

BALLS

DRIFFIELD AND NOLAN AGREE.. SNOOKER SCENE, JUNE 1973

A LESLIE DRIFFIELD *East Hardwick* I was glad to read your comments about **SUPER "C"**. Most players i have met have complained about their **ERRATIC BEHAVIOUR**, and my own experience is that they are **COMPLETELY INCONSISTENT**, and liable to do the **ODDEST THINGS UNEXPECTEDLY**, causing one to break down when in perfect position. I have come to the conclusion that it is mainly because they gradually build up a charge of static electricity (not present in the old balls), which suddenly discharges on contact, causing a **variety of odd angles to be thrown**. This can easily be tested by rubbing on a piece of billiards cloth, when even a small piece of paper can be picked up, and adhere to the ball. **ALF NOLAN** *Newcastle* During my Billiards playing days i have extolled the virtues of **CRYSTALATE** balls, a first-class product, the quality of which was beyond dispute. The so-called "**SUPER**" ball is not of the previous high quality and in simple terms is **RUBBISH**, compared with the balls used in the English Championship and the CIU Championship of 1972 and the post-war years. My views are specific on Billiards and have nothing whatsoever to do with Snooker. I trust that Billiards players will be able to look forward to the continued quality ball and not be inflicted with **THIS SUPER GLOSS RUBBISH**.

CRYSTALATE ADVERTISEMENT .BILLIARDS & SNOOKER, SEPT 1968

Leslie Driffield's two great breaks of 1,013, made on December 24th, 1964, and 1,014, made on May 10th, 1966, at Smith and Nelson's Room, Leeds, were compiled with Crystalate balls.

SUPER CRYSTALATE BREAK OF THE MONTH SNOOKER SCENE MARCH 1973

How many amateur (or professionals for that matter) are capable of a run of 55 nursery cannons in match play?? Very few indeed but one survivor from this small but select breed is the winner of our March Break of the Month competition. He is **GEZA GAZDAG** (Lilycroft WMC) who had a run of 55 nursery cannons on the top-cushion in an unfinished break of 120 in a South Bradford League match against Alf Muzurke (Horton Grange WMC). Gazdag won the match 150-20. He receives the set of Super Crystalate balls which, each month, is presented to the player making the highest Billiards break either in a match or a friendly provided there are two independent witnesses.

B&SCC GIVE ARAMITH COLD SHOULDER CLIVE EVERTON, SNOOKER SCENE, MARCH 1975

ARAMITH, the Belgian made ball, has been refused the official approval of the Billiards & Snooker Control Council..... I was told that the Council saw no reason to change from **SUPERS** but we weren't suggesting that **ARAMITH** should be a replacement -- only an alternative (John Lazarus, Sales Manager of Mister Billiards).....Thus, the privileged position of the **COMPOSITION BILLIARD BALL SUPPLY CO** is preserved since the use of either the old Crystalate (not manufactured since 1973) or Super Crystalate is specified for most major events.Composition claim that Supers are superior to Aramith in sphericity (roundness), matching weights & sizes & consistency of colour because their manufacturing tolerance of Supers is finer. Aramith dispute this.

NEWCASTLE EVENING WORLD WALTER LINDRUM 10 APRIL 1930

..... One fault i have to find with professional billiards in this country. The balls are not changed often enough. It must be remembered that a **new set of balls means quicker scoring**, & quicker scoring means a quickened interest in the game.....

ENGLISH AMATEUR BILLIARDS CHAMPIONSHIP

BILL EADY VS MARK WILDMAN
ROSS PORTER, SNOOKER SCENE, MARCH 1975

..... Wildman..... after being left with perfect spot-stroke position & the object white 2" below the spotcommented"Thank you, this is my favourite".....but broke down at 75 getting a **nasty kick** when potting the red off its spot..... Both players had experienced **several vicious kicks** which each time caused loss of position or a miss, & unless this annoying fault with certain sets of **balls**, types of chalk & grades of cloth can be eradicated **it is difficult to foresee a return of the huge breaks, averages & aggregates recorded between the 1930's & 1960's.**

A CLARE VIEW OF THE SITUATION SNOOKER SCENE APRIL 1975
NORMAN CLARE, EA CLARE & SON, LIVERPOOL

I have just finished reading your editorial in the March issue & find myself absolutely amazed at the implied suggestion that it is the duty of the B&SCC to approve any of the equipment used in the playing of Billiards or Snooker, or any of the kindred games. Quite frankly, although in general i support the B&SCC, i do not think they have any authority at all to approve or reject any items of equipment which we, or other manufacturers, provide. Quite clearly, we do all need a governing body whose duty it must be to generally administer the game, & on behalf of all interested Billiards and Snooker players to look after the rules. Within these rules i would accept that it is their duty to specify in a broad manner such things as the measurements of the billiard table itself, the size of the balls, what is, or is not, a billiard cue, but always the specifications should be broad enough to allow for experimentation, ie the introduction of new materials, etc. For example, i do not think they should have the right to say that only ivory balls are approved, otherwise composition could never have been introduced. Likewise, it would be wrong to specify that the cloth should be a certain colour or a certain weight or a certain quality or made from a certain material, otherwise years ago all the cotton Janus cloth could not have been introduced..... I would submit to you that the players themselves, in other words the public, should be given complete freedom of choice, so far as the design - quality etc of the equipment is concerned. I am sure you could rely upon the players themselves by a process of trial & error to select whichever goods they think are the best..... Clearly, the promoter concerned must be at liberty to select whichever equipment is thought to be best at the time.....I would conclude by suggesting that the limit which should be allowed to the B&SCC in matters of this sort is simply to say that the equipment concerned complies with the rules..... I therefore think that the criticisms expressed in your March editorial are unjustified & that the suggestions you have made would in fact confer a Monopoly power which could develop in a most dangerous manner, the very situation you indicate you wish to avoid!!

Editor. We agree with so many of the points that Norman Clare makes that we cannot see why he should adopt such a hostile tone to our March editorial..... Where we differ is over the B&SCC stipulation that either of two dissimilar balls, Crystalate & Super Crystalate, may be used in the English Amateur Snooker Championship but that Aramith, which is similar to Super Crystalate in its playing qualities, may not be used. If the B&SCC had reached this conclusion by a series of exhaustive tests we could have more sympathy with their position but a set of Aramith were in fact sent to the B&SCC over 12 months ago & have still not received an official test..... A club buying a set of Snooker balls will not buy a set of Aramith if their use is not permitted in any B&SCC controlled event for they would also have to buy a set of Supers if they wished to stage a match in an official championship.....

BROWNING VERSION SNOOKER SCENE APRIL 1975
DOUGLAS BROWNING, RILEY BURWAT.

..... The function of a world governing body is to administer its game, frame the rules of play, & lay down certain specifications within which certain equipment shall fall. If the equipment does fall into that specification it must be acceptable. The present rule on the ball specifies size only & perhaps it would be better rule if it also laid down density or weight, but it does not. If the B&SCC was asked to give a seal of approval it was right in refusing to do so, but i believe it would not declare the ball to be illegal because it did not conform to the rules....When we -- & i know that the same applies to our competitors -- supply a table we make sure that it complies with the rules in so far as they apply to tables, but we should resist strongly any rule which said we must use the rubber, cloth, slate, etc of any particular manufacturer.

Editor..... Again, we agree with all the points.... Aramith are upset because the B&SCC stipulate, without so much as testing the Aramith ball, that all Championship matches under their jurisdiction are played with balls manufactured by another company.....

A MATTER OF SOME GRAVITY SNOOKER SCENE, DEC 1975

The October Snooker Scene gave a report on the "experiment and tournament" recently held in Wales, using the Belgian Aramith Ball, and comparisons were made between the performance of Aramith and Super Crystalate balls. The principal difference in specification between the two makes of ball is that **Aramith balls** have a **specific gravity** of approximately **1.7** and that of the **Super Crystalate is 1.875**, the same as the old **Crystalate**. This means that with two balls of exactly the same size the Super Crystalate is heavier, and this would account for both the easier "run-through" and the more difficult "hold at long range" attributed to the Aramith. If one wishes to make comparisons on these points of performance, then the **ARAMITH** should be compared to the **"VITALITE" ball** which has the same specific gravity as the Belgian ball..... Incidentally, if one is comparing prices, i understand that the Vitalite ball which we market under the name **"RILATE"** has a recommended retail price considerably lower than other balls of similar specification..... **D C K Browning, Riley Burwat Limited.**

UNFAIR TO SUPERS SNOOKER SCENE, FEB 1980

Jim Williamson, Northern Snooker Centre, Leeds. Regarding your article on **Super Crystalate** balls i would like to say that, in fairness, throughout the whole of the United Kingdom Professional Billiards Championship last year i did not get one complaint about the balls. Also, i think that most thinking people agree that the recovery of the professional game is vital for the future of Billiards as a whole. This recovery was started with the UK Professional Championship, yet it could never have got off the ground without the sponsorship of Super Crystalate. This year they have increased their support to 3,000 pounds with 4,000 next year. Of course no balls or conditions can ever be perfect for every player. However, i do know that Super Crystalate are continually developing their product. **At this time they have a new billiard ball of a denser nature on test.**

Editor.....Our report on the 1979 UK Professional Billiards Championship stated that "the Super Crystalate balls used ... were on their best behaviour. There were no more than **a handful of kicks** ... and the **angle of throw** was consistent and predictable." **The trouble is, as other reports have made clear, that the balls do not always behave in this admirable manner.** We acknowledged at the time that Composition's sponsorship of 2,000 pounds was "probably the most valuable contribution they have ever made to the game for without it the event would never have got off the ground." In these terms, we would place it above even their 5,000 pound sponsorship for the inaugural UK Professional Snooker Championship in 1977.....Even if their sponsorship had been 20,000, though, we would still feel free, in the widest interests of the game, to criticise their products if such criticism seemed appropriate..... If it is true that Super Crystalate have a new ball of a **denser nature** on test, we would like to know the extent and nature of such tests and to have their assurance that balls whose playing characteristics are in

any way different to those which already pertain will not be offered for sale without due notice. Without such an assurance, players can find that the certainties of angle on which their games are founded are altered overnight.

FURTHER THOUGHTS SNOOKER SCENE FEB 1980

MARKHAM WILDMAN, Peterborough. I wish to refer to the article in the December issue concerning the **Super Crystalate** and **Aramith** balls and in particular to the signed petition Whilst in agreement with you that improvement of any product should always be strived for, i personally am not disquieted over Super Crystalate balls any more than i am with Aramith..... The signatures appended to the petition were an endorsement that the introduction of a new product had been implemented with satisfaction on that day, this being not an unreasonable line to adopt with any new sponsor if results were satisfactory, which by and large they were..... However, it must be emphasised that half the signatories had played with Aramith balls only on that day and in some cases their games had lasted little more than **thirty minutes**, which is not basis for sound judgement. It is, though, an indication that further experience with them is probably called for..... From my own point of view **further trials have not obviated the kicks** which i experience with the ordinary Super Crystalate. Aramith tend to have a more pronounced 'run through' characteristic than any other ball i had played with, including the old Crystalate and Bonzelines, until a week ago i experienced for the first time the matchplay Super Crystalates. I then found that their run through effect was at least as pronounced as Aramith's.

Mark Wildman signed the petition voluntarily and presumably held the views stated in it when he signed. (Editor).

KICKS GEZA GAZDAG THE ACCOMPLISHED CUEMAN 1991

In May 1973 I won the Break of the Month prize, a set of newly issued Super Crystalate balls, with a measly 65 cannons break. The first thing i noticed was that on collision they emitted a high pitched sound, like some castrated eunuchs. Then after a few hours play they began to develop yellow fever in the form of yellow spots, burn marks, which nothing could remove. However, they did not kick. As their condition went from bad to worse i have thrown them away. When the guessing started about the causes of the kick i wished i hadn't. The next batch of Supers did not get yellow spots, but the kicking started. As this puzzled me i cut some old Crystalates & Supers in half & the difference was revealed, the old Crystalates, the main ingredients of which was bone swarf from the button industry (pre-plastic times), were homogeneous throughout, but the Supers, made of phenolic resin, were not. My guess is that the first Supers were also homogeneous, but as they were getting burn marks something had to be done. So, they baked about a 1 mm thick hard layer on the balls.....

MAC'S COMMENTS --- further to Geza's, but almost unrelated.

Whereaz Crystalates were supposedly made of **celluloid & bone**, & Aramith of **phenolic resin**, Super Crystalates were supposedly made of **polyester**. But i don't trust anything. **Bakelite**, a formaldehyde resin, was the first man-made plastic, invented in **1907**, & i hav always suspected that **all ballz** were soon made of this material, no matter what u hear. And that calling something phenolic resin was just chemical elitizm or discrimination & should be outlawed.

Anyhow, let's see what my copy of **Principles of Organic Chemistry**
by J English & H Cassidy, Yale, 1965, sez

Yep, it looks like i woz on the right track. Most of these chemical names have been invented by Sales Managers. It appears to me that a **Polyester** iz simply a polymer of an **Ester**, & an Ester iz something that haz been made by **Esterification**, & **Cellulose** can be esterified. Back to the future! An ester is a compound in which the ionizable H of an acid has been replaced by an aromatic or aliphatic group. Alcohols react with many acids to form esters. Ok! And it appears to me that

Phenol iz a form of **alcohol** which can be obtained by decomposing an **ester**. Forward to the past! And an **ester** can be obtained from a **phenol** izing an acid. Something iz starting to stink real bad! And it appears to me that **Bakelite** iz made by the interaction of **Phenol** & Formaldehyde. And it appears to me that the word **Resin** iz almost meaningless, that it iz one form of plastic, & that in fact nitrates of cellulose, ie **Celluloid**, belong in the Resin family. I think we passed this spot earlier. We must be going round in circles!

When Walter Lindrum made hiz 4137 & hiz 3905 he was izing Crystalate balls (proibly **cellulose** & bone), on a Janus cotton cloth (almost 100% **cellulose**), izing a modified Alcock cue (**cellulose** plus lignin). Here's an idea. I think that the rules of Billiards should specify some form of **cellulose** for everything but the slate.

CELLULOID

Carbohydrates (CH₂O)_n are usually divided into three categorys, Monosaccharides, Disaccharides, & Polysaccharides..... the three best known polysaccharides are cellulose (C₄H₁₁O₅)_n, starch & glycogen..... Cellulose is an important structural material in the plant kingdom. The cell walls of plants are made up in large part of cellulose, cotton is almost pure cellulose, & wood, while it contains lignin (which is not a carbohydrate), contains much cellulose..... partial hydrolysis yields cellobiose from cellulose, & maltose from starch & glycogen.... both cellobiose & maltose yield D-glucose on complete hydrolysis.... one can deduce a chain length for cellulose of 100 to 200 glucose units..... but the ultracentrifuge method of analysis gives.... results of the order of 2000 glucose units.... Cellulose is made up of linear molecules but is insoluble & fibre-like... the chains appear to lie side by side, bound in bundles of ten... & orientated parallel to the axis of the cellulose fibre. These chains are bound by hydrogen bridges, it is thought, & this cross-linking accounts for the insolubility & toughness of the cellulose. The esters & ethers of cellulose... can be dissolved & precipitated... as a film...or a thread... Nitrates etc of cellulose... find commercial application under names such as Celluloid (nitrate) etc....

BONE

Nitrates can be explosive. The plastic ized in a ball iz important, but perhaps the filler iz more important, the filler will hav special propertys, chiefly that it iz cheaper. I think Mr Composition Ball Co ized bone in an effort to duplicate the ivory angle. But it didn't work. But it woz their Vitalite ball that they crowed about, that supposedly had the ivory angle. Did this hav more bone? I know my Bonzoline & Crystalates hav the same angle, nearnuff to the same az Aramith & Super Crystalate i think. Are Bonzoline & Crystalate identical. Could be. But my Bonzoline had lots of aging blotches when i gottem, not so the Crystalates. Theze blotches soon wore off with play. But, koz of the blotches, i woz tempted to say that it woz the Bonzoline that had the bone.

ADVERTSNOOKER SCENE, FEBRUARY 1980

The new ARAMITH PRO The true performer. The finest snooker ball chosen by the world's leading professionals. each & every set matched for championship accuracy. ADAM -- fine billiard products -- intended for the serious player. Make Aramith Pro the new breakthrough in your game.

FRED DAVIS I have found all the qualities needed to give the best breaks in snooker in the Aramith ball. I intend to play with Aramith on all possible occasions. **TERRY GRIFFITHS** I find that the Aramith Pro snooker ball plays perfectly under all conditions. **JOHN SPENCER** Given the choice i will play with the Aramith Pro snooker ball in preference to any other. **ALEX HIGGENS** I find the new Aramith Pro ball very pleasing to play with.

GRAHAM MILES The Aramith balls make playing a pleasure. **PATSY FAGAN** I have used the Aramith balls in practice & exhibitions & i believe they will make an excellent tournament ball. **CLIFF THORBURN** I find Aramith balls to be top quality in every way. **The throw in the cue ball is astoundingly accurate.** **PIERRE MANS** I found these balls to be true & reliable in every respect & **have had no kicks.** **DOUG MOUNTJOY** The Aramith is

the ball of the future. It plays well, **doesn't kick**, acts as a true ball should. Truly superior. **KIRK STEVENS** When making a break the continuous flow of the balls is most important. By **allowing no kicks** Aramith makes this possible. **DENNIS TAYLOR** I have found that these balls play as well as any that i have used. **STEVE DAVIS** After using Aramith snooker balls i am very pleased with their performance & i

would not hesitate in recommending them to other players. **JIM MEADOWCROFT** The Aramith snooker ball is, i feel, very positive & will react & play to the highest standards. **John Virgo** Aramith balls are another step forward for snooker. **EDDIE CHARLTON** Having thoroughly tested the Aramith Pro snooker ball, i have found it to be first class in every respect.

**FALSE BILLIARDS H STEVENSON
ALCOCK'S SPORTING REVIEW NOV 1912**

*One summer, on the west coast of Ireland, another man & i were overtaken by a storm, & had to go into a tavern for shelter. The rain fell steadily. We had 3 or 4 long hours before us. Time began to hang heavily on our hands. **Landlord**, said i. **Do you happen to have a billiard table? Sure, just step this way.** He proudly threw open the door of a dark, stuffy room. We saw an antiquated table with a patched cloth, & in the corner was a rack of crooked cues. **Any balls?** said i. **Sure** said the landlord, & he unlocked a closet & set on the table 3 white balls, all alike -- there was no spot, you know. **But, see here.** I remonstrated, **how do you tell these balls apart? Oh, that's all right** said he. **You soon get to know'em by their shape.***

ADVERT SNOOKER SCENE, MARCH 1973

**THE SUPER CRYSTALATE BILLIARDS & SNOOKER BALL
THE CHAMPIONS' CHOICE**

What the leading players say:

Joe Davis I find them excellent in every way the highest standards of play will result from use of Super Crystalate. **Rex Williams** Playing qualities are superior to anything i have used previously.... another step forward for billiards & snooker. **Fred Davis** An outstanding improvement... the advantage will show in a very short time.

From your Dealer now

The new Super Crystalate ball has been developed after years of research. It embodies

all the superb qualities of Crystalate PLUS a hard finish, giving extra durability, & new, brighter colours.

- Retains the same playing angles as Crystalate.
- Approved by the B&SCC for Championship Play.
- 100 per cent British Made by Expert Craftsman.
- Obtainable from all table manufacturers & leading sports dealers.

**CLIMBING UP THE BALL WALTER HARRAP, OSSETT
SNOOKER SCENE AUG 1979**

A great deal of controversy has ranged round the subject of how balls bounce. The old Crystalate ball weighed approximately 148 gm whereas the new ball weighs 144 gm. The material composition used in the manufacture of the two types of ball is quite different but the new ball is more homogeneous & probably more accurate in its running. The difference in weight is not responsible solely for the bounce. One must understand that spin, especially backspin, is fiercer in the present game of Snooker & that a fiercely backspinning ball, travelling with its leading edge upwards from the bed of the table, tends to lift & climb up the periphery of a ball at rest on the table bed. This will account for the erratic behaviour of the cueball. Again, if the spot on which the ball is placed is resting on a thick nap (eg on a new cloth) then the ball is held slightly longer on contact. Also, the object-ball could have its horizontal diameter fractionally above that of the cueball & under these

conditions could quite easily be lifted off the bed of the table. The normal topspin employed in Billiards tends to keep the ball on the table as the leading edge of the ball is spinning into the table bed. The extra weight (4 gm) difference between the old Crystalates & the new Super Crystalate would have only a slight effect on keeping the ball on the table. (**MAC'S COMMENTS** I don't know where to start).

ADVERT THE BILLIARD PLAYER OCT 1940

Crystalate Balls hold all the World's Records

Used exclusively by **JOE DAVIS**

Billiards

CRYSTALATE 1784

World's Record Championship Break
made by Joe Davis in the UK
Professional Championship Final, 1936

English Amateur Championship 1938 **549**
Record break made by Kingsley
Kennerley in the Final.

Crystalate is the Standard Ball used in all
BA&CC Amateur & Professional Events.

Selected for the Great NEWS OF THE
WORLD Amateur Billiard & Snooker
Tournaments.

Snooker

CRYSTALATE 138

**World's Record Snooker Break made
By Joe Davis. DAILY MAIL Gold Cup**
JOE DAVIS says. *I am delighted to have
created this new record, especially so
soon after my last, & i now wonder, as i
did before, whether this new figure will
ever be beaten. Of one thing i am
certain, it will only be beaten, or reached,
if at all, under the most perfect conditions
in every respect -- table, cushions,
lighting, sympathetic audience, &, of
course, the best balls obtainable. I again
used Crystalates for this latest record &
cannot speak too highly of their accuracy
& reliability.*

CRYSTALATE BALLS

BRITISH MADE AND BEST

SOLD BY ALL THE LEADING BILLIARDS AND
SNOOKER HOUSES THROUGHOUT THE EMPIRE

Important Announcement

RESONITE

Snooker Ball

The New Synthetic Resin Ball

Guaranteed 100% British
Manufactured throughout all processes
by the makers of the well-known

**BONZOLINE, CRYSTALATE
& VITALITE BILLIARD
& SNOOKER BALLS**

May be obtained from your usual supplier.

MAC'S COMMENTS Earlier, the Vitalite woz advertized az being specially for snooker. Some sed that the Vitalite woz lighter than Crystalate & Bonzoline. In early days, the Vitalite woz advertized az having the ivory angle.

**REFINED BILLIARDS TOM CLEARY
MELBOURNE SNOOKER SCENE AUGUST 1979**

Having recently witnessed the final of the Pennant Billiards, the top competition in Victoria, between the University and Geelong Clubs, i was appalled to see the poor standard displayed. Of the twelve participants no one had any knowledge of refined Billiards whatsoever. In years gone by, each player who participated in this final would have been able to make a break of 100 or more. But today, all the players want to do is play hazards (ie in-offs and pots) without thinking of their next shot. I saw one competitor (who has been playing for years) deal with a position in which the balls were six inches apart, in a playable position. All he should have done was caress them to leave them in an easy position for a scoring shot to follow. Instead, he gave them an almighty crack and they spread from one end of the table to the other -- end of break.

No player can achieve any measure of competence unless he realises that break-building comes only from correct cueing technique and in treating the balls in a gentle, caressing manner wherever possible. Avoidance of launching a continuous assault and battery is essential. The balls will then only respond by detesting the player who treats them so and will passively resist all punishment, thus ensuring complete failure, cursing and exasperation, not to mention complete lack of enjoyment from this supremely artistic game. Most players of today want to learn top-of-the-table

play but, alas, they are on the wrong track. They should make breaks of 100 or more before attempting to master top-of-the-table.

I support the move to return to the two pot rule. Most big breaks in recent years have been compiled not with true top-of-the-table but through potting the red in sequences with some top-of-the-table play. The key to top-of-the-table play lies in manoeuvring the cue-ball into the desired position for the red to object-white cannon. With two pots (ie the red being placed on the middle spot after the second pot) the player must at all times be controlling all these balls, a much more demanding mode of play. A return to two pots would probably reduce the size of breaks made by the top players. This in itself might be no bad thing because the bigger the breaks there are the less cut and thrust there tends to be. I venture to say that this top-of-the-table play would take five years to learn thoroughly. Having closely observed all the leading Australia players, very few of them have any idea of top-of-the-table except Jim Long, who has a brilliant Billiards brain but who is unfortunately in poor health.

SUPER CRYSTALATE balls are just beautiful for Snooker, as Snooker mainly consists of screw and stun. The balls are very lively and this is what Snooker is all about. But for Billiards they are a **DISASTER**. They are **SMALLER** and **LIGHTER** and have a tendency to **SLIDE** through and take a different **ANGLE**. The sooner the Billiards authorities think about **REVERTING** back to the old **CRYSTALATE** balls the better it will be for the up and coming player of Billiards.

SUPERBALL WORLD SNOOKER, JANUARY 1972

The Composition Ball Co. is to introduce a new **SUPER CRYSTALATE** ball in the New Year. Jim Cameron, Composition's managing director, told World Snooker: "We've been doing research on the new ball for five years & this year we've got it to a point of **PERFECTION**. The purity of the white was the last obstacle. Now, we're perfectly satisfied. The Super Crystalate will supersede the existing Crystalate although odd balls as replacements in existing Crystalate sets will still be supplied. The **CRYSTALATE** ball has been produced since 1901 to the specifications arrived at by a German scientists in Ludwigshafen. With main ingredients of grated shop celluloid (cellulose nitrate) & crushed cows shinbones, Crystalate has virtually monopolised the British market, not least because the Billiards Association has required it to be used for all major matches & tournaments.

Of Composition's other balls **BONZOLINE**, which is chiefly sold in hot countries, will continue for another two years while **VITALITE**, which is primarily produced in stripes for Pool, particularly for America & Canada, is also exported in Snooker sets to these countries. The ingredients of the new Super Crystalate remain to some extent a trade secret but the company claims that the ball "**IS MUCH MORE DURABLE**". The colours are brighter & leading professionals, including Joe Davis, have expressed enthusiasm for the qualities of the new ball which is "**LIVELIER**" & "**EASIER FOR AMATEURS TO PLAY CERTAIN SHOTS WITH**". The greater liveliness will make screw shots easier & Snooker breaks should be easier to compile. Pure cue power in playing deep screws will be less important & on the whole attacking players should be favoured at the expense of defensive players. **IN BILLIARDS THE NEW BALL'S GREATER LIVELINESS COULD AFFECT SOME OF THE GAME'S BASIC SHOTS LIKE THE LONG IN-OFF BUT IT WOULD BE UNFAIR TO BE DOGMATIC ABOUT THIS UNTIL A FEW MATCHES HAVE BEEN PLAYED WITH IT.** The Super Crystalate will be with the Trade in January & on sale in February. "We are hoping for a very good year", says Cameron. "We think this is an **ABSOLUTE WINNER**". It is an estimate which there seems no reason to doubt.

Regarding the aforementioned **KICKS** & Mini-Kicks, these are particularly bad with the modern Aramith Ball, which unfortunately we all use nowadays (in competition). The varying friction and deviation angle you can get with this (high-polish, light-weight and soft) ball (even when clean) would make the old-time red-ball player puke. And kicks (due to chalk marks) send it into orbit. The old Super Crystalates were just as **BAD**. Bring back the big, old **CRYSTALATE** and **BONZOLINE** balls. These were heavy & big & hard & big & low-polish & big, bewdyfull. They gave a more consistent deviation angle, & kicked less, & touched less. Of course, the best ball ever made was the **BBA MELAMINE BALL**, made in Melbourne in **1972**, it was 150gm, hard as hell, low-polish, threw beautifully consistent deviation angles, and kicked very little. You needed ear-muffs to use em, they sounded like **IVORYS**. Top billiard players nowadays wonder why they can't quite get the magic 1000. Well, the modern ball is shit. That's the simple reason. It makes little difference to snooker (spit) players, but I reckon our billiards leagues should fossick some sets of Crystalates or Bonzelines. Trouble is, the older Crystalates are now often covered in little **CRACKS** (crazing), & I think that the older balls are often out-of-round and have flat-spots coz they have not moved for years. I know that Mr Aramith could make a good billiard ball if he wanted to. He could go back to ordinary **BAKELITE** (instead of modern bakelite) & some hard heavy filler (& no high-crap-gloss-crap surfacing). A set of three modern (puke) balls presently costs say **\$130**, & I reckon that serious billiards players would be prepared to pay \$200 for something decent. If the top players tried BBA's they would pay heaps for something similar. I have bought some **OLDISH** Crystalates and Bonzelines for private play & practice, life is too short to put up with krap, but unfortunately you have to roll out the Krappamyths before a match etc, they are just so different. The consistent and **FRIENDLY** qball Deflexion Angles, and run-thru angles, and red-ball angles, and roll distances, have to be experienced to be believed (Bonzelines). What really blew me away was that screw-backs were so easy and so consistent and accurate. If you asked for 300mm you got it. I couldn't believe it, mainly coz of the stupid stories I had heard, & still repeated by players who wouldn't have a clue. Don't believe that krap about Bonzelines being too heavy, too difficult to screw easily, etc, it's all krap. And Bonzelines are great for nursery. Instead of telling you how nice and friendly they are, it's easy to tell you how crappy the Aramith are. There are two things suffered by **ARAMITH** balls. Firstly, the qball follows thru too much. This may be ok for some shots, but it is usually bad in nursery cannons. What I am talking about is that if you played a stun-shot, the qball would tend to follow on a little. I am not talking about topspin, I am talking about a stun-shot, ie with nil topspin. This effect occurs during all impacts, for all balls (in varying degrees). And in **NURSERY** cannons it tends to mean that the balls always try to stop close to each other. So, when the qball lands softly on the second object-ball, it does not click clear, ie you tend to get touching-balls, or, worse, a cover. Secondly, the very long impact times (due to the softness of Aramiths), the high ball-to-ball friction (due to the surfacing), both conspire to rob the qball of its rotational energy. At first glance, it may seem that this would help to avoid touching-balls, but in fact, for reasons I won't try to explain here, this also leads to a greater risk of touching-balls. What I am talking about here are very low speed impacts, ie softish nursery cannons. So, with Aramiths, you get the feeling that you are playing with sticky, or perhaps magnetic, balls. Get some Bonzelines. Perhaps you might get some satisfaction from an old set of...**VITALITE, DUROLITE, MINERALITE, BAKELITE, RESONITE, MONOID, COMPO-IVORY, IVORYLENE, CANNON BALLS, TITAN, CENTENIAL, EMPIRE, GOLD DIAMOND, TRIANGLE, HYATT, MONARCH** etc.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, BILLIARDS AND SNOOKER
METRIC TOLERANCE NORMAN CLARE COMMENTS JUNE 1970

The old rule specified that the balls should be of equal size & weight with a diameter not less than 2 1/16 inches, or more than 2 3/32 inches.... True this is a large tolerance..... because the balls were usually finished slightly oversize, & thus could stand "trueing up" on one future occasion..... Times are however changing & the "trueing up" service is itself becoming too expensive If there is to be a tolerance ... the tolerance must be stipulated, otherwise somebody will take liberties in order to obtain an advantage..... A player might use undersize balls in order to get them into the pocket openings a little more easily..... going metric, if my suggested size of 52.50 mm is acceptable as so near 2 1/16 inches as makes no matter (it is in fact 0.1125 mm over size) then we could be very accurate by specifying 52.50 mm plus or minus 0.05 mm. But this i fear is too fine a measurement for the average non engineering referee to check! The tolerance for practicable purposes, therefore, might have to be greater.

LARGER BALL JACK NHELL BILLIARDS AND SNOOKER AUG 1965

*Jack Nihell sends us some ideas he has on billiards & snooker. He advocates a larger ball for billiards as, we quote, It would make the game more exciting, by making losing hazards more difficult & winning hazards very exacting. Cannons would be much easier, also screws, etc, the balls would run better, especially the slow shots, it has been a success at Golf & could put Billiards right back on top, imagine a game **WITH 2¼ OR 2½ OZ BALLS!***

LARGER BALL GEZA GAZDAG THE ACCOMPLISHED CUEMAN 1991

*In May 1990 the two billiards made their first contact in the form of a biathalon, consisting of 150 up English billiards & 15 up 3 cushion cannons.....they agreed to use 57 mm (2 ¼") balls (same as in American pool) in English billiards only..... I have been playing English billiards about ten times longer than cannons & i can only say that it was not the size of the ball which bothered me, but their unpredictable behaviour which varies from table to table. Of course, i am not on my own, for i have yet to meet a player born into this game who has never complained about the same thing. Still, about 25 years ago i experimented with 57 mm balls & found that while they made cannons easier (an advantage to me) & the pocket strokes harder (a disadvantage to you), they behaved just as erratically as the smaller balls when they slowed down. The reason for this is that they have a larger surface contact with the nap. Apart from this they tend to jump at higher speeds.....The size of the ball is neither here nor there, although a slight increase, say, **TO 54 MM (2 1/8") WOULD DO NO HARM.***

JP MANNOCK BILLIARDS EXPOUNDED 1904 & 1908

IVORY IS ALIVE, & will expand with heat & contract with cold. A ball freshly cut from the centre of a tusk is soft & decidedly impressionable. A set of such balls will be found to be covered with indentations after they have been played with for a few minutes. The reason is that the surface of the balls is like their interior -- soft & unseasoned. To remedy this, & give them a hard coating, is then plainly what has to be done. The only way is to get your new set of balls above the standard size of 2 1/16 to 2 3/32 inches. Knock them about daily. You will notice them becoming more & more untrue in their running every time you play with them. Then, say after about a couple of months of lusty knocking about, they will, in spite of all their indentations, have gained a hard coating. The balls are now seasoned, & much less subject to climatic changes than when they first came to you. It is now time to send them back to the turner's. They should return a strong, seasoned ball, with at least a good year's wear & tear in them. When they go wrong again, have them re-turned. A set of 2 1/8 inch balls will stand about three turnings before they become too small for use -- that is, less than 2 1/16 inches in

diameter..... A quick means of seasoning a new set of balls is to tap them with a wooden mallet. One may accomplish in a single hour the same results that months of playing with the balls would need. Tap them repeatedly on every part, then take them to the ball-turner's.

IVORY BALLS TOM REECE

Reece, when first struggling with the difficulties of Bonzoline insisted that Ivory Balls would travel further on the table. This was his stumbling block, he said, & it accounted for most of his failures to prolong close cannon sequences. But as Bonzoline is the heavier ball it is they ought to run further, he was reminded. **I don't care what they ought to do, it is what they actually do, & I'll back my judgement that I'm right, whatever mathematics may prove to the contrary.** So the other day an ivory ball (quite a rarity in these days) was secured, & Reece's theory was tested, & apparently it is right. The balls were given a fair start together a large number of times, & **only once did the ivory fail to travel further than the Bonzoline.** The cloth on which the experiment was carried out was a heavy one, & the extra half ounce of weight in the Bonzoline would make it take a deeper track in the nap. Possibly this might be sufficient to pull it up in spite of its greater momentum. Reece, however, makes no distinction as regards fast or slow table. If any reader is able to make the experiment on a fast table i should be interested in hearing the result for these notes.

WILLIE SMITH'S PLATFORM THE BILLIARD PLAYER JULY 1950

This month i am dealing with the long-losers, quite the most spectacular &, at the same time, alluring of all strokes on the Billiards table... when **Ivory Balls** were in universal use it was really difficult, & that because they were often of **different size**, to say nothing at all about **different weights** in the ivory. One could take two sets of Ivory Balls, similar in size, & yet the **angle for the long-loser would vary as much as one inch**, & in cases like this, the long-loser was difficult. In professional games, in the days of Ivory Balls, it was no unusual thing for the player, toiling in the rear, to object to the balls, saying that his ball was running foully, & the Referee had to test the balls for true running. Seeing that Ivory Balls rarely ran truly, it was frequently the case that the balls were changed, with a consequent change of angle of the balls, & then the man, leading, had to adapt himself to the angle of the new balls..... I can recall to my memory how the late **Tom Newman** detested this particular stroke, & not without reason, because he was not at all strong on it. If he played it slowly, he rarely missed making the loser, but if strength had to be used for driving the red-ball round the table there was trouble for Tommy. No one played him more than i did, so i knew all about Tom's strength & weaknesses. I hastily say that i was very pleased he had this little weakness, because he was master of all the strokes on the Billiards table, except this one, & maybe, in a lesser degree, the **powerful screw strokes.** This is evidently accounted for by the exquisite skill & touch he had. A great player, & a great chap..... Of course, the right way in which to play the long-loser is half-ball contact, & if this is done the red-ball will travel round the cushion angles, & will come round the table, arriving quite near to the centre-spot. As a matter of fact, **if the red-ball is hit exactly half-ball it will travel over the centre spot...** if the object-ball be more than one foot above the centre-spot, it is very risky to take the long-loser by the **quick stroke**, trying to send the object-ball round the angles, because one has to strike the object-ball **more thinly than half-ball**, a most difficult stroke indeed. I never liked this stroke, & i am not alone in this respect, most of the other professionals sharing my view. I know this, because they avoid the stroke. Quite the best player at the thin long-loser was **Claude Falkiner**, a really wonderful exhibition player, & no more artistic player ever handled a cue.....

FRED, ON HIS TRIP ETC

"Unfortunately for me the Winter was of exceptional severity, and during the whole of my stay i never felt like playing billiards. Not only were the chilly blasts disconcerting, but the majority of the tables

on which i played were altogether too slow for my style of play. Often and often i sighed for the fast-running cushions that i had been used to in Australia. But it was a vain regret." "Doubtless my friends out here wondered why i discarded red-ball play in most of my games. The only reason i can advance was that, punch the balls as i may, they would not run to the desired position, so i had, perforce, to adopt other methods." "I did not play the red ball as a scoring medium to any great extent, except in my games with Reece and Collins, against whom i made breaks of **584** and **582**. In those games i had fast tables, while most of the other tables were altogether too slow for red-ball play." **INMAN'S** "easy defeat of Reece in the championship was a surprise to the critics -- but, strange to relate, it was mainly brought about by **an extra fast running cloth**, which nullified Tommy's efforts in the sheet-anchor of his system -- **close cannon play**. Reece lost heart before half the game was through, and never afterwards looked like a winner. Billiards is a peculiar game if one's nerve goes." "Yes. I have had a hit with ivory balls, and fancy they will suit my touch better than composition, as they run faster, and as they do not require to be "punched" as hard as the composition to bring them back to the middle pocket range, they do not interfere with one's touch for top-end tactics or close cannon play."

SELECTING BALLS FRED LINDRUM SENIOR

In selecting a set of match Bonzoline balls, many important parts must be studied before a first-class set is secured, although you may drop on a good set at first choice, & to overcome the difficulty quickly, select a set that gives forth a sound (by clicking the balls together) something similar to ivory. That class of composition has much more life in the ball than one with a dead sound, & it is less likely to 'kick'. When i say 'kick' i refer to something well known to billiard players of the first degree. The balls also require to be equally weighted, & of the same size. Let it be understood that two sets of bonzoline balls that are exactly the same weight, not a fraction of a grain between them, may take an entirely different angle to each other. For instance, the set of bonzoline balls that Fred Lindrum junr has in his cue case, & the set that Miss Ruby Roberts & Walter Lindrum played with are exactly the same weight & size. Yet in losing hazard play you would require to spot 2 ¾ inches wider with Miss Roberts' set, that is half-ball & without side used. Again, Fred's set takes an 'ivory' angle, as was tested by one of the leading professional players at Liverpool, England. I first calipered the spot ball (ivory) used in Burroughes and Watts 1000 pound tournament, & found it to be the same size a Fred's set. I then placed the bonzoline on the same spots as the ivories for losing hazard play, & both sets took the same angle. I maintain that the substance (both in ivory & bonzoline) determines the angle which a ball will take as a ball made from the extreme end of an elephant's tusks is far more solid than one made from material nearer the jaw-bone. So it is with the bonzolines, the soft & the solid balls take different angles. Crystalate balls do not seem to vary in weight & size as the bonzoline, & have more life in them. For fine work at top-of-the-table play they are excellent, but not so serviceable for public billiard rooms as the bonzoline balls. As regards the ivory ball, i have the same opinion as most of the English professionals. They are the best, but do not stand the Australian climate. For losing hazards ivory balls are sweet to play with, owing to the natural 'life' & easy delivery needed to bring the red ball round the angles into play for another losing hazard. With the bonzolines much greater force is required.

TOM REECE CANNONS & BIG GUNS 1928

It is beyond doubt that the game is much more difficult with ivories than with composition..... One has to be at least 50% more accurate with the ivories for the simple reason that the point of contact on an ivory ball is a good deal smaller than the head of a pin. The point of contact on a composition is at least twice as large as that on the ivory, & this is simply due to the nature of the material. No artificial ball can be quite so hard as natural ivory. It follows that a trifling miscalculation fatal when playing

with ivories may not be noticed at all with compositions -- the margin-of-error is so much wider. Compositions make the game easier in another way -- they seem to make the table smaller. In actual fact they bring into play a much bigger area owing to the wide angle they take. What is an ordinary half-ball angle with compositions becomes a screw shot or a forcer with ivories. The obvious result of these advantages is that scoring has become easier & the amateur has learned to make bigger breaks since the use of composition balls became general.... I should just add that one thing which handicapped Hooper & other Colonials very severely is that, while a man who has played all his life with ivories can soon adapt his play to the use of compositions, the player who has learned his billiards with Bonzoline or balls of that kind will never play within 33% of his best game with ivory balls. This was proved to me by the ex-professional champion on Australia, Fred Lindrum, one of the greatest natural players i ever saw. He confessed to me that it positively broke his heart to play with ivories..... WA Lovejoy was.... one of the fastest scoring amateurs i ever saw, & the extraordinary thing about him was that he always played with an ordinary ash cue without any butt or splicing & weighing only 11 oz.

GRAY'S VICTORY OVER INMAN ALCOCK'S SPORTING REVIEW AUGUST 14 1911

By his remarkable victory, says Sporting Life, Gray has proved beyond question that as a scoring force he stands alone. His actual play has been a revelation of the perfection to which his special stroke may be brought. His bridge & cue delivery are beyond improvement, &, more-over, has come on to a startling degree as regards the ease & celerity with which he works up positions. The brain is behind the cue all the time. By defeating Inman, Gray has conquered a player who is incomparably the finest exponent of safety play in England. A born strategist & tactician to the finger-tips is Inman, & yet this wonderful boy Gray has won by more than half the game. The idea of stopping Gray has been killed..... Inman, however, battled pluckily & doggedly against overwhelming odds. At times he showed attractive play, especially at the spot end game, & this despite the fact that he never felt at home with the balls, which he described as being very much smaller & lighter to the touch than those he is accustomed to. To use his own words -- I felt as though i daren't hit a ball, it was like playing with three peas, after being used to the ordinary ivory balls.

MAC'S COMMENTS New ivories were obviously usually the full size allowed, ie $2 \frac{6}{64}$ " , whereas special match Crystalates were often only $2 \frac{5}{64}$ ", the minimum size allowed for a ball being $2 \frac{4}{64}$ " which for some stupid reason iz the stupid size now foisted on stupid billiards players by the stupid council.

NEWSPAPER SNIPPET 1911

*The decision of a break competition at the end of each session, introduced by Cecil Harverson, was the outstanding side attraction of last week's match. Dozens of competitors took part, but few got over the first hurdle in the shape of a half-ball loser into the top pocket from white on centre spot, player in hand. Most of the amateurs allowed for the different angle thrown by the Crystalate ball, the majority being Bonzoline users. The winner turned up in Walter Albert Lindrum, brother of the Australia professional champion. This 13-year-old youngster, who will be 14 on August 29, had many tries to make a break, but it was not until the semi-final session that he opened up position and scored a neat 42. Mr D Dewsbury came second with 33, Master Hughes 25, and the ex-champion amateur of Australia, Mr J B Belfield, fourth with 24. It was a most popular competition and of much educational value..... **HARVERSON** agrees that the angle thrown by Crystalate in half-ball strokes is not so wide as with Bonzoline, " but with side on a forcing stroke, you can get an exceptionally wide angle with Crystalate," remarked the South African.*

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT ALCOCK'S SPORTING REVIEW DECEMBER 1913

Articles of Agreement made & entered into this fourth day of November, 1913, between Henry William Stevenson, of Sutton, Surrey, of the first part, & Harry Gray, London, late of Sydney, Australia, of the second part, wherein the said Henry William Stevenson & Harry Gray agree to a billiard match of 18,000 up, level, for 250 pounds aside, being played between HW Stevenson & Joseph George Gray, on a standard table, at the Holborn Hall, Gray's Inn-road, London, World's Championship, commencing Monday, April 20, & terminating Saturday, May 2, 1914. Play to commence each day, at 3 & 8:30 pm, & each session to conclude when either player has reached his respective proportion of points. In the event of neither player scoring his proper proportion of points by five in the afternoon or at 10:30 at night, during the first week's play, proceedings to be suspended, the referee to have power to order the game to be proceeded with to later hours the second week. 1st. -- The match to be governed by the rules of billiards, as issued by the Billiards Control Council. Ivory balls to be used, & to be 2 5/64" in diameter. **The spot ball to be marked with ink.** Six sets of African ivory balls to be supplied by the firm erecting the table for the match, & to be sealed up & deposited with the Editor of the Sporting Life one clear month prior to the commencement of the match. It is agreed that the non-striker remain seated behind the baulk line.

MAC'S COMMENTS -- some players hated the spot ball, they reckoned that the spots, ebony plugs, sometimes affected the angle, so it was usual to use two plain balls, & to mark one with pencil etc.

LIGHTING

A CHAT ABOUT ALIGNMENT William Moncrieff Billiards and Snooker June 71

Alignment !! This is a more involved subject than would appear to a superficial glance..... There is to be overcome the visual difficulty, which sometimes almost amounts to an optical illusion, of finding the centre of a shining ball from which spring the reflection of several lights; the ball is not of a uniform brightness, adding considerably to the difficulty. Then again, any part of a sphere may be taken to be its centre, this centre varying according to the position from which a view is takenBecause our physical make-up decrees that the eyes must be some distance above the cue when aiming, the centre of the ball appears to be higher than that part we wish to strike.

V HARTLEY SHADES ADVERTISEMENT, BILLIARDS AND SNOOKER, APRIL 1967

6 Way Photo Tested Photometric tests -- hundreds of times more sensitive than even the most experienced eyes -- prove that the Hartley Shade gives exactly equal illumination at each of the six pockets. The whole playing surface is flooded with soft, even brilliance -- free alike from shadow & glare. V & N Hartley Ltd, Greenfield, near Oldham, Lancashire

MAC'S COMMENTS.....Unfortunately the above lighting is krappy once u put balls on the table. Melbourne clubs luv this sort of lighting (Sydney clubs mostly go for large fluorescents, better, but still uzually only on a central line). These sorts of shades uzually hold two incandescent globes, that sit centrally above the centreline of the table. Two globes iz not good enuff. Some hold 3 globes, not much better. The more globes the better. But, even if u had 4 globes, on the centreline of the table, the lighting would be crappy. Koz, if the lanterns are all on the centreline, then in most pozzys the ball haz a dark side & a light side, which makes it difficult to find the centre, for central

accurate hitting. And, when the red is near a cushion, spectators on that side see a black ball. Not that we are worried about the spectators, it's the poor players who suffer, mostly not knowing what is biting them. Snooker players haven't got the faintest idea of the physics etc of what is going on around them, & don't care. Neither do billiards players, but at least they feign interest when something is pointed out to them. Nursery cannons are mostly along the top-cushion, where the shadows are worst. In some pozzys, when you have to reach out & back, the 3 balls are in your own shadow. What you really need is a large number of globes spread out over the whole area. I have recently installed 6 mirror-back globes (60W & 75W) on my new table, in two lines of 3, using standard desk lamps attached to the ceiling. And I find that 6 is not good enough, I really need 8. Recently, I replaced the 6 mirror-backs (total 390W) with 6 modern small fluoro's, each 15W (total 90W). The level of lighting is now as good as or better, the color seems nicer also, & the meter doesn't spin as fast. In fact, I no longer feel that I need 8 lights. And the price of a fluoro is only \$7.80 (or \$5.95 on special), compared to \$3.95 for a mirror-back, & the fluoro's last twice as long (they say). I might try some 20W fluoro's next time. The 15W that I got are not the older fashioned longish ones that tended to hang out from a (desk-lamp) holder, they are actually shorter than a standard globe, hence they don't need special shading, although a little shading is always well-kum.

READERS LETTERS BILLIARDS & SNOOKER, MARCH 1968

F Johnston, Cookstown *I am installing a full size Billiard table.... and was wondering if it could be lit by fluorescent tubes instead of the conventional bulbs.* **Editor** *Fluorescent lighting is not successful for Billiards tables. It is a difficult light to play in as it is harsh to the eyes and does not illuminate the table as well or as evenly as electric lighting with a Hartley shade....*

JP MANNOCK BILLIARDS EXPOUNDED 1904 & 1908

The best light of all is a lantern light -- that is to say, a converging light from all sides on to the table. An equal distribution is thus guaranteed. A great point to be observed is to fix the table well within its focus, & thus insure as little shadow as possible being thrown from the balls or the cushions. Whenever there occurs a strong shading along the cushions, or around the pockets, nothing more deceptive to the players can be imagined... It has been found that an arrangement of six lights, equally distributed on cross-rods to a long central bar, provides the best illumination. Again, the greatest care should be taken to insure that the light is clear, & the least possible shadows arise around the balls, cushions, & pockets; for again I must point out that nothing more detrimental to good playing than a dim & shadow-inducing light can be imagined. Another point, too, requiring attention is to keep the glare of the light out of the players eyes. With men of short stature this is a first necessity. To safeguard against this, the lamp-shades must droop well below the lighting. The best light that I have ever seen upon a billiard-table came from acetylene gas. The installation of a manufacturing plant in any household is so modest, & the saving of money so great as compared with ordinary gas or electric light, that I must give it the preference over all other kinds of illumination for the billiard-room.

CURIOSITIES OF BILLIARDS THE BILLIARD PLAYER OCT 1948

An **electrically lit pocket** was invented in **1910**, & actually tried out in a match between **DIGGLE & LOVEJOY**. The **searchlight** was situated in the top framework to which the net is attached. The first composition ball was made in **1857**. A **kiss** closed Harverson's career at 27. Aitken went to the table **with nothing on**.

TABLES

WHY NOT REAL BILLIARDS?

WG Clifford The Billiard Player June 1935

*Why don't you write something about playing **real billiards**.?? This question was put to us by the managing director of one of the leading houses in the billiard trade. It is like this..... There can be only one game of billiards, & that must be played on tables which conform to the **official rules** -- but how many tables are there in actual use which would be passed as fit for play, if the **official templates** were put over the pockets? But the difficulties are tremendous, & it is but fair to point out that the trade itself was very largely responsible for making them. The first approach to a standard table was the **3" pocket** table, a freak table concocted by the trade & professionals with the ulterior objective of preventing **young Cook** from playing the spot-stroke & defeating the **elder Roberts**, the popular billiard idol of that day. This takes us back to **1871**, & it is billiard history that young Cook defeated old Roberts. Today, however, his victory is of no significance compared with the effect produced by the birth of a tradition that a standard table for championship play was one thing, & an **ordinary table** for general play quite another. This tradition had playing experience to support it, as there can be no question that play on the **3" pocket** table was artificially difficult, much too difficult to be popular with average amateurs, & the **ordinary table** therefore met an undeniable need. Next came the **standard table** now in use. This was introduced during the **80's** by the old Billiard Association, & it would have been a wonderful thing for the game, if the trade had been far-seeing enough to do all in its power to popularise the standard table. But it did nothing of the sort, it pandered to the public that was supposed to like easy tables with pockets of the bushel basket type, & fostered the idea that standard tables were quite a thing apart, something to be reserved for the exclusive use of professionals, & a few of the leading amateurs, something much too difficult for the ordinary amateur to hope to play upon with real enjoyment. Behind this, it is to be feared, was the set policy of certain very powerful trade interests to oppose, either openly or covertly, the Billiard Association & all its works, including the **standard table** designed & approved by that body..... The remarkable thing is that a **standard table** in good playing condition is nothing at all for any 20 break amateur to be scared about. The pocket openings are a little more difficult than those of the **ordinary type**, but, unless the latter are ordinary enough to be farcical, there is not a great deal of difference. And whatever difference there may be is nothing compared with the satisfaction of scoring on a **standard table**, of knowing that you are playing **real billiards or snooker**, using the word real in the sense given to it by our friend the managing director..... The late **JP Mannock** had his **standard table** rule at the Hotel Victoria, & what a following it brought him of customers with money to spend..... But we shall never come to it without the whole-hearted support of the billiard trade..... If outfits were shunned as out-of-date unless **standard table** were available, the amount of re-cushioning trade thus created would be very welcome. The cost is the same, any of our advertisers could fit a table with **standard pockets** for the same price as **ordinary pockets**.....*

CHAMPIONSHIP TABLES LESLIE DRIFFIELD, BILLIARDS AND SNOOKER, JULY 67

The championship results again prompt me to bring forth a point i have argued for many years with officials & manufacturers regarding the provision of suitable Championship tables..... There does seem to be a tendency however, to assume that all match tables must be very fast (ie fitted with a fine cloth & ironed with a very hot iron before all sessions) but i would say emphatically that this makes ball control extremely difficult, & in my opinion adds to the danger of "kicking balls" very considerably. Let us realise that continued ironing only makes the bed faster, but does not speed up

the cushions, & we get unbalanced conditions. It would be much better to have faster cushions & a slow bed, but the ideal is when both are the same speed. In the World Championship in India the table was only occasionally ironed during the tournament but brushed & padded each session. The result was a much higher standard of play, bigger breaks & higher sessional totals. May i appeal to all concerned to consider these points very carefully, as i know from experience that it would result in better performances, & a higher standard of play from all classes of players.

SYMPOSIUM ON THE NAP & ITS EFFECTS THE BILLIARD PLAYER DEC 1952

TOM NEWMAN --- Concerning this influence of side on the course of the cueball, it is well known & universally recognised that when a good deal of side is used at slowish strength, the cueball will drift in the direction of the side when playing with the nap. Against the nap, the action is reversed, but on the recently introduced (written in 1924--Ed) napless cloth, the action of side is always the same as when playing with the nap on the woollen cloth (*Advanced Billiards*).

MY COMMENTS In relation to Tom's comments regarding the napless cloth, Tom iz talking about swerv, which haz nothing to do with the nap. In fact, on a napless cloth, az a ball with side-spin gets near to stopping, it drifts in the opposite direction, ie az if it were travelling against the nap on a woollen cloth, although to a reduced degree. This i call the Janus Cloth Effect.

GEZA GAZDAG THE ACCOMPLISHED CUEMAN 1991

Regarding Janus Cloth, Gez sez.....As luck would have it, i did manage to find an old timer but when i talked to him i had the feeling that his personal experience was very much tainted with a lot of hearsay. It emerged: (1) The cloth was very fast & (2) Both sides were equally good for playing on. When i told him that this could not have been a disadvantage, for we only play on one side of any cloth, he went into a rather garbled explanations: The absence of the nap not only deprived the serious players from an important degree of control (he couldn't give an example!!), **but also they had to cope with the side having the opposite effect to what it had on the nap cloth.** I told him that on a napless cloth the side has no effect on the bed of the table therefore one can hardly talk about opposite effect. He agreed that Lindrum was a serious enough player indeed, but he could not explain how Lindrum could conjure up 3905 & 4317 on an allegedly useless cloth, when -- if my memory serves me right -- his best break on a nap cloth was well below 3000!!

MAC'S COMMENT The old timer confirms my comments about the Janus Cloth Effect in the previous article.

RISO LEVI BILLIARDS, THE STROKES OF THE GAME 1907-1916

(Page 218) ... in many clubs & hotels, after the D has become somewhat worn at the corners, another D & baulk line are marked in at the spot end of the table, & the old baulk enclosure becomes the new spot end of the table. Instead therefore of playing with the nap, every stroke up the table from the D is against the nap,.... **A TURNED CLOTH**,.....Later on, when the cloth is still more worn, it is **OFTEN REVERSED**, that is to say, **the wrong side** of the cloth becomes the playing surface. When this takes place, a table is even worse for play than when the nap runs the wrong way. The wrong side of the cloth has **no nap at all**, & a ball travelling with side, or, for the matter of that, without side, can never be depended on. Generally side on a ball affects the ball, though in a lesser degree, **as though it were running against the nap** on the right side of the cloth.

PEEPS INTO THE PAST THE BILLIARD PLAYER NOV 1950

RISO LEVI IN 1931 I believe that in a few years **the cotton billiards-cloth will snuffle out**, & be buried in a forgotten past with oval & circular billiards tables.

ALL ABOUT BILLIARDS & HOW TO POT ARTHUR F PEALL 1939

More recently a new factor in playing conditions has been introduced by the advent of the napless cloth. This cloth is the next thing to indestructible, you cannot even cut it with an ordinary penknife, & its durability is incontestably superior to that of the woollen cloth. Thousands of tables are now covered with it, **& there is every indication that in a few years woollen cloths & ivory balls will be things of the past**, still clung to, perhaps, by the few who like them & who may be prepared to pay for them, though the bulk of billiards is now played with composition balls on napless cloths..... I have scored very many thousands of points on each kind of cloth, & my experience is that every shot can be made on the napless cloth exactly as on the other kind, with this important exception -- When playing against the nap of a woollen cloth, a ball moving slowly & carrying strong side will turn in the contrary direction to the side imparted to it, whereas it will drift in the direction of the side when playing with the nap. **On the napless cloth, however, this complication is eliminated, a ball intended to be deflected by the use of side will always move in the direction of the side employed....**

MAC'S COMMENTS It looks like **ARTHUR & RISO** differ on both points, which cloth iz best, & which way the ball **KURVS**. I just thought of something, i hav already sed that the Janus Cloth Effect makes the ball act az if it were travelling against the nap, but i hav just realized that, whereaz normally we all agree that swerv iz cauzed by massé & not by sidespin, i can see that the **JANUS CLOTH EFFECT** kan cauze a reverse drift while the ball iz skidding or at least until the sidespin axis haz found equilibrium. Koz, while the ball iz skidding, the shape of the ball's footprint iz changing az the speed slows, which iz the same az for the ordinary Janus Cloth Effect, but the difference iz that here the sidespin haz not yet reached equilibrium, so the **DRIFT** iz (or kan be) in the opposite direction, not that this **REVERSE** Janus Cloth Effect iz very large, it iz eezily overwhelmed by even a piddling amount of intentional or unintentional massé **SWERV**.

DEATH OF MR H U ALCOCK ALCOCK'S SPORTING REVIEW AUGUST 1912

Mr Henry Upton Alcock, founder of the firm of Alcock & Company Pty Ltd, died at his residence, 184 Power Street, Hawthorn, on the morning of August 6th, in his 89th year..... It was in 1852 that Mr Alcock commenced business in Brunswick Street Fitzroy. At first he confined himself to making bagatelle tables, but the business rapidly extended, & after the lapse of 18 months larger premises had to be secured in Russell Street. It was there that the first billiard table ever made in Australia came to light. In the first 10 years that he was in business Mr Alcock turned out 200 tables, which was considered a good output in those days. Relatively speaking, the trade is now on a gigantic basis.....It was in the early 60'd that the late Mr Alcock successfully prevented the importation of English tables by the excellence of his own manufactures. His ambition from the outset was to equal the best tables in the world, & to find his material within the colony. This goal was amply realised, though, of course, the rubber had to be imported. Mr Alcock many years ago offered a premium of 500 pounds for the first web of Victorian cloth suitable for billiard tables, but the bonus was never claimed. However, he found Australian woods that met all requirements.....

JP MANNOCK BILLIARDS EXPOUNDED 1904 & 1908

In Australia things are better arranged for the private purchasers of tables than they are here. To us it is at once a matter of sending for a workman if the table gets out of the level. The Australian makers, Messrs. Alcock, of Melbourne, have affixed to their best tables a mechanical contrivance, by means of which, in conjunction with a spirit-level, the fault can be remedied with the utmost ease by the most inexperienced. At the very foot of each table-leg a circular, brassed groove is fitted. It is wormed inside to fit a screw lever, which, worked by hand, raises any part of the table (which needs

attention as shown by the index of the spirit-level) to the required height. A child can handle the thing. What a boon it would be if our tables were so favoured.

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THE BILLIARD PLAYER MARCH 1956

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In 1799 -- John Thurston established in Newcastle Street, Strand, as Billiard Table & General Cabinet Maker.

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In 1836 -- John Thurston introduced the Slate Bed.

In 1845 -- John Thurston Patented & introduced the Vulcanised Rubber Cushion.

In 1872 -- Thurston's transferred their Factory to 33 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea.

In 1892 -- Thurston's designed & made the original Standard Billiard Table officially adopted by the

Billiards Association, the only pattern since recognised.

In 1901 -- Thurston's built their new Premises in Leicester Square.

In 1924 -- Thurston's introduced the wonderful Stanfast Cushion. (One set only in use only in use on their Match Table 1924-1940).

In 1940 -- Thurston's premises in Leicester Square wrecked by a German Bomb.

In 1940 -- Thurston's carry on from their Chelsea Factory.

In 1955 Thurston's are still in play with a record of **155** years of continuous trading as **Makers of high-class Billiard Tables & ALL Accessories for Snooker & Billiards. Let us quote you for Stanfast Cushions & West Of England Cloth for your Tables.**

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