ed is unimpressed by the display of finger contortion



A thrilling action shot

Varsity Match

Newnham College, 17th February 2024

William Roberts

Dawn happened suddenly, the darkness of night giving way to a grey and unforgiving sky. It was raining. 7:30am had been and gone when we left the house in our intrepid little car, though many of the other Oxford winkers were committed to the 6:07am train. An early start for the biggest date in the tiddlywinks calendar, and the advent of a new era.

The venue: Newnham College, Cambridge. Apparently home of the second-longest continuous internal corridor in Europe, this was to be the site of a monumental battle. In an inauspicious start, CUTwC had managed to find some tables that were too small, measuring only about 4 ½ but 2 ½ foot. They assured us that there had been properly sized tables before and they couldn't understand where they had disappeared to, but there was some concern on our part that this was an underhanded tactic. There was consternation as to whether to request to use some OUTS mats – in the end it was agreed that given the home-mat advantage is so great it would only be right. The stage was set: two CUTwC mats, two OUTS mats, four tiny tables.

Much consideration had gone into the OUTS pairings, all thanks to our Captain of the First Winking team (as was; he's now Master of the Winks and Warden of the Squidgers – see my other article for an explanation of this whole mess), Dominic Seymour. OUTS has a good core of fairly serious winkers, though most have less than a year's experience. Dominic had arranged us so that we were reasonably balanced in terms of potting and squopping capabilities, but there were pairs we thought would do better. Our aim going in was to get at least half as many points at CUTwC did, so we wanted at least one pair that we thought could win a few games.

Anyway, proceedings started with the traditional anthems in their respective range of keys. Kudos to CUTwC who seemed to have practiced and knew the words. OUTS was rather less well-

versed (geddit?). For anyone not familiar with the format of Varsity, it is a four-pair team, all-play-all tournament. There was some discussion as to whether we should religiously rotate mats as well, and I'm not sure whether we managed this or not. Right... I've jabbered on enough; to the tiddlywinks! The draw was made, the games began.

(For clarity, I accept no responsibility for any of the information contained in this article other than my own games. Obviously, I was too engrossed in play to pay attention to what happened elsewhere. All reports are at least second hand so make of them what you will. Similarly, I don't know why I've had to write this – surely the WW editorial policy makes it someone else's problem?)¹

Round 1

Dominic and Wiktor played Jack and Hannah. Deciding to play safe, the OUTS pair went for the oft-maligned double-squop strategy, pioneered by OUTS in the early days of the game. Unfortunately, this all went tits-up and they lost 3-4, though Dom assures me this only happened in rounds and nearly went the other way.

Anthony and Mike played Ed and Emmy. Ed brought in well, leaving the OUTS pair to chase him around the mat to prevent a pot-out. When finally they managed the essential squop, they realised they had rather shot themselves in the foot and had terrible mat position. Despite losing 4-3, they felt they had done well against well-rated opponents and were confident for the games to come.

Heloise and Marcus first played Bertie and Sam. Despite a lack of practice and failure to attend training because of some insignificant exams, a powerful potting performance from Marcus and some commendable squopping from Heloise (each out of their comfort zone there) ensued. This wasn't enough to win the game, but a respectable 3-4 loss resulted.

¹ From the Editor: How dare you imply that there is some sort of editorial policy that I apply a) consistently and b) fairly. Anyway, I have it on good authority from Patrick Barrie that you agreed to write it up, and famously everyone who agrees to do a write up for Winking World absolutely always definitely does it 100% of the time without fail. For sure.

Jack and I first played Holly and Francis. We had discussed our tactics over many a drink and because we are both quite impatient, had elected to go hard and fast. Not quite Dave Taylor, but Dove Tyler if you will. Jack won the squidge off and made good mat position. On the other hand, I flitted about distractingly getting involved in some small piles around 3-6 inches from the pot. Jack potted four and spent what seemed like an age attempting his fifth. Eventually, he changed tack and went for the other wink, which he potted on his first attempt. In an interesting tactical choice, the CUTwC pair did not try to squop his remaining wink, rather hopping onto a rather nice little pile I controlled. Jack potted from distance to secure the pot-out, and I wrapped up for the 7*-0*. Excitingly, this was the only game of the match to go to a pot-out, a feat unheard of in recent times.

Following the first round, we trooped off to brunch at the Newnham Buttery, with CUTwC quaking in its boots. There were some pretty odd looks from the other patrons but as I'm sure you, dear reader, will agree: tiddlywinkers are used to disapproving glances (though there were some pleasant comments on the recently devised OUTS stash. Interested parties can order this from the Warden). We were impressed by the range of brunch items on offer, from your basic fry-up to some rather millennial smashed avocado and smoked salmon. Tasty, but rather dear (for hall) in this poor student's opinion. Over brunch, OUTS schemed and plotted our next round. CUTwC quivered, aghast that they were behind 16-12. In fairness to them, they had won three of the four games. Not that that mattered.

Round 2

Anthony and Mike played Sam and Bertie. This game was defined by missed shots, leading to somewhat chaotic play that could have gone either way. The finish was close, but OUTS won 4-3. With their first win of the day, Anthony and Mike were growing in confidence, working better as a pair, and starting to strategise well.

Plague stalked Heloise in round two, leading to a game that wasn't quite as planned. She and Marcus played Emmy and Ed.

With Heloise getting squopped-up near the beginning of the game, the CUTwC pair were able to take the game away. Marcus potted some (whether this was necessary or not I don't know). 6-1 CUTwC.

Jack and I played Jack2 and Hannah. Buoyed by our initial success, we went aggressively again. This time however, Jack could not fully avoid the squops and so was prevented the pot-out he so lusts after (containing his enthusiasm is a job I can tell you). The game ended with a handshake in round 4, as each pair couldn't find a shot that would improve their position. The classic 4-3 going our way.

Dominic and Wiktor played Holly and Francis. Having seen how Jack and I made the pot-out on them, Dom and Wiktor went on the offensive. Securing an all-important squop, the CUTwC pair soon laid waste to that particular plan but they were too embroiled in piles to extract themselves and score some necessary tiddlies. 6-1 OUTS.



After committing a number of infractions, three CUTwC players were been placed in the sin bin

Having scored at this point in the match nearly as many points as the entirety of Varsity last year, OUTS were ecstatic. We were surprising ourselves and nervously contemplating what this might mean. I think I saw Sam Dernie crying in the corner at one point.

Round 3

Marcus can't remember what happened here. His email to me says they played Sam and Bertie but this is definitely wrong as they played Jack and Hannah. He also thinks they lost 4-3, which they didn't. Anyway, at some point CUTwC did as they were commanded (vobis ipsis squopate) and couldn't do much. OUTS won $4\frac{1}{2}$ - $3\frac{1}{2}$ is all I know for sure.¹

Jack and I played Emmy and Ed in this round. Knowing Ed's abilities, we elected a more conservative approach, aiming to squop him up and prevent him controlling the game. This we achieved, but at the cost of leaving Emmy too free. She potted a few (three or four I think?), leaving Jack and I in rather a difficult position. Jack valiantly replied, potting an equal number, but with his remaining winks covered, Emmy still led. In the final round, I had the opportunity to squop Emmy's remaining flat wink, stealing a tiddly that would leave her and Jack tied in first. To my shame, I missed. I have since replayed that shot over and over in my mind. Wondering what could have been. Perhaps if we'd been more offensive? Trusted ourselves that little bit more? 5-2 CUTwC

Dominic and Wiktor played Sam and Bertie. Dom describes this game as like two singles matches, played in their own half of the mat. Wiktor managed to squop Sam to leave him with few free winks, with Dom and Bertie fighting over a pile the other side of the pot. With Sam unable to pot enough of his winks to take first, the game ended 5-2 OUTS as Wiktor made some excellent late squops to take third.

Anthony and Mike's third game against Holly and Francis was "wobbly", apparently. Despite this, they reached rounds in a

¹ From the Editor: Given the mathematical impossibility of this score, I put it to you that you don't even know that.

commanding position, with strong potting from Mike securing a 5½-1½ victory.

Now winning 48-36 OUTS was beside itself. We regrouped to discuss the final round. ‘Do not let them pot-out!’ I cried (or maybe Dom did. It might even have been whispered, but someone definitely said it at a volume), rallying our winkers. We only had to score eleven points to win overall and CUTwC would have to try something epic to claw it back – but they could do it with pot-outs. We turned back to the tables.

Round 4

In this final round, Jack and I faced Sam and Bertie. Knowing of Sam’s finely honed potting abilities, we focussed on attempting to squop him at least once before moving on with our basic game plan. This proved far more difficult than anticipated and first we subbed, then we were doubleton’d. I looked over at Dom on the neighbouring table and shook my head. He shook his in return. We were fighting hard over a large pile but with Jack and I almost squopped up it was a losing battle. In rounds I managed to get one of mine free and leap atop the mountain of winks, but by then it was too late to save the game. We lost 6-1. The CUTwC fightback was on.

Dominic and Wiktor playing Emmy and Ed finished next. Knowing this was probably CUTwC’s most accomplished pair, they too aimed to prevent the pot-out. They targeted Ed intensely. Dom unfortunately suffered a couple of subs and was eventually squopped up. Ed was too involved in piles to pot, so Emmy tried valiantly but unsuccessfully. She resorted to squopping Wiktor which led to a 6-1 CUTwC victory in rounds. With the match now in the balance (50-48 OUTS) we turned nervously to the remaining tables. My heart was pounding in my chest, blood pulsing in my ears. I couldn’t dare watch what was happening.

Anthony and Mike also knew CUTwC had to score big. They faced off against Jack and Hannah. The tabs began by blitzing, potting four early winks. Fortunately for OUTS, our pair’s bring-ins were such that they formed an “impenetrable wall of winks around the pot” (direct quote from Anthony there). This



Bertie has clearly been practicing their teacher face

Trumpian barrier was able to squop any enemy winks within easy potting distance. It looked like CUTwC would clinch the game, but a boondock that potted one of the OUTS winks whilst simultaneously sending theirs straight off the mat turned the tables. No-one knows exactly how this happened, given the intention was probably the opposite. The game ended with some robust OUTS potting, though the final pot was missed. Like my failed squop in the previous round, could this have changed the result? It doesn't bear pondering. Game: 4-3 OUTS, match: 54-51. I crawled into a corner and stared into the void.

It seems that it always comes down to the final shot. Again trying to prevent the pot-out, Heloise and Marcus played Holly and Francis. They went for the long game, ignoring the pot and squopping their rivals. A conversation about cheese was started. As time passed, new information began to filter in from the other tables. They had to win, they had to pot-out, they had to at least get second and third. Was this the confusion that led to our downfall? Marcus informed us that they would win (though it transpires that although Heloise was marginally ahead on tiddlies, Marcus was in fourth and almost squopped up). It seemed that the game, the match, was for OUTS.

Patrick shook his head. The final shot of the final game. A pot

from distance for Francis. One that couldn't, shouldn't be made. Francis pressed the squidger down, slowly at first, and then quicker. Sinking into the mat. The wink accelerated off the table, spinning and twisting in the air. Had it been sunny, the light would have reflected and bounced all over the room illuminating as a disco ball the consternation on our faces. The wink began to fall. Never had 9.81 ms^{-2} looked so slow (probably; I couldn't watch). The pot opened to swallow its final catch. CUTwC 5-2 in this game. 56-56 overall. Silence in the room.

I struggled to believe the outcome, reeling with what was and what might have been. The difficulty in trying to be proud of our achievement whilst mourning the absence of an outright victory overcame me, and I felt empty. If I'd made that shot, if we'd been more aggressive in our final games? In this, my last Varsity match, to have come so close and yet fall short was heart wrenching. Like true gentlemen, each seething with resentment, Sam and I shook hands. In the absence of any prior arrangement, we agreed to share the trophy. Then we went to the pub.

Upon reflection, I have resolved to take solace in the outcome. From barely existing at the start of 2023 to drawing the Varsity match, OUTS is very much on its way up. As I take leave of Oxford, I depart in peace, knowing that one day that battered cup will belong to OUTS in its own right. Dear reader, I will ask you to call to your minds the closing text from the 1993 epic Cool Runnings... "the OUTS team returned to Oxford as heroes, and will return to Varsity... as equals".



Relations between the two sides remain the friendliest they have ever been

National Singles

Downing College, 20th – 21st April 2024

Patrick Barrie

The 20 players were divided into two qualifying all-play-all groups named “Avarice” and “Gluttony” with the top four finishers in each group progressing to the final on the second day. The top novice on the first day would be awarded the Geoff Thorpe trophy, with novice defined to be someone with less than three year’s winking experience or a world rating below 1500. A plate competition (handicapped pairs format) would be played on the second day for those who did not qualify and anyone else who wanted to play.

League of Gluttony

In the Gluttony league, the top two seeds Patrick Barrie and Tim Hunt qualified without any particular alarms. The 3rd and 4th seeds Andrew Garrard and Alan Dean also qualified, but needed to win their final games because they were pushed all the way by Paul Moss. It turned out that Jack Murphy finished 5th in the group, ending with 7*, 6, 6* wins. This made him “top novice” and gave him the Geoff Thorpe Trophy. All players won at least one game.



Spoiler alert



Paul points at things

League of Avarice

In the Avarice league, Dave Lockwood topped the group with a string of impressive results. Matthew Rose and Jon Mapley also qualified with a high PPG. Patrick Driscoll had been seeded to qualify but had lost 1-6 to Steve Phillips early in the day, and could only get 2, 2*, 1 in his final three games which were against the other top players. This opened the door to Steve Phillips to overtake Patrick D – but it was believed on the Saturday that Steve fell just short (though see below). All players won at least one game. It was particularly nice to see Dominic Seymour (an Oxford student) doing well in his first national singles tournament.

The Final: League of Hubris

The start of the final was delayed when checking the scores it was noticed that Steve Phillips had in fact qualified rather than Patrick Driscoll. Players have a responsibility to check their own scores have been entered correctly into the scoresheet (whether paper or computer) and the addition of scores (if the master scoresheet is on paper). Thankfully, Steve was contacted and he was able to play in the final catching up on a missed first game over lunch.



Paul continues to point at things

The final was notable for close games, indeed 11 out of 28 games ended up as 4-3 scorelines, and there were only seven 6-1 scorelines.

In the first tournament round, I got a 4-3 win from a scrappy game against Alan Dean with neither player getting control (despite opportunities). I was pleased not so much because of the scoreline, but because in round five I successfully played a tricky colour-order shot with green to play a blue onto the free red that would otherwise have won the game for Alan.

In the second tournament round Steve Phillips started his delayed campaign with a 5-2 win against Dave Lockwood, while I got a 4-3 win against Tim Hunt following a potting battle in rounds for first place. Again I had to work hard for it, needing an awkward yellow shot in round five to move a green out of a pile into a pottable position.

In the third tournament round, Jon Mapley got a 6-1 win against Tim Hunt to lead the competition, while Alan Dean and Matthew Rose both got 5*-2* wins (against Dave Lockwood and Andrew Garrard respectively). I got a solid 6-1 win against Steve Phillips in a game in which winks were left supported by the pot for the majority of it (see separate article).

In the fourth tournament round, Matthew Rose took the competition lead with a 6-1 against Steve Phillips, and Alan Dean moved into second place with a 6-1 win against Jon Mapley. I slipped up by “only” getting 3-4 against Andrew Garrard – he potted two greens early on before I squopped him. I was manoeuvring into a strong position when I missed a fairly easy tripleton. That let him pot two more greens. I managed to pot four blues by round 5, but Andrew then played a delightful lunch of a green that was under three other winks to get first place.

In the fifth tournament round, Alan Dean took the competition lead with a 5*-2* against Andrew Garrard. Matthew Rose had looked likely to beat Dave Lockwood and keep the lead, only for Dave to pot two winks from the edge of the mat in the final turn of the game and take a 4-3 win when he thought he had lost. I got a 4-3 win against Jon Mapley in a game in which both players missed key pots in rounds.

In the sixth tournament round, I took the tournament lead for the first time by beating Matthew Rose 6-1. I remember playing well and leading for most of the game – Matthew only had one chance to destroy the main pile from an edge of it, but the pile-break did not go well and I achieved a squop-up in rounds. Jon Mapley moved into second place with a 5-2 win against Dave Lockwood. The previous leader Alan Dean faltered, with Tim Hunt getting a 6-1 win against him.

In the final tournament round, I remember making a succession of medium distance squops against Dave Lockwood to give me two doubletons which were later joined by a tripleton. Sometimes the final game in a tournament with the title at stake can be a nerve-wracking affair – it was nice on this occasion to get a solid squop-up in rounds without any drama. Jon Mapley and Alan Dean won their final games and shared second place.

The Plate

Sometimes the Singles plate has involved few players or few games, but not this year. 16 people played in it and multiple games were played. The plate competition achieved what it is meant to, giving non-qualifiers something proper to do, and giving tournament experience to those who only wanted to play on the Sunday. The final results show that Jack Murphy just managed to hold off Sam Dernie to win the competition.

National Pairs (Plate Tournament)

Downing College, 27th October 2024

Katherine Drew

I thought it would be a shame if there was no written record of the Pairs weekend, not least because I emerged victorious with my shorter and more stylish partner.

The relatively new Pairs plate, now necessary due to the higher number of Pairs entrants, is an excellent and similarly jolly companion to the Singles Plate - perhaps more so as you get to keep your excellent partner throughout the tournament.

It was certainly an exciting day, with the winner being decided by the very final game; we were obviously delighted when it went our way. Details of the games themselves escape me but the excellent trophy served as a sufficient reminder of our glorious victory.



Challenge Matches and Invitationals

Brighton Invitational

Hurstpierpoint, 30th September – 1st October 2023



Winkers displaying that their athletic prowess extends beyond the mat

World Pairs 48: Mapley and Rose vs Driscoll and Purvis

Cambridge, 27th October 2023

Patrick Barrie

In Larry Kahn's absence, Jon Mapley (WP champion) nominated Matthew Rose as a substitute to defend the World Pairs title against Patrick Driscoll & Andy Purvis (ETwA Pairs champions). The approval process for this substitution could have been better communicated with relevant parties.

I took some notes at the match but they are only partly comprehensible. They are also incomplete – I ran out of steam after 5 games – which had taken almost 5 hours.

Game 1 was very slow moving. Players seemed to lack confidence, with several straightforward shots missed. A good squop gave Matthew the edge, but a knock-off by Patrick gave him sufficient winks in rounds to pot for first place. J&M 3 – 4 A&P.

Game 2 was an Inglis game with 3 singletons. Later on, the game developed into a potting race between Jon and Patrick. Matthew played mostly solidly other than one critical sub; Andy played to delay Jon in the hope Patrick would overtake him. After some missed pots, Jon had first place. J&M 4 – 3 A&P (overall 7-7).

Game 3 was another very slow game. After 12 minutes, Matthew still had a pot-out threat but with some winks still distant. He went for a squop, successfully, but it was arguably more in Andy & Patrick's area. Finally there was a period of play with squops being made with confidence. A pile break by Jon worked nicely and meant Andy was now firmly in 4th place. Somewhat surprisingly given this was the case, Patrick did not aggressively pursue a pot-out in rounds. For instance, he squopped a wink of Matthew's that had unluckily bounced out of the pot rather than potting himself. His decision was vindicated though when missed squops by Jon & Matthew in round 4 and 5 meant he

could complete a pot-out in round 5. J&M 1* – 6* A&P (overall 8-13).

In game 4 Matthew got an excellent triplet on early on. The pile grew, but was well guarded. Andy played a superb shot to put his partner's wink on top – but Patrick's pile-break was too gentle. Despite further heroic shots by Andy to attack the pile, Jon and Matthew's was solid and there was a squop-up in rounds. J&M 6 – 1 A&P (overall 14-14).

In game 5 Andy & Patrick started well but gradually lost control. After a pile break, it looked like it would be a 4-way potting race in rounds. Matthew proved to be the most reliable potter and so got first, while Andy's attempts to distract him went wrong. J&M 5 – 2 A&P (overall 19-16).

In game 6 Matthew brought in well again. He was slowed down by a good Andy squop, but only temporarily. Matthew went for and achieved the pot-out, albeit with his partner not in a great position to follow him in. J&M 5* – 2* A&P (overall 24-18).

At this point Patrick & Andy needed a 7-0 in the final game. Matthew brought in his winks really well. Patrick brought his winks in safely but they were some way from the pot. Patrick went for the pot-out. It wasn't clinical – he was squopped and then freed with skirmishes a foot from the pot – but he did get the pot-out. However, Matthew had deliberately kept all his winks at easy potting distance, rather than engaging with the enemy, and so there was never much danger of not getting the point needed for the title. J&M 1* – 6* A&P (overall 25-24).

Overall it was a close match. The standard of play was good from all players in patches. I think Matthew showed more consistency in all aspects of the game and this ultimately may be the reason his pairing was victorious.

Somerset Invitational

The Old Down Inn, 4th – 5th January 2024



"Absolutely no pressure on this next shot partner"



The only drinks consumed over the tournament. Honest.

Jubilee Trophy: Driscoll vs Hunt

Patrick's House, 10th – 11th February 2024

Patrick Driscoll

In what was certainly the highest-rated, probably the highest quality, and possibly the only tiddlywinks match played over the weekend of 10-11 February 2024, Patrick Driscoll retained the Jubilee Trophy, defeating Tim Hunt 21-7, in a glorified shed in Patrick's garden in Girton, Cambridge.

Game 1 was a straightforward pot race with blue reasonably set up and green poorly set up. Blue potted out after Tim refused to chase into his opponent's area, and red followed in well to get 7.

Patrick's exceptional brand of hospitality continued in the squidge-off for Game 2, penhaligoning his large yellow wink. However, the tone of the game changed and Tim had Patrick squopped up with ten minutes to go after Patrick subbed two greens into one pile. Tim declined to waste 30 seconds each turn, which gave time for Patrick finally to play a competent shot, getting a yellow wink right on the top of the pile with all the greens in. Two close attempts to defend with well-placed guards missed and Patrick rescued an extra point with green, to lose 5-2.

Game 3 started with Patrick creating a reasonable potting chance with five flat blues and one awkwardly squopping. He missed the third right by a yellow and then a very awkward boondocking game began. Patrick never got all the blues free but Tim found himself with always at least three winks on the edge of the mat, evening out the balance of winks in the area of competition. From a difficult position, Tim was very unlucky with a sensible shot in Round 5 which pushed a big red flat, allowing red to come from last to second by potting three at the end of Round 5 (Tim missed two important pots during rounds to allow this).

Game 4 was very constipated – made so by Patrick's deliberate tactics, given that he needed three points from two games. It ended up very unbalanced because Tim had to chase all the points. Patrick's potting in rounds was again better and he ended with six.

Throughout, the quality was high; Tim's potting on away turf was not as good.

World Singles 75: Rose vs Barrie

Patrick's Office, 6th April 2024

Harley Jones

More random notes from my notebook.

Game 1. MR yellow/green. Fairly scrappy. Good bringing in from MR - he's got no chance... PB just edged ahead in the squopping and managed to get four in.



There was a brief pause for a round of the coin game

Game 2. MR described a pool trick shot he'd seen recently involving a large swerve - then brought in, rolling round the pot and squopping a nurdled enemy wink on the far side of the pot.

Great bringing in from MR. Surely he'll go for the pot? Yes - missed the fourth. Patrick sits on one for a while but poor position with Y - MR got them out and in.

Game 3. Baseline squops rampant this match - though blue on red next to a yellow is unfortunate. It's going to be one big pile...maybe not. Lucky dock from PB. Actually it kind of is one big pile. PB potted for 4.

Game 4. Blue penhaligon! MR stomping all over this game. PB docks some Ys out but MR has control of a tight area.

The second dock was much better. PB more areal now. Surely B goes for the pot? He does! 2 in. Pot off G misses and brings G with it - G takes. Unlucky. G now counterpotting - bold with six free Rs. G misses the third. R misses the fourth pot but lands on a yellow... Tense game.

At this point there was a break.

Game 5. More baseline squops! Pile play like this etc. Close and tense once more. Exciting burst of potting at the end.

Game 6. Plink plink plink. Fourth G misses. PB might be in trouble. A chance to free? Not really. Now it's pile time. PB in serious trouble in rounds - one wink left...

Y on top of the pile in round 4 - what can he do? Fabulous pile break after minutes of agonising planning. Blue squops green straight off though. Tricky. Both miss pots in round 5.

Game 7. "What would Molly do?"

This was clearly an exciting one with some very close scorelines. I look forward to the inevitable rematch.

Round	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Matthew Rose	2½	6* (8½)	3 (11½)	4 (15½)	4½ (20)	4½ (24½)	3 (27½)
Patrick Barrie	4½	1* (5½)	4 (9½)	3 (12½)	2½ (15)	2½ (17½)	4 (21½)

¹ From the Editor: Despite my general stance against table inclusion, I have opted to do so here so that there is even the slightest chance that someone might have any idea what is going on.



Refreshments were not provided

Colorado Invitational

Thornton, CO, August 3rd 2024

Ben Deane

Andrew Garrard attended SIGGRAPH this year. SIGGRAPH was in Denver this year. Ben Deane lives in Thornton, a suburb of Denver. Therefore a friendly tournament of sorts was arranged, subject to the time available between lunch and Andrew's flight home. And as luck would have it, Ben had recently had cause to get his set, mat, and squidgers out of storage (not having seen action in oh, call it 25 years?) and even procure a right-sized table. Three-foot-wide tables are annoyingly non-standard, it seems. But anyway, the arena of play was quite according to Hoyle; arguably more so than many environments seen at tournaments in our undergrad days...

Game 1: Andrew Blue/Red, Ben Green/Yellow

Red won the squidge-off. Both players were a little patchy - Andrew getting used to the "vintage" mat, and Ben getting used to playing again in general. No bring-ins rolled off, but neither did they form particular areas. An early pot-out threat from Green predictably came to nothing, with just one going in. After that it was a game of singletons and the odd doubleton but without any large piles developing.

Mid-game, it was discovered that although we were playing clockwise, we were playing in reverse colour order! Under the time constraints, there was nothing for it but to continue.

Andrew went for a boondock at one stage:

Andrew: "Is it safe to dock winks off the mat?"

Ben: (closes basement door, stands ready to catch/impede a flying wink)

Andrew: (docks wink about 4 inches)

It must have been the squidger.

Green somehow managed to mostly stay out of trouble, and with a few minutes left continued potting, however inconsistently. A timely rescue by Yellow (a reverse colour-order knockoff) meant that Green potted out in rounds, to be followed first by Red and then by Yellow.

Result: Andrew 1* - 6* Ben

Game 2: Andrew Blue/Red, Ben Green/Yellow

It was decided to preserve reverse colour order as a feature of this "tournament". Despite both players being continually confused, in the spirit of good sport they helped each other to play and think in order.

Blue won the squidge-off by a hair over Green. Andrew must have been feeling too consistent with bring-ins, so sent Red off twice. Notwithstanding, both players were getting into their groove more. Andrew pulled off some nice pile shots and knock-off-and-squops (knock-offs-and-squop?), and Ben was able to get short squops more consistently.

Andrew had squidger trouble, perhaps a hazard of using an "emergency travel squidger" and/or unfamiliar borrowed squidgers. Apparently the travel squidger was a Zach-manufactured one with serrations (I include this information for anyone who can make sense of it and possibly relate), causing Andrew trouble getting a smooth motion over the wink surface, and worry over scratching the winks. A particularly egregious "pot" at one point somehow failed to leave the mat surface at all.

Meanwhile Ben was improving by the tactic of "go for what you can reasonably get, instead of the perhaps tactically more tempting but let's face it, pretty low-probability shot". But although some of the feel for shot-play was returning, after a couple of fallow decades, strategy was all but nonexistent. So when given the choice, it was "play the interesting shot". And predictably this devolved into potting (slowly) in an effort to take first place.

This time though, Andrew was ready, and kept Red ahead of Green, while Blue kept both enemy colours busy. Andrew also regained the ability to pot reliably from 2-4", giving Red first place. (Red's "poor" bring-ins were obviously a strategy

to avoid getting embroiled too much.) Ben could not pot reliably even from short distance, but managed under pressure to redeem both colours somewhat with a nice large wink pot-off, a small yellow from about 10", and a phonecard effort on a close small green (using a genuine retro actually-made-from-a-phonecard squidger).

Result: Andrew 4 - 3 Ben

At one game all, time was insufficient for a third, so we briefly turned to reminiscing and exploring the current Cambridge pub crawls on the CUTwC web page. Is it me, or is the average pub crawl a lot shorter than ~30 years ago? I seem to remember several crawls being 10, 11, or even 12 pubs. Shorter is no bad thing, of course.

In conclusion, anyone who finds themselves in the Denver area and in need of something familiar in these uncertain times can get a game or two of winks if they give me some notice. Your best bet is to email elbenoa@gmail.com. And who knows, it's just possible I might show up at a recognised tournament again one of these days...

World Pairs 49: Mapley and Rose vs Lockwood and Lockwood

All Saints Church, Faringdon, 3rd November 2024

Matthew Rose

A slightly delayed match to allow challenges to be played in order and thanks to everyone for permitting additional time for matches to be held.

This was held in a new venue, with plenty of space and good lighting. It was broadly equidistant and convenient for those based in the UK so worked well. Some parishioners did observe a few games and the match finished around 7pm as another service in the Church was finishing.

This was the first WP to use the alternating mats option, with a UK mat in odd number games and a US mat in even games. Potting had proved tough in many recent tournaments I have seen in 2024 irrespective of the mats, although ironically I personally had more success in potting on the same US mat in the recent WS against Dave.

Game 1

Jon and Matthew brought in much more solidly than Dave and Jonathan, who started off less well. Jonathan started off more solely than the others and his squopping was much weaker than the other three players, and this was ultimately the difference with the outcome a relatively comfortable 6-1 win for Jon and Matthew.

Game 2

This was a total contrast – Jonathan definitely turned up for this and played much better than in Game 1. The US pair were slightly up much of the game and potted solidly in rounds to secure a deserved 5-2 win. (overall 8-6)

Game 3

This was a tight game and another where potting was tough. Dave had won the squidge off and had a number of singleton

squops well positioned for late in rounds if necessary and that ultimately became the key factor – Dave was able to pot off two winks in the final turn to secure a 4-3 win and narrow the gap to a point after 3. (overall 11-10)

Game 4

This probably proved to be the key momentum shift similarly to the recent WS. Jon and Matthew (particularly) brought in poorly and many of Jon's winks were captured or holding back Dave and Jonathan's whilst Matthew's were dispersed. Eventually Matthew managed to regroup them and a few minutes before rounds tried to pot (on the US mat) knowing that potting in rounds was challenging. 5 went in and the sixth landed safe a few times before ultimately going in (using an old phonecard squidger) for a pot out. The subsequent potting was a very extended affair and eventually was a 5*-2* win for Jon and Matthew; however as this could easily have been a similar scoreline in reverse felt pivotal – much like the equivalent game in Dave and Matthew's WS just over a week earlier. (overall 16-12)

Game 5

A classic World match game – Jon and Matthew seeking to secure a solid result to get closer to the line and were always slightly ahead, with Jon having more free winks and these were kept fairly free to aim to ensure first place, which was ultimately achieved with Matthew seeking to keep the other colours busy. Dave and Jonathan managed to secure enough for second and third. (overall 20-15)

Game 6

Jon and Matthew brought in really well on the US mat in this game and were always solidly positioned. Dave's winks were more involved and Jon did momentarily have 5 fairly well positioned winks and one at the edge and jokingly suggested a pot out which might have been a momentum changer had it started well. However this was not the strategy adopted and the game proceeded with a slight edge for Jon and Matthew with a larger pile under their control. Dave did manage some excellent attacks on the main pile which ultimately when it split left Jon with more winks pottable than looked likely before. Jon managed to pot 4 of these early in rounds, putting pressure on

Dave and Jon who realised they needed 2 and a half to keep the match alive. Matthew was struggling to pot initially but got one close (again with the trusty 1980's phonecard) and one long pot in round 3 and positioned another wink in point blank range which ultimately was sufficient for a 6-1 win. (overall 26-16)

Overall

This was similar to the last World Pairs as it was a closer match for much of the first half until a pot out opened up a lead that was defended in a match play situation. Jon's potting became much more solid as the match went on with some clutch ones in games 5 and 6 closing out the match. Dave and Matthew played well generally and Jonathan's form was mercurial. I could tell Dave was understandably proud to be playing a match with his son and that was positive. In winks terms it remained hard to pot especially on the English mat, and the records on both mats were actually the same i.e. 13-8 on each.

Thanks to Jon for arranging and roll on WP50!

Pictures from the Silver Wink

St Hilda's College, 16th November 2024



In accordance with tradition, it began with an arm wrestling match...



...followed by a head-butting competition



And there in the pot lay untold horrors

Pictures from the Oxford Open

St Hilda's College, 17th November 2024



Two fingers are better than one



Not in shot: the angel on Hilary's other shoulder

Jubilee Trophy: Driscoll vs Jones

Patrick's House, 30th November 2024

Harley Jones

I made my way to Girton via several bookshops, the other winker I'd arranged to meet for coffee having got the day mixed up. Fortuitous really that I was not full of cake and coffee, because as soon as I arrived I was whisked away to help fetch dinner from the Histon Frier. Even though two fish between five was thought to be not enough, I was uncomfortably stuffed by the time the children were being packed off to bed - I blame the banana fritters. Then I was plied with beer and we proceeded to the Winking Arena, which had been superheated for my additional discomfort. This low-down, transparently gamesmanlike hospitality was obviously calculated to put me into a soporific state and render me incapable of play. SiBo's nerves were evident as soon as we started playing: he had an extraordinary hand tremor, the like of which I have never before seen the like of which. His palpable display of unease was catching, and this turned out to be by far the most tense winks match I have ever played, and possibly the highest quality.

I won all but the last squidge-off - which was to prove crucial.

Game 1: Good bringing in, tight squopping, hand tremor, Harley can't pot. 4-3

Game 2: There was a quite important, very tenuous squop; after, SiBo brought in better and Harley had to come to him, which didn't go well. 6-1 (overall 10-4)

Game 3: SiBo attempted a pot-out with yellow, missed the 6th with a phone-card and much trembling. Superb squopping was not enough to prevent my classical defence and worming a round 4 pot-out. 1*-6* (overall 11-10)

Game 4: Harley set up a brilliant area, then left it; Patrick gained total control of the game but played poorly in rounds, especially with blue - missing a pot and squopping red unluckily left me a road in to steal the game, though I missed a pot in round 5 for 6 points, as was typical. 3-4 (overall 14-14)

Game 5: Turn 7 pot-out by yellow.

After this we needed a considerable period to wind down, well-provided by the remainder of the snooker semi-final and some very lovely wine. We discussed bringing in at some length, having done so very well in general throughout the evening. Phoebe (cat) was clearly also taken by the relaxing mood, and dignified my lap - or perhaps I have visited so frequently she is beginning to know me.

Somerset Invitational

The Old Down Inn, 3rd – 4th January 2024

Patrick Driscoll

Very shortly after Christmas, seven eager winks turistas did the Turkey trot to Radstock – though alternative venues had been contemplated, continuity was preferred lest in future it should prove impossible to keep it Old Down.

Opening the winks on Saturday morning, some were evidently on top form and ready to spew forth glory, others were wretched.

My morning was difficult but I purged myself of whatever was holding me back and put the skitters under my opponents in the afternoon, while Harley was among several who got the runs of pots going after lunch; I nosed ahead by the end of the day after potting out and following through for 7*-0* against Nick and Sarah.

In the first game of the second day, Tim and Harley were putting the skids under me until a huge Bristol blew chunks out of their big pile and put them in reverse; when Tim failed to cope, I squeezed out a couple of each colour in Round 5 for a 6-1 win, giving me a tournament lead I never let go.

Taking in Sunday lunch under the impression there would be more winks to come, I was careful how I hurled the pigs, but Nick threw up too many strong combinations for me; nothing I could produce in this grittily contested session could prevent my losing it.

“Poor Sick Boy,” said Nick.

Unfortunately, I had barely heaved myself up from the lunch table than I almost gagged with surprise to find that the winks tournament was being chucked up for want of contestants ready to play at the restart time and that I was declared the winner (if any of the beaten contenders – or Montezuma – would like their revenge, I look forward to a repetition in 2026).

Knowing then what we know now of what that wintry, numb afternoon contained, several of us would have been revisiting our lunch choices (whitebait in my case, garlic mushrooms for Sarah), but the p.m. gave Stew, Nick, Timmy and me the chance to regurgitate some old card game favourites and get in some good yakking about old times.

Eventually, time came for flux; great leave-taking was made all round; we all belched forth into the outside world; at last I drove the porcelain bus (well, Toyota Prius) home with Stew as my passenger – it was a long journey, but I hadn’t prevented his getting back to Cambridge – “Nor’ve I rusticated you!” he said.



I believe this picture captures the essence of what was clearly a peaceful and uneventful tournament. Very mindful. Very demure.

Occasional Articles

All abOUTS

William Roberts

Now, having sat my finals but still notionally with a degree to do, I have found time to regale you with the wonderous story of OUTS; its noble history and other news. I don't know whether you want this, but whatever.

As you will all know, OUTS was established sometime in the late 800's AD by Alfred the Great. Our history from then up until about 2020 is reasonably documented, and where it isn't nothing happened anyway. Anyway. In 2020 OUTS was a small group of friends who spent the majority of their time drinking tea and eating blue food (blue the colour, not anything untoward). The Society had had a tumultuous few years but was resurrected under the guidance of the then Master, Madeleine Moore. We practiced occasionally and knew only of the pot-style shot. This turned out to be a disadvantage when it came to Varsity as CUTwC had an uncanny ability to actually make shots and not just talk about them. The author is pleased to say that during that Varsity he was responsible for the only game OUTS won (though we did lose spectacularly 29½-82½).

During the following year, OUTS muddled on in a limited fashion, not least because many of our members had the audacity to graduate. The Master, Gideon Lewis, tried to rope in many of his friends to play, but was almost universally met with jeers of "what even is tiddlywinks?". The greatest enemy to the Sport during this time was, of course, coronavirus. Without being able to demonstrate the deftness and tactical nature of play to prospective members, the Society dwindled.

In Michaelmas 2021, there was but one winker left.

Unfortunately for OUTS, their solitary winker was not very good at convincing people to play with him. A medical student, his course colleagues were fond of explaining that "we're supposed to be learning how to save lives" and not "getting those silly bits of plastic into that small cup". Despite invoking the words of the late great Rev. E. A. Wells ("The progress of Civilisation will depend in no small measure upon the spread of this most noble sport"), no-one would listen to him. It seemed that OUTS was due to fade into oblivion.

However, in Hilary 2023 (the blasphemous may call this Lent), under challenge from CUTwC, some people actually turned up to a meeting and were introduced to the most noble of Sports. Some of them turned out to enjoy it, and they weren't bad either. OUTS was back with a vengeance. Meeting weekly and training hard, we acquitted ourselves well at the Varsity match, winning three times as many games (i.e. three) as we had last year. Given that many of our players had only been involved for a matter of weeks, we all thought this was acceptable.

This academic year, we have achieved much stuff. Recruiting a significant number of new members, we were able to run a hugely successful novice tournament based on truncated individual pairs (each play every other player at least once). This term we have held the inaugural Random Junk™ tournament – a variation of obstacle winks (I thought this was good fun and added yet another tactical dimension to the game, Jack hated every second of it and was outraged by the end. I won) and have been graced by the presence of a NARG or two, in the forms of Purvis and Mapley. Of course, there was also the small matter of Varsity 2024 (see my other extremely long report for that). I have also sadly had to hand over the reins of Master to my worthy successor, Dominic. This has left me somewhat purposeless, though I will ensure proper procedure is followed involving the watermelon (see WW104, supp 1).

You will notice, dear reader, the multitude of odd names for people and anything else to do with OUTS. This, of course, is not unusual within the winking world. They may however need some explanation, as will some other things.

Technically, OUTS is Oxford's *Unofficial* Tiddlywinks Society, and

the University continues its tirade against this most noble sport. I believe there may be some real technical reason why they don't want us, but that's by the by. The Society is traditionally headed by a Master. Until 2021, this was an elected position akin to a president. Sometime between 2021 and 2023 the Master changed the rules such that the position is now appointed and not elected. Some say that this is because the Master was a power-crazed megalomaniac, but the author couldn't possibly comment. Following a demise of the Master, the Member of the Society first in line of succession is appointed Master. All Members are admitted to the line of succession in the order in which they made their oath. Members may challenge other Members in the line of succession, such that they can move up (it is also technically possible to challenge the Master directly, but doing this would be considered very bad form). A challenge requires the challenger to put two differently coloured winks of a partnership into the drink of the Member they are challenging. They then play a five-game match, with the winner decided by points (a challenge to the Master requires a seven-game match). It is also possible to move up in the line of succession by two other means: being awarded the Master's Cup, or by winning St Michael's Cup (the Michaelmas Novice Tournament).

Under the Master sits the Committee. Disappointingly democratic, it is elected annually by the Members of the Society. Led by the Warden of the Squidgers, it further consists of the Registrar, Bursar, and some other less important people. Under the Committee are the oppressed masses. Separate to all of this, whispering sweet nothings into the corridors of power, is the Distinguished Institute for Masters and Wardens Immemorial of the Tiddlywinks Society. They were essentially created to ensure there was a supply of beer and because it was an amusing name.

This coming year, OUTS will retain most of its winkers by virtue of them generally being itty-bitty first and second years. I did notice that some of the CUTwCers looked a bit long in the tooth so hopefully OUTS will go into the next Varsity with the advantage of experience. To that end, if any NARGs want to pay a visit to the original University, they would be greatly welcomed.

Please don't hesitate to contact someone else about anything raised in this ramble.

Swap-Pistol: Damp Moves in an Old Drinking Game

Harley Jones

Finding ourselves in a pool with no pool-based gaming equipment to hand, it was clear that our experience in CUTwC was going to come in handy. A few rounds of Angle-Dangle-Splash ('Angle-dangle, splashalash, and away we go...') were not sufficiently more entertaining than their dry equivalent, so we moved on to Squop-Bristol, and following a series of traditionally poor squops from a novice we were inspired to add a move, namely Swap. This makes advantage of two features of being in a pool: you can move; and it is slightly harder to hear precisely what anyone is saying. After a few rounds all had got the hang of this move, and so its inevitable partner was devised to be indistinguishable audially from Bristol: the Pistol. This move took longer to get the hang of (some would say that we didn't) but we did deduce its effects with respect to fish.

The movement element is added to by the gravitation of players towards that part of the pool edge where they have left their drink.

Swap

This move is made by bringing the hands together vertically in front of you, as if to begin swimming away, pointing at the person you are Swapping, and pronouncing the word 'swap'.

Its effect is that you swap positions with the player that you are Swapping. 'It' is sent to them, and they ought to respond before beginning to move so as not to slow the game down; however, that move is counted as having originated from the Swapped player's new position.

As a Swap does not send 'it' to a new position, it is deemed to be a transparent move for the purposes of four in a row. (Four Swaps in a row have not been seen in the wild, but this author feels that they should count.) 'Penhaligon - Penhaligon - Swap - Penhaligon - panic' is therefore a frequently seen sequence.

Pistol

This move is made by forming a pistol shape with the hands and 'shooting' any player. It has the effect of killing the player who is shot, and undoing the previous move.

If the player shot is Club Smith, there is no longer a Club Smith.

If the player shot is the Finesmaster, the shooter drinks a fine and becomes the new Finesmaster.

If the player shot is the player that 'it' returns to, the round cannot continue, and the shooter has therefore incurred a fine.

In any case, the player that has been Pistolled should theatrically act out their death and swim to a new position, where they respawn. Particularly if playing with fish, but recommended in any case, the Finesmaster proclaims 'A new player has entered the game!' and the new player names themselves. (Sharing a swimming pool with The Late Geoff Thorpe was not what I anticipated doing the day after my wedding.)

Note that undoing the previous move is of course different from merely sending 'it' back to the previous player. It removes one from the four-in-a-row count, undoes a penhaligon or herring, and, when used as the second move, undoes the start of the game - 'Squop-Pistol' becoming the trivial game.

Pistol and Swap interact in exciting ways. Readers are invited to experiment.

It's clear that fish are appropriate in pool play and will be strongly recommended in the next session. On the other hand, Scotland is too cold for swimming outdoors, so Scottish moves are not appropriate.

Evolution of the Rule on Winks Supported by the Pot

Patrick Barrie

My game against Steve Phillips in the National Singles final contained a situation that used to be called a “Cullingham squop”. Steve played a flip on a large pile that contained most of his winks. The result was two winks that ended supported by the pot while squopping a third. In accordance with the rules, those winks were left in their position – and they remained there for the rest of the game (10 minutes plus 5 rounds). I was playing yellow and I could not reliably predict the outcome of any shot I played on this pile; thankfully, my other winks gained control and I said “pass” on 6 consecutive yellow turns (albeit I would have played the pile if I had needed yellow winks). So how have the rules evolved on what to do in this particular situation?



Photo: Steve Phillips

What to do when a wink ends up supported by the pot has been described since the fairly early days of modern tiddlywinks. The blue rules booklet from the 1960s states:

If a wink comes to rest leaning against the pot it is moved down to lie flat, just touching the pot, even if this results in it squopping another wink.

which seems straightforward in principle. In practice, you may need an umpire to move the wink down, particularly if it is not immediately clear whether the movement down should squop another wink or not.

At some point, the rule was reworded because “leaning against the pot” was not deemed sufficiently clear, and because it was not obvious what to do if the supported wink is already squopped by another one. The yellow rules booklet published in 1981 states:

If a wink comes to rest supported by the pot in a position in which part of the wink so supported is higher than the rest of the wink then it must be moved manually out from the pot but still touching the pot so that it is no longer supported by the pot. The wink is moved out such that it remains squopped by any wink already squopping it but squops any other wink in its path. The manual movement of a wink under this rule does not constitute a shot.

which is a lot more verbose. In particular, I think the first sentence is gloriously inelegant while being grammatically correct. Those who worked on the rules at that time had an aversion to commas.

This rule worked in almost every situation encountered in practice, but it could be unworkable in some situations when more than one wink ended up supported by the pot. In the late 1980s these circumstances became known as “Cullingham squops” because they seemed to happen in games involving the CUTwC player of that name. The problem is how you move down two winks at the same time – you can get different results depending on which wink you move first, or if you move them at the same time then you may require both winks to squop each other (which is clearly physically impossible).

In 1990, the rules were amended to deal with the Cullingham squopp situation: if supported winks are squopped or squopping then they are left as they lie. The wording used was:

If a wink comes to rest in a position where it is unsquopped but supported by the pot so that part of the wink is higher than the rest, it is moved to lie touching the pot but no longer supported by it. It squops any wink within the range of its required movement. If any wink comes to rest in a position where it is both supported by the pot and squopped, it is left as it lies. If it is subsequently freed but remains supported by the pot, it is moved as above. To move a wink under this rule does not constitute a shot.

One minor issue with that rule was that it could be considered to apply to potted winks. This was clarified in the 2004 version of the rules – which changed the structure and wording of almost every rule to give a more coherent structure and simpler explanations of most common situations. The 2004 wording (still valid today) is:

During the course of a game, an unpotted wink may come to rest in a position where it is supported at an angle by the pot. If the wink is neither squopping nor squopped, then it should be manually moved the shortest distance necessary to lie touching the pot but no longer supported by it. It squops any wink within the range of its required movement. If the supported wink is either squopping or squopped, then it is left in its position. If it subsequently becomes neither squopping nor squopped but remains supported by the pot, then it is manually moved as described above.

I have heard recently the word “tombstone” used to describe the situation where wink(s) end up at an angle supported by the pot, but I think that this terminology is incorrect. A tombstone is the rare situation where a wink ends up in a near vertical position all on its own without involvement of pot – it may be supported by fluff or other flaws in the surface. I remember one such tombstone occurring in the first ever Scottish Pairs in 1993 – indeed I was asked to adjudicate on what was the upper surface of the wink. The anthem “ScotTwA the Brave” written by Bruce Turnbull soon after that tournament includes the words “Come, now out tombstone’s fallen...” in memory of it.

Bridge, Tiddlywinks, and the Individual Duplicate

Richard Ackland

This article was originally published in the Surrey County Bridge Association's newsletter

Lest the casual reader be tempted to pass this by thinking "Huh, a facetious article", let him be straitway confounded. For what follows is for the serious student. For a couple of decades or more I've been playing tiddlywinks at a national level and for rather longer than that have played bridge at a club level - and still do. And I've often been struck by the similarities between the two games.

Both are played around a four-sided table - one square, the other oblong. (Long gone are the days when traditionalists insisted that tiddlywinks be played on the floor).

Both involve four players arranged into two partnerships, with team-mates playing opposite each other. In bridge North and South play against East and West. In tiddlywinks, Blue and Red play against Green and Yellow.

Both have adopted a vocabulary all of their own. In bridge we have trumps, fits, sputniks, dummies, redoubles, Jacobys, stoppers, slams etc etc. In tiddlywinks we have squops, scrunges, boondocks, Carnowskys, Bristols, gromps, bring-ins etc etc. In both cases these are but small samples. Both, by the way, have doubletons

Both have highly sophisticated strategies and tactics. In bridge these are agreed and set in advance and are made known to the opposition upon request. In tiddlywinks they are constantly adapted according to the fluctuations of the game and are discussed openly within the partnership, but out loud so that the opposition is privy to them and can adopt suitable countermeasures.

When the EBU introduced its NGS ranking system it bore a striking resemblance to the means by which tiddlywinks world rankings are calculated, for the principle in both cases is not to rely solely upon raw results, but rather to take into account the quality/proficiency of partners and of opponents.

So where are the differences? Well, tiddlywinks has an additional physical skill requirement. No amount of intellectual theorising regarding strategy is of any avail if not accompanied by an expertise in making the shots, which can be attained only by years of practice.

And it is this which distinguished tiddlywinks from bridge in an area where both have tried and failed. Both have sought Olympic status. Bridge failed through the absence of that physical ingredient. Tiddlywinks failed because too few countries play it at an international level.

It sometimes used to occur to me how unlikely it would be for the likes of Djokovich, Graf, Nadal or Navratilova to show up casually to enjoy an afternoon's tennis at our club. These people are wholly out of the reach of the average player.

Bridge is a little better, for it's possible to join in tournaments where the top players are taking part. But they will probably be playing in their established partnerships; they won't be partnering any old novice or average player. Although I read that this is sometimes possible if one is prepared to fork out a large sum of money for the privilege.

Tiddlywinks is more straightforward in this respect. Apart from elite competitions such as the Golden Squidger and the like, many, if not most, tournaments are based upon random draws, where each competitor plays with a different partner for each round (or hand/s in bridge terms).

This format should be familiar to bridge players as the Individual Duplicate. It's very democratic since it means the World No 1 might well be partnering a rank novice. (I've frequently been partnered by such notables) Neither party minds. The novice is not over-awed and benefits from some experienced advice. The top player has to exhibit some

spontaneous flexibility in his approach which can be just as challenging as playing against his peers.

Despite all that, the top players still generally win such tournaments and they can play with the reassurance (if they care about it anyway) that their world ranking won't be unduly affected because of the account taken of the standard of their partners and opponents.

And the same may now be said of bridge with the introduction of the NGS system. So how about a return to popularity of the Individual Duplicate which seems to have fallen out of favour.

I can see the drawback in terms of agreeing systems and conventions, which, as described above, is admittedly less of a problem at tiddlywinks.

But we play this game for fun, don't we?

So this rigmarole amounts to a plea for the return of the Individual Duplicate.

Poetry Corner

As a wide editor once said, 'If anyone else dares to submit poetry in lieu of an essay then I will become so enraged that I will publish your poem in Winking World 105. Grrrr.' (Drew, 2023). Let this be a warning to anyone else who dares defy me. Grrrrrrrrrr.

William Roberts

There once was a wink that was squidged,
Two other winks it had bridged,
The pile wasn't stable,
It went off the table,
If only I hadn't have fidgeted.

The Book of Nuggets

Patrick Barrie

Compiled by Juliet Solomon. Published by KindPublishing 2023

The compiler of this book solicited “nuggets of wisdom” from a wide variety of people, many of whom are celebrities. It’s a tribute to her mother who died of kidney failure, with profits from the sale of the book going to Kidney Research UK. Contributions came from actors, journalists, writers, musicians, sports stars, charity workers, medical researchers and patients with kidney disease. Some were asked to contribute a single nugget; some a list of nuggets; others a short story that illustrates a particular nugget. Contributions vary from 3 words to 3 pages. The result is quite charming. It's not really a book to read cover to cover, but a book to dip in and out of, reading a few pages from time to time.

On Page 27 it features the following contribution:

Patrick Barrie and Matthew Rose – World Tiddlywinks Champions

Everyone is interesting – some may even play tiddlywinks tournaments.

You can improve with practice and perseverance, even if you don’t think you are currently good at tiddlywinks.

Keep a sense of perspective – there are some worse things in life than losing a game of tiddlywinks.

Stay positive – there is always a chance that a lucky shot will snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

Embrace the unexpected – you can’t always predict the outcome of your shots.

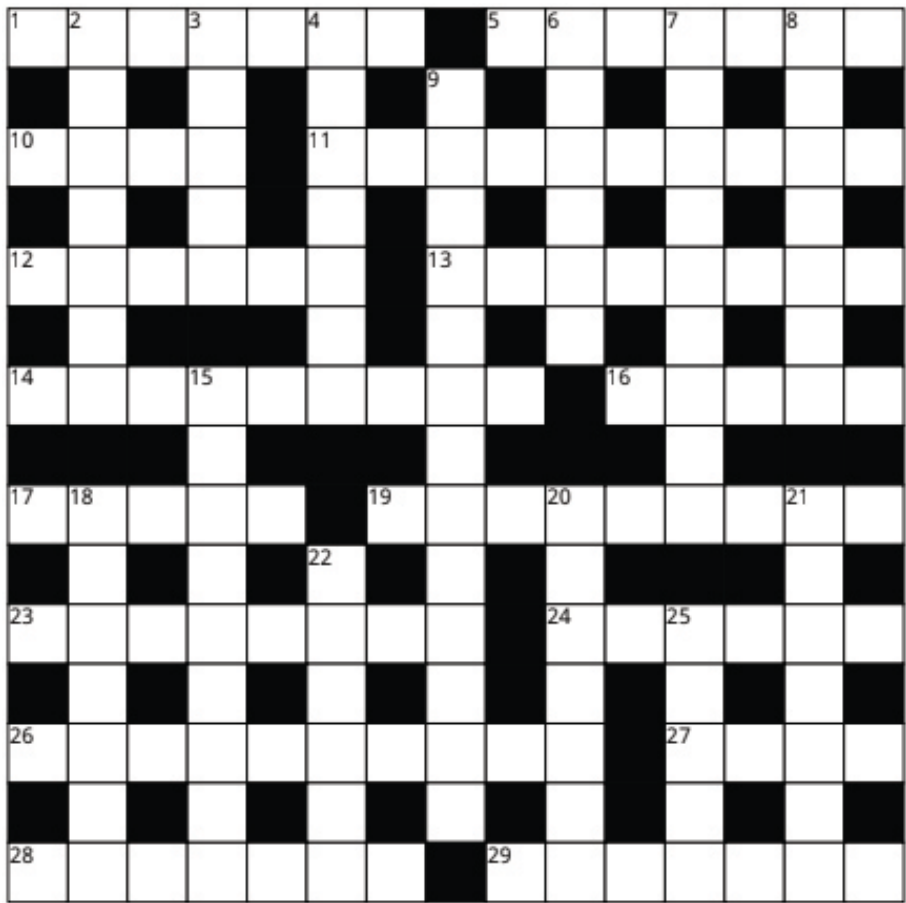
Take up a hobby – all tiddlywinks and no play is bad for your mental health.

You can still be a good person even if you are bottom of the tiddlywinks world ratings.

Crossword

Cambridge Open 2025

Nargumentative



Crossword Clues

ACROSS

- 1, 27A Colours over hesitation, two pints down (7,4)
 5 My look back on what's current in computer games? (7)
 10, 16A, 17A Last-ditch effort failing, vents profanely (4,5-5)
 11 Leaves home taking employment in France as brewer (3,7)
 12 Carbon latitude given to chemical company once, leading to extremely cold spike (6)
 13 Watched ladies? A thousand, on cycling date (6,2)
 14 Revolting, Wat Tyler heartlessly takes a plan originally from lawman (5,4)
 16 See 10A
 17 See 10A
 19 Groom is mad about the French boy (6,3)
 23 Drive away from church; answers regularly seem unacceptable (5,3)

- 24 Book is first-rate, I see (6)
 26 Half joking, I'd enter wrong thing in recipe (9)
 27 See 1A
 28 Distressed, in the manner of maiden in embarrassed state (7)
 29 He remedies waterworks with choice: queen takes bishop (7)

DOWN

- 2 Regrettable year after country club accident (7)
 3 Sequence I caught of old script (5)
 4 Radical cut, in addition to space base (7)
 6 Make combo play in the middle? N-no, never! (6)
 7 Spooner's domestic spy shelters vermin (5,4)
 8 Former law at first popular, but vague (7)
 9 Running four late, I forced Ed to go with the odds - a tactical error (7,2,4)
 15 She keeps money safe in t' back (9)
 18 Solvent but half-abandons ethics over bad loan (7)
 20 British International's against learner's reply to squop (7)
 21 Usually, game interrupts a second beer (2,1,4)
 22 For instance, egg head (6)
 25 Perhaps photograph a large behind (5)

The Pentney Abbey Mixed Pairs Invitational

Pentney Abbey, Not Very Near Pentney, Quite Far
From Kings Lynn, Darkest Norfolk, 1st November
2024

Harley Jones

This event attracted a great many winkers, with very few of the invitees finding themselves unable to make it. Despite the relative inaccessibility of the venue, even Andrew Garrard wasn't late; I was however unimpressed to see that SiBo and Stew had managed to stand around just outside a bar without noticing it. Good thing I was there to point it out.

It was notable that in addition to the winkers there were a large number of non-players - presumably there to spectate, and therefore one presumes they were exceedingly disappointed to discover that not a single shot was to be played over the course of the winkend. I hope that they were less disappointed by the in-house catering; at how many tournaments are you treated to a 5-course banquet? (Actually, some come close - messrs Dean, Driscoll, Hunt and Holmes have always been excellent hosts.)

This surely can't be the first event at which the ETwA and CUTwC anthems were sung simultaneously by mistake, but the effect as we moved from one to the other and back again was quite hypnotic.

The density of jolly winkers and free-flowing-ness of the refreshments might have given one cause for worry - this is a set of people who have been known to iron eggs into carpets, accost trees, retrieve rice crispies from puddles, and order chips instead of chips. But the photographic evidence suggests that all were on reasonably good behaviour. Those who stayed overnight and remained cromulent on the following day had some additional jollity which you can read about in a different article (see page 49).

All in all it was a most successful day. Winkers have married each other in the past, of course, but I think this is the first time that a winker has married two others at once.

Excerpt from a Speech Given at the Pentney Abbey Mixed Pairs Invitational

Jake Humbles

“...it was through [...] the University Tiddlywinks Club that this couple met; and, indeed, that I first came to know Kat, even though, by coincidence, we both grew up in the same town and went to the same college at university.

For those who do not know, the adult game of tiddlywinks – or, I should say, the *sport* – was developed at Cambridge in the '50s, and many of its leading exponents are based there. Both of our newlyweds are former Presidents of the Club and both are now officers of the English Tiddlywinks Association. (Yes, that is a thing.) Indeed, Harley is one of the top-class players of the sport. Did he mention that he's a former world champion?

In preparing my remarks for today, I was surprised to stumble across a startling fact which I feel I must share with you. Even world-class winkers like Harley are, I think it is fair to say, not exactly household names, so you will understand why I was surprised to find the following description in the press: “Mr. Harley Jones is an enterprising potter and it is in no half-hearted way that he is developing...”. In what publication was this positive review of an up-and-coming player published, you may wonder? Was it in *Winking World* (editor: Katherine Drew)? No. Was it perhaps an “in other news” story thrown together by a local journalist desperate for some copy? No indeed. This review comes from no less august an organ than *The Pottery Gazette* in its issue of 1st January 1913. It turns out that one Arthur George Harley Jones was a well-known and respected earthenware manufacturer, who worked out of the Royal Vienna Art Pottery in – where else? – Stoke-on-Trent. I don't claim to know if our Harley is any relation to his illustrious namesake, but if his potting is anything to go by, I'd say the chances are good.

Many tales which I will not repeat here date to pub crawls organised under the auspices of the Club, which sets the daunting mission of having a drink at every pub within the

Cambridge city limits in a year – no mean feat, but an achievement that several of us in this room have attained. Harley and I have often arranged these crawls together, and, just as often, complained to each other about their poor organisation by somebody else. It was on one of these pub crawls that I first met a keen, sweet and funny young lady, who seemed already to be showing an inexplicable interest in Harley. The rest, as they say, is history.

One of the duties of the President of the 'Winks Club is to invent and oversee a silly new game, known as the "President's Vice", for the diners to play at the Club's Annual Dinner. I was never President myself... but you'll be glad to know I have resisted the temptation to take advantage of this captive audience to inflict a game on you now. Kat has never admitted that her Vice was a "fix", but it can hardly be viewed as anything other than very suspicious that Harley won in record-quick time her rather implausible game, which involved a room filled with balloons and tiddlywinks with faces stuck on them..."



The undisputed tournament winners practice their flamingo poses

References

Drew, K. (2023) 'Poetry Corner', *Winking World*, 104(1), p. 39

*Thanks to Andrew Garrard, Harley Jones, a group
of hikers we found on top of a hill, and to Tiffany
and Tristan Charnley for the photos*

