



# Alexandra (Alexa) Malcolm GLOVER

1882 - 1933



We have somewhat restricted this section by definition to golfers (male) who may have been apprentice club makers to Forrester or Scott and who pioneered the game in other countries and at home as professionals. However, there were other illustrious golfers honed and/or bred in Earlsferry and although amateurs they still propagated the reputation of Earlsferry as the home of world class golfers.

One such lady was Alexandra Malcolm Glover (known as Alexa).

No.	Name and Surname.	When and Where Born.	Sex.	Name, Surname, & Rank or Profession of Father. Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother. Date and Place of Marriage.	Signature and Qualification of Informant, and Residence, if out of the House in which the Birth occurred.	When and Where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
1474	Alexandra Malcolm Glover	1882, Newmarket Gighie	F	Thomas Craigie Glover (Civil Engineer)	Alexa Linton Glover	1882, October 29 <sup>th</sup> At Edinburgh
		Edinburgh		Miss Dougan Glover Mrs. Gordon	Parent	Edinburgh Registrar.
		Edinburgh		1851 March 29 <sup>th</sup> Hamilton Canada		

She was the youngest child of Thomas Craigie Glover an engineer who had made a fortune in India. In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century he purchased the former residence built by Admiral William Duddingston of Earlsferry House (see the article on the history society [www.eliehistory.com](http://www.eliehistory.com) website about this property).

It was here that Alexa Glover became a world class golfer under the tutelage of Andrew Scott (q.v.). She spent countless hours as a young girl playing golf over the Earlsferry tract and latterly the Elie and Earlsferry golf course. There is a story that when her father, Craigie Glover, purchased Earlsferry House he had added to it a turret/watchtower from which with an uninterrupted view of the entire golf course he could monitor his beloved daughter's progress. It is said, however, that Alexa was not exactly happy with the scrutiny that this tower provided. If that was the case then his enthusiasm for the talents of his daughter certainly paid off.

Alexa Glover was only 19 when she won the very first Scottish Ladies (Closed) Championship

Alexa Glover, the winner of the inaugural Scottish Ladies Championship over the Old Course 100 years ago, was born in Edinburgh and was a member of Elie and Earlsferry Ladies Golf Club.

She was a graceful golfer, played in many British events, and was a member of that first fateful Scotland international team in 1902.

Her golfing prowess was well-known. Alexa, for many years, held a plus four club handicap and a Ladies Golf Union handicap of scratch. Cecil Leitch said that Alexa was one of the most brilliant and impressive players ever produced by Scotland.

“The Ladies Field” publication of 1912 said:

*“It was no less fitting that the first winner of the honour (Scottish Ladies Champion) should be a player whose style and game were the epitome of Scottish golf. This was Miss A Glover. Champions may come and champions may go, but there will never be one to improve on Miss Glover as a model of Scottish golf.”*



Alexa was a teenage prodigy. She was still only 19 when she won the first Scottish Ladies Championship and was the youngest player in the field. She had played for Scotland by that time and was well known in open tournaments as far afield as Nice, Cannes and Biarritz, which were the Continental golfing haunts of the rich and the Royals 100-odd years ago.

Having a wealthy father, Mr Thomas C Glover of Mountgrange, Edinburgh, undoubtedly helped Alexa’s golfing development but she had the natural talent in the first place. The Glovers were popular figures in Earlsferry where Alexa, coached by the local professional, A H Scott, learned to play the game. Mr. Glover “lent considerable aid financially and by personal exertions to have both courses at Elie brought to a perfect state besides being the means of encouraging professional matches,” according to the “East Fife Record” of the day which also reported:

*“When the result (of the Scottish Ladies Championship final) reached Earlsferry, Miss Glover’s present residence, intense satisfaction prevailed. The bell of the Town Hall was rung and flags were hoisted .... Later Mr Glover, of Earlsferry House, entertained a large company in Earlsferry Town Hall to mark the important victory.”*

Surprisingly for one so talented at an early age, the 1903 Scottish Ladies (Closed) Championship was Miss Glover's only success in her native championship. She was runner up in 1906 and 1910, and a regular international player before World War I, as well as playing in a match against the United States in 1905, which became a precursor to the Curtis Cup.

There were 46 entrants for the first Scottish Ladies (Closed) Championship played from the morning of Tuesday, June 16 until lunchtime on Friday, June 19, 1903. There had been a stroke-play competition over the Old Course on the Monday, won in very windy conditions by Mrs McMahon with a 94 (she was the only player to break 100 but bear in mind the hickory shafts and inferior golf

balls) – but there was no qualifying round for the championship, the players going straight into match-play.

The championship could have been finished off in three days but a putting competition, supported by 40-odd of the competitors, was held on the Thursday afternoon and the championship final between Alexa Glover and Molly Graham (St Rule) was not contested until the Friday morning.

This is an excerpt from the excellent website maintained by <http://www.gilliankirkwood.com/>

In 1903 there was the first “closed” Scottish Woman’s Golf Championship which was held at St. Andrews. It was “closed” in that only Scottish golfers could take part. Alexa won the championship at the final hole. This is part of the report of the occasion:



*THE CHAMPION Miss Glover, who is a daughter of Mr Thomas. C. Glover, C.E., Mountgrange, Edinburgh, is a native of the capital of Scotland, and learned to play golf at Elie, so that the Fifeshire village, also the home of James Braid, can lay claim to having produced two golfing champions. She has twice appeared in the Open Ladies' Championship—at Deal last year, where she was defeated by Miss Hezlett. and at Portrush this year, where she again found more than her match in the same lady. Miss Glover played golf on the Continent in the spring of this year and won the first award in a tournament held at Nice. She also secured a gold medal in a competition held at Cannes. Last year at Gullane she took a conspicuous part in some matches played there, practically carrying everything before her. Miss Glover is nineteen years of age. Whenever the result reached Earlsferry, Miss Glover's present residence, intense satisfaction prevailed. The bell of the Town Hall was rung, and flags were hoisted. Miss Glover has for some time past drawn a good crowd to follow her play. The local professionals found themselves unable often to allow her half a stroke a hole. Her round for the links there is 84, and the ladies' golf course (nine holes), 30. Mr A. H. Scott, the golf club professional, initiated her into the game and her success reflects credit on his tuition. Her father, Mr T. C. Glover, has lent considerable aid financially and by personal exertions to have both courses at Elie brought to a perfect state, besides being the means of encouraging professional matches, and that makes the success of Miss Glover all the more popular.*

#### ANOTHER GOLFING HONOUR FOR EARLSFERRY.

*Miss GLOVER CHAMPION BIIIIE. Miss Glover has, equally with the others, brought lustre to the Ferry greens. In the ladies' open championship meetings she wee yaw' enough to hope to go far, but the experience gained in these meetings was invaluable lost week In the first Ladies' Championship ab St Andrews. Opening brilliantly. ....Miss Glover had a further signal victory in the semi-final on Friday, finishing 3 up and 2 to play over Miss Campbell. She was given a rival worthy of the name in the final in Miss Graham, late the ladies' open champion. Their exhibition was a sporting event of prime magnitude. and up to the last hole the issue was in doubt.....Miss Glover played golf on the Continent this spring end won the first award in a tournament held at Nice. She also secured a gold medal in a*

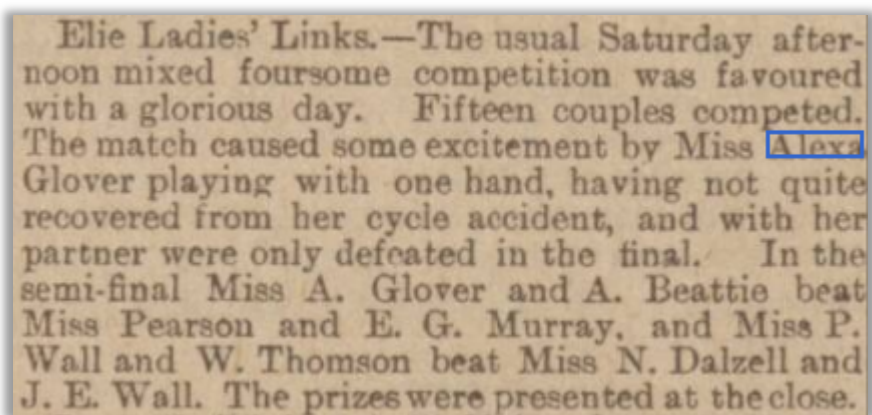
competition held at Cannes. Last year at Gullane she took a conspicuous part in some matches played there, practically carrying everything before her. Miss Glover is 19 years of age. It is a pleasure to see the play of her lithe body .... and she walks with a masculine freedom of pit which comes of much pacing of elastic turf. A typical athletic girl of the school Glover with her rose-leaf complexion, golden hair, and pretty air of aloofness—not the sunburnt hoyden who used to come to the front in active exercises. Her costume of white jersey, short tweed skirt, and Tam o' Shooter, firmly pinned down to bid defiance to the wind, was an ideal one. Whenever the result reached Earlsferry Miss Glover's residence, intones satisfaction prevailed. The bell of the Town Hall was rung, and flags were hoisted. ....The local professionals found themselves unable even to allow her half stroke a hole. Her [best]round for the links here is 34, and the ladies' golf course (nine holes), 30. Mr A. H. Scott, the golf club professional, initiated her into the game, and her win reflects credit on his tuition. Her father, Mr T. C. Glover, has lent considerable aid financially.

As a result of this triumph a public reception was held at Earlsferry Town hall and here is a report on the occasion compare with J.N. Smith (q.v.) as runner up in the British men's amateur open.

THE LADIES' GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP. ENTERTAINMENT AT EARLSFERRY. On Monday evening Mr Glover of Earlsferry House entertained a large Company in Earlsferry Town Hall to mark the important victory gained on the previous Friday by Miss Glover at St Andrews of the Scotch [sic] Golf Championship trophy for ladies. The Hall was very prettily decorated for the occasion by Mr A. H. Scott and others. At the east end of the Hall was a fancy scroll containing the words "Long live the lady champion," surmounted by Mr Glover's coat of arms and the motto "Surgite Lumen Adest," the meaning of which is "arise, the light is near," while in the centre was the burgh coat of arms. The design was a pretty one, and was much admired. It was executed by Mr Greig,, Earlsferry. Above the platform was a number of golf cleeks and clubs, between which were golf balls, while flags and emblems were suspended from the roof, and the windows were set off with fine lace curtains. The challenge bowl was prominently displayed on the platform, along with the gold charms, one of which goes with the championship and possession of the bowl for a year, while the other was won last year by Miss Glover in England. The bowl is mounted on a pedestal, and bears the words on a silver band, "Heart of Scotland." The gold medal has the Royal Arms of Scotland on the one side and on the other "Ladies Golf Championship." A large company which crowded the Hall, assembled at nine o'clock, and when Mr Glover and Miss Glover appeared on the platform, an orchestra played the well known tune, 'See the conquering hero comes" while high and prolonged cheers were raised, to which Mr and Miss Glover repeatedly bowed their acknowledgments. Mr Glover Ladies. and gentlemen, allow me to introduce to you the first lady golf champion of Scotland. (Cheers.)She has asked me to thank you for your kindness in turning out so well to this entertainment and showing your appreciation of her victory. I may say she had a very hard and stiff battle to fight, I am correct when I say she was the youngest player among the competitors last week, and she had to meet with very strong lady golfers, ....(Cheers.) Her victory was the result of thorough good play and determination. (Cheers.) She is not only delighted at having carried off the first golf lady's championship cup for Scotland, but she is more delighted at having

*brought it to the burgh of Earlsferry. (Cheers) It was here, when she was very little that she first took a golf club in her hand, and learned the game with the able assistance of our local professional, Mr A. H. Scott. (Cheers ) Thanks to her training with Mr Scott she was now the player she was. I thank you again for your kindness in coming here in such large numbers, and trust you will all enjoy yourselves. (Cheers.) I have also to congratulate all these who have been engaged in decorating the Hall. We are very much pleased with all that has been done, and again I trust you will all have a very enjoyable evening. (Cheers.) Provost Mackie called for a hearty vote of thanks to Mr Glover for his kindness in enabling them to have this entertainment. (Cheers). On the call of Mr A. H. Scott, three cheers were then given for Miss Glover, to which Mr Glover responded. A long programme of dances was then entered on, Mr A. H. Scott and Miss Glover taking the lead in the Circassian Circle. The music was supplied by Mrs Bain on the piano, and Mr Kerr and Mr Clark on the violin and cornet. A very enjoyable evening was spent, dancing being continued until an early hour in the morning.*

No handicap was enough to deter her exploits.



By all reports she was a young lady of immense character and occasionally fell foul of the law.

The Evening Telegraph November 1905

**FIFE LADY MOTORIST FINED** Miss Alexandra Malcolm Glover, sometime residing at Earlsferry House Elie and now at Mount Grange Hope Terrace Edinburgh, was charged at Cupar Sheriff Court this afternoon of having on Friday 6th October driven dangerously within the High Street and St Andrews Road within the burgh of Anstruther at an excessive speed in a manner that was dangerous to James Lawrie builder, William Drysdale police constable and Alexander McHardy police sergeant, and other lieges who were then on the road causing the motor car to swerve from side to side on the roadway, and driving it round a corner at the junction of St Andrews Road and High Street without slackening speed. She pleaded not guilty and was defended by James Grosset solicitor Leven.

### **A DANGEROUS TURN**

Police constable Drysdale, Anstruther, deponed that Miss Glover on the day in question was driving her car through the burgh at a speed of between ten and eleven miles per hour; Sergeant McHardy, Mr. Lawrie and himself had difficulty in getting out of the way\*. The corner on which she swung



round was a very dangerous one from the Shore Road to the Clydesdale Bank there were five turns. Cross examined there were no notice boards directing the attention of the motorist to the dangerous nature of the road. In answer to the Sheriff, Drysdale said in his opinion faulty steering was the cause of the car swerving; a dog was almost jammed between the car and the kerb. James Lawrie a builder in Anstruther in answer to the fiscal said the car was going fast enough for the place it was in – he did not think it was being driven in a manner which was likely to be a danger to the lieges.

## COOLED DOWN

Sgt McHardy said that his opinion was that Miss Glover had lost control of the car. Lawrie shouted as she passed him that it was something terrible. The Sheriff – he seems to have got over it his alarm. Fiscal – he has cooled down but at the time he was very much struck. Sgt McHardy – yes he was. Proceeding, McHardy said that Miss Glover had so often come through Anstruther and driven her car in such a reckless manner that the people came out of their houses to watch her as she passed. The sheriff found the charge established and fined Miss Glover the sum of £3. He said he could never sanction motor cars going through town and particularly at dangerous corners at so dangerous a speed as 10 miles per hour\*\*.

*\*I am pleased to say that in my experience the training of police officers is now such as to enable them to get out of the way of motor cars except if there is a possibility of the speed limit being exceeded. However, I wonder where these three people were standing.*

*\*\*One wonders whether this is an expression from the bench that his lordship would have later preferred not to have expounded.*

Alexa Glover was a prominent member of Elie and Earlsferry Ladies Golf club and was responsible for pioneering that club onto the Ladies Golfing stage to be followed by Madge Maitland and Helen Holm among others.

Alexa never married and died in 1933. It was a surprise to discover that her death was reported widely in England. No

less than seven local English newspapers - after a cursory search - carried a report of her death such was her popularity.



This article published after her death is probably the most fitting tribute to her.

Pioneer Among Scottish Women – *“At Turnberry last season I congratulated her [Alexa] upon her entry, and she told me that, though she enjoyed competing, she was afraid that that would positively be her last time. Her words were more sadly prophetic than either of us could possibly have imagined, for she was in excellent spirits at the Championship. Miss Glover was interested in the progress of young golfers, and she was greatly impressed last year with Miss Jessie Anderson\*, at whose hands she met her defeat at Turnberry. Miss Glover in her earlier years was a striking figure on the links, with her monocle and her cigarette, when smoking was not the fashion with the women that it is today, and when she made her debut in the championships she also took the eye, as the records of her contemporaries have affirmed. Of the Open Championship of 1902, where she started her career with a 9-and-8 win, one woman writer has said that the grace and beauty of her style attracted everyone, and added, “ . She was a particularly neat girl, always beautifully turned out, her chausses being especially noticeable, perhaps because she had unusually small feet and ankles. ” Miss Glover took part in the first, though of course unofficial, Britain v. America match 29 years ago at Cromer, playing in a side that included two of the Hezlet sisters and Miss Molly Graham, and playing above Miss Dorothy Campbell (as Mrs Hurd then was.) Her kindly presence at the meetings will be missed.*

*\*Jessie Anderson Valentine was the doyenne of Scottish Ladies golf for many years having won innumerable trophies including the Scottish and British women’s championships. She became a professional in 1960.*



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*Researched and compiled by Graham Johnston*

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