



Southwold Golf Club

Established 1884

Southwold Rabbit

JANUARY 2021 EXTRA VERSION

CONGRATULATIONS TO PAT DONAGHY ON HIS HUNDREDTH BIRTHDAY



Congratulations to **Pat Donaghy** who reached his 100th birthday on Saturday 23rd January 2021.

Plans were in place for **Pat** and **Tony Seago** to hit some balls to celebrate Pat's 100th Birthday, but unfortunately the closing of the Golf Course prevented this from taking place. Pat still hits a mean ball, at times driving up with Tony off the tee.

Pat's Daughters, **Julia** and **Jill**, were on hand to help Pat open the numerous Birthday cards that arrived, including one from **Bob Reed** that granted Pat a 'Swinging Lesson' with **Tony Seago** once the course is back in use. There is no need for our **Professional Richard Smith** to feel concerned about this, as Tony reckons that Pat can teach him something!

There were a number of gifts in long thin bags that appeared from well-wishers, including one from **Barbara Hurr**, Ladies

Captain, with a present from the Ladies Section of the Golf Club. On seeing all these, Pat commented 'I think it's going to be a boozy day!'

Earlier that morning Pat had received a call from **David Kent**, the CEO of the Southwold Golf Club Committee, granting him **Honorary Membership of Southwold Golf Club**. Pat is looking forward to making use of that but commented that he sometimes finds it difficult to see where his ball goes. That problem was quickly overcome with **Barbara Hurr**, Ladies Captain, offering to caddy for him.



Pat with his Daughters, Julia and Jill

Barbara is related to Pat, and recalled the first Adam and Eve Ladies' invitation competition held at the Club when she invited Pat to partner her. He was happy to accept, but a little put out when he discovered they were playing with our past **Professional Andrew Robinson** and **Rosie Owen**.

Obviously enjoying life so much the question was – what do you put your longevity down to? **Pat** was quick to answer mentioning enjoying a Gin and Tonic, but most of all his wife had kept him in good order – a statement confirmed by **Tony and June Seago**.

'Looking forward to celebrating again this time next year' were Pat's final words to his well-wishers.

Our warmest congratulations to **Pat Donaghy** on his Hundredth birthday, and we look forward to seeing him on the Course once the weather has improved and we are able to play again.

See Page 2 & 3 for details of Pat's Eventful life.

Pat Donaghy - An Eventful Life

Patrick Lewis Donaghy, known as **Pat**, was born in Wenhaston, Suffolk, a village where his Grandfather was a farmer and many of the villagers were family. When he was growing up the water was drawn from a well, and he remembers the water mains being installed when he was a young child.

In 1929, at 9 year's old, he was amongst the fortunate passengers travelling on the last train out of Southwold, a very momentous occasion.

After growing up in Wenhaston, he later lived on Oulton Broad, becoming an excellent swimmer by swimming back and forth across the Broad.

When he was a teenager his Mum, **Grace**, and Dad, **Lewis**, moved to Loughton to run a lovely pub on the edge of Epping Forest. Sadly his Father died young when Pat was 16, so although he couldn't drink in the pub, he found himself running The Victoria Tavern with his Mum, and was doing so at the outbreak of World War 2.

When his Mum moved back to Wenhaston he joined the RAF in 1941, hoping, but failing, to become a pilot (a decision he realises now probably saved his life). However, the RAF did give him a career. Because of his interest in and knowledge of early 'Cats Whisker' radios, he was sent to Cranwell, the RAF College, where 3 years training was concentrated into a 6 month cramming course. It was the cutting edge technology of its time, working with radio signals.

At 100, Pat is one of the few remaining D-Day veterans. He had volunteered for a special unit who were trained to land in France in Horsa gliders. On the evening of D-Day 1 he, with 11 others, together with a jeep, landed behind the beaches with the role of setting up communications and an airstrip to guide Dakota planes in, to take the wounded back home. A very modest man, he sees his role on that day as 'merely' a supporting one, just doing what was expected of every young man at that time. Nevertheless, he is one of the few still alive to tell that tale.



Stella Polaris—Hitler's luxury yacht- with U-Boat alongside

The first stage of the journey was on the STELLA POLARIS, the luxury yacht given by Hitler to the puppet ruler of Norway Quisling. This yacht was used as a recreation centre for U-Boat Officers returning home on leave. Arriving in Leith and then to London by train and Tube across to Liverpool Street Station. He caught the train to Halesworth, with all his baggage, including the Skis, then on to Wenhaston. Telling this story Patrick says how unpopular he was in particular on the tube with the skis – not a usual sight at that time. After his leave he returned to Norway to complete his posting before being demobbed some 7 months later. He took the ski's to Derbyshire and continued to ski in the winter months.

Pat met his wife **Hilda**, who was in the WRAF during the war, and married in 1946, returning to live in a top floor flat on London Road South, Lowestoft. He continued to advance his career as an Electrical Engineer, first working for Hughes, then a small family firm, and using his wartime expertise on domestic radios and signals on the many Lowestoft trawlers, and local lifeboats. He moved on to working with Pye in Cambridge as a technician finding and solving problems with the very early production of TV's.



Train in Southwold Station—name of child unknown

The 1960's brought changing times and a rush for bigger, better but frequently unreliable colour TV's. Pat had moved to Derbyshire with his wife and their two daughters working for Rumbelows part of the Thorn EMI Group where his knowledge and experience was recognised and deployed as far afield as Bolton and Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Throughout his years in Derbyshire, Suffolk always remained home to his family, and holidays were always spent in Southwold. When Hilda became ill with cancer, aged 61, Pat retired early aged 63 in 1984. They moved back to his beloved Southwold to a house on Hotson Road, from where he was able to indulge his love of a daily sea swim, and then develop his other love of golf. He has laughingly said he has now been retired longer than he worked.

Pat joined Southwold Golf Club in 1984 (the club was formed in 1884 – another milestone?). He served on the Committee and was part of the group that started the inter-club Seniors' matches (not Thursday league).

He tells the story about the time he played at Caister and when being picked up by **John Franklin**, he forgot to put in his change of clothes in the car. Upon arrival at Caister he promptly informed the Captain of his dilemma and said as the Southwold Seniors' Captain he would have to miss the meal! They would not have this and said they would provide some attire! When they were all seated, Pat still in his golfing gear was asked to stand up. He was asked to hold his arms up and from behind he was dressed in a bin liner with holes for his arms. The following morning Pat returned the bag with a bill for cleaning from Sketchly's dry cleaners!



Pat with his Daughter Jill; Tony Seago his friend of some 30 years, and Barbara Hurr, Ladies Captain of Southwold Golf Club

The following morning Pat returned the bag with a bill for cleaning from



Details of the Card Bob Reed sent to Pat on his birthday

Pat was quite an accomplished golfer reaching an 11 handicap, and winning the Winter and Summer knockouts two consecutive years running. As happened time moves on and they formed a group called the **SWAGS** (Southwold Wine and Golf Society) with about 10 members. **Tony Seago** also used to play with them when he was home on leave. They included **Jack Harris, Brian Payne, John Baker, Peel Gregg, Peter Eves** and **Jim the Scotsman** (surname not recalled). As Pat is the only one left, he has the cup at home. **Peter Eves** was the last to leave us. **Pat** and **Peter** used to lunch at the Red Lion and later at the Golf Club on Wednesdays, with **Tony Seago** joining them when possible.

Without doubt Pat has already had a very full life spanning a time of some significant changes, and is still enjoying himself. His daughter **Julia** describes him as a very happy and much loved family man with 2 daughters, 4 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren, in whom he takes great interest. Despite gradually losing his sight, and becoming a bit deaf, he is still the same bright, good humoured and interesting man he always was.

Our warmest congratulations to **Pat Donaghy** on his Hundredth birthday and we look forward to seeing him on the Course once the weather has improved and we are able to play again, and when he won't be able to get away without our toasting this very significant birthday.

Thanks to **Steve Wolfenden** for his photos, and input from **Julia, Jill** and **Tony Seago**.