

Miss Curtis and the Gorse Bush

Miss Margaret Curtis, of Boston, one of the donors of the Curtis Cup, was reminded, by the competition in Scotland this month, of a golfing trip she had made in England in 1907 and of a most surprising aftermath.

In a stroke-play tournament at Walton Heath, near London, Miss Curtis, as the sister of the USGA Women's Amateur Champion at the time, was coupled with Miss May Hezlet, the British Ladies' Champion.

"I was having a very good day when everything seemed to go right," Miss Curtis related. And, in fact, she was leading by five strokes when they came to the eighteenth hole.

Both made fine drives, but Miss Curtis overshot the green with her second and became enmeshed in a gorse bush, the ball lying inches off the ground in a forked formation. She had had no previous experience with gorse bushes and so perhaps did not treat this one so respectfully in the first brush as a British lady might have. When she had finally learned her lesson, she had taken 13 strokes on the hole and had lost the tournament by four strokes to Miss Hezlet.

To Miss Curtis, that was the end of the story and she came home to win our Championship, defeating her sister, Harriot, in the final just as Miss May Hezlet had defeated her sister, Florence, in the British final of the same year. Actually, though, the end was not yet.

Thirty years later, in 1937, Miss Curtis again had occasion to make a golfing tour of the British Isles, and, as a long-time, distant admirer of the Walton Heath professional, the late Jim Braid, she wrote ahead for a lesson, which she hoped would consist primarily of chat and reminiscence. At the appointed hour, she presented herself to Braid.

"Hello, Miss Curtis," Braid said. "How are you and how is your sister?"

"My goodness, how did you know I had a sister?" Miss Curtis asked. She has



Miss Margaret Curtis

never acquired the feeling that the three USGA Championships she won in 1907, 1911 and 1912, the one her sister won in 1906 or the international cup which they donated in 1932 gave her any special status in the world of golf.

"Remember you had a sister!" said Braid. "Why Miss Curtis, I even remember that day thirty years ago when you came to this eighteenth hole leading Miss Hezlet by five strokes and ended up in that gorse bush.

"As a matter of fact, I would be delighted to take you out there right now and show you how to play the shot. The bush is still there."

SPIRIT OF GOLF

"On the subject of golf and dealing with it physically, many books and innumerable sketches have been written, but the spirit of golf cannot be caught on the point of a pen; it is too sly, too elusive, too closely interwoven with whimsical metaphysics. It addresses itself to the mind, to the playful part of the soul. A man may be of a nature inclined toward evil and play golf, but records do not show many criminals among golfers. It is not a game that attracts the tough, the degenerate; its appeal is to the manliness of youth and of age. It laughs with the schoolboy and smiles with the philosopher." —OPIE READ