

## Archie Simpson 1866 – 1955

Archie was the youngest of the Simpson brothers and arguably the best golfer. He probably had the most success as a golfer whilst his eldest brother Robert was the businessman. He and his family lived in Grangeview, which was a house facing the golf course towards the west end of Earlsferry. At that

time the area in front of the house facing the beach was not built on but there was a yard of sorts there that his father used. Later at the turn of the century Robert built a house on this ground called Lyndhurst. It is not clear whether he was apprentice to Forrester but it seems certain that he had some training as a young man in Earlsferry. By 1883 Robert was already established as a golf club maker in Carnoustie so it is certain he would have spent some time there with



Archie driving with  
Rolland looking on.

his brothers. However, he was a professional in so far as he played high stakes games for money. His cousin was James Braid although there were a number of cousins of James Braid who were competent golfers having been brought up in Earlsferry. He married Isabell Low whose father was carpenter in Carnoustie and made clubs for Robert Simpson. He was married in a sense by order of the Sheriff in Edinburgh – at this time a form of

marriage could be undertaken by declarations on oath that they were essential a couple and subsequently sleeping together. This is probably the position with this marriage. It saved having to publish banns etc and since at that time Archie was living in the Isle of Wight where he was at the Bembridge club it made sense and he would not have to publish banns, etc.

1891. MARRIAGES in the PARISH of EDINBURGH							
No.	When, Where, and How Married.	Signatures of Parties. Rank or Profession, Whether Single or Widowed, and Relationship (if any).	Age.	Usual Residence.	Name, Surname, and Rank or Profession of Father. Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother.	If a regular Marriage, Signature of officiating Minister and Witnesses. If irregular, Date of Conviction, Decree of Declarator, or Sheriff's Warrant.	When & Where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
83	1891. on the 27th of April at the Sheriff Court House, Glasgow W. Bridge Edinburgh	Archibald Simpson Bachelor	25	Earlsferry Isle of Wight	Alexander Simpson Germans, Merchants Services and Mary Simpson M. Stewart	Warrant of Sheriff substituted at the Glasgow Sheriff Court dated 28th April 1891.	1891. April 28th Edinburgh
	and declaration in presence of the Edinburgh Golf Club and G. H. Forbes and Mary Smith	Isabell Low Spinster	23	1033 Summer Street Glasgow	Alexander Thompson Low Joiner and Mary Low M. S. Brand		Thos. Hetherland Registrar.



15 University Road, Aberdeen

He was runner up in the open championship in 1885 and 1890. A 1903 newspaper puts him in Aberdeen where he was professional at Royal Aberdeen, Balgownie between 1894 and 1911 and he lived in University Road.

He was then at Bembridge G.C. in the Isle of Wight, 1890-91 at Prestwick, 1892-93, Carnoustie 1891-92 and 1893-94 and again 1921. Of course, his connection with Carnoustie at that point was that his eldest brother Robert had established a very successful golf shop and no doubt Archie occasionally visited him to help out. He went off to the states in 1911.

**Archie Simpson** ...the well-known professional the Royal Aberdeen Golf Club, has decided to give up his appointment and also his business in Aberdeen and emigrate to America. Since he went to Aberdeen, sixteen years ago, the game has extended greatly in all directions. Many courses have been laid out all over the north during that time, and, in the majority of cases, the work has been planned on his advice, and many cases carried out under his direction. Archie was born Earlsferry, a village which has produced several famous players. He became a professional at the early age eighteen. With the exception of six months, he has spent all his professional life Scotland. Beginning Carnoustie, his was associated with that course for many years. In the Year 1888 accepted an appointment in Isle Wight but remained there only six months. Returning to Scotland, became assistant, to Charlie Hunter at Prestwick, and there remained for fifteen months, and met many famous exponents of the game. After assisting his brother for two years Carnoustie, he was asked by the Royal Aberdeen Club become their professional and greenkeeper and consented. During the period Archie has been at Balgownie the course has been twice extended. At the early age of nineteen he missed winning the Open Championship single stroke, and before his twenty-fifth year he had occupied the record twice in that great contest of the golfing year. [1911 Newspaper article.]



Detroit Country Club, where Archie started.

Archie started at the Detroit Country Club and he came back to Scotland in 1921. He then returned with his eldest son Archie Jnr who later became a professional golfer in USA (see later). He was back in the states in 1922 and laid out Vincennes Club in Indiana. He became an American citizen in 1920s. In 1920 he was living at Roosevelt Place in Grosse Pointe Michigan.




*Roosevelt Place in Grosse Pointe*

10	Wadson	Robert	20	27	7	85	1841	United	Scotland	Scotland	Abertay	University	Edinburgh	NY	New York	
11	✓	Simpson	Archie	18	27	7	85	1841	Scotland	Scotland	Abertay	University	Edinburgh	NY	New York	
12	✓	100	do	25	18	27	8	85	1841	Scotland	Scotland	Abertay	University	Edinburgh	NY	New York
13	✓	Philip	John	22	27	8	85	1841	Scotland	Scotland	Abertay	University	Edinburgh	NY	New York	

He and his wife had a son also called Archie and two daughters. His son also became a professional golfer and had the pro job at Clovernook GC in Ohio. Meanwhile his father was the pro at Tam O'Shanter CC in Detroit, which is no longer a golf course but has been returned to parkland.





# DOWN the FAIRWAY

with CINCINNATI GOLFERS  
by LOU SMITH

ull Resolution Paper

Directors of the Mariemont Country Club, now under construction, yesterday announced that Archie Simpson Sr., who has been connected with the Tam O'Shanter Club, of Detroit, Mich., for the past five years, has been obtained to take charge of the course and the professional duties for the 1929 season.

Simpson, who already has celebrated more than 50 summers, is rated one of the greatest golfers that ever came over to the United States from Scotland.

On two occasions Simpson finished second in the British open with such stars as Ted Ray, Harry Vardon, James Braid, Bill Taylor and "Sandy" Held competing. He also won two open meets in England.

He also was a star member of the Scottish international golf team and played against the English professionals 10 consecutive years. Before coming over to the States Simpson was professional of the Royal Aberdeen Golf Club, one of the largest and finest golf courses in all England.

Shortly after arriving in this country in 1916 Simpson was signed to lay out and supervise the construction of the Detroit Country Club, one of the finest links in the world and the scene of the national amateur championship several years ago.

Harry Vardon, generally referred to by veteran golfers as the finest shot-maker who ever lived, in his book, "How To Play Golf," said that Archie

stylist was in a class by himself. Simpson still is capable of ambling around the majority of the courses in par figures.

With Simpson numbered among her professionals, Cincinnati also will have one of the greatest teachers in the golf game today. Among Simpson's proteges are such stars as Leo Diegel, present P. G. A. champion of America, and ranked as the second greatest golfer in the world last season; Grange Alves, professional of the Acacia Country Club, Cleveland, Ohio; Charley Hilgendorf, Michigan State open golf champion in 1925; George Duncan, great British star and former open champion of England on several occasions, and Archie Simpson Jr., professional of the Cloverbrook Country Club and rated as one of the best golfers in the world in 1917-18.

Simpson will arrive in Cincinnati from Detroit in the next few days and will be associated with Simpson Jr. in operating the Cincinnati Club's Indoor Golf School. He will take over the professional duties at the Mariemont Club about March 15, and expects to have the nine-hole course ready for play about the middle of June.

With Simpson Sr. signed to take over the professional duties of the new Mariemont Country Club, Cincinnati now has three professionals of the old school in her fold. Alec Baxter, of the Twin Oaks Country Club, and Dave Mentiply, the grand old veteran of the Wyoming Country Club, are graduates of the caddy ranks of bonny Scotland. All three of these veteran professionals have



Later, in Mariemont, his son Archie Jr died suddenly in 1930 when he was pro at Cloverbrook and his father took over that job shortly afterwards.

As a celebration of the Simpson family the club had (maybe still have) a Carnoustie day each year when they hold a competition and have various events in celebration of the Simpsons and their contribution to golf.

*Mariemont golf course no longer exists as it was turned into farmland in 1941.*



## Golfing Career

### The Open 1895

The annual competition for the golf championship, open to all comers, played alternately over three Scottish links, was held on Saturday over the St. Andrews Links, when the large number of 56 players competed, including all the best professionals and a number of crack amateur players. Bob Martin, professional St. Andrews, came in first at 171 strokes for two rounds, and became champion golfer for the year. Archie Simpson, professional Elie, was second at 172; and O. Aytoun, professional St. Andrews, third, at 173. Last year's championship was played at Prestwick, when Jack Simpson, Carnoustie, was winner.

1895

### 1896

**June 1896 at Musselburgh ARCHIE SIMPSON V. BRAID.** James Braid and Archie Simpson attracted a large following. Archie started in disastrous fashion half topping his drive, with the result that the ball struck the paling, and rebounded to within a few yards of the tee. Braid, the other hand, had a grand tee shot, played all through in grand style, holing perfectly 4. Simpson took 2 more. Both men drove long balls the next tee, but both were bunkered. Simpson got fairly well out, but his partner was less fortunate. Both managed to get on to the green in 4. and the hole was halved in 6. With the match square, green was reached in faultless style. Braid had played the odds but was unfortunate in not getting down. Simpson, however, got a 4 and also the hole, and was one up and four to play on the round. Simpson increased his lead at the next hole. Both were bunkered in front of the green, and though Simpson failed to get out at the first attempt, he succeeded placing himself two up by holing 5 to Braid's 6. This lead was reduced the next hole, which Braid by home in fine style in 3 won, Simpson taking 1 more. ....the home hole Braid got down in and won, Simpson's like just failing to get it. Result—Square on the nine holes. Starting their second journey the first green was reached in 3. Braid was in his putting, and Simpson getting down 5 his opponent's 6 won the hole. He followed this winning the second hole also. ....Fine driving brought both players the green the sea hole, and another half was the result—in 3. At the fifth hole still

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another half was played, this time in 4. Both drove well, but their putting was not so good. Simpson was again going to the sixth, but all the same he managed secure a half in five, through Braid's weak putting. Another half followed, and Simpson was thus dormy two. Simpson pulled his drive a little, but recovered well, and again Braid did badly on the green, and lost the hole and the match by three up and one to play. This left Simpson, Aberdeen, and Sayers, North Berwick, in the final.





**ARCHIE SIMPSON, THE CARNOUSTIE GOLFER.** Archie Simpson, Carnoustie, whose name widely familiar in golfing circles, is the youngest six brothers—all of whom are first golfers, one of them, Jack, gaining the professional championship in 1884—and was born in the quaint old seaside village of Earlsferry, in the East Neuk o' Fife, in 1866. Young as he is, his career as a golfer has been brilliant one, and some of his achievements have been unprecedented. In his case the adage "learn young, learn fair" has been amply verified, as he began playing golf almost soon toddle, and he has handled the "hickory" ever since. The following are a few his notable performances:

When only fourteen years old, carried off the second prize in a competition open to all amateurs, his score being 50 for the round 12 holes. In the following year, at St Andrews, in playing a member the Thistle Golf Club of Elie against the St Andrews Club, he made the lowest score of the day, his record being stroke faultless round, very meritorious performance, as many of the members of the St Andrews Club were "caddies" who are well known as really first-class players.

Archie made his a professional at Leven in 1884, when was eighteen years old, engaging in competition to all professionals he carried off the second prize with scores 82 and 85, his brother Jack being first with 80 and 86. was third the same year, playing in a large tournament open to all-comers, his scores being 53, 56, and for the three rounds 12 holes each.

Playing in the match open to all professionals in the famous Carnoustie tournament 1885, Archie carried off the second prize with a score of strokes. The same year St Andrews he almost gained the blue riband of the golfing world, which he only lost by a single putt, his scores being 83 and 89 for the two rounds. Bob Martin winning the championship by one stroke less.

Against large field of professionals Troon in 1886 Archie secured third prize with scores 74 and 78, and at the autumn competition for professionals St Andrews was fourth with 89, his brother Jack, the ex-champion, being first with 84.

Some of Archie's performances in foursome and single matches have been very notable, and a number of them have gone to make history in golf. For instance, Mr Arthur Molesworth, the well-known amateur golfer, and Archie in 1885 played series of matches over Carnoustie and St Andrews courses against Messrs James Hunter and John Ball (tertius), the famous Holylake player, and beat them. One their rounds at Carnoustie and one at St Andrews were done at 81 strokes, which showed remarkable play for foursome game.

Quite recently Archie played J. O. F. Morris, member the Morris family, home and-home match of rounds Carnoustie and Andrews for £50 and won by 12 holes. Evidence that he possesses that most valuable gift the ability to play uphill game, may allude to the match which he played the other day at St Andrews against Willie Campbell, Musselburgh, when, in spite of the fact, the latter was five holes up he took hole after hole squared the match. Archie generally admitted to be pre-eminently the longest driver any golfer, and in the match with Willie Campbell he had one most terrific "swipe," which went 280 yards in length—a feat which, far we know, has never been done before and on Carnoustie Links few players can own with him. He has dozens of times taken present round, which was recently somewhat lengthened, at 76. A fortnight ago he did the outgoing nine holes at 35, being one stroke less than average of four—the lowest has ever been at. It's a grand sight to see Archie play ruddy complexioned, young, lithe, and active, easy dashing style play, he the very ideal golfer frank and winning manners, and chivalrous towards opponents on green, he is very popular with all with whom he comes in contact. Brilliant Archie's career it may safely be anticipated that he will gather more laurels which will add fresh fame to himself and shed a brighter lustre on the game. [newspaper article 1887]

**ARCHIE SIMPSON v ARNAUD MASSIE.** Archie Simpson, the famous Aberdeen professional who was runner-up to Bob Martin in the open championship twenty years ago played splendid game at Balgownie, Aberdeen, on Saturday, when he beat Arnaud Massey, of Biarritz and North Berwick. The French professional started well and stood one upturn in the first round. Simpson, however, won the eighteenth hole, his score being 78 strokes; and in the afternoon, he farther outplayed his rival [to win by 4 and 3]. August 1905

Name:	Archibald Simpson
Birth Year:	abt 1866
Gender:	Male
Race:	White
Birthplace:	Scotland
Marital status:	Married
Relation to Head of House:	Head
Home in 1930:	Cincinnati, Hamilton, Ohio, USA
Map of Home:	<a href="#">View Map</a>
Street address:	Wiswell Avenue

1930 census



Wiswell Avenue, Cincinnati

Some day before my golfing sun has set, I hope to visit Carnoustie. Archie Simpson Sr., veteran Clovernook Country Club professional who puttered about as a wee, toddling laddie on Carnoustie's fairways, or scrambled through the brambled thickets along the course, has told me about the far-off heath of Scotland as only a native son can.

The records show that the canny old Clovernook mentor is one of the most famous of the large Carnoustie clan. He was the youngest of six brothers, all good golfers, who belonged to Earlsferry, but settled in Carnoustie. Archie was runner-up twice in the British open championship. He beat Douglas Rolland, the stone mason from Elie in a famous match at Sandwich. British golfing history prove that Simpson was one of the greatest players in the history of the game over on that tight little isle. Archie's home-and-home matches with Willie Park and Willie Campbell are still talked about as two of the greatest golf matches ever witnessed in England.

A smile swept across the weather-beaten face of Archie Simpson as he informed the writer that the British open championship will get under way at Carnoustie next Thursday. Archie recalled that Carnoustie was always a stiff test, even when he played against Willie Park and Willie Campbell in their big money matches more than a quarter of a century ago. He also recalled that the Smith boys, MacDonald, Willie and Aleck toted their clubs in these matches. Yes, Mr. Golfer, in Archie Simpson Sr. the Clovernook Club has one of the greatest golfers of all times. Although Archie has already enjoyed more than 65 summers in this great vale of tears, it is still an inspiring sight to see the "Old Master" play a round of golf. He still hits his shots with a machine-like precision, and rarely does he go over 75 blows on the sporty College Hill course.

## **The Dundee Courier published the following obit in 1955 after Archie Snr.**

### **Death. Oldest Link with "Open" is Broken (By Our Golf Writer)**

*If Carnoustie Dalhousie Club had not appointed Bob Simpson of Earlsferry its professional in 1883, Carnoustie golf might never have got out of the rut. For not only did Bob Simpson come to the town; he brought with him his brothers Jack and Archie as assistants Jack, who won the Open died a young man. But Archie, who moved to America in 1911, lived to become the aides link with the Open Championship. He died in Detroit, Michigan, on Saturday, and was buried there on Wednesday.*

*Carnoustie never could repay the debt it owes to Archie Simpson. It was he who made golf the town's biggest industry. The perfect stylist, his swing was imitated and copied by scores of the young men of the town in the latter years of last century. This swing—"The Camoustie swing"—became world famous. Local men took it to almost every country in the world and won titles with it. It made many a man's fortune. Its exponents made Carnoustie famous and they inspired the town's traditional belief that its players must always be in the forefront of the game. And it all goes back to the Old Archie, who has died at the ripe old age of 89. He was a great player in an era what professionals had few chances to make good. In 1885 he missed the Open title by one stroke, being second to Bob Martin at St Andrews. It was the same story at Prestwick in 1890, when he finished one stroke behind the redoubtable Mr John Ball.*

*As a match player he was unrivalled. Brother Bob and he whipped the boots off that all-star St Andrews team, J.O.F. Morris and open champion Jack Bums. Archie gave Morris a 9 and 8 drubbing over Carnoustie and St Andrews to win a stake of £25, which was big money in these days. In 1887, when he was it, he challenged the 22-years-old Open Champion, Willie Park. Over Carnoustie and Musselburgh Archie trimmed the champ. to the tune of 8 and 7. One Carnoustie resident who still vividly recalls Archie in his heyday is Mr John C. Stuart, now, fortunately, recuperating from a severe illness. Archie left Carnoustie to be pro. at the Royal Isle of Wight Club, but came back to Scotland to take over Royal Aberdeen, whose course at Balgownie Bob Simpson had designed. While there, Archie fostered and encouraged a young man called George Duncan, later to become Open Champion.*

*From 1894 until 1911 Archie was pro. at Balgownie, then packed up to go to America. After a spell at Grosse Point, Michigan, he was chosen for the famous Tam o' Shanter Club. He retired, and when his only son, Archie, jun., died while pro. at Clovernook, Ohio, the club asked the old man to succeed the son. He was so popular there that the club instituted an annual golf, sports and social day which out of compliment to their pro. they called "A Carnoustie". His only visit home was in 1922\*, when I followed many of his games and admired the grand golf he was still playing. His wife died many years ago. She was a former Miss Bella Low, sister of the late George Low, another famous Carnoustie golfer who founded the American P.G.A. He is survived by his only daughter, Mrs Bella Ramsay, 4092 Columbus Avenue, Detroit. Her son, Bill Ramsay, was in Britain with the American Forces during the last war and spent some leaves in Carnoustie.*

*To most of Carnoustie's present population "Archie Simpson" is only a name, if that. But he was a man well worth remembering, for his brilliant play, his fascinating swing, his tremendous personality and his passionate love of the game which without doubt made Carnoustie the golfing town that it is.*

*\* After winter holiday in Carnoustie. Archie Simpson, the noted professional, has left for America, having secured important golfing appointment in Indiana. A brilliant exponent of the game. Archie recently returned superb Carnoustie Old Course. He is brother of Bailie Robert Simpson, the eminent Carnoustie golf clubmaker. 1922*

This is the entry in the cemetery records:



Photo added by [Grand Army of the...](#)

## Archibald "Archie" Simpson

BIRTH	14 Mar 1866 Earlsferry, Fife, Scotland
DEATH	31 Jan 1955 (aged 88) Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan, USA
BURIAL	<a href="#">Woodlawn Cemetery</a> Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan, USA
PLOT	Section 25, lot 46, space 1
MEMORIAL ID	197361969 · <a href="#">View Source</a>

*Researched and complied by Graham Johnston*