

Miss Macleod's Letter to Mrs. Alford.

34 Newton Rd.

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20.4.83.

" In the 1930's, we used to reckon that 5 weeks in Scotland, - 2 at Hockey Camp at Ballater, and 3 at Dornoch in rooms - cost us £35. This included, as a rule, a length of fine tweed. Now that amount would barely pay for one day at one of the Hotels.

P4 I have a Dornoch "Guide Book" for 19, giving the names of 29 people who kept "rooms with or without attendance". (I think that Willie Skinner took photo-copies of some of the pages) but most of these were abandoned after World War II.

P5 I read a book or an article recently - - which stated that when Dornoch first became patronised by visitors they were all well-off and took houses of residents. Few stayed in the only Hotel - the Sutherland Arms, and apparently none in rooms. As usual this information was very inaccurate. In the years before World War I there was a group of families who met year after year and most of them were in rooms. One family stayed at the Station Hotel and one or two leased houses for 8 weeks or so, taking their own servants, and bed and table linen.

I have a "Guide to Dornoch" published in 1906; written by John Sutherland, House Agent and Accountant, and Secretary of the Royal Dornoch Golf Club. It gives a list of 34 "Furnished Houses for letting. One or two mention Bathroom. Cooking with Attendance. All mention Bathroom with hot and cold. And practically all finish with the number of minutes needed to reach the links. There must have been some pretty fast walkers in those days (no cars of course) as practically all the houses on the road above the city

now called I think Burghfield Road but then The Terrace gave times of 6 mins. Oversteps and St. Andrews 3 mins. There are also advertised 21 apartments - only 7 of which had bathrooms.

In 1903, 1907 to 1911, and in 1913 we stayed at Mrs. Campbell's in High Street. She also kept a Tea rooms - no bathroom - just a hip bath.

In 1904 we were at Mrs. John Bell's in Castle Street which was over the shop of D. J. Mackod jeweller etc. The names of many shopkeepers are the same - Gillespie's, A. Gillespie, John Grant (butcher) W. A. Macdonald, K. R. Johnstone - and W. S. Fraser in High Street have only recently changed their names.

The professional was V. D. Currie who hand-made the clubs he sold. I still have a putter, bought - - in 1913 (I think) and a mid-iron (= a No. 4). - - There were no stainless steel clubs in those days - one had to polish them with sand-paper.

The 'Club-house' for the 'Upper Course' was what afterwards became the professional's shop - now demolished. The lower course (the Ladies) had recently been extended from 12 to 18 holes - most of them rather flat and uninteresting, stretching towards the sea and back again.

Before W. W. 1, my sister and I used to have 4 sones with Frank Bust and Jim Mackintosh, on the 'Lower Links'. The Ladies' club-house I think still stands? as a greenkeeper's tool house etc., just by the 6th hole of the Struie Course. The first time we ever played on the 'Upper (sic) Course' was in 1915, when one morning we were told to play there, as the men were

(were) to go on the Lower (sic) Course.

The Buists took Alden as their summer residence in 1908, I think. The Guide Book mentions 2 private Hotels and 3 public hotels.

We stayed in many different houses in Dornoch and visited friends in others. So a good many still have "associations" attached to them.

During World War I, of course, we could not get there, but went back after 7 years absence, to stay with the Buists at Alden. One day in 1920 we went to see Angus Fie of Rogart who was at his loom in a little place almost opposite to Allt Dearg, Sander Macdonald's house now. When we asked Mr. Fie if he remembered us, he said "Fine Wex trotties ye were then, rannin about after your mother!"

He used to design his own tweeds giving them names like "Waves of the Sea."

After spending the morning in fine weather on the beach, we used to arrange to go for picnics within walking distance - the Carl's Cross woods or the "Sawmill Woods" or sometimes in a field off the Poles Road. ---

I think that it was in 1910 that we hired bicycles and increased the range of favourite spots for picnics - the Cielin barn, Littleferry, and a spot almost opposite the old Larchan School with a wonderful view of Dun Creech and the Firth.

Only two families had cars, the Buists and the Bacharans. I remember a drive in 1909 by Rogart and Lairg where we had

tea at the Invershin Hotel with such marvellous scones that one did not want anything else.

I think that the 1920s were the years during which the Wethered family were regular visitors to Dornoch, staying in A. J. Kyle's house (Randalls). I remember one year that we were looking forward to seeing her - possibly 1930 but she was not visible because of 'chicken-pox' (Bobby Jones' assessment of Joyce Wethered) - - -

In 1930 an aunt offered to pay for a holiday for us. Naturally we plumped for Dornoch and paid about 10 days at the old Sutherland Arms Hotel.

The next 6 years we stayed with Mrs. Budge at Aymere Cottage in Sutherland Road. Very active years - once it was so warm that we even bathed before breakfast! There was usually a week-end ^{after camp} before she could take us on Sept. 1st so we spent it at the Roslynn Hotel in Castle Street. - - -

In 1939 the only rooms we could rent were in Carnaig Street but we never got there because about 24th August my brother who was by that time Military Assistant to Gen. Ironside at the War Office warned us that the agreement signed between Germany and Russia meant that war was inevitable. - - -

No going to Dornoch again all through W.W. II but in 1946, 7, and 8 we stayed with Mrs. Kolichaud at Oversteps. She had lived there since 1898 her marriage about 1898 - and introduced us to some of the 'residents'. Until then our friends had mostly been from the annual visitors who, I fear, spoke of

the residents rather patronisingly, as "the locals", but owing to new friends made among them, my sister and I really did begin to feel that we were not incomers but belonged. - - - - -

From 1954 to 1974 we stayed at Burchfield

As time went on few visitors stayed for more than a fortnight instead of the former month, 6 or even 8 weeks. Again the same families used to come for several years in succession - for instance Lord Johnstone and his wife, and a family from Salisbury called Fletcher. (Mrs Fletcher's name is on the Wepner's Board for one year, I forget which.)

We had annual foursomes with residents - the Grant twins and Mrs. Skinner and Mrs. J.A. Macdonald or sometimes Miss Matty Macrae and usually played with residents in Mrs. Buist's Mixed Foursomes having asked Tosh Mackintosh of the Post Office to find us partners. One year he said "I'll just have to play with you myself." I remember that he always putted with a No. 2 or 5 iron. - - - - -

I see that I haven't mentioned the subscriptions in the Guide Book:

Members -
 Gentlemen - Entrance fee 2/- Annual Sub. 10/- Locker rent 3/-
 Ladies - Entrance fee 5/- Annual Sub. 5/- Locker rent 2/6

Visitors
 Gentlemen 1 wk 7/0 2 wks 15/- 3 weeks £1-0-0 4 weeks £1-5-0
 2/6 a week thereafter locker included.
 Ladies 5/- a wk for 1st month 2/6 a wk thereafter locker included

Daily Visitors - Gentlemen 1/6 Ladies 1/-
 Caddies Fees - Old Course

(over)

With which staggering information I had
really better "hole out"

Yours sincerely,
E. A. Macleod.

Miss Macleod on Putting.

Don't look up too soon. My brother says
that one of the old professionals used to
say "it and 'ark" Jessie Anderson's
"pendulum swing" I also found useful and
- personally - I found that humming a
little tune, in walty time, helped to make
a rythmical putt.