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cricket, *n.*²

(ˈkɹɪkɪt) Also 6 **creckett**, 7 **krickett**. [Etymology uncertain.]

The word occurs in a document of 1598 (see below), and the evidence then given takes the game back to the end of the reign of Henry VIII. The word appears to be the same as F. *criquet* given by Littré as ‘jeu d’adresse’, by Godefroy as ‘bâton servant de but au jeu de boules’, with a quot. of 1478, ‘Le suppliant arriva en ung lieu ou on jouoit a la boulle, pres d’une atache [vine-stake] ou criquet’. It has been surmised that it is the same as CRICKET *n.*³, and the game a development of that known as STOOL-BALL, to which there are many references from 1567 to 1725, as a game at which girls and women especially played; but this is very doubtful: *cricket*, a stool, is itself not in evidence till a later date. *Cricket* cannot be a deriv. of OE. *crycc* ‘knobbed staff’, for here the *cc* was palatal and gave ME. *crytch*, crutch; but F. *criquet* might be a deriv. of the cognate M.Flem. *krick*, *kricke*, ‘baston à s’appuyer, quinette, potence’. Many changes have been made in the character of the game since the 17th c. when the *bats* were hockey-sticks, the wicket of two stumps with one long bail, and the ball trundled or ‘bowled’ along the ground.

Cf. BAIL *n.*⁴, BAT *n.*², BOWL *v.*, WICKET.]