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

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

**MAY 2018**

### **JOINT NEWSLETTER**

**Has your address changed?** Please send your updated details to Tony Nicholas Chairman Cape Town (details above).  
**Do you have an interesting article for this newsletter?** Please send your contributions to Dennis Henwood,  
[dhenwood@iafrica.com](mailto:dhenwood@iafrica.com) Phone: +27 (0)21 6716373. Fax: +27 (0)86 6706710.

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

#### **GBOBA/SOMMSA/SAIMENA JOINT LUNCH**

- Tuesday 12th June, 1130 for 1200 – Pub lunch, Royal Cape Yacht Club.
- Speaker: Professor Phillip Lloyd of Energy Institute at CPUT on climate change. Details advised on separate email.
- NOTE the earlier start time. Cost R55 per person excluding gratuity.
- Booking for the lunch is important, please RSVP by Sunday 10th June to:  
Kathy Nicholas: Phone 021-788 5957  
Email: [cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za](mailto:cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za)  
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#### **From the bridge of s.s. *Cape Town***

Cast your eyes up to the header of this newsletter and you should have noticed one important change, our new postal address. Our Cape Town post office has down sized yet again and no longer has the physical space for the large number of post boxes. Therefore we were forced to change. Rather sad methinks; I do not know when our original post box was opened but I like to believe it was when the OBA was first established way back in August 1931. Whenever it was opened, it was long before my time.

All who follow our Face Book page shall have seen news of our successful *Bothie Weekend* in March when we held our Cape Town branch AGM, Commissioning Day Dinner and War Memorial Service. Some excellent photographs were posted of the event. In addition the 1968 & 1978 terms celebrated their reunions and by all accounts much enjoyed by all who could attend.

Another notable achievement has been the establishment of your bursary fund Face Book page. A separate FB page from ours enables non-member and corporate sponsors to follow the activities and achievements of your bursary fund and its bursars. So, find it, like it and keep abreast of the news.

Some notable dates in the history of our training ship have been published on our Face Book page, with thanks to the Naval Heritage Trust who is the custodian of a valuable log book of historical interest. Among the days of interest posted:

- 14th March 1987 - your OBA unveiled a memorial plaque on Jubilee Square, Simon's Town. The inscription reads: "The 4,050 ton Royal Navy Cruiser H.M.S. *Thames* was built in 1886 and donated to South Africa by Mr T.B.F. Davis in 1922 for the training of cadets for careers at sea. The ship re-named S.A.T.S. *General Botha* trained 1,276 cadets whilst moored here in Simon's Bay between 1922 and 1942. Since 1942 cadet training continued at various shore establishments."
- 30th March 1966 - our cadets leave Gordon's Bay to occupy the new Bothie at Granger Bay.
- 1st April 1922 - T.S. *General Botha* is commissioned S.A.T.S. *General Botha* by Mrs Smuts who deputized for Mrs Botha who was too ill to perform the honour.
- 1st April 1972 - ex cadet 610 H.H "Boozy" Biermann is appointed Chief of S.A. Defense Force. His successor as Chief of S.A. Navy was ex cadet 695 J. "Flam" Johnson.
- 17th April 1942 - ex cadet 573 J.D. Nettleton earned the Victoria Cross whilst serving as a bomber pilot.
- 23rd & 24th April - the Bothie marches off Red Hill and marches into Gordon's Bay.
- Ex cadet 2530 Peter Hemer 1976 posted a copy of his 1975 S.A. Marine Corporation Ltd pay advice detailing basic wage R88.50 per month and after deductions net wage R24.60 Well Peter, if it makes you feel any better my basic wage in 1970 was only R51.00 per month.

Again, I urge all members to join our Face Book page for the latest news and postings of interest. Old Salts, simply ask your grandchildren to set it up for you.

For the purpose of planning your travel arrangements, particularly reunion groups and those from afar (such as Simon's Town and our *Weskus* - and those from over our border), the forthcoming dates for our AGM, Commissioning Day Dinner and War Memorial Service will be:

- 2019 Saturday 16th & Sunday 17th March
- 2020 Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th March

Constitutionally we should have the Commissioning Day event on or about the 15th March which is the date the first cadets boarded the ship in 1922. Recent years we have avoided the bicycle race (when the City of Cape Town streets are shut down) 2nd Sunday of March, and the long weekend, 21st March being a public holiday.

The following two years leading up to our legendary ship's centenary commissioning in 2022 is complicated again, the bicycle tour and the public holiday again coincides with our traditional date of 15th March. Therefore, *provisional* dates are:

- 2021 Saturday 6th & Sunday 7th March.
- 2022 Saturday 5th & Sunday 6th March.

On the subject of our centenary celebration March 2022; your committee eagerly awaits all your suggestions on how we should mark this important date in our history. One idea we already have is to compile a celebratory book, not to relate our ship's history, as this has already been written, but rather to gather photographs, reminiscences, anecdotes, anything. A wealth of old photographs from the ship's days has been identified in the Simon's Town Museum. But we need more on all the *Bothies* that followed, Red Hill, Gordon's Bay and Granger Bay. Time waits for no one, so please start your digging now and send us everything. We look forward to your overwhelming support.

You shall read below a report from the Chairman of our *General Botha* Trust. This subject brought intense debate at our (Cape Town branch) AGM, the end result being the Trust's proposals have been ratified and are proceeding. Members are welcome to comment further. No doubt we shall hear from the various branches in this newsletter.

On the home front our Garden Route and Southern Lunch (Simon's Town) functions continue due to popular demand. Bravo Zulu to them all. The Southern Lunch, held at the Seven Seas Club in Simon's Town, was initially launched by Ian Manning and Brad Wallace-Bradley who have hosted 47 lunches since 2006. Initially the catering was provided by the club manager and Bothie Old Boy, Chris Els.

Since his untimely death in 2012 Angela Manning provided the lunch catering, which was absolutely superb I may add. Brad, Ian and Angela have retired as conveners of the event handing over the watch to Fred Marais, thank you. Our sincere appreciation to Brad, Ian & Angela, enjoy your *retirement*.  
Cheers, *Tony Nicholas, Chairman*

### SCRAN BAG

**P.R. le ROUX 1981 #2723.** Pieter Bossers came across a kindred spirit in Walvis Bay. Pierre le Roux is presently with Seawork Fish Processors in Walvis Bay. Suppose it had to be something to do with fish. We await your update Pierre and high time the Namibian contingent hosted a Bothie reunion up there.

**F.M. VERHEIJ 1977 #2577.** I came across Frank at our bursary fund golf day recently; he was a representative of our primary sponsor of the event, Fendercare Marine.

1976 - 82 sailed with Safmarine, Cadet to Second Officer. 1983 - Master with Caroline Fishing Company. 1983 - 87 - Sailed with Department of Environment Affairs (Sea Fisheries) achieving the rank of Master in July 1987. November 1987, joined Portnet. Has served as Dredge Master on a trail dredger and 1995 Tug Master in the port of East London. Obtained Harbour Pilot's License in 1993. 1996 - transferred to Durban on promotion to Harbour Pilot. 2000 - moved to Jebel Ali, United Arab Emirates, as a Harbour Pilot. 2012 Harbour pilot in Sohar, Oman. 2017 returned to South Africa. Terminal Pilot / Mooring Master with Fendercare Marine, UK.

**R.M. GARDNER 1983 #2798.** Rob has moved up again to Executive Business Development for Grindrod Freight Services. A rather challenging role.

**M.J.I. FINCKEN 1987 #2904.** Mike is still out there saving the world from itself as Master on the Greenpeace flagship, Rainbow Warrior III. "After 10 years with Safmarine and obtaining Master's certificate I joined Greenpeace International (operating out of Amsterdam). Within 2 years my wife Christine (a Somerset nurse) whom I'd met at Bothie died of cancer aged 30. I took 3 years off the sea living in Canada in an attempt to set my priorities before returning back to Greenpeace.

In 2006 I obtained my first command with Greenpeace and continue to sail as captain on the Greenpeace ships up to current times. When on shore leave I live in Aberystwyth, Wales to be near my son Gwynfi born in 2012."

**S.C. ENGELBERTS 1987 #2901.** Villiersdorp is just that, a *dorp*. Its claim to fame is the old SAR&H coal fired steam tug Alwyn Vintcent now resides there and is under restoration by local enthusiasts. Toralf Grapow located Shane living in Villiersdorp. We know not what he is up to there and wait for his update. Perhaps he is the Master of the steam tug on the local farm dam.

**F. KRONHOLM 1987 #2910.** Finn sailed with Safmarine on States, European & Far East run, 1994 promoted to Second Officer. 1999 studied for his Air Transport License in the U.K. 2000 - returned to S.A. and flew for National Airways Corporation. 2001 - Returned to U.K. and flew between Luton and Manchester. 2002 flew in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Goma based) for a humanitarian organization. 2003 to 2006 flew for the Greater Manchester Police, England. From 2007 Ground and Simulator Instructor with Flight Safety Farnborough. 2008 to 2010: TAG Aviation flying the larger corporate jets. TAG Aviation is a management company with its head office in Geneva, but with offices in Farnborough and Madrid. We are the up market end of the corporate market. At least we try to be. Can't really say who the clients are but they are normally wealthy individuals or corporations. Obtained American and European airline pilot's license and now flying worldwide in corporate aviation.

**T. GRAPOW 1987 #2906.** Toralf joined Pentow Marine. Have remained with the same company for 32 years through numerous name changes. Currently employed by AMSOL. Master since 2000, after taking a break from tugs to be Master on a research vessel for 8 years, back on tugs again since 2013. 2018 Master of AHTS *Lombok*, living in the Cape wine lands area.

**N. CHETTY 1987 #2897.** Neil is flying the Bothie flag high. "Since leaving the sea in 1995 with Safmarine, I moved to National Ports Authority as Pilot in Durban Harbour in 1997, and in 2005 became the Harbour Master for Port Elizabeth. In 2009 became the Port Manager for Port Elizabeth and built the new port of Ngqura. In 2014, I joined Zadco in Abu Dhabi, UAE as an offshore Harbour

Master and since September 2017, I am now with Hutchison International Terminals in Port of Ajman, UAE as a Manager Marine Affairs."

**M.P. FLEMING 1979 #2670.** Mike has an unusual email address which prompted me to verify whether it is actually him at the other end, appears it is. 1978 - 88: Safmarine obtained Masters Certificate. 1988: Joined Pentow Marine, Durban, spent 4 years on the tugs servicing the SBM. 1992 - 2000: Loading Master and then Terminal Manager for Pentow Marine at Mossel Bay SPM. 2000 - 2001: Mooring Master at Durban SBM, EBT Field and Takoradi, Ghana. 2001 - 2005: Working for Smit in Novorossyisk, Black Sea, Russia as Mooring Master for two SPMs there. 2006: Smit Operations Manager based in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Russian Far East for client, Shell. 2007 - 2010: Operations Manager for Smit in De Kastri, Russian Far East for client Exxon. 2011 - 2016: Smit Lamnalco Contract Manager, working in Rotterdam, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon. 2016 - Present: Contract Manager for Smit Lamnalco on an Exxon LNG contract in Papua New Guinea stationed in Port Moresby.

**P.M. MARTIN 1963 #2229.** 1995 Paddy owned a motel in Australia, sold 1997.

Also owned and flew two light aircraft. One is used for crop spraying and the other he uses for aerobatics. He also flew a sea plane which was used for conveying tourists out to the Great Barrier Reef. 2007 supposedly retired. Now it appears that Paddy has built or restored this Sopwith Pup and recently took it on its maiden flight. "On Wednesday 7th February 2018 at about 10:15 Rosie, the Sopwith Pup, took to the air on her maiden flight. The flight was quite uneventful and she



proved to fly well but rather differently to a modern aeroplane. After a four plus year gestation it was with a few butterflies in my tummy that I opened the throttle for real, the first time. She floated off the ground and climbed well at 65 knots. There were no stability problems and the controls required no trimming. After a couple of circuits of Watts Bridge aerodrome we came in to land with a slight cross wind which Rosie handled with no problem." Bravo Zulu Paddy.

**S.H.A. MIDDLEMOST 1957/58 #2064.** "Sam" recently checked in to inform us all is well *Down Under*. "At the young age of 77, I have joined up again with the Anglican Church in WA, and am doing locum (caretaker) work for them. I can still take services, and with my army background, including Reform Church, Catholic, and various other "anomalies", I can still give a "wake-up" sermon. After years of Army parade grounds, my voice can still reach the back of a big hall without a microphone. I enjoy your bulletins, even though they "come from afar", and am keeping in touch as much as I can." After Bothie Sidney sailed with British Shell Tankers. Obtained second mate's in 1962 and joined the Antarctic supply vessel *RSA*. End of 1963 left the sea to study ministry in Grahamstown thereafter served four years at St John's Parish in Wynberg. 1971 joined the S.A. Navy as a Chaplin and end of 1979 joined the S.A. Army, initially with the S.A. Cape Corps and later six years with Spes-Ops, 32 Batallion. 1991-93 was Chaplin at the Recce HQ and at the Military Police School in Vortrekkerhoogte. March 1993 retired from the S.A. Army and continued in the ministry in Cape Town. 2014 immigrated to Australia.

**K. MEYER 1952/53 #1780.** Keith shared some interesting statistics of his draft/term/class with us. "Of the 55 who joined in 1952, 21 went to sea, 38% of the class. These include 2 S.A. Navy admirals, 1 S.A. Navy captain, 2 S.A. Navy commanders, 12 master mariners, 1 chief engineer, 2 second mates. Of the remainder seven have not been traced.

**P.C. COLLIER 1967 #2296.** Unfortunately Peter missed his 50th reunion last year March.

1968 to 1974 at sea with Safmarine. Thereafter came ashore and became a Human Resources Manager for Sports Equipment International, Tongaat Hulett Sugar, Dunlop Tyres. 2008 established his own company as a Human Resource Consultant. 2009 joined Agri-IQ as their Projects and Human Resource Director. Retired end of 2016.

**P.K. van OS 1978 #2618.** Unfortunately Paul had to cancel his attendance at his 40 year class reunion in March due to unexpected work and travel demands. "I currently work as a freelance tow master /

MWS doing rig moves and semi sub discharges and load outs, working for European / UK principals. We are in the process of relocating from Tanzania to the UK, so in short, have bag, do travel".

**M.P. MELLY 1978 #2606.** Class reunions usually bring updated biographies to my inbox which are valued and form part of our Bothie history. "I was married in 1980, obtained my Master's CoC in 1987, then left the sea in favour of my wife and four kids to join Intertek briefly, before joining P&I Associates in Jan 1990. I started Calcon in 1991, and then bought it a year later. I was active in surveying, casualty investigations, logistics, importing and exporting, transport for many years, before deciding that my CoC needed the dust shaken off, and revalidated it. During that six month process (actually it was on my 2<sup>nd</sup> day back at sea as a JNO – basically a jumped-up cadet these days!) I realized that the call of the sea remained as strong as ever. That was a fairly short-lived thought, as Grindrod Shipping offered me a great opportunity to introduce a mentoring program into the Unicorn Shipping fleet. This did disguise the many responsibilities of a Marine Superintendent, but I sucked them up, and thoroughly enjoy being back in close contact with seafarers again. Caryl and I have been married 38 years this year, have four kids, and two grandkids based in snowy Scotland. We've been through thick and thin together, and have shared our experiences with many other married couples in the Retrouvaille program, where we were International Presidents from 2012-2014. We live in Hillcrest, and spend our lives trying to barricade our doors against kids trying to move back home. Unsuccessfully..."

**D.E. SEELIGER 1957/58 #2071.** In 1958 David was Chief Cadet Captain. He joined Bank Line as an apprentice and sailed from Cape Town to Durban and also went to India and to New York. He got his Second Mate qualification and was at sea for five years before going to train as a teacher at Graaff Reniet Teacher Training College, working in East London, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town. He became a headmaster before going back to university to get a degree. He then left to work in England where he still lives.

**W.F. GOLDSMITH 1951/52 #1713.** Bill has reacted to my plea in our previous newsletter. "Apologies for my delay in replying but I did not realize how many loose ends there are to tie up when one retires after being involved with your own business. 1953 Joined the Anglo Saxon Petroleum Company (Shell Tankers) as an apprentice cadet. 1955 Acting 3rd Mate (Shell obviously had a shortage of Deck Officers). 1956 Passed 2nd Mates exam [classes held at the Mission to Seafarers building and I am sure that Capt Phil Nankin was a lecturer at the time), then sailed as 2nd Mate on what was the oldest tanker in the Fleet. No Gyro, no Radar and the Echo Sounder did not work as the bridge was of timber construction and leaked above the echo sounder. 1958 Passed 1st Mates exam, swallowed the anchor and got married! Quite a come down for me from 2nd Mate to Foreman Grade "B" with Caltex Oil unloading tankers and load & dispatch all rail tank cars. This from the old quarry which is now part of V & A Waterfront in Cape Town.

1962 Transferred to Johannesburg to be the first Aircraft Refueling Manager for Caltex in South Africa. To begin with two flights a week to be refueled, Sabena and Pan Am. 1967 Left Caltex and went into sales, mainly related to filtration and thermal insulation with a number of companies. 2008 Formed my own export business and also into partnership with others in the polyurethane business, blending chemicals and manufacturing thermal insulation products. 2013 Shut down export business due the inefficiency of South African labour resulting in being uncompetitive. 2018 retired but still involved in the polyurethanes business as a director and shareholder but not involved in the day to day business but as a consultant on a when required basis."

### ANCHORS AWEIGH

**L.E. WESTON 1968.** Len slipped his cable 26th March, moving eulogy from his children. Laughter-loud, joyous, contagious laughter- that is what most people comment on when they remember Pastor Leonard Weston. As children, when in a large crowd & we didn't know where our parents were, we would just stand for a moment & wait for the laugh... making Dad easy to find.

Leonard Ernest Weston, born 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1949, in Chingola Zambia, was the youngest of four children. Len attended boarding school in Lusaka, Zambia & then completed schooling at Gifford Tech, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. During his high school years, while on a family vacation in Cape Town,

he met Dagmar- which resulted in him moving to Cape Town & spending a year at *General Botha* Naval Academy in 1968. Len was quite the wild child, by the age of 21, he had been in 21 car accidents (he was only driver in four of them)... the last accident being when he put his MGBGT sports car under a train, whilst dicing a friend, in the Cape Town harbor. After the Academy, Len worked his way up the ranks in business until he was factory manager for a leather luggage company. Leonard & Dagmar married in 1972. Their home was the notorious party spot & they were the neighbours nobody wanted to have! One afternoon, in the midst of reveling with friends, Len had the sudden urge to attend an evening church service & told his friends to lock up when they'd finished their drinks. Two weeks later, the same urge hit him & that night, after hearing a message of the stoning of Stephen, Leonard responded to the altar call & his life changed drastically. From then on, Len became very involved in the local church & in 1980 felt called into fulltime ministry. At this stage, Len & Dagmar had two young children, Robert & Simone, & sold up everything and moved to Louisville, Kentucky, USA for Len to study at the Southern Baptist Seminary for eight years. Whilst there, their youngest, Natasha, was born. During those years, Leonard was a co-pastor at a vibrant, fast-growing charismatic church with his brother, Dr Owen Weston. Upon completion of his theology studies, the family returned to South Africa whereupon they received a call to the then Piet Retief Christian Church, in January 1989. At that time, the church had undergone a split. One of Leonard's conditions of accepting the post was to restore the two factions, which, with the help of the Lord, was accomplished within the first year.

Prior to the 1994 elections, Leonard was the Chairman of the Peace Committee & was also key in networking with pastors in Swaziland & surrounding towns. This networking resulted in lifelong friendships & in him being made chairman of the Lighthouse Board, Mbabane- which now oversees Bulembu, Teen Challenge & Potters Wheel church. The PRCC grew, adjacent properties were bought, Maranatha School was started & the original building became too small. It was apparent that a larger building was necessary. To this day, many people still joke about "Len's gym" – where the church folk would help with building the new church on Saturdays! The new building was opened in 1997, with not a cent owed: debt-free, such a testimony! In the years that followed, different ministries sprung up from PRCC, namely: Kebar Bookshop, Assegai Revival Centre (Commondale), River of Life Church Plants & Uzwelo Home. At this time the leadership decided that a name change was in order, to encompass the various ministries- thus Wellspring Ministries. In 1999, Pastor Len completed his Masters degree in Ministry. Pastor Len was an integral part of Piet Retief's pastors fraternal & a great encourager & motivator for many ministries. He was also a part of the Fellowship of Elders- a meeting of Senior Pastors from all over South Africa. Since 1998, Pastor Len mentored Sheldon Hallis & frequently referred to him as his "Timothy". On Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2018, Len officially handed over the mantel of Senior Pastor of Wellspring Ministries to Sheldon, unknowing that this would be his last time at the pulpit.

Pastor Len began having heart problems in 2013, resulting in a pacemaker. Sadly, on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> March, Leonard went home to be with the Lord. He leaves behind his beloved wife Dagmar, three children, their spouses & seven grandchildren. The Weston family has been overwhelmed by the outpouring of love & support from Wellspring & from the entire Piet Retief community, for which we extend our gratitude.

Pastor Len often challenged young pastors & mission students, "If God had to take your church out of the community, would anyone notice?" With this we would like to challenge you to make a difference in your community & to continue Pastor Len's legacy.

**A.S. HUNTER 1953/54.** Tony weighed his anchor 13th April, kind words from class mate Ivor Little. He was a bit of a hell-raiser at the *Botha* which made him popular with his fellow cadets, but earned the constant displeasure of authority. Nonetheless he was a keen member of the OBA and regularly attended all its functions. He also hosted monthly luncheons for many years at the Johannesburg Country Club for his immediate circle of old salts and shipmates.

Another shipmate who will be sadly missed.

Tony Hunter was another 'Vaalie', this time from Vereeniging High School. When he left the *General Botha* he joined African Coasters, serving in the Barrier and the Voorloper on the Durban to Cape Town run.

In 1957 Tony decided to come ashore, joining John Brown Land Boilers, doing boiler installations at various sites until 1960. Having broken into the engineering business, he then moved to Babcock and Wilcox, where he was 'thrown into the deep end' with general machining, lathes and milling machines. In 1961 Tony decided it was time to branch out on his own, establishing A S Hunter Steel Construction, engaged in various projects including military and mining work but specializing in elevated water tanks. This kept him busy for twenty years until 1981.

During this time Tony met Margot Allan of Fish Hoek, a primary school teacher specializing in remedial education. They were married in 1965 bringing three sons into the world, with one of them, Michael, dying very sadly at only one month old. In 1978, at the tragically young age of 34, Margot passed away from cancer.

In 1980 Tony founded Hunter Transport and commenced a five-year legal battle to secure an Inter-City passenger transport permit to operate long distance buses between Johannesburg and Durban. He was ultimately successful and in 1985, Citi Line was established in partnership with Safmarine and Main Line Carriers.

In 1987 Tony sold his interest in the bus line to Safmarine and purchased a share in Pennybridge Duck Farm, selling that in 1990 when, in a complete change of direction, he qualified as an estate agent and entered the fast track world of real estate.

However, Tony could not break away completely from his interest in engineering. In 1990, he went into production line maintenance with a firm called Main Tin, a member of the Barlow Group. Then, his real estate interest gained the upper hand again! In 1993 he established a partnership known as Endeavour Estates and ran this until 1999. Then, back to engineering it was for Tony and until 2003 he was with Bakker and Griffioen, engaged in construction work on various sites, including SASOL.

In August 2005, Tony registered Cresta Construction, doing repair and maintenance to residential properties. This was a success until the recession in 2009, whereupon he de-registered the company but continued in the same business but now as a 'one-man show'.

Tony did not remarry after Margot's death, putting his two surviving sons, James and Gavin, through St Stithians College in Johannesburg. Tony lived in Linden and after rejoining Endeavour Estates, continued keeping himself busy as an estate agent! He has four grandsons, three in South Africa and one in UK.

**John Raymond (Ray) Rippon, No.1059, 1939-40** Ray passed away on 31 January 2005.

Borne 15 September 1923 in Durban; Parents Sidney and Nelie Rippon had four children – Merle, Desmond Ray and Alison; Started life in Durban and moved to Johannesburg where he attended King Edward High School before going to the General Botha where he matriculated.

Midshipman Royal Navy Reserve (RNR) 1940 - 45. HMS "*Pretoria Castle*" 11 Dec 1940 to 30 Nov 1941 (Armed Merchant Cruiser); HMS "*Gambia*" 15 Feb 1942 to 13 May 1943 (Crown Colony-class Light Cruiser); HMS "*Frobisher*" 21 June 1943 to 9 March 1944 (Hawkins-class Heavy Cruiser); HMS "*Full Moon*" 24 March 1944 to 7 March 1945; HMS "*Mayina*" 10 March 1945 to 21 July 1945

During his time as Midshipman Ray kept a meticulous journal of his experiences and travels which has been copied electronically to be preserved in the GB archives. Ray married Amy and they bought a bungalow on 4<sup>th</sup> Beach, Clifton in Cape Town where they began their life together. Subsequently they moved with their four children to Rondebosch. They were happily married for over 50 years. Ray spent most of his working career as a manufacturer's representative (middleman/wholesaler) selling clothing, textiles and groceries in the western and southern Cape. He and his brother-in-law, Piet Maas (ex-RAF Pilot) ran a very successful agency business for over 35 years. They had more than a dozen representatives on the road at one stage. They were based at the old Robbs Motors Building near the Rondebosch bridge.

**N. COOPER 1958/59.** 1960 - 76 Nic sailed with T&J Harrison and later with Geest Line. 2 years Master on a 600T Coaster, tramping. 2 years master on a 650T Twin Screw Motor Yacht based in Monte Carlo. 3 years Chief Officer with Kuwait Shipping Company. 1976 - 79, Master with Uiterwyk Corporation. 1979 - 83 Port Captain with Uiterwyk Corp based in Alexandria, Egypt. 1984 - 89 Marine Cargo surveyor with Perfect, Lambert & Co, of London covering Mediterranean and Middle East. 1989 - 90, Port Captain with Afram Inc Tampa, Florida. 1990 - 91 Marine Superintendent with

Gulfship Marine Inc. based in Houston. 1992, Port Captain with London Offshore Consultants Inc. and Ewig International of Houston, Consultant with Allied Maritime Co. 1993, Chief Officer with Safmarine and Master with Midocean Ship Management. 1994, Master with Pentow Marine and 1995 Master with Safmarine, of Cape Town. 2000 joined Maersk as Master. Past President of the Nautical Institute.

Deceased 30th April 2018.

Old Salt Dave de Wet 1957/58 writes; " Nick and I sailed together on a number of Harrison Lines ships. We were together for a year and made a great team. Our standard practice was to exceed the Mate's expectations to such an extent that we almost became our own bosses. The mate would give us work for the day. We would go like hell and finish it before *smoko* and report for the next job. The mate wouldn't believe that we had done a proper job so he would do an inspection, be very surprised and give us more work which we would finish before lunch and so on.

We were sent to one ship which hadn't had cadets for some time because there had been formal complaints from parents of bad treatment of cadets by captain and mate. We were doing our standard act and were working away on the forecastle after secure time just to finish the job and not waste time the following day getting everything out again just for 20 minutes work. The captain saw us, the mate came along all flustered and ordered us to stop. We said aye aye but just finished the job off.

The next evening we were invited to the captain's cabin for a couple of drinks with him while he got to know us. Extraordinary as cadets are lower than shark shit. Couldn't go wrong after that.

The next time I saw him was in Monte Carlo. The wife and I were touring one weekend and there was a shout from a fancy speedboat. It was Nick. He was master of a huge luxury yacht and was collecting some supplies with the launch..

The next time was in Durban. He had been a fleet superintendant for a ship management company that folded. No job! Joined Safmarine and was mate of a ship with Jannie Gous 1958/59 as master, enjoyed a few *dops* with the two of them.

Then heard about Nick as master of a large Safmarine bulker, and losing the rudder in the Indian Ocean. He rigged a jury rudder and steamed the ship to the continent saving megabucks."

**T.B. SCHMIDT 1945/46.** 1947 - 54 Thomas "Twiggy" sailed with Union Castle up the 3rd Officer. Then did odd jobs ashore in the U.K. before emigrating to New Zealand in 1959. 1960 - 65 sailed on the research vessel *Tui* as 1st Officer. 1966 - joined Air New Zealand as Flight Navigator until 1971 when retrained as Flight Engineer. Operated on DC8, DC10 and B747 until retiring in 1983. Went back to sea as Master and half owner of a small trading vessel operating a cargo passenger service to Great Barrier Reef Island 50 miles from Auckland. 1988 sold out and returned to Aviation until 1993. 1999 cruised the South Pacific and Queensland Coast in his 40' steel ketch, *Jananna*. 2002 returned to New Zealand. Deceased 30th March 2018.

**F.L. SETZER 1958/59.** 1960 Fred joined Accounting and Auditing firm - Douglas McKelvie Galbraith & Co and took up articles of Clerkship. 1964 qualified with C.T.A. and 1965 qualified as C.A. (S.A), both from U.C.T. 1968 left auditing profession and joined family business, Electrical Industries Ltd - Commercial Refrigeration Engineers and in 1985 took over the family business. Fred was very active with the Lions Club, Past President and Zone Chairman, and President of the Belville Hockey Club. Deceased 13th April 2018.

*Our condolences to family and ship mates.*

#### AWOL

**GERHARD. MEYER 1961/62**, last heard of in Northcliff, Gauteng.

**PETER HALL 1952/53**, last heard of in Zuurfontein, Gauteng.

*Please assist in the SAR and bring them back on board.*

#### AUSTRALIA BRANCH NEWS – Peter O'Hare

The Sydney lunch and AGM were held at The Ipoh Club at Chatswood RSL Sydney on Saturday 24th March. Lunch was a 5 course Malaysian banquet. Unfortunately, Chairman Grenville Stevens was unable to attend as he was about to have a double knee replacement. In attendance were Peter and

Jenny O'Hare, Stan Damp, Peter and Liz Kroon, John Baxter and son Kim, Rudie Auer, Gordon Maxwell, all GB Old Boys. In addition Roger and Maura Pike from Pangborne. The food was excellent and a good time was had by all. The next informal lunch will be at the bistro at Chatswood RSL on Saturday 18th August.

Regards to all, Grenville Stevens Chairman, Andy Fotheringham Deputy Chairman and Peter O'Hare Hon Secretary Treasurer.

### GAUTENG BRANCH NEWS – Alan Ford

It is with sadness that we report the passing of two of our Branch old boys within two days in early April. Tony Hunter '53-54 and Dan Barbier '55-56. Tony had been in a nursing home for quite some time since suffering a stroke. Tony had always been active in the Branch while still in good health and many a good lunch was enjoyed at the Johannesburg Country Club on pensioner's day. He will be missed by his sons James and Gavin and their families.

We were not aware that Dan was not well and his passing came as a surprise. Our condolences go to Heather and family as well.

Our resident historian and author, Ivor Little, was recently unexpectedly caught in irons, and only due to swift action by his First Mate, Anne and others, were they able to get him into dry dock for a few days to untangle his rigging, reset all the circuit breakers, and reboot his auto pilot. We hope he will continue with fair wind from now on.

Rene Poerner and Mike Crewe who currently would both be hard pressed to get Lloyds A1, remain in our thoughts as well, and we wish them well over the coming cold dry winter.

Our 2018 Commissioning Day Luncheon was held at Rene and Karen Poerner's house, with 13 cadets and spouses present on the Mess Deck. It was good to see most of the fairly regular suspects from past and present, as well as long time AWOL new face and recently retired Joe Birtles. It is interesting to note that the difference in attendance year date of our oldest and youngest cadets present, 1948 to 1984, is 36 years. Somehow it seems a little, but I wonder how many other branches can top that?

This year's Luncheon was very informal, following on the success of the format from last year. Fresh Mushroom soup, followed by Karen's massive build your own gourmet burgers, and Malva pudding for those who still had stowage room, was the fare for the day. The weather was wonderful and the wine was good. Thanks to Randparkridge Scout Group for the extra chairs and tables, for how many private houses can seat 26 people all together on the veranda in this day and age? Probably only mansions which have huge walk in freezer rooms such as the one Rene recently built for Karen. Thanks to our hosts and staff for a job well done.

This month's news comment I have decided to call Fun with Buoys. This sounds more interesting when pronounced the English way as in "Boys", and not the American way, where buoys are called "boo-wees". It is about buoys we find at sea compared to some strange European buoys found in port. A few of our readers subscribe to a Dutch online publication called [www.maasmondmaritime.com](http://www.maasmondmaritime.com) and saw that I asked the editor about what appeared to me to be a strange looking buoy in a location called the Beerkanaal which is part of the Rotterdam waterway complex. The markings on the buoy did not appear in the IALA list. For those of the readers who swallowed the hook a long time ago, IALA stands for what is now called the International Association of *Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities*, an organization which according to Wikipedia came into being in 1957. The *marine aids* bit was added recently.

This was after drawing a blank with the SAMSA A to N man and the SAN Hydrographer's Office. Within a day I had drawn a response from a retired English Master and a retired Rotterdam Pilot, Piet Veenman. Piet had an interesting answer for me. He tells me that in Europe, inbound vessels, once past the breakwater, will find Aids to Navigation which conform to the SIGNI Convention (*Signalisation des Voies de Navigation Intérieure*). While there is a great deal of uniformity between the IALA and SIGNI lateral marks, SIGNI has a couple of extras. The question I then asked myself was where in other parts of the world does the IALA system end and other conventions start. I had never thought about it before and just assumed that the IALA jurisdiction would perhaps extend as far as tidal

headwaters, or lock gates, or at some minimum draft which would limit access to seagoing vessels. That latter was not a very good definition upon careful thought.

In the case of our home South African waters the IALA convention is used inside our harbours and estuaries and will in future be implemented on inland dams and rivers as well, according to James Collocott from SAMSA our representative to IALA.

The thought then came to me, what was the situation in UK and what were going to be the Brexit implications. Not that UK is noted for extensive inland commercial waterways, it seems to me (after a bit of a Google) that this SIGNI convention was never instituted in UK waters as part of being subject to Brussels authority, and will therefore be one less item to negotiate in the divorce settlement.

But back to the other conundra posed by some of the definitions found in SIGNI and IALA. SIGNI refers to right bank and left bank of a waterway as observed by a mariner travelling down stream. IALA conventions refer to the progression of the system in an upriver direction from the mouth of a waterway or river. That's all fine, and though somewhat confusing to the inexperienced mariner it can be figured out.

Then I thought, how do the Americans deal with the situation on their waterways, which go upstream and down stream as well as sideways in the case of that rather important waterway which is called the Intra Coastal Waterway (ICW), which for the vast majority of its length is a confused mess of tidal streams from numerous sea inlets, changing direction twice a day and which runs parallel (more or less) to the coast.

Apart from the fact that they drive on a different side of the road, they live in IALA Region B where the red and green colours of the lateral marks as one proceeds upriver, are the opposite to Region A (which is most of the rest of the world except for Japan and some other smaller Far East countries). They cannot, in the case of the ICW, use upstream or down stream or left bank or right bank definitions. So they cleverly decided to use what can be described a land side or sea side to mark the waterway banks.

This then lead to further questions in my mind, questions which were getting rather complicated and which I have not yet had time to research. One of the questions is what happens where the ICW crosses big estuaries such as Chesapeake and Delaware Rivers. Does it work like a flyover system to couch it in road transport vernacular? I don't know, perhaps our readers along the US East coast could consult their charts and give us an answer. I wasn't really paying attention to that detail last time I was there.

Here is a picture of what started it all, Buoy HK-M2, and courtesy of the interweb can be seen at

[http://www.openseamap.org/index.php?id=openseamap&no\\_cache=1&L=1](http://www.openseamap.org/index.php?id=openseamap&no_cache=1&L=1) at Lat 51.93988N Long 4.07936 E.



Translated from Dutch this says this mark found at a bifurcation of the waterway, indicates the main channel is on the right bank (going downstream).

Regards, Alan Ford.

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

Well, time for another quarterly column. Is it still fun and certainly a challenge to keep up to speed.....of course it is!! Life and all its distractions sometimes gets the better of me and I feel bereft of the thing we all need more of and that is time: time and I'm retired!!

Seriously though, although some days such as snow, rain, hail all of which we have experienced in the past couple of months being an example and having broken my left ankle back in February I have had time.....ankle has now repaired whoopie!

Our GBOBA – UK has been ticking along for well over twenty years with yours truly the local representative since circa 1997.....all continues and really most enjoyable, for me at least. During this period the dynamics have changed from having social gatherings once or twice a year in venues Portsmouth, London, Gatwick and Chichester. The dynamics of modern telecommunication, social media, IMO, Skype, Facetime, Facebook enables our scattered members if they so wish, to

communicate easily without the expense of travel through traffic congestion. Meeting with fellow Obies of the same term is fine, however, the college, ship whatever we attended is decades past and with our group now well into their 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> decade the memory dims. It is fact but as reporting below through brief telephone conversations I've established all are nicely settled be it in work or play!

**Robin Wrede** 52/53 Dorset, going well, fit and very enthusiastic cyclist

**Ivan Bole** 51/52 Emsworth, Keeps Fit, local gym visits, leisure sailing from Port Solent.

**Alan Bole** 49/50 Merseyside, all fine in his camp according to brother above.

**Colin Greenacre** 49/50 Hampshire, keeps well and in contact with term mate Alan above and others in the Cape area.

**Irvine Hall** 1968 Taunton, fully retired, busy in various activities.

**Donald Neaves** 1971 Southampton, still sailing as Master with Wight Link Ferries IOW.

**Stuart Hay** 1976 continues as a London Thames River Pilot.

Future socials – doubtful for the reasons above, however I am open to suggestions from members as to ideas whatever, where-ever? In the meantime, go well all, best regards, Ted Fisher [tedefisher@aol.com](mailto:tedefisher@aol.com).

### **GENERAL BOTHA TRUST FUND - Report to the GBOBA AGM 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2018**

It has been an interesting year in which certain issues have come to light and prompted a rethink of the function and need of the GB Trust. The Trustees are unanimous in the opinion that the Trust should be dissolved after 28 years and propose that this AGM ratifies this resolution. This decision was not taken lightly and there are a number of reasons for this. The original purpose for the formation of the GB Trust has disappeared over time. This was a formal connection between the Cape Technikon and the SAMNA *General Botha* that the Cape Technikon (now CPUT) would continue the traditions of the *General Botha*. The last Bothie Old Boy lecturer retired from CPUT (ex Cape Technikon) last year. That is, of course, Roger Pawley (cadet 2400). The current Head of Department Dr. Ed Snyders is retiring this year. His replacement is unknown but unlikely to be a Mariner. There is very little, in my opinion that leads me to believe that CPUT is upholding the traditions of the General Botha as we know it.

The Trust was fika'ed this year that led us to rethink the objective of the Trust and that we need to eliminate the bureaucracy that is inherent in a Trust. This process took 3 months, in excess of 100 emails, numerous telephone calls and visits to the financial institution in question. The assets of the GB Trust consist solely of artifacts at SA Naval College and a number of items at CPUT and approximately R100 000 in finance. As mentioned at the last AGM all the items at the SA Navy Museum were legally donated to the museum many years ago, and we no longer have control or responsibility for those assets although we still ensure that the display is maintained and updated regularly. The constitution of the GB Trust would at least need to be rewritten as many of the clauses are no longer applicable and others would be difficult if not impossible to sustain.

The proposal is: The Trust is dissolved and that the current members form an ad hoc 'Legacy Subcommittee' of the Old Boys Association and continue to look after the historical aspects of the Association as a whole, as well as the display at the SA Naval Museum. Various assets at SA Naval College will probably be donated to that College. Similarly, certain assets at CPUT would be donated officially to CPUT with other assets, including the remainder of the finances, after costs of dissolution, will probably be passed to the SATS *General Botha* Old Boys Association. Kieron Cox (Chairman)

### **Further ramblings by "Barnacle Brad"**

Early in the mid-fifties, having obtained 2<sup>nd</sup> Mate, I well remember being sent to join my first mail ship "CARNARVON CASTLE", Capt. Billy Byles RNR RD, so I sailed under the Blue ensign for the next ten months. In those days it was the custom that the Chief Officer, later to be known as the Staff Captain, was a day worker. He managed the whole of the deck department and, incidentally, wrote up the company's fair copy of the Deck Logbook.

The senior of each watch was a man with a Master's certificate; all juniors, known as the Fourth, Extra Fourth and Junior Fourth had a 2<sup>nd</sup> Mate's. I joined as Junior Fourth and was promoted Extra a voyage or two before being transferred to the "Durban" and then "Athlone" as a Fourth.

Aside: as junior of a watch sea time, up to nine months, counted at 2/3rds. You got your nine months in in fourteen months, so any time after that was 'wasted'. Union Castle did their best to promote 4<sup>th</sup> with their time in, to 3<sup>rd</sup> of a fruit ship, or one of the recently painted black cargo ships.

Further aside: the company had finally reconciled themselves to the fact that the three WWII built general cargo ships just couldn't remain as smart as the "lavender" hulled mail ships and intermediates. As the senior of six cadets in "Kenilworth" I remember, while alongside in Hull (I think it was) all hands painting out black the lavender port side and sailing across the North sea still lavender on the starboard. We went completely black in Hamburg.

What prompted this long-winded contribution was mention in our Feb. 2018 Newsletter of SEXTANT - hurrray - space navigation and early days "Astronomical Running Fix". As I recall on "Carnarvon", the 1<sup>st</sup> Officer doing a.m. and p.m. "stars" didn't do sun sights. During the forenoon all three 4<sup>th</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> would do their Marq. St Hilaire. As "Noon" approached all five would line up and take their "Mer. Afts". The 2<sup>nd</sup>, as Navigator, called for our readings in turn and 'averaging' would declare the actual Mer. Alt. for us to use for Noon and running up our position-lines fix. Thereafter, our noon positions were all compared, he decided on a mean, and we declared our 'day's run'.

The First Class Lounge steward was standing by to deliver the Day's Run chit to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Purser on which hundreds of pounds hung. "BRAD" WALLACE-BRADLEY

### **RAFOC Pay Tribute to Sailor Malan GB 168: 1924/25**

*The following two extracts are from the Royal Air Force Officers' Club (RAFOC), Johannesburg April Newsletter with kind permission -*

#### **REPLICA SPITFIRE Mk IX "AGM"**

As part of the celebrations to mark the Centenary of the Royal Air Force, on Saturday 7 April. a replica Spitfire Mark IX was unveiled by RAFOC member and WW2 Spitfire pilot John Martin, at a special event at the SAAF Museum, Port Elizabeth, the culmination of an 8 year project by dedicated volunteers and to which RAFOC has contributed. Sailor Malan flew the original aircraft when it was allocated to him personally when Station Commander at RAF Biggin Hill. The replica is finished in Sailor Malan's personal "Alpha Golf Mike" (Adolf Gysbert Malan) markings, and will be on permanent display as a Memorial to him.'

#### **"WHO WAS THIS CHAP MALAN, AND WHAT DID HE DO?"**

In 1966, members of 74 Squadron conceived a Memorial for Sailor, The Malan Memorial Sword. It was made by Wilkinson, and on the evening of 5 July 1966, the magnificent trophy was presented to the Squadron at Bentley Priory, the great house on the hill above Stanmore, North of London, the Headquarters of RAF Fighter Command in WW2. Accompanying the sword were the portrait of Sailor by Cuthbert Orde, and a drawing of 2 Spitfires in the markings of 74 Squadron by Gp Capt Norman Hoad.

The speech was made by Gp Capt D S Brookes: "The presentation of this sword is made by 28 former members of the Squadron in the years 1939-45 and I am deeply honoured to represent them tonight. Sailor was, I think, the outstanding fighter pilot of WW2 and accounted for over 30 enemy aircraft destroyed and another 20 probables. He joined 74 on the day he left Flying Training School, an Acting Pilot Officer, and served in all ranks until on 8 August 1940, at the height of the Battle, he assumed command as a Squadron Leader. He left when promoted to Wing Commander in March 1941, to become Wing Leader of the fighter Wing in which 74 flew, but he continued to fly with 74, and in fact was never in any other Squadron. So it seems entirely appropriate that this presentation should be a family affair of past and present members of Tiger Squadron. From a personal point of view, I find that the most endearing thing about him was that, apart from being an exceptional shot, he was just an ordinary chap; quiet, unassuming, and gentle in manner. His great gifts came from within when great gifts were called for. Tremendous courage, relentless determination and that quality of leadership which carried the whole Squadron to great deeds with him. For in those dark but glorious days the record of the Squadron was, as in 1918, second to none. This small book, which we shall, for want of a better name, call The Charter, is devised to place the presentation on record and to act as a record of subsequent changes of command, when the custody of the Sword will devolve upon the new

Commander. It also ensures that in years to come no young member of the Squadron need ever ask: "Who was this chap Malan, and what did he do?" *The legend lives on*

### **BAMBOOZLING THE LAYMAN**

*By GB Cadet 119 Draft 1923/24 - extract from S.A.T.S. Magazine No. 3 1930-7*

From a layman's point of view sailors are a funny crowd who seem to delight in making sea-faring one of the most difficult of professions to understand. Take for instance, the daily weather observations. When the wind blows, say from the South, the sailor calls it a southerly breeze, which is as it should be. Similarly with the swell. The long, slow-moving mountains of water that follow each other with such monotonous regularity from the Atlantic, he describes as a southerly swell. Once again you'll agree with him, but just as you are prepared to believe that this sailing business is dead easy, you are astounded to discover that a Northerly sea is a current flowing from the South.

Another unusual feature is the sequence of bells which are struck on shipboard to denote the time. Generally it takes a stranger a fortnight or so to fathom the mystery. One bell rings at half-past-twelve, after which the number increases singly, every half-hour, until four o'clock when 8 bells ends the series and a fresh start is made by striking one bell at four-thirty. Again the sequence runs smoothly until the dog watch is encountered. Six-thirty p.m. instead of being allotted 5 bells, as in the early morning, receives only one; 7 p.m. two bells instead of 6; 7.30 p.m. 3 instead of 7 and then, just as everybody is gradually becoming accustomed to the mix-up, the quartermaster, following the custom of time immemorial, suddenly reverts to the normal and quite casually rings 8 bells at 8 o'clock.

In the manner of tonnage, the men who go down to the sea cause a great deal of confusion in measuring ships in tons that are not actual tons. The *Queen Mary*, 73,000 tons, certainly does not weigh that amount. The figure, called registered tons, is simply a measurement of her internal capacity divided by 100. This term is said to have originated in the old sailing-ship days when wheat was considered the most important of all cargoes, being calculated by the number of bags, weighing a ton that filled a ton space.

Another type of ton, now thankfully almost obsolete, is the Thames ton. This has nothing at all to do with the London river, but boasts some remote connection with coal. It is, in some ports, used by yachts and other ships for the payment of dues - in spite of the fact that a yacht automatically loses her amateur status the moment she carries a coal cargo.

It is only when the man ashore reads in his paper that H.M.S. *Rodney* (37,000 tons) has been ordered to proceed from Malta to Gibraltar that the REAL ton comes into operation. The tonnage used with reference to His Majesty's Ships refers to their displacement, and that, as our old friend Archimedes points out, defines the actual weight of a floating box.

One can point to many things in which the sailor's expression differs from that of the landlubber. He measures, for example, his speed in knots ( $1\frac{1}{8}$  land miles); his depth in fathoms (6 feet) and his distance in cables of which there are ten to the nautical mile.

Probably the most mystifying of all maritime commands, and there are many, concerned the old helm orders which were recently abolished. Up to a few years ago, when the officer on the watch desired to alter course to starboard, he gave the order "hard-a-port." The quartermaster thereupon turned his wheel to starboard, and the ship, like a motor car followed suit. The reason for this contradictory order was, of course, that the old time sailorman always referred to the direction he moved the tiller.

Fog and direction signals are quite simple. A sailing ship with the wind on the starboard side, or any vessel altering course to starboard, gives a single blast on the fog horn or whistle, or two blasts when dealing with the port side, but I'm blest if the whole effect is not spoilt by the look-out man, who, from his exalted and elevated perch in the crow's nest, rings only one bell if he sights a ship on the port side and two if it appears to starboard.

### **GENERAL LOUIS BOTHA - a snippet of history – by Charles Reid 1981 #2729**

My grandfather Charl Andries Cilliers, fought in the South West African campaign under Smuts and Botha, was a private secretary in the cabinet and retired as Head of the Civil Services Commission. A

proud Afrikaner who was a friend and supporter of Smuts. Going through my grandfathers' memoirs, I found that he had worked closely with the General and the below excerpt refers. I have not been able to find the photo however!

“Just a few words about General Botha. He was the most amazing character I was ever privileged to meet and I have met many great figures. His makeup was such that one either loved or hated him – there could never be a feeling of indifference. My first contact with him has already been referred to. This was a telephone conversation and being entrusted with a telegram to cancel mobilization in 1913. When I was formally introduced to him in 1917 he looked at me closely and said that he knew all about me, that my brother had some six years earlier spent a holiday on his farm, Rusthof, and that I had served in the Commandant-General's office. It can be imagined what a lasting impression this made on an unimportant young man of twenty four, coming from a man of international renown. But then this was one of his characteristics.

His memory for names and faces was amazing. He was intensely human, was full of lovable qualities, was very, perhaps over, sensitive and could make anybody, from the highest to the lowest, feel at home at once. Another quality he possessed can only be described as magnetism. I can vouch for the fact that when he entered a room one felt something unusual, even before one actually saw him. In whatever company he was he became the centre of things.

I must refer to just one story related to me by Brebner of an occurrence at Versailles during the peace negotiations. It appears that Paderewski, who was present in his capacity as President of Poland, was most anxious to become as famous a statesman as he was a pianist. He tried to take part in all the discussions but was intelligent enough to realize that nobody took any notice of him. He then had a brainwave which in time enabled him to become known to all the delegates and pressmen. He started arriving about an hour after the plenary session had commenced. He would then walk up to the main table and make a stately bow to the presiding delegate. So far, so good. Nobody would regard this action as unusual in a continental. Paderewski then, however, would proceed down one of the side tables towards his place near the bottom. Halfway down this table he would stop and make a stately bow to one of the delegates. This unusual action caused delegates and pressmen to ask:

“Who is that?” “Paderewski from Poland” would be the reply. “Whom is he bowing to now?” “That is General Botha from South Africa” would be the answer. That is how Paderewski became known and the General better known to the present. The really human touch in this peculiar little ceremony is provided by the General's reaction. When he saw Paderewski approaching he would whisper to General Smuts: “Hier kom ou Paderewski weer, nou moet ek weer opstaan.” At the time the General was heavily built and obviously did not fancy the idea of getting up unnecessarily and bowing in acknowledgment.

General Botha died in 1919, leaving all of us who knew and loved him utterly miserable. Arrangements were made for a State funeral. Mrs. Botha expressed a wish that the guard of honour in the church should all be intimate friends of the General, irrespective of the positions occupied by them. She selected twenty four and I was proud to be one of them. The older ones were members of the General's personal staff during the Boer War, members of the “Kaggelpyp Seksie”, we younger ones had jocularly become known as the “Junior Kaggelpyp Seksie”. I still possess a photograph of the group of us taken in the Bosman Street Church, standing round the coffin. For the service in the afternoon we served as ushers, taking all the people to their appointed seats.”



**Can you spot the Capetonian???**

*Town are grateful for answered prayers and the start of the winter rains at last. Scribe*

**Tail Piece:** *Cape Town nearly became the first city in the world to run out of water this last summer. We in Cape*