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# **GENERAL BOTHA OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION**

http://www.generalbotha.co.za

# <u>May 2011</u> 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, <a href="mailto:dhenwood@iafrica.com">dhenwood@iafrica.com</a> 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.

# FROM THE BRIDGE OF s.s. CAPE TOWN

After many months of planning our respective 1950/51, 1960/61, 1971 & 1981 class reunions are a pleasant memory. From all accounts, including my own, it was highly successful. I for one decided to take an extra day leave in order to rest and drain some of the alcohol out of my system but alas that was not to be. That day was taken up by my class gathering at Dave Main's pad for a final thrash. Thus the reunions stretched from a Thursday to the following Wednesday. Of course some of the overseas travelers took the opportunity to extend their visit to holiday in our fair city. Somehow it was a relief returning to the office. No doubt there are many reminisces in this publication for our entertainment. One anecdote that amused me somewhat was John Marrison's, 1950/51, tale of when he contacted a class mate he was remembered only because "he had an attractive sister". Among the respective class mates there other very amusing stories which kept us thoroughly entertained. The standard has been set, thus we look forward to next March where we expect at least the 1961/62 & 1972 classes to gather their class mates. Hopefully the classes 1951/52 & 1982 shall also heed my call, Both Watches. Honour and Duty chaps.

Speaking of reunions **Robin Gratjios 1956/57 #1998** is visiting Canada early September this year. He and Margaret shall be staying with class mate Malcolm Clark whose address is Duncan, BC from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> September and Malcolm is planning a local Bothie Old Boys reunion. If you are in the area please contact Malcolm on email <u>jumal@shaw.ca</u> or phone 250-7151405. Also **Peter O'Hare 1964 #2247** is visiting us in July this year and has planned his trip to coincide with our Cape Town July lunch. So all you 1964'ers, let's see you all roll up at the RCYC 12<sup>th</sup> July. Honour and Duty chaps. We look forward to your report back of a notable party worthy of the Bothie.

Our AGM went off successfully methinks with one addition to the Cape Town committee. Keith Burchell 1960/61 who displayed his organizing prowess for the reunion *volunteered* to join the Cape Town committee. Welcome aboard Keith.

This 2011 AGM was Cape Town's 80<sup>th</sup>, a significant milestone indeed. Another notable date has passed by almost unnoticed, the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of our ship in South Africa. "TS

GENERAL BOTHA arrived in Table Bay Harbour from the United Kingdom at **1400 on 26 March 1921** after a passage taking 46 days. She went alongside in the "new dock" [Alfred Basin]. She was still painted in her First World War grey but had the name T. S. GENERAL BOTHA on each bow [apparently not on the stern]. She was registered as T. S. GENERAL BOTHA because there was already a trawler registered as plain GENERAL BOTHA and registration did not allow duplication. She picked up the SATS only after her naming by Mrs. Smuts on 01 April 1922." We shall have to arrange a special celebration in coming months to mark these two events. In other words, good reasons for a party.

Fortunately none of our Bothie Boys or their families was directly affected by the devastating earthquake around Christchurch, New Zealand; I did however receive a few humorous responses to my concerned enquiry.

- Our daughter was caught up in Christchurch at the time. However she was only shaken, not stirred.
- We did have a scare, as two of our grand children were at Christchurch airport waiting for a flight to their home on the Chatham Islands some 400 miles due east of Christchurch. Their flight was delayed for 18 hours. I was naughty and told Shani, the youngest at nine years old "her big FART caused the earthquake". She is not talking to me at the moment, I wonder why?
- And Barry Young arranges a fund raiser; "My family and I are all safe but many of the staff and students at the New Zealand Maritime School have friends and family in Christchurch. We are having an ocean swim this Saturday to raise funds for the Christchurch appeal."

Some retired Safmariners [Alan Smaldon & Ricky Flint included] have tabled the idea of registering a website where they could communicate with each other – post pictures – and pass on news and so far all who have been contacted are in favour of such a site. As our membership has a preponderance of Safmariners, primarily ex, retired, etc, I expect there will be much interest in this initiative. Alan has volunteered to act as the web master, thus ex and present Safmarimers contact Alan at <a href="mailto:assmaldon@chillibyte.com">assmaldon@chillibyte.com</a> to get this site established. This could draw together friends from all over the world!

Finally, I receive many approaches from various staff agencies around the world with details of international employment opportunities, far too many to publish and I am not enthusiastic of using this medium for such purposes. However, I keep these on file and should anyone be interested just email me. Now for this week's Super Rugby match Sharks vs Stormers; where are those grandsons of mine just when I need beer and nuts fetching?

#### GENERAL BOTHA SOUTHERN LUNCH

The next lunch will be held at the Seven Seas Club, Simon's Town on Tuesday 19 July 2011 at 1200 for 1300. Those wishing to attend are requested to telephone Brad Wallace-Bradley on 021-786-1957 or Ian Manning on 021-782-1559 **before** 1700 on Friday 15 July 2011 to make reservations.

# **KZN BRANCH NEWS** – Ernest Nellmapius

We continue to enjoy excellent monthly lunches at the RNYC. Obies please come along on the first Wednesday of every month.

Our Chairman, Derek McManus attended the Cape branch AGM and Commissioning day dinner and thoroughly enjoyed the visit. Thanks to the Cape branch for extending the invite.

The AGM and Commissioning day dinner held at the Westville Country Club on Friday 18 March was a great success and enjoyed by all. The new committee was elected and they are:

Derek McManus (Chair), Rick van der Krol (Vice Chair), Ernest Nellmapius (Secretary), Colin Knowler (Treasurer), Allen Pembroke, George Foulis and Tony da Silva.

This year is the 80<sup>th</sup> year since the first AGM of the GBOBA. However it was decided that a **special** event will be held in 2012 to commemorate this milestone and the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ship.

**Talk to World Ship Society** - On Tuesday evening, 26<sup>th</sup> April Derek McManus gave an illustrated talk on the Bothie to the World Ship Society. This took place at the Durban NSRI base close to the harbour

entrance. The talk was most interesting and Derek related some fascinating events from the past that he, and other Obies present, had experienced.

The Committee, at a previous meeting, decided to make a donation to the NSRI and the occasion was used to present a Bothie plaque and donation to the Base Commander. Rick van der Krol did the honours and outlined the significance of the NSRI to seafarers and many Bothie Boy's both past and present.

The local South African Sea Cadets and Sea Scouts were also recently assisted with donations from the KZN branch of the Obies.



On the left is a bit of history regarding two of our local Obies.

# Colin Knowler painting & Keith Meikeljohn in relaxed mode

# **AUSTRALIA BRANCH NEWS** – Andy Fotheringham

The Annual Commissioning Day Gathering was held in Brisbane this year on the 19th March. The decision was made in late December to hold it in Brisbane due to the continued active support of the members in South East Queensland. On the 10th January SE Queensland was inundated with rain, which resulted in the worst flooding Brisbane has seen since 1974. Most of the prospective venues in the CBD were flooded and there was little chance of them being ready before

our big day. An alternative was looked for and eventually Elaine Fotheringham suggested we approach the Geebung RSL. This was a good choice because it is right next to a train station and the floods did not affect its location in the north. We were given the privacy of our own room and the gathering was attended by 21 Obies, wives partners and guests. Special thanks must go to John Fisher's partner Wendy who brought him up from Adelaide. Thanks must also go to Grenville and Suzette Stevens, Peter and Jenny O'Hare, Stan Damp and his partner and Rodger and Maura Pike (ex Pangbourne) who all came up from Sydney. Also worthy of mention was the attendance of John de Villiers and Cynthia Cochrane, the children of the late Ian de Villiers. The Sunshine Coast was represented by Richard and Gloria Shaw, Brian and Jill Hoatson and Mike and Margret Pomfret. Just to show that Elaine is not a figment of my imagination, Elaine accompanied me down from Mackay attending her first GBOBA gathering in Australia. Special thanks needs to go to Simon Atherstone -Reynolds and Al Snyders who did a wonderful job of organising the venue and making sure things ran smoothly on the day. Also thanks to Simon and Al for keeping the organisation running so well in South East Queensland. Thanks to Brian Hoatson for the photos. By "Unanimous" vote the committee were Shanghaied into another year of unselfish service. Chairman: Grenville Stevens, Deputy Chairman: Andy Fotheringham, and Secretary Peter O, Hare.

# **UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH - Ted Fisher**

Having returned from our memorable holiday in SA I can honestly say the AGM/Dinner & Memorial Service was again a tremendous experience. Our Committee led by our Chairman Tony Nicholas does a wonderful job in maintaining a very vibrant association. I am always surprised and intrigued by the varied career paths GB Obies have taken. At the dinner it was great meeting new faces with who I've been in contact, yet never met through the job of UK Scribe. From the UK were two 60/61ers, Keith Lindsay and Alistair Struthers. A regular at local events here in the past Donald & Kathleen Neaves attended the anniversary activities, all of them reporting the organising committee did everyone proud with the variety of interesting and entertaining activities giving an opportunity to renew friendships.

Alastair was grateful to have had the opportunity to visit the Naval College at Gordon's Bay and to spend a night in his dormitory. I gather his first 'clean ship station' was 'heads party' so he had a particular interest in that part of the ship! I feel honoured to have been accepted as Hon. Member of my Old Salts 54/55 CC's group and thus able with Barbara to join them at their table that evening. Sincere thanks to Barry Cullen for arranging. Particularly pleased Keith and Vi Croome attended, Keith having only left hospital some hours previous. Now very saddened at hearing news Keith passed away peacefully at home on 21<sup>st</sup> April. I am certain his passing will be well represented at his funeral & service in Fish Hoek. A kindly man who will be sadly missed.

We stayed in Knysna en-route, being entertained in the home of Trevor Holmes (a chum of 55) and Adelaide with the added company of Laurentius van Rouendal wife Rita and Clyde Louw the trio having driven up from Mossel Bay for the evening!!

Through Ian Manning we visited the GB Museum in Simon's Town. Wonderful memories much work yet to be done; however, Ian and his team are doing a wonderful job in preserving The Legend! Whilst there we enjoyed an excellent lunch at The Seven Seas Club through Ian & Angela with the company of Harold & Lorraine Lincoln over from the US of A.

On the local home front, Barbara & I met Peter & Norma Heydenryck a week or so ago and am able to report they are well settled and happy in their new home near Chichester.

That's about it, more news anon!

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#### GAUTENG BRANCH COMMISSIONING DAY LUNCHEON

The Gauteng Branch is not really a branch as we have no committee or constitution but for want of a better word we call ourselves that. Our membership stands at the surprising figure of 106 ex-cadets and has grown by four over the last year as younger members drift north on promotion or transfer. We normally lose members as they retire to the coast but since our last get-together this has resulted in our only loss, with Graham Jooste moving to Tarkastad. In order not to clash with all the big events in Cape Town this year, we held our own Commissioning Day luncheon on the 27th March and not the 13th. This was a very sociable affair and took place at the Jeppe Quandam complex in Essexwold. We had a private room that was nicely decorated, an excellent Sunday lunch arranged by Karen Poerner, wife of Rene Poerner, and table wines sponsored by Headline Industries, all for R70 per head, which was unbeatable value. Our hosts at this complex were Winton and Marion Benn who are long term friends of our Association and residents of the complex. The first guests arrived just before noon and the last left just before 17h00, from which one can gather that it was a most successful event. After the usual toast to The Ships, one of our Worcester members, Ian Thurston, invited any Botha boy interested to accompany him and David Jones, another of our OW members, to the 150th anniversary of the founding of *HMS Worcester*, as their guest to represent the *Botha*. This huge bash is going to be held at Portsmouth naval dockyard. However, there was a slight catch as any takers would have to pay their own airfare. 39 Ex-cadets, friends and family attended the luncheon, which was fewer than usual but seems to be the trend for March meetings as for some reason March is a busy month in Gauteng and includes school holidays. Present (and hopefully correct) were Frank Wheeldon (41/42), Laurie Barnes (46/47), Rene Poerner (48/49), Drummond Terry (50/51), Vic Albert and Mike Crewe (52/53), David Jones (OW 51/53), Tony Hunter, Ivor Little, Eric Moir and Keith Quayle (53/54), Tony Jacquet (54/55), Archie Campbell (55/56), Brian Watt (56/57), Wim Kiersgieter (58/59), Ian Thurston (OW 58/59), Fred Marais and Tony Proudfoot (61/62) and Alan Ford (1971). A number of ex-cadets went to the trouble of tendering their apologies and these were Frank Redgment (39/40), Gordon Cross (47/48), Bill Goldsmith (51/52), Peter Hall, Graham Jooste and Ken van der Walt (52/53), Dave Howard, Hugh Lendrum and John Orrock (54/55), Brian Glass (55/56), Hannes Smit and Koos Klok (57/58), Peter Syndercombe (58/59), Alex Vowles (59/60), Henri Fouche (1968) and Dave Sharrock (1974). It was good to hear from them even though they were unable to attend. Our Spring Function will be held in September and Gauteng members will be notified of the date and venue later in the year. Ivor Little Bothie agent in Gauteng.

# News from Vic Holderness 1955/56 #1946, Simon's Town, 12 January 2011.

I sailed in the most recent Governor's Cup Race from Simon's Town to St Helena aboard the ketch Marty Alessa, a Roberts 45. We left Simon's Town with the other seventeen competitors on 1 December 2010, taking fourteen and a half days to complete the journey. Our crew was Colonel Lionel Dyck (owner/skipper) with two Bothie hands aboard, myself and Lance Tiedt (1987 # 2916) plus Simone Wright, a young lady aged 20 years, who brought down the average age of the crew by some margin! What a great shipmate Lance was, he had square rigger experience as the mate of the Hong Kong outward bound brigantine as well as extensive yachting experience in the Caribbean. Lance is still actively employed by Smit Marine. It was probably my last experience of watch keeping (2 on, 4 off), which I enjoyed, especially sailing with a fellow GB old boy. This was followed by a week on the Island itself, and then by the voyage back to Cape Town aboard RMS St Helena, again a most interesting experience.

On another tack, while I was sailing the South Atlantic, my step-sister had been trying to contact me after a break of over thirty years. Her daughter, Maureen McAllister had a photograph of me as a Bothie cadet, so went to the website and contacted Tony Nicholas saying that she was looking for someone called Victor who had been at the Bothie, and had joined the S A Navy. On that scanty information, Tony contacted Ian Manning, who very quickly worked out that the missing person was ME! Good sleuth work all round. I followed up the email details, and we are all back in contact again! Well done Bothie website!

# Barrie Sanderson Evenden (1921 - 1941) - M N War Memorial on Tower Hill

I read with interest your Newsletters on the General Botha Old Boys' Association website. In the



who lost their lives in the First World War whilst the Second World War MN and Fishing Fleet dead are commemorated in a sunken garden below the low wall to the right of centre. There are also statues of seafarers of the period. These memorials commemorate those who died and have no known grave but the sea. In the First World War 3305 ships were lost and more than 17000 seafarers. From 1939 to 1945 4786 vessels were lost and approx 32,000 seafarers. I visit the place often. Each year on Merchant Navy Day, 3rd September (the day war broke out) a service is held here, and again on Armistice Day, the nearest Sunday to 11th November. With best wishes, Paul Ridgway FRGS FRIN Editor.

Newsletter of May 2010 there was reference to Barrie Sanderson Evenden (1921 - 1941) lost in the Mediterranean on 9th May 1941 in 'Empire Song'. From time to time I visit London with my work as a writer on maritime affairs. On a recent visit I called by the Merchant Navy War Memorial on Tower Hill ('twixt the Tower of London and Trinity House, EC3, on the edge of the old shipping and insurance quarter) and took the attached photograph of the 'Empire Song' plate, which I thought, you might be interested in for your records (see below).

The classical mausoleum on the left is to those



#### **REUNION 2011 – NEVER TO BE FORGOTTON**

Charles Reid 1981. Well, the reunion is now a thing of the past, and those that could not make it missed a good bash. The Vergie boys were well represented with Donald not making it due to the floods in Oz, Steve Parnaby being turned back at the airport due to not having a blank page in his passport and Pierre Le Roux having work commitments. Special mentions go to Mike Gibson for making it from Durbs for the pissup at Forries on Monday and the farewell lunch at the College on Tuesday, Mike Stretton for coming down from PE and the irrepressible Padda all the way from Fremantle for the whole shebang. Locals included Dave Murray, Neil Mouton, Patrick Smith, Leon Witz and myself. There was an alcohol fuelled plan to go to Suiderstrand and kidnap Beeslaar, but somehow he got the jump on us and was in Oudtshoorn for the weekend!! The Connie boys and the second half of 81 - well what can I say? Nick Sloane was your sole representative! Many thanks Nick for making it and for the generous donation toward the wine at the Farewell lunch. We hope that there is a better showing from you slackers in 10 years time!! The plans are to have a 80 Vergie page and a 81 Bothie page set up on Facebook. The idea is that you scan in your photos and post them on the site. Any volunteers?? Dave Murray has very kindly volunteered to put together the 40th reunion in 2021 go Dave!! We will all lend our support to ensure that it is also a success! The 61's were the main instigators of the reunion and they put in a huge amount of work and planning. Our thanks go to them for the effort and organization.

**DAVE MURRAY 1981.** I must admit, in support of Charles, that I was one of the gang who viewed this reunion with much trepidation and reluctance, however from start to finish it was absolutely great. It was really good to catch up with all those who made the effort to come - and my thanks go to those who came from distance, especially the French Mauritian South African Australian "give it a go mate" Lagesse who came all the way from Oz and entertained us royally, Parnaby who should have been here (he could never get it right!!!), Mike Strets who came down from PE, and the notorious Gibbons who came from Durbs. Charlie - do not like the way that I have been shanghaied into organizing the 2021 reunion, but with your and Mutton's able and expert assistance, I will be there, deo volente. Cheers guys, it was great to catch up, and looking at the pics of the Vergie and Bothy brought memories flooding back. I must admit I was privileged to sail and study with a bunch of fantastic, eccentric and salt of the earth lunatics.

**SIMON LISIECKI 1971.** I must admit I was rather apprehensive when we arrived at the Cape Town Yacht Club, 40 years is a long time. Would I recognize anyone? Would my optimistic and fun loving class mates, from all those years ago, have turned into grumpy old men with bitter wives? Would the wives get on, I hoped so as five action packed days could turn into a nightmare? Well, just as we were getting out of the car, another car screeches in and a familiar smiling face leans out of the window and yells: "Remember me? It's me, Freddy (Kop)!" Adrianne, Petra, Freddy and me are jabbering away a mile a minute. Next, Robert and Maike de Koning join us at the reception line and we're all talking at once trying to cover all the years at once. That was the start of a fun filled time with non-stop stories, laughter, and being reminded of things one would rather forget. There was an audible sigh of relief when we discovered that Norman "Flinty" Eaglestone, hadn't arrived with a young trophy wife but his cute daughter. Not being biased or anything, but I must propose that the Class of 71 be declared "The Funest and Most Raucous Year" in the history of the General Botha! The glaring looks and "Ssssssshs!" pointed at the Class of 71 area at the AGM dinner, and our entertaining the Non-stop Entertainer and the X Rated hen party at the Paulaner Brauhaus, must surely guarantee the 71's this coveted and prestigious award? Wasn't Dave Main's snappy and fun speech the envy of the room? He claims is was spontaneous and off the cuff; if so give up your day job and hit the comedy circuit! Even the venerable and wise Captain Pitcher, commented on Colin "Bansi Singh" Johnsen's cartoons in the '71 year book, Both Watches, and his rechristening of the Howard Davis as the Olympic Flame.

On a more serious note, I was really happy to see a classroom so full of cadets, there was hardly any room for Roger Pawley to scrawl thorny navigation lessons on the board. How wonderful to meet those bright young children, under the care of Brian Ingpen and his team at the Lawhill in Simon's Town.

I understand that Maike is organizing a 71'ers cruise in the Mediterranean in 2013 (I hope I got that right?), so all of you that were unfortunately unable to come, be there or be square. Please, heed the call

for the next Class of 71 reunion, a good time is guaranteed! I know many people helped and put in many hours to make this event a success. Thank you!

Kathy, thank you for cracking the whip and keeping Tony's nose to the keyboard to keep the GBOA alive. Also, Petra and I really enjoyed 4x4'ing and the braai at your place. I've taken to wearing my Bothie cap, which is causing puzzled questions, "Eer en Plig?"

ALAN FORD 1971. What inspired me about the reunion was the enduring friendships which were germinated 40 years ago are still alive and viable, all they required to re-flourish was a bit of contact and a few beers. We have all come a long way over that seemingly very short interval since '71. Some have changed dramatically..., some look identical... Rob de Koning has been in a time warp for 40 years, except for a little beer belt which was outside the force field containing him. Despite us having all followed varied careers around this little world we live on, we remain sailors at heart, with varying degrees of salt in our veins. We all, in our various fickle ways, aspire to be the perfect seaman and live our lives accordingly. We can all be thankful that the institution of the General Botha in its various forms has plotted our lives courses on a safe heading and generally clear of major obstacles. The legend of the Bothie along with so many other institutions of its type will live forever in the fabric of history. Viva Bothie, Viva.

A three ton cargo sling full of thanks to the Cape Town crew and the current OOW Tony for the fabulous event which went down almost flawlessly... the bus didn't wait for me in Simon's Town!

**DONALD NEAVES 1971.** In a nutshell the reunion was the brilliant success of a lot of hard work and planning and participation by Obies, spouses and families. It's incredible to realise how wide and varied the General Botha Old Boys network is and the contribution Botha Boys have and continue to make to commerce, industry and society. It speaks volumes for the General Botha. It was great meeting up with mates last seen many years ago and being able to reminisce on escapades. It would have been nice to have met some of the Obies who could not make the reunion. Being my first reunion it was wonderful how the organisers had put together a program of events that combined the importance of the General Botha with the entertainment for the spouses enabling their partners to catch up with old mates, and reinforcing their friendships. The Welcome Cocktail Party was a warm ice breaker with many surprises and clinking of glasses. One saw old ship mates and the memories started flooding back and spilling out. Tony thank you for arranging the boat trip on Condor at the 11th hour after the "Olympic flame" aka Howard Davis developed engine problems. The get together (skop n dop) at the Paulaner was great, sorry I bailed out so early to be with my relatives. The AGM, wine tasting/beauty demo and Dinner Dance was a winner. The setting was fantastic. I had earlier done a recce to Kirstenbosch Gardens to make sure I could get there on time. Using "Gertrude" the GPS was useful, except I had to tell her to shut up once or twice and follow my own instincts especially with Cape Town's heavy traffic and wrong turns. The Memorial service wreath laying ceremony at the Cenotaph brought together the continuation of the generations with the granddaughters of General Botha and Howard Davis as guests and "The General Botha" reminding us of the role played by "Botha" boys in history. Another opportunity for old shipmates to reunite. My thanks to Tony and Dr Ed Snyders for arranging for us to "gate crash" Roger Pawley's lecture. It was very nostalgic. A big thanks to Roger Pawley for joining us and being able to chat with him after so many years. A special thanks for inviting Denis Pitcher to the Lunch at CPUT, he was, may we all be, as bright with his recollections of "Both Watches" magazine 1971 articles from cadets amongst others Collin Johnsen's caricatures. The meal provided by The Cape Town Hotel School was scrumptious, I would certainly go back for seconds, and the service was excellent. I was impressed by the work being done at CPUT, LAWHILL and SAMTRA in striving to keep the standard of South African Seafarers World Class. The visit onboard the SAS AMATOLA was an eye opener to how living standards for seafarers on naval vessels has improved. Thanks to Chris Els and "Seven Seas" for a lovely lunch and ice cold beer in what turned out to be a heat wave week. I was expecting temps of around 20C after emerging from a freezer cabinet of a winter in the UK. The informal gatherings were wonderful and we look forward to going down memory lane when the photos come out.

ALISTAIR STRUTHERS 1960/61. We 60/61s were pleased when the 51s, 71s and 81s decided to hold their 60, 40 and 30 year celebrations with our 50 year celebrations. It was particularly poignant to have the 51ers with us, particularly when one described how he and had been a ballroom dancer in his, younger, post GB days. Our first welcoming 'vergadering' was at the Royal Cape Yacht Club on the Thursday where the 'four years' had the opportunity to make acquaintances with fellow GB cadets and shipmates in Safmarine and Unicorn. What a wonderful experience. On day two we 60/61ers made for Gordon's Bay where we were given the run of our alma mater. Does anyone remember the ventilator bricks in the building walls with 'GB' incorporated? What price these memorabilia when the Naval College is refurbished? It was a, somewhat, surreal experience revisiting the boatsheds, the chapel, the main hall, the 'hidey holes' where 'tings' were surreptitiously consumed, the dormitories and the 'heads'. Could we believe that, as 15 to 18 year olds we had 'lived' in this environment for two years? That evening we enjoyed a dinner in the Naval Academy mess hall. There was an enjoyable sharing of stories and a memorable toast from a wife who thanked the GB for making such good husbands and fathers. A few stalwarts spent the night in the dormitory where snoring seemed to be a theme which was non-existent fifty years ago! For those of us from overseas, the Gordon's Bay dawn was nothing short of uitstekend. On the Saturday evening we met at Kirstenbosch for the AGM, ably chaired by Tony Nichols, followed by the dinner dance. Another opportunity to share our experiences with GB, Safmarine and Unicorn shipmates and to enjoy the music of the South African Navy Band. Sunday morning saw us 'bright eyed and bushy tailed' at the GB memorial at the foot of Heerenchracht to honour our shipmates who lost their lives in WWII. This is always a poignant experience with the great grand-daughter of Mr T B F Davies and the great grand-daughter of General Louis Botha laying wreaths on behalf of our benefactor and our namesake and the South African Navy Band playing our familiar songs of praise. On the Monday 'all years' met at Simon's Town where we were escorted around SAS AMATOLA followed by lunch at the Seven Seas Club and a tour of the Lawhill, Simon's Town School Maritime Studies Section, and SAMTRA simulator training facility. Many of us were so impressed by the young people we met at Lawhill, the successors to we General Botha alumni, that we are investigating opportunities to sponsor or otherwise support the next generation of South African mariners. On Tuesday 'all years' met for our farewell lunch at the Hotel School at Granger Bay. Granger Bay plays an important part in the General Botha evolution so it was gratifying to see a GB Old Boy lecturing a class of students, following in the steps of the many illustrious lecturers who prepared us for our professional examinations. The final gathering of the 60/61ers was a braaivleis at the home of a shipmate on the Wednesday. Out of earshot of wives, were stories of serving as young officers on the Mail ships and parties attended by the nurses from hospitals in Durban, Liverpool and London. At least one wife was one of those nurses. This review would be incomplete without giving thanks to the organising committee. Over a period of about two years the committee planned, negotiated venues, estimated costs, consulted members and finalised a programme that provided a fitting commemoration of the SANC General Botha which gave us the grounding for successful careers, both at sea an ashore. Thank you, GBOBAs and wives of the Committee, for a memorable experience commemorating the institution which prepared us for life.

#### THE LEGEND LIVES ON – LAWHILL

All shall recall that the Lawhill is the name of the newly built hostel and class rooms at Simon's Town School accommodating the school kids who are taking the Maritime Studies course at the school, indeed we have reported much on this. One positive that came as a result of the reunion class's visit to Lawhill at Simon's Town School is the proposal to provide sponsorship to students of the course. Many of these youngsters come from rather disadvantage backgrounds and thus such assistance is in much need. The school, Lawhill and the teachers are doing fantastic work with these youngsters. Any visit there and you shall find a group of extremely well mannered and enthusiastic youngsters, some of them far away from their homes. They are a credit to their school, Lawhill and their teachers. This initiative has received total support from the reunion group and some members have already made funds available and others have pledged their support, they are just waiting for your committee to formalise this. The reunion felt very strongly that should not be specifically their class initiative but rather a

GBOBA initiative. In this manner we have yet another legacy towards preserving the history of our training ship and those that trained in her. Keith Burchell has again volunteered to chair a GBOBA subcommittee to establish and run this initiative. Thus further details shall be communicated through future newsletter publications. In the meantime if any member has some funds burning a hole in their bank accounts this may be donated into our present GBOBA account clearly identified towards this initiative. For guidance the present cost to support one boarder through this three year course is in the region of R22,000 per annum.

#### **ANCHORS AWEIGH**

**K.B. CROOME 1943/54.** 1954 Senior Cadet Captain. On completion of G.B. joined John Dickinson & Co, whilst waiting for a ship. Got engaged and decided to stay ashore. Transferred to Bloemfontein and joined Spicers, the paper people, 18 months later. After eight years transferred to Johannesburg and later back to Bloemfontein as Manager. After five years appointed manager of the Pretoria branch and two and a half years later transferred as Manager to Cape Town where he was appointed Director. Five years later back to Johannesburg as Branch Director for five years before returning to Cape Town. Sadly deceased 21/04/2011 following a short illness. Keith shall be remembered by all as a very pleasant and friendly person, and a proud Bothie Boy. In fact he checked himself out of hospital on the day of our AGM last month to attend. A true Old Boy. He shall be missed. **Keith Meyer** writes: He did not go to sea, but had every intention of doing so. He was informed that he had a wait for about

three months for his first ship. During this wait, he was fortunate to meet his present wife, Vi. It was for this reason that he did not go to sea. Vi became much more important to Keith, than the thought of spending long periods of loneliness navigating the wide oceans. Keith, from his early years became involved with the paper trade. In fact he spent his entire life in this business. He and his family were posted to many different addresses within the borders of SA whilst he slowly climbed the corporate ladder. During this period he became much involved in ships and shipping trading paper around the coast. I lost contact with Keith after leaving the Bothie the end of 1953, and did meet or see him for 52 years. I did however meet him and Vi once again in 2007, under the most entertaining circumstances. On a quiet Sunday morning I made my way to the local deli here in Fish Hoek, and leaving the shop with my Sunday paper, I was approached by a stranger and his wife outside the shop. "Ar'nt you Keith Meyer?" says he. "Yes I am" says I. "Don't you remember me?" Say he. "No I don't." says I. "Well I am Keith Croome, your chum from the Bothie" says he. "And, don't you remember that in the last week of 1953, I told you that if I ever meet you again, I'll F... you up?" Says he. Well you could have blown me over with a feather!! 'We'll, here I am, Go ahead" says I. That encounter was the beginning of a firm friendship. He and I would give each other lifts to Bothie lunches both in Cape Town and Simon's Town. I also got Keith to serve on the CT Sailors Home committee. He represented the WP Lifesavers on the committee. Keith became a loyal and enthusiastic Old Boy. He never missed a lunch or meeting. He was always immaculately dressed (with naval precision) in his starched white shirt, Bothie blazer, badge and Bothie tie. The last time I saw Keith, was at the AGM dinner/dance this year. I couldn't help noticing that Keith was suffering much with his illness. Although he had just come out of hospital with the all the signs of chemo therapy showing vividly, he was adamant not to miss the function. Keith and Vi have one son and one daughter and two grand children.

**O.W. IHLENFELDT 1947/48.** After Bothie Owen joined Barclays Bank in East London. Later studied accountancy and achieved Honours Diploma in 1955. Worked at several posts before returning the class room again. 1974 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. Deceased January 2011.

M.J. LERWICK 1948/49. After G.B.Michael served an apprenticeship as a fitter and turner for five years. Then went to sea on the Victory Ship, "S.A. Morgenster" (Safmarine). Two years later joined Smiths Coasters. Sent to Sweden to deliver the "Monita." Stayed at sea for two more years before coming ashore. The "Monita's" bridge (all teak) is a part of the Crayfish Inn at Ramsgate. Deceased 13/02/2011.

**R.B. DICKIN 1937/39.** Ray served in the Royal Navy during WWII. Sailed on HMS Dorsetshire, AMC Ranchi, HMS Amber, HMS Barham, HMS Snapdragon, among other vessels. Also appointed to the R.N. Naval Base in Phaleron, Greece, during their civil war. Deceased 15/09/2010.

# FRANCIS (FRANK) GRAHAM DICKSON 1547 (1948/49) - Best boxer at the time.

After leaving, Frank joined the S.A.Lines ship Damaraland. Then followed a spell with Thesens Coasters and finally fishing for anchovies at Veldrift. Then he left the sea and took up steel construction rigging ashore with various companies including finally, Consani Engineering for many years. Sadly passed away on the 8<sup>th</sup> October, 1999.

**HUB STOHR,** past Bothie lecturer. It is with regret that we learn of Hub passing over the side after a short illness, 19<sup>th</sup> January. He shall be remembered as one of the best, if not THE best, lecturers on the Bothie of all time. Many a student owes their successful exam results to his professionalism, dedication, enthusiasm and unreserved interest in the students. Hub joined the GB in 1972 and although retired many years later from there he continued to lecture maritime students on various courses.

**R.W.M. THOMSON 1939/40.** Reported in "Old Salts" 1947/48. "Was Second Officer on the 'Vergelegen' (Safmarine) on her first voyage under the S.A. flag." Extract from "Mailships of the Union Castle Line." "A few Safmarine Officers were transferred to the mail ships, one of whom was Captain Robin McA. Thomson. Having learnt his seamanship on the training ship General Botha, and after a spell in the Blue Funnel Line, he had joined Safmarine as a Third Officer in 1947, gaining command in the early fifties. His experience and his polished demeanour made him an obvious commander on the S.A. Vaal, before being appointed to command on the S.A. Oranje. When Commodore Norman Lloyd on the S.A. Vaal retired, Captain Thomson succeeded him as Commodore, 05/02/1976 the first Safmarine Officer to be appointed Commodore. Sadly deceased 11/01/2011, he shall be remembered as a true gentleman. **Chris Smith GB 1968** writes;

"I can't recall the exact date when Commodore Thompson joined the S.A. Vaal, but it must have been around 1972 when I was 2nd Officer. He came from having full command of a Safmarine ship to Staff Commander on the Vaal, serving under Dougie Sowden. Despite not being the de facto master of the ship, he was effectively in charge and everyone on board, especially the sceptical UK crew, who were soon under his spell. He was the epitome of a true gentleman, subtly firm with the very large crew (About 400 in all) and the sceptics were soon won over. He usually travelled with his wife and the way they handled passengers must have soon bumped up bookings to travel on the ship. Apart from his social attributes, he was a seaman of unusual ability and I can remember on several occasions Dougie Sowden asking him to take over from the pilot when we had to sail from 'A' berth in Cape Town when the south-easterly was howling. I never sailed under Robin Thomson once he was promoted to Commodore but met him numerous times after he retired. During the years I was a marine superintendent in Durban and Richards Bay we met frequently at General Botha Old Boys functions where he was almost revered for his gentlemanliness and gracious demeanour. He was courteous to the extent that if one happened to pass him in the street he would go out of his way to greet you and he rarely forgot the names of the officers he had sailed with.

Sadly, probably the greatest Safmarine Master has sailed his last voyage."

**Jinny Parsons**, wife of Charles Parsons, class 1939/40 passed away recently. She was a great force behind our association, particularly in Port Elizabeth and Sydney, where Charles was our GBOBA chairman, over many years.

Another good friend **Jackie Cross**, wife of Andy Cross class 1966, also passed away recently following a short illness.

Our condolences to family and ship mates. Our prayers are with you.

#### **SCRANBAG**

**Ron Wilson 1956/57 #2029 First Prize.** Once again our world class Obie painter makes the prizes with his painting "The Boondocks" winning first prize in the 2010 Sidney 'Paint-In'. Go to the following sight to view: <a href="http://www.artistwilson.com/PeninsulaNewsReview.htm">http://www.artistwilson.com/PeninsulaNewsReview.htm</a>

**G.K. JOOSTE 1952/53 #1772.** Graham reports; "Greetings from a cold and windswept Tarkastad. Most people say to me: "Where the hell is Tarkastad?" I answer them that it is halfway between heaven and the Karoo. I have settled here now amongst beautiful mountains and sheep country. I keep busy with my writings and do a monthly article for Farmers Weekly. My last article was on the General Botha for which I received numerous phone calls and emails of interest regarding the article. One caller told me that his great grandpa was present when the German cruiser "Koningsberg" was sabotaged in an East African river during WWI. Hoping to see you all again in March, 2012 for our 60th Anniversary of class 1952.

**J.C. AKESTER 1955/56 #1925.** John formerly supported the Lions, latterly the Sharks but has recently gained some wisdom and moved to Cape Town to support the best team in the Super Rugby tournament, the Stormers. We look forward seeing you at our lunches etc.

WARWICK KENNETH DICKSON 1591 (1949/50). After leaving, had a short spell with Thesens Coasters before joining the Elder Dempster Line in Liverpool. Sailed on various ships of the line as cadet, Third Mate and Second Mate after achieving his Second Mate's Certificate. Subsequently achieving his First Mates Certificate, he then joined Shell Tankers and later Safmarine where he sailed as Second Mate. After not having been home for seven years he returned to Cape Town to write his Master's Certificate. There he met Betty, his wife to be, and decided to "swallowed the anchor". Then followed a variety of employment positions in Cape Town and Johannesburg before finally retiring to George where they presently live.

CLAUDE WILLIAM DICKSON 1644 (1950/51). After leaving, joined Shaw Savill Line operating between S.A. and Australia and then U.K. and Australia/New Zealand. Since he was desperate to follow his brothers to the Bothie, he completed his apprenticeship at the tender age of 18 years and 3 months and was not eligible to write his Second Mates ticket. The Company sent him home for an extended leave and when requested to join a ship some three months later, decided not to take up their offer. Married Dulcie in Cape Town (recently celebrated 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary) and subsequently emigrated to the U.K in 1976. Took up various positions as Fire and Safety Consultant in the Petro-chemical industry specializing in the Fire and Safety design for Oil and Gas rigs which involved travel to various locations including back to S.A (Mossel Bay Gas Rig); on to Montreal (Hibernia Gas rig) in Canada and then to Glasgow, Aberdeen, and London. Finally retired on health grounds in 1998 and presently lives in Reading, Berkshire.

D.WEST 1952/53 #1799. Joined BI in April 1954 as Cadet. Sailed on Kampala. Karanja, Chanda and Canara and while on leave in 1957 approached Capt. Donald Thorpe with a view to joining Safmarine. No vacancies existed as they only had three Liberty ships at the time. Vergelegen, Constantia and Morgenster. Capt. Thorpe then introduced me to George Fullerton, Safmarine's Freight Manager at Safmarine's H.O. in Keerom St Cape Town and they offered me a temporary job as a Freight rep until a ship posting was available. Liked it so much that I stayed on for 24 years serving in all SA offices and London in various management positions, eventually becoming an Executive Manager in charge of developing customer support for Containerisation. Left Safmarine in 1984, was invited to Tokyo by the Sanko Steamship Co with the view to opening up a SA office for them which I did successfully and handed over to a Japanese Manager two years later. Was then invited to form States Africa Line, by SA interests and was transferred to New Jersey as Director, where I lived for two years prior to the company being liquidated. While still in the States the Israeli company Marimed approached me and I did consultancy work for them for a further year. Came home; wanted desperately to go farming, having had my fill and more of shipping. Eventually bought two farms in Mvuma Zimbabwe. Started a textile business which became the largest rural employer in Zimbabwe. Was elected businessman of the year in 1995. Mugabe wanted it and took it away forcefully, so much so that my wife died shortly thereafter. By forcefully I mean just that. We were beaten up badly and fled back to SA. Settled in Smithfield Free State with very little money apart from my Safmarine pension and became an Estate

Agent for Homenet. Finally convinced the Free State Government to duplicate what we did in Zimbabwe and a pilot project is currently under way to which I act as a consultant. Now in my 75<sup>th</sup> year and expect to work till I go over the side! But very Happy. Have a wonderful partner, Elizabeth. Three children, one boy and two girls all in the UK. Would love to hear from any of my old shipmates.

**R.C. BARRY 1976** #2521. Richard is now General Manager of a logistics company in Ghana, with offices in Burkina Faso. He writes; "Ghana is what you make of it. It is very third world with crazy traffic and even worse drivers. The roads have wonderful potholes too. Yes, we have settled down and are quite enjoying the experience. Work however is very busy, as we do the logistics/freight forwarding for the majority of the mines in Ghana and Burkina Faso. That is very interesting. The people are very friendly and there is far less serious crime here than in SA, even though the people are poorer." Have fun up there Richard, we shall call when your services needed. Cheers.

F. [Frans] OOSTHUIZEN 1967 #2311. "I had a happy childhood growing up on farm near Vrede in the Free State. Attended a small farm school at Roadside and my uncle Victor Matfield (Grandfather to the Blue Bulls rugby lock) was our teacher. Did my Matric at Potchefstroom Hoer Volkskoos and the next year went to Bothie. Could hardly speak a word of English and had to brush up quickly. Our batch of thirty cadets was the first full year at the new Granger Bay location. All the old school instructors like Nutty Almond, Slimy Eye Smith etc. treated us with a fatherly hand and although the strict rules were outdated, I still enjoyed my time there thoroughly. I received the "Friendliness and Good Fellowship" prize from Captain Nankin, nogal. In 1968 I joined Safmarine and did my first trip on the S.A. Statesman. We were four deck cadets and although we worked like slaves we had a wonderful time, especially with the nurses in Liverpool. Sailed on various Safmarine fruit and cargo ships and bulk carriers till 1978. Those were the good old days. Married an Australian girl and moved to Sydney working for Blue Star Line. After three years we decided to move back into the shadow of Table Mountain. Joined SAR&H and spent the next nine years driving tugs in Table Bay. In 1990 I decided to go back deep sea and joined Safmarine's salvage tugs Wolraad Woltemade and John Ross. At the same time I sold my house in Hout Bay and bought a seaside farm at George. Next I did some time with De Beers's diamond dredgers, Unicorn, Ocean Diamond Mining and finally joined Tidewater in 1999. I am still here on the "oil patch" running supplies from Soyo in the Congo River mouth out to the field and mooring tankers onto the FPSO's and SPM's on my new ASD Supply/Tug, Vrana Tide. The two months on/off routine suits me fine, keeps me out of mischief and enough time to tend to my property development on my farm. I subdivided the 60 Ha. into 3 Ha. plots and still have a few left to sell. So, all you old sea salts with fat wallets, have a look at my web-site www.lalavuga.co.za or give me a shout when you are in the beautiful Garden Route on 044-8780708 or 0761373133 and come for a "Lalavuga" (Cold Black Label regmaker). Would like to hear from my 1967 Bothie mates and all the friends and characters I sailed with. We have a bunch of Old Boys here in the Garden Route that meet for lunch occasionally. Contact Van and Rita van Rouendal vanrouen@mweb.co.za"

**P. van GYSEN 1976 #2558.** Pete writes on his travels and interesting meetings. "A short message from Thailand where I am waiting to go offshore tomorrow by chopper as marine rep for Chevron (Thailand) on a rig move. I am in a small place called Nakhon Si Thammarat. I was looking at the passenger list for my chopper flight earlier this evening and whose name is on the list, one Hans Christian Liedtke (1981 #2741) who is the MWS rep.

A few months ago I was on an OCIMF course in Abu Dhabi for an OVID surveyor's course and one of the attendee's was Clive Sheard (1976 #2557), one number below me. The barge master/rig mover is Alan Gemmell, cadet in 1980 #2714, so that's three Bothie boys involved from the marine side. Bothie boys certainly get around and meet in the most obscure places!!!"

**C.F. RYCROFT 1973 #2455.** "I [Charlie] have moved on from my job as Napier Harbour Master and have gone back to sea. I am finding work through various manning agencies in the NZ and Australian Offshore oil industry. As I have DP experience in the past and have recently done a DP Basic certificate, work is easy to find at present."

**JOHN BURNS.** Previously at sea with Safmarine before coming ashore into their Stowage Coordination Centre in Cape Town. 2003 joined the S.A. Maritime Training Academy in Simon's

Town as a lecturer. 2008 joined PRDW. 2011 Senior Maritime Specialist with Prestedge Retief Dresner Wijnberg, Consulting Port and Coastal Engineers based in Cape Town.

**MIKE DOWNES 1985 #2861.** Mike went AWOL but has been *saved* somewhere in New Zealand, apparently via Australia. I await his address and update on his activities. Class mate Grant Gorton comments; "How the hell he decides on a Super 15 [rugby] team to support I have no idea or it's probably that he's always supporting the winning team??"

**H.J. FRAHM 1967 #2299.** Hans retired from Transnet National Port Authority in 2008 and remains involved in marine consultancy / survey projects in the Eastern Cape area.

K.H. BURCHELL 1960/61 #2169. Past chairman of the 2011 reunion organizing committee and did a fine job. Here his pedigree. Joined Safmarine in December 1961 served on SA Merchant whole of Cadetship. 2nd Mates in Liverpool in 1964. Served 3/0 on S.A.Seafarer, SATransporter. Mates in Cape Town in 1965 Served on 3/0 S.A.Victory, I/O Lankus, 2/0 SA Van Der Stel, 2/0 S.A.Tzaneen. Masters in Cape Town 1969 Served 2/0 & C/0 Cable Restorer resigned in 1969. 1969 Started two businesses in Cape Town, Diving Bell and Marine & Industrial Ship Cleaning sold in 1970. Joined SAR&H (later SATS and Portnet) in Mossel Bay Sept 1970- 1972. Served as Mate & Master Tugs/Dredgers East London 1972-1975. Served as Master & Pilot in Walvis Bay 1975 -1981. Served as Senior Pilot Cape Town 1981-1984. Served as Harbour Master & Pilot and Ass. Port Captain Saldanha 1984-1988. Served as Port Captain Walvis Bay 1988-1991. Served as Manager & Senior Manager Marine Operations and Lighthouses 1991-1997 Johannesburg. (During this time served on various International Maritime bodies and as IALA Councillor). Appointed CEO of Transnet Subsidiary Marine Data Systems (MDS) 1993 -1998 JHB. Served as Commercial and Operations Director on secondment and on contract to MDS 1998-2004 JHB. Retired from Portnet 2001. Contracted to MDS as Director 2001-2004 JHB. Retrenched from MDS - 2004. Started Burport Marine Consultancy Africa (Ptv) Ltd presently [2011] Managing Director. Established B&B - 2005. Greenville Lodge, Cyrildene JHB. Sold B&B 2010- Relocated with businesses to Cape Town. Indeed impressive and again, welcome aboard s.s. Cape Town.

**H.I. BARNARD 1982 #2753.** Class mates will recall that Henry was at some stage in Beira as Lloyds representative up there. He now reports; "After leaving Moz, my folks and I bought a small bottle store in Richards Bay harbour, the waterfront area. Later sold the business. My wife and I relocated to Warden, sellin wood and coal in the town and surrounding areas. Moved to Parys to look after her folks. Worked for Parys Biltong, the suppliers to PnP, Checkers and Makro as factory manager. We made and packed about 100 tons a month. My wife worked for a glass company, and when the opportunity arose, we opened our own company. Got a contract to install windows in a new RDP housing project. We relocated to an old mining village just outside Carletonville. Would like to get acquainted with any OB in the area." Amazing how our Obies get around in every walk of life.

# Seamanship and Nautical Knowledge Published by Brown, Son & Fergusson of Glasgow

**Ken van der Walt 1952/53 #1795** is looking for a copy of this publication. Anyone able to assist? If so please contact Ken on email <a href="wonken@absamail.co.za">wonken@absamail.co.za</a> or phone 011-7066454

#### STEAM TUG ALWYN VINTCENT

This beautiful old lady is the last of her kind, the last sizable steam vessel that was on the S.A. register of ships. She has been kept from the scrap man by a series of lucky chances.

For 24 years, from 1959, the Alwyn Vintcent worked the Mossel Bay and Knysna ports. She was specially designed to receive passengers in a wicker basket lowered down from the mail boats which used to run scheduled services past Mossel Bay. At the end of this official duty, in 1983, she was bought by some Australians to steam all the way across the Indian Ocean to Australia, for restoration. This romantic trip is the stuff that films are made of! Having almost sunk in the attempt, with the captain's furniture being thrown into the boiler to make steam, she made it to Knysna where South Africans bought her back. Then the SA Museum took her over, but could not continue with her due to lack of funds. Another Australian bought her, knowing the historical value. Again this venture did not

succeed. South Africa, in the form of the Villiersdorp Tractor and Engine Club, now has title to the boat. This club intends to transport her by road to their inland *dorp* and there restore her to full operation. This is a most interesting initiative and one which deserves all the support possible. For further information and to keep abreast of her progress log into website <a href="www.alwynvintcent.co.za">www.alwynvintcent.co.za</a> If you wish to become involved and assist in any manner contact Keith Wetmore on e-mail <a href="mailto:andy@alwynvintcent.co.za">andy@alwynvintcent.co.za</a> phone 083 2800 180 fax 021 845 8115

# More Memories of Pilot Rowe Contributed by The Junkman alias Mike Briant 1953/54.

We had picked up this fully laden bulk carrier, broken down some 600 n.ms north of Cape Town and towed her in. I seem to remember the ship's name was Effy N. - something like that. Deep Salvage 1 was fitted with a 50 ton stern gantry which made towing problematical at best of times, but this ship, due to her trim, proved an absolute swine. Four days of strong south westerly wind had her determined to head for Antarctica while we tried to convince her to go to Cape Town. No proper means of gobbing the tow wire and old D.S.1 really not up to towing a ship of that size. We made it eventually, with a real Cape Doctor building and pulled into a lee off Clifton, to catch our breath, knowing that the final stretch into Table Bay was going to be a battle. The port agreed to send a harbour tug out to assist and so we came up into the bay quite sedately, where a second tug joined forces and the Pilot went aboard the casualty. (Pilot Rowe as I later found out) The South Easter was really doing its thing by this time, as we all know so well - straight across the Duncan Dock entrance. Pilot asked me to keep my tow wire up and lead in. (We had shortened up by this time and the wire was a straight lead off the bulky's bow. I remarked to Peter Wilmott that we would probably be with her all the way to the berth. (This had happened to us on more than one occasion) Peter (the owner) as usual threw his toys out of the pram. 'Over my dead body!' (That's what he always said.) And so, in we went under Rowe's direction, DS1 pulling for all her worth with both harbour tugs 'holding her up'. Then; 'Deep Salvage One, can you please pull hard a port.' 'But...... Oh well!' Round we go and I watch as our tow wire passes clear over the top of the lighthouse on the end of the Eastern Mole and Wilmott turns the air in the wheelhouse blue. I was sure that someone ashore must have got a photo of that odd situation - DS1 on one side of the Mole, the ship on the other and the tow wire stretched between - no such luck. We pulled her round and up the dock - a South Easter much as described in that incident of the Queen Elizabeth by dear old Cee Jay. And of course we were still with her when she was alongside, Wilmott still very much alive and sucking his teeth. Final call on the VHF from Pilot; 'Good job Deep Salvage One.' What a pilot!

# SOS

Do we have any historians in our midst who cover the years *BB*, Before Bothie? An unusual request. "I am trying to locate an ancestor of mine who was, by all accounts, buried in Cape Town in January 1867. I know this is too early for legal registration which as I understand began in 1895. I have tried to locate some information on Ancestry24 with no success. He was a Scotsman, a Captain Donald MacKinnon. He died on board the ss Roman, he was a passenger, while it was anchored in Table Bay. I have the log of the ss Roman it does mention his death but no mention of where his remains were buried. He was relatively well known, and I think would have been buried in consecrated ground but perhaps a paupers grave as he was so far from home. Does anyone know the names of possible graveyards in that era? Or the names of the churches of that time frame? (I am thinking there must have been some notation in the church records about his burial). and/or any other ideas where I might find this information?" Mary MacLean - mermaclean@hotmail.co.uk

Well, that is all we have space for this time. Look forward to seeing you all at our functions and reunions. Hope our regular editor is back from darkest Africa for the next edition. Tony Nicholas.