

# 'Anonymous visitor' bowled over by warm welcome

American Elizabeth Pippitt Shapiro fulfilled the ambition of a lifetime when she spent a few days in Dornoch as part of an extended holiday she is taking in Europe.

The 58-year-old had always longed to visit the Royal Burgh because it's where her late grandfather, golf course architect Donald Ross, was born and brought up.

Ross is, of course, a legend in the United States, where he emigrated at a young age. But it's only in recent years that his international fame and his legacy to the game of golf has become more widely known amongst the general public in the place of his birth.

by **Caroline  
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A plaque was erected a few years ago marking the ivy-covered house at 3 St Gilbert Street where the Ross family lived — his stonemason father Murdoch, mother Lily, and a brood of youngsters including Donald.

His granddaughter came to Dornoch expecting to be treated as an anonymous visitor, and was amazed to find herself practically lionised. She was bowled over by the welcome she received and the high regard in which her illustrious grandad is held.

"It has always been a dream of mine to come, and I want to thank everyone in Dornoch not just for my hospitable and warm welcome, but also for remembering my grandfather so kindly and honouring his name," she said.

"I really didn't realise that people would know Donald Ross here. I knew



Elizabeth Shapiro

there would be some golfers here who would have heard of him, but I didn't expect to run into them. I had no idea he was quite the historical figure here that he is. I was really quite surprised and impressed."

Elizabeth never really knew her grandfather, who died from a heart attack at the age of 76 in April 1948, the year after she was born.

Sadly, the two were together only once — he held her in his arms when she was only three weeks old. But of his three grandchildren, Elizabeth is the one for whom he held most fascination. She has made a study of his life and can now be regarded as an authority on Donald Ross.

Around her neck she wears a gold pendant presented to him by his

church on the occasion of his departure from Scotland and inscribed: "D J Ross. From Dornoch Bible Class and Band. March 1899. She also treasures his pocket watch. And her family spend the summer every year in the cottage in Rhode Island that Ross originally built for his secretary.

Born in 1872, Ross grew up playing on Royal