



ST ANDREWS LEGACY

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St Andrews Legacy 2023. Back row (L-R): Jaye Evans, Eric Hatch (St Andrews Legacy CEO), David Windsor (PGA Professional), Eric Scott. Seated: Sam Haro, Randy Shack, Ian McNeill. Front: Cliinton Edwards and Sam Bush

I'M ALL IN...

Sam Bush helps to relaunch St Andrews Legacy

St Andrews, April 2023

Graham Proctor was taking care of business with Sam Bush.

“Graham called me from bed. It was in 2019, soon after he had asked Eric Hatch to be his successor. He called me for a couple of hours. Marion was off camera, helping him. He made me promise the four we’d picked in 2018 would come in 2020; when he was no longer here, that Australia would be part of St Andrews Legacy forever. I would make that happen”.

At that time Graham was in the final stages of his battle with Motor Neurone Disease, or ALS, a terrible condition that would claim him the following May, but he was looking to the future and finding ways to continue the work he started in 2013, when he founded St Andrews Legacy. The COVID era postponed the next event until 2023, but it did indeed include four Australians led by Sam Bush, just as Graham would have wanted.

Sam himself first came to Scotland with St Andrews Legacy in 2014 and is one of almost 200 individuals to have experienced what Graham called “the magic of St Andrews” a place where, in the right company, healing, good fellowship, and a renewed sense of purpose can be found.



Some highlights from Sam Bush's time with St Andrews Legacy.

Row one (L-R): Graham Proctor and Sam Bush on the Old Course; the New Course at St Andrews Links; with R&A club captain Sandy Dawson and the Claret Jug; Row two: Kingarrock Hickory Golf Course; celebrating at Crail; a drive at Dumbarrie; Row three: with Graham, David Gillies and rugby star Gavin Hastings; with Tiger Woods

Life changing

“It 100 per cent changed my life. I see Graham as a father figure. I told him he was responsible for the rebirth of me, for starting again with my life.”

Sam has gone on to represent St Andrews Legacy at Del Rio Country Club in Modesto, California, whose members have been a major source of support for almost a decade, and at home in Australia. Now he wants to guide further progress.

“I helped to fine tune the wording in the selection criteria. To make it more about combat, having to be deployed, having combat experience, and with something affecting them, an injury or illness: people who would get the most benefit from it. The hardest thing is finding an organization that can filter people here. We actually have to drag them out.

“It’s hard. I did a lot of things myself; buying shirts, contacting guys in

multiple cities, but it is a duty...I wanted to. I promised Graham I would”.

Sam spent a decade with 2nd Commando Regiment, serving in Asia, Iraq and Afghanistan, where he was critically injured in a rocket attack, suffering a broken back. He knows exactly how golf can help therapeutically as well as in simply bringing people together.

All smiles

“Look at the smiles on these guys’ faces,” he says referring to fellow Australians Ian McNeill, Jaye Evans and Clinton Edwards, and their American counterparts Sam Haro, Eric Scott and Randy Shack.

“They are diverse individually, but as a group they are the same. We all love the game of golf and are at different stages of recovery. In the military you change by small increments. You change by osmosis. You go in a normal

person and after 7-8 weeks you are a military person. After 8 months you’re Special Forces. When you leave it’s the opposite. There is no support structure. One incident...bang! The bell curve goes straight to the bottom.

“This trip is one of the best. I can see a future for it. It’s progressing from a one man band into an organization with more backing. I’m excited. There is a great bunch of people. I’m comfortable with these guys. There’s clearly a future for this.

A promise made

“I’m all in. I made a promise to Graham. I’m all in”.

Based in Cairns, Queensland, Sam has a stable family life, his biggest achievement. “I am infinitely grateful I met my wife when I did” he says. Their daughters are now 13 and 8 years old.

“I am better than I have been in my entire life”.



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St Andrews Legacy 2023. Australian veterans Ian McNeill, Jaye Evans and Clinton Edwards

GOLF HELPS

Sport puts veterans in a better place

St Andrews, April 2023

There were nil signs of life three times. We were destroying the biggest heroin production facility that we had encountered and I was hit by a directional mine”.

Jaye Evans recalls that much about the events leading up to his injury in Afghanistan a decade ago but it was the actions of Ian McNeill that mean he can tell the story.

“His pulse was 212 and then just stopped,” says Ian. “I put a needle in his chest and got him going again...on the ground and in the chopper. It was tough watching it. I knew Jaye was a family man with a wife and three kids. He was in an induced coma for 11 days and hospital bound for over two months. I always looked up to Jaye. He was quicker on the uptake and made better decisions”.

Jaye joined the Australian Infantry Corps in 2001, serving with the 1st Battalion Royal Australian Regiment before being posted into 2nd Commando in 2010, as his brother had been. Now 40, he is a rugby coach at Brisbane Grammar School.

“Sam Bush and my brother were best mates. Sam has shown me how golf can help and change you. He’s a bit of an inspiration to me. He has got so much fitter and has had three promotions at work. It’s really helped his life”.



Australian veterans Ian McNeill, Jaye Evans and Clinton Edwards with St Andrews Legacy.

Row one (L-R): Jaye Evans and Clinton Edwards at Kingarrock Hickory Golf Course, Hill of Tarvit; Clinton celebrates a birdie at Dumbarnie; Jaye at Crail; Row two: Ian McNeill; the eagle has landed at Craighhead Links; Ian tees off at Dumbarnie; Row three: St Andrews Legacy CEO Eric Hatch with Ian; Ian and Jaye on the tee at Crail

The old routine

Ian himself later went on to suffer a traumatic brain injury which still has ramifications for him.

“Golf helps massively. It gets me out of a rut.

“My dad was a mad keen golfer and he used to wake me and my brother up to watch The Open. I played for a year or so as a kid. I used me nan’s clubs. I would tie the handle of the cart to a push bike and go to the local course.

“I didn’t play again until 2007 when I had six weeks holiday after coming back from Afghanistan.

“Golf is like the military. You turn up early, wear the right stuff, exercise, and then have a cold beer!

“I’m competitive. I want to get good at it. The onus is on you. I used to get frustrated and angry but there’s a lot of competence and integrity”.

Ian had been due to take part in the 2014 St Andrews Legacy visit but it was scheduled too close to the birth of his daughter and Sam Bush got the slot.

“This has been a long time in the making. I always thought I’d get here in one way or another. I’ve struggled with different parts of my life after leaving the military. There’s no job that will ever be the same.

“Golf has been a part of that, linking it together. I’m in a better place for having golf in my life”.

Doing well

Graham Proctor picked both Ian and Jaye to be part of St Andrews Legacy, and he would have been delighted with their play, especially Ian’s eagle chip in at Crail.

Clinton Edwards joined the Royal Australian Armoured Corps and served with the 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment.

“I’ve played alright,” he says looking back on the week. “The course that helped

me the most was Kingarrock, the nine holes of hickory. The harder you hit it, the worse it gets. That step back in time provided the platform.

“My life in the last five years has been crazy: a lot of ups and downs. Golf slows down your breathing and keeps you in the present moment”.

Clint went to Iraq in 2005 and 2006. “It was the highest, most concentrated fighting season. The Saddam Hussein trial was in the building next to ours. I’ll never forget the smell of the city...the Blackhawks in the air, the sound of the chopper...”

Getting close

Meeting up again with an American contingent in St Andrews was part of this year’s event.

“We started to integrate more and more. We all come from different backgrounds but we all got that bond that ties it all together”.



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St Andrews Legacy 2023. American veterans Eric Scott, Randy Shack and Sam Haro

THEY GLEAM

Mind-strong
veterans sparkle
at St Andrews

St Andrews, April 2023

I had a promise from him to come back. Graham had a way of making you feel special, to not feel broken”.

Back in town again after taking part in a beginner’s course in 2016, Eric Scott is now a St Andrews graduate where it counts – out on the Links. Seven years ago, after playing the Strathtyrum Course in the company of tour pro Whitney Hillier, Eric said that he wanted to get to the level to play the Old Course, and now he has.

“I’ll never have another round like it. It will still be the best round of my life”.

Approaching his fifteenth wedding anniversary and about to start a new job at Chambers Bay Eric can also look back on a distinguished career in the US Army.

“As a kid, I only wanted to join the Army and I ended up serving 17 years in a career that I loved”.

Having achieved so much himself, Eric is full of praise for Randy Shack, who plays golf from a specially adapted SoloRider cart and who shot 84 on the Old Course, going out in 40, including two birdies.



American veterans Eric Scott, Randy Shack and Sam Haro, together with PGA coach David Windsor, on the Old Course.

Row one (L-R): Eric Scott; Randy Shack tees off from a SoloRider on the Old Course; Sam Haro; Row two: Eric on the Old; Randy Shack and St Andrews Legacy CEO Eric Hatch; the Old Course in April; Row three: Sam Haro at the Road Hole; PGA pro David Windsor gives his judgement on St Andrews Legacy

Get to it

“Watching Randy is amazing. I’m in awe of the way you control the ball, of your routine”, he tells him.

“It’s taken a lot to get to it,” Randy replies. “There are holes in the glass, holes in the ceiling!” referring to his practice garage back home.

“I spent a year every day swinging the club, trying to figure it out. I learned to use more torque with the body till it became second nature. I had a golf net, with little holes to aim at, and chipping nets in the yard. I try to imagine the nets in front of me on the course”.

Randy suffered terrible spinal injuries from an IED explosion in Iraq in 2006 and although he used to hit balls off dirt mounds growing up on a farm in west Phoenix, he didn’t get into the game seriously until 2015, thanks to PGA HOPE.

“I used kids’ clubs out of a SoloRider and I thought: that looks really cool. I really love

golf because it equalizes between disabled and able bodied. Golf is still the same; it doesn’t treat me any different.

“In Scotland I’ve broken 90 on most of the courses I’ve played. I try to keep that stamina going, to make myself last for four hours a round.

“Disabled golf is starting to become a bigger thing. The USGA had their Adaptive Open at Pinehurst in 2022. I’ll play in 2023 if I can find the funds”.

In control

For Sam Haro, still serving out of Joint Base Lewis McChord in Washington State, the trip to Scotland comes after two separate cancers.

“After I was sick I had no motivation to do anything. I got really low, but seeing my efforts on the golf course made a difference. It was a really good surprise. There were so many things I couldn’t control when I was sick but one thing I could control was my golf game. Every

week in 2020, for nine months, every week, was golf at American Lake. Any kind of veteran is able to golf, which I think is really incredible”.

Accompanying the American veterans this year was David Windsor, a PGA of America Class A member teaching professional who is a leading coach in adaptive golf, having been involved with military golfers since 1999.

Surviving

“I call myself the Chief Encouragement Officer of adaptive golf. One of my first clients had been a POW in World War II. He just loved being out there. I learned just how much he’d overcome: being in a German war camp, hearing the guards rattling the cages.

“It’s been a big part of my journey, seeing that will to survive; they are mind-strong. It’s such an honour to help them.

“I’m so thrilled to witness the shots...to see them just gleam”.