

# Heritage members learn of golf course designer

**By Staff Reporter**

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TODD Warnock, owner of Links House and The Carnegie Courthouse in Dornoch, gave a talk about John Sutherland to a full house of members and guests of the Dornoch Heritage Society in Royal Dornoch Golf Club last week.

Todd spoke with passion, admiration and a great depth of knowledge about the man who served as the secretary of the Royal Dornoch Golf Club from 1883 to 1941, a period of 58 years.

In addition to his duties at the club, Mr Sutherland was also Dornoch's Town Clerk from 1924 to 1941.

Although best known for his work relating to the growth of the club, he was also one of the pioneers in golf course architecture.

He was involved in laying out



**John Sutherland.**

several courses including one for Andrew Carnegie at Skibo.

Sutherland saw the talent in the young man Donald Ross, employing him at the club, and it was here that

Ross honed his skills prior to his emigration to the US in 1899.

There he went on to become one of the most successful golf course architects.

While Donald Ross served as green-keeper at Royal Dornoch, he and Sutherland would often walk the course at night and talk about what improvements could be made.

Sutherland also wrote a golf column for a London newspaper, The Daily News, under the name "Golf Causerie."

A causerie is an informal article or talk.

This weekly column was hand written and sent by mail from Dornoch to the London paper ensuring its arrival in time for publication.

A book of his articles was published in 2016 under the title of Golf Causerie.

In 1933, John Sutherland was

publicly honoured in recognition of his valued services to the golf club and in his capacity as secretary for more than 50 years, during which the course developed to be one of the finest in the country.

The club had well in excess of 100 of its members living in London but making regular trips north to play on the links.

The public honour also acknowledged his major contribution towards the welfare and development of the community at large during his time as town clerk.

He was quoted as having said: "We are a Cathedral city - a Royal Burgh with a Charter granted by Charles 1, a Bishop's Palace.

"And a links waiting to be developed."

This talk by Mr Warnock marked the conclusion of the monthly events

for the 2016/2017 season run by the Dornoch Heritage Society.

Historylinks Museum is featuring Scottish engineer Thomas Telford as the subject of this year's seasonal exhibition.

This will highlight some of his major projects in the area.

Throughout the summer months, Curator Lynne Mahoney and a small team of volunteers will be taking part in a Lottery Funded project to be known as "Fish Tales and Other Stories."

Talking and recording tales with older residents of Dornoch and the surrounding area, the stories will be the inspiration for local children to paint their interpretation on large stones.

These will then form an outdoor maze in the grounds of Historylinks.

The museum, just behind the town's Castle Street, is now open seven days per week from 10am to 4pm.