Scotland to 1892

Ain south west Scotland, on the Galloway coast, Kirkcudbright Bowling Club is to be found, as at Ayr, in the very heart of the town. On one side stands the parish church, on the other the Town Hall. Formed in 1865, Kirkcudbright was at the forefront of efforts by Scottish bowlers to organise competitions and generate public interest in the game. But whereas the Eglinton Trophy was limited to Ayrshire and Glasgow, the Kirkcudbright committee went further. As announced on a poster issued for its second tournament in 1864 (‘the first was in 1861 – theirs was to be ‘Open to Great Britain and Ireland’. Another poster stated: ‘Such an opportunity of witnessing Britain’s Greatest Bowlers has never occurred’.

Indeed it had not (other than perhaps in 1861). No earlier international events are known. How many non-Scots there were amongst the 292 entrants is hard to say, but certainly some were from Ireland and England. Reporting on the event in his Manual of Bowling, published shortly afterwards, William Mitchell described hearing ‘Cockney dialects’, while a bowler named Woods is known to have travelled from Preston.

Clearly for the fishing port of Kirkcudbright, the tournament was an opportunity. A poster, now on display in the modern bowls club and aimed at visitors from Cumberland, advertised day trips on a paddle steamer, first from Maryport, then Whitehaven, both across the Solway Firth. Tickets cost 2s 6d but were free for bands of musicians not exceeding twelve in number. Such bands were offered free admission to the green.

Entry to the competition was also priced at 2s 6d. Of particular interest are the competition ‘bye-laws’, showing as they do how the ‘Scotch game’ was already well defined. For example, each player was to use four biased bowls, ‘the circumference of which shall not exceed 16¼ inches’. Games were ‘21 up’ with a minimum length for a mark of 20 yards. Also, five games were to be played at a time, suggesting that the green was divided into rinks.

Note that the prices were not cash but objects of a specific value. Thus the winner, William Currie, took home £8. This form of award, common in Victorian sport, ensured that the entrants were in cash. J Dewhurst, the second placed man, took home ‘a silver tea service valued at £50’. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. The ‘copper alloy’, as described by Paddington Evans in his Manual of Bowling, published shortly afterwards, William Mitchell described hearing ‘Cockney dialects’, while a bowler named Woods is known to have travelled from Preston.

Clearly for the fishing port of Kirkcudbright, the tournament was an opportunity. A poster, now on display in the modern bowls club and aimed at visitors from Cumberland, advertised day trips on a paddle steamer, first from Maryport, then Whitehaven, both across the Solway Firth. Tickets cost 2s 6d but were free for bands of musicians not exceeding twelve in number. Such bands were offered free admission to the green.

Entry to the competition was also priced at 2s 6d. Of particular interest are the competition ‘bye-laws’, showing as they do how the ‘Scotch game’ was already well defined. For example, each player was to use four biased bowls, ‘the circumference of which shall not exceed 16¼ inches’.

Games were ‘21 up’ with a minimum length for a mark of 20 yards. Also, five games were to be played at a time, suggesting that the green was divided into rinks.

Note that the prices were not cash but objects of a specific value. Thus the winner, William Currie, took home £8. This form of award, common in Victorian sport, ensured that the entrants were in cash. J Dewhurst, the second placed man, took home ‘a silver tea service valued at £50’. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. The ‘copper alloy’, as described by Paddington Evans in his Manual of Bowling, published shortly afterwards, was a handicap match ‘open to all England’ but not beyond. Amongst the entrants was J Woods, possibly the same Woods who competed at Kintyre. Another difference was that, as was commonplace in the north of England, the prizes were in cash. J Dewhurst, the winner, took home £8.

...The green was divided into rinks. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. Thus the winner, William Currie, took home £8. This form of award, common in Victorian sport, ensured that the entrants were in cash. J Dewhurst, the second placed man, took home ‘a silver tea service valued at £50’. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. The ‘copper alloy’, as described by Paddington Evans in his Manual of Bowling, published shortly afterwards, was a handicap match ‘open to all England’ but not beyond. Amongst the entrants was J Woods, possibly the same Woods who competed at Kintyre. Another difference was that, as was commonplace in the north of England, the prizes were in cash. J Dewhurst, the winner, took home £8.

...The green was divided into rinks. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. Thus the winner, William Currie, took home £8. This form of award, common in Victorian sport, ensured that the entrants were in cash. J Dewhurst, the second placed man, took home ‘a silver tea service valued at £50’. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. The ‘copper alloy’, as described by Paddington Evans in his Manual of Bowling, published shortly afterwards, was a handicap match ‘open to all England’ but not beyond. Amongst the entrants was J Woods, possibly the same Woods who competed at Kintyre. Another difference was that, as was commonplace in the north of England, the prizes were in cash. J Dewhurst, the winner, took home £8.

...The green was divided into rinks. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. Thus the winner, William Currie, took home £8. This form of award, common in Victorian sport, ensured that the entrants were in cash. J Dewhurst, the second placed man, took home ‘a silver tea service valued at £50’. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. The ‘copper alloy’, as described by Paddington Evans in his Manual of Bowling, published shortly afterwards, was a handicap match ‘open to all England’ but not beyond. Amongst the entrants was J Woods, possibly the same Woods who competed at Kintyre. Another difference was that, as was commonplace in the north of England, the prizes were in cash. J Dewhurst, the winner, took home £8.

...The green was divided into rinks. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. Thus the winner, William Currie, took home £8. This form of award, common in Victorian sport, ensured that the entrants were in cash. J Dewhurst, the second placed man, took home ‘a silver tea service valued at £50’. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. The ‘copper alloy’, as described by Paddington Evans in his Manual of Bowling, published shortly afterwards, was a handicap match ‘open to all England’ but not beyond. Amongst the entrants was J Woods, possibly the same Woods who competed at Kintyre. Another difference was that, as was commonplace in the north of England, the prizes were in cash. J Dewhurst, the winner, took home £8.

...The green was divided into rinks. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. Thus the winner, William Currie, took home £8. This form of award, common in Victorian sport, ensured that the entrants were in cash. J Dewhurst, the second placed man, took home ‘a silver tea service valued at £50’. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. The ‘copper alloy’, as described by Paddington Evans in his Manual of Bowling, published shortly afterwards, was a handicap match ‘open to all England’ but not beyond. Amongst the entrants was J Woods, possibly the same Woods who competed at Kintyre. Another difference was that, as was commonplace in the north of England, the prizes were in cash. J Dewhurst, the winner, took home £8.

...The green was divided into rinks. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. Thus the winner, William Currie, took home £8. This form of award, common in Victorian sport, ensured that the entrants were in cash. J Dewhurst, the second placed man, took home ‘a silver tea service valued at £50’. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. The ‘copper alloy’, as described by Paddington Evans in his Manual of Bowling, published shortly afterwards, was a handicap match ‘open to all England’ but not beyond. Amongst the entrants was J Woods, possibly the same Woods who competed at Kintyre. Another difference was that, as was commonplace in the north of England, the prizes were in cash. J Dewhurst, the winner, took home £8.

...The green was divided into rinks. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. Thus the winner, William Currie, took home £8. This form of award, common in Victorian sport, ensured that the entrants were in cash. J Dewhurst, the second placed man, took home ‘a silver tea service valued at £50’. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. The ‘copper alloy’, as described by Paddington Evans in his Manual of Bowling, published shortly afterwards, was a handicap match ‘open to all England’ but not beyond. Amongst the entrants was J Woods, possibly the same Woods who competed at Kintyre. Another difference was that, as was commonplace in the north of England, the prizes were in cash. J Dewhurst, the winner, took home £8.

...The green was divided into rinks. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. Thus the winner, William Currie, took home £8. This form of award, common in Victorian sport, ensured that the entrants were in cash. J Dewhurst, the second placed man, took home ‘a silver tea service valued at £50’. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. The ‘copper alloy’, as described by Paddington Evans in his Manual of Bowling, published shortly afterwards, was a handicap match ‘open to all England’ but not beyond. Amongst the entrants was J Woods, possibly the same Woods who competed at Kintyre. Another difference was that, as was commonplace in the north of England, the prizes were in cash. J Dewhurst, the winner, took home £8.

...The green was divided into rinks. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. Thus the winner, William Currie, took home £8. This form of award, common in Victorian sport, ensured that the entrants were in cash. J Dewhurst, the second placed man, took home ‘a silver tea service valued at £50’. Note that the prizes were not cash but objects of a specific value. The ‘copper alloy’, as described by Paddington Evans in his Manual of Bowling, published shortly afterwards, was a handicap match ‘open to all England’ but not beyond. Amongst the entrants was J Woods, possibly the same Woods who competed at Kintyre. Another difference was that, as was commonplace in the north of England, the prizes were in cash. J Dewhurst, the winner, took home £8.