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Editorial

In early October the sad news broke of the sudden passing of Charles Relle, the elder statesman of tiddlywinks who for many decades had been proactive in supporting the game, often encouraging old players back (he started playing in the early 1960s) and was always welcoming to new players. He features prominently in most current players' most vivid memories of the game. Winking World has long benefitted from Charles' support with most issues, at least as long as your current editor can remember, containing a contribution from him whether he was asked to provide one or not. As an example, Winking World 93 featured not just a letter to the editor from Charles, but even two articles he wrote entitled "Why Bother With Tiddlywinks Nowadays?" and even "Super-Sexy Winks: Comments and Ideas". This edition is no exception and we are pleased to include multiple articles he had submitted out of the blue since the last edition appeared. Indeed, I am honoured to have been in one of the "couple[s] locked in strange embraces" when failing to remember how to tie Danish Babar's bow tie in Charles' account of the diamond jubilee dinner. Tim Hunt made the suggestion "that Winking World re-runs his series of articles of how to Bristol as a tribute, since we now cannot learn from the master himself" and this we have dutifully done, reprinting four articles from Winking Worlds 78–81. We also have Charles' account of this year's Cambridge Open and one other off-beat contributions from him.

It is a fitting tribute that this edition is no slender volume — so what else is here for you, dear reader? Notable highlights include an astonishing account of a conversation with a parrot and a detailed exposition of the recently formed London Tiddlywinks Collective along with all the usual accounts of recent tournaments. My deepest gratitude goes to everyone who wrote a piece for this edition, namely, in no particular order, Harley Jones, Tim Hunt, Matthew Rose, Patrick Driscoll and Larry Kahn as well as Andrew Garrard who, as ever, proved to be a valuable source of pictures, but also provided an invaluable service in helping to reproduce Charles' Bristol articles and wrote the obituary we print here.

The Editor

The 2014 Cambridge Open

1st–2nd February 2014, Diamond, Selwyn College, Cambridge

Potting and women made a small comeback in this tournament; of the 35 games, 7 resulted in a pot-out; of the 21 players 2 were female, and finished 3rd and 4th by ppg. Oxford was also well-represented, with one current Oxford student braving the Enniskillen floorboards to attempt to repeat his (frankly embarrassing) victory over me in the Singles. Only 6 players played in enough games to qualify, partly due to players having to go home in the Sunday afternoon but mostly due to the allure of the Mill and its beer.

Many did travel from far and from near
To visit the Chadwick Room and to drink beer
The Open of Cambridge this fearful event
and 21 came to this Winks Tournament.

The players assembled that Saturday morn,
Their squidgers were polished, the first games were drawn
I partnered the Novice of but four days play
And we were defeated with usual dismay.

The next round bore losses to those you expect:
Surprises were few and the experts unchecked
By lucky beginners. In need of some grub,
We met Anne and Rupert and went to the pub.

The keen beans returned for the restart at two,
But slowness of kitchen meant that these were few.
Elizabeth Whalley by now had arrived
Ensuring that women in winking then thrived.

Geoff Thorpes second game of this winks afternoon
Showed that his standing was far from immune:
Blowing a pile at the end of round 5
Did Geoff little good; Liz and Michael's points thrive.

I partnered Liz next against Michael and Bob
This clash of the Presidents would make Michael sob
A squopping game put Bob and Mike in a fix

They only got one to our masterful six.

Elsewhere in the room Francis Wragg had turned up
Renowned for getting his winks in the cup
So startled was I when in his second game
Michael and Stew proved to have better aim.

At the end of day 1 I was doing quite well,
With ppg not far from that of Charles Relle;

but after the Dinner's a quite different day:
It wasn't just Christian who would be dismayed.

[Note; presumably at this point I'd had enough of this, and ignored it for a year.
I've no idea what happened on the second day, but it looks like CJ came and played
a few games, and as usual Patrick Barrie won.]

Harley Jones

*[Ed: This article was submitted to Winking World somewhat retrospectively in February
2015. Furthermore, seizing ancient powers a former Winking World editor included the scores
in an insert attached to Winking World 98.]*

Cambridge Open 2015

17th–18th January 2015, Diamond, Selwyn College, Cambridge

The Sixtieth Anniversary of the Founding of The Club was a special occasion for anyone who does not deplore decimalisation, and for some of those who do. The Dinner was attended and enjoyed by a large number of former members, including the Founder, who set an example to more recent players by taking part in a round of the tournament on the Sunday morning. Some other guests did play a few rounds, and more of them would have been welcome. The Cambridge Open is, after all, not a serious tournament, and people can socialise almost as much over the mats as in the pub.

The acme of ungallantry appeared in the first round, when Paul Moss trounced Marie Moss 7–0. This outrage was compounded by the fact that Marie was partnered by Patrick Barrie. Another notable partnership in this round was the almost-all American pairing of Patrick Driscoll and Larry Kahn, who took 6–1 off Stew Sage and Phil Buckham-Bonnett. The next round saw the welcome and all too rare appearance of Elizabeth Whalley, who partnered Richard Ackland, but Patrick Barrie, one of her opponents, was clearly determined to reverse his earlier result, and did just that with the help of Andrew Garrard. Two guest-appearers, James Murray and Alasdair Grant, were linked in this round, and beat Phil and Marie 6-1. So far the name of the Editor of WW is not visible in the results sheet.

Alan Harper had scored five in each of the first two rounds, but his name does not feature in round 3. Perhaps this was the round after lunch. But Andy Purvis was now present, and he and James went down 43 to Nick Inglis and Ed Green, another new arrival. Alan Harper was back in the fray for round four, when he and Nick took part in a 3-4 against Charles Relle and Ed. In this round The name of Geoff Thorpe appears for the first time, partnering Harley Jones to 2·5–4·5 against Patrick Barrie and Elizabeth. We also had a visitor from Indiana, Chris Abram, who, with Andrew Garrard, who had been at the tournament all along, made a notable entry into the tournament with a six against James Murray playing singles. But there was still no sign of the WW editor.

There were two new entries in round 5. One was Liz Ackland, who featured in a game in which the ladies were in a majority, partnering Elizabeth against Charles playing Singles. Charles controlled the game well, and potted five in rounds, and then attempted the sixth. This shot was bizarre even by his standards, as the wink was resting on four others. The score 4·5-2·5 tells the story that the pot-out did not

succeed, and that he was lucky to escape with a win. The other new player was Christian Gowers, who partnered Alasdair to 1-6 against Nick and James. Meanwhile Chris exceeded his score of the previous round with a seven, playing with Alan Dean against Richard. In round 6, Alasdair played with Nick Inglis getting six against Elizabeth and Alan Dean. This round also saw the appearance and disappearance of Nick Jarman, who got a zero partnering Sarah Knight against Patrick Barrie. I look in vain for the name of the WW editor.

Alan Dean had a new partner in round seven, Chris Goddard. They were up against Larry and Patrick Barrie, and the contest must have been tough, for they ended losing 3-4. This round also saw Stew emerge for the first time since round 2; partnering Richard against his wife Liz and Alan Harper, he was defeated 1-6. In addition, new to the tournament was Dave Clarkson, who partnered Andy against Harley and Charles. At one stage in this game, Charles proposed to play a Bristol off a pile onto a distant doubleton. This brought no demur from his partner and an incredulous grin to the face of Andy. The shot worked and the result was a 5-2. This round saw the final game of Chris, a 4-3 with Nick against Andrew and Phil. By contrast, Matthew Rose made his entry to the tournament at this stage, gaining 5-5 points with Tim Hunt, who had played since the start, against James Murray and James Cullingham, the latter also making his first appearance. We were all very pleased when Bill Steen, the founder, took part in round 8. Even though he lost, it was great to welcome him to the mats. One of his opponents was another new entry to the tournament, Dannish Babar, who was partnering Larry. Bill's partner was Nick. It is a pleasure to report that in this round Marie Moss scored her first six in competitive winks, partnering Alan Harper against Liz and Phil. So far, there was no sign of the WW editor.

Jake Humbles played in Round 9. His only game paired him with Richard against Larry, and the result was 0-7. Matthew did almost equally well, beating Alan Harper and Charles 6-1. This round in fact had fewer players than any other, with three games out of four featuring a singles player. There were no new entrants in this round, but round 10 saw the return of Marie Moss, who could not repeat her success of round 8. She had to play singles against Larry Kahn and Alan Harper, a difficult task, and lost 0-7. This was a bad round for the older players too. Charles Relle, despite the support of Matthew Rose, lost 2-5 to Philip Buckham-Bonnett and Patrick Barrie, Richard Ackland, playing singles, lost 1-6 Harley Jones and Andrew Garrard, and Alan Dean, partnering Paul Moss, scored one against James Murray and Tim Hunt.

In Round 11, last year's winner, Patrick Barrie, and the leading contender for first place in 2015, Alan Harper, both scored wins which made for an interesting last round. The penultimate round also saw the reappearance of Geoff Thorpe, who scored a 6 with the help of James Murray. The final round was made the more interesting still when the draw pitched Alan Harper and Harley Jones against Patrick and James. Alan and Harley scored five points, and the trophy went to Alan, whom we all congratulate.

I myself congratulate anyone who has read all the way through this exceedingly boring article. It so much lacks interest that twice I almost gave up on it.

Charles Relle

Rank	Player	p.p.g.	# Games
1	Alan Harper	$4\frac{1}{2}$	10
2	Nick Inglis	$4\frac{1}{5}$	10
3	Patrick Barrie	$4\frac{3}{22}$	11
4=	Andrew Garrard	$4\frac{1}{24}$	12
4=	Charles Relle	$4\frac{1}{24}$	12
4=	Harley Jones	$4\frac{1}{24}$	12
7	Alan Dean	$3\frac{67}{72}$	12
8	Tim Hunt	$3\frac{29}{72}$	12
9	James Murray	$3\frac{5}{24}$	12
10	Phil Buckham-Bonnett	$2\frac{35}{36}$	12
11	Richard Ackland	$1\frac{7}{12}$	12

[Ed: the above table lists only those players that played in enough rounds to qualify. Several other players were involved in the tournament.]





An Old Man Comes to Dinner

Over the Cambridge Open weekend, I was staying with Alan Dean at Sandy, over twenty miles from Cambridge. This posed the small problem of how and where to change for the Sixtieth Anniversary Dinner. Stewart Sage solved this by allowing us to change in his rooms. We were not alone, but there was space enough. It was well that we were on hand, for sharing this facility was Patrick Driscoll, who, after several attempts with and without a mirror, had to admit that he had forgotten how to tie a bow tie. I quite often wear a bow tie, having discovered in my old age that it is less easy to spill food down a bow tie than a conventional one. Patrick appealed for help, and when I had finally persuaded him that a mirror was not necessary and that it was useful if he would stand still, I tied his tie before either his or my patience ran out (a feat in itself), straightened it, and got him to agree that it was presentable. Alan Harper was also present, and at one stage I thought he was going to solve the bow tie problem by appearing entirely unclad from the waist up, but this state turned out to be a preliminary to taking a shower.

It was now time for aperitifs, so we made for the Chadwick room, and I went first into the Gents. When I emerged from the more private facility, I saw more than one couple locked in strange embraces, both facing the same way, and apparently enjoying in the mirror the sight of their own contortions, which seemed to involve a sado-masochistic act of asphyxiation. The explanation, however, was rather more innocent, in that they too had forgotten how to tie bow ties, and were trying to do this for each other with the aid of the mirror. I offered help, and said that there was really no need to use a mirror (actually I find it much harder to tie a bow tie with a mirror than without), asked them to face me, and then, in this possibly more hermaphroditic position, tied their ties successfully, and got them acceptably straight. In far off times you would find, in the Gents, a notice requesting you to adjust your dress before leaving. Did it, I wonder, include bow ties?

I come to the Dinner once every ten years, and may not live to see the seventieth, so here is some advice to those whom I may not be able to help from beyond the grave. Tying a bow tie, like tiddlywinks, needs practice for success. The operation is no different from tying a shoelace. You can practice by putting the tie round your thigh, and experimenting until you get it right. This has two advantages: you can see what you are doing, and you can do it sitting down. You may have to adjust the length of the tie, and remember to put it back before tying it round your neck, or you may be faced with a Procrustean choice between sloppiness and strangulation. Again, if you practice just before the Dinner, do remember to remove the tie from

your thigh and put it on your neck, or you may get some rather strange looks.

Charles Relle



CU Tiddlywinks Dinner

Saturday 17th January 2015

DINNER

Mr Rick Tucker	Mr Brad Knapp	Mr Paul Moss	Mrs Caroline Cullingham
Ms Cathy Furlong	Mr Charles Relle	Mrs Marie Moss	Mr James Cullingham
Mr Larry Kahn	Mr Alan Dean	Mr Fergus Riche	Mr Ed Green
Mr Geoff Thorpe	Dr Elizabeth Whalley	Mr Christian Gowers	Mr Harley Jones
Dr Patrick Barrie	Prof. Andy Purvis	Mr Philip Buckham-Bonnett	Mr Dannish Babar
Prof. Bill Steen	Dr Christine Barrie	Ms Anne Austin	Mr Jake Humbles
Mrs Margaret Steen	Dr Stew Sage	Dr Robert Lever	The Assistant Secretary
Dr Chris Goddard	Dr David Clarkson	Ms Deborah Fisher	The President
Mr Anthony Harris	Dr Rupert Thompson	Dr Alan Harper	The Publicity Officer
Dr Richard Moore	Mr Stuart Collins	Dr Liz Batty	Dr Ben Fairbairn
Mrs Emma Collins	Mr Simon Gandy	Dr Matt Fayers	Mr Laura Clarke
Mr Julian Wiseman	Mrs Helen Gandy	Dr James Murray	Dr Sarah Knight
Dr MaryAnne Shiozawa Wiseman	Dr Ed Wynn	Dr Nick Inglis	Mr Patrick Driscoll
Dr Andrew Dominey	Dr Chris Abram	Mr Matthew Rose	Ms Emma Chapman
		Ms Stephanie Keele	Mr Andrew Garrard
Dr Tim Hunt			

Jubilee match

4th February 2015, Enniskillen Road, Cambridge

Alan came to Enniskillen Road and we began almost immediately. Green won the squidge-off, as he was to in the first four games; but this time it was me. A few early squops from me kept Alan busy, and though I didnt manage quite to squop him up there was nothing he could do by the time the timer went.

The second and third games went more as I was expecting, and except for the excitement of a small red going missing before game two, prompting us to wonder whether wed played with enough winks in the first game (I found it under an armchair after Alan left) and a blue penhaligon in game three, which shouldnt have helped Alan but did in the end, the continual squop-ups got rather tedious.

The fourth game was more exciting. Yellow and blue were squopped up for most of the game and so Alan and my focus was to keep control of the piles with each others colour in while trying to knock out our own squopped-up colour. Eventually I had a trivial lunch, with a small red leaning on top of a firm big-yellow-on-big-blue. Those people who think they need to beware of my lunches will take heart that I lost control of the squidger and dropped it all over the place. We made no attempt to remember what was what. Alan missed a couple of pots in round 5, otherwise this game would have been a heavier defeat for me.

Having added the scores up (the most difficult part of the game, in my opinion) it was clear that I needed a 7*-0* pot-out in game 5 to tie. Not one to play silly buggers, I brought in well; but failed to pot well; and, with green (me) having lost the squidge-off for the first time today I was at a disadvantage. Plan 47 doesn't work against Alan, and he freed his reds in the squop-up turns, docked one each of mine to the edge and didn't muck about. We arranged a rematch for three weeks time, so look out for the sequel to this write-up.

Harley Jones

Round	1	2	3	4	5
Harley Jones	6	1	1	$2\frac{1}{2}$	0*
Alan Dean	1	6	6	$4\frac{1}{2}$	7*

Yet-Another Jubilee match

25th February 2015, Enniskillen Road, Cambridge

Three weeks after our last match Alan returned to Enniskillen Road, this time armed with a full size board to compensate for our slightly undersized table. Blue, playing as Alan, won the first squidge-off. Alan was quick to take advantage of my poor bringing-in, and had me squopped up for much of the first two games. The third game was more in my favour, and an early sub from Alan allowed me in to keep him under and struggling to escape; I didn't let him at this point, and took six. In the fourth game, my poor bringing-in reared its head again, with one of my greens ending up rather closer than I liked to Alan's area. Rather than doing something sensible, I decided to Dave Taylor, which worked rather better than I had hoped; I had one each of his squopped by my yellows. I failed to pot the sixth, and Alan managed to get it. I was worried, as I was running out of yellows, but I ended up with a small next to the pile with my green in. The Good shot moved my green improbably far from Alan's marauding winks and I managed to move it to a safe distance before potting it. As is traditional, we were both somewhat hopeless at following in, but Alan managed to pull a point back, and we entered the last game equal.

Despite bringing in dreadfully, again, I somehow managed to squop Alan up very quickly. This meant I had to try and hold him down for a further 15 minutes. I think it was the third freeing shot that went badly wrong; I had freed the easy small winks from singletons by then so was left with a slightly more tricky one, but I played it very poorly and Alan's big blue landed on the pile. That was that, really; he freed lots of his and managed to reverse the situation, getting me squopped up just as time was running out. Both of us agreed that we'd both missed lots of shots we shouldn't have, though, and there were some very low-quality bring-ins and squidge-offs.

Harley Jones

Round	1	2	3	4	5
Harley Jones	1	1	6	6*	1
Alan Dean	6	6	1	1*	6

68th World Singles

24th April 2015, Emmanuel College, Cambridge

Larry Kahn (US) challenging Patrick Barrie (UK) as described by Tim Hunt, the referee.

Yellow was placed in the corner by the door. Larry was yellow in the first game, after which they alternated. Yellow always squidge off first, followed by the other colours in strict rotation.

Game 1

Red (Patrick) won the squidge-off, and each colour brought in to their quadrant by the pot with no mixing until finally one of Patrick's blues took a green that landed a bit too close, then yellow squopped a red.

Even so, a blue pot-out threat remained. Patrick went for it saying "I know what Andy would do." (That's Andy Purvis for the benefit of any youngsters out there, a great exponent of pot-squop strategy.)

The 4th blue missed, and Larry squopped the blue on green, but missed the doubleton of blues. Patrick did not pot the two blues, although he "knew what Nick would do". (The 'Inglis theory' is that once you have potted three winks of a pot-out, it is almost always correct to pot the remaining unsquopped winks of that colour as soon as possible.)

Larry was never able to control for a squop-up, and later Patrick potted the two blues when they became free again. That was enough for the 43. Larry needed a couple more rounds.

Match score: 43 to Patrick

Game 2

Blue (Larry) won the squidge-off. One of Patrick's bring-ins was a disastrous self-knock-off-and-squop, which gave Larry a doubleton of both of Patrick's colours.

Larry also had a blue pot-out threat, but Patrick's yellow tenuously squopped one, and then a huge pile formed. Larry defended well, but eventually Patrick got a wink

on top, and blew it. The break left Patrick a doubleton and a few singletons down.

Patrick eventually freed the doubleton (twice) leading to some very tight rounds. 4–3 to Patrick, eventually.

Match score: 8–6 to Patrick.

Game 3

Larry, Yellow & Green

Red (Patrick) won the squidge-off but then brought in less well. He was playing from behind all the way, but it was tight, particularly in rounds. Eventually 4–3 to Larry.

Match score: 11–10 to Patrick

Game 4

Patrick, Yellow & Green

Red (Larry) won the squidge-off, and the game saw the first roll-off of the match by Patrick. A perfect Inglis game evolved. I wish I had taken a picture of it before Patrick took the first squop. Although cracking first can be a mistake, Patrick almost got a squop-up, but Larry managed to turn it around. This led to another set of extremely difficult rounds, with some misses from both players. In the end 4–3 to Larry.

Match score: tied at 14–14.

Game 5

Red (Patrick) won the squidge-off. Patrick had the better of the start of the game, but missed three pots with a blue in rounds, so the inevitable 4–3 went to Larry, not Patrick as seemed more likely. A miasma of winks-fatigue was pervading the room.

Match score: 18–17 to Larry.

Game 6

Blue (Larry) won the squidge-off. Winks fatigue had well and truly set in. Patrick got squopped up, and Larry defended well enough. 6–1 to Larry.

Match score: 24–18

Game 7

So, Patrick needed a 7 from the last game to win. That could never happen, right?

Yellow (Larry) won the squidge-off! Patrick had slightly the better of the bring in, but the winks were mixed.

A great bit of opportunism by Patrick to freed the 6th red. Larry had one chance at a squop, which he missed. Patrick then ran a moderately difficult 6 under extreme pressure. Suddenly, it seemed like the impossible might happen.

There was one yellow on the edge, so Larry ran 4, including two quite long ones, and brought in the distant one. The blues were, if anything, harder then the yellows had been. Patrick potted 2 then missed. Larry then potted the the last two yellows on their next turn.

6*–1* to Patrick

Final score: 25–24 to Larry.

Alternate outcomes:

Red & Blue beat Green & Yellow 6–1 in squidge-off wins. The game score 4–3 beat 6–1 5–2.

I would like to thank Patrick for taking me to lunch at Emmanuel high table before the match; and to both players for playing a good clean match that did no overly tax the referee. Also, thanks to them for making it exciting at the end.

Tim Hunt



The National Singles 2015

25th–26th April 2015, Tim Cadbury Room, Downing College, Cambridge

The first National Singles tournament in what seemed like a squillion years was held in the increasingly traditional venue of the Tim Cadbury room in Downing College Cambridge in the last weekend of April 2015. The recent reforms in the ETwA calendar swapped the singles and the pairs ensuring that 2014 had a bounteous excess of pairs tournaments and consequently a paucity of singles tournaments. More awkwardly it quickly became clear that the number of people who had arrived condemned us to the all-play-all format, even with Jon Mapley running into the room thoroughly out of breath just in the nick of time, and making the plate all the more cumbersome to crowbar into the 'winkend. Naturally this entailed a certain amount of seeding which the tournament organiser sensibly based on the world rankings. This condemned your correspondent to the bottom seed, a position he persistently retained throughout the tournament. My reward for obtaining this wooden spoon of the event was to write this article and so my revenge is to heavily bias what's written here in favour of my games and in particular the high points of my 'winkend.

My first moral victory was in my game against Nick Inglis on the Saturday morning. You would expect such a game to end in a predictable 6–1 victory for Nick. As is often the case, most of the 'winks were gradually ploughed into a giant amorphous blob or pile, to use the technical term, typically with one pair of partnering colours sitting on top of the various different parts of the pile firmly stamping out any attempt made by the opposition to even get on it, let alone breaking it. This was the scenario in my game against Nick, however for most of the game it was *my* colours that were in control of the pile! Few men would have the intelligence to let this situation remain and an overpowerful shot with one of my small blue 'winks soon gave Nick control again but I was sufficiently on top of the situation that he never fully recovered and the game ended with Nick winning as you would expect, but only by $4\frac{1}{2}$ – $2\frac{1}{2}$! You can imagine how much I was 'buzzing' from this little *coup-d'état* for the rest of the day.

With Saturday lunch taken in The Prince Regent in a session dominated by counter-rotating pigs and *misère* pigs using two surreal coloured pairs of pigs left over from the Kningles wedding a few weeks earlier (yes — this was probably the first ever singles to have a competitor sort of named S. Ingles!) the afternoon progressed as you would much expect, ending ultimately with the thrill-a-minute event that is an ETwA congress in The Hopbine, including a slightly non-standard use of a telephone to establish a non-nomination for a position on the rules sub-committee, followed by curry.

And so onto the Sunday. My game-of-the-day for this stage of the tournament was against Paul Moss. Now, unlike Nick Inglis, Paul plays somewhat infrequently, often missing major national tournaments these days and having started playing the game somewhat later than Nick, he has a bit less experience under the belt. Nonetheless the rantings still persistently put him in the top twenty of the world and given my performance in other games that 'winkend you would still expect a 6–1 victory to Paul. We both brought in reasonably well — with the exception of my Penhaligoning my first large green — and I even remembered to stop the blue pot-out. Alas, I had failed to performed the same task for the red winks. Paul attempted a pot-out successfully potting four of them and then — shock — went over the pot with the fifth and landed straight into my area. I quickly squopped this stray rogue and Paul's task was then to get it out. Somehow I managed to not only keep the 'wink under the whole time but with great squop efficiency to boot — many of the squop-ups were of the "that's seven plus one in new money" variety. By the time of round zero I had engineered a promising looking green pot-out and before the full rounds¹ even began it was perfectly executed. Red and blue followed in quickly ensuring that it was only a 5*–1* victory, but even so, as far as I can recall this is quite possibly the first time I had ever engineered a pot-out rather than having a partner engineer one for me. After the game Paul remarked that he had forgotten my early pot and was wondering what all my seemingly pointless faffing about was for. Perhaps he would have played a little differently if he had noticed earlier. "Always be fully aware...".

After lunch in the now trendier-than-a-Shoreditch-hipster pub The Grain Store *née* The Alma, complete with 'vegetarian baconnaise', the tournament continued. Eventually a nail-bitingly close contest between Patrick Barrie, Larry Kahn and Matthew Rose arose but in the end Patrick Barrie emerged as winner.

Ben Fairbairn

¹Or should that be 'positive rounds'? Somehow 'rounds enumerated by positive integers' or even more Cointreauvertially 'rounds enumerated by natural numbers' both sound a bit too clunky to me. There seems to be something of a terminological vacuum here.

The National Singles 2015

25th–26th April 2015, Tim Cadbury Room, Downing College, Cambridge

Council having switched the dates of the Pairs and the Singles meant that this was the first EtwA Singles since 2013, so it's possible that some people were looking forward to it. The excitement got underway well before the squidge-off, with Andrew Garrard texting ahead to say that he wouldn't be competing in the singles; so we were almost lulled into thinking everyone was there by 10:15, except for Timmy, who managed to get lost; but Jon Mapley dashed in at the last moment. This meant a 15-player all-play-all was the format, seeded such that the top half played the bottom half on the first day. The results from the first day therefore show a large number of 6–1s, but a few low seeds managed to pluck a few points off some of the top branches.

One such moment occurred in my game against Alan Dean. He had got early squops of one of each of my colours, but when I penhaligoned the last yellow I potted the remaining four afterwards, as Alan had reminded me that it had worked in our last Jubilee match. It looked like it was going to end worse this time as well, as Alan squopped me up with plenty of handy singletons to boondock, and plenty of flat blues to pot; however, when he went off with red on the fifth of 6+1 free turns, he realised that the only thing he could do free with blue was my last yellow; if he deliberately failed to free I would nominate the blue and do it myself. I managed to pot it, but not follow in. Stew was fewer lucky against Larry, saying afterwards that he hadn't noticed there was a pot-out threat until they'd all gone in. It's important to know what's going on at all times, apparently. After lunch it all went wrong, except for Timmy who was romping ahead of the lower pack, and Larry and Matty, who had only got one score lower than 6 between them all day. Patrick was left with lots of work to do at this point, being nearly 9 points below Larry; but Sunday was another day.

At the alarming time of 9:30 we regathered in the rooms, and after fetching a porter with a key and collecting our equipment from the library, where I had locked it overnight for safe keeping we restarted. As anyone could have predicted the scores on this day were much closer, and also more witty with some halves (including a $3\frac{1}{2}$ – $3\frac{1}{2}$ between Dr Nick and Charles Relle, which I'm sure was fascinating). Winks fatigue had begun to set in in some areas, and by the time I played Paul Moss in my penultimate game not only were we both taking forever to get winks into the pot (Paul having decided to attempt the pot-out after I had moved a blue to the large red safe area when he threatened it while bringing in), but we also failed to be able to count to 1+1, both of us assuming that if his green had subbed I would need to pot my

last (flat) red immediately to free by potting out. So Geoff was called for an umpiring decision that seemed witty at the time, Paul wanting his wink under to add pressure to my shot and me wanting it free to give myself time. It took Patrick to remind us how wrong we had gone, so I then potted with impunity for a 6–1.

The story of the scores on the Sunday was an interesting one, with competition breaking out in various positions. Near the bottom Paul was trying to catch up to me and Sarah; meanwhile Sarah and I were vying for the ratings points, having previously been separated by just 1. I hadn't noticed how close Geoff and Stew's scores were until Stew recommended that if I beat Geoff, Stew would come out on top (a service I was pleased to provide). Timmy didn't quite manage to overtake Charles but just pipped Nick. However, at the top end Patrick had been catching up all day, until after the penultimate game he was ahead of Larry by $7\frac{1}{2}$ points. Matty was the only person able to beat him, but his 3–4 loss to Alan Dean meant that despite Patrick losing to Larry in the last game he still came out on top, winning for the fourth time in a row.

After the update of the ratings it seems I have moved above Sarah, thus ranking me higher than all the women. Clearly the logical thing to do now is for me to have a sex change, then I've got some claim to fame, or something.

Harley Jones



The National Singles Plate 2015

Sunday April 26th 2015 Tim Cadbury Room, Downing College, Cambridge

Ah, the Singles Plate. Source of complicated maths since 1320. I've missed it, since the tournament (and the Singles itself) had a sabbatical last year in favour of a pair of Pairs. Ah, the happy hours I spent making the draw program capable of handling varying handicaps in the middle of a tournament. (Of course, in the writing of this report, I've noticed yet another bug — but not one that would have affected the result. I've fixed it, I'm sure you'll all radically care to know.) With a longer memory, the fun of working out all the point transfers by hand, then discovering that we'd done it wrong and given the trophy to the wrong person...

It turns out that the format is somewhat simpler when only two people are present at any one time, and there are only three in total. My penalty for wussing out of the Singles proper (having arrived back from Korea on Friday night and found myself too tired and jetlagged to drive) is that I was there for every round of the Plate, which gives me a complete lack of excuse when it comes to the write-up.

So, winks happened. I turned up fashionably late for the 10:30 start on Sunday finding the President waiting for me, possibly through necessity, since the Singles players didn't seem inclined to use their byes to get in extra practice. Feeding our ratings into the formula described on the ETwA web site left us with handicaps of 6 and 1 respectively, which meant that this was going to be a somewhat challenging tournament for me if we were going to play singles the whole time.

The first game achieved absolutely nothing. I played much better than I expected — the old adage that the best preparation for a tournament is not to practise seems to be true. Still, Daniel did a credible job of hassling me, and I was unable to work a pot-out. Daniel's undeservedly low rating (which I was convinced was a typo when I entered it) made the game a draw after point transfer.

More aggression was clearly required. Fortunately, I had one of those games where I missed almost nothing and played above my abilities. Daniel still played pretty well, but there's little you can do when your opponent is consistently getting twelve-inch squops. I ran at the pot and, despite credible containing efforts from Daniel with some of my misses, managed to get my sixth wink in, followed by a surprisingly effective attempt to follow. Daniel then demonstrated a lack of commitment by indicating that he would be unavailable to play in the afternoon due to something called an "exam" the next day, which may have been weighing on his mind during

his counter-follow-in.

Since lunchtime was upon us, we trundled to the Hog's Head, or Avery, or whatever it's calling itself these days. There was a distressing amount of misere pigs (any at all), and much whitebait. After a while, we were joined by Louise, my PR/journalist friend, who took Sarah, Harley and myself aside to discuss how best to prolong the death of English winks.

Returning to Downing and lacking an opponent, I did some umpiring, and tried to assist Louise in interviewing Sarah. At one point, Louise had mentioned that our job would be easier if there were more women in CUTwC — at which point, Elinor turned up.

Games ensued. Following the tradition of not recalculating the midpoint around which handicaps are calculated after a tournament has begun, Elinor was given a zero handicap, which somewhat dictated my strategy if my six handicap was going to do me any good. (I've since checked: if we'd recalculated, I'd have been handicapped 7, but Daniel and Elinor would have been 2 and 1 respectively, so a recalculation would not have affected point transfer). Elinor borrowed my squidgers, and indicated that she did not yet have her own — a more significant handicap than the numerical one.

I began with a moderately competent game, did my bunny bashing thing (historically I've been bad at this, but maybe my years as a bunny are finally paying off), and worked a secure pot-out, which I also converted. I felt very bad about it, and apologised.

The second game after lunch, I sportingly contrived to go off four times with the same colour, and I proved that Dave Tayloring is not so hot unless your winks go in the pot. Elinor successfully sat on me, and I did a terrible job of both trying to free myself and getting my own winks free. I scraped five and a half, and deserved worse. At this point, Elinor was on 3.75 p.p.g. (with handicap) and winning the tournament — and three people were eligible to win. Thankfully, she did the sporting thing (Pope Verisimilitude, I'm looking at you), and agreed to play more games. This had the effect of disqualifying Daniel, since he would not have played all-but-two games.

Worried that we would run out of play time, I decided to rely on getting the games over quickly, and gave up much pretense of squopping beyond a containing strategy. Elinor let me get away with this more than I deserved, and didn't always go for the

colour threatening the pot-out — hopefully something she will learn from tournament play, if the experience wasn't too dispiriting. Otherwise, she actually acquitted herself somewhat better than the 7-0 scores in the last two games would indicate, especially for someone with no squidgers. While confident of out-potting her, my situation was never 100% solid. Had there not been a title in it, I'd have risked far more interesting games.

Anyway, I bashed the bunnies, and felt bad about it. But I won a trophy (in absentia), so that made up for it.

Final results after handicap transfer:

rank	player	p.p.g.	# of games
1.	Andrew Garrard	3.75	6
2.	Elinor Macnab	3.375	4
	Daniel Barnett	3	2

No handicaps changed, possibly a first in the history of the Plate.

Andrew Garrard

How The Other Half Live or What Happens When We Don't Let Patrick Win: The London Open

19th September 2015 The Crosse Keys, London

Ben had asked me to chase the London Open attendees to ensure that someone did a Winking World write-up. Early on, I'd asked team Kninglis, who were doing quite well, but I've since felt survivors' guilt, and thought I should do it. Which conveniently gives me the chance to rant about our hosts.

The Crosse Keys, traditional venue for several years (except when we go academic), surprised us by asking for a deposit for the room. They then insisted on this being delivered in person; fortunately, Ben is a hero, especially since he didn't make it to the tournament. The rest of us turned up (myself traditionally last, but untraditionally before the start time) and installed ourselves in the upstairs room. We had an excess of mats, without needing to use the American mats that I'd brought along. I would be a bit cross that insufficient people told me I didn't need to cart my mats around were it not for my inadvertent passive-aggressiveness — as pointed out with usual tact by Timmy. I'd intended a snarky comment to Mr Dean about him being the only one who actually replied; unfortunately, I sent this to the entire ETwA list, which meant that my intended "complaining about people behind their backs" turned into more public display of cantankerousness. I'd apologise, but since I'm an honorary member of SEPTIC, I feel the occasional public display of cantankerousness is part of the job description.

Anyhoo. Nine of us arrived. This was a bit death-numberly, but fortunately I remembered the London isn't a singles tournament, so we didn't have to resort to the Swiss situation from previous years. I still haven't fixed the computer to help with the Swiss — although I did eventually establish that the really complicated problem that I'd found a really clever way to solve was in fact completely irrelevant to optimising a Swiss. Only twice in a week I found I'd spent several hours optimising something pointless. Next up, a really fast bubble sort.

Fortunately, Geoff was on hand to dictate that the tournament would be an all-play-all, with a bonus round on the end. Which my software also can't handle. I really must fix that — but, as ever, the paper version was both capable and authoritative. (I apologise to Geoff if my electronics ever look like I'm usurping T.O.itude — I am nothing but backup.) To get the requisite number of rounds, rather than having a lot of byes, Geoff had the proposal that we should have three singles teams. I pointed out that at least three of us must hate everyone else in the room, and this should be

acceptable. Geoff avoided the need for us to own up to our loathing by suggesting that the three pairs who had come pre-paired should play like that, and the three of us who turned up as singles should stay that way. Thus leaving me with my least-competent partner in a pairs tournament for some time. And possibly the most argumentative.

The room was “some assembly required”, with much tilting of lights, a request that I use the TV screen with my computer in order to offer more illumination, and with tables levelled with magazines. We then settled in for the traditional mood-lit tournament, whereby the under-sized small greens are the best way to distinguish their shade of black from the small blues. (Though Geoff did find a stealth under-sized small blue as well. . .)

I had Timmy and Stew for starters (burp), and found that my strategy of practising squopping and potting had left me capable of astonishingly accurate bringing in (by my standards), but a complete lack of ability to pot or squop. I offered a yellow peril for most of the game, though Tim was completely correct in his assessment of how much to worry about it and I was constipated with my greens. My confidence in my position combined with a vague sense of not really remembering how winks strategy works and not really having much feel eventually turned into the 5-2 drubbing I deserved rather than the easy pot-out that my bring-in had promised. I was lucky it wasn't worse. It turns out that, of the losing teams in the first round, I lost least badly. So there's that. Between rounds, I applied caffeine, which seemed to help.

Next up, Geoff and I had the chance to share war stories of how badly we'd been playing. Geoff actually didn't seem to be doing too badly, but on a different mat and with a few more photons, I found myself suddenly able to play (if a bit less good at the bring-in), and worked a fairly secure 6*-1* run at the pot while Geoff was too far away to counter. We finished on the dot of twelve, and heard the pints, the pints a-calling. After a brief foray downstairs, we realised that guarding the room might be a good idea (this turned out to be wise, given a few confused fellow patrons) and settled into the sofas upstairs for much pigging of pigs, followed by much pigging of food. We managed to demonstrate first some confusion about whether 69 in pigs was above or below the cusp (since it IS the cusp) and then on whether SEPTIC Hold-'Em allowed pre-flop bidding. So much for the experts.

Post-lunch, I found myself playing Nick and a Sarah who was alternating between being apologetic and nauseous. I often have this effect on people, although appar-

ently breakfast may have been involved on this occasion. Nick was back to the “it’s all pointless” form that I’ve historically associated with him, although by now you’d think he’d have found faith in my ability to throw a game away in rounds. Still, on this occasion I didn’t, and despite a show of inept potting by all three of us (Sarah’s excused by a chunder break), I got a 7. But I felt bad about it, partly because of Sarah’s invalidity and partly because Nick had vocally failed to find the game entertaining early enough that I was still trying quite hard not to lose. After a sit down and some opening of windows (unusually, for winks, dictated by the heat rather than chemical warfare) I gather Sarah felt slightly better. Or it may just have been not dealing with me.

On to Alan and the “I’ve not seen him for a while” Steve Welch. I had no faith that Steve would be in any way rusty, and this was proved completely correct by him missing almost nothing, in a long sequence of jumping on a pile from a distance by both teams. There was a great deal of pile nudging, and I only ended up with a reasonable number of winks to play because I’d helpfully dumped most of them into one pile, which gave me the ability to rescue a lot of them at once. The game was very tight right to the end, with a three-way tie for second, and I feel lucky about getting five.

On to bunny bashing. I am painfully aware that I’m quite good at losing to people who should be way below me in the rantings, so I faced off against Dan with some trepidation, especially since this was my return to the mat on which I’d lost the first round. Dan decided he didn’t want to play a squopping game against me, and landing several of my winks in positions where I would have been threatened had he changed his mind, I attempted an early run on the pot before he could get too far in doing the same — fortunately managing to hold some of his winks down for when it went wrong. Deservedly, my last green got squopped, and I spent much of the game trying to rescue it. Dan had given up on first place by this point, and was concentrating on trying to beat my yellows for second, which is the only explanation I have for him not paying much attention to my last green when I freed it. He did, at one point, say “green is on fifteen”, which I corrected to “sixteen...”, so I feel my conscience is clear about that one, even if the green was the same shade of black as the blues. Some incompetent yellow play, notably including a bring-in shot that ricocheted off the pot and off the mat, gave Dan the follow-in point he deserved.

Thus ended the all-play-all, but Geoff had decided that first should play second, third should play fourth, and fifth should play sixth — as a play-off between each

pair only. Dan was far enough behind Geoff by this point, being somewhat rusty, that his game was (in the words of the fluorescent condoms in *The Cricketer's*) “for fun only”. The rest of us were at risk, and I knew I was perfectly capable of losing the last game by more than enough to have a problem.

Again, Alan and Steve played very well, and I was definitively feeling winks fatigue. I continued the strategy I'd applied all day of doing random things to stop my opponents forming a coherent strategy against me, and after much scrambling around some piles, Alan had one shot that took out several of his own winks at once. At this point, one of my colours was reasonably far ahead, but since I'd not potted as many as Alan thought, I was still wary of him running several winks from a distance. I attempted a bristol that was illegal, and the second go was hopelessly inept and gave my opponents much more of a chance. Fortunately the end of rounds gave me the chance to pot with my losing colour, turning an at-risk loss into a smug 6–1 that was much less convincing than the scoreline suggested.

So, much excitement. That's the first non-team, non-handicapped tournament I've won, after nearly twenty-three years of playing winks, and the triumph of insanity (by Einstein's definition) over talent. I believe this also marks my highest-ever ranking, if not rating, so I'm briefly smug and can look forward to it all going horribly wrong at the Pairs. Since I was unexpectedly obliged to ask someone else to take the presentation photo, Dan was kind enough to get my camera to work, after only a moderate amount of my remembering its settings were on “weird”.

There was more excitement to come. Not only did we play Yogi's (Nick's idea, for which we promptly nailed him for a failed revelation and gave Timmy a lethal dose) and then switch to BYG (giving me the twin excitement of three sixes and 5–4–2), we also had the fun of watching Japan beat South Africa at rugby, to the hilarity of most of the pub.

Then the Crosse Keys further endeared themselves to us. Having refused to return the deposit at the start of the day (as I'd been told they would, having talked them out of trying to translate it into a tab), they then tried to refuse to return it at the end of the day because “we didn't have sixty people”. I eventually established that when I was asked how many people might attend, I might have said “no more than sixTEEN” in an attempt to persuade them that the room would be big enough. The demand on sixty must have been nonsense, since the room would have run out of chairs at forty. Still, while we were given the money back (despite attempts to get us to “come back

on Monday”), I was told that it wasn’t economical for them to book a room out for “five people drinking” (you’d think they’d have met us...), and that they couldn’t do this again. Which is just as well, because we’d already largely decided that the Parcel Yard at King’s Cross Station (I remember when the pub there was Cooper’s, and smelled of cabbage...) was a better option anyway. So if you’d like to join us next year, please don’t start by heading to Monument and assuming you’ll see winkers.

We all decamped in daylight, the first time I remember this happening with a London Open, despite them usually being nearer to the summer solstice. We must be getting old. Farewell Crosse Keys, we won’t see your like again. Hopefully.

Pos’n	Points	Player(s)
1	32	Andrew Garrard
2	$24\frac{1}{2}$	Alan Dean & Steve Welch
3	$22\frac{1}{2}$	Nick Inglis & Sarah Knight
4	$18\frac{1}{2}$	Stew Sage & Tim Hunt (15.5 points after 5 games)
5	19	Geoff Thorpe (15 points after 5 games)
6	$9\frac{1}{2}$	Dannish Babar

Andrew Garrard



My London Open Day

19th September 2015, the Greek island of Aegina

It was not the best day of my life, though it should have been delightful. We were on the Greek island of Aegina, in a modest but agreeable hotel. The room had a balcony, and we could see the sea. The problem? On the Wednesday we had been on a cruise up the Bosphorus, and had eaten a salad that was either unwashed or had been washed in unsafe Turkish water, with predictably unpleasant effects. We had reached Aegina on Thursday, and had lain low on Friday, eating virtually nothing.

For me Saturday started just after midnight, when I awoke wondering whether England had beaten Fiji in the Rugby World Cup. Relieved to find no headline saying 'England fall at first fence' or some such, I slept until 06:00, but waking then was no hardship, as I had slept most of the previous afternoon. The sunrise was beautiful, as beautiful as the sunset of the evening before.

Breakfast was yoghurt, and I decided to go next to the monastery of St Nektarios, in the country and attractive for its architecture and its atmosphere. Eleanor decided not to risk being far from the hotel and its facilities, so I set out alone. I found the bus station, and managed to explain where I wanted to go, and to read the timetable. The bus was soon and the journey took twenty minutes. The monastery complex is in two parts. Below is a modern Byzantine church, and above various chapels, the nuns' quarters, some courtyards, St Nektarios' cell, and a shop.

We had visited twelve years before, and I found my way round, enjoying the whole thing. In church this time I lit candles for friends who I thought needed my prayers. Perhaps I should say a word about this. When once I told a friend I had lit a candle for him, he said, 'It will not do any good'. That is a possible view, but to put it at its lowest, I do not think it can do any possible harm, even to a non-believer, to know that someone has put his whole life on hold for a few minutes to concentrate solely on him or her. So I continue to light candles for people.

The atmosphere of devotion was very strong. The bus almost emptied at the monastery stop, and clearly many people make a pilgrimage to the shrine on a Saturday. To digress for a moment, we went to church on the next day, and were made very welcome. Many people talked to us, even though we had very few words of Modern Greek. To many Greeks, religion seems to be intertwined with life, not an add-on for part of Sundays. To resume: I went all round the shrine, in company with many other people, and visited the cell of St Nektarios. I enjoyed being with so many

people who had the same purpose. The only disappointment was the shop. Last time I went, there were icons of high quality, and this time there were not, and the person behind the counter was not polite.

Back to Aegina town, and coming away from the bus station I met Eleanor, and we visited a pharmacy, where I was given some pills with instructions to take them before or with food. Certain food items were banned, but I did not ask about wine. So we went for lunch, a delicious Cretan meal, and then a siesta that took up most of the afternoon.

My London Open day was in surroundings much more delightful than those at the Crosse Keys, but food poisoning made it less agreeable than it might have been. I expect to be fit for the National Pairs, for which my training régime will include a trip to Burgundy.

Charles Relle

The ETwA National Pairs

31st October–1st November 2015, Selwyn Diamond, Cambridge

Prologue

Ah a Pairs only once a year – hasn't been like that since 2013.

An auspicious start as we walked into the Diamond. As well as finding Andrew Garrard on time and all prepared, a large screen had been lowered, and before we started an image appeared and a suitable anthem was sung to mark the passing of Charles, with reference to Yan as well.

All were determined to make the weekend a celebration of winks in the circumstances.

Fortunately there were 8 teams making the usual pre-tournament ranting about draw format largely irrelevant, as this was straightforward – double all play all with resetting of the draws between the two phases.

Teams entering were strong – two former winners including the holders from 2014 (twice) and 1994 and 1995, and all bar one pair possessing a former ETwA Pairs champion. If we include other National Champions from formerly compliant countries such as the US and Scotland, then 11 of the 16 players had been National Champions before (did you know that Stew had been twenty years back?).

With Larry and Dave teaming up to give as strong a US Pair as the rankings would indicate, there was much to play for, as it was possible that second place could add to the World Pairs challenges.

Only that imposing, fine figured duo of Messrs Garrard and Green, lacked a partner with the experience of winning a National Pairs tournament, but there seemed no rabbits in the room, maybe just in the headlights.

Day one

Early on there were a few upsets as Patrick and Nick lost heavily to Alan D and a supercharged Harley, with Geoff controlling his game against Matthew and Patrick D despite he and Keith having virtually no winks! He ended with a first place in that game. Larry and Dave had a solid win for an early lead.

The next two rounds saw the highest seeded teams all record 6–1s with close 4–3 games elsewhere, leading to a “breakaway” – round 4 saw Patrick and Nick lose to Sarah and Alan H, leaving them a little off the pace with Stew and Andy starting to record some impressive wins.

We won't discuss lunch with all sorts of delays in the Red Bull and much ranting. Not memorable although if that's the case why am I continuing to rehash this misery for purely additional word count? Don't know – move on. Round 5 started to see the higher seeds start to meet and Matthew and Patrick D eventually potted out in a protracted and poor blitz against Larry and Dave, followed by an even worse follow in but a 5* brought things closer at the top. Alan D and Harley's maximum meant they were looking likely to be in the highest 4 pairs as it shaped up.

Round 6 saw Patrick B and Nick edge out Matthew and Patrick D in a close game. Larry and Dave had a heavy 6–1 win against Stew and Andy although the story of that game was different to the outcome. Alan D and Harley continued their impressive run and Andrew and Ed ended the day with a win going into the early finish to allow spooky happenings to take place in the Diamond...

Day two

An early start on Sunday was needed to get 8 rounds in – and Larry and Dave started with a pot out 5 against Nick and Patrick B to hold a lead at the halfway point, Matthew and Patrick D matched the score in a close game with Stew and Andy and with Andrew and Ed and Sarah and Alan having 6–1 wins in the last of the first round robin it was tighter than the proverbial at various pinch points.

Reseeding took place with Alan and Harley leapfrogging Stew and Andy into the top 4 but in the first of the return games Stew and Andy then dominated Larry and Dave again and this time got the 6 they perhaps deserved previously. Matthew and Patrick D got a pleasing 6 against Geoff and Keith after a disappointing result in that game on the Saturday, and solid wins for the rest of the top 4.

Round 9 saw the top 4 all score non-deviant 6's against the bottom 4 so no real change there. Round 10 saw the top two (Larry and Dave and Matthew and Patrick D) score 6's to move clear of Patrick B and Nick who managed a $4\frac{2}{3}$ score, with Stew and Andy continuing to impress.

Round 11 saw Larry and Dave stomp a 7 with Matthew and Patrick scoring 5 and a half against Stew and Andy in a much closer game than the result suggested. Other games saw Harley and Alan continue their strong run.

Round 12 saw Larry and Dave only manage 2 against Alan and Harley with Matthew and Patrick D this time edging a 4–3 win against Nick and Patrick, to take a small lead, with Sarah and Alan recording a 6 to move closer to the middle of the table.

Round 13 was similar to the previous round for the leaders, with Larry and Dave getting 2 from Nick and Patrick B, and Matthew and Patrick D struggling to get a 4 from their game with Alan and Harley to be 4 and a half clear going into a final game against Larry and Dave.

The last round saw all 4 games potentially place-changing as each match was almost a direct play off for 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th.

Keith and Geoff took the final match against Andrew and Ed, whose p.p.g. was strong for last place in such a tournament.

Sarah and Alan H's narrow win could not elevate them above Stew and Andy so stayed beneath them – no comment on whether they preferred the resulting position or not.

Patrick B and Nick quickly potted out against Alan and Harley to secure 3rd and the top match was poised as Larry and Dave needed 6 to win – anything less would not be enough.

The bring-ins were unspectacular, with early squops making pot out chances limited – Dave briefly flirted with potting some but did not progress far, and gradually it became a game where Matthew and Patrick D could absorb the threat as an increasingly aggressive attempt to free at least one colour failed, and 6–1 slightly flattered the difference between the Pairs.

Epilogue

I felt that Patrick and I complemented each other well, with Patrick's squopping on day one being outstanding and potting on day two pretty solid – I was probably stronger at squopping on day two despite my bringing in being distinctly average.

Overall a tournament where most pairs played reasonably well in a closely contested set of games, despite only 4 of the players improving their rating points as a result!

I hope we all played in a spirit appropriate for the memory of someone who surely would have been present and a contender for a high position.

Matthew Rose

Partnership	Score
Matthew Rose & Patrick Driscoll	$71\frac{1}{2}$
Larry Kahn & Dave Lockwood	62
Patrick Barrie & Nick Inglis	$60\frac{2}{3}$
Harley Jones & Alan Dean	51
Stew Sage & Andy Purvis	43
Sarah Knight & Alan Harper	$38\frac{1}{3}$
Geoff Thorpe & Keith Seaman	$36\frac{1}{2}$
Andrew Garrard & Ed Green	29



The Somerset Invitational

3rd–5th January 2016, Old Down Inn, Chilcompton, Somerset

The grey parrot (*psittacus erithacus erithacus*) looks on from his cage by the door as eleven healthy city-dwelling humans arrive at the Old Down Inn on Sunday 3 January. “Hello humans!” says the parrot to each human as he or she arrives. “You are welcome in the Old Down Inn.” The parrot can see that the new arrivals don’t fit in well with the other humans who are in the Inn. The new humans don’t know anything about who should be in which rugby team, like the normal humans do. They play cards and drink beer and talk amongst themselves.

The parrot watches and listens as each of the humans arrives and as they are shown to their rooms. The humans are daunted by having to share rooms with each other. The parrot doesn’t have to share. He has his cage all to himself. The parrot watches in the evening as the humans leave the Old Down Inn, even though they have all spent all day getting to the Old Down Inn. They go to another public house, the Somerset Wagon. There is no parrot at the Somerset Wagon. The humans come back to the Old Down Inn.

The humans seem more receptive to their surroundings, less preoccupied, now. Perhaps this is because all the other humans have left. The parrot singles one of the humans out. With effort and perseverance, he tries to teach the human to talk to him. “Hello?”, says the parrot. “Hello? Can you talk?” asks the human. “Yes”, says the parrot. “Parrots can speak up to 100 different words, but we can only speak in the present tense. Parrots don’t have the concept of past or future tenses, so our conversational abilities are rather limited.” The human goes to bed.

The parrot can see that the humans are intent on making themselves less healthy during their stay in the countryside. On Monday 4 January the humans eat a lot of breakfast and drink a lot of coffee. They spend all day in the Somerset Wagon pub, even though it doesn’t have a parrot. They drink beer (some of them drink cider or Coca-Cola products), and they play tiddlywinks (some of them don’t play tiddlywinks, but most of them do). They write down the scores from the tiddlywinks on pieces of paper and into a computer.

On the evening of Monday 4 January, the speaking human tells the parrot: “Parrot, Im not winning the tiddlywinks competition or the drinking games at the moment. Alan is winning the tiddlywinks competition and there are no winners in drinking games. But, parrot, listen to this! I have a plan: I’ve sold my soul to the devil. Ill drink

all I like all day tomorrow and I'll play tiddlywinks really well as well. I've spoken to the devil, and he has told me that I'll win the tiddlywinks tournament and I'll still feel OK. And even after all that dissipation, I'll still retain my good looks." "Sure", says the parrot. In his experience, this sort of conversation is common for humans, especially late at night. "Don't you believe me, parrot?" says the human. "Well, this evening the devil came to me. I saw him in the form of a mobile phone. He told me – through the mobile phone speaker, that is – that he would keep me okay in spite of all the bad things I was going to do to myself, but, he told me – still over the mobile phone – that he couldn't keep me from seeing what I deserved. He told me I wouldn't see it in real life, but any time anyone took a photo with his mobile phone camera, I would have to see what I deserved to look like in the pictures." "What the hell are you talking about?" the parrot says. "You're drunk. Anyway, I only understand the present tense (parrots can't operate in the conditional tense either) so I find your story confusing and irritating."

It turns out the speaking human is right, though. He comes up to the parrot's cage on the evening of Tuesday 4 January. The human is all puffed up and proud because he is the winner of the tiddlywinks tournament. "And that's not all, parrot, didn't I tell you – I still feel and look just fine, but just look at this photo!":



On the evening of Tuesday 4 January and the morning of Wednesday 5 January, the humans go away, one by one and in small groups. They are all still healthy and they are happy as well because they don't have to share rooms with each other any more.

The parrot stays behind. He still doesn't have to share his cage with anyone.

Rank	Player	Points
1	Patrick Driscoll	$54\frac{1}{2}$
2	Nick Inglis	$46\frac{1}{2}$
3	Harley Jones	$44\frac{1}{2}$
4	Stew Sage	$43\frac{1}{2}$
5	Alan Harper	42
6	Tim Hunt	38
7	Ed Wynn	$37\frac{1}{2}$
8	Sarah Knight	$36\frac{1}{2}$
9	Andrew Garrard	32
10	Dannish Babar	23

Round 1

Alan Harper & Harley Jones 5-2 Ed Wynn
 Stew Sage & Tim Hunt 6-1 Dannish Babar
 Nick Inglis & Patrick Driscoll 6-1 Sarah Knight & Andrew Garrard

Round 2

Patrick Driscoll & Ed Wynn 5*-2* Harley Jones
 Alan Harper & Stew Sage 6*-1* Dannish Babar & Tim Hunt
 Nick Inglis & Andrew Garrard 6-1 Sarah Knight

Round 3

Alan Harper & Ed Wynn 6*-1* Stew Sage & Andrew Garrard
 Harley Jones & Tim Hunt 3-4 Patrick Driscoll
 Nick Inglis & Sarah Knight 6-1 Dannish Babar

Round 4

Ed Wynn & Andrew Garrard $1\frac{1}{2}$ - $5\frac{1}{2}$ Alan Harper
 Nick Inglis & Tim Hunt $2\frac{1}{2}$ - $4\frac{1}{2}$ Patrick Driscoll & Harley Jones
 Stew Sage & Dannish Babar 5-2 Sarah Knight

Round 5

Alan Harper & Andrew Garrard 4-3 Nick Inglis
 Harley Jones & Ed Wynn 6-1 Sarah Knight & Dannish Babar
 Patrick Driscoll & Tim Hunt 3-4 Stew Sage

Round 6

Nick Inglis	&	Alan Harper	4-3	Harley Jones	&	Dannish Babar
Patrick Driscoll	&	Stew Sage	5-2	Sarah Knight	&	Ed Wynn
Tim Hunt			3-4	Andrew Garrard		

Round 7

Nick Inglis	&	Stew Sage	2-5	Patrick Driscoll	&	Alan Harper
Sarah Knight	&	Tim Hunt	6*-1*	Ed Wynn		
Dannish Babar	&	Andrew Garrard	3-4	Harley Jones		

Round 8

Stew Sage	&	Harley Jones	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 $\frac{1}{2}$	Andrew Garrard		
Patrick Driscoll	&	Sarah Knight	5*-2*	Alan Harper		
Nick Inglis	&	Dannish Babar	1*-6*	Ed Wynn	&	Tim Hunt

Round 9

Stew Sage	&	Sarah Knight	5-2	Harley Jones	&	Andrew Garrard
Alan Harper	&	Dannish Babar	1-6	Patrick Driscoll		
Nick Inglis	&	Ed Wynn	6-1	Tim Hunt		

Round 10

Stew Sage	&	Ed Wynn	1*-6*	Nick Inglis		
Patrick Driscoll	&	Dannish Babar	5-2	Andrew Garrard		
Alan Harper	&	Tim Hunt	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -5 $\frac{1}{2}$	Harley Jones	&	Sarah Knight

Round 11

Nick Inglis	&	Harley Jones	4-3	Stew Sage		
Patrick Driscoll	&	Andrew Garrard	6-1	Dannish Babar	&	Ed Wynn
Alan Harper	&	Sarah Knight	2-5	Tim Hunt		

The Bristol Shot: Ideas and Variations

“What are these Bristol Shots?” I asked, when I came back to Tiddlywinks after my move to London. I was then shown one, and realised that it was a kind of shot that I had tested out in student days, but with the squidger held in the usual squopping fashion. This made the shot very difficult to accomplish, and anyway it was rare. It could, however, surprise opponents in a very satisfactory way.

In 1977 everyone was far ahead of me in tactics and shot making, and I was not sure I could do the Bristol shot at all. But I decided that if I was to catch up, I would have to have the same repertoire of shots as other people, and began experimenting. Over the years I worked out how to play the shot, and what sort of squidger was best for me. As I write this article, I have a mat and a set beside me; I am verifying that I at least can play every shot I describe.

One piece of advice I would give myself and anyone else trying Bristol shots is “learn to squop”. Since all Bristols begin with a wink-on-wink position, you have to get the squop in the first place!

What about squidgers? Squidgers are very much a matter of personal preference. Use whatever seems comfortable. Nevertheless, here are a few ideas: the point at which the squidger touches the wink has to be very precise, so it helps to have a squidger that is thin at the edge. The Bristol is a delicate shot, and, I am sure, cannot be played with a squidger that looks like a cobblestone picked up from King’s Parade! I think the squidger should be quite small in diameter; mine is 32mm. It should also slide across the wink smoothly. If you have the patience, make and try several squidgers, and see which one you prefer. As you do this, you will learn quite a lot about Bristol shots!

Bristol shots involve three winks, which I shall describe as follows: the upper wink, the one already on a squop; the lower wink, the one already squopped; and the target wink, the one onto which you want to move the other two. Here is a picture of what most people would think of as a typical Bristol shot.



Diagram A

How far will the upper and lower winks go and how do you play the shot? Here I need to introduce a new concept, the length of a wink. Assume that the above winks

are small: in the picture the shot will go about two and a half lengths. Try it and see; practice is very important, and you may do better. Be very careful, when practising, to play legal shots. If you train yourself to play legal shots in practice, you will play them in matches. It is all too easy to make the upper wink slide back on the lower before release, which would alter the nature of the shot as well as make it illegal. Hence the importance of the advice offered above to make the edge of your squidger smooth. Again, make sure your squidger does not slide sideways as you play the shot. When you have tried a few shots as in Diagram A above, set the winks up again with the upper a little further back on the lower. Continue to do this until you find out how far a shot will go for a given overhang. Small variations will make a difference, until you find that the upper wink slides over the lower without moving it much distance. Experience will tell you what can be done. I am sure that somewhere along this continuum is the ideal Bristol, in which the upper and lower winks can be sent any distance without separating. An ideal, however, is something striven for, but hardly ever achieved.

Another consideration is this: how do you want to land on the target wink? You may want to stack them in a three wink pile (Diagram B), or you may want to rest the lower and target winks next to each other with the upper wink on top of them (Diagram C). Try to predict the outcome of each shot.



Diagram B



Diagram C

In my experience, for a given position, achieving forward propulsion by drawing the squidger rapidly across the upper wink will tend to make the upper wink slide over the lower, whereas achieving forward propulsion mainly by downward pressure will tend to make the lower wink pop out from below the upper.

How far on to the upper wink do you put your squidger when playing these shots? Far enough on to keep control; far enough back to get a smooth shot. Where would you put your squidger on the lower wink if you were making a squop with it? Rest your squidger above that point on the upper wink. A Bristol shot is played with two squidgers. Your squidger is the squidger for the upper wink; the upper wink is the

squidger for the lower wink. To realise this is to have the key to all Bristol shots.

How high will the upper and lower wink fly when played as a Bristol? This may depend on squidger size and style of play. My own experiments suggest that you can jump the height of one wink but not two. Of course, trying to Bristol over a friendly wink is fairly off-putting, because of the risk of squopping it.

I turn next to Bristols where the upper wink is small and the lower is large, illustrated in Diagram D.



Diagram D

At this point I apologise to readers for not having provided exact measurements in describing Bristol shots. I have neither the skill nor the equipment for these. To resume: for me the best position is that illustrated. You can comfortably jump the length of three small winks, sometimes even further. Again, have a set beside you as you read this article; your conclusions may be different from mine. Try various overlaps, and remember what happens when you play the shot. For me, the position in Diagram E is tricky. It is all too easy to make the upper wink leap off the lower.



Diagram E

Suppose you have a large wink on a large, as in Diagram F. This resembles positions already discussed at Diagram A.



Diagram F

Exact positioning is important here, and I do urge you to try out the shots as you read this article. The Diagram F position should go three lengths of a large wink, or even four. You may find, when investigating Bristol shots in general, that it is easier to use large winks. Alas, in real life there are twice as many small winks as large, so you are investigating the rarer shot. Nevertheless, the principles you establish can be

applied to small winks.

What can you do when the upper wink is totalling the lower? if the case is small on small, I would not got for a target wink more than a large wink's length away. For large on large, my maximum distance is a large and a small away. You may be able to do better.

When you have a large wink on a small, the lower wink is not always visible, but it is very important to look to see where it is. Its precise location under the upper wink will govern the direction and distance in which they can be Bristolled. The simplest case is illustrated in Diagram G.



Diagram G

In this position, you have to imagine that the large Yellow is on the small Blue, not the other way round. You can Bristol these winks in any direction, and they will comfortably go the length of two small winks. Of course such a perfect squop is rare, and most of the time you will find the winks go in one direction only.



Diagram H

In Diagram H, it is easiest to Bristol the winks in the direction of the arrow. To do the shot in the opposite direction risks coming off the lower wink altogether. It is, however, possible to Bristol at right angles to the direction of the arrow. When faced with a shot like this, look very carefully at the positions of the winks, and remember the remark made earlier — the upper wink is in effect the squidger for the lower wink. In general, your squidger should cross the back of the lower wink (the part of the wink furthest from the direction of travel). You have to make allowances for the top wink, either in the angle at which you hold the squidger, or in its exact position, but the back of the lower wink is the point from which you start thinking.

Most people believe that the easiest Bristol shots are those in which the upper wink is directly 'behind' the lower; some even believe that such shots are the only ones playable. Both these beliefs are false. It is now time to consider Bristols that appear to be more challenging. Consider Diagram I.



Diagram I

How do you accomplish this Bristol? Consider three things, the 'back' of the lower (blue) wink, the point of intersection between the blue wink and the yellow, and the fact that, although it is agreeable to cover a wink totally, to squop a wink you need to cover it only slightly. In this position, you also have to remember that the lower wink is resting on the mat as well as the blue, and will tend to slide off the blue as you play. Look back at Diagram I. Your squidger should make contact at the point indicated by the arrowhead, and be played across and slightly downwards. Hold it vertically to the upper wink, not to the mat, to prevent the upper and lower winks from separating. Your grip and squidger may affect the exact position, so if you fail, try again, and remember what succeeds, so as to apply the principle to other positions.



Diagram J

Diagram J shows a similar but more difficult position, with the lower wink more exposed.

As long as you can get the upper wink on the target wink, you have succeeded, so do not play too hard. Though the upper and lower wink look more likely to separate, you have compensation in that you can get more purchase on the 'back' of the lower wink. The arrow shows my preferred point of contact and angle of holding the squidger. When you can do this shot satisfactorily, try some more variations, and see what you can do.

Suppose you have a small wink on a large. There is a good case for simply keeping it as an asset too precious to waste, though there are those who, when an opportunity for an ambitious Bristol arises, would regard turning it down as unenterprising, or even pusillanimous.



Diagram K

Look at Diagram K. You decide that you must squop the red on the right. Can it be done? It can, but it is a delicate shot, and risky. The risks are of coming off the big Red, and of missing the target Red, or both. In the diagram position, put your squidger on the centre of the small yellow, and slide off at about seven o'clock on the large red. The large red should go onto the small at about ten o'clock. There are some related positions in which it is better to slide the upper wink over the lower without coming off it, so that it rather than the lower wink covers the target wink. This is especially true if the upper wink is more than half off the lower. The distance such a Bristol will go is quite short, but I think it is a better shot for the bridge than a normal squop shot, because there is less chance of butting.

There are many other types of Bristol shot. Large on large and small on small variations come to mind. There are also tripleton and other multiple Bristols, and others that contain an element of surprise. However, I have probably strained the Editor's and the readers' patience by now, so I will cease, and resume in another issue if I am invited to do so.

Charles Relle

Originally in Winking World 78, Spring 2002



The Bristol Shot A Second Look

Consider the position in Diagram A2:



Diagram A2

You are looking at small winks. You probably think of this as a typical Bristol position, and so it is. You would have no hesitation in going for this shot.

But what about position B2?



Diagram B2

Most people would be doubtful about playing a Bristol shot to cover blue and red with yellow. Nevertheless, it is possible. How do you play it? Put your squidger over the middle of the Blue wink, and draw it backwards to the point of intersection of the blue and the yellow. Point the squidger at the top edge of the red. This shot is quite hard to accomplish. The maximum distance is about two lengths of a small wink. Start by putting the winks closer together, and make sure the yellow is not actually in front of blue, for then you are more likely to spill the blue. The result for which you are aiming is shown in Diagram C2.



Diagram C2

Remember that in all Bristol shots, you do not have to pile the winks in a great stack. Many Bristol shots are possible only if you aim to cover part of the target wink. For this reason they are very delicate; you have a small area for which to aim, and the potential for going wrong is considerable. However, this is part of the charm of the shot. If your opponents do not expect you to play it, they can be caught out. If they do, they may be more wary of you, to your advantage.

Look back at Diagrams A2 and B2. If both these positions are possible Bristol shots, it follows that positions in between can be played in the same way.

Here is another position.



Diagram D2

Again, put your squidger over the middle of blue, and pull it back to the back edge of blue. Imagine the red wink as a clock face. Point your squidger towards 2:30 on red. Once again, two lengths is a reasonable distance, but practise on shorter distances to start with. As with all shots, confidence counts for a great deal, so begin with shots you are sure you can do. When you can do these shots, start again with large on large winks. You will find the easier, and the distances you can accomplish greater. Experiment with squidger angle, and see what goes best.

No look at this position. Set it up so that yellow is just resting on the mat behind blue:



Diagram E2

Would you are to attempt this as a Bristol? I would not. The yellow will either come off the blue altogether, or, if it carries blue a little way, butt against red. Now turn the yellow-blue through 90 degrees to get this:



Diagram F2

You would probably be doubtful about this shot too. But in fact it is possible to squop the red without coming off the blue. It is a shot of great delicacy. Put your squidger just higher than the middle of yellow, towards one o'clock, angling it towards that point. Draw it back towards 7:30 on blue. You cannot make this shot go more that a small wink's length, and you are aiming to squop the red at about 7:30. You need practice to get the right pressure. This is an extreme Bristol.

If you can do the shot in F2, you are ready to attempt shots like this:



Diagram G2

Again, the yellow is just resting on the mat. Put the squidger at two o'clock on yellow, pointing it at the top of red, about 10:30. Slide the squidger off yellow at about eight o'clock on blue. Once again, this is a hard shot; you will need practice, and, as suggested in my last article, the squidger position, in this and other shots, may be different for you.

Many angled Bristol shots depend on how much purchase you can get on the lower wink. Look at Diagram H2.



Diagram H2

Now the yellow is on the blue but not on the mat. To play this, you can point the squidger straight at the target wink, and slide it back over the blue at 9 o'clock.

From this account, you can work out how to play Bristol shots at other angles. Most considerations apply to both small on small and large on large positions.

My last article finished with a discussion of large on small positions, so let us look at some more of these.



Diagram I2

You have to imagine that the large blue is on top of the small yellow. Point your squidger at the target wink, and pull it back over the lower wink at 9 o'clock. You will find that Bristols like these will go a surprising distance.

One more position that looks surprising is this. Again, suppose that blue is on yellow.



Diagram J2

Put you squidger on the point of intersection of the blue and yellow pointing at the target wink. Draw it straight back, and you should achieve the shot.

There may be more two-wink Bristol positions to explore, but playing them will follow the principles laid down in these articles. Get out some squidgers and try!

Charles Relle

Originally in Winking World 79, Autumn 2002



Bristol Three



“Many players would not have shared Charles’s view that his shot was on”: so writ Phil Clark in WW 51. This article looks at three wink Bristol positions from which you can squop a fourth wink. They are all high-risk shots, because if they go wrong, you give the opponent a squop and some guards.

We shall start with positions in which the winks to be Bristolled are all the same size.

Look at this position at the top of the page, the one that started my first article.

Now imagine there is another blue under the yellow, like this:



Whether the winks are large or small, this will still Bristol. You need slightly more downward pressure than for a two-wink Bristol shot, and great steadiness, especially if the winks are small, because of the risk of their slipping out.

Now consider this position:



Diagram A

This will Bristol too. You are aiming to put yellow and blue on the target red, while bringing the other red next to it. How do you accomplish this shot? Put your squidger on the middle of yellow, angling it towards 10:30 on the target red. If you get the pressure right, you should squop the wink at about 9:30. There are variations on this position, and to describe them all would make this article too long. Try them out, and see what will go and what will fall apart.

Sometimes you have a position in which the winks are spread, with yellow resting on the mat, as in the diagram below.



Place your squidger on the middle of yellow pointing along a line joining the centres of the three winks. Slide it off the yellow at 7 o'clock. You should squop the red anywhere between seven and ten o'clock, depending on the precise arrangement of the tripton. This is a difficult shot, and it and similar shots need delicacy and practice. Make sure you try with large winks and small winks.

Of course, the winks will not always be in a straight line. You need to experiment with variations, and see what will work. In general, it is surprising how far the lowest wink will be carried by the other two.

Diagram A is a Bristol position, so there is no good reason why three winks piled in a zigzag should not be a Bristol too. Like this:



The basic Bristol requirement is here: upper is behind lower behind lowest for the desired direction. Put your squidger on yellow, pointing it at the target wink, and slide it back across the intersection between blue and red. Practise to get control, and the distance right. This shot is easy with large winks and hard with small ones. Try starting with the squidger fairly far back on the upper wink. The right position can be found only by experiment: too far forward and you drag the upper wink off, too far back and the whole thing may spill. You may be able to perform this shot with the winks spread further, but I think it is too risky.

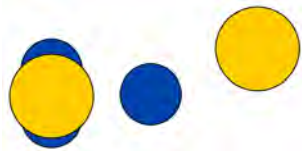
A perfectly possible but largely unrecognised Bristol position is this:



This looks unlikely, for in effect you are Bristolling red onto red with yellow; blue happens to be in the way, which makes the shot harder. To compensate, you have to reach the target wink only with the wink nearest to it. To play the shot, rest on yellow in such a way that when you pull your squidger back you cross its edge at the point of intersection with red. This shot is playable with small winks, but is much easier with large ones.

In this article, I have discussed shots in which all the winks are of the same size. My experiments with winks of different sizes suggest they are very likely to spring apart when the middle of a pile of three is different in size from the other two. You can do some shots with large on two small or small on two large by following the principles I have outlined above. Every Bristol shot is different; you have to get the correct direction and squidger pressure for each one. This is of course true for all shots; with Bristols, however, you have to take more than one wink into account. Experience counts for a great deal, both your own and your partner's. Partnering Rob Cartwright in a tournament, I once suggested playing a tripleton Bristol that I thought obvious. He said, "Absolutely not", so I played something else. I remembered the position, and tried it at home that evening. The three winks all fell apart; Rob was quite right. A tripleton Bristol is hard to play, risky, and may not be the right shot anyway. So if you have not seen it work before, beware!

After that warning, look at this position:



Playing yellow, you decide to squop the small blue. Bristolling the pile onto it is obvious; only thus to you get the squop and a guard!

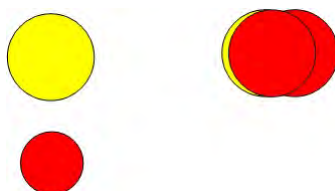
Charles Relle

Originally in Winking World 80, Summer 2003

Bristol Four

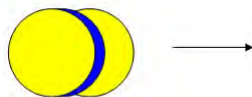
After reading my last Bristol article, someone remarked that after describing many of the positions, I recommended readers to try them out, and that this advice was repeated too often. He may be right, but I know that you can do different things with different squidgers, that certain shots seems easy to some and hard to others, and that practice is necessary. Therefore, I will make the point once here and now in this article: you do need to try all these shots out to see if they will work for you, and try them several times. Small variations in the positions of winks make a big difference, and you need to memorise them. There are few generalities, and this is one of the charms of the game, and of Bristol shots in particular.

In the Jubilee in 1985 playing against Geoff Thorpe, I had this position:



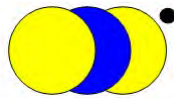
It seemed to me obvious to Bristol the red and yellow off the other red onto the yellow. This gives a doubleton and two guards. After I played the shot, Geoff remarked, 'No-one else would have taken that squop in that way'. Having tried to reproduce the shot for this article, I realise what a problem I was taking on. In most shots, your squidger hits the mat at the end of the shot, but when you want to Bristol off a wink in the diagram position and ones like it, you are playing an air shot in a special sense; you do not want to hit the bottom wink, so you have to play very delicately. These shots are more successful when the overlap between the top and middle winks is very small. The shot illustrated is complicated by the presence of a target wink; even a plain Bristol off is not easy.

Here is something that *is* a bit easier:

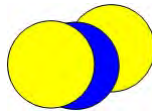


Playing in the direction of the arrow should accomplish a Bristol off. But be very careful with these shots. If the top two winks are too far apart, you will get the same position with the direction reversed, or, worse still, just slide off the middle wink.

This is the position referred to above:



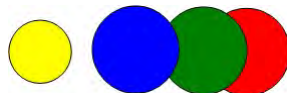
Put your squidger at top middle of the top yellow, and slide off just below the point of intersection between it and blue. If you are playing from the bottom of the diagram, angle your squidger towards the black blob. This is not an easy shot. A mistake can free the blue, leaving it to squop both yellows.



Now it is easier to free the bottom yellow. Imagine you are playing towards the bottom of the page. Place your squidger at the tail of the arrow, and move it towards the head. There are many variations on this shot, depending on the exact positions of the winks. It is interesting to put winks in different places near such piles as these, and see which ones you can squop while Bristolling off. Again, the bottom wink may well move a short distance; sometimes it too can be used to make a squop.

You will find, as noted above, that very small differences in the positions of the winks will make a big difference to the playability of the shot and the direction in which the winks will go. Practice is necessary, as well as a good memory for what will go and what will not. The illustrations in this article show winks all of one size. Piles with winks of different sizes, other than big on big on small, are less easy to control. If you want to split them, very often the shot the Americans call the 'piddle' is preferable; otherwise there is the boondock.

One of the most satisfying parts of the game is to create a shot from nowhere, and to succeed in playing it. The second part is the more important; I leave to others to write articles on the situations in which my 'Bristol imagination' has conjured up a match-loser! Consider the diagram below:



Blue, on green which is on red, is to play. Yellow has just brought a small wink behind the large blue, which is on two other small yellows, not visible in the diagram. What to do? The obvious shot was a Bristol-boondock, sending green some distance away while freeing red and Bristolling back onto the other yellow. The shot had to be played with care, because a boondock is vigorous shot, and the Bristol rather delicate.

But it worked!

This is my last 'Bristol' article. I hope others will write on other technical aspects of the game, for instance on opening theory. I am sure there is much to be discovered.

Charles Relle



Obituary: Charles Relle

It was a great shock to me — and the rest of the winking community, I'm sure — to hear of the recent death of Charles Relle, who has been a continuous piece of the winking scenery for so many years. Despite his head start on me and protestations to the contrary, Charles always demonstrated such sprightliness that I had expected him to outlast me.

Charles had been playing winks for nearly fifty five years. I imagine he would have reached this anniversary had he made the 2015 National Pairs, for which he was practising shortly before his death. Indeed, when I first saw "M.A.C. Relle" in the CUTwC archives listed as Secretary in 1963, I had assumed that it must have been a different Relle. Having come to know him better, I realise there could only be one.

During my years in the bad lands of Abbey Wood, Charles was kind enough to invite me to his house-cum-library in Maidstone for many fine lunches and many trouncing at winks. Something that I had not entirely appreciated in my previous exposure to him was just how scarily consistent he was when playing on his own mat. Despite temporarily overtaking him in the Rantings at the last London Open — my last missive from him was congratulating me on doing so — I've always known that Charles was a better player than me, but the ease with which he beat me in his own house was truly scary. Charles is known as the strongest Bristoller in the game but he was also ridiculously accurate at the bring-in, with a high deliberate squop-from-the-baseline rate, meaning that I was usually heavily behind on position very early on in the game. Middle for diddle, indeed.

I would also tease Charles that he was incapable of potting flat winks, but could pot off piles easily. I once laughed at him for missing a round five pot off a squop from eighteen inches, in which the lower wink was farther from the pot than the upper; I considered this impossible. He responded by reconstructing the squop and getting the pot on his next attempt. I maintain that Charles's biggest weakness in winks was just how strong he was at home, which sometimes made him a little too confident on an unfamiliar mat. Not that this tended to stop him from beating me most of the time, but it did give some piquancy to the rare occasions when I returned the favour. I think most players would treat him with respect, and relish beating him, even if their rating suggested that it was expected. Of course, by seniority, there was a time when he was stronger than all of them.

Other than winks, Charles was a great lover of wine, books, his students and his

faith. I can't vouch for the first, other than having seen the rate of change in his Maidstone wine collection and his choice of part-time retirement accommodation in Burgundy. His book collection was remarkable. I visited four stories of his house in Maidstone (if there was a fifth containing his bedroom, please forgive me for not having been there!) I believe the basement, containing the kitchen and dining room, did not have the walls filled with bookshelves. Everywhere else did. Most winkers will remember Charles eschewing a lunchtime of violent drinking games in favour of seeking out more antique books. This may explain some of his hesitance when drinking games appeared, although he showed no lack of enthusiasm when it came to starting with a bid of forty in SEPTIC Hold-'Em.

After many years as a teacher, Charles remained proud of (and stayed in touch with) his students, and was clearly very much appreciated by them. He was always dismissive of his own intelligence (and tactical ability), but extremely learned despite that. Of course, if you don't miss any shots, your tactical ability doesn't matter much.

I remember some years ago that he was a little prone to assuming competence in novices — I guess he was showing them respect, although it could come across as abrasive to those on the receiving end, having been one when I first met him. Some of this was, no doubt, his perpetual frustration at the slightest shortcomings in his play. In this, he was aided by his best friend of many years and oft-times winks (and crossword) partner, Alan Dean, who was uniquely capable of mollifying him. I remember being driven by Alan during the International Match in Washington, during which Charles described himself and Alan as "Mr and Mrs Dean" when on the phone to Eleanor.

In more recent years, I believe Charles mellowed in his treatment of others, and having seen him try to teach a number of complete beginners to play, he showed extreme patience, a side of him presumably also seen by his students. Still, he was a staunch advocate of what he saw as proper behaviour: few of us have not jumped out of our skins at a loud "shush" from Charles, which stopped his opponents from talking and also got the attention of everyone else in the room. Stew can also lecture you on the topic of standing in front of windows, which is a piece of etiquette that seems to have stuck in Charles's mind. Fortunately he could always be distracted by the topic of winking on the frozen Cam.

While fond of quoting in the classical tongues that he taught and dismissive of his own mathematical capabilities, Charles still seemed to be keeping up with technology

well in his later years. I remain bemused that he had a problem with the concept of a “torus” as part of the description of a wink, given its classical roots; sometimes I believe Charles’s ignorance of some topics was by choice.

Since I don’t share Charles’s faith, I can only report on his willingness to find early-morning church services on Sundays, which he would visit before the second day of tournaments. Sometimes this involved high-speed driving; while I had little experience myself, I’m told by many that being chauffeured by Charles tended to make people feel closer to God. Or at least to invoke His name a lot.

Charles was a great believer in charity. The first London Opens that I remember, hosted by Charles, included a charity collection that was often substantial; it is unfortunate (except for my chance to win it) that he was unable to make the 2015 London Open, having so staunchly supported that tournament in the past; I believe ETwA plans to replace the London Open Trophy in his name. In more recent years, Charles put his love of rambling to good use in getting sponsorships — often mixing long walks with attempts to teach people tiddlywinks. It was during such a walk that he passed away; I’m glad that he was doing something he was fond of at the time. He was a regular promoter of the game outside major tournaments; most recently, I particularly remember his efforts in Sandwich.

CUTwC undergraduates, of course, know Charles for his contribution of the Charles Relle Trophy. Having co-won the original Cambridge Open, Charles found the trophy hideous, and donated it to the Club for use for a left-handed tournament “or something”. CUTwC uses it for an end-of-term tournament, often the most enjoyable of each term. Charles probably knew CUTwC novices best for the annual dinner, in which he was among the first to express concern for anyone suffering from acute alcohol poisoning.

Still, it is for the Bristol that his contributions to the game will be best known. Nobody else would even consider many of the Bristols he considered easy. Playing him only taught me to Bristol slightly better, but it definitely taught me to watch out for the sideways-Bristol-over-a-pile. No doubt Charles would appreciate that he is still teaching me (or, as he may prefer to think of it, telling me what to do) even now — I had the pleasure of transcribing some of his old articles on Bristolling (and the pain of redrawing the diagrams) for the reprint in this edition, and I think some of it has sunk in this time.

I should not fail to say that Charles was devoted to his family. Many of us have imposed on the hospitality of his wife Eleanor, and met his son, Benedict; our thoughts are of course with them.

Despite his supposedly relaxing retirement, Charles never became less self-critical (“pull yourself to pieces, Charles!”) He often threatened to give up the game, but never did. Welcoming to novices and returning historical players alike, always with a friendly word to his fellow players, and with a caustic wit (better appreciated with age, like the man himself), Charles was a highly-visible constant to generations of winkers. I never realised that the ETwA anthem could be moving until I heard it performed in his honour at the 2015 National Pairs by a group of tiddlywinkers who showed more respect than I think I’ve ever seen from them.

Pax vobiscum, Charles.

Andrew Garrard

Playing Winks with Crappy Eyeballs

Since many of us are getting up in age I thought my experiences may be of some use, either now or in the future. As you all probably know, I was EXTREMELY nearsighted most of my life (good eye was something like 20/600), so originally wore glasses for pretty much everything other than close up reading. When I started playing winks in 1971 I was getting by with just one pair of distance glasses and those were fine for all shots, and I even kept them on for close up work (when your eyes are nice and young the lens is pliable).

This worked for quite a while, 1985 at least, at which point I had switched over to contacts (got tired of looking like a nerd with thick glasses) and simply played in contacts, unless my eyes were especially tired in which case I just switched back into my distance glasses.

I was OK for about the next 10 years (or so I thought), but things were starting to get a bit worse due to the onset of presbyopia, which usually starts happening at around age 40 to nearly everyone. It's the gradual loss of the eyes ability to focus on nearby objects, and is a natural (but annoying) part of aging. What really brought it to my attention was an utterly feeble shot against Geoff Myers in a world singles match where I was trying to reposition on his sixth wink and clicked off instead! This was while wearing contacts. After that match I recalled playing with Sunshine in the NATwA pairs in 1990 and he had played like crap. It wasn't until a few years later that he told me about his own presbyopia problem, and that he had switched over to reading glasses for close shots.

So what I did next was to go back to using my distance glasses for most shots but then started taking them off for close shots. This was ideal, as my natural focus distance was about 4–5 inches anyhow. I was off and running again, and did very well in the late 1990's. Then came 2001, a really lousy year, made even worse by losing to Lockwood in pretty much all the major singles matches. I felt like I had been missing a lot more easy squops than normal and after pondering this for a while (plus some advice from my optometrist) I began using my computer glasses for most shots and no glasses for close stuff. This wasn't perfect (bring-ins were a bit fuzzy) but I decided to get used to it rather than switch glasses all the time.

So I was all set until about 2 years ago when I finally had to bite the bullet and get cataract surgery. The surgery itself was really easy and not painful at all, but it totally reversed my whole world with respect to wearing glasses. For various reasons,

I decided on monofocal lenses and the doctor “set” me to be slightly nearsighted (something like 20/30) which meant I didn’t need glasses for most things other than driving at night, or for reading up close. Great for sports and dancing; not so great for winks or reading. So before my vision stabilized enough to get a permanent glasses prescription (about 3 months), I ordered a bunch of cheap reading glasses from Amazon to figure out what would work best for winks. Took a while to sort out, but by the time I got permanent glasses I pretty much knew what to do. The optometrist was a bit confused when I ended up ordering 3 pairs (one of distance, one for computer, one for reading/winks) but everything seems to have worked out fine for winks. I use the reading glasses for most shots, then have a cheap Amazon pair for the close up shots, and a second Amazon pair in case some desperate soul wants me to umpire anything. The second pair is basically a huge magnifying glass, useless for actually playing a shot but great for seeing really close up and huge.

Larry Khan

[Ed: I feel morally obliged to point out that there are plenty of fine retailers of spectacles and tiddlywinks is in no way affiliated to corporate giants like Amazon.]

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I was fascinated to discover from reading your organ that Dannish Babar is a solipsist.

I would be very grateful if you could publish this letter to communicate to Dannish and other winkers that I, too, am a solipsist. I think it would be very beneficial for both of us if we could perhaps establish a mutual support group.

Perhaps it is a common condition? I'd be fascinated to find out whether solipsism affects other winkers.

Yours sophisticatedly,

Patrick Driscoll

[Ed: the views expressed here are those of the letter writer and do not reflect those of the editor, ETwA council or indeed ETwA at large. Not even slightly.]

Jigsa'winku

Place each of the nine distinct characters of the word tiddlywinks once in each row, column and bold-lined jigsaw regions.

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