

Loggats

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Introduction

First mentioned in a Royal Proclamation of 1363¹ and later banned in the Gaming act of 1541², Loggating or Loggats was a throwing sport. Clues regarding the pastime are rare and the game appears to change as the centuries pass but the general form of the game is clear. Punters would throw sticks called loggats at a target - either on the ground or stuck into the ground and the winner was the owner of the loggats that came to rest nearest to the target.



Fig.1 The only known Loggats set in existence. Held at Strangers' Hall Museum, Norwich.

Evidence and information regarding Loggats seems at first to be remarkably paltry considering that the game was popular enough to be banned by Acts of Parliament and was played for more than 600 years. The usual 'go to' sources of Willughby's 'Book of Games' and Strutt's 'Sports and Pastimes'³ reveal respectively nothing and nothing useful.

After listing and examining the evidence, this article will show that Loggats probably enjoyed only a brief spell around 1600 as a very popular game before disappearing into relative regional obscurity which perhaps explains its ephemeral place in the historical record. It will evidence that the game thereafter still existed in Norfolk, was thriving in Norwich in 1723, was still seen in that city after 1900 and perhaps had continued without a break in that region since Tudor times. Finally, it will identify two separate varieties of Loggats and attempt to deduce how both were played.

Previous Writings on Loggats

No-one that this author has found has done a full analysis of the evidence and history for Loggats until now. Writings on Loggats to date are all simply attempts to describe or explain what the game was with the occasional speculative remark.

The earliest of these is by Steevens as a note in his annotated Works of Shakespeare of 1773⁴ giving an explanation for the reference to Loggats in the play 'Hamlet'⁵. A subsequent edition of the same work in 1785 adds another short description by someone called 'Blount'⁶.

Joseph Strutt's "Sports and Pastimes of the People of England" (1801)³ contains a small section on the game but his piece is largely based on the inaccuracies of Hanmer. It is worth noting, though, that he didn't know the game and considered it extinct.

A century after Steevens, another annotated Shakespeare's Works, the 1872 edition of Clarke and Wright ⁷, summarised a description sent to the authors by a Reverend Gould.

There is a good description of Loggats from Norwich Mercury 29 October, 1887. ⁸

James Hooper of London's Daily Chronicle published a well researched piece on Loggats in 1899 that was regurgitated by several East Anglian newspapers⁹. It runs through the usual quotes but also attempts to describe the game as played in the last known premises to host the game, the Hampshire Hog Inn of Norwich. There are a couple of facts that are not found anywhere else.

The most recent and only contemporary piece is by Arthur Taylor, the primary authority on pub games for the last thirty years. His two previous books on pub games do not have anything substantial but 'Played in the Pub' published in 2009 ¹⁰ has half a page on Loggats that gives some references, has a picture of the only known Loggats set and expands on the story of the game at the The Hampshire Hog pub in Norwich.

The Historical Record

The following table aims to give the first exhaustive and fact-checked list of useful Loggats evidence and references that contain original information. Any reference that is thought to be incorrect or which does not add anything new to the existing body of evidence has not been included. Additional columns are given with the purpose of extracting specific descriptions of the equipment with which the game was played.

Table 1 – Original Evidence

Date	Source	Quote	Projectiles	Target	Pitch
1 June 1363	Royal Proclamation (Edward III) Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward III: Volume 11. 11 The original source of this is listed as “Fœdera” 12	June 1. Westminster. To the sheriff of Kent. Order to cause proclamation to be made that every able bodied man on feast days when he has leisure shall in his sports use bows and arrows, pellets or bolts, and shall learn and practise the art of shooting, forbidding all and singular on pain of imprisonment to attend or meddle with hurling of stones, loggats, or quoits, handball, football, club ball, cambuc, cock fighting or other vain games of no value; as the people of the realm, noble and simple, used heretofore to practise the said art in their sports, whence by God's help came forth honour to the kingdom and advantage to the king in his actions of war, and now the said art is almost wholly disused, and the people indulge in the games aforesaid and other dishonest and unthrifty games, whereby the realm is like to be kept without archers. By K. The like to singular the sheriffs of England.			
12 June 1365	Royal Proclamation (Edward III) Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward III: Volume 1213 The original source of this is listed as “Fœdera” 12	June 12. Westminster. To the sheriffs of London. A repeat of the order of 1363.			
5 May 1526	Royal Proclamation (17 Henry VIII) 14	Enforcing statutes against Unlawful Games and for Archery. States that many Acts have been made for punishing and laying down ‘bowling, cloysh, quoyting, logatting, playing at tennis, dice, cards, and tables, and other unlawful games’ and also Acts and statutes for the maintenance and exercise of the longbows and archery. The ‘said unlawful games be so continually used and exercised within the realm, and no due punishment had in that behalf according to said provisions against the said unlawful games, that the exercising of longbows and archery of this realm is utterly set apart and extremely decayed’.			

1541	Unlawful Games Act (33 Henry VIII, chapter 9) 2	An Acte for Maynten'nce of Artyllarie and debarring of unlawful Games. Mentions earlier acts in the 3rd and 6th years of Henry VIII reign and says: ... many subtill & inventatyve and craftye persons, intending to defraude the same estatutes, sithence the makinge thereof have founde and dayly fynde many and Sondrie newe and crafty Games and Playes, as logatinge in the Feilde, slydethrifte otherwise called shovegrote, as well within the Cittie of London as els where in many other and divers parte of this Realme, kepinge houses playes and allyes for the maynten'nce thereof, by reason whereof Archerie ys sore decayed and dayly is lyke to be more mynished... Further on in this lengthy Act, we find: ...no manner of Artyficer or Craftsman of any handy crafte of occupacion, husbandman apprentice laborer servante at husbandrye jorneyman or servaunte of artyficer marriners fysshermen watermen or any servyngman, shall from the saide Feast of the Natyvvitie of Sainte John Baptiste playe at the Tables Tennys Dyce Cardes Bowles Clashe Coytinge Logatinge, or any other unlawfull Game, out of Christmas, under peyne of twenty shillings to be forfeyt for everie tyme...			A field
c.1596	Ben Jonson, Tale of a Tub, Act 4. Sc. 6 15 (Another less acknowledged theory holds the date was c1633)	“Now, now, even now, they are tearing him in pieces, Now they are tossing of his legs and arms, like loggets at a pear tree”	Things similar in shape to arms and legs: presumably sticks.	A tree	A field, village green or other area of land where a tree might be growing
c.1600	A pamphlet: The 4th satire of Samuel Rowlands, 'The Letting of Humour's Blood in the Head-vaine (epigrams and satires)' 16	“To wrestle, play at stooleball, or to runne, To pick the barre, or to shoote off a gunne; To play at loggats, nine holes or ten pinnes; To try it out at foot-ball by the shinnes.”			
c.1600	William Shakespeare, Hamlet written in the period 1599 – 1601 and first published in the First Quarto 1603. 5	“Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with ‘em? mine ache to think on’t,”	Bones		
1611	“If this be not a good play, the devil is in it”, by Thomas Dekker 17	“Two hundred crowns ! I've lost as much at loggats.”			
1615	Ignoramus: comoedia (a play in Latin) by George Ruggles 18	“If 'twere not too late I would go to Loggets with the mariners.”			

1620	A description of the procedure for holding of a Court Leet apparently taken from 'The Manner and Forme how to keep a Court Leete' by John Wilkinson (Lond. 1620). Original source not found – text is referenced from 'A Volume of Courte Leet Records of the Manor of Manchester in the Sixteenth Century', 1864.19	Play of Games – Also you shall inquire if any alehouse-keeper or other person do keep any unlawful games in his or their houses or elsewhere, as cards, dice, tables, loggets, quoits, bowls, or such like: in this case the housekeeper loseth for every day 40s and every player 6s 8d for every time.			
3 July 1723	The book of the Mayoralty Court of Norwich. Ref. NCR 16a/28 20	P.164 Against Ten pins and riding on Carts Whereas it appears to this Court that very great disorders are comitted and great inconveniencys arise by persons playing at nine pins, ten pins and loggats at publick houses in this city also that complaint have been made to them of great mischiefs frequently happening by persons driveing carts and rideing on the fore Cobbs. Instead of walking by the side of the horses. It is therefore Ordered, by this Court that if any person be found playing at any of the said games or rideing on their carts in this city for the time to come that they shall be punished according to Law. And that notice thereof be given in the news-papers this week.			
1773	Samuel Johnson and George Steevens' 'Shakespeare' 4	This is a game played in several parts of England even at this time. A stake is fixed to the ground; those who play, throw loggats at it and he that is nearest the stake wins: I have seen it played, in different counties at their sheep-shearing feasts, where the winner was entitled to a fleece.		A "stake"	
1778	Steevens enhances his note with a frissance of titillation in Shakespeare, edit. 1778 Vol. X p. 377. 21	...the winner was entitled to a black fleece which he afterwards presented to the farmer's maid to spin for the purpose of making a petticoat and on condition that she knelt down on the fleece to be kissed by all the rusticks present.			
1785	Steevens' Shakespeare 1785 (a new edition edited by Isaac Reed). A new quote by 'Blount' appears 6	A loggat-ground like a skittle-ground is strewed with ashes, but is more extensive; a bowl much larger than the jack at the game of bowls is thrown first. The pins, which I believe, are called loggats , are much thinner, and higher at one extremity than the other. The bowl being first thrown, the players take the pins up by the thinner and lighter end, and fling them together towards the bowl, and in such a manner that the pin may turn once round in the air, and slide with the thinner extremity foremost towards the bowl. The pins are about one or two and twenty inches long.	Pins about one or two and twenty inches long much thinner, and higher at one extremity than the other.	a bowl much larger than the jack at the game of bowls	Larger than a skittles ground and covered with ashes.

c.1807	A Dialogue in the Vulgar Tongue of East Anglia between Norbor Rabbin and Norbor Tilby. Published in The East Anglian, 1890. 22	Ah ! there was a nation rumpuss. He played at ten pins, and bone i' the hole and truket and copped the loggete and he won a' sort of things and craw-waters and blood olphs & spinks.			
1808	Part of a eulogy on the anniversary of Trafalgar delivered by 'Mr. Kemble' at the White Hart, presumably in London, reported in the Sun (London) - Friday 28 October 1808, page 4 – originally from the Greenock Advertiser.	... So the lov'd relics of the marbled urn, By Time divested of its mantling stones, The Peasant's rule untutor'd heel may spurn, And play at loggest with a Nelson's bones. ...	Bones		
1844	Norfolk Chronicle 4 May 23	Loggats. - An excellent subscription skittle ground, fitted up at a considerable expence, has been opened at the Boar's Head inn, late the Greyhound; and a similar place of relaxation is attached to the Grapes inn, both of which are very respectably attended. At the latter inn the ancient game of loggats is revived, and to those who are fond of athletic sports, where much amusement is found in the skill displayed, a visit to the above named places is recommended			
1872	A textual analysis of Hamlet by Clark and Wright, 7	'Loggats,' diminutive of log. The game so called resembles bowls, but with notable differences. First, it is played not on a green, but on a floor strewn with ashes. The Jack is a wheel of lignum-vitæ or other hard wood, nine inches in diameter and three or four inches thick. the loggat, made of apple-wood, is a truncated cone 26 or 27 inches in length, tapering from a girth of 8 or 9 inches at the one end to 3 or 4 inches at the other. Each player has three loggats which he throws, holding lightly the thin end. The object is to lie as near the Jack as possible. The only place we have heard of where this once popular game is now placed is the Hampshire Hog Inn, Norwich. We have to thank the Rev. G. Gould for a detailed description of the game, which we have abridged as above.	Made of apple-wood, a truncated cone 26 or 27 inches in length, tapering from a girth of 8 or 9 inches at the one end to 3 or 4 inches at the other	The Jack is a wheel of lignum-vitæ or other hard wood, nine inches in diameter and three or four inches thick.	A floor strewn with ashes.

1887	Norwich Mercury 29 October 8	<p>The game... still survives in Norwich, and it is said that it is the only place in the kingdom where it is still to be found. The game is played with a jack and six loggats. The jack is made of lignum vitae, or other similar hardwood, and is wheel shaped, like that which is used in skittles. That at the Hampshire Hog, St. Swithin's, is nine inches in diameter, and three of four inches thick. The loggat is made of applewood, is at truncated cone, very much after the fashion of a policeman's baton, though somewhat larger. They each measure 27 in. in length tapering from a girth of 8 ½ in. or 9 in. at one end to 3 ½ or 4 in. at the other. Each player has three loggats, which he throws, holding lightly at the thin end. The object is to get as near as possible to the jack, which has been thrown out on the ground in the same manner as the jack in a game of bowls is thrown out at the commencement of a game. It is deemed to be the proper and the most skilful play that the loggat should make but one turn in the air, and then touching the ground, glide up to the jack with its thick end foremost. ... The scoring board, which may be described as an enlarged cribbage board, still exists. Nailed to a wall in the yard, it is now much the worse by reason of its age and exposure.</p>	<p>A truncated applewood cone. They each measure 27 in. in length tapering from a girth of 8 ½ in. or 9 in. at one end to 3 ½ or 4 in. at the other.</p>	<p>Wheel shaped piece of lignum vitae, or other similar hardwood, like that used in skittles, nine inches in diameter, and three of four inches thick.</p>	
1899	<p>An East Anglian Survival - The Good Old Game of Logats The Daily Chronicle (London periodical) as quoted in the Thetford and Watton Times 9</p>	<p>A long piece, much of which is not new. Relevant excerpts:</p> <p>Yet in a very quiet corner of Norwich City, near the wrecked church of the decayed parish of St. Swithin, one may still play at logats, and it is probably the only place in England where the game survives. There is an old world little tavern named "The Hampshire Hog," kept by a man of old renown, "Licker" Pratt, so styled because in a glorious prize-fight long years ago he licked Jem Mace, also a Norfolk man. The logat ground is strewn with ashes, and extends on one side of a large open yard; the logats themselves are something like policeman's truncheons, they are made of applewood, are about twenty two inches long, and are much thinner and lighter at one end than the other. Then there is the jack, a sort of wheel-shaped bowl of lignum vitae that is thrown towards the end of the ground. Each player is supplied with three logats, and the aim is to toss the pins as near the Jack as possible, so that the game somewhat resembles bowls...</p> <p>Probably however, the Norwich style of play, with a Jack at each end, the players changing ends at the conclusion of each turn, is the original game known to the old playwrights.</p>	<p>like policeman's truncheons, they are made of applewood, are about twenty two inches long, and are much thinner and lighter at one end than the other.</p>	<p>wheel-shaped bowl of lignum vitae</p>	<p>strewn with ashes, and extends on one side of a large open yard</p>

1922	Strangers' Hall Museum, Norwich. Accession number 1922.135.240.	 <p data-bbox="528 510 1043 566">Not a quote but an actual Loggats set consisting of 2 sets of 3 sticks and 2 Jacks. [Fig. 1]</p>	18 – 20 inches long	7 ½ inches diameter	
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Notes on Loggats Evidence

The date of Ben Jonson's play, the 'Tale of the Tub' is controversial. Most academics who have studied his work feel that it was not written around the date of its first public performance in 1633 and was instead written at a much earlier stage prior to 1600 and then revised in the early 1630s for its production. The reason for this is that Jonson uses many terms that are old-fashioned for a date of 1633 and one might add, with the benefit of the evidence in this article, that the reference to Loggats can be included in that list of terms. But it is only fair to note that there is also a school of thought that argues it was written in the year or two prior to 1633 and that the archaic terms used in the play are all simply a deliberate artistic device employed by the author. 24

It is not certain that Ben Jonson's reference to Loggets was to the game. Loggets is a term for small pieces of wood and this could be a reference to the common activity of throwing sticks at a tree to retrieve fruit.

Rowland's pamphlet was later publicly burnt by order because Rowland was promoting secular ideas. Presumably mentioning gaming activities of which the authorities disapproved did not help in this regard.

The 1872 attribution to Reverend Gould is verifiable - born in Bristol, 1818, Gould was an English Baptist minister who moved to Norfolk in 1849 when he became pastorate at St. Mary's Chapel, Norwich and where he eventually died in 1882 (aged 63). 25

The 1808 eulogy's link with Greenock may be to a sailor from that location who claimed to be with Nelson when he died. It seems late for a mention of Loggats but a couple of reasons for the writer to have assumed that the audience knew the game can be imagined. Perhaps the writer considered that Shakespeare's plays were sufficiently well known that the reference in Hamlet would be common knowledge but more likely, given that Nelson was born and raised in Norfolk, he and many of his friends and acquaintances knew the game.

There were several pubs called The Grapes in the vicinity of Norwich in 1844. The author wrote to Richard Bristow, the foremost authority on the history of pubs of Norfolk and owner of the encyclopedic on-line database website at norfolkpubs.co.uk. Bristow is reasonably sure that the tavern in question was the one located at 1 Earlham Road, St. Giles Gate, Heigham because:

- At the time it was in the same ownership as the Boars Head and the newspaper article appears to be a "corporate plug"
- Any search for Grapes Inn, 1840 - 1850 always comes up with 99% of the references being the one at St Giles Gates. It was obviously popular and marketed well whereas any other public houses with the same name kept a lower profile.



Fig.2 The old Grapes Hotel, Norwich is visible on the right, the top floors having been recently destroyed by fire around 1950. The replacement building is on the left.

The Hampshire Hog opened in St. Swithins Alley, Norwich, 1810 and closed in 1911²⁶. The splendid sole surviving Loggats set was donated to the The Strangers' Hall Museum, Norwich in 1922. Arthur Taylor suggests therefore, that the set probably came from the Hampshire Hog¹⁰ but the description of equipment at 'the Hog' from 1887⁸ states that the Jack was 9 inches diameter, the sticks 27 inches long and the article in 1899 rates the sticks at 22 inches long.⁹ The Strangers' Hall set is smaller: Jacks 7 ½ inches diameter and loggat sticks 18 – 20 inches long. So either the landlord had the equipment replaced with a more diminutive set at some stage or perhaps the set was privately owned.

Unpicking Confusion in the Historical Record

1. Anyone who has read anything about Loggats might be puzzled at the omission, in the table above, of a ubiquitous quote that has been used in most writings on the game to date. Seminal confusion can be traced to the 1744-5 edition of the Works of Shakespeare by Thomas Hanmer²⁷, an editorial version much discredited for its inaccuracy by subsequent scholars of the Bard. He stated that the game was the same as kittle-pins (i.e. kayles, an early form of skittles) which, by all evidence, as outlined in the rest of this article, is entirely false. Not only was this assertion then repeated in many subsequent treatises on Shakespeare but Samuel Johnson also used Hanmer's elucidation in his famous dictionary of 1755²⁸. Dr. Johnson's definition was considerably re-quoted again in all manner of dictionaries and other literary works and continues to re-emerge in books and on websites, today. Let us be clear – no version of Loggats was the same as any incarnation of skittles. In Loggats there was one target and it was either fixed or hardly movable. In Skittles there were multiple targets and the objective was to knock them over.

The remainder of Hanmer's entry for Loggats is a quandary: "in which the boys often make use of bones instead of wooden pins, throwing at them with another bone, instead of bowling". It is possible that Hanmer had actually seen or had heard reported that the game was sometimes played by boys with bones in his time. Or it could be that Hanmer was speculating further based on the Hamlet quote about "bones" speciously and without any real knowledge of the game at all. Given Hanmer's form, it seems safest to assume the worst and therefore his quote has been ignored for the purposes of this analysis completely.

2. A good example of the trouble caused by Hanmer and Dr. Johnson, are the two plays by James Sheridan Knowles - 'The beggar's daughter of Bethnal Green' (1828) and 'The beggar of Bethnal Green : a comedy in three acts: altered from The beggar's daughter of Bethnal Green' (1834). In these, there are several references to Loggats including an expansion of a game in progress that would have been extremely interesting were it not for the fact that what is described is, in fact, a game of Ninepins or Skittles. Further investigation reveals that the play is set in the time of Queen Elizabeth and so it is apparent that Knowles had simply picked Loggats as a game that was played in the Tudor era and must have been misled by Dr. Johnson's dictionary or a derivative.

3. A second more subtle misunderstanding has come about from a good description of the game that appears in annotated editions of Shakespeare's works from the eminent Johnson and Steevens' edition of 1785⁶ onwards. After Johnson's (brief and again incorrect) description of Loggats and Steevens' own much more helpful one, there is a third description ascribed to 'Blount'. This has led previous researchers to suppose that the description was from Edward Blount, the editor of famous 'First Folio' of Shakespeare's works of 1623 which would date it to this period. But this is wrong because:

- The First Folio did not contain notes of explanation
- Edward Blount did not produce any other writings that would have given an explanation of Loggats
- The quote is not written in a 17th century style – the style is that of the time of its first publication.

The author wrote to two Shakespeare experts, Professor Emma Smith of Oxford University and Professor Tiffany Stern of Birmingham University in August 2020 and both were clear that this analysis was correct - Edward Blount was definitely not the writer.

The only other famous Blount that could be responsible was Thomas Blount, the author of Glossographia, an early dictionary, first published in 1656. Glossographia was a dictionary of 'hard or difficult' words, the first illustrated dictionary and the largest dictionary yet when it was published. Again, the style of the quote is later than this period and anyway Loggats is not mentioned in that work.

A third possibility is that the description came from a later edition of Glossographia, because this volume was added to and reissued several times over subsequent centuries. If so, it would have been a new entry in an eighteenth century

edition of Glossographia and attributed incorrectly to Thomas Blount, as the original author. Searches of later versions of Glossographia for Loggats turned up nothing and so this theory also appears to be a dead end.

According to Professor Stern, if the Glossographia idea is eliminated, there is only one sensible conclusion: “it is the surname of an 18th century contributor to Steevens’ vol: Members of the public would sometimes write to Shakespeare editors with explanations — which would then be printed if useful”. There appears to be no other explanatory note from a ‘Blount’ in any work on Shakespeare so this then is the conclusion: Blount’s was no more than a one-off contribution from a member of the public.

4. There is an unfortunate and wrong definition of Loggats in notes from Shakespeare’s Tragedy of Hamlet; edited by Charles Moberly, 1870 ²⁹ which asserts “Loggits: “A species of Aunt Sally.”

The original version of Aunt Sally, ie. the version referred to by Moberly, burst into existence around 1858 ³⁰. In it, sticks were thrown at a wooden doll, usually and unpleasantly, a representation of an old Afro-Caribbean woman, affixed to the top of a post, the objective being to break clay pipes that were stuck into the doll. Happily, the modern incarnation of Aunt Sally since the 1930s/40s is simply a skittle game in which the unadorned skittle atop the post is always white. The game was quite different to Loggats.

Having shown that Loggats is not the same as skittles and Blount’s description of the game is from the late 18th and not the early 17th century, we can proceed to deduce a little about the game.

Analysis of the Historical Record

There is a one more important fact that can be gleaned from the historical record on Loggats – and that is its absence in the historical record. After the Royal Proclamations of 1363 and 1365 there are no known references to the game for 180 years. That may be explained primarily by the fact that printing and books were entirely for a tiny minority of the population only, namely the English government, clergy and aristocracy. The first book in English was published in 1474; the first printing press in England appeared in 1477³¹. So if a game wasn't mentioned in a statute or a court case, and was not played by the nobility, it probably wasn't mentioned at all. Moving forward in time, it is striking that the game appears to have gone from being a household name in 1615 to an apparent non-entity by the 1660s. Evidence for this is as follows:

- No further references to the game in any subsequent government statute. One cannot read too much into this because there are a number of games that are mentioned by name only once in the statutes. It is, though, clear that Loggats is not subsequently as popular as Bowling, Tennis, Tables, Cards and Dice that do continue to be mentioned³².
- 5 references to the game in popular plays and literature from c.1596 to 1615 and then no other references in any popular work since
- It is highly likely that the notes for the important Francis Willughby's 'Book of games' (c.1672), would have contained an entry for Loggats, had it been popular in the 1660s but it does not contain any mention of the game.
- Similarly, the important 'The Compleat Gamester' by Charles Cotton first published in 1674 features no mention of it in any edition and nor does its offspring 'The Court Gamester' by Richard Seymour, first published in 1719.
- Coles' Dictionary (1676) has an entry for the game saying simply "Logating, an unlawful game disused.". Clearly Elisha Coles considered the game extinct in his time.
- The Works of Shakespeare, Lewis Theobald, ed. Hamlet in vol. 7 published in 1733 states "I have restor'd, from the old Copies, the true Word, *Loggats*...". "What sort of Sport this was, I confess, I do not know, but I find it in the List of unlawful Games, prohibited by a Statute 33 *Henry VIII*".
- Outside of Norwich, when the game is mentioned as existing again from 1773, it is only as a footnote of explanation in treatises on Hamlet – it can be deduced that the game is no longer commonplace or an explanation would not be required
- Joseph Strutt's "Sports and Pastimes of the People of England" (1801)³, another of the most important works on games in history, contains a section on Loggats but he quotes Hanmer and refers to the game in the past tense. It is clear that he does not know Loggats and considers it to be extinct.

Concluding, after the 1620s or 1630s Loggats seems to have suffered a dramatic decline becoming so scarce or regionalised that it was unknown to almost everyone for at least 150 years. The sole and notable exception to this is the 1723 report from the Mayoralty Court of Norwich where apparently Loggats was being played in pubs to the point of being a nuisance.

It is puzzling to note that the Act of 1541 considers Loggats, along with some other games, to be "new". Another editor of Shakespeare's works, this time Malone from 1790, declared: "Not being mentioned in former acts against unlawful games, it was probably not practised long before the statute of Henry the Eighth was made". One can see his point, but it appears he was incorrect because Loggats was mentioned in much earlier royal proclamations of the 14th century.

The game with others in this Act is also described as 'crafty'. Crafty is an odd word to use in an Act of Parliament but the act makes it clear that the bureaucrats who wrote the document considered these games were devised or played to get around previous laws banning specific games such as bowling, tennis, closh and dicing. Loggats is just one of many

games that were, according to the authors of the Act, being played specifically as a way of bypassing earlier prohibitions.

Matthew Wakeman in his 2014 BGS paper³² on early games legislation presented a well-argued case that “attitudes towards [games] worsened under Henry VIII in the 1520s”. The 1526 proclamation stated “No person within this realm of whatever estate, degree, or condition he be - do play or use unlawful games, nor householders suffer them within their houses” and just two years later the proclamation of 1528 required owners of alehouses, taverns and hostelries to ensure that no unlawful games were to take place within them³².

There were Acts of Parliament in 1477, 1495, 1503 and 1511 but it appears that they were not particularly effective because the Royal proclamation of 1526³³ declared that despite acts punishing games, they continued to be used. And it is from this year that things seem to have been stepped up considerably. Royal Proclamations were issued in 1526, 1527, 1528, 1533, 1535, 1538 and 1541 together with another act of parliament in 1535 all banning or debarring unlawful games. It appears that game playing and presumably especially games explicitly mentioned were being heavily targeted during the period from 1526 through to 1541.

One reason for this crack-down can also be deduced (in particular from the patent rolls) because Wakeman shows that from 1535, licenses to keep gaming houses began to be given – for a price. For example, Hugh Foster of London kept a bowling-alley and a place for other games, for the use of all ‘except apprentices, vagabonds and other ‘misruled persons’ and a licence was also given to the notorious ‘Paris Gardens’, owned by William Baseley, a gaming house for the play of cards, dice and tables with a bowling alley outside. The statute of 1541 formalised this, allowing for the creation of gaming houses on a payment of recognizance to the Chancery. In a short period of time, games had gone from being simply a nuisance to becoming a money-spinner for the crown. And this was accompanied with an increased diligence in penalising those who were playing games unlawfully³².

Since it had become much more risky to play most popular games, it appears that some people in England sought replacement pastimes that they could legally play. Loggats was one of these “crafty” games.

As bowling was apparently one of the most popular common sports, if not *the* most popular, and Loggats is a very similar game in practice, this author speculates that Loggats is an excellent substitute for that game. Its characteristics are such that it gives a similar game to bowls, boules or ‘casting of the stone’. But the projectiles and target are sufficiently different that no law enforcement officer could sensibly claim that it was the same as that activity.

Conclusion: The History and Evolution of Loggats

The evidence gathered to date, despite being sparse, does then allow some conclusions to be drawn with reasonable confidence. In fact, there seem to have been 2 incarnations of Loggats. The first, old provincial Loggats, was a game of the general populace, and was probably never played by the gentry. Its origins are lost but genesis occurred prior to the 1360s when it was banned by proclamation and, in common with many other games, it was particularly in evidence during festivals, feasts and holidays. During the 1530s or early 1540s, it is the assertion of this article that Loggats surged in popularity, probably as an alternative pastime to those games explicitly made illegal (with punishment) by recent acts of parliament. It is likely that it was often a direct replacement for the enormously popular game of bowling (bowls). It continued to exist, as did most unlawful games, in spite of its ban in 1541, and its popularity appeared to peak from the 1590s through to the 1610s, when, judging from brief mentions in several popular plays, one might conjecture that it had become something of a fad.

After this time, Loggats appears to have suffered a dramatic decline becoming so scarce or regionalised that it was unknown to almost everyone for 150 years, the only known exception being Norwich where it still existed in 1723.

Come the 1760s or 1770s, the game is finally acknowledged again in a more general way. Information from Steevens gives that it is still played informally (and presumably in a similar way to the old game) in certain counties, by country-folk at festivals and fairs using a stake for a target, although the implication is that it was not a common sight. The last mention of the old provincial field game is the one from Steevens dated 1773⁴.

At around the same time, a new incarnation of Loggats is first described in 1785⁶, a formalised version of the sport with purpose-built pitches together with specially made tapered loggats and the target prescribed as a heavy, turned bowl. In places that this modern Loggats was played, the game was on a par with and now being taken as seriously as skittles, bowls and other sports of a similar genre.

Pub Loggats, as we might call it, appears to have continued, for another one hundred years, although judging from the lack of information or records on the game during this time, it became rare. In 1844, the Norfolk Chronicle advertises that “ancient game of loggats is revived” in The Grapes inn which gives a good idea of its status by that year⁹. Later, in 1887, The Norwich Mercury asserts that it remains in only one pub, the Hampshire Hog⁸.

The date of the final game of Loggats at the Hampshire Hog is not known but it was reported as still being played there in 1899. The Landlord responsible for promoting the game, John ‘Licker’ Pratt, was something of a local celebrity in Norwich due to his prize-fighting skills in younger days, and his death was widely reported in 1902. Loggats last breath was almost certainly between then and the date that the pub closed in 1911.

It’s possible that Loggats had become entirely extinct and the later pub version was reborn one or more times during the 1800s. It is equally feasible that it had carried on happily in a few inns or clubs, unrecorded and unbeknownst to the rest of the country, a direct descendant of the formalised Loggats from the 1770s.

We can go further – since the vast majority of the country seemed to know nothing of the game from the 1630s onwards and yet it was apparently thriving in Norwich in 1723, it is not inconceivable that Loggats survived in a region incorporating the county of Norwich or Norfolk from its heyday around 1600 right through to 1900. While there is no evidence to prove the unbroken continuance of the game around Norwich from the end of the Tudor era to the 1720s, such a happenstance would not be surprising because many sports and board games have existed and continue to exist in this way for lengthy periods. With today’s modern media and monetisation of commercial sport, it can be difficult to imagine that there are games thriving regionally with virtually no sponsorship or national recognition at all. Toad in the Hole in Sussex, Aunt Sally in Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire Skittles, Bat and Trap in Kent and Steel Quoits in Yorkshire are all games that are still today played week in, week out by hundreds or thousands of ardent enthusiasts without most of the rest of the country having the merest inkling of their existence. If that is true now, in older times without modern media, travel and communication, it must have been a phenomenon that was more prevalent, if anything.

The alternative that the game died out completely in England after 1620 and was reborn in Norwich at some point in the subsequent century seems perhaps less likely.

The play of Medieval Loggats / Provincial Loggats

From the meagre scraps of evidence at our disposal for the medieval version of Loggats, it is possible to glean a few nuggets of information. The pitch would have been sometimes a field, but no doubt, any open space where people could convene such as the village green would have worked.

The target was some item that sticks up out of the ground - a stake or a suitable tree. One might speculate as to other items that would have sufficed: a post, a milestone or prominent rock, perhaps.

As for the projectiles themselves, the name 'Loggats', meaning 'little logs', hints that perhaps the sticks used might have originally or sometimes have been chunky and stubby rather than thin and tapered. In fact, in older times, it seems reasonable to surmise that, for an adhoc game, players would sometimes have used whatever happened to be around – sticks harvested from a nearby wood, logs from a nearby firewood pile or bones from the kitchen, as suggested by Hamlet.

For gameplay, we have little more than the obvious to go on. But there are perhaps a couple of further assumptions that can be made. Firstly, whereas the later pub game seems to have been for 2 players only, there is no reason to assume the same thing for this older game. Indeed of the games and activities that were enjoyed during medieval times, many such as stoolball, football, tipcat and bowling were multi-player pastimes. The idea at festivals and holidays was to have a good time and multi-player games are generally more fun and sociable than 2 player varieties.

Secondly, a general point about games for the last 5000 years, is that they were almost always played for money. Until Victorian times, if it was a game, it was almost certainly a gambling game. Gambling was often the whole point of the thing rather than winning a certain number of rounds or reaching a certain score first. Further, because a gambling element provides its own intrinsic excitement, a game can still be enjoyed even if the rules are extremely basic. Games that without a betting element would be mind-numbingly tedious include Crown and Anchor, the 18th century game of Even-Odd (or E-0 - a game like roulette in which the wheel has only 2 options), modern Baccarat and, one might argue, Poker.

This was undoubtedly no different for Loggats and if evidence were needed, the playwright Dekker who wrote “Two hundred crowns! I’ve lost as much at loggats” around 1611¹⁷.

Consequently, one hypothesis for the rules of Medieval Loggats must be that there weren’t really any rules beyond ‘get your stick the closest’. Each round might have consisted of a number of players putting some money into the middle and after throwing, the person with the closest stick takes the winnings and the next rounds commences.

However, given the distinct possibility that Loggats was a good replacement for Bowls and that Steevens relates that Provincial Loggats in 1775 was some kind of competition with a single winner, it seems more likely that a scoring system was involved, notwithstanding that the game would have also been bet upon.

Precise rules for medieval Loggats are shrouded but target games such as bowls, boule and quoits are usually scored in only 2 or 3 different ways. Once all have thrown, it’s common for the winner of that round to score the number of projectiles that are closer to the target than the nearest projectile of the opponent. An alternative is simply for the winner of that round to score a single point regardless. In either of these cases, the first person to reach a certain score wins the game. Another popular strategy is simply for a prescribed number of rounds to be played. In the bygone days of unregulated sport, the number of loggats, how many points or rounds were needed to finish a game and so forth probably varied according to locality or whim.

There is comfort in knowing that Loggats can be played in virtually the same way that it was played 500 years ago using the insights from above. Here are some suggested rules:

Rules For Medieval Loggats

- Decide what you will aim at – perhaps the lamp-post in your local park or the tree in your garden or a bit of driftwood that you’ve pushed into the sand on the beach.
- Mark the throwing line, 21 feet (6.4m) from the target
- For loggats, use as many similarly sized sticks as prescribed viz: For 2 or 3 players, throw 4 loggats each. For 4 or 5 players, throw 3 loggats each. For 6+ players, play in two teams with at least 2 loggats each.
- Feet must remain behind the throwing line at all times and throws must be underarm
- To decide who will start, each player throws one loggat at the target. The owner of the closest loggat decides who begins the first end. Thereafter, the winner of the previous end begins the next.
- After all loggats are thrown, score 1 point for each loggat that is nearer than the closest opponent’s loggat.
- If opposing loggats touch the jack, the loggat that loses is the one that has any part of itself furthest from the jack.
- First to 11 points wins the game.

The play of Pub Loggats

Information surrounding equipment for the later, formalised version of the game, is more substantial. For the pub sport, as played at the Hampshire Hog, we have good information for the basics of the game. With a couple of minor exceptions, the 1785 description of Loggats seems to match the later descriptions of the game at the Hampshire Hog, so it seems safe to conclude that the games were substantially the same.

Loggats Sticks

For this later form of the game, Loggats - the sticks - were nicely tapered batons. Evidence from 1785 to 1899 gives that sticks are anything from 18 inches to 27 inches long. The set at Strangers' Hall set shows that a player's sticks were distinguished from the opponent's – three of the loggats have a single incised ring approximately 1/3 of the way up from the thinner end of the stick.

Judicious calculations give the following dimensions for a nineteenth century Loggat.

Table 2 – Historical Loggat Dimensions (inches)

Source	Length	Thick end diameter	Thin end diameter
1872	26 – 27”	2.5 – 2.9”	1 – 1.3”
1887	27”	2.7 – 2.9”	1.1 – 1.3”
Strangers' Hall set	18 – 20”	2.2”	1”

A Loggats Jack

From several descriptions of pub loggats equipment, the target jack is well known to have been a cheese-shaped lump of heavy wood, usually from Lignum Vitae timber. Dimensions are quoted as being around nine inches in diameter and three or four inches thick and it's safe to assume that, as with all pub sports, variances in all aspects existed and were allowed. Indeed the dimensions of the target jack in the Loggats set at the Norwich Strangers' Hall Museum is rather smaller at 190mm - 7.5 inches in diameter.






The term “cheese” is more commonly found in the game of skittles and denotes any lump of wood designed for throwing that is not a sphere. In the case of loggats, the form of the cheese was apparently always shaped like an actual wheel of edible cheese.

The author owns a Lignum Vitae cheese that matches this description, being more than 9 inches in diameter (245mm) and weighing just over 5 kilos (11 lb). Lignum Vitae is the densest of all timbers and this is an extremely heavy piece of gaming equipment. The main reason for this must surely have been to ensure that the target did not move around when struck by a stick. In the old days, targets of stakes or trees afforded the same immovable property for the target – as they still do for the games of quoits and horseshoes. This contrasts with modern versions of boule or lawn bowls where an important part of the game is that the target jack can be moved or even bashed entirely out of play by an aggressive and skilful bowler.

Further investigations have turned up more cheeses of this type as shown in the following table:

Table 3 – Old Lignum Vitae Cheeses

Description	Dimensions	Photo
Cheese bought at Islington Market. Recorded in the 1990 inventory at the Hampstead Lawn Billiards and Skittles club at the Freemason's Arms, Hampstead. The inventory was performed by Guy Tunnicliffe. It did not have rings carved into its surface so he believed that it might have been a blank awaiting turning. ³⁴	Blank LV cheese; no rings and no bias. Weight: 11lbs, 120zs (5.33 kg) Thickness: 3.5 in. 89mm Diameter: 10¼ in. 260mm	

<p>Cheese seen in a 5 minute Raymond Roden TV news report about a game of skittles played in the Plaisterers Arms pub at Winchcombe in Gloucestershire, 1961. One of the locals, a Mr. Pritchard, President of the skittles club, shows an old Lignum wheel owned by the pub. He claims it as a 'ball' that was used in an old Elmore Public House 120 years ago. In Oct 2021, the current Plaisterers landlady confirmed during a phone call that the skittles alley no longer exists and the location of the cheese is unknown.</p>	<p>Estimated by ratio of hand to feature measurements by the author at around 7 inches and perhaps 3.5 - 4 inches thick.</p>	<p>Omitted – copyright permission not granted. Fig C1</p>
<p>Lignum Vitae Cheese found on J Collins & Son antiques dealer website.</p>	<p>Height: 3¼ in 85mm Diameter: 8½ in 215mm</p>	 Fig C2
<p>Lignum Vitae Cheese found on J Collins & Son antiques dealer website.</p>	<p>Height: 3 in. 75mm Diameter: 8½ in. 215mm</p>	 Fig C3
<p>Lignum Vitae Cheese owned by the author, bought in 2020.</p>	<p>Height: 3.75" 95mm Diameter: 9.75" 245mm Weight: 11lb 4oz 5.1kg</p>	 Fig C4
<p>Cheese held by the Museum of Gloucester. Ref: GLRCM:F04917. Aquisition Ref: F1972.018 Found at the White Hart Hotel, Broadoak, Newnham. Material: Unknown; described as "wooden"</p>	<p>Height: Apprx. 3.5" 89mm Diameter: 7" 178mm Weight: Unknown</p>	 Fig C5
<p>Cheese held by the Rural Life Living Museum, Farnham, Surrey. Accession number c2008.0094.</p>	<p>Diameter: 28cm 11" Thickness: 7 cm. 2.75" Weight: just over 12lbs (5.5Kg)</p>	 Fig C6

Antiques dealers and others invariably state that these marvellous objects are skittles cheeses but in all cases this is an assumption. Which leads to an interesting question: Were cheeses of this type used for skittles or were they in fact for the play of Loggats?

Actually, no modern form of alley skittles uses a cheese of this shape – old English skittles as played in London uses large Lignum cheeses but, for at least the last 50 years, they are "lens" shaped making them slightly easier to wield.



Fig.3 A wonderful lens-shaped cheese made from solid Lignum Vitae used at the Freemasons Arms, Hampstead and known as the 'X' cheese.

One skittles variety does use a cheese of this shape – Northamptonshire Table skittles but these cheeses are relatively tiny with a diameter of only 4 inches (100mm) so not comparable with alley skittles. However, Northamptonshire skittles is thought to be a miniaturised form of old English skittles¹⁰ which would imply that its cheese shape is derived directly from the cheese shape of the older alley skittles game in an era when the cheeses used were of this form. If further evidence is needed, the 1887 quote states that loggats was played with a “wheel shaped piece of lignum vitae ... like that used in skittles” and a picture of old English skittles from 1878 also shows a non-lens shaped cheese being used.



Fig. 4 Skittles, Dell, 1878

In the survey of the Hampstead Skittles inventory of 1990, Guy Tunnicliffe found their cheeses (all lens-shaped) weighed 3.75Kg to 4.725Kg. Presumably this range gives a good idea of a practical weight for the game. For the cheese type in question, we only have 3 weights, all of which are significantly heavier at 5.1Kg and 5.33Kg and 5.5Kg. The other 3 examples are a bit smaller and with weights unknown but probably within the range of 4 – 4.75Kg. The 3 larger examples seem extremely weighty which lends a slight doubt as to their practicality for the game of skittles³⁴

In summary, there is sufficient evidence to be reasonably sure that cheeses of this shape were used for Skittles in the past. But given a 19th century cheese of this type, it seems just as likely that it was used for playing Loggats as it was for Skittles. A third possibility, and indeed the most likely in this author's opinion, given that we know Skittles and Loggats were sometimes played in the same location, is that Lignum cheeses of this type were sometimes used for *both* sports.

Interestingly, the Loggats set at Norwich Strangers' Hall Museum, contains *two* Jacks and this matches the 1899 description of the game at the Hampshire Hog viz: "a Jack at each end, the players changing ends at the conclusion of each turn". This does not contradict the earlier descriptions of 1785 and 1887 that describe the Jack as being thrown prior to the sticks. To continue with that tradition, the players would simply need to pick up the Jack that denotes the throwing line after chucking the final stick and bring it with them to the other end. They would then score the end and begin the next end by throwing the Jack back where it came from. Or they might simply leave them unmoved at a set distance. In practice, having two targets is a convenience that makes little difference to gameplay.

A Loggats Pitch

There are clues as to the distance thrown in Pub Loggats. Regarding the pitch, from 1785 we have: "A loggat-ground like a skittle-ground is strewed with ashes, but is more extensive;". Which begs the question: how big is a skittle ground? As luck would have it, a full rule sheet for pub skittles with an annotated diagram of the court was printed in Fleet Street for G. Kearsley in 1786. This makes it clear that a skittle ground was an area enclosed by a short fence and states that the enclosure should be $17\frac{1}{2} \times 4$ yards (52 x 12 feet). Other pictures of skittle grounds exist from this era which back this up as being a typical size. We know only that a Loggat pitch is "more extensive" but this might mean in only one dimension leaving us with the simple conclusion that the length of a Loggats pitch was around 17 yards (51 feet) or longer.



Fig.5 Picture of The Adam and Eve skittle ground – Rowlandson, 1790

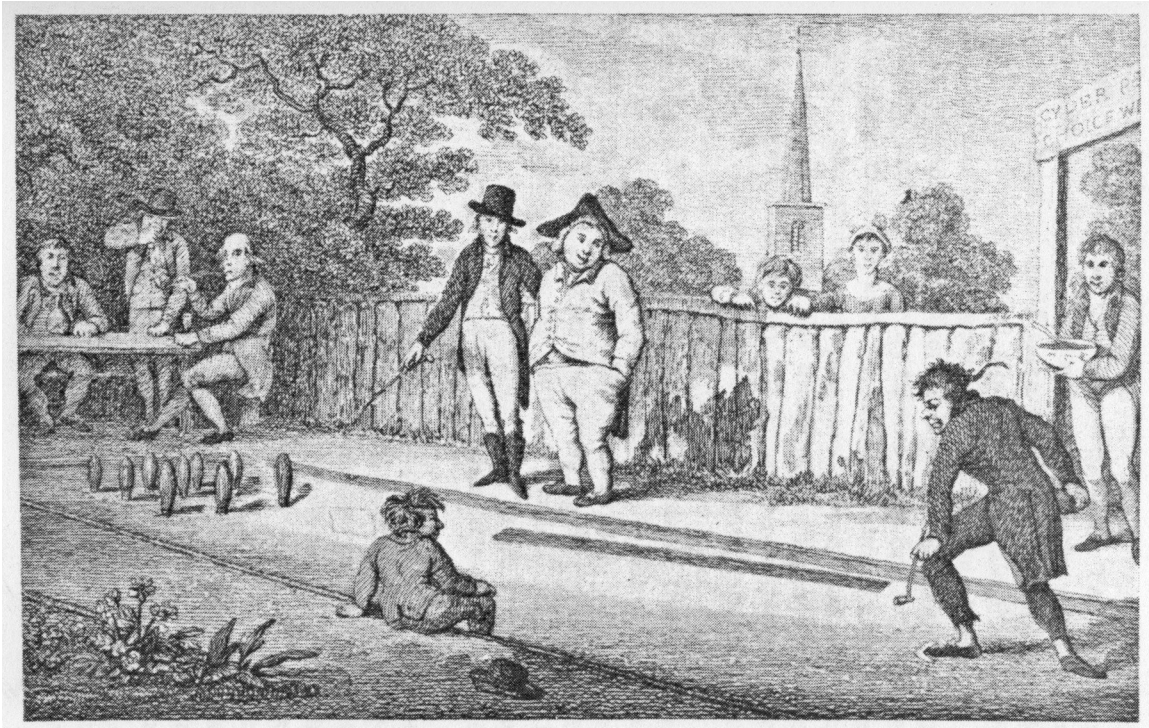


Fig. 6
 'Skittles' by J. Wheble, 1801



Fig. 7 Rules and Instructions for Playing Skittles. By a Society of Gentlemen. 1786. Top: "A View of a Skittle Ground" (actually of the skittle-ground at The Merlin's Cave, a Tavern standing in the fields near New River Head, Clerkenwell close to the present Merlin's Place). Bottom: "Plan of a Double Skittle Ground ..."

Of course, for both Skittles and Loggats the distance from throwing line to objective was much shorter than the pitch itself – at The Merlin's Cave the enclosure fits two skittles games at once and the throwing length is around 8 yards (24 feet). Ball rolling is very different to stick throwing so that figure is irrelevant but there would be no point making the length of a Loggats pitch 50 feet plus unless the throwing distance was normally at least half that distance.

We can attempt to hone our estimate further by analysis of other modern stick throwing games. For some games such as Kykka (Kyrelian skittles) and Gorodki (Russian Skittles), brute force is key and distance accuracy irrelevant – those

are omitted those from the survey. The following are modern games where distance accuracy is part of the game even though the objective is different to that of Loggats.

- Kubb – 8m (26 feet)
- Molkky - 11.5 feet (but distance of some skittles more than doubles during the course of the game)
- Aunt Sally – 30 feet ³⁰

The rules for such games have been refined over decades to be suitable for players with a good skill level and so represent an excellent benchmark for what is practical. All of these games are skittle games as opposed to target games and it seems reasonable to assume that a sensible distance for a sticks target game will be less than and certainly no longer than a skittle game. One can reasonably conclude that a practical maximum range for Loggats is around 30 feet.

Since the jack was also thrown we can derive further rules of thumb from old English skittles that uses cheeses of the same order. Full rules for London skittles were given by the Army Sports Control Board in 1964 ³⁶ and give that “the distance from the start of the alley to the first pin should be “not less than 21 feet” continuing “The throw shall be made by the player standing with his right heel at least 21ft. From the front plate and stepping off with and delivering the cheese on the left foot. He shall have the option of taking one following step with the right foot, but must (until the cheese is motionless) keep his left foot on the ground behind a line drawn 15 ½ feet from the front plate.” In practice this means that the throwing distance is ‘one step’ forward from the back of the alley so assuming a typical pace is 3 feet, we have a minimum throwing distance to the front pin of 18 feet or 6 yards. The cheese then continues through the 6 ½ foot frame and comes to rest in the ditch at the back often hitting the backdrop to the alley so a full unimpeded throw of this distance will travel a minimum of 26 feet.

The alley at the Freemasons Arms conforms exactly to this length and from personal experience, the author can testify that it would not be practical for the game to be much longer than that – in fact a good proportion of people struggle to throw the heavy cheeses that far at all. The jacks in Loggats were apparently sometimes heavier than the largest Freemason’s jack but on the other hand, accuracy is less important when the Loggats jack is thrown, allowing for perhaps a yard or two more.

The above analyses concludes that the Loggats throwing distance was a practical maximum of around 30 feet or 10 yards and a typical minimum of around 24 feet or 8 yards.

Another clue is that we know where a Loggats pitch was located - The Hampshire Hog pub was located in St. Swithins Alley, Norwich. Most of this area was demolished in 1937 although the arched doorway that was located on the south side of the pub still exists. A rusted sign still affixed above the arch gloomily announces ‘Hampshire Hog Yard’. The 1899 article states about the Hog’s pitch “The logat ground is strewn with ashes, and extends on one side of a large open yard;” and so one can only assume that the yard referred to is this very Hampshire Hog Yard. Thus if one could determine the size of the pitch in question, we might also find some limits on the size of its Loggats pitch.



Fig. 8 The entrance to the Hampshire Hogg Yard, 2016. Regrettably, it now leads only to the back garden of the adjacent thatched cottage.

A “yard” in those times was normally an old courtyard located behind an ancient building which fronted the street. It was entered through a narrow opening, often tunnel-like which led to a cul-de-sac surrounded by run-down and often dilapidated dwellings which shared insufficient water supplies and toilets. Norwich had a particularly large and interesting selection of such areas - to the point that there is a website dedicated entirely to the history of the yards of Norwich.³⁵

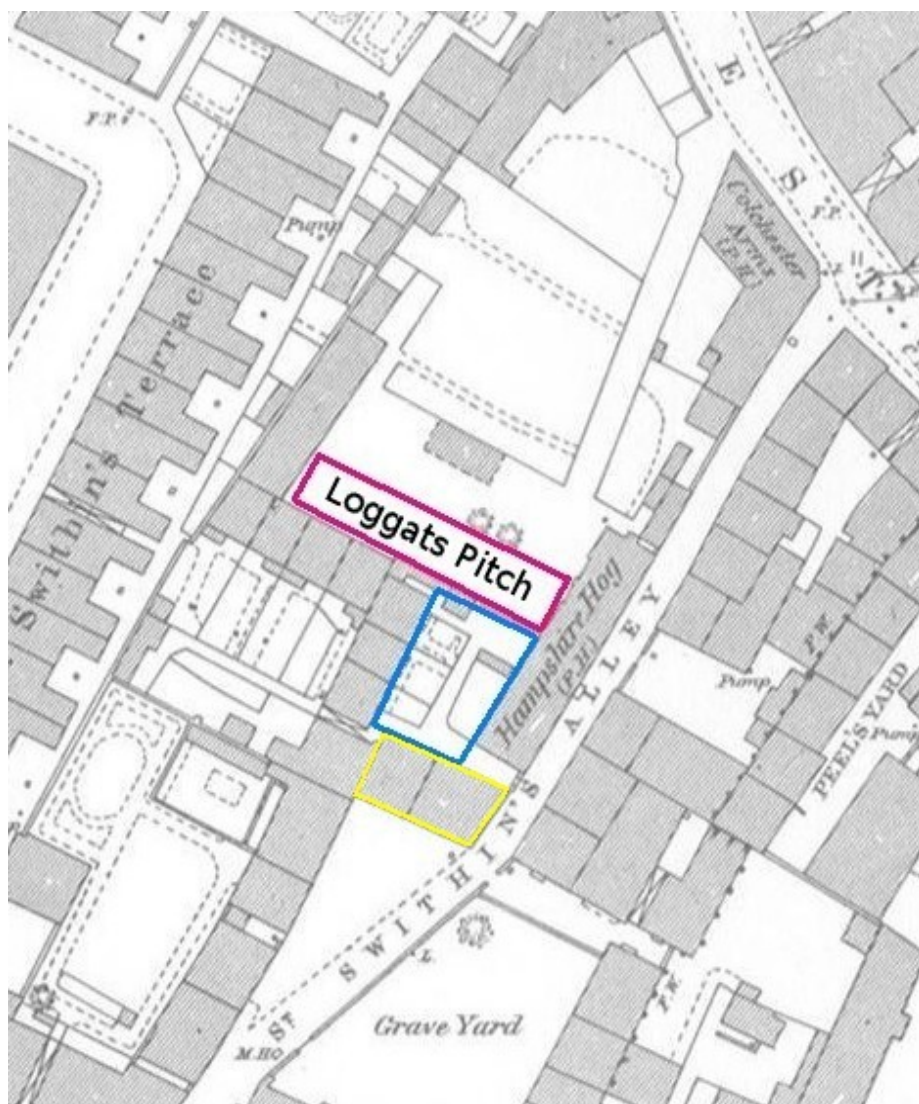


Fig. 9 Excerpt of the 1885 OS map showing the location of the Hampshire Hog and the yards behind it. Hampshire Hogg Yard outlined in blue; Loggats Pitch outlined in mauve. Two cottages that still exist are outlined in yellow.

Maps dated 1885, 1886 and 1907 were examined. The Hampshire Hog yard must be the area directly behind the pub surrounded on the south and west sides by buildings – because the archway that still exists today with the sign saying ‘Hampshire Hog Yard’ is located where the gateway into that area is shown. On the north side, there is a larger clear area and so this matches exactly the description “logat ground...extends on one side of a large open yard”. If the court extended Northwards from the yard, it would measure around 25 x 11 feet, the width being restricted by two small trees or bushes growing in the middle of this area. But from our earlier estimates from comparison with modern skittles games and old skittles alleys, we know that this is too small for a Loggats court and so this cannot be the area that they played in. The only alternative is that the loggats pitch extended Westwards from the pub – the length of this open ground is around 74 x 10.5 feet, the width again being restricted by the two small bushes. A length of 74 feet fits the deduction from comparisons with skittles grounds that a court was a minimum of 50 feet long and also allows easily for sensible throwing distances gleaned from modern stick throwing games of 24 to 30 feet.

Pub Loggats Gameplay

All common sports and pub games of the Loggats genre usually have minor rulings that are often quirky – stipulations as to how the stick can be thrown, whether the thrower can step over the throwing line as the throw is made, what length of stick is permitted, scoring methods and so on and so forth. For all of these details, games historians are unhappily clueless – a disappointment for anyone wishing to re-enact the game in a genuine way.

How this game was scored is almost as enigmatic as it is for medieval Loggats and of course it’s possible that more than one variant existed, but the news article on the game at the Hampshire Hog in 1887 left us a single clue: “The scoring board, which may be described as an enlarged cribbage board, still exists. Nailed to a wall in the yard, it is now much the worse by reason of its age and exposure.”.

Nothing firm can be deduced from this – only some likelihoods. A cribbage board has a lot of holes - it is 30 holes long and so if this scoreboard resembled a cribbage board, it probably contained at least 10 or so holes on at least 2 tracks. One could argue that this rules out that the game was played like skittles or darts or curling - as a series of of a small number of legs or as a point per end. So it is more likely that the game was played more like bowls with 1 – 3 points scored per end and a target score. Most forms of English Bowls are to 21 points, as are many forms of quoits. Boule, in which players normally have 3 boule each, is played to 13 points, so a target of that order is likely.

Based on the above deductions, surmises and guesses, suggested rules for Pub Loggats, follow.

Rules For Pub Loggats

Pitch and Equipment

The jack should be a heavy disk of wood 7 – 9 inches (18 - 23cm) diameter and at least 2 ½ inches (6.5cm) thick.

The game is for two players and each contestant shall have charge of three loggats, marked to differentiate the two sets. Smaller loggats may be used for informal games but for competition, loggats must fall within the following dimensions:

Length:	24” or 60cm	(+/- 2” or 50mm)
Thin End Diameter:	1” or 2.5cm	(+/- ¼” or 6mm)
Thick End Diameter:	2.5” or 6.5cm	(+/- ¼” or 6mm)

The pitch must be a flat area of mown grass, sand, shingle or ashes. A slight slope is allowable.

A formal Loggats pitch should be 18 yards long and at least 10 feet wide delineated with a short fence, rope or markings on the surface. For informal games, delineations are not required but the area should be at least 30 feet (10 yards) long and wide enough for sensible play.

Two throwing lines are marked on the ground, 24 feet apart (adjust downwards according to the strength and skill of the players; 18 feet is recommended for adult beginners). Alternatively, two Jacks are used for the throwing lines and in this case, they are stay in place and are not thrown out to begin an end.

Game Play

- To decide who will start, one player spins a loggat into the air while the other guesses which end of the loggat will finish nearer to themselves by calling ‘broad’ or ‘narrow’. The victor decides whom will play first. Thereafter, the winner of the previous end begins the next.
- Throws must be underarm and both feet of the thrower must remain behind the throwing line until the throw is complete.
- The player who will throw the first stick begins by throwing the jack. Should the jack not finish flat on the ground, within the playing area, and past the pitch half-way mark, it is returned and the opportunity to throw it (but not the first stick) passes to the opponent.
- Loggats are thrown at the jack in turn. If the jack or any other loggat is consequently moved, it remains in its new location.
- Once all loggats have been thrown, the winner of the end adds to their score the number of their loggats that are closer to the jack than the opponent’s closest loggat.
- In scoring, if opposing loggats touch the jack or a draw is declared, the end is null and no points are scored.

Objective

The winner of the game is the player that reaches 11 points first. A match will be the best of five games, finishing as soon as a player wins their third game.

Notes to Rules

- Loggats are normally held at the lesser end. A worthy and elegant throw is one that spins once in the air and reaching the ground, glides up to the jack with its thick end foremost.
- It is legitimate part of the game to knock an opposing Loggat away from the Jack.

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List of Figures

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1	Picture of the only known Loggats equipment held at Strangers' Hall Museum in Norwich	Unknown	© Norfolk Museums Service (Strangers' Hall, Norwich)	Permission granted for free reproduction / publication of low-res image only granted by email from Fi Hitchcock, 16/10/2020.
2	The Grapes Inn and The remains of Old Grapes Hotel	Unknown but c. 1950	Mrs E. H. Butt	Richard Bristow of Norfolk Pubs reports that Mrs. Butt gave him the picture on the understanding that it was free to publish.
3	The 'X' Cheese, made from solid Lignum Vitae. Used at the Freemasons Arms, Hampstead	c.2020	Pete Greene	Kind permission granted by email 4 Oct 2020
4	Skittles	1878	Dell	Copyright expired
5	Picture of The Adam and Eve skittle ground	1790	Rowlandson	Copyright expired
6	'Skittles'	1801	J. Wheble	Copyright expired
7	Rules and Instructions for Playing Skittles. By a Society of Gentlemen. [Broadside]. London: G. Kearsley, at No. 46, in Fleet-Street, 1786. Engraved view at the head, the upper part "A View of a Skittle Ground" (actually of the skittle-ground at The Merlin's Cave, a Tavern standing in the fields near New River Head, Clerkenwell close to the present Merlin's Place), and the lower part a "Plan of a Double Skittle Ground ..."			Copyright expired
8	The Entrance to the Hampshire Hog Yard	2016	Hugh Craddock	Granted under the 'ShareAlike' creative commons licence, link: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/ as at September 2020. No changes have been made.
9	Ordnance Survey map of Norwich. Scale thought to be 1:2500 but this has not been confirmed.	1885	The Ordnance Survey / norwich-yards.co.uk ³⁵	Original expired. Permission to take excerpt from website given by Frances & Michael Holmes of Norwich Heritage Projects by email 11/10/20
10	John Penny and Simon Church playing Loggats	2017	John Penny	Permission granted by email 12/10/20
11	A modern set of Loggats made by Simon Church	2017	Simon Church	Permission granted by email 12/10/20

C1	Cheese shown briefly in a Raymond Roden TV news report about a game of traditional skittles being played in the Plaisterers Arms pub at Winchcombe in Gloucestershire	1961	Mace Media Group	Permission not granted. Fee requested: £110.
C2	Cheese	2017	J Collins & Son	Permission to use the image in any form wished granted by John Biggs Snr. Email, 07/06/2020
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C4	Cheese	2020	James Masters	Author
C5	Cheese	2020	Gloucester Museum	Author paid for permission to use for non-profit purposes Dec 2020.
C6	Cheese	2021	Rural Life Living Museum	Permission kindly granted by Jill Wilbraham 4/March/2021

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Fig.

10 Simon Church and John Penny re-created and play-tested Loggats in 2017 producing a useful set of playable rules. Pictured is their 'historic Ashes game' at The Rose & Crown, Bradford Abbas, 20 September 2017.



Fig. 11 Simon and John have made several Loggats sets. This is an elegant modern set made by Simon Church.