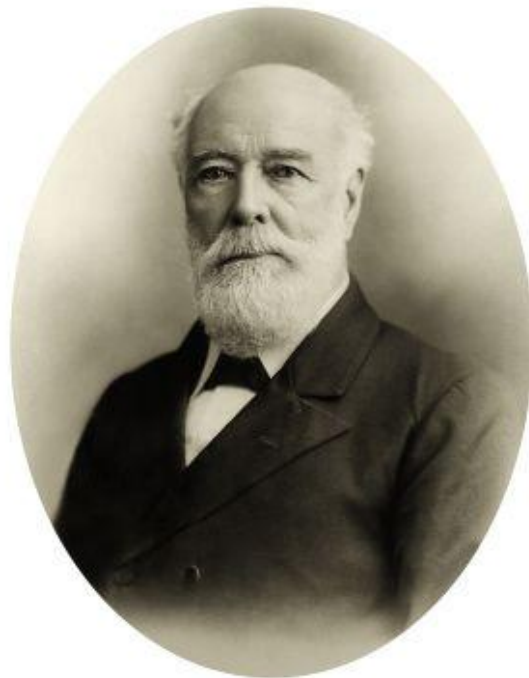


Alcocks Billiard Table Manufacturers in Victoria

Alcocks Billiard Table Manufacturers has been closely linked with amateur and professional billiards and snooker in Victoria and throughout Australia since 1864, in the earliest days of the Company, an association which has lasted for 160 years.



Henry Upton Alcock

Alcock & Co was founded in 1853 by the Irish immigrant Henry Upton Alcock. From the very earliest days, Alcock set out to make the finest possible billiard tables using as far as possible locally sourced materials. He was a pioneer in promoting Australian timbers including Blackwood, Myrtle, Queensland Silky Oak and other fine timbers which until that time had been regarded as inferior to English mahogany and oak. Within a few years the quality of Alcocks billiard table had put an end to the importation of English billiard tables and Alcocks, winners of 27 medals at Australian and overseas exhibitions, claimed the lion's share of the Australian billiard table market.

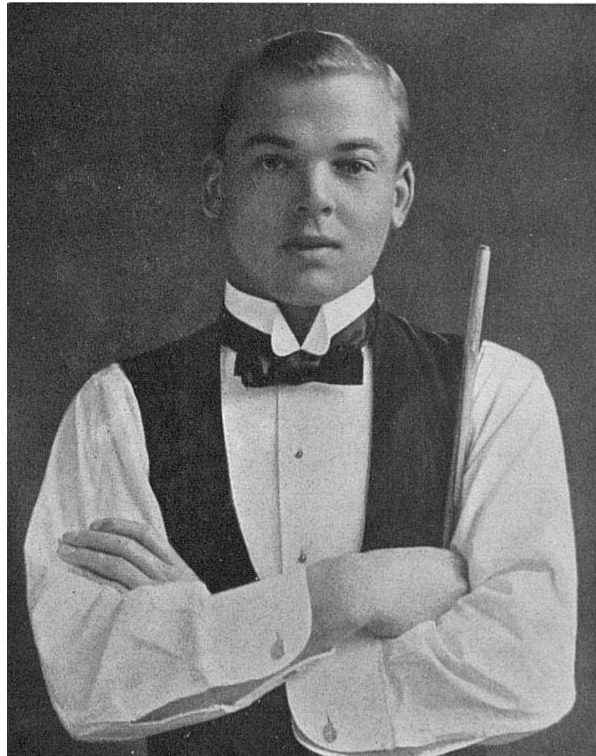


John Roberts Senior

In 1864 Alcock & Co sponsored the Australian Tour of the Champion Billiards Player of the World, John Roberts Snr. Roberts wrote to Alcocks:

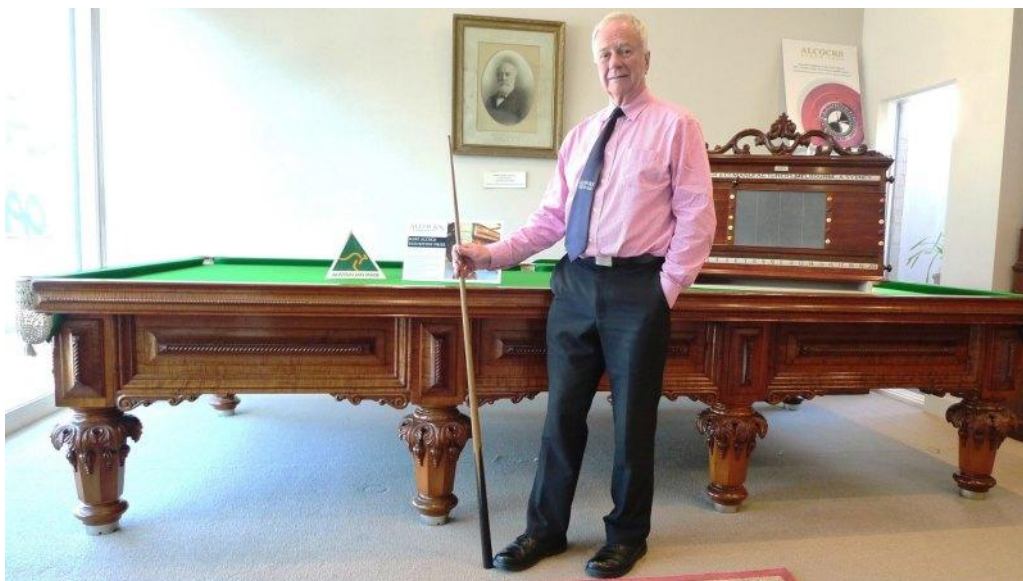
“Before leaving the Australian colonies, I have the greatest pleasure in expressing the extreme satisfaction I have had in playing on your Tables, and which I pronounce equal to any I have ever played upon”.

Roberts returned to London with an Alcock table which he installed in his London rooms. Alcocks subsequently sponsored tours of Australia by leading overseas professionals including William Cook, Professor A.P. Rudolphe, Professor Pierre Carne, John Roberts Jnr, Charles Dawson, JP Mannock, Cecil Harverson, Edward Diggle, Melbourne Inman, Tom Reece, Claude Falkiner and many others.



Claude Falkiner c1915

In 1884 Alcocks sponsored a tournament at the Temperance Hall in Russell Street Melbourne to determine the Professional Billiards Champion of Australia. The winner, Harry Evans, received £200 and Alcocks most expensive table, an Exhibition Prize model in Blackwood copyrighted by Alcock & Co in 1873.



**Alcocks Managing Director George Taylor with an
Antique Alcock & Co Exhibition Prize model full-size billiard table**



Alcock & Co, 155 & 157 Elizabeth St, Melbourne

The opening of Alcocks new premises at 155 & 157 Elizabeth Street Melbourne in 1904 heralded a new era in Alcocks support for billiards. Those premises included a showroom and a purpose-built match hall, and for the next fourteen years, this hall was in constant use for both amateur and professional billiard matches.



**1904 Victorian Amateur Billiards Championship Trophy
donated by Alcock & Co**

In 1904 Alcocks staged and provided the trophy for the first Victorian Amateur Billiards Championship at Elizabeth Street, won by Edwin Jacoby who defeated Charles Cock in the final, with the highest break a 79 by Cock. The following year

the Amateur Billiards Association of Victoria was formed, and this body took over the running of the Championship, which in most years was staged at Alcocks Elizabeth Street match room.



**1907 Victorian Amateur Billiards Championship
L-R unknown, Arthur Tricks, Edwin Jacoby**

Through the subsequent “Golden Age” of billiards, Alcocks hosted scores of matches featuring leading English and Australasian professionals. The Elizabeth Street match hall was the scene for George Gray's world record billiards break of 836 made against Fred Lindrum Jnr on 29 August 1909, made on an Alcock & Co Salisbury model billiard table No 4663. The match hall also hosted contests in 1908 between Fred Lindrum and Melbourne Inman, in 1910 between John Roberts Junior and Fred Lindrum, in 1913 between Miss Ruby Roberts and Walter Lindrum, in 1914 1915 and 1916 between brothers Fred and Walter Lindrum, and in 1916 between Walter Lindrum (then 17) and Clark McConachy (then 21), among many others.



**Alcock & Co's Sturt St South Melbourne Match Room 1929
L-R Clark McConachy (NZ), Reg Campbell (Referee), Walter Lindrum**

In 1918 Alcocks Elizabeth Street showroom moved to 338-340 Flinders Lane Melbourne. There was no room for a match hall in Flinders Lane, but in 1921 Alcocks opened a new match hall in their Sturt Street South Melbourne premises. At the 1927 VABA Annual General Meeting, the Vice-President Mr James Davies was reported thus:

“Mr Davies was loud in his praise of the generous way in which Alcock and Co. had treated the association. Without the help of this firm the new body would have had a hard struggle”.

Alcocks Colossal Tournaments were extraordinary annual events which ran for four years between 1925 and 1928. Separate events were run in each of those years in billiards and snooker, with qualifying events run in billiard parlours all over Melbourne before the later stages were conducted at Alcocks Match Hall in Sturt Street South Melbourne.

The tournaments were indeed colossal - just on 4000 entries were received in 1925, 5007 in 1926, 6804 in 1927, and a staggering 7957 in 1928. The tournaments were the brainchild of Coburg billiard room proprietor Percy

Hornsby, who acted as secretary and organiser, strongly supported by Alcocks Managing Director Fred Alcock and an organising committee.

First prize in each event in 1928 was a silver tea and coffee service; second, a phonograph and records; third, a 400-day clock, and fourth, a smoker's outfit. In addition, there were 80 special presentation cues to winners of qualifying tournaments. £21 in admission fees was donated to charity.



**Alcocks Colossal Billiard Tournament Final 25 October 1928
C Halbert (City), Will Cleary (Malvern), Reg Campbell (Referee)**

Alcocks provided trophies for all sorts of events. In 1927, Alcocks provided the shield for the first season of the Church of England Men's Club Billiards Association interclub competition. The finals were held at Alcocks Sturt St showroom where the prizes were presented by the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne Dr Harrington Lees.

The Alcock Shield was donated in 1929 by Alcocks for competition between the Bendigo Inter-Club Billiard Associations. The shield, held by the Golden Square Working Mens Club, is in carved blackwood and silver. The central section has a

cockerel atop a globe, with the Latin inscription *Semper Fidelis* (Always Faithful), then a silver billiard table with balls and cues, then two laurel wreaths.



**The Alcock Shield
Golden Square Working Men's Club**

Alcocks later staged events at Sturt Street including the 1997 Australian Amateur Billiards Championship and the City of Melbourne Snooker Championship in 1981. Alcocks continued to support major events in Melbourne including the 1938, 1977 and 1991 World Amateur Billiards Championships, the 1975 World Professional Snooker Championship, the 1976 World Professional Match-play Snooker Championship, the 2019 World Professional Billiards Championship as well as hundreds of Victorian and Australian billiards and snooker championships and other tournaments.

It is unlikely that any other Sports Company can boast of such a long-lasting and happy relationship as does Alcocks with the organisers of billiards and snooker in Victoria.