

A GOLF TRIP THROUGH THE SOUTH SEAS

By
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Last year the Wandering Browns, of Manchester, Vt., visited that vast area known as the South Pacific. The trip required 6 trips by train, 18 by plane, 15 by car and 12 voyages by sea.

It is said that wherever the Englishman travels, he introduces cricket and golf. Well, this is not exactly true, for we followed the trail of one of England's greatest travelers, the famous Captain Cook.

We visited coves and bays where his ship had sought snug harbor. We saw a live tortoise that Captain Cook had presented to the King of the Tongan Islands in 1777. If I could live that long, I might be able to shoot my age.

We saw a ball that he had left on Mandalay Island near the Great Barrier Reef along the coast of Australia. It had no mesh marks or dimples, and was much larger than a golf ball. Furthermore, it was made of iron and had the tell-tale marks of having been shot out of a cannon.

There was no evidence among the many relics that Captain Cook introduced golf, so it must have been the numerous Englishmen who followed in his footsteps.

For the golfer who visits this land of romance, there are hundreds of golf courses scattered throughout the South Pacific.

Golf on Samoa

The majority are in New Zealand, Australia and Japan, but there are also courses located in some of the more remote Islands such as the Apia Golf Club on Samoa, the Fiji Golf Club near Suva, etc.

Because of limited budgets, these Island courses are maintained in about the same manner as many of our small resort courses.

When you visit the more populated areas you will find some real Championship layouts as, for example, the Christchurch Golf Club in Shirley, N. Z., the Royal Hobart Golf Club in Tasmania, the

Lakes Golf Club near Sydney and the Royal Melbourne Golf Club in Australia.

You will also see some strange sights when golfing through the South Pacific. At the Rotorua Golf Club in New Zealand the tee markers on some holes are small active volcanoes, emitting steam and sulphurous fumes. It gives one the impression of playing golf in Hades.

The Club House of the Fiji Golf Club is shaped like a mushroom. The greens of the course near Orewa, New Zealand, are surrounded by fences to keep the cattle and sheep off the putting surface.

On one of the Islands they have a Sports Club and divide the year into four playing seasons—one for cricket, one for rugby, one for polo and the fourth for golf.

All of these sports are played on the same grounds. It takes more than the bottom of the putter to flatten out some of the hoof marks in the greens.

On an island in the Tonga Group they play golf around a temple. A convenient place, no doubt, to appeal to the Deity when the ball is in a particularly tough lie.



These tee markers at the Rotorua Golf Club in New Zealand are built atop small, active volcanoes.

In Queenstown, N. Z., you can borrow a key to the Golf Club House from the owner of the leading Sports Shop, pay him your green fee, then motor a couple of miles out of town and enjoy the unique sensation of having a nine-hole golf course, club and all, entirely to yourself. At least that was our experience, and although the course itself is not distinctive, the scenery is magnificent.

At the Keppel Club near Singapore one must conquer a flight of 200 steps before reaching the Club House. There is no other way to approach it!

After this experience I asked if there was an electric cart available. No such luck. As a matter of interest, especially to those of advancing years, motorized carts have not been introduced yet in the

South Pacific. There are tote carts because caddies are scarce and most golfers have to carefully budget their golf expenses.

In China and Japan the majority of the caddies are women, and some are surprisingly good golfers.

The women also do most of the maintenance work on the golf course. Although there is the essence of an idea here for those American clubs having labor problems, I had better not pursue it any further.

For the traveler who wishes to enjoy an occasional round of golf, the Islands of the South Pacific offer a great variety of courses at modest cost surrounded by scenic splendor that is equal to any other area of the world.

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