

S.A.T.S.

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GENERAL BOTHA OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

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

FEBRUARY 2013

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 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.

The New Year is moving rapidly ahead as this letter is being compiled on 3 February from Indonesia where I have a project to dry-dock a floating dock in the ASL Batam Shipyard. This will be the third dock for Walvis Bay, and will be commissioned in the second half of this year. **Please note the upcoming important Commissioning day events in the respective branches, details of which are in the relevant Branch news below.**

FORTHCOMING CAPE TOWN EVENTS

- Tuesday 12th March, 1230 for 1300 – Pub lunch, Royal Cape Yacht Club.
- Saturday 17th March 2012, 1030 for 1100 – Annual General Meeting, Kelvin Grove Club, Camp Ground Road, Newlands, next door to Newlands Cricket Club.
- Saturday 17th March 2012, 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 R265 p.p.[same price as last year], cash bar. 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 17th March 2012 @ 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 Tuesday 12th March 2012 to:
 - Kathy or Jacky Nicholas: phone 021-788 5957
 - Email: cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za
 - Facsimile: 086 604 0811
- **Pre-payment for the Commissioning Day Lunch would be appreciated by our over stressed Treasurer. Payment details in the Slop Chest section of this newsletter.**

KZN BRANCH NEWSLETTER - FEB 2013

The Christmas lunch was held on Thursday 6th December at Splashes in Glenashley and we had a good turnout of Obies and wives/ partners. The venue was a new one for us and has lovely views over the sea. The place was crowded and very busy. Although we had to wait a long time for our meal we all enjoyed it very much and the food was great.

The afternoon was a fitting end to a good year and it was good to see some new faces there. We only left at about 1630 after a very pleasant afternoon.

The **first lunch in 2013** will be on **Wednesday 6th February**, 1230 for 1300 at Royal Natal Yacht Club.

The GBOBA, Natal, AGM & Commissioning Day Dinner
is scheduled **Friday 22nd March 2013**

TIME: 19h00 for 19h30
VENUE: Westville Country Club
COST: R125

Wine and Port will be sponsored.

BOOKING: Derek McManus H - 031 7673719

Please note that I will be out of Durban for three months from March and will be in the George/ Knysna area. I can be contacted on ernestpn@gmail.com
Ernest Nellmapius. KZN.

General Botha Old Boys Australia Branch News

Our Sydney pre-Christmas lunch was held on 8th December. It was well attend including Hon. Member Allan Du Toit. Allan started in the SAN and joined the RAN in 1986. Allan has had many important jobs over the last few years and he is a Rear Admiral. He has just taken up a three year post in Brussels as Australia's Defence Attache to NATO and the EU.

Forthcoming Australia Events

The AGM and Commissioning day lunch will be held in Brisbane on 16th March. Venue is the Geebung RSL Club. Please contact Andy Fotheringham (ajfotheringham@bigpond.com) if you wish to attend.

In May there will be a weekend of celebrations at Brisbane held by the Conway Worchester Pangbourne Association which includes invitations to all General Botha old Boys. Dates are May 23-26. The main dinner is on Saturday evening 25th.

Please contact Loriol Williamson email loriol@bigpond.com if you would like to attend.

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

Grenville Stevens (2189 60/61) Chairman
Andy Fotheringham (2525 '76) Vice Chairman
Peter O'Hare (2247 '64) Hon Secretary, Australia Branch.
Email peteroh@bigpond.com Telephone 0417 028809

Gauteng Branch Newsletter

Judging by the dearth of reports to the contrary, inland branch members survived the festive season and are all able to muster for roll call on 31st January. Sadly we lost Laurie Barnes (see Anchors Aweigh) in November. No new members have been ferreted out, but we are

always on the lookout for cadets whose current whereabouts are still not recorded In Tony's Big Logbook.

Taking on the job of newsletter compilation for an organization with a demographic such as ours is rather a difficult job. Apart from reports on functions held, how does one report on topics, which are of interest to mostly senior ex seafarers. Fortunately the majority of us are still able to access information from the internet in one way or the other, either by ourselves, or by tech savvy younger generations of family or friends. One good source of nautical news is the Facebook Group for ex Safmarine and Unicorn Officers, many of who are still active in the industry in all corners of the world.

Recently through this medium I was made aware of the London based Nautical Institute www.nautinst.org, which caters for all manner of problems confronting seafarers of all ilk's, young and old. Buried in the pages I found an article on the roles and development of the navigator in today's maritime environment (<http://bit.ly/Prppzo>). I found it informative and interesting, and it would appear that at last the role which the second mate performs is at last being overtly recognized.

Another site which I am sure for some reason will appeal to Bothie Boys, purely by virtue of its name, is www.oldsaltsblog.com. A good place to while away some hours of light and informative reading with a cup of tea and a biscuit.

I would appreciate any input from our members who may come across news of interest to our sort and which you think the rest of the GBOBA crew would find interesting. In other words if there is no way on the cutter, the coxswain cant steer!

Alan Ford alanford@global.co.za.

UNITED KINGDON BRANCH – Ted Fisher

Social: An excellent combined GBOBA / Conway Solent Christmas Lunch at the Silver Fern, Warsash, on December 2nd 2012. Turnout from GBOBA Don and Kath Neaves, Alan and Maureen Garton, Peter and Norma Heydenryck, Richard and Barbara Hellyer, Doug Wrathmall, together with Barbara and myself. Conway group fielded a large contingent. Thanks to Chris Nelson for arranging not only a great meal, but also the place cards/menus.

Association Fraternalisation: Christopher Farnfield, Chairman of the Association of Old Worcester's, has sent a communication to Association Chairman / Hon.Secs. stating they are considering ways which the respective Old Boys Associations can co-operate through joint events – see Page 11 a copy of his letter to Association Chairmen.

The Old Worcester AGM is being held on Saturday 16th March at the Passage House Hotel, Kingsteignton, Devon. Should any of our GB members wish to attend they are most welcome – ideal for those residing in the West Country. Please contact their Hon.Sec. David Glennie, Telephone: 01395 578722 or email dave.glennie@btinternet.com.

Cutty Sark – Greenwich, London: Through the Association of OW's a planned visit to the restored 'Cutty Sark' is being arranged for the week commencing 6th May 2013. The date probably Wednesday 8th May followed by lunch in a local hostelry. An ideal opportunity for our members and ladies especially within the London / Home Counties area, indeed, whoever wishes to attend..... please make contact with myself, email tedefisher@aol.com, or telephone 01903 744400 for further details as and when known.

Looking ahead, Chris Nash (61/62) and myself have had our heads together and, hopefully, we shall come with a social venue for August in the Woking area. Needless to say this will be open to Conway / Worcester / Pangbourne members.

A reminder of the joint GBOBA / Conway Solent lunch on the first Sunday of each month at the Silver Fern, Warsash.

Ted Fisher Tel: 44(0)1903 744400, Mob: 44(0)7702 635017 and email: tedefisher@aol.com.

FROM THE BRIDGE OF s.s. CAPE TOWN

So much has happened on all fronts during the past year that I imagine I know how Winston Churchill must have felt at times. Besides personal and work related pressures and activities the GBOBA front has been extremely busy.

A very successful and inaugural golf fund raiser was held in November in support of the association's bursary fund which provides support to pupils on the maritime course at Simon's Town School, much has already been written on this and no doubt there is a quarterly report elsewhere in this publication. Four of the students attended the event and assisted with *meet & greet*. Brian sent us the following snippet, which, I believe, makes it all worthwhile:

"Traveling back in the car to Simon's Town tonight was a pleasure – the four lads were very excited about the day that they had experienced and they were MOST appreciative of the hard work that went into the success of the Golf Day.

It took hours of preparation and with busy folks like you, it meant considerable sacrifice of time on behalf of the young people who will benefit from your efforts. We thank you all most sincerely for all that time, energy and meticulous preparation to make today such a success.

Thanks too for inviting the lads – sorry that more could not come, but examinations had to take preference. With best wishes and deep gratitude; Brian Ingpen and all at Lawhill Maritime Centre."

November also saw a number of us *Captains of Industry*, which also includes a high number of Bothie Boys, attend the Lawhill prize giving and graduation. The worthy recipient of our annual binocular prize was Talente Zungu, a very talented young man who received a few other awards on the evening. The support and generosity of our members is highly appreciated by the Lawhill staff and most particularly the students on these courses.

Reunions abound. The class of 1957/58, including their Old Salts and Chums, are hosting their 55th year reunion in Mossel Bay to which my wife and I have been invited. We are honoured. We also hope that they shall all follow me back to Cape Town in time for our *Bothie Weekend*.

Following an almost nonexistent start by local members the class of 1973 has finally got some steam up headed by newly pensioner Gavin Durell. Class mates of 1973 contact Gavin urgently sextant@netactive.co.za or phone +27 83 388 2610. We do know that class mate Philip Theunissen is travelling out from Canada, so there is no excuse for all the others.

Our Australia branch has an ex S.A. Navy officer on their membership who is now a senior officer in the Australian Navy, Rear Admiral Allan Du Toit (*see page 2 Australia Branch News*). Well done Allan and do give us a call should you visit back here in the homeland.

You may recall that in my November report I ended off to watch our rugby Currie Cup final. I now proudly report that WE WON! Western Province holds the Currie Cup title and we take great delight in reminding the Sharks supporters. This year's rugby season will have kicked off by the time you read this. PROOOOOOOOVINCE! *WP jou lekker ding!* [Sorry].

SCRANBAG

N.C.A. HOBBS 1959/60 #E29. Nigel immigrated to Australia in 1979 and reported in recently. "Australia did not recognize my SA certificates so started all over again. I finished with a Combined 1st Class Steam and Motor, endorsed for Chemical and LNG tankers. After '98 I continued serving on the NWS LNG tankers until retirement 2001. I joined the Sydney Heritage Fleet 1991 as a volunteer and since I was still seafaring, my volunteering, was crewing on a restored steam tug and steam yacht that were hired out for functions. I wanted to qualify as a stoker, but as they were very short of certificated engineers so I spent more time at the controls than wielding a shovel and slice. Once retired, volunteering at SHF shipyard became my principle interest; I was shown the engine room of a 1913 steam harbour ferry (1,000 passengers). (During 1958/9 the steam plant was removed and a 8cyl, two stroke, Crossely diesel was installed.) The restoration work is ongoing. When not volunteering other interests are surfing and motor cycling." Sounds fascinating.

R.D. HIRST 1966 #2281. Roy and I were trying to recall on which vessel and when we had sailed together many years ago, he writes; "I went hunting for my old documents after I received your email and found my Discharge Book and Masters Certificate so I am now able to put together a brief summary of my career.

After passing out from the Bothie in 1966 I joined Safmarine as a Navigating Cadet in 1967. My first ship was the S.A. Shipper under the command of Andy Borlase. I would serve on the S.A. Shipper many more times over the years both as Third mate and Second Mate. I also served on Bulk Carriers, General Cargo vessels, Reefer Ships and Tankers. I obtained my Second Mates Certificate in 1970, my Mates Certificate in 1973 and my Master's Certificate in 1976. I then joined SAR&H in Durban as First Officer. I spent a year in Port Control working alongside a number of Assistant Port Captains' on a shift basis. There was no space on the tugs at that time because there were quite a few First Officers floating around as spare mates until a vacancy came up. After the year in Port Control I was appointed to the F.C.Sturrock as First Officer under the command of Bob Beckett who taught me the ropes of handling a twin screw steam tug. I also spent time on the Jan Haywood with Bill Parfitt who taught me how to handle a Voith Schneider tug. In 1978 I was appointed Master of the John X Merriman another twin screw steam tug. I spent another year doing shift work on the tugs in Durban Harbour and in 1979 I was persuaded by Ron Herman to join him at John T Rennie and Sons as Assistant Marine Superintendent. I was later promoted to Manager of the Bulk Trumper Division. In 1983 Rennies and Freight Services were about to merge to form one huge conglomerate in the freight industry, so together with a colleague of mine from Rennies Shipping, Geoff Peatling, we decided to go off and form our own company, offering a specialized Clearing and Forwarding and Ships Agency service under one roof, to provide a very personalized service to our clients. This was the birth of Seacargo. We traded successfully under this name for 22 years out of offices in Durban and Richards Bay. In 2005 in order to expand the business we merged with Panafco Maritime to form a company called Panargo with offices at all the major ports around the SA coast. In 2009 at the age of 61 I decided to retire and sold my interest in the company to my partners. After 42 years in the shipping industry I have now been happily retired for four years. I live on a golf estate at Mount Edgecombe north of Durban with my wife Cheryl to whom I have been married to for 40 years this year." Look forward to meeting again, perhaps you can arrange your class reunion for 2016.

K.J. SHIRLEY 1967 #2315. After a number of years as Port Authority Director, port of Maputo [remember Lourenco Marques?] Ken has retired back to Cape Town. Ken, I still await your postal address and also the whereabouts of AWOL Ron Herman.

M.G. GREENEN 1963 #2224. Another enthusiastic correspondent, Gerry. "Happy and prosperous 2013 to you and yours. Sorry for this delay in contacting you, but as you will see I have been rather busy of late. I have been appointed by Lloyd's Maritime Academy as Course Director for their new Course - certificate in Marine Cargo Surveying!!!! This is a result of me being an author for their Diploma in Cargo Surveying Course since its inception. Ja, Jong us old Bothie Boys cannot be held down. Totsiens en alles van die beste."

J.R. HENDERSON 1940/41 #1113. John's daughter recently sent a wealth of interesting stories and photographs of her father, which shall soon be added to our legends. "My dad is one of your older 'Old Bothie Boys' at 87 years old (entered Jan 1940, left 1942). I have moved back home to the Isle of Wight (UK) to live with my parents and give them a little support since my own sons have both 'flown the nest.' Dad has sadly lost his sight completely (but not his sense of humour) which has limited the pursuit of all his hobbies. Consequently, we've been spending a lot of time chatting about his time at sea and I thought that I'd jot some of it down so that his grandsons have a record of what he got up to when he was their age. He appreciates receiving your regular Newsletter and enjoys having it read out to him. It occurred to me that you may be interested in reading his history, and, if ever you're short of news for your Scranbag, you may want to use as little or as much of his history at sea as you

like. Also attached are some photos of him as a cadet on board 'The Bothie' and various examination certificates (he remembers failing Afrikaans, having emigrated to S.A as young boy from England, and therefore at a disadvantage with this new language!) My father sends his very Best Wishes and thanks you for your regular publications, which he looks forward to receiving. He wonders whether you are still in contact with any of the cadets from the 1940 to 1942 intake?" Indeed I sent John a list of his class mates and sincerely hope they establish contact, perhaps by Morse key, and swap those hair raising tales.

R.C.J. YOUNG 1976 #2544. Robert and I met at an industry meeting recently, both of us still active in the shipping business. Robert was at sea with Unicorn Lines until July 1986 after obtaining Master's Foreign Going (Class 1). He then transferred ashore in various management positions until January 1996. Left Unicorn Lines and started own company in Johannesburg. Returned to Durban July 2000 and joined Lykes Lines in February 2001 in their operations department. Hapag Lloyd purchased CP Ships [Lykes Lines] in 2006.

J.W.G. LAURE-SMITH 1987 #2911. William left Safmarine in 1999. Worked for Mid East Ship Management as DPA, mate and standing by new buildings. Left them in 2002/2003 worked for ER Schiffhardt - promoted to Master and left them in 2005 and presently working for Swire Pacific Offshore.

G. DURELL 1973 #2438. Gavin is one happy chap at the prospect of retirement. "Tomorrow I go in to the office for the last time. I hand over to my colleague, who has been away travelling, then make my weary way home to three months worth of leave which I have to take before I officially retire on 31st Jan 2013! Forty one years in shipping has come and gone. Amazing how time has flown. Time.... tooooo.... say ... goooooodbye.....Finished with engines. Time to swallow the anchor. Pass me my pipe + slippers!

See you all in the twilight years. Hang in there; stay safe + God bless you all. Ciao."

ANCHORS AWEIGH

B.J.A. AKKERMAN 1959/60. Barry sailed with British & Commonwealth Shipping Company until 1978. Sailed on passenger vessels, Clan Line, Bowater paper carriers and King Link bulk carriers. Then joined Unicorn Lines and sailed as Chief Engineer until retirement in 1988. Deceased 11/01/2013. Barry's class mates have recalled some wonderful memories and anecdotes involving Barry, he is fondly remembered.

W.E.H. BISSET 1934/35. Walter joined H Hogarth & Sons (Baron Line) April 1936 as apprentice and served all his time with them until obtaining masters in Glasgow December 1943. Joined Harbour Service in Durban May 1944. Mate and Master on Tugs and Dredgers. Pilot in Port Elizabeth 1959 - 1969. Assistant Port Captain in Cape Town and Walvis Bay, Deputy Port Captain and finally retired Port Captain Cape Town 1978. Selected to represent SA Merchant Navy in Victory Parade, London 1946. Deceased 12/12/2012. Sad loss of another of our waterfront legends.

P.A.L. POTGIETER 1945/46. Pierre passed away 12th December last. Served cadetship with Safmarine before being appointed as 4th Officer on the S.A. Constantia in 1950. Retired Master, sailed with Unicorn Lines. 1995 - PAL Security Services, Durban. 1999 Retired and relocated to Cape Town.

L.R. BARNES 1946/47. "Lawry" Barnes was extremely proud of the fact that he was one of the first two cadets to join Safmarine from the *General Botha*, when he joined the *Victory* ship *Constantia* early in 1950. He came ashore later that year and joined the Standard Bank, serving in various branches of that organisation in both Natal and the Transvaal. He then moved around the country in various managerial positions in business in Nelspruit and Cape Town. During this period of his life he achieved the financial qualifications of CIS and CMA, before joining Syfret's in Cape Town and then Eskom. In 1986 he became a Senior Financial Accountant with the latter firm and retired in that position in 1993, eventually settling in Gauteng.

He was a top class sportsman for all of his life and as a marathon runner he ran for the Celtic Harriers and Villagers in the Comrades marathon, where he consistently finished in the top twenty, and ultimately captained the Natal provincial cross country team. He was also heavily involved with the Western Province and Border cricket teams.

For the last few years he and his wife Margaret were avid supporters of the GBOBA in Gauteng and rarely missed a meeting, until he was claimed by cancer, 13th November last. He will be sorely missed at our gatherings.

H.C. LENDRUM 1954/55. Hugh Lendrum held the rank of Cadet Captain, won prizes for Mathematics, Navigation and Seamanship and matriculated with a University pass and a distinction in Navigation.

On leaving the *Botha* Hugh joined African Surveys where he became an aerial photographer, which included working for a short time in Harare (Salisbury). He then joined Colgate Palmolive to become Group Product Manager for the Household Product Division. During this time he met Loretta Elizabeth De Klerk and they married on October 3rd 1964. There were four children from the marriage - Wayne, Leanne, Gareth and Grant.

Hugh's abiding passion for the sea drove him to resign from Colgate Palmolive and head off to Mtunzini, KZN in 1970. Here he became an offshore commercial fisherman while Loretta ran their General Dealer Store in town.

He subsequently moved back to Johannesburg where he held positions in senior management with Concord Food and Drugs and the South African Society of Marketers (SASOM). He was also a co-founder of the Loerie Awards, which is still today a prestigious annual event.

Hugh was extremely interested in computers and computer programming and from the mid 80s designed programs to analyze data. He worked in New York and was recognized in the *New York Times* for his research in the Marketing and Advertising Industry of the USA.

He was a well-travelled man who had worked, lived and visited over 30 countries in his life. Hugh respected life and treated people with care. He made a large amount of friends throughout the globe through his willingness to help others. In 2009 Hugh was diagnosed with Basal Cell Carcinoma and Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia and, after almost 3 years of battling, he was diagnosed in remission of all cancer cells, but because of the sensitivity of his body he was not able to fight a stomach virus which dehydrated him, leading to his passing on the 26th October 2012. He is survived by his four children.

T.H. SPENGLER 1948/49. Terry sadly passed away 21st November. Terry served many years in the harbour service retiring as Assistant Port Captain in 1993.

B. SMITH 1954/55. After G.B. Brian worked for Otis Elevators in both Cape Town and Johannesburg for 30 odd years before joining Anglo American. Retired 1994 and did some consulting, deep sea fishing and playing golf. Deceased 27/01/2013.

===Our sincere condolences to family and shipmates.===

A TUG AT MY HEART – Okkert Grapow 1953/54

Many of us shall recall the famous pair of tugs, fondly nicknamed ZTUGS. Okkert was one of, if not THE, principal drivers behind their creation and success.

"My book has finally also appeared - titled : **A Tug at my Heart**, which it is for all those who came into contact with Wolraad Woltemade and John Ross, and did their share to build their international fame. "Their" includes the impressive core of international salvage and towage experts generated by such a small enterprise, most of whom are of course Bothy boys.

It is co-authored by Tony Westby Nunn, is richly illustrated, has 256 pages and is a collection of narratives which includes a number from 'those who were there'.

Copies are available from me at my normal mail address once payment of R250. - per copy plus postage is received at **Rand Merchant Bank (through FNB) Cheque Account No. 557900 10257, Branch Code 260-505 SWIFT Code FIRNZAJJ.** Postage (& packing)

unfortunately varies widely, and I would have to quote options for overseas orders. For local (within South Africa) airmail the cost is about R25.

AWOL

Not exactly AWOL but rather a S&R that came to me from the Ship Society. "A few weeks ago we heard from a Fredrik Grashof who was an engineering marine cadet with Safmarine from 1969 to 1971. He served on the 'Burland' and would like to contact old ship mates if there is anyone who remembers him. His contact is fredg@tshwane.gov.za"

Whilst clearing out and packing recently for my house move I came across a few files of rather old Bothie documents, much of interest. Most I have deposited in the Archives, some used, or still to be, for the newsletters and one old application for membership to the Transvaal Branch caught my interest. **Hylton Lionel Pretorius, class 1952/53**. Address at the time was; 10 Popular Street, Greenhills, Randfontein. Nature of employment listed as "company director". Needless to say that Hylton is no longer on our mailing list; does anyone out there know anything of him and his contact details? There is no date on the application form but life membership of the Transvaal Branch was a heady R6.30 in those days, or R1.00 annual subscription.

"SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY"

By [late] Sid Wheelock 1940/41 - penned 30th December 1993

Perhaps it is old age, but I seem to have recurring bouts of nostalgia! These attacks manifest whenever I meet an old friend whom I have not set eyes in years, or when I visit places that have been distant both in time and locality. Such an attack occurred recently while holidaying in the Cape!

After a most enjoyable scenic tour of the Peninsula, I persuaded my host [who incidentally was my son] to go the extra proverbial mile and take my wife and I to Simon's Town.

Responding willingly to my request, I was driven in luxury along the familiar route parallel to the railway through all those picturesque sea facing towns which led to the goal of my quest!

Passing the railway station, a place of many happy memories we entered Simon's Town, a town I had not forgotten since my very first visit 54 years ago.

My eyes scanned every minute detail of the buildings, roads and of course the very familiar Naval Dockyards.

Nothing had changed very much since all those years ago when I was just a homesick boy taking his first step into manhood and a new way of life!

"Snoekie" was still the same town I had known which over the years had become rather special to me, in a sentimental sort of way!

Suddenly we come upon the narrow road which led down to the old concrete pier a most familiar place!

"Turn down here!" I exclaimed with excitement.

In true naval fashion, my son reacted quickly to my 'command' and soon we were parked at the end of the road.

Getting out of the car, my nostrils once again smelt the clean sea air and my tongue eagerly sought the salt on my lips!

I made my way slowly onto the concrete pier. With each step that I took, the past came flooding back to me! No longer was I an old man!Now in time, I was just a boy in his tender years walking into a new way of life with many years of the unknown before him! I was still to experience love, anger, life, death, comradeship, fear and most of all, the responsibility to those who were to become dependent upon me!

I remembered sitting on the chain guard rail watching the coloured fishermen in their green and white boats trawling for snoek. Lifting the big fish from the water was a very skilful operation. The fisherman would fling the snoek under the armpit, then with free hand, club the writhing denizen of the deep, slit its throat then fling it to the bottom of the boat. Great care

was exercised in handling a snoek to avoid losing a finger or two by the snapping jaws and razor sharp teeth!

Occasionally a duiker would attract the boy's attention as it plunged from flight into the depths of the water, only to emerge almost immediately with a fish in its beak, then to swallow it head first.

The tranquility which had prevailed distracted the boy's thoughts from the ravages of war which at that time was creating havoc in those areas many thousands of miles to the north. Even closer to home, the large expanse of ocean that stretched out before him hid treacherous U-Boats which stalked and sunk the unsuspecting merchant ships leaving the safety of the harbour of the peaceful Cape!

So it was on this morning, in January 1940, that this young man was waiting on the threshold of a new life, far distant from the security, love and family he had come to rely upon over the short, young years of his life.

Lifting his eyes, he gazed in wonder at the gleaming white ship riding at anchor in the bright morning sunlight!

Standing high out the water, she made a beautiful sight with her sloping bows which curved outward below the water line.

The gun turrets, or sponsors as they were better known, bulged out symmetrically along each side of the ship, giving the effect of an invincible floating fortress!

Her two stately masts supported by the well maintained 'lace-like' rigging, sloped slightly backwards, accentuating an effect of a proud ship straining forward like some virgin goddess of the seven seas!

Although she was of vintage stock, she looked as though she could still challenge the heaviest seas and escape victorious! These were some of the boyish thoughts that flashed through his mind! She was the most beautiful ship the boy has ever seen!

The young lad had now been seduced in true nautical fashion by this grand old lady of the deep. From this sacred moment on, he would always answer the call of the sea! He knew now that he was reborn! This was the life he was destined to follow! He was to be cadet on the most legendary and famous South African Training Ship "GENERAL BOTHA"!

Now time had been zeroed! This was to be the beginning of the next chapter of his life!

His excitement knew no bounds as he watched the gleaming white cutter approaching the pier, which would take him to board the ship.

The crew bent their backs in rhythm with the stroke oarsman. The blades of the oars glistened as they left the water simultaneously, then to return and repeat the performance with perfect timing!

Expertly the cutter was navigated between the two piers then turned to face the direction from whence it had come.

Standing erect in the stern sheets, the coxswain adjusted the white lanyard that draped around his neck to disappear into the top pocket of his neat navy blue jacket with eight shiny brass buttons. His cap, set at a cheeky angle, revealed the short cropped red hair, his healthy sun tanned face remained impassive as he stared up at the boy on the pier. His light blue eyes searched the newcomer from head to toe with an air of superiority.

"Shake a leg" Get a move on!" he bellowed out in a stern boyish voice, "We haven't got all day, you know!"

Clutching his suitcase tightly, the boy made his way across the pier to those who waited below. In his haste he was desperately trying to maintain his balance to negotiate the steep stairs that led down to the boat that bumped gently against the fenders of the worn concrete pier.

The young oarsmen sat smartly in two rows with oars held vertically in front of them. They grinned facetiously to one another as the 'new fart' [for that was what new cadets were known as] battled to step aboard with each swell of the sea! With no help from the coxswain, he

made a final effort by throwing himself forward in an endeavour to land on the stern sheets but unfortunately he misjudged his footing and toppled face down to the heaving deck below! Raucous laughter echoed under the confines of the pier! Red faced and feeling very uncomfortable, the boy looked up sheepishly then joined in the laughter with his new found family! He was home at last!

Slowly the picture faded and here I was standing all alone on the end of the pier with unfamiliar ships, yachts and buildings before me.

The sea ahead where the grand old lady had been for many years was empty! She had gone! Gone to a watery grave like so many of those plucky young men who had served on her!

But the legend lives on! Those of us who were privileged to serve on her and are still alive today, will never forget those two proud and productive years on the good "OLD BOTHIE" God bless all those who served on her!

The 2013 "Three Intakes Reunion"

The planned Reunion of the Bothie Boys of the '56, '57, '58 Intakes will DV take place a mere 4 weeks after the issue of this Newsletter.

The turn-out will be above expectation, with approximately 72 guests that wish to attend. There will be Old Boys from Australia, Tasmania, the Philippines, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Canada that come all the way to interact with Contemporaries of 55 years ago.

The true friendships that followed the Bothie years can scarcely be put into words, for the camaraderie between Old Boys is remarkable, and for the outsider quite incomprehensible. The 12th, 13th, 14th March 2013 will be no exception and the hands of friendship are extended between complete strangers and new friends.

The Reunion – taking place in the Garden Route -- makes use of many different Garden Route icons and mementos for each Old Boy and Lady, to accentuate the fynbos, the flowers, the people, the sights and the unique surroundings of this beautiful and safe part of South Africa.

Although the Reunion was planned for 12th to 14th March 2013, quite a few Old Boys are apparently already going to be in Mossel Bay by the 11th. The idea was then proposed that all those who want to can go Dutch and have supper as a group at the Kingfisher Restaurant at The Point as a provisional opportunity to get used to some old faces that will be wearing known names on their nametags

The official opening, by Rev Peter Holden of the Searles memorial Church in Great Brak River, will take place on the 12th March in the Bahia dos Vaqueros Restaurant on the first floor of Diaz Hotel, followed by a few songs by an exceptional artist, the buffet dinner, a fitting power point presentation of mega container ships, and [most importantly] interaction between Old Boys who may not have not seen many of the other since 1957/58. The Masters of Ceremonies will be '58 Fred Setzer and '58 Gys Henri de Kock.

During the two days in between the three evening dinners, different trips will be at the Reunion Goers' disposal, including a Power Van trip up the Outeniqua Mountain under the leadership of '57 Peter and Liz Evans, and sailing in the bay of Mossel Bay under the leadership of '60 Rob and Madri van den Berg. Many more places of interest can be visited by individuals or groups. The choices will be issued in the form of pamphlets for everyone -- to study and to pursue according to each taste.

The second evening (13th March) will take the form of a Braai (all the meat donated by '58 Mike Neill), with typical braaivleis side dishes, a variety of homemade breads and different conserves, to be held in the Arts café on the ground floor of the Diaz Hotel. An Antarctica power point presentation by '56 Bruce Joubert and the Songs-of-the-Fifties by '58 Gerard Marais will shed lustre upon this informal and companionable evening. The Masters of Ceremonies will be '56 Malcolm Clark and '56 Peter Rogers.

The Gala Event, the 2013 Reunion Dinner will also take place in the Diaz Hotel in the famous "Starlight Room" on the 12th floor. The evening starts with different professional group photos to be taken by Lynelle, light-hearted Afrikaans songs about ships, the Garden Route and the Stone

Frigate in Gordon's Bay. Reunion mementos will be distributed and we will sing a fond Farewell to all the Best Friends that attended the Reunion. The Masters of Ceremonies will be '57 John Dugmore and '57 Mike Lundy.

The youngest Guest of Honour will be our Chairman, '71 Tony Nicholas and the oldest Guest of Honour will be '49 Gordon Stockley (and their wives, of course!)

Everyone is encouraged to round the Mossel Bay Reunion off in Cape Town by attending the GBOBA's AGM on Saturday 16th March, and the Sunday Service on 17th March.

For more information, please contact '57 Van & Rita van Rouendal at 082 822 3131 or 044 696 6481 or vanrouen@mweb.co.za

Subject: Association Fraternisation

In recent times the Association of Old Worcesters has been considering ways in which we could co-operate more fully with fellow marine Old Boys Associations, hence my email to you. As you know we held our extremely successful 150th Reunion in Portsmouth this last summer and we were privileged to welcome HRH the Princess Royal as our Guest of Honour at our Guildhall Dinner. We were delighted to welcome as our guests representatives of other nautical associations being limited only by the seating capacity of the Guildhall.

In parts of Australia and Canada, and I know elsewhere, the Worcester / Conway / Pangbourne local Association members have for a number of years have been successful holding joint events.

Our belief is that the time is right to attempt to formalise this situation by exchanging details of each Association's forthcoming events for the year. By doing this we would be able to keep our respective members up to date with all events. Regional Associations branches might choose to use this information to distribute this information to local memberships

We would be interested to receive your feedback to this idea of improving communication and letting our memberships know of other Associations local events that may be of interest to them in attending. Sadly, but inevitably, our membership declines. The College closed in 1968 so our youngest members are now in their 60's.

I wish all a very Happy and Successful New Year.

Yours sincerely, Christopher Farnfield, Chairman Association of Old Worcesters.

**GBOBA BURSARY FUND MENTORING AND OUTREACH PROGRAM
TSOSO HANONG & ZUSIPHE MZOTHO – 2nd half 2012**

It's pleasing to report that our two bursary-holders continue to excel.

Firstly, the Outreach. Mention was made in the last Newsletter about the outreach effort in respect of "Clouds of Hope", the Aids related orphanage at Underberg KZN. As reported, our kids' efforts were enthusiastically received by the Clouds children, and there were numerous candidates interested in applying. However, Lawhill's entrance requirements are 65% in both Science and Pure Maths, and only three of the Clouds children had made that grade, all of whom enjoyed a close-knit and interdependent friendship with each other. So it was with some trepidation that Clouds submitted THREE applications, and a few nail-biting months followed. However, early in December, the wonderful news came – all three had been accepted, and with good bursaries from Transnet to boot. Once again, compliments to Brian Ingpen, but BRAVO to Tsoo and BRAVO to Zusiphe ! A job very well done. The "Clouds Trio", as we now call them, are now at Lawhill, and hopefully settling down well. Zusiphe has been assigned as their "Mother" and was immediately and affectionately nicknamed "Ma-Zu" by the Trio. (Imagine how it would have been if we'd had an Old Salt to take care of each of us as chums when we first arrived !!)

Mentoring was a bit patchy over Christmas, as both Tsoo and Zusiphe went away with family, which was as it should be, with the hard slog of matric ahead. But we managed to get in some meaningful exercises in the time available. On 10th December, we got our two, plus the "Clouds Trio" and 10 of their Clouds friends together, and enjoyed a marine celebration of

the Trio's success, with a trip around Durban bay on "Isle of Capri" followed by a burger, chips and Coke at Spur, who sponsored us to 50% of the cost ! Roundly enjoyed by all, especially those who had never seen the sea before, let alone a ride in a charter ferry !

A Lawhill parent in Durban, Ashwin Maharaj, is with TNPA at Portcontrol Durban, and he generously came in during his leave, to host our two at the Millennium Tower at Durban, and meticulously took them through all of the aspects of Portcontrol, its people, the equipment and all its functions. This had been a specific request of the learners, and they were delighted that it was achieved.



Another day was spent on a trip to Richards Bay, where the Branch Manager of agents Mitchell Cotts Maritime spent the day showing them all the terminals, different ship types and different cargoes which make that port unique. This was very useful, as they had studied Richards Bay in detail in the last term.

Finally, they spent a very worthwhile day at the offices of Edward Nathan Sonnenbergs (ENS) under the guidance of Crispin Camp, who is not only a qualified attorney, but also a Master Mariner ! This was at the request of the learners who had been approaching Maritime Law and Insurance this year in Grade 12 with some apprehension. Happily, all of the "spooks" were laid to rest after a highly participative session with Crispin !

There is no doubt that both Tsose and Zuspihe are rapidly becoming young adults of whom any Bothie Boy can be proud, and who are instinctively living up to all the traditions we all hold so dear. But had it not been for the bursaries which the Bothie Fund provided, it is distinctly possible that they might not even be at Lawhill. **(Jerry Hookins 1960-61)**

SANaval College (Navcol) - 2012 Passing out Parade, 7th December 2012.

Barry Cullen and myself were invited to attend the Passing out Parade of 67 Midshipmen (6 from the Namibian Navy) in Gordon's Bay. The fact that the Base had recently completed a refit added value to an absolutely glittering occasion. The SA Navy Band (ably led by Cdr. Kenny Leibbrandt) provided the audience with a superb display of drill and music. It was obvious that the Midshipmen had received a high level of instruction. After the Ceremony, I took the opportunity to go and inspect our two newly re-installed GB plaques and can report that they are immaculate. It was evident that the Navy clean-ship crews are regularly maintaining their appearance. **Peter Coetzee (60/61)**

The next **GENERAL BOTHA SOUTHERN LUNCH** will be held at the Seven Seas Club, Simon's Town on Tuesday 16 April 2013 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** Friday 12 April 2013 to make reservations.

KIPLING'S "IF" By – Denys Pitcher

There can't be many OB's who have not spent time, either as a "Clean Ship" duty or as "Slack Party", polishing the brass plaque bearing Kipling's epic poem "If".

The plaque came to the Ship in 1923 as a gift from a Mr Bertram of Muizenberg. All the GB establishments gave it a place of prominence. That the frequent and industrious polishing by cadets for more than six decades did not wear away the metal is proof of the quality of the brass from those early foundries.

Kipling penned the poem in 1909. Following its publication in 1910 it soon gained rampant popularity. Within a few years it was recognised as the best known poem in the English language – though Kipling stated that the wide acclaim which it enjoyed did him and the poem a disservice as it "contained councils of perfection most easy to give."

I wonder how many of us noticed that some of these “councils of perfection” are missing from the plaque that came to the ship. I was made aware of this by Captain Kenny – that versatile Examiner of Masters and Mates. On his arrival at Granger Bay one morning to conduct his annual testing of cadets, he stood at the gangway and gazed at the plaque – and then asked “Pitcher, why do you suppose the lines ‘If you can make one heap of all your winnings / And risk it on one turn of pitch and toss....’ have been omitted?” I had to admit that this had escaped me – in spite of the poem having been included in an anthology I was supposed to have studied at school.

Its vibrant words still ring out from the walls of school halls and tennis players making their way on to the centre court at Wimbledon can cast their eyes up and read “If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster / And treat these two imposters just the same”. But perhaps the most generous contemporary tribute has been given by the late German billionaire Gunter Sachs (once married to Bridgette Bardot). He admitted he had no religious convictions. All the moral guidance he needed was found in Kipling’s “If” with its stern admonitions of self-reliance.

Our newsletters provide us with abundant evidence of the achievements and accomplishments of OB’s. This clearly shows that many have “turned the unforgiving minute / Into sixty seconds worth of distance run”..

Donations

We have received donations from many Old Boys for which we are grateful. These funds go towards the expenses in particular of the newsletter and other activities of the Association. We thank all who have contributed to this cause over the past year.

A Brink, Charles Hellyer, Atkinson, Grant Geddes, E Bolton, JR Dow, G Stalling, ES Page, Forster, C Kingon, D Pitcher, A Lyddell, E W Jupp, Brian Douglas, R Hogg, PTS Evans, Rob Watkins, DT Breckon, Bill Goldsmith, GJ Smith, David Bell, Kevin Wilson.

Training Ship ‘S A Agulhas I’ takes Cadet on an adventurous voyage

Since the old SA Agulhas has been replaced with a newer state of the art ice ship, ‘S A Agulhas II’, it has been the decision of SAMSA, and with the initiative of a few GBOBAs to help, to use the former vessel as a training ship for Cadets. The vessel has done a couple of coastal voyages, but its current expedition (as this newsletter goes out) has taken some 50 youngsters from Cape Town, joined by Cadets from Namibia and Ghana, to London. There the vessel docked alongside HMS Belfast and took on board Sir Ranulph Fiennes, known as the greatest living explorer, and his team to embark on the ‘Coldest Journey’ to cross the Antarctic in winter. The vessel left London before Christmas for Cape Town. From there it departed with a grand send off out of the Waterfront on 7 January. The vessel has been chartered by the expedition for its versatility for this particular project, and its crane capacity to lift the heavy machines onto the ice.

But what better opportunity could a youngster have in this day and age than to play such an important part in such an historic and momentous adventure. What Bothie Boy would not be so envious of such an opportunity? These youngsters will be telling their grandchildren about this trip and more, or even writing ‘A Sentimental Journey’ similar to the one on page 8 above. SAMSA CEO Tsietsi Mokhele, speaking at the send off of the expedition on 7 January about the training ship said “How can we use this vessel to the benefit of human kind, and produce officers of a world class caliber?” They identified this opportunity and worked with the expedition team and their sponsors to find a ‘win-win’ solution.

The expedition co-leader, Anton Bowring, spoke of the charter of the S A Agulhas as an inspired idea and hugely successful thus far.

On arrival in Antarctic, Barbara Maregele writes in the Cape Times of the high praise from both Fiennes and Bowring for the Cadets on board who had worked hard and assisted them

all the way from London to discharging the team and equipment safely on the ice – “They have all contributed greatly to the success of our expedition so far.”

The vessel will be returning to pick up the expedition at the end of the next winter after they have traversed the Antarctic.

When one thinks of such an opportunity for Cadets, one thinks of the success of Lawhill and its contribution to keeping South Africans at sea. Further more one thinks how appropriate it is that the GBOBA is playing such an important part in supporting Lawhill and the youngsters who are as eager to have the education and to go to sea as Bothie Old Boys were. The initiative of the Bursary fund is money well spent.

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 or Louise Nicholas:

Phone: 021-7885957;

fax: 086 604 0811;

Email: cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za

BADGE	R100
TIE [STRIPED]	R60
PLAQUE	R150
PEAK CAP [BASEBALL TYPE]	R100
’n NAAM WAT SEEVAARDERS EER Geskiedenis van die opleiding skip.	DONASIE
A NAME AMONG SEAFARING MEN History of the training ship.	DONATION
FIRST DAY COVER 60 th anniversary of our Old Boys’ Association	DONATION
BELT BUCKLE	R170
DVD “THE SHIP” Filmed on board during the thirties.	R40
DVD “RED HILL 1946/47” Collection of Rex Chamber’s photographs with titles and accompanying music.	R45
DVD “SOUTH AFRICAN NAUTICAL COLLEGE GENERAL BOTHA 1954”. Filmed by Barry Cullen and Chris Copeland.	R40
NO REWARD FOR DUTY A Biographical Note on the life and career of Captain G.V. Legassick DSC RD RNR	R129 incl. packageing & postage R227 overseas airmail

PLUS PACKAGING AND POSTAGE! Some items in the slop chest are available from Durban branch as well. BANKING:

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