

223 N Broad St.
Elkhorn, or Eekhorn
Wisconsin
August 23, 1966

Dear Mr. Grant,

The above salutation seems in order because quite a number of years have gone by since we the Curries, knew you, along with others of the same era as Donnie Grant, Evelix.

There have been quite a few times during those years when I meant to write to you, inspired of course, by your writings in the Northern Times about Dornoch and golf in days past. But these letters were never written.

Then along came your article in the Northern Times issue of May 20 of this year. It is priceless. You touched on so many things that brought back happy memories that at the cost of a nights sleep I relived them over and over much as one would roll a choice morsel on the tip of the tongue, the better to relish it.

It is always heartwarming when you mentioned Dad. I know for a fact those Dornoch years were the happiest of his life. Sometimes I felt he left a bit of his heart in Dornoch. No matter what advantages a new life in new surroundings offers the bit of home is always there deep inside, a warm spot to be referred to from time to time. Dad died in 1951 at the age of 73. He spent his last years with Douglas, my brother, at his club here in Wisconsin.

To get back to Dornoch - I can barely remember the old "shop" up the few stone steps. But, the Old Clubhouse as the pro shop is as clear as though I were there yesterday, the knotty wooden posts and the chains from one to the other. Inside was the pungent smell of new leather golf bags. In an alcove was a rack of clubs, irons and woods in neat rows. I'll never forget how proud Dad was of a new Till he bought. A bell rang when the drawer opened, really something in those days before cash registers. Inside the till I can still see the gold sovereigns & half-sovereigns with which the English people paid their purchases. No paper money for many of them in those days.

The workshop always fascinated me. I can still see the fellows (at different times, Charlie Hymers, Sandy Matheson and Danny McCulloch) making clubs by hand. How they'd drive a wood shaft into an iron head, look down the shaft with an experienced eye to see if it was straight, then drive a nail through the neck, filing and knocking off the excess piece of nail, then filing it down smooth. I remember them wetting the shafts to bring out the grain, then hanging the clubs through the wire netting on the window to dry. There were the curls of wood as they planed the shafts & the sand papering process to bring them to a satin-smooth finish, the varnishing & shellacking. Then the grip, first a cloth strip was wound on and this was rubbed over with a piece of "pitch" to help make the leather grip stick. I was fascinated with how the leather grip was overlapped just the exact amount, then several rows of "whipping" to finish it off. (at one time I even learned to make that special loop that fastened it off securely). The final touch was the stamping T. D. Currie on the club head.

I remember the glue pot, the ladle in which the lead was melted, the varnish bottles with tears of hardened varnish down the sides, also the wooden blocks between which the newly wound grips were rolled to smooth them out. There were the oilstones on which chisels were sharpened & rows of files from rough to very fine, each for its purpose.

Your mention of Tommy Grant, Walter Matheson & others (who filed the face of a club or added some lead) reminded me of the flat-topped trunk in the workshop where they'd sit and chew the rag. Those were really fun days for you Dornoch golfers weren't they.

I can still visualize the caddies, both Dornoch & Embo boys and all eager for a "chance" as they called a caddying job. Their reactions after a round were typical. The Embo boys were pleased to get from the generous man "t'ree skeeling extra" from the not so generous, a "scrubby tecckut". The caddies turned in their tickets for cash on Saturday then squandered much of it at Weirs or MacLennans on sweeties.

Frequently I day-dream about Dornoch.

Do the bluebells still grow in profusion in the hollow down by the bathing sheds? Do the little white daisies still court the golf course (to the consternation of players looking for a ball, also greenkeepers trying to keep the greens in good condition). Are the breezes across the links filled with the intoxicating sweetness of broom and whins in blossom? Do the sky larks sing their hearts out away up high out of sight? Do the "peeweeps" still nest "down the flat"? To complete my day-dream I can still see the rain clouds coming across Struie, the falling showers making beautiful rainbows in the sun - Or have these joys of nature been over-shadowed by "progress"? - the ability to get from one place to another in the shortest possible time, the question of available caravan space, not to mention the traffic problem on Castle Street.

The arrival today of the July 1st Northern Times brought your wonderful tribute to Hughie Mackay. I knew him only during his early Dornoch days so it was most interesting to read how his career grew.

Your mention of your sister Chrissie really aroused fond memories. I was a member of her Mod choir and simply adored her. The trip to Inverness to sing at the Mod was quite an event in my young life and I can remember Chrissie coming to all our hotel rooms to see we were all safe and sound. Her warm personality made everyone love her just as I did.

The reference to Moor's shop and the characters brought a smile to my face as immediately I could see those "worthies" sitting on the stone wall at Castle corner.

It has become a habit with me to scan each paper when it arrives to see if there is something written by D.G. If so I know I am in for some real enjoyment.

I want to thank you for the many times you have brought warmth and joy to my heart with your writings on Dornoch and the people we knew in days past. When next you visit Dornoch, please convey my special greeting to the old home town.

Very sincerely yours

Mamie Currie.