

## S.A.T.S.

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## GENERAL BOTHA OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

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

**February 2009**

### JOINT NEWSLETTER

**Has your address changed?** Please send your updated details to Tony Nicholas Chairman Cape Town (details above).

**Do you have an interesting article for this newsletter?** Please send your contributions to Dennis Henwood, [dhenwood@iafrica.com](mailto:dhenwood@iafrica.com) Phone: +27 (0)21 6716373. Fax: +27 (0)86 6706710.

**Can you read this Newsletter?** If not please let us know. We can send you larger print if it is necessary.

### FORTHCOMING CAPE TOWN EVENTS

- **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2009**, 1030 for 1100 – Annual General Meeting, Kelvin Grove Club, Camp Ground Road, Newlands, next door to Newlands Cricket Club.
- **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2009**, 1230 for 1300 – Commissioning Day Lunch, Kelvin Grove Club, Camp Ground Road, Newlands, next door to Newlands Cricket Club. Partners welcome. Dress; club blazer and tie preferred or ladies equivalent. Price R155 p.p., cash bar. Note this price is lower than last year. Should any member find difficulty with the price please contact a committee member. What is vitally important to us is that you and your wife attend the function. We look forward to seeing you all there on the day.
- **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2009 @ 1000** – War Memorial Service, at our cenotaph, corner of Heerengracht and Hertzog Boulevard, Cape Town. The service shall be followed by sumptuous refreshments at the Mission to Seafarers. In case of inclement weather the service shall be held at the Mission to Seafarers, Duncan Road, Table Bay Harbour. Dress; club blazer and tie preferred or lounge suit, with medals, or ladies equivalent.
- **Booking for the Commissioning Day Lunch is important**, please RSVP by Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2009 to:
  - Kathy or Louise Nicholas: Tel.021-788 5957; Fax: 086 604 0811; Email: [cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za](mailto:cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za)
  - Pre-payment for the Commissioning Day Lunch would be appreciated by our over stressed Treasurer.

Cheque or postal order should be made out to “General Botha Old Boys’ Association”. Post to: P.O. Box 4515, Cape Town, 8000. Alternatively, the payment can be made by electronic fund transfer directly into our bank account. Details as follows:

- Bank: Standard Bank
- Branch: Thibault Square, Cape Town
- Branch code: 02 09 09
- Account name: General Botha Old Boys' Association
- Account number: 070835128

## **KZN BRANCH NEWSLETTER DURBAN October 2008**

Christmas and the new year have come and gone and it is hard to believe we are less than a year away from 2010.

We enjoyed a successful year with a couple of functions and our regular monthly lunches at RNYC. Lunches are very good value for money, let alone the interesting people you meet, so come along Obies and join us there. After a long period with no increase the price of lunch has gone up a bit to R60 including the tip. This is still very good value for money as it includes a starter, soup and main course followed by sweets.

Our annual Christmas lunch at Westville Country Club, held on 10 December, was a great success with a very good turnout of 43 Obies. At the start there was a hitch with the seating arrangements that were not according to instructions and once that was ship shape we enjoyed an extended lunch. Some Obies remained afterwards and socialized into the evening.

### **The GBOBA, Natal, AGM & Commissioning Day Dinner Scheduled for 13 March 2009**

DATE: Friday 13 MARCH 2009

TIME: 18h00 for 19h00

VENUE: Home of Roy Martin 59 Westville Road, Westville

COST: to be determined – includes wine

BOOKING: Derek McManus W - 031 30395653

H - 031 7673719

E-mail - [ernestn@saol.com](mailto:ernestn@saol.com)

### **FROM THE BRIDGE OF ss CAPE TOWN**

Anyone's guess which is the most important newsletter of the year? No not the February edition promoting the AGM & Commissioning Day celebration as well as the War Memorial Service held the following day. The MOST important edition is the May edition each year in which we publish in advance these most important dates for the following year. Yes, we provide the dates at least nine months in advance yet many still fail to make their travel arrangements accordingly. Do take heed of the dates when published. By now you have realized that our March AGM & Dinner and War Memorial Service are imminent. Thus please take heed of the detail on page 1 and BOOK. We have continued with the same format as last year, i.e. Saturday morning AGM followed by our Commissioning Day Lunch. Wives are most welcome again. To reiterate; our primary reason for changing from an evening function to a lunch time function is to accommodate our more senior members, thus avoiding driving at night. However so far this has not been successful. We would appreciate your communicating with any of our committee members the reason why we have been unable to attract you back to these highlights of our association. If it is the price of the lunch, we need to know. If some require assistance with transport, again we need to know as we are in the position to assist with transport. Let us know without delay.

On the subject of lunches; our monthly pub lunch at the RCYC continues with reasonably good support. However this institution has not escaped the global economic recession, our price has been constant for a number of years but unfortunately the caterer has asked for a price increase. We managed to agree to a 10.5% increase which translates to R42 per person. I trust members find this palatable. Look forward to your continued support on the second Tuesday of EVERY month, 1230 for 1300 unless advertised differently in these newsletters.

Members in receipt of posted newsletters shall have noticed that we have continued with the A4 size and larger font. However, this is expensive and must be evaluated by members at our forthcoming AGM. We look forward to your support.

A steady stream of donations has been received over the months for which we are very grateful. These enable us to meet our goals and also keep the newsletter afloat. Some have been rather generous and one of these was marked "In memory of Phil Nankin", a fitting tribute.

For the younger members you may have heard of something on the internet called Facebook. I have heard of it but have not plucked up the courage to use it, yet. A certain group has created a site on Facebook called "Safmarine and Unicorn Officers' Old Boys". So log in and communicate with your past shipmates all over the world.

An interesting book is to be published next month which may interest members. John Pike 1942/43 served in the RNR during WWII and in later years he wrote a book on the naval war in the South China Sea 1941-45, before he died in 1994. His widow, Susan, has had the book accepted by a publisher in England who is printing 500 copies, which they hope to launch in March this year. If you are interested in a copy I can put you in contact with Susan.

T.B.F. Davis was born on the Channel Island of Jersey and started his seafaring career from there. He gave a number of charitable gifts during his lifetime which included our famous training ship. The Jersey Maritime Museum is researching T.B.F. Davis with the view of an informative exhibit of this extraordinary man. A gap in their historical records is his business career around our coast. As far as they have worked out he arrived in East London in 1901 and worked for a stevedoring company. He then moved to Durban to work for Brock & Co which he bought out in the early 1900s and operated a series of companies under the umbrella name of Thomas BF Davis from his headquarters in Sivad Buildings, 241 Point Road from 1902 until his death in 1942. On his death, his son, Glenham Davis, renamed the company Urda (SA) Ltd. The museum is appealing to anyone who can assist to fit together the missing pieces of his life. Let me know.

### SOS

NAME	CLASS	LAST KNOWN LOCATION
Bryan Mowat	1988	London, UK
Dave Coleman	1984	The Hague, Netherlands
Ron McClintock	1942/43	Bryanston, Gauteng
Mark Koen	1979	Durban North

I have exhausted my sources, All, please make an effort to locate these AWOL.

### ANCHORS AWEIGH

**DAVID HUME 1948/49.** Deceased 12/11/2008. Dave was born in Rustenburg in 1932, which made him 76 when he passed away. He went to school in Rustenburg, Pretoria and Vryburg before joining the General Botha in the 48/49 draft. On leaving the ship he took up motor racing, specifically Formula 1, before retiring in the 1960s and opening a radiator and engineering business in Rustenburg. He was still involved in this business with his son Doug at the time of his death.

**GARY ROSEVEARE 1977.** Gary sailed with Safmarine until 1981 when he joined Tristan Investments running up the African West Coast as far as Gabon, across to St Helena and down to Tristan da Cunha. 1983 he left the sea and initially went into sales and in 1984 joined Allied Building Society. Served in various posts including appointment in 1990 as their Regional Network Manager in Durban. 2001 became a WAN specialist with ABSA. Deceased 18/11/2008. One of Gary's wishes was that he should always have Cape Town at his feet. Therefore his family scattered his ashes on the slopes of Signal Hill.

**BRIAN LAWRENCE 1944/45.** Lived in Taiwan and sadly passed away 27/07/2008. Any further information appreciated.

**BILL DEANE 1943/44.** Bill passed away 20/12/2008. 1945-1947 R.N.R. Midshipman to Sub Lieutenant. H.M.S. Lulworth, H.M.S. Nereide, Fairmile 1028. 1947 two months at E. Geduld. 1947 - 1948 - Union Corporation, Tanzania, Base Metal Exploration. 1948-1954 Williamson Diamonds, Tanzania, Diamon Exploration. 1954-1959 University of Michigan. BSc Geology and Mineralogy. 1959-1989 Lakefield Research, Lakefield, Ontario, Canada. Research Mineralogist and Chief Mineralogist. 1989 retired.

**PETER SUMPTION 1954/55.** Peter had a business running rock and surf angling trips from his home, Hamburg, Eastern Cape. Deceased 22/01/2008. Any further information appreciated. (*see United Kingdom Branch News below*)

*Our sincere condolences to family and shipmates.*

### SCRANBAG

**C.L. PHILLIPS 1978 #2610.** All well here although expecting snow tomorrow. It has been the coldest winter in the 10 years we have lived here. I took over as pilotage Operations manager in September and settling in well. Still get let out to play on the river one day a week to maintain my authorisation. Have no intention of giving the piloting side up for the foreseeable future. **Stuart Hay 1976** still enjoying his job with me here on the Thames. **Vince Hawkins 1978** still on the Manchester Ship Canal and happy.

**J.R. BANACH 1972 #2411.** Jan recently moved to Singapore to set up a bulk division for an oil company. He welcomes any Obie passing through for a chat and a beer or two.

**J.B GOUS 1958/59.** Jannie attended the Cape Town February lunch which caused my hangover the next day. Following the lay up of his diamond mining vessel he has “retired” back to his homestead in the Free State. Beware Jannie, we shall visit soon. I expect that this also means that **Dave Reid 1966** has also swallowed the anchor as he shared the berth with Jannie.

**R.J.R. ROWE 1954/55.** Robin recently joined the IT world by obtaining email, he writes: “I attended the “General Botha” from 1954-1955 and went to sea with “Clan Line” for the purpose of obtaining my Masters Certificate of Competency, and joined the “Harbour Service” in 1964. Progressed through the ranks and in 1988 was promoted from Assistant Port Captain, Richards Bay to “Fleet Manager” of the newly formed “Dredging Services” which operated as an independent unit within Portnet. I retired at the end of September 2001.”

**P.J. FERREIRA 1984 #2831.** “What a pleasant surprise to open my email on Boxing Day and discover that not only is there a Bothie Old Boys network, but that someone had actually taken the time to track me down. Depending on where you found my email address (I suspect my mother) you might or might not know that I stopped working on merchant vessels in 1987 and have pursued a far more lucrative and somewhat pampered career on private luxury yachts. I am writing to you from an anchorage in the Exumas, Bahamas Islands where we are cruising with the owner of the yacht I am currently running. Please send my regards to Bill Damerall.”

**S.P. LISIECKI 1971 #2395.** I leave BP at the end of the year [2008] after a 4.5 year stint on BP Shipping’s Leadership team here in London. Whilst in London I had the pleasure of crossing paths with Hugh Scheffer from time to time (once in the Gatwick airport lounge!). After 39 years in the business I feel its time to move on. My immediate plans include a trip to NZ, via dropping off our bags in Anchorage, then on to SA where I hope to catch-up with you. Long range I’m signing up for a two year course on restoring wooden yachts on the East Coast in late 2009. Also, I’m in discussion with the Obama transition team where I’ve offered my services on issues of climate change in respect to shipping – a long shot but something I’m quite passionate about.” Yes Simon, we are all equally keen to meet again. How about attending our AGM & Commissioning celebration 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> March? Cheers.

**J. WANLISS 1993.** Jonathan appears to be enjoying home life; “Finally received my Master's and spent two years in command of the SA Agulhas. Left Smit in November last year. Now working as a marine surveyor for BMT (old Salvage Association) here in Cape Town along with Rob Swier and Andy Bain. Don't know if I've swallowed anchor for good...but its nice being able to get the vegetable garden at home up and running for a change!”

**E.S. FENWICK 1960/61 #E43.** Syd has been AWOL for a while but on a recent visit to the port our paths crossed again. “I retired from Portnet (Containers) as the MIS Manager (Management Information Services) on 31 March 2003 after 41 years service with Transnet. (They actually sent me to the General Botha in 1960-61 to be trained as a Chief Engineer on the tugs – somehow I never completed that training). I am very happily retired with a beautiful wife, two married daughters and three gorgeous granddaughters. Since retirement I have been trying to figure out where I actually found the time to go to work everyday. I keep myself fit by cycling on average about 1000 kilometres a

month on mountain and road bike. You really get to know the Cape this way, as well as giving the wife her space in the mornings. It works out really well for us. I also bought myself a SUV 4x4 to play with. At present Portnet has contracted me to undock the sliding caisson at the Strurrock Dry Dock, quite a challenge I must add.” Syd suggest you join our 4X4 club for some more adventure. Let me know.

**O.J. PEETOOM 1964 #2248.** Otto is another that has recently joined the IT world. “Greetings from England. I have finally been press ganged into acquiring a computer, complete with "He-mail" Thus you can add my address to your files & save the postage. If any of the members collect stamps they may wish to have a "SKI" experience & visit my website on [www.rhodesianstamps.net](http://www.rhodesianstamps.net) I would be delighted to relieve anyone from their pensions & assets! SKI= Spending Kids Inheritance!!!!!!

**K.D. FORD 1961/62 #2202.** I don't how he did it but class mate Jimmy Cooke found Keith inland somewhere. After failing the eye sight test Keith joined the public service and worked for the Department of Customs & Excise. Then spent 30 years working for the Kimberly City Council where he was appointed Manager of Parks & Recreation in 1984 and retired January 2005.

**P. MORRIS 1949/50 #1610.** Peter sailed with Union Castle as a cadet and later joined Standard Bank in Cape Town. Transferred to Rhodesia [now Zimbabwe] in 1954 and worked in the various sectors of the finance industry before being transferred back to Cape Town by the Colonial Mutual Assurance Company. Next joined S.A. Breweries and following time in the Eastern Cape as their manager bought the Grand Hotel in East London. Thereafter spent another five years in Zimbabwe returned to Cape Town where he started a motivational business and then invented and patented worldwide a system to improve service on the forecourts of service stations. Shell S.A. bought the rights and he worked for Shell as a consultant on the project for 10 years. Then spent 9 years as GM of Peers Retirement Village in Fish Hoek, Cape Town. Now retired.

**N. COOPER 1958/59.** Nicholas has an extensive and impressive CV which we have abbreviated here, I trust with Nic's approval.

1960 - 76, sailed with T&J Harrison and later with Geest Line. Two years Master on a 600T Coaster, tramping. Two years master on a 650T Twin Screw Motor Yacht based in Monte Carlo. Three years Chief Officer with Kuwait Shipping Company. 1976 - 79, Master with Uiterwyk Corporation. 1979 - 83 Port Captain with Uiterwyk Corp based in Alexandria, Egypt. 1984 - 89 Marine Cargo surveyor with Perfect, Lambert & Co, of London covering Mediterranean and Middle East. 1989 - 90, Port Captain with Afram Inc Tampa, Florida. 1990 - 91 Marine Superintendent with Gulfship Marine Inc. Based in Houston. 1992, Port Captain with London Offshore Consultants Inc. and Ewig International of Houston, Consultant with Allied Maritime Co. 1993, Chief Officer with Safmarine and Master with Midocean Shipmanagement. 1994, Master with Pentow Marine and 1995 Master with Safmarine, of Cape Town. 2000 joined Maersk as Master. Past President of the Nautical Institute. See “A Century of Navigational Excellence” below.

**J.L.D. HUSSEY 1956/57 #2032.** John was a recent visitor here from Australia but although he contacted me, by the time I set my auto pilot John had already left town. My apology John, next time I shall ring full ahead sooner. An interesting part of our history is that John was honoured in 1966. He was presented with a 'Royal Human Society Silver Medal' by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, and the 'Silver Laurel Wreath and Certificate of the Queen's Commendation for brave conduct' from the British S.A. Ambassador. John Hussey saved the life of a teenage Cadet washed overboard from the s.s. Mobil Enterprise (31 456 tons) off Cape Finisterre. A very brave act particularly in those stormy waters. John presented us with a number of photographs and copies of the accompanying certificates, all of which shall be placed in safety in the S.A. Naval Museum. Thanks John, another chapter in preserving the history of our training ship and those who trained in her.

**S. Doyle 1985 #2862.** It was fantastic to stumble upon the Bothie Website. I was a cadet with Safmarine and attended Bothie in 1985 where a week before final exams I failed my sight test so no merchant navy career for me. I left S.A a few months later after deciding that I would prefer doing my national service in the Caribbean not Angola and joined Windjammer cruises as a unlicensed 2nd Mate. I then started running yachts and after obtaining a 3000 ton U.S. license ran and built numerous large motor yachts world wide. I left running yachts and settled in Fort Lauderdale where I have been a yacht broker since 2000. Thanks for a great Website and Best Regards, Sean Doyle. Merrill-Stevens Yachts.

## General Botha Old Boys Australia Branch News

On Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November, John Mc Tavish organized a lunch in Newcastle (NSW) at the old Customs House (now a restaurant) on the harbor front next to the main railway station. A good day was had by all. 19 attended including Old Boys Fred Petters, Robin Fisher, Jock Cameron, John Mc Tavish, Norman Connolly, Rudolf Auer, Nigel Hobbs, Grenville Stevens and Peter O'Hare.

**Our annual Commissioning Day Lunch** this year will be held in Adelaide starting at 12 noon on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March. Early indicators show a good turn up. Venue is Largs Pier Hotel, 198 Esplanade Largs Bay. Costing is being finalized but is expected to be reasonable. This is a historic hotel near the Adelaide waterfront.

Regards to all and please get in touch if you are going to be "Down Under".

Grenville Stevens (2189 60/61) Chairman; Andy Fothringham (2525 '76) Vice Chairman

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

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## UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH – Ted Fisher e-mail: [tedfisher@aol.com](mailto:tedfisher@aol.com)

Amazing, into another year – time certainly passes quickly when one leads a busy life which I'm pleased to say I do now manage to enjoy.

The joint GBOBA/Conway gathering over the Christmas lunch at The Crown Hotel Lyndhurst in December was again a great success – some 48 from both camps were present including wives/partners and according to Chris Nelson our intrepid organiser from Conway the numbers are slowly increasing each year. It is our intention to hold a Summer lunch at The Goodwood Park Hotel Chichester probably in July before the holiday period commences, yours truly to arrange – indeed with the 'credit crunch' on we may have members deciding a splendid lunch would be an ideal tonic so, **WATCH THIS SPACE** in the next Newsletter! Members who attended three years past will recall the quality venue and of course the videos!!

**Sea Pie Supper** – Southampton Master Mariners Club is on 7 February, however, as a local group who have faithfully supported this event in previous years we have decided to 'miss out' in 09 – the cost of a meal at £40.00 excluding beverages is out of all proportion to the occasion – should any members wish to attend please make contact with the local Hon Sec.

**Contacts** -I confess I failed to report on my receiving an e-mail from **John Mellows (55/56)** back last September when I was on holiday in France. John of course was one of my year chums. He was in London staying with his daughter and family, we'd not met since end of 55! It was great meeting in spite of the fact we did not recognise each other, however, a couple of sherbits soon rekindled old times. Thank you for the lunch John and I do hope business continues to flourish – not many around with 'break bulk' experience these days!

I was grateful to receive a telephone call from Barry Cullen last week. I was of course Barry's batman, he once said on meeting a few years ago he failed to know why I took the job on? Can one imagine life aboard had I refused!! Thank you Barry for enquiring as to my well being since the passing of Caroline last April.

Also an e-mail from Ivor Little (53/54) with the offer of a bed should I at anytime make a trip out to SA in the future – thank you both Ivor & Anne.

**anchors Aweigh**- sadly, a call from Lee Sumption wife of Peter (54/55), who passed away on 22 January after a long illness. Peter and I were both from East London (Cambridge High & Selborne College respectively) Both of us came to the Bothy on Municipal Bursaries from the City, travelled to and from together on the Mailships (whatever happened to Mike Egan who was the third recipient of a bursary for 54/55?) Caroline & I met with Lee and Peter when on our travels, both a most charming and lovable couple – more detail on Peter in Anchors Aweigh, this issue.

That's it – I'm running out of space other than to say attendees at Christmas were Donald & Kathleen Neaves, Ken & Pam Snow, Adair & Janet Butchins, Tim & Tiki Cowley, Richard & Barbara Hellyer, Alwyn & Molly Christie, Doug Wrathmall (Dolly had to apologise with Flu) Rob Mybergh with Val, Alan & Maureen Garton and myself with Barbara.

Finally, my apologies for non- attendance at the AGM & Commissioning Dinner in March, my very best wishes and regards to all who attend especially to our Chairman Tony Nicholas & Kath with thanks for their hard work in holding all together for the Association.

Ted Fisher. Tel: +44(0)1903 744400 Mob: +44(0)7702 635017 e-mail: tedefisher@aol.com

### **GAUTENG BRANCH COMMISSIONING DAY LUNCHEON**

The Branch is very pleased to be able to invite you and your family/wife/partner/mistress/girl friend/platonic other to our annual Commissioning Day Luncheon. Visitors to Gauteng are also welcome to attend.

We are now going very up-market and larney and, thanks to the good offices of Tony Hunter (1953/54) who will be acting as our host, we have obtained the Johannesburg Country Club in Auckland Park as our venue. We have been given the use of a private dining room, opening on to a full-length balcony overlooking the Club's beautiful lawns and gardens.

The meal will be a three-course buffet, with table wine supplied and sponsored by Specialised Freight Services (Pty) Ltd., and there will be a cash bar. We are offering the meal for the remarkable price of only R90 per head. As can be expected, the standard of both catering and service at this prestige venue is top class and this promises to be another memorable luncheon.

The date will be Sunday, 8 March. The time: 12h30 for 13h00. Dress: Smart Casual.

Please **RSVP before Thursday, 5 March**, to Ivor or Anne Little at 3 Villa Rosa, 186 Jonk Av., Centurion 0157, telephone to 012-660-3243. The e-mail address is [ivorandanne@mweb.co.za](mailto:ivorandanne@mweb.co.za).

Looking forward to seeing you all there. Yours Fraternally, Ivor Little

### **SATS GENERAL BOTHA Southern Lunch**

The next Southern Lunch will be held on Tuesday 21 April 2009 at the Seven Seas Club, Simon's Town at 1200 for 1300. Those wishing to attend are requested to telephone Brad Wallace-Bradley on 021-786-1957 or Ian Manning on 021-782-1559 before 1700 on Friday 17 April 2009. Please note that the Seven Seas Club dress code requires shirts worn by members and their guests to have collars [i.e. no T-shirts or sweaters] and shoes to be worn with stockings.

### **A CENTURY OF NAVIGATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

Last October the new 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Admiralty Manual of Navigation* Volume 1 was launched. This addresses the principles and practice of navigation and is, without doubt, the leading authoritative text on the subject. This new edition runs to 690 pages and covers the full spectrum of navigational theory, procedures and techniques. Thoroughly modern in its approach, the book has antecedents in our maritime traditions as well as describing how to use modern navigational aids in this electronic age. The history of navigation has been well documented elsewhere but, to put this new edition in perspective, it is worth mentioning some of the techniques that have been used since man first went to sea. We know they work because, as the old saying goes, "a mariner who cannot navigate cannot come back". The Royal Navy author of this magnificent book donated an inscribed copy at the launch to past President of the Nautical Institute, Old Boy **Nicholas Cooper 1958/59**. Nic, as he is popularly known, has in turn donated this precious book to the successor of our training ship, the Cape Peninsular University of Technology, Granger Bay Campus, Cape Town. Granger Bay of course was the final location of our training ship before its official closure end of 1987. There the book enjoys pride of place providing a valuable research and teaching aid for the present day students. Our volumes of thanks to Nicholas for this generous donation.

### **DAVIS OR DAVIES AND THAT CHALLENGE CUP** - Denys Pitcher 1943/44

All publications are prone to the vagaries of printing gremlins. Their mischievous work eluded the ever diligent scrutiny of our editor in the article headed "Howard Davies Memorial Challenge Gold Cup" appearing in the November newsletter. [*The Chairman's humble apology for the error.*] Poor TBF Davis will be beating his chest in frustration as he learns that his cherished son has been referred to as Howard Davies. TBF had his roots among that independent and isolated community of

Channel islanders and would vehemently object to his family name being confused with Davies which has its origins among those bands of Celts living in the mountains and valleys of Wales.

The events relating to that historic cutter race in 1935 between the training ships Conway, Worcester and GB are well chronicled on pages 73 and 74 of Gruter's "A Name Among Seafaring Men." There, we read that it was the idea of Davis to issue such a challenge. He bore all the expenses and purchased (at a cost of one hundred guineas) the competition cup which he wished to be known as "The Silver Jubilee Trophy". (1935 was the silver jubilee of Britain's King George V and there was a general euphoria in the then British Empire to make this a great occasion. Jubilee Square in Simon's Town was so named in recognition of this event).

A replica of the programme (on page 74 of Gruter's book) describes the race as a "Cutter Race ... for a Cup presented by TB Davis Esq." not a "Silver Jubilee Trophy" as Davis wished. Can someone explain why it is now referred to as the "Howard Davis Memorial Challenge Gold Cup"? A most elegant title but one apparently devoid of any authority. A sticky bun for the first one to unravel this mystery.

From subsequent enquiries – thanks to our Chairman – it is comforting to know that that the Cup (albeit, not in its entirety) is now displayed in the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich.

I question the wisdom of that Worcester Captain – Superintendent who foolishly presented the finial to "a cadet"... What a generous gesture it would be if the New Zealand family of this cadet were to return the finial to the Greenwich Museum. It can then be placed where it belongs – atop the Cup; not in some unknown person's display cabinet. Perhaps the Association of Old Worcesters might pursue this suggestion. [*Old Worcesters, we leave you to take up the challenge and revert – Chairman.*]

### **LEWIS ALLAN LYNN – 1932/33**

Alan was ex-General Botha boy who, like Sailor Malan, went to sea in the Merchant Navy as a cadet prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War and then, like Sailor Malan, opted for a short service commission in the Royal Air Force. He was a pilot officer at the start of the war and was immediately at the spear point of hostilities. In Bomber Command he took part in 120 sorties over Europe, an astonishing feat.

Astonishing in that a man could survive such dangers for so long. The comparison would be with a member of the U-boat service surviving several years on operations in the Atlantic Ocean. At War's end Alan was a wing-commander loaded down with decorations- DSO (and bar), DFC (and bar), AFC (Dutch) and other awards. After the war a town in England sought leave from the Air Ministry to name the streets of a new suburb after leading RAF heroes and asked for a list of men deserving this form of remembrance. Alan's name was on the list supplied and Lynn Street came into existence. The RAF had many heroes and Alan must have been high on their roll of honour. On one mission he was leading he was told that an American war correspondent was to travel with him in his aircraft. To Alan's surprise the correspondent turned out to be Ernest Hemingway. An official publication has a photograph of Hemingway and Alan standing beside the aircraft kitted out for the journey.

Hemingway is described as "an incongruous sight with his large frame squeezed into RAF battle dress, flying gear, and helmet. His steel-rimmed spectacles and shaggy beard did not detract from the overall impression of something a little out of the ordinary. "Murderous flak greeted them on the road but Alan and Hemingway returned safely to form a wonderful and lasting friendship. After the War he was successful in business and towards the end of his life he had an urge to return to South Africa albeit on an extended annual vacation basis. For this purpose he and his wife Graziella bought a holiday home in Plettenberg Bay in 1997 and here they enjoyed several long vacations together. It was at that home that he died on March 18<sup>th</sup> 2000. Few South African men could have had such a distinguished war time record and very few men anywhere could have been more modest than Alan in hiding his achievements.

### **SPRINGBOK ESTATE – from Peter Ferreira's Mother**

In the years immediately post WWII, money was collected by the people of South Africa and sent to England with the instruction that it was to be used to erect some sort of living memorial to the Merchant Seamen of both World Wars and the years between, many of whom died in service. With this

in mind, a large piece of farmland was bought, which included a sizeable house, known as Sachel Court. The house name was retained while the entire estate was renamed Springbok Estate in honour of the benefactors. The idea was that returning Merchant Seamen could reside at the farm, in the house, while being retrained for a shore job, namely as farmers. The farm is situated in Surrey, not far from Gatwick and is still operational, although nowadays it is more of an accommodation centre for seamen who have fallen on bad times and as a B&B for retired or serving seamen as well as South African tourists. We have stayed there and found it to be a quite delightful place. Most of the surrounding farmland is rented out to neighbouring farmers. As the sum of money collected in 1945/6 amounted to £200,000 and came only from SA citizens without government assistance, it has always been something of a mystery as to how this large sum was collected. Until a few months ago. One of the people still closely associated with the estate saw what he called a stamp, now better known as a label, for sale on eBay and bought it. It appears to be a label similar to those we used to buy at Christmas and Easter time in aid of SANTA, and we are now wondering if this was the method used to collect such a large sum of money in the post-war years. If anyone can shed any light at all on any of this, we, and our contacts at Springbok Estate would be delighted, and it would serve to fill a gap in the history of the farm. Again, let me know if you can assist to clarify this mystery. The estate has an interesting web site [www.mswmsociety.org.uk](http://www.mswmsociety.org.uk) Take a look and book your next holiday.

### **Memories of Main Hall 5**

#### **The Ordinary Practice of Seamen – ‘The Junkman’ (Mike Briant 1953/54)**

The staff of the College at Gordon's Bay was divided -Nautical on the one hand (Officers and Instructors in uniform) and Academic (teachers in civvies') on the other. The emphasis, subject-wise was all on the former, the standard of tuition in those subjects, those which fell under the headings of Navigation and Seamanship was higher, the pace downright impressive. This was partly because such stuff was, to us, all new and fascinating, but also because the practitioners of those subjects knew well how to press our grubby, collective noses to the grindstone and keep 'em there.

The teaching staff, by contrast never seemed to have the knack. They lived and, I imagine, gnashed their teeth in a sort of educational backwater, their subjects generally deemed unimportant in a world aimed towards ships and the sea. Maths and physics held little of the esteem of the ancient Greeks and Arabs, while English and Afrikaans were treated, dare I say it, almost as a joke. One had the impression that a teaching post in the old ship of those days offered little in the way of lucre or job satisfaction. There were frequent teacher changes.

On the nautical side of things, such pillars as 'Grannie' MacDonald, 'Sandy,' and Joe ('Nuts') Almond seemed to go on and on forever. Each had his own method of improving our tardy intellects. Harry Pinn, for example, that doyen of navigation, who opened our minds to the mysteries of the heavens and the means by which they might be used to find our way about the ocean, seldom had to resort to anything more than a little vocal chastisement. He had the ability to rule a class of cadets, keeping them within the traces and at full gallop from the very first second until the bugle sounded 'change of classes.' Torpedoed twice in tankers, his larynx had been damaged by ingesting heavy fuel oil and he had a metal plate fitted in his throat. It tells much of the regard for the man, that when Harry got into difficulties, his metal plate becoming temporarily dislodged, we would wait in respectful silence until he got it repositioned and he had recovered his vocals. 'Grannie,' on the other hand, though no less effective, was apt to dish out hour upon hour of 'slack party', as though recruiting for a personal gulag, while not about to spare the rod in the form of an old semaphore flag handle. Morse, Semaphore and the International Code of Signals were imparted at a bewildering rate.

Mr Sanderoff ('Sandy") the epitome of the unorthodox educationalist, taught us Rule of the Road, those 32 Articles (as they were at the time), laid down with the wisdom of the ages, in order that ships plying the seas might avoid bumping into each other. Sounds simple, don't it? Yet the language and the eminent explicitness of those Rules is, as we all know, prosaic, almost poetic at times, and not easy to

absorb. The nautical pundits of the time believed that aspiring ship's officers were better off learning the 'articles', word by word. 'Sandy', wielding his trusty rattan cane, (the cane had a name, one which escapes me) would have us learn one article each week - two if they were short. We then had to be ready to 'get on our hind legs and spout' - parrot fashion. The penalty for failure was immediate and painful. Don't tell me corporal punishment doesn't work. It works! He, who till then, had never succeeded in memorising anything more edifying than lewd limericks or the words, perhaps, of Peggy Lee's latest hit, found himself enunciating clear phrases, memorized in precise English - "in obeying and construing these rules, due regard shall be had to all dangers of navigation and collision ..... which may be required by the ORDINARY PRACTICE OF SEAMEN, or by the special circumstances of the case." (try and get ye'self out of that one!)

Partly, the teachers difficulties lay in maintaining control over a class of devious, bloody-minded renegades. We tended to look upon periods of academic study as just that - academic - times of relative relaxation or mischievous entertainment.

'Snuzzle' du Bois, our Afrikaans teacher, could be easily diverted to such worthy subjects as 'the wines of the Cape' or 'Currie Cup Rugby', particularly when his period happened to fall after a good lunch.

Corporal punishment, used as a means to promote learning, was something the teachers had difficulty with. By Bothie standards they just didn't know how to lay it on, and we, the cadets, all too ready to provoke, lived in hopes of shredding their self-control.

One unfortunate gentleman - small and pernickety, joining the staff, determined to inculcate a level of English grammar, ran himself headlong into the trap. At the time the establishment was in the throes of a rebuilding program. A brand new mess deck, galley, and wardroom had already been completed, and now a much-needed modern accommodation block was about to be built, replacing the Main Hall accommodation, the Locker room and the infamous Annex. In order to make way for this new building, the old ex-S.A.A.F. iron sheds, which served as classrooms, had to be relocated to a piece of reclaimed land next to the harbour. Walls and roofs dismantled, each floor was lifted from it's foundations and carried shoulder-high by 150 cadets (75 of them bearing most of the weight), the full length of the starboard roadway and across the quarterdeck. The buildings, hastily reassembled, the scrubbed tables and benches and the blackboards transported, and thrown inside - classes were resumed.

Mr Farryman (not his real name), arrived to continue his lectures on parsing - adverbs and adjectives and so on, in a breezy structure wherein the tables and benches had been arranged oddly, in reverse order, and cadets were practicing chin-ups on the open rafters. Delays occurred while the furniture was noisily rearranged, and the determined Farryman got the class down to verbs and tenses of verbs. 'Fisherman' Downing, convinced that the past tense of 'drag' was 'drugged', and being called to the front of the class, stepped on a floogy floor board and put his foot through the floor. There was general hilarity. Cruel and partisan, as only the young can be, we would support to the death, those who we looked upon with respect, while happily prepared to persecute others, who, for whatever peculiar reason, we did not. The poor man was being baited and he knew it. His fault lay in his pomposity, and, lacking that fine disregard for discrimination or apportionment practiced by his saltier colleagues, failed to find a suitable culprit. He became more and more exasperated. When 'Johnny' Hirst, called upon for the degrees of comparison of (I think) the adjectives 'good' and 'bad', suddenly and unaccountably became dyslectic, causing him to misplace his 'd's' and 'b's' with comical phonetic result. Farryman began to scream, thumping the words which he had chalked on the blackboard, one end of which, had evidently been poorly nailed to the wall. It fell lopsidedly with a crash, narrowly missing his foot.

Mr Farryman's dignified patience, already frayed and stranded, parted asunder. 'Johnny' was marched off to the staffroom, a small brick building, lying close to the shore, on the far side of the Captain Superintendent's house. Although it stood a hundred metres or more from the class room, it was in full

view to us across a stretch of kelp-strewn sea water. 'Johnny' was made to bend down and grasp the balustrade of the small veranda. Mr Farryman, having found himself a suitable cane, proceeded to administer punishment, exerting himself dangerously, but without much effect.

There is a particular wave of the hand which is quite unique. The hand is raised high, the palm flat, cutting the air open-handed in a sort of urging, paddling motion. It denoted mischief - attempted, or pulled off. It is a gesture also of defiance and of triumph, also an acknowledgement of applause. It is I believe a uniquely South African gesture - the try scored, the acknowledgement of the appreciative roar of the crowd - "now let's go get ourselves another one".

Arnold Hirst - 'Johnny' - looked up and to his left. Across the yeasty stretch of sun-dappled water, over on the dusty stretch of land, the windows of the corrugated - iron classrooms were thronged with happy, raucous faces. His own face split into that broad and famous grin, and despite the indiscriminate blows landing on his rear end, 'Johnny' raised his right hand and gave us all - just that sort of wave.

Mr Farryman resigned not long after. Strangely enough Arnold Hirst also opted to leave the General Bothie without completing his first year. There were very rare cases of cadets chucking it in, usually because they found the going too hard. This certainly was not so in 'Johnny's' case. Since we now know that he became a minister in the church, one feels certain that he had heard the call to serve the Lord and left to answer that call.

#### **The Mail Wallah** - Contributed by Barry Young 1953/55

An original story written for the 2003 British India Steam Navigation Company reunion in Auckland, New Zealand.

Mr Bannerjee had been the mail wallah in Bombay since the end of the Second world war. His job was to meet each ship on arrival and take delivery of the Royal Mail which that ship was carrying. He also visited mail ships just before departure to load outgoing mail. His trim, neatly dressed figure was a familiar sight on the Bombay waterfront in the nineteen fifties and sixties. He was always accompanied by a gang of six or so porters who carried the mail bags one at a time, balanced on their heads, between the ship's mail room and the hatch square. Mr Bannerjee and I had established a good working relationship. He was both friendly and efficient so I enjoyed his visits. I discovered that he liked a glass of gin and tonic while completing the paperwork in my cabin. I always kept a bottle of Gordons in my locker for this purpose and made sure that some tonic and ice was handy on the days he was due to visit our ship. In 1961 I was a newly promoted second mate on DUMRA, one of the four Gulf D's running between Bombay and the Persian Gulf. My shipboard duties included being responsible for the loading and discharging of the mail bags and the security of the mail locker below decks. The gulf D's averaged one port per day so, almost every day, I would unlock the heavy steel door of the mail room deep within the bowels of the ship. Each mail bag would then be tallied in or out of the mail room. Special care was taken with the red labelled registered bags. They were stowed separately from the ordinary mail. On completion of the loading and discharging of mail at each port, the registered bags in the room were counted to make sure that none were missing. The loss of any mail was a serious matter but the loss of registered mail could, depending on the circumstances, result in demotion or even dismissal. At the very least the loss would trigger an avalanche of paperwork which would continue for months and which would include the inevitable 'please explain' letter addressed to the ship's captain. This was bound to incur his wrath. Not the sort of thing a newly promoted second mate needs! This story is really about the voyage on which I lost a registered mail bag. I discovered the loss while the ship was in the Persian Gulf when I routinely made a count of the registered bags in the mail room. I still don't know how the bag went missing. Each bag going in or out was counted by both myself and the mail wallah independently so a miss-count was out of the question. I suspect that the Bombay bound bag was stolen while my back was turned or my attention distracted. I shall never know what actually happened. To say that I was worried would be an understatement. When I first discovered the loss I spent hours counting and re-counting all of the

hundreds of bags in the mail room. I did not report the loss to the Captain as I should have done because I kept hoping the bag would turn up. It never did. By the time the ship berthed at Ballard Pier, Bombay I was really worried. Mr Bannerjee greeted me with a friendly smile as he reached the top of the gangway. I led the way down to the mail room and on the way I tried to tell him that a registered bag was missing but he cut me short saying "No, no don't worry Mr Young, I know you. You would never loose a registered mail bag." There seemed little point in arguing at that stage so we continued on to the mail room which I unlocked and we began the counting. One of us stood on each side of the door with the porters passing between us, each with a bulky mail bag on his head and shoulders. As each one passed we would click our little chrome plated counters. It took about twenty minutes to discharge the ordinary mail then we started on the registered mail. The mail room was alongside the engine room bulkhead and it was always uncomfortably hot down there but on this day I was perspiring even more than usual. My white uniform was soaked. Crunch time was rapidly approaching! The pile of bags remaining in the room grew smaller until only one remained. A porter hoisted it on to his shoulders and passed between us. I clicked my counter, looked at it and then held it up towards Mr Banerjee for him to see the numbers. "There, you see Mr Banerjee, we are one bag short." Without hesitation he smiled back at me and said "No, no Mr Young, don't worry, the tally is correct. Didn't you see that last man had two bags on his head?" Without another word he turned away and headed up to the fresh air and my cabin for the signing of the paperwork. Nothing further was said about the missing registered mailbag. I can't imagine how it was accounted for at the post office. In India there are mysterious ways of dealing with situations of this sort. I do know that it was a very relieved and grateful young British India officer who poured the mail wallah a particularly large peg of gin to go with his tonic and ice. As he sat on the edge of my settee sipping his drink and enjoying the cooling flow of air from the cabin fan, Mr Banerjee said "I like coming aboard DUMRA. We never seem to have any problems on this ship."

### **Anyone for a Spin?**

*The origin and authenticity of this article are unknown. However, it is a good story and the 'biographical sketch' would suggest that the devious author may have been trained at the GB!!*

Judy Wallman, a professional genealogical researcher, discovered that Hillary Clinton's great-great uncle, Remus Rodham, a fellow lacking in character, was hanged for horse stealing and train robbery in Montana in 1889. The only known photograph of Remus shows him standing on the gallows. On the back of the picture is this inscription:

"Remus Rodham; horse thief, sent to Montana Territorial Prison 1885, escaped 1887, robbed the Montana Flyer six times. Caught by Pinkerton detectives, convicted and hanged in 1889."

Judy e-mailed Hillary Clinton for comment. Hillary's staff sent back the following biographical sketch:

"Remus Rodham was a famous cowboy in the Montana Territory. His business empire grew to include acquisition of valuable equestrian assets and intimate dealings with the Montana railroad. Beginning in 1883, he devoted several years of his life to service at a government facility, finally taking leave to resume his dealings with the railroad. In 1887, he was a key player in a vital investigation run by the renowned Pinkerton Detective Agency. In 1889, Remus passed away during an important civic function held in his honor when the platform upon which he was standing collapsed."

*Well, the year is moving along rapidly, and in a blink the silly season has come and gone. So, it always seems late to say "Happy New Year", yet it is appropriate to greet all Obies and wish you and your families a fulfilling and successful 2009. We look forward to seeing many of you at our forthcoming activities, and in particular the various Commissioning Day celebrations advertised in the Newsletter. Please note the advertised events for your relevant branch in this edition and respond with your bookings as soon as possible. These gatherings and reunions make for a wonderful spirit that is alive in the Old Boys' Association around the world. The Scribe, [dhenwood@iafrica.com](mailto:dhenwood@iafrica.com).*

## SLOP CHEST

These slop chest items all proudly display our association insignia and are available from Cape Town branch. Place your orders without delay with Kathy or Louise Nicholas:  
 Phone: 021-7885957      fax: 086 604 0811      Email: [cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za](mailto:cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za)

<b>BADGE</b>	<b>R100</b>
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<b>TIE [STRIPED]</b>	<b>R60</b>
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<b>PEAK CAP [BASEBALL TYPE]</b>	<b>R70</b>
<b>’n NAAM WAT SEEVAARDERS EER</b> Geskiedenis van die opleiding skip.	<b>DONASIE</b>
<b>A NAME AMONG SEAFARING MEN</b> History of the training ship.	<b>DONATION</b>
<b>FIRST DAY COVER</b> 60 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Old Boys’ Association	<b>DONATION</b>
<b>BELT BUCKLE</b>	<b>R100</b>
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<b>DVD “RED HILL 1946/47”</b> Collection of Rex Chamber’s photographs with titles and accompanying music.	<b>R40</b>
<b>DVD “SOUTH AFRICAN NAUTICAL COLLEGE GENERAL BOTHA 1954”.</b> Filmed by Barry Cullen and Chris Copeland.	<b>R40</b>

**PLUS PACKAGING AND POSTAGE!**

Cheque or postal order should be made out to “General Botha Old Boys’ Association”. Post to: P.O. Box 4515, Cape Town, 8000

Alternatively, the payment can be made by electronic fund transfer directly into our bank account. Details as follows:

- Bank: Standard Bank
- Branch: Thibault Square, Cape Town
- Branch code: 02 09 09
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- Account number: 070835128

**OPERATION CAPEX – contributed by Malcolm Clark 1956/57.**

One early morning in October 1957 the HMS LYNX dropped anchor off Gordon’s Bay to pick up parties of cadets for a day at sea in Operation Capex. Granny MacDonald detailed a number of us onto the signal bridge and then sent a message to the Lynx saying there were cadets manning the Aldis lamp. Immediately a perfusion of rapid messages followed which we were unable to read, until Granny stepped in and said “The Mugs” and then proceeded to answer them. Their reply was ---Repeat, Repeat

### SHIP WRECKS

Have you heard the news from abroad about the discovery of the SS Mendi that sank in 1917 & also the discovery of a wreck that they believe could be the HMS Victory that went down in 1744? A local discovery was also made in December 2008 of the wreck Tristania. For further info log onto [www.underwaterexplorers.co.za](http://www.underwaterexplorers.co.za)

On the same site there is news of further dives on our training ship on the bottom of False Bay. The team took our plaque ashore for cleaning and replaced it again on the vessel. Take a look at the dive reports, very interesting.

### **BOTHIE POEM**

Cadet Barry Downing #1819.

## **BOTHIE WAS A GOOD PLACE TO REMEMBER**

Having cold showers in mid September  
It made you glow from boy to man  
And proud to be of the Bothie clan

Every Friday we mustered for our measly pay  
And many of us had to say  
Cap in both hands and eyes straight ahead  
1819 defaulter was heard to be said

Remember as a chum going to get your clean  
ship fare  
Ending up in the soggy barrel for the electric  
chair  
Rounds over and off for a game of sport  
Or that what it was of sports

Saturday after rounds was quiet and peaceful  
and fun  
If we did not have to go up the mountain for a  
run  
The food on Saturday was really great  
With all the left - overs piled on your plate

Ten minutes in the barber grip  
Made you look like a drip  
Short back and sides and nothing on top  
Thank god we had caps to cover our shorn  
mop

Diamond with his black magic bags  
Smuggled in for many of us some good old  
fags  
Behind the trooper we all stood waiting for  
our brand  
2 packs of Rembrandt van Rhyn placed in  
your hand

Sick bay all had to visit to see all's well  
Just then marks on your buttocks began to swell  
Once again you had to tell a little white lie  
How you got them yes really learning to fly

The ad in those days was truck and car  
But to go by trooper was best by far  
To sit in that lovely smoke screen  
Smoking to be sure never to be seen

The galley was clean and modest place  
I can still see Cooky in his grace  
Someone asked please sir can i have more  
You boy have had enough to feed the poor  
We laughed and had a lot of fun  
Even swimming lesson for a chum  
Officers were all navy class and smart  
Petty officers good men all with good heart

Prize giving day was at its best  
Mums, sisters and dads all friendly dressed  
A few red faces in the cutters crew a warning run  
Dammit somebody forgot to place the bung

At last the admiral said I implore  
I have not seen such a splendid show before  
My story must now come to an end  
Or all the readers will go round the bend