

THE CUE COLLECTOR

by *Andy Hunter*

Although born in Hull in 1874, by the time he was nineteen, Harry Stevenson had also lived in Brighton, London and South Africa. In 1893 he returned to the English capital and within the next seven years he established himself as one of the best players in the World.

His first try at the Professional Championship ended in defeat at the hands of his intense rival, Charles Dawson. However, in January 1901 he reversed this result, and it was from this date that the first "champion" cues began to appear.

After temporarily losing the title again to Dawson, he was again declared champion in November 1901 (without contest), his reign lasting until 1903. He then again held the title between 1909-1912.

Stevenson cues are known to have been produced by at least three manufacturers, these being Burroughes & Watts, (two versions); Cox & Yemen (two versions) and Peradon & Co. (one version).

Burroughes & Watts

The Burroughes & Watts cues have a black ebony butt with a mahogany front splice going about half-way up the butt. These were produced as either square or round badge versions.

The square badge "Stevenson Champion Cue" (illustrated) are valued at £150-200. The round badge would be inscribed "Burroughes & Watts" around the top circumference "H. W. Stevenson" across the centre, and "Trade Mark" under the name. These are more valuable and can be expected to fetch between £200-260. Some of these round badge cues would also have a bur splice, but this would not affect the values given. There is also a machine spliced Burroughes & Watts cue which is worth around £100.

The square badged version is also known to have been made as a two-piece cue. This would have a second round badge, set above the other, carrying the inscription "patent secret jointed cue". Particularly rare, these cues could be expected to fetch between £250-300.

Some of these cues were presented as prizes and would have a silver plate attached to the butt which detailed the competition, the winner



Harry Stevenson with the Billiard Assoc. Professional Championship cup in 1901



and sometimes the date. The addition of a presentation plate usually adds approximately £20 to the value of any particular cue.

Cox & Yemen

Cox & Yemen cues would have the same butt as those produced by Burroughes & Watts. The main difference between them being the positioning of the badge. The Cox & Yemen badge was set to run with the taper of the flat, while the Burroughes & Watts badge was inset, laying parallel to the axis of the cue. It was also rounder at the back than the Cox & Yemen badge.



Their first model produced by Cox & Yemen had the inscription "Stevenson Champion Cue" with the date of 1903 (illustrated). This is valued at £200-300.

They then made the 788 record break cue, which recognised a feat accomplished by Stevenson in a match against Charles Dawson held in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in April 1904. The break took Stevenson just 47 minutes to make and was a record under the existing rules. This cue is valued at £200-260.

Stevenson had a break of 802 in February 1905, again against Dawson, in what was considered by some to be an "unofficial" Championship. Stevenson's break helped him to win the match and it is thought that Cox & Yemen may have made a cue in commemoration of the event, but no examples are known to exist.

Peradon & Co.

Using Bonzoline balls, Stevenson surpassed all his previous records with a break of 1,016 against William Cook in October 1912. It required some initiative to claim this as a "world record" as George Gray was at that time racking up thousand breaks almost every week with his red-ball play. It was nevertheless a monumental achievement and was described at the time as "a world's record under present conditions, the specialized Gray-stroke alone excepted."



Peradon produced a "Champion" cue with the same butt as the other manufacturers, recording Stevenson's massive break. The writing on the badge of the cue was "Stevenson Champion Cue, Record Break" and would be read holding the cue vertically. As Peradon would supply these cues to other companies for retail, examples will sometimes be stamped "Kent & Co." or "Kent & Cline". These cues are valued at £150-200.



Whatever happened to the Likely Lads ?

Disregard the *bouffant* hair styles and fancy dress, why not try to identify the venue and the players in this photograph kindly loaned to us by Alan Orton of Burbage, Leicestershire