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GENERAL BOTHA OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

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NOVEMBER 2003

JOINT NEWSLETTER

Should your address details change, please send your updated details to:
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History is Preserved – The Bothie Returns Home.

On Wednesday 29 October 2003, the General Botha Exhibition at the S. A. Naval Museum in Simon's Town was opened when Flag Officer Fleet R Adm E.M. Green ceremoniously cut the ribbon in front of the display. This all took place in the loft annex to the Naval Museum, where the memorabilia from the Old Ship is intended to be preserved for perpetuity. We can be proud of the hard work and dedication of those who have made this possible, and in particular the Bothie Boys.

The following extract is from the opening speech by **V. Adm. G. Syndercombe (#1571, '48/49)**:

Admiral Green, Admiral Louw, Distinguished guests, GB Old Boys, Ladies & Gents, it is with great pleasure and with a deep sense of satisfaction that I welcome you all here today. After more than 2 years of waiting and anticipation, the GB collection is safely in its new home and on display at last. I believe it is appropriate at this time that we pause to remember those who have cared for this collection, since the GB ceased to exist as a separate entity and was absorbed into the Cape Technikon in 1990.

It is fitting on this occasion, to thank the members of the last Board of Control of the GB, for their foresight and concern for the future of this collection. It was they, under the leadership of Captain Bluett, who set up a Trust to manage the safekeeping and display of the assets of the GB, so that the rich legacy of the GB would not be lost to future generations. The GB Trust determined that the new Maritime Museum at Cape Town's Waterfront would be a fitting place for this and thus, for the first 10 years, the GB collection was housed there. A number of items were handed over to the Maritime Studies Department of the Cape Technikon for use in training and in order to maintain the link with the old GB. These have been well cared for and we are grateful to the department for providing a good home for them, particularly as most are large ship models that occupy a great deal of space.

I wish to thank also the successive curators of the Maritime Museum, Tom Graham, Denise Crouse and Jaco Boshoff for their dedication and hard work on our behalf over the last decade. It was certainly never the wish of the Maritime Museum to divest itself of the GB collection. However, the drastic reduction in floor space at their disposal that took place in 2000/1, made it impossible for them to continue to display the collection in an appropriate manner. The GB Trust was left with no alternative but to seek another venue for the display of the collection.

By a stroke of good fortune, the SA Navy Museum had just been allocated additional space for expansion, and when we approached them with a request to consider accepting the GB Collection, the answer was very favourable; it was more than that, it was enthusiastic. I wish to thank the Chief of the SA Navy, Vice Admiral Johan Retief for giving his blessing to this move. What could be more appropriate, than that the GB collection should be housed in Simon's Town, where the rich heritage of the GB had its first beginnings in 1922 and continued there until 1948. After that the establishment moved to Gordon's Bay and later to Granger Bay for a further 42 years.

The process of moving the collection and setting it up here took some time, but was relatively painless due to the excellent relationships existing between the GB Trust, GB Old Boy's Association, the Maritime Museum, the SA Navy, the Naval Heritage Society and the Naval Heritage Trust. The cooperation and assistance received from all parties was outstanding and the exhibition before you today testifies to that fact.

It was a trip down memory lane as we all looked for our year photo and inspected the memorabilia. There was the trophy cabinet, and the honours board, and Kipling's "IF" on its brass plate that I recall learning to recite when on QM Duties. If you ever have the opportunity, come back to the Cape and pay a visit for old time's sake – you won't be sorry!

Glen concluded his speech with this quote from the memorial at Britannia Naval College, Dartmouth – “See that ye hold fast to the heritage we leave you, yea and teach your children the value, that never in the coming centuries their hearts may fail them or their hands grow weak.”

DURBAN BRANCH NEWS

Our annual Christmas lunch is once more upon us, and we hope to see some sixty five members at the Durban Club again this year on the 10th December (details below, booking essential). I appeal to those of you who have been unable to make our monthly luncheons to support this event. While on the subject of our monthly lunches, I would like to thank those of you who have loyally turned up at the R. N. Y. C. We have somehow not achieved great numbers, but certainly have enjoyed the company of quite a varied mix of ex-Cadets who show up and who have not been regular attendees. It is great to welcome new faces and hope that this trend continues.

Ivor Little made a special trip to Durbs accompanied by Andy Turner, and as luck would have it, so did a number of his era, which made for a sociable occasion. Peter Hope showed up as well for his first ever Bothy function since leaving the establishment, and Clyde Louw and Glen Wanlis also appeared whom I have not seen in 47 years. I therefore appeal to the Durban members to remember the first Wednesday of the month at the R. N. Y. C.

DURBAN BRANCH – CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Date:	Wednesday 10 th December 2003		
Time:	12:00 for 13:00 hrs		
Place:	The Durban Club (now called Durban Manor)		
Cost:	R90-00 (including wine)		
Dress:	Comfortable		
Booking:	Essential -	Ray Walker	082-7860990
		Secretary	031 - 5692585

Our annual dance was attended by 120 people, and we are of the opinion that a new format must be worked out for next year's event. The Bulawayo Boys played excellent music, but it would appear that the joints are not

as supple as they used to be, and we are thinking along the lines of a candlelight dinner with limited music for those who wish to show their talents on the floor.

May I extend to all the best wishes for the festive season, and hope to see at least 70 people attend the Christmas Lunch – Kindest regards, **Derek McManus**.

FROM THE BRIDGE OF s.s. CAPE TOWN

Members are to **take note** in the header of this publication, the new contact details of your Cape Town branch chairman with immediate effect. Also all communications relating to membership should be communicated to this address as well as your local branch. The address and membership lists as well as the historical database are managed from this address. On the subject of emails, the volume of scam emails has grown to huge proportions in this electronic age and with it, computer viruses. All members' communication with the association by email must include an appropriate comment in the SUBJECT LINE of your email. Should the subject line be blank or non-sensible, the email will be deleted without being opened. We appeal to all members to take adequate precautions against this evil.

As advertised in our previous publication, Cape Town branch again hosted a joint lunch meeting with the Master Mariner's in October. Old Boy **Dave Main 1971** took time off his busy schedule as MD of Smit International S.A. to present a video on the raising of the Russian submarine, Kursk. This was a very interesting program and afterwards Dave appeared to be relieved that the questions were not too technical. Me thinks the Obies were in a hurry to charge glasses again. A successful meeting, 101 persons sat down to a convivial lunch. The Cape Town monthly lunch meetings continue to be held on the 2nd Tuesday of EVERY month. Two or perhaps three lunches per year will be jointly hosted with the Master Mariner's, usually with a subject of interest preceding the lunch.

CAPE TOWN BRANCH – CHRISTMAS LUNCH **Jointly with the Society of Master Mariners, Cape Town Branch**

NOTE: next joint lunch meeting will be the December Christmas lunch.

- Event: Christmas lunch with guest speaker
- Speaker: Captain Rick Sullivan, master of "Navigator of the Seas," 138 279 GT."
- Topic: Largest passenger vessel in the world. Will be of interest to our wives as well.
- Date: Tuesday 9th December. 11:30 for 12:00.
- Cost: R65.00 per person excluding staff gratuity
- RSVP: by 1200 Monday 8th December
- Phone: Kathy Nicholas, phone 021-788 5957
- E-mail: cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za

These meetings have become very popular and thus bookings are ESSENTIAL. Should you not have booked, but find yourself free on the day, every effort will be made to accommodate you [after all, we are an Old Boys' Association] but no guarantee can be given. We look forward to seeing you all there. **PLEASE BOOK!**

HAPPY HOUR in the MARITIME ROOM

Tony Weatherley has revived the Happy Hour that Ray and Michelle Schooling successfully ran for so many years. All Obies, Master Mariners and their partners and friends, including those passing through Cape Town, are welcome to just rock up and enjoy the good company and sundowners to end the week. Details as follows:

- Venue: The Maritime Room, Survival Centre, Granger Bay
- Date & time: Friday 21 November, from 17:00hrs onwards
- Future: Nothing in December, thereafter, January 2004 and monthly

SCRAP BOOK ALBUM – We are looking for a willing Obie to take over and organize the Scrap Book and the collection of photos. Come on guys, this could be an interesting one. **Contact Tony Nicholas.**

SLOP CHEST

These slop chest items all proudly display our association insignia. Available from Cape Town branch. Place your orders without delay.

BADGE	R100
FLAG	R100
TIE [STRIPED]	R60
PLAQUE	R100
PEAK CAP [BASEBALL TYPE]	R60
A NAME AMONG SEAFARING MEN History of the training ship.	DONATION
FIRST DAY COVER 60 th anniversary of our Old Boys' Association	DONATION

PLUS PACKAGING AND POSTAGE!

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

ANCHORS AWEIGH

W.P. KROON 1936/37 #875. We lost Pieter over the side on the 28th September 2003. A service was held in the Chapel of the Cape Town Mission to Seafarers at which his son, Peter [class of 1969], paid a moving tribute to his father, well known in the shipping fraternity of South Africa. Pieter joined Reardon Smith's of Cardiff in 1938 as an apprentice and in 1940 joined Union Castle working his way up from deckboy, OS and AB before obtaining his second mate's in December 1941. Pieter then returned to Union Castle until joining the Bothie as third officer in 1950. Later the same year he took up stevedoring for Union Castle and in 1951 joined the S.A.R.&H. There, he served in various ports and posts rising to Deputy Port Captain in Cape Town before retiring in 1983. Pieter was a strong supporter of the Bothie Old Boys' and will be missed from our ranks.

M.S. HARVEY 1958/59 #2106. Chris Miles' [class of 1959/60] neighbour happens to be the widow of Mark Harvey. Realising that our historical records did not have any detail of Mark, Chris asked Sandy to write this for us. "After leaving the General Botha Mark spent several years at sea but had already met Christine Dabrowska whom he married and together had 4 children (Anne, Susan, David and Lisa). Due to the demands of family life Mark then came ashore and pursued a career as a Marine Surveyor working in the early days with Peter Stacy and later became an associate of Barry Borland. Sadly Christine became very ill with cancer and leaving Mark with a young family, died in the early 1980's. In 1983 Mark reunited with a childhood friend, Sandra Mise (nee' Nicholls) with whom he had grown up in Cape Town. A strong bond developed and they spent 17 loving years together ultimately getting married. During this period Mark was offered a position with Polaris Shipping Company, where he worked until his death. In 1977 Mark had a setback with his health when he was diagnosed with a malignant tumor of the jaw. After major surgery he made a remarkable recovery but 18 months later was once again plagued with further cancer. He tragically passed away at home at the age of 58 years on Easter Saturday. 22nd April 2000. Mark leaves behind his second wife Sandy, four children of his own, one stepdaughter, 7 grandchildren and brothers Peter and Michael and treasured friends."

R.E. YEO 1930/31 #504. An interesting envelope of photographs was sent to us recently from the son of Ronald accompanied by this life story. "As you know my Dad completed the G B in 1931 after which he joined British Tankers as a deck apprentice and obtained his 2nd mates. During the depression in 1936 he was unable to obtain a berth, but managed to work his way back to S A and joined the Johannesburg Traffic Department in 1937, in its infancy, only a hand full of officers. At the outbreak of WW II in 1939 he joined the S A A F, attaining the rank of Captain and awarded the DFC. He married my mother in 1940, had 2 sons, myself born 1942 and my brother Roy in 1946. After the war he joined his father in Davies Engineering Works in Brakpan, and after his fathers death (1949) he, and his brother John, inherited the firm. My mother passed away in 1964, and he remarried in 1967/68? He passed away in 1972. After the war and until his death he was very active in the MOTH order, being a founder member of the Cosy-Corner Shell-Hole in Brakpan."

Our sincere condolences to family, shipmates and friends.

SOS

An interesting letter from George Thom (see “Where Are They Now?” below), 1946/47, mentions that he and **Eddy Hill, 1946/47**, traveled together to England after Bothie where Eddy joined Reardon Smith’s. Their paths have not crossed since. Charles Parsons, 1939/40, wishes to renew contact with shipmate **Ian Frederick Kiloh, 1939/40**. Ian Hare 1967 has asked of **Alistair McGillivray 1967**. Does anybody know of these three AWOL Obies? Please contact us.

The usual pile of mail returned of which some I have managed to trace, sacrificing much of my time to those defaulters. One such example was Peter Shaw 1943/44. Recent mail returned from his address in Underberg notated that he had left there 8 years ago. Managed to trace him to Cape Town. Sigh! My appeal in our previous publication for news of Hilton Brent resulted in astounding results. You must be a very popular Obie, Hilton. But that does not get you off the captain’s defaulters report. Those that I have been unable to locate are:

- **Ferdi Brand 1937/38** – last known in Bellville, Cape Town.
- **Wilfred Pierce-Jones 1955/56** – last known in Glenwood, Durban.
- **Ray Kros 1947/48** – last known in Tokai, Cape Town.
- **Doctor John Alexander 1926/28** – last known in Peers Village, Cape Town.
- **Roy Linnow 1954/55** – last known in Green Point, Cape Town.
- **Gerald David 1966** – last known in Strand, near Cape Town.

Any details whatsoever of these AWOLs will be immensely appreciated. Please contact us.

Bob Hind 1954/55 has sailed to New Zealand without leaving a forwarding address. Anybody out there know anything of him?

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

CADET 1488 GEORGE THOM 1946/47

After Bothie [Red Hill] I was indentured as an apprentice to the then P&O. Worked my passage to the UK by kind permission of Union Castle in the Winchester Castle together with Eddy Hill [#1468]. The two of us shared the luxury of a 36-berth cabin. At that time the ship had not been refitted and was bringing immigrants out to SA. Eddy and I parted company at Waterloo, and our paths have not crossed since. He had to find his way to Cardiff to join Reardon Smith’s.

First ship, as an apprentice was m.v. Palana. With her sister ship, m.v. Paringa, they were the 5th and 6th largest refrigerated carriers in the world at the time. Palana was lucky to survive the war; for a bomb struck her funnel but did not explode. Upper tweendecks were dry cargo, and the remainder refrigerated. Loaded London, Marseilles and Genoa for OZ. First shock to my Victorian sensitivities was in Marseilles. The street urinals were no more than metal shields, and from the outside one’s head, legs and shoulders were clearly visible. While relieving myself, I was surprised to find a woman come up alongside me on the arm of her boyfriend. Genoa was Wild West, with gunfights between Police and Black Marketeers between the rail trucks in dockland.

Discharged main ports Fremantle to Brisbane. Then fitted out for reefer. A laborious and no doubt expensive exercise. Not that we minded as apprentices, for in the evenings we were permitted to work as carpenters assistants. No doubt we did not receive the going shore rate, but we were more than grateful. Our daytime’s tasks were something else, and I can still smell those bloody bilges, and the sight of brass reminds me of bridge telegraphs, grated bath brick and colza oil. Marine Superintendent had obviously never thought of Blue Bell.

Then to Tasmania to load zinc at Ridsen, up river from Hobart as bottom weight. Then off to Lyttleton, South Island NZ for a full cargo of lamb. Sailed for London via Panama and when some 400m off Pitcairn we received a distress call from m.v. Fernmoor fully loaded with grain. She had had an Engine Room accident, which had immobilized her. Some tank had fallen from above onto her main engine. We took her in tow, and 29 days later after sailing from Lyttleton, arrived Auckland. The tow was parted in bad weather and what remained of the insurance wire at our end was a swine to recover before re-connecting. The crew were Stornaway fishermen, which was unusual for P&O. They used to come away for the winter months, usually in NZS ships which were part of the group. Fine seamen. Some used to start their day when I called them on the 4-8, on the OZ coast, with a good slug of OZ plonk while sitting upright in their bunks. As a first voyage apprentice we were graded as Deck Boys for salvage purposes; and received the princely sum of 37 pounds fifty which was not to be sneezed at, as our pay was 5 pounds per month. We had done as much as many of the AB’s, so this rankled a bit. And while in Auckland, while the crew had their run ashore, who were left to do the gangway duty? The six

apprentices! For many years that tow was recorded in Lloyds Calendar as the longest ever undertaken by a merchantman of another.

So back to London with wooden gin boxes covered in hessian and filled with what we could afford to a still rationed Britain. One of mine contained jam and the ration was lifted as we arrived. After my second voyage in Palana, I was promoted to Cadet Officer and found myself as 4th Officer on the Himalaya's maiden voyage. She was the first passenger ship to be built for P/O after the war. Completed my time in her and took 2nd Mates in London, as I did the other two. After 2nd Mates did one voyage as junior 4th Officer in the Pretoria Castle. Joined her in So'ton on arrival. Everyone disappeared leaving me on my todd in a dead ship. The only person I saw was my oppo in the Engine Room. Eventually walked up to town to get a meal of fish and chips, and felt guilty doing so. My National tea ration had run out. Bye Union Castle and back to P&O. During my time spent 4 years as Assistant Dock Superintendent in the Royal Group of Docks in London. My responsibilities were mainly Deck repairs, surveys and dry dockings. All done in major North Sea ports. On occasion would either sail in the ship as Chief Officer or Master and then don my bowler hat and overall. It was educational, but when a ship sailed from London a bit went with me. The P&O system was that on promotion one generally moved to cargo ships, and when in a more senior position to mail ships. It was enjoyable, For my Bank Line friends who might be sneering, cargo work in mail ships was far more exacting, for one was against the clock The schedule had to be maintained.

During that period of my life became a Royal Navy Reservist, wartime, Rockies, and retired as a Commander RD RNR. After my initial training which included sea going in frigates, I opted for Hydrography. Served in HMS Shackleton twice and as many two and a halves were being bowler hatted at that stage found myself as pilot as a Lt. Interesting and educational. Survey areas were on the West Coast to the far north where they had not received attention for well over a century. Did another spell in Shackleton and one in Scott.

Joined Safmarine in November 1971 and served them for 20 years. First voyage was in the SA Merchant as Chief Officer. Then commanded 14 of their ships and after retirement in 1991 did two relief voyages, one for Gold Star out of Hong Kong, and one for Safmarine in the Sea Trader. That was enough and gave it in September 1992. At the end of 1992 moved to Hilton, but have since re-located to Chase Valley Downs in Pietermaritzburg. A spacious and comfortable mini sub, where I was able to bring my dogs and cats. I still have a boat on the Midmar Dam. A fin keel 21 Vivacity and ply with it doves permitting. The Cape Turtle Dove has taken a liking to nesting on my outboard bracket. I love their call and flat-topped acacias are my best memories of Africa being a Vaalie. To my knowledge at least 5 chicks have flown away from "Cape Velvet" and that fornicating bird is back again. Chased her away recently, and gave the nest and two eggs a floatation test. Not discouraged she is back again and defiant.

ADMIRAL HUGO BIERMANN 1932/33 #610

The Naval Digest, journal of the Naval Heritage Society of South Africa, latest edition covers the illustrious career of our Old Boy, HH. Widely regarded as the "Father of South Africa's post-war Navy and as having the distinction of being the first naval officer to head the entire South African Defense Force. The journal covers fairly extensively HH's time on the Ship, which makes a very interesting read. We are indeed proud to have one of such note in our ranks and I urge all members to support the Society by joining. The membership fee is only R50 per year and includes the journals published regularly by the Society. The subjects cover all aspects of the South African naval history. Their address is:

Naval Heritage Trust, P.O. Box 521, Simon's Town, 7995, South Africa.

SCRANBAG

R.J.D. DUGAN 1982 #2759. Ronald has ended up in Gauteng recently as a Divisional GM at EnviroServ. Sounds important. Ron was also looking for Jonathan Warren 1980, presumably for a piss-up. Am sure Gauteng branch can accommodate Ron in that respect.

A.H. SHARP 1961/62 #2214. We note with much delight that Alex signs his correspondence as "Chairman, GBOBA, Shanghai Branch". How many members over there mate?

S.A. BLOOMFIELD 1954/55 #1863. Stewart served four years with Ellerman & Bucknall before coming ashore to Southern Rhodesia [now Zimbabwe]. There he became a trainee estate superintendent, which involved forestry, sugarcane planting, cattle management and trout farming. Mid 1962 joined British Motor Corp. in Mutare as a production trainee. Mid 1960's moved to General Motors in Port Elizabeth and subsequently worked

for several big name companies. Retired 2003, having served for 20 years as industrial engineering manager with Defy Applications in Durban.

D.E. JONES 1953/54 #1831. After Bothie Dennis joined Blue Funnel Line as an apprentice. He resigned from there and joined the Liverpool City Police on the 17th March 1961, retiring from the police in 1991. Obtained the rank of sergeant and served in several departments and branches, finishing his career with the Dog Section with a particular interest in the Drug Detection field working as a Drug Detection Dog Handler. [Another “fair cop”?]

I.B.T. MACPHERSON 1983 #2808. “I have been on the move career wise having recently joined FWL Technologies, one of the biggest global supply chain software companies in the world, based in Liverpool. My current role is to project manage the supply and implementation of new systems software for Unifeeder (hosted by Safmarine Computer Services). Having worked for both Safmarine and Unicorn previously it's like being back home. My position naturally involves lot of travel and I was fortunate enough to meet up with a number of old boys (Alan Vermaak, Wayne Jones, Robbie Gardner) and stayed with Chris Sutton when I was in Durban conducting a project audit at the end of July. It was superb to sit outside in SA's mid-winter drinking pints of lager at a quarter of the price we pay in England! I look forward to more of the same when I am back for three weeks in September and again when we role out just after New Year.” Such is the value of the Rand against the pound, sigh. Still await the detail of your uncle, Peter MacPherson 1938/39, please.

F. KRONHOLM 1987 #2910. Our flying Angel, Finn, may have finally landed. “1997 left Safmarine: as Chief Officer. 1998-2001 Charter Pilot & flight instructor. Also obtained the UK Airline transport pilot's license. Left National Airways Corp. Mar01 for UK. 2001 Captain for regional airline, scheduled passenger services London/Manchester etc. Then 11 Sept happened. 2002 Flying in the DRC (Goma based) for humanitarian organisation. Saw a Safmarine reefer box in Kalema (middle of jungle), no doubt a good story as to how it got there. Now used for breeding, toilet and living quarters for the local soldiers. 2003 Flying for the Greater Manchester Police. Big brother is watching!!! Have bought a house and hope my wondering days are over...” Next time get the container number for Clive van Onselen, 1984.

N.C. GIBBS-JONES 1974 #2472. “Joined Unicorn Lines in 1972 as cadet and promoted chief officer in 1979 and relief Master 1984. Joined Portnet 1985 as Tug Mate. Promoted Master 1987, Marine Operations Manager (JHB) 1994, Durban Pilot 1997. Joined Pentow 1998 as Loading Master and SBM Pilot 1999. Joined Qatar Petroleum 2000 to date (2003). Chief Marine Officer - Head of Marine Operations, Halul Oil Terminal. Many highlights, far too many to list.” Look forward to an edited version of those highlights; will be educational for our younger readers.

D.I.R. KEMP 1957/58 #2058. “Just to let you know I am still living, same place Formby, Liverpool. At present serving as Master aboard the Cruise Ship ' mv Discovery '. The old Island Princess. Under charter to Voyages of Discovery UK. until end of November then we revert to our owners Discovery Cruises UK Ltd., until 1st May 2004 when on charter again. Not quite retired but am thinking of the possibility after 44 years at sea. Don't know if I could get used to the idea. Keep well and best regards to anyone who may remember me.” Of course we remember you. You were my first chief officer on my first vessel on my first voyage. Remember me?

D.H. CAIN 1953/54 #1812. “My wife Di & I sold the hotel in 1998 & have now retired in Mooloolaba on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, Australia. I joined the Mooloolaba Coast Guard as a volunteer for a short period of time but decided to give it away after a 2am call out for an assist (too old for that now). My 15-year-old grandson lives with us now, so between him & looking after my other grandson when my daughter's at work keeps us both quite busy. Apart from that we're just enjoying our retirement.” Attending your class reunion in Cape Town next year would be a well-deserved rest from coast guard stuff and babysitting grand kids, don't you think? Look forward to seeing you here.

C.H. JOHNSEN 1971 #2392. “Spent a year in Subic Bay in the Philippines managing a seafarer training centre, resigned and returned to start up my own business in Durban as a maritime training consultant. Will be catching up with all the news at the Durban dinner/dance on 4th October. Do you realize that we've missed our chance for 30th anniversary celebrations?” Yes, our attempt at a reunion produced only yourself, Terry Purdon and myself out of possible 24 classmates. Shame on you lot, honour & duty?

Cape Town Branch Treasurer reports with gratitude the following donations to the Association during the period 1 April to 31 October 2003:

VG Albert, CJ Barker, PJ Birch, W Bisset, E Bolton, SA Bloomfield, PD Coetzee, L Cole, CH Copeland, JB Cullen, GH de Kock, NF Desmond-Smith, RB Dicken, I Fairlie, W Goldsmith, R Hellyer, DE Jones, MA Linck, CR McKenzie, CA McLeod, GF MacRobert, I Manning, I Meikle, K Meyer, I Mill, D Pitcher, S Polter, JA Rayner, G Schoeman, GA Stibbe, W Stodel, Anne Taylor, HK Underwood, E van Rensberg, R Wrede.

MERCHANT NAVY SERVICE MEDAL

There is a British M.N. Service Medal available. It is intended for the medal to be worn in recognition of those merchant seamen who lost their lives in WWII. It should not be worn with gallantry and campaign medals. For those interested apply to:

Award Productions Ltd, Dept F.A., P.O. Box 300, Shrewsbury, SY5 6WP, United Kingdom.

They will require your discharge book number, with ships names and dates served under the Red and/or Blue ensign. Cost about 35 pound sterling.

AUSTRALIAN BRANCH NEWS

Greetings from Australia.

It is great to see all the flags flying for the Rugby World Cup including the South African flag which is very prominent. By the time of publication the results will be known but who ever wins it has been a great event.

Our next function will be an evening Braai on Thursday 13th November at Greenwich Flying Squadron Yacht Club in Sydney.

Attendance is expected to be around 21 people including a number of Old Boys who have not attended functions before. A report on the event will be included in the next newsletter.

We have firmed up the date and venue for the Annual Dinner as Saturday 20th March 2004 at the very successful venue used this year North Ryde RSL Club in Sydney.

Peter O'Hare (2247 '64) Hon Secretary, Australia Branch. Email peteroh@bigpond.com. Telephone 0417 028809

GBOPA – UNITED KINGDOM

Not very much has happened since our last Newsletter, other than being able to report on an excellent summer, wonderful weather for months on end with high temps for all to enjoy – almost a waste to go abroad!

I have managed to attend only one Rising Sun Warsash lunch on 3 August which again, saw the regular attendance of Doug Wrathmall who does 'fly the flag' on our behalf in company with Conway Boys. Again a reminder for those who would be able to take time out it is the 1st Sunday of each month with no advance notice required.

Scribe was pleased to receive an e-mail from Dick Hellyer in Dibden Purlieu advising Bob & Judy Hind were over on a short UK tour prior to emigrating to NZ Auckland area where two of their daughters live.

Managed to make contact with Bob (also a 54/55 attendee) sorted out a date, so both Judy & he spent a great day (Saturday 11 October) we all thought, in the Storrington area – out to Petworth Park House National Trust, snack lunch, tour of the district and back home here for dinner & needless to say some reminiscing on times past!

Bob sends his 'greetings' to all OBIES who had the great pleasure of his company at various occasions.

I have e-mailed to those who are in the electronic age details of a proposed Saturday lunch at:

OLIVIO'S Restaurant, Port Solent

Saturday 6 December meeting 1215 for lunch 1300 hours

Welcome - OBIES & WIVES/PARTNERS

£17.50 per person,

Advance booking required and a deposit of £5.00

Contact me Tel 01903 744400 or Mobile 07702 635017 or e-mail tedfisher@aol.com & I will do the rest! Please try and attend for those who are local.

That's it for now, but could I wish all Obies and Family wherever you are a Merry & Happy Christmas & Prosperous New Year - **Ted Fisher**.

GAUTENG BRANCH

SPRING FUNCTION: The Gauteng Branch held its annual spring function on Sunday, 14 September at "Highbrook" estate in Lone Hill. It was the perfect indoor venue for an overcast and cold day.

The estate itself is completely private and secure and offered a beautifully appointed and decorated dining room and lounge for our get-together. Our host and hostess, Jack and Marge Gemmell, had planned the function very carefully, even down to supervising the parking. The service was impeccable, the tables nicely laid in white linen and silver and the menu, although simple, was excellent and beautifully prepared. It was altogether an inspired choice of venue and all present enjoyed themselves very much, the last guest leaving well after tea time!

Forty-one people attended, including wives, girlfriends, sons and sisters and the noise level was pretty high.

Notwithstanding this, we were able to welcome those attending for the first time; to thank Graham Jooste for his donation to the new museum of a framed photograph of J.D. Nettleton on our behalf; and to toast the ship.

The ex-cadets who attended were: James Robinson (39/40) (who earned the prize for the most senior "Old Salt" present), Bill Broderick (44/45), Reg Chambers and Laurie Barnes (46/47), Gordon Cross and Jack Gemmell (47/48), Drummond Terry (50/51), Bob Slatter (51/52), Vic Albert, Mike Crewe, Graham Jooste and Jac Van Leeuwen (52/53), Tony Hunter, Ivor Little and Eric Moir (53/54), John Orrock and Ian Morral (54/55), Archie Campbell (55/56), Gerald Meyer (61/62), Brian Preiss (1964), and Richard Morgan (1968) who got the prize for the youngest "chum" on parade. Thirteen ex-cadets sent their apologies.

The next get together will be in March 2004 and will be hosted by Tony Turner in conjunction with the Gold Reef City banqueting management, if our current plans come together - **Ivor Little**.

60th REUNION 1943 & 1944 All Hands

Participant's replies to this event are rolling in, if you have not sent your reply yet please do so NOW so that bookings can be confirmed.

If you were on the Bothie during the above two years, either Old Salt or Chum, and have not received any notification by mail or e-mail, please contact any of the committee who are listed below, or check the notice board page on the Bothie web site:

Dave Powell – 021-7901973 davepowell@saol.com, Gordon Webb – 021 5314465 webgraf@mweb.co.za, Bill Scott – 021 7496579 billscot@iafrica.com, Dicken Silberbauer – 021 7825494 dickinson.silberbauer@netactive.co.za, Jack Wells – 021 7905163.

1953/54 REUNION - A WEEKEND OF PURE NOSTALGIA!

The Class of 1953/54 is holding its 50th reunion at the old SANC "General Botha" (Now the SA Naval College) in Gordon's Bay over the period **19 - 22 March 2004**.

We would like to invite any members of our "old salts" (1952/53) or "chums" (54/55) to join us in recreating some of the fellowship which we had together 50 years ago, in the authentic atmosphere of our old *alma mater*.

The weekend will commence on Friday, 19 March with a reception in the wardroom in the evening where we will get to know one another and our respective wives and partners, who are also invited to attend.

Accommodation will be in the same bunks we had as cadets. The ladies will be berthed in two-bunk cabins in the ladies block, which will be out of bounds to all ex-Bothie Boys. Last Post will be at 21h00 and "Taps" and "Lights Out" at 23h00.

"Charlie" on Saturday will be at 07h00 with the rest of the day free to wander around the College, which is basically as it was 50 years ago, and to show your better halves where it was that you got into trouble and to bunk out to the village for a walk.

"Officers Dinner Call" at 19h30 will signal the commencement of our formal reunion dinner. Lunch and breakfast will be supplied during the day and the wardroom bar will be open before lunch. Meals will be signified by "messcooks".

Sunday will be marked by "divisions" to signify a chapel service, which will be led by the Rev Les Cottle-Green. Thereafter "Both Watches" will summon us to join a luxury bus for a trip out to Stellenbosch to Hans Schroder's estate "Oude Nektar" for a wine tasting and lunch. Afternoon tea will be at either Hermanus or Betty's Bay (still under negotiation) followed by a light supper back at the College.

The evening will take the form of a social evening where Eric Moir will have his keyboard along and we have two videos of the Bothie in our time to show you and have you overcome with emotion.

The party will break up after breakfast on Monday, 22 March, when the Bothie flag will be lowered to the strains of "Auld Lang Syne".

The organisers promise that there will definitely be no chum bashing or black ball raids after dark; that smoking will be allowed in places other than the heads; that chums may claim and hope to be given a years "buck" and that the sanctity of the female of the species will be preserved.

The Duty Officer will be Alistair MacKay, assisted by Joe Almond and PTI Smith as Duty Instructors. They have been tasked to ensure that the tone is not allowed to drop below that expected of ex-Bothie Boys.

Although a final price for the weekend has not yet been decided upon, we are endeavouring to keep it well within reach of all us pensioners. The Navy is quoting us official rates for dinner, bed and breakfast and for the Dinner and accommodation, with Mess prices for drinks.

If you want to go up market, or your good lady is appalled at the thought of sleeping in a female cadet's bed, then we have a variety of bed and breakfast establishments at our beck and call. We would, however, urge you both to "sleep in" as part of the fun.

Detailed prices will be available in the next Bothie Newsletter. In the mean time please contact Barry Cullen at 5 Oakhurst Mansions, Oakhurst Avenue, Rondebosch, 7700, telephone (021) 685-6134, e-mail cull@xsinet.co.za Barry is OC Accommodation and will be only too pleased to place your name on our list of those attending - **Ivor Little**.

1964 REUNION – CAPE TOWN.

Butch Rice #2251 1964 writes: "We are planning to have a reunion for the class of '64 on the week-end of the 5th of March, 2004, so as to coincide with the AGM and dinner on the 5th, as well as the memorial and braai on the 7th, so that those who want to can also attend these functions. The get together for our class will take place on Saturday the 6th of March, and we have planned a cruise in Table Bay, followed by lunch at the Waterfront. We need to get a feel of numbers asap so as to make the appropriate reservations.

Could any members of our class reading this notice please contact me to indicate whether they can make it or not. My e-mail address is mwbutchr@mweb.co.za."

WEB SITE

A new page of obituaries has been added go to Gallery > Memorials > Obituaries, and contains the following:

1611 Captain Sigmund Muldal, Captain Chips Bierman , # 1151 Captain Desmond Bowen, # 1819 Captain Barry Downing, # 1378 Captain Ray Schooling

We recently received a copy of "Shell Chronicle", Shell Tankers house magazine of August 1957 which carried a splendid front cover photograph of the Gordon's Bay parade ground, and an article about the ship and some of the cadets who were sailing in ships of the Shell fleet at that time. Go to History > Gordons Bay > Shell Chronicle to view these pages.

Recent additions/updates to personal histories on the Muster List (Alphabetical) are:

Kenneth Terence DOWNIE 1987 # 2900, Robert Hillary LOVELL 1975 # 2497, Hilton Louis STROEBEL 1981 Jan-June # 2732, Brian Douglas HOATSON 1941-42 # 1179, Colin Howard JOHNSE 1971 # 2392, Neville Charles GIBBS-JONES 1974 # 2472, Finn KRONHOLM 1987 # 2910, Douglas Alexander SMITH 1960/61 # 2187, Mark Seaford HARVEY 1958-59 # 2106. OB's are urged to send in their personal histories, always of interest to old shipmates. You can do this quickly and easily from the web site Contacts page > Reply form. **Bill Scott # 1320 Webmaster**.

CAPTAIN ROBERT GRANGER REMEMBERED

DE Pitcher (#1316 '43/44) The Trustees of the GB Trust hosted an occasion on 22 April 2003 at the Cape Town Restaurant, Granger Bay. It was attended by invited guests and Obies, and publicised the display in the restaurant of the silver model of Moullie Point Lighthouse. This was presented to Captain Robert Granger by the citizens of Cape Town in recognition of his heroic rescue of the passengers and crew of the schooner "Miner" which capsized in Granger Bay during a storm on the night of 5 February 1857.

In his address, V Adm Glen Syndercombe, explained how a newspaper report of the finding of the model in a City Council storeroom had led to negotiations with the Council. It was agreed to display it in a place close to the original scene of rescue and in view of the base of the lighthouse for the benefit of the restaurant patrons. The model, housed in a glass-fronted wooden cabinet, may be rotated to reveal four embossed illustrations depicting aspects of the rescue.

ODE TO THE SEXTANT, or MEMORIES OF THE “HAMBONE.”

By Dave Powell (#1318, 1943/44)

Being of relatively unsound mind and still influenced, at the young age of 75, by the “call of the sea” coupled by a need to escape from the perils of modern life such as TV, cell phones, traffic, “why haven’t you fixed the leaking toilet yet? I accepted an offer to be Navigator on the yacht “Daly’s Insurance” aka “Panther” on the 2003 Cape to Rio Yacht race.

The race was no real stranger to me having competed in the first Cape to Rio in 1971 as Navigator of “Active” and also as Skipper of “Ukulele Lady” in the 1993.

1971 was still in the “good olde days “ of Astro Navigation. GPS and or SatNav were still words of the future as were “weather routing” satellite telephones and instant access to the Internet. Navigators still had a degree of mystery about them and the sextant, their tool of the trade, was an instrument that was viewed with deep respect by most.

Most of you who have owned a sextant and have used it in the old fashioned way of finding ones way from A to B across the worlds oceans will, I am sure, have the same amount of affection for your “hambone” as I have for mine.

I am sure the words, “Kelvin Hughes,” 3 Circle Mates Sextant will bring back memories. They do to me. Purchased in Liverpool whilst 4th Mate on the old Safmarine Victory ship “Vergelegen” in 1950. It cost the princely sum of 36 pounds sterling almost a months pay in those days, and I still have the original invoice. A Deck Officer without his own sextant in those far off days was not really dedicated!! And to borrow someone else’s was really frowned upon.

What a change from 1971 to 2003, almost like a different world. Accurate position always available, “course made good” at ones fingertips, no need to worry about keeping a notebook of course changes as you tack, speed differences due to wind changes etc so as to get a good DR. (I still did it because it is ingrained).

How many of you reading this and turning back your memories to the days of “Noon” can remember the old time Masters pacing the bridge waiting for the Second Officer to say “Noon Sir” and give the Latitude.

Imagine you are bound for Rio de Janeiro, in DR Lat 20°-16’S, it is January, and the Declination is about 19°S, not easy on the bridge wing of a cargo ship with a H.E. of 20 meters chasing the sun around the horizon. Your altitude, if you remember that well, would be in the region of 89°.

Imagine trying to do this on the deck of a yacht with height of eye of 2 meters, and the horizon could be real or the nearest swell., hopefully you are on the starboard tack with the wind Easterly and the mainsail isn’t in the way !!

In 1971 we still had to do it and we got there, albeit with a degree of trepidation, On “Active” we had one period of no sights for three days and very fickle winds, DR was “god”. Today all you have to do is pick up the GPS and press “Pos,” and “voila” we are here, +/- 10 meters.

Despite all the modern technology, and I am the last to decry it, I have used it and it is good. I still get a deep sense of pride in being able to take out my trusty “hambone” and with a very skeptical audience get a reasonable position and prove the GPS is quite accurate!!

To many, Astro Navigation is a dying art; in fact I personally wonder how long it will continue in the form we knew it. Even coastal navigation is dominated by Radar and GPS. Gone are the days of recognising “sandhill conspic,” or “Water Tr.,” “Hotel,” etc. No doubt the new technology gives easier and probably more accurate position fixing but hasn’t the “art” of navigating disappeared?

I suppose one must accept that technology will always create change and one must never oppose change just because it makes ones original training and knowledge out of date. However despite all this I still find it difficult to really accept that a little box can do what it took years of study and experience to master.

My “little box,” as my wife calls it, always goes with me on a passage and I still get a terrific kick out of still being able to take a sight and fix my position. These days are, I am afraid, fast disappearing so I thought a note to those who still remember would be a fitting Requiem to the “Hambone.” – **Dave Powell.**

MY HEART TRANSPLANT STORY

Peter Thomas (#2129, '58/59)

After an evaluation by the Heart Transplant Unit at the City Park Hospital in Cape Town in October, 2000, I was placed on the waiting list for a heart transplant. I was advised to get my ducks in a row regarding aircraft flight times, availability of charter aircraft, possibility of diverting overflying SAA aircraft, opening and closing times of the Airport and generally all relevant information required to arrive in Cape Town within 6 hours.

On Saturday 19 May, 2001 I was in Vincent Park Shopping Centre when at 11h45 the cellphone rang and it was the head of the Heart Transplant Team advising that a heart had become available in Johannesburg. A team consisting of a surgeon and nurse would be sent to harvest the heart from the donor. The condition was that I must give the assurance that I could be in Cape Town by 18h00 and that this was my only bite at the apple. "Piece of cake", so I thought. SAA/SA Express only have two flights on a Saturday, one in the morning and one in the evening around 19h00. A state of extreme panic now existed and Plan "B" was implemented. SAA flight 611 from Durban to Port Elizabeth and Cape Town was due to overfly E.L. and arrive in Cape Town at around 17h00. However, SAA would not entertain the thought of landing this flight. Plan "C," contact medical rescue organization in Cape Town (Netcare 911) who advertised in medical aid brochure that they could dispatch a twin engined aircraft from Cape Town to E.L. and return by the deadline. Not able to assist due to short notice and various other reasons. Had previously obtained a quote from local aircraft charter company for E.L. to C.T (return empty) for R10.900.00. After exhausting all my options, I came up with the idea of chartering an aircraft to P.E. (R3.100.00) and joining flight 611 from Durban.

At 13h00 I took off from the Airport in a single engined aircraft complete with Pilot, Wouter Gous. Had a few tense moments when we picked up strong headwinds and our arrival in P.E. in time to meet Flight 611 was in the balance. We made it with a few minutes to spare and was in C.T. by deadline, to be met by Hospital Heart Transplant staff who whisked me away like a lamb to the slaughter and the fun began. After the operation I was discharged (45 days later) but confined to Cape Town for a further two months for numerous weekly tests.

During this period I stayed with my Daughter Janet in Rondebosch. Her daughter was 11 months old and very mobile in her walking ring. One morning while having breakfast in an enclosed entertainment area, Janet rushed off to answer the telephone and unfortunately the pool gate had blown open in the high winds. I heard the splash and saw the wheels of the walking ring sinking in the pool complete with baby turned 180 degrees heading for the bottom. Without a thought I jumped in and performed the perfect rescue. (Former NSRI Station Commander to the rescue, gammy legs and all). Fortunately, the baby had taken no water and after a good shake, dry and rub was full of beans again. I was a little shaken and cold as the pool water was a bit chilly due to night time air temperatures of 2 and 3 degrees C, rain and winds, the worst in 44 years This was test No 1 for new heart. I then undertook the job of fitting a proper gate-locking device with spring and self-locking catch. After quite a hunt managed to get all the bits together and required a block of wood cut to size. The only place I found this was in Salt River. I had obtained the block and was walking towards the car when I was jumped on from behind, had my arms pinned up my back and relieved of my cellphone. Test No 2 for new heart. No damage other than some lost pride.

When I returned to East London (4 months to the day) from the date of the transplant. Much jubilation and great welcome from family and friends. I was a little wobbly on my pins due to weakness etc. and lost my footing on a step into our lounge, fell and connected the corner of a display cabinet, fair and square on the forehead. This modification culminated with a visit to St Dominic's Hospital for some stitches and had to walk around with a pressure bandage around my head, looking like Asama Bin Laden with fancy headgear. Test No 3 for new heart. I do not want to see the inside of another hospital as you can imagine. By the way, the operation was a success and in fact a "piece of old takkie" when one looks at the overall picture. I am active, enjoy eating out, dancing, love the sea, beach and the outdoors (Like Hogsback). My aim is to enjoy each day of my new life, one day at a time, to the full. Time is marching on and there is no time to dwell on the past and the mistakes made - **Peter Thomas.**

Did you know that Charlie Chaplin once won third prize in a Charlie Chaplin Look-alike competition?

Space allows me just to wish you all a happy festive season and all the best for 2004.

Scribe, dhenwood@iafrica.com.