

George Duncan Keddie

1869 – 1937

George Keddie was born in Earlsferry on 4th October 1869. There were a few Keddies in Fife many associated with the mining industry but George and his brother James were living with their aunt in Earlsferry, but it is not clear where or why they were not living in family.

48	George Duncan Keddie	1869	10 th October	James Keddie	1869	10 th October
		Fourth	5 P.M.	Coal Miner	James Keddie	at
		Earlsferry	Edinburgh	Marquett Keddie	at	Edinburgh
				Mrs. Duncan	at	Edinburgh
				1947 May	Thomas Sime	Registrar
					Registrar	

It might have been that he was a miner and semi-itinerant. It might have been that their parents thought the environment of Earlsferry was preferable to the polluted mining communities of that time. However, there were a fair number of Keddies in Fife and George seems to have been a popular Christian name making it more difficult to track him.

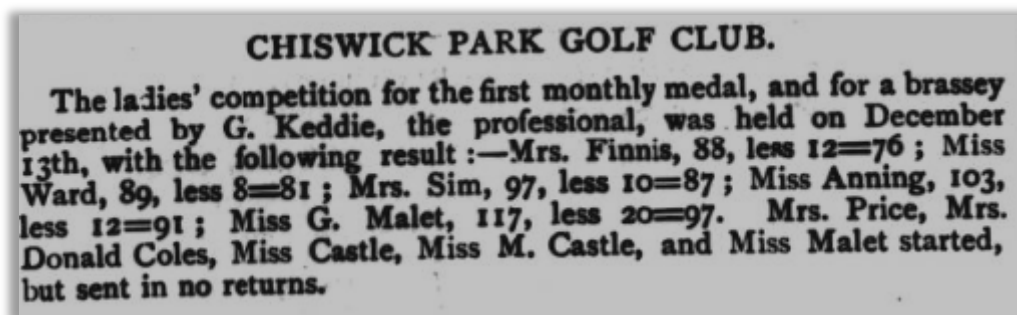
It is more than likely that George became an apprentice to Forrester although he was slightly older and generally, he would have been a proficient golfer honing his skills on the Earlsferry tract. He was a member the Thistle club. He first surfaces as a professional in the early 1890s when he seems to have been a first professional at the fledgling Chiswick Park Golf Club, which received in depth treatment in The Golfer in November 1894 thus:

One of the most pleasant little Golf courses in the near neighbourhood of London is that of the Chiswick Golf Club. About two years ago a small club was formed there, in a picturesque piece of ground adjoining the station of the London and South-Western Railway.A lease of the ground has been taken, and at present the club numbers 185 members....The green has been laid out for a course of twelve holes, in the course of which there is more than the average number of natural and artificial hazards to call forth the iron play of the players. The turf is particularly good, and with a little rolling on the line of the lies, and cropping when the grass begins to grow in the spring, no one can grumble at the efforts of that hard-working body, the green committee of the club. George Keddie, a name well-known in Elie and Earlsferry, is the green-keeper, and his sister, bright and cheery, looks after the comforts of the members in the club-house, a fine, well-situated building, right in the middle of the course, with the first tee at the door.For the occasion [of the opening] the committee had arranged an exhibition professional match the players being Douglas Rolland (Rye) and George Keddie (Chiswick), against James Braid of Elie, and James Keddie (Hastings). The match was one of thirty-six holes, and contest was followed by a large and eager crowd of ladies and gentlemen anxious to see such a renowned player as Rolland. James Keddie ought to have his attention called to one circumstance, which, in our judgment, is not only a flagrant breach of etiquette on the part of a professional match player, but a gross want of respect to the members and committee of the club who invited*

him to play. He lighted and smoked his pipe several times while playing, even disdaining to take the pipe out of his mouth to play his tee shot, and this, too, in a serious match, with a gallery of onlookers. Keddie ought to know that this is not the game.The captain of the club, Mr. James T. Currie**, is a golfer who has learnt his game on the hither side of the Tweed. A better selection, for the difficult post could not have been made. Mr. Currie has the advantage not only of knowing the game thoroughly and playing it well, but he has experience of many greens here and in Scotland ; and it is out of the fulness of such experience that a young club like Chiswick will in all probability he prevented from going wrong at the most critical point of its career—the outset.

*His sister was presumably Nellie who lived in Elie latterly see later.

**James T Currie was the son of James Currie of the commissary office in Edinburgh and he was born in Edinburgh. He (at least one of the same name) competed in a boys competition in Earlsferry in 1881 coming 4th. He does not appear to have been related to the Currie family of builders of Elie but there is a strong Scottish connection.



We are not sure how long he stayed in Chiswick but he appears again in Berlin in 1899 when he is married to Jessie Margaret Oliver from the borders. At least that is what one entry in Ancestry says but there is another one suggesting it was in 1909. Since, as we will see, he later appears in the US census of 1900 along with his wife we have taken the 1899 date as the accurate one unless 10 years later to the day they decided to renew their vows in Germany.



Rolland G Keddie J Keddie and Braid at Chiswick

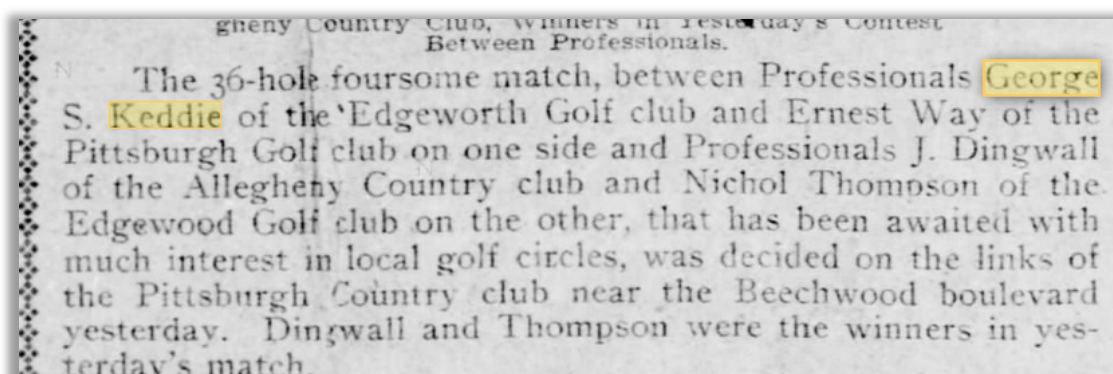
Since golf was very much in an embryonic state in Germany at that time it is highly likely that George was employed in setting out a golf course in Hamburg or thereabout since there is evidence that another Scot was also carrying out his trade there. (George Pearson).

Shortly after he was married he and his new wife went to America where they arrived probably 1900 and it seems he was immediately employed as a golf professional and is shown as living in New York

State in the census of that year. His first clubs seems to have been Powelton GC in New York state and in 1900 he is shown as living in Newburgh which is close by



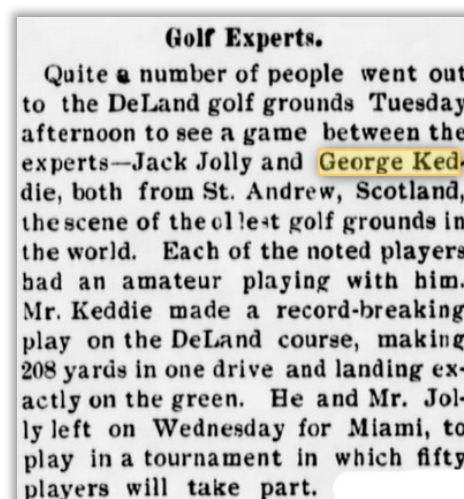
He seems to have been there for about two years before he was offered and accepted the position at La Grange club in Illinois just to the north of Chicago. This must have been again as a recent development since the course itself was not fully operational until a year or two later.



In 1902 he was professional at Edgeworth Golf Club. It seems that as professional he was merely engaged "for the season" and in most cases in northern aspects of USA that would have been starting in April. Hence during winter seasons the professional may well have to seek warmer climes and that is what George did because he was reported as being attached to Winter Park golf club in Florida which is near Orlando.

Also:

The player seemed to spend much time travelling to where the money was.



Then in 1903

The Edgewood Golf club has signed as coach for the season **George Keddie**, who was last season with the Edgeworth club, of Sewickley. Nichol Thompson, the old coach of Edgewood, will, upon quitting his term with the Birmingham, Ala., club, return to the Hamilton Golf club, of Toronto, Can., which he left to come to Pittsburg.

It should however be noted that in some of these newspaper reports there is a suggestion that we are talking about George S Keddie but despite best searches we cannot find a golfer of that name. We are assuming therefore that Keddie was our Keddie in each of these reports.

However, he or perhaps his wife tired of the peripatetic existence in the States and he return to Great Britain. He is seen to play in Earlsferry in 1905

Before resurfacing again in 1909 at Whitstable where he was the professional (below):

A match was played on Saturday last between the Tankerton and Whitstable Golf Club and the Herne Bay Golf Club. In perfect golfing weather the Whitstable Club won by 10 points to 7, the detailed scores being as follows:—

WHITSTABLE CLUB.	
Singles.	
R. J. Arbon	1
Carol Powers	1
J. B. Sumner	4
S. Anderson	11
C. Downs Butcher	11
J. W. Riddell	0
W. G. Small	1
J. Ogden	0
G. W. Jones	0
G. D. Keddie	1

ELIE.
GOLF.—The monthly competition for Earlsferry Thistle silver medal took place on Saturday. The medal was won by G. Elder (90—2), 78. Other scores :—W. Anderson (84—4), 80; John Walker (85—2), 83; J. Stevens (93—10), 83. During play, while a golf professional, **George Keddie**, was teeing his ball at the Golf House Club, he was struck on the head with a ball, rendering medical aid necessary.
BURGH COURT.—Thomas Hutt, St Monans, was brought before the magistrates on Tuesday for a contravention of the Licensing Act. The condition of accused as he took his place at the bar was a subject for remark, and it was well for him he did not have to deal with the magistrates who had first installed the Burgh Court. Hutt was fined 10s or seven days. In a breach of the peace case, fines of 10s and 15s were imposed.

And the census shows him there - Clare Road Tankerton Whitstable.

And later he is shown as the first professional at Lee on Solent. He moved in 1905

EARLSFERRY.
GOLF APPOINTMENT.—Mr **George D. Keddie** has just been appointed greenkeeper to the golf course at Clackton-on-Sea in the Isle of Wight.

We then lose him in the South of England and he comes back to Elie in about 1912 where is shown in the valuation roll as owning property in Earlsferry. It may be that he kept this property on after he went south but it seems more likely that he resumed occupation of it in 1910.

His wife died in 1934 and is shown as living at 44 Woodside Road (at least that was the place of her death).

Further research shows that he took over the Ship Inn in the Toft in about 1919 (right).

However, he did seem to fall on hard times and was being sued thus:

ELIE PUBLICAN SUED

Sued in Cupar Sheriff Court yesterday Low, Robertson, & Co., wine and spirit merchants, Leith, for an account amounting £14 17s 6d, George Duncan Keddie, the Ship Inn, Toft, Elie said was unable to pay anything owing to illness and bad trade. Was only drawing £2 5s a week, and on Wednesday, his books would*

show, he only drew 4s 9d. With the season coming on he might be able to pay £1 a month. Mr A. H. Macdonald, Cupar, said he might accept £1 week. Sheriff Dudley gave decree for the amount sued for, payable at the rate of 10s per week. 1929. [current value £900.]*

He eventually died in 1937. There were no children of the union.

NEW TENANT FOR THE SHIP INN, ELIE.

Mr George Duncan Keddie, golf professional, Inglisfield, Earlsferry, applied for the public-house certificate for the Ship Inn, The Toft, Elie. The premises had been closed for the past two years, as owing to the war pleasure steamers had stopped coming and the potato trade at the Harbour had ceased. Mr Cook, solicitor, said Mr Keddie had been living abroad for the past 20 years, and had brought some ideas home with him. He wished to get the licence for the garden connected with the Inn as well as for the Inn as he desired to introduce the Continental system of drinking in the open.

Several of the Justices saw a difficulty in including the garden in the licence, and on the motion of Mr Clement only the Inn itself was licensed.