**For Immediate Release**

**Dornoch and Brora Tee up a unique deal for golfers**

**Dornoch, Sutherland, 26 February 2016:** They share a golfing tradition and an association with Scottish philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. Now the neighbouring golf clubs at Royal Dornoch and Brora are joining forces to mark two special anniversaries.

This year Royal Dornoch Golf Club is celebrating 400 years of golf being played in the town and it is 125 years since a proper golf club was formed along the coast at Brora.

The clubs have enjoyed a long and friendly relationship over the years and have now formed a partnership to present a unique way of commemorating both significant landmarks.

A special deal will give 400 golfing enthusiasts the chance to play both courses on the same day for the fantastic price of £125. The package includes a morning round at Brora, followed by lunch and afternoon or early evening game at Royal Dornoch.

Bookings can only be made by contacting the booking office at Royal Dornoch Golf Club on +44 (0) 1862 810219 ext.1 or bookings@royaldornoch.com

Royal Dornoch and Brora are renowned for their spectacular locations, the links courses set between stunning mountains and breath-taking sea views.

Golf is said to have been played on Dornoch links since the monks were recorded hitting a ball over the closed cropped grass that linked the famous cathedral to the sandy beach as they grazed their animals.

The first known recorded reference of the game being played is in 1616 when John, the 13th Earl of Sutherland, was sent to school in the town and his expenses showed that ten pounds annually was provided for “bowes, arroes, golff clubbes, and balls, with other necessars for his L[ordship's] exercise”.

The expenses were paid by John’s uncle Sir Robert Gordon, an influential man in the court of King James VI and I, who became the earl’s tutor after the death of his father.

The golf club was formed in 1877 and the first 18-hole course was laid out in 1886 by Old Tom Morris who extended the original nine holes.

Royal Dornoch’s Championship Course, ranked No.5 in the world and No.1 in Scotland by Golf Digest this year, is a favourite of many leading professional golfers, including Ben Crenshaw, Greg Norman and Craig Stadler.

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Brora, although younger and less well known than its bigger ‘sister’, nonetheless has its own legion of fans, led by five time Open winner Peter Thomson. Thomson is president of the James Braid Golfing Society whose headquarters is in Brora. The course is the most northerly golf memorial to course architect Braid in his native Scotland.

Royal Dornoch and Brora have other connections. John Sutherland, the then Dornoch administrator or secretary, laid out Brora’s first 18 holes, perhaps calling for assistance from his good friend Old Tom Morris, before Braid made later changes.

Both courses were popular with Andrew Carnegie while he stayed at nearby Skibo Castle and both he and his wife gave their name to trophies.

Mrs Carnegie and the Duchess of Sutherland were also founding patrons of the Brora Ladies Golf Club, along with a Miss Risk, an ancestor of current Brora president’s family.

And the great Jim Miller from Brora has won the Carnegie Shield at Dornoch a record ten times in the 1960s 70s and 80s.

**Notes for editors:**

Royal Dornoch Golf Club

Royal Dornoch Golf Club was founded in the late 19th Century as a private members Club, and was given the Royal title by King Edward VII in 1906. The club boasts a Championship course as well as a second 18-hole course, the Struie. Over the years the Club has played host to many events such as the Northern Open, the Scottish Ladies, and the Scottish Professional and Scottish Amateur Championships. The Club is situated in the town of Dornoch, 45 miles from the gateway to the Highlands, Inverness and its airport.

Royal Dornoch’s championship course was ranked No.5 in the world by Golf Digest 2016. Royal Dornoch Struie Course ranked No.50 in UK & Ireland by Golf Digest 2011.

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Brora Golf Club

Brora Golf Club was founded in 1891, originally 9 holes the course was extended to 18 about 10 years later. In 1923 the committee invited the renowned course architect and golfer, James Braid to visit. This he did in February 1924, arriving by train, walking around the course and departing later the same day. For the princely sum of £25 Braid submitted his plan and the course which exists today was born. There have been very few changes to the layout proposed by Braid, the only minor alteration extended the 11th hole by 53 yards to convert it to a par 5 and the course overall to a par 70.

Brora is unique in many ways, not least because we share the land with the local crofting community who have a historic right to graze livestock on the course. Sheep and cattle wander freely around the course, whilst unobtrusive single strand electric fences protect the greens from damage. Over the years this relationship has helped to maintain the rough at playable heights, but woe betide the golfer who thinks it is wide open. Like all great architects Braid has made clever use of bunkering and subtle changes in angles to protect the greens.

Brora is a traditional out and back links, the ninth green sitting at the furthest point from the clubhouse. Even with this layout Braid has managed to get each of the four par threes to play in a different direction. The ninth and eighteenth play north and south while the sixth and thirteenth play east and west and it is perhaps a little unusual that each nine ends with a par three, the eighteenth at 201 yards uphill to a green with a false front and a severe swale in front is particularly challenging. The members and visitors watching your trials and tribulations from the clubhouse overlooking the green do nothing to add to your sense of wellbeing.

Located just 20 minutes from the well known course at Dornoch, Brora has many regular visitors who make the long journey north to play this spectacularly scenic gem.

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Images: Photographs of Royal Dornoch Championship Course and Brora can be accessed at

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ql1fafsmde11hfc/AACex2pbv7ao9-cZAikV7VjZa?dl=0>