

The Cue Collector

by Andy Hunter

This article features a number of "named" cues which began to appear from the 1880's.



William Green
Scottish Professional
Champion
1870-1888

The William Green cue

William Green is probably best known as the Scottish Professional Champion, a title he first won in 1870 after he had moved to Glasgow to take over the billiard rooms in Dunlop Street. However, Green was actually a Yorkshireman, having been born in Barnsley in 1839. His early career was spent in Liverpool and he subsequently moved onto the London circuit where he was considered to be among the "third rank" of

professional players in the 1860's. Green held the Scottish professional championship for 18 years before he was eventually defeated by Joe Sala in Glasgow. William Green won a fortune in horse racing, only to lose everything in business ventures. He was a great hazard striker and in later years developed a shake in his hands which made it appear as though he could hardly hold a cue. But appearances were deceptive and his accuracy remained undiminished, much to the surprise of many an unwary opponent.

The William Green cue has an ash shaft, an ebony butt with a front tulip splice. This was split down the centre with the grain joining in the centre to form a "V". The cue has a round badge with "W. Green" written across it and a black line around the circumference. The cues are probably manufactured by a Scottish company and are valued between £200-300.



Tom Taylor

The Tom Taylor cue

Born in Exmouth in 1852, Tom Taylor belonged to the era when the only way to earn a living at the game was to play other professionals for money. In this he was ideally suited, having a cast-iron temperament and was the most tenacious of players. A born grumbler, the more he complained during a match,

the better he played, which was very disconcerting for his opponent. Although highly regarded in his profession, he never quite reached the top. His only attempt at the Professional Championship came in 1881 when he was narrowly defeated by Joseph Bennett. He was still playing to a high standard in the mid-1890's but was making few public appearances by the turn of the century.

The only cue carrying his name is the "Tom Taylor Balance Cue" which was made by John Taylor & Co of Edinburgh. Apart from the name, there is no known connection between the manufacturer and the player, and it is not known whether Tom Taylor endorsed this model, which appeared with both machine and hand splices. The latter version had a plain ebony butt, and the machine spiced cue had a maple veneer. I have only ever seen ash shafted cues of this type and all have been

very good "players". Values range from £150-200 for hand spliced and £50-70 for the machine splice.

There also exists a round badge "John Taylor" cue which has a striped ebony butt. This cue, which also handles well, is valued between £200-250.



Cecil Harverson
South African
Professional Champion

The Harverson cue

Cecil Harverson was born in London in 1872, and began to play at the age of fifteen. He made his reputation in South Africa which he first visited in 1892, winning the very first professional championship of that country which was held a year later, defending it several times before returning to England in 1896. After establishing himself on the professional circuit in London, he returned to South Africa in 1916 where he again won the national championship, staying in that country until his death in 1925. He had the unfortunate distinction of being George Gray's opponent when the latter made his record break of 2,196 unfinished in 1911.



The "Cecil Harverson"
cue produced by
Burroughes & Watts.

The "Harverson" cue was produced by Burroughes & Watts. It had a traditional "billiard" shape [*] with a plain ebony butt and a maple veneer, then a front ebony splice on top of the maple veneer. It has a square bone badge with no other writing on it other than the player's signature. The manufacturer's name is stamped into

the wood above the badge. These cues were made either with an horn ferrule or with just a plain tip. Rarely seen, this cue is valued between £220-320.

[*] *Billiard shape* : Early cues were designed so that the butt end could be used in the manner of a mace. To do this the diameter had to be great enough to reach the centre of the ball and are therefore relatively thicker than later models. This design is a good indication of age for a cue.

Views from a Billiard Fanatic

by Tony Keeling

On Thursday 12th March, I travelled by train and taxi to Liverpool to watch the opening day's play in the Strachan World Matchplay Billiards Championships. Conditions were first class and I was made very welcome at Liverpool Billiards and Snooker Club.

The format was the best of seven games, each being 100 up. The audience was quite sparse, probably due to the format, or the fact that the higher seeded players, in the main, came into the competition at a later stage.

A lot of matches finished early, leaving plenty of time to fill in. Having never seen the Indians play before, I took the opportunity of watching Geet Sethi and co. on the practise tables. It was an education and experience for me to watch them, but the highlight of all was their frankness and open manner. Freely discussing all aspects of the game with just an onlooker, made the day for me.