

CRADLE CANNON

MANNOCK BILLIARDS EXPOUNDED (1908 ??)

"..... The last is Lovejoy's latest invention, the "cradle" It does not matter so much, as far as i can grasp of the situation, that the second object-ball be moved somewhat out of its original position, as does the red, or whichever ball is in that position, which appears to me to be the key to the system. Lovejoy can easily bring the second object-ball back again to where he desires it after a few strokes. ... The principal work is, however, done off the ball that lies on the top cushion, and Lovejoy found out the secret of keeping it at the desired angle with the cue ball by employing side. With this auxiliary he is able to cause the object to go about two inches which-ever way he desires, and make the cannon at the same time. This is quite a new invention, and scientific billiards with a vengeance, and it has upset a lot of old theories. It is absolutely necessary in employing side on the cue-ball to hit, as well, the object-ball accurately in order to keep the position, as the former, by its means, travels to the latter in a circuitous direction. By the way, to assist me in making a correct diagram of the position, he cut a bit of foolscap paper to fit in the corner of the table. After the measurements had been taken, Lovejoy said, 'I believe i can play it in this' (meaning the paper), 'although it make a very fast cloth!'. Suiting his

actions to his words, he made twenty cannons with the same ease as though he had been playing on the cloth. After he had proved his mastery of the cradle cannon by turning the first object-ball (the red) half a ball's width, first on the right and then to the left, and then working it back to its original position, Lovejoy said In playing the cradle cannons, the first object-ball which gradually settles down by a cupping of the cloth does not move from its position. It merely shivers and keeps its place although making a complete vertical revolution once in approximately every 250 stroke..... This was observed during the course of the extraordinary world's record break made at Messrs. Burroughes and Watts' Saloon, Soho Square, London, WC. Then the professional player T Reece compiled 499,135 points almost exclusively by means of the cradle cannon....."

Mannock also shows a **drawing** of

"...Where Ives had the 2¼" balls outside the jaws of a 3¼" pocket when he scored a 2,540 break against Roberts"

This small drawing is almost identical to the drawing showing **Lovejoy's** cradle cannon position.

RISO LEVI STROKES OF THE GAME 1910

" In January, 1907, Lovejoy created a sensation in the billiard world by making a break of 603, which contained 284 consecutive cannons, made by means of what afterwards became known as the double-kiss cradle-cannon position. It is said that Lovejoy discovered the position and its potentialities in 1905, but that two years elapsed before he was able to work the balls into the proper position in the course of a public match. Be that as it may, he had no sooner exploited the stroke in public than he began making breaks of 2,000 or more. Then Dawson, Cook, and Reece, and later on

Williams and Aiken, set themselves to make huge breaks by means of the new stroke, and before long five-figure breaks became quite ordinary, and after Dawson had made a break of 23,769 and Cook one of 42,746, Reece was credited with a break of 499,135. Such scoring finally put an end to what by this time had become farcical billiards, and on September 2nd, 1907, a rule was passed by the Billiard Association which made a cradle-stroke cannon a foul. None but players of exceptional ability were able to score by means of cradle cannons, for only by the very greatest refinement of play

was it possible to work the balls into the correct position. Once the balls were in position, however, it was an easy enough matter for any good player to keep them there. The first few strokes had to be played with care, but as the break proceeded retention of the position became less and less difficult, and later on a good player could hardly lose the position except by an accident..... The cloth on which Reece is credited with having made a break of nearly half a million was on exhibition in several towns in

England, and the cups in which the object balls had rested and the ruts in which the cue ball had travelled to and fro were quite plainly discernible, even when standing at a distance from the cloth. it began on June 3rd, 1907, and continued until July 6th By the present-day rules, which allow twenty-five ball-to-ball cannons without the cue ball touching a cushion, the double-kiss cradle cannon becomes a legitimate stroke once more....."

TOM REECE DAINTY BILLIARDS 1925

"Until the rule restricting the series of ball-to-ball shots to five-and-twenty came into force, i feel sure that i was going to roll up some new records. Unfortunately, i showed my hand too soon. The long string of 249,552 consecutive cannons in a break of 499,135 points, between July 3rd and 6th, 1907, which occupied 85 hours 49 minutes to tick off, ended my chances of ever again making full use of my close-cannon skill..... Try as i would, and certainly did, to overcome this restriction i found it too heavy a handicap. When i made my record i had the balls placed just outside the right top pocket, the red ball on the end cushion, the object-white on the side-cushion (both just clear of the "bumps") and the cue-ball in between. Within my own memory there have been curious happenings concerned with close-cannon strokes when the balls have been at the jaws of a pocket.The late John Roberts contested a compromise match with the then American champion, Frank C Ives, the "Napoleon" of the cue, as his admirers styled him, at Humphrey's Hall, Knights-bridge, London. There were 6 pockets to the table, each 3¼ inches (much smaller than the usual openings) at the "fall of the slate", and the balls were 2¼ inches (much larger than the regulation size) in diameter. It was an interesting contest until Ives managed to work the balls to the mouth of the right top pocket, and, once having done this, ticked off cannons to his heart's content. A big set of balls and a small pocket enabled him to keep the balls moving about the "bumps", and to all intents and purposes prevented any of them going in. The

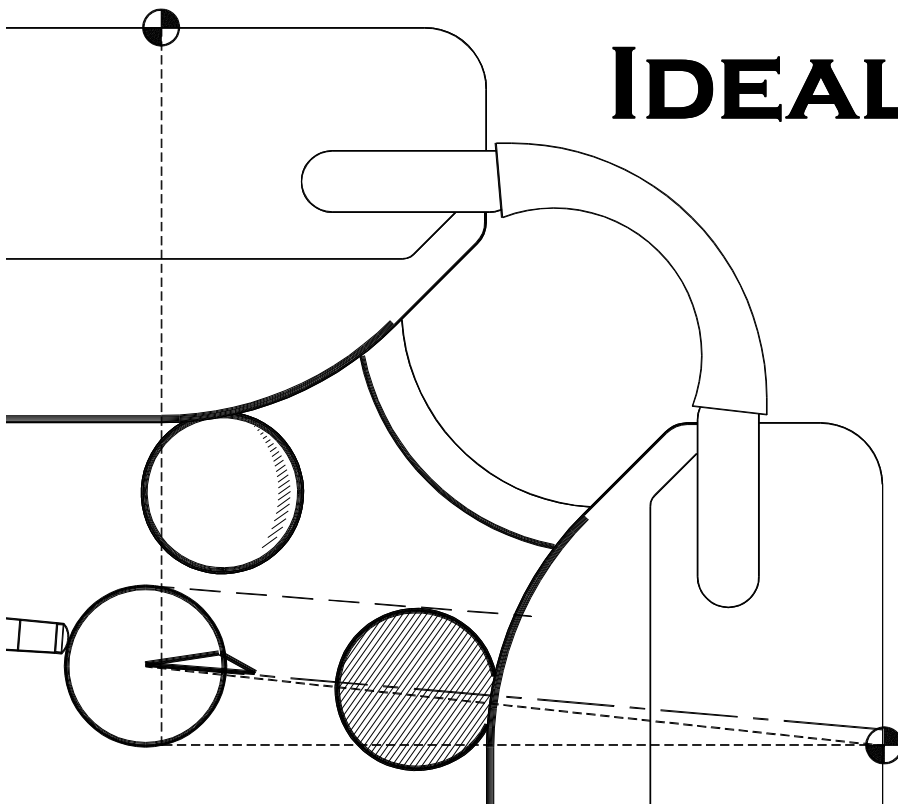
American champion finally, and after he had made his position on the marking-board secure, purposely broke up the position--or he might have kept them there to the end of the one-sided match."

Tom shows a drawing of Ives' pozzzy, showing the object-ballz almost touching, just outside the bumps, equidistant from the centerline of the pocket. And it shows the qball grazing across both ballz, from side to side, just az for a jam-cannon, except that the qball never goes near a cushion but keeps quite close to both ballz. The drawing shows that the cannon grazes the white each shot, but haz some kiss-off effect off the red each shot. This could be poor drafting, or perhaps there woz some kiss-effect. I hav tried to emulate Ives on my home table. My pockets are 3½", and i uzed my set of 3⁷/₁₆" ballz. I ken tell u that Ives did not make hiz cannonz az stated by Reece or az stated by any of the other descriptionz that i hav come across over the years. Perhaps Ives uzed a cradle-cannon for each shot, or for each second shot. In other words, he uzed a kiss-back some of the time, or all of the time. Ives could hav at times played the kiss-back by firstly grazing one ball before kissing-back off the second ball, instead of after. This sort of back'the'front cradle-cannon iz sometimes the best shot to play in a present-day-run, ie with 2¹/₁₆" ballz. Perhaps Ives invented the cradle-cannon in 1893. Either that, or he uzed the Jam Cannon. Theoretically, it iz possible to graze across the two object-ballz (az per Tom's drawing), and to repeat this ad-infinitum. But it iz also theoretically possible to score 75 consecutive cannonz by belting all three ballz around the table each shot.

IDEAL POZZY

CRADLE 1

The red&yellow are a little inside the jawz, and the qball iz not too near or far -- the **qball-to-red line** passez just left of the **J-Spot**. We aim just left-of-center on red, with a touch of left-hand-side. The qball kissez back off red to graze (or bump) the yellow, stopping in about the same spot each time. Ideally it's a **one-shot sequence**. Take care where to aim on red and on the need for running-side or check-side or zero-side.



J-SPOT If the **qball-to-red line** iz right of the **J-Spot**, then u usually havta uze check-side (right-hand-side), and aim left of center. If the **qball-to-red line** iz a little too far left of the J-Spot, then u usually havta uze running-side (left-hand-side), and aim right-of-center.

The Cradle-Cannon iz another one of thozе old-time freak pozzyz that hav a place in the modern game. The beauty of this pozzы iz that u don't havta worry about loozing the yellow, unlike the Jam-Cannon. And it's a 1-shot sequence, so u don't havta keep changing sidez. U ken make a cannon each 2 secondz without rushing. But u should stand up and stretch your back and armz frequently, otherwise u will soon looz feeling and control. The jaw stops the red from going right (too well uzually), so u uzually havta uze some left-hand-side to stop the red going left, and the side is uzually needed to get the correct kiss-back angle to graze the yellow. The yellow iz frozen inside the jaw. After a dozen cannonz the red starts to sink in a bit, which helps. The uzual stuff-up iz to looz the red to the left or right. If to the left we ken still get a Jam-Cannon pozzы.

DRIFT Early on, u havta be very alert to what the red iz doing (or trying to do). Uzually u ken see if the red iz on the verge of drifting left or right. And so u continually amend ya aim&side to keep thingz nice&steady. Uken uze maximum running-side or check-side to try to coax the red to the right or left, to better pozzы, so that u don't havta uze so much side-spin so often.

SPIN Uzing lots of side-spin iz risky. A bad kick ken rezult in bad pozzы, or, worse, a missed cannon. If the qball fallz short, leeving a short-range cannon next shot, then be very-very careful. It iz eezy to double hit the qball, on its way back from the red. So withdraw the cue quickly, or, better, uze an upish follow throo, to avoid the foul.

75 LIMIT When Wozza read this chapter, he suggested that when nearing the 75 cannon limit, u could jostle the ballz out, to allow an in-off, & then score a dead-slow cannon from in-hand, keeping the red&yellow close to the jawz, & then regain nurseryz, even possibly the cradle or the jam, & go for another 75 cannonz, & then when nearing the 75 cannon limit u could jostle the ballz out to allow an in-off, & then score a dead-slow cannon from in-hand, keeping the red&yellow close to the jawz, & then regain nurseryz etc etc etc. Hmmmmmmm.

POOR POZZYZ

CRADLE 2A

Here the yellow iz just inside the jaw, ie too far out. And the red iz a little too far in. So, each cannon needz lots of **left-hand-side**. Not good. We **carnt** keep this pozzzy for long. Actually, the light & soft & glossy **Krapamith** ballz come in handy here. Koz there are **three** problemz that ken come up when u want to keep the red anchored on the cushion.

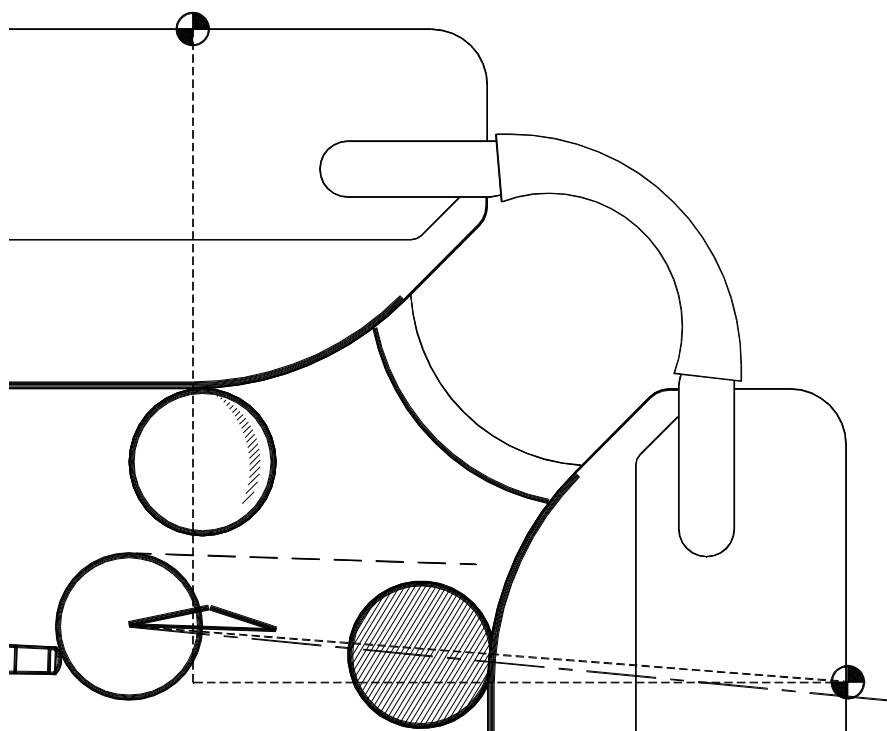
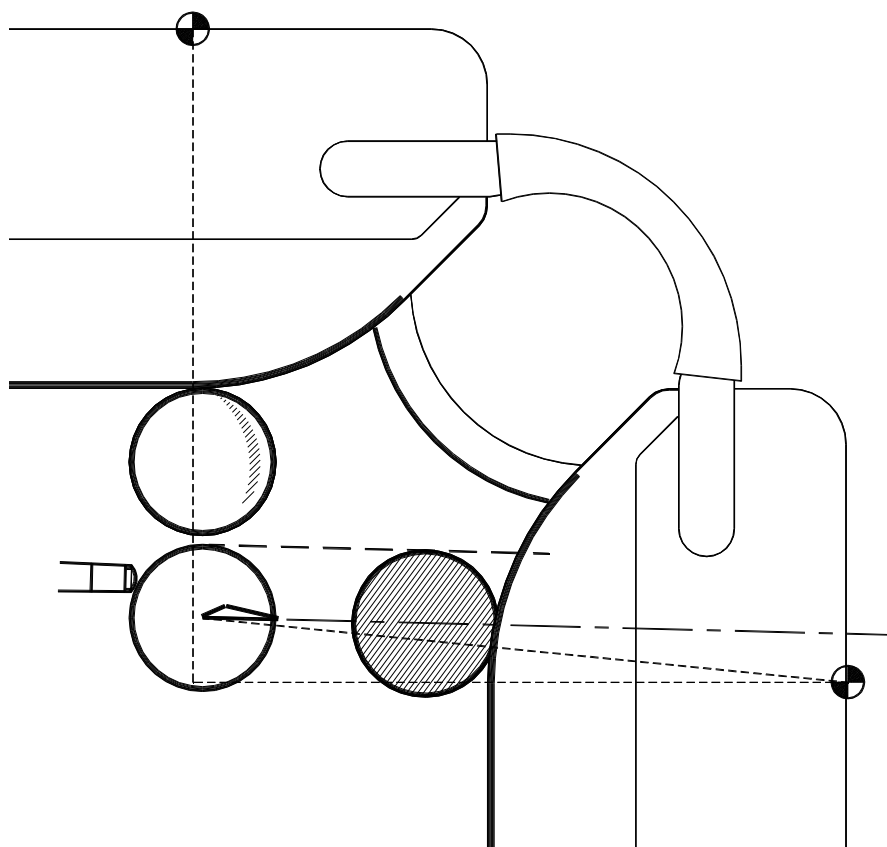
(1) U carnt keep pozzzy if the kiss-back distance iz too large -- the red kumz off the cushion.

(b) U carnt keep pozzzy if u don't hit the red fairly centrally (altho side-spin ken help some).

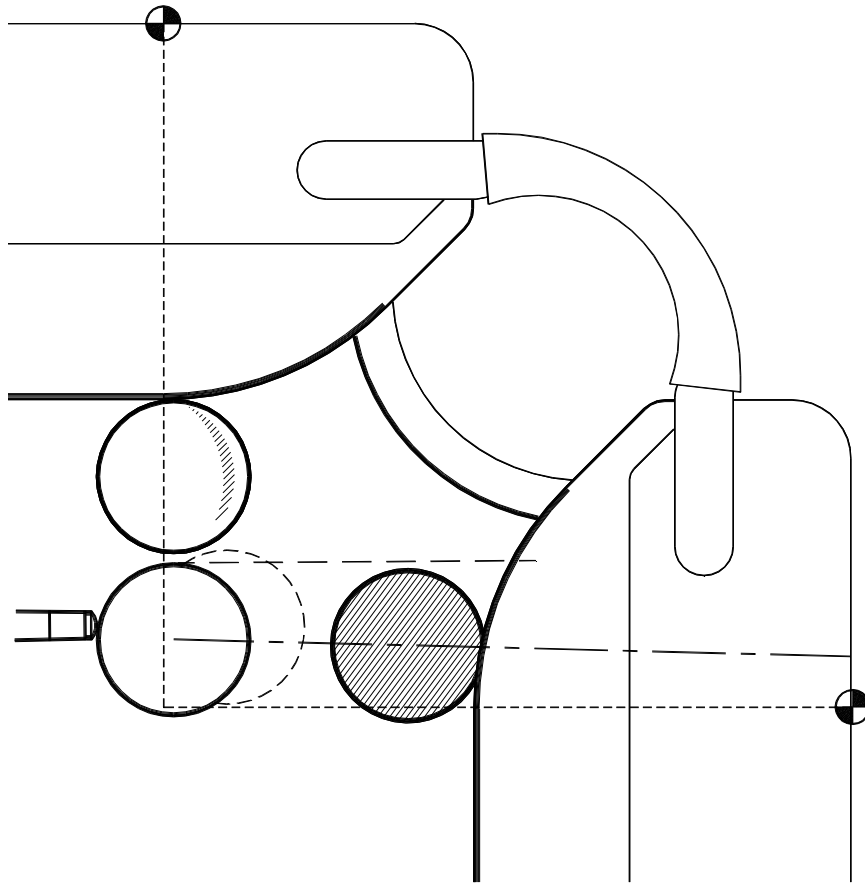
(iii) U havtahav lots of topspin. Or, putting it another way, side-spin hurts -- the red kumz off the cushion.

Here, in 2A, we are pushing the limits for all three. We would hav trouble trying it with **Bonzoline** ballz -- but, without going into Why -- i reckon that the Krapamith make it **eezyr**.

CRADLE 3A Here the yellow iz az for 2A above. But this time the **red** iz a little too far **out** -- so we havta uze lots of **check-side, aiming left-of-center on red**. Not good. We **carnt** keep this pozzzy for long either.



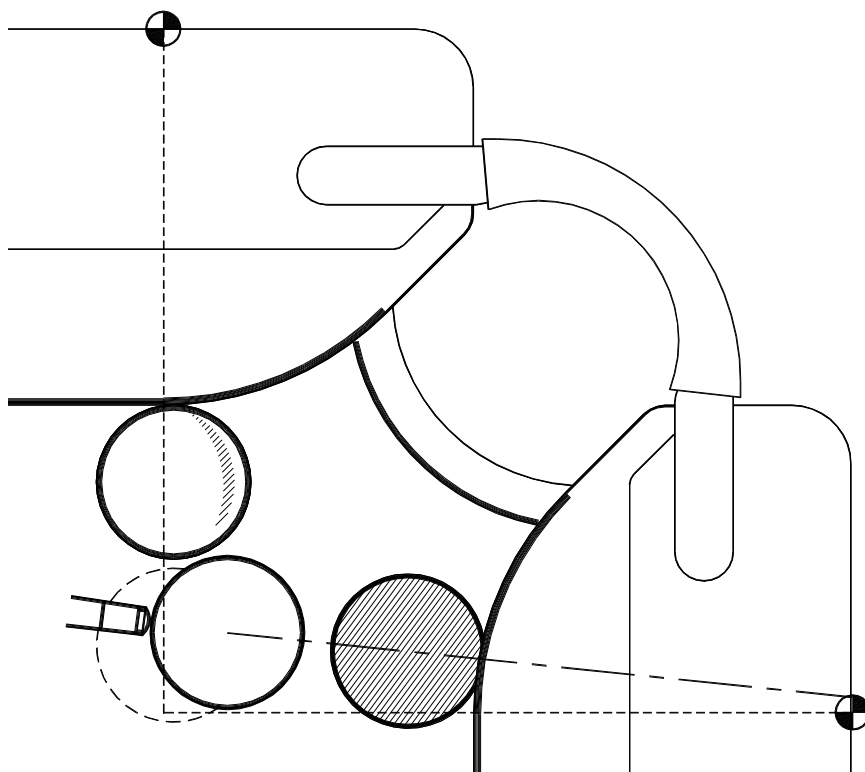
2 SHOT CRADLE



CRADLE 2B

Az i sed. U won't keep 2A up for long. Here, in 2B and 2C, we hav 2A pozzzy, but we uze an eezyr two-shot-sequence.

In 2B (Shot 1) we aim further left on red (compared to 2A), with little or no side-spin, to land thickish on yellow, stopping az shown by the broken ball, leeving 2C.

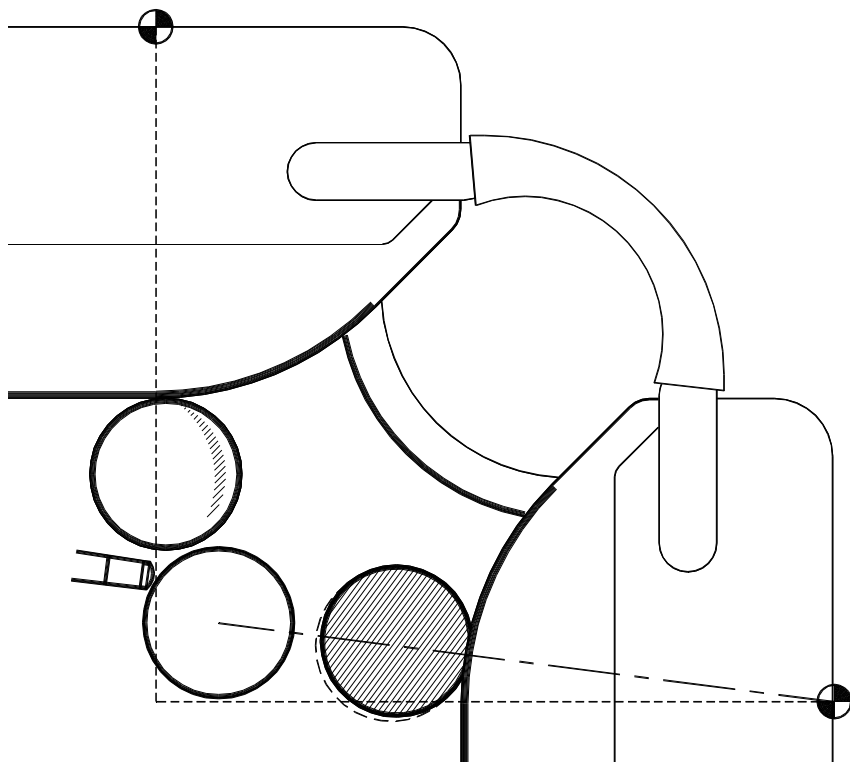


CRADLE 2C

Shot 2 iz probably a full-ball kiss-back with zero side-spin, to leev 2B again, az shown by the broken ball.

This 2-shot-sequence iz eezyr than the 1-shot-sequence in 2A. But it carryz the risk of touching-ballz in Shot 1 (2B). And it also haz the risk of mooving yellow out of the jaw -- but probably no more so than 2A.

IMPROOVING POZZY



CRADLE 2D

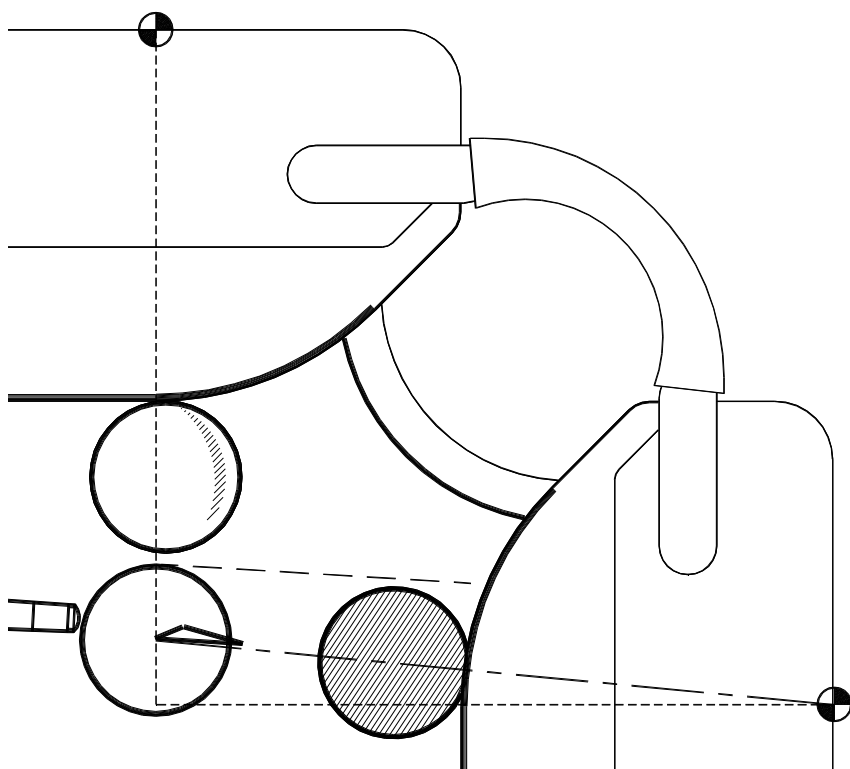
Here iz another strategy. Instead of putting up with 2A and 2B, we coax the red out to better pozzzy.

Here in 2D we hav the 2C pozzzy. But we uze some left-hand-side to try to coax the red out, az shown.

The qbball probably fallz back to where it woz, ie az for 2D again, but, with luck, the red stops where shown by the broken ball.

CRADLE 2E (NOT SHOWN)

We play kiss-backs off red, az many timez az it takes, to work it over to the good pozzzy shown in 2F. We uze running-side, or check-side, az needed. If we are having trouble mooving the red along, we ken uze a bit of stun in 2D, to get the red to leev the cushion (just a little bit). This should help to moov it along next shot, which might profit from some stun also (a bit like a Line--Nurse).



CRADLE 2F

Here we hav managed to get the red into the best pozzzy, with regard to the yellow.

So, all we need do iz play kiss-backs, with perhaps a little running-side az usual, until we hear the referee's warning... *70 cannonz*.

Not that the pozzzy iz eezy. It's very tricky. Take care. At this range, the usual stuff-up iz to fall short. So make sure that the qbball iz cleaned if u see any chalk-marks -- but don't ask Harold Silver.

REVERSE CRADLE

MOOVING YELLOW

CRADLE 3B

Here iz pozzzy 3A again. It's not too hard to get the red&yellow into better pozzzy.

In 3B, we cannon off yellow, with a little running-side. This should coax yellow further into the jaw, az shown. If we wanted to moov the yellow a long way, we could hav uzed no side-spin, or we could hav hit yellow thicker.

The qball finishez az shown by the broken ball, to leev 3C.

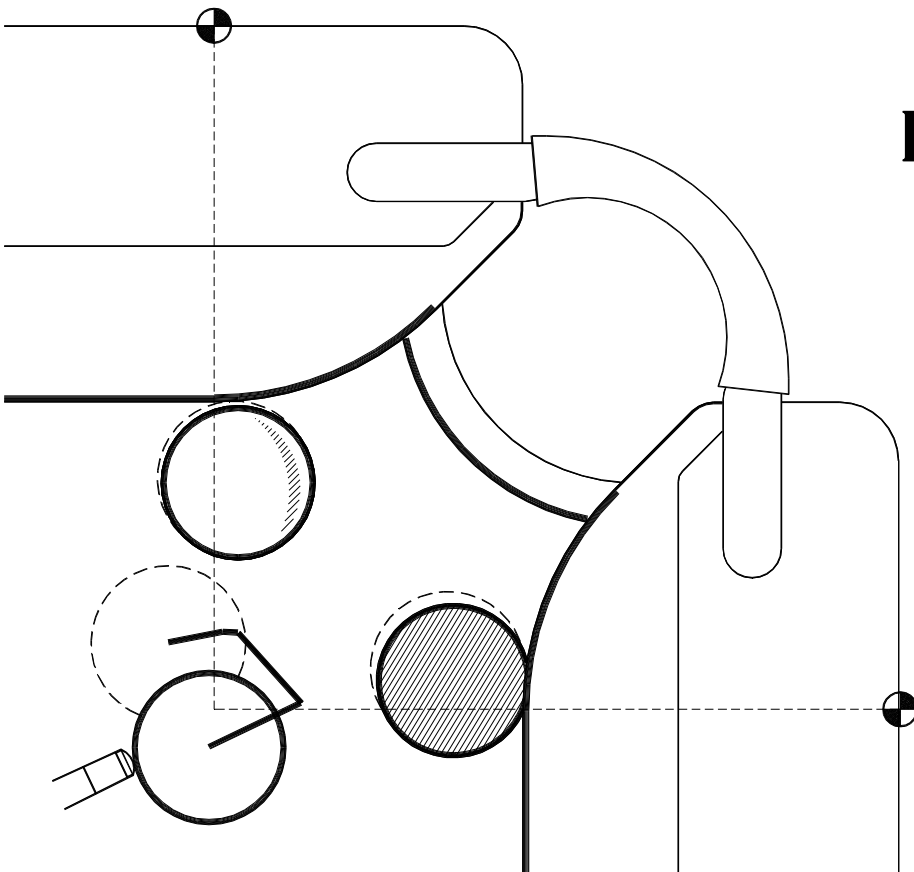
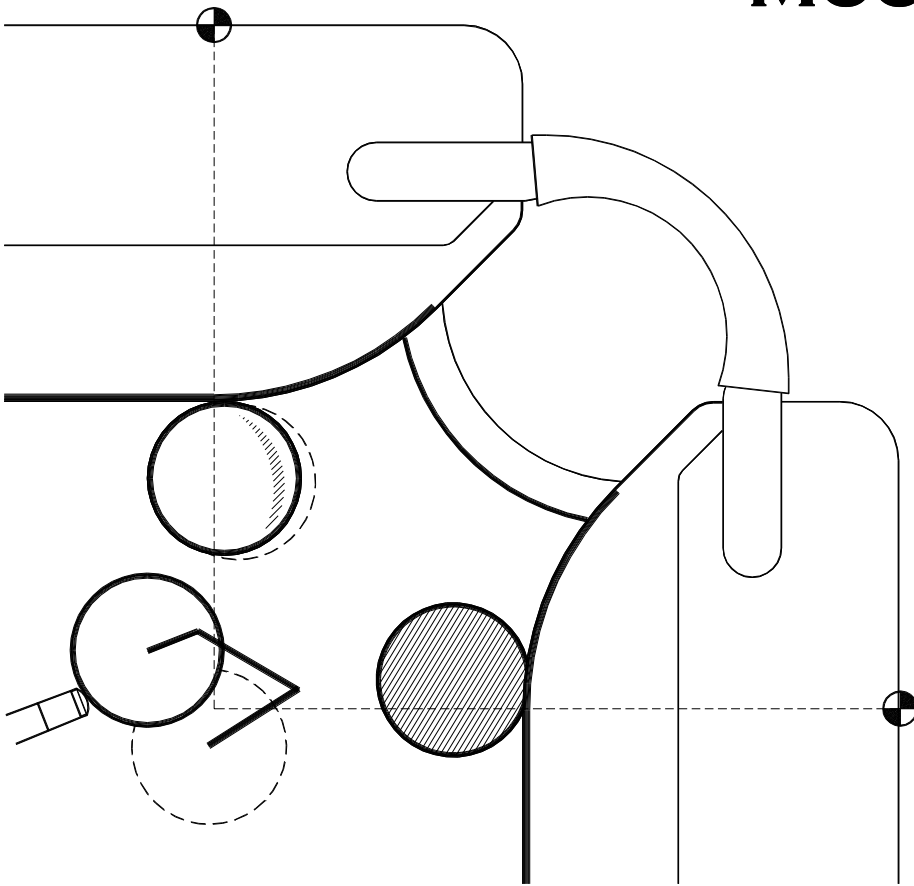
The uzual stuff-up iz to hit 3B too hard. This iz not a kiss-back cannon. We don't need to do much more than reach the red. If we hit hard we will risk mooving yellow too far. And it would only magnify any error with the qball leev in 3C.

MOOVING RED

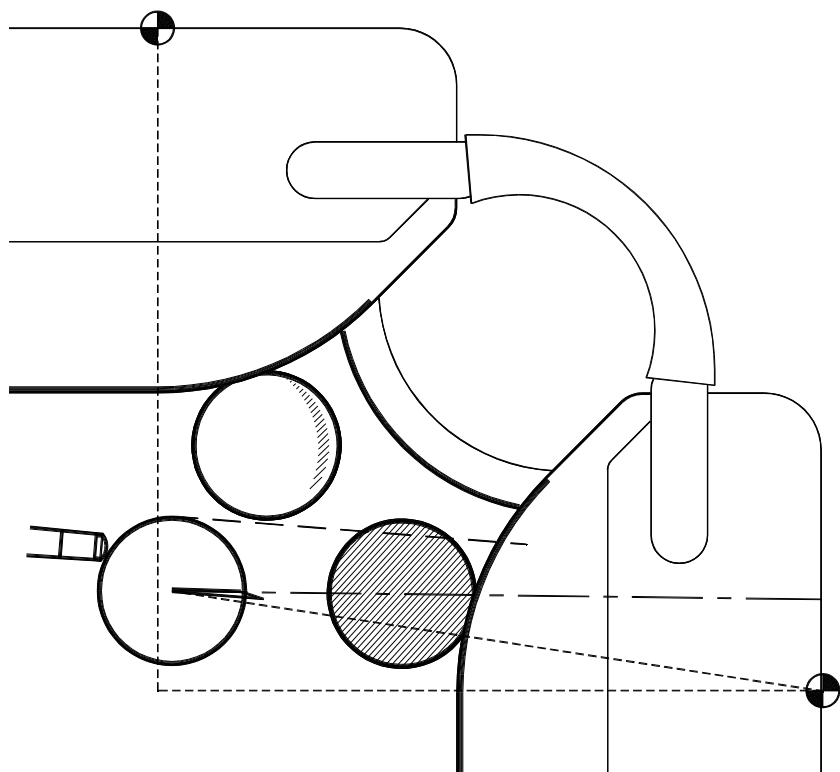
CRADLE 3C

This iz tricky. U needta judge the contact and side-spin really well. U want to moov the red a little, but not too much. A thick half-ball with running-side should do it. Leeving the three ballz az per the broken ballz.

If this leev iz something like our ideal pozzzy shown in CRADLE 1, then u are cooking with gas. If not, uken keep trying. Remember, it's safer & better here to creep up to good pozzzy. There'z no law saying u havta do it in one shot.



TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT



CRADLE 4

Here we show the red&yellow at the inside limit of possible cradle-cannon pozzz, inside the jawz. In fact, the pozzz iz very bad. When the ballz are so close together, it iz actually more difficult to judge the needed contact etc, and u ken eezyly miss the cannon. But the uzual stuff-up iz to double-hit the qball, koz of the short-range.

There iz little u ken do to improv the pozzz. Almost anything u try leedz to a loss of the yellow.

JAM

Best bet here in (4) iz to try for the Jam. Then, uken either continue with the jam, or, once the red&yellow are jammed, it iz eezy to hit very hard to get them to spring outish (un-jam them). Then u ken do anything u like withem. With luck u might get good cradle-cannon pozzz.

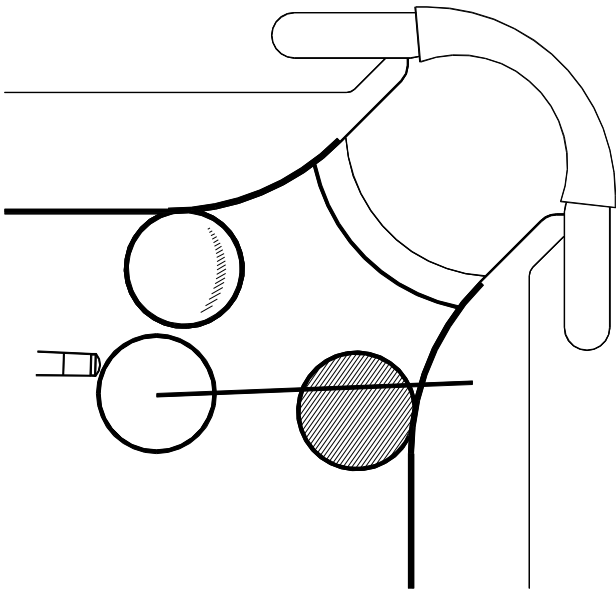
THE TIMES 20 FEBRUARY 1930

..... McConachy missed a winner..... Lindrum introduced a variety into his cannon play in a rather peculiar way. The two object balls were placed one on either **shoulder** of the top left pocket, & Lindrum made **18** kiss cannons in succession before either object ball was displaced.

COMMENTS

This must hav been a Cradle Cannon. Cradle woz obviously an oddity in 1930 -- due to the 35 limit on direct cannonz -- i think it required Ball--Cushion--Ball -- obviously an impossibility with the Cradle or the Jam. The Pendulum Jam could handle Cushion--Ball--Ball before they removed that ambiguity in the rulez (which were never ambiguous anyhow).

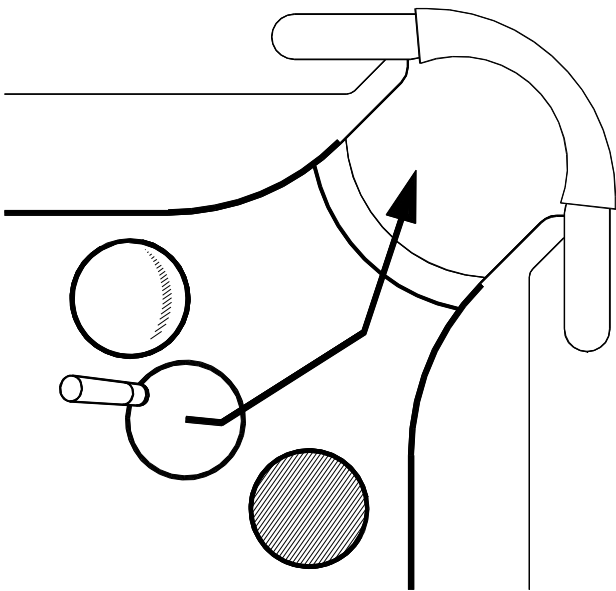
A 303 BREAK



CRADLE CANNON 5A

Here'z how u ken make a 303 break. This sequence woz suggested by Wozza, whilst flicking throo the first draft. U are kumming up to 70 cannonz, so u then play a cannon to open up the pozy, az followz.

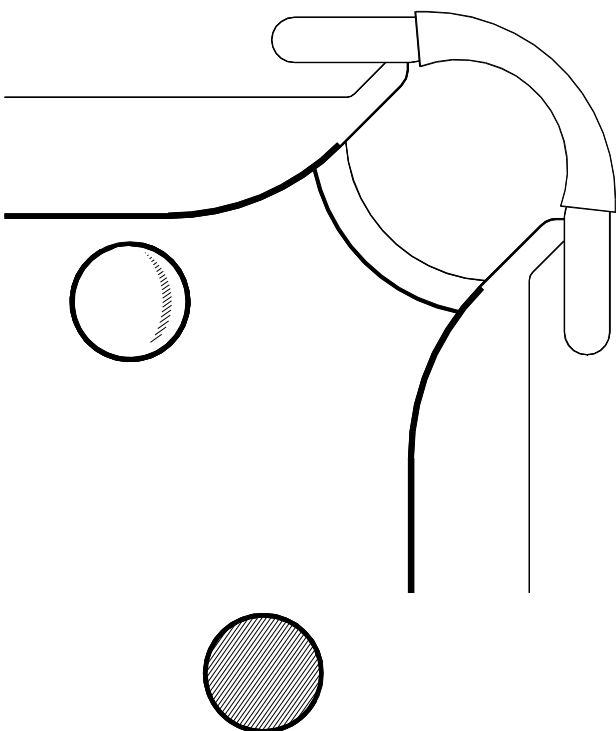
Play three-quarter-ball on red, with some left-hand-side, az shown, to leev 5B pozy. This might take more than one cannon if the red&yellow are very close together.



CRADLE CANNON 5B

Here u play in-off the red. U might havta uze some left-hand-side or pique, az shown.

Be careful to leev red in a friendly pozy, az shown in 5C. If an in-off red iz too difficult, play in-off yellow, or some other bridging cannon.



CRADLE CANNON 5C

The next stroke, 5C, iz a very long-range gathering-cannon from in-hand, played at dead pace.

Now here u will hav to know your table very well, koz, at slow pace, the drift ken be a half-ball or more. With good management, u will keep the red&yellow between the qball & the pocket. Hence, no one ken stop u from getting the Jam, which iz the eezyst, or perhaps regaining the Cradle, which iz the best. And away u go again. Another 70 cannonz, & then the same manipulation again, etc etc. So, u get up to 153 points per cycle.

I hav done a similar 303 in practice (see the chapter on the Jam Cannon). It's probably the eezyst way som of us are ever going to make a 300 break.

For a professional, the Baulk Line Rule would be a hurdle, but i don't know of any eezy way of doing the baulk-line stroke, i meen, without breaking up our nice&kozy cradle cluster in the corner.

GETTEN CRADLE

Getting cradle-cannon pozzz iz not hard. This iz the way uken do it. U are nursing the ballz towardz the pocket. When u get there (or befor) u do one of 5 thingz.

- Plan A** The Cradle.
Plan B If u stuffed up Plan A, go for the Jam.
Plan C Turn-the-corner. This allowz some eezy Rockerz against the side cushion.
Plan D This iz the TurnAbout, to go back the other way along the top cushion. U would havtabe fond of playing left-handed.

Getting Cradle pozzz iz fairly natural. There iz no real need for xtra drawingz. Az your run nearz the pocket, u open up the spacing a bit, & u then nudge the outside ball ahead to the far jaw, and there it iz. More often, u will hav a couple of tricky little kiss-backs, with the kissee (the red) a little off the cushion at first. But this soon agreez to freeze on the cushion without too much fuss. If u fail to get the Cradle, & get the Jam, then u are now in what iz possibly the eezyst pozzz for getting the Cradle. Hav a look at this. But i don't know why u would want to convert a perfikt Jam to a Cradle, nowadays.

CRADLE 6A

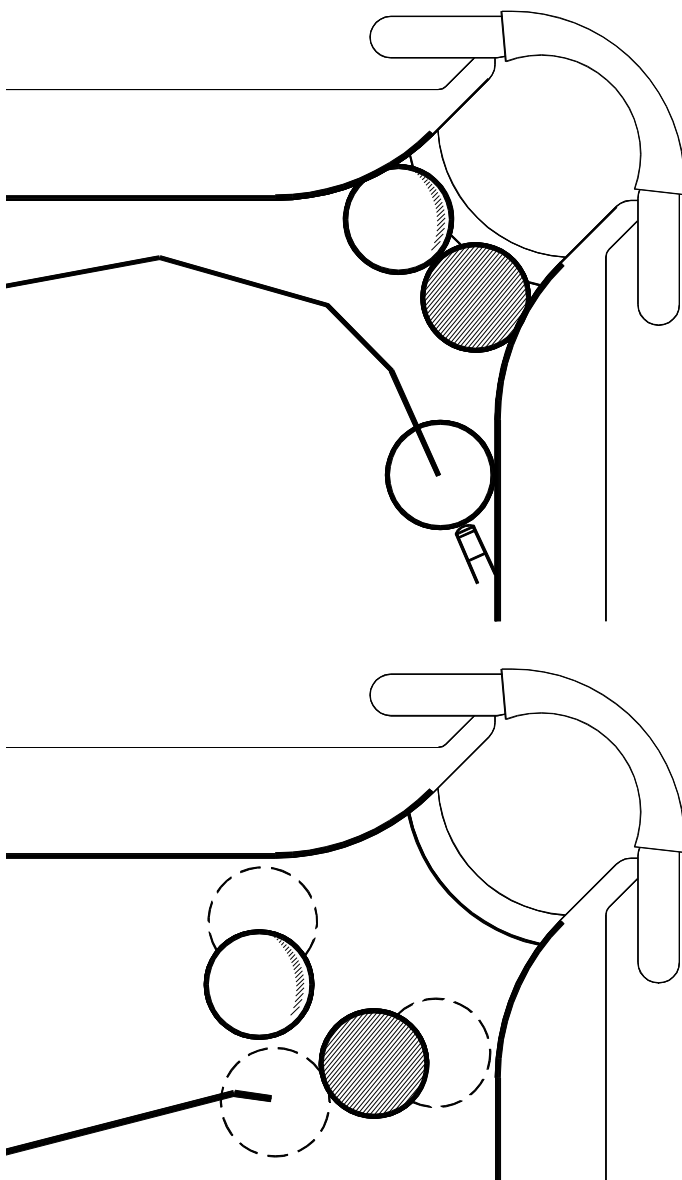
Here we hav a perfikt Jam. Firstly, play a hardish cannon to bring the red&yellow out almost one ball off the cushion, leeving 6B.

The qball kumz off the side-cushion to stop between The Spot & the Pyramid-Spot. The closer the qball stops to the top-cushion the better, for the best angle for your next shot.

U will tend to under-hit the shot. It haztabe hard. Normally the qball would kum across to finish near the same cushion. But uken make it stop near mid-table, if u uze stun. Topspin iz next best.

CRADLE 6B

Nextly, we play a very soft cannon, az shown. This will be yellow-first or red-first, depending on the exact pozzz u hav. And, uken sometimez get good Cradle in one more shot. If u stuff-up badly, no-one ken stop u from getting a loozer to leev a little gather from in-hand. Then of course try for Cradle, etc etc. I wonder if this sequence could be put to some use. Mightbe if the rulez were changed to prohibit more than one jam cannon. I meen, with an army of cushion-crawlerz getting the Jam whenever they wished, a limit could follow. Hmmmmm.



HOW I HOAXED LOVEJOY

RISO LEVI BILLIARDS IN LIGHTER VEIN (1920)

.....The cradle-stroke---sometimes also called the anchor-stroke---was discovered by the late W A Lovejoy who won the amateur championship in 1904 and became a professional in 1905. He first exploited it in 1907, but it had a comparatively short life, for after two or three other professionals had made gigantic breaks by its means, the rule which led to its abolition came into force.

Only a gifted player could work the balls into position for the stroke. Indeed, the surpassing skill and the delicacy of touch which were necessary for the setting up of the position were possessed by but few of our professionals. If, however, the correct position was set up by hand, the case was very different. A good touch was required even then for the making of a respectable number of cannons, but with a little practice any amateur who was good enough for an occasional three-figure break could play the stroke all right. Indeed, no very great care was necessary after the first 15 or 20 strokes, for the two object balls gradually settled in the cloth, and when the run of cannons was long continued, pronounced hollows or cups were formed under the object balls. After a very little while, the object balls rocked in these hollows every time the cue ball came in contact with them, and only as the result of a somewhat careless stroke could either of them be induced to come out of the little depressions in which it rested.

As many players of to-day do not know precisely what the cradle-stroke position is, i have illustrated it on the diagram. I had some practice at the stroke---i used to place the balls in correct position for it before i began---and i very soon acquired such mastery of it that i could make two or three hundred cannons before i broke down as the result of a careless stroke or a miscue. Bending down continuously whilst making a very long run of these delicate cannons makes your back ache, and so, unless you stand up for a short rest after every fifty or hundred strokes you are very apt to make a careless one.

When i was able to make several hundred of these cradle cannons one of the staff of the "Manchester Evening Chronicle" came up to my house to witness me make a thousand break by its means. At my first attempt i made a break of 800 odd and then miscued. As i had failed to make 1,000 i was requested to have another try there and then, but as an amendment i proposed that we should have a few games of billiards, and that if desired i would have another go at it at the end of the evening. The second attempt proved quite successful, but when i reached four figures i was pressed to continue, and i added a further 400 odd before i miscued. A few days later a column article on the stroke, illustrated by diagrams supplied by me, appeared in the "Chronicle".

The following week i was in Glasgow. A famous London Billiards firm has a branch house in Sauchiehall Street, and as i was very friendly with its manager i looked in one morning just before noon to have a chat with him. We had barely exchanged greeting when he said :

"Dawson and Lovejoy are upstairs, and i believe the latter is showing the cradle-stroke to a few gentlemen. He was just placing the balls in position when i came down half a minute ago. Would you like to go upstairs and watch him, and then come back to me ?"

I thanked him for his suggestion and went upstairs at once. When i entered the room Lovejoy was still at the stroke, and was surrounded by a little knot of very interested spectators while Dawson stood a little away from the others. I had never met Lovejoy before, but i knew Dawson, so i made a sign to him not to say a word, and then i went close up to Lovejoy, and after watching him make about half a dozen strokes i exclaimed in the most simple voice at my command :

"Is this the wonderful cradle-stroke about which i have read so much of late?"

Lovejoy looked up for a moment and replied :

"Yes, this is it," and then bent down again and continued at the stroke.

I watched him make a few more cannons and then in the same kind of voice as before i said :

"It looks very simple."

"D'you think so ?" replied Lovejoy as he looked up again.

"Yes, i do."

"D'you think you could make a dozen cannons from this position ?"

"Yes, i feel almost certain i could."

As a matter of fact, i was quite positive of it, for the manner in which the object balls had rocked whilst Lovejoy was making the cannons had proved to me that many hundreds of them had been made in that particular corner of the table, and that the ball were resting in such relatively deep cups that no very delicate touch or accurate contact was necessary for the retention of the position.

"Would you like to have a try ?" continued Lovejoy, as, with a smile on his face, he offered me his cue.

"Thanks very much," i said, and as i took the cue i noticed that several of the spectators were smiling amusedly in anticipation of my quickly making a mess of the position, and of my discomfiture in discovering that i could only make two or three cannons, notwithstanding that it had all seemed so very simple to me when i had been a spectator.

It was a cold day in early February, and i was wearing a heavy overcoat and thick gloves, but i bent down to the stroke just as i was without removing even one glove. The balls were so set that i quickly made a dozen cannons and could have gone on indefinitely had not Lovejoy caught hold of my arm and pulled me away.

"Here, that'll do," said he with a laugh. "You've been pulling my leg, What d'you mean coming in here, and talking simple-like after you've been practising my stroke for hours ?"

And then i told him that although the making of a considerable number of these cannons presented no difficulty to any fair player when once the correct position had been set up, the working of the balls into this position during the course of a game demanded the acme of refinement in execution, and that only a player of surpassing skill and possessed of an exquisite delicacy of touch could possibly manipulate the object balls into their correct locations for a sequence of cradle cannons. I also told him that i had never yet seen this done, and that i would take it as a great personal favour if he would show me how he worked the balls into position during a game.

"Well, it's no certainty," replied Lovejoy, "but I'll do my best to show you how it's done."

And as he spoke he placed the three balls in close-cannon position against the side cushion about a foot or so from the corner pocket, and then by means of perhaps a dozen cannons he ran the ball along the cushion to the vicinity of the pocket, and with two or three more dainty little strokes he had the balls in perfect position. It was a wonderful achievement. I thanked him for his kindness, and complimented and congratulated him on his great skill. For what he had shown me was a far more marvellous thing than the getting of even twenty thousand cannons from the set position would have been. And as i went downstairs i wondered how many hours Lovejoy had devoted to the perfection of play required to set up the cradle-cannon position after he had first discovered it and recognized its potentialities.....

TOM REECE CANNONS & BIG GUNS 1928

Half a million up!! That's some game, as the Americans would say, & i had to play it soon after i had borrowed the Anchor Stroke from its discoverer, W A Lovejoy, the famous amateur.....

... it only took me a week to learn how to nurse the ballz into the requisite position in the jaws of the pocket. Having done this i naturally saved up the resultant surprise packet for my old opponent, Melbourne Inman. We were playing a match while there was still much excited comment in the billiards world over Lovejoy's new stroke. Many people maintained that the position could not be obtained at will & nobody dreamed that i had already mastered the secret. It may be imagined, therefore, what excitement there was when i got the position in one of the early sessions & ran to points with three or four hundred unfinished.

When the next session came round people were paying a pound a head to get into the hall. I put on one hundred after another until i had passed the 900 mark & had, incidentally, set up a new world's record in professional billiards. In those days, it should be remembered, the four-figure break was regarded as a practical impossibility. But, having once lost my position, it happened that i never got it again during that particular match &, in trying to do so, i flung away my chances & Inman actually beat me!!

History always has a tendency to repeat itself. It was upon Inman again that i sprung the pendulum-cannon surprise when we were playing in the Championship in 1927, & once again, after making a startling break by means of this stroke, i lost position & never recovered it, Inman winning the match.....

.... as regards the anchor cannon itself, there was probably no man in England quite so sick of it as i was before the authorities put a stop to it. And i had some excuse for that, for it was by means of this stroke that i made the world's record break of 499,135 unfinished!! I got the Anchor position in the first session when i had scored 865, & i never lost it. I went on playing the same stroke for five solid weeks &, as admission was free to the public, there was a large gathering on every occasion, both afternoons & evenings....

.... Another curious feature about this match was that, although there were set times to begin at, 3 & 8, there were no set times to finish. I used to reel off 1000 after 1000. The anchor stroke is a very trying one to play, as one has to lean over the table & after an hour or two the position has something the effect of a kidney punch. If i had not been very fit physically i could never have stood the strain.

When this nightmare break had been in progress for some days it used to amuse me to play the spectators out of the room. I suppose i was scoring at the rate of 3000 an hour roughly & usually most of the crowd would tip-toe out of the hall after they had seen me make a couple of thousand or so.

One evening i had played'em all out except half a dozen & i must have been nearing the 8000 mark for that session. I was quite ready to have a rest myself, but i grew obstinate. 4 of the last 6 left before i had completed another 2000 -- one more 1000 shifted the fifth. He crept out as silently as a mouse, but the last of the half-dozen refused to budge. He was sitting right in the back row of the seats & i couldn't help admiring the way he stuck it out. But i am a bit of a sticker myself & i wouldn't give in, not even for the sake of the weary marker, the tired referee, or my bored opponent. I rattled up another 1000 & the man was still there -- still another, & he made no sign of moving. Then i stopped play & walked around to where he was sitting. He was fast asleep & perfectly happy. We broke up the session without waking him & i think he must have been found by the cleaners in the morning.

On two occasions i played all night & there was a constant stream of spectators coming & going. Several of the boys came round from the Vaudeville Club, Eugene Stratton, Paul Martinetti, Arthur Reece, the Brothers McNaughten & others. There were several intervals for refreshments, & even i was not too anchored to the table to enjoy them.

I ought to add that George Reid of the Sporting Life watched the break from start to finish, & i am inclined to think his job was harder than my own. At all events, he stuck it out like a Briton.

TOM REECE'S RECORD BREAK

By Peter Ainsworth & Jock McGregor

English Amateur Billiards Association website

This website haz lots of historical stuff -- re the Cradle Cannon the above article mentionz that

- The possibilitiez were known to have been demonstrated by Frank Ives during a visit to London in 1892 when he stayed with JP Mannoock at the Victoria Hotel.
- In January 1907 Lovejoy made a break of 603 including 283 consecutive cannonz, versus Cecil Harveson.
- In February Reece had a break of 1825 versus Inman, & another of 1269.
- In March Lovejoy had a break of 2257 versus W Pindar.
- By April Dawson had a break of 7184, while in the same week Tom Aiken had 7172 unfinished, in a game of 16,000 up.
- Dawson then had 23,769 unfinished, in a game of 25,000 up.
- Reece had a break of 40,001 unfinished, versus Joe Chapman.
- In June Cook had a break of 42,746, versus Alec Taylor, when he failed to cannon by the merest shade.
- In June & July 1907 Reece made hiz break of 499,135 unfinished, in 500,000 up, versus Joe Chapman. Reece gave a demonstration that each of the object-ballz revolvez around its axis once in every 500 or 600 cannonz.
- At a special meeting in September 1907, it waz rezolved that the cradle cannon be barred.

THE BILLIARDS PLAYER

The Nov 1953 issue haz a Burroughes & Watts photo of the ballz&pocket of Reece'z actual pozzey, taken at that time. The article sez.....

.....He made 249,552 cannons, and on an average scored 10,000 at a session. Orthodox sessions were at 3 and 8. Harry Tate did a sketch with a curtain-fall in it, after which Reece was seen with hoary white beard, the table area, apart from the cannon space, was covered in cobwebs, and Chapman, also bearded, lay snoring.

The "hero" of the occasion received an extra cheque of 135 pounds for his pains. The refusal of an official Certificate by the Billiards Association was simply due to the fact that the public were not present at many sessions

(though George Reid, of "The Sporting Life" was stated to have seen the whole break, and he lived to tell the tale) but it was expressly stated by the governing body that not the slightest imputation was cast on Reece's integrity.....

Tom Reece was born at Oldham on August 12 1873passed away at his home at Lancing, Sussex on Friday 16 October 1953.....it is good to know that even at eighty he had just returned from a successful visit to Australia, and the picture i received of Tom showed him looking a debonair sixty.....

I hav i think the same photo, i uze it az a bookmark in my copy of Reece'z book -- Dainty Billiards -- it iz of Tom and hiz wife, and Wally iz in the background, the mark on the back sez Geelong.