

## S.A.T.S.

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

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

**August 2013**

### **JOINT NEWSLETTER**

**Has your address changed?** Please send your updated details to Tony Nicholas Chairman Cape Town (details above).

**Do you have an interesting article for this newsletter?** Please send your contributions to Dennis Henwood, [dhenwood@iafrica.com](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.

*Greetings from a stormy Cape Town as we drown our sorrows in a typical driving Nor'wester. Our sorrows being the disappointing performance of a local rugby team that has not lived up to its name this season, and seemed to have upset our Chairman and Bob Hind by what they have to say further on in this newsletter. Your regular scribe is off to sea for a few weeks, and so we are grateful to Hugh James for stepping in to complete this issue.*

### **FORTHCOMING CAPE TOWN EVENTS.**

- **Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September, 1130 for 1200 – Pub lunch, Royal Cape Yacht Club.**
- Speaker, Michel Boer, Staff Captain with Holland America Line, on the subject of Super Yachts.
- NOTE the earlier start time. Cost R50 per person excluding gratuity.
- Booking for the lunch is important, please RSVP by Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2013 to:
  - Kathy or Jacky Nicholas: phone 021-788 5957 Facsimile: 086 604 0811
  - Email: [cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za](mailto:cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za)

- **THURSDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER – SVITZER MARINE BURSARY GOLF DAY**

Your support of this good cause in the spirit and memory of our Ship is vital. Full details are on page 14 and on our website [www.generalbotha.co.za](http://www.generalbotha.co.za) or contact a committee member for details. We value your support highly and invite you to put together your own 4 Balls in support of this fundraiser.

CAPE TOWN DATES OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS: 2013
21 November – Svitzer Marine Bursary Golf Day
10 December 2013: End of Year luncheon.
PROVISIONAL DATES OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS: 2014 & 2015
01 March 2014: AGM and Commissioning Day luncheon (Kelvin Grove confirmed)
02 March 2014: Annual Service of Remembrance and Wreath Laying Ceremony
14 March 2015: AGM and Commissioning Day luncheon (Kelvin Grove confirmed)
15 March 2015: Annual Service of Remembrance and Wreath Laying Ceremony

**FROM THE BRIDGE OF s.s. CAPE TOWN**

As I write today I am in mourning! My rugby team, the Stormers, failed dismally in their Super Rugby campaign this season. But their final match against the Bulls last week was a sweet revenge.

A little bit of history has done a full circle, a silver cigarette box was donated to our GB Trust recently and the inscription on it reads: From – Captain & Wardroom Officers – S.A.T.S. General Botha – December 1929 – This was presented to Owen Clough on his retirement from the ship’s board of control, he chaired the board from inception in 1921. It is truly a remarkable item and will hopefully find a place in our museum exhibit in due course.

Our monthly lunches continue to be popular but with varying attendance. Your support is highly appreciated. These are hosted on the SECOND Tuesday of EVERY month at the Royal Cape Yacht Club. Finally the club management has approached us for an increase in price. We have been expecting this for a long time and quite frankly it is remarkable how the club has managed to hold the price for us for so many years. Previously we collected R50 per person, which included a gratuity. We have now agreed that the lunch price will be R50 per person excluding staff gratuity. A tip by each member is thus discretionary, perhaps the silver coins in your wallet at the time.

The Marine Golf Day featured elsewhere in this publication is worthy of your support. As previously detailed this fundraiser is in support of our GBOBA Bursary Fund, which provides bursaries to deserving and needy scholars studying a maritime stream, similar to our Bothie days. The inaugural golf day last year was generously *lead* sponsored by Smit Amandla Marine and this year the lead sponsor is Svitzer, both companies headed by Bothie Boys. Our heartfelt thanks to both these Old Boys and their companies. Long may the Legend Live On.

Terry Purdon 1971 has given our website an upgrade. The site is well worth regular visits and one is able to *interact*, for want of a better term, via the website. Have a look and follow your course line on it.

A note from the Ship Society. The Ship Society has back issues to sell for R5-R10 each of the British shipping magazines Ships Monthly, Shipping Today & Yesterday, Sea Breezes for the period 2000-2010. ALSO Windsor Castle (Porcupine Ridge) red wine (R55) and white wine (R45) for sale. Contact Pauline – 021 434 [5528](tel:5528) / [brupa@telkomsa.net](mailto:brupa@telkomsa.net).

Now for a beer or six and settle down for rugby on the *telly*.

**The New Website (<http://generalbotha.co.za>)**

They say that if it ain’t broke then don’t fix it! Well the old website wasn’t broken, but I decided to fix it anyway for the following reasons....

- i. I am basically a lazy person and updating the old site was becoming quite a tedious task.
- ii. Web technology has advanced in leaps and bounds since Bill first hand crafted the original site using HTML and Java. In addition, we now have CMS (Content Management Systems,

PHP, Plugins ,Widgets, etc. and the beauty is, you don't have to know anything about how they work , just what they do and how to put them together to create a modern and professional looking website.

Finally, I wanted to create an interactive site, where users could upload their own content for comment and discussion. This is known in the industry as a "Blog" and although our site incorporates all the functionality of a blog, I have modified it so that we have a normally functioning website with limited blogging capabilities.

I haven't really broken any new ground when it comes to content on the website. I think that Bill got it right first time and most of the change entailed copying existing material over to the new site. Most of it is there, and if you do see something new, it was probably sitting for a while in my mailbox waiting to be published.

OK, so now I have done my bit and it is now up to members to do theirs! ....

"Oh – I knew there was a catch!" I hear you say, but it's not that bad. I need members to provide me with pictures and articles relating to the Bothie, either of a historical nature or with some entertainment value which could be published in our magazine section. If you do send pics, please ensure that they are captioned with a date, a place, and names of the people. I realise that there may be some conflict with the news letter, but if you have prepared something for the newsletter, no harm in also submitting it for the website magazine as well.

For more current news, we have the "Notice Board". I have given committee members world-wide, "Author" privileges. This allows them to post messages or articles on the Notice Board, the idea being that they can advise members about local events or news without the delay of requesting the webmaster to publish it. (Told you I was lazy!.... ☺). Remember that ANY member (or non-member for that matter), can "Comment" on these posts as long as they are logged in to the site.

So – register on the website today and avoid the rush! It is hoped that the website will eventually become the first place members will look when they need up-to-date information of happenings within the GBOBA community.

Terry Purdon

(Webmaster) or Web Administrator as they call it today!

*Thanks Terry! It's simple to register. I used my name as the User Name and chose a Password. I could log in immediately. Hugh James.*

### SCRANBAG

**R.J. DE KONING 1971 #2387.** After many years in Doha, Qatar, Ron & Maike appear to be dragging their anchors back here and settling in Port Elizabeth. We hope you are regular Cape Town visitors though.

**N.G. TALBOT 1973 #2458.** Norman's email address led me to believe he had relocated to the UK somewhere only to eventually discover that, although his email is UK, he works in the Middle East but lives in S.A. Appears the mid east sand dunes have made him a nomad of sorts. "To clarify, when I became "internet connected" my daughter in the UK generated my email address for me hence the UK connection. I am piloting in Jebel Ali on a temporary basis and SA is still my home. When back in SA my home is my caravan, which I keep in storage along with vehicles and furniture. So I am living a sort of nomadic/adventurous life at present and travel around SA a lot." Don't forget our Cape Town monthly lunch meetings when wandering through here.

**C.F. STURGESS 1980 #2702.** Chris found our website to update us of his present locality. Moved to the United Kingdom July 2012 and working as a Contracts Manager in the South of England for a family run construction business.

**K.G.D. OBERMEYER 1979 #2675.** Kevin has been the President and CEO of Marine Operations for the Pacific Pilotage Authority overseeing the pilotage for the entire British Columbia [Canada] Coast. Interesting how the Bothie Boys make their successful way in the world. There is a very interesting interview with Kevin on the site <http://www.bcshippingnews.com/shipping/pilotage/industry-insight-captain-kevin-obermeyer-president-ceo-pacific-pilotage-authority>. The opening paragraph of the article reads:

“For Captain Kevin Obermeyer, President & CEO of the Pacific Pilotage Authority (PPA), the importance of pilotage on the West Coast cannot be understated. Despite the intricacies of our coastline and the unpredictable weather, pilotage provides a level of oversight that offers a 99.97 per cent success rate of getting ships to port (and back to open seas) safely. While his days may be filled with industry and public consultations, candidate examinations and regulatory reviews, Captain Obermeyer’s main focus — to ensure safe passage for vessels over 10,000 tonnes — never falls far from view.”

**R.J.D. DUGAN 1982 #2759.** Ronald has left Shaw Group, joined Technip France based in Paris as Vice President Downstream Onshore Business Unit. Please let me have your new address details Ronald.

**A.P. SHARROCK 1978 #2633.** The internet can be a wonderful tool. Some burrowing around on the internet by Alan Ford [1971] found AWOL Tony in Australia. “My brother Dave [1974] sent me a photo taken in about 1979 when I was sailing on the m.v. “HORIZON” up the West Coast of Africa and which was taken in the delightful paradise of Pointe Noire. Well Dave is my ‘bigger’ brother and I was at Bothie during the second intake for 1978 and my number is 2633. Sadly I have not been one to remain in contact and drifted on. The photo did bring back old memories. I have been living and working in Melbourne for the last 18 years and currently self employed as a Marine Surveyor.” Well hopefully you have drifted onto our Aus branch.

**R.A. HIND 1954/55 #1884.** Another reunion in the making, we look forward to your gathering Bob. “My wife Judy and I are planning a trip to your area next year. I wish to be in Cape Town on the occasion of the annual dinner [1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2014]. Further it is the 60th anniversary of the 1954/55 draft, and I ask if you would check your records as to how many of that draft are still alive and live in the Cape Town area, let it be known that I would like to meet them through the newsletter closer to the time [27 class mates internationally but only four in the Cape Town area]. We plan to spend about 10 days in the Cape, 3 or 4 days in PE, the same in Durban, and the remainder of our time Jhb. For myself I am still in reasonable health playing golf twice a week, badly! Have to accept that at 75 years I can’t hit the ball as far and accurately as I used to. Only glad that I am to be able to still get out there. I am not impressed with the Stormers this season who started off well but seem to have slumped. [Yes, their entire Super Rugby campaign was a disaster until their final match against the Bulls]. I am impressed with the newsletter, keep up the good work. BRAVO ZULU. Yours Aye, Bob Hind.”

Bob, I trust you have made contact with ALL your class mates to gather for a bash here in Cape Town March 2014. Let us know should assistance be required.

**S.G. BREBNER 1979 #2639.** Simon has been on Captain’s defaulters parade for being AWOL but we have him on our radar again. “Hi Tony, apologies for being such a slacker! After moving from Brazil I joined APM Terminals in Tangiers Morocco although thankfully we were allowed to reside in Spain which has more choices for International Schools. So we settled in Marbella (someone has got to do it!) and I used to commute across the Straits of Gibraltar on a regular basis into and out of our Tanger-Med port. It worked well and we were all very happy. As normal for the expat style within the Group, changes were frequent and after 3 and a half years I took up the post with APMT in Bahrain as Chief Commercial Officer looking after all commercial aspects of our port which includes the container terminal, general cargo and warehousing, marine services (we sub-contract tugs and pilotage to our sister company Svitzer). Unfortunately my family is not with me as the kids’ schooling needs required

more stability and they are all in the UK, so it is a frequent path that I tread from Bahrain. In fact I'm writing this mail to you whilst onboard Emirates bound for Heathrow! My contract has been extended until Dec 2014 and we will see what happens after that." Please keep in touch and I still await your postal and phone details for the database.

**R.W. REDDING 1955/56 #1969.** Roderick recently contacted whilst on a holiday visit to our fairest Cape, a long absence from our GBOBA. 1957 to 1960 apprentice/cadet with Ellerman & Bucknall [City Line]. 1960 to 1986 Price Forbes Insurance Brokers [South Africa]. 1987 to 1992 Sedgewick Insurance Brokers [London]. 1993 formed own insurance services companies [United Kingdom]. We hope to see you at the 2014 *Bothie weekend*.

**G.M. DOUGLAS 1978 #2626.** Our ever alert Gauteng chairman noted that Graham was not on our membership when they met at the Durban branch AGM. 1977 to 1985 at sea with Unicorn, thereafter with Land & Marine, Safmarine, Pentow and Smit, at sea and as salvage master.

1997 - Tug Master with Portnet, Richard's Bay. Received a bravery award whilst in Richard's Bay. 1998 - joined Pentow Marine, Durban. 1999 - Master on a Dive Support Vessel operating out of the Bonny River, Nigeria, for an American Company, Stolt Comex Seawan. 2005 Sub LT in S.A. Navy, completed FTO 1 Officer's course and served on a missile strike craft. 2006 to 2007 lecturer at Durban University of Technology before joining Svitzer. Thereafter with various tug and salvage companies before joining Alan Brink & Associates Durban in 2012.

**A. CROSS 1966 #2277.** Since retirement Andrew has crossed hot air balloon and a bungee jump off his bucket list, next is a round the world yacht race, he writes: "We are at last having some summer sun in UK which has cheered the country up somewhat. As you are aware I am taking part in the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race so thought I would give you an update. The race starts from St Katharine's Dock London on the 1st Sept stopping at Rio, Cape Town, Australia, Singapore, Qingdao, San Francisco, New York (via Panama) before returning to London about the 19th July 2014. This is 40,000 miles of sailing on a 70 foot racing yacht with a crew of 20 and perhaps the biggest challenge is not the sailing but getting on with 20 fellow crew members. I will be the oldest member of the crew and hope I am up to the challenge. Would love to meet any Bothie Old Boys along the way and full details of the race can be found on <https://www.clipperroundtheworld.com/the-race/13-14/leg-1>

We don't yet know the names of the 12 purpose built yachts taking part but I am with Team Rich/C25 and more details about my own adventure can be found on my blog <http://andrewclipper.wordpress.com>

I join my yacht on the 12th August then the start 1st Sept, should be in Rio by 1st week Oct and Cape Town last week Oct. all weather dependent of course."

Andrew, we look forward to your Cape Town visit, which I hope we can make a memorable one for you. Chris Viljoen is in some Brazilian place called Aracruz and in Singapore we have Hugh Scheffer, Hilton Stroebel and Clive van Onselen. So we have a Bothie Bash in the making there. Then there is Australia which hosts many Bothie Boys, let Andy Fotheringham and Peter O'Hare know your ports of call in good time. Bon voyage Old Man.

#### **ANCHORS AWEIGH**

**P.G. KING 1957/58.** After a long period of serious illness, which he bravely endured, Peter passed away 18<sup>th</sup> May. Born (1941) in a small town called Barry, in Wales, Peter immigrated to Durban with his family in the 1950's. After Bothie, Peter applied to Bank Line but due to lack of berths joined Standard Bank followed by a brief period in the Personnel Department of the Durban Port Captain's Office. He then joined Mitchell Cotts in Durban and was transferred to Port Elizabeth before joining Burroughs Machines (later named Unysis) as a Salesman and transferred to their Johannesburg Office, promoted to their General Manager of Business Forms Division. Later started his own companies; business forms design and eco therapy products. He and his wife settled in the Eastern Cape in 2006,

where they enjoyed restoring furniture and old buildings until in 2010 he began suffering the dreadful Motor Neuron disease, which he fought with much courage and bravery.

**B. GREENWOOD 1952/53.** A highly respected member of our waterfront, fondly known as “The Pirate”, and an active member of the GB Old Boys and the Society Of Master Mariners for many years, Brian passed away 8<sup>th</sup> June. Born Durban June 17<sup>th</sup> 1936. Educated S.A.M.N.A General Botha and University of Stellenbosch (Industrial Relations Development Programme). Midshipman to Third Officer Blue Funnel Line 1954 - 1960. Farmer 1961. Second Officer to Master and Assistant Superintendent Safmarine 1963 - 1970. Stevedore Superintendent to Director in charge at Durban for Rennies Stevedoring 1971 - 1981. Branch Manager at Durban for Rennies Grindrod Cotts Stevedoring 1981, and Branch Manager at Cape Town for S.A. Stevedores 1982. Established Stevedoring Specialists 1986.

Brian’s good friend and class mate, Keith Meyer, expressed his fond memories:

“I first met Brian Greenwood as a junior cadet at the General Botha in 1952. I learnt that he had previously been a student at Wynberg Boys High. From the moment I met him, I realized that he was one of the few there, who knew he was going to go to sea. There was no doubt about that. He took part in almost all of the activities possible. He was a side drummer in the band and was a bugler as well. He was in the senior rugby team and in both the GB whaler and cutter crews. All this may lead readers to believe he was an innocent 'do gooder'. No ways! He was as naughty as they come. I don’t know why, but I'm told that he was the only person who could be wrapped only in a white sheet, stare Sanderoff poker faced. He was a leader amongst us even as a junior cadet. We could always trust Brian to find ways of minimizing the effects on Old Salt terrorizing nights. Later in life, knowing what a good leader of men, a good seaman, a good ship's master he was, I asked him why he thought he was never made a Cadet Captain at the Bothie. He smiled, that naughty smile of his, and told me that on the day they were choosing those for promotion, he was caught by Second Officer Sanderoff, smoking in the heads!!

Brian always had a big heart for those in trouble and on their beam ends. For instance, I know that he took into his home a lady, down on her luck, together with her two children, and looked after them and their schooling for many years until they were stable again. Those friends of his, who were at the memorial ceremony at the RCYC, will have heard a girl in the front row 'heart sobbing'. She was one of those children, grown up now, whom Brian had helped in life. I know quite a lot about his very successful sea career. The Bothie must have thought well of him by sending him to Blue Funnel Line. There they were not known as cadets, but as Midshipmen! He was fourth mate in 1957 and did Second Mate's certificate in Liverpool, First Mate's in 1959 and after a short while ashore passed Master's Certificate in Durban in 1965. After a further while ashore in the company's office, he returned to sea as Master in 1969. When Brian came ashore for good, he started up a small stevedoring business, which over the years grew into a sizable enterprise. Those of us who knew Brian, will not be surprised to hear that not only was a he good business man, but he was such a good boss that he ensured the future of all his staff by making them share holders of the business. Brian eventually was able to leave his well trained crew to run the business, leaving him able to build a house in Veld Drift on the river side. There he built a fine jetty to moor his yacht. Prior to this, he and his fine lady Alleta had lived together in good harmony, and here on the riverside, he and Alleta lived happily for some time. Brian had so very many friends in life, yet he had the remarkable ability of making each one feel that we were his best friend. Admiral Peter Bitzker (Senior Cadet Capt 1953), Brian and I often enjoyed a car trip out to a Bothie mate of ours, one Danny le Roux who had hidden himself away in the sticks between Caledon and Hermanus. There we would braai, enjoy a glass of wine and Brian, to our great enjoyment, would rag Danny unmercifully about his Right Leaning political views. Danny, Peter and I were heartbroken to hear of Brian's passing. I will always remember Brian for his incredible general knowledge, for his excellent memory, his kind heart, and his tremendous sense of humour. Even in death, we will still remember him.”

Also from class mate Peter Murray:

“Brian was my best shipmate and mate at the Bothy – we were there together, and also in Blue Funnel and Safmarine together. I would have really liked to pay my respects at the remembrance, but being in Port Elizabeth makes this difficult. Myrtle and I got married in Pentre in Wales when I was studying in Liverpool, Brian who was in Liverpool at the time (just having signed off a Blue Funnel ship) got onto a motorbike and came through to Pentre for the wedding. In fact, Brian was the only South African at the wedding. This is what shipmates are all about. I remember to my horror at my wedding that about 10 of my fellow cadets (who I had not invited for a good reason) pitched at the church. I must admit at the reception they lived up to the reason why I didn’t invite them in the first place, however it was special. And that is exactly how I feel about Brian.”

Mike Briant wrote of Brian “Only he could stare 'Sandy' out poker faced, dressed in nothing but a sheet. Our loss has to be heaven's gain. Moz.”

**E.S. PAGE 1944/45.** Edward passed away 5<sup>th</sup> June. On the Bothie Edward won the Kings Gold Medal and was captain of the cricket team. 1946 - joined Ellerman Lines. 1956 - joined the Harbour Service at Durban. Received special merit for helping to save three people from drowning during a gale when their small boat capsized in the bay. 1963 - Harbour master at Luderitz. 1966 - Pilot at Walvis Bay. 1969 - Pilot at Port Elizabeth. 1976 - Assistant Port Captain, Port Elizabeth. 1982 - Port Captain Port Elizabeth. 1987 - Port Captain Durban. 1989 - Director (Marine Services) Johannesburg and retired 1991.

**E.S. FENWICK 1960/61.** After a “lifetime” in the harbour service Sid passed away 30<sup>th</sup> May. In his own words: "I retired from Portnet (Containers) as the MIS Manager (Management Information Services) on 31 March 2003 after 41 years service with Transnet. They actually sent me to the General Botha in 1960-61 to be trained as a Chief Engineer on the tugs."

**C.D. CILLIE 1957/58.** Charl passed away 16<sup>th</sup> May. We unfortunately have no detail of Charl’s career and would appreciate any contributions.

**R. MEIERHANS 1950/51.** Roy passed away 30<sup>th</sup> April. Roy served as cadet on m.v. Kaapland February 1952 till sold in 1954. Then joined "Thesens Steamship Company" as 2nd Mate 1955 till coming ashore in 1969 (8 years in command). Joined Grindrod Cotts Stevedores as Superintendent. Promoted to Assistant Branch Manager. Transferred to Grindrods Shipping to open their container terminal as terminal manager in 1997. Then transferred to Town office as Operations Manager till retirement. Thereafter farmed in the Greyton area for many years.

**R.G. WEISS 1945/46.** Reg passed away 26<sup>th</sup> April. Reg Weiss completed more than 63 years in active journalism, some 54 mainly with agricultural publications. From 1996-2005, he was Vice-President (Africa) of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists and at the time of his death he was an Honorary Life President of the SA Agricultural Writers.

Trained on the General Botha, Simon’s Town (1945-46), for a career as a deck officer, he was the first cadet-officer to sign on with Safmarine’s first ship, SS Constantia, sailing between South Africa, the West Indies and the United States. In 1948, he took up a post with The Friend Newspapers in Bloemfontein. He cut his teeth in 1958-59 with *Farmer’s Weekly*, where he was trained as a reporter before joining *The Friend*, South Africa’s first daily newspaper north of the Orange River. He was “Editor: Western Cape” successively of three publications – the *Farmers’ Weekly*, *Landbouweekblad* and *The Dairy Mail*. He also worked for the SA Press Association and the *Cape Argus*, at the same time seeing service in the Parliamentary Press Gallery (with breaks) from 1957 to 1995.

He represented SAPA and Reuters at the independence celebrations of Ghana, the first colony in Africa to achieve this distinction. In the 1950s, among others, he covered the treason trial in Johannesburg and

the historic congresses of the ANC before it was banned. Memorable assignments included interviews with General Smuts, Dr Malan, Dr Moroka, Chief Albert Luthuli, Walter Sisulu, J. G. Strydom, Hendrik Verwoerd and P. W. Botha and he also remembered being introduced to a youthful Nelson Mandela, then described by Sisulu as a “young Turk” no longer satisfied with passive resistance.

Frustrated by negative politics, he returned to agricultural journalism, which he saw as a positive force for good in the world. Visits to the United States, the United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Australia, Israel, Ghana and the West Indies only reinforced his belief that peace was best served by “putting good wholesome milk into babies” (Churchill).

He represented South African journalists at successive world congresses of the IFAJ and fought hard to secure the 10<sup>th</sup> World Congress for South Africa in 2004. It was the first in Africa and hosted some 100 delegates from 26 countries.

He was a past chairman of the Paarl Ratepayers’ Association, the Simon van der Stel Foundation and the Paarl SPCA, was secretary of the Drakenstein Heemkring and ratepayer representative on the Drakenstein aesthetics advisory committee.

He served for two successive five-year terms on the Cape Diocesan Council and was for some 40 years a lay minister at Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Paarl, also representing the parish at various synods and the elective assemblies of five Archbishops, including that of Emeritus Archbishop Tutu. He was Public Relations Manager of the old Deciduous Fruit Board in the 1970s and served on the board of the National Museum, Bloemfontein, in the 1950s.

Up until his death, he was still a regular columnist for the *Paarl Post* and *The Dairy Mail*, edited newsletters for organized agriculture in the Western Cape for many years and was also a correspondent for *Die Boer* and several commodity journals.

Many Safmariners, past and present, will remember **Commodore Ivan Currie**, commodore of the Safmarine fleet after Old Boy Robin Thomson retired. Another retired Safmarine Master, Alan Smaldon, writes: “I have just learnt Commodore Ivan Currie passed away 14<sup>th</sup> July. Another one of the old school has gone to the big dry dock in the sky; many a seafarer will be very upset at this I am sure. He was truly a character, respected and admired by all who knew him. R.I.P. Ivan The Terrible.” Our condolences to family and shipmates.

### SOS

**Jacobus van Leeuwen** last known in Bromhof, Gauteng, remains AWOL despite the best sleuth work of our Ganteng Chair Alan Ford.

In checking the Muster List of 1954/55 for their, we hope, 2014 reunion I noted AWOL **Alan French** last known as harbour pilot Cape Town, **George Salmon** last known Turrumurra, Australia and **Steven Walton** last known in Meadowridge, Cape Town. Surely someone has useful information to assist us in tracking these defaulters.

### Request

The family of the late Gary David Roseveare (2569) 1977 January to June intake, request any photos or information that Old Boys may have of him. Contact Courtney Cook; email: admin@seamarine.co.za

### Australia Branch – Peter O’Hare

Our mid year lunch was held on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July at the Great Northern Hotel in Chatwood, Sydney.

In attendance were:

Gordon Maxwell 40/41 and Bettie

Stan Damp 47/48

John Mc Tavish 51/52

Peter O’Hare 64 and Jenny

Roger Pike - Old Pangbourne

Hugh Murray – ex Sydney Harbour tug master -Guest of Stan Damp



We celebrated Gordon Maxwell's 88<sup>th</sup> Birthday last year and this year he turned up in his new Honda Jazz which he had taken delivery of the previous day. He and Bettie had driven a long distance across Sydney to be with us.

Our Chairman Grenville Stevens and his wife Suzette are on a round the world cruise after Grenville's retirement from air freight and will be back in Sydney in August.

We are holding a pre Christmas GBOBA lunch in Sydney on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November.

Venue will be the Great Northern Hotel, cnr. Mowbray Road West & Pacific Highway, Chatswood.

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

Grenville Stevens (2189 60/61) Chairman

Andy Fotheringham (2525 '76) Vice Chairman

Peter O'Hare (2247 '64) Hon Secretary, Australia Branch.

Email [peteroh@bigpond.com](mailto:peteroh@bigpond.com) Telephone 0417 028809

### **Durban Branch – Howard Jackson-Moss**

The Durban branch continues to suffer from poor support at the monthly lunches; endeavours to encourage the local chapter of Master Mariners to join the monthly lunches are underway. We are hoping a concerted pressure of emails to the sluggish members of both associations will get some reaction.

During 2012 it was agreed to recognise an excelling final year DUT student in 2013 with a book prize. In discussion with the DUT head of maritime studies, it was decided that in today's electronic world, a Tablet will be far more useful as this will allow the student unlimited access to many books.

Due to construction in the port, The Annual International Sea Sunday Service which traditionally takes place at the Durban Passenger Terminal was moved to the Missions To Seamen premises at Durban Harbour New Pier. I am pleased to report that the GBOBA was represented at the service.

### **Gauteng Branch – Alan Ford**

The Branch has thankfully been peacefully at anchor without a ripple on the water since the last communications. The Chairman has however been encountering virtually the opposite conditions for the last 5 weeks prior to writing this report.

A thirty nine day trip on the 3 masted barque *Europa* from Mauritius to Freemantle saw him back at sea, daunted by the one hundred and twenty lines made up on the various pin rails, and which disappeared aloft in a maze of rigging and yards. Staysails with home grown names such as the dekschwabber, the Aap and Desmond further confused the issue. No servo assisted steering was to make life easy for the Helmsman, and within a week I realized why the cartoonist who invented Popeye the Sailor had drawn him with such big forearms. I'm thinking of patenting a new type of gym machine which will involve a big spoked wheel.

The weather did not play ball for most of the voyage in that we were continuously thwarted in our efforts to nip round the South of the South Indian Anticyclone via the Roaring Forties, as the system extended too far South. The Roaring Forties turned out to be the Snoring Forties, and the ship had to head North to pick up some stronger but variable winds accompanying the low pressure systems. Luck was on our side eventually and for the last few days we had a good run in to Freemantle accompanied by the odd whale and lots of strong rain squalls.

Half way through the voyage one of the voyage crew developed a worrying heart symptom, and we were ordered by the Dutch Coast Guard to make for the tiny French island of Île Amsterdam where the doctor had an ECG machine available. I was one of the few fortunate crew members who made it ashore before the Zodiac was punctured. We were warmly welcomed by the thirty or so French scientists who stay for periods of up to two years. Amsterdam Island is not known for its tourism and we were only the second non-scheduled visitor in a year, the other being a lone Russian yachtsman who rowed ashore in a dinghy.

After an interesting tour of the scientific base a wonderful braai was put on for us, with plenty of French wine, and desserts to die for. The fishermen amongst the crew who were not in the lucky bunch to get ashore were in the mean time stocking the ships freezers with a variety of fish caught off the poop deck. The main deck in parts looked like the aftermath of one of Lord Nelson's sea battles with blood and guts everywhere.

Because *Europa* is in most respects a training ship, she is to my mind still performing that valuable function in training people in the ways of the sea. I was privileged to be asked to assist in some of the courses given on board, particularly demystifying the sextant and simple aspects of celestial navigation. One young man of 19 who was at sea for the first time, was for all intents and purposes the "cadet" on board, and had an insatiable appetite for knowledge. Many hours were spent pouring over the Almanac, tying knots, and explaining the intricacies of compass and chart work. He took to the rigging like a monkey at any opportunity. It was for me extremely satisfying to be passing on what little knowledge I have to the next generation of seamen in the making.

At the end of voyage farewell party, during a presentation I made to the ship, I told the ships company that I felt in my heart that I had taken the well wishes and spirit of all the cadets who had passed through the various General Botha establishments with me on the voyage, and that for me it was a very proud moment to present to the ship, through Captain Harko Lambarts, an English and Afrikaans copy of the Book "A Name Amongst Seafarers", and a GBOBA plaque

I hope I was able to some degree, to fulfill the requirements of Mr JS Dunn's proposal to the Board in 1921, which appears on the dustcover of Wilhelm Grutter's book .

If anyone is ever in Freemantle, a visit to the West Australian Maritime Museum is a must. They have a beautiful large model of the Lawhill on display, with the Finnish flag on her topsides, as she was before becoming a South African war prize.

Alan Ford can be contacted at alanford@global.co.za

### **United Kingdom Branch – Ted Fisher**

The months are certainly rolling away – must be a sign of age !!

**Social:** Pleased to confirm that, as a result of a positive response to an email a Sunday Social Lunch for OB's with wives / partners is now to be on **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2013 1215 for 1300 Lunch.**

**Venue:** **Soffitel Hotel Gatwick Airport North Terminal** Exit Junction 9 from M23 motorway. Easy access to the hotel car park (fixed charge £5) or via the Rapid Transit from Rail Station South Terminal.

**Menu:** Chefs 2 course Buffet Lunch with coffee at £24.00 per person including nominal service charge. All drinks **excluded.**

Kindly send cheque and confirmation payable to Mr E E Fisher by 31 August, 6 Nightingale Close, Storrington, RH20 4NX.

Intention is to show a couple of GB DVDs post lunch.

Cutty Sark, Greenwich, 8 May – no takers hence no visit !

**GBOBA / Conway Solent**, a reminder of first Sunday each month Silver Fern Pub, Warsash.

**Members :**Have been in contact with OB's who are I believe now also feature in the AWOL / Scranbag sections of the Newsletter.

**Website** – congratulations to our Web Master Terry Purdon on the design and layout of the web site. Easy to use etc when 'logged in' – I have found Google Chrome the best way to access rather than Internet Explorer.

An appeal to OB's to try and make the Sunday Gatwick Lunch.....travelling, we know, is not a cheap option, however, the venue is hopefully more central and thus of assistance.

Ted Fisher Tel: +44(0)1903 744400 Mob: +44(0)7702 635017 Email: tedefisher@aol.com

### **SA Man Heads Cruise Ship Salvage**

*Extract from DAILY COLLECTION OF MARITIME PRESS CLIPPINGS 2013 – 2013 22-07-2013*

As the trial of Francesco Schettino, the captain accused of causing the *Costa Concordia* ship accident last year, resumed in an Italian court on Wednesday, the former Durban man tasked with salvaging the wreck said everything was on track for it to be righted in September.

Kearsney College old boy **Nick Sloane (GB 2750 1981)**, who now lives in Cape Town with his wife and two children, said the excitement was building around the site of wreck off the Tuscan island of Giglio, as his salvage team prepared to right the ship by using rope slings. He said four of the six large platforms to be used for the ship to be rolled on to had been built and the other two should be ready by the end of next month.

“The mooring is going very well now that we have summer,” he said from the wreck this week. “We have 500 people on the project at the moment, working 24 hours a day. We have carried out about 12 000 dives and shot more than 27 000 hours of footage.

“We hope to have it erect by the end of August and hopefully by the end of September we will get permission from authorities to go ahead and move it into the harbour,” he said. Sloane said they would not be following the trial because they were too busy.

“We have little communication out here and we don’t even have TV. We are just focused on what we are doing,” he said. The *Costa Concordia* - a luxury cruise ship more than twice as big as the *Titanic* - had 4 229 people on board when it struck an offshore reef near Giglio on the evening of January 13, 2012.

A total of 32 people died.

Sloane, who joined the salvage division of Safmarine after the 1983 *Castello da Bellver* tanker fire, has been involved in numerous salvage operations off the South African coast and elsewhere. He now works for US-owned company Titan Salvage as a salvage master.

Sloane was working on a shipwreck off the coast of New Zealand last year when he got the call to salvage the *Costa Concordia*. He said recovering the *Concordia* had been the most challenging project in his career.

“A lot of what we are doing has been done before, but never on this scale. “If you add them all together, there has never been a project where all these things happened at the same time. The project is huge,” he said. Meanwhile, Schettino’s defence requested a plea bargain deal at his trial this week, saying he was ready to serve three years and five months in prison. .... **Source : IOL – Daily News**  
*I am sure that Obies around the world will be watching this salvage with great interest, and we wish Nick everything of the best in the successful righting and salvage of the vessel.*

### **Lance Corporal Job Masego MM**

Extract from the book – “**Day-by-Day in the SA Navy**” by Adm. Chris Bennett

1942 - Lance Corporal Job Masego MM, captured with the Second Division at Tobruk, is held as a POW in that port. He and his fellow prisoners are put to work unloading cargo ships in the harbour. The following incident is taken from an article written by journalist Z B Molefe that appeared in the Sowetan newspaper of 6 March 1981 and describes how Masego managed to sink a ship in the harbour. “It was estimated that some 1,200 black soldiers who had been serving in the ill-fated 2nd South African Division had also fallen into the hands of the Germans when Tobruk fell.

After the battle of El Alamein and with the German Army in full retreat Col H O Sayer, Deputy Director Non-European Army Services followed up the advancing Allies to take care of released POWs. Before the Allies reached Tobruk Col. Sayer found three men, two black soldiers and one coloured man from the Cape Corps who had escaped from the Tobruk POW camp. Corporal Masego was their spokesman and told of the condition of the prisoners still being held, their health and their immediate needs. He also described their life in captivity explaining that they were used mainly to off-load army supplies at the Tobruk harbour. This work had enabled them to do considerable damage to supplies and equipment when they were not too closely watched by their Italian guards. For example whilst the sugar supplies, captured by the Germans when the 2nd South African Division surrendered,

held out, the POWs were given a daily ration. One bright man amongst them told his fellow prisoners that if they put sugar in the tanks of the motor vehicles when they filled them with petrol, this would gum up the valves of the motors and cause a great deal of damage. The POWs actually sacrificed their sugar rations and apparently managed to cripple a number of vehicles in this way.

When asked "What did you do yourself?" Corporal Masego replied; "Oh! I sank a steamer". This was confirmed by the Cape Corps soldier and Masego explained that before the war he had worked in the gold mines of the Witwatersrand and knew something about fuses and explosives. He had manufactured a long fuse from string and cordite and attached this to a jam tin that he had filled with more cordite that he had obtained from cartridges which could always be picked up in the trenches and sand. He then carried this little demolition outfit around in his haversack for ten days waiting for an opportunity to find something worthwhile that he could blow up. On 21 July Corporal Masego and his group were busy unloading the cargo consisting of ammunition and petrol from a small steamer in the harbour. Some of his trusted mates were instructed to dance excitedly round the guard, talking in their own language, which the Germans did not understand, in order to distract his attention whilst Masego was fastening the covers on the hatch. This gave him the opportunity to light the fuse which he had earlier led around the ribs of the ship and down to the explosive jam tin that he had placed amongst some jerrycans of petrol.

The work team was naturally anxious as they were marched away and luckily it was only after they had gone over a rise in the ground and were out of sight of the harbour that a series of explosions were heard. The POWs pretended no interest in these explosions as this might have given them away for, as Corporal Masego explained, they were now for the first time, afraid. The following day the working party was mustered for questioning; "Had any of them been smoking in the hold of the ship?" But only blank faces stared back at their questioners. Thankfully for the POWs the suspicions of their captors had evidently not been fully aroused and there were no obvious links between them and what had happened on the ship. Nevertheless, Corporal Masego's group was removed from the harbour work force and Corporal Masego found himself detailed for manual labour on a wireless dump about a mile from Tobruk.

While at work in the wireless dump, Corporal Masego watched the assembly of receiving sets until he thought he could assemble a set himself. During a meal interval, he managed to take his assembled set into a disused brick hut that had a large hole in the roof and another in the cement floor. The space under the floor was some sort of storage cellar formerly used by the Italians for their wine. Corporal Masego had heard that there was an unexploded aerial bomb in the cellar and he therefore considered that it was unlikely to be searched. "They were afraid to go there," he said. He managed to secure a ladder and took his wireless set down through the hole. Meanwhile all the prisoners had been told by their captors that it would be impossible to escape as they would surely die in the desert especially as Cairo and Alexandria were now in German hands and therefore even if they achieved the impossible and escaped, they would be recaptured and shot.

As British aircraft were still to be seen overhead the POWs doubted this information and this had led to Masego's desire to fix up a wireless in order to get Allied news broadcasts. Eventually he got the set going and picked up broadcasts from Cairo which told him that Rommel had been pushed back after the battle of El Alamein. It was then that Corporal Masego and his comrades decided to escape using water they collected from the radiators of broken down vehicles to survive in the desert. Col Sayer thought his story was true but affected not to believe it and instructed Masego to accompany him back to Tobruk. They were amongst the first Allied troops to re-enter the town and Masego led them to a little white building about a mile outside of Tobruk to the west. Dangling from the roof was a rusty wire, which Masego said was his aerial. He then knelt on the floor and reached through an opening in the floor for a hidden ladder, down which he climbed and found his radio. The set was found to be still working and Col Sayer obtained permission for it to be taken back to South Africa as a trophy.

This also gave additional credence to his story of the sinking of the ship in the harbour and subsequently a diver sent from Alexandria found the sunken vessel and substantiated Masego's story. Today, a portrait of Corporal Masego hangs in the South African Museum of Military History's Geo.

Brink Hall proclaiming his bravery. His citation reads: “Corporal Masego who was captured with the Second Division in Tobruk was awarded the Military Medal for his ingenuity, determination and complete disregard of personal danger when he sank a fully-laden enemy steamer in Tobruk Harbour in which he and other prisoners had been put to work.”

The portrait was painted by the official war artist, Neville Lewis.” Job Masego returned to South Africa in 1943 and subsequently the Job Masego Primary School in Kwa Thema, Gauteng, was named after him. In 1997 the strike craft SAS Kobie Coetsee was renamed SAS Job Masego in his honour and in 2005, after this ship was disposed of, the Navy kept the name going by naming the Naval Base Simon’s Town Wardroom in his honour.

### SLOP CHEST

These slop chest items all proudly display our association insignia and is available from Cape Town branch. Place your orders without delay with Kathy:

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**PLUS PACKAGING AND POSTAGE!**

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

Cheque or postal order should be made out to “General Botha Old Boys’ Association”. Post to: P.O. Box 4515, Cape Town, 8000

Alternatively, the payment can be made by electronic fund transfer directly into our bank account. Details as follows:

- Bank: Standard Bank
- Branch: Thibault Square, Cape Town
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- Account name: General Botha Old Boys' Association
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### SVITZER MARINE BURSARY GOLF DAY

See the flyer with full details on the next page.

**THE GENERAL BOTHA OBA & SOCIETY OF MASTER MARINERS**



Invite you to participate in our



**SVITZER**  
**MARINE BURSARY GOLF DAY**



**Venue: Rondebosch Golf Club**  
**Date: Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013**  
**Tee-off between 11h30 and 13h30**

The event is being hosted by the GBOBA Bursary Fund and the SOMMSA Bursary Fund in support of their marine bursary programs for disadvantaged learners and students studying towards school and university marine qualifications. All profits from the golf day will be split equally between these two funds.

**The competition will be a 4-Ball Alliance with 2 scores to count.**  
**Cost: R1,800 per 4-Ball**  
**(Includes Half-way House vouchers and Prize Giving snacks)**

**SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

Sponsored holes: 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> – R5,000 per hole  
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Prizes for winning 4-Balls, “Nearest the Pin” & Longest Drives are required and will be sought from sponsors.

**To book 4-Balls and/or become a sponsor please contact us on our email address: [mastermariners@icon.co.za](mailto:mastermariners@icon.co.za) or contact one of the following organisers:**

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