

Dornoch does it by degrees for UHI course



Paul Lawrie (right) with local young golfers at Royal Dornoch and new researcher Wade Cormack.

GOLF

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ROYAL Dornoch Golf Club has donated £54,000 to the University of the Highlands and Islands' Centre for History, based in the town, to establish a three-year PhD studentship to investigate the history of sport and culture in Dornoch and wider Moray Firth area from 1600-1800.

In 2016, Dornoch will mark four centuries of golf being played in the area with the earliest concrete evidence of the game dating back to 1616.

However, few records have been

explored from the period 1600-1800 and the new project aims to bridge the gap in knowledge in the lead up to the town's 400 Years of Golf in Dornoch celebrations.

The subsequent research will be used for an exhibition and a series of public talks, but will also add to the early knowledge of the growth of golf worldwide.

The research will start in September and will be carried out by Canadian Wade Cormack, who will stay in Dornoch during the three-year project.

Wade, 25, a keen golfer who recently completed an MA in Scottish history at the University of Guelph in

Ontario, learned about the studentship through the university's Centre for Scottish Studies.

Details of the project were unveiled on Tuesday as the Highlands are in the golfing spotlight with the Scottish Open being held this week.

Former Open champion Paul Lawrie attended the launch at Royal Dornoch Golf Club. He said: "Knowing more about the history of our game is of interest to all golfers. The work at Royal Dornoch with UHI may even show us how to bring new people and children into golf."

Royal Dornoch Golf Club is seeking sponsorship from members to help cover its investment in the research.

It has already received pledges of support and an appeal is being made to reach other donors.

Sutherland councillor Graham Phillips, who attended Tuesday's launch, said: "The student is clearly very knowledgeable about golf already and was quoting chapter and verse on recorded instances of golf in Dornoch and in Sutherland going back to 1666. He's planning to fill in the gaps in between."

"It's good for Dornoch. It's good for the UHI history centre as well."

"I'm also impressed to hear that Paul Lawrie has put some of his own money into setting up the golfing studies at UHI."