

Mr. John Sutherland,
Dornoch...

**PUBLICLY
HONOURED**

Golspie;
Reprinted from
"The Northern Times",
September 7, 1933

In recognition of his valued services to the Royal Dornoch Golf Club in the capacity of secretary for the past fifty years, during which period, under his direct supervision and practical efforts, the links have developed into a course which is admitted to be one of the finest in the country and over which the leading exponents of golf in Britain, America and other countries have played, and also for what he has done for the welfare and development of the community at large, Mr. John Sutherland, town clerk, Dornoch, was yesterday publicly honoured, and deservedly so. The presentation took place in the Dornoch Territorial Hall.

In addition to the cited services, it might be mentioned that Mr. Sutherland is an able exponent of the game of golf, and for many years was the outstanding player at the Royal Dornoch Golf Club. His prowess was not confined to the home area. He went afield and in open competitive golf, contributed to bringing many golf honours to the Royal Burgh. An admitted authority on golf courses and all pertaining to them his advice thereto is constantly sought. He has also done much for golf through the agency of his pen, many a fine article coming from his pen.

The gathering was a very large and representative one. Their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland not only favoured the assembly with their presence but very kindly consented to hand over the public tributes to Mr. Sutherland. Provost Murray, magistrates and town councillors were present, as also was Colonel A.N. Macaulay, convenor of Sutherland, and members and officials of the leading public bodies of Sutherland. The bench and bar were well represented, including as it did Sheriff J. Mackintosh, K.C., who presided, and Sheriff-Substitute J.W. Forbes.

The public marks of appreciation to Mr. Sutherland took the form of a portrait in oils, which was painted by Mr. David Allison, R.S.A., College of Art, Edinburgh. He also received a gold watch, and Mrs. Sutherland and Miss Sutherland each received a diamond pendant brooch. The whole proceedings were of a most happy and appropriate nature, and were in every way a fitting tribute to the highly valued services rendered by Mr. Sutherland.

SHERIFF MACKINTOSH'S ADDRESS

In asking the Duke of Sutherland to speak, Sheriff James Mackintosh, K.C., captain of Royal Dornoch Golf Club said, it was a great pleasure for him to preside over such a great gathering of well-wishers and admirers of Mr. Sutherland, whose long and honourable public services well earned the tribute which was being paid to him that afternoon. It was rather a unique event in the annals of the Burgh and Scotland, as for the past fifty years Mr. Sutherland had zealously carried out the duties of secretary to the Royal Dornoch Golf Club. Mr. Sutherland was a great player in his day; he was a great writer on the game; and by his loyal public services to his native Burgh of Dornoch he had created a strong following. It was, on this auspicious occasion, a most significant tribute to Mr. Sutherland that their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland should be present to hand over tokens of esteem, more particularly as his Grace was not only head of the county but president of the Club and chief of clan Sutherland. He now had much pleasure in asking His Grace to speak.

MANAGEMENT OF GOLF COURSES

His Grace the Duke of Sutherland in asking Mrs. Carnegie to unveil the portrait said: Mr. John Sutherland is a Dornoch man and his whole business career has been there. Fifty years ago he became secretary and treasurer of the Royal Dornoch Golf Club. He succeeded Mr. McHardy, then Chief Constable of Sutherland, who had been secretary and treasurer from 1877 to 1883. Thus for the long period of 56 years there have been two secretaries of the Golf Club, namely Mr. McHardy from 1877 to 1883, and Mr. Sutherland from 1883, and still continues. The club income when Mr. Sutherland took over was only £9 per annum. Now it ranges between £1,400 and £1,600 per annum. There are 460 regular members and about half of that number reside in or near London (Applause).

CLUB'S DEVELOPMENT

In the thirty years, 1901 to 1930, the income of the club from members' subscriptions, from non-member visitors, bazaars, etc., amounted to £28,250. During that period there was expended on the two courses no less a sum than £27,500. The excellency of the course is a monument to Mr. Sutherland's industry in guiding its destinies (Applause).

A HOBBY

Mr. Sutherland made golf and golf-greenkeeping a hobby, and in earlier years he was frequently called upon to advise clubs desiring to improve their courses, and his advice was always given gratuitously.

For years he contributed a weekly article to one of the London dailies, and he visited America and the Continent both to obtain and to give advice regarding the management of golf courses. Mr. Sutherland has been a member of the Scottish Golf Union and Board of Greenkeepers, since the institution of those bodies.

BENEFIT TO TOWN

The benefit to the town of Dornoch having a first-class golf course, coupled with beautiful surroundings, can be gathered from the valuation of Burgh property for rating purposes when Mr. Sutherland became secretary of the Golf Club, and the valuation now. In 1883 the value of the Burgh for rating was £974. Now it is £6,184. These figures speak of the development of Dornoch, due very largely to the existence of the golf course, the management of which Mr. Sutherland has guided during the long period of 50 years (Applause).

Apart from his interest in the golf course, Mr. Sutherland has led a busy life, and as everyone knows, he is town clerk of this Ancient and Royal Burgh, an office which, judging from the reports in the public press, must entail a great deal of care and time (Applaus).

Mrs. Carnegie, who was received with acclamation, then gracefully pulled the cord, the portrait behind the curtain portraying Mr. Sutherland sitting with a golf putter, a true picture of him who has done so much for golf.

Following the Duke's admirable oration, Provost John Murray, after a lengthy speech on citizenship, recalled the days when he and Mr. Sutherland were in school together.

Mr.Sutherland was a regular and good scholar, he (the Provost) being a regular ragamuffin. After Mr.Sutherland graduated through ability and perseverance it was to the good fortune of Dornoch that he remained in the town. He wished him long life to enjoy the tribute paid him that afternoon, more particularly his good services to the community.

Mr.John Foster, Elgin, expressed appreciation on behalf of all golfers, and said they were all gratified and delighted that Mr.Sutherland should have been so honoured. They owed much to Mr.Sutherland, who by zeal and initiative, had the honour of being elected as one of the committee who selected their international teams. He was one of those who was at the inception of the Scottish Golf Union in 1921 and today he was secretary to the North District Association, which controlled twenty-three clubs from Kirkwall to Spey Bay. His good sense and impartiality made him one of the best secretaries in the country. Mr.Foster followed his speech with several golfing stories.

The Duchess of Sutherland thereafter presented Mr.Sutherland with a gold watch in further token of esteem, the company cheering to the echo as he accepted the gift.

Mr.Alex Morrison, one of the oldest Burgh golfers, and a silver medallist as far back as 1898, thanked the Duchess of Sutherland for having handed over the watch to Mr.Sutherland..

The Duchess replied and expressed her delight at being present.

MR. SUTHERLAND'S REPLY

Mr.John Sutherland in reply, said:-

Mr.Chairman, Your Grace, and ladies and gentlemen, it would be idle of me to pretend that this moment finds me in either a normal or tranquil frame of mind . No reason for alarm however: it is not a case for medical certification but one, I hope, in which I may count upon the kind indulgence of all who have thought this occasion worthy of their countenance and support. Having listened to all the kind things said, I am rather surprised to find myself still down here on mother earth (Laughter and applause)

My Lord Duke, it is extremely difficult for me to find words to adequately express my gratitude for the signal honours which you have this day conferred upon me. Never in my widest dreams did anything of this kind enter my head, and it was not until comparatively recent times was the matter fully revealed to me. It will be a relief to me at this juncture if I am allowed to frankly confess to a measure of justifiable pride - a pride that has been intensified by the knowledge that the bestowal of these gifts is in recognition of spade-work performed and services rendered to my native town, through the medium and activities of the Royal Dornoch Golf Club, the one and only continuously live institution of this place during the past period of 50 years (Applause).

Your Grace, in offering you my sincere thanks, I should like to say how much I value getting this portrait at your hand, not solely because you are the Duke of Sutherland, not even because you are the head of our ancient clan, but largely because you are President of the Royal Dornoch Golf Club, an office which you have graced since you succeeded to the Dukedom 20 years ago. In this connection it may be worth mentioning

that during its 56 years of its existence the Club has had but two Presidents - your late father of honoured memory and yourself. This is surely a record. (Applause).

And now in case I get bunkered, I must embrace this opportunity of thanking you from the bottom of my heart, everyone who has been in any way at all associated with the movement which has culminated in this wonderful expression of kindness and of this recognition of service. In particular I desire to thank the Chairman, Sheriff Mackintosh, Captain of the Golf Club, and his Committee of ladies and gentlemen, with Mr. Bell and Mr. Skinner as treasurer and secretary. And finally to Mr. David Allison, R.S.A., the artist, I owe a debt of gratitude for the remarkable pains he took with me and the extraordinary patience he exercised with a rather irritable sitter who kept shuffling about because of a fractured ankle.

Ladies and gentlemen, golfers and non-golfers, from near and far, I offer you my cordial thanks. But some of you will expect me to say something about the game about which all of this clusters, the game that has done so much for the prosperity of this small but ancient town. How did it come to take root here, when, and who planted it? It is an engaging story, and it is closely associated with the ancestors of the Duke of Sutherland. The full story would take too long to relate, but when the golf courses of the world could be almost counted on the fingers of one hand, Dornoch was one of them. The six historic links with date of first mention are:-

St. Andrews.....	1552
Leith.....	1593
Dornoch.....	1616
Montrose.....	1628
Aberdeen.....	1642
Musselburgh.....	1672

In those early days there was a close ecclesiastical connection between St. Andrews and Dornoch; a close golfing link naturally followed; both were Cathedral Cities, and both possessed great stretches of fine links. How long before 1616 golf was played in Dornoch is uncertain, but from that year to 1622, Earl John was at school at Dornoch, and in 1621 he was joined by his brother Adam. The accounts for the young Earl's board, lodging and tuition are still extant and contain items for "My Lord's Golf Clubs and Golf Balls" - big items too - £10 and £12.

Who planted it? If any one person was responsible it must have been Sir Robert Gordon, tutor to the House of Sutherland and Historian of the County, and the date was probably about 1582, on his return to Dornoch from St. Andrews University. The old castle out there was his residence. Sir Robert became the great benefactor of Dornoch, and to him we owe our best advertisement. Writing about the links in 1630 he says:- "About this town, along the sea road, ther are the fairest and lairgest links (or green feilds) of any pairt of Scotland, fitt for Archery, Goffing, Ryding and all other exercise; they do surpass the feilds of Montrose or St. Andrews".

Another link between Dornoch and St. Andrews has a rather amusing side. In 1582 the minister of St. Andrews went on the loose, and a conference was held with the Earl of March, the commendator of the Priory of St. Andrews, who declared the Priory vacant, drew the stipend and the kirk rates and "spendit the same withe the town's rewellars at

the Goff, Archey, and guid cher". The Earl of March, Bishop Robert Stewart, was a Dornoch man, who took up residence in St. Andrews in 1570, and appears to have been a bright specimen.

It is to the enduring honour of the Scots that they have given to the world its most popular of useful pastimes - Golf. The whole wide world today worships at its shrine as it worships at no other. Other outdoor games belong to a common caste the essential principles being attack and defence. The ball is common to both sides, and is negotiated mostly when in motion. Golf on the other hand is wholly, absolutely unique. From the time the first ape began to shy stones and knock down apples which he could not reach, the mind of man has devised no other game similar in structure or design and none so simple - the knocking of a stationary ball into a hole in the ground proportionately large. There is no one to oppose or interfere with you; no one to make a counter move against you; no human being to thwart your intention or stay your hand. In other games you have to reckon with a mortal foe. In golf it is your solitary self against the world.

It may be due to this peculiar set of circumstances that the language of the game is so exceptionally rich. Eighty years ago two old cronies immortalised their memories on Prestwick Links. Smith's second went slap into the big deep "Cardinal bunker". Thomson's sailed safely over. After what seemed to Thomson an eternity he and his caddie were joined by Smith's caddie. Irritated by the delay, Thomson addressed him sharply "Well, my boy, what are you doing here? Why are you not with Mr. Smith? What's he doing? Where is he?" The boy had an impediment. "Hee-hee's doon i-in that bunker there and he-hee's taaking to himsel".

The lore of our own links contains many gems. The big bunker at the old second hole, if it could but speak might well afford an evening's entertainment. It was there we once listened to a gentleman of education and position, holding an animated conversaton with his little white ball, finally committing its poor soul-less body to imperishable flames, therein to be trampled by red hot elephants. Ladies and gentlemen, it is not in the language, nor in the mind that conceived it, that the imperishable spark lies, but in the game it was capable of setting it ablaze.

After 1630 history is silent for 200 years. Then George Dempster of Skibo, also a St. Andrews man, comes on the scene. He and his party used to play golf on our links. Then another hiatus for 25 years and in 1877 the present Club was founded. The men mainly instrumental in its foundation were Dr. John Gumm, who took his degree in St. Andrews and Alex. McHardy, Chief Constable here, a native of Fife, with the Marquis of Stafford - the late Duke of Sutherland - as President. Six years later Mr. McHardy was promoted to Inverness, and I succeeded him as secretary and treasurer.

The annual subscription was 2/6, the Club's income was £9 or £10, which instantly fell on my appointment to £6, but four years later I got it up to £16 10/- and I can assure you that I was a happy youth, and I do not mind admitting that every penny was a prisoner with the object of springing a surprise on the Committee at their next meeting. Then we raised a few pounds amongst ourselves and got old Tom Morris up, and he relaid the course. We also had Archie Simpson, the Carnoustie professional, and I got

And it only remains to me now, in accordance with arrangements already made, to hand over this portrait to you Sir, as Captain of the Royal Dornoch Golf Club, for preservation in the club-house, its appropriate home.

Mr.Sutherland's reply was listened to with keen interest and frequently punctuated with applause.

Mrs.Grant, Trevoise, gracefully presented Mrs.Sutherland and Miss T.Sutherland with a diamond pendant each, and Mrs.Sutherland expressed thanks for the great honour done to them that day.

Mr.J.C.Buist, vice-president of the Golf Club, proposed a vote of thanks to the Duke of Sutherland and Mrs.Grant, for making the presentations; and Mr.A.S.Bright to Sheriff Mackintosh for presiding.

Dr.MacLauchlan, before extending a tribute to the artist, spoke as to Mr.Sutherland's qualities. In the picture Mr.Sutherland was depicted in true life. Mr.Allison, whose work it was, was recommended by Mr.W.H.Innes, one of his pupils. It really was a work of art.

Mr.Allison returned thanks for their appreciation of his efforts.

Wine and cake followed, and thereafter on the invitation of Mrs.Sykes, many of those present partook of tea and had a look round her wonderful garden. The castle was incidentally the residence of Sir Robert Gordon.

The Sutherland Arms Hotel Staff, under Mr.H.M.Ross were assiduous in the labours allotted to them at the close.

Mr.J.Bell and Mr.Wm.Skinner, who had done so much in the arrangements, were cordially thanked at the close.

Dornoch Pipe Band before and after the proceedings gave spirited selections outside the hall.

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