

This Game
of

GOLF

HENRY
COTTON



FIRST VISIT TO U.S.A.



Walter Hagen and me in Miami, in 1929, when he was "Open Champion"

weights, lofts, lies, swinging weights, and grip thicknesses are checked all the time as the thousands of clubs made daily progress stage by stage on their way to players' hands.

It is fair to say that there are no bad golf clubs made today; some may be better than others, and in the era of tough competition (the life-line of trade of any sort) which is about to begin, now that the day when the maker could sell everything he could make easily is over, clubs will improve even more.

American golf courses are mostly well designed and very well kept, but by common demand of the players, and to make a contribution towards hastening slow play, "rough," as we know it, is obliterated, so that a course like Pine Valley, where natural conditions are encouraged, stands out in the minds of American golfers as something unfair.

Pine Valley, one of the most renowned courses in the game, is really a wonderful golf course, with only the tees, fairways, and greens kept in normal condition. As the aerial photograph shows there is sand everywhere and always untraced, and human nature being what it is, any golfer, suffering the tortures of the damned in going from one foot-mark to another, is inclined to leave a worse place, if possible, for the next player following him. From the back tees the course is long and difficult, but there is no doubt in my mind that locals enjoy building up a legend about the place, just as they do at St. Andrews, and so a casual visitor has a testing time trying to ignore the hazards both real and imaginary.

Anyone driving straight off the tee just finds it another nice course. I was introduced to it from the back tees by John Arthur Brown and J. Ellis Knowles, two veteran stalwarts of the Club, and scored a 74. The tournament record is 68, by Ed. Dudley, which is certainly a different figure from the very low scores in the sixties done elsewhere. This is because the Club sets out to defend its course rather like we do at home and does not in consequence do anything to encourage low scoring.

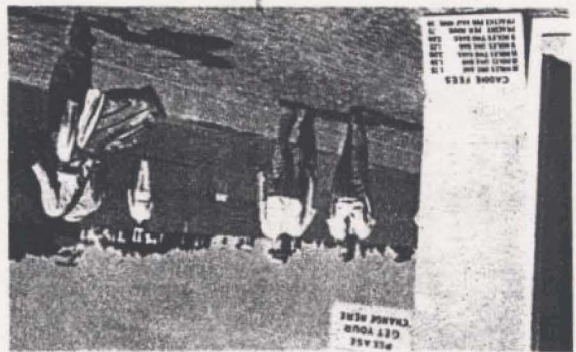
I am not sure, on looking back at my visit to Pine Valley, that I would not prefer to try to score there than at Walton Heath with the usual wind across the heath.

The courses at Pinehurst, N.C., built by Donald Ross over 40 years ago, are grand pine-wooded courses, amusing and testing to play.

Replace all Divots. The player is responsible for the replacing of divots by the caddie.

IN	OUT	TOTAL
10	130	3
11	387	4
12	330	4
13	439	4
14	167	3
15	584	5
16	422	4
17	335	4
18	410	4
19	3204	35
20	3262	35
TOTAL	6466	70

SIX-INCH STYME GAUGE



By the professional's shop, Pinehurst, N.C. Donald Ross, the veteran Scotch professional who died suddenly aged 75. He built over 600 courses in America, beginning soon after his arrival from Dornoch in 1899. On the ridge in the distance is a huge practice ground—to the right is a big putting green, and there are three great golf courses with wonderful putting greens. I took this picture to show the caddy fees; the coloured caddies are very good and delightfully keen

A Pine Valley Golf Club score card

PART V

1. The Best Player Ever?

WHENEVER golfers gather and begin talking of one of the game's most popular topics, "Who is the best player ever?" it is certain that before many minutes have passed the name of Joyce Wethered (now Lady Heathcoat-Amory) will be mentioned.

Lady Heathcoat-Amory, in the days when she was Joyce Wethered, was a great golfer, for she hit the ball as far as the average scratch player, and with feminine grace. She had the advantage of playing in her early days with her brother, also a wonderful golfer, and came to play at a much higher standard than any other woman has yet reached.

Lady Heathcoat-Amory hit the ball a long way from the tee, could play a spoon or brassie from the fairway as straight as most professionals could play a short iron shot, and her chipping and putting were beautiful to watch.

Everybody has tried to form an exact comparison between this Queen of Golf and the men champions, but, despite the fact that Lady Heathcoat-Amory held Bobby Jones during one practice round, when she played in a four-ball match with him at St. Andrews, there is no doubt in my mind that she would be the first to admit, modestly and seriously, that she could not be expected to play first-class male players on level terms.

On certain courses where, perhaps, length counts less than usual, Lady Heathcoat-Amory could keep up with the best men players on level terms, but from the back tees on the very big courses the carries are too long.

I do not think a golf ball has ever been hit, except perhaps by Harry Vardon, with such a straight flight by any other person. This feature alone made Lady Heathcoat-Amory's game unique to watch. Curiously enough, both she

and the great Harry seemed to allow the shot to drift slightly to the right when it could not be described as dead straight.

In my opinion, the best feature of her game was her pitch-and-run shots. The rest were impressive, but it was these low-flying shots, played with a mashie more often than not, which intrigued me. They were played with such a beautiful touch, and had been well calculated beforehand. They were not just guess work.

There are certain shots a weak golfer cannot play. Although Lady Heathcoat-Amory cannot be described as a weak player, she is the first to acknowledge that her brother, for example, always had an advantage over her in recovery shots, as she could not force the ball to the pin as effectively as he could from bad places. Then again, she was not required to play these shots very often!

One day I had a letter from Lady Heathcoat-Amory saying that she and her husband would like to come to Ashridge, at the time my home club, and talk golf with me.

I was very pleased and honoured to have them visit me, and looked up the various golf books written by her, or about her, so that I had her old swing in mind. She had said in her letter that she had not played much lately, and was not hitting the ball as she used to do in the old days.

Lady Heathcoat-Amory had assisted so many men partners to win the Worplesdon Mixed Foursomes over a long period that she hoped to bring her husband through, although he was not quite up to the Worplesdon male standard, and having left big golf for some time she was not in her best form.

We all hit shots on the practice ground before lunch, and I timidly suggested that her "perfect



Shaking hands with Joyce Wethered. Mme. Lacoste and Enid Wilson look on. This was at a match at Romford. I played the three ladies level off the same tees and won. It proves nothing, but it was a pleasant game. October, 1938

golf swing" of the old days was much narrower than usual. Lady Heathcoat-Amory widened her swing a little, and there followed a string of perfect golf shots which might have been poured out of a machine.

Then we began to hit shots with the left hand only. Although Lady Heathcoat-Amory had never before tried to strike the ball this way, she quickly adapted herself to swing with one hand. She hit the ball splendidly, which is always a good sign, as the left hand plays a great part in the swing.

After lunch I showed her some old photographs of herself, taken in her competitive days, and we discussed and analysed them together.

We then played a round—a round I really enjoyed, for Lady Heathcoat-Amory gave a glorious display of hitting the golf ball, and perfect shot followed perfect shot.

Lady Heathcoat-Amory could play medal rounds and match-play golf; I believe every good player can, although there are still certain golfers who think a good medal player can be a bad match player.

In my time, no golfer has stood out so far ahead of his or her contemporaries as Lady Heathcoat-Amory. I am pleased to add to the world's acclamation my appreciation of this wonder golfer—a figure of modesty and concentration, and an example to everybody.

THIS GAME OF GOLF



"Do me some shots left-handed," I said to Joyce Wethered when she was practising one day at my club. Well, here is the swing! (Outside the practice sheds at Ashridge, October, 1938.) Look at these photographs. Perfect left hand—perfect club-head position at the top of the swing, and perfect follow-through—the shot was good, too, almost 90 yards with a No. 6



Left: Joyce Wethered at Ashridge in 1938. This action-photo taken with a slow lens, seems to show the wide arc of the club-head on the down-swing, also that the head in better focus is "dead" still. Note left heel up, most common in ladies' golf

Right: Very few women golfers have ever got into this hitting position. What a lovely pivot! Joyce Wethered driving





Tom drew this cartoon especially for me to put in this book

regularly from just off the course, to the delight of golfers everywhere.

All Bernard Darwin's books are good; they cannot help being so, for every one of his winter articles when golf is dormant, on "the old spoon in the locker", or some such topic, make everyone who picks them up read them greedily to the end.

I cannot help but admire the multiplicity of quotations with which his articles abound. How he has the time to read so much I cannot fathom, whilst to remember them, as it to order, is another incredible performance.

There will be other great writers on golf; there are now, but surely one is safe to say that

two places at once, not a surprising failing really, and that in consequence he did not see So and So's wonderful "eagle three", but was regrettably present when So and So took seven. Many other reporters, covering the same event, dare not admit they failed to see every stroke taken.

He has for long been a friend of mine, I am proud to say, and we have broadcast on numerous occasions on the same programme, when in low, clear tones he spoke so eloquently the words he had written.

Perhaps, one day, we shall have him giving a running commentary from the actual field of play—he "does" the Open Championship