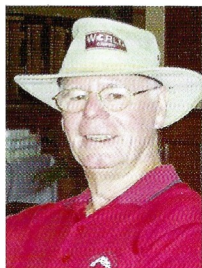


OUT & ABOUT



Tony Stenton

FOR more than 50 years Tony Stenton has played and followed a range of sports; but while sometimes socialising with golfing friends at various courses on weekends, he did not play.

That according to Tony is because there's always the possibility that those left to run a business are often suffering while key personnel are playing – which hardly sets a good example of work ethics.

Why then did Tony, founder of the very successful Gold Coast-based World Carpets, join Southport just on three years ago to take up golf with his wife Nancy?

"Well, over many years World Carpets has been buying a huge amount of underlay from Dunlop and Bridgestone.

"Going back six years World Carpets was named Bridgestone's retailer of the month, and part of the award was a set of Precept golf clubs.

"That prize was accepted and a second set was purchased for Nancy.

"Since neither of us had ever picked up a golf club before, we went along to a TAFE course to find out what we had been missing.

"Family members had moved up into some key roles in the business, leaving Nancy and myself with more time to pursue our new sporting interest.

"So we hacked around for three years and eventually decided it was time to join a major club – and Southport was our choice.

"Because of our continued bulk purchasing from Bridgestone, we are provided with a regular supply of golf balls and enjoy the pleasure of sharing them with fellow members," says Tony.

Terrors of the blitz

Born in Sheffield a year before prime minister Neville Chamberlain went to Germany in what proved to be a futile attempt to prevent the outbreak of war, Tony still recall the terrors of the blitz.

"I vividly remember a night when, as a three year old and with my brother and sister, we were rushed into a cellar as bombs rained down around our house," says Tony who, after peace was declared in 1945, became addicted to soccer and cricket during his school years.

On leaving school at age 15, Tony's mother wanted him to become a hairdresser; but believing that would be a bit 'teasy-weasy', he agreed on the basis of cutting men's hair only.

Short back and sides

Given parental agreement, his next move was a three-year apprenticeship with a barber at Attercliffe, right in the centre of Sheffield – where steel workers settled for short back and sides as well as shaves with cut-throat razors.

Not long after becoming a qualified barber, Tony – now nearing 19, married and with the first of three sons on the way – was called up for two years of compulsory national service at Catterick in North Yorkshire, where he trained as a driver of Centurion tanks.

When demobbed from the army Tony, always ambitious, went to work with his father-in-law as a carpet fitter and after two years went out on his own installing carpets with three teams of fitters.

Three years later, advertisements placed in Sunday newspapers by

Australian building company Leighton Homes offering to sponsor families to Australia led to the great adventure of emigrating down under.

Ten quid pommies

"As ten quid pommies we set sail on the 'Fairstar' with my family and other relatives, disembarking in Melbourne on June 6 1965.

"Leighton Homes were very good to us and it wasn't long before we rented a house at Preston, then soon after bought our own residence in Moomba Park, Fawkner.

"Already we had been to see J G Guest, a Melbourne-based company involved in furniture and carpets, for whom we started installing carpets.

"Interestingly one of the carpet layers working with us who took his holiday breaks on the Gold Coast spoke so much about the attractions that my family and I took off to the same destination.

"We were so impressed that, after spending a week looking for real estate, we returned to Victoria, put our house on the market and within a short period made the move to the Gold Coast, arriving here in June 1967.

"Long hours were put in to laying carpets all over the Gold Coast, but we made good money and, rather than buy a house, we invested our funds in a business known as Classic Carpets situated on the Gold Coast Highway at Miami.

"Before selling Classic Carpets in 1969, and after taking a hard look at carpet manufacturing, we established premises in Christine Avenue – and were delighted when then premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen and a cabinet minister officiated at the opening of our mill.

Premier opens larger factory

"The new business was very successful, leading to an offer of assistance from the Queensland Department of Industry to establish a larger factory at Molindinar; and once again the premier flew down by helicopter to open the new mill in front of more than a hundred dignitaries.

"Obviously, knowing that the premier would be landing in heavy rain, we rolled out a long carpet from the helicopter to the enclosed rostrum."

PS: World Carpets is now based at Labrador. Tony has not only donated carpet for the club's upgraded Golf Shop, but also distributes dozens of golf balls to members and over the past three years has sponsored Associates' functions to the tune of \$2000 annually.