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GENERAL BOTHA OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

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

November 2007

JOINT NEWSLETTER

Should your address details change, please send your updated details to:

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Please send any articles you may wish to be included in the Newsletter to:

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Visit our website <http://www.generalbotha.co.za>.

As I complete this letter, it is Sunday 11 November, Remembrance Day, and around the globe we recall those who have gone over the side, primarily in the two World Wars, but also in other regions of conflict in the past and at present. There are many Botha Boys whom we remember today who have fulfilled their "Honour and Duty".

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning

We will remember them. - *From Lawrence Binyon's poem For the Fallen.*

This issue is crammed with news and articles of interest contributed by many, and thank you all. We do have to restrict the content to 12 pages as anything more increases the postage exponentially. So I have had to leave out the list of those who have generously contributed financially (see the next issue) and also left out the Slop Chest (if you require anything please contact Tony Nicholas. Please do look at the website, and if you don't have access to the internet ask your young children or grandchildren. Bill Scott informs me that the full release of Charles Kingon's "Old Salts Yarns" are now on the web site. Gallery > Yarns > Old Salts Yarns. Thanks to all those who sent me the obituary of C H Filmer (see Anchors Aweigh). I take this opportunity to wish you all a happy Christmas and holidays coming up.

CAPE TOWN BRANCH

COMBINED YEAR END LUNCH with the MASTER MARINERS

Venue Royal Cape Yacht Club,
Duncan Road, Table Bay Harbour
Date & Time Tuesday 11 December, 12h30 for 13h00.
Partners welcome.
Cost R130 with cash bar
RSVP Kathy or Louise Nicholas
Phone 021-7885957
e-mail cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za.

DURBAN BRANCH

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Venue Royal Durban Golf Course –
Greyville Race Course
Date & Time Wednesday 12 December 2007,
12h00 for 13h00
Cost R110 – as per last year
Booking Derek McManus
W – 031-30395653
H – 031-7673719
Dress Smart casual

KZN BRANCH NEWSLETTER October 2007-11-01 - Derek McManus - Chairman

Your Committee recently took the decision to update our KZN member records and no prize for guessing who was entrusted with the task of contacting and updating the long list. It turned out to be a most enjoyable exercise, getting to talk to absent members and I am very pleased to note that the Bothie spirit is still alive and well.

Sadly, however, we learnt of the passing of EH Long (818) 35/36 ten years ago. ER Collocott (971) 1936/37 on 6 April 1998, RM Gavin (1107) 1940/41 on 2 October 2005, PG Hamilton (1356) 1944/45 on 2 October 2006, JL Candy (797) 1935/36 on 28 August 2007 and CH Filmer (553) 1931/32 also passed over the side recently. *Unfortunately we have no information about EH Long, ER Collocott and JL Candy. If anyone does have information please would you pass this on to Tony Nicholas cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za.*

On a more positive side we also noted that a member who was reported to have swallowed the anchor has coughed it up again and is still with us.

Nine pages have been completed and the task will be ongoing - thanks to all for your continued interest and to the many who indicated their interest to make the Christmas lunch. It would be great to welcome those who have been absent for a while, so give the bridge, tennis, golf, croquette or whatever else a miss on our lunch day and join us.

Who knows, the mystery draw may turn out to be a refund for your mess deck fees. Ample parking is available and you will not be bothered with traffic in central Durban.

Once again it was nice chatting to so many Obies recently and I hope to see you in person. Lets make this Christmas bash one to remember - the fare is always of a high standard.

Best wishes for an enjoyable festive season and a prosperous new year.

Kindest regards, Derek McManus.

FROM THE BRIDGE OF s.s. CAPE TOWN. - Tony Nicholas - Chairman

Much has happened during the past year. By the time you read this the Boks will have brought the Wilber Ellis Cup home, Western Cape has had the first *normal* winter in 20 years resulting in all our dams overflowing, but even more exciting was the arrival of my two grandsons, two months apart. Delightful little *ankle biters*. But, such a pity the Bothie is no longer around to train them in Honour and Duty. Never mind, I shall do my best with them but please do not expect me to play cricket. One recent achievement was the copying of all the class photographs which was quite a task. Starting with the retrieval from the S.A. Naval Museum, removed from their frames, digitally scanned, replaced in their original frames and finally [following a period of storage in my bedroom much to annoyance of Kathy] returned safely to the museum. Thus now we are in the position to make copies available to those who ask for them. We have these available on file, in other words I can email the file to you and you can have copies printed locally. Failing which I can have copies printed for you and mailed to you. A couple of guys already requested copies a few months ago but unfortunately I have misplaced that list. Therefore please contact me again. Contact details in the header of this newsletter.

Recent additions to our slop chest are three DVDs, comprising a film taken on board the ship in the thirties, a montage of photographs taken by Rex Chambers during his time on board 1946/47 and a film done by Barry Cullen and Chris Copeland on board at Gordon's Bay in 1954. All three are accompanied by suitable music and are well worth viewing this piece of history. In addition Hugh Lendrum 1954/56 and Ian Westworth 1955/56 have also sent us collections on CD of their photographs taken during their time on board. Thus we now have a fine collection covering the first three Bothies but alas, we have nothing of the Granger Bay era. This is a sad omission and therefore I appeal to all cadets of the Granger Bay era to research their personal archives and send in useful material, be it photographs or films taken on board. No Terry Purdon, that 1971 photograph you have of me shall not do for this publication. I look forward to a positive response.

Our Cape Town monthly lunches continue at the Royal Cape Yacht Club but the low attendance over past months is of concern to your committee. The club caterer appointed a few months ago is a great improvement over previous caterers and remember the club refreshment prices are very reasonable. The company is good, old [or not so old] shipmates and regular presentations of interest. Thus why the

decline in interest? Please make your thoughts known to the committee members. Our Strand contingent has made their apologies as some of them are on *sick parade*. Best wishes and get well soon chaps. On the subject of presentations we had one of a different subject recently. Past presentations have focused largely on the salvage industry which in itself is extremely interesting. However for the September meeting we decided to host a chap who had cycled around the entire coast of Africa. Now that was different but extremely interesting, yet fewer than usual members attended and they missed what was thoroughly enjoyed by those present. Again, please make your thoughts concerning these meetings known to your committee members - should we continue these or not?

The year end function is scheduled for Tuesday 11th December at the Royal Cape Yacht Club. We have challenged the club and caterer to better last year's function and I am confident they shall achieve it. We look forward to strong support again and having all the lame and lazy report on board for duty on the day. As usual our widows shall be invited to attend as our guests and we shall place them at members' tables. Please behave.

They say that change is as good as a holiday, maybe for Ivor Little this is the case. Ivor resurrected our Gauteng [previously Transvaal] branch and held that helm firmly in his hands for many years; I forget how long but am sure Ivor shall tell me. Ivor has recently handed over command of the branch to Donald Forbes class of 1957/58. Welcome aboard to higher management position Donald, I am sure you are up to the challenge. And to Ivor, many thanks for all the years of dedication and labour put into furthering the interests of the association and keeping the legend alive. We look forward to continuing newsletters contributions from you though. Honour and Duty. May the legend live on.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

J.S. MCLOUGHLIN 1975. Joe was a victim of a very unfortunate accident in Durban harbour recently, 24th September. He sailed with Safmarine on all types of vessels including passenger vessels. In 1990 he lectured at the Natal Technikon and the following year joined P&I Associates as a Marine Surveyor. 1993 entered into a partnership in a survey company and in 1994 formed Independent Surveyors c.c. based in Durban. Joe was very well known and respected throughout the industry. He shall be missed.

W.P. WHEELER 1926/27. William was recently reported as having passed away. We know that William was apprenticed to Andrew Weir Line we have no further information. If anyway can provide further information, please contact us.

L.H. NEL 1953/54. Louis sadly passed away 31st August last. Bill Cope (53/54) writes:

“As I accompanied Louis on his first and last voyage, as new apprentices and then to scatter his ashes, I thought it would be fitting to write a short epitaph. After obtaining his Masters at Warsash he went into commerce, managing several firms before starting his own business. In later years in semi-retirement, ran his own brokerage business from his home in Cape Town. Louis and I were fellow cadets for our two years at the Bothie. On leaving we both joined Ellerman and Bucknell and sailed together for eighteen months. Completing his sea time Louis sat for his 2nd mate's in Cape Town and later Mates and Masters at Warsash. It was there that he met and married his first wife Mary who brought, in due course, two lovely daughters into the world. Returning to Cape Town he worked on the coast before taking up the post of Harbour Master at Port Nolloth. A job as a manager of Ovenstones Fishing, followed and then, a spell on the staff of the “General Botha” lecturing another generation of Bothie Boys. After working in managerial positions for Dowson and Dobson Electronics and Rediffusion S.A. Louis moved to Johannesburg, where he was with Plessy and then Control Instruments. Louis had personally been going through a rough period, and while in Johannesburg took two decisions that were to prove very good for him. He married his second wife, Gabriella, and started his own business: Neptune Electronics. Eventually he sold his business and he and Gabriella returned to Cape Town, where he did a short spell with the Dept. of Transport, before moving into the field of marine and other insurance. Louis kept his brokerage going into semi retirement, where he lead a happy final few years,

entertaining his grandchildren and being well cared for by his loving wife Gabi. Ill-health finally put an end to a highly varied and successful carrier. One could say that Louis had done his bit to keep the legend alive. Bill Cope.”

D.TABERNER 1945/46. 1948/52 Dennis was a Pupil Draughtsman with the Cape Divisional Council, 1953/64 Senior Draughtsman, British Colonial Service. Nyasaland Government (now Malawi). 1964/66 Technical Representative, fixing & fastening methods (Pty) Ltd. 1967/72 Dennis then entered into a partnership and started a new company, Powerbolt (Pty) Ltd. 1972/80 Branch Manager of Turner Morris (Pty) Ltd and in 1980 appointed Branch Manager, Liquid meters when the meter division was to run independently. 1990 this amalgamated with Duplex valves and he was appointed Regional Manager Duplex/Liquid Meters. 1990 appointed alternate Director to Fluid Holdings Board. Deceased 31/07/2007.

R.C. COUSENS 1930/31. After Bothie Dick sailed as apprentice for three years with the British Tanker Company. After obtaining second Officer's certificate returned to S.A. and joined a mining company. At the outbreak of WWII he joined the Seaward Defense Force and served on S.A. Vessels and Royal Navy destroyers in the Mediterranean, during which time he commanded two anti-submarine escort vessels. After WWII he returned to S.A. and joined the S.A. Navy. First command was the SAS Transvaal and in 1955 commanded the SAS Good Hope. 1959 appointed Commander of the Dockyard followed in 1961 with the appointment of Naval Attaché to the S.A. Embassy in London for a four year period. On his return to S.A. in 1965 was given command of the SAS Tafelberg, the newly acquired fleet replenishment vessel. Retired from the S.A. Navy 31st July 1972. Deceased 25/09/2007.

C.H. FILMER 1931/32. Better known as *Fairy Filmer*, no doubt nicknamed after a certain aircraft he flew in WWII, runner up for King's Gold Medal. After G.B. appointed midshipman RNR. Apprenticed to Houlder Brothers for three years. He then joined the Royal Navy as Sub Lieutenant. After promotion joined the Fleet Air Arm and obtained 'wings' in 1938. 1940 dive bombed the German Cruiser 'Konigsburg' and assisted in her sinking. This was the first time in aviation history that a major warship was sunk by air attack. Shot down twice, second time captured and spent five years as a prisoner of war. Returned to flying after the war until 1958, retiring as Lt Commander. Joined the Merchant Navy and within a year was Master of small ships belonging to South Island Government of Tonga, for five years. Following fourteen years he commanded tankers supplying fuel to most of the South Pacific Islands. 1995 retired. Deceased August 2007.

M.J. DE KOCK 1936/37. After Bothie Michiel returned to High School to complete his matric. 1940 joined the South African Railways and Harbours, served in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Bloemfontein until early 1967 when he joined Atlas Aircraft Corporation. Retired from there in 1985. During WWII joined the Imperial Light Horse and served in the technical services and as a dispatch rider in Egypt and Italy. 1949 he joined the second battalion of the Transvaal Scottish and served as Company Quarter Master until end of 1966. Medals: 1939/45 Africa Star and Italy Star. 1939/45 Defense Medal. 1939/45 British Defense Medal and Africa Service Medal. Due to failing eyesight he joined the National Association of Blind Bowlers in 1992 and played in four Nationals. Deceased 06/08/2007.

M.V. LEGG 1948/49 #1560. Mervyn passed away 22nd August. Unfortunately no details known of his career and any information would be welcome.

A.M. MATTHEWS. Granger Bay cadets will fondly remember Aubrey who was renowned for his kind interest in all cadets, sadly passed away recently. Joined G.B. staff as stores assistant in November 1967 and retired July 1990 as assistant purser. As a S.D. 7 Rating, subsequently R.N.V.R. [war reservist], served with the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean. 1941 in the gunboat HMS Ladybird. As an A.B. sustained wounds when she was sunk by Stuka's 87 in Tobruk and repatriated to South Africa. Subsequently commissioned and as a lieutenant had command of HMSAS Turfontein & Pretoria of the 3rd & 4th Escort Groups. Also commanded HMSAS Blaauberg & Rondevlei. Retired from a very senior position in Shell Company December 1966 and joined G.B. staff in November 1967 at Granger Bay. Retired 01/07/1990. Deceased 30th July 2007 at the age of 96.

Our sincere condolences to family, shipmates and friends.

SOS - Get your brains into gear and your fingers working; find these AWOLS for us – please!

NAME	CLASS	LAST KNOWN LOCATION
Alan Vermaak	1983	Cape Town
Ryan Braunschweig	1979	Port Elizabeth
Gary Bowers	1984	Strand, Western Cape
William Keytel	1943/44	Cape Town
Les Farge	1980	Paarl, Western Cape
Gary Bowers	1984	Strand Western Cape

SCRANBAG

J.W. HOOKINS 1960/61 #2177. Jerry thought he was heading for the land of the gentry, retirement, in June. But NYK quickly put paid to that dream for a little while longer. Thus Jerry left Johannesburg recently for the greener pastures of Durban, still with NYK. One day the great moment will come Jerry. **ALAN DU TOIT HON. MEMBER.** Alan was previously with the S.A. Navy and later moved to Australia where he joined their navy. Attained rank of Commodore and recently appointed to one of the senior naval posts in the Persian Gulf. He has taken over command in charge of several Coalition ships from the United States, the United Kingdom, Iraq and Australia and about 1000 personnel as commander of Combined Task Force (CTF) 158.

T.H. HARVEY 1958/59 #2107. The correspondence generated by the planned 1958/59 continues with enthusiasm between class mates and salty stories are being swapped. Some I believe not suitable for this publication. But then Bothie Boys and Gals will be Boys. Thomas reports; “Has own company "T. Harvey Technologies" (THT) in Gauteng. First joined Union Castle as cadet and later sailed on Mobil tankers. I finally swallowed the anchor in 1979 after four years as master on tramp ships out of Hong Kong, and after a spell as MD of various companies within Leo Raphaely and Sons, wandered off into the realms of various so-called entrepreneurial ventures, mainly in the project management field, and am still consulting in this area for a crust of bread.”

C.R. HELLYER 1958/59 #E9. Another of the class reunion, Charles reports in. “Royal Air Force in UK for five years in Airborne Radar and Wireless. Came back to SA as a 'learner official mining' - Venterspost. After a few other jobs, joined Burroughs Machines as a computer technician. Became Director Customer Service, first for Switzerland, and then for SA. Moved to Sales and was GM for Public Sector. Left after 28 years due to disinvestment and reinvestment trauma with Unisys (the old Burroughs). Various other jobs, till retired in February 2007.”

G.W. HAYWARD 1984 #2834. Gordon was until recently a marine pilot somewhere in New Zealand and is now living in Port Pirie, South Australia doing piloting for Flinders Ports. He says; “Quite a change from life in New Zealand- so far, so good.” Now if only you guys could learn to play rugby down there.

H.C. LENDRUM 1954/55 #1892. After Bothie Hugh joined Africa Surveys, aerial photography, which involved a year in Zimbabwe. Returned to S.A. and joined Colgate, became head of Loss and Gain Management. Later transferred to their Marketing Department as a Brand Manager. After eight years was Group Product Manager and then left to open his own General Dealer store in Zululand. At that time also did commercial fishing and shark net maintenance. Thereafter became a partner in Fiberil Coatings followed by joining Plate Glass as a Mill Manager in Gauteng. A year later joined Parker Pen Company and later Concord Food and Drug as partner. During this period also became Executive Director of S.A. Society of Marketers. Initiated the Loerie Awards. Eight years later set up a new business in the USA marketing stainless steel products and other products from S.A. Returned to S.A. and acquired The Directors' Collection LTD. Currently active assisting clients with advice on business strategy leading financial applications of all types including property development and asset finance.

F.J. KIES 1966 #2282. Maryanne, Frans’ wife, reported to me in August that; “Frans is delivering a fishing trawler from Brisbane to Cape Town. When he calls me from sea I'll pass on your message and perhaps he can catch up with you in Cape Town.” Well Frans, we are still waiting for that call. Where are you, AWOL?

H.L. STROEBEL 1981 #2732. After a spell on an icy island somewhere off Russia, Hilton has returned to warmer pastures. He is now with Southern Tankers, the BEE arm of the Grindrod group, running the Commercial side of the South African companies, from Durban. Welcome back and next time report your change of address. How I have to chase you layabouts.

R. HERMAN 1966 #2280. Thankfully there are times when our SOS in the newsletters is responded to. After a spell as MD of Dart Line in the UK Ron is now the CEO of MPDC = Maputo Port Development Company, the port authority for Maputo, Mozambique. I am still waiting for a reply to my email Ron.

I.S. PAYNE 1946/47 #1477. After two years with Clan Line Ivan came ashore and worked in an industrial laboratory. Became Works Chemist with Consol Glass and then joined S&CI, a Unilever chemical company, eventually becoming Marketing Director. Transferred to IOP, a subsidiary of Chemical Services, as Marketing Director. Retired end of 1990.

B.M. GEORGESON 1957/58 #2049. At last after many years of pursuing I have managed to get a story out of Brian. Here goes. Cadet with B & C, King, Bullard King, (on the old 'King Robert' tramping) Springbok thence Safmarine. After 2nd Mates various. S.A. vessels including reefer and 2/o-3/o on the RSA to the ice. Obtained Mates then assorted vessels amongst which S. African (S.A. Huguenot building and maiden voyage from Japan). Portuguese (C/o on 'Capitao Abreu'), Norwegian (including AB on tanker 'Widan', 3/o with Karlanders in South Pacific Isles). Australian (with Colonial Sugar), Hong Kong (C/o on the 'San Roberto' tramping with Manners Navigation.) 1970 wrote Master's Foreign Going hence a contract on the 'LM Gemsbok of Land and Marine as Mate. 1971 Sailed on first Cape to Rio yacht race on 'Howard Davis' in company of several old boys, sailing on two subsequent South Atlantic yacht races thereafter. The following eight years with Leo Raphaely Group firstly as Master of the reefer 'Judith R' and subsequently as Marine Superintendent/Supercargo/Surveyor/Agent dealing with and sailing on owned and chartered vessels operating worldwide. The late 1970's saw me sign the dotted line whilst on a hitch-hiking trip to Rhodesia during their bush war, regular army. Engineer's Boat Squadron, Kariba and Zambezi including operations in the bush and externals returning after Independence in 1980. Back to sea on the 'Perla Frio' then two years Master of the 'Atlantic Isle' (passenger/cargo South Atlantic isles, West Africa, C.T.) 1983-1989 Marine Superintendent and Master Kuttel Group including delivery 'Brazilia' to China and others. Next fifteen years contract work mostly as Master assorted vessels worldwide including general cargo/tugs/supply vessels, hydrographical survey, reefer including many deliveries, particularly fishing vessels. This included a period 1993-1994 with Spanfreight Mombasa as Master of their Aventure and Acor running mostly WFP cargoes to Somalia coming under mortar attack in Mogadishu once, and an unusual treasure hunting trip to the Seychelles as Master of the tug 'Argo Cape' (Unsuccessful!). 2004-2006 two years with Smit Salvage and 2007 have now completed a contract as Master of the Svitzerwijsmuller tug 'Battleaxe' in Angola. Still sea-going doing contract work when not mountain climbing. Rather interesting, your chairman has just spent two weeks holiday at Kariba, Zimbabwe. Perhaps we can swap some stories.

D.A. HUNT 1985 #2868. David recently reported in. "I was a cadet with Unicom Lines, and attended "Bothie" in 1985. I left Unicorn Lines in 1988, predicting the future was going to be container vessels, and deciding this was not going to be a good thing for life as a mariner. I joined MSC in Joburg, working in client services until 1993, when I decided I needed a change and moved to the UK, where I joined a freight and warehousing company called Icon Carriers, eventually becoming a partner and director, until April 2007. Itchy feet have struck again, and having visited Canada several times have decided this is the place to be, and hope to move there within the next few years (Canadian immigration not being what you would call speedy). In the meantime I am taking some time out from work life, and plan to spend a couple of years touring round North America in an RV, after which I hope to persuade someone in Vancouver to offer me a job." What a life, I am truly envious. All I have to look forward to is babysitting my grand children

MODERN TECHNOLOGY PRESERVES THE OLD.

Cadet Owen Ihlenfeldt #1521 (1947/48) has found a novel way to both keep himself occupied and at the same time raise funds for the Monte Rosa Old Age Home where he and his wife live. Owen has

installed the latest Dolby Digital Surround Sound equipment in his computer and makes CD's from LP Records for all the customers he can find. He charges a very realistic price of R60.00 per record, of which he donates R10.00 to Monte Rosa who desperately need all the funds they can collect (The government no longer subsidizes these institutions). So, all you "Chums & Old Salts" who have stacks of favourite music on records and cannot play them anymore because you no longer have HiFi equipment get them over to Owen (PHONE 072 146 6976) who will blow you away with the latest 5.1 Surround Sound. Slightly damaged records are restored and polished gratis.

The seventh SANC GENERAL BOTHA OBA "Southern" Lunch was held on Tuesday 16 October 2007 at the Seven Seas Club, Simon's Town. Eighteen former Cadets and two ladies attended. "Ted" Fisher, Number 1875 [1954-1955 term], from the United Kingdom was a very welcome visitor. Several of his contemporaries were present.

The next SATS GENERAL BOTHA OBA "Southern" Lunch will be held on **Tuesday 15 January 2008** at the Seven Seas Club, Simon's Town. Those wishing to attend are requested to telephone Brad Wallace-Bradley [021-786-1957] or Ian Manning [021-782-1559] **before** 1700 on **Sunday 13 January 2008**. The caterer makes her victual purchases the following day, Monday.

AUSTRALIAN BRANCH NEWS - Peter O'Hare – Hon Sec/Treasurer.

The Queensland group met for lunch at the Sunshine Coast on Sunday October 21st.

Our next Sydney get together will be an informal pre-Christmas lunch in at The Great Northern Hotel, Chatswood, Sydney commencing 12.00 Saturday 24th November.

A reminder will be sent to local members at end October and all overseas visitors are very welcome.

Grenville Stevens is busy organizing the Commissioning Day lunch in Sydney on Saturday March 15th 2008. Best Regards to all. Peter O'Hare Hon Sec/ Treasurer on behalf of the Australian Branch.

From W. Australia David Bell (53/54 #1807) writes:

Dear Tony, Have just read your last newsletter and am always surprised at how pleased I am to get it, print it out and read every word voraciously. This has always been the case even before the 2004/50th get together of the 53/54's which brought back to me how much my 2 years on the Bothy meant to me and how it shaped my life.

Just a couple of points that I found interesting and firstly it was sad to hear of the passing of Arnold Hirst which reminds us of our age and how lucky we are to still be moderately fit and enjoying life. Secondly the notes from Barry Young regarding the Tuvalu Maritime Inst. and his involvement as Captain/CEO because we had a very interesting TV show here in OZ a few years ago, showing the institute and its activities and at the time my thoughts were how interesting to see what changes can be made to a complete innocent when given the training and discipline. Our experiences on the Bothy completely. Well done Barry.

Lastly the "Legend Lives on" and the last part regarding the "Lawhill" and its 1946 voyage to S.America. My brother Chris Bell joined the S.African navy in late 1944, having completed school at St Andrews Grahamstown and on being demobbed with nothing to do joined the Lawhill as an AB and sailed I think to BA and return to, I think, Durban. One of the reasons I went to the Bothy was because of his stories of daring do, setting and furling sails in a gale (I new I would never have to do that), but also there were 2 Ex General Botha boys on board as cadets who he talked about a lot. Those boys would now be close to or at least 80 and I am wondering if they are still with us. My brother Chris was very ill with prostate cancer when Julia and I were in Cape Town for the reunion and it was great that I saw him then and was able to say goodbye as he passed on shortly afterwards.

And another Ex GB comes to WA in Peter and Norma Heydenreyk, there must be 8 of us here now, is that enough to form a quorum. Unfortunately we don't all live in Perth and it is a fair hike to try and get us all together. Cheers Tony and we are indeed fortunate to have your guiding hand at the helm, David Bell.

UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH - Ted Fisher

Social: This year we are again combining with The Conway Club's Solent Branch for a pre-Christmas Lunch. This is to be held on **Sunday 2 December 2007** venue being **The Crown Hotel High Street Lyndhurst Hants 1200 hrs for 1300** meet in the Bar – this year it will be as one Group! **Cost £20.00 per head.** For those who attended last year it was an excellent social occasion. I've e-mailed members in the vicinity, others who have distance to travel may contact me on receipt of the Newsletter tedfisher@aol.com **Tel 01903 744400 Mobile 07702 635017.** Deadline mid-November.

In September Ivan Bole's (51/52#1693) Company Arun/Rockall Sails exhibited at the Southampton Boat Show and were able to welcome Obies aboard their Stand. They will be at The London Boat Show in January at The Excel Centre, again all welcome!

GBOBA/Conway Club North West: Alan Bole (49/50#1588) and Keith Lindsay (60/61#2180) were invited to and attended The Old Conway Club's bi-monthly lunch on 19 September at the Liner Hotel (adjacent Liverpool's Lime Street Station). Alan suggests Obies in NW England might like to consider attending future meetings and to this end please contact Alan Bole through e-mail alandjune@talktalk.net or telephone 0151 6251335

Visit: I've returned from a thoroughly enjoyable trip to the Cape meeting with family in Port Elizabeth and East London. Naturally a highlight was my stay in Cape Town attending the lunches at the Royal Cape Yacht Club and Southern Lunch in the Seven Seas Club Simon's Town (greetings were conveyed from all UK members with thanks to our Chairman Tony Nicholas for all his hard work on behalf of our Association) I was delighted to again meet with ex-cadets whom Caroline and I have met on past visits especially Barry Cullen (53/54) to whom I was Batman when he was CCC. Others of my years Keith Croome, John Andrews, Brian Smith, Vic Holderness and Ian Manning – thanks to all for your courtesy and hospitality. Caroline sends greetings and hopes to be out next time round!

Autumn is now with us in England after a somewhat 'iffy' summer.

Perhaps new arrivals to the UK could make contact – it would be great to have an early Summer Social in 2008 with a few new faces. Best regards to all, Ted Fisher on behalf of the UK Branch.

Elevation of Old Boys Status in the Solent - Doug Wrathmall (56/57#2030)

Just a short note to wish you a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to you and all those around you, Old Boys and et al. I attended the monthly Luncheon at the Rising Sun at Warsash, with the Old Conway Old Boys, to which we as General Botha Obies are cordially welcomed. Because of work commitments and of course the Rugby World Cup 2007 I have been missing a few Luncheons but today I did attend in order to keep our flag flying. Pity these other local Obies can't find the time to attend. What's a pity! To my great surprise on joining the Conway Obies and their wives I was paid the greatest HONOUR, any ex - Bothie cadet could ever hope to be accorded. I was honoured by being presented with a special Jersey elevating me to an Honorary Member of the Conway Club, Solent Branch. Words cannot express my gratitude to the members of The Conway Club for this Honour which I accept on behalf of The General Botha Old Boys Association. All the best, Doug Wrathmall.

SOME RECOLLECTIONS - Denys Pitcher – 43/44 #1316

Age plays its fickle tricks on the elderly who are not possessed with a ready remedy. Inexplicably I missed the first reading, the references to HMS Kempfenfeldt in the November 2005 issues of the newsletter. However, when re-reading their pages recently the name stood out like a beacon and sparked memories of my brief association with this destroyer in 1945. I was a cadet on the Gerusalemme (His Majesty's Hospital Ship Gerusalemme to give it its full title). It had served as an Italian passenger ship which hastily left Durban only hours before Italy entered the war. Allied vessels then shadowed it as it steamed northwards off the Natal coast. To elude them it sneaked into the neutral port of Lourenco Marques (now Maputo). There it was trapped but some two years later it was claimed by the Allies, brought to Durban and converted to a hospital ship.

Following the capitulation of Japan in August 1945 the Gerusalemme was tasked with evacuating Australian prisoners-of-war from various Japanese camps. One of these was on the island of Hainan. The approaches to the anchorage were mined. On arrival off the island soon after sunrise the

Gerusalemme was met by HMS Kempenfeldt which led us through the swept channel to a safe anchorage. There, a fleet of Japanese landing-craft was waiting for us with its human cargo. The pitiful sight of the PoW's as they were brought aboard was heartrending. All were suffering from beri-beri and were in a very debilitated state. Many were stretcher cases. When the embarkation was complete in the late afternoon HMS Kempenfeldt stationed herself ahead of us and led us safely to the open sea for the voyage to Fremantle. Despite the medical care afforded them by the RN doctors and orderlies as well as the Queen Alexandra Nursing Sisters, a number of the PoW's did not survive the ten-day passage and had to be buried at sea. The Gerusalemme had a padre on board so committing the bodies to the deep was done with due reverence, dignity and respect.

Other OBies serving on the Gerusalemme at this time were Mark Crowder (1095) the Third Officer and Niel Mackay (1309) my fellow-cadet. All of us were Union Castle staff. Mark continued his allegiance to the company for 2 or 3 more years and then became a very successful farmer in the Natal midlands with farms at Mooi River (where he built an imposing double-storey house) and at Bulwer. He married Mary Phillips the daughter of a Newcastle farmer. The couple subsequently emigrated to New Zealand where continued his farming.

Niel Mackay's career also took a turn away from seafaring. For a short while he was an inspector for Bakers Ltd. In Durban and when this paled he joined the Durban Fire Brigade. Following his success with various fire-fighting qualifications he was appointed to a senior post in the Salisbury (now Harare) Fire Brigade. Later he joined the Pietermaritzburg Corporation as their Chief Fire officer where he remained until his retirement.

Mackay acquired an affinity for things French – in particular the language and the lasses. This had its beginnings in 1946 when the Gerusalemme made passage from Saigon to Toulon. On board were several hundred French nationals who had endured the hardships of the Japanese occupation of what was then French Indo-China and were returning to France to start a new life. The cadets found time to fraternize with the young members of this group (girls of course) and were able to learn some essential French phrases. Mackay built on this foundation and it provided him with an entrée to the French community in Durban where he found the girl he married. Failing health during 1994 prevented him from attending the anniversary marking 50 years since the 43-44 cadets left the General Botha. Regrettably Niel succumbed to the ravages of cancer the following year.

One other South African was serving on the Gerusalemme – George Thompson, the Fifth Engineer. When Mackay and I first saw him as he breakfasted at the engineer's table in the saloon we spontaneously remarked "that is Hoskins" because of the remarkable likeness to Michael Hoskins (1359) who was our junior on Red Hill. There was an occasion when we mentioned this to George Thompson but he brushed it aside without comment. However, some months later he admitted (provided we kept it confidential) that he was actually Brian Hosking the older brother of Michael and explained the reason for assuming another name.

During the war his occupation in Johannesburg designated him as a "key man" which prevented him from enlisting in the armed services. This frustrated Brian who was keen to join up. His chance came when he was able to acquire (he didn't tell us how) the seaman's discharge book and other relevant papers of one George Thompson who had been a ship's engineer. With these he hastened to Durban and joined the Gerusalemme. Since leaving Red Hill I didn't ever meet Michael Hosking again to tell him of this strange coincidence. Brian might have done this for me.

Early in 1947 the Gerusalemme was returned to its former owners, the Llyod Triestino Company of Trieste. By this time it had changed the distinctive markings of a hospital ship for the livery of a Union Castle vessel. I don't know what his future was but it never again resumed its popular passenger service between Trieste and Durban.

GRANGER BAY - By Ivor Little 1953/4

How is it that in all the tales and the whole saga of the "General Botha" one rarely reads anything about its final years at Granger Bay? Was it because, although it appeared healthy superficially, the "Botha" was already in decline and people now realise this? Is it because the one-year course does not engender the same feeling of nostalgia as the longer two-year course? Whatever the reason, there is a dearth of

reminiscences pertaining to this era and justice has not been done to that period of the “General Botha” history.

I was one of those privileged to be on the staff of the “Botha” over the period 1966 to 1970, a period which saw Captain Superintendent Phil Nankin welcome the first cadets to Granger Bay and the final passing out parade, before the introduction of the correspondence course/first year at sea phase. It seemed to be a golden period in the “Botha” history with beautiful new buildings, new floating craft and all the old traditions still being carried on. The ‘new’ “Botha” in its new site received a lot of publicity and the cadets participated in many fancy functions, including cinema previews; the start of round-the-world yacht races; entertaining visiting dignitaries and grand dances, but underneath it all they were still very much “Botha” boys.

The new SAMNA “General Botha” was sited where it was because it was open government ground, near the docks, which was previously occupied by the Cape Town Nautical Academy. It was, in retrospect, a sighting of which the average student can but dream – halfway between the Somerset Hospital Nurses’ Home and the Bay Beach Hotel. Bothie boys being what they always were, were not long in finding this out, giving us staff members disciplinary problems unknown to previous generations of staffers. Added to this was the fact that the lads were now post-matric, mostly in their late teens and some in their early twenties, to whom the old “Botha” punishments were no longer acceptable. The most one could normally invoke was an extra spell of Gangway Duty.

‘Going over the back wall’ became a fairly frequent occurrence that we on the staff attempted to combat by making the cadets so tired during the day that they, hopefully, would lose interest in nocturnal excursions. Some hope! Even PTI Smith on the prow couldn’t keep them in!

This combination of tiredness and debauchery sometimes had interesting results. On one occasion I was duty officer on a beautiful Cape Town summer morning, with not a breath of wind and the mountain etched against the sky like a cardboard cut-out. I decided to use a prescribed prayer for Morning Prayers which started with ‘They shall lift up their eyes unto the hills whence cometh their help’, which seemed particularly appropriate. All the necessary bugle calls and foot stamping being completed, I then commenced inspection, slowly becoming aware that all was not well in the ranks – something that one could not quite put a finger on.

Several times when I stopped I got the feeling that the Cadet Captain just behind me was not stopping quite as fast as I was and that the cadet being inspected was not always reacting as normal. Eventually we went off to prayers and off I launched, with Chief Cadet Captain Redding, a strapping lad who had already completed his National Service, swaying gently behind me. Unfortunately, after we had ‘lifted our eyes to the hills’ a phrase or two further on was ‘and they reel to and fro like drunken men in their distress’. In the words of a dirty little ditty, a titter then ran through the ranks, which, before we had got to ‘Amen’, had become a guffaw of laughter, resulting in a very sheepish duty officer giving a quick dismissal and beating a hasty retreat from the parade ground.

Those same young men could also be very studious and very good seamen. In the days before the NSRI the Academy at Granger Bay was ideally placed to become involved in rescue operations, invariably when Joe Almond was on duty. These included big ship strandings such as the ‘SA Seafarer’, ‘Sivella’ and ‘Kazima’, and also a host of smaller operations. The cry ‘Away emergency boat’s crew’ happened all too frequently and a lot of us spent a lot of time in the motor cutter, drenched, wet and cold plugging around Table Bay in bad weather looking for missing boaters or sailboarders.

There was, for instance, the time when Chief Cadet Captain Sean Day was sitting quietly studying in the radar room off the bridge when he saw a distress flare out at sea. He reported it to me and, although we didn’t see another one, he was adamant about what he had seen and where he had seen it.

Accordingly, we took the cutter and went and had look. Much to Day’s relief, we did in fact come upon a fishing boat, broken down off Green Point and whose flare he had seen. We took it in tow and, ignoring their request to be taken to the Alfred Basin, I towed them in to Granger Bay. The next morning the owner came to collect his boat and, after thanking us, enquired why I had not taken the boat to the Fish Dock, as requested.

Much to Phil Nankin’s surprise, for obviously he was also present, my reply was that I was ‘claiming salvage’, hence the nearest safe harbour! (Guess who was then lecturing to the Senior Students?) After

a bit of an argument, it was decided that we would settle for a donation towards a piano for the cadets and, full credit to that owner, we did in fact receive a second-hand piano for the cadets' mess deck. On another occasion we received a call out that two crayfish fishermen in an outboard motor dinghy were locked out of Melkbos by rising surf and couldn't land. The duty crew once again set out, this time in 'Elegance', under the command of Phil Nankin himself ('Elegance' was a large yacht on loan to the "Botha" while the Howard Davis was being built). It was a really dirty night but, aided by car headlights aimed out to sea from the shore, we found the dinghy with its two occupants. They were cold and terrified as we came alongside them and wasted so little time in scrambling aboard 'Elegance' that they neglected to make their boat fast. Seeing this, and being ever the unthinking idiot, I jumped into the boat with a line and, after having made it fast around a thwart, found that I had been swept astern of 'Elegance' but under her overhanging boom.

Instead of waiting to be hauled back alongside, I decided to jump for it and, as the dinghy went up and 'Elegance's' boom came down in the swell, I stood on a thwart and launched myself upward. As the dinghy fell away beneath me, I grasped the boom and was instantaneously shot upwards, losing my grip. At the same time, Cadet Errol Kadish, leaning far out along the boom, grabbed my belt as I shot up in front of him and, being a powerful lad, used the momentum to swing me aboard 'Elegance'. I think that if I had fallen back into the dinghy or, worse still, into that freezing wind-swept water without a life jacket, things could have been very nasty and I probably owe my life to Cadet Kadish. I wonder if he even remembers the incident?

'Elegance' gave way to the 'Howard Davis' and for her first cruise Phil took her to Saldanha Bay, with me as his Mate. We took part in the 'Harvest of the Sea' Festival, joining in the sail-past and shore festivities, before going across to Langebaan and up the Lagoon to Oosterwal, before returning to Cape Town.

For her second trip Denys Pitcher, Robin Gratjios and I took her to Hout Bay and back. It was blowing a hoolie and we three tanker-men decided "to hell with sail", we would motor. In the meantime, Phil Nankin drove along the Clifton Road to watch his pride and joy sail past and was most upset to see her under bare poles and power! This led to a shake-up on the 'sailing list' and Bobby Deacon became Phil's 'Sailing Master'. The 'Howard Davis' had her supporters but I was never one of them, preferring the twin-engined motor cruiser 'General Botha'. Phil acknowledged this and his wife, Eraine, did a lovely painting of the motor cruiser which they presented to me and which I still have hanging in my home.

Bobby Deacon was very much the rough-and-tough sailor man, compared to us other namby-pamby academics and was very popular with the cadets. He also deserves full credit for the part he played in founding the NSRI. When Reg Jackson got the Society of Master Mariners interested, they held the inaugural meeting of the NSRI in the Opt'Hof Hall at the "General Botha". By then the rest of us were pretty fed up with all the nocturnal jaunts around Table Bay, so Bobby and Colin Billson volunteered to represent the "General Botha" at the meeting and, as a result, they became founder members of its first station and first boat's crew.

It was Colin Billson who showed me how easily stories were started at the "Botha". While doing rounds one evening, Billson, Kenneth the watchman, the duty Cadet Captain and I came to a stop before the 'Davy McDonald' that was high and dry on the slipway. Colin Greenacre, the shipwright, had left her for'ard hatch open and propped up with a plank – obviously to let the inside of the launch dry. 'That's dangerous', remarked Billson, 'once before, some years back, it was left like that and the cadet on cleaning stations dislodged the plank and it fell on his head.' 'Oh', said I. 'Yes', said Billson, 'and what is more it killed him and the blighter is still haunting that darned boat!' 'Oh', said I, slightly bemused.

From that night onward, until the end of the year when all the cadets left and the chain was broken, the 'Davy Mac' was haunted! Kenneth refused to go near her after dark and the cadets themselves took a dim view of being alone on the boat after dark for cleaning stations.

In such a way were some of the stories born which in time, no doubt, became part of the Legend. This particular one did not survive because there was no one to pass it on to, but surely there must be other stories from the Granger Bay era that are waiting to be told from a cadet's point of view.

Maybe a combination of time and old men's nostalgia will one day bring them forward to add to the store of 'Old Salts' Tales'.

J.H. SHONE 1943/44

The following are extracts from the eulogy to John and Sheila Shone (died 29 Jan. 2007):

The last time I spoke to Dad (John Shone) I told him I'd seen my first comet – McNaught – which was crossing the southern skies for a few days in January. He told me how as a young man, on board a ship heading across the Great Australian Bight, he too had seen his first comet while on night watch, during which he taught himself about the stars to keep himself alert. He had told two of his superior officers but neither was very interested. When they docked in New Zealand, he read someone else had reported it and so he missed out on having it named the Shone comet. Tall tale or true? Sometimes you weren't quite sure where truth ended and embellishment began with Dad but he had a store of great tales to tell, which was as it should be for an old seafarer. Another salty story concerned an emergency visit to the dentist in port somewhere in the Orient, where a Russian dentist, operating the drill with a foot pump, slipped and went straight through his jaw up into his skull. Dad had to get back on board quick smart and for weeks the ship's medical officer had to plug the hole daily with a new wad of cotton wool soaked in oil of cloves.

My own first real memories of Dad came via his postcards, which used to drop through the letter box regularly, to each of us three (before no 4 arrived) children.

Dad joined the Merchant Navy because he wanted to be part of the war effort and it was the only service in South Africa that allowed 16-year-olds to sign up. He had to get his godfather to sign the papers as his own father was already away at war in North Africa. His mother only found out once the deed was done – he was always very strong willed! – and off he went on a supply ship to Burma, India and other parts of the battlefield in the East.

At war's end, he continued his studies for his master mariner's ticket, stopping for a few months in Warsash near Southampton, where he met Mum when both were asked to crew on a yacht heading across the Channel for a few days in Holland. Marriage and one baby boy (James) later, they set up home in South Africa, a first daughter (Judith) was born, then after two years headed back to England, and the arrival of another daughter (Caroline), and Dad continued commanding oil tankers for another five years before eventually becoming a landlubber and joining the UK Civil Service Marine Division, when daughter number three (Abigail) appeared.

Dad rose through the Civil Service to become Deputy Surveyor General and was Britain's representative at International Maritime Organisation meetings on safety at sea. Away from the field of work, he had a lifelong passion on another field - the rugby pitch. When he left the sea, he became a founding member of Tabard Rugby Club near our home in St Albans and, bar a three-year stint up on the Scottish borders where he found another club, played with one or other of the regular teams until the club subtly 'retired' him at the grand old age of 60 by throwing him a huge birthday party. So he switched to refereeing, which continued for another 15 or so years for senior and schoolboy teams in Sussex, near their home in retirement, and, true to form, the week before he and Mum left for South Africa, he was on the sidelines watching a local rugby match.

We had urged Mum and Dad to make one more trip to his homeland, to visit his sister Gay and other relatives. According to Gay, they were "as lively as spring chickens" on their first few days of the holiday, for which we are thankful. They set off to drive to Cape Town on 29 January to visit a cousin and to enjoy a get-together with old General Botha buddies – an extraordinary collection of men who had lived life to the full and all contributed a great deal in their chosen fields, according to cousin Heather. Sadly, they never arrived – their hire car crashed near the small town of Riviersonderend, and both Mum and Dad died that day. We brought them home to Sussex to be interred near their home of 20 years in Runcton, Mum's family home. Bon voyage, Mum and Dad, up with the comets, sailing through the universe. – *Written by Caroline Shone.*

"A cloudy day is no match for a sunny disposition." (anonymous)
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