



Winking World 89

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This issue of Winking World was edited by Matt Fayers. Please send him any articles and pictures for the next issue, and he'll forward them to the next editor.

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Cover photo (courtesy of Rick Ticker): Peter Downes shows the advantage of being well-dressed in tiddlywinks.

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Contents

Editorial	<i>Matt Fayers</i>	2
Needleloom to felt	<i>Charles Relle</i>	3
World Pairs 35	<i>Greg Durrett</i>	6
50th Anniversary Royal Match	<i>Patrick Barrie et al.</i>	8
National Handicapped Individual Pairs	<i>Andrew Garrard</i>	14
Flexible friends	<i>Andrew Garrard</i>	17
Player Profile: Richard Ackland	<i>Richard Ackland</i>	18
Jubilee Trophy – Dean dethroned	<i>Tim Hunt</i>	20
Sandy New Year	<i>Andrew Garrard</i>	21
'Wikipedia	<i>Ben Fairbairn</i>	24
Somerset Invitation	<i>Patrick Driscoll</i>	26
Thoughts on a timer experiment	<i>Andrew Garrard</i>	28
A quick moan – baselines	<i>anonymous</i>	38
Letters		39
National Teams of Four	<i>David Bradley–Williams</i>	40
Crossword	<i>Ed Wynn</i>	44
Cambridge Open	<i>Ben Fairbairn</i>	46
Radio Four translated	<i>Alan Harper</i>	48



Editorial

Matt Fayers

Welcome to the latest Winking World. I hope you'll find some things to interest you, and maybe some other things too. Thanks as always to my contributors, and to Andrew Garrard for his photos, articles and printing.

It's been a moderately exciting time in 'winks. In particular, you'll find in this issue a report of the 50th anniversary Royal Match, between CUTwC and Prince Philip's Royal Champions. The 50th anniversary bandwagon rolls on – ETwA will be 50 in June. Happy birthday ETwA!

Elsewhere in this issue, Andrew reports on his attempts to implement a chess-clock-like thing for winks. I did my best to trim his article, but then received some more articles (from Andrew) which meant that the number of pages went over forty-four, and so (to make the number of pages forty-eight) I had to fill some space; so I untrimmed the timer article. The upshot is that you might want to put the coffee on before you start reading it.

There's also a crossword from Ed, some wittering about Wikipedia from Ben, some important history of mats from Charles, and the usual supply of tournament write-ups. (Some of these were very tiresome to obtain, and if I were a more cantankerous editor, I'd grumble about how people aren't prepared to write for WW, or even to reply to my e-mails saying that they're not prepared to write for WW. I might even go so far as to rant 'how can you be too busy to send a simple e-mail that says "no, I'm too busy to write for WW; go away"?' . Fortunately, I'm not cantankerous.) There's also an instalment of my new 'Player Profiles' series, from Richard Ackland. Enjoy.



Needleloom to felt

Charles Relle

Matt Porter's unfortunately truncated article 'Mat Carriage and Deployment' in WW88 is an important contribution to a neglected subject. Articles on mats last appeared in WW44 and WW45, and were written by Phil Clark and Mike Surridge respectively. I should like to comment on Porter's article and add a few contributions of my own. I was at Cambridge myself, so some of my remarks refer to Cambridge.

Carrying mats has always been a problem. The original Cambridge mats were made of rubber-backed needleloom, and were manufactured by a firm called Peter Shepherd of Reading. They were much heavier than present-day mats, and thus much more difficult to carry. In my first year (1960–61), there was no real problem, as CUTwC met in the Lloyd Room, Christ's, and several members were in Christ's. But mats had to be carried from college to college for Cuppers matches, and also for social matches against women's colleges. These latter were fairly frequent, as there were no mixed colleges in those days.

How was mat transportation managed? You rolled up the required number of mats, and laid one end on one side of your bicycle handlebars. You then put the other end under one arm, preferably on the same side of the bike. You then mounted the bike and set off, steering with your other hand, and by slight movements of the rolled-up mats. This needed some skill, which had to be instinctive, because there was no opportunity to practise. As far as I know, no match was abandoned for lack of mats, which is a tribute to the versatility of winkers at the time. It was not really practical to carry more than two mats in this fashion. There is one point on which Porter's article needs correction. Carrying tubes were introduced by Jon Mapley and Alan Dean, followed by myself. I cannot provide exact dates, but it was before Nick Inglis became an active player.

In 1961, Peter Shepherd stopped making needleloom mats, and we cast about for a new surface. Felt mats, similar to those of today, were the replacement, and were made, I think, by a firm called Naish of Salisbury. They cost £1.50. We were initially concerned that these mats would be too unstable, as we always played on the floor, but they proved to be satisfactory, and, as they were much lighter, one could comfortably carry four of them in the manner described above. Cambridge, incidentally, continued to play on the floor some time after other universities had switched to tables. This was because the leading proponents of tables were Oxford and London, traditional enemies. Oxford were more traditional, London more inimical. Playing on the floor also avoided the problem, ably described in Porter's article, of unrolling a mat in the wrong direction.

I was CUTwC secretary in 1962–63, the year of the last very hard winter; the cold

weather lasted even longer than in January and February of 1947. There was no central heating, and no doors at the bottoms of staircases, so the cold air circulated freely. There was no heating at all in my bedroom in Trinity, and in some rooms, but not mine, no hot water was laid on. To wash, you had to boil a kettle. Even where there was hot water, it froze in the pipes in many places. As Secretary, I kept the Club's equipment in my rooms, and was thus able to use the felt mats as extra blankets on my bed. We still had the old needleloom mats, and when we decided to play a game of winks on the frozen Cam, we used one of these.

The greatest problem with all mats is that we have to use a material not specifically made for tiddlywinks. This will always be the case until the time visualised by Brad Schaefer in a *Newswink* article, when 'winks will be as popular as baseball. Thus, if the demand in another quarter for our preferred surface ceases, the supply dries up. This has happened several times, once when I was ETwA Secretary in 1980–81. I went to my local library, and with the help of several volumes of the Yellow Pages, telephoned numerous manufacturers of felt, largely in the North of England. I did locate a source, and discovered that the manufacturer wished only to supply me through a shop in Beckenham at retail price, which was much higher than the factory price. After some negotiation, I did get a reasonable discount, but still had to buy a large roll of the material, known as ROB2.

I was not totally happy with ROB2, for several reasons: I did not want ETwA to be tied to a shop in Beckenham for national supplies, I felt the price was still too high, and the material itself was not consistent and tended to wear out quickly. This meant that on six tables one might encounter six different surfaces; also that parts of any mat might be different from other parts of it. Indeed, one person said that tiddlywinks should resemble golf in that each surface should present a different challenge. Most players, however, considered that this was not acceptable, and this opinion was represented by Phil Clark's article in WW44. Although I was no longer ETwA secretary, I continued to investigate possible sources for mats, and in 1982 came across a felt supplier in Brockley, near where I lived at the time. I paid him a visit, and discovered several advantages. He was a professional with many kinds of felt in stock; he had a large flat surface on which to cut the felts, and, by taking along a set of winks I was able to test the properties of various felts; he was prepared to cut any length; and, with no middleman, there was a distinct advantage in price. I managed to select a felt that was economical and hardwearing, and bought two mats. I bought only these because we still had a quantity of ROB2 left, and because I had not been authorised by ETwA to buy mats on their behalf. I tested my mats at home and in a private tournament, and later lent one to Southampton University, then a significant club. This mat was described by Mike Surridge in his WW45 article, and he notes that

one of my mats was used in the 1984 Singles. By 1985 ETwA was ready to change, and our supplier in Brockley remained our source, despite two moves of location, until quite recently. He was a Second World War veteran, and went on working until long after retirement age, but eventually ceased trading.

Buying of mats is now done by Stewart Sage in his capacity as ETwA Treasurer, but my own interest in mats continues. In particular, I have been looking for a surface that is nationally available and more hardwearing than our present mats. Again, in common with other ETwA members, I have noticed a big increase in price has arrived with our new suppliers. A mat that is not much more expensive than present mats is desirable. Recently, I have come across a surface that I think fits our requirements, a table protector available from John Lewis. Again I took a set along to the John Lewis shop at Bluewater, and was favourably impressed. What are its advantages? It has a consistent surface, from which it is possible to play all the shots, it is made of a dense material which seems to be hardwearing, and it is available nationally. This last is an important point. If we can quote a product code and source for mats, we do not have to go to the labour of sending out mats to casual buyers. In fact, we can indicate these details on the ETwA web site. Again, casual buyers might like to have mats cut to the size of their home tables. These would not be standard ETwA size, but might encourage people to buy them, as they would have an additional purpose. What are the drawbacks? The material is backed with plastic, so we could use only one side (but this construction itself may well make the mat more durable), and mats made from it are heavier than the present mats. The surface is slightly different, but whenever we have made a change, we have had to accept this. The price is within a pound or two of the present mats. Am I advocating a change? I am certainly not against it. I should like people to experiment with the 'John Lewis' mat in non-serious tournaments, and think about the advantages and drawbacks. I am sure, too, that investigation should continue, and I hope to hear more of Matt Porter.



World Pairs 35

5th April 2008, Cambridge

Greg Durrett

Larry Kahn & Matt Fayers	3	7	6	1½	6	6	29½
Prabhas Pokharel & Yan Wang	4	0	1	5½	1	1	12½

Game 1

Cautious play on both sides, resulting in a chiefly squopping game. Round 5, Yan has an epic Good shot to free three of Prabhas's winks. Prabhas pots one, then chooses to squop an easy green rather than pot and squop for 5.

Cumulative: 4–3 Prabhas & Yan

Game 2

Lots of squops from the line result in some big-wink doubles during the bring-in phase. After some pile manipulation and breakups, the game is almost completely flat with about 15 minutes to go. Larry jokes that nothing will happen for the rest of the game. Yan and Prabhas try to attack, but end up subbing three (!) winks under a single pile while trying to free their winks. Larry becomes involved and Matt remains free as rounds start. Matt runs four flat winks and also pots off of one of Yan's, but misses his sixth. He misses again, but both times, Yan and Prabhas fail to squop his remaining wink. Matt finally clinches the pot-out third round. Prabhas misses his first pot and Larry runs six.

Cumulative: 10–4 Larry & Matt

Game 3

Mostly uninvolved after bring-ins, but piles quickly develop, with Larry and Matt largely in control. They maintain their advantage into rounds, and pot three flat winks each, giving them 11 and 10 points, respectively. Neither Yan nor Prabhas has enough free winks, and they fail to disrupt enough piles to pull ahead.

Cumulative: 16–5 Larry & Matt

Game 4

Everyone (i.e. Yan) is excited about the chance of a pot-out right out of the gate. A few tentative squops do little to diminish the threat, and Yan remains hopeful, going so far as to attempt to pot off of a double (his other 5 winks being flat and within 6 inches). However, Matt and Larry manage to 'drag Yan into a squopping game' after about ten minutes with a well-played squop. Focusing on the pot-out has

left Yan and Prabhas in an unenviable position, and Matt and Larry leverage their advantage to gain control of the game. Yan manages to get on top of the largest pile and executes a tremendous break-up in round 4, evening the odds considerably. In the fifth, Prabhas pots three, Matt pots one and misses his second, and Yan pots three, leaving the standings at 11 (Yan) – 11 (Matt) – 10 (Prabhas) – 4 (Larry), with Larry to end the game. Larry tries to bring up his score with a short pot, which he makes, followed by a long pot from about 18 inches. The long pot misses and smashes a pile, freeing up two of Prabhas's winks, launching him into first place with Yan and Matt still tied for second.

Cumulative: 17½–10½ Larry & Matt

Game 5

Larry wins the squidge-off for the fifth time in a row. The game progresses uneventfully. Yan daringly Goods one of Larry's winks through a pile, but the advantage gained by this is marginal. Larry and Matt steadily take control until Yan is squopped out and Prabhas is down to two free winks at the beginning of rounds. The game ends fairly predictably.

Cumulative: 23½–11½ Larry & Matt

Game 6

Inauspiciously, Larry's first shot (he still won the squidge-off) is a boondock. Yan lines up at his 'favourite potting distance' of 8–10 inches and threatens to pot out, noting that a 7–0 is needed in either this or the next game. But his hopes are cruelly dashed by a rim-out on his first pot, leaving him in an area strongly controlled by Larry and Matt. They fail to squop him, so he determines that he should run the other five before fleeing. He misses the second pot, and is subsequently squopped, but Prabhas positions himself to free Yan. Unfortunately, another failed pot on Yan's part knocks Prabhas off the pile, sealing their fate. After freeing two yellows, however, Yan and Prabhas become hopeful again, and Yan starts potting in the hope that Prabhas can finish freeing him. This hope is, however, unfounded. Yan manages five in the pot, but Larry and Matt are solidly in control of the last one. Prabhas is squopped down to one wink attempting to free it when Larry boondocks again. His attempt to free the last of Yan's fails, however, and Yan and Prabhas are squopped out. Larry and Matt free up all of Larry's winks to prepare for his pot out, and he runs five in round zero, but misses the last one and opens himself up to squopping by the pet wink that Larry and Matt were forced to free. In round 2, Matt has almost completely covered Prabhas, Prabhas is on Larry, and Larry and Yan are squopped out. Matt frees Larry by round 4, and he clinches the pot out. Yan pots his last wink and Matt beats out Prabhas for third place.

Cumulative: 29½–12½ Larry & Matt

50th Anniversary Royal Match

1st March 2008, Cambridge

Introduction

Patrick Barrie

The first Royal Match between CUTwC and the Goons (as Royal Champions) took place on 1 March 1958. Spurred on by Peter Downes, one of the original Cambridge players, CUTwC wrote to HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, to request him to nominate Royal Champions for a second match to be played, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the original occasion.

Prince Philip nominated the Savage Club, one of the leading Bohemian gentleman's clubs in London. The Club's aim is the pursuit of pleasure, and its members need to have made contributions to the fields of art, music, drama, literature, science or law. The choice of opponents was an appropriate one. Prince Philip himself is a member of the Savage Club, which had just celebrated its 150th anniversary. At least one of the Goons was a member of the Savage Club, and it was reported on the day itself that Noel Whitcomb, the journalist who had arranged the first ever opponents for CUTwC in 1955, had been a member as well.

Alex James, formerly of the band Blur but now more well-known as a journalist, cheese maker, and country gentleman, was to be the one of the Savage Club team. He set the scene for the event in an article published in *The Spectator* on 20th February 2008:

Actually, the more I think about tiddlywinks, the more I start to think it might be my game. I've always played it. It has the essence of all the noble sports, the keen edge of competitiveness, but it's so clearly a completely useless thing to be good at that there is absolutely no snobbery involved whatsoever. It requires no commitment, training or silly trousers to get involved. It's a simple case of sitting down and kicking the other party's ass¹. It doesn't matter if you're rubbish at it. It's the game that's good, not the players. It's the perfect combination of flair, chaos and not taking oneself too seriously, yet still wanting to win. A good game of winks is guaranteed to lift the spirits, which is what it's all about. Any age, any time. I'll take you all on. I'm the tiddlywinks guy.

It's a pleasing article, as it was *The Spectator* that initiated the first Royal Match by using the headline 'Does Prince Philip cheat at tiddlywinks?' Unfortunately, Alex

¹Editor's note: The views and opinions expressed are those of Mr James only. Winking World does not endorse the kicking of asses or any other abuse of animals. Except cats.



James had to drop out of the event on the day itself due to illness of one of his children.

Peter Downes successfully contacted all members of the original CUTwC team (bar one who had passed away), and six of them agreed to attend the reunion. Unfortunately, one of them (Keith Piper) was unable to attend at late notice, again due to family illness, but that left five to relive one of the most remarkable days in their lives.

And so the scene was set. . .

A view from the original CUTwC team

Lawford Howells

Anyone walking into the Old Library of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, on the morning of March 1st, 2008, must have wondered what was going on, with special game tables set out and the noisy chatter of enthusiastic people. It had become the venue of a Royal Tiddlywinks Tournament!

For the visiting 'old stagers' (Bill Steen, Peter Downes, David Moreton, Graham Ridge and myself) it was a truly amazing experience – a journey back fifty years to the very day and the very hour, when we played in the original Royal Tournament against the Goons in the Guildhall, Cambridge.

During this anniversary Royal Tournament, for which the Duke of Edinburgh had chosen the Savage Club, London, as his champions, we chatted with many people,



both players and supporters. It was impressive to find out that, compared with the early years of the CUTwC, when we had difficulty finding teams to play, the sport has really mushroomed, with a long list of tiddlywinks clubs in the UK and abroad. The current international nature of the sport was highlighted by the presence of a representative from the North American Tiddlywinks Association at this match.

Naturally, to us it was sad to learn the fate of the old light blue needleloom carpets of fifty years ago – having fallen prey to a similar fate as our moth-eaten old tiddlywinks ties! Of course, playing in a standing position was also different from the past. On second thoughts, though, perhaps not having to get down on hands and knees to make a squidge was probably beneficial for our older bones and joints! Aspects of the present game, which we all found fascinating, were the development that has taken place in the rules of play, and the advances made in the design and selection of squidgers. These changes have certainly made the strategies used in games more complex.

I don't know where our daughter found the bottle of Babycham – the drink that had been donated by the producers to the CUTwC as a training diet for the first Royal Tournament (the Goons had Guinness sent by the Duke of Edinburgh, although wine was preferred!) – but drinking a special toast to tiddlywinks was yet another nostalgic moment! When the five of us eventually got down to playing in games, we did not

*Andrew Garrard*

perform very well. Of course, I suppose, this is understandable since we had been without our training diet for five decades!

After happy hours spent once again in the tiddlywinkers' orbit, we were delighted that the event was rounded off by a rousing rendition of the 1958 anthem, which to our great pleasure has well and truly withstood the test of time. We said farewell with our memories refreshed, our winking fingers newly energised, and with the knowledge that the game continues to be played with the traditional fervour and commitment. The Savage Club players and supporters certainly entered into the spirit of this match, and without question, played very well – so much so, that the result was only settled in the last game.

On behalf of Bill, Peter, David, Graham and myself, I sincerely thank the CUTwC for organising such a memorable match, and taking us on such a nostalgic journey. On March 1st, 1958, none of us expected in our wildest dreams that the game would flourish as it has and lead to this special anniversary Royal Tournament. We wish the CUTwC, and all its 'off-shoots', continued success in the pursuit of this noble sport.

A Right Royal Rite-Up

Sarah Knight

The day of the Royal Match brought with it much excitement, and a touch of apprehension. There had been several problems during its organisation, all of which had eventually been solved: making mutually convenient arrangements had proved tricky, but it had now been agreed to play two matches, one either side of lunch. We'd fretted over finding a venue, but Patrick Barrie had come up trumps with Emmanuel Old Library. And it had been hard to find a team of enthusiastic, competent undergraduates.

OK, so maybe not all of the problems were solved – but a team was eventually mustered (Alan Harper, Patrick Driscoll, Andy Blackburn, Sarah Knight, Cassia Pennington, Rob Lever, Sarah Quinn and Serita Rana). From the very start the day had a festive atmosphere: along with both teams and their supporters, many winkers past and present, a small contingent from York University Tiddlywinks Club, and five members of the original 1958 Royal Match team were in attendance. CUTwC memorabilia were on display, and the Savage Club team (Craig Barrett, Charlie Talbot, Patrick Johns and Dunstan WHO?) had even invested in team T-shirts for the occasion.

Since the Savages numbered only four, and to give the visitors a prod in the right direction, CUTwC donated an experienced player to partner each Savage in first round. Aside from creating a constitutional crisis – how exactly does one burn Stew at the Sage?! – this made the games hair-raising for several of the CUTwC partnerships. Luckily, the wine corks had already started popping by this stage, but even this was not enough to soften the blow of a 16–12 Savage lead at the end of the round.

It was clear that drastic action was needed, so we had lunch. A splendid spread had been laid on by Emmanuel, and a series of speeches kept us entertained. Lawford Howells and Peter Downes provided nostalgic memories of the lead-up to the original Royal Match, the Goons, and, curiously, Babycham; Charlie Talbot enlightened us about his Savage past; and Patrick Barrie presided, putting in a few words about the state of the current CUTwC. Andy Blackburn, CUTwC Secretary, presented the visitors with CUTwC cufflinks, and everybody seemed to like the Kentucky-fried chicken.

Fired with confidence from their first games (or maybe just Dutch courage), the Savages decided to partner each other in the second round, albeit with experienced advisors. CUTwC thus plumped for a splittance: four players took on the Savages, while the remaining four tackled two YUTS partnerships. Tension was clearly running high, with some CUTwC members visibly struggling to sober up while others headed back for more to steady their nerves. On the Savage tables, the visitors were proving



Rick Tucker

remarkably, and frighteningly, adept. Sarah Quinn's wild potting strategies had to be held in firm check by Alan, while Sarah Knight and Sick Boy desperately tried, and failed, to remain nonchalant in the face of some excellent squopping (and not by them, needless to say). YUTS, meanwhile, put up a brave fight – I think the final score was 1–1, though I can't be sure.

Despite the best efforts of the CUTwC advisors, and indeed the CUTwC players themselves, the home team eventually scraped a 24–18 win. But, even more so than most winks matches, winning was hardly the point. It was a genuinely historic day for winks and, I hope, a lot of fun for everybody. The Savages certainly seemed to enjoy themselves, and even talked of buying equipment for a re-match at their place – watch this space!



National Handicapped Individual Pairs

25th November 2007, Shrewsbury

not Charles Oakley

Player	Round						Hdp	Gms	Actual		Adjusted	
	1	2	3	4	5	6			pts	ppg	pts	ppg
Alan Dean	6 _a	5 _a	6 _b	6 _b	6 _d	1 _c	7	6	30	5	28 ¹ / ₄	4 ¹⁷ / ₂₄
Johnny Wilkinson	—	5 _a	—	—	—	—	0	1	5	5	4 ¹ / ₂	4 ¹ / ₂
Ben Powell Davies	6 _a	6 _a	1 _b	3 _b	3	6 _c	0	6	25	4 ¹ / ₆	26 ¹ / ₄	4 ³ / ₈
Charlie Lacey	2 ¹ / ₂	1 _a	6 _b	3 ¹ / _{2b}	6 _b	6 _a	0	6	25	4 ¹ / ₆	26 ¹ / ₄	4 ³ / ₈
Stew Sage	3	6 _b	1 _a	4 _b	6 _c	6 _b	5	6	26	4 ¹ / ₃	26 ¹ / ₄	4 ³ / ₈
Catherine Goodwin	6 _b	5 _b	6 _e	6 _a	1 _d	2	1	6	26	4 ¹ / ₃	26	4 ¹ / ₃
Tim Hunt	4 ¹ / ₂	4 ¹ / ₂	6 _d	3 ¹ / _{2a}	1 _d	3	5	6	22 ¹ / ₂	3 ³ / ₄	22 ¹ / ₂	3 ³ / ₄
Charlie Oakley	6 _b	1 _a	6 _c	1 _a	1 _c	4	4	6	19	3 ¹ / ₆	21 ³ / ₄	3 ⁵ / ₈
Ben Fairbairn	—	5 ¹ / ₂	1 _e	3 _b	6 _b	1 _a	3	5	16 ¹ / ₂	3 ³ / ₁₀	17 ¹ / ₂	3 ¹ / ₂
Rob Hunt	1 _a	4 ¹ / ₂	1 _c	6 _b	1 _c	6 _b	0	6	19 ¹ / ₂	3 ¹ / ₄	20 ³ / ₄	3 ¹¹ / ₂₄
Alexander Mott	4	2 _a	6 _c	4 _b	1 _b	5	0	6	22	3 ² / ₃	20 ¹ / ₂	3 ⁵ / ₁₂
Andrew Garrard	2 ¹ / ₂	2 _a	6 _e	1 _b	1 _a	6 _c	5	6	18 ¹ / ₂	3 ¹ / ₂	19 ³ / ₄	3 ⁷ / ₂₄
Bob Wilkinson	1 _b	1 ¹ / ₂	1 _c	3 _a	3	6 _a	3	6	15 ¹ / ₂	2 ⁷ / ₁₂	18 ¹ / ₂	3 ¹ / ₁₂
Michael Houston	4 ¹ / ₂	6 _b	1 _e	1 _a	4	1 _c	0	6	17 ¹ / ₂	2 ¹¹ / ₁₂	18 ¹ / ₄	3 ¹ / ₂₄
Patrick Barrie	—	2 _b	1 _d	3 ¹ / _{2b}	6 _a	5	7	5	17 ¹ / ₂	3 ¹ / ₂	14 ¹ / ₂	2 ⁹ / ₁₀
Charles Relle	1 _a	6 _a	6 _a	6 _a	1 _b	1 _b	7	6	21	3 ¹ / ₂	16 ³ / ₄	2 ¹⁹ / ₂₄
Andy Blackburn	1 _b	2 ¹ / ₂	6 _d	1 _b	6 _c	1 _a	2	6	17 ¹ / ₂	2 ¹¹ / ₁₂	16 ¹ / ₂	2 ³ / ₄
Patrick Driscoll	4	1 _b	1 _b	4 _a	4	2	5	6	16	2 ² / ₃	15 ¹ / ₄	2 ¹³ / ₂₄
Tom Burgess	3	1 _b	1 _d	3 ¹ / _{2a}	6 _d	1 _b	0	6	15 ¹ / ₂	2 ⁷ / ₁₂	15 ¹ / ₄	2 ¹³ / ₂₄
Paula Wilkinson	—	1 ¹ / ₂	—	—	—	—	0	1	1 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹ / ₂	2 ¹ / ₂	2 ¹ / ₂
Victoria Handley	—	2 _b	—	—	—	—	0	1	2	2	0 ³ / ₄	0 ³ / ₄



Andrew Garrard

The weekend including the NHIPper of 2007 promised to be a two-stop crawl of 'winks tournaments, with Ben Fairbairn arranging a Birmingham tournament on the Saturday and the NHIPper on the Sunday. Alas, the Birmingham arrangements fell through, which apparently robbed YUTS of their first potential tournament; we were glad to see them at the Fours, instead. This also meant that my sister found my arriving at her house somewhat earlier than expected. (I don't believe she's recovered from the shock yet.)

Vowing to make up for this on the Sunday, I duly rushed to Shrewsbury School, fortunately noting that the police car flashing its lights in my rear view mirror while I was driving at ninety was in a hurry to get somewhere rather than expressing disapproval. In spite of starting out only fifty miles away, I still contrived to arrive after those who had started out from Cambridge. For once I wasn't obviously holding up the tournament, at least.

I noted that there was an inscription on a cornerstone of the hall which housed the tournament, beginning 'hunc lapidem posuit'. Translating this as 'here be bunnies', I concluded that I must be in the right place.

As it turned out, I was very much mistaken: Charlie had clearly induced enthusiasm in his students, and – with a few fluctuations – some turned out to be very capable indeed. I descended into a fluster, being concerned that the distinction between a

*Andrew Garrard*

bunch of sad old men and a brotherhood of elite athletes is best demonstrated when one doesn't play like a novice. Maybe the inscription meant 'bunnies, go here'?

Charlie, too, was a little flustered, showing a Ben-like level of apology for caring about running the tournament; I was certainly very happy with arrangements, although I don't know how many children will have been scared off the game by our prowess.

Lunch time descended on us, and brought with it an opportunity for a healthy walk to the other side of the school grounds (bordering on a campus, in fact) where an all-day breakfast combined with a surreptitious provision of beer cans. Alas, Charlie's charges had their own arrangements, robbing us of the opportunity to teach some drinking games to the next generation and of angle-dangling baked beans over ourselves.

A brisk trundle back to the tournament, dodging the empty beer cans, and my form improved not a jot. However, we did get some interest from the media – and I got to play 'name that camera' when I heard the sound of a professional camera's shutter before I'd spotted the journalist. One of Charlie's colleagues also turned up to take photos, and I spent a few minutes distracting myself disastrously from a game while talking camera kit and demonstrating how to get finger grease on my lenses (tip: check the lens cap is on before you put the glass bit of a fish-eye in your palm;

who knew?).

The photography opportunities were strictly limited, since taking photos of the under-aged without parental permission is frowned upon. I contented myself with snapping the presentation to Alan, who narrowly avoided a crisis that would have ensued had I not been able to record the winner for posterity, and the aforementioned teacher's dog, who found a winks mat to make a comfortable chin rest.

We were also asked to sign a T-shirt which was, I believe, to be auctioned. I trust our fame raised a lot of money as a consequence.

My thanks to Charlie, both for a most entertaining (and, in spite of his apparent worries, smoothly-run) tournament and for raising what promises to be a gifted next generation of winkers. I hope some of them will make it into university clubs in due course.



Flexible friends

Andrew Garrard

Steve Phillips, Alan Dean and I recently descended on Charles Relle's house for a friendly warm-up to the National Pairs. The result was a number of interesting (and slowly-played) games with intellectual scenarios, including one of the most effective click-Good shots that I've seen by Steve and catering by Charles that left me struggling (more than usual) to reach over the table.

In the light-hearted spirit of the occasion, when at one point I had the opportunity to break a pile next to the pot which had limited space for legal squidger movement, I attempted an unusual solution. I took a phone-card squidger, bent it to ensure that it would not touch any winks illegally, and blew the pile (quite effectively).

I might not have attempted squidger-bending in an official tournament, and I was expecting Charles and Alan to pull me up on it (it turns out that they hadn't noticed, even though I was fairly blatant about it), but – while it felt a bit naughty – in retrospect I'm not sure that I was actually doing anything wrong.

The squidger was a normal phone-card disc. This obviously deforms from a planar disc during the play of normal phone-card-style potting shots, and I don't believe I put more of a flex into the squidger than I would when potting; it's possible that the flex didn't even exceed the nominal 5mm thickness that a squidger is permitted to have.

There have been queries in the past about rolling a squidger into a tight tube; at this point, it is clearly no longer a 'disc', and becomes illegal. However, flexing a squidger so that it fits around obstructing winks doesn't seem to be directly precluded.

Opinions?

Player profile: Richard Ackland

Richard thinks/thought he has/had three claims to winking uniqueness. One of these has already been swiftly demolished by conversation in the Hat and Feathers. And he fears the others won't last long either, always supposing that anybody reads this.

Anyway, here they are.

1. Richard believes, judging from the experience of his short reborn career, that he must be the only practising winker not to hold a university degree. Indeed his only experience of the inside of a university has been as a venue for winks tournaments.
2. He believes that of all currently practising winkers, he began his career the earliest (1958).
3. He believes that he still holds the world record for a winks marathon (24³/₄ hours set in a department store shop window in April 1961).

Now retired and living in London (just), but with no secondary residence, Richard Ackland was born in December 1942 in Writtle, Essex. It was wartime and expectant mothers were taken out of London for safety. Richard has never forgiven Hitler for depriving him of the privilege of being born within the sound of Bow Bells. His childhood was spent in Chingford in north-east London. He has no recollection of air-raid shelters but still shudders when radio programmes reproduce the sound of doodlebugs. He had an early interest in chess and even represented his school at that discipline; however it was at the time of one of the great 1950s flu epidemics and he was one of the few to make it to school at all. He knew, long before he was fourteen, that he was never going to be a good player. Subsequently he took to bridge and would have played for Cambridge to the exclusion of tiddlywinks but for two events. Firstly he never went to Cambridge. Second, his initiation into bridge came at an age beyond that at which he might have been an undergraduate.

Richard was ill-educated in Essex. The only lasting benefit of his school career was his co-founding, with two others, of a school tiddlywinks club. The proximity of Marchant Games (in Loughton) meant that the sport was played strictly in accordance with ETwA rules (a surviving copy of the 'Babycham' rules testifies to that), and several matches were played between 1958 and 1961, the most notable being that against University College London in October 1960. Richard has recently unearthed some score-sheets from other matches, which he intends sharing with winks archivists, the editor of WW and anybody else who can be persuaded to take an interest.



Lucy Ackland

After 1961 (and until 2005) Richard can claim no further credit for winks exploits. During the sixties Richard represented nobody against nobody and although he briefly worked in Ely his marriage to Liz in 1967 took place in Milnrow, Lancs (birthplace of a current winks star) rather than in Ely Cathedral.

In 1970, any winks involvement, such as an unlikely invitation to stand for Chairman of ETwA, would have been declined, as a move to self-employment in Purley (LB of Croydon) was imminent as was the birth of his first child. However he has since provided occasional demonstrations at scout fairs.

Richard's return to tiddlywinks began in April 2005 when he invited himself to the National Teams of Four. He was aghast to see how much better all other players were than he was and even more aghast at the developments in rules, tactics, techniques and terminology which had occurred during his forty-four-year absence from the mat. He reckoned it would take him another forty-four years to catch up. However on that April day he was gifted a star-studded bunch of team-mates and won the tournament, a feat he repeated (in similar circumstances)

in 2007 and in 2008. Richard regards it as a privilege that he was invited to take part in the very enjoyable and worthwhile Maidstone Open (by chance in the year it was televised) and hopes (hint, hint) that the invitation will one day be repeated.

Richard was not a classics teacher by profession, but enjoys the privilege, which retirement affords him, of travelling frequently, and thus indulging his interest in modern languages, particularly French (he lived in France for several years) in addition to his more rudimentary knowledge of German, Spanish and Italian. He and Liz co-organise a local 'Italian Club'. He still plays a good deal of Duplicate Bridge and lots of tennis. He regularly supports the Abbeyfields charity and works for the Labour party. He has regular subscriptions to Sustrans and he and Liz always take their bikes on European vacations. He is chairman of the local Debating Society – one of only three such societies in all of south-east England. Richard collects books, but rarely reads them. He does however listen to his substantial CD collection. He has also supported Tottenham Hotspur for fifty-seven years.

Richard and Liz like to unwind, not just on Fridays, but generally prefer Côtés du Rhone.

Jubilee Trophy – Dean dethroned

13th–14th October 2007, Sandy

Tim Hunt

Alan Dean, wanting some pre-singles practice, invited some winkers to his house in Sandy on the weekend of 13th/14th October 2007, dangling the Jubilee trophy as bait.

On the Saturday, Alan was to be joined by Steve Phillips, Patrick Driscoll and Andrew Garrard. Patrick carelessly asked Andrew for a lift, so while they were being late, Steve challenged Alan to a match, and the scores were as follows.

Alan Dean	6	6	6	18
Steve Phillips	1	1	1	3

They played several more friendly games before the others arrived. For some reason, the 'winks in the afternoon was not counted as Jubilee matches. Anyway, as I was not there, this is all I know.

On Sunday, Patrick had left, and I joined the party. Alan had devised a format that used a mixture of singles and doubles games to enable the four of us to play a match for the Jubilee trophy. Not exactly a singles challenge match, but 'rules – schmules,' we say. It's what we agreed.

The nice feature of the format was that for the first six rounds, first you played singles against someone, then you partnered them against the other pair. For some reason, this fight-then-make-up was very pleasing. Then we did three more rounds of all-partner-all. Finally, there would be a further singles game between the top two if the score was within seven points.

Andrew romped into the lead. However, with three rounds to go, it was still possible for Alan or Tim to catch up. Round 7 put paid to Alan's hopes of defending, pretty much from the start of the game when Alan rolled off his own mat several times. No one, especially me, was expecting Tim to catch up twelve points in the last three games, but Andrew crumbled under the pressure.

Player	Round									Play-off	Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
Tim Hunt	1	7	6 _a	0	6 _a	1	4	5	6	6	42
Andrew Garrard	6	7	1 _b	7	6 _b	6	4	2	1	1	41
Alan Dean	5	0	6 _b	7	1 _a	1	3	2	6		31
Steve Phillips	2	0	1 _a	0	1 _b	6	3	5	1		19

Sandy New Year

30th December 2007 and 6th January 2008, Sandy

Andrew Garrard

Shortly before the end of 2007, Rick Tucker indicated that he was going to be in the UK, and had an interest in some games. Alan Dean tried to arrange some sessions, only to find that Rick was unavailable on the originally-proposed date (Sunday December 30th). Patrick Driscoll and I descended on Alan's house anyway, with a view to getting some practice in before the Somerset – or something.

Patrick and Alan had played a number of games before my arrival (I had slept through an alarm); apparently Alan gave Patrick a sound thrashing in almost every game, meaning that he was gnashing at the bit by the time I arrived.

We elected to play three rounds of rotating singles. Patrick got off to a strong start, with a six-point lead after the first three games (I took a couple of games to find my feet, meaning that I probably hampered Alan more than I hampered Patrick). The second round of games had precisely no effect, with us each scoring eight points, leaving Patrick's position strong going into the final rotation. Here Alan started to show his form, pulling back a couple of points on Patrick, and I started to show mine (dropping a further four), but Patrick's earlier lead was unassailable. In all, the standard was remarkably high from all three of us – something which always makes losing more enjoyable, I find – and gave me false hope that I might not completely embarrass myself in Bylaugh.

Player	Round									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Patrick Driscoll	7	4	6	1	6	1	4	5	1	35
Alan Dean	7	3	1	1	1	6	4	2	6	31
Andrew Garrard	0	3	6	6	1	1	3	2	1	23

By the following weekend, in a friendly tournament which actually did involve Rick Tucker this time, I'd had precisely one competent game all week – and this had been a friendly. My confidence restored to its low levels, I at least took comfort from turning up earlier than my sat nav's estimate and while a friendly game was going on (albeit in a slight daze from an infeasibly small amount of sleep – I'd stayed up until gone four the night before, trying to clear up all of my mess in Bylaugh to give myself the minimum to do in the morning). This may have given Rick an inaccurate estimate of my ability to turn up on time to tournaments, but an accurate impression of how coherent I am. I greeted him with a question about his moustache, which has been missing in action for some years. I'm particularly impressed by my sat nav, for

once, because I have documentary evidence that Bylaugh is in the middle of nowhere: on the way back, I passed 'Nowhere Lane' off the Fakenham Road. I also passed a sign for a dinosaur park, which it seems kind of someone to erect in our honour. Still, back to the present day. . . .

Timmy arranged a six-round tournament in which we would each play a singles game twice, while the rest played a pairs game. I started much as I would have expected, partnering Rick by bringing in incompetently and rolling off a lot. Since it turns out that Rick was to be my closest competitor (sorry to ruin the suspense, but why do you think I got saddled with the write-up?) it seems that I timed my incompetence well. I was pleased to find that my practice the week before had left me somewhat more competent on Alan's mats than on my own (in use in Bylaugh), so at least some of my squopping was working.

Alan and I retired to the singles table, in a game which turned out to be more of a battle of nerves than I would have expected. Although Alan was in reasonable control, he was let down by a missed attempt to pot in five, leaving me with first place. My play seemed to be on the up (Alan's is, of course, already at an elevated level): I remember saying something rude about Charles (this happens often enough that I don't recall what was said on this particular occasion), and feeling that I'd redeemed myself by playing a sideways Bristol to get a rock-solid doubleton, in his honour.

I partnered Charles next, against Alan and Tim; the resulting 6–1 was, I'm sure, more Charles's doing than mine. Charles and I retired into the singles room, and spent a minute or two getting started, knowing that I was unlikely to survive the game long and that we had a five-minute time advantage. Charles told me of his medical woes and having been laid up over the Christmas period. There seems to be a lot of it going round – Matt was reporting a heart attack all through the Somerset, and even I've had most of a day off this week. Perhaps distracted by his medical condition, Charles allowed me to scrape my way out of a losing position, and looked unhappy about it: he had potting to do in rounds, and there was a bit of an explosion when Alan walked in to ask why we'd not finished yet. (Charles's complaint that it was unfair for Alan to walk in while he was trying to pot seemed a bit unfair, since Alan hadn't walked in during his first two tries with that wink . . . I'm just saying . . .). Charles did, however, manage to get the sort of long-range sideways Bristol that you'd think, by now, I'd have got used to looking out for; there's nothing like being kept on your toes.

In the penultimate game, Tim partnered me against Charles and Rick. Tim brought in very well (I brought in fairly well, with a nurdled wink), and decided to go for the pot early. He potted well, but not well enough, leaving me to rescue his last wink. A series of unlucky pile shots later, I had my chance to do so (actually more

Player	Round						Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Andrew Garrard	1 _b	4	6 _b	4½	6	7 _b	28½
Rick Tucker	1 _b	6	6 _a	6	1	7 _a	27
Alan Dean	6 _b	3	1 _b	6	7	0 _b	23
Charles Relle	6 _a	1	6 _b	2½	1	0 _b	16½
Steve Phillips	6 _b	1	1 _a	1	0	7 _b	16
Tim Hunt	1 _a	6	1 _b	1	6	0 _a	15

than once, since I'd not always been able to separate winks as well as needed). I was happy that I'd at least been able to keep them working, but Tim's pot meant that my satisfaction with doing so well out of a high-risk strategy was reflected in the scoring. My initial feeling that I was better-positioned to run for the pot than Timmy was got immediately quashed by a trivial miss when I started trying to follow in. Fortunately, Charles's winks were a long way from the pot, leaving me just enough attempts to bucket everything.

The last game, and everything to play for. Steve took the strategic lead, and decided that with flat winks near the pot and some threatened, our best chance against Charles and Alan was for me to start to make plinking noises. My potting was terrible, but we were lucky that both Charles and Alan were playing almost like mortals, and missed squops that I would normally have expected them to get. They were so busy trying to squop me that Steve had a chance to get the position for a follow-in, so when I finally did manage to pot out his potting was more than good enough. This was enough for the 'tournament' win, in spite of my best efforts to get distracted with polarisers while trying to photograph the singles game (I noticed that, at night, there's a good reflection in Alan's window which would have made for a photogenic effect had Rick not potted out against Timmy before I had the chance to capture it).

Feeling for some reason that twenty-eight games of winks in eight days was an inadequate supply, I then felt the need to partner Charles against Rick and Steve in what, in a way that does not really distinguish it from anything else, was described as a friendly game. Much like many of the games of the day, this turned out to be surprisingly intellectual, with a selection of hero shots able to change the result dramatically in rounds. Steve had a chance to make it 3½-3½, but missing with the last turn of the game managed to leave us on a 4⅔-2⅓, which is probably a fair reflection on how itsy-bitsy all the day's play had been.

I'm left to reflect on how much difference the ability to bring in makes on a game, while having little understanding of how I managed to be competent at Alan's but useless in Norfolk, and feeling that perhaps the way to handle the brain strain of a series of very intellectual games is to be so tired at the start that one's faculties cannot be negatively affected – even if my strategy seemed more to be based on unexpectedly escaping from the apparently inevitable than on taking control. I slept very well on Sunday night, even after finishing my fourteenth Diet Coke bottle of the week.

My thanks as even to Alan for his hospitality, and to Barbie for putting up with all the strange people invading her house (and, as ever, for catering exquisitely).

Note that none of this was in any way an official ETwA event – although Tim and Steve did threaten to arrange a Jubilee in the near future. I write only to prove that friendly games do still happen, even if I'm too tired to remember them.



'Wikipedia

Ben Fairbairn

During this year's Somerset tournament the often-repeated 2 a.m. 'is 'winks dead?' conversation cropped up, with the usual array of conspiracy theories, enquiries on the current state of various clubs and questions of what can be done about it all. One interesting and slightly unusual question was raised by Matt Fayers: 'What about Wikipedia?'. He was, of course, referring to the ever popular 'free encyclopedia that anyone can edit', that may be found at www.wikipedia.org. If I remember correctly, it transpired that Matt had in fact contributed to a Wikipedia page on the subject of tiddlywinks and was asking for our input on the matter.

Having investigated a little further, I can confirm that a wonderful overview of the game exists and I agree that the question of the Wikipedia presence of tiddlywinks really should be taken a little more seriously. After all, we've all found bizarre and fascinating things for the first time on that web site, right? As an internationally famous site with large numbers of users worldwide this could easily be a major source of good publicity for the game as a whole.

Pursuing matters a little further I discovered various interesting things:

- there has been a Wikipedia entry for ETwA for some time, which when I found it was hopelessly outdated;
- since Wikipedia searches are case-sensitive, the above article is actually quite difficult to find;
- 'winks was absent from the Wikipedia entries on 'Hobbies', 'Game(s)' and even 'List of social activities at the University of Cambridge';

- searching for 'NATwA' (and other capitalisation variants) takes one straight to the entry on the 'National Alliance of Taiwan Women's Associations';
- there is even some negative publicity such as the entry on 'Blue (university sport)' stating 'In spite of claims by the Cambridge University Tiddlywinks Club, there is officially no such thing as a 'quarter blue'.

I have since addressed each of the above problems, except for the NATwA issue, which I believe is better left to those more in the know than myself. I am, however, only one person and there may be people with better ideas on approaching the above issues. In particular, I would call into question my ability to edit such entries. Some readers may remember during my presidency of CUTwC the disastrous production of nearly 3000 leaflets promoting a 'tiddlywinks' club.

In particular, the top of the page on ETwA has an official warning from Wikipedia itself noting that:

This article may not meet the notability guideline for Organisations. If you are familiar with the subject matter, please expand or rewrite the article to establish its notability. The best way to address this concern is to reference published, third-party sources about the subject. If notability cannot be established, the article is more likely to be considered for redirection, merge or ultimately deletion.

This article or section needs sources or references that appear in reliable, third-party publications. Primary sources and sources affiliated with the subject of this article are not sufficient for a Wikipedia article. Please include more appropriate citations from reliable sources, or discuss the issue on the talk page.

Another suggestion I would like some assistance on is the matter of former clubs. A page outlining a brief history of the past glories of, say, the Southampton club or OUTS may, perhaps, just be what's needed to lead to the founding of newer incarnations of these clubs.

Editor's note: Can I re-iterate Ben's request: please help to improve the Wikipedia entries relevant to tiddlywinks. I use Wikipedia fairly often, and I suspect it will be a first point of contact with tiddlywinks for many people who might be potential recruits. While an encyclopædia entry shouldn't be a recruitment tool per se, I feel that we can do a lot to make tiddlywinks seem serious and well-organised. The entry for ETwA is in a really terrible state, and drastically needs some work (or perhaps deletion). Wikipedia seems very keen on references of third-party sources, so someone with a good database of these could help a lot. The online article currently referenced from this entry is nothing to do with ETwA!

Somerset Invitation

2nd–6th January 2008, Norfolk

Patrick Driscoll

	Player	Partner											Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1	Matt Fayers	6	3	6	7	6	6	6	6	6	5	1	58
2	Patrick Driscoll	3	1	6	6	7	6	4½	6	3	5	3	50½
3	Nick Inglis	6	6	2½	7	2	6	0	0	5	6	2	42½
4	Ed Wynn	7	6	7	2	4	2	6	5	1	1½	1	42½
5	Stew Sage	6	7	2	4	4	2	6	4	4	2	1	42
6	Tim Hunt	6	6	6	2	2	3	1	4	6	0	5½	41½
7	Chris Abram	6	4½	0	6	6	1	7	5	1	1	1	38½
8	Andrew Garrard	6	6	0	5	4	4	5	5	1	1	1	38
9	Alan Harper	6	3	5	1	4	6	1	1	0	1	3	31
10	Sarah Knight	5	5	6	1½	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	24½
11	Ben Fairbairn	1	3	2	1	1	5½	1	1	3	1	1	20½

At Bylaugh Hall, miles from anywhere in particular, the Somerset Open was staged, courtesy of Stew Sage. Among those attending were Alan Harper, Matt Fayers and Tim Hunt, though Chris Abram was not there (at least, he was so quiet nobody noticed his presence apart from a fine curry he prepared).

Unlike the previous year, the owner of the house and ruler of the festivities did not realise there was a galaxy of winking stars present, so no-one was required to give media interviews.

Among the high points was Ed's impassioned discussion of intellectual property and patent law. He said, the chain that binds inventor and design is made in the head, and man can never see it in twain. And a government may forge a chain, and bind the twain. This is not copyright genuine, it is intellectual property. The twain are different as squopping and potting; the government and anyone with half a brain can tell the difference. And that was all that Ed said.

As Ed stood apart, helping to dry the dishes after dinner, which had been lovingly prepared by Slu (although hang on, was he even there?), Andrew Garrard came to him and said, The drinking games and beer have failed; what shall we do?

And Ed said, Pray what is beer? It is but water with the flavouring of malt, hops, and yeast. And what are malt, hops and yeast? They are but certain types of thought made manifest, and I can manifest that thought, and water will be beer.



Andrew Garrard

He went upstairs and refilled the beer jugs, and with a mighty thought stirred up the embers of the winkers, who were struggling after some days' bitterly contested tiddlywinks tournament (which Matt won, I think), and, lo, the winkers blushed (a horrid thought), and turned to beer and violent drinking games, particularly Pigs and Squop-Bristol (which did for me and then I had to go to bed).

And when other winkers were told that Ed, by the power of thought, had turned a sober gathering of serious-minded winkers to violent drinking games, they were amazed;

They said, This man is more than man; And when the winkers went for a walk on the final day to some soggy stones, they would gladly have followed Ed (and Timmy), but then they preferred to walk back along the road rather than venturing further into the damp field.



Thoughts on a Timer Experiment

Andrew Garrard

Since the recent resurgence in the Great Slow Play Discussion (q.v. WW86 and rants at every tournament in recent memory), we've been experimenting with alternative timing options. This article reports on one such trial.

Goals

For those blissfully new to the debate, we've been trying to find an acceptable variation on timing for winks games which solves (as I categorise them) two problems:

1. games over-run, leading to fewer games at tournaments than we'd like, to other players waiting for games to end (the disparity in end times being the problem here), and to tournaments ending late;
2. slow play (that is, taking a long time in deciding how to play a shot) can interrupt the flow of the opposition and reduce the number of shots played during a game, affecting strategy.

Over-long games were supposed to be avoided by the time limit to the game that was introduced after an early match when Oxford elected to sit on Cambridge's winks rather than finish the game by potting. This solution allowed slow play to influence strategy, by limiting the number of shots available before the end of the game. The addition of rounds at the end of the game addresses this, but the duration of these rounds restores the variation in game time that the time limit was intended to redress.

Slow shot play is counteracted by the 'thirty-second rule': one can elect to stop the timer and/or practise if one's opposition spends over thirty seconds on a shot. This prevents a winning team wasting time to limit the number of shots in the game, but doesn't remove the disruption of one's 'feel' when waiting to play (practice on another surface is a poor substitute, and often not an available option) – and it increases the total game time.

The duration of rounds has become a major concern. This is a direct consequence of slow play: with a fixed number of turns to play, slow rounds can only result from a long time spent on each shot. As the end of the game approaches, more thinking time is naturally required, but exceptional slowness remains problematic. We now expect tournament games to take forty-five minutes – averaging a minute per turn in rounds – yet we still often over-run. The thirty-second rule is of limited effect once the time period has expired (practice is rarely convenient); there is no recourse against a slow opponent at this point.

New solutions

The failings of the traditional conflicting solutions have elicited numerous proposals. Those officially trialled include:

- a hard limit on game duration (each tournament round starts at a fixed time, and those who have not finished their previous game forfeit the new game 7–0; this doesn't address the second concern, and can result in a fast team being penalised by a slow one);
- a one-minute rule (failure to play within two minutes results in forfeiture of the shot; this still allows multiple shots to take just shy of a minute).

My proposal is a variant of a Fischer chess clock.

- Each team has a time bank holding up to a fixed number of seconds. When experimenting, this limit was two minutes.
- Before each shot an amount is added to the time bank, up to the maximum that the bank can hold. I set the increment at twenty seconds.
- The playing team's time bank starts counting down at the start of each shot, and if a shot has not been played when time runs out the player is obliged to pass.
- Time remaining in the bank is retained for that team's next shot. Game duration is still determined by an overall twenty- or twenty-five-minute clock plus five rounds – fast players should see no change. The per-shot time bank replaces the thirty-second rule: there is no need to stop the game clock or practise since play cannot be excessively slow.
- There is no special treatment of rounds (the time bank still counts down, the per-shot increment is the same), as slow play in rounds is detrimental to game duration and should be discouraged. Players should play faster as rounds approach to earn thinking time for the end of the game.
- This timer complies with the current rules: it merely involves a gentleman's agreement to pass when shot time expires and not to invoke the existing thirty-second rule.

To be practical, this approach requires electronic assistance; I have written a timer which runs on Java-equipped mobile phones (needing a button press after each shot), which may be found at

<http://www.zen60163.zen.co.uk/Private/Winks/Timer/>.

This timer allows adjustments to the per-shot time increment and the time bank limit (as well as the total game time), which may be useful for a game involving novices who need more time to think.

The Cambridge Open

The timer used at the Cambridge Open differed from later versions, in that

- multiple key presses were needed after each shot, and
- it had a number of bugs.

I trust those who experienced it will not hold these failings against the scheme. I used the timer as a conventional timer, and merely observed the shot time counter. Nonetheless, the experience gave some valuable observations.

- The provisional time limits seem reasonable. Almost universally, the time banks were quickly filled; as intended, the first few shots are brief enough to raise the time to its maximum.
- Most play was fast enough not to be affected by the shot time limit. This is intentional: the aim of the timer is to mitigate effects of slow play without adversely influencing the normal flow of the game. The exception involved two (relative) novices, for whom the shot timer went substantially negative – though I did not tell them this. Play in that game was particularly slow, and the thirty-second rule could have been repeatedly applied under more serious conditions – the lack of shots affected the outcome.

In retrospect, the timer could have been set more leniently to allow for novice players: anti-slow-play measures should penalise dawdling among experienced players, not separate the inexperienced from time they need to learn. Novices often play slowly, and it's perhaps fair that experts should compensate for their slow play.

Finally, it is awkward for just one player to have to update the timer, especially with the original version's unwieldy interface.

A CUTwC meeting

Shortly before the Fours I attended a CUTwC meeting and played some games using the timer. The President found the timer to be fiddly when running on his own phone, partly because I inadequately explained the multiple ways to use it to best suit the phone design, but had no trouble with my phone. The design had been improved so that most timer updates required a single button press, and the known bugs had been removed.

We first used the timer as an umpire might for a world title match (not a typical use), with the timer-wielder not playing. Excluding a few errors during acclimatisation, this seemed easy enough, and we abandoned the experiment to play a new game.

This produced the unfortunate observation that the games which involved the 'slow-play timer' finished ten minutes after all the others: that they also started ten minutes after the others was less widely reported.

During play the need to keep pressing the timer was mildly intrusive but not especially difficult. My suggestion that the timer be passed between players each shot seems too strict, at least for a singles game: because the timer needs updating so frequently, it's better left within reach and for players to press the timer on each others' behalf when convenient. It should still be the player's responsibility to ensure *someone* updates the timer after their shot.

Relying on another to update the timer is particularly helpful between pots: getting up to update the timer is distracting. Updating the timer when your opponent pots should, perhaps, be part of suggested protocol.

A pairs game was played using the timer, with one player (a late arrival) unadvised of its features – the others ensured that the timer was always updated. This bodes well for introducing the timer to new players without needing it to intrude on them unduly.

Neither game suffered slow play, so the benefits of the timing scheme weren't evident. Again, as it should be: if the aim is to eradicate slow play, it should already be rare. Time did expire on one shot, but because an external player interrupted, so the clock should have been stopped anyway (leading to the request that the 'pause button' be renamed the 'rant button').

A friendly game

The evening before the Royal Match, I stayed with Alan Dean, and we played a couple of friendly games, again with the timer.

- The design of the device matters: Alan struggled with the keys on my phone, sometimes pressing multiple buttons when only meaning to press one. Any timer update gives visual feedback, but when rushed this may not be obvious. This problem may disappear with familiarity or another phone design – notably, mine has no convenient number pad, only direction keys. Dave seemed to have no problems, and preferred my phone to his; each to his own (or another's!).
- Alan once ran out of shot time – partly because I broke my own rule of announcing that time was ten seconds from expiring, thinking him about to play. The twenty-second increment feels much shorter when the bank has zeroed – one very slow shot must be followed by fast ones – but this is intentional; the solution is not to play slow shots. I think that, even under duress, a sequence

of shots shouldn't average more than twenty seconds each – although the timer can be configured for those who disagree.

It also helps if the timer isn't left at the wrong end of the table after a shot!

The Teams of Four

At the Fours, I deliberately proposed the timer only in games whose participants might be sympathetic to experiment (involving relative novices from YUTS seemed unfair); thanks to Steve, who partnered me, for letting the timer intrude on his games. Some games without the timer were excruciatingly slow (Stew) in comparison.

Most notable to me were two games.

- A game against Richard (playing singles). Sometimes deliberation caused the time bank to dip below a minute, but otherwise the timer did not influence the game.
- A game against Ben and Rick. Twice, during rounds, our opponents' time bank emptied. They were told this, although – despite agreeing to the timing scheme beforehand – didn't play any faster or pass as a consequence. This was indubitably my fault for inadequately explaining the timing rule; Rick's question 'but what if you don't pass when your time runs out?' may have warned that the scheme's intent wasn't clear. Since the experiment was voluntary (I thought Rick as winks historian and Ben as Tournament Organiser might like first-hand involvement in the slow play debate), we ignored this. It was notable that our game finished late.

I fielded comments after the games.

- Steve felt the timer was a bit too intrusive; also he was rushing his shots. The scheme aims to remove slow play, not to promote speed winks, so there shouldn't normally be time pressure. Whether Steve's complaint that it over-influenced the game was a fault with the scheme or of unfamiliarity with it is hard to judge.
- Rick found the timer 'a bit distracting, especially being told you've got almost no time left when you're going to play'. (In fact, no shot was being lined up when warnings were given, and any such timing scheme aims to compensate for the distracting effect of slow play; in any case the warnings caused no rush to play in the allocated time.) The thirty-second rule was not invoked during the game, being obviated by the new scheme, so Rick's report that 'some Americans' invoke it a lot might justify some intercession in his playing style. It's hard to see how any scheme intended to discourage slow play would not distract those

who are playing slowly! Again, the proposal may have been misunderstood in this case, so these comments may be unfair.

Summary

Being raised on a game of twenty-five minutes and five rounds, I aimed to find changes which fix the most possible problems (overrunning games, one team's slow play disturbing the other's strategy or shot-making ability) with minimal effect on acceptably brisk play under current rules. I intended that if tournament play must use such timers, friendly matches could be played with unadjusted strategy using just a wall clock.

Is that what this timer achieves? Maybe. My strategy was unchanged, beyond keeping half an eye on the timer. Steve found his style of play affected, but never by the actual amount of time remaining – any time-per-shot variant might have caused rushing, but maybe familiarity would breed content.

Updating the timer, even with a single button press, after each shot is awkward. Dave and Alan found the physical features of individual devices significant, and using a different phone may help. My original proposal of making custom timers would be better, but the mobile phone solution is much less effort, ubiquitous and free. Steve and (with my phone) Dave could operate the timer with minimal introduction; I found it becoming instinctive, albeit still intrusive. Without manufacturing stick-on Bluetooth transmitters so squidgers can report directly when they have been used to play a shot, it's hard to do much better.

Is the inconvenience of updating the timer worth the benefits? This is my preferred scheme of those that count shot time: it's no harder to use than other proposals, and I feel it does a better job of balancing shot duration than more complex suggestions. Whether any shot time counter is worthwhile is another matter.

On the thirty-second rule

As my scheme replaces the thirty-second rule, the original bears examination.

I'd always considered the thirty-second rule only as an attempt to resolve the problem of slow play reducing the number of available shots. I'd deemed it a poor solution, not speeding shot play and adversely affecting total game time. In retrospect, I'd given insufficient weight to its other feature: it is invoked at the option of the injured party.

My proposal could also be optional (one can 'play the let', especially with a negative time bank imposing guilt). There's an important distinction: stopping the clock doesn't disadvantage the slow player (although it hurts others in the tournament) but

a forced pass is directly detrimental. If a player opts to penalise the opponent with a forced pass, antipathy will be associated with the decision; a strict rule, however harsh, might avoid blame. Slow play saps the game's fun and demonises slow players, but the solution shouldn't make matters worse. Leniency should come from adjusting the time bank size and increment – although I'd hope that exceeding time by a couple of seconds would be treated sympathetically.

The discretionary penalty factor applies to other slow play proposals. The harsher the penalty, the less acceptable for it to be optional – but any non-trivial penalty carries implied malice. An enforced 7-0 may be imposed only under extreme provocation, the imposer hesitating out of sympathy, but penalised players will feel aggrieved no matter how common and mild or rare and punitive the outcome. Clock stopping can happen with impunity (although it can cause offence if applied with undue fervour, Charles), but harsher optional punishment is less acceptable: the thirty-second rule marks the limit. Allowing exceptions for leniency, as in proposals with a fixed number of time-outs, only defers the problem while restoring variation in game duration.

In contrast, the application of the thirty-second rule as it stands must be optional. Exact shot duration is rarely measured, so the clock is stopped only when the shot time is exceptional. Without updating the timer each shot it's impractical to measure shot time exactly, and making the rule discretionary avoids differences of opinion: 'that wasn't thirty seconds' is unheard because usually much longer has elapsed. Were the rule applied at every opportunity (a shot timer that stopped the master clock after thirty seconds would be easy to create) games would overrun considerably more than now: at most opportunities, the clock is not currently stopped. This contrasts with my proposal, for which the time bank rarely empties.

This raises another point: a rule designed to be invoked infrequently (or never, for a discouraging rule) will likely penalise only one side during any given game. However deserved, imbalance carries overtones of injustice, especially with a new rule more familiar to some players than others – recall the trouble when free turn counting rules changed. A rarely-invoked rule may take longer to become familiar. Shot duration rules blend the ubiquitous and the rare: time constraints influence every shot but the penalty for slow play is ideally never applied, so a constant rule to some may seem obscure to others. A mild but commonly-invoked rule might balance out over several games, making the rule seem fair; rarer but more punitive rules may seem less so.

Similarly, the inconvenience of a shot timer may be more acceptable if the rule constantly affects the game than if it intrudes only rarely (and thus rarely seems to use the timer whose updating is so awkward). The minimal change for which I aimed may feel redundant, the timer unnecessary – where a similarly effective, but more

substantial, rule change that uses the shot time counters more explicitly may justify its inconvenience better.

In summary, we can't penalise slow players with a rule which is invoked optionally. Optional rules allow for uncertainty in shot time; to penalise a slow shot, duration must be known absolutely – so each shot be timed. Perhaps obvious, but only having seen the response to ruling on an over-long shot did I realise the significance of discretionary penalties, and appreciate that enforcing an optional rule would be a problem.

Swings and roundabouts

Current rules inadequately regulate slow play – else we would not so regularly rant about it. The thirty-second rules are imperfect: they still permit slow play and can exacerbate the overrunning of games, but they seem the only options not to actively penalise the slow player. Instead, the slow players' opposition is compensated by not having their strategy or (given the opportunity to practise) their 'feel' interrupted. There is no discouragement to the slow player, no incitement to keep tournament rounds from over-running.

A solution which improves the situation must go further: either negating the effects of slow play or eradicating it. No proposal seems to hide all the effects of slow play (more than the game time limit and the thirty-second rule combination); penalties for slow play remain the only option.

Any penalised slow player is bound to dislike such rules: they aim to correct bad habits, and this is never enjoyable. We can't eradicate slow play without means to stop people from playing slowly. All suggested approaches affect the game appreciably – my scheme, other than the need to update the timer, impinges on acceptably-fast players the least of those I've seen. Still, I was wary of trialling it in some games at the Fours without an official mandate for fear of a prejudiced response. I suspect any penalty scheme may be unpopular at first – especially if some players are less familiar with it than others and feel disadvantaged.

I claim that any scheme which penalises slow shots must be obligatory to avoid the blame factor. It must, therefore, be intrusive: there must be an automated official counter of per-player time, whether the scheme is the one I proposed or another, and this counter will take effort to update. This intrusiveness will often be unwelcome and unnecessary: most games do not suffer from abnormally slow play, by definition.

Are we so concerned about slow play that we are prepared to suffer the necessary inconvenience required to discourage it? Once imbued with speedy habits, if there is no more slow play, dare we withdraw the timer again for expediency? (My scheme, at least, should allow this with minimal upset.) If we are not prepared to sacrifice, we

should accept that some play will be slow, and concentrate on the consciences of the guilty parties – although this approach has had limited success so far.

What are we trying to solve?

I've assumed that we want to stop slow shot play; resolving this also solves the over-running of games. If we choose not to bear the cost of such a solution, what problems can we fix?

The original Royal Match players were surprised at the need for the clock. This reminded me that the current rules – twenty-five minutes, rounds, the thirty-second rule – were all introduced to regulate slow play, and have significant effects on the game. Perhaps we shouldn't worry about changing the style of play imposed by these rules if the shape of the modern game is determined by their failings more than their intent. On the other hand, we are acclimatised to the current rules; major changes may alter the game we know and love to one we don't, and don't. A change may be for the better (we have more hindsight than when the existing rules were introduced), but the pain of adjustment while we confirm this may outweigh any gain. Slow play has been reduced to a relatively rare problem; maybe what we have is good enough.

Total match duration can be regulated without timing each shot. Enforcing a start time for each round worked well, although the experiment was under relatively favourable circumstances – this may leave fast players penalised by slow ones, but perhaps this is acceptable: players should think while their opponents play, so apparently-fast play can result from hiding a lot of thinking time behind an equally-slow opponent's shot.

Slow shot play annoys opponents, but only affects game duration in rounds or when the clock is stopped – avoidable if the waiting team is prepared to let the clock run. Maybe we should accept the thirty-second rule (combined with peer pressure) as the best that we can do to speed shots during the timed period. How, then, can we make games finish on time?

- Rounds must be brisk. The end-game can be complicated – nobody wishes to remove strategy from the game – but most of the game should be the timed period. Timing shots in rounds is easier than in the timed period, so a per-shot limit could be imposed (a conventional timer can be used) – or we could require that rounds finish by a fixed time and leave details to the players.
- Clock stopping should be rare. Slow opponents can hamper strategy, but be a lesser evil than delaying the tournament. A stopped clock should be an encouragement to play, not a permit to think. Avoiding tournament delay justifies the hasty choice of a shot that will have a random factor to its outcome

anyway. Winks is a probabilistic function based on getting to the pub – there are better things to do than spend your time estimating shot risks.

- Umpires – both needing and providing one – can delay a game. Better to offer to umpire quickly than to hold up another game in need, then find the tournament running behind. Better not to call an umpire unnecessarily (it delays two games, not one). If it's close, maybe a prompt conclusion is better than a slow but definitive one (for the record, I've never applied this policy!) Maybe umpires should be timed, the best guess taken after two minutes?
- Games must start promptly. Spending five minutes practising the last shot you missed while other participants in your game are waiting is unacceptable. If you want time between games, pot out.
- Interruptions should be minimised. Others suffer if someone who interrupts a game can't wait for a quiet moment.

Maybe the rules can't solve this. We can rant at people when rounds are slow. We can rant at, well, me if games start late. Maybe the fun is in the ranting; maybe we'll never please everyone. And maybe we just need more experiments.



A quick moan: baselines

The same anonymous moaning curmudgeon as before

Rule 3.3: . . . At each corner of the mat there should be . . . ‘baselines’

Interesting word, ‘should’. Are there baselines on your mat? A mat which causes amusement in MITTwA (‘winks games are long and slow, and we have to get our laughs where we can’) is a mat which used to belong to a member of CUTwC, who took the trouble to write his initials on the mat in huge letters, and even the date, but neglected to make any useful markings, such as baselines. Just draw them on; it needs a marker pen, a tape measure and ten minutes, and relieves hours of ranting.

Rule 5.2: The winks are placed behind the baselines

Interesting word, ‘behind’. It doesn’t mean ‘in front of’, and it doesn’t mean ‘on’. It means ‘behind’. A wink should be brought in from a position where it is wholly outside the field of play; the point of this is that other winks can come to rest close to the baseline, and winks *behind* the baseline shouldn’t interfere with them. I know it seems pedantic, but I find it reasonable to be pedantic about something which is very easy to get right – you don’t see a snooker referee placing a ball merely close to its spot and arguing that it’s pedantic to insist that it be on its spot.

Of course, there is an issue with undersized tables, which may not allow much space behind the baseline. But there is a lot of leeway: on a full-sized table, the baseline is more than four inches from the corner of the mat, giving an area of more than twenty-two square inches behind the baseline. Even if the table is four inches too short, the baseline will be nearly two and a half inches from the corner. Unless the table is really small, there’s room (especially if you take a few seconds to make sure the mat is placed centrally on the table). If the table is really too small, come to an agreement with your opponent. If you play against me, I’ll be watching you carefully.



Letters

Dear Time Lord, and other members of ETwA,

Events at the Cambridge Open suggested to me a possible solution to the slow play problem.

First some background. I don't know if you are familiar with the Ig Nobel Prizes. These coveted awards are presented annually by Improbably Research for research that 'first makes people laugh, and then makes them think' (improbable.com/ig/). The awards themselves are not really the issue. It is their awards ceremony that you need to know about. Now, it is an unfortunate phenomenon at awards ceremonies that people saying 'a few' words tend to go on far too long. Improbable Research do not tolerate this. They have a referee who strictly enforces time limits, and when a speaker has exceeded their time limit, he signals Miss Sweetie Poo, a nauseatingly cute eight-year-old girl, who walks up to the lectern and starts saying 'Please stop. I'm bored. Please stop. I'm bored. Please stop. I'm bored.' repeatedly in a whiney American accent until the speaker gives up. This tends to be quite effective.

By now, you may be wondering why I am telling you all this. So, back to the Cambridge Open. On Sunday morning, we were blessed by the presence of Christine and CJ Barrie. Patrick and I were embroiled in very complicated game against Alan Dean, and proceedings had naturally become rather protracted. CJ, like all sensible people, was worried about how long he would have to wait before lunch in the Hat and Feathers, so he came over and said 'Daddy, hurry up! You're holding up the tournament. Daddy, hurry up! You're holding up the tournament.' At which point I suddenly put two and two together and got eureka!

Yours in haste,

Tim Hunt

P.S. Miss Sweetie Poo does not seem to have made it on to YouTube in her own right. If you wish to see her in action, you will have to watch one of the complete webcasts available from the improbable.com web site.

Sir,

Where are the trophies these days? The Jubilee Cup has not been seen for some time, and is certainly not in the hands of the present holder. It is the same with the Cambridge Open trophy.

Yours faithfully,

M.A.C. Relle

National Teams of Four

2nd March 2008, Cambridge

David Bradley-Williams



Andrew Garrard

The excitement of the second royal match since 1320 had evidently exhausted many of the Cambridge winkers. The rumors of treachery and bravery the previous day were running wild as we waited in the Harrod's Room in Emmanuel for the traditional arrival time of Andrew Garrard. It soon became clear that not only were rumours running fast but so was Steve Phillips, albeit away from the Queen's Building. A quick nip to buy a Mothers' Day card, or just getting the blood flowing through his winking fingers? Whatever his motives, he arrived in good time to find his team-mates huddle and discuss the tactics for the day.

Among our number were four representatives of the York University Tiddlywinks Society – Jen Collinson, Mark Eyles, Peter Rocker and myself – three of whom were playing in their first ETwA tournament. With a few well placed bribes, the YUTS players managed to recruit four ringers onto their teams. The registration of fifteen players led to the partition of 4 + 4 + 4 + 3 and the TO declared a format of four-team all-play-all (three rounds, each of two games between the pairs chosen from opposing teams). Being a handicapped tournament, the handicaps were negotiated

	Player	Handicap	Opponent																Raw	Cooked	
			1				2				3				4						
			a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d			
1	a	Geoff Thorpe	6	6	5	5	6	6	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	3½	3½	6	49½	45⅙
	b	Stew Sage	5	—	6	5	6	6	5	5	6	1	6	6	1	2⅓	6	6	2⅓		
	c	Richard Ackland	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	6	1	6	3½	3½	6		
2	a	Alan Dean	7	1	1	6		5	4	4	5	5	4	4	5	3	3	6	6	55	44½
	b	Andrew Garrard	5	2	2	6	—	4	6	6	4	4	6	6	4	5	5	7	7		
	c	Steve Phillips	4	2	2	6		4	6	6	4	4	6	6	4	5	5	7	7		
d	Bob Wilkinson	4	1	1	6		5	4	4	5	5	4	4	5	3	3	6	6			
3	a	Patrick Barrie	7	1	6	6	2	3	3	2		4½	4½	5½	5½	2	2	5	5	35	40½
	b	Tim Hunt	6	1	1	1	3	1	1	3	—	2	2	5	5	4½	4½	5½	5½		
	c	Mark Eyles	0	1	1	1	3	1	1	3		2	2	5	5	2	2	5	5		
d	Peter Rocker	0	1	6	6	2	3	3	2		2	2	5	5	2	2	5	5			
4	a	Rick Tucker	5	1	4⅔	1	4	2	2	4	2½	5	2½	5	5	—	—	—	28	37⅙	
	b	Ben Fairbairn	3	3½	1	3½	4	2	2	4	2½	5	2½	5	2½	5	2½	5			
	c	David Bradley-W.	3	3½	1	3½	1	0	0	1	1½	2	1½	2	1½	2	1½	2			
d	Jen Collinson	0	1	4⅔	1	1	0	0	1	1½	2	1½	2	1½	2	1½	2				



Andrew Garrard

and assigned between 0 (novice) and 7 (national champion). As you can see, there was a range of experience present. Only the number 1 was left unassigned and the average handicap was $3 \frac{4}{5}$. This leads to absolutely no interesting conclusions whatsoever.

The first game had team C vs D, and Ben Fairbairn and I playing against Richard Ackland and Geoff Thorpe. Via what must seem an outright conspiracy, we attained the witty score of $3 \frac{1}{2} - 3 \frac{1}{2}$. More impressively my teammates Rick Tucker and Jen Collinson arranged for the rarer score of $4 \frac{2}{3} - 2 \frac{1}{3}$ against Stew Sage. This was a very encouraging sign, introducing sixths to the score sheet on the very first game and pulling ahead of a significantly more experienced team. Stew put an end to this in the next round, having decided it was almost time for lunch, and potted out against myself and Ben. The other games of round 1 saw, at first, team B making the most of the less experienced players on team A. It should be noted that team A soon warmed up, and their second game saw both partnerships scoring 3 from their adversaries. At the end of the first round, although the unadjusted scores showed the experienced players of teams B and D winning the most points; after applying the handicaps the four teams were pretty level, with D slightly ahead of the field and C's fractional

scores taking them seven sixths ahead of the other York players' team, A.

Lunch was refreshing, and was taken in various pubs in the Clarendon Street area. Splitting up was inevitable due to the fight for space against the large groups of mothers who were out in force. As usual, the morning's differences were dissolved in the solvent of real ales selected from Greene King's offerings. We were relieved to see Sarah and Ed both arrive as we were leaving to return to the tournament. It had been feared that Ed would have to be 'burnt at the Sage' due to his treachery the previous day, in playing against Cambridge in collusion with the Savages. Although he had clearly been pardoned, the signs of guilt lay on his face; and Sarah explained his devastation at his own actions had kept him from play in today's tournament.

'Winks was taken up again close to two o'clock in the surrounding of ex-masters of Emmanuel watching from their wall hangings in the Gardner Room. In Round 2, team C was drawn against their rivals A. The decisive York vs York match. Team A were insistent on gaining the lost ground against team C and ended up scoring 17 against C's 11 (raw). Meanwhile in the B vs D games Stew and Geoff Thorpe proved a formidable paring against all their opponents in B. Viewing the damage after round 2, it became clear to us in team C that we had fallen behind the field.

Despite the trips to be relieved increasing in frequency, it was evident that slow play had not plagued us today as we headed to finish before 5. There was no clear winner going into the last round, but Geoff Thorpe clearly had his mind on 6. He demonstrated that neither Patrick and Peter nor Tim and Mark would take any more than 1 point from him. Another impressive victory for team D saw Richard Ackland and Stew take 6 against Mark and Tim. This strong play in the last round left D deservedly on top. So well done to Stew, Geoff and Richard Ackland.

I would like to finish this report with congratulations to the York novices all of whom fared so well against the sea of experience. Also thanks are due to Ben Fairbairn for organising the tournament, Patrick Barrie for organising the venue, Emmanuel College for providing such a variety of rooms, and everyone else for being such skilful opponents.



Crossword

Ed Wynn

1	2	3		4		5	6	7		8
	9					10				
11						12		13		14
			15			16			17	
	18	19	20					21		
22							23			
	24				25				26	
				27						
			28							
										29
30						31	32		33	
		34								
35			36							
							37			

	38		39				40
41							
	42						

Answers that are winkers' names are defined briefly; one has a traditional misspelling in the grid. Where solutions are abbreviations, total letter counts are given. All but one of the letters in the bold boxes (in unclued two-letter entries) are anagrammed to make the solutions to clues 38–43. The first winker to tell the WW editor the extraneous letter will not win a prize.

Across

- 1,2 To stray is to err loudly (2,2,3)
- 7 Tide-watcher, we hear, sea-maniac (4)
- 9 See 36
- 11 A paperback? (3)
- 12 High priest might be urged to keep his when agitated, we hear (5)
- 16 Rough dive, empty tavern, or pub conversation with screens (5,3)
- 18 Someone who begs and borrows, lacking nothing, pops in and out (8)
- 21 See 30d
- 22 See 5
- 24 Operatic phantom knocks back drink and drugs (4)
- 25,32 To stray is a blunder, your American players might argue (8,4)
- 28 Is in clink trouble around the First – Great Scot! (4,6)
- 30 A bird is working? (2,2)
- 31 Old Danish weight, or a dubious Afrikaner currency (3)
- 34 Entering hospital, somewhat smooth way is a sign? (2,7,4)
- 35 Beer trouble, we hear? (3)
- 36,9 'I'd meddled,' florid, flustered old player frequently says (6,3,6)
- 37 Tool to get the line right (5)
- 38 I sew warm ripped clothes for the beach (8)
- 41 Flower on the table for food (game) – equipment found in a pub (9)
- 42 Tool for kitchen fireplace, right? (6)

Down

- 2 See 1
- 3 Obtained an inverse unit of insulation (3)
- 4,14 Left-handed mason dying messily (5,5)
- 5,22 Whisky for former leader at short break (5,5)
- 6,15 A drunk flew out from America (4,6)
- 7 Could Old Etonian be used to paddle? (5)
- 8 Queen backs it to the front row (4)
- 10 Under the influence of cool vodka, wed the dragon (4,8)
- 13 Roman god back in book (3)
- 14 See 4
- 15 See 6
- 17 See 19
- 18,23 Formally called out a western Satan: "Go!" (7,4,4)
- 19,17 Their bairn cries out: "Mother!" (9,6)
- 20 In heroic country? (3)
- 23 See 18
- 26 Sounds completely boring! – tool? (3)
- 27 Graces cool means of transport (7)
- 29 Acting school-master's final method of detection (5)
- 30,21 Like some blonde and former champion (4,4)
- 32 See 25
- 33 Note cleared space for answers (4)
- 38 Hurt finally leaves sharp taste (5)
- 39 Select swift way joining national associations (5)
- 40 Went on horse round cowboy show (5)

Cambridge Open

27th–28th January 2008, Cambridge

Ben Fairbairn

Player	Round													Games	Points	p.p.g.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13			
Chris Abram	4 ¹ / ₂	6 _a	5 _b	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	15 ¹ / ₂	5 ¹ / ₆
Patrick Barrie	1 _a	5	1	6 _a	6 _a	6 _b	7	6 _a	5 _a	1 _c	6 _a	6 _a	7	13	63	4 ¹¹ / ₁₃
Charles Relle	3 _a	2	2 _c	6 _a	3	5	6 _a	6 _c	5 _c	6 _a	7	4	6	13	61	4 ⁹ / ₁₃
Bob Wilkinson	2 ¹ / ₂	5	2 _b	1 _b	6 _b	6 _a	6 _b	6 _c	2 _c	6 _c	5 ¹ / ₂	3 ¹ / ₂	5 _b	13	56 ¹ / ₂	4 ⁹ / ₂₆
Andrew Garrard	3 _b	6 _b	2 _b	5 ¹ / ₂	4	5	—	6 _b	2 _a	7	6 _a	1 _b	2 _a	12	49 ¹ / ₂	4 ¹ / ₈
Patrick Driscoll	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	4	4
Tim Hunt	4 _b	4	—	5	5	7	3	1 _d	5 _b	1 _b	1 _a	6 _b	5 _b	12	47	3 ¹¹ / ₁₂
Steve Phillips	—	—	—	—	—	—	1 _a	6 _d	3	6 _a	6 _b	3	2 _a	7	27	3 ⁶ / ₇
Geoff Thorpe	6 _b	1 _b	5 _b	6 _b	2	6 _a	0	6 _d	4	1 _b	1 _b	6 _a	5 _a	13	49	3 ¹⁰ / ₁₃
Ian Gameson	6 _b	4	5 _c	5 ¹ / ₂	1 _b	2	4	1 _a	5 _a	6 _c	7	1 _b	1	13	48 ¹ / ₂	3 ¹⁹ / ₂₆
Stew Sage	1 _b	6 _a	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	3	11	3 ² / ₃
Andy Blackburn	4 ¹ / ₂	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0	3 ¹ / ₂	7	5	18	3 ³ / ₅
John Haslegrave	1 _b	4 ¹ / ₂	5 _c	2	6 _a	1 _b	3	—	—	6 _b	1 ¹ / ₂	3 ¹ / ₂	6	11	39 ¹ / ₂	3 ¹³ / ₂₂
Alan Dean	4 _a	2	6	1 _b	2	1 _a	7	1 _a	5 _b	6 _b	6 _b	3 ¹ / ₂	2 _b	13	46 ¹ / ₂	3 ¹⁵ / ₂₆
Ben Fairbairn	4 _a	1 _b	—	5	3	6 _b	1 _b	6 _b	2 _b	—	—	—	—	8	28	3 ¹ / ₂
Ed Wynn	6 _a	1 _a	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	7	3 ¹ / ₂
Alasdair Grant	6 _a	6 _b	5 _a	1 _a	1 _a	1 _b	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	20	3 ¹ / ₃
Richard Ackland	1 _a	2 ¹ / ₂	6	6 _b	5	0	1 _b	1 _b	5 _c	7	5 ¹ / ₂	1 _b	0	13	41	3 ² / ₁₃
Sarah Knight	2 ¹ / ₂	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	5 ¹ / ₂	2 ³ / ₄
Liz Ackland	4 _b	1 _a	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	5	2 ¹ / ₂
Joseph Elliston	—	—	2 _c	1 _a	—	—	—	—	—	1 _a	1 ¹ / ₂	6 _b	—	5	11 ¹ / ₂	2 ³ / ₁₀
Zoe Brass	—	—	5 _a	1 ¹ / ₂	1 _b	0	—	—	—	1 _c	1 _b	4	—	7	13 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹³ / ₁₄
Jonathan Gameson	3 _b	4 ¹ / ₂	2 _a	1 ¹ / ₂	6 _b	2	0	1 _d	2 _b	0	0	3	0	13	25	1 ¹² / ₁₃
Andrew Gameson	3 _a	2 ¹ / ₂	1	2	1 _a	1 _a	1 _a	1 _c	2 _c	0	1 _a	1 _b	1	13	17 ¹ / ₂	1 ⁹ / ₂₆

So, having offered to write up the Teams of Four (or was it the Royal Match?) I find myself being asked to do the write-up for January's Cambridge open. In March. Many details are now a distant memory, so I apologise for the lack of detail in the article.

The first day began traditionally, with Andrew Garrard having sent a message in advance that he would be late, forcing us to do the first draw with pieces of paper. Thankfully the tournament organiser had had the foresight to put all the obvious names on little pieces of paper in advance, accelerating the draw. These came in



Andrew Garrard

useful the following day for exactly the same reason. As draws go it was a pretty odd one – Stew Sage had accidentally been omitted and we were unexpectedly treated to the company of Alasdair Grant.

As the day progressed we were even joined by multiple novices who played a non-trivial number of games.

Other than that, much of the weekend is a bit of a blur. Andrew Garrard's new Fischer-clock-style timer enjoyed its first experimental outing. Personally my only experience of it was a game against Richard Ackland playing singles in which I convincingly sat on a large number of doubletons and tripletons, comfortably winning the game 6–1. Perhaps these new conventions are not so bad after all?

The 'intimate' sized dinner on Saturday really only saw Geoff Thorpe suffering on the Sunday. So much so, in fact, that we had enough players present at the start of play that the first round of the day saw an entire three games played. The Sunday morning as a whole even saw three rounds played before lunch.

Personally I spent the whole of the Sunday afternoon in the Hat and Feathers and thus know little of the afternoon's 'winks'. Needless to say that Patrick Barrie enjoyed a meteoric rise up through the ranks on the second day, going on to win the tournament as a whole.



Radio Four translated

Alan Harper

Editor's note: Readers will recall from WW88 the following quote from It's that Jo Caulfield again on Radio Four, with a request from me for an explanation:

Tiddlywinks? Shizzle ma nizzle, mofo!

I can now hand you over to WW's Youth Culture correspondent, Alan Harper.

This is a form of 'Snoop speak' made famous by the rapper Snoop Doggy Dogg in the last ten years. It's a linguistic technique, slightly fuzzily defined, whereby -izz or -izzle are introduced into the word in place of everything after the last pre-vowel consonant in the word. However, the deletion is not always complete and is usually done in an 'artistic manner'.

In the above sentence the speaker is trying to say

Tiddlywinks? For sure, my male African-American brethren who has indulged your Oedipus complex!

In the 'Snoop speak' sentence:

- 'sure' becomes 'sh-ure', which becomes 'shizzle';
- 'n...er' becomes 'nizzle';
- 'mofo' is an 'artistic' contraction of 'mo(ther)f...(er)'.

The speaker clearly has a poor grasp of Snoop speak, since he adds a completely unnecessary 'mofo', as the object of the sentence, the 'nizzle', is then immediately redefined as a 'mofo'.

A website that translates into snoop speak is fun to play with and can be found here: sites.gizoogle.com/index2.php?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.bbc.co.uk.

I hope that helps, my homie!



