

# THE CUE COLLECTOR

by *Andy Hunter*

Edward Diggle was 72 years of age when he died in 1934, having played in competitive matches right into the 1920's, with some of his last matches being against a young Joe Davis.

Diggle started his career as a Marker in the Billiard Rooms of John Roberts in Manchester, where he learnt to play from observation backed by perseverance and practice. Charles Roberts describes Diggle as having "no style worth speaking of; any old bridge, but a most doughty and unconcerned opponent. Indeed he might have been playing marbles for all of the interest that he seemed to take in any of his matches." Although regarded amongst the top players for much of his career, this lack of ambition to try for championship honours makes him less well-known than he otherwise might have been.

One title which he did win, was for the Professional Championship of Lancashire and Yorkshire in 1891. He took this by defeating Charles Dawson and was never required to defend it, the cup eventually becoming his personal property.

He utilised the "push-stroke" in close cannon work to such an extent that many people forecast his career would end when the push was abolished in 1898. But in the style of a truly great player he simply adjusted his game to the new conditions and remained amongst the front rank of professional players.

All of the Diggle cues commemorate his performances during a match against John Roberts Junior at the Argyll Hall, London. Made on 4th January 1895 under the "spot-barred" rule, his record break of 985 occupied a little over an hour and was the highest of his career. On the following day Diggle had a run of 84 consecutive cannons, and obviously in fine form, added breaks of 480 and 404 to win the match by over 4,000 points. Interestingly enough, Diggle set these records using a "John Roberts" cue!



Edward Diggle  
1862 - 1934



The Diggle Record Break Cue  
Two of the three variations in badge design

There are at least four distinct versions of the Diggle cue, which were most commonly Ash shafted, although pear and occasionally maple shafts are also seen. All known examples were produced by Burroughes & Watts.

The earliest version is distinguished by an extended wavy line under Diggle's name on the badge, made up from eight distinct ripples. In later versions the line was

slightly shorter, having just seven ripples. Made from ivory or bone these cues would have been produced from around 1890 to 1920 and the inscription would have had either brown or black lettering.

A later plastic badge version was made in the 1920's and 30's which can also be identified by the wavy line being replaced by a straight one, having scrolls in the centre and at the ends. This later cue would have been manufactured by Peradon & Co; on behalf of Burroughes & Watts and has a Mahogany butt with an Ebony front splice. (£200-300)

The early badges, made from ivory or bone, were produced with differing styles of butt. These were: A plain Ebony (£170-250); Ebony and Burr (£250-£320); a plain Mahogany (£250-£350).

The earliest of these would have a fat butt, slimming down to a billiard shaped cue. The later, plastic badge version, would have more of a snooker cue shape

It is possible that other manufacturers were involved in the manufacture of Diggle cues, and it is rumoured that a round badge example was also produced, but no examples of these are currently known to exist.

# LETTERS

.... to the Editor

Sir—I would very much like to congratulate you on the format and quality of the 11th issue of the, "Amateur Billiard Player." It is quite first rate and I hope you will be able to maintain such a high standard. As one who has a great deal of experience of journals and deadlines of one sort or another I am possibly more aware than most of the difficulties and hard work involved.

I like to feel that I was in some small measure involved with the development of the magazine as contributor and helping to pave the way via. "The Billiards Quarterly Review." As regards articles, quite clearly there is now such a wealth of material and contributors that my rather inconsequential ramblings are not needed.

I must say how shocked I was to hear of the death of Albert Hanson. In the very early days of the EABA there were four of us involved, myself, Malcolm Lax, Derick Townend, and Albert Hanson. We all gave of our time and effort, myself perhaps the least, but I am sure that my fellow founder-members would agree that it was Albert who did most of the work. He was not a billiards player, I do not know what might have been his motivation for putting in the time and effort that he did—especially into the Teesside Boys Billiards League—he certainly didn't make any money out of it.

I remember once having to quite forcibly convince him that his train fare for a visit to Bristol on EABA business should come from EABA funds. He protested that they hadn't really got any funds and I reminded him that neither had he! So it wasn't money. Neither, I am sure, that there was very much in the way of kudos, billiards is, after all, very much a minority sport. We are left with that rather old-fashioned notion that he did what he did simply because he loved the game. Well done Albert. If I could have helped you out in any way then I would have done.

Peter Ainsworth's article on Walter Lindrum was most interesting and perhaps you will grant me space for a couple of Lindrum anecdotes one of which is probably quite well known but the other certainly not.

On one of his visits to England the great Australian cue man was scheduled to play a second rate Midlands professional, Willie Leigh. Leigh, as a professional was, of course, a very good player, but hardly in the Lindrum class. A day or two before the match he was spotted at the venue and someone asked him if he had come to have a look at the table. "No," replied Willie. "I've come to find a comfortable chair!"

The second of my stories will hardly be known. When I started to play billiards I became very friendly with a man named Billy Lowe. Lowe was a very good player, mostly a red-ball man, but who could make breaks approaching the three hundred mark. He won the Notts Amateur Championship several times in the days when that Championship was worth winning. During the war he was a regular playing partner to the great Joe Davis in Davis' many matches in the Midlands organised to raise money for the wartime Ambulance fund.

Billy told the tale of how, in the thirties, he had been to watch Lindrum when Walter was playing under the auspices of the Nottingham table manufacturer and billiards impresario Howarth Nuthall. It seems that the club table on that occasion was not of the highest quality and Nuthall struck a bet with Lindrum that he would not make a thousand break.

The Australian billiards genius got to work and fairly quickly got into the nine-hundreds. It seems that at this point a false stroke left the object white tight in the jaws of a top pocket. Lindrum potted the red ball leaving a cross loser into the pocket where the white was placed and certain to be lost. The story goes that Nuthall—thinking that the object white must be pocketed—called out to Lindrum, "That's it Walter, you've lost, red ball limit you know."

Lindrum replied, "Wait a minute Howarth, I'll leave 'em touching."

My old friend Billy Lowe recalled how the great man cued up several times at the side of the cueball, as he put it, "Rather like a golfer taking a practice swing."

Lindrum played what would have been a cross-loser, but for the fact that the object white was lying in the jaws of the pocket into which the cueball was played. But the strength was such that cueball and object white wriggled into the jaws of the pocket and did indeed remain touching. The balls were spotted and within a minute or two the Australian billiards genius had added one more thousand break to his tally—**Tom Terry**