

The Pearson Family

John S. Pearson

1867-1923

There were, in the 1891 census, about five families of Pearsons living in Elie and Earlsferry. We are particularly concerned with John otherwise John S., Andrew and George.

David married Anne Tulloch and they had 11 children – the eldest was Ann born in 1848 then Alex then John born 1851, David, Robert, William, Thomas, Christian, James, Euphemia and George born in 1870. They lived in Rose Cottage in Earlsferry High Street and we think it was the house two along from Cadgers Wynd rather than the Rose Cottage at Chapel Green Road – since the former was much larger for a family of 13.



Then there was Andrew married Catherine and they had four children, the youngest was John Stewart who was born in 1864 but he was born in the Isle of Skye. His parents (his father Andrew was an estate worker) eventually moved to Elie and they were living at 21 High Street in 1891.

Then there was Robert who married Susan and had three children one of whom was Andrew born in 1881 and the family lived in 4 The Vennel, Elie.

J.S. Pearson figures considerably in the American Newspapers, especially in Florida at Ocala, and he is buried there having died in New York in 1923. Our researches show that three of the above became professional golfers with differing degree of success. However, confusion arises in relation to John Stewart Pearson. Whilst we know that a man of that name became a professional golfer, we are aware that this John Stewart Pearson was born in 1867 or 1868. The reason we know this is that a J.S. Pearson golf professional died in 1923 in New York, was buried in Ocala in Florida and had a cottage in Pittenweem which he called Ocala cottage. His gravestone in Florida indicated that he was aged 55 and died in 1923. That would make his date of birth 1868/7 so he cannot be the JS

who was born in the Isle of Skye in 1864. Equally, it could not have been John son of David and Ann who was born in 1851 and in any event, John died in 1912.

The information we have is that he went first of all to the West Middlesex Club at Southall in 1895 which may well have been assistant to the then professional also from Elie, C. Ralph Smith (q.v.). He seemed to regularly play in tournaments. It is difficult to get information about the West Middlesex Club now as it has just been sold in administration (for £2.5m). However, we know that he went across to USA and seemed to spend his time in Florida in the winter and New York or thereby in the summer. He died in New York in 1923 and was buried in Florida. At least this information is based initially on the reference by Peter Georgiady of Antique Golf Clubs of Scotland, who says that John S Pearson went to West Middlesex and then to USA. He suggests that he learnt his golf in Elie.

There is reference to a **James** Pearson having gone to Ocala golf club and when this John Stewart Pearson died in 1923 his address is shown as Ocala Cottage Viewforth Place Pittenweem. It seems therefore this John S Pearson is the chap referred to and who had various travel arrangements. So far as we can see he went to America, probably 1899 or so, and thereafter he was active as a golf professional in Florida and also NY state and Illinois.

We concluded therefore that this John Stewart Pearson must have been someone other than the one born in the Isle of Skye and this was re-enforced by the terms of his will. He mentions various brothers and sister and cousins all of whom were the product of David and Ann's family. It seemed to us therefore that this John S Pearson looked upon David and Ann's family as his own. Further investigation revealed the birth of a John Pearson in 1868 from which it can be seen that he was born in Scoonie (Leven).

				At Gargo		
	John Pearson	1867	No.		Ann Pearson	1867
		North			(Mother)	April 16
		Highcandle				address
21		100 P. S. No.		Ann Pearson		
	Highcandle	20 South Street		Wagner at a Flour Mill		At Pierce the
		Leven				Pearson

It is clear that his mother was the eldest of David and Ann's family. It often happened in these days that the child of an errant daughter would be brought up by the family as if the grandparents were the true parents. This is what we think happened here. We first pick him up as a joiner aged 15 in the 1881 census. In 1894 he was in Elie because he competed in the Elie Athletic games in the summer of that year where he was second in the long driving contest and he is noted there as a professional from West Middlesex. In 1898 he competed in a tournament in Carnoustie and there he is said to be from Southall GC which actually is West Middlesex Golf Club.

And it is significant that the three other members of that household were all Scottish

NAME:	John Pearson
AGE:	15
ESTIMATED BIRTH YEAR:	1866
RELATIONSHIP TO HEAD:	Lodger
GENDER:	Male
WHERE BORN:	Scotland
CIVIL PARISH:	Islington
COUNTY/ISLAND:	London
COUNTRY:	England

NEW GOLF LINKS OPENED.

FORMAL DEDICATION OF HOMEWOOD CLUB'S COURSE.

Match Play Between J. S. Pearson, the Club's Professional, and Alex. Smith of the Washington Park Club is the Feature of the Day, Smith Winning by Five Up and Four to Play—Many Social Features Enliven the Occasion.

The Homewood Country club formally opened its new golf course and clubhouse to the golfing world yesterday. Five hundred people were in attendance, this number being increased by the late afternoon trains. The principal golf fixture of the day was an eighteen-hole match between the club's professional, J. S. Pearson, formerly of the West Middlesex club of London, and Alex. Smith, the Washington Park professional, which was won by Smith after an excellent exhibition of golf by the score of 5 up with 4 to play.

The course over which the game was played is a temporary affair and the roughness of the greens caused many miscalculations. The feature of the match was Smith's driving, a majority of his drives from the tee covering from 200 to 240 yards. The approaching of both was good, but the putting at times somewhat erratic. Smith's medal score, though, will doubtless stand as "bogey" for some time to come, his record being 39 for the first half and 36 for the last nine holes.

The match was started at 2:30 o'clock, a large gallery following the players around the links. Smith had the honor and both made good drives, the first hole resulting in a half in 5. Pearson won the second in 4-5 by holing a long putt, making him 1 up. Playing to the third Pearson sliced to the right, finding the long grass. He was well out on his second, however, obtaining a half in 5. Honors were even at the fourth, the result being again a half in 5. Smith evened matters at the fifth by winning the hole in 4-5. The sixth went to Smith in 3-4, Pearson winning the hole on his third, score Smith 1 up.

Ealing is one of the newest of London's golf clubs. The links, however, at Twyford Abbey are by no means new, in the sense that they have only recently been devoted to the game. The links are already, so far as the frost allows, in excellent condition, and the engagement of John Pearson, a professional from Bournemouth, to look after the greens as well as to coach members, ought to be a further attraction to intending members. Pearson, who was four years at the golf links at Brockenhurst, is a first-rate player, and holds the record of the Brockenhurst links with the fine score of 74 strokes. The club is being properly organised, and the first monthly medal competition will be held on Saturday, March 30, at

What we also know from 1895

So tracking that back he must have joined Brockenhurst in 1890 or so. He certainly played in a number of exhibition games and tournaments between 1890 and 1900 being attached to West Middlesex Golf Club, which was the forerunner of West Middlesex and Southall Golf Clubs.

We next find him America having travelled there probably about 1899, although we cannot find his entry. He appears in an article in 1900 at the opener of a golf club in Illinois called Homewood. He seems to be the first professional and his previous history ties in with our research.

Since Homewood and most of the courses north of New York were only playable in the summer most professionals "wintered" in sunnier climes. JS started going to Ocala in Florida in about 1900 and every year until his death he spent time there as a golf professional. He became a bit of

a local personality his every (almost) move being chronicled in the newspapers. It does however give a clear insight as to his comings and goings. He stayed with Homewood for only two years we think before he joined Richmond County Golf Club.

However we have one item of evidence that suggests that there was more than one J.S. Pearson plying his trade in north america at this time.

This (right) from 1902. It seems strange that the competition should be hosted by J.S. Pearson instructor at Ocala and yet there is a professional competition later that day between J.S. Pearson of Homewood and others. It is possible that there were two J.S. Pearsons but we cannot find any evidence that they ever both completed

In the golf tournament Saturday the prizes, which were offered by Mr. J. S. Pearson, instructor at the Ocala House, were warmly contested for.

The first prize was won by Phillip Robinson, score 58, handicap 7, net score 51. The second prize was tied for by Ralph Robinson and Charley Chazal, both with scores of 55, the latter, however, having a handicap of 7. A scratch score of 63 was made, both by Louis Chazel, jr., and Morris Smith. With a handicap of 12 each, John Chazal and Norton Davis, made the respective scores of 63 and 87.

The contest was open only to the younger players but quite a large number of visitors was out and the scene was a lively one. After the tournament a foursome was played in which car two crack local players, D. S. Williams, and Geo. K. Robinson were matched against T. G. Bright, of Toronto, Canada, and J. S. Pearson, of Homewood, Fl. The visitors won. The tournaments are to be held every Saturday during the season and Ocala should be a mecca for visiting golfers.

in the same tournament so we suggest that this report from the Boston Globe of 1902 is ambiguous and that the two JSPs are one and the same person.



GOLF AT AMPERSAND.

Special to The New York Times.

AMPERSAND, N. Y., Aug. 20.—There have been some interesting events on the Ampersand golf course this week, including a contest for a handsome cup presented by Frederick I. Pearsall, a match between professionals, and the breaking of the records for the course by John S. Pearson of the Ampersand Club, and later the lowering of Mr. Pearson's record by one stroke by George Bouse.

The qualifying round for the Pearsall Cup was held on Saturday, when H. B. Reynolds, Otis L. Williams, Harold Naylor, Mrs. Milton Work, Mr. Lawrence, W. D. Gordon, Dr. Gibney, and H. Schmelzel were successful. The finals brought Harold Naylor and H. B. Reynolds together, and Mr. Naylor won by 3 up and 2 to play.

John S. Pearson of the Ampersand Club made a new professional record for the course Saturday. He made the first round in 34 and two rounds in 72.

There was a match for professionals on Monday, when George Bouse of Lake Placid and Jack Jolly of New York met G. V. Keddie of the Stevens House and John S. Pearson of the Ampersand in a thirty-six-hole match. Bouse and Jolly won by four holes. The features of the day were the playing of Bouse and Pearson. Bouse established a new record for eighteen holes, making the distance in 71. His second eighteen holes were not as well played by eleven strokes. Pearson played a remarkably steady game, covering the eighteen holes twice in 73 strokes each time.

Messrs. Williams, Ransom, H. Reynolds, R. Reynolds, Simons, Marsh, Work, Pearsall, Huseilton, and Coolidge of the Ampersand Club played a match with the representatives of the Stevens House on the Stevens House course at Lake Placid this week.

The annual sports and games for the employes of the Ampersand took place yesterday, and the events included various amusing contests, like eating huckleberry pie, shoe scramble, flour diving, sack race, and potato race. The committee in charge of the events was composed of visitors to the

Richmond County golf club is in Staten Island in N.Y and we also know that he was playing in a tournament in New York in 1904 where he is said to be attached to Ampersand Golf club which was also on Staten Island. We think he probably had appointments at both. He still wintered in Ocala and seems to have been part of a syndicate called the Plant System. This was a syndicate organised and managed by J.D. Dunn originally from North Berwick who promoted a number of tournaments and also assigned various professionals to their winter quarters.

GOLFERS WILL FOLLOW THE BIRDS.

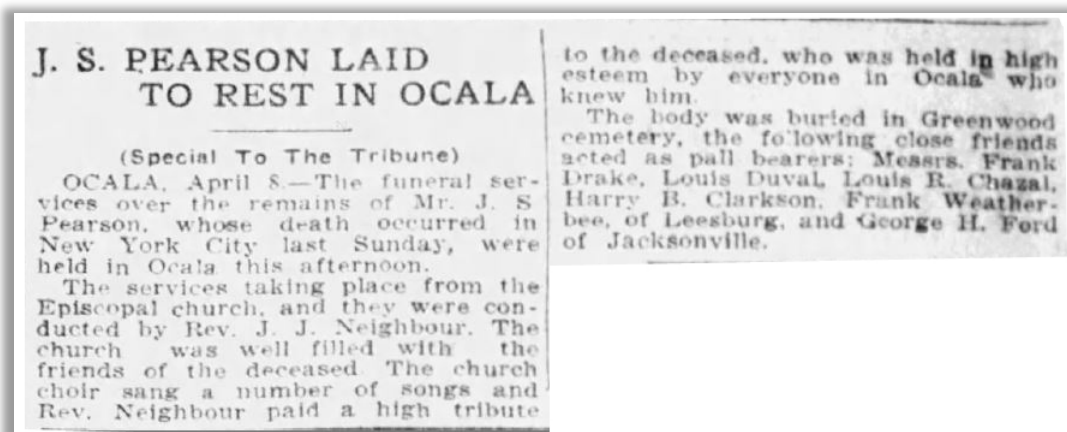
Many Local Professionals Plan to Winter on Florida Links.

Chicago golf professionals will be well represented on the Florida links through the winter. Herbert Tweedie, who returned yesterday from Dayton, closed an agreement with the Plant system, which controls a number of the Southern courses, by which Lawrence Auchterlonie will go to Belleair, Jim Foulis to Tampa, William Marshall to Kissimmee, James Watson to Winter Park, and James Pearson to Ocala. John Dunn, the New York professional, will go immediately to Florida to inspect and alter most of the courses. George Low and Arthur Penn, the two Eastern professionals, will both be located through the winter on Florida courses.

In 1910 he seemed to move north to Illinois and was establishing the Lake Shore County Club, which is on the shore of the Lake Michigan 15 miles north of Chicago. He came back across the Atlantic in 1909 and returned in 1910 and significantly his destination in the ship manifest was Glencoe Illinois which is slightly south of Lake Shore. In 1912 he was leaving Ocala and going back to Chicago. Whilst in Florida he was wont to travel between Florida and Cuba on a number of occasions between 1912 and 1921. He seemed to have interests also in New York and often his return heralded from Florida to New York and on one occasion to West Orange County in New Jersey. In effect he seemed to have a fairly peripatetic existence he was merely a boarder with a family in Florida and we have no record of any property in New York or Chicago.

In 1921 he returned back to Elie in April of that year which may have been significant because his mother died in early 1922. But that event may well also have precipitated him making a will which he did in Edinburgh in October 1921 very shortly before he returned to the United States. It is from the terms of his will that we were able to establish that he was a "son" of David and Ann of Rose Cottage.

He was not married and had a stroke in New York in 1923 from which he subsequently died. His wish to be buried in Ocala was carried out. He actually was quite a wealthy man and at a rough estimate his estate was worth about \$10,000 in 1923 - which equates to about \$160,000 today.



We also have a copy of his will which is very useful in tracking down his family. He left the following bequests:

George Douglas Bonner and Catherine Bonner the children of his sister Christian Pearson or Bonner, Susan Pearson widow of his brother Robert and her son Andrew (q.v.) who lived at 4 Church Lane Elie (may now be the Vennel) who was also bequeathed all his stock etc of his golf business in USA which suggests that he might have carried on the golf tradition. Mary Pearson widow of his brother William and her 3 daughters and William Pearson his nephew, and his cousin Jessie Harrower who lived in New York. He bequeathed his house in Pittenweem to Christian Pearson or Bonner which he acquired by disposition by George Douglas Bonner who resided at the bungalow Pittenweem and who disposed it to JS in 1905. This is interesting that George Bonner the husband of his sister Catherine should have disposed his house in Pittenweem to JS. in 1905. The valuation roll of 1915 shows JS owning one of the houses and it was let out and next door house in Viewforth Place Pittenweem was owned by George Bonner. This is where he was designed as living and certainly his confirmation at Cupar Sheriff Court was in these terms:



This is his gravestone in Florida.

This would relate only to his estate in Scotland.

PEARSON, John Stewart, of Ocala Cottage, Pittenweem, Professional Golfer, Ocala Country Club, Ocala, Florida, U.S.A., died 1 April 1923 at Ocala, Florida, testate. Confirmation Cupar, 7 August, to Christian Pearson or Bonner, 7 MacDowall Road, Newington, Edinburgh, his sister, and William Pearson, 183 Piersfield Terrace, Edinburgh, his nephew, Executors. Will dated 3 October 1921 recorded Cupar 26 July 1923. Value of Estate, £247:17: 3.