

## RDGC Mailbox

---

**From:** Derekdobbs@aol.com  
**Sent:** 21 January 2004 16:04  
**To:** RDGC Mailbox  
**Cc:** wtaylor4@walkertaylor.com; fay.m@comcast.net  
**Subject:** The Donald Ross Society

For Mr. J.S.Duncan, Secretary / Manager.

Dear John:

The Donald Ross Society (DRS) was founded in the USA in 1989 and has about 700 members. A number of DRS members are also RDGC members.

The DRS has several meetings annually at Ross - designed courses and is predicated on the principles of safeguarding and elevating the stature of golf courses from the "Golden Era" of US golf course architecture with particular focus on courses designed by Donald Ross prior to 1945.

Goals of the DRS are to

- Raise the awareness of Donald Ross - designed courses.
- Serve as a clearinghouse for information on golf course architecture and restoration.
- Collect and disseminate historical information concerning Ross courses.
- Assist in restoration efforts of Ross courses.
- Maintain a roster of DRS members.
- Provide scholarship opportunities for students to help further a career in golf course architecture and / or agronomy.

At a recent DRS meeting, in view of Donald Ross' origins it was agreed to pursue with Royal Dornoch the idea of a special relationship between DRS and RDGC and I have been given the task of the initial contact – hence this note.

Current thoughts (which can be developed and expanded later) would be to

- Write an article concerning DRS for publication in a future RDGC newsletter, so as to make Royal Dornoch members aware of the DRS.
- Invite any interested Royal Dornoch members to become DRS members.
- Give RDGC members DRS contact information for USA visits.
- Invite RDGC to publish advance notice of DRS meetings (the next one is the Annual Meeting 13 - 16 May in Asheville, NC) with a standing invitation for RDGC members to participate, should they be visiting the USA.
- possibly have RDGC - DRS matches on any future USA tours by RDGC.
- Give all RDGC Captains automatic DRS membership during their terms of office.

John, I should perhaps make it clear that the DRS is not asking for any privilege at Royal Dornoch - it simply seems appropriate for the two organizations to have a relationship.

21/01/2004

✓ Should these ideas have interest at RDGC, a more formal letter would be issued by the DRS President to RDGC along these lines.

✓ I would be much obliged if you could use this note as a sounding board with The Captain and Council.

✓ You will see that I have copied Walker Taylor, DRS President and Michael Fay, DRS Executive Director with this communication.

I trust all is well at Royal Dornoch and I look forward to your response.

With kind regards,

Derek Dobbs

Note from Tom Tew:

Am pretty sure that Ross had no hand in designing any of R.S.G.C. Holes. His knowledge of golf course design when he left these shores was based on his association with Morris & Sutherland. With ref. to his trip to St Andrews I have not been able to raise any written evidence of his stay there. Almost certainly there would have been a three cornered interest, that being J. Sutherland, Tom Morris & Donald Ross. I feel confident that if Ross had been working with Morris on the course for a year it would have been recorded, the St. Andrews records of this period are intact and available. My guess is that Ross spent time in the "Tom Morris" shop as an apprentice club maker. There were so many employed in the workshop at that time, alas personal records don't exist. On his return to Dornoch via, we are told, Carnoustie, he started as the Professional / Greenkeeper. His real apprenticeship began under John Sutherland who was himself working on the original holes laid out by Morris. We know Sutherland became very skillful. The 4 years under Sutherland were to hold him in good stead for the rest of his life. His move to America was a gutsy decision & has put Dornoch on the map ever since.

21/01/2004