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

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

**AUGUST 2017**

## **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.

### **GBOPA/SOMMSA JOINT LUNCH**

- Tuesday 12th September, 1130 for 1200 – Pub lunch, Royal Cape Yacht Club.
- Speaker: Old Salt Peter Rogers - Covers the pre-WW2 build up of "Fortress Singapore" the humiliating defeat of the British & Commonwealth Forces, the treatment of the POWs building the "Death Railway" and some comments of the rise again of Singapore to where it is today.
- NOTE the earlier start time. Cost R55 per person excluding gratuity.
- Booking for the lunch is important, please RSVP by Sunday 10th September to:  
Kathy Nicholas: Phone 021-788 5957  
Email: [cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za](mailto:cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za)  
Facsimile: 086 233 6410

### **FROM THE BRIDGE OF ss CAPE TOWN (Chairman Tony Nicholas)**

When you all were sitting comfortably with your feet up reading our last publication, Kathy and I together with Terry Purdon (GB 1971) were fording some deceptive rivers in Mozambique en route to Zimbabwe. This was not without its challenges though, after successfully crossing the Limpopo River, albeit with some damage to my trusty Colt; suffice to say I was close to losing my vehicle in the Mwenezi River. Alas, travel over the African continent is not for the faint hearted. Nevertheless we made it back safely to our southern shores in time for this publication and to plan our forthcoming trip back to Zambia and Zimbabwe. What is that old saying; Mad Dogs and Englishmen?

It is always sad to report of those who have weighed their anchors; this quarter more so with the loss of some remarkable waterfront characters. Among them Alistair Struthers 1960/61 and Bill "Dicky" Damerell 1941/42; they both contributed in their own way to the Legend of our ship and those that trained in her, they shall be missed.

This reminds me of a comment from Stewart Edwards 1954/55 recently; "Thoroughly enjoy reading your newsletters and can't but marvel at the interesting and challenging careers many ex Bothy boys have had. Surely a great testament to the training we received."

With the sad passing of Old Salts John Mallory 1930/31 and John Henderson 1940/41 their respective families made their documents available to us relating to their Bothie years and subsequent careers. Ted Fisher 1954/55 made arrangements with a Cape Town school principal whom he met on a golf course to bring John Henderson's documents safely back to us; so golf does have its use. These shall be placed with their original cadet files which are lodged with our Western Cape Archive and Records Service, safely stored and available for future researchers.

Our galley wireless has gone totally off air with respect to class/term reunions planned for March 2018. Please keep me in copy of your plans. Also, PLEASE send me your photographs of your respective Bothie terms. These all contribute to our Legend and I can splice them together for a visual display during the reunion. Both Watches to terms 1947/48, 1957/58, 1968 (your 50th), 1978 plus any other terms who are taking the initiative before more of us weigh our anchors.

Our thoughts and prayers were with those affected by the Garden Route recent wild fires. However our members along that southern coast rallied to the call of Standby Tables. Stuart McAllister reports; "To our combined total amazement we managed to muster 14 hardy souls who braved gales, tempest, and the worst ravages of fire ever seen in these parts. Well done to all who made it, and who made it home unscathed too. Neil and Sheylah, bravely done and many thanks indeed! To Niki and Clyde a special mention for their hospitality and organization. To the ladies who brought "scoff" - it went down a treat. Betty, for the Sex in a Pan (You had to be there.....) - grateful thanks!!!

Until the next one, stay safe all and see you again!"

As all know this year is the 70th anniversary of the sinking of our ship in False Bay. Our dive team visited her recently and cleaned our plaque which is still proudly in place on her. We are still working in compiling photographs and video material of their visits on her. More to follow.

Next month's joint lunch with SOMMSA may not be of everyone's interest but I can think of at least one Bothie Old Boy who was involved in that theatre of WWII, and there were more. Singapore has had an interesting "rise from her ashes" to her successful present position in the world economy and our own country could learn from her history. Thus I look forward to strong support from members for this interesting historical talk.

Finally, our planning is well advanced for our bursary fund's annual Marine Bursary Golf Day fund raiser. Details have been circulated widely and internationally, from my email. Thus there is no excuse, get involved and support the bursary fund. As the fund's chairman, Keith Burchell 1960/61, remarked in his Chairman's Review in the annual report; "the Old Boys Association cannot resurrect the 'Bothie', but through the work of its Fund it can ensure the continuation of its heritage of inspiring and educating the youth of South Africa to answer the call of the sea."

### **DURBAN BRANCH NEWS (Derek McManus)**

Bothie Old Boys activity has been relatively quiet in Kwa-Zulu Natal over the past quarter. One highlight was the visit of Cape Town branch chairman Tony Nicholas and his wife Kathy. Together with Howard Jackson-Moss and Nomkhitha Mbele, we met for lunch at the Royal Natal Yacht Club. We were so busy discussing OBA & Bursary Fund matters over lunch (at which Howard broke out in a serious curry sweat, hope the other end was safe next morning) that we omitted to photograph the historic meeting.

As mentioned in previous publication we are celebrating the 85th anniversary of the Durban Branch this year at the yearend lunch scheduled for 13th November. All are urged to reserve this date in your diaries and to muster your class mates (or is that term mates?) for a memorable celebration.

### **SCRANBAG**

**J.A. BIRTLES 1973 #2430.** Recent report with photographs on Face Book informs us that Joe has just retired from his interesting sea career. "I started with Safmarine on the S.A. Vergelegen 18/01/1972 and

did the longest service 10.82 months. In 1983 spent 11.34 months in Shimizu attending the building of the Sea class bulkers.

At the beginning of 2000 I was on the Ferosa which was taken over by Enterprise Shipping. Unfortunately the management and I were not too compatible and they offered me retrenchment which I gladly accepted. During my leave / retrenchment I forwarded my CV to numerous companies and was picked up by Safmarine / Maersk in Cape Town and they offered me a Chief Officer's job which I accepted towards the end of 2000. Strangely enough I was quite happy in this position and stayed as Chief Officer until I was promoted to Master once again on the Safmarine Concord 27/07/2004. During these last tours of duty the one that stands out is probably the handing over of the Oranje 16/12/10 to 07/01/12 in China to Greek owners, last container vessel on the South African Registry.

Retired in May 2012 on attaining the age of 60 and subsequently back on the Safmarine Chilka, 3 on 3 off and am basically on voyage contract.

When I sign off here I will have basically 20 years as Master, 14 as Chief Officer and 42 years in service."

**R.L. FULTON 1965 #2264.** Our Old Boy network still proves successful, a phone call from one looking for a past shipmate, Rob reports; "Since retiring as an open license pilot in 2007 from Cape Town I have had contracts training pilots at the Durban simulator facility. After that I then got short term piloting contracts as pilot in Jebel Ali in Dubai. My last contracts were in Walvis Bay and Maputo where I was engaged in assessing students and qualified officers in tug handling and piloting.

I think that it would require a book for me to relate my career experiences as they are rather varied and checkered, although quite interesting. We would need a few hours together over a few beers and a meal for me to update your records. Hope the above will be sufficient in the meantime.

Finally I wish to inform you that, thanks to you and your efforts, I received a huge surprise when Larry Bima (GB 1963 #2220) phoned me out of the blue after losing contact with each other for about 40 years or so. It was really spooky and we spent about an hour on the phone catching up on our lives since our younger days. Hopefully we will have a reunion in the near future.

Regards to your wife and to all the lads who know me when you next have a Bothie get together."

**B.G.M. MARTIN 1985 #2869.** Brett has been found as a Director of Westgate Walding Auctioneers, somewhere in Jo'burg.

**E.Y. KOLBER 1978 #2602.** Yuri had been AWOL for a while but surfaced on our Face Book page, the wonders of modern technology. He reports; "Safmarine Cadet, Acting 3/O, 3/O, 2/O, T/O until the beginning of 1984. During the time at sea, got several programming diplomas, and took on development contracts (mobile quotation systems) for Legal & General.

1984-87 UCT BSc Mathematical Statistics and Economics (with Computer Science and Information Systems as minors). Continued working for Legal & General as a programmer and systems analyst during breaks and on weekends/evenings

Technical Manager - LCS (Legal Computer Systems) 1988-1989, managed the Development and Support departments.

Managing Director, Benchmark Training (a division of LCS) 1990-1991.

Product Manager, TSD Software (a division of Persetel/Comparex) 1992-1993.

Vice President/Managing Director, ISU Education Group 1994-1998.

Senior Consultant, John Bryce 1999.

Platform Evangelist (Microsoft) 2000-2016 (Consultant on behalf of OnTarget Communications).

Director Training & Professional Services, OnTarget Communications 2001-date (2017) (also working as a senior consultant for Holden International, on occasional secondment from OnTarget).

And on the subject of exercise; "Certainly, golf is a worthwhile pursuit. My wife does not allow me to partake, on account of it being too risky to let me swing clubs in close vicinity to other people."

**M.G. READING 1968 #2342.** Somewhere we found Malcolm; "1969 Unicorn Shipping, Cadet.

1970 - 1971 Willem Barendz - 4th / 3rd Officer, uncertified.

1972 - 1979 Ashore, started as a sales representative for Reed Stationery, resigned as area manager and main board director for Cape Province, OFS, SWA/Namibia.

1979 - 1992 Shareholder and MD of the following small companies: Minus 40 and Safreeze, specialized refrigeration products.

Cape Lumber and Poles & Planks, timber fencing and garden products direct to home owners.

Cape Fabrix, Carpet Manufacture.

In 1993 decided to emigrate, moved to Vancouver Canada in 1994. On arrival in Canada opened Black Rock Trading Inc, to act as the North American distributor of Boulder Buster rock breaking equipment for Rhinemetall Denel. They discontinued the product range at the end of 2016. As Boulder Buster was the major part of the business, decided to wind up and retire." I highly recommend retirement Malcolm.

**G. ROHRS 1989.** A varied and interesting career, Greg has ended up back Down Under.

Previously at sea with Safmarine followed by a commercial position with Safmarine Cape Town in 2002. 2003 transferred to Safmarine Sydney office as General Manager, Australia.

2006 returned to South Africa and appointed Safmarine Regional Manager for Kwa-Zulu Natal and Swaziland and later to Safmarine H.O. as National Reefer and Dry exports executive.

2009 Sales Director for CEVA Logistics. 2011 Director, Good Hope Logistics, based in Cape Town.

2014 Commercial Director LCL Logistics. 2017 Relocated to Australia, Marketing and Procurement Manager with Poseidon Freight. And the next chapter?

**M.A. ROWE 1977 #2572.** Michael has been on the move again to a port named Esperance.

Sailed with Unicorn Lines up to Chief Officer until 1983. Then joined his family business in Natal before immigrating to New Zealand in June 1993.

Returned to sea in March 1996 with a New Zealand Coastal shipping company called Pacific Shipping, running between the North & South Islands. 1998 sailed as Chief Officer.

2003 moved to Australia, joined ASP Ship Management on bulk ore carriers in the Great Barrier Reef area.

2004 Harbourmaster and Pilot in Port Kembla, Australia. 2012 transferred to Port Hedland, Australia.

2017 harbour pilot in Esperance, Western Australia.

**R.W. WELLS 1967 #2320.** "I joined Bothie in 1967 after matriculating from Forest High in 1966. I served in Safmarine from 1968 to 1979 and left them as Chief Officer in 1979, serving on general cargo vessels, tankers, reefer and bulk carriers. I joined the Harbour Service in 1979 as Chief Officer in Richards Bay and East London before transferring to Durban as tug Master. I carried on serving Durban Harbour and retired as Senior Pilot in 2012. I am now (2017) happily retired and we now live out at Durbanville."

**D.J. PEEL 1971 #2401.** Having missed our 40th anniversary in 2011 Doug visited our shores recently and comments; "Hope you guys are enjoying your 'Safaris'! We had a week in Jhb & Durban, and are enjoying our week in Cape Town.

My wife Facebooked OBA to find out when your monthly lunch was but received no replies. We contacted Dave Main & are meeting for lunch on Friday, but Pawley is not answering his home phone & Dave thinks Patrick is overseas. Safe travels." Now what is wrong with OBA Cape Town in your chairman's absence on safari, particularly 1971 term? Defaulters, the bunch of you.

Doug sailed with Unicorn and Mobil. Then joined Renfreight Warehousing and in 1997 joined SAPPI. 1999 relocated to U.S.A. as a Marine Surveyor. 2006 Cargo Superintendent for Gulf Africa Line based in New Orleans.

**N.C. GIBBS-JONES 1974 #2472.** I have recently left Doha and have resettled in the UK, currently unemployed but enjoying a welcome extended break.

**A.C. WENTWORTH 1982 #2771.** Previously mentioned that we found Anthony as Commodore of the False Bay Yacht Club. He has kindly assisted with the L26 yacht, Homero, as reported in our May edition. Through Anthony the club members have assisted with maintenance, sailing instructor and free moorings. Bravo Zulu Anthony!

"I went to sea with Safmarine as Third Mate after Bothie, sailing on the new SA *Vaal* and 'big whites' before joining the *Wolraad Woltemade* and *John Ross* for a two year stint.

After resigning towards the end of 1986 I joined Pennypinchers in a complete career change, was able to purchase a partnership in my Tokai, Cape Town business in 1996, and continue to operate the same store to this day."

## AWOL

**DAVID LOUBSER 1981**, last known address Porirua, New Zealand. Patrick Atwood (GB 1980) visited David's last known address only to learn that the present resident has been living there for two years. Both Watches fall in! Find this AWOL and report back to management.

Remember **Len Ellis**? An appeal from his son, refer below. Send all and anything you recall of Len and his time aboard with you.

"My father, Edmund Leonard "Len" Ellis was a Nautical Instructor at Granger Bay until his death on 28 October 1984 aged 60. His era included names such as Collin Billson, Taffy Billet, Phil Nankin, Ivor Little, Jimmy Smith and others.

I have fond memories of this institution, and also have a framed photograph of the cadets and staff of Gordon's Bay in 1964. I am trying to put together some history of my father's career with the General Botha, as well as when his association with the NSRI began. Would you in any way be able to please assist? "



First response from Ivor Little; "At the last reunion some of the 1967 class were talking about the time when they were out boat pulling in Table Bay and Len Ellis made them dive over the side in their overalls and tackies, to see what it was like to abandon ship in ice cold water. I gather that they were not particularly impressed."

## ANCHORS AWEIGH

**A.E.C. STRUTHERS 1960/61 FNI.** A strong supporter of the OBA and a founder member of our bursary fund, Alistair passed away 2nd July 2017, a sad loss to the association family and ship mates.

Alistair joined his first ship as a cadet on the *City of York*, Ellerman Lines and 1967 sailed with London & Overseas Freighters. He served at sea with Safmarine and Unicorn from 1970 to 1972. After completing his Extra Master's Certificate in 1974 in Durban, he spent two years in command with Unicorn Shipping of Durban. He then joined the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) as a Grade 1 Surveyor, progressing to Principal Surveyor Scotland. He was also a very active member of the Scotland branch of the Nautical Institute including chairman for eight years.

In his retirement Alistair was an active astronomer, a keen hill walker and a cyclist. He also studied for a Master's Degree in Geology and a course in German.

**W.J. DAMERELL 1941/42 #1165.** Authored by Brian Ingpen - published by the Cape Times.

"My mother told my father that I had taken girls to bioscope," Captain Bill Damerell told me during one of my visits to this amazing old salt who passed away last week. "The following Saturday, my father told me to dress smartly in my school uniform, and took me to the Sea Cadet base - the start of my nautical career!" (He was 14 at the time and living in Port Elizabeth.)

On his bicycle, the young Damerell was a frequent visitor to Port Elizabeth harbour, riding on tugs and watching the ships pass, a fascinating time that led the youngster to dream of far-off ports, interesting ships and cargoes – and to head for a two-year stint aboard the training ship *General Botha* at Simon's Town.

One afternoon late in 1942, he and a fellow cadet were piped aft to see the training ship's chief officer. "What ship will you be joining next year, Royal Navy or *Lawhill*?" he asked the lads. "*Lawhill*," they replied, and, at the end of the year, off they went to join the magnificent South African four-masted barque *Lawhill* that had been taken as a war prize earlier that year after being intercepted by a South African minesweeper near East London.

Although life was tough aboard *Lawhill* – Damerell lost a finger to a slamming door as the ship rolled in heavy weather off the Cape – her cadets had a superb grounding as they learnt the ways of the sea, in fair weather and foul.

As tough and romantic as his time aboard *Lawhill* had been, the future lay in motor ships, and, in 1944 with the war still in progress, Damerell joined *Selandia*, a four-masted Danish motor ship that had been captured from its Vichy-French crew in Cape Town to become a South African war prize and that proved useful in transporting troops and equipment from Durban to Suez.

Bill Damerell remembered VE and VJ Day celebrations aboard her the following year, after which *Selandia* was returned to her owners and called at Cape Town and South American ports en route to New York.

As a newly qualified watch keeping officer, he joined the tramp ship *Pentridge Hill* in Durban whence she carried coal to Colombo, followed by a ballast voyage to Mauritius to load sugar for Beirut. “A beautiful, peaceful city in those days,” Bill recalled. With sugar to discharge and phosphates to load, there would have been time for several lengthy runs ashore – and the beaches were particularly attractive to the young third mate. The rest of the voyage lasted over a year, including a circumnavigation of the globe in the course of her various voyages, an experience that suited this free-spirited man.

He joined Union-Castle whose intermediate liners *Llangibby Castle* and *Dunnottar Castle* took Third Mate Damerell around Africa, calling at East African ports, including Lourenco Marques (now Maputo) where, as the ship passed a sandbank in Delagoa Bay, he saw the derelict *Lawhill*, a tragic, silent shadow of that fine barque that once had the wind in her sails, and a bone in her teeth.

A spell in Union-Castle mail ships and his gaining his master’s certificate preceded his joining the harbour service as a dredger mate and later master in East London, rather different to keeping the 12 to 4 watch in *Stirling Castle* and the mail ships’ traditions! The mate on that dredger – a fellow who once had served in tugs in Port Elizabeth – posed a question to Damerell on his first day aboard. “Were you at the Grey in PE?” he asked. “Yes,” responded Bill. “Why do you ask?” “And did you ride on the tugs in your school uniform?” “Frequently. But why the question?” “I was then a deckhand,” the man said, “and the tug master told me to make you tea each time!”

I first came across this cheerful, energetic man when I – as he had done in Port Elizabeth years before – thumbed rides on Cape Town harbour tugs. He commanded the old steam tug *TS McEwen* for several years, and, probably remembering how the Port Elizabeth tug masters had let him aboard their tugs in his younger days, he immediately welcomed youngsters aboard the old steam tug. “Wonderful tug!” he enthused about that legendary vessel, years later. “Just a touch on the wheel and she responded and she was very good when you wanted engine movements as well – as long as she hadn’t lost her head of steam!”

Later, as a senior pilot, he would often enjoy those Union-Castle traditions again – the four o’clock Friday sailings from Cape Town or boarding the inward mail ship at dawn on Thursdays.

Captain Damerell told me of an occasion when *Transvaal Castle* was wind-bound in Cape Town. When the wind dropped later that night, he was ordered to sail the mail ship immediately. Boarding the liner, he found the fellow ex-General Botha cadet, Captain Norman Lloyd (GB 1925/26), on the bridge. “Single up, please,” Damerell asked, and Lloyd passed the command down the mail ship’s lengthy pecking order. It took nearly 45 minutes for 38 mooring lines to be winched aboard. Three tugs pulled the mail ship off the berth and down towards M Berth in the Duncan Dock, but, in the delay in casting off, the wind had strengthened again. “Put her back alongside,” Lloyd instructed Damerell. “Even more dangerous to do that now, Captain!” retorted the pilot. “Full ahead two!” he ordered, and into his walkie-talkie he yelled, “All tugs let go now!”

The mail ship trembled as her powerful steam turbines drove her through Duncan Dock’s entrance at 12 knots – to the consternation of Captain Lloyd!

One of Damerell’s most memorable piloting jobs was to sail the Argentine sail training ship *Libertad* one Sunday afternoon. He boarded the ship earlier than usual and when he explained to the ship’s commanding officer that he intended to sail the ship out of the harbour, and had shared his experiences in *Lawhill*, the captain agreed. “He sounded quite excited,” Bill Damerell told me years later. From

vantage points along the sea front, hundreds of folks watched - I was with many others on Signal Hill - as *Libertad* came away from the berth, her foresails set to catch the light breeze. She swung around in the breeze and passed through the entrance. A most laudable piece of seamanship that remains one of Dockland's legends.

He told me that he drew the lot for a special milestone to pilot the first containership to berth in a South African harbour en route from Britain to Australia. "She had all the bells and whistles," he told me. "A fine ship!"

After spells as port captain in Walvis Bay and Richards Bay, his appointment as port captain of Cape Town was the pinnacle of his stellar career.

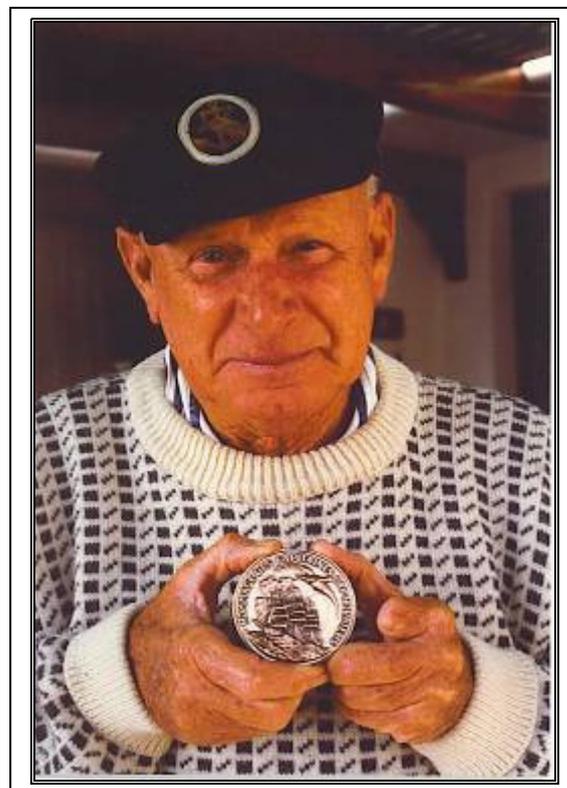
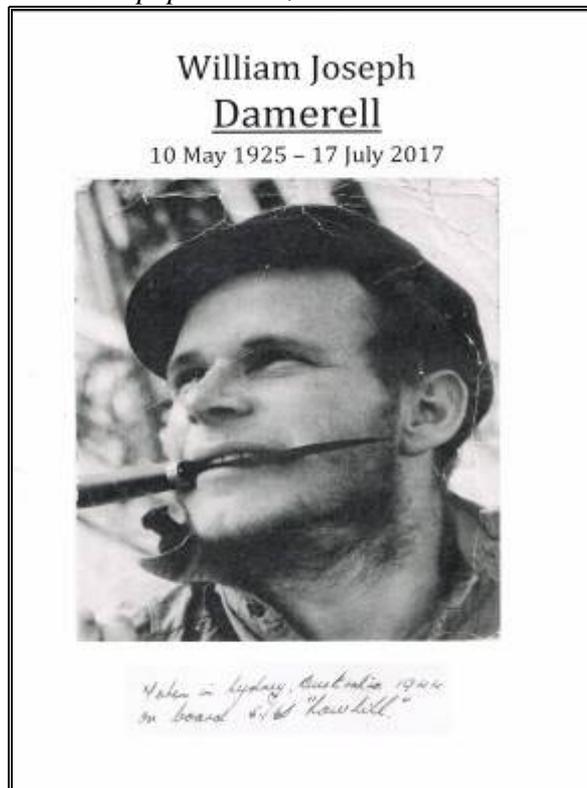
"I've had a wonderful life," Bill Damerell told me over what would be our last cuppa together at his retirement home in St James. "A wonderfully supportive wife, three wonderful children, and a wonderful career."

"Your most memorable experience at sea, Captain?" I probed. He needed no prompting. "Standing on the truck (top) of the main mast when *Lawhill* passed under Sydney Harbour Bridge."

*Lawhill* had carried the cheerful gentleman around the world twice, including rounding the notorious Cape Horn twice under sail. From the church last Saturday, *General Botha* old boys and current students from Lawhill Maritime Centre at Simon's Town School carried this highly respected old salt.

A giant cedar in local shipping has fallen – and that twinkle in his eye has now faded.

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Retired from harbour service in 1986 and joined SA Navy, Navigation Instructor at Maritime Warfare School, Simon's Town, subsequently retired. 1971 crewed on the ketch *Howard Davis* on the first Cape to Rio yacht race. Decorations include 1939-45 Star, Atlantic Star, Pacific Star & Victory medal and the pictured Cape Horner's. Deceased 17th July 2017.

**J.P.H. VAN LEEUWEN 1952/53.** Jac went to sea with UCM SS Co, for two years before joining a shipping agency. Later joined Fisons Fertilizers as a Shipping Clerk but was transferred to accounts. Obtained Chartered Institute Secretary before transferring to Sasolburg. Then joined International Rotterdam, a Dutch Trading Group as accountant and part time sales manager where he obtained a MBA (Dip). Became Chief Accountant with Grindrod for four years before joining Malbak Group, Eagle Shipping, as Financial Director in Durban. A further three years with Africa Shipping as Financial Executive before retiring. Deceased 15th May 2017.

**N.E. BULMER 1942/43.** Neville came from Kimberley and was the sick bay attendant on the *Bothie*. Joined the Royal Navy Reserve and later worked for Shell in Port Elizabeth. *Bothie* nickname was "Teddy". Deceased 27th June 2017. Any further information of his career would be welcome.

**J.R. HENDERSON 1940/41.** Deceased 7th May 2017. Career recorded by Ted Fisher in this edition. An interesting reminiscence of John's; "He remembered several of the instructors from his time on *General Botha*: Mr.'Chick' Chapman, P.T.I (given this nickname because of the two Bantams tattooed on his feet, having been Bantam weight champion boxer of the Royal Navy).

**K.J. WELLS 1965.** Ken's brother, Bob, kindly provided detail of Ken's career.

"After Matriculating at Forest High in Johannesburg Ken attended *Bothie* at Gordon's Bay, one of 13 cadets.

He then joined Safmarine in 1965 and served them from cadet to Chief Mate where he left to join the Harbour Service. He was well known as a dredger Master on the coast based in East London and Durban, and ended up working in the Dredging office in Durban. He retired and did spells of dredging, and also taught in the Transnet academy. His last job was for sub tech in Durban. He is sorely missed. Ken passed on peacefully after a long illness on 6th April 2017."

**G.M. BYROM 1985.** George passed away 18th May 2017 after an interesting career.

1995 - Assistant Manager of Polaris Shipping, Port of Richards Bay.

2008 Country Operations Manager, Kenya & Tanzania, Wilhelmsen Ship Service.

"I left Kenya/Tanzania middle of 2010 and spent 4 Months in Dubai with MUR Shipping Ltd. I am now in Johannesburg with MUR Shipping RSA Ltd/ Shipping Branch of Macsteel International as Port Captain/Planning. It's very exciting as we own 11 Ships which are named African Eagle/Falcon all birds and we have about 40 Ships on Charter worldwide at any one time."

**F.J. KIES 1966.** Frans went to sea with Safmarine and Unicorn Lines. He then went fishing out of Walvis Bay and Cape Town eventually owning two of his own. Having worked hard he decided to enjoy life and spent two years on the yachts *Kraken* and *Zanj*, carried cargo and serviced the Indian Ocean Islands from Durban. Bought a Korean long line fishing vessel of 257 gross tons which he converted to a cargo vessel, fitted with a derrick to handle containers for the islands.

Deceased 25th May 2017.

**A.F. GEORGE 1942/43.** Arthur George was an eminent and well known nurseryman having a business for many years near Godalming Surrey. A regular contributor to Chelsea Flower Show and was often seen shaking hands with Her Majesty our Queen Elizabeth. Deceased 1st April 2010. Any further detail of his career would be welcomed.

**G.D. BOULDEN 1939/40.** Graham passed away recently aged 91. Any details of his career welcomed. Our condolences to family and shipmates.

#### **News from North America (Malcolm Clark 1956/57) CWPB Reunion-Victoria, Vancouver Island, Canada.**

For those who are not familiar with the CWPB the *General Botha* OBA became members of the association on the island approximately 15 years ago, subsequently agreed to our becoming members. It was also recognized that we are a dying breed and at this stage numbers are important to the associations' survival.

It is my understanding that we were the first to be accepted under this arrangement. Over the years there has been the participation of eight *Bothie* Boys who have joined our association the island. Besides our four functions a year we decided to hold an international reunion similar to those previously held in other parts of the world and an invitation was extended to join us from May 30th for three days. The function was held in Victoria a tourist destination and popular port of call for the cruise ships to Alaska. There were 100 attendees mostly from the UK, Australia and New Zealand representing the Conway and Worcester training ships. The *Bothy* flag was represented by five *Obies* from North America.

As expected there was much to see and do in the city which was certainly enjoyed by one and all. This was capped off with a banquet held at the Delta Ocean Point Hotel which overlooks the picturesque Inner Harbour. Following this the majority took off for a cruise up to Alaska whereas a few did a tour

of the Rocky Mountains. (Our thanks to the North American members for flying the Bothie flag; representing and preserving the legend of our training ship and those that trained in her.)

### **Bursary Fund Report - August, 2017.**

It was “All Hands on Deck!” for the Fund through midyear, particularly for the bursar mentoring team. No sooner were the second term school examinations completed and three Lawhill students (including one of our bursars) were off to Palma, Majorca, for ocean sailing, shipyard and marine technology training with Marine Inspirations, under the watchful eye of Phil and Ann Wade and Anthony Just; not to mention the valuable experience of participating in a prestigious international super-yacht regatta with world-class yachtsman.

Then followed a two-week school holiday program for our bursars. The first week was an intense study tutorial run by our three subject tutors for our grade twelve's tacking against the headwinds of the math and science curricula towards their matric examinations. The second week was a winter camp together with the Sea Cadets of TS *Woltemade* at Zandvlei, Lakeside, during which they acquired new skills in boat handling, first aid, fire-fighting, water rescue, and knowledge of naval lore, naval ceremony and protocols. Initially, some of them found it somewhat difficult to adjust to the rigours of sleeping in hammocks, standing night watches, galley and mess duties, parade drills, etc, but they soon settled down to enjoy every aspect of the experience. Tony Nicholas and Peter Coetzee deserve several “Bravo Zulus!” for organizing and managing the program with such success. During the second week, Tony and Peter supervised a field trip to Table Bay Harbour, visiting the port control, a bulk vessel and an AMSOL super tug.

Later during that week, Tony led our grade twelve bursars to the funeral of GB Old Boy William Damerell, the last of the barque *Lawhill* old salts. On arrival, Tony and they were asked by the family to act as pall-bearers for the entry to the church, which they did with true dignity – an appropriate final service by the GBOBA and the students from the *Lawhill* Maritime Centre.

Our team in Durban was also active during the school holidays, organizing and accompanying our Capt. Steve Ray bursar in Durban, Smangaliso Dlamini, and our new Durban Mentoring Sub Committee Member and Board member Aubrey Sosibo together with two maritime studies students from Sithengile Secondary School on an extensive tutorial visit to the SA Shipyard where the new harbour tugs are being built for TNPA.

The Annual General Meeting of the Fund was held on Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> July, with a full review of the previous financial-year and the approval of the future business plan and budget. The previous committee was re-elected for a further year. The Annual Report for the period from March 2016 to February 2017 was presented. E-copies of this informative Report will be distributed and hard-copies can be obtained on request. The principal administrative task in hand is the re-drafting and approval of a revised constitution for the Fund, accommodating the incorporation of the Society of Master Mariners South Africa Bursary Fund - the meeting approved the establishment of a task-group to process this urgently.

The Fund EXCO for some months has been involved in activities to gain more support from the Industry, this outreach program “Nurturing Sea Fever” included invitations to our very successful AGM. Our first where Sponsors and the Industry could attend. The program and meetings with Industry players have resulted in commitment of support from the South African International Maritime Institute (SAIMI) who sponsored the camp mentioned above, the organization in charge of the overarching implementation of the Operation Phakisa the Government Maritime Program, amongst which is the SA National Cadet program, TETA and now NSRI, with us moving forward to sign an MOA with them for Bursaries and an IRB Training programs amongst other opportunities.

The voyage continues, on course and on time.



### UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH – Ted Fisher 1954/55

Another quarter has passed us by. Being the Hon UK Sec of GBOBA, now into my twentieth year, allows me to come into contact with various associations and ex-mariners of yesteryear who are in retirement maintaining a low profile for personal reasons.

Good news filters through and sad news of which I must make mention of:

**Alistair Struthers GB 1960/61** who passed away on 2 July 2017, a result of mesothelioma handling, as he told me bagged asbestos whilst serving with Ellerman's back in the 60's. Do we not remember as cadets the dusty bagged asbestos in East African ports!

Alistair, even though residing up in Aberdeen supported the GBOBA-UK sector managing to attend when possible, our little functions outside Southampton and Gatwick. He communicated with me and contributed well to our fund raising last year for the refurbishment of the Training Ship Plaques in the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

Way back, I recall him telling me the tale of his interview with the late Captain John Shone GB 1944/45 for a post with the UK Department of Transport. John being a Senior Examiner of Masters and Mates. John and his late wife Sheila lived local to me near Chichester and confirmed in conversation later he did not tell Alastair of him being an 'Old Boy' until the position was accepted. Both were holders of Extra Masters Certificates.

**John Robert Henderson No 1113 GB 1940/42** who resided in Bembridge on the Isle of Wight passed away peacefully aged 92 years on 7 May 2017. His daughter Mandy Horwood contacted to say her father derived great pleasure from having the Newsletters read to him having sadly lost his sight about six years ago.

Barbara and I met with Mandy and her partner Tony locally a few weeks ago, an occasion when I was given much of her late father's career records from schooling in Durban, time on the SATS *General Botha*, sea service, certificates both scholastic and nautical, Bible, Masters Foreign Going, Radiotelephony Certificates, Discharge Books (2) Trinity House Pilots License, letters from Ellerman's, Union Castle and later Trinity House upon his retirement together with personal papers. All have been scanned and retained by the family, however, the originals are now in Cape Town and I understand from our Chairman Tony Nicholas and Museum Curator Ian Manning the documents are to be lodged in Government Archives for future historical interest.....The Legend Lives On.

Briefly, John was born 1926 in West Ham London. His father was at sea serving with Ellerman's (Durban to India voyages) so the family moved to Durban when John was eight years old. At age fourteen he joined the Training Ship in Simon's Town where he remembers seeing the *Queen Mary* and old *Queen Elizabeth* bunkering en-route to UK. Twenty years later as choice pilot for Cunard he piloted both ships in Solent Waters.

His first ship '*City of Lincoln*' in 1943, thereafter during the war various ships until joining Union Castle Line Southampton in December 1945 as 4<sup>th</sup> Officer. His career progressed through both cargo and mail ships including the new build '*Kenya Castle*'. He met his future wife Joan on '*Edinburgh Castle*' in 1955 when he, being 1<sup>st</sup> Officer, and she Children's Hostess. They married at Lytham St

Anne's, Lancs, in September 1956. Having been on the waiting list he joined Trinity House Pilotage Service where he remained for 22 years.

Once he had to be flown out to the QE2 en-route to Southampton by helicopter during bad weather. On retiring in 1989 John filled his leisure time with several pastimes – he pursued a PPL after taking flying lessons in a Cessna, collected cigarette cards, stamps and postcards that featured Merchant Ships only. He was proud of the fact he was one of the oldest Bothy Boys in the UK and spoke with great fondness of the days in Simon's Town, life was tough but he appreciated in later life the disciplined training he received. Don't we all!

### **Further ramblings from "Barnacle Brad" - Brad Wallace-Bradley 1951/52**

Having recently passed 1<sup>st</sup> Mates – as it was known in those days – at Southampton, I well remember being posted to an iron-ore carrier. This was to be my first North Atlantic crossing. Under command of an experienced "Western Ocean" Master, at full speed, in thick fog, on approaching the Grand Banks bound for the Belle Isle Straits, in his Night Orders ordering "avoid all stationary targets". Previously, the Mate had enlarged: "the Grand Banks, off which the Gulf Stream deflects, is the graveyard of the Sou'ward drifting Labrador Bergs – this is where we'll encounter their broken off "Bergy Bits – give these "targets" a wide berth."

Needless to say, I re-read all I could out of the Pilot Book!

In those days, maybe even today, all ships were required to report the positions of encountered bergs which International Ice HQ assimilated and re-broadcast. Your "sparks" received and the 2/O (Navigator) plotted them – then it was up to the "Old Man".

In a previous company, a year or two before, on joining a new ship, signing "Standing Orders", which stated, inter alia, "if at any time you deem it prudent, please call me and I will bring up the key to the Radar – I'm at the other end of the voice-tube labeled "Master".

### **Botha Colours Blue/Green**

**Colin Greenacre 1949/50** has posed an interesting question.

"I have always wondered about the origin of our colours. As a youngster before I joined the Bothie I belonged to the 1st Clifton Sea Scouts and our colours were the same Blue/Green exactly the same shade. Was there perhaps a connection between the naval cadets and the sea scouts in finding a home in Cape Town for further training?"

I believed there is a link between the Naval Cadets (now Sea Cadet Corp) and the Bothie. The Cadets were evicted from their council training premises which resulted in Mr Davis offering to provide permanent premises. Hence his purchase of HMS Thames. Naval Cadets formed the crew that sailed her to South Africa. Our colours match theirs which I believe to have been a deliberate choice by the first OBA committee. I do not know of a link with Sea Scouts. However 1st Muizenberg Sea Scouts scarf is all green and same shade as our green.

Can anyone answer this question providing the background to the decision on Bothie colours?

### **GAUTENG BRANCH LOG BOOK (Alan Ford)**

As I sit here at the gangway in a comfortable old chair in the last half hour of the morning 12-4 watch writing up the log book for Gauteng Branch, with a ham and green piccalilli sandwich from the black pan, and my favorite enamel mug of tea, I can, I think, thankfully report that not much has happened since the last page was filled out after the "Big Lunch" in April.

I must first thank Ivor and Anne Little for their continued work in visiting those who are no longer seaworthy and laid up in forgotten mud berths in creeks near us. Their pastoral visits do I'm sure bring happiness and camaraderie and hopefully some laughter to those old salts that need it most. They visited Tony Hunter on his birthday recently, and I hear that strict Matron's rules in the ward prevented the party getting out of hand.

We have been allocated one or two new crew members from Head Office, which is wonderful, thank you Chairman Tony. Sorry I don't have any to trade with you, all our guys are away on permanent R'n R, except for me on 24-7 gangway duty.

So it's back to scraping the bilges for maritime news and finding snippets which hopefully will be of interest.

The four masted barque PEKING has just made probably what will be her last Atlantic crossing on her way home to Germany, where she was launched in May 1911. This time it was in the COMBI DOC III heavy lift transporter which floated her into position stern first, in New York in Mid July. She had been languishing there as a museum exhibit since 1975. She was partially de rigged for the voyage, with only the sticks left standing. Once home she is slated for a full restoration. Her progress can be followed on the old Interweb Facebook page. Whether she will ever sail again I do not know, but it would not be unprecedented for her to do so. The 2017 Tall Ships Regatta has just ended in Halifax Nova Scotia, and there were a couple of ships of similar vintage out of a total of 62 entrants, attending, including EUROPA which was also built in 1911.

The question is how many ships built in 2017 will still be around in 2132. Would heavy fuel oils have long since been outlawed? Would the new fangled LNG have been super ceded by batteries or mini nuclear reactors? Would we have seen, by that time yet another era of sailing ships come and go? Stick around and find out.

In the daily junk which arrives in all our inboxes, I found an interesting tale of where the word caddie (pertaining to golf) comes from. When Mary Queen of Scots went to France as a young girl, Louis, King of France, learned that she loved the Scots game 'golf.' He had the first course outside of Scotland built for her enjoyment. To make sure she was properly chaperoned (and guarded) while she played, Louis hired cadets from a military school to accompany her. Mary liked this, and when she returned to Scotland (not a very good idea in the long run), she took the practice with her. In French, the word cadet is pronounced 'ca-day' and the Scots changed it into caddie.

I'm still trying to work out if there is a connection between the functionality of cadets and bidets.... There must be... judging by the treatment we often received.

#### **Australia Branch News (Peter O'Hare)**

No meetings over past quarter but members have been active over lunch. Michael Pomfret 1951/52 and Brian Hoatson 1941/42 attended a Worchester, Conway, Pangbourne, Botha lunch north of Brisbane.

Peter O'Hare 1964 had lunch in Liverpool UK with Alan Bole 1949/50.

Lunch in Sydney is on Saturday 19th August at the Chatswood RSL Club which takes an informal format. Well, at least the beer sales remains on a high down under.

#### **NATIONAL SEA RESCUE INSTITUTE**

Our NSRI needs your support. We all know this valuable and essential service is run by volunteers and maintained by donations. One of their principal annual fund raisers is a draw to win two valuable Mitsubishis. Ticket sales are not going well this year; so let's not allow our NSRI to founder. Log into their Face Book page for competition details or email [carcomp@searescue.org.za](mailto:carcomp@searescue.org.za). Your participation will be helping them to save lives at sea and our inland waters.

#### **PART 2 of Graham Reinders 1976 Folly -- 1999 (E18 1958/59)**

After a year in Argentina, under Martial Law, I realized that they were not capable of running a First World society, so I sailed my yacht up to Vancouver and immigrated into Canada in 1977.

In Saskatchewan my body could not handle the cold weather. I spent the next 30 years of my life being cold. As an immigrant I had to take every job I could get. I spent time as a Carpenter building High Rise buildings in minus 20deg Celsius. (Not recommended for sanity.)

- I spent time as a flying instructor for very bad wages.
- I spent time as a Helicopter pilot up with the Eskimos (bloody cold again).
- I spent five years as an Infra-red Thermo Graphic Electrical Inspector. Very interesting work.
- I opened a spate of small businesses.
- I owned a route of vending machines. Tax free and rewarding.
- I spent five years as a Hydroponics Specialist and wrote two books on the subject.

Finally after many years in Vancouver, when I reached the age of 55, I realized that “Work Sucks”. I had had enough of Canada. The US I disliked even more. Luckily, in my spare time I had built another 42 foot sailing yacht. I sailed out of Vancouver to cross the South Pacific in 1999.

By then I was coming up to 60 years old. Sadly I was no longer equal to the task I had undertaken and it ended badly because my yacht sunk on a reef at an island called (Wallis - Futuna) 600 miles NE of Fiji.

One day in a recent conversation somebody asked me if I knew how to sail, No!! I said with a straight face.

Sailing south from Vancouver about 5 miles out to sea, off the Columbia River the wind totally disappeared. I lay becalmed for more than a day so I decided I would apply some engine and keep heading slowly south. At that point the engine decided to quit. I was still becalmed in a totally dead sea. For two more days I lay completely becalmed on a glass smooth ocean. I watched tons of garbage circulate around me in a daily pattern as I went nowhere. I knew I had to head into the Columbia River and repair my engine as soon as any wind arrived. Finally on the fourth day there was enough wind to sail into the Columbia River.

I had sail over the Columbia River Bar. Anybody who has done that Bar knows its reputation for wrecking boats. It is one very bad and dangerous entrance, even under normal power. Single handing it under sail in a big yacht is beyond description. However, the worst was yet to come. Being the totally independent macho fool I was I had not even fitted a radio on my yacht because I felt it would be beneath my dignity to ever think of calling for help on my trip.

It was now getting dark, and I struggled over the Bar. I was finally in Baker Bay. Because I had not intended to be there in the first place I had - no chart, - no engine, - and no idea where to go. It was now totally dark. All I could think of was to tack up and down all night until I could see something. About midnight I saw a fishing boat within hailing distance. I shouted my lungs out to them, waving my arms like a maniac. Eventually they pulled up close to me. I shouted that I had no radio, no engine, no charts, and I was lost.

“OK” the Captain said, he would radio the Coast Guard. --- and off they went to carry on fishing. I kept tacking up and down for many hours. Eventually I saw some lights heading my way. I am not religious but I said a small prayer of thanks for that Captain. A Coast Guard Cutter pulled up next to me.

Their Captain immediately told me to make myself scarce. They did not want a 60 year old bumbler getting in their way. They put bumpers out and three of his crew jumped on my yacht. Then followed one of the greatest choreographs I have ever witnessed. This team of Coast Guard crew was magnificent; they acted as it was all scripted. The Captain was magnificent, with hand signals he got them all moving in the correct directions. They got more bumpers out, they had lines and springs across in a flash, they had my helm and we all steered into the night.

About an hour later they pulled into Ilwaco pier, they tied me up against the dock, jumped back onto their Cutter as if nothing had happened, and off they went. They never asked my name or where I was from or what I doing. Best of all they did not ask for payment. To this day, I still thank Uncle Sam. Those guys and the US Coast Guard will have an undying respect for the rest of my life. To an old man like me at that time, the Captain and his crew looked like they were not yet old enough to be out of school.

I had the engine repaired in Ilwaco and was ready to continue my journey south. I decided to buy a radio. At least I would be able to get weather reports. I still had no definite destination in mind. - Maybe the Baja? Maybe Mexico? This was the middle of winter in Washington State. The weather was stinking, gale force winds and very heavy swells off the coast. Those of you have been on the Big Oceans can identify with this:

Every morning I listened to the weather report for the area and then again in the evening for the next day's projections. Not once in that late November - early December was there a single day less than gale force winds or less than 20ft swells. By then I was so desperate to go that I had made up my mind, --- Any day they projected with less than 20 Knots wind and less than 20 foot swells, I would go. Finally somewhere in late December they predicted 18 Knot winds and about 19 foot waves for the next day.

I was off, in heavy seas and winds. I still had to cross the Columbia River Bar outbound. Even with engine it was very scary and only did it in those conditions out of ignorance. I decided to head for Newport Oregon, about 100 miles south. The weather improved as I went south. I had a near-disaster at Newport. I was tired, it was late and dark. I was motoring down the river mouth, minding my own business, when I heard shouting and screaming and engines being pushed to their limit. – The local ferry had been pulling out of its berth at 90 degrees to the traffic-flow to cross the river. There were regulations that traffic was to give way to the ferry. That Captain did not know that he had a Canadian yahoo to deal with, who had not read the regulations. He would have hit me dead abeam, probably sunk me and the ferry, if he had not been as sharp as he was. I did not even look back. I sailed a mile up river found a place to anchor and spent the night. After the night stay in Newport and set course the next morning for San Diego, California. About 700 miles south. The weather was reasonable for the end of December.

NAVIGATION: You ex-Bothie boys all learned navigation the Old Fashioned Way. I was only an Engineering Cadet. When I sailed the Atlantic in 1976 I had a beautiful 1927 Antique sextant given to me. I had limited my navigation short to the Marc St Hilaire method which was short and nasty but I religiously did my three shots a day and ran a running plot on the Atlantic charts.

By 1999 a miracle happened, they perfected GPS. On this 1999 trip of mine I was too blasé' and did no running plots. I had no points on the chart. If I felt I wanted to know where I was I would just hit the GPS and merely grunt "OK" and that was it. We all remember the hysteria of the Doomsday about Midnight 31 December 1999, when all the computers in the world would shut down. It just so happened that I was about 20 miles out to sea somewhere between Newport and San Diego, (of totally unknown position) on that Midnight I could not place myself within a hundred miles even if I tried. My GPS alarm buzzed and the GPS went dead. – Oh My God!! I had absolutely no idea where I was or where to head. If the GPS stayed off I was in deep trouble. After about 3 hours the GPS came back and I made an instant plot on the chart and did so regularly from then on. A few days later I sailed into San Diego. What a fabulous port it was. I spent a week in San Diego. For me it is the most beautiful city in the US.

*Next edition to follow.*

### *The Log of the Lawhill*

Sunday December 14th, 1947.

We are very thankful to advise our readers, that the announcement of Mr. Barleycorn's death was premature. When the bosun went to put the lid on the coffin the alledged corpse sat up and asked the dumbfounded bosun: was Captain Lind home? - Medical evidence proved that our old friend went into a deep trance after having taken an overdose of leg opener.-

We shall now hold a Court of Injustice on Dingaans Day, when all hands will be fined a nominal sum of one shilling to 2/6 according to their crimes. The officers will be fined in their absence with the exception of the Chief Steward, who is on a serious charge.

His Honour, Sir James Cassidy will be on the bench, the Crown Prosecutor will be Pop K.C. - Clerk of Court will be the versatile 3rd Off. and Sergent Mohr and Bosun in charge of the prisoners.

#### Some of the charges are as follows:

|                       |   |  |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| <u>Carpenter</u>      | : | running a polishing factory without a license.                 |
| <u>Bosun</u>          | : | letting his men take too long time to cleaning the P.O. Rooms. |
| <u>Sailmaker</u>      | : | breaking too many needles.                                     |
| <u>Messina</u>        | : | eating too much.   |
| <u>Arbuckle</u>       | : | having a filthy bunk.  |
| <u>Mohr</u>           | : | not teaching boys and O.S. how to pass over the sheets etc.    |
| <u>Long Tack Sam:</u> |   | falling over ropes, falls and slowing down capstans etc.       |

All will be charged and a full list is now being prepared by the Chief M. and the Prosecutor. Money collected will be donated to most hard working men on the ship and ..... that won't be Pop.-

*(Quoted verbatim, not my spelling or grammar errors.)*

**SLOP CHEST** details in previous editions and on our website: [www.generalbotha.co.za](http://www.generalbotha.co.za)