

Winking World

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**Spring 1997:
Election Special**

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Julian Wiseman *lurches into* The Traditional Editorial Rant ———

There is a long and rich tradition of Winking World Editorials.

Winking World Editorials are always written during the early hours of a bitterly cold morning, in an unheated room overcrowded with consumptive students and their hungry friends. Friends hungry not just for their daily bread, but hungry for justice and an end to government censorship.

Picture the scene: a lookout at the door, both half asleep and half awake; a lantern flickering its last on the table; an Editor fighting for words; the chill wind whistling through the ill-fitting window — not the sudden piercing of the whistle of a *gendarme* in pursuit, but rather the slow grinding of the machinery of an oppressive police state.

In these pre-revolutionary circumstances the Editor, fortified only by the remnants of a dangerously phenolic '79 Ardbeg (second-use bourbon cask), has a duty to appeal to his audience. A duty not just to himself but also to subsequent generations of Editors. A duty not just to appeal, but to urge, to impel, to incite, to compel the people to rise up, to cast off their chains, and, by the mere act of denying the regime, to destroy it.

And, whilst at these heroic deeds, whilst witnessing these operatic times, to set down their witnessing for future generations. To set down their witnessing in writing for publication in Winking World.

So, that's the traditional editorial. But who reads editorials anyway?

And don't forget to vote on the 1st of May.

Christine Wiggins *visited* Young Farmers in Hertfordshire —————

It was a cold and blustery night when four intrepid Cambridge winkers (Stew, Sly, Patrick and myself) set off into deepest Hertfordshire to try to convince the local Young Farmers Club that winks is a deadly serious game with a social aspect (at least I think that was the plan, but you'd have to ask my Secretary to confirm that!). In my new found role as ETwA ChairMAN I had rashly agreed to drive and not drink, thus giving Stew a chance to celebrate his last lecture of the term.

When we arrived at the social club in Stanstead Abbots (with two "t"s we think, but the road atlas seems to think differently!) the first thing that was spotted was the real ale. At this point Stew, Patrick & Sly's eyes lit up, and I got rather sulky due to the fact I was driving and was therefore condemned to drink orange juice all evening. It turned out that the barman buys his beer from CAMRA, and the Wild Rover turned out to be rather nice (so I'm told!), especially for a beer with an ABV of 5.6%. Unfortunately the barman was unable to tell us who actually made it.

The demonstration went well. After a potted history of the game up 'til 1955 by Patrick, Stew filled us in on the more recent history. I'm glad I wasn't doing this since I hadn't heard any of it before. Sly then tried to demonstrate the rules of the game by playing winks on his chest (not the most successful of ideas, but a fairly novel one). At this point we decided to give them all a chance at the game. On our table we had one who could squop well, and another who potted 3 winks (his first one using a flexible squidger!). Stew failed miserably to demonstrate how to pot winks, especially from his favourite potting distance of a foot. I have to say at this point that I demonstrated the superiority of women winkers by immediately potting 2 from over a foot away (my current favourite distance!).

After the demonstration we sipped more drinks while they had their formal weekly meeting. It's clear that there is so little to do in Stanstead Abbot(t)s that the young farmers have to create their own amusements. Even CUTwC could learn from their organisational skills as the meeting occasionally degenerated into entertaining chaos.

Having been deserted in the social club at 10.30 pm by our hosts we decided to find them again by going to the local pub since there was still some drinking time left. We pulled into the car park of the Red Lion after a customary trip all the way round the nearby roundabout. To our delight when we got inside they too were serving Wild Rover & were able to tell us that it's made by Samuel Allsop (Queens' bar will be informed in due course I suspect!). The Young Farmers were particularly amused to see us enter, but made no attempt to talk to us so I guess they can't have been too impressed by our demonstration.

By the time a couple of drinks had been had, the lack of supper was beginning to tell. Luckily the Curry Gods were shining on us. Next door to the Red Lion was the Taste of Raj, open 'til 11.30. They welcomed us with open arms at 11:23pm and proceeded to produce one of the nicest and cheapest post-winks curry most of us could remember. What a shame Stanstead Abbot(t)s is 45 miles from Cambridge...

Overall, a fun time was had by all, and I hope we'll find other clubs who would like us to visit.

Richard Moore's (Other) World Ratings

Following the success of Richard Moore's world ratings (WW64), here is another effort to establish once and for all, in measurable and unambiguous terms, the relative talents of the leading British and American winkers. Here's how it was calculated: you score -1 for every game you've ever conceded 7-0 in a national tournament under the "deliberate interference" rule by upsetting the table in a fit of temper. Hence these are the even-temperedness world ratings.

1= Chris Abram	0	1= Simon Gandy	0	1= Andy Purvis	0
1= Kilian Anheuser	0	1= Chris Goddard	0	1= Charles Relle	0
1= Anne Austen	0	1= Alasdair Grant	0	1= Stew Sage	0
1= Patrick Barrie	0	1= Graham Hancock	0	1= Dave Salter	0
1= Liz Bertoya	0	1= Anthony Heading	0	1= Phil Scarrott	0
1= Alan Boyce	0	1= Tim Hedger	0	1= Dave Smith	0
1= Jackie Carter	0	1= Tim Hunt	0	1= Sunshine	0
1= Rob Cartwright	0	1= Nick Inglis	0	1= Dave Tarrell	0
1= Dave Clarkson	0	1= Adrian Jones	0	1= Rupert Thompson	0
1= Stu Collins	0	1= Larry Kahn	0	1= Geoff Thorpe	0
1= James Cullingham	0	1= Gavin Keyte	0	1= Rick Tucker	0
1= Alan Dean	0	1= Dave Lockwood	0	1= Christine Wiggins	0
1= Heather Dean	0	1= Jon Mapley	0	1= Jonathan Williams	0
1= Ben Deane	0	1= Richard Moore	0	1= Julian Wiseman	0
1= Clive Dixon	0	1= Geoffrey Myers	0	1= Peter Wright	0
1= Andrew Dominey	0	1= Giles Pickering	0	1= Ed Wynn	0
1= Cyril Edwards	0	1= Ed Porter	0	1= Andrew Young	0
1= Ian Gameson	0	1= Julian Porter	0	2 Mathew Rose	-1

Any winker in the list wishing in addition to learn his or her "horror rating" or "beer factor" should write to the author, c/o Winking World, enclosing a brown s.a.e.

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The 1997 Cambridge Open

Anyone who remembers what happens at a Cambridge Open has miserably failed to understand the purpose of that tournament.

The individual game scores were (and it isn't tricky to guess which round was the first on Sunday):

Round 1				Round 2			
Moss & Relle	6*:1*	Dominey & Thorpe		Clarkson & Wynn	6:1	Fayers & Sage	
Sage & Clarkson	5:2	Wiggins & Clark		Abram & Holdsworth	1:6	Mapley & Barrie	
Williams & Abram	0*:7*	Wynn & Collins		Haslegrave & Clark	2*:5*	Grant & Williams	
Barrie & Cullingham	6:1	Haslegrave & Grant		Cullingham & Dominey	4:3	Relle	
Mapley & Hunt	6:1	Carmody & Fayers		Moss & Carmody	5*:2*	Thorpe	
				Collins & Hunt	6:1	Wiggins	
Round 3				Round 4			
Haslegrave & Scarrott	2:5	Moss & Moore		Haslegrave & Garrard	0*:7*	Carmody & Scarrott	
Relle & Cullingham	7*:0*	Abram & Clarkson		Williams & Fayers	1:6	Hunt & Relle	
Mapley & Wiggins	6:1	Carmody		Clark & Clarkson	3:4	Moss & Wynn	
Garrard & Barrie	3:4	Fayers		Mapley	1:6	Moore	
Wynn & Clark	6*:1*	Hunt		Thorpe & Wiggins	3:4	Collins	
				Cullingham & Young	1:6	Barrie	
Round 5				Round 6			
Mapley & Clark	6:1	Collins & Garrard		Garrard & Clark	1:5:5:5	Fayers & Collins	
Wynn & Wiggins	5*:2*	Clarkson & Relle		Grant & Carmody	6:1	Wynn & Thorpe	
Hunt & Haslegrave	1:5:5:5	Grant & Barrie		Abram & Haslegrave	2:5	Moore & Wiggins	
Williams & Cullingham	0*:7*	Moore		Hunt & Moss	3:4	Relle & Barrie	
Scarrott & Thorpe	5:2	Carmody		Williams & Scarrott	7*:0*	Clarkson & Cullingham	
Fayers & Moss	7*:0*	Young					
Round 7				Round 8			
Haslegrave & Carmody	6:1	Fayers & Garrard		Relle & Wynn	3:4	Scarrott & Wiggins	
Abram & Wiggins	4:3	Moss & Wright		Abram & Milligan	4:3	Moss & Williams	
Hunt & Cullingham	1:5:5:5	Scarrott & Relle		Hunt & Garrard	1:6	Barrie & Keevash	
				Thorpe & Wright	6:1	Haslegrave & Cullingham	
				Andrew & Fayers	7*:0*	Collins & Carmody	
Round 9				Round 10			
Rose & Haslegrave	6*:1*	Reed & Scarrott		Relle & Rose	4-67:2-33	Clarkson & Moss	
Hunt & Fayers	2*:5*	Wynn & Garrard		Reed & Grant	0*:7*	Cullingham & Scarrott	
Austin & Barrie	1:6	Williams & Clarkson		Fayers & Barrie	1:5:5:5	Hunt	
Wiggins & Relle	4:3	Cullingham & Moss		Austin & Garrard	3:4	Williams & Holdsworth	
				Wynn & Haslegrave	6:1	Wiggins	
Round 11				Round 12			
Moss & Haslegrave	5:2	Murray & Williams		Scarrott & Moss	6:1	Grant & Fayers	
Grant & Hunt	2*:5*	Scarrott & Garrard		Haslegrave & Clarkson	5*:2*	Barrie & Wynn	
Wiggins & Rose	6*:1*	Relle & Fayers		Williams & Relle	6:1	Cullingham & Murray	
Clarkson & Barrie	6:1	Wynn & Cullingham		Wiggins & Hunt	1:6	Rose & Garrard	

Giving a resulting score table of:

Person	Games	Points	ppg	Person	Games	Points	ppg
Chris Andrew	1	7-00	7-00	Peter Wright	2	9-00	4-50
Pete Keevash	1	6-00	6-00	CHARLES RELLE	12	52-17	4-35
Richard Moore	4	23-00	5-75	ED WYNN	11	46-00	4-18
Matty Rose	4	22-67	5-67	PATRICK BARRIE	10	41-00	4-10
Jon Mapley	5	25-00	5-00	Andrew Milligan	1	4-00	4-00
PHIL SCARROTT	10	49-50	4-95	Stu Collins	6	23-50	3-92
PAUL MOSS	12	46-33	3-86	JOHN HASLEGRAVE	12	37-50	3-13
WALTER CLARKSON	10	35-33	3-53	TIM HUNT	12	36-50	3-04
CHRISTINE WIGGINS	12	42-00	3-50	Geoff Thorpe	6	18-00	3-00

Phil Carmody	8	28-00	3-50	Stew Sage	2	6-00	3-00
Phil Clark	6	20-50	3-42	Alastair Grant	7	20-50	2-93
JON WILLIAMS	10	34-00	3-40	MATT FAYERS	12	33-00	2-75
JAMES CULLINGHAM	12	32-50	2-71	James Murray	2	3-00	1-50
ANDREW GARRARD	10	26-50	2-65	Alan Reed	2	1-00	0-50
Pihlip Holdsworth	2	5-00	2-50	Andrew Young	2	1-00	0-50
Andrew Dominey	2	5-00	2-50				
Anne Austin	2	4-00	2-00	Those tedious people who bothered to play at			
Chris Abram	6	11-00	1-83	least ten games are in capitals.			

Some would claim that somebody won, and others would claim that everybody won. There were prizes for all at the dinner.

Charles Relle *on* Fair Shots and Irreversible Movement

From time to time, people, usually opponents, have asserted to me that when I play a shot involving a pile, if a wink other than the one I am playing is the first one to start to move, the shot is not fair. I have always thought that this is not the case, and have recently read rule 5 again, and I think the rule supports me. Since, however, the definition of a shot has been one of the trickiest rules to frame, the point is worth discussing.

The first sentence to consider is this: **“A shot consists of downward pressure of squidger on wink that is an attempt to move a wink or that causes a wink to move irreversibly”**. It is plain: downward pressure is easy to understand, and the final clause makes it clear that if, say, you are lining up for a pot and your squidger slips off the wink, you have played a shot. Irreversible movement has been hard to define, and this is why the next sentence was added: **“For the purposes of this rule, a movement is irreversible if, when the squidger ceases contact with the wink, all winks do not return to the position they occupied before contact with the squidger began”**. This sentence makes it clear that you can, in a simple pot situation (only the wink to be potted involved) rest your squidger on the wink before playing the shot. Similarly, in playing the Good shot, you are allowed to press your wink into the mat before releasing it. If, however, the wink you are attempting to pot is resting on the edge of another wink, you are not allowed to play in such a way that the underneath wink pops out from beneath the top wink, and then pot the top wink, if the movements are distinct. Even this apparently simple situation raises questions. If you play as just described, is it one foul shot? Or is the popping out a fair shot, even though unintentional, and analogous to the first situation I described (squidger slips off wink)? If so, the subsequent play of the top wink is itself a foul shot, and the opponents have redress with reference to that wink only. No-one has, I think, taken this view, but it needs to be considered.

To return to the situation I mentioned at the start of this article, suppose you are playing a wink on a pile and another wink on the pile starts to move. The relevant sentences are these: **“From the moment when a wink starts to move irreversibly, the movement of the squidger must be quick and continuous. A shot may consist of tapping a wink so that another moves from beneath it, but it is a foul shot to squeeze a wink from beneath the top wink and then play the top wink if the movements are distinct”**. The first of these sentences is crucial, and the second throws some light on the matter. It is important to notice that it states: “From the moment when **a wink** starts to move irreversibly ...”: **“a wink”**, not **“the wink played”**. This shows that the intention of the rules is **not** to say that the player’s wink must be the first to move. The test of the fair shot is the movement of the squidger, which must be quick and continuous. How is quickness and continuity to be measured? This is very difficult, and the best thing to do is to examine analogous situations. When you have a wink on edge of wink position and you want to pot the top wink, you have to play an air shot. This avoids the “distinct” movement mentioned in the example given in the rule. In playing more complex shots, we should expect such quickness and continuity of squidger movement that, in a pile, the movement of one wink is not distinct from that of another. What, in this context, is distinctness? I should say that no wink should stop moving before movement of the wink in contact with the squidger starts.

Larry Khan *attended* The NATwA Singles

Anyway, Larry held off Dave in the last game (a 4·5 point lead going in didn’t hurt) to capture the belated 1996 singles. Inconsistent short and mid range potting by Dave really hurt him during the entire tournament. He actually had a theoretical chance at the needed 6 during rounds, but missed pots and a blow-up that resulted in a loss of turn killed any hope. Larry had lost his first round game (to Nick), but then won his next 11 tournament games to win by 7·5. Nearly all the games were competitive, with even the lower ranked players making the leaders work for points. Typically, the games would be somewhat up in the air most of the way, with the stronger players pulling it out near time or in rounds.

Day 1									Day 2							
	Dave	Bob	Nick	Rick	Jim	Sun	Larry	Mac	Larry	Dave	Bob	Jim	Sun	Nick	Rick	Mac
Dave	-	5	5·5	6	4	6	1·5	7	Larry	-	5	4	6	6	6	6
Bob	2	-	5	6	5·5	6	2	4	Dave	2	-	4	5	1	4	5
Nick	1·5	2	-	1	6	1	6	6	Bob	3	3	-	6	3	1	5
Rick	1	1	6	-	1	1	1	6	Jim	1	2	1	-	NP	2·5	1
Jim	3	1·5	1	6	-	1	1	4	Sun	1	6	4	NP	-	NP	NP
Sun	1	1	6	6	6	-	2·5	6	Nick	1	3	6	4·5	NP	-	5
Larry	5·5	5	1	6	6	4·5	-	6	Rick	1	2	2	6	NP	2	-
Mac	0	3	1	1	3	1	1	-	Mac	1	1	4	3	NP	1·5	3

NP = Not played. Sunshine’s games are official NATwA games (and thus rateable), but they were non-counting games for the singles title. Don’t ask, it’s too complicated.

Apparently the above implies the following end results, but the Editor doesn’t claim to understand:

	RR1	RR1*	Total	W-L	RR2*	
Larry	29.5	[4.5]	62.5	11-1	[6]	
Dave	29	[6]	55	10-2	[1]	
Bob	24.5	[6]	45.5	6-6	[3]	
Jim	16.5	[1]	28	3-9		(no game against *)
Nick	22.5	[1]	47.5	7-5		(no game against *)
Rick	16	[1]	33	4-8		(no game against *)
Mac	9	[1]	22.5	1-11		(no game against *)

* 28.5, W-L: 4-3

Tim Hunt *shares his Winking Proverbs* ---

[Editorial comment. Tim Hunt admitted that he “wrote this little piece just after the Cambridge Open” and then “forgot about it”. Having “rediscovered it”, he sent it to the Editor even though “it is completely bizarre”.]

As I’m sure we all agree, tiddlywinks is the best game in the world. The second best game in the world is Go. There is one thing that Go has and winks doesn’t though, and that is a set of proverbs. A Go proverb is a piece of advice like hane at the head of three stones or the one point jump is never wrong. These proverbs are not universally true: there are always counter-examples, but they provide useful rules of thumb, especially for beginners. So here, in no particular order, I offer some example winks proverbs. Are they helpful? Should there be more?

- Don’t look a gift-horse in the mouth.
- Play the shot that you will get not the one that you would like to get.
- If you don’t try it then you won’t get it.
- Bringing-in can only make things better.
- If you’ve got it, guard it!
- If missing the shot doesn’t make things worse then go for it!
- If your strategy relies on your opponent missing their shot then it’s not a strategy, it’s a recipe for disaster.
- When you’ve potted three or more, just keep potting.
- If you haven’t got a worthwhile shot, play somewhere else.
- If the difference between two shots is negligible then there’s no point ranting at your partner about it for 10 minutes.
- You are there to enjoy yourself.
- Any pile will explode if you throw enough winks into it.
- Don’t commit suicide.
- If your opponent has six flat winks then your opponent is about to run 6.

- If you have six flat winks then don't. (That is, if you are a boring narg who actually wants to win. As any red-blooded CUTwC winker will tell you, you should always go for a pot out if its available.)
- If you can get difficult shots you are a good player, if you never have to play difficult shots you must be outstanding.
- If you bring in badly the game is as good as over (but you will still have to spent the next 25 minutes being wazzed on by your opponents).
- Colour order can be devastating.
- It's only a game.
- If you under-play a faff shot then there's no harm done. If you over-play it its a mare on a stick.
- You can't over-play a pile break. If you under-play it its a mare on a stick.
- If it could all go horribly wrong then why are you even considering it.
- If it could all go horribly wrong then it will.
- If you're going to lose anyway then it's better to lose 3-4.
- If you're opponent is committed you can attack another of their winks.
- If you're behind go for shots that stir things up, if you're ahead play solidly.
- If you're playing with Sage after lunch then its bound to be a pot-out.
- If you're playing with Sage after lunch then you are a very sick person.
- Don't leave all of your potting until round five.
- It is easier to squop them before they have six flat winks near the pot.
- If there are more of your winks than your opponents in there then just crud it.
- Respect your opponents.

The ETwA Pairs

ETwA Pairs, etwa schmairs. Inevitably won by GRMP and partner.

1	Geoff Myers & Matthew Rose	86
2	Larry Kahn & Dave Lockeood	80
3	Andy Purvis & Jon Mapley	79
4	Alan Boyce & Tim Hedger	64
5	Simon Gandy & Ed Wynn	60.5
6	Alan Dean & Phil Scarrott	58.5
7	Patrick Barrie & John Haslegrave	53.83
8	James Cullingham & Charles Relle	52.5
9	Anthony Heading & Julian Wiseman	49.5
10	Stu Collins & Stew Sage	48

11	Kilian Anheuser & Geoff Thorpe	46.5
12	Tim Hunt & Chris Goddard/Phil Carmody	44.67
13	Matt Fayers & Christine Wiggins	40
14	Chris Abram & Andrew Young	35.5
15	Andrew Dominey & Paul Wolstenholme-Hogg/Andrew Garrard	26.5
16	John Stevens & Graham Turnbull	15

Does anyone have the full game-by-game results? Winking World is the journal of record for ETwA; tournament organisers (or their deputies) are asked to ensure that the Editor receives the full gory details.

Geoff Thorpe *grumbles about* Boundary and Timing Rules —————

Sorry everyone but the editor asked for it, and we elected him! (This does not constitute a submission to the rules committee for consideration.)

Potouts

Why not stop the game when the sixth wink of a colour is potted and score up normally before transferring the point. This would stop all the silly desquopping and make scores 6.5* and 5.5* much more common.

We could clarify the position when the last winks of more than one colour are potted in the same shot. I think each colour potted should take its share of the transferred point from their opponents. Thus if one colour from each side is potted there is no net transfer while if three colours are potted simultaneously a transfer of 1/3 points results. Presently the transfer is from the losers to the winners. If blue and green are potted out simultaneously then the third place finisher determines the winning side and therefore the direction of transfer.

Scoring

Ideally all games would be played to a conclusion without time limit. However this is impractical particularly in match and tournament play. thus we have the time limit and need a system of scoring for a time limited game.

Such a system should reflect the progress of each pair towards the goal of a proper win (potout), i.e. it should reflect the strengths of the two sides if the game were continuing. The major tactical changes often required in rounds indicates that the present scoring system does not meet these aims. Some of course may argue that this change adds both to the skill and interest of the game.

In normal play a free wink is generally more valuable than a potted one, except when a potout attempt is in progress. So what about scoring 3 tiddlies for a free wink 2 for a potted wink and 1 for any other unsquopped wink.

Alternatively we could score tournaments on tiddlies. This would encourage potting.

Slow play

Two problems can result from slow play. First the late ending of a game can delay a tournament and leave other players standing round. Secondly it can prevent opponents getting their proper number of turns.

There are three provisions in the rules concerning slow play. These are:

- Rule 32. (the thirty-second rule).
- The umpire may add on time that he considers deliberately wasted.
- The tournament supremo may enforce a two minute time limit in rounds.

Of these only the first is regularly used. It and the second only compensate the opponents for the time lost and do nothing about the length of games and the frustration of players waiting for the next round.

The two minute rule is largely unenforced, and as it is possible to have 58 shots after time is called without a potout occurring, it only ensures that a pairs game last less than 141 minutes excluding time stoppages.

To reduce the overall time taken by a game two things are necessary, to speed up rounds and if possible to reduce the number of clock stoppages during a game.

For the first I can think of no better solution than the old one of chess clocks. Why not get some ETWA has lots of money. Eight minutes for each side in rounds, if your clock drops you must pass all your remaining shots.

For the other I have no ideas at all.

Deliberate time wasting is very rarely penalised as there is rarely an umpire to enforce it. It needs emphasising that 30 second is a limit on the time taken for a shot not an allowance, once you have decided on the shot you should play it.

There are three particular times when prompt play is obligatory:

- When a player has failed to pot out. If his partner, who has the simple strategy of digging out his partners last wink, delays the game to try and prevent he counter pot this is grossly unfair.
- When taking free turns in a position where you are not attempting to convert to a pot out slow play unfairly removes the opponents chances of getting back into the game.
- When as the starting colour playing just before time is due. Waiting for time to be called to deny the opponents an extra round is unfair. If the shot causes a squop up the opponents can be denied several rounds.

Going off the mat

My views on the off the mat rule are based on the idea that ideally winks should be played on an infinite mat where the problem would not arise.

If a wink that goes off the mat is replaced on the edge at the point it went off there is an advantage to the owner over the above situation. Any penalty should be to counter this advantage.

Many winks that go off would have stopped within inches of the edge of the mat and to say they would take a shot to bring to the edge is excessive compensation. Further this would not necessarily be done on the next turn.

I see no reason why the penalty for sending off one's own wink or one's partner's should be different.

My personal choice for a revised rule would be that any wink still in contact with the mat but unplayable is moved to be playable, with no penalty. Any wink leaving the mat completely is returned to its baseline but counts as in play.

Other options which are worthy of consideration are

- All winks leaving the mat are placed by the opponent of the player who made the shot anywhere on the edge subject to a 4 inch (10cm) rule. (No missed turn).
- As a present without the missed turn.

Or for those who insist on a missed turn I suggest

- A wink belonging to the player of the shot or her partner which leaves the mat goes into limbo. If on a players turn she has a wink in limbo she may place it anywhere on the edge of the mat subject to the four inch rule. Such action comprises a shot. A wink in limbo at the end of the game scores 1 tiddly. A wink in limbo is unquopped.

This effectively allows the player to delay the missed turn but forces her to take it before playing the wink.

Edward Wynn *describes* Conjectures _____

[Editorial comment. This game is not recommended to the pancreatically challenged; having played it one Saturday the Editor was still ill on the following Wednesday. And Andrew Purvis, having been playing for a few hours one lunch-time, wandered up to Edward Wynn, shook his fist and said "How dare you invent this game!" — which was rightly taken as a high compliment.]

Conjectures is a new drinking game.

The game has been found to work well for groups of around eight players. In an initial burst of enthusiasm, it has been played by groups of a dozen or more. It probably wouldn't work so well for small groups. The game is intended for the Famous Winkers Cards, but until they arrive (and they are like the days of

the Son of Man, “the time will come when you will long to see one..., but they will not come”) normal playing cards will do.

The cards are in a strict order of superiority: all Aces are higher than all Kings, and so on, and the suits are in the order of bids in Yogi’s Whist: Clubs are higher than Hearts, Spades and Diamonds, in that order. For a typical group, a standard 52-card pack is shortened by removing all cards lower than a Six — the intention being that the chance of at least one Ace (for example) being held is fairly high but not very high. Different numbers of cards are necessary only for extreme numbers of players.

The terminology of the game has a sexual theme, hence the name ‘Conjectures’ (as in Liz Baggage — verb. sap.).

Each player is dealt one card face down, and may immediately look at its face. In a typical game, there will be several rounds of so-called Exposure, of which each player can join only one. The basic aim of the game is to win the round that you join.

The player who has the highest Exposed card in a round has won and is not fined; he might be said to be Well-Endowed. Every other player in that round is fined according to the Shortcoming between his card and the Well-Endowed player’s. To announce a round, a nominated player calls out “Three ... two ... one ... BID!”. At the instant of the “B” in “BID!”, all players with their cards touching their foreheads (still face down, or rather, face-to-face) have joined that round. They show their cards, and the fines are allocated and drunk in a more or less self-policing way.

The fines already mentioned (and quantified below) make it undesirable to join a round and not win it. Why then should you ever join the first few rounds? Why not just wait until all the high cards have gone, so that you are definitely Well-Endowed? The reason is this: if there is a round in which the Well-Endowed player’s card is lower than yours, you will be said to be Softly Spoken and you will be fined more heavily than players who Expose their Shortcomings. So, there’s a balance between Exposing earlier than the ideal round (and revealing a Shortcoming) and not Exposing until it’s too late (and being Softly Spoken, also known as Staying In The Closet). If you skilfully wait until the ideal round, then you are said to have demonstrated Anal Retention, which is apparently desirable.

The fining system now described is compatible with standard playing cards and sturdy constitutions. Fines are measured in Pencils. (A Pencil, as you probably know, is half a Finger, which is one eighth of a pint of beer.) The fine for a Shortcoming is $(1 + \text{denominator difference})$; for example, if you Expose an Eight but the highest Exposed card is a Ten, your denominator difference is $(10 - 8)$ and your fine is 3. The fine for being Softly Spoken is $(1 + 2 \times \text{denominator difference})$; for example, if you fail to Expose a Ten when the highest Exposed card is an Eight, your fine is 5. If you are Softly Spoken, it is in your best interest to admit it, because you will not be allowed to profit from concealing it. The players who have joined the round or are Softly Spoken do not participate in subsequent rounds. If only one player remains, he shows his

card (to demonstrate that he hasn't been Softly Spoken) and then drinks a single fine for being Asexual; the game is over.

It may happen that no-one joins a round. In this case (known as Mass Buggery), only the player with the lowest card escapes; all other remaining players are fined according to the formula of (1 + denominator difference), and the game ends. If you were holding a King, and someone else the Six of Diamonds, you are subject to a half-pint fine. This is (arguably) bad. However, if that player with the Six were the only player to join a round, then you would be subject to the higher Soft-Speaking fines — in this case, a short head away from a pint. He would have shafted everyone; he would be a Stud. This is a popular ambition, but a would-be Stud runs the risk of Exposing a significant Shortcoming if someone else joins the round.

The player announcing the round should not vary the pace of calling, and should be particularly careful not to hesitate before "BID!". To join a round, your card must be touching your forehead at the instant of "B". To clearly not join, your card must be touching the table (or your knee if no table is to hand). To be anywhere in between is to be Unsure of One's Orientation; you are given a single fine, and you have not joined the round. This calls for a careful judgement, preferably agreed among the other players. It can be important to see who else is Exposing himself, so it is forbidden to "cabbage" (i.e., to move an empty hand in semblance of Exposure). It is perfectly acceptable to change your orientation during the countdown, though. The face-down cards that are still in the game should remain visible (so that it is clear how many there are); cards that have been used should be put in a central face-up pile. To give players a chance to wake up and check their cards, the announcer may count down from "Five" on the first round of a game.

Game should follow game as quickly as possible, so anyone can deal. The cards don't have to be shuffled too often (except that all the Aces and Kings eventually bunch together). The dealer and the announcer shouldn't be fined for venial mistakes, except when the announcer hesitates for his own good. As with many drinking games, a player should make an effort to drink the fines from one game before the next game's fine arrives. If this is completely impractical, he should announce this and sit out for the minimum period to catch up. However, no-one should drink so much that they do themselves permanent physical or spiritual harm. I should know.

Letters

From Mr Richard Moore of Cheltenham, to the Editor on 23rd March

Dear Sir,

A serious letter for once. I should like to suggest that the timing of the ETWA Congress be changed. For many years Congress has coincided with the National Fours in order to generate the maximum number of attendees, but

today the Fours is no longer ETwA's best-attended tournament. Moreover, many of this who do come along are experiencing tournament winks for the first time. It always seems to me that it must be particularly tedious, perhaps off-putting, for these people to have to sit through Congress at such an early stage in their careers.

Meanwhile there are, it has to be said, a fairly small number of the "hard core" of serious winkers present for a meeting which is actually the only chance we get to discuss, collectively and seriously, the issues which face the game. It seems to me that, for the sake of those for whom the Fours is their first tournament, and for those in whose interest it is to have the best and most considered decision possible on such subjects as the ever-changing Pairs and Singles dates, that Congress should be retimed to coincide with a more important tournament with a larger contingent of 'serious' winkers — perhaps the Singles. I intend to introduce a formal proposal to this effect at the next Congress. What do people think?

R. J. Moore, MA MPhil

From Chri, Princess of Winkland

Dear Auntie Gertie,

Help! I have no private life any more. The media cameras are everywhere. I can't even drink beer during tournament lunch-times without the tabloids (and my mother!) getting hold of the story. What should I do?

Yours confidentially, Princess Chri

From Mr Matthew Evans to Dr Patrick Barrie on 1st November

While we all enjoyed the weekend, it did not end as well as it could have done; After being jump started by the AA, we stalled outside the station (in the middle of the road). I had to get out and push the car to a side street, where we had several pushing/jump starting attempts, until we decided to give up and beg Kilian to let us stay another night. Luckily, he was exceedingly nice (in the Mr. Kipling fashion) and didn't mind in the slightest, and the next morning (after a quick game of winks) we left and pushed the car to a nearby garage where they successfully jump started us, and aside from a slight temperature problem and severe side winds all the way home, we survived.

Anyway, we did find that the game is much more tactical than we thought, and we will now be spending a lot of time on tactics (and of course, practising the correct way to pot). Unfortunately, I expect it will be some time 'till we reach any sort of decent standards.

We hope to hold a Truro open some time; we spent some time discussing it at Kilian's and on the way home. It should theoretically be possible to be held at

any weekend during term time, or at any time at all during holidays; however., this is at the main site, and ideally we would like to use the building actually in Truro (Haven House) which is adjacent to a pub cunningly called 'The Real Ale House', which I expect bodes well with all the ale-drinking winkers. There are also some other good pubs nearby; at the college, there is only one pub within reasonable walking distance, at threemilestone; also, it is further from the station. I hope if we manage to get either building, we can transform the available space into a sleeping area (assuming no-one minds sleeping on the floor). If you can give me a date which would be ideal, I'll see what I can do.

That's about it, I'm just going on the 'net to look at the winks pages,
Matthew Evans.

From Mr Theodore Reprocessing of Stockport, to the Editor on 31st March

Dear Editor,

It is true that ETWA council are considering a series of "parallel" tournaments for non-smelly non-farting hygienic winkers? May I suggest that a minimum standard of dentition be added to the list of criteria? If there are to be such tournaments, then how does one gain entry — is there to be a formal forensic test? Would I pass?

I remain Sir, your faithful and humble servant,
T. Reprocessing, Stockport, Sussex.

A genuine letter from a recent edition of Business Traveller magazine

I was recently travelling in economy class (Lufthansa) from Frankfurt to Madrid and, while I was reading Business Traveller, I was constantly disturbed by two boys of about seven or eight years old who were seated just behind me and enjoyed hitting the back of my seat.

I asked them several times to keep quiet and stop this naughty game, but they didn't. The only thing they did do was to call their father who — surprise, surprise — was travelling first class.

He came down to my place and very angrily asked me: "What is wrong with the boys?" I answered: "What is wrong with the boys is that you should be seated here in my place educating your boys and taking care of them."

He looked very surprised and then said: "OK. Let's change."

So I went to his seat in first class, enjoyed the rest of my trip very much — and now I am having an affair with his wife and we are madly in love!

G Toquica, Bogota, Colombia

Generalised “cut out ’n’ keep” Congratulations

Congratulations to all winkers who have recently become engaged, married, had children, been promoted to Prime Minister, been promoted to any other ministerial post, received an honorific of note, received a master’s degree, received a bachelor’s degree (at least II^{II} from Cambridge or Oxford or TCD, 1st Class from anywhere else), received some lesser degree, or passed any examination other than Diploma in Computer Science which can be acquired for tuppence ha’penny from the back of Private Eye.

Charles Relle *reminisces about*

Irreversible Movement: My Start In Winks

It was at school: a term or two before I left, the Classics group were challenged by the Geographers. We did not know any rules; we just tried to pot turn by turn. Maybe I practised more than most: at any rate I became a proficient potter. In fact I was one of the best: that sounds and probably is boastful, but even now I am pleased that at a school where you gained prestige by being good at games like Rugby, Cricket, Boxing and Rowing, there was something at which I could outperform athletic people.

I never expected to play Tiddlywinks at Cambridge. The University Bridge and Tiddlywinks clubs both met on Thursday evenings, and Bridge was my first love, and a friend from school and I hoped to play together at Cambridge, so I did not consider Winks. But it was not to be; my friend could not make Thursdays, and so, after being let down by someone else one Thursday, I sought out the Tiddlywinks Club. I knew from the Societies Fair that it met in the Lloyd Room, Christ’s. Nervously I opened the door, and there people were playing. It was easy to join in, someone invited you to a game, and you played. There were no internal tournaments at all. I was asked: “Are you a potter or a squopper?” Not knowing what a squopper was, I replied: “A potter.”

This was 1960, and the distinction between potter and squopper existed because double-squop strategy, in which both partners bring in their winks a view to squopping the opponents, had been invented only the year before, in Oxford. It was disputed whether it was a legitimate strategy at all. In Cambridge one player was the potter and the other the squopper, and strategy and tactics were based on that assumption. However, during the academic year 1960-1961, double squop took hold, especially as Oxford, using double squop, beat Cambridge in the Varsity match of 1961. It was perceived as the way forward to beat the better potters Cambridge had at the time.

At club meetings, there was no time limit, and all games were played to a finish. There was no point transfer after a potout, for all games ended that way. What were tactics like? Mostly, since one partner was going for the pot, they were very simple: the squopper tried to hold up the opposing potter, and, given

the chance, to squop one or two winks of the opposing squopper. Towards the end, if the opponents were outpotting you, both partners might try to squop the last wink or two of the enemy potter, and then turn the game round. As squopping became more prevalent, ways of gaining and keeping control, while still looking for an eventual potout, were devised. Potting some of the opponents' winks was sometimes tried. Sometimes a situation developed in which the opponents had potted more of your winks than you had yourself. It occasionally happened that each colour was down to about three winks, and play had to be very accurate, because it was all too easy to let one colour become all free and be potted out.

In the year 1960-1961, the time limit, already provided for in the rules, began to be introduced more generally. The Varsity match of 1961 was played to a 35 minute time limit. The refinement of having an extra five rounds at the end came in much later. The whole notion of a regular time limit for matches came in after a match between Oxford and Bristol had to be abandoned with three games unplayed because the hire of the hall where it was being staged ran out. It was perceived that double squop games could go on for ever.

Double squop was a contentious matter all through the 1960-1961 season. Letters passed to and fro between Oxford and Cambridge discussing the matter. Cambridge were against double squop, Oxford were for it: it was their brainchild, and perceived, rightly as it turned out, as the only way of beating Cambridge. It brought into focus the desquop rule. This was very loosely defined. Cambridge maintained that in a pile you could play an uncovered wink and then all the winks in the pile: the so-called xylophone shot, in which you potted the last in a whole string of winks, was known and occasionally played. Oxford asserted that you could play only the top wink in the pile. There was plainly a wide divergence of view here, based on the Cambridge preference for an open game, and the Oxford tendency to double squop. Matters were uneasy until Geoff Wilsher, of Cambridge, suggested the present desquop rule. This was played in the Varsity match of 1961, but not entirely accepted by other Universities. London were especially unscrupulous in this and other situations.

The rules had been fixed by a congress in 1958, and the next congress was in 1963. The rules were very simple, and inevitably new situations arose in the interval, and had to be resolved by agreement between teams playing matches.

With double squop in its infancy, colour order tactics did not feature much, though it was already recognised that it was best to squop the colour following you. Even in a pot-squop game, it was not always decided at the start who was the potter, though, as I have indicated, some people were recognised as potters and others as squoppers. In those days also, there was no fixed partnership of colours; any colour could partner any other. In a match one team sometimes played the same colours throughout. It was generally believed that Oxford did not like to play blue. Blue winks were of a very light shade, quite near to a light green, and some people thought they behaved differently from other winks. Again, anyone who remembers playing with the old winks will know

that they were slightly concave on one side and convex on the other, and for this reason you were allowed to turn free winks over.

When I walked into the Lloyd Room at Christ's, I found people playing winks on the floor. This was no surprise, and was more common than not until the mid-sixties, though elsewhere than Cambridge, tables were sometimes used. Mats were made of needleloom, a heavy, pileless material supplied by a firm called Peter Shepherd in Reading. They had a rubberised backing, and were slightly less springy than the present mats. They were also, because of their weight, hard to carry about. To balance one on your bicycle handlebars was not too hard, but two was tricky. During 1961, this firm ceased to make needleloom mats, so we cast about for a new material, and felt mats were introduced. They were white on one side and grey on the other, and were supplied by a firm called Naish in Salisbury. Their price was £1 10s. or £1.50. Their introduction accelerated the move towards tables, as they were much lighter than needleloom mats, and could be unstable on the floor.

During 1960 - 1961, we might at the end of a meeting go to a member's rooms for coffee, but hardly ever to a pub. Possibly this was because they closed at ten o'clock. There were no College bars. With that thought I leave you.

Simon Gandy *provides* A Surprising Piece of Trivia _____

The US Standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number. Why was that gauge used? Because that's the way they built them in England, and the US railroads were built by English expatriates. Why did the English people build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used.

Why did "they" use that gauge then? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing. Okay! Why did the wagons use that odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing the wagons would break on some of the old, long distance roads, because that's the spacing of the old wheel ruts.

So who built these old rutted roads? The first long distance roads in Europe were built by Imperial Rome for the benefit of their legions. The roads have been used ever since. And the ruts? The initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagons, were first made by Roman war chariots. Since the chariots were made for or by Imperial Rome they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing.

Thus, we have the answer to the original questions. The United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet 8.5 inches derives from the original specification for an Imperial Roman army war chariot. Specifications and Bureaucracies live forever. So, the next time you are handed a specification and wonder what

horse's arse came up with it, you may be exactly right. Because the Imperial Roman chariots were made to be just wide enough to accommodate the back-ends of two war horses.

Zzzzz: Rules Proposals from Patrick Barrie _____
on behalf of The Rules Subcommittee _____

Discussion has led to the following rules proposals. One is a correction of the current rules, while the others are simple rewordings designed to remove ambiguities and make the rules easier to understand by beginners. There are still a number of parts of the rules recognised as not being ideal. We hope to make recommendations regarding these on a future occasion. The following proposals will be debated at the rules meeting on Saturday 26th April.

- Rule 3: rewording of last sentence Change “but in no circumstances may the pot be moved” to “but whatever action is taken the pot should remain at the centre of the mat”. This is so as not to contradict rule 7(b) which allows the pot to be moved (albeit accidentally).
- Rule 5(c): clarification and rewording Following on from last year's complications over what constitutes the “field of play”, we wish to state explicitly that winks in the pot can't be played. Minor rewording of the rest of the rule gives:

“In each turn a player squidges once in sequence, with an additional squidge for each wink of the correct colour potted in that turn. Winks coming to rest inside the pot are called “potted winks”. Potted winks may not subsequently be played. Any wink coming to rest on the top rim of the pot is treated as a potted wink and is immediately moved to a position inside the pot. If a potted wink is knocked out of the pot by another wink it is immediately replaced inside the pot; any winks disturbed by it are restored to their original positions. Moving potted winks back into the pot to comply with this rule does not constitute a shot.”
- Rule 7(a): correction/rewording Pedantic reading of the current rule on placement of winks that are sent off the mat reveals that winks should be placed where they went off, and that it is the winks on the mat that didn't go off which should be moved to satisfy the 10 cm distance requirement. This is obviously contradictory to past and current practice. Proposed rewording:

“If in any turn a player plays a shot which causes one or more winks of his correct colour to leave the field of play (i.e. any part of the wink to cross the boundary) the next shot due to be played with that colour is forfeited. Any wink crossing the boundary is immediately replaced on the field of play 22 mm (a large wink's width) from the boundary. The wink should be placed as near as possible to the point at which it crossed the boundary, but should not

be placed closer than 10 cm to any other wink (nor closer than 10 cm to any baseline with unplayed winks behind it).”

- Rule 8: for ease of comprehension Add to the end of the rule: “At the end of the game following a pot-out, the score is then calculated according to Rule 10(a).”
- Rule 9(a): clarification of first sentence and rewording for simplicity “The time limit of a game is calculated from the first shot played after the squidge-off and shall be 25 minutes for pairs games and 20 minutes for singles games. The time limit may be modified by the tournament organiser or by any agreement between the players before the start of the game. The time limit may be extended if the umpire considers time has been deliberately wasted.”
- Rule 9(a): clarification of last part Add before the last sentence: “Similarly, time taken to correct the outcome of a foul shot is not counted as part of the game (see Rule 12).”
- Rule 9(b): clarification This rule needs a reference to rule 8 (potting out), rule 11(e) (time elapsing during free turns), and also to 11(d) (possibility of a shot in round 6). Our simplest proposal is to add the following after the first sentence: “The only exceptions to this are the special cases detailed in rule 8, at the end of Rule 11(d) and in Rule 11(e).” Other rewordings can get messy.
- Rule 9(b): for ease of comprehension Add to the end of the rule: “Once the game is ended, the score is then calculated according to Rule 10(b).”
- Rule 12(a): rewording Delete “or 11” from the first sentence, as failure to free ceased to be a foul shot some 5+ years ago.