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GENERAL BOTHA OLD

BOYS' ASSOCIATION
<http://www.generalbotha.co.za/>
AUGUST 2002.
JOINT NEWSLETTER

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I often have a sense of pride when I read articles of the success of a Bothie Old Boy. There are many such stories to be found in books and magazines in a variety of forms and disciplines. Such is the diversity of Obies that we have so interesting an Association, and one to be proud of. The following piece (précised), entitled "The Last of his Kind," written recently by Terry Hutson in the Kwazulu Natal Mercury (April 24 2002) illustrates the product of the thorough training we were so privileged to have had at the Bothie, and what we have every reason to be proud of.

When Captain Rijk van der Kroll (GB 1955/56 #1976) retired recently as Executive Manager of Marine Services, National Ports Authority (NPA) he was the last of a kind, certainly the last General Botha graduate to reach the highest rank within the port services. Van der Kroll, who comes from a traditional and often conservative seafaring background, played a leading role in the transformation of Marine Services. He brought about an intensive training programme that changed the working on tugs and other port vessels, with new qualification criteria for tug masters and pilots. "In 1977 we sat with a policy of a class 1 for tugmasters upwards, but after 1994 all this had to change," he says with conviction. "I don't mind my part in transforming the

marine service through new qualification requirements In any case, these are now the same as for those in other places such as Singapore.” He says the change here was necessary and not because of affirmative action, but a shortage of personnel with seagoing experience. This, together with the government discouraging recruitment from overseas, has led to a policy of training people in the ports instead.

Although born in the Netherlands, he came to SA as a young lad and completed his schooling in the then Transvaal, before going to the General Botha at Gordon’s Bay. On graduation he went straight into Clan Line – those were the days when Union Castle ships had to dip their flag twice to Clan Line ships, he recalls with some pride. His first ship was the Clan MacDougall, a refrigerated cargo vessel alternating between Australian meat and SA fruit. Later he served on others, including those of Bullard-King Line. “I remember being on the Umtata, which had only SA Cadets – we were far too wild, so they split us up.” He was keen to join Safmarine but the Springbok Line had just been launched and the young van der Kroll was persuaded to remain with them instead. With the absorption of these companies into Safmarine, he achieved his wish and his last ship was Safmarine’s Langkloof, which he left in 1965 to join the Harbour Services in East London on tugs. After a series of transfers he returned to there in 1975 as Pilot, and remained till 1990 when he moved to Durban as Port Captain and later as Marine Manager. Among his achievements was the reduction in the manning of tugs, which hadn’t changed since the days of steam. This brought enormous benefits to Portnet while the crew scored from improved working conditions and pay. By 1992 the entire system at all SA ports had changed in line with Durban. In 1997 he moved to Johannesburg as executive manager: Marine Services. He faced many challenges, including kick-starting the new tug-building programme. He went overseas to investigate modern tug technology, ending with a holistic approach that called for a simplistic design incorporating the Voith Schneider propulsion system. “We required a simplistic system to meet the requirements of people who have to be trained up rapidly, and a propulsion system able to work in tight corners.” He was also involved with the replacement of the Durban floating dock.

Now all that is past, but he remains a busy man, doing consultancy work and helping his wife Jenny with her rock-making business – decorative rocks for garden and fish tank displays.

(With kind permission of Terry Hutson & the Mercury – Scribe.).

NEWS from TONY NICHOLAS, CAPE TOWN BRANCH.
ANCHORS AWEIGH

Cape Town Branch diaries:

March 2003 sees Cape Town hosting world cricket as well as the Argus Cycle Tour which clashes with our date of 15th March. Therefore we have fixed our dates as

follows:

- a] Saturday 15th March 2003 - Quadrangular yacht race.
- b] Friday 21st March 2003 - AGM & Commissioning Day Dinner.
- c] Sunday 23rd March - War Memorial Service.

H.J.F. LILLEY 1951/52 #1720. After Bothie Jimmy started with the Provincial Administration. Then moved around in various jobs, which included boat building and ship chandelling before going into electrical sales in 1965. Retired in 1990. Sadly passed away 30th April 2002.

R.P.W.P. WEGE 1953/54 #1832. Known to his "General Botha" shipmates as "Wedge" Ronnie came to the Bothie from Wynberg Boys High School and on completing his training went to sea as a cadet with Southern Steamships, serving in the "President Steyn" and "President Brand". Thereafter he served as 3rd Officer in Safmarine and as 2nd Officer with Sammy Collins in the pioneering West Coast diamond mining tugs and barges. It was during this period that whilst working in the breakers a wire rope snapped and wrapped itself around one of his legs, fracturing it in several places and effectively ending his seafaring career. Ronnie then did a series of maritime related shore jobs, including stevedoring, before entering the employ of the Western Cape Regional Services where he remained for the rest of his career. After suffering a stroke and continual problems with asthma Ronnie and his wife Cynthia decided on a move to the Karoo where they settled in Calitzdorp, where he rapidly began playing a large role in the community. Ronnie loved animals and children, and was also a very keen member of the Bothie Old Boys. He thus became very well known as the Father Xmas at the Cape Town Branch's annual kiddie's Xmas party, volunteering for it year after year until his health deteriorated. He was a good shipmate and friend and a devoted husband and will be missed by all that knew him. He leaves his wife Cynthia to whom he was married for 42 years. Passed away 28th April 2002.

B.J. WALLIS 1983 #2820. After serving at sea for a period Barry became branch manager of Quadrant Ship's Agency in Cape Town in 1997 and in 1998 with TRT Shipping, also of Cape Town. 2000 Barry and family moved to New Zealand where he entered the real estate business. Barry was a dedicated member of the Old Boys' committee and carried the Bothie flag wherever he went. Always a willing worker and ideas man. He will be remembered as the man who formed our sailing team when reactivating the yacht races competed between the Old Boys', Royal Cape Yacht Club, SAS Unities and SAS Yselstein. To this annual event he donated a trophy known as "Barry's Board". Passed away after a long illness on the 5th June 2002 leaving his wife, Yanina and two children.

S.L. PETT 1983 #2813. Stuart worked in photolithography for a publishing house and passed away unexpectedly on the 29th June 2002.

F.A. DIETERLE 1954/55 #1870. Fred chose not to go to sea after Bothie, instead joined Burroughs Business Machines for whom he worked in Cape Town and London. He played first team rugby for the Villager Football Club in Cape Town and Richmond Club in London. Went into packaging on his return to Cape Town in 1963 and finally had his own company, wholesaling and distributing packaging material. Passed away 26th April 2002 leaving his wife, Penny, and three children.

Our sincere condolences to family, friends and shipmates for all of the above.

SOS – The search continues.

It is a rare phenomenon for a Bothie Boy to advise the mailing list administrator of their change of address. As previous complaints from the writer, this leads to much additional, and unwanted, administrative work. The writer does attempt to locate AWOL Old Boys by costly telephone calls and other means. Make a note on your list of bank managers, doctors, dentists, etc. of the Old Boys' Association address to be notified when you change yours. I.e. P.O. Box 4515, Cape Town, 8000. THE ADDRESS FROM WHICH YOU RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTERS. Email address changes are even more of an inconvenience to the writer. PLEASE GUYS.

Those that I have been unable to locate are:

Andrew Ainsworth 1986, last known in Harrisburg, North Carolina, USA.

John Evans 1980, last known in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Dennis Low 1953, last known in Finmere, Bucks, England.

An Old Boys' network can usually work wonders. Surprise me, find them and advise the writer.

SCRANBAGS

A.I. SNYDERS 1972 #2425. Ace obtained his CA degree and left Spoornet a while back, forgetting to update us. CA's are known to be forgetful, are they not? Ace is now with PWC Consulting based in Durban. Something to do with "financial management solutions". Strange business for a sailor.

N.J.A. SLOANE 1981 #2750. A very busy letter from a very busy Old Boy. "I have been out touch for the past 22 months since the "Treasure" salvage off Cape Town. I have been working on the new Caspian Pipeline Consortium [CPC, Novorossiysk, Russia] oil export terminal, as start up manager for Smit Octo. Responsible for the delivery of 10 vessels, 1 work/dive/oil recovery barge, 1 saturation dive system, 1 mixed gas dive system, employment of 96 tug crews, 15 divers, 9 mooring masters, office administrators/translators etc. Graham Clack, Graham Spires and Brian Radford, all Obies, are still involved in the operation. Obie Mike Riddell has carried out two vessel deliveries from the east and is currently busy with the last one from Yantai, China to Novorossiysk. After I left Russia, I was back with Smit Pentow Marine on the Ikan Tanda Salvage off Scarborough [Cape Town] last September/November and more recently on the salvage tug John Ross in the Far East. I have just been appointed as a Smit International Salvage Master, based in Cape Town." Phew, a very busy sailor.

S.J.G. CLARKE 197/58 #2042. One good point of our new web site is that it encourages Obies to write in with their news, as Stephen as done. "Greetings to anyone from the 1956/57/58 intakes. I am an academic now, after only five years at sea with British India. I read for a degree in Economics, then International Relations at Wits [1964-68], a short spell in mining finance, and then to the U.K. I spent some months at the L.S.E. and also as a youth worker [more perilous than being a 'chum!'], and then moved to Wales [1971]. I worked as a community development worker for 12 years, and now teach as a specialist in that subject in the University of Wales. I have published a few [technical] books. I am currently on secondment to the new National Assembly for Wales [devolved regional government] as a special advisor on

regeneration and community to the Ministry of Health. I am now [finally] married, no kids.” The editor would add to the “no kids” comment, “not yet”. Have fun.

R. WALTERS 1975/58 #2085. Reg has advised that he has finally retired from ABSA in Worcester and moved to Still Bay on the Cape south coast. He wonders whether there any other Old Boys in the area. So am I. Let us know chaps whether you are in the area, possibly we can arrange a reunion there?

D.J. WRATHMALL 1956/57 #2030. “After six months in Palma de Mallorca skippering a 66 ft Azimut Motor Cruiser have now settled down in Portsmouth. Am working for Wightlink, Isle of Wight Catamaran Ferries. Am hoping to strengthen my ties with other Obies here in the U. K.” Our UK branch is going strong with many Obies taking an active interest, not least Dick Hellyer and Ted Fisher. Well done chaps.

ANDREW ODDY 1987 #2912. “After leaving the South African Fleet, I spent sometime with the Arabs, then went on the open market. Now Master with an up and coming British company. Still enjoy playing the field as there is a lot out there still to do.” We are sure there is and look forward to the next edition of your travels.

M.A.J. CARRINGTON 1976 #2548. Mike is another of those many that went AWOL without advising the writer of his change of address. Hope he feels suitably guilty when [if?] he reads this. Patrick Atwood of Wellington, New Zealand, recently met him and writes; “Last Friday I caught up with Mike Carrington on the wharf. He is doing a relief voyage as mate on the Hakula. As I was speaking to him, the ro-ro on which Gus van Wyk (ex-SA Navy) is serving sailed past! We all 'recently' worked on the tugs at Portnet in Cape Town and half a dozen years ago it would never have crossed our minds that we would meet in this somewhat remote port. Fortunately I can report that both Gus and Mike seem well.”

P.G. ATWOOD 1980 #2708. Patrick has also finally found the energy or motivation to update us on his activities. Initially sailed with Unicorn Lines 1979 to 1985 followed by a period in 1985 with Barefoot Cruises in the Caribbean. Returned to RSA and sailed on various vessels of the government departments of Environment Affairs and Conservation until 1991 when joined Portnet in Cape Town. Served on harbour tugs, assistant port captain and training officer. 1996 relocated to New Zealand and sailed as third officer on a rail and vehicle ferry between the North and South Islands of New Zealand for two years. 1998 joined the Wellington Regional Council as deputy harbour master. Well Patrick, one of these days we will teach you how to play rugby.

J.J. GALLOWAY 1943/44 #1292. Read about his history and amazing coincidence on page 9-10.

J. CAMERON 1947/48 #1504. After Bothie John went to sea in S.A.R.&H. ships, Agulhas and Dalia. After obtaining his second mate’s certificate in Durban relocated to Australia and sailed with Burns Philips for 10 years. Left the sea in 1962 and spent some 15 years with the Australian Stevedoring Industry Authority as Port Inspector, Senior Survey Officer – Research and Development and industrial officer. With the demise of the authority in 1977, then worked at several different positions in Bond Stores, Warehousing and Retail. Now retired.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

An idea from one of our “older” Obies is to feature some details of our “older” members for interest of their shipmates and this may well become a popular column, depending

on feedback from members. Although cadet Ken Snow is not too “old”, this may prompt Ken to provide more details of his interesting career.

Rear Admiral K.A. Snow class of 1950/51 #1678.

“After 35 years in the Royal Navy and 12 years at Westminster Abbey, I felt I had done my bit and so retired to the Isle of Wight to get some clean air away from London, if nothing else. Actually it is a fine place to live”.

We are sure it is a fine place and impatiently await your next signal.

CLASS OF 1954 REUNION

The search and rescue operation continues with cadet Ivor Little in command. The AWOL list presently reads as follows:

Bain, Miss Alsona. Secretary. Married Pierre Jordaan of the Strand in the 1960's. Present whereabouts unknown.

Barnardo, Eldred. Went to sea with Safmarine. Not heard of since.

Bolton, Peter Michael. Ex Union-Castle. RoR lecturer in 53. Missing since.

Bowles, William. Married Betty and became a land surveyor. Not heard of since.

Britton, Miss N.A. Secretary. Present whereabouts unknown.

Cain, Daniel. Mail returned from Woolamooloo, Australia, “address unknown” in 2002.

Ferris, J.W. Assistant Purser. Left the Botha in the 1960's. Present whereabouts unknown.

Flack, Robert. Went to sea in Union-Castle and then Thesens. Has since disappeared.

Hall, C.H.P (Colin). Lived in van Buuren Rd., Bedfordview in the 1970's but has since moved, leaving no trace behind.

Hirst, Reginald (Arnold). Last heard of as a priest in Durban North in the 1960's. It is presumed that he left the church after that as the major denominations have no record of him.

Horley, Ronald. Last heard of in 1954.

Jones, Dennis. Went to sea in the Blue Funnel Line. Missing since.

Kelly, David. Left after being found medically unfit. Missing since early 1953.

Lee, Laurence. Last seen preaching on the Grand Parade, Cape Town in 1958.

Lyons, David. Last seen as manager of a Ster-Kinekor cinema in Orange Grove, Johannesburg in the 1960's but Ster-Kinekor has no record of him.

Mitchell, Vincent. Went back to Bethlehem in the Free State and gained employment with the SA Railways.

Moir, Eric. Missing since 1954.

Mundy, David. Missing since 1954.

Murphy, Colin. Sent home after an incidence of theft. Missing since early 1953.

Oliver, Ronald. Was going to become a marine insurance clerk. Missing since 1954.

Quayle, William. Went to sea in Safmarine. Missing since then.

Schonkin, Hartvig. Missing since 1954.

Shaw, Michael. Went to sea in Shell before returning to Rhodesia in the late 1950's. Missing since then.

Simons, Paul. Missing since 1954.

Smit, Derek. Married Denise Brown. Last heard of at 403, Queenswood, Clarens Rd., Sea Point in 2000. Missing since then.

Spargo, Norman. Missing since 1954.

Spence, Henry. Went back to Witbank to go mining. Missing since then.
Turner, Edwin. Married Elizabeth Watt of Fort Lee, New Jersey, USA and settled there.
Enlisted in the US Army in the 1960's.
Wales, Douglas. Missing since 1954.
Whipp, Richard. Went to sea in Shell and came ashore in the late 1950's to settle in
South Africa. Missing since.
If any ex-cadets out there have any ideas on the further movements of any of the
missing shipmates above, no matter how slight, it would be of great help in the task of
tracking them down. Please pass on these ideas to Ivor Little at 79, Maud Rd.,
Valhalla, 0185, telephone 012-651-3647 or e-mail iclittle@lantic.net

Jimmy (PTI) Smith's 80th Birthday

Monday the 3rd of June was Jimmy Smith's 80th birthday and to mark the event his
family gave him a special Bothie party on Sunday the 3rd of June. This took the form of
a delightful luncheon at the Kempton park home of his daughter Glynis. A special blue
and white ice cream cake decorated with a facsimile of the Gordon's Bay anchor was
provided and a representative group of ex-cadets drawn from the "Smith Era" were
present. Jimmy was in fine fettle and the one-liners and quick gags were well up to his
usual standard. Although frail due to a recent spell of ill health he is very much the PTI
we remember and is remarkably fit and active with his memory as sharp as ever. The
following ex-cadets and their wives attended: Ken van der Walt (52/53), Ivor Little
(53/54 and staff 66/70), Fred Marais (61/62), Alan Ford (71), Tom Fraser (79). Alan,
who had been Smithy's sick bay tiffie gave a very good speech recalling his days
under Smithy's command and passing on regards and best wishes from other Old salts
as far afield as Alaska. Jimmy reciprocated and promised to get Glynis to throw an
even bigger party for his 90th birthday!

NEWS from Derek McManus, DURBAN BRANCH.

Important Notice: The Durban monthly lunch venue has changed to: Royal Natal Yacht Club. Still the 1st Wednesday of every month for lunches.
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I would like to thank those members who attended the July lunch at the Royal Natal
Yacht Club. Twenty-four pitched and all agreed that the change was a step in the right
direction. Thanks go to Dave de Wet and Keith Meyer & co from Cape Town as well as
the 1952 models that joined Keith. (50th anniversary)

It is with regret that the MNOMC is no longer the venue for our monthly luncheons but
as from the 1st August the only facility still operational is the upstairs bar & at this point
catering has yet to be arranged. The sale of the club has fallen through and the ground
and first floors have been let to provide income that hopefully will tide things over and
keep the ship afloat.

Museum - Cape Town:

As has been previously mentioned, the G.B. Museum has relocated from the CT
waterfront to a new site in Simonstown. Many thanks go to those who have taken on
the task so willingly & the contribution made in terms of manpower & the backing for
this project. Needless to say that we now have a permanent home & the Durban
Branch has allocated R2000 to assist with costs. Should anyone wish to make a

donation towards assisting the project (all donations will be acknowledged) our mailing address is P.O Box 2454, Durban, 4000. I will kick off with R100-00 to show willingness.

Any memorabilia (blazer buttons, cap badges and any Bothy items in you possession) that you would like displayed can be forwarded to the Secretary, Tony da Silva, at the above postal address. Your committee will gather as much as possible from our archives. Simonstown is the home of the Bothy & it is fitting that the museum has a permanent place there.

Annual dance:

The annual Durban Branch dance will be held in conjunction with the Master Mariners at the Elangeni Hotel Garden Court on 29th September. Last year's bash was most enjoyable from all aspects so book early as tickets are limited. (Contact B. Webster 082 323 9940, work - 2742411 or fax 031 7646567).

Ahoy all you 1972 Obies: This is your 30th anniversary, and Roy Martin is eager to have you all at the dance on 29th September. Please contact Roy on 0837771914 or martin@admiralty.co.za.

Christmas Lunch:

Just a further reminder that the annual Christmas Lunch will be held on 11th December at the Durban Club.

In closing, I would like to thank those who made the last luncheon at the new venue - certainly an upturn in numbers & hope that this trend continues. Kindest regards,
Derek McManus.

AUSTRALIAN BRANCH NEWS

Greetings from Sydney, Peter O'Hare.

QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIA GATHERING:

On Saturday 15th June 2002 we finally had our first Queensland meeting. Queensland is a big place but when we consider that the Sunshine Coast, 100kms north of Brisbane, has 5 old boys, the Gold Coast, 80kms south, has 1 while Brisbane has 3, an informal lunch was held at a well known Brisbane watering hole called the Breakfast Creek Hotel.

7 of the possible 9 turned up as did Secretary Peter O'Hare from Sydney (who hides out on the Gold Coast as often as he can) and ex Chairman Charles Parsons who was visiting his brother on the Gold Coast.

Together with 6 wives we had a good time. The oldest present taught us the pleasure of drinking good red wine. Those present were

Ian de Villiers	36/37	859	
Charles Parsons	39/40	1079	
Brian Hoatson	41/42	1179	and Jill
Fred More	43/44	1312	and Maureen
Michael Promfret	51/52	1728	and Margaret
Richard Shaw	54/55	1907	and Gloria
Michael Neill	58/59	2119	
John Baxter	61/62	2197	and Judith
Peter O'Hare	64	2247	and Jenny

The group now plans to meet at regular intervals with Brian Hoatson as organiser. The next Sydney get together will be a Braai at the Greenwich Flying Squadron yacht club on Thursday 14th November 2002. Alan Bole and family will be in town and have confirmed their attendance at the November Braai. Any Old Boy's visiting Sydney are welcome to contact me any time as we can quickly organize to meet in a pub somewhere.

UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH NEWS, from Ted Fisher.

I trust that all UK members are enjoying the summer which has been rather mixed this year dependant upon where you live in the country, however, we are now on the 'slippery slope' with the days becoming shorter!!

That said, I would like to hear from UK members. I would be more than pleased to try and organise a further re-union so write to me at my home address or preferably e-mail - ted.fisher@tarmac.co.uk - this would at least ensure that I have the correct address, as a recent note out did not reach recipients in certain cases. The autumn meet would be ideal, but Richard Hellyer has said that he could approach the Southampton Master Mariners to secure the club services for a Pie Supper in February next. Please remember the weather etc together with where the members are scattered, also transport difficulties for some around the UK. Perhaps London as last October would be the ideal place so let me have your views?

Caroline & I met with Peter & Norma Heydenryk (52/53) at their home in Westergate not far from us at Storrington, had a very pleasant morning chat over coffee - Peter is doing some odd consultancy work with a trip or two to Swaziland - best of luck to him!! Also met up briefly with Richard Hellyer (56/57) in Southampton who appeared to be in the middle of many packing cases, so no doubt he will reveal all in due course!! Spoken with Robin Wrede, Chris Nash.

ARBORETUM NEWS ALREWAS Nr DERBY

All are aware of the plaques unveiled last APRIL 2001 which at the time were placed on a steel spike. The plaque has together with others been mounted on a brick plinth to be protected and in future years will be moved to the tree when it is large enough to have the plaque placed onto it - assume we shall not be around to see this happen! A low key re-dedication ceremony was held on Sunday 23 June which I had pleasure in attending in company with a number of Old Boys & wives from the training establishments of CONWAY, WORCESTER, MERCURY, PANGBOURNE. Needless to say the GENERAL BOTHA was represented by myself together with Doug Wrathmall (now working on Wightlink to IOW). Roy Paul Chaplain of the Mersey Mission to Seafarers officiated and the unveiling carried out by David Nutman President of the Conway Club. Capt. David Parsons MNI General Secretary Merchant Navy Welfare Board gave the welcome with brief history. Commander JW Dickie OBE RN did the unveiling, Exhortation by Capt. A C Cruickshank (OW). We met at 1230pm & had a most enjoyable 'sit down' buffet lunch following the ceremony. I would suggest that the site of the National Arboretum which is just off the A38 trunk road be visited if anyone is passing through the area - a lovely spot with shop, museum etc for all services army, navy etc.

If of interest, Old Conway Boys plus wives meet for lunch on the 1st Sunday of each month at the Rising Sun Pub at Warsash Southampton (remember the School of Navigation's local) - they say the pub does not need advance warning to cope with numbers, so how about it for the first Sunday 3rd November????? - I look forward to hearing of support.

More news anon. Regards to all & sundry, TED FISHER.

NEWS FROM THE GAUTENG BRANCH, Ivor Little (Convenor).

“Spring Function” on Heritage Day 24 September: What better day to celebrate our own Bothie heritage than that. To mark the occasion Frank Pascoe and Alistair Douglas have got together and arranged a Bothie luncheon at the Randfontein Golf and Country Club in Randfontein.

This magnificent venue is being provided free of charge. The luncheon, which is sponsored, is also free to all attending Bothie Boys and their partners. We will all meet at 11h30 for free drinks before lunch, followed by a three-course carvery with wines provided. Taking in to account the usual camaraderie and short speeches the day should be over by 14h30. As the drinks are also being sponsored lunch might go on a bit longer than this. This is your chance to spend your public holiday enjoying a pleasant drive, an excellent meal, good company and a couple of drinks amidst lovely surroundings, all gratis and "for nothing"! Talk about a Bothie boy's luck - what could be better than that!

To book (we need to give the Club advance notice of numbers for catering purposes) and for directions to get there please contact Ivor directly at 79 Maud Rd, Valhalla, 0185; telephone 012 651 3647; iclittle@lantic.net. Booking before Friday 20 September, please. I look forward to seeing you all there for what promises to be an outstanding function. Yours fraternally, Ivor Little.

A Piece from the Shell Magazine.

Bill Goldsmith (#1713, 1951/52) has sent the following contribution:

Four of the Seven Ages of Man. By Second Officer G. WADDELL (With apologies to Mr. Steven Adam).

WHAT IS AN APPRENTICE? Closely following those carefree days known as childhood comes the blissful state of Apprenticeship. An Apprentice is a Deck Officer with spots on his face. He is Nelson with holes in his socks; Raleigh with a rip in his pants; Robert Taylor with a running nose; Professor Piccard with an ullage tape in his hands. Apprentices come in an assortment of shapes and sizes, big and burly, thin and wiry, fat and sleepy. All are hungry. All of them have a hidden ambition to eat more than the store room will carry. No one else can get so much into such a small locker: three weeks dirty dhobie, a broken gramophone; a loudspeaker; the hydrometer everyone has been looking for; a dog-eared condensed edition of the Kinsey Report, last night's cheese sandwiches; 15 lbs. of cotton waste and a tin of pineapple chunks. The Apprentice likes girls, cooks, dances, 'Rock 'n' Roll,' a beer when no-one is watching, the last ship, 'time-off', double helpings, pin-ups, and a dirty face. He hates dhobieing, the Mate, overtime, 'topping off', draining, polishing brass, Chief Stewards, indentures, Nichol's Concise Guide, M.O.T. Examiners, Sunday inspection

and washing his hands. He can be found eating, dodging, sleeping, lying, in the galley, in the shower, in the soup, out of cigarettes, out of money and out of reach. To his mother he is her brave little boy; to his girl, Prince Charming, and to the officer, the lowest form of animal life. And when the tank overflows who is it that says: "Sir! I thought you knew, there is two feet off the end of that ullage tape?" None other than that under-paid, overworked little hero—the Apprentice.

WHAT IS A THIRD OFFICER? Shortly after an Apprentice has finished his indentures he rushes to the M.O.T. examination rooms and gains for himself a Second Mate's Foreign-Going Certificate. He then becomes what is known as a Third Officer. Third Officers come in four lengths: short, medium, long and just plain clumsy. A Third officer is Columbus with cough drops in his pocket; Drake with dandruff on his shoulders- Thor Heyerdhal with a lifeboat list in his hand. He can be found spilling ink on the chart, oil on the deck, peas on the table, and 'the beans'. No one else can be saving so hard for so much from so little. A Jaguar, a Hi-Fi radiogram, a chicken farm, a wife, seven suits and a fortnight in Paris. He likes motor-bikes, chorus girls, West-end shows, bed, receiving mail, gin and orange, whistling, Eartha Kitt, and going ashore. He hates lifeboats, flags, libraries, Fifth Engineers, being told to, girls' mothers, Ex-Meridians, 8 o'clock, coming back, Bombay and writing home. Only he can trip up, fall down, crash into, fall out of, wear crepe shoes ashore, climbing boots on the bridge, talk politics, take the chartroom pencil, tell the Chief Officer his star-sights were wrong, drop the Captain's binoculars, and still live. To his mother he is St. Christopher, to his girl a mathematical genius, to the engineers a telegraph swinger. And who is it that greets the Second Officer with a smile at midnight, and says "The log has carried away"? None other than that broad-shouldered scapegoat, that modern Marco Polo—the Third Officer.

WHAT IS A SECOND OFFICER? Sooner or later a Third Officer must leave behind him the easy, carefree life he has been leading and become a Second Officer. Second Officers arrive in a taxi, a train, a tube, and in a terrible hurry. A Second Officer is to be found on the bridge, on the telephone, on the poop, and on the carpet. Looking up, looking through, looking in, looking for, looking out and looking worried. He collects smelly pipes, log lines, ashtrays, engagement rings, bottle openers, chart pencils, and has a natural affection for stray dogs. He likes patent medicines, chess, popular classics, clubs, fish and chips, 'Sparks', TheNews of the World, talcum powder, chest expanders and resigning. He hates being tidy, chart corrections, boatmen, and his fiancée's brother, relieving the Third Officer, insurance policies, and Smith's Dry Dock. He is Vasco da Gama with Venus on the meridian, Magellan with folio No. 24 on the chart table, and Lord Kelvin with a stopped chronometer. He is to be seen at breakfast time dashing into the saloon with five minutes to go and with sleep in his eyes, a taste in his mouth, and soap in his ears. Who else can sleep with the alarm clock ringing in his ear, the steam whistle blowing, his wardrobe door banging, a tap dripping, a beer bottle rolling backwards and forwards across the room, and stagger up on to the bridge ten minutes late swearing he hadn't been called? To his mother he is Lord Louis Mountbatten, to his fiancée a born leader of men, and to the Captain an advert for Horlicks. And when you have had a heavy day on deck who is it that says to you: "The clocks are being retarded 30 minutes in your watch

tonight"? The Second Officer, bless his heart!

WHAT IS A CHIEF OFFICER? Before a Captain can have the Second Officer certified and put away the latter is promoted to Chief Officer. Chief Officers are knowledgeable people. They know there's not enough paint to do a rabbit hutch; what they will do when they are Master; what the 'Super' wants; which ship they would rather be in and that they are in the Company's Black Book. A recent survey shows that if all the Black Books were placed end to end they would go twice-round St. Helen's Court. A Chief Officer doesn't know what the Company is coming to, where they got this crew from, what is expected of him; where they got the shore figures from, and what possessed him to come to sea in the first place. He likes cheap second-hand cars, Bing Crosby, slide rules, a sleep in the afternoon, a 'flutter', Agatha Christie, The Daily Telegraph crossword puzzle, cups of tea, a quiet watch, and their nerve. He hates inventories, being transferred, rust, his bald patch, saying good-bye to his wife, chamber music, and arriving in port on Saturday afternoon. He collects paint brushes, unused dock passes, presents for his wife, broken locks, bottles of hair tonics, stomach ulcers, keys without doors and photographs of happier days. No one else can chip it, scrape it, wire brush it, prime it and paint it and be so thrilled with the result. And who else could have half a bulkhead painted when, from nowhere, there's a cloud-burst? To his wife he is a King, to his child he is Dada, and to the Apprentices a Holy Terror. And when, screaming and frothing at the mouth, he leaps over the side, what do they say of him? He was a very good Chief Officer!

Our Webmaster, Bill Scott, has a few lines to add!

OB's Histories:

Our appeal for volunteers to do the typing for this project in the May Newsletter has been a resounding success, and the web site now has a 'staff' of five hard working programmers making up the web pages for all the histories that have been accumulated over the years. The volunteers are, in order of seniority, Norman Caseley 1941-42 # 1157, Jane Galloway, wife of John Galloway 1943-44 # 1292, Elaine Fotheringham, wife of Andy Fotheringham 1976 # 2525, Gary Rosevere 1977 # 2569 and Kevin Denning 1978 # 2625. We are most grateful to these more than willing voluntary workers, and their handiwork is now being transferred to the web site as it comes in and as time permits. This project is already proving to be of great interest, and we are now getting new histories, and updates, on a regular basis.

Latest additions, other than the above, to the web site can be seen on the notice board page.

What a Small World that we Live in.

We have received the following contribution from Jane Galloway, one of the five volunteers listed above who is assisting with the web site. It tells of an incredible coincidence, and demonstrates the value of networking through our friends and associates around the world.

Jane writes: "At last I have pinned John down to give me the details of his history, but in so doing I dug up what I consider to be a most fascinating coincidence of a Bothie

Boy's experience – fifty years on. John received a letter in 1995 from his very dear friend, Graham Gallow, a South African, now retired and living in the UK, who travels extensively. John and Graham have always been close, as have John and Fred Petters, ex Bothie Boy and mentioned in his history as having cared for him when he was so ill at sea. I wondered if this might be suitable material for the Bothie newsletter, and I submit it (with John's blessing) in that spirit. Kind regards, Jane Galloway."

- The History: J.J. GALLOWAY 1943/44 #1292: After Bothie joined Anglo Saxon Petroleum Co travelling to Abadan as supernumerary on a Norwegian tanker in the company of John Shone, Cadet No 1323. Joined mv Narica and in late 1945 dry docked in Falmouth where I was joined by my senior apprentice Fred Petters, Cadet No 1254, 1942/43. We sailed together mainly in the east until in mid-1946, while loading cargo in Bahrain, I contracted poliomyelitis. I was put ashore in Adelaide and Fred has my eternal gratitude for his ministrations during that period of illness at sea. The illness effectively put paid to a childhood desire to be a seafaring man, but thanks to extensive and dedicated physiotherapy care at Adelaide hospital during the next five months, I made a complete recovery and was able to resume a normal life, playing cricket, rugby and squash. In 1952 I married Dorothy Bennett and we had five fine sons. Spent a life in commerce and am presently retired and living in Parkhurst, Johannesburg.

-And the letter –

Lichfield, England, 8 September 1995.

Dear John, Be and I have recently returned from a cruise along the Rhine and Moselle rivers. There were about 125 passengers aboard and during two weeks one meets most of them. My purpose in writing to you now is to tell you of our meeting with one passenger whose story I must convey to you.

His name is Patrick Webb and we got into conversation with him in Rudesheim in a typical German wine/beerhall. Lots of happy, noisy music, singing and fun. He told us that he liked South Africa and went on to tell us of his first ever meeting with a South African. It seems he signed on as a galleyboy / assistant steward in a ship, the mv Narica owned by Shell Mex at a young age. The ship sailed out of Falmouth and made for Abadan in the Persian Gulf to take on oil cargo. Among the officers were two South African midshipmen, one named John but he could not recall the name of the other. John was a fine man and well liked, but sadly he contracted polio whilst at sea making for Freemantle and there was much panic aboard because no one knew what the problem was and reliance was placed upon radio advice received from ashore. However, the ship made for Adelaide and because of John's condition it had to fly a yellow flag upon entering the port. John was taken ashore and the ship's company assumed that he had died in Australia.

Patrick really did express sadness when telling us about this experience. I said to him that I knew every detail of the story he had recounted but I could assure him that John had not died but had made a marvelous recovery, was a father of five boys, played rugby and squash and was my oldest living friend. He was astounded to hear this so I told him I would recount the story to you and ask you

to confirm or otherwise whether you are the same John as I believe. If not the coincidence is extraordinary as I am sure you will agree.

I hope you will substantiate my beliefs and that I can phone Patrick to let him know the correctness or otherwise of our conclusions. Be joins me in sending our fondest regards to you . . .

DONATIONS TO THE G.B. OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION.

The following made donations to the Association during the period 1st January to 30th June 2002:-

G. Alderman	J.C. Ferris	C.R.F. Kingon	P. Partridge
I. Appleton	R.W. Fisher	C.A. Kroon	J.D. Piggott
D.E. Atkinson	Ted Fisher	D. Le Roux	D. Poulton
P.G. Atwood	P. Fitt	M.A.G. Link	D.
Powell			
A. Baartmen	A. Fotheringham	C.R. MacLeod	P. Prest
M.G. Barnes	GBOBA Australia	Magtape Credit	J.A. Rayner
J. Bekker	W. Goldsmith	G.L. Maxwell	J.D.
Robinson			
A.W. Bluett	N. Hagan	A.M. McKay	J.M.L. Sharman
E.C. Bremner	I. Hartnack	K.T. McNish	R.J. Shipp
K.J. Clifton	I.B. Harvey	J. McTavish	J. Shone
J.E. Cooke	Mrs. E. Hodes	K. Meyer	G. Stevens
W.J. Damerell	M.A. Hoffman	G. Mildyard	P.E. Swart
J. Dow	D.R. Hoole	A.D. Nicholas	T.Y.
Thomson			
R.M. Dow	H.S. James	P. O'Hare	K. van der Walt
N. Du Plessis	E.W. Jupp	J. Oosthuizen	D.P.
Williams-Freeman			

R. Wrede.

STATUS OF FUNDS FORMERLY BELONGING TO SAMNC GENERAL BOTHA.

The Chairman of the General Botha Trust reports that the protracted negotiations with the Cape Technikon have at long last borne fruit. The several funds that existed under the control of the SAMNC at the time of being incorporated into the Cape Technikon, have been consolidated into two funds. The Trust is now in possession of a document jointly signed by the Cape Technikon and the Trust, which sets out the terms under which the Funds will henceforth be administered and controlled. The Trust will shortly commence the process whereby the first disbursements of a minimum of 75% of annual interest will take place, in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

Members will be kept informed on a regular basis as to the state of the funds, via the pages of this newsletter and annually at the GBOBA AGM. At the AGM it is intended to present to members a complete picture of what disbursements have been made during the year, in addition to the existing state of the funds. Unfortunately as the agreement has only recently been ratified, it was not possible to produce a statement in time for inclusion in this newsletter.

The "Octopus Route."

The following amusing story is taken from "HORIZONS," the Story of Rennies 1849-1999, by Brian Ingpen. At the turn of the century a passenger could expect a 27-day voyage from London to Durban in a Rennie's vessel. However, one complaint from a Mr. Ernest Drury of Ladysmith makes fascinating reading (the original grammar and punctuation have been retained):

"I wish to lodge a complaint against Mr Waring, Captain of the SS Insizwa. I embarked from London on the 1st July 1903 and on the 16th inst. I had the misfortune of having my bedclothes snatched from me, and out of the porthole by a huge 'octopus' of the length 40 to 50 feet. I at once aroused my fellow passenger, Mr Grant, and we together went on deck to see if we could find the monster, but it had entirely disappeared, and I distinctly saw it had my bedclothes in its arm, it gave me such a fright, that it nearly sent me into a fit, and for several days, I was completely incapable of doing anything, as it took away my presence of mind, and I consider it has injured my health for years to come. Hearing our cries for help, Mr Bradbury of Johannesburg at once rushed on deck to assist us, we gave a thorough search but it was of no use, we also had the valuable assistance of your Mr Harlow your Bedroom steward .Mr Bradbury at once rushed downstairs to see if his children were secure and found the creatures marks around the Port Holes and at once closed them.

"Sleep the remainder of the night was out of the question and our nerves were terribly shaken up, and had it not been for the kindness of Mr Bradbury supplying us with Wine, Myself and Mr Grant would have completely collapsed. As soon as the Captain came on Deck, I went to report the horrible catastrophe, but instead of stopping the ship and investigating the matter, he laughed at me in a most insulting manner, and wished to know what I had been drinking over night, whereas I am a staunch teetotaler as well as all my people at home including my Grandmother, and Grandfather, and I consider the statement a gross libel of my character. Mr Bradbury and Mr Grant were both present and could swear to the truth of my statement. The Captain also neglected to post a notice up, informing passengers they were traveling the "Octopus Route,' and warning them to keep our Port Holes at night closed also to keep clear from the side of the ship, which notice I posted outside the Cabin door. Another very grave, and serious complaint I have to make which might have ended with the total loss of the ship and all passengers and crew. When coursing the 'Equator Line' the Captain so far neglected his duty as to go full steam ahead instead of almost stopping, until we had crossed out of danger. I was informed very rudely by the Captain that I should have to pay for the Bed clothing, viz a sheet and quilt which the Octopus carried out to sea. I don't intend to pay even if you put me in prison, and if the Captain retains my luggage I shall sue for very heavy damage, as I am writing this letter there are several Octopus's traveling along the ship, and which has been seen by both passengers and officers. Trusting that after reading my very serious complaint you will be more careful in choosing the men you appoint as Captains of your passenger ships..."

When going through some historical records of the Company in 1960, Gordon Rennie came across the letter of complaint from Mr Drury, and sent it to the Rand Daily Mail which published it.

In a letter to the editor, the daughter of the “kind Mr Bradbury” referred to in Mr Drury’s account responded with an interesting explanation:

“...Mr Drury... was a nervous young man, obviously adventuring into the wide, wide world; no doubt he expected to encounter lions snakes and such African paraphernalia in primitive South Africa. I remember my father adding to this menagerie a creature of the sea and there was much talk of the giant octopi which infested the Atlantic. We children were crossing between England and South Africa for the third time and were unmoved by the terrors of the deep. To offset some tension on board, due to a little engine trouble following a spell of rough seas and discomfort, my naughty father, this ‘kind Mr Bradbury,’ arranged a demonstration of the real dangers to be met on the high seas for the benefit of our unsophisticated Mr Drury. The cabin adjoining Mr Drury’s was occupied by Mr Grant, and my father, with his help, engineered a contraption which actually did drag Mr Drury’s bedding out the porthole... It was Mr Bradbury who helped him cococt the letterof complaint to Messrs Rennie, Sons and Company... The Insizwa was a small ship, eminently seaworthy and homely. The few passengers were so varied and interesting that many of them are remembered by that voyaging schoolgirl...”

Well one wonders how far we have progressed since 1903, when one reads something like the following clip out of a Gauteng newspaper recently:

"The situation is absolutely under control," Transport Minister Ephraem Magagula told the Swaziland parliament in Mbabane. "Our nation's merchant navy is perfectly safe. We just don't know where it is, that's all." Replying to an MP's question, Minister Magagula admitted that the landlocked country had completely lost track of its only ship, the Swazimar: "We believe it is in a sea somewhere. At one time, we sent a team of men to look for it, but there was a problem with drink and they failed to find it, and so, technically, yes, we've lost it a bit. But I categorically reject all suggestions of incompetence on the part of this government. The Swazimar is a big ship painted in the sort of nice bright colours you can see at night. Mark my words, it will turn up. The right honourable gentleman opposite is a very naughty man, and he will laugh on the other side of his face when my ship comes in."

At the 1994 annual awards dinner given for Forensic Science, AAFS President Dr Don Harper Mills astounded his audience with the legal complications of a bizarre death. Here is the story.

On March 23, 1994 the medical examiner viewed the body of Ronald Opus and concluded that he died from a shotgun wound to the head. Mr.Opus had jumped from the top of a ten-story building intending to commit suicide. He left a note to the effect indicating his despondency. As he fell past the ninth floor his life was interrupted by a shotgun blast passing through a window, which killed him instantly. Neither the shooter nor the deceased were aware that a safety net had been installed just below the eighth floor level to protect some building workers and that Ronald Opus would not have been able to complete his suicide the way he had planned. "Ordinarily," Dr Mills continued,

"A person who sets out to commit suicide and ultimately succeeds, even though the mechanism might not be what he intended, is still defined as committing suicide." That Mr. Opus was shot on the way to certain death, but probably would not have been successful because of the safety net, caused the medical examiner to feel that he had a homicide on his hands. In the room on the ninth floor, where the shotgun blast emanated, was occupied by an elderly man and his wife. They were arguing vigorously and he was threatening her with a shotgun. The man was so upset that when he pulled the trigger he completely missed his wife and the pellets went through the window striking Mr. Opus.

When one intends to kill subject "A" but kills subject "B" in the attempt, one is guilty of the murder of subject "B." When confronted with the murder charge the old man and his wife were both adamant and both said that they thought the shotgun was unloaded. The old man said it was a long-standing habit to threaten his wife with the unloaded shotgun. He had no intention to murder her.

Therefore the killing of Mr. Opus appeared to be an accident; that is if the gun had been accidentally loaded. The continuing investigation turned up a witness who saw the old couple's son loading the shotgun about six weeks prior to the fatal accident. It transpired that the old lady had cut off her son's financial support and the son, knowing the propensity of his father to use the shotgun threateningly, loaded the gun with the expectation that his father would shoot his mother. Since the loader of the gun was aware of this, he was guilty of the murder even though he didn't actually pull the trigger. The case now becomes one of murder on the part of the son for the death of Ronald Opus. Now comes the exquisite twist. Further investigation revealed that the son was, in fact, Ronald Opus. He had become increasingly despondent over the failure of his attempt to engineer his mother's murder. This led him to jump off the ten story building on March 23rd, only to be killed by a shotgun blast passing through the ninth story window. The son had actually murdered himself so the medical examiner closed the case as a suicide.

CAPE TOWN BRANCH MEMBERS.

Your Committee would like to know from the Members what format the Commissioning Day Dinner should be.

- Should we continue with a dinner, or change to a lunch?
- Should we keep the dress code "Black Tie," or change to club blazer and tie?
- Should partners be included?
- Do you have suggestions about a guest speaker?

Please direct your response and comments to the Chairman. Tony Nicholas, in writing preferably. His full details you will find on page 1 of this newsletter.

Please read that list of missing Obies from the class of 1954, and let us know if you have any information of any one of them.

Finally to close – "The best saving you will ever do is to save friends. Friendship is like money – easier made than kept."

Cheers for now! From Dennis Henwood (the Scribe) dhenwood@iafrica.com.