

The British Ladies View Our Courses

By MISS ELIZABETH PRICE

MEMBER 1950 BRITISH ISLES CURTIS CUP TEAM

Before trying to compare British and American courses, may I use a small piece of your paper to reach the many friends we made while in America to thank them for their kindness and hospitality wherever we went. Particularly we of the British Curtis Cup Team want to thank the Pam Barton Day committees, without whose help our trip could never have been made. I feel this is the only way to reach as many of you as we can, and we do thank you all.

To compare British and American courses is rather difficult without explaining what a British course is like, but I think that difficulty can be overcome by saying that the National and Maidstone, both of which we played while on Long Island for three days, are very like the best British courses. The grass on both was like ours, the layout was similar, and the length of hole and the sand dunes reminded us of home. It is possible that the fairways were a little grassier than the fairways in Britain during August and September, but the ball refused to stay on the greens in just the same infuriating way.

On leaving home we had been told that all American courses were much better trapped than our own, particularly round the greens, and that the only shot to play was a high pitch with a wedge. We were told that a ball pitched up to the flag would stop dead, and so we practiced the wedge. We pitched up to the flag and bounded over the greens at home, but always someone said, "That's all right — they'll stop in America." And so, when they didn't stop on the National and at Maidstone, we said to ourselves, "Well, these courses are like our own; the ball will stop when we get inland."

And so to Buffalo for the Curtis Cup Match.

Here we thought we should find a course with the greens surrounded by

traps, as we had been led to expect at home, with lush greens which would be easy for pitching and lovely to putt on. There had been only one faint whisper about grain on American greens. This had come from Bobby Locke, who had suggested that the grain on the greens was the main danger to us since it was new.

We played our first round on Buffalo. The pitch shot was not wanted very much as usually we were taking full wood shots to the green, and if we missed the green with this shot we could use our usual run-up, as the greens were not bunkered tightly on more than two holes.

The course seemed very long. It was explained to us that there had been an abnormal amount of rain, but no one seemed able to explain the fact that the sprinklers were on even while the rain was pouring down. The amount of water the course received while we were at Buffalo made the holes very long, and play was the same as in winter at home.

Lesson in Concentration

But the grain on the greens! Never shall I forget it. It didn't hold a short pitch as we had expected when pitching down grain, and when pitching or running the ball into the grain it stopped dead. But the longer pitch (50 yards or more) stopped well.

We came in from the first round alarmed at the prospect of playing an important match on those greens.

But putting on grain teaches you something that is difficult to learn anywhere else. I'm sure I, at least, have learnt to concentrate more on the green, and I hope that this extra concentration will pay dividends in the future.

And then to Atlanta and more trouble, in the USGA Women's Amateur Championship.

Here we met Bermuda grass. Another novelty, this. We looked at the grass,

The British Isles Curtis Cup Team



Alex Bremner photo

Left to right: Mrs. George Valentine, Miss Jean Donald, Miss Elizabeth Price, Mrs. A. C. Critchley, Captain; Miss Jeanne Bisgood, Miss Philomena Garvey, Miss Frances Stephens.

and it looked easier than at Buffalo. There didn't seem to be any grain to these greens. The grass was spikey but it didn't seem to lie all one way. But when we had played on these greens once or twice, the grass did seem to lie different ways, so that putting was no easier than at Buffalo. Pitching, however, did seem a good deal easier and the ball stopped as well as we had been told it would on all American courses.

Longer and Wider

Both Buffalo and Atlanta seemed longer and wider than the courses we are accustomed to at home. The fairways are wide and the rough not as thick as in Britain, where you usually lose a shot if you are off the line. In America it seems that you are only on another fairway if you wander, and might even have an easier shot to the green. The different

type of course is reflected in the different approach to the game. We are usually short but straight, while you are long but sometimes off the line.

We try to lay out our courses so that the par 4 hole is within reach with a drive and an iron, and the 3-par hole is usually an iron shot whatever the weather conditions.

We realize that we are shorter than you Americans, and we went home determined to get more length so that when next we play the Curtis Cup we shall not be playing wooden club shots when our opponents are using irons. If we increase our length, our comparison between American and British courses may lay emphasis on a different part of the game, as our lack of length puts a premium on our short game and makes difficult greens more difficult.