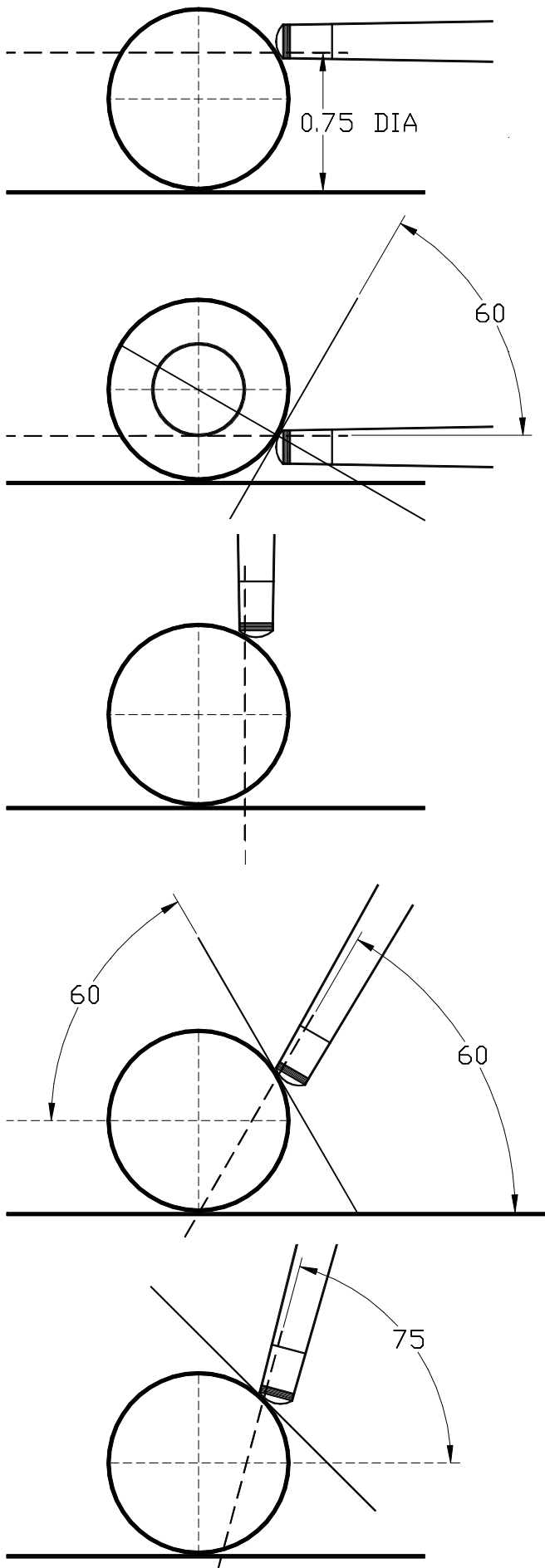


MASSE'Z & PIQUE'Z



SCREW 1A To hit a qball with **zero skidding** u hit at **0.70 dia** hight. I do better, i get **overspin**, hence i reckon that i hit at say 0.75 dia, ie a ¼ ball off center. Or at least that's the **effect**, the first contact might be at **0.65 dia**, but the cue **bendz** (up) & **moovz** (up), so the first contact duznt prov anything.

SCREW 2 A ¼ screw -- the que iz shown horizontal, which it **never** iz. The qtip **frikzion** needed iz equivalent to parking on a **30°** hill, else u missq. Contact the ball outside the ¼ circle in the qtip'z view, az shown, & u might missq. Altho saying somthing like this iz **meeningless**, koz everywun haz a **peculiar** relationship between what they think iz their **aim** & what they think iz their **contact** -- which dependz on how they hold their **tongue**.

PIQUE' 3 A ¼ ball contact with the que vertical (**90°**). Anglz higher than **45°** are classed az piquez -- with **side-spin** a **masse'**. When i play at 90° the ball pushez away for **5mm** or **10mm**, & then reversez & rollz a long way back, all depending on how hard i hit it.

PIQUE' 4A I find that if i hit down at **60°** i ken make the ball push-out say **100mm** & then abruptly stop dead -- it duznt matter how hard i hit. If i try it at **55°** (not shown) the ball brakes but then rollz on -- it duznt matter how hard i hit. If i try it at **65°** (not shown) the ball stops & then kumz back a bit. And, **60°** (& ¼ ball) just happenz to mean that the line of action passez throo the bottom of the ball (az shown). But here again saying **60°** iz **meeningless**, koz i hav never actually meazured it, & neither will u. Hmmmmmm.

MAXIMUM

PIQUE' 4B If i want to maximize the distance that i make the ball go out & still kum back to the start, then **75°** iz the angl that i uze. And the **harder** i hit the **further** this **out&back** iz.

SPEAR-GRIP

There are 2 basic wayz of holding a cue for any stroke -- the ordinary grip, & the spear-grip. With the ordinary grip, u hold the cue the same way, whether the cue iz horizontal, or at 45°, or at 90° (vertical). I uze the ordinary grip up to about 40°, but if i raize the *q*butt higher, i hav to switch the grip around & hence hold the cue az if it were a spear. I hold the cue between the thumb & 1 or 2 fingerz. The hold iz uzually light, the thumb pressing the *que* into the bridge.

WRIST

A wristy action iz perhaps the eezyst, for the smaller masse'z & pique'z. But u carnt uze an eazy wristy action unless u uze the spear-grip. If u uze zero arm moovment, & zero hand moovment, & just uze wrist moovment, u might find some strokes eezyr.

The wrist carnt follow throo, hence the *q*tip only nips the ball lightly -- the *q*tip carnt follow throo to the cloth -- there iz less chance of landing heavily on the ball.

A wrist action iz accurate -- the *q*tip hits the *q*ball **where** intended -- & consistently **how** intended.

A wristy action almost automatically decelerates the *q*tip at the *q*ball -- which thusly let's the cue'z weight do the dainty work -- ie it givz u a quick but soft action. Some books say that acceleration iz needed -- baloney.

J-ACTION

With pique'z, some playerz look az if they are going to hit the *q*ball dead center, but then conjure up some sort of J action on the downswing whereby the *q*tip wipes spin onto the *q*ball. We all uze this sort of J action to some degree, the *q*tip duz it without us needing to ask, if we let it, but theze playerz uze it to the

maximum -- they moov their bridge handz in the direction of the wanted action to multiply the natural effect. This sort of stuff kan kum in handy for masse'z, but about the only time u need it for a pique' iz when the *q*ball iz almost touching the first object-ball, & a ¼ ball contact on the *q*ball would leed to a foul. So, u aim say 1/8th ball on the *q*ball & uze some bridge-hand moovment to increase the action.

QTIP

Its amazing how difficult it iz to hit a ball straight, straight up & down the tabl for instance. And its amazing how difficult it iz to screw consistently. Sometimez u try to screw-back 1m & the *q*ball kumz back only 300mm. Well, hitting straight, & screwing, are childz-play compared to pique'z&masse'z.

The first problem with all of them iz that u carnt place the *q*tip on the *q*ball where u want, or where u aim. For a straight shot, u might aim in the center of the *q*ball, but u end up hitting it say 2mm left of center. Same for the screw-shot. And in addition, for the screw-shot, u end up contacting the *q*ball higher than u aim/want, & so u get less back-spin than u want.

These failurez are due to 3 reazonz.

LEFT EYE

Firstly, u are left-eye dominant. So, when u aim at the center of the *q*ball u are actually aiming 1mm or 2mm left, without realizing it. In the short-range, contorted, side-wayz, askance view u hav of the pique'&masse', this left-eye problem iz probably doubly bad. U might be aiming 3mm off.

Secondly, yor cueing action iz not straight. The cue moovz about in your bridge on the forward-swing.

Thirdly, yor swing iz not straight. The cue turns left or right on the forward-swing. Once again,

all of this iz magnifyd when playing a pique'-or-masse.

PRAKTIS

The remedy iz the same for all 3 -- Praktis. Az u get familiar with the stance, the aim, the swing etc, u get more accurate. And u learn how to overcome or allow for the ingrained problemz that u ken never seem to eradicate no matter how much u praktis. This overcoming & allowing-for are automatic, whether u like it or not. Koz in billiardz, three rongz make a right.

PLAYERZ

I remember checking the aim & line-up & swing of lots of good playerz, for the long 6 shot. The left-eye-dominant playerz aimed left of center on the qball, & left of center on the red, but uzually managed to pot the red, & occasionally followed-throo for the complete 6 shot.

The right-eye-dominant playerz aimed right-of-center etc etc.

One player stood alone az having the worst aim etc. He woz the reigning Australian Billiardz Champion, & he woz the reigning Australian Snooker Champion also. Only one player had perfect line-up, throo the center of the qball, & throo the center of the red. He gave the game away.

BRIDGE

In regard to hitting the ball straight, & screwing, apart from praktis, it might help if u make yor bridge more steady. Plant yor hand firmly on the tabl. Hold that thumb firmly into yor first finger. Keep yor elbow above the cue-line. Develop a smooth straight cueing action. Don't jerk. Don't lift yor head. Pauze at the end of yor back-swing. Etc etc etc etc etc.

EEZY STUFF

But u probably carnt apply any of this to the pique'z & masse'z. And, even if u could, it takes yearz of praktis to get ordinary cueing half right, so how much troubl would it be for pique'z & masse'z ?? We don't liv that long. Anyhow, the good newz is that u don't havta be perfect at pique'z & masse'z. Az long az uken do the eezy shots fairly well, & az long az u know yor limitationz, that's all yor need. This won't take long at all -- 2 or 3 praktis sessionz should do it -- the main thing then iz to hav a few minutes praktis each week.

MASSE' QUE

If u are really keen, u will make a special cue for masse'z. This will be very short, a little longer than the legal limit of 36". It will hav a large soft oversized tip that overhangz the ferrul. I read somewhere that it should be very heavy (20oz) if u want to do large forcefull masse'z -- & light (14oz) for small stuff.

Mac's iz 12.5oz -- but Mac might end up making it 18oz -- he haznt yet made up my mind about weights. I suspect that a heavy masse'-que iz ok for everything --- but if 2 weights are needed, then it makes sense that u should hav a light masse'-que with a 4oz bob that can screw onto the end. But u will find that yor ordinary cue will be just fine for any pique'-stroke that u will ever need.

I hav a suspicion that a thin-whippy cue, with an 8mm or 9mm tip, might help to get more action, for some playerz. But perhaps a stiff cue, with a 10mm or 11mm tip, iz more accurate. I suspect that this might depend on just how new & slippery the cloth iz.

With yor ordinary cue, koz it iz too long, u will tend to hold it below the center-of-balance. This will magnify the wobblez&shakes on yor upswing & downswing. Holding it closer to the butt will reduce theze problemz.

FRIKTION

The thingz mentioned in the previous sectionz all depend on a player'z action etc, & her cue etc, & the cloth etc. The more slippery the bedcloth the eezyr the pique' & the masse'. For example, if u rub some chalk on the bedcloth, u will get allmost zero out&back.

I seem to recall playing draught-pool at my neighbourz, the lkstrums. John had a square laminex board, with wooden cushionz, & gaps in the 4 cornerz. And we played pool izing circular flat wooden discs (like draughts piecez) with quez. Anyhow, at intervalz, John would get some Naptha flakes (i think -- or woz it Lux) & rub the laminex to make it more slippery. I suspekt that for their exhibitionz George & Wally might hav uzed a similar substance to make their masse' trick strokes eezyr, eg making a cannon around the triangle. HmMMM. There are tricks in every trade.

The reason we ken play a pique' iz that the qtip to qball friktion iz greater than the qball to bedcloth friktion.

But there iznt a lot in it. That's why u havta chalk-up every time. And that's why pique'-shots are eezyer on a new slippery cloth than on an old worn-out cloth.

One more thing. Pique'z are eezyer when playing away from the side-cushion than when playing away from the top-cushion. And even eezyer when playing away from the baulk-cushion.

The reason for this iz that the balltobed friktion varyz with direction, due to the nap. Friktion iz at a maximum against the nap. Strangely, friktion iz at a minimum at 35°, 00° being the direction of the nap. This iz all xplained in Billiards Arithmetically Treated, & the chapter -- Friktion -- haz some excerpts.

So, u should begin by praktising pique'z near the baulk-cushion. If u make any bruizez in the

bed-cloth, these are going to be less of a worry to the committee if in the baulk area.

Anyhow, perhaps u should place a small piece of spare cloth on the tabl, & do yor early praktis on this. This should eliminate bruizing. And, don't think that it iz the qtip that duz the bruizing. The qball duz more bruizing than the qtip.

Which remindz me, if u place the ball on a chalk-mark, & try to play a pique'-shot, u will get littl or no effect. The ball will just jam & bounce a bit.

This backs up what i sed earlyr about the friktion. If the qballtobedcloth friktion iz highish, pique'-shots are nearly impossibl.

PIQUE' PRAKTIS

So, there u are near the baulk-cushion, praktising pique'z. Ok. U are trying to hit the ball parallel to the cushion, koz this is the eezyest direction to do. Ok.

U are izing a sort of tripod bridge, with the fingerz outstretched, & the weight on the endz on one or two or three fingerz. Ok. This givz a very short back-swing & forward-swing, but that iz all u need, & this bridge iz nice&steady. Ok.

U are trying to hit the ball about 50mm to the left, & then make it kum straight back.

The first thing u notice iz that it duznt kum straight back. It kumz back to the left.

This meanz that u are contacting the qball left-of-center. Try aiming a littl right-of-center, even if it looks rong. This should do the trick.

If u are consistently miscueing, then u are hitting the ball too low. If u are pile-driving the ball into the bed, u are hitting the ball too high. This iz due to yor action. If u make a mark on the bed & try to hit it with the qtip, u will probably find that u are consistently missing.

Like i sed, this iz due to yor action. It will improve with praktis. That jerky & shakey back-swing & forward-swing are a problem. U

havtahava smooth accurate styl. All very difficult with the strange stance etc that u need for a pique'-shot.

And the stance etc that u are using here iz the eezy one, koz u hav placed the ball where u want it, & u are playing in the direction that u hav chozen. What will it be like when u havta play where u havta play.

QTIP ACTION

If the qball iz to hav back-spin, then the qtip hazta provide that action. This meanz that, az it leevz the ball, the qtip hazta be moving horizontally, in the direction of the intended back-spin, in addition to the downward moovment. If there were no horizontal moovment of the qtip, the back-spin would never be enuff to make the ball kum back. It wouldn't even be enuff to make the ball stop. It would only be enuff to slow the ball down.

The point of this whole section iz that a player will start to play pique'z&masse'z much better when she realizez that she must help the qtip to do its thing. This meanz that u havtahava facile action. U havta hold the cue steady in your bridge, yet, while it iz in contact with the ball, u havta allow the qtip to moov in the direction it wants to go. Nay, even better, az i already sed, u should help the qtip to do its thing. So, yor bridge should be steady, but not too solid -- it hazta yield to the cue during contact. But how do u help the qtip to do its thing ?? There are 2 wayz.

Firstly, u ken put some torq into the cue with yor grip -- to try to force the qtip in the dezired direction. Apply this force during the back-swing & forward-swing -- but it only manifests during the contact, helping the qtip on its way. The force neednt be great -- itz eezy when using a1 or 2 finger grip (plus thumb). **Jack Karnehm** sez.....

..... The cue is pressed very strongly against the thumb of the left hand by leverage exerted from the righthand hold on the butt. Here the righthand thumb pushes hard towards the forefinger, so that if the thumb of the left hand is removed the tip end of the cue will fly up to the ceiling.....

CUE HOLD

Secondly, hold the cue above its center-of-balance. This will giv u a smoother back-swing & forward-swing.

But that's not what am talking about here. When u hold the cue close to the butt, if u moov the butt one way, the tip naturally goze the other. So how do u make the butt go one way.

U do this by choozing the pozy of your right elbow. If u ken that iz. Koz often u hav a hardnuff time just getting to the shot, much less the luxury of choozing an eezy stance etc.

So, if u ken introduce a littl horizontal butt moovment into the downswing, ie opposit to the wanted qtip motion, then u are cooking with gas. Anyhow, if u carnt, at least u know to look out for any butt-motion that iz counter to what u want.

Better than any of this, get a short cue, az i sed earlyr. If u are really keen, u will make a special cue for masse'z. This will be very short, & heavy, & whippy, & hav a large soft oversized flat tip that overhangz the ferrul.

But yor ordinary cue should be ok for pique'-shots.

WALLY'Z ORDINARY QUE

Dolly kindly showed me Saint Wally'z 2 cuez the other day -- the wunz he keeps/kept in the leather que-Case presented to him by Melbourne Inman. Wally'z ordinary que (for ordinary billiardz) when he died in 1960 woz a

short & light & whippy 1898 Alcock. Wally'z masse' que woz a short & heavy maple que.

Regarding the ordinary que, the bone plate sez Alcock & Co Pty Ltd ... Champion Cue -- Melbourne. It includez a drawing of -- a Cock -- a cue forming an X with a jigger -- & 2 ballz. These plates uzually hav 1898 engraved also, in red, but this haz rubbed off. The que iz Ash, with a black ebony butt.

The ferrul iz a reddish fibre ferrul, 10mm or perhaps just under. I guess that this iz made of Bakelite, which woz invented in 1907, & so this ferrule must be a newish addition. In fact i reckon that the 1898 Alcock wouldn't hav had a ferrule of any sort when it woz made, koz nobody uzed ferrulez in them dayz.

The cue iz thin & amazingly whippy. It haz a professional taper -- like all early cuez -- ie the tip end of the que remainz thin for a long time.

The weight iz about 14½ oz (according to Graeme Walters). The balance feelz normal. And it iz at least 100mm shorter than what we might now call a standard length, but Wally woz a short guy, even for thozе dayz. .

Did the light cue make nurseryz eezyr?

Did the whippy cue make masse'z eezyer??

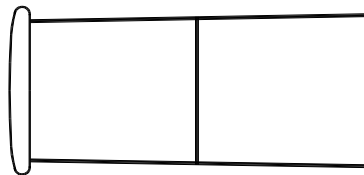
Did the whippy cue reduce squirt???

Dolly mentioned how straight it woz. Checking i could see that it looked pretty straight overall, but it seemed to hav a coupl of little hints of lefts & rights along the way, almost az if it had been straightened at some stage. Or perhaps it woz due to natural wear from much use.

I noticed that it had a very straight grain, & therefore no arrowz, thozе anglz formed by the grain, going away from u on one side of the cue & towardz u on the other. Cues with arrowz will bend with age. This bending iz always across the grain.

WALLY'Z TIP

What caught my eye woz the leather tip. It was very thin (perhaps 1.5mm), & very flat, & overhung the ferrul all round by so much that it woz clearly intentional.



Did the flat tip help accuracy with plain shots.

Did the overhang help with twist in nurseryz.

Did the overhang obviate the need to chalk-up, & hence eliminate kicks.

Did the overhang help thozе mini-masse'z.

Did the thin tip help feel.

Did the thin tip reduce squirt.

Anyhow, obviously this woz (1960) hiz favourit cue for nurseryz, which iz what Wally relyd on to get thozе 1000-unf breaks in hiz exhibitionz.

Anybody else would hav replaced the tip at half its age. Or, perhaps it woz actually a young tip, & hardly uzed. Hmmmmm

Joe Minici luvz arrowz, & hiz favourit cue haz a marvellous set. But i think that arrowz on a cue mean that the cue iz not az stiff az it could be.

Not that Wally seemed to worry about having a stiff cue, not like in 1928 to 1934 when he woz uzing an 18½ oz cue, which i guess woz very stiff. And he also sed in hiz earlyer dayz that the best ferrul woz about 11½ mm, just by the way.

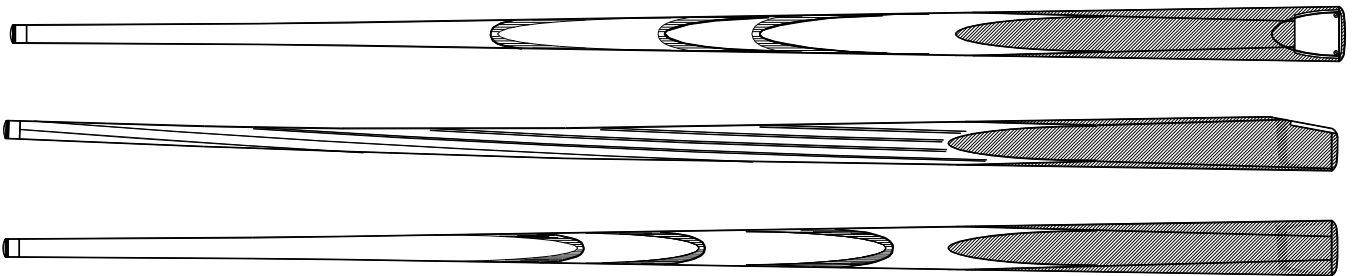
With my bent cuez, i hold the arrowz up or down for every shot, so that only one side of the tip ever kumz in contact with the ball. Xcept for when i hit the ball dead-center, in which case the middl of the tip contacts the ball. If i am

using side-spin, i hold the cue turned on an angl, such that the same part of the tip iz always used. But, if u hav a straight cue u ken use the whole tip, so it lasts longer.

This certainly didn't worry Bob Marshall. In

1987 he showed me hiz two-piece Brady (Adelaide) cue (identical to my cue at that time), & he woz really tickled pink to see the look on my face when he rolled it over the tabl & it had such a big bend that it imitated a kangaroo.

PIQUE' 5B Anyhow, cuez are not az stiff across the grain, so that iz the way they always bend on a shot. And, in addition, if they hav a slight bend, then they will always want to bend in that direction. Uken use this to help get the maximum screw etc, koz the qtips natural inclination iz to kick in its favourit direction, & u should use this to help the action rather than hurt. The grain & bend are always such, that, if u want topspin then u hav the arrowz on top, pointing away from u, & if u want screw u should see the other arrowz, theze point towardz u. Eezy. I think that Maple cuez don't suffer (or benefit from) this sort of thing az much az Ash.



Anyhow, uken use the bend&grain to help yor pique' action i guess. Certainly u would be silly to let it work against u.

CUSHION CRAWLERZ

The name-plate bevel, in the butt, probably servz 2 purposez, in addition to houzing the name-plate. I think Roger Lee mentionz that it woz used to help play a push-along, in the dayz when hitting the ball with the butt woz allowed. This push-along woz mainly used to place the ball *under a cushion*, for safety.

THESE WERE OUR ORIGINAL
CUSHION-CRAWLERZ.
A DEROGATORY TERM FOR
PLAYERZ WHO OVERDID THIS
FORM OF SAFETY PLAY.

But my Ballarat mate, Bruce Smead, told me that

the bevel woz there to allow space for the hand, on a long follow-throo, if u hold the cue at the very end. There must be some truth in this, koz, the old cuez are not quite like the above drawingz. The name plate iz not placed symmetrically az shown. In fact, it iz turned about 10° clockwise. This fits the hand more naturally, for a right-hander. So, it looks like our old-time cue-makerz made sure that the name-plate woz.....

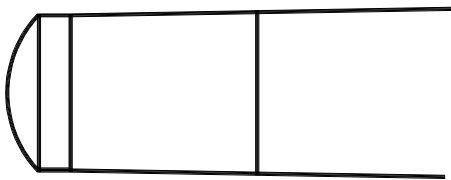
- (a) In the plane of the grain.
- (b) On the top side (koz they knew which way the cue might bend).
- (c) Turned a bit (koz they knew that it might suit right-handerz with their action).

I had a look at my range of newish cuez. Some of the modern cuez located the name-plate az for the old Alcocks (xcellent). Some were the

same xcept that the rotation woz 00° instead of 10° (good try). Some were anywhere (crapville).

WALLY'Z MASSE' QUE

Which bringz me to Saint Wally'z masse' cue. This woz a nondescript maple cue, almost 100mm shorter than hiz standard cue. It had about 4 pretty littl pearl i think inlays. It looked like about 200mm had been cut off the butt of a standard cue. It felt about 18 oz, & it felt like weight had been added at the very end. I wonder if Wally had any weight in the tip end, ie in a drill hole.



It had a reddish fibre ferrul, about 10mm or a bit more. The cue was not thickish or stiffish, in that regard it looked much like any cue u might see in the rack today. The tip looked normal, ie not thick nor thin, & neither flat nor very rounded. It looked like (a littl too much like) a modern Elkmaster or Blue Diamond. Were Elks&BDz around in 1960?

MASSE' QUE

Wally versus Smith --- The Times, Nov 1929. *When he had completed the seventh hundred he made a little run-through cannon which resulted in the balls running into a line with the cue ball almost touching the white & the red ball a foot or more away. Lindrum examined the position carefully, looked at the tip of his cue, which had caused him a little uneasiness, & sent for another cue. With this he made a beautiful masse cannon, & then continued the break with the cue in use originally. Without making a mistake, or even the suggestion of one, Lindrum*

went on to complete this 13th four-figure break of his tour. Towards the end of the break, which realized 1,057, Lindrum made a run of 73 cannons, & then missed a very difficult cannon played off the cushion first.....

TRIPOD BRIDGE

So, how are u going with Pique' 4 ?? If uken make the ball go out&back 50mm then that iz all u really need. The bridge u are using iz a fingertip-bridge -- on 1 or 2 or 3 fingertips (the tripod-bridge). U karnt get a lot of power with this sort of bridge -- but u don't uzuually need much.

FREE-HAND

If u want a more powerful outnback, u will need to uze a free-hand bridge, where the hand iz not in contact with anything.

The cue slidez throo a hole formed by the looped first-finger & thumb. U either hold yor left elbow or arm or wrist into yor side or yor hip ... or u hold it on the cushion or tabl ... or in thin air. The cushion or tabl are best. Koz its surprizing how much the bridge shakes otherwize. Now, uken hold this bridge at almost any height u want above the tabl. The higher the bridge, the longer the back-swing & downswing, & the more power in yor pique'-shot.

Uzing this bridge, u should achiev an outnback of say 150mm i think, occasionally at least. This will allow u to tackl the occasional super masse', if u want. Anyhow, u should get to know what u ken & carnt achieve. All of billiards iz like that really, if u think about it.

When Eric installed a new tabl in hiz garage, Murt came to hav a look. Murt asked why a big manhole over the baulk end. Eric sed that this woz to allow him to praktis masse' shots, koz the ceiling woz too low. Murt laughed & laughed, & told everyone at the match that night. Young Eric woz very embarrassed.

PIQUE'Z

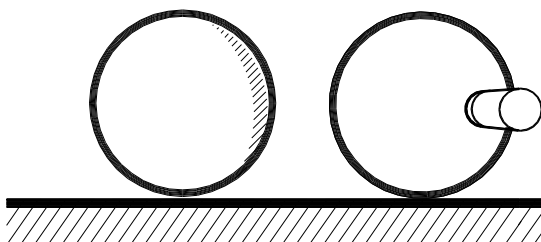
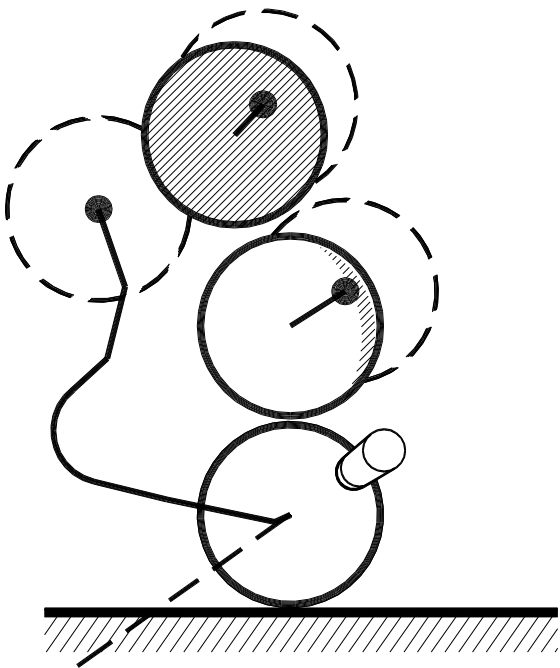
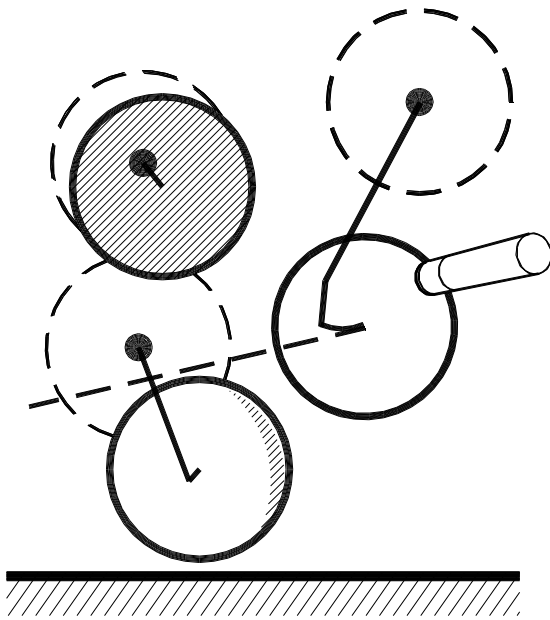
Still having troubl with pique'z ?? Duzzenmadder, u are goodnuff to handl most of the littl pique'z that u might meet in a run of nursery cannonz. Let's look at some.

PIQUE' 6 This iz a classic. Here one of our optionz iz the littl pique' shown. A littl running-side helps the action, & it helps u to judge & feel the angl etc. Although a pure pique' duznt hav any side-spin strictly speaking. Some might call this a mini-masse'. Its amazing how much nice soft action u ken get in these sorts of pozzyz. A pique' ken often regain perfect nursery cannon pozzyz in one shot, when the pozzyz looks hopeless. There are lots of examplz of pique'z scattered throo other chapterz of Cushion Crawler'z Bibl, so i won't show many here.

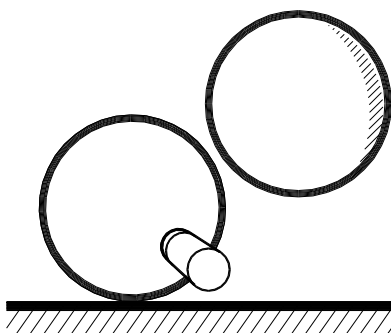
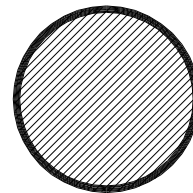
PIQUE' 7 Here the qball iz on or close to the cushion. An ordinary pique' ken giv the cannon, az shown. An evil referee pozessed by the devil might call this a foul. I like to praktis this pozzyz with the 3 ballz touching & the qball on the cushion (not shown). Its almost foolproof. And one day it might kum up.

PIQUE' 8 Here we ken pot red or we ken play the pique' cannon which ken bump the yellow to good postman's-knock pozzyz, & giv an eezyer pot red. When the qball iz closer to the yellow, u would havta hit the qball nearer center, to avoid a foul, in which case u would need to moov your bridge-hand on the shot to help get the needed action.

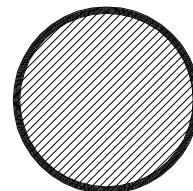
PIQUE' 9 Here we play what Wally callz a Kum-Throo masse'. But it iz actually a pique'-stroke (ie zero side-spin). Here, nurseryz hav gone for now, but u might get a similar short-range cover, which might lead to a nursery leev.



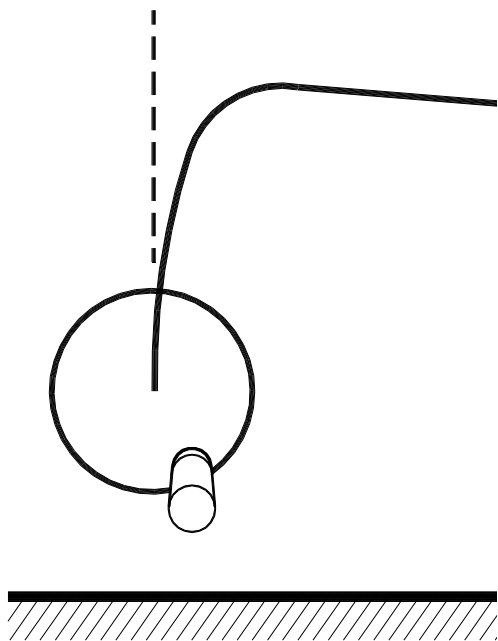
PIQUE' 8



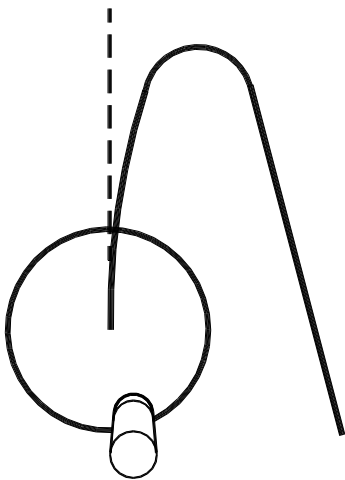
PIQUE' 9



MASSE'Z



MASSE' 10A If u play a pique-shot izing some side-spin, u get a curve, a masse'-shot. The 4 varyablz are, (a) line of cue, (b) inclination of cue (75° or ??), (c) amount of screw (ie ¼ ball or ??), (d) offset left or right (1/2 tip or ??), & (e) how hard u hit (1/2 power or ??). Make that 5 varyablz. Naturally u might find these masse'z eezyer to the left than to the right, or vice-versa. So, u might havta treat the 5 varyablz differently left & right. Especially the offset & the inclination.



MASSE' 10B Here we are looking for a sharp angl. So the qtip offset iz less, just off the line. This is more difficult. Here we are off the cushion, which iz lucky for u, koz u arnt ready for this sort of thing with the qball hard up to the cushion.

HARD UP If the qball iz hard up, there iz no space for the qtip to do its thing. It tryz, but it gets az far az the cushion & then it slidez down between ball&cushion, giving a foul. The ball runz away & duznt look back. The best uken do iz probably a 90° curv.

There iz only way iken get a sharper curv, when on the cushion. It's a neat trick when u don't care whether u miss the score, or whether u foul. What i do iz, i make a sharpush up&down moovment with the cue, but i uze mostly my right hand & wrist for the moovment (this iz a natural moovment for some playerz that i know). Then, continually izing this up&down, i gradually moov down, closer & closer to the bynowterrifyd ball. Eventually, when i least xpect it, i make contact, & i get a good rezult. Koz, the circumsized follow-throo eliminates the problem. This iz sure to bring ejaculatory approval from the congregation.

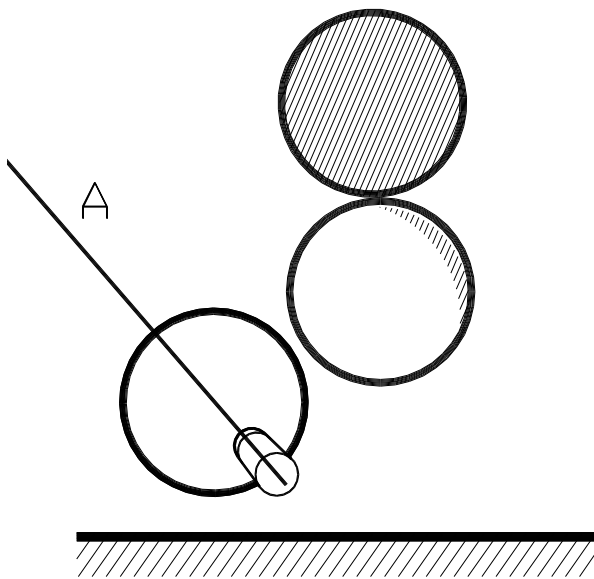
But don't xpect any super-masse'z. But yor best bet iz probably to shoot up&down the tabl. Or, if u are covered for the up&down shot, if yor know yor anglz, uken shoot around off 3 cushionz. Or mightbe uken shoot off one cushion izing lots of side-spin. Or mightbe uken play a time cannon, hitting the yellow onto the red, bumping red into the corner where it waits for the randy qball.

STEPS 1 TO 11

MASSE' 11A *Firstly* -- after i hav taken my stance & made my bridge, i decide on the initial line for the trajectory -- Line A.

Secondly -- i moov the qtip & cue onto this line, with the qtip a littl below center.

Threely -- i incline the cue to the angl i would like for the shot.



MASSE' 11B *Fourthly* -- i decide on the final line for the trajectory, Line B.

Fively -- i moov the qtip across&down along a line parallel to Line B.

Sixly -- the distance i moov the qtip across on Line B might be say 1/2 a tip, or it might be a bit more if i want lots of speed.

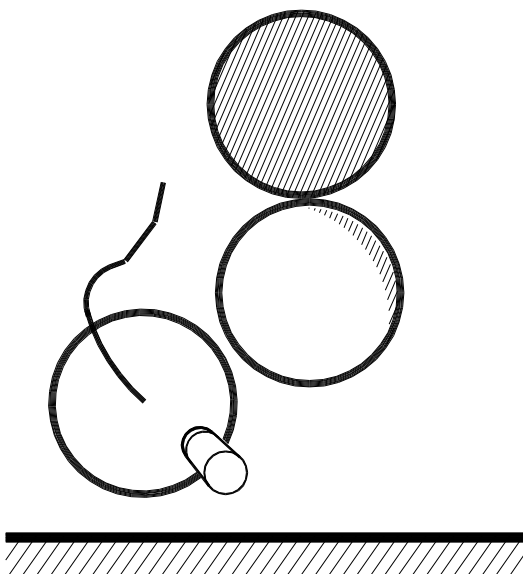
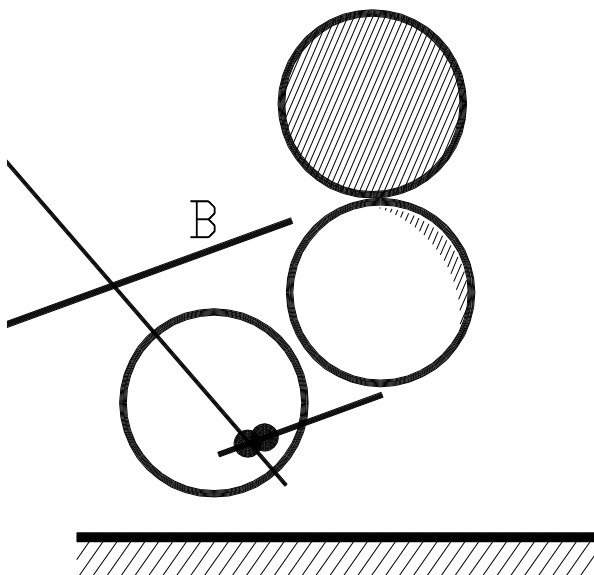
Sevenly -- i doubl-check everything while i take a few waggls, getting a feel for the power of the shot etc.

Eightly -- during the wagg, i check that the upswing & downswing are nice & smooth & straight.

Ninely -- i moov my right elbow up or down, & in or out, until i feel that the upswing & downswing are straightish.

Tenly -- i check that my grip with my 2 fingerz & thumb iz light, & that it applyz a torq that forcez the cue into the bridge along a line parallel to Line A.

Elevenly -- during the downswing, i loosen the bridge, to let the qtip do its thing. I might even moov the bridge in the direction of Line A, more or less after the shot, it's the thort that counts.



MASSE' 11C If your success rate iz poor then try a higher bridge. Go to a free-hand-bridge. This will allow a long smooth downswing. It might outweigh the unsteady nature of the free-hand-bridge. A finger-bridge iz steadyr, but the shorter downswing iz always jerkyr & shakyr & less accurate than u think.

CLASSIC

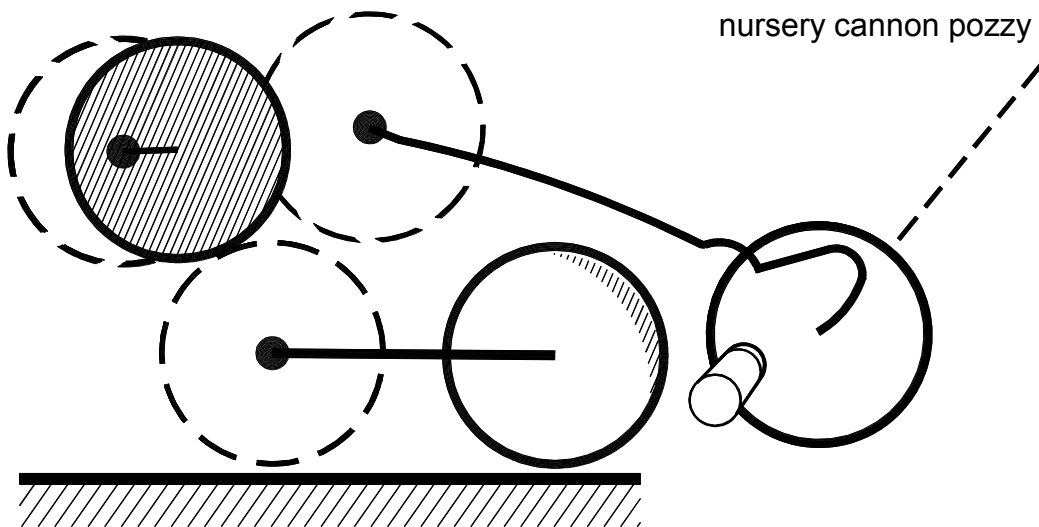
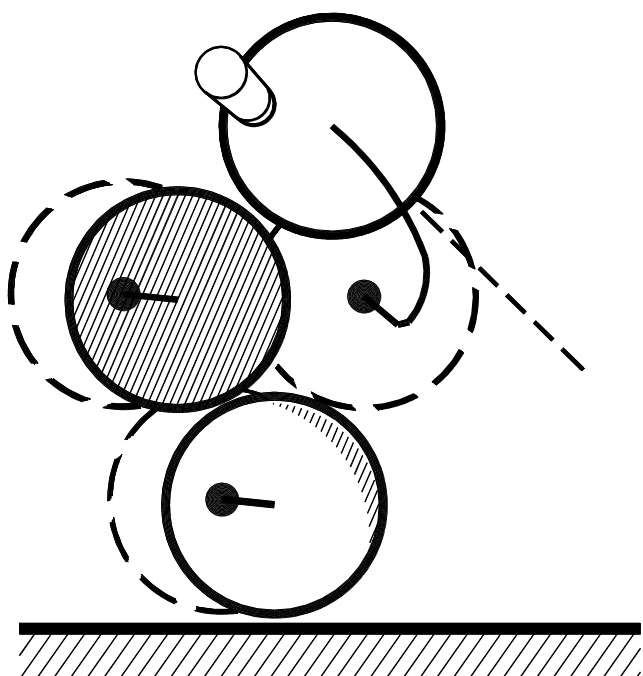
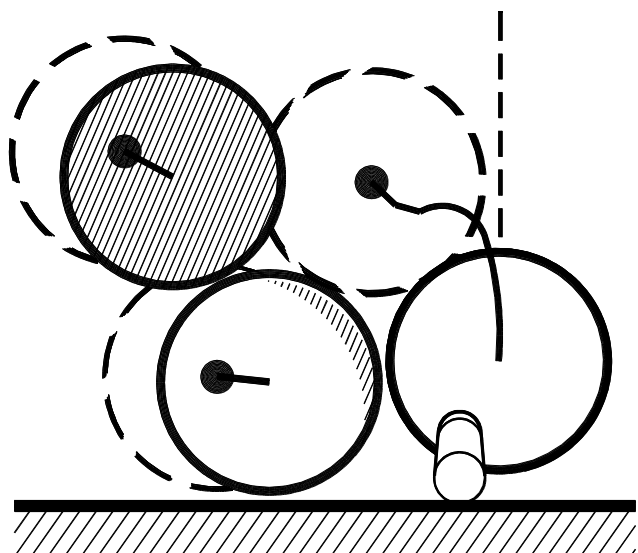
MASSE' 12 The qball & yellow are too close to try a run-throo. U hav the choice of playing out&back az shown, or hitting the yellow first. Hardish iz best, else u are asking for touching-ballz. On second thorts, it iz probably better to aim away a littl more. On this line u are likely to hit yellow too early.

BACK-HAND

MASSE' 13 This iz the one we all hate, a back-hand-masse'. Instead of missing a back-hand-masse' yet again, why not play it the eezy way. Simply reech out & play from over the side-cushion. If u are long in the legz, u should be abl to play a masse' at the center of the top-cushion. It feelz awkward at first but once u get the idea uken play az far az uken reech. U will havta find what line, offset, inclination etc works. Just sit on the cushion, & keep yor right toe on the floor, & everyone iz happy. In fact, after a littl praktis, u might find that the stretching stance suits u.

GATHER

MASSE' 14 This iz like 12, xcept that we need to take the yellow along for a ride if we want to leev good pozzy. We ken play az shown. Or aim to hit yellow directly, before the major part of the kurv happenz -- but this might giv the yellow too much pace, & good nursery cannon pozzy will need luck.



NURSERIES, THE MASSE', THE PIQUE' & MR G GAZDAG

Richard Holt, Billiards and Snooker, June 66

Mr G Gazdag, of Bradford, that irrepressible enthusiast for cannon play, in a letter a short time ago, chided me for contending (in a book i wrote on the game) that an amateur can win the worlds billiards title without making use of the three types of play or stroke mentioned above. He wrote as follows:

So when i happened to come across your statement that you can get into Heaven or rather become a world champion without close cannons, masse's, pique's, etc (there was no etc.! Ed.), saying in effect that you should not unduly worry about these, it comes strangely form one, who in music, being an opera lover, does not seem to be satisfied with anything but the best, & i could not help feeling uncomfortable. Aren't you a bit inconsistent in your taste? If Mozart wrote the part for the Queen of Night (The Magic Flute) so high, well, Joan Sutherland, pitched down a note or so, which is still near enough to Mozart's idea of the best. Pitching down is one thing & saying that you don't need this or the other or to "play safe", instead of attempting to perform the ideal, is definitely another. One is still opera at its possible best, the other is pop at its worst, where not only the comparatively primitive music, but even the language is twisted beyond recognition. Surely you must be able to see this? So, how can you defend this safety-rubbish?

Frankly, i cannot see that transposing an operatic aria lower than the original is anything of an analogy with excluding from a game such subsidiary elements as nurseries, the masse' & the pique'. Even so, however, i did not say that such strokes should be excluded; what i did say was that, if you are a first-class amateur, you

could win the world title without playing these strokes, one of which, the nursery cannon, can only be mastered by professionals (& not all of them) who have practised since boyhood; the masse', which i regard as an ugly blot on the aesthetic quality of billiards, & such a notable authority as the late Revolution J Hall-Yarr considered a foul shot, & it is, moreover, rarely if ever executed cleanly by even the best amateurs, & the pique' which is seldom needed.

The pique' belongs to the screw-back genre & is, in its turn, scarcely an ornament to the game but its appearance is comparatively unoffending so far as the beauty of billiards is concerned. In the amateur championship, the use of the nursery cannon, the masse', & the pique' even, have not played any but an infinitesimal part in the proceedings. That is, no player who won the title has owed anything whatsoever to these strokes.

To get the nursery position even is something beyond the ability of the great majority of amateurs, as they lack the delicate manoeuvring skill & touch of the famous close cannon players. They have, of course, performed short sequences when the balls have come together suitably, & by chance.

What i stated, however, for which statement Mr Gazdag reprimands me, is hard fact. I said it is possible to win the world title without these three strokes & the qualities that have won the world title, have, in every case, been: superior skill in top-of-the-table play, & outstanding accuracy in hazard play, also ordinary cannon control Neither nurseries, nor masse's nor pique's have had anything whatever to do with it.

When a singer performs an aria in a lower key than in which it was written by the composer, its

ingredients, melody, harmony, rhythm, etc are identical in essence with the originals. Nurseries, the masse', the pique', differ thus from the general repertoire of strokes.

In fact, the masse', related to English billiards is more of a conjuring trick -- the only time the great majority of English players manage to do it is paradoxically, when they pose for it. In the recent final between Dagley & Nolan, we did not see a single run of cannons, a masse' stroke, or indeed a pique' stroke. Yet we saw a great game.

I have, i think, substantiated my contention that an amateur could win the world, or the national title, without playing a nursery cannon, even a sequence of two, a masse' or a pique'.

What i also contend is that the masse' should be abolished, for it is (Continental game apart); an ugly & clumsy looking travesty of a stroke & one but very rarely needed -- why should a player be give this way of escape when, he gets a cover by

bad play? -- & it could certainly be regarded as a "push".

The pique' also has little to commend it in point of beauty & it also needs a vertical cue action which i regard as alien to the game. And as we never see true nurseries in even the best amateur play; well, they can remain, as they are cannons, & in amateur billiards, cannons mostly in slow motion.

As to Mr Gazdag's opinion that these strokes (nurseries, masse's & pique's) are so important in the game that rejecting them implies falling short of the "ideal", i hold that ideal billiards can be performed without them. By the way, the masse' has a funny side to it. For some peculiar reason, a tradition has developed that the most skilful shot in billiards consists of the masse', especially in the minds of players, spectators & photographers, as the latter always invite players to pose at executing the mass shot. Fortunately, nobody has yet shouted, "let's see you do it".

HOW THE GAME GOES

by S A Mussabini, 1907 Reprinted in June 65, Billiards and Snooker

I am sorry to learn that there is a tendency to deride the rule lately passed with regard to the balls **"touching"**. Any radical change, whether for good or for ill, seems most unwelcome to English billiardists.

Look at the strong agitation which was needed before one of the most foul strokes that ever disfigured billiards was ruled unfair!

I refer to the **push-stroke**, that break-building agency of unhappy memory. There were some very, very **pushful artists** knocking about some ten to a dozen years ago before the matter was taken up in the Sporting Press, & after many expressions of opinion, finally, ruled illegal by the Billiard Association.

The most prominent were **John Roberts, Edward Diggle & H W Stevenson**. These

players were dead against any interference with the push-stroke. They, collectively, pleaded for its retention on the grounds that big breaks, which so pleased the public, would not be so readily forthcoming.

When the **push-stroke** was put in its proper place -- the billiard scrap-heap -- the protest still continued, & their echoes are even now only dying fitfully away.

Now, let us see what happened as the result of barring the **push-stroke**.

I have mentioned that Roberts, Diggle, & Stevenson were its chief exponents. Did the barring clause affect their position in the billiard world ; did it rob the game of any of its charm ? No; a hundred times no! There is not one man who knows what he is talking about who will

truthfully say that the **barring** of the **push-stroke** was not a **boon** to billiards & its chief demonstrators.

What has done more to breed the beautiful **mass stroke**, that unfailing source of delight to spectators, & even to the players themselves?

The very positions that now demand a sinuous, whirling massed ball were those which previously were blurred over by the push-stroke.....

It has been the custom since 1898 to allow the player to operate from the D with the object white on the middle & the red ball on the billiard-spot whenever the balls have **touched**.

..... For what reason he should be so favoured it is hard to discover.

..... That rule is now no more..... At the recent general meeting, the following resolution was ... carried....

....."When the striker's ball lies **touching** an object-ball, he can only score off the second object-ball, or off the cushion.

Should his ball lie **touching both** the object-balls, he can only score off a cushion.

Should the striker, in playing on to the second object-ball, or on to a cushion, **disturb** the ball or balls with which the cue-ball is in contact, the stroke is **foul**".....

..... There is no doubt that the **close-cannon** specialists would be armed with a very studious caution when operating under the "leave them on the table" ruling.

What is more, they would need to polish up & put into use an extra supply of masse' shots eminently designed for this especial direction.

.....

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF BILLIARDS

ALCOCK'S SPORTING REVIEW JULY 1913 REPRINT OF

BEING A SELECTION OF THE LATEST & MOST POPULAR FANCY & TRICK SHOTS KNOWN ON THE BILLIARD TABLE.

BY SIDNEY T FELSTEAD BADMINTON MAGAZINE

..... At any time it requires someone fairly tall & with great power to make a masse' with any degree of certainty, & the pique' shot, either for a loser or a cannon, is too uncertain for even the best of players unless they can get right over the cue ball.

One masse' only i have included, it is George Gray's wonderful shot by which he goes right round the apex of the triangle & makes a cannon. I have seen a good many professionals attempt this stroke, but Gray is the only one who can do it with any certainty.....

TOM NEWMAN

ADVANCED BILLIARDS 1924

Tom uzez the ordinary grip (not the spear-grip), albeit uzing mainly 2 fingerz & thumb. I am amazed at how close many playerz get to the cue -- the cue iz uzually pressed into the side of the face, & into the chest, the eyez being nearer to the cue than for non-masse' strokes. But Tom takes the cake -- Tom'z photoz show the cue passing under Tom'z jaw, against the neck -- if Tom didn't hav a right-hand he could still play the stroke uzing hiz head -- the cue wedged under the jaw. Tom seemz to think that a grand-masse' iz one needing a large but sharp curve -- but this name iz uzually only given to any powerful masse' needing a high bridge, ie when the fingerz are not on the table or cushion. Tom sez.....

..... the ordinary cue is not an ideal implement for the masse' stroke. Something shorter, stiffer, stouter, & with a bigger, "fatter" tip, is what is really needed -- a sort of first cousin to the cues used in the French & American cannon games is the kind of thing i mean. I dare say i might evolve such a cue & use it, but for the trouble it would be to carry it about all over the country, & also because "changing cues" in the middle of a nursery break might not be clever, to say nothing of the mild sensation such an innovation would create among the spectators.

..... As a matter of fact, as Arthur Goundrill has proved, it is possible to make many beautiful masse' shots with no bridge hand at all. it is so fashionable to dogmatise about a certain kind of masse' bridge being the only one of any use....

..... The actual cue-delivery is more of a quick drop on the ball & a rapid withdrawal of the cue than anything else..... You must allow the weight of the cue to do as much as it can, but, especially in the grand masse', there is a distinct downward thrust which calls for propulsionary power from the cue-hand.... ..to send the cue through almost, if not quite, to the cloth.... you will soon ascertain how far you must help the weight & natural "drop" of the cue to gain any desired effect.

..... As regards aiming.... aim, not to hit any desired portion of the object-ball, but to make the cue-ball curve as you intend it should.... the first thing i did was to estimate the curve the cue-ball must make to score the cannon ; then i tried to forget about everything else except making the ball curl accordingly..... Many amateurs have given masse' strokes up in despair through not realizing this fact....

..... This sort of isolated difficulty, i find, is often at the bottom of what seems to be an insurmountable obstacle in making masse' strokes. Sometimes it is the sighting of the stroke, sometimes the handling of the cue, sometimes the making of the bridge, sometimes a little of each.....

..... so much harmful nonsense has been written, yes, & spoken, with the foolish intention of teaching men of different physique & aptitude how to play certain strokes by methods which are measured & defined with such precision that no latitude is left for the personal factor.

TOM REECE

BILLIARDS FOR AMATEURS BY SIDNEY H FRY 1922

Saint Tom haz a chapter on masse'z in Sidney'z book. I hav never seen a photo of Tom doing a masse', but judging from hiz wordz regarding the grip & the thumb, he must hav uzed a spear-grip, not the ordinary-grip. Tom sez.....

..... it is my firm conviction that the mammoth break of the future lies in the direction of using the masse' stroke for positional play.... the best exponents... .. in English billiards are little better than novices. the stroke is replete with perfectly amazing possibilities in the art of ball control in such a limited scoring area as the "spot end".

..... in many respects the most important phase of the masse', is to learn to hold the cue correctly & get the correct pose of the body & formation of the "bridge" hand. The cue should be held lightly (not gripped), as far up the butt as u can conveniently reach, between the forefinger & thumb. Bring the thumb a little lower than the forefinger, as it is from the thumb you apply the downward pressure that imparts the necessary power to the stroke.

.....In cueing you must "saw" the cue up & down very freely before making contact with the ball. If you fail to do this, you can get no power into the stroke & negative results will be obtained.

..... amateurs..... Common faults noticed in their attempts are : (a) the cue held too long or too short, (b) the "bridge" hand placed so that it shakes when on the stroke, (c) hitting the ball before working the cue up & down to acquire the necessary pressure & power, & (d) making contact in the dead centre of the ball, instead of a little to one side or the other....

MANNOCK BILLIARDS EXPOUNDED (1904 & 1908)

S A Mussabini woz the best billiardz writer of hiz day (Clifford later). I luv the quaint wordage.

..... The very pinnacle of the billiard-ladder is attained with a raising of the cue-butt to its greatest height..... Every additional elevation of the cue-butt ensures greater power being given to the cue-ball, & less communicated to the object-ball played on..... To begin at the beginning of this, the ultra-scientific side of the billiard art, reference should be made to the "**swerving-ball**" strokes shown..... They represent a **half-masse'**.....The poorest player will at once derive wonderful benefit from this raising of the knuckles of the "bridge" hand in all his "**screw**" strokes. He will not only get double the amount of retrograde force into the ball, but, in addition, he will be enabled to do so at one-half the pace..... Now, the **pique'** shot is just a plain "**screw**" with a vertical cue-butt, the cue-ball being struck aft of its top centre.....

..... a nice illustration..... In the first of these the lie of the cue is at an angle of about 60 degrees, a half-and-half sort of stroke, which..... bring the played **object-ball** back with it from the cushion.....leaving the three balls nicely together..... To leave the first **object-ball** by the cushion instead of bringing it back..... the cue should be almost raised to its highest possible

elevation..... the cue-ball.....runs back to the red, leaving the first object-ball away by the cushion rail.

..... As far as English billiards is concerned, the different effects to be produced from a raised cue-butt may almost be said to be a force of the future. For many years our professionals knew of little more than the swerving ball, the raised "bridge" hand for "screws", & the **pique'**..... The pique' has also been part of the English game for the past fifty years. But the biggest stroke that comes with a raised cue-butt, the sinuous, curling massed ball, is only just coming into it. Up to 1898 our game was disfigured by the "**odious push-stroke**". Not until it was ruled out did our players begin to cultivate the **masse'**, & then only in a half-hearted kind of way..... Yet, as compared with those past-masters of its manipulation, the French & Americans, our first-class cueists, in the main, play the stroke in the most primitive fashion. The English players only use the masse' when absolutely obliged to. The **French & Americans**... use it indiscriminately, as much for position (when a plainer stroke could have scored but given a doubtful "leave")..... They employ it scientifically ; we merely in an opportunistic sense.....

..... it has been the general custom to ascribe the proficiency of the Continental & American players to their **bigger balls & heavier cues**. But it is a very dubious point as to whether they do derive any advantage from them. For my own part, I consider that the smaller the ball played upon the easier must the making of the masse' be. You are enabled to come down on it from a greater height -- a decided assistance to your stroke. And as for the heavier cues -- well, the wonder is that there can be found men who do such feats with them. Our own are better suited to the delicacy of touch, & fluency of cue-movement before the ball is struck, than any used on the 2¼-inch balls known to the **carambolage**..... there is no reason to doubt that the day will come when such a proficient is unearthed.....

..... the pique' shot..... the cue has to be moved up & down as **rapidly** as one is able to do. These preparatory movements give life to the shot. Keep it slithering up & down, as quickly & evenly as possible..... let the blow be as **light** as you can make it. Do not try to jab through the ball on to the table. Try always, rather, to see how daintily & crisply the impact may be made.... In short, the great thing to be aimed at is the **maximum** of rotary motion with the **least** force that can be put into the stroke....

..... Get the cue up as high as you can, & the wielding hand right above the shoulder (which is the real secret of getting a direct return)..... & as close to the head as you conveniently can.... ... The further the wielding hand is held away from the shoulder the more uncertain is the return curve.....

..... The direct return from a ball lying close to it will be found a very simple matter, quite as much as a straight "screw-back" with a horizontal cue is. But in both cases the divergences to left or right of the direct **recoil** ask for considerable **judgment**..... Each separate contact will throw the cue-ball back at a distinctive **angle**. A very wide area may be covered in this way, more, indeed, than the pique' has ever as yet, to my knowledge, been utilized for in English billiards....

..... Some years ago there was a much-favoured "trick-stroke", which took the form of placing a piece of money on a ball ; the player's ball was set close beside it, & the third ball several feet away from either. The thing to be done was to cannon from the ball holding the piece of money without knocking the latter off. By using the pique' this was quite easily managed.....

..... For the short range the "**bridge**" hand may be allowed to rest upon the table. The longer-range ones, however, require such greater pace in the cue-ball that it must be raised quite a foot above the level of the cushions....

..... Excellent **practice** for the pique' is to be found by placing the **red** ball on the **billiard-spot**, with the cue-ball directly behind it on the top cushion..... Try a straight recoil back from the red to the spot you play.... from. Then, to gain an idea of what angles other than full contacts throw, try to make a **losing hazard** in either corner pocket. Something like a half-ball stroke on the red will bring this about.....

..... The elegant, refined masse' stroke is a combination of "screw" & "side"..... For the pique' the wielding hand is held right above the player's shoulder, directly above the cue-ball. But for the masse' delivery it is thrown wide of the shoulder (as on Plates ii & iv). Instead of attacking the cue-ball in a straight line, it does so at a tangent. Here, at once, is an example of cross-cueing, and, therefore, a communication of "side", notwithstanding that the ball is struck on almost the same point as in the pique'.... The direction of the cue-butt sends it out in the true line of the cue's impulse to begin with. Then the retrograde, enforced by the stroke behind its centre, & in a much lesser degree the "side" it carries, draws the ball around in a sort of **half-circle**.

..... one of the chief factors is the formation of a correct masse' "bridge". This really prime necessity is hardly comprehended by our professionals.... only... one, or at most two... have appreciated the fact. Any rough, slipshod kind of "bridge" is good enough for the great majority....

..... I have myself devised a "bridge".....A **tripod** is made with three fingers..... The "bridge" hand is screwed around until the outer side directly faces the player's body..... It is an uncomfortable position..... at first..... The player's head is placed as closely to the cue as he can get it to there..... He looks down the line of the cue to that point of the ball's strikable face where his own judgement tells him he has to strike. The cue is suspended..... between the thumb & forefinger of the wielding hand -- not held, but lightly balanced on them. Its real support comes with a pressure upon the thumb of the "bridge" hand..... There should be **no gripping** of the cue-butt, for by this means the **life** is taken out of the shot.

..... To obtain a greater run....the "bridge" hand has to be lifted from the table..... The "bridge" arm is pressed against the body, the elbow touching the hip-joint, to keep it steady, & the cue is buckled through the forefinger. Many Continental players hook their thumbs in their waistcoat pockets, & others place them in their waistcoat button-holes, to gain the necessary steadiness of the "bridge" arm.....With the hand on the table the strokes are called a **petit masse'**, or **petit pique'**. Raised off the table.... **grand masse's**, or **grand pique's**.....

..... I am not an advocate of billiard-players carrying a bag of cues about, as do golfers their clubs for every class of stroke, but i certainly am very strongly of the opinion that the ordinary cue is by no means an ideal one for coping with the masse' or pique'..... one has to hold it somewhere below, or at any rate at the end of, the splicing..... they have at once a tendency to become "**top-heavy**"..... What he needs is a cue of less length.... with more weight forward. I have invented a **masse' cue** on this principle. It is only some **two-thirds** of the length of the ordinary cue, & the gain all players experience with it in their masse' & pique' strokes is almost incredible. I have had it weighted to **seventeen ounces**, with the weight well inclining to the point of the cue.....

..... Referring to the "aft" strokes, the most delicate of them all is that technically known as the "**dead-ball" masse'**. It is employed in the course of close-cannon play along the cushions, & when the minimum of pose only is required to be used.

..... For masse'-stroke **practice** of the short-range order i recommend the placing of the cue-ball on the top cushion behind the billiard-spot with he object-ball slightly in front of it, & the red ball on the spot..... Try & cannon around to the red in both directions, left & right of the object-white.....

RISO LEVI

BILLIARDS, THE STROKES OF THE GAME 1907-1916

Riso mainly showz the large variety of masse' & pique' cannonz & loozers possible.

Riso haz 36 drawingz, & sez.....

..... unless a player receives some coaching his progress even with a considerable amount of practice will necessarily be very slow....

..... A clean, crisp stroke should be used, & exactly as in ordinary screws the fingers should grip the cue tightly just at the moment it meets the ball.

..... First-class players play these close pique' strokes without causing the cue tip to touch the cloth.

..... Masse' stroke positions may roughly be divided into two classes, viz., those in which the cue ball is some little distance from the first object ball & those in which it lies quite close to it. The latter are generally the easier.....

DALY'S BILLIARD BOOK 1913

.....Important ! The cue must not be stopped just as the ball is hit. The tip must "go through" nearly to the cloth.

.....Doubly important ! Most beginners try to hit too near the edge. **Don't strike near the edge of the cue ball, but nearer the center as you look down upon the ball.** This avoids miscues. The "feel" of the shot is as though you were trying to drive the ball down through the table bed.

..... For a masse' grip one finger & thumb or two fingers & thumb may be used. The latter gives a firmer hold. It is well to hold the cue very firmly, **but a flexible wrist motion**, free from jerk, so that the cue tip may go well "through" the ball, is essential. When in position it is well to feel that the wrist is arched a bit ; that makes the "follow-through" easier. Hit a good, firm stroke, & try to feel the cue tip cling to the cue ball, & push the side of the ball downward, or "knead" it down. The shot is not a sharp hammer tap, but a clinging shot.

..... The tyro is tempted to use English on almost every stroke. He must learn early never to use English unless there is a Special Reason for it. In cushion shots, more especially in one-cushion shots, avoid English if you can, thus getting the "land" much

more nearly dead, as well as increasing your accuracy of execution..... The cue ball lands lightly & does not kick the carom ball away.

In 2 photos, Daly has the cue touching his cheek.

Daly reproduces a diagram by **Benjamin F Garno**, from "Modern Billiards". This shows 4 angles of stroke. No 1 is a Close Masse' needing $78\frac{3}{4}^\circ$. No 2 is a Half masse' needing $67\frac{1}{2}^\circ$. No 3 is a Long, slow curve needing 45° . No 4 is a Jump shot needing $22\frac{1}{2}^\circ$.

Hmmmmmm. Where in hell did the $\frac{3}{4}^\circ$ & the $\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ & the $\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ come from ??????????

MAJOR WILLIAM BROADFOOT, R.E. BILLIARDS BADMINTON LIBRARY 1896

This has the first reference in my library to the term Pique'. Major Bill shows 4 diagrams of a pique', 3 cannons (these are novel) & 1 looser (similar to the one shown by Crawley early). None are closely associated with proper nursery cannons, except that one is a nice nursery gather (driving ball 2 across the table & back). Bill sez.....

Pique' & masse' are not often used in English billiards ; the latter, indeed, seldom or never, whilst the former, when used, is miscalled masse'.

..... the real distinction between pique' & masse' being that in the former the cue's axis is directed to the centre of the ball.... in the latter, the cue's axis is not directed through the centre, but on one side or other of it, with the consequence that the path of the ball is no longer a straight but a curved line.... & produce some beautiful curves.

Now, so long as the push stroke is allowed, masse' will not be much attempted ; it is difficult of execution at any time & in any position, impossible on a large English table save when the balls are near a cushion. It further has the great disadvantage, when played hard, of causing a dent or pit in the cloth sufficient to deflect or arrest a very slow ball, & therefore soon spoils a cloth near the cushions on the very part most used for nursery cannons. It is also doubtful whether with the most skilful manipulation effect can be got with small balls & fine-pointed cues at all equal to that which is obtained in the French game. Hence for many reasons we are indisposed to recommend the study & practice of this undoubtedly beautiful stroke.

Quite otherwise, however, with pique', which may often be used with advantage in the English game & without harm to the table. The stroke is indispensable when ball 1 is so near ball 2 that the screw-back cannot be made in the ordinary way, or when the cushion prevents the application of the cue.....

..... Respecting masse' proper, it is not proposed to write in detail. Those who desire more information are referred to 'Le Billard', by M Vignaux, from which excellent work, though on the French game, much may be learnt by players of the English game..... The fault of amateurs is always to play too hard, a stroke which requires the greatest delicacy & the lightest possible touch.

JOHN ROBERTS

ROBERTS ON BILLIARDZ (186?)

My second edition (1869) makes the first reference (in my library) to the term 'Masse', but duznt uze the term 'Pique'. Roberts definez it az followz.....

.....**Masse**. *A twisting top stroke.*

There iz only one drawing of interest here, showing a 'pique', altho Roberts callz it a masse -- it showz nothing more than a ball in the Dee -- & it showz the ballz trajectory, which goze straight up the table almost to the centerline, & then returnz just into baulk, almost on the same line. Obviously a greatly exaggerated & otherwise inaccurate portrayal, koz Roberts sez.....

..... *What have been termed "**fancy**" strokes cannot claim any other connection with the game than that they are shown on a billiard-table ; & nothing is more likely to prove **destructive** to good play than attempting them in a **match**. In order, however, to **amuse** such of my readers as are desirous of knowing what really can be done, i have added, on plate 20, five **curious** strokes, none of which have ever, to my knowledge, before been published, though they are known to most experienced players, save No 4, which requires the use of the **masse** or **top-twist**, the cue being held **perpendicularly**.*

..... 4. **Berger** was extremely clever in giving a miss in baulk without touching a cushion. He used a **perpendicular** stroke, hitting his ball near the top on the side closest to him, which was thus forced over the line, turning under & under. Shortly it stopped, & then, turning over & over, rolled back into or near the **D**. Many curious **cannons** are effected by the **masse**, which i have no opportunity to illustrate, except on a billiard-table, where i shall be always glad to show them to visitors.

CAPTAIN CRAWLEY THE BILLIARD BOOK (1866)

ENGRAVING This haz the first engraving that i can find showing a player in the act of playing a 'masse' or 'pique'. The caption sez.....

Position for a Top Hazard.

The description sez.....

..... *Sometimes, however, it is necessary -- as when a ball lies close to another or under a cushion -- that the Cue be raised in order that you may get its point to the top of the ball.....*

Hmmmmmm -- the engraving duznt show the *q*ball frozen -- it showz the *q*ball (it looks more like a grape actually) about 6 ballz clear of the cushion -- what iz going on here ?????

PIQUE' Actually, the *que* iz being held at about 70°, & the distance to the red iz about 7 ballz, altho the ballz are actually drawn not much bigger than grapes. The stroke iz

being played towardz the center of the table, altho the third ball iz not shown. If the stroke iz a hazard, then it must be a pique', koz a masse' (ie with some side) would be unnecessary & more difficult. The *q*ball iz going to be hit on the equator from the *que*'z viewpoint, or slightly abov. Whether the *q*ball iz going to be hit dead-center or a bit left or right of center cannot be seen from the obzerver'z (the engraver'z) pozzy.

HAZARD

What the hazard might be i don't know -- obviously not a winning hazard, koz the only time u would need a swerv etc for a winning hazard here would be if the other ball woz in the way, which it iznt. Hence the hazard must be a loozing hazard -- probably into a middle-pocket -- altho it might be back into a corner-pocket. But any such loozer -- whether into a middle-pocket or into a corner pocket -- must be more difficult than a simple winner of some sorts. Hmmmmm.

GRIP

The interesting thing iz that -- the player'z grip iz az it would be for an ordinary stroke.

What i meen iz -- most photoz in most books show the player gripping the *que* az u would if u were going to throw it like a spear. I am not talking about whether it iz a full grip or whether it iz just uzing the thumb & one or two fingerz -- i am talking about which side of the *que* iz the home of the thumb. Crawley showz the thumb on the far side from the player -- which makes the thumb lower than the palm.

SPEAR GRIP

Me -- i alwayz change my grip to a spear-grip once the *que*-angle gets abov say 40°, hence my thumb iz on the near side, & it iz abov the palm & fingerz.

TRIPOD BRIDGE

Crawley also showz 2 engravingz -- one showing in effect a close-up of the earlyr engraving, showing a tripod bridge (altho Crawley duznt uze that term) -- & the second showing a plain finger bridge, the *que* etc being at 45°. Crawley sez of both.....

.....*the proper way in which the High Bridge is made.*

PIQUE'

Crawley showz 2 drawingz of a **High Oblique Screw**. The first drawing iz a side view of a *q*ball & a *que* -- the *que* being at about 70° & hitting the *q*ball at about an 1/8th ball below center (from the *que*'z view). This iz the earlyst reference to a Pique' in any of my English billiardz books, altho Crawley duznt uze the term Pique'. Crawley sez,.....

.....**The High Oblique Screw** ---- *This curious & often very useful stroke is made by striking your ball on its top-side, with a downward rubbing action of the hand, accompanied by a sort of half-turn of the wrist. The action is nearly indescribable, but any good player can show you how to make it. The ball must be struck on the side that is towards the player. I struck on the outer side, you will produce a **Reverse Screw**. The effect of the **High Screw** is to cause the ball to jump a little, & to twist back on reaching the Object-ball. It is a very useful stroke when you wish to strike a ball near to your own & **cannon** back on to a ball behind, or make a **Hazard** in a near pocket.*

The second drawing iz a plan view of the 3 ballz lying close to a corner pocket, & it showz a trajectory for the *q*ball twisting back off the red & into the pocket, & it also showz the alternative trajectory for a cannon onto the third ball. Crawley sez.....

.....Case *g* is the **High Oblique Screw**, by which you make either a **back Cannon** or a **Pocket** :-- try both.

SWERVY Crawley showz a drawing of a swerve stroke -- the 3 ballz are in a line & not very closely spaced. Here Crawley makes an early reference to a swerve or half-masse', altho Crawley duznt uze theze termz. Crawley sez.....

.....Case *d* is the **High Oblique Stroke** already explained. The Object-ball is reached without touching the centre ball ; or the centre-ball is **thrust aside** & the **Cannon** follows.

MASSE' Crawley showz a drawing of a Side-stroke Canon -- the 3 ballz are in a line & almost touching -- the red iz in the middle -- the *q*ball almost touching the cushion. The drawn *q*ball trajectory iz a half-circle around the red, & i suppoze that the *q*ball iz ment to touch the red along the way. Crawley'z drawing iz not dissimilar to Kentfield'z earlyr drawing, altho neither uzed the term Masse'. Crawley sez,.....

..... Case 2. You cannon in this instance by playing with a nearly **perpendicular** cue at the ball nearest the cushion, striking it on either side, according az you wish it to **curl** to the right or the left :-- a most elegant stroke, which requires very decisive treatment & some practice.

NEAR THUMB OR FAR THUMB

NEAR THUMB Az i sed, for a masse', i originally thort that most old-time playerz & most modern playerz (every player actually) had their thumb on the near side (the spear-grip), but in fact scrutiny of my library showz that the playerz were split on this issue -- in fact 3 playerz (Hoppe & Joe Davis & Bob Marshall) were bi-sexual, ie AC/DC. The spear-grippists in my library were.....

Daly (Daly's Billiard Book, 1913, 2 photoz).

Fred Lindrum (Spot End Billiards, 1913, 1 photo).

Joe Davis (Billiards Up to Date, 1929, 1 photo. But in a moovy, he uzez the ordinary grip for a half-masse'. Hmmmmmmmmmmm).

Arthur Goundrill (Moovy).

Claude Falkiner (Moovy).

Tom Reece (Moovy).

Mannock (Billiards Expounded, 1904, 1 photo).

Geza Gazdag (The Accomplished Cushman, 1991?, 2 photoz)

Peall (All About Billiards & How to Pot, 1925 & 1939, 1 photo)

Hoppe (Thirty Years of Billiards, 1925 & 1971, 2 photoz) One showz a masse' uzing the spear-grip (thumb on inside). The other showz a grand (free-hand) pique' uzing the ordinary grip (thumb on outside). Hmmmmm. Whats going on here -- i would hav thort that, if somwun were to change grips for strokes, then it would be the grand-masse' & the grand-pique' that would be favoured with the more powerfull spear grip -- but Willie duz it the other way around -- Hmmmmmmm -- mightbe it had somthing to do with reeching the particular stroke in question.

Bob Marshall (later photo in hiz book, ie when much older).

Alcock (Billiards, 1901, 1 photo of an anonymous player).

Jack Karnehm (Understanding Billiards, 1976, 1 photo).

I carnt find any reference in any of my books to the 2 basic wayz of holding the *que* for a masse' or pique'. I suppoze that there were actually 3 wayz -- when u include Sutton who had lost both hiz hands abov the wrists. U could allmost make it 4 wayz if u include Arthur Goundrill who had lost hiz left hand -- hiz bridge hand. Anyhow, all writerz hav been silent on this important point.

FAR THUMB

Playerz & books showing the thumb on the far side (the ordinary grippists) include.....

Crawley (1 woodcut, 1866).

Bennett (1 woodcut, 1873 to 1894).

Clarke McConachy (Moovy).

Fred Davis (Moovy).

Joe Davis (Moovy).

Newman (3 photoz in Advanced Billiards, 1924).

Melbourne Inman (Cannons & Big Guns, 1928, 1 photo. But it duznt hav a photo of Tom Reece playing a masse').

Walter Lindrum (photoz & moovyz 1932).

Bob Marshall (early photo in hiz book, ie when younger).

Hoppe (1 photo. Az mentioned abov -- for a grand-pique').

Horace Lindrum (Lindrums' World, 1999, 1 photo).

Rex Williams (Snooker, 1975, 1 photo).

U ken add Eric's name to this list --- but i hav tryd this Far-Thumb (ie the ordinary-grip), & for me it iz hopeless -- it iz useless for masse'z to the left (i am right handed) & it iz half useless for masse'z to the right. But i suppoze that it dependz on how u learnt when a tyro -- ie its a little bit like being able to play ordinary strokes left-handed or right-handed. Anyhow, i reckon that a near-thumb (spear-grip) iz likely to suite u, & it iz more powerful. But perhaps the far-thumb might suit u. Or perhaps uken uze either, az needed, az did Hoppe & Joe Davis. The ordinary-grip iz perhaps not entirely suited to the light finger hold that i mentioned earlyr. It certainly iznt at all suited to the wristy action that i recommended earlyr.

CAPTAIN CRAWLEY

BILLIARDZ (1856)

This book duznt mention the termz **Masse'** or **Pique'**, but it haz a drawing of 3 ballz spaced **closely** in a line, in a chapter on **Cramp Strokes**, & sez.....

.....The stroke marked 3 in Fig. 32 is comparatively **useless**, & is introduced simply to show what may be done by a clever player. Here it is the object of the striker to play on the distant ball without touching the centre ball. This may be accomplished either by the stroke called the **dip**, in which you lift or **jump** your own ball over the centre ball, or by making your own ball assume a **parabolic curve** to the object without touching the centre ball. To make the **dip** you must strike your ball about three-fourths in the centre, your cue being **raised** so as to command the upper surface of the ball. For this purpose you must raise the **rest hand** on to the tops of the fingers & strike **perpendicularly** down onto the ball with a **sharp & sudden** impetus -- which, by the way, is very likely to **tear** the cloth & cost you a **guinea**. The striker's ball then **rises** from the table with a **reversed** action, & passes **over** the centre ball on to the end one. Or the same **effect** may be produced by an extra-ordinary fine slow **side stroke**, as shown in the engraving.

Then a **long-range** line of ballz along a cushion, where Crawley sez.....

..... In Fig. 31, I have shown a very common **experiment** -- that of striking a ball without touching the intermediate one, all the balls lying near to or touching the cushion. The ball (A) at the bottom of the table is the striker's, & the next we will suppose to be the red. To strike the ball 1 without touching the red you must hold the cue nearly **perpendicularly** & strike your own ball right on the **top**, aiming half an inch from the red ; to strike 2, the same kind of stroke is made, aiming two inches from the red ; for 3, you must aim three inches ; & for the stroke on the ball marked 4 you must take aim at least four inches from the red. In each of these strokes the distance to be travelled by your own ball must be carefully measured, as upon the **curve** assumed depends its success. Striking the ball on the **top** has the effect of altering its **running axis**, and, in fact, making a **screw** by striking a high ball instead of a low one ; hence the **curve**, which is equivalent to the extreme side, or to the return stroke when the ball is struck much below its centre.

..... **Cramp** strokes.... are mere **tricks** of the hand, & have **no** more to do with the **real** game of billiards than the eccentricities of the **puppet** & the **novelist** have with genuine humour & pathos.

COMMENTS. Here Crawley mentionz the modern **jump-stroke**, which he callz the **dip**. The **bridge** hand is called the **rest**. And he mentionz **raizing** it on to the **tips** of the fingerz. He mentionz -- **running axis** -- **parabolic** -- **perpendicular** -- **screw** .

Regarding the masse', all Crawley sez iz that it iz --- an extra-ordinary fine slow **side stroke** --- Crawley duznt uze the term masse' nor twist. Nor duz Crawley talk about uzing such a stroke to score a cannon, nor even of uzing it to pot hidden ball..... Hmmmmm.

EDWIN KENTFIELD

THE GAME OF BILLIARDS (1839)

This book duznt mention a **Masse'** or **Pique'**, but it haz a drawing of a masse' cannon played with a nearly perpendicular cue & the 3 ballz **closely** in a line, the gap being 2½ ballz & then 2 ballz. The trajectory of the qball iz an arc onto the rear-side (surely it should be to the front-side, or the side-side) of the center-ball, & hence to the last ball. This iz the earlyst drawing of a masse' in my library. Jonathon sez.....

..... Plate LXVI., fig. 1. Fig. 2 represents a **trick**, or **fanciful** stroke, & it should **never** be played for in the course of the game. The way, however, to effect it, is, to strike **down** upon the ball, holding the cue **vertically**.

The que in this drawing haz been drawn in pencil later, & iz drawn to show a nearly vertical que hitting sown on the qball on the right-hand-side. There are also some pencilled amendmets or additionz to this paragraph written in a very nice neat hand (perhaps Jonathon'z own hand) which make the above read az followz....

..... The way, however, to effect it, is, to strike **vertically** down upon the ball, **striking it a little on the right side nearest the corner pocket**.

Then there iz Plate VI -- **The Positions of the Cue** -- which showz 6 drawingz showing varyus pozzyz of the cue for varyus strokes. One of theze showz a que hitting down at about **40°** just abov center from the que'z view point, the caption sez -- *Position of the cue in jumping the ball.*

Another drawing showz the cue at about **80°**, hitting down on the top of the ball at about the bottom quarter-point from the que'z point of view. Jonathon must be talking about a **pique'** here, koz the caption sez.....

..... *Position of the cue when the ball is near to another, for a **twist**.*

Eric showz how uken praktis masse'z while watching the football on television.

