

David Donaldson Robertson

A Lesser Known Member of Troon Golf Club Who Competed in the Olympic Games' Inaugural Golf Event

I was interested to read in the Summer Newsletter 2013 an article about the 'Silver Cleek and Iron' display which used to hang in the Dining Room - not least because the name D.D. Robertson is engraved on one of the clubs. Coincidentally, following a tip off from a contact in St Andrews, I had been conducting research into this gentleman's golfing record because it had been suggested to me that he had taken part in the 1900 Olympic Games. On looking further into his sporting background a fascinating story unfolds.

[Born on 20th March 1869](#), David Donaldson Robertson was the son of our third Captain, W.A. Robertson who presented the Silver Cleek and Iron, first competed for in 1884. Young David showed early prowess - aged 13, with a handicap of 9, he scored 90 in the 1881 Boy's Competition over the (then) links at Troon. By 16 he was a scratch player and competed in the 1884 Turner Cup, and by the age of 18 he won the 1886 Duke of Portland Medal.

The following year David became the first Troon Golf Club Member to win the Hillhouse Cup Medal, and not content with that, he successfully defended his Duke of Portland Medal with a 93, mirroring his score the previous year.

Over the next two or three years David's appearances at Troon began to wane - he only played in occasional monthly medals but nevertheless he once again won the Hillhouse Cup in 1892 for which he received the [then customary gold medal](#). I've recently discovered that this very item was sold in February this year for around \$1,000 at auction in San Francisco, USA. DDR's absences from Troon were undoubtedly due in part to his commitments on the rugby field - he represented Cambridge University against Oxford in the Varsity Match of 1892, and represented Scotland in the Home International match against Wales in 1893. Though he was preparing for a career in law (he would later practise in London at Lincoln's Inn) and thus had limited time to play at his home club, a Committee Minute of 22nd September 1894 records that he was selected "to represent the club at the Links Trophy Tournament on 4th and 5th October at Leven".

From then onwards there appears to be no further trace in our archives of David Robertson, which brings me back to the beginning of this article and the tip off from my friend in St Andrews. In 1900 the "modern" Olympic Games were held in Paris, and they marked the first occasion (never repeated after 1904) when golf was included. David Donaldson Robertson "[du Troon Golf Club](#)" entered the event and took the bronze medal. With golf due to reappear for the first time in 112 years at the 2016 Rio games it is gratifying to know that a member of our club played an influential part in linking us with modern Olympic heritage.

David Robertson died in Berkshire in 1937 aged 68.

If you have any information which might add to this article please get in touch with me at douglasmccreath@hotmail.com