

Golf in 52 Lands

By JOHN W. BAILEY

KENT COUNTRY CLUB, GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

During a trip abroad in 1931, I read an article which stated that Joe Kirkwood, Sr., had played golf in more countries than any known person. At the time, I was experiencing a case of wanderlust so serious that I hardly expected to recover, and it occurred to me that, if I made every effort to play as widely as possible, I might some day be able to challenge Mr. Kirkwood's record.

As a result of serious—well, not all serious—application during vacation trips abroad in 1931 and 1933, a trip around the world in 1936-37, a stay of eight months on a ranch near Honolulu in 1938 and a three-months wedding trip to South America in 1940, it has been my good fortune to have played in 52 countries and large islands all over the world. They are:

United States, Canada, Cuba, Ireland, Scotland, England, France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Turkey, Greece, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Arabia, India, Burma, Siam, Indo-China, Federated Malay States, China, Japan, Manchuria, Korea, Straits Settlements, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Celebes, Sumatra, Java, Philippines, Hawaii, Bermuda, Nassau, Trinidad, Jamaica and Ceylon.

Victory in Czechoslovakia

I should like to dispel any idea, however, that I engaged in a race from country to country. On the contrary, there were many interesting pauses.

At the outset of my world tour, in 1936, I discovered that Czechoslovakian, Austrian and Hungarian amateur tournaments were to be played in three consecutive weeks.

That drew me quickly to Marienbad, Czechoslovakia, a spa where Edward VII had been instrumental in establishing a golf course; and I was fortunate



John W. Bailey (left) with the Czechoslovakian Amateur Championship Cup which he won during his around-the-world trip in 1936 by defeating Frederick Gutman of Berlin, 1 up.

enough to win the Czechoslovakian Amateur Championship from a field representing nine countries, defeating Frederick Gutmann of Berlin, 1 up, in the final. Incidentally, Gutmann's father was the banker who arranged von Ribbentrop's first job, as a wine salesman. The trophy was a cup with a valuable crystal ball donated by President Masaryk.

The victory encouraged me to go on to Vienna, where I won the Austrian stroke-play competition, and to Budapest, where I won the Hungarian Amateur Championship. The Budapest course is high on the hills overlooking the Danube, and the view, coupled with the incomparable Hungarian hospitality, will never be forgotten.

Three college companions and I went from Budapest to Warsaw, Moscow, down to Odessa, across the Black Sea to Istanbul, Greece, Syria, Palestine (where I played on the stony, flat Jerusalem Golf Club course with George Wadsworth, the United States Consul General, who had won the Austrian Championship the previous year) and Cairo.

At Cairo we spent three weeks, playing several times at the Gezira Sporting Club. That is possibly the most luxurious, complete club in the world, with a

golf course, a race track, outdoor squash courts and swimming pools. We also played on the Helouan course, where the fairways are a combination of sand and clay, rolled smooth. The sensation of hitting into this mixture is comparable to that experienced when taking a divot from the best watered turf in the United States.

The next stop was Calcutta. We spent three weeks there and participated all too briefly in the India Amateur Championship, which is three years older than the USGA Amateur. The Royal Calcutta Club was instituted in 1829 and is the oldest in the world outside the British Isles.

The Barefooted Pro

At the Rangoon, Burma, course, I played with the assistant professional, who had his long hair done up in a knot, wore a skirt and played barefoot with five patched-up clubs. He scored a 73, and I was so impressed I left my brassie with him.

In Bangkok, we played in the Siam Amateur Championship, but not for long. The course was inside and across the club's race track, and quite short. In my first match, I went out in 33 and found myself 2 down to a diminutive Siamese who had scored a 31. He went on to win.

At Tokyo we separated. My three companions returned to California, and I went by trans-Siberian railway back toward Scotland, stopping en route in Paris where I was fortunate enough to meet the Aga Khan and to play a few holes with him at St. Cloud.

Every real golfer hopes someday to play in the British Open, and I achieved that ambition at Carnoustie in 1937. I had the good fortune to qualify with Jimmy Adams, the runner-up the year before, and to play my first two rounds with Hector Thomson, who had won the British Amateur the year before. My score for the first two rounds, however, was too high to permit continuance.

During our tour of South America I had an enjoyable game in Buenos Aires, Argentina, with Jose Jurado, who once was professional to the present Duke of

Windsor and who came within a stroke of tying Tommy Armour in the 1931 British Open. I also found an excellent course at Montevideo, Uruguay, from almost every hole of which we could see the partly submerged German cruiser Graf Spee.

My most interesting golfing experience, however, came in 1938 at the Gull Lake Country Club, near Kalamazoo, Mich., where a year later I lost in the final of the Michigan Amateur Championship to Bill Barclay. On this occasion, however, the test was endurance, not skill.

You may recall that, in the early summer of 1938, J. Smith Ferree won a Virginia plantation on a wager by playing 144 holes between sunup and sundown at the Olympia Fields Country Club, near Chicago. Three of my friends cornered me the next evening and hinted rather broadly that I could not equal Ferree's feat. The bet was on.

The course is a rather hilly layout on which three Michigan Amateur Championships have been played. I rolled into the club, almost out of gasoline, at 5:30 A.M. of a rainy morning and played 45 holes before breakfast and 99 holes, or five and one half rounds, before noon.

After stopping for lunch, the salt pills and water I had taken to excess began to creep up on me. Still, after 27 more holes, I had completed seven full rounds in an average time of 1 hour 9 minutes and in an average score of 79½ strokes. On the seventh round, I had a 74.

One more 18-hole round, during which I played the last nine in par, brought my total to 144 holes at 5:30 P.M. Thirty-two miles of walking ended, and I won the bet.

Then, with the bravado of youth, I danced with the daughter of my chief antagonist until 1 A.M.

I would be most interested to hear of any experiences resembling mine, particularly of anyone who may have played in more countries than I have. After all, the travel bug never leaves one's system, and I have not yet had to tap South Africa.