

Messrs. Orme & Sons Ltd,

16, Soho Square, London
and of

The Parsonage, Manchester
Established 1845

Billiard Table Makers

To H.M. King George V, H.I.M The Empress Eugenie
and His late Majesty King Edward VII

For the Royal Jubilee Exhibition, Manchester, 1887

“The idea carried out in the carved ornamentation of the “Queen” Billiard Table has been to give a permanent record by allegory and inference of the stability of the monarchy in this country, by showing in historical succession round the Billiard Table, the principal links connecting Her Late Majesty, Queen Victoria, with William the Conqueror, and thus inferentially with Charlemagne from whom William the Conqueror was himself descended: Also by the Panels, in which are allegorised the principal Colonies and Dependencies, to illustrate the wealth, diversity, and breadth, of the British Empire”

This unique ‘black walnut’ billiard table by Orme and Sons Ltd was a masterpiece commissioned for Queen Victoria’s Jubilee Exhibition in 1887. Every side is beautifully carved in high relief with references to the industrial growth and cultural variety encompassed by the fifty years of her reign, which coincided with the Golden Age of the British Empire. It was sold from the Exhibition to Hamar Bass Esq, of the famous brewing family, for the princely sum of 1,000 guineas!

The cushion friezes are decorated with ribbons of quotations from Shakespeare, Tennyson, Scott, and Byron entwined with over fifty species of wild flowers and native British birds. Beneath this are two long and six short panels depicting numerous countries through allegory, flora, fauna and industry. Between the panels, above each leg, are portrait figures of William of Normandy, Henry I, Henry II, John, Henry III, Edward I, Edward II, Edward III, Edward IV, Elizabeth of York, James I and Charles I.

Height: 34 $\frac{3}{4}$ in; 88cm

Width: 150in; 381cm

Depth: 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ in; 65cm





On the death of Mr Bass this table was included in The Byrkley Lodge Sale on June 23rd 1913. Messrs Knight, Frank and Rutley wrote a fulsome three page catalogue entry describing the major panels as follows:



No.1 Panel gives (encircled with olive, laurel and forget-me-not) a portrait of Queen Victoria when first called to wear the crown of these realms, below which is her royal residence of Windsor; on either side are female figures in the respective costumes of her accession and jubilee years. On the left hand appears a stage coach of those early days – not as yet superseded by steam. On the right is a locomotive, with the towers of the Manchester Town Hall and Exchange in the background. In medallions at the extreme ends are represented, on one side, an old-fashioned line of battleship, and on the other the ironclad “Devastation”. The former medallion is entwined with a chain of wild blossoms, and round the latter a garden flowers are twined, typical of the progress of cultivation.





No.5 Panel displays Queen Victoria enthroned and surrounded by music, art, literature and science, commerce, manufactures, mechanics, and engineering. Besides her throne are grouped the armorial insignia of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland; while representatives of the army and navy are seated as its supporters and defenders. Behind the figures upon the left hand is the great Exhibition of 1851, the first of the series of world fairs, which have since been so popular, and with which the name of the late Prince Consort is so justly associated; and on the right the Manchester Jubilee Exhibition. The tough old British oak fitly adorns the panel. The Queen holds in her hands the Ribbon, which is shown at the back of each panel – “the golden chain, that binds all hearts in one” – binding together the widely severed portions of her world-wide domain; the other end being attached to the medallion containing the portrait in No 1 Panel.



No.2 Panel typifies the British Isles.

In the centre is the figure of Britannia, armed, her right hand grasping a trident, and on her right side a lion, en garde, her left arm is round the neck of Hibernia whose harp is garlanded with the leaves and blossoms of the Flax Plant (the raw material of the Irish Linen manufacture). Around the feet of the central group are clustered smaller figures, the Channel Islands, Man, Scottish Isles, etc. On the left side, enwreathed with Rose, Shamrock, and Thistle, an Old English Homestead of the black and white, half-timbered style. On the right a cornfield, in the background the sea, with a ship under sail in the offing and in the middle distance a Coast-guardsmen, indicating the nautical aspect of the nation.

No.3 Panel illustrates the British African and Mediterranean possessions.

In the centre the figure of Africa, seated on a Cheetah or Cape Hunting Leopard (the head-dress is borrowed from the Roman Medals of Scipio); on her right hand an African boy is seated on an Elephant; and grouped around are Ostriches, Buffalo and Cape a Bullock Wagon; on her left an Egyptian Sphinx, and reclining at its base, the Cyprian Aphrodite: in the rear are Giraffes browsing, while across the plain a herd of Zebras and Spring-boks fly wildly from the pursuit of a Cheetah. The whole is surrounded with Cotton, Grapes and Wheat.

No. 4 Panel illustrates our Indian and Chinese dependencies.

The central figure of India – beneath a canopy with the pillars from the ancient rock-cut temple at Ajunta in the Bombay Presidency - is seated on an Elephant with gorgeous State trappings, embroidered with the Imperial Monogram, and at her feet a tiger crouches; on her left an Indian girl is spinning the thread for textile fabrics. On the extreme left a Ceylon boat plunges through the surf, and behind it is the Taj Mahal at Agra, the splendid tomb erected by Shah Jehan for his favourite wife, Moomtaza Mehal – Chehil Minor (or pillar of victory, erected at Old Delhi in the thirteenth century, by Kootub ud deen Ibeq, to celebrate his conquest of the Hindoos); and the temple at Tanjore, in Southern Hindoostan (probably erected in the tenth or eleventh century), fill the remainder of the background. Behind the spinning figure appears a Zebu or Brahmin Bull, and long-loined Oude-Bullock. On the other side a Chinese female figure is seated, and behind her are shewn the natural rock bridge at Hong-Kong with a Junk at anchor and the Pagoda at Rangoon. Cotton, Hemp, Tea, Rice and the Mulberry leaves and berries, bearing the Silkworm and Moth, festoon the sides of the Panel.



No. 6 Panel illustrates the Empire beyond the Pacific.

In the centre is seated a Creole, on her left hand a Native, and on her right an Indian (in the modest attire assumed by these children of nature in the forests of Guiana) reclines in a hammock, at her feet are crouched a Puma and Jaguar (the Lion and Tiger of the American wilds): an Ocelot steals along a branch behind and a Macaw, Marmoset, and Spider Monkey, swing from the boughs, and Alligator, Tapir and Peccary appear at the side: and in the background on the left, is shewn Coffee gathering, and the Mahogany tree; and on the right, the Cocoa-nut palm and Turtle catching on the West Indian coast. The subjects are bound by a garland of various productions. Coffee, Cocoa, Cotton, Cinnamon, Guava, Orange, Lemon, Banana, Pomegranate, and the beautiful Passion-flower; amidst them on the one side the tiny humming-bird has built her nest, and on the other the Toucan displays his ungainly form.

No.7 Panel takes us Eastward and Southward, and typifies the Colonies of Australia.

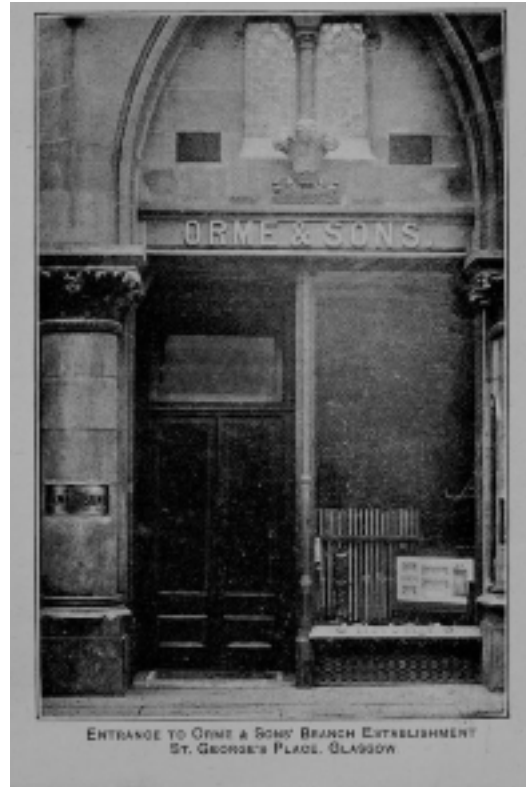
The centre figure of Australia holds in her left hand a Shepherd's Crook and in her right a Fan made of that most beautiful specimen of the Ornithology of the Antipodes, the Lyre-bird. On the left Tasmania, as a child, clutches a black Swan, and on the left a Maori woman propels a canoe. In the background are shewn gold-washing and a sheep-farm; and grouped around are the Kangaroo, Emu, Ornithorinchus and Apteryx (the strange, wingless bird of New Zealand), Parrots and Cockatoos, with Tree Ferns and Fruits.

No. 8 Panel, the last of the series, illustrates the Dominion of Canada.

Upon a sledge, is a female figure in the graceful winter attire of a Canadian lady, and beside her a Nun represents the French Colonists, many of whose settlements were made by religious communities, and whose convents still flourish in considerable numbers in Montreal and Quebec. Newfoundland, the abode of the Cod Fishery, is shown as a Mermaid, and beside her lies a dog of the breed that derives its name from the island. Behind, on the left, an Indian bridge, the rapids of the St Lawrence, and Ottawa and nearer the foreground Beavers are engaged in their engineering operations. On the right Montreal, the Wood barges of the St Lawrence, Cape Blomidon, Nova Scotia and fishing boats on the Banks of Newfoundland, while Seals disport themselves in the middle distance. Near the central figure is a group of Marine productions, which have become such an important portion of the exports of the Dominion, and around which are hung its varied fruits: Plums, Peaches, Apples, Pears, Currants, Gooseberries, Strawberries (grown in Ontario as a field crop), Grapes and Tomatoes."



A Black Walnut Cue Cupboard en suite



This imposing cupboard resembles a door within a frame, surmounted by a broken pediment enclosing a lion. The door is carved with seven panels. The upper four show Victoria's coats of arms at important stages in her reign, the central horizontal section has a profile of Victoria and Albert beside Windsor Castle and the lower section depicts the royal residences of Holyrood and Caernavon. The second section has slides which expose a game with stars and coloured counters and also rotates to form a scoreboard. The ormolu door furniture comprises a handle and two push plates intricately worked with arabesques and lion masks.

Height: 123in; 312cm

Width: 68in; 173cm

Depth: 79in; 201cm

Please note that the *Royal Jubilee Exhibition, Manchester, 1887, Official Catalogue*, a commemorative medal, some early photographs and the Byrkley Lodge sale entry are included as provenance for this table and cue cupboard.



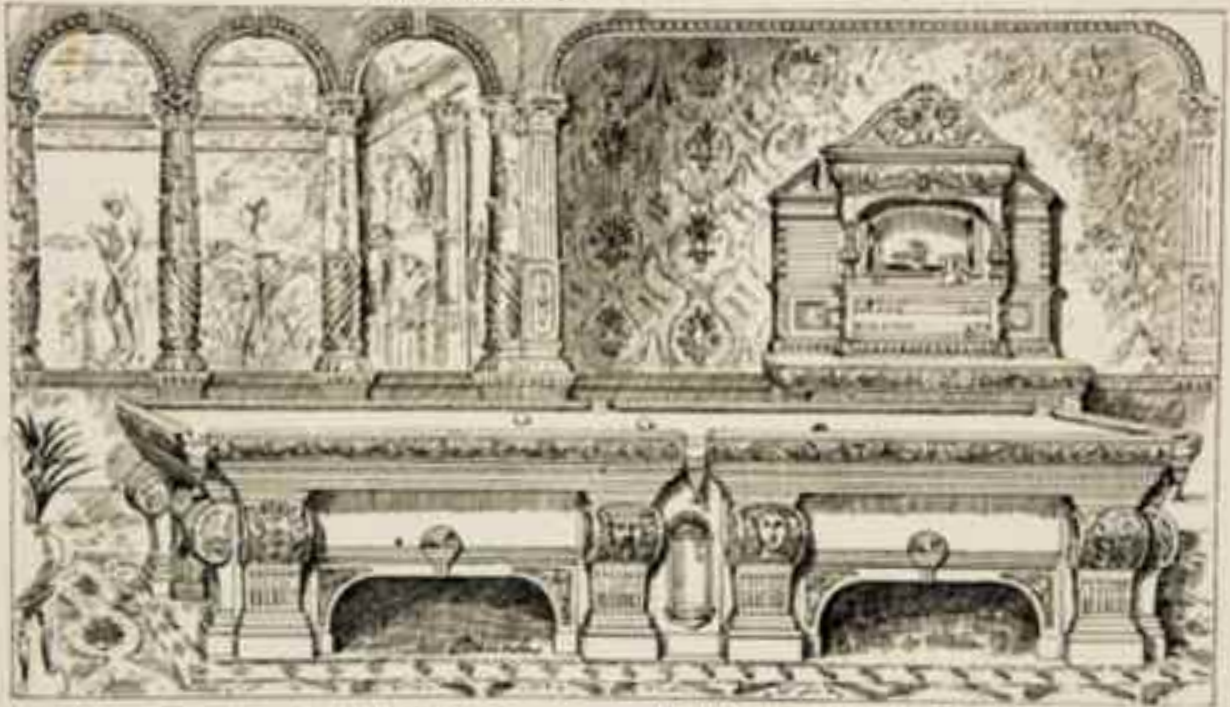


H.M QUEEN ALEXANDRA
and
H.I.M THE DOWAGER EMPRESS OF RUSSIA
playing upon a
BILLIARD TABLE
made by
ORME & SONS LTD.

Footnote:

Orme & Sons, founded in Manchester 1845, had become highly respected billiard table makers by the 1860s, a feat which was achieved by very few provincial firms. They rapidly expanded into further premises in Manchester, Glasgow (1880) and London (1890). The firm was highly ambitious and innovative, being the first to publish their own magazine "The Billiard Journal", to supply ivory balls and from 1876 to encourage billiards competitions by donating silver trophies (the first was valued at 140gns for the inaugural Championship of Ireland). With a talent for self-publicity they also challenged themselves to build and fully equip a room for the 1870 Professional Billiards Championship in 24 hours! Their success was described by the Sportsman newspaper thus: "Sixty men were engaged and they entered thoroughly into the spirit of the task. The timber (mahogany) had all been laid out, slates, ivory for the balls and all the other material for the cues, marking board, etc. and strip rubber cushions." In 1880 they acquired the accolade of royal patronage and from this date the three Prince of Wales feathers feature prominently in their advertising. It is therefore of no surprise that they were selected to undertake this truly magnificent commission for Queen Victoria's Jubilee exhibition in Manchester in 1887. Following the death of the Queen, their royal warrant converted into a warrant from King Edward VII and further expansion into Liverpool, Belfast and Stockport followed. The fortunes of Orme & Sons continued to rise under the next monarch, King George V, but from then on the two world wars and changing lifestyles contributed to their gradual decline until they were finally absorbed into Burroughes & Watts in 1967.

With reference to Peter Ainsworth, A Potted History - Orme & Sons



No. 602. - BILLIARD TABLE, Standard Size, fitted with -

Best quality Slates.
 U.S. Law Chalks.
 Fresh Pocket Plates (patent).
 Leather Covers to Pocket Plates (patent).
 No. 60. 60. 60.
 Price. GUINEAS.

1 Set best quality Balls, to size and weight.
 12 Superior Ash Cues.
 Cue Rack for 12 Cues, fitted with Rubber Springs.
 Cues Rack, fitted with Rubber Springs.
 1 Set Long Balls and Sockets.
 Wood Box.

With this Billiard Table as given quoted are included -

Dust Cover. Brush.
 Smoothing Iron.
 Billiard Scales, Drums and glass.
 Snook Marker.
 Chalk Cops and Chalk.

The above magnificent Billiard Table is kept in stock in Oak, but can be made in any other wood.



ENTRANCE:
 BLACKFRIARS STREET
 MANCHESTER.

ORME & SONS, BILLIARD TABLE BUILDERS

Co. B.R.E. INC



PRINCE OF WALES

16 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON; ST. GEORGE'S PLACE, GLASGOW;
 AND BLACKFRIARS STREET, MANCHESTER.

Have had the honour of supplying Billiard Tables to

- THE MOST HON. THE MARQUIS OF LONDONDERRY,
- THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF WILTON,
- THE RIGHT HON. LORD EGERTON OF TATTON,
- THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF STAMFORD AND WARRINGTON,
- THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF WICKLOW,
- THE RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT MASSEREENE AND FERRARD,
- THE RIGHT HON. LORD MOSTYN,
- THE RIGHT HON. VISCOUNTESS OSSINGTON,
- THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF LEITRIM,
- THE RIGHT HON. LORD KENYON,
- THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL MANVERS,
- THE RIGHT HON. LORD SUDELEY,
- THE RIGHT HON. LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON.

And many of the Principal Families, Clubs, and Hotels in the United Kingdom.

ESTABLISHED 1845.

The Magnus Table







The shaped rectangular frame and faceted tapering legs of this most unusual full size (12ft) Victorian table are crafted from slate which is one of the unique features of tables made by George Magnus. In addition he patented the technique for applying enamelled decoration to the slate, usually in the form of imitation marbling or scagliola. On this table the sides and legs are decorated with panels and roundels of faux Siena marble below a Vitruvian scroll border round the frieze all on a black ground. The sturdy legs have turned rings above tapering octagonal sections on bun feet. Signed *Magnus Patent London*. English, circa 1860.

Footnote:

Mr. George Eugene Magnus (1801-1873) was born in Orsett, Essex. He spent some time in the Potteries area of Staffordshire working for Josiah Wedgwood II and married Mary Boyle, the daughter of an earthenware manufacturer. There, he evidently learned the art of decorating, glazing and firing pottery, a skill he later used to decorate the underframes of billiard tables which he made entirely of slate. In 1838 he purchased an interest in a slate quarry in North Wales, and another on the Island of Valentia off the West Coast of Ireland. From these quarries he obtained slate of various colours including grey and ebony black from which he made his billiard tables.





George Eugene Magnus

In 1840 he patented his process of applying colour and glaze which was fired like enamel directly onto the slate. An extract from the letters patent reads ... *"The articles which I have manufactured from slate instead of other materials ... and which I claim as new and never before made or known, and to the sole manufacture of which I consider myself entitled under the letter patent are billiard tables composed solely of slate that is the frame and legs as well as the bed or table, although I am aware the bed or table has been heretofore made of slate which I do not claim excepting when combined with the framing and legs Secondly my improvements consist in polishing and finishing such manufactured articles as are required for ornamental purposes by the following process ... (here follows a list of instructions for enamelling slate)"*

Magnus leased a wharf, complete with large cranes for offloading quantities of slate and with workshops, on the Grosvenor Canal at Pimlico where in 1840 he established the "Pimlico Slate Company" with the address 30/40 Upper Belgrave Place. By 1851 the firm was sufficiently famous to exhibit at the Great Exhibition. Within a decade he was evidently well-known for his links with the royal family as testified by the following entry in the *'The Phillimore estate', Survey of London: volume 37.*, pp. 58-76, in 1859-60, No 31 *Phillimore Gardens was built for his own residence by George Eugene Magnus, a slate manufacturer who was also billiard maker to H.R.H. the Prince Consort.* On his death, he left the business to his sons George and Ernest but by 1890 Corgden & Powell Slate Works had taken over the Pimlico site.



The Osborne House Magnus billiard table



The Stratfield Saye Magnus billiard table

Other notable examples of Magnus Tables

A very fine example of a 10ft Magnus table made in black ebony slate with rich enamelled and gilt decoration can be seen at the Duke of Wellington's residence at Stratfield Saye.

Another Magnus table is in Queen Victoria's Summer Residence at Osborne House, Isle of Wight. The Queen and Prince Albert visited the Iron Duke at Stratfield Saye whilst Osborne House was being built for them by Cubitt, and possibly the Duke recommended a Magnus billiard table. An article published in the "Art Union Monthly Journal" dated March 1847 reported the making of this table to Prince Albert's own design at the Pimlico Slate Works and describes the beautifully enamelled imitation marble. The table which is a full sized 12ft, model is made entirely of grey slate which has been decorated, glazed and fired. Apparently this table is also slightly higher than normal because Queen Victoria (who played every afternoon accompanied by her ladies in waiting, while the men played after dinner) did not want to risk showing her ankles when she leaned across the table.

There is also an unusual example of a Magnus Full Size (12ft,) billiard table made entirely of black ebony slate in the National Trust property - Penryhn Castle, Bangor, Gwynedd.

A Full Size Table by Gillows of Lancaster and London







This superb quality mahogany full size (12foot) table is the quintessence of Gillows craftsmanship. The rectangular top is set upon eight tapering turned and reeded legs. The restrained decoration of turned bosses to the sides and elegant reeding to the edges accentuates the wonderful colour of the wood. Signed *Gillows*. English circa 1820.

Footnote:

In *Gillows of Lancaster and London 1730-1840*, Woodbridge, 2008, Vol.1 p421-2 Susan Stuart devotes a chapter to billiard and 'trou-madame' tables and includes a drawing and photograph of a later table with reeded legs and a timber bed made for James Howard in 1833. The earliest Gillows tables appeared in London in 1768 and were instantly so successful that they probably encouraged Thomas Gillow to establish a shop in Oxford Street. By 1770 the Gillow brothers claimed that few could equal them in the trade. As well as the traditional solid table they manufactured two types of portable table, this was before the invention of slate beds! Other early features included hoop shaped pockets, alluding to the very earliest form of billiards from the 1680s when billiards was essentially indoor croquet, and lint-stuffed cushions which were purely to contain the ball rather than provide a bounce.



A Billiard Marker by Gillows



This mahogany marker or scoreboard has a rectangular panel with two slides, peg boards and spots marked out in a paler inlaid wood, all within a reeded frame with two stretchers supported on outswept feet with brass castors. Signed in a painted cartouche, *Gillows London and Lancaster*, English, circa 1815.

Height: 59 $\frac{3}{4}$ in; 152cm

Width: 34in; 68cm

Depth: 14in; 35cm

Footnote:

In *Gillows of Lancaster and London 1730-1840*, Woodbridge, 2008, Vol.I p423 Susan Stuart shows a very similar scorer with an angled board described thus; “the marker was made in mahogany inlaid with a lighter regular close-grained wood, possibly orangewood. The words ‘GILLOWS LONDON and LANCASTER’ are carefully painted, not inlaid, on to an oval cartouche. (ibid plate 525(b))”. It is interesting to note that the markers stop at 24; this is because the early form of the game consisted of many short but quick frames, which may also explain the use of the peg board above to keep track of the number of games.



The Lord James Blyth Table
Built by Cox & Yeman







James Blyth, 1st Baron BLYTH 1841-1925 (Agriculturalist)
Photograph by: Sir Benjamin Stone 1909 Platinum Print
Collection: National Portrait Gallery

This striking full size (12ft) Victorian table was made for James Blyth, 1st Baron Blyth for 33 Portland Place, London. It is veneered in ebony with openwork gilt-wood panels applied to the sides and boldly carved and gilded acanthus leaf scrolls on the corners. The panels are filled with small and large circular guilloche enclosing flower-heads with ebony centres and the lower borders are bright cut with fans of trefoils. The fluting on the tapering legs are gilded, as are the acanthus leaf caps on the feet. Bearing a maker's label *Cox & Yeman, Billiard Table Manufacturers, 209A Brompton Road, London*. English, circa 1895.

Footnote:

James Blyth, 1st Baron Blyth, 1841-1925 was a party loving and philanthropic millionaire who created his wealth by founding the wine merchants and gin distillers, W A Gilbey & Sons. He bought No33 Portland Place, a Robert Adam house built in 1775 for Lord Henry Wyndham, in 1893 bought it. A man of great energy and innovation he carried out numerous improvements to the property including *'a remarkable Victorian extension, which included a stained glass billiard room. He also introduced some ingenious innovations such as a hydraulic wall, which separated the dining room from the music room. The ambitious design, which still exists in its original form, was powered by a water pump system concealed in the basement.'* It is presumed that the stained-glass billiard room was built to house this impressive table





Cox and Yeman

Mr Henry Cox and Mr Edward Yeman joined forces at some time in the 1850s to form their own billiard table company. It would seem that Mr Cox was already building tables but needed the expertise of Mr Yeman and his sister who were trained by Burroughes and Watts stuffing cushions and making Holland covers respectively. By 1864 they were fully fledged manufacturers of billiard tables and supplied specially made competition tables for the 1866 Oxford vs Cambridge match, Dufton's 'Great Handicap' and the hotly contested Roberts and Cook championships. By 1873 the company was located at 184 Brompton Road and listed over fifty titled gentlemen as customers including: The Duke of Richmond, The Duke of Wellington, the Earl of Jersey, the Nwab Nizam of Bengal, H.M. the King of Siam, Chas. Dickens and 'the London Clubs'. In 1876 Yeman left the partnership but Cox carried on under the same name. In 1902 *His Majesty the Shah of Persia, ordered two billiard tables from Messrs. Cox and Yeman. The tables were made of mahogany, with carved legs and fitted with this firm's well-known low cushion. During the Shah's tour he stayed at the Royal Palace Hotel, Ostend, and at the Elysee Palace Hotel, in Paris, both of these magnificent hotels have billiard tables fitted by Cox and Yeman.* Always innovative Cox patented several products from 'Simplex' Combined Billiard and Dining Tables, Invisible Pocket Plates, 'Multum-in-Parvo' rosettes and 'Ovalex tables, a dainty arrangement in curving and rectangular cushions.' However, despite these novelties and sponsoring challenge matches, Cox and Yeman went into receivership in 1908 and were finally bought out by Messrs. Burroughes and Watts in 1911.