

# Tom Reekie & John Reekie

1880 – 1958

1923 - 2007

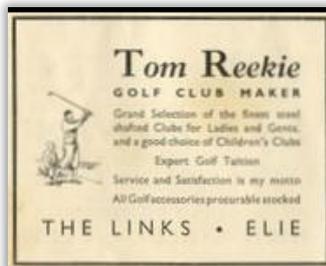


There cannot be anyone who has visited Elie in the last 100 years who has not heard the name Reekie. Father Tom and son John were stalwarts of the Elie golfing scene from 1918 when Tom came back from World War 1 and 2007 when John, who took over the business, died.

Tom was actually born in St. Monans (aka as St Monance) on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1880. His father was one of a number of Reekies in the area who earned their living from the sea. It was a hard and hazardous life and Tom made it clear at an early age that he disliked the sea which rather ruled out his succession to the family boat.

80	Thomas Reekie	1880.	M	John Reekie fisherman	John Reekie Father	1880.
		May				May 24 <sup>th</sup>
		Avenhoeth		Christina Reekie		At St. Monance
		6th. Dr. P. St.		M. P. Pearson		George Lewis
		Bradywind		1875 December 17 <sup>th</sup>		Register.
	St. Monance		St. Monance			

However, aged 15 he was taken on as an apprentice with George Forrester in 1895. Initially, he commuted from St. Monans although he may have had some sort of temporary lodgings in Earlsferry. On his return from World War 1 he set up his own plate as a golf club maker and professional.



By that time Forrester was still in business but his son and he did not see eye to eye and there was a lack of successor to the business which eventually was wound up in 1926 and the machinery, devised in the main and built by Forrester, was put up for sale. Tom probably acquired some of the machinery and stock in trade from the auction. He certainly acquired the brass mould which was used for the gutty ball making.

By that time Andrew Scott (q.v.) was the pre-eminent golf club maker in Earlsferry but his market was more international than local. Tom decided to set up as a professional as well teaching and making golf clubs. When James Maclean Sunter (q.v.), the appointed professional at Elie Golf House Club, moved to Edinburgh in 1930 one would have thought it would have been natural that Tom or Andrew Scott would be appointed the resident professional for the club in his place. However, it was not be and it may have had something to do with the competition that was provided by Crowley (who by then was in Glasgow) Scott, Reekie and James Forrester.

All four had a shed/shop up against the wall of the car park area at the sports club. He also established a workshop in his house in Viewforth in the High Street of Earlsferry and for a time 1921 he was the tenant of

Forrester at Moonzie Cottage in Links Road which he may have used as a workshop. Viewforth had been owned by Mrs Catherine Sime the mother of Willie Sime (q.v.) and the Reekie family originally living in the Cross merely crossed to the other side of Earlsferry High Street in 1923 or thereabouts.

He became a renowned teacher and many an aspiring youngster was taught by Tom Reekie in the sports club area beside the Pavilion. His shop, in addition to selling golf equipment, also served at one time as the ticket supplier for those playing the Ladies Course (Baird Course now).

Tom married Katie in 1919 and moved to the Cross before moving to Viewforth.

1919.	(Signed) Thomas Reekie Golf Clubmaker	27	Board Wynd St. Moniece	John Reekie Fisheranass	(Signed) John Turnbull Minister of the Evangelical Church	1919.
on the 27th day of June	(Bachelor)			Christina Reekie No. 1 Casson (Deceased)	at St. Moniece	June 25th
at Aberdeen, Mans St. Moniece	(Signed) Catherine Ellen Ferguson Domestic Servant	20	Rose Street St. Moniece	Peter Ferguson Joiner	(Signed) Thomas Latta Witness	
After Banns According to the Terms of the Established Church of Scotland	(Spinster)			William Ferguson Minister	Lizzie Reekie Witness	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)

*John Turnbull*  
Minister

It was the norm in these days for Earlsferry and Elie residents to move out of their homes during the summer “season” and live in a shed or cottage in the garden. The newspapers of the time would report which eminent families from which metropolis were spending the season renting the Earlsferry residents’ houses. The Reekie family was no exception and the author of these articles has fond memories of living in Viewforth for two or three “seasons”. Tom and family lived in a small cottage in the garden during the “season” but he often came into the back garden of an evening and watched the author develop his golfing skills (aged 4). His future success owes much to Tom’s sage advice.

Another abiding memory - it must have been in 1949. In Viewforth there was a half landing on the stairs which looked out across the garden and bay (it has been reconfigured now). One Sunday morning the peace was shattered by large repeated booming noise coming from the north. The author was terrified, but relieved to hear and watch as the guns at Kinraig Point practiced firing into the estuary. Sure enough, large splashes were observed close(ish!) to the target boat being towed up the Forth.

Tom initially made his own clubs from wood blanks he had prepared. Sometimes they were laminated other times solid beech or persimmon. The shafts, of course, were initially hickory but that soon gave way to steel shafts. His first foray into iron clubs would have been the manufacture by Anderson in Anstruther – the blacksmith – who forged iron clubs and would pass them on to Tom. He ran his own brand of golf clubs which latterly were made by Nicoll in Leven, but always contained his signature. He must have sold many thousands of clubs from the cut down smaller ones for children through to ladies sets and then the men’s sets. He also had a range of Tom Reekie putters.



Here (left) is an example of one purchased as a result of caddy earnings during holiday.

**JOY BELLS.**  
The bells of Earlsferry Town Hall rang a joyful peal yesterday afternoon in honour of the fact that Mrs Holm had won the title.  
Elie got the news from the "Courier and Advertiser," and there was great pleasure in this popular lady's triumph.  
The Town Council gave permission to fly the town's flags at the Toll Green and the Town House at Earlsferry. Elie Golf Clubhouse flew their flag, and the Parish Church bell was also rung.  
One can say truthfully that Mrs Holm is a firm favourite with all, and although she now resides in the West, Elie claims a share in the honour she has won.  
Mrs Holm will be the first to admit her debt of gratitude to Tom Reekie, the local professional, who gave her a great deal of her early instruction.

On the golf course Tom and John were canny players – not perhaps the full blooded slash and hope brigade but the measured stylish swingers. It was teaching really however that was their fortes.

1937 (left) and  
1934 (right).

**HOLE IN ONE AT ELIE.**  
Councillor Tom Reekie, golf professional, Elie, had the eleventh hole in one when playing a friendly match over Elie course.

Tom handed over to his son John in 1945 and it became Tom Reekie & Son and John was to continue the business until his retirement in 2000 or so and he died in 2007.

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*Researched and compiled by Graham Johnston*

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