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GENERAL BOTHA OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

<http://www.generalbotha.co.za>

FEBRUARY 2006 **JOINT NEWSLETTER**

Should your address details change, please send your updated details to:

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CAPE TOWN BRANCH EVENTS - MARCH 2006

Bothie Boys in the Cape and those from further a field that are joining us, please take note of the following important events. Before you turn the page or fall asleep, please decide on your plans, pick up the phone, write a fax or e-mail, and make your bookings without fail to:

RSVP: - Kathy Nicholas, phone 021-7885957, fax 021 4213250 Email:

cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za

- **Friday 3rd March @ 1800** – Annual General Meeting – Venue: Palmyra Room, Kelvin Grove Club, Rondebosch.
- **Friday 3rd March @ 2000** – Commissioning Day Dinner – Dress: dinner suit preferred but suit or blazer and tie acceptable – Cost: R130.00 – Cash bar available – Wine and port shall be provided by the Association. Sponsors for this would be welcome. Pre payment would be welcomed by the Treasurer, details further down in the newsletter.

- **Sunday 5th March @ 1000** – War Memorial Service – The service will be conducted by Rev. Ralph Thornley. Venue: The Cenotaph on the corner of Heerengracht and Hertzog Boulevard, Cape Town – In case of inclement weather the alternate venue shall be at The Mission to Seafarers, Duncan Road, Table Bay Harbour [opposite the police station] – Following the service refreshments will be served at The Mission to Seafarers, Duncan Road, Table Bay Harbour [opposite the police station, SA Marine Corp and Atlatech].
- **Sunday 5th March @ 1200** – Bring & braai at the Maritime Room, Survival Centre, Granger Bay – refreshments available at club prices – fires provided.

Note: The 1956 Obies will be holding their group reunion in Cape Town 3-6 March to coincide with some of the above main events, and in addition they will have made arrangements for other reunion tours and functions. For further information contact Peter Rogers Mobile: 082 374 6262.

DURBAN AGM

FRIDAY 17 MARCH AT POINT YACHT CLUB – WARDROOM 1800 for 1830

R70 per head

To book call Candy on 031 - 5692585

Comment (Scribe)

Extreme sports are a relatively new development on the sports fields and the TV channels. It has also become very popular here in Cape Town. Folk are coming here from all over the world as participants as well as spectators. They experience the thrills of breaking the sound barrier in a F16 fighter jet, or soaring the thermals on a hang-glider, or swimming around Cape Point in freezing shark infested waters, or skateboarding from Kloof Neck down to Camps Bay at neck-breaking speed. One could even stretch the point and include cricket taken to the extreme in the Pro-20 series. All of this and more with the magnificent backdrop of the mountains and the Fairest Cape. And to add to the list, we have just had the honour of being the first port of call of a fleet of high-tech racing machines providing a spectacular display of yachtmanship. The 2005-2006 Volvo Ocean Race is considered an extreme sport. This race is quite revolutionary in many aspects. For a start, it is difficult to imagine driving a boat in full sail at maximum speed into a head sea almost to the point of destruction – and some of them have gone over-the-top and broken their masts, or the boat. They are achieving a daily distance in excess of 550 miles (greater than 23knots) on the sea passage Vigo to Cape Town. Secondly, the skippers and crew are all professional, with grand performance bonuses, and they have professional backup teams flying around the world to support the boats at their scheduled stop overs, and sometimes unscheduled pit stops. Thirdly, the sponsors (Volvo, ABN-Ambro, Ericsson, etc.) have all invested many millions of Euros into the race, and they claim that the return on investment on the first leg already exceeds the capital. Fourthly, there is the spectator aspect. They have a magnificent ‘virtual grandstand’ website continuously running on www.VolvoOceanRace.org where you can watch the progress of the race, including video, at any time and look up a variety of information on just about anything you wish to ask.

It has been described as “purgatory in motion” or “just like living in a washing machine!” How do the crew manage in this express capsule pounding through the sea at such speeds? As the boats are buffeted by enormous waves and spiral down into the troughs, what is it like to live, work, eat and sleep on board for 18days or so? Well to answer this question and to have a better understanding, each boat has on board a small black box called the Wave Height Sensor (WHS) which will monitor and record vital information on wave heights and frequency, as well as ‘slam accelerations’ impacting on the boats hull. From this data scientists hope to build a clearer picture of the severe demands offshore sailing places on

competitors. The data will be compared to the 'habitability index', which is a scale designed to quantify the effects of motion on the human body. This information has been compiled from studies on the effects of the g-force in conditions of extreme repetitive motion in sports such as power boat racing and aircraft aerobatics. Fascinating stuff!

NEWS FROM THE DURBAN CHAIR

Firstly I would like to apologise for the lack of news emanating from the Durban Chair. Things have been pretty hectic over the past six months and not much time to devote to Bothie matters.

A while back Roy Martin secured a plaque that was presented to the Merchant Navy Officers Memorial Club (MNOMC) Durban in 1952 on the occasion of the 21st anniversary of the Old Boys Association.

This year thus sees the 75th anniversary of the Association and the Durban Branch propose to celebrate the event with a function to commemorate the event i.e. a candlelight dinner or some other befitting event.

The planned date is towards the end of August 2006 since the Association was founded on 28 August 1931. This should be a good opportunity for Obies to meet, along with their better halves, and it is hoped that a good attendance can be mustered to enjoy the evening.

C'mon Obies, many of us won't be around to enjoy the 100th anniversary so let's make this one a big bash. Good luck to those who anticipate their presence on the planet in 2031!

We had an excellent Christmas lunch last year and 45 Obies attended. Thanks, once again, to Ray Walker and his Secretary Candy for all their organising.

This year sees the 50th anniversary of the 1956 intake and I look forward to meeting and renewing acquaintances after such a long time. The sprit seems to linger forever and the Bothie somehow set the stage for making ones journey through life such a joyous adventure. During 2005 there were a number of new faces at our monthly luncheons and I hope 2006 will see this trend continuing. Kind regards, Derek McManus.

DURBAN SCRANBAG - George Foulis is, at the time of writing, delivering bunkers to a fishing fleet at about 50 degrees south. No doubt he is experiencing some wild seas down there and hopefully avoiding icebergs. We hope to see him safely home for our next committee meeting.

Allen Pembroke is off to Australia on the 9th of February. Allen will be officiating at the International World Lifesaving Championships "RESCUE 2006" at Lorne and Geelong in SE Australia and in March will also visit family in New Zealand. All going well, we look forward to welcoming him back just in time for our AGM.

FROM THE BRIDGE OF s.s. CAPE TOWN

Booking for the Commissioning Day Dinner is essential, please book early. The AGM and Dinner coincides with an international cricket match next door to the venue. However the club management has assured us that on site parking shall be available to members. However, to be assured of parking on the club premises we urge members to share transport to the venue. The class of 1956/57 is having their 50th reunion over the same period and thus we look forward to some interesting and hilarious reminiscing at the dinner.

Werner Wiehart, class of 1986 has checked in with the following; "To all the 1986 General Botha Cadets Happy 2006. Perhaps it's time to get together again. It has been 20 years. I sill look the same, but don't know whether that's the case with all you other fellow mates." We have ten Obies of class 1986 on our mailing list. So, let us see you all at the Commissioning Day Dinner this year.

The Cape Town monthly lunches continue to be held on the second Tuesday of EVERY month at the Royal Cape Yacht Club, 1230 for 1300. Two or three times a year the

association hosts joint lunches with the Society of Master Mariners' and topic of interest is presented. These meetings start at 1130 followed by lunch at 1300 and are well publicized in our quarterly newsletters. These have been very successful and well attended the most recent presentation covered one of our celebrated Bothie Boy's, Sailor Malan. Our Christmas lunch held in December was also a great success with about 100 Old Boys' and partners attending. Included where a large contingent of our "local" widows whom we invite as the association's guests. It was a very pleasant event and much enjoyed by our guests. Your, the members, generous donations to the association make it possible for us to host such events and thus retain the memories of those who have weighed their anchors. In addition a number of Old Boys working and living overseas joined us at the Christmas lunch. Among them were Peter Blackett 1974 from Qatar, Graeme Stephan 1978 from Belgium, Ken Downie 1987 from New Zealand and Tim Cowley 1960/61 from England. Dennis Cowley 1940/41 also visited us but unfortunately too early for the Bothie Xmas lunch. Thus John Mellows 1955/56 and I hosted Dennis and Jennifer to lunch which was very entertaining. Yet again I managed to sucker John into paying. Thanks mate.

SOS

As usual a large number of newsletters returned both email and post. Most I have managed to track down again with the assistance of some members. However, we are still searching for **Alan Rathbone 1972** last known at Warner Beach somewhere in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Someone out there must have a lead on him. Please let me know.

Chris Viljoen 1967 has gone walk about. Last known to be in Houston as the owner's representative for Global Lines in Houston, U.S.A. and running a company called Armadillo Marine Consultants. His mobile number I have on record is 713-8574517. Hopefully our USA members in the industry are able to trace Chris for me.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

T.J. JEFFERY 1940/41 #1114. It was reported in Both Watches 1952 edition that Trevor was appointed Honourary Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor-General. In 1953 he was lieutenant in the S.A. Navy. Trevor passed away 26th October 2005. Nothing more is known of his career and any further information would be welcome.

W.D. HOGG 1935/36 #810. April 1937 Bill joined Ellerman & Bucknall Line as an apprentice. September 1939 he was called up for war service as midshipman R.N.R. and August 1942 he was mentioned in Dispatches. June 1946 released from war service with the rank of lieutenant. October 1946, joined S.A. Navy (P.F) with rank of lieutenant. October 1970 promoted commodore S.A.N. January 1980, retired. During service in the S.A.N. Bill held the following commands: S.A.S. Transvaal, March 1962 to August 1964. S.A.S. President Pretorius, December 1969 to October 1970. Senior Officer (afloat) Tenth Frigate Squadron, October 1970 to February 1972. Commander Maritime Defense, June 1977 to June 1978. Sadly deceased 01/12/2005.

F.J.S. BRADSHAW 1941/42 #1152. Francis passed away on the 22nd November 2005. We have no information of his career on record and any detail would be welcome.

A.J. HARVEY 1944/45 #1357. Alan passed away on the 26th December 2005. After leaving the Bothie Alan joined the S.A. Navy as Able Seaman and was part of the crew that brought the SAS Bloemfontein from England to South Africa. He left the navy in 1947 and worked at various jobs in Walvis Bay and Luderitz before joining Consolidated Mines in Namaqualand. Retired in 1988.

G.E. WILMAN 1935/36 #844. Another of our old salts, Gordon, passed away recently. Unfortunately we were not able to establish contact with Gordon to get to know him before his passing. Any information of his career will be welcome.

G.O. WEBB 1942/43 #1273. Gordon owned Summit Steel in Cape Town. He was a long standing member of the Royal Cape Yacht Club and involved for many years in the organization of South African International Keelboat racing events. He was Chairman of the Cruising Association of South Africa for 12 years and also served as chairman of the S.A. Ocean Racing Trust as well as Vice-Chairman of CASA and President of The Port Owen Yacht Club. A colourful character around the RCYC Gordon sadly passed away on the 6th January this year.

Our sincere condolences to friends, shipmates and family.

SCRANBAG

M.A. RIDDELL 1980 #2716. Mike has recently joined Nick Sloane at Svitzer Wijsmuller in Cape Town as Salvage Master. No doubt there will be many salty stories of these two soon.

I.M. THURSTON 1958/59. Ian is an Old Worcester and an ardent supporter of our Gauteng branch. On leaving HMS Worcester Ian joined Shaw Savill. Later he joined a British frozen food company, Birds Eye Foods. Spent 15 years working on their mink farm in Europe before taking a management position in the poultry industry, responsible for seven poultry farms in England. In 1981 immigrated to S.A. in a similar position and in 1984 became a factory manager in the filtration industry. 2002 started own company repairing sewing machines which has proved very successful and far less stressful. *Now I wonder whether that would work for me in Cape Town.*

R.M. REID 1967 #2313. It seems that Rob is too busy [or too lazy] to keep us updated of his life in paradise, as he termed it. But Sue does so and recently wrote to confirm that Rob is still hale and hearty down under as Skipper [or is that Master?] on the large ferries of Fullers Ferries. As Sue puts it; “he’s driving the bigger ferries, Superflyte and Quick Cat and loves it to bits”.

R.A. DICKINSON 1976 #2549. Ronald is another one that found us through our web site. He left the Merchant Navy in 1985 after working for both Unicorn and a Scottish gas carrier company. Thereafter he went into chemical bulk liquid storage (on land) and returned to Australia. Also spent six years in Dubai (1996 - 2002) where he met Clive Sheard also 1976. Ronald mentioned that Clive has completed a PhD in Maritime Law. Now what are you going to do with that Clive?

S.N. WOODGATE 1984 #2855. Here another Obie that found us through our web site. Sean joined Unicorn Lines as a cadet in January 1983. Joe Almond sailing trophy winners 1984 as a cadet. Also won the regatta in Simon's Town against the sea scouts and the naval cadets in 1984. Subsequently also part of the crew to win the Joe Almond sailing trophy as an old boy. He served with Unicorn Lines as a 3rd Officer until January 1988. Thereafter becoming a landlubber to pursue a career in IT. Well, what is such a master of sail doing in Gauteng? The water is here in Cape Town.

R.K.C. KILBY 1976 #2536. One of the great inventions of this century was Google, an internet search engine. Everyone uses Google and this leads Obies unerringly to our GBOBA web sit, Robin being one. After joining Deutsche Afrika Linien/Cape Continent Shipping Co as a cadet in 1974 Robin did his 2nd NO FG in Durban in 1978. Thereafter he served with Fyffes Lines (UK) on Reefers and E. Jacob Shipping (Germany) on Bulklers as 3rd/2nd Mate until 1982. Then he went to Bremen Polytechnic to do Nautical Studies. 1986 - 2nd Mate on Gas tankers. Obtained his German Master FG ticket. Went shore side in 1987, joined BMW AG, Munich working in CKD division supplying BMW SA in Rosslyn, Gauteng with car part kits. 1990 - Senior purchasing manager for global sea transport at BMW. 1994 - Transferred to BMW aerospace division - 1999 transferred to Rolls-Royce Germany civil aerospace division working in Business Improvement as senior SAP consultant. “As I'm planning a trip to SA this year, or next, I'd like to contact any of my old classmates that the

OBA may know about. If anybody from the mid-seventies era is planning a trip to Berlin, I'd be pleased to show them round."

A. HAAKESTAD 1983 #2801. Reading Alan's email really made me feel old for a moment as I have been ashore for longer than Alan has been in command. Sigh. "Always glad to read your newsletter. I have met a few ex South Africans on my Australia - Asia travels, whilst serving on the Cape vessels. It is difficult to imagine that I have been in command for ten years. Presently in command of NYK's big container vessels (6500 TEUs).Have just finished a stint on the Europe Japan trade on the NYK ARTEMIS and managed to come home from icy Hamburg a day before Christmas. My next vessel the sister ship NYK ATHENA which operates between Asia and U.S.A. Have met many people and seen many places but is always nice to come back to our sunny African skies."

K.W. LINDSAY 1960/61 #2180. "In September I retired from my post as Deputy Director of the School of Management at John Moores University in Liverpool. In October I was asked back to teach a module in operations management to an undergraduate course for one semester. So I am less retired than I thought I would be. The good things that I hoped to do in my workshop and garden will eventually overcome the habit of work, and retirement will take its hold over the next month or so." Oh I am so envious of you Keith. Imagine the Bothie work I could achieve if I were retired.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

One of the local Sunday papers, appropriately named Sunday Times, is celebrating its' centenary this year and are trying to track down various "old boys and girls" of the paper. One of their journalists's contacted me recently through our web site asking about none other than our **Lionel Attwell 1956/57**. Apparently Lionel is remembered as one of the paper's "more colourful characters". "Once, after an extended absence, the Sunday Times actually printed street posters declaring, 'Lionel Attwell is back'." Well, another famous Bothie Boy! Lionel is now preaching the gospel somewhere in England and from all accounts has not lost his colourfulness. Look out for Lionel featured in the Sunday Times sometime this year.

Further reminiscing comes from Warwick Stodel 1946/47 and reflects the strong bonds formed between the young boys during their training on the ship. He writes; "In 1946 I invited my mate Alwyn "Carrots" Christie who was from out of town, to spend a weekend leave with me at my home in Clovelly, just a few miles up the line from Red Hill, Simon's Town where we were based. Needless to say, as we were Chums at the time, the moment we arrived at my home in our #1 uniform we tilted our caps at a cheeky angle and had my dad take a snap. Having finished our time on board at the end of '47 we went our different ways and had not been in touch since. That is until around about 2003, **56** years later, having bumped into G.B.O.B. Al Viljoen [1964] up at the Breede River, who persuaded me to contact Tony. I sent Tony Nicholas my details and for the first time started to go to the G.B.O.B.'s monthly social get together at R.C.Y.C. Some weeks later I opened an email from the U.K. with an attached photo, the photo of the two of us, with a note from Alwyn saying; "Hi, remember me?" How could I forget him? Not only were we good mates, he was a capable boxer and beat me in the end of year boxing match!! We started up a correspondence as a result of which at the end of April this year, en route to the U.S. via the U.K. Patsy and I stopped off and spent a few days with him and Molly, his wonderful loving wife, at their home near Southampton. Alwyn and Molly collected us at the bus station and I can only say that the warmth of their hospitality was worthy of a 5* B & B. He and Molly are great bird lovers and their whole garden is designed to attract the local birds. The downside was that the squirrels would come and pinch all the bird food. So being an animal lover [and a bit of a nut, if you'll allow the pun] he set up a humane trap and each time he caught a squirrel he would then drive four miles out into the country and release it into the forest. When we arrived end

of April his catch score was 45. When I spoke to him a few weeks ago it had gone up to 65. How wonderful it is to pick up with one another after such a long time. It was most heart warming.”

THE LEGEND LIVES ON.

Peter Coetzee 1960/61 found himself in Simon’s Town recently and noticed an interesting piece of memorabilia. He writes; “upon returning to Meadowridge, I stopped in for a "frostie" at the Southern Right Hotel at Glencairn as it was very warm and the traffic volumes were not very great. This establishment has been really wonderfully refurbished and the stay was very comfortable. I became aware of a display of Naval cap ribbons on which the names of various RN Ships and others were displayed (a host of HMS Londonderry’s etched.) which was situated beyond the bar area. This display is behind glass and some of the exhibits are clearly quite old. What I must report is that, at the top of the display, attached by two drawing pins to the green beige covering (all the others are the same) is a ribbon clearly indicating the following: SATS GENERAL BOTHA. The condition of this item indicates that it can only be from the SHIP. The GBOBA might be aware of this specimen or even have other genuine examples in their possession. My knee-jerk reaction was that we as GBOBA should recover this ribbon and preserve it. If you are in the area please go and check it out!

Your comments will be appreciated.” Yes indeed, we are in possession of an old ship’s cap ribbon and if memory serves me correctly we handed it over to the S.A. Naval Museum in Simon’s Town. If I am correct then Obie Ian Manning would have it recorded on the GB Trust list of memorabilia. This list is also on our web site for viewing. Perhaps Ian can confirm this and perhaps this may induce Ian to send us a report of his labours to preserve the legend for the next newsletter. At least the ribbon displayed at the Southern Right Hotel is contributing to the preservation of the ship’s history and legend in the public eye. But, as Peter says, comments welcome.

A HAPPY ENDING.

As mentioned previously the internet is wonderful tool and has led many an Obie or enquiry to us, including the Sunday Times journalist mentioned elsewhere in this publication. Recently someone contacted me via our web site requesting any possible information of her grandfather, a Bothie Boy. Her mother lost contact with him during the war. Our data base had only a one liner of him but no contact details. Thus armed with that one liner I duly sent an email appeal to the Obies in that region. The Old Boy network worked and within 24 hours we had our man. The happy ending; “I have trouble in picking-up my jaw from the table!!!! I telephoned my mother last night and told her that I just might be on the trace of her father, and the poor woman just started crying. She has had this huge void in her life, not being able to find her father and at last a spec of hope! I will forward this information to her as soon as possible and hold thumbs and pray like crazy that this could mean a happy reunion!! Thank you so much for all your trouble and I will definitely keep you posted!!!” This brings tears to my eyes. Thanks to the Obies who assisted with this enquiry.

UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH NEWS - Ted Fisher reports

We had a very successful pre- Christmas (seems light years away!) gathering with the Conway Solent Branch down the New Forest in December. Those ‘Bothy’ attending, Rob Mybergh and Val, Donald Neaves & Kathleen, Alan Garton & Maureen, Douglas Wrathmall, Caroline & myself, plus 15 Conway and wives – an excellent meal and good fellowship.

News Update: Captain John Shone (43/44) phoned the other week to inform that following the entry in the November Newsletter regarding their Golden Wedding, he recalled that he

and Sheila had performed a similar double 10 years earlier on their Ruby Anniversary – that is consistency for you!!

Spring Function: Note the date **Sunday Lunch 5 March 2006 with timing 1215 for 1300** and **Venue** is confirmed as The Marriott Goodwood Park Hotel Golf and Country Club Chichester West Sussex. Cost adiesed at £16.00 per person excluding drinks but to include a 4 Course meal with coffee (choice of Starter/Main/Sweet & Cheese). All payable on the day. Facilities will be available for the screening of videos and certainly the classic 1954 film of the General Botha by Barry Cullen and Chris Copeland in their senior year showing a straightforward view of cadets lives at our remarkable institution.

The date has been chosen to coincide with the Commissioning weekend in SA where some of UK members will be.

We have a goodly number of attendees so far including I am pleased to say, Glenys Woudberg one of the daughters of our late PTI Jimmy Smith.

I look forward to hearing from any other Obies who would like to attend on that day!

Best wishes to all, Ted Fisher +44(0)1903 744400 e-mail tedefisher@aol.com

GAUTENG ANNUAL COMMISSIONING DAY FUNCTION

The Gauteng Branch is having its annual Commissioning Day luncheon on Sunday 19 March, 2006. Our venue for this occasion is once again being arranged by Jack and Marge Gemmell and our function will take the form of a three course Sunday lunch at the extremely well appointed clubhouse in “Highwood”, their complex. There is a swimming pool, billiard room, lounge, dining room and bar. The dining room is spacious and airy and has a lovely view across the gardens. The complex is wheel chair friendly. A full three course meal will cost the princely sum of between R60 and R70 per person. Those of you who attended our last function at this venue will know that the standard of catering is excellent! In order to keep expenses down we have not requested a barman or bar service, so please bring along your own bottle of wine or any other booze that you might feel inclined to sample on that day. We have decided that this time we will ring a few changes to maintain the variety and will be “going back to basics”. No music, no microphone, no dancing, just good food and wonderful company, where we can renew old friendships in our private dining room.

Please make a note of this in your diaries. This is a popular function and over the last few years our number attending has grown from the 20s to more than 80 at the last function.

If you live in Gauteng and have not yet attended one of these then you are missing out on some really good fellowship. Gauteng members will be advised by later notice of the time and address, and will be provided with directions on how to get there. Other members are welcome to contact Ivor Little to book a seat if you are going to be in the vicinity on that date. Contact details are: ivorandanne@mweb.co.za ; Telephone (012) 660-3243; Postal address – 3 “Villa Rosa”, 186 Jonk Avenue, Centurion, 0157.

Ivor Little.

AUSTRALIAN BRANCH NEWS

Happy New Year to everyone. Our last function was a Pub Lunch at the Great Northern Hotel in Sydney and this was well attended and a success. The Southern Queensland Group have also had well attended functions. Our next function will be the Annual Commissioning Day Dinner and AGM to be held in Sydney on Saturday 18th March 2006. When planning this function your committee would have preferred to have repeated the past few very successful dinners at the North Ryde RSL Club. Unfortunately the venue will not accept a booking for less than 40 persons and prefer to book full wedding type functions in the entire area. Lunch instead of a Dinner has been chosen as this is easier to book and less costly and may also suit

some attendees particularly those older “Old Salts” and those wishing to make a day trip to Sydney. Please note cheap air fares.

Our venue will be the very old and famous “Hero of Waterloo” Hotel which lays claim to Sydney’s oldest Pub. Built by convict labour from sandstone in the 1843 as a Gentleman’s Pub it soon became a sailor’s haven for good rum and has a tunnel from the basement to the harbour for rum smuggling press gangs to “Shanghai” drunks. We don’t believe this practice is still carried out there today but who can tell! We may get lucky. We have booked a private room upstairs.

The address is 81 Lower Fort Street, Millers Point (The Rocks). Cost will be \$60 per head including 3 Course Meal, Beer, Wine, Port & Soft drinks. Spirits will be available at your own cost. Dress of the Day will be Blazer and Bothy Tie as preference. We would appreciate your early advice of attendance.

We would also like to offer a special challenge to the Granger Bay Old Boys to attend to keep the legend alive. Andy Fotheringham, please note and follow your group up.

Grenville Stevens (2189 ‘60/61) Chairman.

Stan Damp (1509 ‘47/48) Vice Chairman.

Peter O’Hare (2247 ‘64) Hon Secretary, Australia Branch.

Email peteroh@bigpond.com; Telephone 0417 028809.

Queensland Old Boys Lunch

The Queensland GBOB had their end of year get together last Sunday (November 13th) at the Spanish Garden Restaurant in the Breakfast Creek Hotel in Brisbane. Brian and Jill Hoatson came down with Michael and Margaret Pomfret, and Fred and Moreen More made up the northern contingent. Ian De Villiers from the south was accompanied by his son John, who was also the designated driver. John and I go back a long time to our windsurfing days in Port Elizabeth in the mid 70’s. The local contingent consisted of myself, Andy Fotheringham and Mike Niell. Richard and Gloria Shaw sent their apologies. They were waiting for favourable winds to get them back from Townsville. A hard life! Good company, copious drinks and lovely food (in that order) made for a great day! Our next gathering is scheduled for March next year (2006). Cheers from sunny Brisbane. Simon Reynolds.

SCARY

Although the projected average growth rate for container ships in the four years from January 1, 2005 to January 1, 2009 is 14% per annum, according to BRS Alphaliner’s latest figures, it’s the biggies which are snatching the limelight. Ships above 4 000 TEU capacity are predicted to grow at 20.5% per annum compared to 8% for smaller vessels. The world’s liner fleet (of all ship types) passed the 9-million TEU mark in November, and expected to pass 10-m in September 2006.

AN “ODE” TO THE CLOSURE OF THE MERCHANT NAVY OFFICERS MEMORIAL CLUB IN ALIWAL STREET DURBAN

It was with regret that the MNOMC in Durban closed its doors after serving the marine fraternity for so many years. It was established as a “memorial” to those who lost their lives in the Merchant Service during the Second World War.

Most visiting seamen gathered there to down a few pints when in port and many local mariners also used it as their special watering hole. The club was well known all over the world.

It was for many years the home of the “Botha Old Boys” where committee meetings, AGM’S etc were held. Unfortunately the club went into decline towards the end of the eighties/ early

nineties and since then the Obies moved to a new meeting venue every couple of years. The happy memories however remain very clear to many of us.

Our monthly lunches were held there and often forty or more OB's gathered and complained when the price of lunch was raised from R1.85 to R1.95. One remembers Shaik the waiter who looked after us – always in his slippers. The plate was passed around on at least three occasions to fund his retirement. He did however finally disappear off the scene.

Committee meetings were always a lively affair with the likes of Curly Morrison, Dennis Cowley and Al Viljoen adding a touch of flavour to the proceedings.

The AGM's of old, held at the club, were always rowdy affairs with Gordon Jones having to stamp his authority on numerous occasions to restore order.

Then, of course, members would order drinks, which together with chirping from the floor further interrupted proceedings. The commissioning dinners followed the AGM's, with tables shouting reminiscences across the floor and wine flowing freely. Of course the die-hards ended up in the magnificent, plaque and memorabilia adorned, main bar upstairs for brandy and liquors. Some of the more mature members in age even found their way to the Ladies Bar for nightcaps.

In later years some of the more agile adjourned to the lower pub, where these late revellers displayed their mastery by tripping the light fantastic with internationally renowned Club Hostesses.

Great memories remain of the renewing of friendships at the Annual Dances that were held in the festively decorated dining hall. These were very happy occasions, with wives, family and friends enjoying the good spirit that always prevails when Bothie Boys get together.

The contents of the club were recently auctioned off lock, stock and barrel. Thanks to Roy Martin we were able to retrieve the plaque presented to the club on the occasion of the 21st Anniversary of the OB in 1952. The Bothie crest and a piece of the Conway Rail went to another bidder. The latter piece of wood fetched a price of R2200.00

Sadly the club has now gone forever, but those members of long standing will remember the happy times and the walls can tell many an interesting tale, spanning it's long years of existence.

John Leslie Stevens (#1064; 1939/40)

(By E W Jupp)

John Leslie Stevens grew up in the Kokstad region of Natal and spent his childhood on a farm where he enjoyed the freedom that fed his sense of adventure. He would ride his horse into the Drakensberg Mountains deeply sensitive of the beautiful ambience which he remembered all his life. His move to Cape Town was a major upheaval, but his love for the sea a compensation. His family settled in Rosebank and John attended Rondebosch Boys High School, and like many boys interested in the sea, spent many hours during weekends wandering the quays of the Victoria Basin and going aboard ships. In 1939 John the SATS General Botha in Simon's Town and so began his nautical career. It was a momentous year culminating as it did with the outbreak of World War II which changed the lives of so many cadets. The Royal Navy Commodore in command of Simon's Town at the time spoke to the cadets about opportunities to join the Royal Navy Reserve as Midshipmen and serve with the RN. This offer naturally drew tremendous interest and several senior cadets left within the following months to join RN ships which had berthed at Simon's Town for refit or maintenance. Very wisely Captain Pennington, Captain of the General Botha at the time, ruled that no further cadets would be permitted to leave the ship until they had completed their training. It was thus on completion of exams at the beginning of December 1940 that John, together with E. W. Jupp, B. O. Powell and J. Power joined the RNR as temporary Midshipmen and were appointed to the Armed Merchant Cruiser *HMS Austurias*.

Following service in South and North Atlantic and the West Coast of Africa, *Austurias* returned for refit to the UK in January 1943. Two months of courses followed in which John excelled, and in May he was appointed to the new “S” Class destroyer *HMS Savage*. He was not happy in the ship and despite his nearly three years at sea and he was still being treated as a ‘dogsbody’. He applied and was accepted to do a submariners’ course and thereafter spent the remainder of the war in submarines in the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean. It was during this period that he decided – much as he loved the sea – his calling was to study medicine and become a country GP.

After being de-mobbed in Cape Town in 1946 he was successful in obtaining the Governor-General’s grant available to ex-servicemen, he returned to the UK. After qualifying and completing his housemanship period he joined a family practice in Aldeburgh, Suffolk. He pursued his calling with typical enthusiasm and determination, and took over the practice when the senior partner retired. His guiding philosophy was a profound commitment to caring and respect for the patient. He fulfilled many lecture engagements, including invitations to South Africa, the United States and Australia during the course a very distinguished medical career, and will be remembered for fostering the principle that terminal patients should be allowed to die in dignity in their own homes – the forerunner of today’s Hospice.

Despite his very busy schedule he did manage two very interesting nautical interludes. The first of these was in April 1957 when he sailed as Seaman/Ship’s Surgeon aboard the replica of the *Mayflower* commemorating the voyage of the Pilgrim Fathers to America, a voyage which lasted 55 days. The second took place some years later in the Mediterranean when he was employed as Medical Officer on the set during the filming of “*HMS DEFIANT*”. This was a naval saga of the early 19th century which culminated in the battle of Trafalgar. Apart from his medical duties, John was also able to sail in the replicas built for the film and appears as a seaman in some of the shots.

Tragedy struck in 1978 when John suffered a stroke which paralysed him down the right side and he lost the power of speech. It was a terrible source of frustration to him as he was unable to continue practicing. He decided therefore to return to his other great passion – the sea – with the intention of sailing around the world single-handed in his yacht “*Sly Boots*”. To cater for his infirmity he altered her rig from gaff to lateen-rig so that he would be able to reef using his good left arm. In 1981 he set sail and reached Antigua in the Caribbean safely where he was joined by his son for the passage to Panama and through the Canal. Sailing on into the Pacific – once again on his own – the yacht suffered rudder damage which John was unable to repair. After drifting for 40 days he was sighted by a Japanese fish-factory ship which took him aboard and was able to lift his yacht aboard and land him and his yacht in Colon.

Due to his inability to speak he had not thought it necessary to carry a radio aboard. However his family convinced him that he should and that he should also attend speech therapy classes which he did for a few months before sailing again in early 1982. He was never seen again and no sign of the yacht or any wreckage was ever found.

In a tribute to him Dr Basil Jaffe, a life-long friend said of him: “General practice had lost one of its greatest intellectuals whose fierce loyalty stemmed from his love of his craft and patients.”

SLOP CHEST

These slop chest items all proudly display our association insignia and is available from Cape Town branch. Place your orders without delay with Kathy Nicholas:

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Defending Our Ocean

In addition to the Volvo yachts mentioned above, the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront here in Cape Town is host to many interesting vessels. As I write this we have two Greenpeace vessels in port (ETD 27 Feb). They are the “ESPERANZA” and the “ARCTIC SUNRISE”. They have just returned from a ten week campaign in the Southern Oceans. The following are extracts from Mike Fincken’s (#2904; 1987) diary over the period of the vessels’ stay in Cape Town in November last year in preparation for the campaign. I have difficulty choosing extracts from his writings, because Mike writes so descriptively and with such passion about his family, his ship, the oceans and its creatures. Space does not permit me to include the entire script, but if you would like to read it all, then write to Mike and I am sure he will be interested to reply.

Thursday 10 November: For months we have waited for my ship to come in and finally the day arrived; there she was as big and blue as ever. The Esperanza sailed into Cape Town harbour this morning before the backdrop of Table Mountain beneath a blue sky saturated with the light of an African Sun. With me on the quayside to greet her were Nana and Opa, Kirsten and Kai. There was a fresh look about her with a brighter rainbow adorning the bow and down the length of her side a new campaign slogan: "Defending Our Oceans". Nolan and Natasha were among the many familiar faces that greeted me from the decks and I felt proud that Kirsten could meet my friends from far away places; many of them still on board from the foggy days spent on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland in August. Thirteen-year old Kai spent the day with me and in the evening when we returned

home he told Kirsten that it was the second best day of his life, the best being the day he was born.

Friday 11 November: Sound is carried through water, and perhaps that's why whales have chosen their environment for they love to sing those long and complicated songs that travel from one side of an ocean to another. From the mess room where I was seated for lunch I heard a deep rumbling coming up through the ship's hull. I jumped up to look out through the port hole and saw the bow of the Greenpeace icebreaker, Arctic Sunrise, coming up alongside the Esperanza. All hands rushed up and onto the deck to take the lines and adjust the fenders as the weather-torn ship pulled up alongside. She looked worn and beaten, paint stripped off her green hull by the Arctic and Greenland ice; rust had set in to replace it through the course of her five week passage across a storm tossed Atlantic Ocean. Tears welled up with my memories of the Antarctic icebergs and the furious fifties of the Southern Ocean through which this aging lady had taken me six years ago. All fast on the starboard side of the Esperanza the railings of both ships filled up with crew leaning over for hugs and hand shakes, and the talk of weather and whales.

Monday 18 November: Thirty school children all dressed in uniform under the direction of Miss

Plummer and assisting parents visited the ship. Kai showed them the way; they were all his class mates. On the helicopter pad I told them the story of Greenpeace that begins with $E=MC^2$; about how there was a time in our history where the world was averaging one nuclear test a week and the Canadian air force routinely used pods of Orcas as target practice for their bombers. It was hot and the steel decks radiated their warmth sending us for shelter in the mess room where the children pulled out their packed lunches and had a taste of life on board.

Tuesday 15 November: Footprints Re-cycling from Wynberg in Cape Town came along to the ship and

helped with the removal of all of our specially separated and stowed waste. This had been a valuable service to us as ordinarily there is no facility in the harbours for ships re-cycling; it is all thrown into one giant skip and sent to the land fill. At sea most ships dump their waste wood, paper, cardboard, steel, aluminium and glass, retaining only plastics and toxic materials such as oily rags which they incinerate; thus demand for recycling receptors in ports is minimal. On our Greenpeace boats we make every effort to avoid packaging, but this is difficult when provisioning a ship of 37 people and another of 25 for two months at sea. One of the crew on each ship is designated the role of Garbologist and takes great care to separate and stow recyclable material whilst at sea. It took Michelle and Adelaide from Footprints three trips in their five tonne truck to remove all of our recyclables.

Thursday 17 November: Captain Bill Shewell is a year off retirement and is the harbour master of Cape Town's Victoria and Alfred Waterfront. Over a period of fifteen years he has taken a polluted old fishing harbour and transformed it into one of the worlds leading tourist attractions. Today he allowed us the use of the passenger reception facility on the jetty which was decorated under the direction of his wife. The evening function was by invitation; each person's positive identification was checked against a names list at the gate and they were allowed in one at a time. If anything, the difficulty in coming into the enclosure raised the anticipation of what we were about to tell the world, but that would have to wait for Friday for this was a pre-launch to the campaign. Among the guests invited were friends of mine from two special groups of people: the South African Society of Master Mariners and the Two

Oceans Aquarium. The speaker was Karen Sacks, a fellow South African who is the Oceans policy advisor; a South African lawyer who lives in Washington D.C. and attends amongst others U.N. and IWC meetings. Karen spoke about the Convention on Biological Diversity

and the need for a moratorium on deep sea bottom trawling of the high seas sea mounts. After the talk I was called upon to do what I love to do most and took a large group of people on a tour of the Esperanza, where I was able to tell them my favourite story of Greenpeace and others from the life at sea on a Greenpeace boat.

Friday 18 November: Sara has caught the sun and her face and arms radiate with the same intensity as her bright red hair. "Every second breath we take comes from the Ocean" she told the press gathered together in the helicopter hanger on board the Esperanza. "The Ocean is responsible for half of the oxygen on this planet." I guess the other half must come from the trees, so that makes both very important. Greenpeace are sending the Esperanza on a campaign of unprecedented magnitude. She will spend more than one year traveling around the Earth and 'Defending our Ocean'. A year of her life is being devoted to this singular cause which started today in Cape Town. From Cape Town she will sail to the whale sanctuary of the Southern Ocean to defend some of the largest of the creatures of this planet.

Sunday 20 November: The red and white pilot flag was hoisted to the top of the Esperanza's halyard, and her ropes cast off from jetty number 2. Lots of wave's goodbye between both ships and those left behind which included me. The people grew small with distance and then they disappeared out of the harbour. Kirsten clung to my side, sad to see them go but happy to have me at home for a few more months to spend Christmas together and the new year. For now I remain on land but not for long, as I hear the Oceans call and my sea legs are restless. With love and peace, Mike Mate.

Mike sails on the Esperanza as Mate departing Cape Town 27 Feb, and he tells me that Lance Tiedt (#2916; 1987) has joined the Arctic Sunrise – 2 Obies in Greenpeace nog al!

“TENJEWBERRYMUDS!”

To get the full effect, this should be read aloud. You will understand what 'tenjewberrymuds' means by the end of the conversation. This has been nominated for the best email of 2005.

The following is a telephone exchange between a hotel guest and room-service, at a hotel in Asia, which was recorded and published in the Far East Economic Review:

Room Service (RS): "Morrin. ; Roon sirbees."

Guest (G): "Sorry, I thought I dialed room-service."

RS: "Rye..Roon sirbees..morrin! Jewish to oddor sunteen??"

G: "Uh..yes..I'd like some bacon and eggs."

RS: "Ow July den?"

G: "What??"

RS: "Ow July den?...pryed, boyud, poochd?"

G: "Oh, the eggs! How do I like them? Sorry, scrambled please."

RS: "Ow July dee baykem? Crease?"

G: "Crisp will be fine."

RS: "Hokay. An Sahn toes?"

G: "What?"

RS: "An toes. July Sahn toes?"

G: "I don't think so."

RS: "No? Judo wan sahn toes??"

G: "I feel really bad about this, but I don't know what 'judo wan sahn toes' means."

RS: "Toes! toes!...Why jew don juan toes? Ow bow English moppin we bodder?"

G: "English muffin!! I've got it! You were saying 'Toast.' Fine. Yes, an English muffin will be fine."

RS: "We bodder?"

G: "No...just put the bodder on the side."

RS: "Wad! ?"

G: "I mean butter...just put it on the side."

RS: "Copy?"

G: "Excuse me?"

RS: "Copy...tea...meel?"

G: "Yes. Coffee, please, and that's all."

RS: "One Minnie. Scramah egg, crease baykem, English moppin we bodder on sigh and copy....rye??"

G: "Whatever you say."

RS: "Tenjewberrymuds."

G: "You're very welcome."

The Pessimist complains about the wind, the Optimist expects it to change and the Realist adjusts his sails.
(author unknown). *We look forward to seeing you on March 3 – 5 if you are in Cape Town... Scribe*
(dhenwood@iafrica.com).