

**WINKING WORLD
IS THE JOURNAL
OF THE ENGLISH
TIDDLYWINKS
ASSOCIATION.**

**THIS IS ISSUE
NO. 74, WHICH
WAS PUBLISHED
IN THE SPRING
OF 2000**

EDITORIAL

Chris Abram fulminates for the final time

So, this is my final *Winking World*. Will I miss it? No. Or at least, not very much. Although I hope that the four issues which appeared under my editorship will perhaps be remembered for something more than their consistent lateness (I believe I have some way to go before I challenge Nick Inglis's record for latest ever issue of WW, however), and the unfortunately tiny type of WW 72, I don't really claim to have overseen the production of a flourishing periodical over the last two years.

Tiddlywinks is, unfortunately, in the doldrums at present. It is hardly a huge slump, and I doubt it is a terminal decline, but there seems to be a slight waning of interest in some of the senior players, as they find they have better things to do with their time than footle about with such trivia, and — alas and alack — few enough new players are being recruited, so *Winking World* reflects the game's malaise. Having said that, there are still witty enough winkers around to write the odd amusing article, some of which are found in this valedictory edition.

In particular, I'd like to thank very much indeed, my regular contributors, without whom the last four *Winking Worlds* would have been immeasurably the duller: thanks to Matt Fayers, Richard Moore, Tim Hunt, Stew Sage, Andy Purvis, Patrick Barrie, Ed Wynn and Christine Wiggins. Julian Wiseman gave advice at the start, and Charles Relle was always ready to sympathise at the editor's plight. I wish Tim all the best when he takes over.

Elsewhere in this issue, Tim has collected the results of his 'three principles of winks' survey, and as Editor it behoves me to give my own opinion on these matters. So, here, in no particular order, are the three cardinal rules of winks:

1. Be nice.

If you are an obnoxious old fart, try to hide this side of your character during games. Congratulate your opponents on good shots, but never be too ready to congratulate yourself: punching the air is acceptable if you've just beaten Larry and Dave or won the National Pairs, but try to win as magnanimously as you lose. Don't be too quick to criticise your partner or yourself. Don't rant about the length of lunchtimes: it is passé in the extreme. Please — and Walter, this means you — try to wear clothes which are not actively offensive to the eye. Get back on time for the restart. Generally behave like a decent, civilised human being whenever possible (and I'm well aware it isn't always possible).

2. Play Quickly

This is self-explanatory, and my feelings on the subject are well-known. Tournaments always seem to last plenty, long enough, don't they?

3. Look after your teeth...

...and they'll look after you.

And that's that from me. I am not, as previously advertised in some quarters, leaving the country (was it just a ruse to get rid of the editorship of this journal: I leave that to you to decide). It's over to Tim Hunt, and his stock of articles on the links between winks and Go: I'm off to flip some piles. See you all at a tournament soon, I hope.

Slu.

THE SNOOVE

Ed Wynn's Shot of the Millenium

Following SLU's paeon to the pile flip, I wish to praise a shot so neglected that it barely has a name, although some devotees know it as the snoove. More precise than its father, the bring-in, but more muscular than its cousin, the brundle, this is the shot that adjusts the position of a wink by squopping at a relevant free space.

This shot is the mainstay of my naive and bloody-minded version of Inglis tactics: bring in, re-group, adjust, adjust, adjust. According to my hoarded scrapings, Inglis tactics (or, more accurately, so-called Inglis games) can be summed up as pessimistic Marxism: there will eventually be a major conflict, which will be lost by the side with a badly placed wink. The aim is therefore to play the snoove until your opponents gnaw their squidgers in frenzied impatience. They will plunge in; their squop will fail (or succeed, but a tiny bit badly) and victory will be yours. In this way, the shot is strategically most valuable when played ultra-cautiously, preceded by millimetric debate with your partner, and witnessed with incredulity. In fact, the shot's main drawback is that it can drive your partner mad, causing unwise, inelegant shots of completely different character.

The snoove can be distinguished from the brundle in that it has an active — sometimes indeed aggressive — purpose. By missing a squop, you may achieve a similar outcome to the snoove, but do not flatter yourself; you have not attained enlightenment, you have merely missed. Be wise: learn not to try such long squops; if possible, don't try any. (On the other hand, a snoove that accidentally squops is an undiluted joy, because the intent was innocent.) A vital element of the snoove is that it disdains contact with other winks. If anthropomorphism is possible, it is simultaneously the aristocrat, the gaffer and the wild-eyed, trigger-happy loner of tiddlywinking shots. Its antithesis is the plunge, which is the greasy neurotic socialite, with wandering hands and a trouser-fetish terrier.

This shot has none of the flamboyance of the pile flip, but let no-one

underestimate its difficulty. All other shots lack the purity of a winker pitted so intensely against the daunting flatness of the mat. (On the subject of flatness, when a beginner asks where the wink is wanted, his genial partner sometimes dents the mat by pointing.) As you become more proficient, your ambition should grow proportionately, until you are aiming to perch on top of a well-situated fluff-bobble. You can remove the fluff before the wink's next move (to a very slightly improved location), or you can watch opponents sub under it, as a deserved punishment for their grubby wink-to-wink squopping.

As I was saying to Moo only the other day, the fundamental rule of tactics is "If in doubt, fart about", and so this shot is the wise player's fallback in every situation. Winning? Perfect your guards. Losing? Preserve your winks by moving safely. Are you unsure? Play this shot confidently, with an air of malice beforehand and a glint of triumph afterwards. This is the only shot that consistently justifies a clenched-fist, bendy-knee, double-elbow celebration. GOTCHA!

HANDICAP

Andrew Garrard became a national champion (of sorts)

Obviously I was buoyed up by being classified a novice, and by missing the round over lunch, and the first in the morning as I attempted to get the draw program working. As such I only had one game in which my partner failed to drag me to victory, and Simon stumbled in the last round.

So I only barely consider myself to be a national champion, but I'm amused once more that I got under-classified (I did quite well in the last handicapped event, too).

NATIONAL INDIVIDUAL PAIRS 21 NOVEMBER 1999, OXFORD

SUMMARY

Player	Games	Points	ppg
Andrew Garrard	5	26	5.2
Matt Fayers	7	35	5
Alan Dean	6	30	5
Charles Relle	7	34.5	4.928571429
Simon Gandy	7	34	4.857142857
Patrick Barrie	7	34	4.857142857
John Kane	7	31	4.428571429
Paul Roberts	7	31	4.428571429
Antony Proietti	6	26	4.333333333
Tim Hunt	7	28	4
Phil Carmody	6	22	3.666666667
Charlie Oakley	5	18	3.6
Andrew Dominey	7	25	3.571428571
Tim Winchcomb	7	25	3.571428571

Jon Carlaw	7	24	3.428571429
Vita Maynard	4	12	3
Pete Keevash	7	21	3
Cyril Edwards	5	14.5	2.9
Patrick Driscoll	7	19	2.714285714
Christine Wiggins	7	17.5	2.5
Kat Levick	4	10	2.5
Andrea Gorman	7	14.5	2.071428571
Chris Jones	7	14	2
Paul Moss	7	13	1.857142857
James Cullingham	7	12	1.714285714
Stew Sage	7	10	1.428571429

Editor's Note:

Extrapolating from these scores (I somehow always fail to make it to tournaments in Oxford), it becomes clear that this year's attempt at a novice-friendly tournament didn't really work. Do handicaps ever? To have the not noticeably young and svelte Andrew Garrard pushing out rabbits the likes of Relle, Dean and Barrie for first place seems to suggest otherwise. Pity the youngsters Paul Moss, James Cullingham and Stew Sage (who he?); I doubt they will return to tournament play following their drubbing at the hands of the mighty.

FUNDAMENTALS

Tim Hunt reveals the mysteries

THE THREE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF WINKS REVEALED!

In the previous issue of Winking World, I asked you to tell me the three most important things to think about whilst playing winks. I suggested that you might want to offer different advice to novice, intermediate and expert players. I wasn't overwhelmed with replies but I did receive a fair selection. It is interesting to see a number of common themes running through the different answers. In particular, if you try to pick out the one single key idea from all these replies it seems to be "You are there to enjoy yourself!"

Now let's look at the various replies one by one

Tim Hunt

I felt that it would be embarrassing if I didn't receive any replies at all, so before seeing anyone else's answers I made up three of my own.

Play swiftly and enjoy it, but don't let yourself be rushed.

Have a plan, even if it is a lousy plan. Play shots that are guaranteed to make the situation better for you. Don't play shots which might go horribly wrong.

Stew

Stew didn't submit his entry in writing, but I asked him in the pub one evening and sheer simplicity and elegance of his reply meant that I could remember it. According to Stew Sage the three most important things about winks are

Beer

beer,

and beer.

(Has Stew ever told you he was a national champion?)

The sad nargs left in Brussels after the Somerset Invitation

really must have been really desperate for something to do. Any-how they managed to compress a profound understanding of tiddlywinks tournaments into a mere three lines.

If you can remember what happened then you didn't drink enough.

If in doubt, fart about.

Always wear a gas-mask.

(I think that the people involved here were Ed Wynn, Stew Sage, Matt Fayers and Richard Moore.)

Andrew Garrard

slipped in an entry at the eleventh hour. He urges you to:

Count the winks: If your opponent has six flat winks, do something about it. If you've got winks on the baseline in rounds, do something about it. If you're about to use the last wink of a colour, think carefully about it. Know where all the winks are before you commit to a strategy.

Re-evaluate: (I don't practice this, I just preach it). Strategies go pear shaped. Don't keep trying to pot out when four of your winks have been squopped. Don't keep squopping one of your opponents' colours if they're trying to pot out with the other one. When all your Opponents' winks have been brought in to guard the pile you were attacking, attack a different pile.

Plan for misses: If you get every shot, you'll win the game. If your opponent gets every shot, there's nothing you can do to stop them. Stop your opponents pot-out as early as you can (so it doesn't matter when you miss your squops), but be in the right place to eat them when they miss. If you're trying to pot out, try to miss safe. If you're squopping, don't miss somewhere that'll be disastrous, or squoppable. The probability of everything working is vanishingly small. Equally, if you don't have anything better to do, plan for your opponent being able to pot out off the tripleton, however unlikely

(*they* might practice that kind of thing). Bear in mind that your ability to execute at the end of six hours of play and a long lunch will be less prodigious than in your practice sessions.

Jon Mapley

sent me a proper answer, incorporating snide remarks about a number of other people. This is just what I wanted to see.

Jon Mapley's advice for the novice winker:

You can't expect to win games if you can't spell you snivelling little runt! I suggest that if you are still loose, you get tight immediately by quaffing three hubcapsful of PCB, shaken, not stirred. My version is Pernod, Caol Ila, and Beetroot juice. If you are looking for a slightly less earthy version, substitute Cragganmore for the delights of Islay.

... for the intermediate player:

I wish I had 7-0 against Larry for every time I have heard a certain C. Relle Esq. utter the immortal words "Sackcloth and ashes, I'm getting too old for this game". Forget the glories of the past, and the possible cock-ups of the future, and concentrate on getting the best score you can from the next game. I believe there is a phrase for this in Footballmanagerspeak. It comes immediately after "It's a game of twenty minutes and five rounds" and before "The girl Wiggins done great whenever she got in the box, Brian". "We just take one game at a time, and let the others worry about points on the board at this moment in time".

... and for the narg

Be as accurate as you can with your baseline shots. This is fundamental to the development of an area of domination, preferably about four to six inches from the pot. If it doesn't work out initially, don't panic and rush into your opponent's area. Remember that big winks win games, so don't waste one by squopping a single small winks out of the main battle area.

Be always vigilant for the opportunity to gain tempo. This can be by distracting your opponent away from the crucial area of the mat, or spotting

a glorious colour-order sequence that has no riposte. Never be afraid to pot a wink that is threatened, if it affords the opportunity to do something useful with the extra shot. Obviously, you don't want to do it too often, but this is the whole beauty of this sort of thing - used sparingly, the surprise tactic can have devastating consequences.

Plan your end-game. Assess your position at about the fifteen-minute mark. Are you in a strong enough and mobile enough position for a pot-out? If not, are you going to win the game, and if so, how? Secure the four points first, before worrying about second or third. Very often, if your opponent sees you playing strongly and sensibly to maximise your potential he will throw the remaining points at you in a feverish panic. Look as though you know exactly what you are doing, and play your shots confidently. The difference between 6-1 and 3-4 is often very small in terms of tiddlies. Know your score and your opponent's at all times, both current and potential.

Matt Fayers

for the novice:

Play for points, not wins.

Don't go for a shot just because a narg would; if you don't like it, don't do it. You are never obliged to attempt any shot except to stop your opponent potting out.

You'll go a long way with bringing in, squopping, potting and no other shots.

for intermediate players:

Take easy shots. If you are winning, this will consolidate your position and minimise risk. If you are losing, the game will more usually turn by your opponent's making a mistake than by your getting a fancy shot.

Bring in well. Games of winks don't tend to swing from side to side, so start off winning.

Try to concentrate on each shot out of the context of the game; then forget about it and think what you are going to do next.

and for the expert:

Be so good at basic shots that your opponent knows you will get them and has to try something different.

No shot is too boring.

Avoid fatigue in a long match; you play 'winks because you enjoy it. Be pleased with your successes, and don't dwell on your shortcomings.

So there you have it. The key to winking prowess? or the sadramblings of some old nargs who need to be fed another beer? I leave the final verdict to you.

What? Oh!, yes, that. I was hoping you would forget all about it. I did indeed offer a buy bottle of champagne for the sender-in of one random entry. Errm, yes, I think you know what I an trying to say. Well the winner is ... (drum roll please) ... *the collected nargs of the Somerset invitation.*

RECIPE

Auntie Girtie gives a topical idea for festive cheer

CHRISTMAS CHEESY PEAS

Make ordinary cheesy peas, put them in a dish, then pour brandy on top and set light to them.

TIM WINS!

A surprise in the Cambridge Open was witnessed by Chris Abram

CAMBRIDGE OPEN 2000, JANUARY 22ND-23RD, QUEENS' COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

Player	Played	P.P.G.	Position
Geoff Myers	3	6.0000	
Simon Gandy	2	4.5000	
Tim Hunt	13	4.4231	1
Alan Dean	14	4.1071	2
Charles Relle	13	3.8462	3
Phil Carmody	14	3.8214	4
Patrick Barrie	14	3.6071	5
John Haslegrave	11	3.5000	
Andrew Garrard	14	3.4286	6
Geoff Thorpe	6	3.4167	
Matt Fayers	14	3.3929	7
Killian Anheuser	10	3.3500	
Nutty Dr Clarkson	4	3.2500	
Christine Wiggins	2	3.2500	
Paul Moss	6	3.2500	
James Cullingham	14	2.9643	8
Stu Collins	3	2.6667	
Chris Abram	8	2.3125	
Patrick Driscoll	6	2.1667	
Pete Keevash	3	1.1667	
Anne Austin	2	1.0000	
Antony Proietti	1	1.0000	
Stew Sage	1	1.0000	

Well, I could tell you what all the game scores were, but honestly, do we care? This year it was Tim Hunt's turn to break Patrick Barrie's dominance of what has been often described as being 'tiddlywinks' most amusing tournament'. A lowish turnout of 23, consisting of the usual hardcore winkers, beer drinkers and CUTwC dinner attendees turned up to boost their world rating, ruin their world rating, or merely ensuring they got a world rating for another year.

Geoff Myers returned briefly, won three games 6–1, and reminded us why he's the best in the world (he wins games). Obviously his sojourn in Jamaica, and all that sunshine and Red Stripe has not entirely killed off his silky skills. Apart from Geoff, and this may be somewhat unusual, only Simon Gandy finished above the qualifiers after playing just two games. Does this suggest that winks fatigue does not really exist, and that playing more games actually increases your chances of winning them? Or does it just mean that the people who played the requisite number of games this year were the good ones, while the hopeless and the hungover were the ones who stayed in bed or the pub.

Anyway, the CUTwC dinner was typically amusing, and ended without casualties for once, and it is heartening to see that in Tim we have a winner who managed to attend this function and still get up and play some high quality winks on Sunday morning (At least I think he was at the dinner; perhaps I should have written this report when it was still fresher in my mind.) Second and third positions were taken by Alan and Charles, both of whom seem to be something of a resurgent force at present.

Stew Sage finished last, albeit after only one token pre-lunch game on the Saturday; Stew is perhaps not the force he once was (even if measured in Newtons, although now Andrew Garrard's got a Palm thingy, that's not really possible).

So, there you have it: a tournament much more fun to play in than to read about, unless you played quite as badly as I did, in which case it's all best forgotten.

MOO!

Richard Moore shares with us his version of winking wisdom

THREE PRINCIPLES OF WINKS

This is a response to the Tim Hunt Millenium Winks Survey (WW73), and indeed previous efforts ranging from Dave Lockwood's "ten golden rules" to the bewildering list of proverbs on Tim's website (www.damtp.cam.ac.uk/user/tjh1000/winks/brainstorm.html). Of course winks isn't as simplistic or predictable as lesser games, such as Go or Chess, but here are some post-Brussels-Invitation armagnac-fuelled thoughts.

These are realistic, middle-of-the-road, conservative-with-a-small-'c' principles. They are all to do with playing the percentages: maximising your chances of winning the average game. I end however with a short comment on a more all-purpose winning strategy, which I think is more a matter of psychology than anything else.

Principle 1: bring in accurately

Learn, and remember, to bring in accurately (squop-style for most people), not only from the baseline at the beginning of the game but also into close attacking and defending positions at 6- to 12-inch range for the rest of the game. There can be no better head start or force multiplier than a wink exactly where you want it. Most players, if they practice at all, practice potting, squopping or interesting pile shots, rather than bringing in (that way they need less room, for a start), but bringing in and positioning winks properly

can make these later shots so much easier. Think of Stephen Hendry and Jimmy White. White usually got the brilliant pots, prodigious screw shots etc., but Hendry did the unspectacular stuff - he got into position, made each successive shot easy, and steadily built the breaks that won all those Crucible finals.

Principle 2: play within your ability

In 90% of situations, playing the easy shot successfully is better than cocking up the difficult one. I'm not saying you shouldn't look out for that 10% and play a difficult shot if you really think it will help decisively, but think of Hendry and White again: do the easy things, don't be flash, don't play daft shots just because "it's only the Fours" or "it's only the London Open" (how many times have we heard that one over the years?).

Principle 3: focus

By this I mean: think about what you want to do in the game - where your area is, which is your first choice colour, whether you want to pile in or keep yourself aloof - make a plan, then stick to it. Don't play shots which don't work towards your end-game, and don't treat every turn as a fresh zero-sum opportunity to decide on a course of action, as if the winks had only just been scattered randomly to start a game of squops. This is the commonest mistake of relatively inexperienced players: getting distracted by the possibility of something "witty" or discussing every shot as though the last ten minutes hadn't happened. And I never know whether to laugh (at the chance I get to be more single-minded) or cry (at the scream-inducing tedium of

listening to someone spend five minutes talking himself into, and then out of, the right shot). Of course, you mustn't be completely inflexible, but I believe the number of times a reassessment is really called for during a game to be small.

“Focus” has another meaning too: you sometimes hear professional sportsmen and women talking about times when they've “felt incredibly focussed” - a semi-trancelike state of confidence and concentration in which everything goes right. Just occasionally, you see this kind of thing in winks too. I believe you can actually tell when some (not all) of the top players - Andy Purvis, Dave Lockwood, Matthew Rose - are about to get a shot and, conversely, when they have gone to pieces. This then would be my one tip for the very top: find out how to “focus” like this, and when it is important to do so (for a state of total concentration cannot be sustained for the length of a winks tournament). Tennis players sometimes talk about the “big points” and football teams like Germany and Man United seem to “step up a gear” at the right moment. So, perhaps, should you.

This is getting too serious. Here are three alternative principles: eat broken bunnies, drink Wadworth's 6X, and go for the pot out after lunch.

AMERICAN PIE

Someone who should wish to remain nameless alters the words to a popular song for comic effect. With apologies to Don MacLean, although perhaps he should be apologising to us.

Inspired by the last ETwA Congress in general,
and Mike Surridge's rant in particular...

Long, long time ago
I can still remember
When the winkers
Used to play the game.
And I knew if I had my way
That they would let a novice play
And I'd get round five pot-
Outs just the same.
But then the nineties made us falter
At Doccy T and Nutty Walter;
Bad news at the Singles
The game had lost Nick Inglis.
"I can't remember if I went"
Claimed the CUTwC president,
And WASP has got some space to rent
The days that ETwA died.

So bye, buy - one more round of the same
Got a seven-nil, but backwards,
And your partner's to blame.
Them Queens' Old Boys are
Gonna give up the game,

Singing "wish I could remember my name..."

Did you write for Winking World
And were you there when Corbett hurled
On the tortoise down below?
Do you believe in drinking fines
Do you care if the anthem rhymes
And do you think Ed Porter plays too slow?
Well I know you didn't vote for him
But our chairman's still Bacony Jim
And Charles kicks off his shoes
To bristol reds, greens, yellows and blues.
I was a lonely CUTwC fresher kid
With a filed-down squidger from a disk box lid
And I can't recall the things I did
The days that ETwA died.

Now for forty years the game's been played
And precious few old nargs have stayed
But that's not how it used to be
When the Goons played for the Duke of Ed.
(A Peter Keevash, it was said)
In a convenience that let the papers see.
And while the Varsity was won
To start the CUTwC winning run
And squopping was debated
The trophy was created
Before Lennons, Charles began the game
And Pam and Grahame did the same
The Silver Wink had got its name
Before the ETwA died.

Hot, pot, Guinness-funded lot

The OUTS flew off to give NATwA a shot
Five years down but closing fast.
The counter-tour then showed their class
The IFTwA Singles were a farce
With Larry bending over with a blast.
The tactics breaks had more... perfume
(Winks needs a ventilated room)
But Alan got to play
It fin'lly went his way.
And as Inglis sang, the BBC
Penhaligoned on Breakfast T
And that allowed us all to see
The way that ETwA died.

So there we played all in one place
Fitzpatrick hall ran out of space
(Will that ever happen again?)
So come on games be witty, play be quick,
And try to make a novice sick
'Cause beer is the winkers' only friend.
But as each tournament goes by
We all lament "the game will die"
And not one of our tries
Has made attendance rise.
"At least we've stabilised the rate"
The Council tells us is our fate
I hope we somehow lock the gate
Before the ETwA dies.

I met a girl who ranted loud,
Whose fights attracted quite a crowd,
But she just swore and turned away.
I went to the Erasmus Room

Albeit with a sense of doom
And sure enough the CUTwC wouldn't play.
And in the halls the echoes rang
Of games we played and songs we sang
But not a wink is brundled
The bastion have crumbled.
And the three who represent the age
The Relle, Dean and Doctor Sage,
They won't be let out of their cage
Now that the ETwA's died.

Author's comments:

- 1) This may be only slightly more comprehensible than the original to some people. Good.
- 2) Names have been selected on the basis they scan/rhyme. Don't be offended if you are/aren't in here.
- 3) Wasn't supposed to be quite this depressing when I started it...

SILVER WINK

Andrew Garrard saw Cambridge retain the trophy

OXFORD VS. CAMBRIDGE, PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXFORD, 2 JUNE 1999

The Teams

Oxford A: Charlie oakley & Matthew Moorhouse

Oxford B: Catherine Goodwin and Olivia Lakin

Oxford C: Peter Weir (by himself)

Cambridge A: Anthony Horton & Timothy Hunt

Cambridge B: Stewart Sage & Rupert Thompson

Cambridge C: Patrick Barrie & Christine Wiggins

Cambridge D: Chris Abram & James Murray

		OXFORD		
CAMBRIDGE		A	B	C
	A	6*\1*	6\1	3\4
	B	6\1	6*\1*	6\1
	C	7*\0*	6*\1*	6*\1*
	D	6*\1*	6*\1*	4\3

Round 1:

Patrick, after some engineering, produced a blue pot-out. The game itself never really developed into a squopping game, but Catherine potted well enough to follow Patrick in.

Rupert and Stew started the game in good humour, with Stew's attempt at a pot-out being foiled and a squopping game developing; the CUTwC players gaining the upper hand. Each colour had a wink potted, and a failed miracle shot left the game at 6-1 to Cambridge.

A pile on top of one of James's reds appeared next to the pot, controlled by yellow and green. The rest of the mat was under red and blue control. [Picture 1] Most winks of both colours were in piles.

The game gradually evened out with a huge pile of fourteen winks and a few singletons, with a pair of blues potted. That was enough for a blue victory, but red was sufficiently under that yellow and green out-scored the unpotted winks.

Round Two:

Chris, playing blue, attempted a Karnovsky pot with a red holding down a green to keep a safe area near the pot. A near wink from Olivia forced a wild but safe pot attempt, and more greens from Olivia threatened the safety zone. Blue narrowly escaped being squopped (with red failing to neutralise the threat). Yellow belatedly joined the fray, but a blue pot-off left a single wink as a trivial pot. After being missed by several attacks, blue, by his own admission, was lucky to convert. Yellow potted heroically to follow, with red getting third after several misses under pressure by both James and Olivia.

In the second game, red and green both attempted potting games, and also ended up controlling a number of piles. Yellow (Anthony) joined the fray, leaving red squopped up but blue attacking well. Two greens went in from Timmy with red squopped, but a free red at the end after the guards were potted let Peter steal the lead.

Patrick ran six winks from long range, pretty much unchallenged by squops. This time Christine followed in, with yellow and green too remote to contend.

Round Three:

An impressive start to bringing-in left all parties clustered by the pot. Green squopped blue quickly, who responded by squopping yellow. Yellow knocked off green's squop. Red (Stew) took a look at the pot, and was squopped by yellow. A squopping game ensued, with red and blue gradually gaining control. Yellow and green worked out at the top of some piles, but blue and red remained largely in control.

Chris (blue) brought in well, but potted unconvincingly - i.e. didn't - while other colours tried to squop. Eventually five blues were potted, with the last squopped but then freed on a pile. The failed pot-off was squopped, and further attempts failed while green counter-potted. Red got the penultimate green (who then karnovskied), and docked it before blue potted out.

A roll-off on bring-in left blue and red with winks on the baseline, in the other game, and a lot of flat winks near the pot. Olivia (green) ended with a green on a huge pile, with Anthony (red) trying to free as a result. The pile eventually ended under blue and red control, with mostly single free winks nearby. A pile break left lots of spread winks, with red and blue gradually gained control. Yellow and green worked some free winks, and red started to try to pot; five in was enough for him to win.

Round Four:

Anthony potted; Timmy followed third after Charlie potted well, leaving yellow fourth.

Patrick (green) brought in well and without threat to run four, and eventually converted. Dave followed with blue, then karnovskied, but scrunged with red. Christine narrowly followed for third.

Stew potted out with red in a rushed game, Rupert failing to follow.

Editor's Note:

A disappointing turn-out for OUTS, and a CUTwC team of exceptional oldness and deadness, killed this off as a contest. The room had to be vacated early, and the bar wasn't much cop, so this chapter was not one of the highlights in the Silver Wink saga. Photos taken with Andrew's spiffy digital camera are available via www.cutwc.org.uk if you're keen to get a falvour of the atmosphere.

BEER

Ed Wynn tells us how to get the most out of drinking games

Thinking that it was my duty to contribute to WW, I considered what winks-related topic to choose. I was forced to reject several. I am simply not qualified to proclaim any grand theories of strategy, nor to lecture fellow winkers on good manners. So, I've resorted to a non-winking topic that I can expound in comfort: drinking games. They're not fundamental to winks, but they are fundamental to my winks.

1. Drink your fines

Drinking games are a way to regiment and enforce communal drinking. (Neither big nor clever, you might argue, but you could be small and stupid for all I know.) If you don't intend to drink your fines, then you'd be better off playing, well, almost anything: bridge, netball, synchronised swimming, even tiddlywinks. I bitterly regret not witnessing Richard Moore's "You're only cheating yourself" speech to Graham Hancock, who was thereby induced to accept an excessive fine. I feel sure that the speech ranked among the best of Shakespeare and Churchill. Graham Hancock was the acme of fine-drinkers: he didn't drop out of the game when the fines were too much for him — after all, this is simply the moral high-ground on the soggy island of reneging — he drank them nevertheless, and suffered.

2. Don't drink your fines

There are sessions during which it would be sacrilege and treason to skimp on the full fines. However, in a fast, workaday burst of Yogi's Whist, you would be foolish not to. (The exception to this, of course, is when you actually want to drink that quantity of beer at that pace. For fast Yogi's Whist, this is rare.) I know no-one who always drinks all his fines. We all have some saved up in heaven.

There are games that occasionally throw up disproportionately harsh

finer – for example, a Super-Stud in Conjectures – and these can be contrary to the players' intentions. (“Throw up” is a key phrase.) The important point is that there should be an agreement, perhaps unspoken: is this a full-fine session or not? If it is agreed that the worst fines will be reduced, then drinking games and their enjoyment will be the winners in the end.

3. Cruelty

If a game bores you, the answer is often to try harder than necessary: a game within a game. Rather than aiming merely to keep your head above water, you should try to sink other players in a beer-pit of their own making.

Any game of bluff is suitable; most people have detectable mannerisms and habits. Another good game for this is Word Dissociation Football. I cherish the move that intentionally forced Patrick Barrie into a rare error, when I said “Tureen” after “Dragon”. Similarly, in Angle Dangle, I remember an occasion when the category was malt whiskies, and I observed Stew Sage confining himself to Islay. After a few circuits, I flummoxed him by saying Bunnahabhain just before he did.

An even more creative variation is to find moves that are only barely acceptable. The next player often thinks so hard about your answer that he forgets his own. (It helps if the group or the player enforces the rule that punishes everyone continuing the game after a mistake. I strongly commend this rule. It works best if a player can only challenge on his turn, and a wrong challenge is also punished.) One of the classics here is to announce the category “Colours of winks” in Angle-Dangle for five players.

Of course, it is usually pointless to victimise a soft target. You should aim as high as you can.

4. Kindness

The companion to victimising the strong is helping the weak. Look quizzically at a slow player just before his turn (and then stare at an alert player during someone else's). In Angle Dangle, look for memory-joggers

*

such as North Dakota. Never send the third in a row at a novice (except for his education). Rigorous kindness can turn simple games into a real challenge. If someone is suffering undeservedly, you might consider picking up some of the burden yourself, but spreading it around is much more fun. (Once, in a game of Squop Bristol, a novice — back in the days of novices — had become Club Smith. As Finesmaster, I imposed victimisation fines with ever-increasing leverage, but he was still sinking fast. Sitting next to him, I quietly suggested that when I started, he should quietly return the Squop. When I did and he did, I sent a loud Squop to a veteran at the other end of the table, who duly obliged. It served him right for making conversation.)

5. Cheating

This is a superb way to add interest to a dull game. I don't understand how anyone can consistently play Buckets of Shite to the rules. Be prepared to be fined exorbitantly — but for added interest, try shrugging it off as perfectly normal; in this way, you can sometimes cheat the enforcement of the rules as well as the rules. In my (somewhat unusual) opinion, cheating should be a constant ambition in drinking games, although my rickety moral framework forbids it when there is no chance of being discovered.

Equally, be on the lookout for cheating; see point 3. In the early days of BoS, the winning hand was often not inspected. In Yogi's Whist, few people compare a player's winning bid-card to the number of tricks he won. When someone puts down his card before the last trick, check that he then plays it (rather than his bid-card, or the top card of a recent trick). Be prepared to fine exorbitantly.

6. Dullness

If you've been fined more heavily than is good for you, it may be possible to give yourself a break. Stop at a single-figure score in Pigs. (In fact, more passing and less greed would help the game of Pigs.) Fold at the first knock (but no sooner) at Toopen. Bid slightly early in Conjectures to minimise Shaftage. Commit a boring Revelation in Yogi's (to punish

everyone else, but mostly to stop them from punishing you). All of these, and especially the last, should be a last resort, an admission that you are in real trouble. Only then should you get any sympathy for such boring behaviour. Naturally, you should also cheat like mad. In drastic circumstances, leave the room, eat your cards and indignantly refuse to play, on the grounds that the dealer has excluded you from the game.

7. Flamboyance

Dr. Inglis can explain how Revelations fit into a rational strategy, but that misses the point. Their real point is to allow people to put themselves needlessly and senselessly in danger. (This is why a danger-free Revelation is such an abomination. The only exception for me is when a hand is so freakishly good that it would be disrespectful not to acknowledge it.) There are similar possibilities in many games. In Liar Dice, throw the right number of dice, but always the wrong ones. With a half-promising hand in Toopen, you could knock early, just to see who's interested. Bid early in Conjectures, unless you've got a good card. If someone repeatedly sends Squops at you, then repeatedly Bristol them back without looking at him. Use completely irrelevant words in word games; see if anyone notices. Try to be the fastest and clearest player in counting games.

8. Action

Get out there now and do it. Drink your fines.

OBITUARY

Admiral T. Ongueinch-Eek laments the passing of 'Salmon Pink'

It is with great regret that Winking World records the death of Salmon Pink, the squidger used by Dr Stew Sage for much of his 18-year winking career, unwittingly asphyxiated beneath his master's bottom during a wine and middle-age spread "do" in Queens' Old Kitchens.

Pink was cast in the golden age of the mid-1980s. ETwA tournament attendances were growing year by year, a fact put down by many commentators to the attitude of certain senior players to the question of lunchtimes. Pink, and squidgers like him, had a pleasing marbled effect and their introduction contributed a good deal to the winks renaissance in Cambridge, after several years' dominance of the English game by SOTWINK. Such players as Phil Rodgers, Gary Shrimpton, Tim Hedger and Dave Salter swore by these squidgers. Ah, we shall not see their like again. Sadly Pink's reputation did not emerge unscathed when, during the 1987 National Singles Final, his master bent the boundary rule just a mite too shamelessly in a game against the then novice Richard Moore. In latter years Pink enjoyed but little success, as his master slipped down the world ratings and, more and more frequently, under the table. Who can forget however those brief flashbacks to the glory days, as when Pink was instrumental in securing the Scottish Pairs title? Certainly it seems unlikely that Stew will ever shut up about this.

Pink is survived by a small number of contemporaries, perhaps most notably Patrick Barrie's potting squidger, already thought to be suffering from SHCS (Squidger Hairline Crack Syndrome). The interment of the pieces, beneath the monster jade zebra veg in the Fellows' Garden, will be during the SEPTIC Garden Party in June. Family flowers only please.

OH BLOODY HELL!

Matt Fayers became a national champion, as well

NATIONAL TEAMS OF FOUR, QUEENS' COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,

An improved turn-out and the continued absence of Dr. Purvis from tournaments meant that nobody needed to be disappointed by anything. Except Dr. Thompson by his handicap. Five teams played, with the usual slight change of personnel. Mortal Coil partnered experience with youth, as Rell and Dean were joined by the CUTwC president and novice Allen Rand; following last year's success, SEPTIC again fielded an elite foursome, but beer factor was favoured over youthful exuberance as Barrrie and Thompson joined the fold. Abram and Fayers, the spurned ex-presidents joined Cullingham in Council-based team You May Call Me God, bringing in National Partner (and now International Partner) Dr. Wynn to complete their combo. Tee-totaller Haslegrave tried to shake off his dowdy image by completing the Sad Lonely Old Beer-Monsters with Hunt, Moss and Thorpe, while CUTwC secretary Patrick Driscoll joined locals Carmody, Projectile and Garrard in the Pambridge Cunters [*Editor's Note: I apologise for the potentially offensive nature of this team name, but Winking World's policy is to oppose censorship in all its forms, and so it is printed in full, without asterisks, which, frankly, are shit.*]

Despite protests from SEPTIC, the Tournament Organiser in his wisdom decided that an all-play-all would not suffice, and that extra rounds were needed at the end; more on these later. In round one the Punters had the bye and went punting, while the rest of us knuckled. You May Call Me God took swift advantage of the SEPTIC sobriety with a 20.5 - 7.5, and led for the rest of the tournament. Allen failed to carry Charles, but Alan and

Anhony boosted the Mortal Coil scoreline a little against SLOB.

In round two Charles went off book-shopping to recover, while Pambridge opened their account with a supposedly soft start against SEPTIC. But Stew and Christine thwarted them slightly, and PC took only 15 - 13 after handicap. YMCMG were looking to stuff SLOB after getting three sixes, but Fayers and Cullingham fell foul of Hunt and Moss with a failed pot-out. Round three gave SEPTIC a chance for lubrication; Mortal Coil returned and gave YMCMG their worst result in the all-play-all stage with a 14 - 14 draw. SLOB against PC was also close after transfer; Hunt and Thorpe got most of the points.

Round four gave YMCMG the overnight bye; James drove back to London, but Ed hung around in order to be spat at by Geoff in the Cambridge Blue. In the game before beer, SEPTIC returned refreshed and began their only win in the all-play-all, against SLOB. No pot-outs from Sage, though. Mortal Coil and PC had a close match; Relle and Dean paired up for two sixes, while Horton limited damage to take an advantage into the handicap transfer and come out 14.5 - 13.5. The second day saw the departure of Rand and Haslegrave; two more CUTwC novices, Cat Hartley and Gareth Clegg, arrived to take their places; apparently ER isn't on on Sundays. The late arrival of Driscoll meant a transfer to SLOB, just in time for their bye. The last round of the all-play-all saw YMCMG meet the low-handicapped PC team; a 23 - 5 victory before handicap was enough to keep them ahead. Mortal Coil had their third very close result, against SEPTIC; Barrrie and Thompson did the business, while Charles, partnering the novice Clegg, continued his poor run.

Going into the final stage, YMCMG found themselves 15 points clear of the field, with the other four teams close together. There remained four games in which each team played against two others simultaneously; changing of pairings between games (supposedly in secret, but there was some sneaky hanging back by certain nargs) added randomness.

In round six a pot-out from Thorpe and Hunt and a 6 for Moss enabled SLOB to close the gap on YMCMG; Cullingham and Slu suffered at the hands of Charles playing singly. SEPTIC were on the champagne trail

and lost a quarter of a point as a result of the round.

Round seven saw the long-awaited SEPTIC 7* - 0* and the ensuing champers; Relle and Dean were the victims, but the Coil won through in the novice v. novice game. SLOB and YMCMG had neutral rounds, and YMCMG looked unassailable.

The penultimate round saw an all-SEPTIC game; no, they didn't fiddle the draw, but Fayers and Abram paired up to face them. Fayers ran six to beat Sage and Wiggins at their own game, and was already on the way to Oddbins when Slu followed in. James, abandoned by Ed, was left to suffer at the hands (but fortunately not at the salivary glands of) Geoff. The remaining games were all very close and a tight battle for last place was set up.

In the last round Fayers played singles and ended with 6+ ppg for the second day. SEPTIC got 12 to avoid last place by a quarter of a point; the hapless PC were unable to take advantage of the handicaps after getting only two real points. A neutral round for SLOB kept them second, ahead of Mortal Coil, themselves only a point clear of SEPTIC.

	MC	S	YMCMG	SLOB	PC	Final	Total	Pos
Mortal Coil	-	14.5	14	11.5	14.5	24	78.5	3
Septicaemia	13.5	-	7.5	17.75	13	25.75	77.5	4
You May Call Me God	14	20.5	-	17.5	17.5	31	100.5	1
Sad Lonely Old Beer-Monsters	16.5	10.25	10.5	-	15	34	86.25	2
Pambridge C*nters	13.5	15	10.5	13	-	25.25	77.25	5

You may call me God.

LARRYKHAN!

and Dave Lockwood were beaten in a recent World Pairs match.

Patrick Barrie describes it

WORLD PAIRS 21

KAHN & LOCKWOOD (CHAMPIONS) V.

BARRIE & WYNN (CHALLENGERS)

KAHN RESIDENCE (VA, USA), 26 MARCH

2000

The favourites were Larry Kahn & Dave Lockwood: two individuals with a formidable record, and long recognised as the two best winkers in America.

The outsiders were the English Pairs champions, Patrick Barrie & Ed Wynn: two players who tend to do well when they partner each other, and long recognised as being more likely to drink beer than their opponents.

Patrick & Ed had got over their jet-lag the previous day playing in an Individual Pairs tournament. Ed had played with distinction to finish 2nd, one place ahead of Larry, but one place behind Dave. Patrick, on the other hand, had lost most of his games to finish 7th, just ahead of last-placed Andy "Sly" Young who was making his winks come-back after a two-year absence (and who is now working at the University of Maryland). It was nice to see the other American winkers present: Mac McAvoy, Bob Henninge and Sunshine.

And so to the big day itself: World Pairs 21.

After the match, it was generally agreed that game 6 was crucial. The Americans had a 19.5-15.5 lead, and so needed only 5 (and a bit) points to maintain their grip on the World Pairs title - a title that Dave had admitted that he wanted (and expected?) to hold for the rest of his life.

After the bring-in, a pot-out game looked likely, with Dave's reds being nicely positioned. The four little reds were potted, and the two big reds were both three inches from the pot. The fate of the World Pairs championship

was at stake: Dave missed the pot.

Ed's yellows were the other side of the pot to Dave's reds, and so he calmly chipped out a big green from under one of his yellows, deliberately flattening two greens that were slightly on each other in the process. Larry saw that Patrick's greens were now all free, and so tried a long Bristol shot to get one: he missed. Up to this point, Patrick had been mentally preparing himself for a long hero squop onto one of Dave's reds, knowing that Dave was unlikely to miss the pot again. The fate of the World Pairs championship was at stake: Patrick potted all of his six greens that turn.

"That's good potting under pressure" grimaced Dave. The match score became 21.5-20.5 with all to play for in the 7th game. And in the 7th game, Patrick & Ed got it right - they brought in well and made all their squops, while Dave's play in particular was erratic (possibly as a consequence of his missed pot in the previous game). The result was a safe 6-1 squop-up to the English pair. They had stolen the World Pairs title from under the American noses.

The earlier games were less noteworthy. Game 1 was a classic Inglis game in which one American shot went slightly wrong half-way through and this decided the score. The Americans dominated games 2, 3 and 4, mainly because they brought in well and squopped more consistently than their opponents. They also didn't sub winks with the same panache that Patrick displayed on two occasions. The Americans didn't, however, get any points from game 3 when a pile-break and two John Lennon memorial shots from Patrick freed all his partner's winks: Ed took advantage of missed squops and potted them.

In general, it can be said that all four players will often play better than they did on this occasion. However, the crucial point was that Patrick & Ed took the chances that they were offered. In particular, their potting was excellent - Ed only missed two pot attempts, both awkward, in the entire match, while Patrick's only miss was one that bounced out of the middle of the pot.

Two post-match comments are worth reporting:

Dave: "I didn't think it would go on so long", when phoning home to

say he'd be a little late.

Ed: "I thought we had to get to 28 points to win", when told that it was all over.

Thanks to Larry and Cathy for hosting the winks, Mac for umpiring the match, and a special thanks to Sly who acted as guide and mentor to the victorious pair.

Kahn & Lockwood	2	6	0*	5.5	6	2*	1	22.5
Barrie & Wynn	5	1	7*	1.5	1	5*	6	26.5

RIGHT ATTITUDE

*Ben Deane reflects on his return to the game,
while Chris Abram writes about what happened at the recent National
Pairs*

Having been absent from winks (except for the 1998 London Open?) for almost five years, at the beginning of May I received an email from Andrew Garrard. In between the general greetings, he mentioned in passing that the National Pairs was scheduled for the coming weekend (in Cambridge) and asked if I was interested. “Why not?” I thought. I confronted the wife with the idea and met with ambivalence, so that settled it. In the event she decided she wanted to come too, so I told her what to expect. Forewarned is forearmed, after all, and I reasoned that experiencing one winks tournament needn’t be too detrimental.

We arrived at Queens’ in good time on Saturday morning. Precious little had changed, although the porters did seem less menacing after my five years in the Real World. Up in the Bowett Room, Matt (Tournament Organiser, as I learned) was putting out tables. Rather embarrassingly, I had to be reminded of his name, although I covered by explaining that this was owing to the fact that I had only seen old pictures of him on the Internet. Feeling somewhat out of practice, I tried a few pots and squops. This didn’t really make me any more confident, but at least gave me a gauge of my ability. Joining the “temporarily partnerless” pool, I teamed up with James, and was heartened to see that my name still existed, properly printed, on display on the scoreboard. It hadn’t been that long after all. As some familiar faces entered the room I began to feel more at home and ready to play winks. So we did.

To be honest, the first day did not go well for us, even taking into account my rustiness. I had to remind myself not to feel too guilty that I was letting my partner down a bit – after all, he knew what he was taking on

when he agreed to partner me. Even though I was feeling like a rabbit to start with, I was gradually getting back into the swing of things a bit and getting more comfortable with the winks. Lunchtime offered more familiarity in the form of a game of Angle Dangle and Great Dalmuti (a game popularised after my time, but which I had met before), and as we eased into the afternoon, despite our continuing low scoreline, I was enjoying myself.

By the time Sunday lunchtime was approaching, James and I had resigned ourselves to being the lowest of the low, and as a consequence, being more relaxed, we had actually won a game or two. Towards the end of our final game before the three-way split, Walter was calculating the required outcome for he and Alan to qualify for the second group. Assuming that we were bumping along the bottom, James and I were surprised to learn that Walter and Alan were vying with *us* for qualification! But ultimately the outcome was as expected, and probably better for all round. After lunch, winning the last two games, one with a pot-out, felt like a good end. This article can't claim to be a real tournament write-up because I can't remember much, but I do remember Jon and Simon's last game where they potted well and got their needed 7*-0* to win. Congratulations to them.

Anyhow, all of this account brings me to my point. I enjoyed myself this weekend. It seems that tiddlywinks as a whole, in spite of the continuing hard work of the university clubs, is going through a period of low recruitment (apparently due in some part to a notion that undergraduates have these days about actually studying). Five years isn't really so long, but in that time, a lot has happened to me: all very natural for people leaving university, setting up lives and all that — but it does make it easy for winks to fall by the wayside. It's not that I don't enjoy playing any more — I do — it's just that tiddlywinks fell in priority compared to other areas of life. But after this weekend, I want to say: it *is* worth making an effort to get to tournaments; they *are* still enjoyable; and four or five weekends a year doesn't seem too much time to devote to a game that you enjoy, even if there are now other priorities in life. Which is why I will be making more of an effort to attend tournaments regularly, and I hope more people (who may have

lapsed) come back to the fold.

I will close by offering a few things to bear in mind for anyone who finds his or her self in a similar situation to that I was in last week:

1. Bringing in is actually quite difficult. It's a long shot to play, and the quality of bring-ins has a large effect on the subsequent game. Do not underestimate the concentration required.

2. When out of practice, the general rule: "Go for what you can get, not for what you would like to get" is truer than ever. Two inch pots and one inch squops, shots that you used to be fairly confident of getting (at least enough to regularly attempt), now seem much less certain.

3. Wives (who don't play winks) are helpful at tournaments only occasionally. They sit doing crosswords most of the time, but they are handy for fetching breakfast on Sunday morning. They are supportive (mostly) when you lose, but they tend to get bored and wander off, and miss the bits where you actually do well.

THE ETWA NATIONAL PAIRS, QUEENS' COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, 6-7 MAY 2000

It all looked so simple for the reigning national, and newly-crowned World champions. Patrick and Ed had a flawless first day, stuffing the rabbits in the bottom half of the draw, and although they had setbacks against Jon and Simon and Charles and Alan on Sunday, they qualified for the top group in first place, and were odds-on favourites to retain their title.

This year the format had no influence upon the outcome, which rested on the final game of the day: but more of that anon. The system devised by organiser Fayers was an all-play-all followed by three play-off groups, with scores carried forward, but with only a pair from the top group eligible to win. The seeding was accurate, with only Allen Rand, playing well in his first Pairs under the guidance of the monster-potting, but truly horrible clothes-wearing Nutty Dr Clarkson, rising out of his seeded group to at the expense of Stew and Christine.

It was great to welcome back famous winkers of yore Jim Carrington,

Mike Surridge, and Ben Deane. Jim and Mike seemed to have retained their winking power remarkably well during their absence, although they were a bit susceptible to the early pot-out. Andrew Garrard and Tim Hunt — unsurprisingly the slowest pair on view — and Matt Fayers and Phil Carmody, freshly flown in from his new job as Secretary-General (and sole member) of the Scandinavian Tiddlywinks Federation, completed the middle group, with Matt and Phil winning comfortably in the end.

James Murray and Patrick Driscoll propped up the table for most of the tournament, although Christine and Stew could have challenged anybody for ineptness at times. Patrick D. later confessed that his plan to have a low handicapped partner in order to boost his world rating had backfired, when they failed to beat any higher-rated pairs. Duh.

In the end, however, it was tough at the top, with Charles and Alan, Jon and Mapley, and Richard and myself seemingly locked together a good few points behind Patrick and Ed. But, when it came to the final game, between the Moo-Sloo-Too and Messrs Gandy and Mapley, there was a glimmer of hope for both teams. A seven for us would have given us a chance to taste the rarified air of finishing second in a national tournament, whilst Jon and Simon needed the same score for a victory. The stage was set. Death or glory. I finished my second pint of seven percent scrumpy (in, retrospect, not a good idea, and I apologise in these pages to whoever cleans and uses the bathrooms in Blue Boar Court, Trinity), and stepped forward. At least tactics weren't going to bother us.

And, guess what? Richard and I were rubbish, and capitulated so easily that Patrick might have been forgiven for muttering darkly about Bombay bookmakers. Simon potted out, Jon followed him in, and they were handed the title on a plate. Still, at least we get a new, all-English world pairs challenge to look forward to.

It was another splendid event, spoiled only by the tedious ETWA Congress, and thanks are due to everybody involved in its organisation, especially the barman in the Bath Ale House, for formulating the 'Winker's special' deal on beer for Sunday lunchtime.

SIC TRANSIT

*Jim Carrington reflects on how
the game has changed since he's been away*

At this year's National Pairs, Mike Surridge and I came out of semi-retirement to sample winks in the new millennium. It was one of the most enjoyable and relaxing tournaments that I remember playing in, and it was a chance to catch up with old friends.

However, after an absence from the game of over five years, you can't help but notice a few changes.

I remember when ...

... a National Pairs all-play-all meant early starts, 45 minute lunches, and late finishes. Now we can enjoy a lie-in, take a siesta after lunch, play half of our opponents twice, and still get back in time for the Antiques Roadshow.

... Gandhi was a newly-released film about a bald guy with little round glasses. Now he's got very short hair, wears shades, and wins tiddlywinks tournaments.

... new-comers to the game were known as "rabbits". Now it's irrelevant as myxomatosis has swept through the game.

... winks mats were unique, each with its own shape, character, and hazards – much like a golf hole. Now they are all the same, and they are all par 5's for me.

... slow play was the result of tactical indecision. Now it's caused by mobile phone conversations.

... pot-outs included several false starts, and took the whole game to complete. Now my opponents pot out while I'm still missing turns from my bring-ins.

... the world rankings didn't exist and it would have required the world's largest computer to calculate them anyway. Now they are updated on the internet hours after each tournament.

... the Wessex Exiles took on The Rest of England in a challenge match with teams of six. If CUTwC issued the same challenge now, the Rest

of England would struggle to find six players.

... ETwA AGM's were long, tedious, full of pedantic arguments, and held in autumn. Now they are held in spring.

But it's good to see that some things never change, like ...

... the giant black scoreboard, not yet replaced by a spreadsheet, laptop, and projector.

... the winker's staple diet of beer and curry.

... winks tournament weather — why does the sun always shine when we are cooped up in a sweaty room ?

... the optimistic ambitions at the start of the tournament, followed by the “mathematical possibilities” at the end of the first day, and the “why do I bother ?” at the end of the week-end.