

S.A.T.S.

**PO Box 22015,
Glenashley, 4022**

Chairman: Derek McManus
Tel. (H): +27 (0)31 7673719

Secretary: Howard Jackson-Moss
jacksonmoss@telkomsa.net
Cell: +27 (0)83 300 9891
Tel (O): +27 (0)31 572 3901



**PO BOX 4515
CAPE TOWN
8000**

Chairman: Tony Nicholas

cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za
Tel. (O): +27 (0)21 421 4144
Fax: +27 (0)86 233 6410
Cell: +27 (0)82 555 2877
Tel. (H): +27 (0)21 788 5957

GENERAL BOTHA OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

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

November 2014

JOINT NEWSLETTER

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

Do you have an interesting article for this newsletter? Please send your contributions to Dennis Henwood, dhenwood@iafrica.com Phone: +27 (0)21 6716373. Fax: +27 (0)86 6706710.

Can you read this Newsletter? If not please let us know. We can send you larger print if it is necessary.

FORTHCOMING DURBAN EVENT – YEAR END LUNCH

- Venue: Royal Natal Yacht Club.
- Date & time: Wednesday 26 November; 1200 for 1300
- RSVP: Howard Jackson-Moss; +27 (0)83 300 9891; O 031 572 3901
- or email jacksonmoss@telkomsa.net

FORTHCOMING CAPE TOWN EVENT – YEAR END LUNCH

- Venue: Royal Cape Yacht Club, Duncan Road, Table Bay Harbour.
- Date & time: Tuesday 9th December; 1230 for 1300
- Lunch cost: R175-00 p.p - Partners welcome
- RSVP: Kathy or Jacky – phone 021 788 5957
- or email cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za
- by Sunday 1700, 7th December.

We look forward to strong support.

FROM THE BRIDGE OF s.s. CAPE TOWN

At the time of writing yours truly has just returned from a three week trip to the Kruger National Park, Mozambique [albeit a brief visit there] and northern east coast of Kwa-Zulu Natal. As a result I can reliably report that the worst roads in Southern Africa are those of the Free State. Our vehicles took a pounding on their so-called tarred principal roads. This excluding Mozambique which was the exception. During my absence my local Western Province rugby team won the Currie Cup, our premier

domestic rugby competition. I am smug and Neil Brown can eat humble pie this year. Anyway, on to matters Bothie.

More reunions are in the offering and planning stages. At last count:

CLASS	CONTACT	EMAIL
1980	Charles Kingon	ckington@gmail.com
1975	Dave Teague	dteague@eps1.com.au
1976	Andy Fotheringham	ajfotheringham@bigpond.com
1986	Janice Doyle	janonobsession@gmail.com
1985	John Briant	balmoral64@gmail.com
1984	Gary Walsh	survey@garship.co.za
1956/57	Douglas Wrathmall	douglas.wrathmall@btinternet.com

Well done to you all and please keep me updated of any AWOL class mates you trace.

On the subject of reunions our Saldanha Bay contingency held their inaugural reunion function recently, Lance Tiedt [1987] writes: "Last night [19th June] the West Coast held a "Mariners Braai" at the Langebaan Yacht Club. This was attended by about 10 Master Mariners/ Bothie Old Boys and one or two others - eg' Quinten Brink the Harbour Master. There are about 4 -6 other Mariner types that were missing for various reasons. A good time was had by all and the sentiment was that this should be done again 3 or 4 times a year. This event would not have happened with out the support and encouragement of Kevin Moran [1973] - thanks mate." Keep the Legend alive up there.

Much has been reported of the class of 1971 40th anniversary held a few years ago. Following the event class mate Terry Purdon produced a video with accompanying music of the era consisting of photographs taken by class mates in 1971 and of the reunion in 2011. The video was released in 2011 to mark the 40th anniversary of the 1971 intake at Bothy. Copies of the DVD were given to each of the 1971 cadets, but unfortunately, due to financial constraints [sponsored by class mate Tony Nicholas]; we could not make the video available to a wider audience. However it is now available to all on our website on the below address. Turn up the volume and ENJOY!

[1971 Hit Video - S.A.T.S. General Botha Old Boys Association](#)

By all accounts a successful autumn UK function was held in September and as a result Ted Fisher reports for duty: "Guess that you Tony will be pleased I shall be continuing in the role of GBOBA-UK Hon Sec for the foreseeable future!!! Bothy Boys do not give up!!" Indeed Ted, I believe the UK membership is very pleased. Bravo Zulu.

Another South African first, Stuart McAllister writes: "As I sit here in Copenhagen on a somewhat dull and dreary morning, about to embark on the last phase of my "conversion" to a Danish qualification as Master, I thought it might be appropriate to share with you the fact that I am appointed as one of the (presently) fairly 'elite' group of seafarers to be in command of a "Triple E" Class of vessel, the world's largest container ships (for the moment at least!!). There are about 20 of us on the planet; eventually there will be 40 Masters on these, that's it.

To have reached this milestone at the end of a very interesting and challenging career is due, in no small measure, to the background, development, and knowledge and World Class experience of my "Safmarine Years". As far as I know, having seen the list for all 20 Triple EEE's all but completed, I will almost certainly be the only South African passport holder and indeed SA qualified Master on these mighty ships. What a journey it has been." Bravo Zulu Stuart.

Members shall recall that an intrepid group of deep-sea divers placed a memorial plaque on the original Bothie on her 60th anniversary of her being sunk by gunfire; she became a "protected wreck" then. These dives continue and the plaque is cleaned on every dive for which we are thankful. Dive Master Alastair Downing reports of their recent dive: "She is in very much the same condition as in the past years, except that her wheelhouse/bridge has now collapsed and fallen to port. Otherwise she sits almost perfectly upright, but with a slight list to port. Her massive ram bow is still the most impressive part of the wreck and with her short bow mast also being in place, we decided to place the plaque on this mast." There is a link from our GBOBA website to theirs, Underwater Explorers CC, which is an interesting visit. Alastair intends to compile a video of the various dives for our viewing. This should be interesting.

Last year we circulated detail of the ship society's calendar which generated much interest among members. Their 2015, A2 size, calendar is available which features the RMS Lusitania. Those interested should contact Pauline of the Ship Society email brupa@telkomsa.net

SCRANBAG

M.A. LUNDY 1957/58 #2061. An interesting and amusing update from Mike. "It seems like decades since I sent you a CV for the Scranbag. It seems I'm seeing more of my shipmates under Anchors Aweigh, than where I'd like to see them. So before it's too late here's the latest!

Left Bothie (57/58) Cadet 2061 and joined Ellerman & Hall Lines for 2 and a half years until meeting a charming American chick, who apparently fell in love with the way I was able to eat peas off the back of my fork (It's the way I was brought up!) She was 10 years my senior, so has probably croaked by now. I gave up a sea career for her, but the infatuation lasted only a few months (as shipboard romances usually do).

Then I went to the University of Cape Town and finally graduated with a B.Sc. degree in Zoology with Botany and Chemistry as sub majors. I then worked for the Oceanography Dept. as a research technician, until discovering old school mates were earning twice my salary selling Arwa Stockings with a Std. 9!

So sales it had to be. Chemicals was the obvious choice and I was in the industry for 11 years, before deciding to branch out on my own as an Insurance Salvage Trader for the next 34 years (1980 until April this year when I UNSuccessfully tried to retire). Okay, so I'm SEMI retired. Can't they leave me in peace?! (The occupation involves buying insurance claims from insurers...marine & non marine... and selling on at 50-60% of cost/insured value. A fascinating 34 years and seemingly ongoing.

On the social side I joined Round Table and finished up as W.P. Area Chairman and on National Executive, before getting kicked out at the obligatory age of 40. As I'd been involved nationally and internationally for a fun filled 11 years, it was 'What the hell to do now?'

I started writing a "Gossip" column for the local newspaper (Sentinel News) and included a description of a hike in the Hout Bay area. Before long I found people tramping across the local mountains with my walk descriptions cut out and pasted into an exercise book! Then followed "Mike Lundy's Best Walks in the Cape Peninsula" published by Random Struik in 1991. It's still selling well after 23 years in its 8th edition.

Following that was "Weekend Trails in the W. Cape" (1992) and "Easy Walks in the Cape Peninsula" (1997), both now in their 7th editions. My latest title (2010) gives away my encroaching age,----- "Scenic Day Drives from Cape Town" Ex Bothie boy and mate Brian Georgeson (57-58) helps considerably in updating "Best Walks".

All this led to numerous other books (now out of print) plus over 200 newspaper columns in the Cape Times & Sunday Times and 5 years of doing the weekly hiking report with drop-dead-gorgeous Charmaine Noy on Cape Talk 567.

More recently (2005) I was invited to be a member of The Owl Club. (Nothing to do with birds!) I couldn't understand why my minutes were always addressed to M.A. Lundy Esq. Until I discovered the membership of 235 was composed of 8% retired and active judges (incl. Ian Farlam of the Marikana Farlam Commission), 25% doctors (in all fields) and 20% Professors. So us 'Misters' had to be given a more Victorian title considering the club was established in 1894.

We meet once a month at Kelvin Grove in dinner suits and rather haughtily describe ourselves as a "Gentleman's Dining Club". It has in its ranks some absolutely fascinating people. I'm damned if I know how it happened, but I was elected President in 2012. Whilst President I had the honour of inducting as a new member His Grace Thabo Mkoba, the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town. I thought it appropriate to ask him to say grace, and at the appropriate time I asked all to be up-standing, and the head of the Anglican Church for the whole of Southern Africa said "Rub a Dub Dub, thanks for the Grub. Amen." First time I've seen people doubled up with laughter after a Grace!! He's clearly following in Tutu' footsteps!

As many of our old shipmates from my vintage have gone over the side, my one wish is to keep enjoying life to the fullest for as long as possible. (With implanted defibrillator and pacemaker!)” Kathy and I have enjoyed many walks and hikes with the guidance of Mike’s books. Thanks mate.

P.A. POTGIETER 1973 #2452. Peter reports that he is back in Equatorial Guinea. Hopefully one day soon he shall let us know what is exciting up there.

K.M. WILSON 1974 #2492. Kevin recently relocated to USA where he has settled at the Retreat Golf Estate, Corona, L.A. Previously at sea with Safmarine and Unicorn. Left ocean going 1984 and spent six month sabbatical in New Zealand. Joined the then S.A.R.&H. Served on dredgers and twin screw, Voith and Schottel craft. 2012 senior tug master in Durban. June 2014 retired.

M.G. GREENEN 1963 #2224. Nic Sloane to the rescue, Gerry writes. “I really enjoy receiving the Bothie Newsletter, it cheers me up to see that some of my former shipmate are still in circulation!!

It was so good to hear the news about Nick Sloane - *Err en Plig* to the extreme.

A wee update from me:

On 15th August, I retired from my position as Senior Lecturer at Banff & Buchan College after 21 years' service. So now I really am my own boss as my darling wife of 43 years, Iris, passed away on 15th June last year. My proficiency in cooking and general housework has soared to great heights, I can assure you.

My SOS call is as follows:

Could you please contact Nic Sloane and ask him to apply for the posting as First Minister of Scotland. The reason for this is the forthcoming [now past and Scotland remains part of the U.K.] referendum to decide on Scotland becoming independent from UK. Considering Nic's record with "Costa Concordia", he would surely be fully competent at preventing the inevitable loss of "SS Scotland"

(SS = Salmond's *Sinking*) - Dankie Meneer, Totsiens

P.J. HAWKINS 1982 #2780. Philip reported in August that he shall be moving to Grahamstown “soon” and enquired whether Old Boys have meetings in the area or Port Alfred. Any volunteers? Philip, I still have your details in Harrismith, would appreciate your updated contacts.

R.J. BOUWER 1968 #2328. Recently press-ganged from our AWOL list, Reon joined Ellerman & Bucknall until enrolling at the University of Port Elizabeth. Thereafter, 1972 to 1991, held various positions in JHB, Durban and Cape Town. Then 1992 ran educational and adventure camps in Villiersdorp until retirement in 2007.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

D.A. RENNIE 1979. Another of our legends passed away, unexpectedly to most of us, 12th September 2014. This tribute published by nautical journalist Terry Hutson. “The death occurred in Durban of Captain Dave Rennie, Master Mariner, Director of Grindrod Limited, and Chief Executive Officer of Grindrod Freight Services.

Captain Rennie had been in ill health for a short while when he suddenly died, and his passing has come a shock to the Durban and South African maritime industry where he was well- known and highly respected. He was a Grindrod man throughout his career and is one of only two people to have moved through the ranks in the company from cadet at sea to director of the company.

He spent time at sea as a cadet before studying at the South African Nautical College known as General Botha. Within 11 years he had risen to ships master when he was given his first ship, the Durban-built container vessel Berg.

He was seconded to the South African Navy for a special task, that of going to Galveston, Texas to bring back the Ukrainian ice-strengthened ship Juvent, which was to become SAS Outeniqua on delivery in Simon’s Town. He remained attached to the navy for six months while training navy personnel in the intricacies of operating a ro-ro type vessel.



In 1993 he transferred to Durban to be in charge of Unicorn's crewing department and later as operations manager of the coastal trade, from where he stepped up to be in charge of Grindrod's container shipping division, Ocean Africa Container Lines. By this time he had become a director of the company. In more recent years he has been chief executive of Grindrod Freight Services and has played a pivotal role in leading the Maputo port back to becoming an important and successful gateway for southern African trade.

He was also the man running the emergence of Grindrod as an important participant in the operating of railways on the sub-continent.

In addition to these duties, Captain Rennie was a Member of the Chartered Institute of Shipbrokers, and played a significant role in the formation of the South African Association of Ship Operators and Agents (SAASOA). He acted as Chairman of the Container Liners Operators Forum, was an advisor to the Minister of Transport and a director of the TT Club in London, an international transport and logistics insurance management service.

Captain Dave Rennie leaves his wife Jane, a son Lloyd and daughter Amy."

S.A. BLOOMFIELD 1954/55. Stewart passed away peacefully on Sunday 24th August in hospital, with his family by his bedside. Stewart always spoke warmly of the General Botha and his years as a cadet were very happy ones. He was Senior Cadet Captain in '55 and attained third in the Queen's Gold Medal Competition; Special Merit Cadet Captain for which he was awarded a pair of brass binoculars from Shell Tankers Ltd.; Silver Bugle; C. in C.s Prize (sic); Practical Seaman's Prize and was described as 'Cheerful, Steady and Reliable' on passing out. Stewart served 4 years with Ellerman & Bucknall before coming ashore to Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). His company indenture describes him as follows: 'completed the full term of his indenture to our satisfaction. He was favourably reported on by the various masters under whom he served, being at all times sober and trustworthy,' He became a Trainee Estates 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. 2010 relocated to Cambridgeshire, England.

J. BURT 1941/42. John passed away 30th August this year. After British war service, Second Mates Certificate, service as Third Mate and sunk in the Black Sea, entered the commercial field of business in South Africa.

Qualified B.Com, FCMA, FCIS and returned to England as a Management Consultant. Returned to S.A. in 1963 and ended his career as director of companies. Four children, (youngest son in REECE Commando's awarded Honoris Crux in the "Crocodile Incident"). Proud moment: rowed in number one cutter crew against the Royal Navy whilst still a chum.

L.W. ATTWELL 1956/57. Lionel was previously a newspaper man before joining the church. 2005 was a Messianic Jewish preacher. Sadly passed away 2nd September 2014.

J.B. MARRISON 1950/51. We reported John's sad passing in our August edition, here more detail of his interesting career from John's family. "Sailed with Union Castle in the 1950's. After leaving General Botha John held varied positions, mainly in the selling and promotions field. Very successful in his profession and he always rose to the top of whatever he was involved in. John became a sought after promotional speaker both in the public sector and the University of Stellenbosch. He was also involved with the beginning of the supermarket concept, and Raymond Ackerman of Pick 'n Pay was one of his fellow visionaries. He owned the first supermarket in Sea Point, Health Food Store.

John then took up a new challenge - ballroom dancing - and under the instruction of Bill and Bobby Irwin, renowned world champions, John and partner, Tiny Langeveld, became SA Ballroom Champions.

The next challenge to take his fancy was learning to fly an aircraft, so he moved up to the Transvaal, and at Johannesburg Light Plane Club got his licence, and it was there in 1963 John met Sylvery Dawn. They were married in 1964, and raised four children, Gary, Kim, Shaun and Hayley. They are blessed with seven grandchildren. A very devoted family man who was delighted to celebrate his Golden Wedding Anniversary in February this year.

Back in 1982/3 taking a break from running his own businesses, John accepted a position with the consortium of companies, both local and overseas, building the Koeberg Nuclear Power Station, his responsibility being the drawing up of the many and varied contracts and controlling all financial aspects.

On the completion of Koeberg, John devoted his time to his own business - Puppy Love Clothing manufacturing dogs' wear and later corporate sportswear run by his wife and two daughters in their home town of Stellenbosch. During this time, together with his two sons they developed the only manufacturing plant of screen printing inks in Africa.

John's passion was spreading the 'good news' of the gospel of Jesus Christ, who became his Saviour in 1973, the centre of his existence and interest. Worked in the mission field for many years and so became well known and beloved in Stellenbosch and surrounds, leading countless people to know and accept salvation.

His health began failing with the onset of diabetes years ago and after a severe stroke in the beginning of April, this year, he was in and out of hospital until he passed away peacefully in his sleep on the 10th of June 2014."

Our sincere condolences to family and shipmates.

SOS

Bert Costick

An enquiry from Ian Manning. "Do you have a record of the date of death of former SATS and SANC *General Botha* instructor, Bert Costick? He was buried at sea on the SATS *General Botha* "wreck". The funeral was originally reported in the *Fish Hoek Echo* and in a book called *Echoes of Yesterday*. I do not have the original report and I think they got the year wrong in the book."

The last British Apprentice

An appeal for assistance from Captain C.B.Thompson, RD FNI Hon.FIIMS

6/1 Longford Park Drive, Takalani, Auckland, 2112, New Zealand.

Email: shipmaster@ihug.co.nz

Most readers are seafarers or were at sea for a time. I should be grateful for their help in finding the last British apprentice who, I believe, may have signed indentures some time after about 1970. To assist my research I have made enquiries at The National Archives, at Greenwich Maritime Museum and with The Registrar of Shipping and Seamen, but so far without success. I would welcome an email from anyone who can throw some light on the subject and especially from those who signed indentures in the 1970s or who can put me in touch with anyone who did. While I may not be able to find the 'last' British apprentice I hope to learn of those whose apprenticeship commenced in that final era.

GAUTENG BRANCH

The remaining winter months were again without significant record. Instead of referring to our membership in such glowing nautical terms as resting quietly at anchor, it has more become a case of us being a bunch of dry old hulks amongst the sand dunes if our weather has been anything to go by.

I have indented head office in Cape Town for some of their surplus rain but naught has come of it. There must be some tankermen down their who could assist their inland shipmates who are all beginning to look like a bunch of shuffling bokkoms.

I have over the last weeks been going through some family history papers and have finally got down to reading through a pile of 1939 correspondence between my father, cadet 927 '37 / '38, and the then Board of Control Secretary, B P Davies. Getting a cadet berth on a ship appears not to have been easy in those days due to the ever-increasing secrecy regarding shipping movements on the South African coast. Eventually after waiting many months for news of the Government steamer Erica's return to our shores, he joined the SAAF and eventually ended the war flying Consolidated Liberators in 31 Squadron.

You may remember my previous newsletter thoughts on quo vadis GBOBA, and the general response I received in that matter. I have now accepted that the numbers will not be replenished in any way, but in lieu of that, I'm now appealing to the membership to go through their own papers relevant to their time

on or at the various General Botha establishments and in some way contribute as much as possible to Ian Manning in Cape Town (Ian I hope you don't mind!!!). I would hope that he could archive it somewhere for possible future research purposes. What may seem insignificant to us now may be hugely important to some one else at a much later stage.

In this way we can enrich the Bothie heritage for future generations. The problem which one may encounter, and which I certainly have in this endeavour, is scanning Folio sized documents in PDF format. A4 scans cut off the bottom of the document, and A3 scans incorporate too much white space on the side of the document. I have had to teach my local PostNet lady to set up the normal A3 sized machine to scan Folio sized documents. The document is saved sideways but can easily be rotated to read. The other problem is the ridiculous costs per page they want just to scan and email the documents.... no printing involved!

I will gladly accept this cost as an excuse for not saving your pennies for next years Commissioning Day luncheon in March on presentation of proof of payment when I start heckling again in January.

By the way please start saving for next years function!... no excuses!

Lastly on this topic of recording our history in general, there is a great possibility that in this modern day and age of email and Skype that we stand to loose more than we retain.

This was brought home to me recently while having some 1960's vintage 8mm reel tapes of my wife's grandfather transposed onto CD format. Finding someone who still has the equipment able to do that was a mission in itself. These tapes had been posted backwards and forwards between South Africa and UK and have lain dormant in a cupboard for fifty years. But at least we have a medium on which these voices from the past can be stored. The question is will our descendant's be able to recover at least some the copious amount of emails and pictures we are amassing on our computers at a phenomenal rate compared to yesteryear? I think not unless due care is practised to archive some of it in some sort of enduring electronic or physical medium.

This point was further driven home for me this morning when I went to a computer repair shop to discuss recovery of data off of an old machine that finally collapsed a few weeks ago. The young lad there told me that the average lifespan of a disk drive is 1000 work days, and that replacement drives of the type I have, and which I suspect very many of us have in our older machines, are no longer available for replacement.

In fifty years time our descendants are going to be confronted with the same problem of recovering information from long forgotten technologies.

Long live printed photographs and hand written letters! They may fade but can still be read and appreciated. Please don't discard them or leave your surviving family to possibly make a decision to chuck them in the bin.

So lets make it all historian Ian's problem and swamp him, he can climb into me with a belaying pin if he can catch me.

Keep steering between the anchors until next time. Alan

AUSTRALIA BRANCH NEWS

The Queensland Group will be having a Lunch on Sunday 16th November at the Samford Valley Hotel in Brisbane.

Our next Sydney meeting will be a pre **Christmas Lunch on Saturday 22nd November. At The Great Northern Hotel in Chatswood.**

We expect Peter Kroon who is visiting from East London as well as Michael Pomfret from Noosa to attend in Sydney.

We have set the date for the **AGM and Commissioning Day Lunch for Saturday 7th March 2015 in Sydney** were we have a Scottish retired Master from Mearsk as a guest speaker. He lives in Spain and is involved with the World Ship Society. We will notify you of the venue later.

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

Grenville Stevens (2189 60/61) Chairman

Andy Fotheringham (2525 '76) Vice Chairman

Peter O'Hare (2247 '64) Hon Secretary, peteroh@bigpond.com Tel 0417 028809

UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH NEWS

Social: The September Lunch held at the Gatwick Airport Sofitel Hotel had a mediocre attendance: Harold Lincoln 59/60 & Lorraine (over on a regular visit from the USA), Chris Nash 61/62 & Ann, Ted



Fisher 54/55 & Barbara, Keith Collins 57/58 & Liz, Adair Butchins 50/51 & Janet, Don Neaves 71 & Kathleen, Cerwyn Phillips 78 & Carole, Stuart Hay 76 & Yolande, Alan & Maureen Garton our regular guests and long term friends of Don & Kathleen, Doud Wrathmall 56/57, Alastair Struthers 60/61.

Feedback on and from the day indicates the Sofitel Hotel is an ideal venue where we are well looked after and no charge made for room hire. Convenient for travel by air, rail or car and simple parking.

A suggestion has been made we attempt a lunch in March to coincide with the AGM thus next March it will be on **Saturday 14 March 2015**

placing us in line with our other Association Branches. This date will in no way place at risk the September Lunch of **Sunday 13 September 2015** If it is to be March, perhaps we can identify a further 'purpose' such as a speaker from within our group (anecdotes) a DVD, however, please let me know over the next couple of months failing which our only gathering will be in September.

A member did suggest meeting in a pub somewhere, this I might add fell on 'stony ground' but, if said member wishes to pursue, perhaps he could consider the arrangements accordingly!

Statistics: Email Invitations out in July gave a 38 per cent reply from GBOBA-UK members.

Attendance at the Lunch 12.8 per cent of our UK Members on email!

I did expect members who do not have email to have replied, having seen the Invitation details in previous Newsletters.

Contact: A surprise email and telephone call found Mike Harvey and his delightful wife Valerie on our doorstep in September. Mike was with me 54/55 and indeed a SCC in his second year and of course he continued for a third year 1956. It was but for an hour, not long to catch up on 59 years, however, we are grateful for Val's advice on the care of Orchid's!!

Saddened to learn it was **Anchor's Aweigh** for Stewart Bloomfield, my term of 54/55. Also an SCC. If my memory serves me correct Stewart was in line for the Queen's Gold Medal plus being the recipient of scholastic and seamanship prizes. A number of years ago, when on a visit to the UK, Stewart and his wife Jill joined us for a day out in and around Brighton. A great day it was and even though sadly, Stewart was suffering ill health at that time. Always remember him as a kind and friendly person.

Members will gather I shall continue as UK Hon.Sec.

On this very rough autumn day I wish all a Very Happy Festive season and New Year.

Ted Fisher Hon Sec UK Tel +44 (0) 1903 744400 Mob +44(0)7702 635017 Email: tedfisher@aol.com

GBOBA BURSARY FUND, OCTOBER 2014.

The third quarter of this year has been an active one for the Fund. Our six bursars were interviewed individually at the start of the third term to review their progress and to provide support where necessary. All have progressed well to date and are fully settled into their programmes for the year, but several of them are experiencing some difficulties with the mathematics and science subjects in their curriculum. We were fortunate to have the enthusiastic support of Charles Reid, a very experienced educator, to fully assess the specific needs of each student and to propose suitable additional tutoring. We were then able to arrange for Hugh James to provide individual coaching for our bursars in addition to his general science teaching at Lawhill. Each bursar has also been provided with supplementary study material and workbooks. All are now working hard with great enthusiasm in preparation for the year end exams.

Extra-mural activities have not been neglected either. Ian and Margie Fishley led our bursars on a fascinating visit to the SA Navy's submarine museum, SAS Assegai, in August, and, in October, Peter Coetzee accompanied them on visits for a tutorial on aspects of maritime law with Shepstone and Wylie, and a briefing on tertiary education in maritime studies at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

While not directly related to the Bursary Fund, we were supportive of a splendid initiative by Phil Wade which resulted in two Lawhill students participating in an ocean sailing regatta in Palma, Spain – a truly life-changing motivational experience for them. Phil together with Anthony Just both experienced super yacht masters, have established an organisation called Marine Inspirations (www.marineinspirations.org), using ocean sailing to provide developmental experiences for young people and nurturing a passion for seafaring - activities perfectly complementary to the objectives of the Fund. Not only is Phil an inspirational role-model for young aspirant mariners, he is a great international ambassador for the OBA and the Bursary Fund, constantly promoting our objectives and activities.

Our two ex-Bursars achieved excellent results in the S1 diploma exams at CPUT with Tsoso Hanong gaining distinctions in all subjects (Best Student) and Zusiphe Mzotho 5 Distinctions. Shows what mentoring and support can do!!!. They are presently busy with S2.

Funding is never neglected of course. The great golf day on the 20th November will soon be upon us. There are still some sponsorships being sought, but all looks set for another grand event. In addition to the golf day, it is hoped that the extensive promotion of the presentation on ocean sailing by Rick Tomlinson at the Royal Cape Yacht Club, November 10th, and the excitement around the Volvo fleet, will ensure that his storytelling is well attended.

A large number of GB Old Boys attended the "Lawhill" awards ceremony which was again a very moving and well organised and attended event. Our Bursary Fund matriculant Nicky Mkhulisi the son of the Slangkop Light keeper was awarded a certificate for his performance in Nautical Science and Marine Economics.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, the activity-planning and related budget development cycle for the next financial year has been initiated to ensure that next year is as productive as this one has certainly been.

CADET #698 JOHN LOURENS 1933/34

John was also known as Jack within his family and he was one of the unfortunates whose name appears on our cenotaph in Cape Town. Roy Lourens, a nephew of John Lourens, who lives in Australia, has sent us some very interesting research of John's life and activities in WWII service. He writes: -

It's remarkable the number of General Botha boys who went on to impressive achievements in WWII. John was one of the few who had a navy, army and air force career in his short life. He spelt his surname Lourens at General Botha and the Grenadier Guards, and Laurens when in the RAF. I think the family was uncertain of the correct spelling of that old South African name at that time. In fact most of those surname variations and others like Louwrens and Lauwrentz come from the same South African ancestor of 1679.

I noticed that he and crew setting off to bomb Berlin were (anonymously) featured in *The Guardian Newspaper* last year (2012) in remembrance of the huge aircrew losses in WWII (see <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jun/22/raf-bomber-command-remembered-with-honesty>).

His DFM citation read:

"657916 Flight Sergeant John Laurens, Royal Air Force, No 101 Squadron.

Flight Sergeant John Laurens, has participated in numerous sorties, 7 of which have been against Berlin. One night in December 1943, when detailed to attack targets in this city, Flight Sergeant Laurens displayed great skill and determination to complete his mission successfully, in the face of difficulties. Some nights previously he attacked targets in the same area. During the Bombing run his aircraft was hit by aircraft fire and was thrown out of control. Flight Sergeant Laurens skilfully regained control, however, and executed a determined attack. This airman has invariably displayed skill, courage and determination."

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Appointed to Commission as Pilot Officer: 4 February 1944 657916 John Laurens 171908 6 February 1944."

The recommendation was:

LAURENS, JOHN. 657916 Flight Sergeant, No. 101 Sqn. (Immediate)

London Gazette 25 Jan 1944. Sorties 11, flying hours 78.45. Pilot. Air2/9216

Flight Sergeant Laurens is a South African who has shown conspicuous courage and determination on all the operational sorties he has carried out. On the night of 29th December, 1943, in spite of the complete failure of all his navigational aids very early on the way to Berlin, he continued with the sortie and successfully attacked the target. This was the second occasion on which this N.C.O. has carried on when some of his equipment has been unserviceable. On the night of 2nd December, 1943, also when attacking Berlin, he was coned by searchlights and very severely damaged by flak, when on the run-up to bomb. His aircraft was thrown out of control but with magnificent skill, he remained on an even keel and with splendid determination went on and released his bombs in the target area. Flight Sergeant Laurens has completed 11 sorties, 7 of which have been against the German capital. He is completely fearless, while his captaincy and leadership are of a very high order which inspires his crew with confidence and sets a fine example to the squadron. It is recommended that this N.C.O.'s courage, determination and magnificent devotion to duty be recognised by an immediate award of the D.F.M. 6th January 1944

Remarks by Station Commander:

This N.C.O. has displayed outstanding determination to reach his target at all costs regardless of difficulties or dangers. His exceptional qualities and coolness set a fine example to his crew and his skilful handling of his aircraft inspired them with the utmost confidence. I recommend that his fine achievements be rewarded by the immediate award of the Distinguished Flying Medal.

His surviving crew all said that it was due to his cool courage in remaining at the controls to the last so as to allow them time to parachute to safety, which saved their lives. He was shot down on his 20th mission, well over the odds at that time.

John was the son of Afrikaans speaking Jan and Maria Lourens, whose family had been in South Africa before 1700. He was the younger brother of my late father, Martin Lourens of Cape Town. The family often spoke of John, or Jack as they called him. I decided to do a bit of research on him, and after many years eventually managed to reconstruct quite a lot of his story. And since then, some of his crew who survived have spoken or written about his courage in saving their lives. His crew was known as the *League of Nations Crew*, as they were drawn from so many countries. Jack was described by his colleagues as *a curious mixture of the practical joker and the serious minded...* He was an accomplished accordion player in his younger days, no doubt used while at the General Botha.

To cut a very long story short, I think it's probably enough to know that he did his duty and did it very well. Here is what one of his crew said:

One of Jack's surviving crew James Arthur Davies from Wales, who was the Special Duty Operator, operating the secret equipment used to confuse German fighter plan controllers, later went on to complete his Doctoral Degree and became a distinguished academic in North Wales. He wrote a book about his wartime experiences, including the last moments of Lancaster Bomber K for King: *A Leap in the Dark*, first published in 1994 by Pen and Sword Books, London. He reports that Jack's last words were to ensure that his crew got out safely while he struggled to keep some control over the Netherlands in his damaged and furiously burning Lancaster plane, ending with his calm order in the final earthward plunge, *Abandon Aircraft, Abandon Aircraft, Abandon Aircraft*, and then no more...

You might enjoy this contemporary personal 1940 letter (below) from John (Jack) Lourens when he was in the Grenadier Guards. It briefly tells what happened at Dunkirk, where they fought in a desperate rearguard action. I don't think it has seen the light of day up to now. I have removed a few personal asides about the family, but otherwise it's as sent.

No 2 Company, 1st Bn Grenadier Guards, c/o Army Post Office, England. 1940 Thanks ever so much for your very welcome letter which I have safely received. I am keeping fine and I'm very pleased to hear the same from you all. I'ts getting very monotonous though. All the lads are longing to get back into action again, or else away on leave. Any one of the two, but the latter preferred!

You asked me the full facts of the action, just before, and at, Dunkirk. Well, that lot has already passed into history and we're ready for the next act which they reckon will be the worst - the final one! But I'll tell you about it as best I can remember.

Our last stand before reaching Dunkirk was at Furnes, on a canal bank and all the time we were there, old Jerry was sending over high explosive and shrapnel shells from his mortars and heavy artillery. There was certain type of shell, used to come over with a shriek and a whoo-oosh! We called it "Whistling Winnie". They do say that it was one of them that killed the Dead Sea! They may be right. Jerry was sending them over as fast as he could load his guns, and there we were bobbing up and down in the trenches like so many "Jacks-in-their-boxes". We had to laugh (even though there were many who had their last laugh), when one of the lads said "I reckon, from Jerries view, it looks like a "Hit-him-on-the-nose-and-win-a-box-of-chocolates" sideshow.

There were between twenty to thirty Huns having some grub alongside a barn about 800 yards across the river, so our machine gunners ripped four belts of ammunition, from two guns, into them. And when they'd done, one of the gunners remarked "They don't learn about good manners in Germany, do they? There's a whole platoon of Huns, gone to visit St Peter with their mouths full of spuds!"

At about 11 o'clock at night on May 31st they told us to watch our rear as well, as 50 German motorcyclists, with mounted machine guns had broken through, but it wasn't long before they ceased to have any more "earthly worries". At one o'clock the next morning (June 1st) we were told to get ready to "get out fast" and leave our trenches at 2.20 am. Jerry must have had an idea of what was happening, because he absolutely plastered the place with shells. They were shelling us so heavily that we expected them to launch an attack and to rush us before it reached 2.20, so we had to keep a constant lookout, over the top. We had to tear the sleeves off our greatcoat to muffle our boots. I didn't have any need to do that, as I had a hurt heel, and was wearing canvas slippers. Then as it reached 2 o'clock the navy started shelling them from the coast, but their first few rounds fell a bit short. They hit a gasometer about 200 yards in front of us. The flash and blast smashed us straight down to the bottom of the trench. And try as we could, we weren't able to stand up. It knocked every bit of breath, and strength, out of us, and we were absolutely helpless for about 10 to 15 minutes. But no matter, how bad the situation, there was always some clown amongst us. This time it was a very shaky voice, from the bottom of the trench, who "wasn't going to play any more, because the navy wasn't playing white on us"

Then at 2.20 am sharp the first lad went over the parapet and I can tell you this, that we felt a lot happier in the trench than we did out of it. I fished out my photograph of Margaret and "The Admiral" and had a long look at it, by what moonlight there was, before it was my turn to go. It was a nightmare, leaving that trench, and making our way into the town, where the Companies were collecting, and then setting out for the coast.

It was, run a few paces, and then down! and shove your nose in the dirt, until "Winnie" had had his say, then carry on again. It was like that all the time, half way through the town. Then we came across some army trucks. We piled on, and set off hell-bent for evacuation on the five miles to the beach, at La-Panne. How the lad who was driving managed it, I can't say because the roads were littered with wreckage. The Jerry planes were flying over us and marking the route with parachute flares for their artillery to range on. When at La-Panne crossroads they shelled an ammunition truck loaded with shells, and blocked the road, so we had to jump off and scramble through that lot, which I'll never forget. All around the place was lying dead and wounded. Some of them were calling to their comrades, to shoot them to put them out of their agony and, not to have done so, would have been a crime, for letting them suffer, for most of them it was only a matter of time.

Then on the beach we were standing knee-deep in the water while Jerry got his long-rangers cracking. We could see where the destroyers were lying out at sea by the flash of their guns. Then dawn broke, and it became a bit lighter, and with the light came the planes, bombing and machine gunning. It was a slaughter, because we had no cover, just a great open beach. That's where we lost most of the lads. When the RAF arrived to take a hand in the scrap the boys cheered themselves hoarse. Lots of them swam out to the destroyers. Some reached them, but many didn't. Others, myself amongst them, walked the distance to Dunkirk harbour and got on board Channel boats which were waiting there. Three

hours after we were in England. 6.30 pm June 1st. No guns, no shells, no bombs or machine guns, not even a rifle shot. Absolute Peace. We couldn't, somehow, believe it. But we just had to look around us, and see our torn remains of uniforms and our beards, and the wounded being carried ashore and we knew it was true. We were home again! Then our next thoughts turned to our families, who were still waiting for news, and our stomachs - waiting for food. Yet now, that we've got over it, we'll be glad to have another smack at them. One Britisher equals 10 Huns, and sometimes more.

Well Joe, that's the excitement over, so I'll close now with best love and wishes to you all, Cheerio... All the best.

From your everloving brother, Jack

P.S. I wanna come 'ome!

According to Jack, only one third of his battalion got back from Dunkirk. Pre-war, Jack had been planning to return to South Africa for a 2 month visit at the conclusion of his first contract with the Guards, but the war intervened. He said he would have to travel in uniform in order to qualify for the concessional shipping fare, but he was not looking forward to that as he expected to be mobbed in Cape Town. He said that it was bad enough in London, where every female tourist thought they had to date and kiss a Guardsman, especially Americans. He complained that it took ages to get rid of their lipstick and makeup!

68 YEARS AROUND THE WORLD – Otto Peetoom #2248, 1964

Follow the link http://www.southafricanstamps.net/Otto_Peetoom_Seagoing_career_1964-78.pdf

Otto has achieved what most of us procrastinate about – written his story. It is a very interesting one, and has an good twist to the tale at the end as he moves on to his next career. Here is an extract from his story:

1978 My last year in the Marine Industry

I contacted Silver Marine services in Liverpool and looked at the daily advertisements in Lloyds' List. Silver Marine hit the jackpot for me, subject to an interview, I was to join a tanker in Spain which was being converted in a Cadiz shipyard and intended to be used as an offshore oil terminal off Ghana in West Africa. I had to supervise the work in Spain, sail her under her own power and moor on location off Saltpond and that was the end of the contract.

American Farmers with their own Personal Oilfield

During a previous oil embargo, a bunch of Tulsa farmers from America's bible belt were aggrieved that they could not obtain adequate supplies of fuel for their operations.

They solved their problem by collectively buying a small production oilfield in Ghana that would insure the foregoing could not happen again.

They formed *Agri Petco Ghana Inc.* With Bill St John as President of the Company and hired Dave Keister who called himself *Keister International*. He in turn hired a Geordie consultant called Dick Spellacy who had to find a suitable second hand tanker.

During my association with these two I gained the impression that they weren't entirely sure which course to follow and made it up as they went along. The Tulsa farmers had plenty of cash, so the odd mistake could be swept under the carpet.

Dick Spellacy bought a Norwegian 65,000 ton tanker from a Larvik ship owner, renamed her the *Farmer* and registered it in Panama. This was a similar ship to the *Koberg* I had sailed on in 1969. He employed three Norwegians engineers from the Larvik company that included Svein Foss an Engineering Superintendent. Dick set himself up as Master of the ship and hired a British mate, who soon got fed up with antics he didn't understand and resigned.

The Farmer at a Cadiz Shipyard

Once the ship was in Cadiz, teams of tradesmen from the Tyne were hired to do all sorts of work. There were welders, plumbers, pipefitters etc.

Spellacy required a Master with tanker experience and offshore knowledge. As I had both, it got me an interview and the job as Mooring Master. The wages were out of this world, after 70 days work with leave pay and a completion bonus I came home with £8000.

At the time I earned more than the Prime Minister of Britain.

I joined the *Farmer* in Cadiz on 11 July 1978 with Captain Spellacy in charge and I moved into the owner's cabin. To start with it was an awkward situation as everyone looked to Dick for direction and no one seemed sure who I was. I have never been slow in coming forward and had a serious word with Dick and the next day he moved ashore to a hotel. Now we had a Captain and a Consultant relationship and I could get on with what was expected from me.

We needed more officers and I recommended people I had worked with who I knew were good reliable men.

The new Chief officer was Roy Russell ex Singapore days.

Spellacy also bought a supply boat and I got George Boothby the Captain's job. I also hired two Chief engineers, one being Alec Rose. Some people intimated I was getting all my friend's jobs, but I pointed out it was their ability, reliability and experience we needed. They all had an offshore oil mentality which was important.

A helicopter deck was put behind the accommodation. I had the ship's spare anchor and propeller removed and the main issue was perhaps over ambitious.

At first they thought of removing the boiler and unwanted propulsion, installing generators and towing the ship to its location. Then to retain everything but to convert the boilers so that they could burn the crude oil produced by the field in Ghana. This complicated boiler conversion created much delay and whether it worked in the long term I don't know.

I pointed out that the ships two derricks were operated by a single winch that was designed to bring a pipeline or the odd pallet of stores onboard. I recommended that we should really have a deck crane, being an offshore oil terminal meant that we would often use it, loading and unloading supply boats.

The suggestion fell on deaf ears, but a mishap in Ghana, resulted in winches being installed on each side of the ship.

I also proposed we had a foam fire fighting system with water cannons that should be able to reach an export tanker alongside. This idea found favour, was approved and implemented.

Once I turned things around I would proceed to the next emergency.

At the end of 1978 I returned from West Africa to seek another contract. I had an interview with Land and Marine to supervise the laying of a pipeline across the Straits of Magellan at the bottom of South America. I declined as the wages were unrealistic, explaining that I did not take on difficult and dangerous work in winter near Cape Horn at the same money a supermarket manager might earn.

Having achieved the pinnacle of success during my fifteen years in the marine industry, I changed hats and took on a trade that couldn't be further away from my chosen profession.

From Captain, ship handler and Mooring Master I was going to buy and sell bits of paper known as stamps.

I consider my time, experiences and things I got up to in the Marine Industry was of a nature that most people could not replicate in three life times. The next chapter in my life was to be quite different yet the teaching and experiences gained in the Marine Industry stood me in good stead when I became a self employed businessman.

I opened for business in April 1979 with a trading name of *Ormskirk Stamps*.

<http://www.southafricanstamps.net>.

Found on a Coffee Mug – “Life would be perfect if Some girls had mute buttons; Some guys had edit buttons; Bad times had a fast forward button; And good times had a pause button!”

It remains for me to wish all Obies a happy and peaceful Christmas and year end holidays. We trust that the quarterly newsletters have brought you all closer in spirit from across the World. I for one never cease to be fascinated in the stories we receive, and while it is always sad to loose our shipmates over the side, there is always something of interest to learn about their lives – “the Legend Lives on!” Thank you all for your contributions to these letters. Scribe dhenwood@iafrica.com.

The Pessimist complains about the wind, the Optimist expects it to change and the Realist adjusts his sails. (William Arthur Ward)

SLOP CHEST

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

Phone: 021-7885957 fax: 086 233 6410

Email: cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za

TIE [STRIPED]	R60
PLAQUE	R150
PEAK CAP [BASEBALL TYPE]	R115
‘n NAAM WAT SEEVAARDERS EER Geskiedenis van die opleiding skip.	DONASIE
A NAME AMONG SEAFARING MEN History of the training ship.	DONATION
FIRST DAY COVER 60 th anniversary of our Old Boys' Association	DONATION
BELT BUCKLE	R250
DVD “THE SHIP” Filmed on board during the thirties.	R40
DVD “RED HILL 1946/47” Collection of Rex Chamber's photographs with titles and accompanying music.	R45
DVD “SOUTH AFRICAN NAUTICAL COLLEGE GENERAL BOTHA 1954”. Filmed by Barry Cullen and Chris Copeland.	R40

PLUS PACKAGING AND POSTAGE!

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

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

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

Details as follows:

- Bank: Standard Bank
- Branch: Thibault Square, Cape Town
- Branch code: 02 09 09
- Account name: General Botha Old Boys' Association
- Account number: 070835128
- SWIFT: SBZA ZA JJ

Things to Think About!

- There are three kinds of men in this world. □ Some remain single and make wonders happen. □ Some have girlfriends and see wonders happen. □ Then some get married and wonder what happened! □ □ □
- When asked in class; Why do women live a better, longer and a more peaceful life than men? □ A very INTELLIGENT student replied: □ Because women don't have wives! □ □ □
- Husband to his wife: Honey, I've invited a friend home for supper.? □ Wife: What? Are you crazy? The house is a mess, I haven't been shopping, all the dishes are dirty and I don't feel like cooking a fancy meal! □ Husband: I know all that. □ Wife: Then why did you invite a friend home for supper? □ Husband: Because the poor fool is thinking of getting married! □ □ □
- Cool message to mother-in-law: □ Dear Mother-in-law, Don't teach me how to handle my children. I am living with one of yours and he needs a lot of improvement! □ □ □
- When a married man replies: I'll think about it. What he really means is that he hasn't asked his wife for permission yet! □ □ □
- A lady says to her doctor: My husband has a habit of talking in his sleep! □ What should I give him to cure it? □ The doctor replies: Give him the opportunity to speak while he's awake!