

Winking World 72

spring 1999

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'Who is the potter, pray, and who the pot?' — *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*

Notes from the Editor

Pot-Squop!

If there is any trend in tiddlywinks tactics evident in this issue, then it is that pot-squop, the dominant strategy of the very earliest period of competitive winks, is making a strong come-back. Rumours are even abroad that members of the rules sub-committee are considering experimenting with new rules to make this style of play more profitable by making only potted winks score points or suchlike. What should be our reaction to this? Pot-Squop, where one colour concentrates on potting-out, whilst the other attempts to prevent the opposition doing the same, is hardly unethical. But is it an effective way to play the game? The argument may go that beginners are more likely to win games against more experienced players by going for the pot, which may be less dispiriting than getting squopped up and conceding six in every game. I'm sure we have all tried speculative and risky blitzes when we have little chance of squopppping our way to victory, but to alter the balance of the game in favour of potting would make tiddlywinks a less interesting game, and it would offer no incentive for new players to practise and study more advanced tactics. A wealth of styles and strategies makes winks the fascinating game it is, but to even consider altering the rules in favour of any one type of player is unacceptable.

Cambridge Blues?

The report of the National Teams of Four and Charles Relle's article in this issue again raise the problem of perceived anti-social behaviour and the length and nature of lunchtimes during tournaments. Charles's comments are mainly concerned with common courtesy and politeness, and we should take them on board. But the complaints by the then ETwA Chairman about the attitudes of 'senior winkers' at the Fours seem to be applicable to a more specific group of players: Cambridge University Tiddlywinks Club, who were hosting that tournament. It cannot be denied (and I am the last person to deny it) that CUTwC enjoy a drink, enjoy their lunchtimes almost as much as their winks and can perhaps seem a closed circle to outsiders. I hope we do not put anybody off the experience of tournament winks; that is never our intention at all, and indeed the continuing presence of so many Cambridge winkers in tournaments and so many tournaments in Cambridge should demonstrate the Club's desire to interact with the wider winking community. In an era when tournament attendances are low, we should be careful of criticising too harshly the attitudes of the very people who keep the game alive. Drinking may kill off some of the winkers, but it won't kill winks. Apathy will.

Slu

World Singles 48

Andy Purvis

The Castle, Cambridge

I'm invigilating a Finals exam, so it's the ideal opportunity to write something for WW. I started writing an article this time last year, but didn't finish it - some wag wrapped two Lilt cans in tin foil, stuck them in the cistern of the Gents, and rang in with a bomb warning. Probably a WW reader. Anyway, I'd better get on with it, before this year's japes begin.

Some players find that their nerves reduce their chances of potting. My nerves don't help mine either, but they totally slaughter my squopping. I was feeling very skittish at the start of game 1, so started a blitz with one at the line. I missed the third and Larry squopped me. Larry hadn't settled either, though: I couldn't rescue the pot-out, but I wasn't getting squopped up. Larry's poor form - and the memory of the very first WS game I saw, in which Jon Mapley squopped Larry up with two in the pot - relaxed me and I ended up with a squop-up. The next two games were more straightforward squop-ups. Larry was missing quite a lot, and I was playing very accurately. We stopped for dinner, with Larry more grateful than me for the break..

At the start of game 4, Larry managed to get 5 of my winks under one of his, but it never looked stable and the game effectively restarted. I had a very satisfying sequence of about 6 successive medium-range flat squops, and was about 8 squops up with a few minutes to go, virtually all the winks being in singletons. I was now too passive, while Larry merged some squops to get free winks and played some nice attacks to leave an even position early in rounds. We both missed easy shots for big wins - in round 5, I cocked up a 1.5 inch squop of big on big for a certain 6-1 - before Larry just missed a pile shot that would have flipped the 4-3 ending game. 22-6 - embarrassing to lose from here...

Larry was getting stronger and I was fading, and he had most of the play in game 5. He didn't get an early pot chance but started to gain control. I played for 2, and Larry needed more than 5. He should have had it, too, but cocked

colour, he also freed my better colour and ended up with $4 \frac{2}{3}$. Unable to believe what had happened, and also unable to count, Larry and I shook hands on the match. Then Matt, who kindly umpired, pointed out that I had $24 \frac{1}{3}$, not $24 \frac{2}{3}$, so hadn't won yet.

Needing two 7-0's, Larry now opted against a squopping game. He brought in well with one colour, but so did I. He ran six, but so did I, and I also sneaked third place (as non-blinking viewers of TransWorld Sport will have seen) to take the match by the relatively close score line of $26 \frac{1}{3} - 15 \frac{2}{3}$. As when I first beat Larry back in 1990, I was very pleased with my form, but a bit frustrated that he wasn't firing. Still, better than the other way round.

Winks as Provided

Charles Relle

In the last National Singles, my opponent and I drew for colours. I drew Green and Yellow. Observing that the green winks were smaller than the rest, I changed the greens for winks of the correct size. My opponent objected, saying that I had to play the winks as provided.

This seemed to me wrong on two very important counts. The first is this. Since the greens were smaller than the other colours, and since the diameter of winks is specified in the rules, all players should make every endeavour to play with winks of the right size. Certainly no-one should attempt to compel an opponent to play with illegal winks. Indeed, there is a case for saying that anyone who does play with winks of the wrong size is deliberately breaking the rules, and should lose the game 7 – 0. This point, however, could hardly be carried with winks in their present state.

The second count is this. Many of our tournament winks are not very good. They are much more consistent in shape than the 'old' winks, which few players now remember, but they scratch rather easily. It is reasonable to expect, in a tournament like the Singles, that all the winks should be in good condition. This is a duty of ETwA, or the tournament director. If they are not, a player should be allowed to replace them before using them. The principle that once a player has played a wink he is committed to it has been with us for some time.

The validity of this second point can be established by comparison with other games like croquet and snooker, in which no equipment that is not perfect would be used.

Now that sets are appearing with greens, and some reds, of the wrong size, what is ETwA doing about it? Have complaints been made to the manufacturers or sellers, and what redress has been obtained? And if ETwA has done nothing, why not?

Silver Wink 1998–9: OUTS vs Silwood Park

No report accompanis these scores, but I'm sure that your imaginations will be able to conjour up details to flesh out these bare bones.

John Kane&Charles Oakley 1 – 6 Fiona Mansfield&Andy Purvis
Peter Weir&Catherine Goodwin 3 – 4 Louise Johnson&Aris Katzourakis
Dave Newbold&Dave Newbold 5* – 2* Cheryl Case&David Orme

John Kane&Charles Oakley 6 – 1 Louise Johnson &Aris Katzourakis
Peter Weir&Catherine Goodwin 3 – 4 Fiona Mansfield&Andy Purvis
Dave Newbold&Dave Newbold 2* – 5* Konrad Dolphin&Julia Ferrari

John Kane&Charles Oakley 2* – 5* Cheryl Case&David Orme
Peter Weir&Catherine Goodwin 1 – 6 Konrad Dolphin&Julia Ferrari
Dave Newbold&Dave Newbold 0* - 7* Fiona Mansfield&Andy Purvis

John Kane&Charles Oakley 6* – 1* Konrad Dolphin Julia Ferrari
Peter Weir&Catherine Goodwin 1* - 6* Cheryl Case&David Orme
Dave Newbold&Dave Newbold 4 – 3 Louise Johnson&Aris Katzourakis
Final Score OUTS 34 – 50 Silwood Park

Editor's note: By the sounds of it, this was a fairly close and exciting match, just the sort of tie the Silver wink should produce. But was there official sanction for teams of six, rather than the usual eight? Should Dave Newbold, playing singles, have only scored half points? Who's in charge of this competition anyway?

The Viking Origins of Tiddlywinks

Dr Erich R.A. Møø

Most winkers are aware that the modern game of tiddlywinks dates from 1955; in recent years research in the United States has pushed our knowledge of the earliest origins of the game back to Victorian times (Tucker 1996). It is now becoming clear however that our ideas of the chronology of this "sport which needs such grit and concentration" (Willis 1958) should be revised dramatically. Archaeological discoveries in Norway, Iceland and the north-western counties of England have shown beyond doubt that tiddlywinks is of Viking origin (Ppolk-Roscoe 1995; Sage and Mateyboy 1996, Møø 1998a, Gransden 1998). Many of the unusual features of the modern game, it would seem, have similarly distant origins and an overview of recent discoveries for a wider audience is now overdue (Gransden 1998).

Reinterpretation of the literary evidence has meanwhile suggested that the boundary rule was a subject of violent dispute in the Isle of Man and the Western Isles of Scotland as early as c.850, and may even have led indirectly to the death of Eric Bloodaxe at the Battle of Stainmore and the subsequent conquest of York by the English (Stenson 1976, Gravelly-Hill 1995a, Gravelly-Hill 1995b, Pickering 1998).

That the Vikings were keen games players has long been known (Nargbrot 1878); indeed, some of the earliest gaming pieces in Northern Europe have been found at Viking sites, and many are now displayed at Copenhagen University and in the British Museum (Gransden and Møø 1991). In the last decade, my own excavations on an eighth-century waterfront site in Trondheim have revealed new artefacts, including what are clearly squidgers, winks and a primitive pot found alongside drinking horns and other objects of uncertain, possibly ritual significance (Møø 1996, Møø 1998a, Møø 1998b). Chance finds elsewhere have suggested that winks was not confined to the Trondheim area; indeed, the game may have been played in the seventh century and it is no longer even clear that Trondheim was the earliest centre (Sage and Mateyboy 1996, Gransden 1989, Trollebevy 1990, Møø 1998c). The earliest excavated sites in Iceland, dating from the ninth century, contain winks including for the first time both large and small pieces. Dyeing techniques available to the early Icelandic settlers were primitive, and it seems that the distinction between red, yellow, blue and green winks had not yet been made. The game may have been difficult to follow as a result, and Gransden has suggested that chess may have gained some popularity in subsequent years as a result (Gransden 1991). Walrus ivory was the usual material for both winks and squidger, although the bones of ferrets and other small animals were certainly used from time to time. We may conclude that the Vikings were vicious bastards who killed all manner

of creatures for both food and sport (Sage and Mateyboy 1996, Yggdrasil and Nidhog 1997).

That squidgers in particular were highly prized articles is revealed by their use as grave goods for moose ritually killed in the swamps of eastern Sweden (Trollebevy 1990). The archaeological evidence alone provides an inadequate basis however for speculation on the manner in which winks was played by the Vikings, or the rules they used. Luckily, scholars have been able to develop our understanding in this area through a study, in particular, of certain stanzas of Egils Saga, which survives in a thirteenth century form but describes the exploits of an Iclander who travelled through many of the Viking lands in the late ninth century (Penguin pb edn 1990). Egil Skallagrimsson, the hero of the saga, provided entertainment at the courts of a number of contemporary Viking rulers, although the suggestion that he was personally involved in the spread of winks has not won wide acceptance (Gravelly-Hill 1980, Steenson 1981a, Gravelly-Hill 1991, Steenson 1981b). The relevant passages read:

104 Six and six the Volva (?bit) the night,
105 Six and six did Fenris gnaw his chain,
106 Great the wapentake
107 When Gudrod beat Yngvar at hrof-penny

351 In Sudrey Gunnar smote the hrof so (?sharp)
352 In Sudrey when the hrof lands by the water
353 Life the mortal prize
354 To Gunnar . . . [six lines missing]

Gudrod, Yngvar and Gunnar are clearly some of the contestants. The 'wapentake' is the traditional Viking acclamation: the warriors present drain their glasses and strike together their weapons. The term hrof-penny is key to the interpretation of the text. Early scholars believed that this referred to a bet or wager of some kind; Steenson however demonstrated that it is cognate with the element *[h]roffr underlying a number of Icelandic words related to playing, taking a turn or squidging (Steenson 1976). Hence the modern Norwegian grov, meaning a dice throw or a small, hard gob of spittle. Six may refer to the number of the winks, since this is the number found together in two separate locations in Trondheim (Møø 1998a). Alternatively, this may reflect an early system of scoring since the Volva, whom Odin traditionally consults in mythology before the Battle of Ragnarok, is mentioned alongside Fenris, who breaks his bounds and kills Odin at the same battle. It is possible that the Volva, perhaps associated here with the victorious Gudrod, opposed Fenris in

these early games of winks, before colours were introduced to separate the sides (Claptrap 1997). The second passage is less clear. 'Sudrey' is presumably the kingdom encompassing the Isle of Man and the Western Isles. The hrof appears to have been smitten some distance, and the consequences for Gunnar, whilst the reading is incomplete, may have been severe. Gravelly-Hill's suggestion is that the boundary rule had been violated in another game of hrof-penny (Gravelly-Hill 1991).

It seems that the game of winks had more divinatory and even apocalyptic associations to the Vikings than as we know it today. This, it has been suggested, may explain a somewhat obscure reference in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to the Battle of Stainmore in 954, at which Eric Bloodaxe, the last Viking king of York, was killed: "in this year was a black hrof in York, and the ravens were glutted on the blood of Bloodaxe, and a good thing too." One scholar has suggested on this basis that a game of hrof-penny preceded the battle, and that the Viking king marched forth to his death knowing that the winks had spoken against him (Gravelly-Hill 1995b). The theory is interesting, but more textual analysis is necessary before it gains widespread acceptance (Stenson 1996). Meanwhile my excavations continue, and I hope to have more to report in future years. For now, we are left with Goethe's strangled cry: "mehr licht!"

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The Varsity Match 1999

Stew Sage

This years clash between Oxford and Cambridge took place a year to the day after the last. The Cambridge team in 1998 had been noticeably more youthful than for many years hitherto. This year saw a more experienced team, which included three graduates, take to the mats. Anthony Horton and Tim Winchcomb were the only new light quarter blues.

Writing on the last Varsity Match (WW 71) I commented on the promising technical skills of the then Oxford novices and on how Cambridge might have a more difficult time if these players gained better tactical knowledge at tournaments. Sadly, few Oxford players have appeared on the tournament scene over the past year. The OUTS job was also made more difficult by the unavailability of several of their more experienced players.

The teams gathered in the Angevin Room, Queens' College on a fine Sunday morning on the 9th of May. This was the first time Cambridge had hosted the match for many years. Most games got underway a little after 11 am, but one was delayed whilst John Haslegrave sought divine intervention. This was either very successful or completely unnecessary according to one's point of view.

Matt Fayers, the only player in the match to have made the final of the National Singles, partnered novice Anthony Horton. Fayers sported his lucky white winking trousers, the absence of which had let him down so badly at the National Pairs just a few weeks before. Overawed by the occasion, or perhaps dazzled by the spring sunshine glinting off his partner's apparel, Horton put three of his reds off the table during the bring in. Even so, Dave Newbold's greens were quite quickly squopped. I was a little mystified by the lack of concern showed by the Cambridge pair regarding the six flat yellows of Matthew Nicholls. Perhaps they, unlike me, knew that Nicholls had only taken up the game some seven days earlier. Twenty minutes in a large Cambridge-held pile had developed and offered subbing opportunities in all directions. Oxford obliged and a squop up was achieved in rounds. Cambridge opened with a safe 6-1.

CUTwC President James Murray partnered former President Chris Abram in his opening match against OUTS President John Kane and Charlie Oakley. My first umpiring task of the match was to resolve a dispute over which Cambridge player had won the squidge off. Once the game itself got underway, winks were scattered around fairly liberally, with Oxford faring slightly better. Cambridge however



squopped from near and far, reducing Oxford to just two mobile greens after 15 minutes. A squop up followed with a freeing shot to end round five leaving Cambridge with another 6-1.

The Two Tims (Hunt and Winchcomb) represented CUTwC against the OUTS novice pairing of Catherine Goodwin and Olivia Lakin. After ten minutes, his game looked to be heading for a Cambridge squop up. Oxford held on however, but seemed at a loss as to how to try to overcome the inevitable 6-1 score line as they passed rather than coming off their few singleton squops. Elsewhere, the partnerless Dave Brewis held on well against Peter Corbett and John Haslegrave. The Cambridge pair finally achieved a squop up in rounds and scored yet another 6-1 for CUTwC, leaving the home side 24 - 4 up at the end of round one.

OUTS suffered an injury scare before round two when Dave Newbold mysteriously sustained a cut to his winking hand. Once patched up however, he came close to gaining OUTS their first win against Murray and Abram. Murray tried to blitz his blues but failed after two. Newbold tried a counter-pot with green, but was also halted with two in the pot. Cambridge seemed to be getting on top when an illegal boondock by Abram left things in a mess. In rounds, blue and green scrabbled for the pot and first place. Oxford looked like they might squeeze home as all the unpotted blues and most of the other winks were resting against the foot of the pot. Unfortunately a tactical error saw green pot, rather than squopping a blue which, when potted in round five, gave CUTwC a 4-3.

Fayers and Horton opened shakily against Kane and Oakley, seeing a number of their winks stacked up during the bring in and then squopped well by OUTS. Good squopping by the Cambridge pair soon turned things around and they went on to another safe 6-1. Both of the other round two games were uneventful. The Tims squopped up Dave Brewis, who nevertheless held on until rounds before going down 6-1. A last minute revival by Goodwin and Lakin saw them take 1 1/2 off Corbett and Haslegrave. CUTwC thus took 21' points from the second round and went to lunch with a comfortable 45 1/2 - 10 1/2 lead. Most CUTwC players headed off to The Mill where they met with various supporters and set about some Gales HSB. OUTS looked a bit nervous, even before the Yogi's Whist started, and opted for the sunshine instead.

Lunch had its usual effect on the men of CUTwC and the prompt restart did not keep many of them out of The Mill for long. Fayers and Horton led the way. They brought in well and Fayers encouraged new boy Horton to attempt to blitz his yellows.

He missed the first, so Fayers ran the greens instead. Horton then got his act together and secured the 7*-0*. Oakley and Kane, who seemed to have a rather blind belief in pot-squop as a tactic, started well as Kane slotted away two of his greens. Unfortunately three of the others were on the periphery of the mat and, unfazed, the Tims went on to a squop up. Hunt then masterminded a pot out for newcomer Winchcomb, who did well to complete this with a large blue pot off of a distant singleton. Hunt followed in for the 7*-0*. Abram Karnovskied against Goodwin and Lakin and after some minor scuffling potted the rest of his yellows to set the stage for yet another 7*-0*.

Despite the carnage all around them, Newbold and Nicholls kept their heads and turned the tables on Corbett and Haslegrave. Newbold, the pick of the Oxford players on the day, led the inexperienced but promising Nicholls well. Nicholls brought in his yellows tightly to set up a close group of 5. Haslegrave put and lost three blues into this area. A large pile then developed close to the pot, but Newbold eventually put paid to this with a good break playing green. The winks were well spread and favoured OUTS. Corbett failed to pot enough reds and Newbold and Nicholls took a 5 1/2 - 1 1/2 to give OUTS their first win. Cambridge however had already secured victory, with the score line at 68 - 16 after round three.

Although Newbold and Nicholls had escaped the CUTwC potting of the previous round, they succumbed to another fine Winchcomb pot out in the final round. After the niceties of the post-pot out rules were explained to newcomer Nicholls, Newbold followed Winchcomb's blues in with his greens after Hunt faltered with red. OUTS thus limited the Tims to a 6*-1*. Elsewhere, SEPTIC men were by now in potting mode. Abram soon disposed of his reds as he and Murray took 7 off of Dave Brewis. It had been agreed before the match that CUTwC would not require Brewis to play for half points even though he lacked a partner. This was not to have a great bearing on the match, as the unfortunate Brewis had an off day and only secured two points in total. The final pot out was secured by Fayers, who missed with his first yellow, but survived to run six in his next turn. Horton, no doubt with his eye on the CUTwC Presidency, obliged by following in for the pair's second 7*-0* in a row.

Potting also dominated the early stages of the final match of the fixture to finish. Kane and Oakley, who had been trying pot-squop all day, decided to go for it big time in the last match. This was the first time I have seen Dave Tayloring* since the great man himself made an appearance at the CUTwC 40th Anniversary celebrations. Kane got three greens in in this fashion before his fourth was squopped. A period of squopping was then followed by a Cambridge error which freed the three

remaining greens. These were temporarily recaptured at the expense of reds and blues for Cambridge to pot. Oakley worked well to rescue two of the greens which Kane obligingly bucketed. Red got some in the pot but was never going to have enough, so a 4-3 victory for OUTS and for pot-squop resulted. Cambridge took 25 points from the round to leave the final score at 91-21. This was the best CUTwC victory since the crushing 98-14 win over the newly revived OUTS side of 1986.

The spate of quick pot outs in this years match meant that there was plenty of time left before OUTS needed to board the dreaded slow bus home. A few friendly games between mixed Oxbridge pairs followed the close of formal proceedings, after which most of the company took a drink or two on the banks of the Cam.

Overall, the match was much as the previous year. OUTS have a number of players who are technically competent but lack tactical ability. CUTwC has the undoubted benefit of a number of experienced players, both in the University and the town, who sustain the game year round and can do much to teach new players. Without this base, it is vital that OUTS encourages its players along to tournaments so that they can lift their game tactically. More contact with other clubs will help too. WASP have led the way this year, and hopefully CUTwC and OUTS can find ways of meeting more than just for the annual Varsity fixture. Closer contact would benefit both clubs and as the day of the 1999 Varsity match drew to a close, some of those present definitely seemed to be working along these lines.

* For the benefit of more youthful readers, the verb to Dave Taylor means to bring in and then pot one wink at a time.

Letter to the Editor

Sir,

Pot-squop does not (often) work,

Yours faithfully,

Andrew 'Sylvester' Young

Oh yes? and how would you know?

Help! Winks is too Hard!

Tim Hunt

It has to be said that winks is a very difficult game (sport?). But in fact this is a virtue, not a problem. All of the really good games around are impossibly difficult. Think about chess or go or backgammon etc. The reason people can spend a lifetime playing these games is that they are so difficult you never learn to cope with them completely so you keep on playing to try to get a little bit better. On the other hand if you take an easy game like noughts and crosses then it is just tedious, and no-one over the age of 10 plays it.

This is, of course, a totally pain for beginners. When you start the game you can't pot, you can't squop, and anyway you haven't really got a clue what you should be potting and squopping in the first place.

I think that what we need are some simple games that are like winks only easier. The idea is that these simple games are easier to learn and fun to play. And by playing these simple fun games you end up learning something about the full game of winks.

For example, when people are taught the game of go (which is normally played on a 19x19 board) it is recommended that they start playing on a 9x9 board. This has about 1/4 of the area and so makes life a lot simpler whilst still being recognisable as go. It also has the advantage that a game take much less time and so you can play many more games in an evening. As a beginner you probably learn more from playing several simple games than one long complicated game where you don't understand what is going on anyway.

The way I adapt this idea to winks is to play with just 3 winks of each colour. This turns out to be a very jolly game which normally ends in a pot-out after 5-10 minutes so you don't need to bother with all that messy time-limit stuff. It is a good way to fill in time whilst waiting for another game to finish, I heartily recommend it. I hope to persuade Cambridge University Tiddlywinks Club to use it for the first bit of the first term of next academic year to teach the new batch of novices.

Another nice feature of this game is that you can handicap it quite effectively. For example if you (think you) are quite good and you are playing someone inexperienced, then you can let them place some specified number of their winks anywhere they like on the field of play before the bring-in. This gives them a good head start and works quite well to even up the game. I have less experience with this idea, but on the few times I have tried it it has produced good results.

There is one other idea I would like to try for teaching less experienced players. This is another sort of handicap system and again the idea is to make games between people of different abilities more interesting. This idea is stolen from the game of Croquet. In handicapped games of croquet (as I understand it) the weaker player (Fred) receives a number of bonus turns (which have a silly name, but I have forgotten it). When Fred's turn has ended, instead of letting the other player (Sue) take over he may choose to cash in one of his bonus turns and have another turn himself. This enables Fred to cope if he misses a crucial shot. It also means that if Sue is threatening to win next turn then Fred can use a couple of simultaneous turns to stop her. On the other hand Fred only has a limited number of bonus turns so he cannot afford to waste them and Sue will eventually be able to win by keeping the pressure on for long enough.

This system can easily be adapted to winks. We need to decide whether the bonus turns are given to a particular colour, a particular partnership, or a particular player. I think that the bonus turns should be given to a particular player. The risk with this system is that the weaker player just saves all of their bonus turns until round 5 (unless they need to neutralise a pot-out threat) and then plays lots of turns in a row to cause havoc and win the game. This is silly, so I think that there should be a limit to how many extra turns may be taken for one ordinary turn. Perhaps one or two.

So at the start of the game the players need to decide who are the weaker players (if you can't decide then you don't need handicaps), how many bonus turns they get, and how many bonus turns they are allowed to play for each normal turn. It would probably be a good idea to have some sort of counters to represent the free turns which can be used to keep track of how many free turns a player has left.

I have no idea how this would work in practice. I invite you to try it out and let me know how you get on.

Finally, for completeness, I would like to mention some of the other games that exist to teach people about winks. These are squops, colour-order squops, and that game where you shake up all the winks in the pot, sling them on to the mat in a number of heaps, and then say "blue to play with the first turn of round 1." Not that this last game also works quite well with reduced numbers of winks and rounds. I am sure any experienced player can explain these games to you in more detail if you don't already know how to play them.

Auntie Gertie answers your questions

Dear Auntie Gertie,

I am concerned that the balance between potting and squopping is not right. In the National Pairs, far too many of the games ended within five minutes after a rapid pot-out. Indeed, my squopping squidger was so neglected that it is no longer talking to me. Should I accept a divorce from my squidgers and abandon winks completely, or propose the rules amendment that potting a wink is no longer rewarded by an extra shot?

Yours nargishly,
A. S. Merchant

Dear A.S. Merchant,

Your problem is an increasingly common one among young people these days, I'm afraid. I imagine that at first you were content with gentle squopping, merely dabbling in minor potting in rounds. Then, playing with Sage after lunch, you may have tried your first pot-out. The rush you got (back to the pub) was like nothing you'd ever known, and after that squopping could never satisfy your craving. Perhaps dangerous illegal narcotics would help.

Dear Auntie Gertie,

I fear I may inadvertantly have been responsible for the death of English Winks. What should I do?

Yours shamefacedly,
A.N. Old-Soak

Dear A.N. Old-Soak,

Have another pint.

Please send all your problems to Auntie Gertie, c/o the editor.

The National Teams of Four 1999

Chris Abram

The Teams of Four, held in Cambridge in March, was all in all a disappointing tournament. The new date turned out to have been a mistake, with the majority of undergraduates already gone home for Easter, and the two-day format did not prove attractive to many more senior players. With only four teams entering, and only three qualifying (the Silwood Park contingent having to return home on the Saturday evening), the future of this once hugely popular and important event was left in doubt.

The behaviour of some of the host club, who took a long and boisterous lunchtime on the first day was questioned, again raising the old question of whether drink is killing winks, which Charles Relle addresses elsewhere in this issue. However, with so few players turning up, it was hard to see the Fours as a serious tournament, and the extra-curricular activities were a result of this.

The tiddlywinks itself was largely uneventful, with a fairly narrow range of abilities represented, and the handicap system thereby somewhat emasculated. In a tournament where teams including novices traditionally have performed best, it was the distinctly experienced team of Charles Relle, Alan Dean, James Cullingham and James Murray (who arrived late on Sunday, by which time he had been usurped by Patrick Barrie, left all alone after his team of the first day had departed) who secured a comfortable victory.

The Teams (handicaps in brackets)

SEPTIC TANK: Stew Sage (5) Matt Fayers (6) Christine Wiggins (4) Chris Abram (4) Total Handicap: 19

CAMBRIDGE LOCAL INDEPENDENT TIDDLYWINKERS: Phil Carmody (5) Andrew Garrard (4) Antony Proietti (2) Kristina Rällsjö (1) T.H.: 12

I DON'T MIND: Charles Relle (6) Alan Dean (6) James Cullingham (4) James Murray (3) T.H.: 19



JANE: Andy Purvis (7) Dave Orme (1) Louise Johnson (2) Patrick Barrie

(7) T.H.: 17

Patrick Barrie replaced James Murray in I Don't Mind on Sunday, raising their total handicap to 23.

The Scores

Day 1

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Adjusted</u>
SEPTIC TANK vs I DON'T MIND	13-15	13-15
C.L.I.T. vs JANE	18-10	20.5-7.5
SEPTIC TANK vs JANE	16-12	15-13
C.L.I.T. vs I DON'T MIND	8.5-19.5	12-16
SEPTIC TANK vs C.L.I.T.	18.5-9.5	15-13
I DON'T MIND vs JANE	17-11	16-12

Note: On Day 1, each round consisted of pairs chosen at the liberty of the teams playing both the opposing team's nominated pairs.

Day 2

Note: Day 2 was a fixed pair all-play-all (excluding members of the same team, the pairs being Abram & Wiggins, Fayers & Sage, Carmody & Proietti, Garrard and Rällsjö, Relle & Dean, Cullingham and Barrie. The scores given here are adjusted.

	brought forward	SEPTIC TANK	C.L.I.T	I DON'T MIND	TOTAL
SEPTIC TANK	43	*	15.5	9	67.5
C.L.I.T	45.5	12.5	*	9.5	67.5
I DON'T MIND	47	19	18.5	*	84.5
JANE	32.5	-	-	-	32.5

World Singles 49

Andy Purvis

Recent form favoured Larry. He had warmed up by winning the NATwA Singles with nearly 6 p.p.g., whereas Andy had managed to finish runner-up in the Silwood Handicapped Singles (pipped by Richard Fortey F.R.S. who, incidentally, first retired in 1966 after playing on the losing Cambridge side in the Varsity Match). There was an enthusiastic crowd of local players throughout, and Kon umpired. Larry and I alternated colours, corners and tactics: in even games, I played yellow and green, had dominant corners, and went for the pot-out. Larry brought in really well throughout, but chose not to develop his potential threats. His good bringing-in, coupled with my patchy squopping, encouraged me to push for blitzes despite my winks being more scattered. As things turned out, Larry missed too many squops (just) and I made enough pots (just), so I won (easily! Oh, all right, just).

Larry won a cagey first game with a late squop-up, after my squopping disintegrated half way through in a fairly even position. In our previous matches, whoever had gone behind early on had usually fallen away, so game 2 was likely to be crucial. I had a beer to steady my nerves (thanks, Aris). We both brought in well: Larry had his blues and reds nicely mingled (but with one errant red two feet away), whereas I had separate green and yellow clusters with one of each on the baseline. Larry missed a squop onto yellow. I started potting but missed the fourth. Larry made a good squop with blue, so I started potting greens. I missed the fourth... With a green still at the edge, it seemed Larry had time to bring in the wayward red and pot out, but he seemed not to be confident of running six. So he tried the long pot. He missed, knocking the blue of the yellow, denurdling the yellow, and bouncing the red a foot past the pot. Something of a turning point. I potted two more yellows and missed the sixth fairly safe. Blue missed a long squop, green brought in the sixth rather than squop a red, and Larry missed the last of the close reds. I completed my subclinical blitz, and ran the greens for 7-0 - six points more than I probably deserved.

At the start of game 3, Larry made a good squop to negate a blue pot threat and a close, cautious game ensued. It usually looked like a 4-3, usually to me, but Larry edged up well and would have won but for missing a reasonable pile pot in round 5. There was much less sign of caution in game 4. Both players brought in well again, and again Larry dived in rather than race. His big-on-big squop attempt subbed, so I started potting greens. The hard ones went in but I missed the fifth, an easy pot off the subbed red. Larry squopped me and started absorbing yellows. There was plenty of time for a conversion, but he missed a rash of more or less simple shots and I got to blow the pile. Larry resquopped one green but was now running short of time

for the pot-out. In round 4 he chose to boondock rather than try a tricky pot off from eight inches, but he missed the flat pot in round 5 so only won 5-2 (yellows were everywhere, so the pot out would have been 6-1) to tie the scores.

After a break for food, game 5 was another close, tentative squopping game. Towards the end, we both got a bit overexcited and threw winks away unnecessarily. Rounds were complex, with all four colours having chances for points. I chose to free a yellow (Larry's best colour) to give red (my worse colour) a chance of beating green. As it turned out, a missed green pot meant I needn't have bothered, and Larry potted well with yellow - especially a game-ending pile pot - to sneak first and regain the lead.

Larry again chose not to develop a possible red threat in game 6, allowing green to gain tempo for the yellows. Larry missed a small yellow touching the pot, leaving me the choice between a difficult pot-out or a squopping game in Larry's area. The pot of the nurdled yellow actually got a round of applause, which made me feel better about the other five. They duly followed, some far from trivial, for one of the most satisfying pot-outs I can remember. There was still a green at the edge, but Larry "Waltered" (to Walter is to miss pots repeatedly with expensive consequences, named after the contestant on Moment of Truth who did so with twenty grand at stake), and I ran the six greens for the dreaded 24-18 lead.

Larry's bring-in let him down a bit when he needed it most, and he couldn't develop an early blitz threat. He had to play speculative shots, several of which missed, and a couple of missed lunches hurt too. The squop-up came as rounds approached and, although the greens were all in one pile, Larry never got the chance to break it.

This was a much more interesting match than our previous meetings, and was played to a pretty high standard. Only the first and last games had no turning points, no crucial shots or misses. Neither of us was at our best, but we both played some excellent sequences. Nice, too, that the strategy was more open than is often the case - Richard Fortey would have felt right at home (he thinks double-squop is basically cheating). Afterwards Larry pointed out the similarity to a tennis match, with a few key shots having a disproportionate effect on the result. Luckily for me, they mostly went my way.

Game Scores (Andy Purvis first): 1-6, 7*-0*, 4-3, 2-5, 3-4, 7*-0*, 6-1.
Final Score: 30-19.

Us and Them Again

Charles Relle

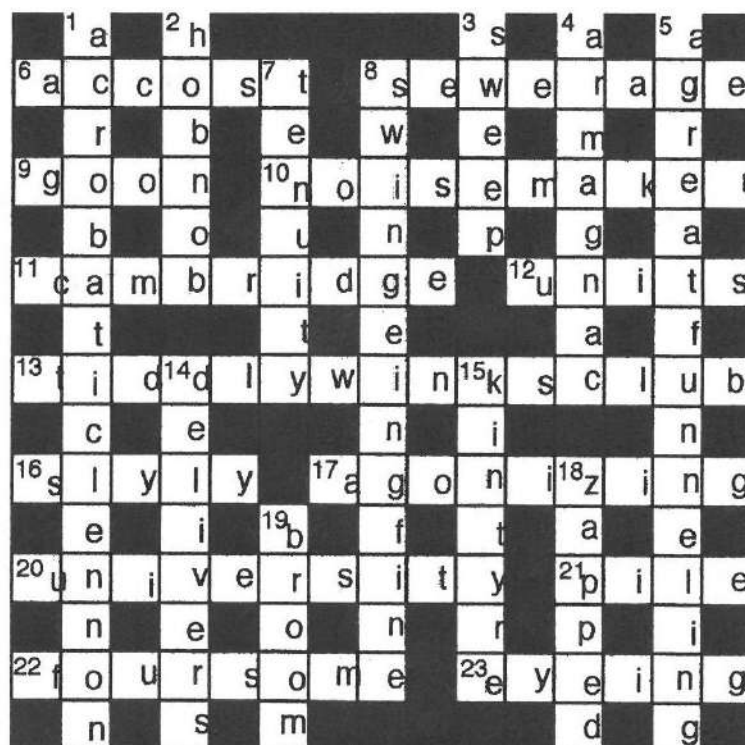
The title is a reminder of pieces written some time ago by Stuart Collins and myself, but it is about a different 'us' and a different 'them'. It is prompted by the thought, 'What if I turned up at a tournament, never having been to one before? Would I feel welcome?' The question supposes that 'I' was roughly the same age as most of the participants. It is a question we all ought to ask ourselves with great earnestness. Most of us have been in the game some time; we know each other well; we make allowances for each other's eccentricities, even to the extent of not commenting on players who play in bare feet, or say 'middle for diddle' and 'partner dear', or disappear into antiquarian book shops at lunchtime. But do we ever consider what sort of impression we make on new people? If we want people to take up the game and stay with it, we need to do this. Do we ever wonder whether the lunchtime entertainments we have evolved for ourselves are congenial or comprehensible to new players, or players from outside our particular circle? Ought we to make some effort to engage them in conversation over lunch, even if they do not drink as much as we do, in the hope that they will gain a good impression of us, and want to come back to future tournaments? Do we actually, in our hearts, want the game to expand, or do we want it to be the preserve of an ever-dwindling 'club within a club'? We all know what it feels like to walk into a room full of people unknown to ourselves, but all known to each other. Tournaments are like that to new players. So we (including the author of this article) ought to ask ourselves whether we have greeted new people on arrival, and how much help we have given to them to find their way to their first table. Have we explained the draw and the movement to them, at least in general terms? When new people come to our table, do we remember to introduce ourselves and ask their names? In short, are we welcoming, whether we are ETwA officers or not?

All games involve a certain amount of aggression, because the object is to win. But we know all aggression should be tempered with courtesy. Do we always act on that knowledge? Do we compliment opponents on well-played shots? Do we, in less serious tournaments at least, adopt a more friendly attitude? Do we make a bit of time at the beginning and end of the game to have some conversation, perhaps just, 'How are you getting on so far?' or,

'Shall I enter the score or will you?', for a single sentence can make the contact and build the bridge. Again, if we play newcomers in the game before lunch, do we invite them in with our bunch of friends to go to the pub, and buy them drinks? Do we try to make them part of the social scene? Do we even give up our own routine (which we can enjoy at any time) in order to make newcomers feel welcome? Do we see the lunch hour as an opportunity to make newcomers more at home with the established players, so that they will be a little more familiar with those they will meet after lunch? Do we reflect that if we really want the game to be enjoyed by more people, we must be more concerned with their impression of us than our impression of them (if we form one at all)?

First experiences are important, and we need to ask ourselves how good the experience of tournament Tiddlywinks is to those who come for the first time. I have written this article in the form of questions, because they are questions we all, including myself, ought to face honestly, and because a series of questions cannot, I hope be read as a series of accusations, but only as a stimulus to thought, and thought for the good of the game and all its players, especially those coming to tournaments for the first time.

WW 71 Crossword: The Answers



The ETwA National Singles 1998

Queens' College, Cambridge, 22 & 23 November

Headless Widow Group

Andy Purvis

Three to go through from eight, but everyone's got a chance when the league contains such randomising elements as Geoff Thorpe, James Cullingham, Geoff Thorpe, Stew Sage, Geoff Thorpe and Geoff Thorpe. Andy Purvis started out with 4 sevens, so was always going to qualify, but Geoff opened with two 1-6 losses to lower seeds, leaving Phil Scarrott, Stew and James to fight over two qualifying slots. After four rounds, only 3 points separated them, but Stew had already taken 6 off each of his rivals, and now had the easier draw. Although novice Kristina Rällsjö notably beat him 4-3, he qualified easily. Going into the last-round head-to-head, Phil had a lead of 3 over James: he got the 5.5 James needed, and finished second. Paul Moss managed three wins without threatening to qualify, and Konrad Dolphin blitzed Kristina (who finished last despite beating a qualifier!) and had a few close losses to finish level with Geoff. Ah yes, Geoff. He had an awful day, summed up by his last round game against me. I'd potted five and got squopped. With a bring-in, he knocked himself off and ended up a long way from the pot, turning a probable 6-1 into a certain 0-7. Oddly, Larry had done the same to me in our WS match a couple of days before - I don't know, you wait 13 years for a bollock-brained knock-off to turn up, and then two of them come along at once.

[Editor's note: thanks to Andy for this report of his qualifying league. Unfortunately, the other three (equally improbably named) leagues have not been written up at the time of going to press. And scores are currently unavailable. Sorry]

The Final: Losing My Virginity *Matt Fayers*

What with so many nargs being dead, abroad or just lazy (Myers, Moore, Inglis, Lockwood,), this year's singles was wide open. Well, not quite. But wide enough to allow all sorts of young pretenders to sneak into the second day: Sage, for the second year running; Relle, despite having given

 24 up the game in 1320; and this year's virgin - me. Those of us who have

never qualified for this prestigious Sunday are often led to wonder at all the rumours. Does it really start at 9.30 after eight pints and a curry? Can Stew really be seen (although still rarely) practising? Well, it's all true. Such was my awe at the event that I immediately fell into a consistent losing streak, taking a point off each of Simon, Patrick, Larry (who I don't think even noticed playing against me) and Andy (against whom I fared rather better, but still sank eventually) before lunch.

Lunch was taken in the Mill, and a sombre affair it was. With no plate contenders joining us, we twelve (modulo Charles and Alan) drank our beer quietly, and no-one mentioned the death of English 'winks. Maybe it's already happened. In first place at this stage was Patrick with 23, half a point clear of Larry. Matty, though only sixth qualifier, had 21, while top qualifier Andy was slightly off the pace on 18, having succumbed to Charles early on.

After lunch I maintained my form, giving Matty the 6 this time. I remained three points adrift of the field, with every rabbit being bashed (except Charles who got 4 off Simon). Consequently the top four and bottom four remained the same.

My first win (and a brief sojourn in eleventh place) came in round 6, a 4-3 against Alan, while Stew's valiant 3 off Larry increased Patrick's advantage at the end of the top v. bottom section of the draw. Andy had managed to sneak into third, Matty having lost to Jon. Round seven saw my form returning, with Charles, who was having a patchy day, grateful for the 6. Patrick's 7 (recovering 6 ppg briefly) allowed him to stretch his lead over Larry who only managed 5*. It was looking like a three-horse race at this point, with Andy now only a point and a half shy of Larry. Rounds eight and nine provided me with two more wins, squopping up an out-of-form Julian and scraping a 4 from Phil Scarrott. Stew also won in both these rounds, and Julian was beginning to look solid in twelfth. Andy's 13 points from these two rounds (making 43 for the last seven rounds) were enough to wrest top spot from Patrick and Larry who had to play each other (4-3 to Larry) in round 9.

Now came the crunch: national or personal glory? With two rounds left to play, the top three were Andy 49, Patrick 48, Larry 47.5, with

Andy to play Patrick. If either succumbed, it would leave the other with a great chance to keep the trophy in England, but succumb they would not. A complicated game (with many people spectating, and Patrick providing a running commentary) ended 4-3 to Patrick - a great result for Larry, who was busy taking 6 off Matty. At the business end, a chaotic counter-pot against Stew, with Julian recovering to take 6 off Phil, provided me with outright tenth, a point behind Stew. But in the final round I lost to a mis-seeded Jon, although I might have done better if I hadn't missed the fourth yellow pot four times. A frustrating ninth equal with Stew and Phil, not far short Alan in eighth, was a reasonably satisfying end to my first singles final. But the climax was coming up at the top as well. Going into the last round, Larry has a point and a half advantage over both Andy and Patrick, so Andy was looking for at least 4.5, while Patrick was after the same off Simon, who had had a slightly disappointing day. In the end Patrick only got 4, while Larry potted out comfortably against Andy. Well done Larry.

So there you have it. I am a virgin no more; I have known 'winks. See you next year (although Geoff, Richard, Nick and Dave needn't rush back).

Qualifying Score		Player	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
46	A	ANDDY PURVIS	-	2*	3	6	7*	6	6	6*	6	6*	1 1/2	4 1/2
45	B	LARRY KAHN	5*	-	4	5*	6	6	6	4	6	5 1/2	5	6*
43	C	PATRICK BARRRIE	4	3	-	4	7*	3	6	6	6	1	6*	6*
40 2/3	D	SIMON GANDY	1	2*	3	-	5	1*	5*	5	6	1	3	7*
38	E	ALAN DEAN	0*	1	0*	2	-	1	2	3	3	6	6	5 1/2
36 1/2	F	MATTHEW ROSE	1	1	4	6*	6	-	6	6	6	2*	4	5
33 1/2	G	PHIL SCARROTT	1	1	1	2*	5	1	-	6*	3	1*	5	1
33	H	STEW SAGE	1*	3	1	2	4	1	1*	-	2*	6	5*	1
32	I	MATT FAYERS	1	1	1	1	4	1	4	5*	-	2	1	6
30 1/2	J	JON MAPLEY	1*	1 1/2	2	6	1	5*	6*	1	5	-	7*	6
30 1/2	K	CHARLES RELLE	5 1/2	2	1*	4	1	3	2	2*	6	0*	-	5 1/2
29 1/2	L	JULIAN WISEMAN	2 1/2	1*	1*	0*	1 1/2	2	6	6	1	1	1 1/2	-

	SCORE AFTER ROUND										
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL	POS.
A	6	12	18	24	30	36	42	49	52	54	3
B	11	17	22 1/2	28 1/2	32 1/2	37 1/2	43 1/2	47 1/2	53 1/2	58 1/2	1
C	11	17	23	29	35	42	45	48	52	56	2
D	7	12	17	20	27	29	30	31	36	39	6
E	5	10 1/5	16 1/2	22 1/2	25 1/2	25 1/2	26 1/2	26 1/2	28 1/2	29 1/2	8
F	12	16	21	27	29	30	34	40	41	47	4
G	6	7	9	10	11	12	17	20	21	27	9=
H	5	7	8	9	12	13	19	24	26	27	9=
I	2	3	4	5	9	10	16	20	25	27	9=
J	8	9	10 1/2	11 1/2	16 1/2	22 1/2	23 1/2	29 1/2	36 1/2	41 1/2	5
K	7 1/2	10 1/2	11 1/2	15 1/2	16 1/2	22 1/2	24 1/2	26 1/2	26 1/2	32	7
L	3 1/2	5	7	8	8	14	15	16	22	23 1/2	12

The Singles Plate

Tim Hunt

Whilst the old nargs were slogging it out in the Armitage Room the rest of us were enjoying ourselves playing in the Plate Competition.

There were several notable success. Kristina got her last name spelt correctly for the first time all weekend, mainly by writing it down herself; by our sheer brilliance we happened to have exactly a multiple of four players for every round (although we did have to force Antony to stay in the pub for the round after lunch; and there were enough redraws to be traditional without getting boring.

The best winking moment came in the round after lunch which you should be able to guess was round three. Kristina (yellow) got a wonderful 15 inch squop onto the pile containing most of the greens (green being Andrew who did not have any mobile winks at this point. Paul and I were rather unimpressed by this and so I told Paul (blue) to squop back with his closest wink which was a mere foot away on the edge of the mat. this he duly did. I then had to boondock a green because it was the only way to get ourselves some more winks out and rather serendipitously the green landed next to a blue on a yellow giving Paul a trivial shot for a doubleton and a squop-up. For a brief moment we thought we were in the wrong tournament. For a brief

moment.

Of course it was not all plain sailing. People had this strange compulsion to talk to the tournament organiser when he was trying to tournament organise, but then the with a total dearth of thirds I only had to contend with adding eighths. There was only one pot-out in the whole tournament and we had to wait right until the end for that. The more novice players played very well indeed, but this does not seem to have been reflected in their results. I particularly remember Kristina flattening a pile from a very tricky position whilst partnering me. I know I wouldn't have pulled that shot off.

Perhaps I should explain how the whole thing works. Well, that might be untraditional because allegedly only James Cullingham understands the system, but in fact it is really rather simple. At the start each player has a handicap assigned by the tournament organiser. In each round, those wishing to play are drawn randomly into pairs (except that two people should not partner each other more than once, but astute readers [what, of Winking World? — Ed.] will notice that this was impossible in the last round and so I partnered Phil Carmody twice). The pairs are then drawn against each other randomly. At the end of the game the result is adjusted by adding one quarter of the sum of the opponents' handicaps minus the sum of the partners' handicaps as usual. If the adjusted score is more than (or equal to) 5–2 the winners' handicaps are increased, and the losers' handicaps are reduced, by half a point. The winner is decided by P.P.G. (using the adjusted scores, of course) and if you want to to win you are not allowed to sit out of more than two rounds. Just to see how easy it is you might want to try recomputing some of the final P.P.G.s in the table below.

Scores (unadjusted)

Phil & Paul 6–1	Philip and Pete	Tim and Kristina 3 1/2–3 1/2	Andrew and Antony
Pete & Paul 5 1/2–1 1/2	Phil and Kristina	Tim and Paul 6–1	Philip and Antony
Tim & Paul 6–1	Andrew and Kristina		
Phil & Tim 5–2	Jon & Kristina	Andrew and Paul 6–1	Pete & Antony
Phil & Andrew 5–2	Paul & Kristina	Jon & Pete 6–1	Tim & Antony
Andrew & Pete 7*–0*	Antony & Kristina	Tim & Phil 6–1	Paul & Jon

Position	Player	Starting Handicap	Score	Games played	P.P.G.	End Handicap
1	Andrew Garrard	3	26 1/8	6	4 17/48	4
2	Phil Carmody	5	21 1/4	5	4 1/4	5 1/2
3	Paul Moss	4	23 1/2	6	3 11/12	5
4=	Pete Keevash	4	19 3/8	5	3 7/8	4 1/2
4=	Tim Hunt	5	23 1/4	6	3 7/8	5
	Jonathan Williams	4	9 3/4	3	3 1/4	4
6	Kristina Rällsjö	1	15 1/4	6	3 1/20	0
7	Antony Proietti	1	11 3/8	5	2 11/40	- 1/2
	Philip Holdsworth	2	4 1/8	2	2 1/16	1 1/2

Winks in Belgium

Richard Moore

The XIIth Somerset Invitation: a Reconstruction

For eleven consecutive years, Terry and Sally Sage had put up with a New Year's invasion of winkers at the Somerset Wagon in Chilcompton, one of the West Country's finest hostelries. During 1998, they called it a day and we wish them a very long and happy retirement. One problem: where to go for the winks in 1999? Luckily Ed Wynn had agreed to go to work for ICI in Brussels, where his flat rivals the Wagon in size and even surpasses it in luxury (if not in 6X or stuffed moose-heads). The scene was set for the XIIth Somerset Invitation to be held in Belgium.

Thus the usual wretched early morning drunks, instead of piling down to Bristol Temple Meads, boarded the Eurostar on 2 January: Messrs Abram, Barrie, Collins, Cullingham, Dominey, Moore, Wiggins and Young. Stu hadn't brought his passport, but blagged his way into Belgium anyway. A frantic call to the Embassy later confirmed that yes, he should indeed have been arrested and put back on the train to London. Matt Fayers joined us by fast jet from Heathrow, his bouffant hair bearing witness to the scalp-tingling excitement of air travel. Sage and Gandy, being the serious drinkers they are, had joined Ed several days previously. A twelve-player all-partner-all beckoned over two fairly gentle days, ending with a day's sightseeing. Thoughts of relaxation were soon driven from our minds however by the serious question of alcohol: Ed had thoughtfully laid in twelve bottles each of forty-two

(or was it forty-three?) different Belgian beers.

A careful reconstruction of subsequent events has been necessary. Inevitably, an impressionistic account follows, which may not be in strict chronological order. Three tables, of regulation 6'x3' size but different heights, were employed. Ed had manipulated the draw, somewhat unnecessarily we thought, to allow each player a bye sometime during the tournament. The arrival of Geoff Myers, halfway through the first morning, explained this anomaly: the draw had been designed to accommodate a special guest (and what more special guest could there possibly be?). Cheesy-pea quiche and beetroot were produced for lunch. There were no locks on the bathroom doors, and so a system of 'yellow stickies' was employed to indicate when others would be unwelcome. Mercifully, no misunderstandings resulted. Stew ranted so obnoxiously about fines that on one evening session, as he tottered around the room, he was deliberately prevented from playing in any drinking games he enjoyed. The game of "Mutant Ninja Brussels Metro" was invented and played.

Opinions differed on the beer. Scotch Silly was voted the beer with the best name, but Cantillon Gueuze was variously described as "very nice" and "a cross between non-brewed condiment and black treacle." In the end, we failed to finish it all. What else? Ah yes, the winks! Richard eventually won, but only just. His failure to calculate the scores properly before the final round meant that Patrick, thinking he needed a six or seven inch squop ending round five to tie overall - and getting the shot - actually finished fourth (sorry Patrick!). Stew came a quite triumphant last, 14 1/3 points adrift. In the first six games of the second day he amassed a total of one point. Less than half of the games overall ended in pot-outs, rather a disappointing statistic. Perhaps Belgian beer giveth the desire, but taketh away the performance.

The ETwA Pairs 1999

Chris Abram

Silwood Park, site of Britain's only academic nuclear reactor, provided winks action which got the geiger counters of opinion ticking and seeped alpha-particles of fun into the game when it hosted its first national tournament, the National Pairs! Chief Redcoat at this Butlin's of Boondocks, Andy Purvis, had (in the absence of the tournament director, or a better suggestion) turned the tournament into a Swiss, but few felt neutral about the new format. Some people were cheesed off, went cuckoo when the clock showed time up, and vowed to get their (tobler)own back.

Round 1

ALAN DEAN & CHARLES RELLE 6 - 1 ANDREW GARRARD & DAVE NEWBOLD
ANDY PURVIS & JON MAPLEY 5 - 2 CHRIS ABRAM & RICHARD MOORE
CHRISTINE WIGGINS & SIMON GANDY 6* - 1* DAVE ORME & CHERYL CASE
JAMES MURRAY & CHRIS KNIGHT 1 - 6 KONRAD DOLPHIN & LOUISE
PAM & GRAHAME BUDD 1 - 6 PATRICK BARRRIE & ED WYNN
PHIL CARMODY & KRISTINA RÄLLSJÖ 5 - 2 STEW SAGE & MATT FAYERS
STU COLLINS & JAMES CULLINGHAM 4 1/2 - 2 1/2 WAL CLARKSON & TIM HUNT

Round 1

Pot-Outs [1]: Christine and Simon, who counter-potted in reaction to Cheryl's frisky start, and were praised for their brevity.

Squop-Ups: Alan and Charles squopped-up Andrew and Dave after Charles initially threatened to pot.

Konrad and Louise squopped-up Chris and James in rounds, 'bizarrely'.

Failed Pot-Outs [2]: Phil and Kristina, ignoring Matt's suggestion that they should play in the nude, eventually won after Stew missed the sixth, and they too failed to pot.

Patrick missed his sixth wink off a pile in round five after Grahame had vainly battled to rescue Pam's squopped-up winks.

Others: Stu and James built on a good bring-in to gain ascendancy against Tim and Wal. Andy and Jon also won a squopping game, although it was pretty close.

Round 2

ALAN DEAN & CHARLES RELLE 5 - 2 CHRISTINE WIGGINS & SIMON GANDY

KONRAD DOLPHIN & LOUISE JOHNSON 1 - 6 PATRICK BARRRIE & ED WYNN
ANDY PURVIS & JON MAPLEY 7* - 0* PHIL CARMODY & KRISTINA RÄLLSJÖ :
STU COLLINS & JAMES CULLINGHAM 2* - 5* CHRIS ABRAM & RICHARD MOORE
WAL CLARKSON & TIM HUNT 1* - 6* STEW SAGE & MATT FAYERS
ANDREW GARRARD & DAVE NEWBOLD 2* - 5* DAVE ORME & CHERYL CASE
JAMES MURRAY & CHRIS KNIGHT 6 - 1 PAM & GRAHAME BUDD

Pot-Outs [4]:

Most convincing: Jon and Andy, converting their squop-up for a seven.

Most committed: Stew and Matt, who survived Walter's joke-telling gamesmanship to dig out Matt's last wink and leave a fourteen-inch pot for victory.

Most unexpected: Cheryl, after potting five, relied on a superb pot out of the pile by Dave to gain a victory which looked lost.

Luckiest: Chris A squopped a doubleton of James's from the baseline to gain Richard enough time to effect a lightning blitz. Mat four gained its reputation for being the pot-out mat of choice.

These games apart, sensible games produced heavy defeats for Grahame and Pam, Konrad and Louise and Simon and Christine, none of whom played particularly well in this round. Konrad and Louise's comment: 'The score does not reflect the closeness of this game. It makes it look much closer than it actually was.'

Round 3

ANDY PURVIS & JON MAPLEY 6 - 1 PATRICK BARRRIE & ED WYNN
ALAN DEAN & CHARLES RELLE 4 - 3 STEW SAGE & MATT FAYERS
CHRISTINE WIGGINS & SIMON GANDY 0* - 7* CHRIS ABRAM & RICHARD MOORE
KONRAD DOLPHIN & LOUISE JOHNSON 1* - 6* STU COLLINS & JAMES CULLINGHAM
DAVE ORME & CHERYL CASE 4 - 3 JAMES MURRAY & CHRIS KNIGHT
PHIL CARMODY & KRISTINA RÄLLSJÖ 5 - 2 PAM & GRAHAME BUDD
WAL CLARKSON & TIM HUNT 2 - 5 ANDREW GARRARD & DAVE NEWBOLD

Some quotes from round three:

Pam and Grahame: 'An intersting strategy totally compromised by total lack of skill.'

Cheryl and Dave: 'Pot-squop works!'

Chris and Richard: 'A pot-out!' Simon: 'Bah humbug!'

Patrick and Ed: 'We played beer tactics and suffered.'

Dave and Andrew: 'Great skill and strategy were displayed by neither side.'

Matt and Stew: 'There was a sassy lassie, who had a classy chassis.'

Round 4

ANDY PURVIS & JON MAPLEY 1 - 6 ALAN DEAN & CHARLES RELLE
CHRIS ABRAM & RICHARD MOORE 0* - 7* PATRICK BARRRIE & ED WYNN
STU COLLINS & JAMES CULLINGHAM 2* - 5* STEW SAGE & MATT FAYERS
DAVE ORME & CHERYL CASE 4 - 3 PHIL CARMODY & KRISTINA RÄLLSJÖ
ANDREW GARRARD & DAVE NEWBOLD 1* - 6* CHRISTINE WIGGINS & SIMON GANDY
JAMES MURRAY & CHRIS KNIGHT 1 - 6 WAL CLARKSON & TIM HUNT
KONRAD DOLPHIN & LOUISE JOHNSON 6* - 1* PAM & GRAHAME BUDD

Partnership tensions began to manifest themselves as the pot-outs began in earnest. Wal and Tim couldn't agree on tactics, evening when they were winning. Stew felt cheated when a squop-up in rounds was converted but not followed in, and no bonus beer was available. Pam and Grahame's 'blind optimism' evaporated in the face of more good potting from a Silwood player, in this case Louise. Simon lunched the sixth after Christine had run five 'miraculously', and while Alan and Charles were establishing their championship credentials by beating Andy and Jon, Chris and Richard continued to milk the Swiss by achieving the optimum combinations of 0*s and 7*s.

Round 5

ALAN DEAN & CHARLES RELLE 0* - 7* PATRICK BARRRIE & ED WYNN
ANDY PURVIS & JON MAPLEY 6 - 1 STEW SAGE & MATT FAYERS
STU COLLINS & JAMES CULLINGHAM 1* - 6* CHRISTINE WIGGINS & SIMON GANDY
CHRIS ABRAM & RICHARD MOORE 7* - 0* DAVE ORME & CHERYL CASE
KONRAD DOLPHIN & LOUISE JOHNSON 1 - 6 PHIL CARMODY & KRISTINA RÄLLSJÖ
WAL CLARKSON & TIM HUNT 7* - 0* PAM & GRAHAME BUDD
ANDREW GARRARD & DAVE NEWBOLD 6* - 1* JAMES MURRAY & CHRIS KNIGHT

With only two games going the full length, the local pub seemed to have done its lunchtime work. Beer was more readily available than vegetables, which had been condemned by Igor, the landlord's sinister assistant. Lack of vitamins or surfeit of bitter provides more or less all the explanation this round requires. (Lunch actually took place before round 4, I think). Ironically, it was Sage after lunch who endured one of the sensible games.

Round 6

PATRICK BARRRIE & ED WYNN 6* - 1* CHRISTINE WIGGINS & SIMON GANDY
PHIL CARMODY & KRISTINA RÄLLSJÖ 6* - 1* STU COLLINS & JAMES
CULLINGHAM

ANDY PURVIS & JON MAPLEY 3 - 4 WAL CLARKSON & TIM HUNT
ALAN DEAN & CHARLES RELLE 7* - 0* CHRIS ABRAM & RICHARD MOORE

STEW SAGE & MATT FAYERS 6 - 1 ANDREW GARRARD & DAVE NEWBOLD
KONRAD DOLPHIN & LOUISE JOHNSON 1* - 6* DAVE ORME & CHERYL CASE
JAMES MURRAY & CHRIS KNIGHT 6 - 1 PAM & GRAHAME BUDD

Chris and Richard continued to eschew games which did not end in 7* or 0*. Patrick and Ed and Charles and Alan continued to lead the way while Andy and Jon stuttered against Wal and Tim. The all Silwood Park game was, by their own admission, inevitably going to be a pot-out, and so it proved, Cheryl again proving about the friskiest potter in the field, though once again she had to wait for Dave to free her sixth. These tactics were by no means unusual in this tournament, however.

Round 7

PATRICK BARRRIE & ED WYNN 7* - 0* PHIL CARMODY & KRISTINA RÄLLSJÖ
ALAN DEAN & CHARLES RELLE 4 - 3 WAL CLARKSON & TIM HUNT
ANDY PURVIS & JON MAPLEY 3 - 4 CHRISTINE WIGGINS & SIMON GANDY
STEW SAGE & MATT FAYERS 1* - 6* CHRIS ABRAM & RICHARD MOORE
DAVE ORME & CHERYL CASE 5 - 2 STU COLLINS & JAMES CULLINGHAM
ANDREW GARRARD & DAVE NEWBOLD 5 - 2 JAMES MURRAY & CHRIS KNIGHT

The final round, and there was still much to play for. Pam and Grahame retired, and Konrad and Louise were glad to take the bye. Phil and Kristina had played so well against the bottom half of the field that even their remarkably swift capitulation to Patrick and Ed could not prevent their qualification. Two places in the final were still up for grabs, however. Dave and Cheryl, after playing the Swiss to perfection with their pot-squop tactics, escaped from a squop-up and won by single point differences to qualify and win the Burglar Bill Beer Can for the highest placed Silwood pair. Stu and James were surprised, but not as surprised as Cheryl and Dave, who decided they needed more time in the bar in the evening in preparation for the Sunday. And then there were Sage and Fayers, National Singles qualifiers both, playing Abram and Moore, still in no mood to mess about with squopping games. Matt tried to pot. Stew tried to pot. Richard potted. Needing to finish second and third to qualify, Stew and Matt missed, and Chris, showing no solidarity with his fellow Cambridge ex-presidents, relegated them to the Plate competition.

And thus the ranting began.

The Final

ppg: 5.7143 (pl'd 7) PATRICK BARRRIE & ED WYNN	[A]
ppg: 4.5714 (pl'd 7) ALAN DEAN & CHARLES RELLE	[B]
ppg: 4.4286 (pl'd 7) ANDY PURVIS & JON MAPLEY	[C]
ppg: 3.8571 (pl'd 7) CHRIS ABRAM & RICHARD MOORE	[D]
ppg: 3.6429 (pl'd 7) WAL CLARKSON & TIM HUNT	[E]
ppg: 3.5714 (pl'd 7) CHRISTINE WIGGINS & SIMON GANDY	[F]
ppg: 3.5714 (pl'd 7) PHIL CARMODY AND KRISTINA RÄLLSJÖ	[G]
ppg: 3.5714 (pl'd 7) DAVE ORME & CHERYL CASE	[H]

ppg: 3.4286 (pl'd 7) STEW SAGE & MATT FAYERS
ppg: 3.0000 (pl'd 7) ANDREW GARRARD & DAVE NEWBOLD
ppg: 2.6667 (pl'd 6) KONRAD DOLPHIN & LOUISE JOHNSON
ppg: 2.6429 (pl'd 7) STU COLLINS & JAMES CULLINGHAM
ppg: 2.5714 (pl'd 7) JAMES MURRAY & CHRIS KNIGHT
ppg: 1.3333 (pl'd 6) PAM & GRAHAME BUDD

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	TOTAL
A	-	3	5*	5*	5*	7*	6	6	37
B	4	-	1	6*	6	6	7*	7*	37
C	2*	6	-	5 1/2	2	4 2/3	6	6	32 1/6
D	2*	1*	1 1/2	-	6	7*	3	6*	26 1/2
E	2*	1	5	1	-	2*	6	6	23
F	0*	1	2 1/3	0*	5*	-	6	2*	16 1/3
G	1	0*	1	4	1	1	-	6	14
H	1*	0*	1	1*	1	5*	1	-	10

The Swiss format, then, was proved uncannily accurate, with the finalists finishing in exactly the same order in which they qualified. Even the bottom three pairs, whose seeding was determined randomly after they tied on first day P.P.G., maintained the sequence. The top three pairs were really the only ones in contention throughout, with Tim and Walter's second victory during the weekend over Jon and Andy, after Jon had missed the sixth wink and Tim squopped over a heroic distance, the biggest surprise, and it was this result, combined with the 2 1/3 Christine and Simon took off them, which made it had for the third seeds. Chris and Richard could have finished third,

had they beaten Jon and Andy in the final game of the day. Alas it was not to be, and the Lincolnshire pair ended up in a position which reflected pretty accurately their dubious reliance on potting and tendency to roll over and die against stronger opponents over the weekend.

Walter and Timmy, on paper the most obnoxious partnership in the game, will have been pleased with their fifth place, and if it had not been for an eighteen inch squop by Ed on Walter's sixth wink in their game, they could have had a decisive influence on the championship.

Christine and Simon started missing too many shots, and only beat Tim and Wal (despite Christine's 'slightly relaxed' potting) and Phil and Kristina, who also managed two wins, shading a tedious game against Chris and Richard 4-3 and comprehensively squopping Dave and Cheryl. Kristina, however, continued to impress greatly in her first season of winks. Dave and Cheryl found the final even less welcoming, but against Christine and Simon they 'raced for the pot in the big league and finally beat them!'

At the top of table, Charles and Alan and Ed and Patrick sailed along stately as galleons, untroubled by the minnows, though Charles and Alan were squopped-up for ten minutes in their game against Andy and Jon. The result of their easy progress was that the match between the two leading pairs was crucial. Or so we thought. A tight, itsy-bitsy game could have gone either way, but in the end Charles secured a 4-3 win, precisely the score needed to tie the two pairs on thirty-seven points. Despite Ed's hurry to get back to Brussels, a rematch was inescapable, and the Pairs went to a dramatic conclusion.

The National Pairs play-off game

Andy Purvis

Right from the first bring-ins, this game promised quality, and it certainly delivered. Alan (green) mixed it with Patrick (red) and Ed (pink, some freckles, glasses) in a very small area near the pot while Charles brought his yellows in threateningly. Four supported each other near the pot, with one at the line and one that had skittered six inches past the action. Patrick now played a devastating pair of shots. He squopped this yellow nonchalantly from about 8" then, when Charles brought in well to threaten this

squop, made a deliberate baseline squop onto the attacker. Charles & Alan now had to dive in, but Ed & Patrick played with amazing precision, making many long squops and all the short ones. The squop-up came in under 10 minutes. Alan & Charles were undismayed, having been dead and buried in the previous game before winning it, but there was no way back this time. Charles did manage to Good two of Alan's free, but sent a yellow off, so Alan's impressive next shot (sending the greens onto the main pile and freeing a yellow) went unrewarded. Congratulations to Ed (his first Pairs win) & Patrick, and hard luck to Charles & Alan for running up against a pair in such unstoppable form.

The Pairs Plate

Matt Fayers

This year's ETwA pairs saw a change in format; with very many novice pairs wanting to play for one day only, a qualifying Swiss was played on the first day, with an elite eight-pair all-play-all on the second. In the event, fourteen pairs arrived, and seven rounds of the Swiss were played. This led to some slightly more random results than might be expected from the world's premier pairs tournament, especially with Dr. Purvis (de facto tournament organiser) asking us all to play quickly, as points didn't matter, a request for which he later apologised. He was partly right, though, and Drs. Barrie and Wynn were somewhat aggrieved that their bucketloads of points from the first day didn't carry over to the second. Points very much counted at the cut-off, however, with three pairs on 25 going through and one on 24 missing the cut.

Congratulations must go to the qualifying novices Dave Orme and Cheryl Case, and Kristina Rallsjo (playing with Phil Carmody); these players managed to overcome the highly fancied pairing of James Cullingham and Stu Collins, as well as the aforementioned 24-point pair, Dr. Sage and Matt Fayers, both qualifiers at the last Singles. Both these highly experienced pairs were disappointed not to have qualified, neither having played particularly poorly (despite Dr. Clarkson (surely the most obnoxious player in the game) telling jokes when Matt was in mid-pot-out). Another problem arose here, for these gentlemen, all stalwarts of the two-day game, feared that they might have no-one else to play against in the plate on the second day, with the one-day novices no longer around.

Lengthy ranting ensued at the ETwA congress in the evening, as James, the new chairman, expressed his disappointment (now rapidly growing to indignance) at the tournament to the outgoing chairman, Dr. Purvis. Interestingly, Dr. Purvis was the only Silwood player present at the congress; it was a shame not to receive the host club's views on the tournament, which was designed primarily with them in mind.

On the Sunday James, Stu, Stew and Matt duly arrived to contest the plate. Having moved a table outside so as not to disturb the qualifiers, they decided that an individual pairs contest would be the order of the day. Mid-way through the first game Andrew Garrard, another non-qualifier, arrived, and so the tournament was extended. Here is an account:

Game 1

Sage/Cullingham 2*-5* Collins/Fayers

Stew went for a semi-frisky pot-out, but missed the fourth, which Stu squopped. Stew potted one more, but then threw Inglis theory to the wind and decided to try to help James extricate the squopped red. Stu and Matt duly squopped up and converted.

Game 2

Cullingham/Collins 6-1 Sage/Garrard

James and Stew were re-united and easily beat Stew and Andrew. The cry of "Why weren't we this good yesterday" was to be echoed through the day.

Game 3

Collins/Garrard 2-5 Fayers/Cullingham

A scrappy game seemed to be going slightly in favour of James and Matt, but repeated pile breaks from Stu and Andrew kept them alive. With a couple of minutes to go, James spotted six free yellows (one on the edge of the mat) and decided to have a go. He repeatedly missed the fifth in rounds, and left himself with no change to bring in and pot the sixth. Matt managed to out-score Andrew but not Stu.

Game 4



Garrard/Fayers 6*-1* Sage/Collins

Stu (red) and Stew (blue) both brought in well, but some nurdling and self-squopping delayed their pot-out attempts slightly. Stew went for a pot but missed and landed on a red. Matt had carelessly squopped one of Andrew's green's, which he was all too happy to send at reds. The blue pot-out still looked threatening, though, and Matt decided to try a risky blitz of his own. Despite Stu declaring "pessary" after the third, Matt ran six very nicely to put himself in line for a tournament win.

Game 5

Fayers/Sage 7*-0* Cullingham/Garrard

Sage and Fayers were re-united for the last game, and Sage was very much après-déjeuner.

Player	Points
Matt	23
Stu	14
James	13
Stew	11
Andrew	9

[Editor's Note: I'm sure all the participants would like to thank Andy and all at Silwood for organising such an enjoyable and successful tournament, and Louise in particular for managing to procure curry for over twenty in the evening. I hope it is the first of many events at this venue.]

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I have enjoyed sampling the cheesy pea quiche recommended in a previous edition of Winking World, particularly with beetroot as a side-dish. Can anyone tell me if jelly is available in this flavour? If not, why not?

Yours faithfully,

Patrick "no hands" Barrie



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