

Historic Ross clubs will be given to Historylinks

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A REMARKABLE piece of golfing history is returning to its roots in Dornoch, as a set of original golf clubs once owned by the legendary course designer Donald Ross is set to be handed over to the town's Historylinks Museum for future display.

On Tuesday, October 21, Canadian visitor Jane MacElligott will formally present the clubs to Lynne Mahoney, curator at Historylinks, during a special visit to the museum.

The clubs, which have remained in the possession of Ross's extended family for decades, will be put on display. The journey of these rare artifacts is a story deeply intertwined with family history and a shared desire to preserve local heritage.

Ms MacElligott is the daughter of Donnie Calder, whose mother Jane Calder (née Ross) was the sister of golf course designer Donald Ross — making Donnie Ross's nephew. Donnie spent

his early years in Dornoch before moving to Edinburgh, and later emigrated to Canada, where he settled in Vancouver.

It was there that he passed down a set of Donald Ross's original golf clubs to his daughter, Jane, in whose care they have remained ever since.

Back in Scotland, the family's connection to Dornoch was renewed in 2023 thanks to Brian Munro, who is the nephew of Donnie's younger brother, George Calder.

George had married Brian's aunt and became a father figure to him after the early death of Brian's own father.

George was an accomplished golfer himself, with his name still on the Royal Dornoch Golf Club's honours boards as a Silver Medalist in the 1950s.

When George passed away suddenly in 1971, and his wife later in 1991, Brian inherited their Inverness home. While clearing out the house in preparation for a move, he discovered a box in the loft filled with family keepsakes — in-



Donald Ross was born in Dornoch in 1872 but spent most of his adult life in the United States.

cluding memorabilia linked to Donald Ross and Dornoch.

Brian donated the collection to the Historylinks Museum in early 2023, ensuring the items remained in the town where their story began.

"I was anxious that the Donald Ross items remain in Dornoch," Brian explained. "They could be quite valuable at auction, but the idea of them disappearing into a private collection didn't sit well with me. They belong here."

Once the items were catalogued and added to the museum's website, curator Lynne Mahoney was contacted by Jane MacElligott in Canada, who had been surprised to see the family name appear. After connecting with Brian, it was agreed that



some personal family memorabilia would be returned to the Calder family in Canada.

However, the more historically significant items — including the newly arriving golf clubs — would remain in Dornoch. Jane had initially planned to visit Scotland in 2024, but her trip was delayed due to health reasons.

She has now confirmed travel dates and will be in Scotland from October 15 to November 4, visiting family in the Edinburgh area before travelling north.

The upcoming handover of the clubs has been welcomed by the local community and by Neil Hampton, General Manager at Royal Dornoch Golf Club who has expressed interest in extending hospitality to Ms MacElligott during her visit.

Historylinks Museum has confirmed the clubs will be put on display, showcasing the enduring connection between Donald Ross, his family, and the town that helped shape one of golf's most influential course designers.