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## **GENERAL BOTHA OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION**

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

**MAY 2006**

**JOINT NEWSLETTER**

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

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Please send any articles you may wish to be included in the Newsletter to:

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Visit our website <http://www.generalbotha.co.za>

### **CAPE TOWN EVENT**

The June lunch meeting shall again be hosted jointly with the Society of Master Mariners' and shall be preceded by a short film of the Barque s.v. Lawhill. The old film has been copied onto a DVD by Mike Forster, 1956/57. Mike has been editing out the scratches etc. for about five years and by his own admission, he still has a long way to go. However, the film should be of interest to all members.

- Event – “**On Wings of the Wind.**” A film by **V.J. Penso**
- Where – Royal Cape Yacht Club, Duncan Road, Table Bay Harbour.
- When – Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2006, 1130 for 1200.
- RSVP – Kathy Nicholas, phone 021-788 5957, fax 021-421 3250, email [cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za](mailto:cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za)

**These meetings have become very popular and thus bookings are ESSENTIAL.** Should you not have booked, but find yourself free on the day, every effort will be made to

accommodate you [after all, we are an Old Boys' Association] but no guarantee can be given. We look forward to seeing you all there.

### **75 YEARS OLD - COMMENT (Scribe)**

This year marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Old Boys' Association. The Cape Town Branch intends to mark this special anniversary with a **lunch at the Roaring Forties Restaurant on the old Cable Restorer in Simon's Town on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September**. Final details will follow, but in the meantime, please diarise this date to which Obies and their partners will be encouraged to attend.

The following is an extract of the history of the Association taken from a report of the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary celebrated in Durban:

On the 1<sup>st</sup> December 1920 the "General Botha" left London under the command of Captain F. B. Renouf for Cape Town and was commissioned in 1922. The first draft of 74 boys joined the training ship early in 1922. In 1925 the Secretary of the Board of Control for the SATS "General Botha", at the request of the Old Boys, made it known that it was proposed to form an Old Boys' Association, and that the annual subscription would be 5/- (shillings), which would include post free any issue of the SATS "General Botha" Magazine.

Further interest was displayed in 1928, and quite a few subscriptions had been paid, but the enthusiasm of Old Boys was still lacking.

In August 1931 ex-Cadets **Paul Dymond: #380, 1928/9** and **Herbert Horsley: #417, 1928/29**, whilst traveling back to work by train, decided that they would like to see the formation of an active association. At their request to the Secretary of the Board of Control, B.P. Davies, the full records of those who had passed through the training ship were placed at their disposal. A notice was posted in the local press calling for a meeting to be held on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1931. Those interested were requested to contact the Chaplain of the Ship, Reverend R. Park, who became a stalwart of the Association. Dymond and Horsley made it their duty to make personal contact by telephone every ex-Botha Cadet resident in the Cape area, appealing to them to attend the meeting. And again two days before the meeting they followed up with their appeal to attend. The Inaugural meeting of the Association was duly held on 28 August 1931 at the offices of the Board of Control, Cape House, Exchange Place, Cape Town, and was attended by 27 ex-Cadets.

The first committee of the Association consisted of the following: Chairman – George T Stone; Vice-Chairman – A Murray McGregor; Hon Sec-Treasurer – Dudley W Rudd; Committee members – W J Todden, L A Fourie, A H Fife, N McIntyre, C J Sumption, A Hardie and H R Horsley. Within a few weeks Rudd was transferred and H R Horsley was unanimously elected to succeed him as Hon Secretary. He held this position until the Cape Town Branch, which had gone into recess during the World War II period, was resuscitated at a General Meeting in April 1944. He travelled from Durban to attend this meeting in Cape Town. Subsequent branches were started in Cape Town, East London and Durban.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> August 1952, the Durban Branch celebrated the 21<sup>st</sup> birthday of the Association. In the Chair was none other than the original champion and stalwart H R Horsley. The function was in the form of a dance at the Merchant Navy Officers' Memorial Club. The Chairman and his wife, Mr & Mrs H.R. Horsley together with the Vice-Chairman and his wife, Mr & Mrs R.J.A. Dart were their to receive the guests. 72 Old Boys and their partners attended, and there were many apologies from those who could not be there. The guest of honour was Captain Renouf who gave an

interesting account of the voyage of the “General Botha” to South Africa in 1920 and presented a typed copy of the Log to the Chairman. He then proposed the toast to the Association, and in doing so, wished the Association every success and prosperity. The Chairman then cut the 21<sup>st</sup> birthday cake which was in the shape of a ship with the Associations crest on top. The Vice-Chairman later highlighted the pre-eminent part the Chairman had played in building the Association to its present flourishing position and praised his enthusiastic hard work. In recognition of his 21 years service, on behalf of the Durban Branch he presented the Chairman with an inscribed lampstand and a wallet, “the contents of which, we hope he and his family will use towards a well earned holiday.”

There is little doubt about the success of the Association, and we can be proud of the efforts of those two Obies, Dymond and Horsley. Thanks to them we have a worldwide network that brings us together socially and to be able to re-live those days of our youth and camaraderie, as well as in our professional fields. Times may have changed, and we may have moved on from those days of grand dinners, dancing and great speeches. The question is how do we want to keep our Association alive and active? Please consider Tony Nicholas’ appeal (see below “From the Bridge of s.s. Cape Town) for suggestions from members about our future gatherings and what form they should take. It would be sad to let a year go by without the Commissioning Day Dinner and an opportunity to gather and celebrate the Ship. *So, how would you like it done? You don’t need to be in Cape Town to comment, how would you like to see it done in your own branch or region?*

#### **GBOBA NEWS FROM DURBAN BRANCH - Ernest Nellmapius.**

The AGM and Commissioning Day Dinner was a great success with a pleasant venue overlooking the yacht club and excellent food. The committee was re-elected with the addition of Dave De Wet.

#### **SPECIAL EVENING IN AUGUST – 75 years in NATAL:**

A slap up dinner and good guest speaker is being set up for a function on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> August to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the GBOBA in Natal. The function will be for Obies and their partners and if possible light music will be provided for a bit of dancing. The venue will be Point Yacht Club. We are limited to 80 seats so do book early.

22 Old Boys attended the May monthly luncheon which must be a record attendance for the last few years. It was good to see some “long lost souls” from far a field, including Maputo and London.

Dave De Wet left this week for the Cape to attend the annual reunion of sub-mariners in Simons Town and will no doubt attend the Cape Town Branch activities whilst he is there. Regards, Ernest Nellmapius.

#### **FROM THE BRIDGE OF s.s. CAPE TOWN (Tony Nicholas)**

Another successful “March weekend” is behind us and my thanks to all who supported the association and worked behind tirelessly to make it all happen. A notable visitor to our shores was the honourable Derek McManus, Durban branch chairman, who was attending his class of 1956/57 reunion. Fraternal greetings were exchanged at the AGM with Durban branch and with this commitment the association can only grow stronger. However, it was again noted the continual decrease in numbers attending the Commissioning Day Dinner, a major cause of concern to your committee. Again I venture the thought that we need to re-evaluate this annual celebration and welcome thoughts and suggestions from members. Much discussion at

the Cape Town AGM revolved around the hosting of the monthly lunches at the Royal Cape Yacht Club. Many members are aware of the extremely poor standard of catering that has been provided for many months at the RCYC and this has prompted many suggestions to relocate the venue. However, shortly prior to the AGM the RCYC had appointed a new caterer. This caterer already owns very successful restaurants in Cape Town and thus it was decided to test this galley before making a decision. I am pleased to report that the past two lunch meetings at RCYC have shown a marked improvement in victuals. Thus I encourage members to continue their support of this very popular monthly event. The lunch continues to be held on the SECOND Tuesday of EVERY month 1230 for 1300 at the Royal Cape Yacht Club, Table Bay Harbour. Three or four times a year we host a combined lunch with the Society of Master Mariners which includes a guest speaker or presentation of interest. The starting time of these is 1130 for 1300 followed by lunch served at 1300. These will always be advertised in the quarterly newsletters.

A new initiative by the Bothie Boys of the Deep South, a quarterly lunch meeting has been arranged and the recent inaugural meet was very successful. An excellent lunch, price, quality and quantity, was enjoyed by some 22 members. Regrettably five members who had booked failed to attend causing some embarrassment for the organizers. A notable visitor who attended was Michael Wijnberg 1941/42, all the way from his home in Zambia. Well done and we look forward to seeing you at all the Bothie functions Mike. The next Deep South lunch meeting is scheduled for the 18<sup>th</sup> July at the Seven Seas' Club, Simon's Town. Contact Brad Wallace Bradley on 021-786 1957 to book your attendance.

#### **REPORT FROM THE SOUTH PENINSULA – Ian Manning**

The inaugural quarterly GENERAL BOTHA lunch at the Seven Seas Club, Simon's Town was a great success. Three dishes were offered on the menu and virtually unlimited quantities were available of each. Of the 22 who sat down 14 were GENERAL BOTHA Old Boys who rarely, if ever, attend the lunches at the Royal Cape Yacht Club, Cape Town. One former Cadet from Trinity House College, Hull and one former HMS WORCESTER Cadet also attended. The balance of those who attended regularly attend the RCYC lunch. The lunch is not intended to compete with the monthly RCYC lunch but rather to complement it.

**The next Simon's Town GENERAL BOTHA Old Boys lunch is scheduled to take place at 1230 for 1300 on Tuesday 18 July 2006**, again at the Seven Seas Club. For ease of catering, please make reservations about a week before by phoning: **Ian at 021-782-1559 or Brad at 021-786-1957.**

#### **ANCHORS AWEIGH**

**S.B. CLAYDON-FINK 1941/42.** Spencer passed away on the 1<sup>st</sup> February this year. Initially served as cadet with Thesens until September 1943 when he joined SAR Ships as a Deck Boy. January 1944 to June 1946 he joined a Norwegian Company as an Ordinary Seaman, later promoted to Able Seaman. July 1946 returned to S.A. and sat for Mates Certificate. 1947 to 1950 worked ashore in the Gypsum industry and in May 1950 joined the Department of Sea Fisheries as an Able Seaman. September 1950 promoted to Chief Officer, in which capacity he served for 7 years, and Master for 2 years. November 1962 Spencer transferred to S.A. Navy as a Sub Lieutenant. Various sea and shore appointments followed before retirement in May 1980 with the Rank of Commander. May 1982 he rejoined the S.A. Navy in a civilian capacity.

**A.S. COPPINGER 1940/41.** Anthony passed away recently. Unfortunately we have no detail of his career. Any information would be welcome.

**D.E. WILSON 1946/47.** Dennis passed away March this year. Unfortunately we have no detail of his career. Any information would be welcome.

**A. WILLIAMS 1942/43.** After leaving the Bothie Alex served in the R.N.R. as a Midshipman and later transferred to S.A.N.F. He went to the U.S. in 1946 and attended the University of Idaho. He graduated with a B.Sc in 1950 and worked for Shell Chemical Co (a Division of Royal Dutch Shell or Shell Oil Co) for 10 years and then started his own chemical company, which he built to the size of U.S. \$520 million. Alex sold his companies in 1976 and went into ranching business. He raised registered black (Aberdeen) Angus in Montana U.S.A. Deceased 2005.

**D. CHEEK 1944/45.** Donald passed away on the 12<sup>th</sup> April. Unfortunately we have no detail of his career. Any information would be welcome.

**A.A.B. DOUGLAS 1958/59.** An enthusiastic Bothie Old Boy and keen supporter of the Gauteng branch. Alistair became a learner miner in 1961 and after working through various mining positions was appointed General Manager of cementation Mining in 1988. In 1997 he was with G.F.C. Mining, Gauteng. Author of several technical papers on shaft sinking and awarded a Gold Medal by the Association of Mine Managers of S.A. for one. 2005 retired. Sadly deceased April 2006.

**A.R. "Tony" TURNER: # 1328, 1943/44** Tony was born in Uitenhage and attended Muir College before joining the "General Botha". He was a Junior Cadet Captain and on completion of his two years was appointed to the SV *Lawhill* as an apprentice with SARships. On completion of his apprenticeship he wrote his Second Mate's and Mate's Certificates in the UK and served with Brocklebank's, Everard's and Blue Funnel. He was unable to write his Master's certificate because of defective eyesight and returned to Southern Africa to work for Wenela in the then Northern Rhodesia. Moving from there to Cape Town he worked for a number of years as a Buyer for Safmarine and during this time met and married June Scott, a member of the well known pharmaceutical family in Paarl. He was appointed Officer Commanding the Cape Town Naval Cadets, with the rank of Lt Cdr, during this period and was also awarded Honorary Membership of the Society of Master Mariners. He subsequently worked for Russells Stores in Parow and Droomers Motors in Paarl before taking up an appointment as Buyer with UNISA in Pretoria. In this capacity he also lectured on procurement at Pretoria Teknikon. In his retirement Tony served for a number of years as Chairman of the GBOBA Gauteng Branch. His wife June passed away in 1999 and after suffering a massive stroke in 2004 Tony moved to Plumstead to live with his daughter Diane. Unfortunately his health gradually deteriorated culminating in his death from pneumonia on 13 May 2006. He was a keen "General Botha" Old Boy and sportsman and a strict but caring father. He is survived by his children Diane, Iain and Fiona and numerous grandchildren.

## SOS

**B Campher** 1984, last known in Bloubergrant. **Cecil Dent 1928/29**, last known in Constantia, Cape Town. **Andrew Oddy 1987**, last known in Queensburgh, Durban.

Someone out there must know where they are. Please provide any contact detail of them.

Relatives of **Howard Robert Reeves Bostock class of 1925/27**, are seeking any news of him. The only detail we have on file is that he was apprenticed to Prince Line. Any further information of him and his career is urgently sought.

## SCRANBAG

**G.W. SHEWELL 1951/52 #1746.** After a successful career culminating with 13 years as Harbour Master of the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town, Bill has retired. However, not one to rest on his laurels Bill has established a marine consultancy business. Anyone needing Bill's consultations?

**S.H.A. MIDDLEMOST 1957/58.** We have finally prevailed on Sam to provide us some detail of his wanderings. "I left the Bothie at the end of 1958, going into British Shell tankers.

In this company I served in Daronia in the Far East, and in Partula based on Curacao in the Caribbean, and then in Zaphon, shuttling through the Suez Canal to the Persian Gulf and to UK/Continent. In 1962, I studied for my 2nd Mate's at Granger Bay under Phil Nankin and Jim Buchanan. Granger Bay at that time consisted of a few shacks and a Mini-Cooper motor car. I passed my ticket under the eagle eye of Captain Kenny, and then joined the RSA under Ken McNish. We did the rounds of Tristan da Cunha, Gough, Marion, and Antarctica, with one visit to Bouvet Island. Regrettably we did not land on Bouvet. (Any weather was always enjoyable in the RSA). The southern ocean was an ideal proving ground. During 1963 I became aware of a calling to the church ministry, and at the end of 1963 I left the RSA to study in Grahamstown. As a land-bound civilian, I served four years at St. John's parish in Wynberg, and then in 1971 I went back to sea in the SA Navy as a Chaplain. Ted Jupp was then one of the church wardens at the Dockyard Church. At the end of 1979 I moved out of the Navy, and much to everyone's disgust, I joined the Army!!! This was at Eerste Rivier with the SA Cape Corps. It was here that my Afrikaans improved dramatically. For various personal reasons, I also moved from the Anglican Church to the NG Kerk. I then went from bad to worse, and moved into Spes-Ops, with 32 Battalion in the West Caprivi. This was a fairly unorthodox battalion, and I loved every moment of it. I later discovered that there had been bets in the company lines that I wouldn't last a month (and they tried hard), but in the end, I lasted nearly 6 years. Of this, about one-and-a quarter years were spent inside Angola, travelling and sleeping rough. Two more of those years were spent at Pomfret in the Northern Cape, after the UN pushed us out of SWA. It was in 32 Battalion that my Portuguese improved dramatically. From 1991 to 1993, I was chaplain at the Recce HQ and at the Military Police School in Voortrekkerhoogte. In March 1993 I took early retirement, and have been employed at a couple of congregations in the Peninsula. I am still serving in the Reserve forces, in 3 Field Engineers, and am at the point of getting my 30 years medal. To sum up (thus far), at age 65 I have been "fired" three times, and am now looking for my fourth employment. I am wondering what extra there will be to report when I update this CV at ages 75, 85, and 95." There will be plenty to update Sam.

**O.W. IHLENFELDT 1947/48 #1521.** Owen recently saw the light and moved down to Cape Town from Kwa-Zulu Natal After Bothie he joined Barclays Bank in East London. Later studied accountancy and achieved Honours Diploma in 1955. He worked at several posts before returning to the class room again. In 1974 he joined Castle Brass works in Krugersdorp as Marketing Manager. Later joined the S.A. Army in the rank of Captain and managed the S.A. Army fund until 1980 and studied Military Law at S.A. Army College. Promoted to Major and Officer Commanding [Law Division] Witwatersrand Command. Later resigned and opened three antique shops in Johannesburg. 1998 retired.

**J. ARMSTRONG 1963 #2218.** Another Obie who has decided to enjoy a well deserved rest. John has recently retired from Smit Salvage and already avidly supporting the association.

**S.G.J. PARNABY 1981 #2728.** Appears that Steve has moved again and reported in. "Have been in touch with an old shipmate, Michel Lagesse, who contacted me after receiving the newsletter - turns out he lives just down the road so our families met for a good chinwag (and a few amber nectars!), first time we had met in nearly 20 years! I'm currently working offshore in the Gulf of Mexico as a hydrographic surveyor, but hope to be home around the end of March. Will keep you updated as to my movements anyway."

Both these Obies are somewhere in Western Australia. Hope they find their way safely.

**G.A. WHITE 1972 #2428.** Returned mail [AGAIN] followed by some research found the AWOL Gordon in Kwa-Zulu Natal "I left P&O Ports, as MD in April 2005, for a years sabbatical. During this year I have started a new company, Marine Care & Solutions (Pty) Ltd, and we will commence operations in March 2006." Best of luck Gordon.

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW? – ROY HARBER 1926/27 #291

Roy was a colourful personality and a well known Master in the industry. Roy attended Selbourne College, East London before joining the Bothie. After Bothie he was apprenticed to Reardon-Smith Line. Early thirties young Roy experienced the worst aspect of the Depression, certificated officers having to sail as deck crew. During this period, met and married Alice in Cardiff, then had the daunting experience of running the blockade in "Potato Jones'" ships to Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War. Early in WW2 Roy joined Bullard & King and this ensured his sailing would take him to South Africa and he made steady progress to Master. Roy was a well-loved and respected captain. He was made a liveryman of the Honourable Company Master Mariners in London and was long standing member of the GBOBA, which was dearest to his heart. In his memory his daughter Liz Hodes in Cape Town has carried on the tradition. In retirement with Alice, joined his son "Young Roy" and wife Jean in Rockingham, Western Australia. His home "The Anchorage" and the watering hole "Harber Inn" housed many of his artifacts collected from all parts of the globe and the yarn only Old Roy could tell! Sadly Roy died on the 1st. September 1993 in Perth Australia returning from South Africa. The Legend Lives On.

## RADAR AND ARPA MANUAL

It always amazes me the various disciplines that Bothie Boys & Gals excel at. One such is Alan Bole 1949/50 who has co-authored a new edition of the above titled book. The write up reads:

- The most up-to-date book available, with full coverage of modern radar and ARPA systems, integrated electronic bridge systems and the 2004 IMO radar regulations.
- The industry authority text, widely used.
- Meets professional, educational and leisure maritime needs, covering both professional and amateur certificate requirements.

I am sure there are many members out there who would make good use of such an authoritative publication. These can be ordered by logging onto <http://books.elsevier.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 Nicholas:

Phone: 021-7885957 fax: 021-4213250 Email: [cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za](mailto:cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za)

<b>BADGE</b>	<b>R100</b>
<b>FLAG</b>	<b>R100</b>
<b>TIE [STRIPED]</b>	<b>R60</b>
<b>PLAQUE</b>	<b>R100</b>
<b>PEAK CAP [BASEBALL TYPE]</b>	<b>R60</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>

**PLUS PACKAGING AND POSTAGE!**

**Note: some items in the slop chest are available from Durban branch as well.**

**AUSTRALIA BRANCH NEWS.**

**South East Queensland GBOBA News - Andy Fotheringham.**

Good Day All, We had our 6 monthly gathering at the Kawana Waters Hotel on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2006. We all updated our addresses and the attached list reflects all changes that were made. We spoke at length about hosting the 2007 AGM up here in Queensland. What will happen is venues in three locations will be identified and priced. One on the Gold Coast, one in Brisbane and Mike Pomfret will do the same in Mooloolaba. What we will look at is a venue with accommodation close at hand so a good time can be had by all. We have chosen the locations so that people can fly in from interstate and have a place to stay. The 17th March 2007 is fine as it does not conflict with Easter, Good Friday is the 6th April 2007. We shall keep you posted and as far as venues and prices.

Now to our get together: There were 11 of us, the Pomfrets, the Hoatson's, the Shaws, the Lovells, Mike Neill, Simon Reynolds and I. Unfortunately Ian De Villiers was not there because his chauffeur (John) is in New Zealand. Other news is Mike Neill has swallowed the anchor after 10 years of driving ferries on the Brisbane River. He is going to "take a 2 month holiday in Asia" and then head back to Brazil where he hopes to go back to sea on off shore supply vessels. I spoke to Donald Lovell, but unfortunately he couldn't make the lunch. Next time I shall call him earlier. The Kawana Waters is an ideal location for the lunch and the meals are very reasonably priced. It made the 1.5hrs trip from Brisbane worth it. Simon contacted the daughter of Maurice Turner-Darcy. She said Maurice lives in a home but they take him out at weekends. He is really looking forward to our next get together when she will bring him. In the meantime I shall see if I can go and visit him and find out more about him. As you have no doubt heard, we had a pretty severe cyclone hit Northern Queensland last Monday morning. It happened to coincide with a trip home to MacKay. On Saturday morning it was a tropical low and by 1200 it was a named cyclone Larry. On Saturday afternoon the coast from north of Port Douglas to Mackay was on Cyclone watch. We did all our preparations on Saturday including buying a generator, filling the car with petrol etc. Sunday was windy but still a day of anguish as we remained on watch with hourly radio updates. After filling the generator with fuel I had to go back to fill the fuel tank. There were cars 5 deep waiting to fill up and most shops had been cleaned out of certain types of batteries. We were eventually taken off watch status at 0430 on Monday morning. When it hit the coast at Innesfail 200km north of Townsville at 0830 it was a category 5 cyclone. I managed to fly out of Mackay at 0620 in pretty wet and windy weather. I spoke to Paddy Martin on Sunday night who was on the mainland from Hayman Island. They had a very bumpy night on their yacht in Abel Point Marina. I spoke to them again on Monday morning and they were none the worse for wear.

Looking forward to seeing you all at our next gathering in 6 months time. Rgds, Andy Fotheringham.

*And we received the following from Peter O'Hare:*

I did want to share with you that Stan Damp had to resign due to cancer treatment. Things do look good for the near future with radical treatment. Charles Parsons is in an Old Age home and very frail. We had to almost carry him up and down the stairs. They are all getting old. I will be 60 this year! You will note we have anointed Andy Fotheringham as Vice Chairman. This will also serve to bring the two main areas of the country together. Regards, Peter O'Hare.

#### **UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH NEWS – Ted Fisher reports**

After a somewhat lengthy dry and for some, a cold winter, spring has started to reveal itself this past week certainly in the southern part of the country – having been under a hosepipe ban since last spring we can now look forward to living through an imposed drought order for the summer and beyond! **Spring Function** – a most convivial four course Sunday lunch in



the restaurant of the Marriott Golf and Country Club Chichester (I have the pleasure of being a member) on March 5. Attendance of 35 in total which, I'm delighted to say was the highest ever with great camaraderie! Attendees including self with other half, Messrs Neaves 71, Heydenryck 52/53, Petrie 38/39, Butchins 50/51, Snow 50/51, Nash 61/62, Shone 43/44, Mybergh 69, Piggott 76 and Hay 76. An opportunity to reminisce as Adair Butchins and Ken Snow had not met since leaving the college in 51. Graham Petrie No 1000 is, I believe, our most senior UK member whose son-in-law just happens to be the oldest serving officer in the Royal Navy based in Portsmouth! Conway stalwarts were Chris and Anne Nelson, John and Myra Tubb, Sean and Rosemary Guy with their Hon Sec Val Murray. Long term supporters of our group and friends of Donald Neaves were Alan and Maureen Garton.

**Honoured Guests** whom we were very pleased to welcome were Glenys Woudberg together with daughter Karen – a daughter and grand- daughter of our late PTI Jimmy Smith. The internet is a wonderful medium and our Newsletter is obviously essential reading 'world wide'. (*see additional note under **Memories** below*).

**Apologies** for being AWOL on the day were appreciated from: Rob Foster 65, Hugh Scheffer 71, Johnny Johnston 38/39, Roger Ferguson 87, Tim Cowley 60/61, Jonathan Warren 80, Keith Lindsay 60/61, Peter Bush 56/57, Ian Lindsay 63, Bill Rushby 52/53 and finally a very much missed Doug Wrathmall 56/57 out in Cape Town for the reunion and I believe a revalidation of his Masters Ticket.

The classic 1954 video film (Barry Cullen and Chris Copeland) of life on the General Botha was certainly appreciated, indeed, the younger fraternity who only served for one year felt they missed out and had it soft! As a contrast the Conway history film was then viewed!!

**Future Venues** – ideas for meetings, please let me know, however, in the meantime monthly lunches with Conway continue at The Rising Sun Warsash on the 1st Sunday of each month. Hopefully, a new member who is now in our midst Stewart Edwards 54/55 will be able to join us at a future event – to quote from Stewart 'When I attended Bothie my parents owned Thelma's Guest House in Gordons Bay and on more than one occasion I was able to swim around the perimeter fence to the beach and then walk home for tea!' As a 54/55 cadet I've not seen Stewart since leaving and indeed look forward to putting the face to the name!

Our best wishes to all readers. Ted Fisher +44(0)1903 744400 Mobile & e-mail tedefisher@aol.com.

**Memories!** In addition Ted submitted the following correspondence between him and **Piet Groustra #225; 1963:**

"Hi Ted, I am a 1963 Bothie cadet and just sitting here in my office in Long Beach California reading the February newsletter. I see you are having a luncheon on Sunday and Glynys Woudberg will be attending. Perhaps you could just say hello to her from me, we dated once in Cape Town in 1965 or 66, so it's 40 years since I saw her, she probably won't even remember me. I was hanging out with Andy Judge and Paddy Martin, Willy Wicox and Mike Barnes. We would go to the bar on the first floor of the Grand Hotel on Saturday mornings as we were all on leave from Safmarine. Thanks and regards"

**I emailed back to Piet and yes, Glenys was absolutely stunned when I read out the apologies without mentioning any names/connection! A couple of days later from Piet this reply:**

"Hi Ted. Thanks for passing my message to Glenys.

Yes, those were great days, especially Friday nights at the Fireman's Arms, Saturday mornings at the Grand Hotel in Adderley Street and then Saturday nights at the Beach Hotel in Green Point. We were on vacation or study leave from Safmarine and attending Granger Bay for our next deck officer license, be it second or chief mates etc. I remember Tim

Cowley, Neil Lawson, Ernie Hinterleitner, Paddy Martin and Andy Judge being 'in attendance' as well.

Shortly thereafter I met my wife Joanne, she was working in the Safmarine office in New York. She transferred to the Cape Town office in 1969. I just got my Mates license and then went onto U.C.T. and studied Building Science. We got married in 1972 and I rejoined Safmarine in 1976 as a stowage co-ordinator working with Mike Barnes and Bill Dernier. In 1980 we went to New York supposedly for 1 year, to spend time with my in-laws and this would enable them to spend time and get to know our three kids aged 3, 4 and 5. I started to work for the National Cargo Bureau and then one thing led to another and now I am with Zim Container Service in Long Beach California. All in all things have gone very well here in the U.S.A.

Meanwhile our kids have all done well, the youngest one is a school teacher, our son a sales rep and our eldest daughter is European Sales Director for an American software company working out of Slough just outside London. She lives in Windsor and loves it there. She has been there almost 6 years now but hopes to relocate back to the States in about 2 years time. Her biggest accounts are in Holland so she spends a lot of time there, quite a coincidence as that is where my parents come from.

We visit Cape Town quite regularly and have attended some monthly Bothie Lunches at the Royal Cape Yacht Club as I still have lots of family in and around the fairest Cape. I plan to retire in early 2007 and we plan to be spending more time in London, Amsterdam and Cape Town visiting family although our base will be Long Beach, Ca. Thanks again for responding. Best regards, Piet.

*Yes indeed the internet and this newsletter spreads the word! (Scribe).*

## **"Under the White Ensign - My years with the Royal Navy in World War 2".**

**By – R. B. Dickin #920; 1937/39.**

### **Review by Barry Cullen.**

When four British midshipmen were delayed joining the cruiser HMS Dorsetshire in Simon's Town, **General Botha Cadet Ray Dickin (37/39)** and three of his shipmates were drafted - at break neck speed ("navy style") - on board as replacements.

The story of Ray's adventures while serving in the wartime Royal Navy is a lively, easily readable account. Shortly after joining, with the cruiser rendezvousing with a supply tanker in the Atlantic, Ray, on the bridge wing on lookout duty, thought he had sighted it.

*"Object bearing Red Six-Oh Sir!"* A moment's pause then Captain Martin's booming voice from the bridge:

*"Object? Object - what do you call an object? Is it a ship, is it an aeroplane, is it a cloud? Look carefully and report what you see."*

Most of us can equate with similar situations. Ray: "I got the fright of my life and stared into the binoculars and thought I could just make out that it was a ship and took a chance and shouted out: *"Ship bearing Red Six Oh- Sir"*. It was the tanker and later, the captain walked over and said *"Well done Snotty - you can have the rest of the day off!"*

There are two underlying themes in this wonderful book. First, the tale is set against the all pervading backdrop of World War II. While on board HMS Dorsetshire, Ray came close to the Battle of the River Plate and later, in destroyers and corvettes, he experienced action in the Aegean and in the Mediterranean escorting supply convoys for the Allies North African campaign. Attacked and sunk? Yes, but I will not pre-empt Ray's story. 19 Years old at the time, he became one of the twenty odd survivors from HMS Snapdragon. The horrors of war were grim, the sinking of one's ship horrendous, *but* - in the more relaxed times at home-port base waiting for action, or with a few days leave, life could be good!

And this is where the second - and for me strongest - underlying theme of this book comes through: We share in these eventful times, as seen through the eyes of a 17/19 year old midshipman, later sub-lieutenant in his early twenties, the excitement of going ashore in foreign ports, the wonderful hospitality given to the boys in blue by the expat families, the girls, the parties. They lived life to the full! But as Ray concludes, these were the remarkable and often painful contradictions of war.

I'll tell you this friends: I think every Bothie old boy would love this book, and I give it my strongest recommendation. It's also a worthy item of Bothie memorabilia and history. There are photos. Don't miss it. Barry Cullen (53/54).

## THE WORCESTER/BOTHA CONNECTION

### Contribution from Ivor Little.

At the last Gauteng meeting one of our HMS Worcester members, Ian Thurston, passed around a number of Worcester magazines. Entitled "The Dog Watch" they make most interesting reading and bear a remarkable resemblance in both content and format to our own old "Both Watches". Those being passed around covered the period of 1958/59 when Ian was a cadet in "Worcester" and the "Botha" is mentioned in three of them. These read as follows:

**1. Obituary.** News has been received of the death, on 13th August 1958, of Captain Ernest W Wise, late of 17 Brierley Court, Chelmsford Road, Durban, Natal. Captain Wise left *Worcester* in 1885, and had lived for many years in South Africa. He was at one time in command of *General Botha*, and also Superintendent of Government Prisons in South Africa.

**Comment:** Discussion about who Captain Wise was brought blank stares from all at the function so I looked him up in "A Name Among Seafaring Men". Captain Wise, a square rigged Master, was Acting Capt Superintendent after Captain Norton resigned in 1926, was permanently appointed in 1927, and left at the end of that year, being replaced by Captain Yardley. Hands up all those who already knew that! Very few I should think.

**2. Obituary.** Pierce. On 15 November 1958, at Somerset West, South Africa, Commander G H Pierce. Cadet in *HMS Worcester*, 1892 - 1894. Captain G.V. Legassick, Captain Superintendent of the South African Nautical College, *General Botha* - himself an "Old Worcester" - attended the funeral, and a cadet from *General Botha* sounded Last Post and Reveille at the grave side.

**Question:** Who was the bugler?

**3. Captain G V Legassick** (1921), until recently Captain Superintendent of the South African Nautical College *General Botha*, has been appointed Personnel Officer to a large British owned company in South Africa and now lives at Durban.

**Comment:** *Sic transit gloria.*

**Thanks Ivor. Come on you clever Obies, send me your answers to the questions above and further comments if you wish (Scribe).**

## THE GORDON'S BAY MARATHON.

**Roger Layzell: #1773, 1952/53** raises another interesting question and further challenge to you Obies. He writes (or rather sends a fax!): "I recently bought a PC and am still battling like hell to use it, ... When I was at Bothy at Gordon's Bay we used to, in the July hols, have a cross country race from the school, going straight up the mountain to the GB sign, then along the slopes just below the crests to the Steenbras Dam, then back to the Bothy along the tarred road to Gordon's Bay. I guess the total distance was at least 20km. Could you please try to find out the distance, and that part of it along the mountain slopes. This feat of

endurance was reserved for the unlucky boys who could not go home for the July hols. Incidentally I can receive email, but am not sure about sending. Best wishes, Roger Layzell. *Well, how about that for a challenge for you Obies in the Cape. Perhaps our intrepid 4x4'ers (our Chairman Tony included) would like to try the track or some keen hikers with their mod-con GPS explore this. Come on, how far is it Guys? And while we are on the subject, is there any one out there in KZN who can help our lost Obie Roger find his way through the cyber space??(Scribe)*

**Contribution from Ken McNish: #1048, 1939/40.**

*Ken cherishes this poem which is amongst his collection of memorabilia from his many years at sea. He tells me that he first came across this in Captain Billy Bile's night order book, and he would place it in the front cover of his own orders when he was Captain of the RS AFRICANA in 1957 and subsequent vessels he commanded. Ken made numerous voyages to the Antarctic, and was awarded the SOUTH AFRICAN ANTARCTIC MEDAL. (Scribe)*

**The Law of the Chartroom** (with apologies to Rudyard Kipling).

Now this is the "Law of the Chartroom," the "Law of the Trackless Way."  
And the mate who will keep it will prosper and learn to bless the day  
As the creaper that girdles the tree-trunk, the law runneth forward and back.  
So the mate that thinks he's too clever will end by getting the sack.

Read you this word of warning, let the law be e'er in your head,  
Let it be on your lips in the morning, let it be on your lips when you're dead.  
For this be the fate of transgressors, who thus raise the Devil in ire,  
Pain on the rack of promotion, death in the endless fire.

There are one or two things you may do, and still keep a blissful state,  
Always respect the chart-pencil, and never abuse the slate,  
Write up the slate quite honestly, put down what you please,  
Be careful to call a Gale a Gale and not just a gentle breeze.

There's a rubber to rub with, and dividers to do their part,  
There's a rack to hold the pencil and the slate is a work of art.  
Don't write too hard on the chart, Sir, don't make a hole in the track.  
Or maybe one day you'll fall in, Sir, and fail when you try to get back.

The variation chart is a veteran, take care how you use it and mind it,  
Always leave the chartroom tidy, just as you'd like to find it.  
Don't be unkind to the calendar, don't let the Bardwood's drop,  
Don't flog the clock too hard, Sir, or the B... thing might stop!

Don't poke fun at the sextants, they're really quite useful things,  
Or at the chief officer's tables, tied up with elastic and strings.  
Take care of the night-order book, treat with respect, it's old.  
Tap the barometer gently, as if it were made of gold.

Don't spend too long in the chartroom, at night a good lookout keep,  
Tread lightly with your feet, Sir, and let the captain below you sleep.  
Respect the Captain and company, if you want theirs in return.  
Honour the cloth and code Sir, ... and let the others go burn!!

“styx”

### WHAT GENDER is a COMPUTER?

A French teacher was explaining to her class that in French, unlike English, nouns are designated as either masculine or feminine: "House" is feminine-la maison." Pencil" is masculine-"le crayon."

A student asked, "What gender is 'computer'?"

Instead of giving the answer, the teacher split the class into two groups-male and female - and asked them to decide for themselves whether "computer" should be a masculine or a feminine noun. Each group was asked to give four reasons for their recommendation.

The men's group decided that "computer" should definitely be of the feminine gender ("la computer"), because:

1. No one but their creator understands their internal logic;
2. The native language they use to communicate with other computers is incomprehensible to everyone else;
3. Even the smallest mistakes are stored in long term memory for possible later review; and
4. As soon as you make a commitment to one, you find yourself spending half your salary on accessories for it.

The women's group, however, concluded that computers should be masculine ("le computer") because:

1. In order to do anything with them, you have to turn them on;
2. They have a lot of data but still can't think for themselves;
3. They are supposed to help you solve problems, but half the time they ARE the problem; and
4. As soon as you commit to one, you realize that if you had waited a little longer, you could have gotten a better model.

As usual the women won!

### A MODERN DAY NOAH

In the year 2006, the Lord came unto Noah, who was now living in the Boksburg, and said, "Once again, the earth has become wicked and over-populated and I see the end of all flesh before me. Build another Ark and save two of every living thing along with a few good humans."

He gave Noah the blueprints, saying, "You have six months to build the Ark before I will start the unending rain for 40 days and 40 nights".

Six months later, the Lord looked down and saw Noah weeping in his yard .... but no ark.

"Noah", He roared, "I'm about to start the rain! Where is the Ark ?"

"Forgive me, Lord," begged Noah. "But things have changed. I needed a building permit. I've been arguing with the inspector about the need for a sprinkler system. My neighbours claim that I've violated the neighbourhood zoning laws by building the Ark in my yard and exceeding the height limitations. We had to go to the Development Appeal Board for a decision. Then the Department of Transport demanded a deposit be paid for the future costs of moving power lines and other overhead obstructions, to clear the passage for the Ark's move to the sea. I argued that the sea would be coming to us, but they would hear nothing of it.

Getting the wood was another problem. There's a ban on cutting local trees in order to save the Lesser-Spotted Loerie. I tried to convince the environmentalists that I needed the wood to save the Loerie. But no go!

When I started gathering the animals, I got sued by an animal rights group. They insisted that I was confining wild animals against their will. As well, they argued the accommodation was too restrictive and it was cruel and inhumane to put so many animals in a confined space. Then the DEAT ruled that I couldn't build the Ark until they'd conducted an environmental impact study on your proposed flood. And I'm still trying to resolve a complaint with the Human Rights Commission on how BEE my building crew is. Also, the trade unions say I can't use my sons. They insist I have to hire only Union workers with Ark building experience. To make matters worse, SARS seized all my assets, claiming I'm trying to leave the country illegally with endangered species. So, forgive me, Lord, but it would take at least ten years for me to finish this Ark."

Suddenly the skies cleared, the sun began to shine, and a rainbow stretched across the sky. Noah looked up in wonder and asked, "You mean, You're not going to destroy the world?". "No," said the Lord. "The bureaucrats beat me to it."  
*With thanks and acknowledgement to my fiend the Weatherman.*

Just a thought! - The Pessimist complains about the wind, the Optimist expects it to change and the Realist adjusts his sails.  
Scribe ([dhenwood@iafrica.com](mailto:dhenwood@iafrica.com)).