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GENERAL BOTHA OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION
<http://www.generalbotha.co.za>

FEBRUARY 2005

JOINT NEWSLETTER

Should your address details change, please send your updated details to:
Tony Nicholas, cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za, Cellphone: 082 555 2877, Phone (H):
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Please send any articles you may wish to be included in the Newsletter to:
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CAPE TOWN BRANCH EVENTS - MARCH 2005

Bothie Boys in the Cape, and those from further afield who wish to join us, please take note of the following important events. Before you turn the page or fall asleep, please decide on your plans, pick up the phone, write a fax or e-mail, and make your bookings without fail to:

RSVP: - Kathy Nicholas phone 021-7885957, fax 021 4213250 Email:

cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za

· **Friday 4th March @ 1800** – Annual General Meeting – Venue: Kelvin Grove Club, Rondebosch.

· **Friday 4th March @ 2000** – Commissioning Day Dinner – Dress: dinner suit preferred but suit or blazer and tie acceptable – Cost: R120.00 – Cash bar available.

· **Saturday 5th March** – Annual quadrangular yacht race between the association, Royal Cape Yacht Club, SAS Unities and SAS Yselstein – Lunch served at the Maritime Room @ 1200 – volunteer crew required for the Bothie yacht. **Contact skipper Dave Powell to crew – email: davepowell@saol.com phone: 021-790 1973, fax: 021-790 7831, mobile: 083 277 5177**

· **Sunday 6th March @ 1000** – War Memorial Service – Venue: The Cenotaph on the corner of Heerengracht and Hertzog Boulevard, Cape Town – In case of inclement weather someone will remain at the Cenotaph to direct members to the alternate venue

at SAS Unitie, Duncan Road, Table Bay Harbour – Following the service refreshments will be served at the Mission to Seafarers, Duncan Road, Table Bay Harbour [opposite the police station, SA Marine Corp and Atlatech].

· **Sunday 6th March @ 1200** – bring & braai at the Maritime Room, Survival Centre, Granger Bay – refreshments available at club prices – fires provided.

· **Tuesday 8th March 1130 for 1200** – Joint lunch with Master Mariners – Venue: Royal Cape Yacht Club, Duncan Road, Table Bay Harbour – Cost: approximately R40 per person – refreshments at club prices. Lunch preceded by a presentation on the salvage of the “Tasman Spirit” by Captain Nick Sloane . Booking essential.

Name Tags - It is the committee’s intention that members should wear name tags at the Commissioning Day Dinner. Tag should include your name and Bothie year/s. Should you have a suitable tag available please prepare it and wear it at the Dinner.

Alternatively we shall have blank name tags at the door for members to complete themselves on arrival.

From the Branch of S.S. Cape Town.

(Tony Nicholas reports)

It appears we have made a safe landfall on the New Year and preparations are apace for the March 2005 activities. I am not aware of any formal class reunion this year and thus we are relying on the membership to reward your committee’s endeavours with exemplary attendance. Take note and book now.

The age of electronic communications dawned years ago and the use of internet and email communications is a fast growing phenomena. However, with every good there is always a bad element. The increase in junk & spam mail and, even worse, computer viruses has grown to alarming proportions. Therefore whenever I see a suspicious looking email in my system, particularly an email without a “subject” title, it is immediately deleted. **THUS ALWAYS ENSURE YOUR EMAILS HAVE A CLEARLY DEFINED SUBJECT, PLEASE!** On the subject of communications, we presently have 525 members on our email address list. This number represents 41% of our membership list and translates into a huge saving of postage and printing costs. But, this brings its own problems. Many members move residence during the years and frequently omit to inform us. Please, although you may receive our newsletters by email we need to keep our database up to date with your landside details, i.e. postal address and contact numbers. I often get requests from past shipmates for your details as they wish to communicate and renew old friendships. Recently I had an ex girlfriend in her nineties request contact details of one of our members, I shall withhold his name from this publication. Even worse, when you order Slop Chest items we may mail them to an obsolete address. So those of you that have received this publication by email, by return send an immediate email confirming your postal address and all phone numbers. That’s an order!

The slop chest remains a very popular selection of items, the latest being an exact copy of the Bothie brass belt buckle. The item is displayed on our internet web site for viewing. The cost is only ZAR100 and I have had my belt made for only ZAR52. If you are unsure how all the bits fit together I can email you a picture.

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 Nicholas:

Phone: 021-7885957 fax: 021-4213250 Email: cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za

BADGE	R100
FLAG	R100
TIE [STRIPED]	R60

PLAQUE	R100
PEAK CAP [BASEBALL TYPE]	R60
'n NAAM WAT SEEVAARDERS EER Gesiedenis 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	R100

PLUS PACKAGING AND POSTAGE!

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

A note of appreciation from the Chairman's Better Half:-

Now that the festive season is over and we are all getting back to normal, with great difficulty I might add. I would like to thank the members for the most beautiful arrangement of flowers which I received at the Christmas lunch. I hope you and your families had a blessed Christmas and I wish you all and your families a happy and peaceful 2005. Kind regards and best wishes. Kathy Nicholas (P.A. to the Chairman).

ANCHORS AWEIGH

B.G. Mc KERRELL 1944/45. Bruce was recently reported deceased; unfortunately we have no further details. Any further information of Bruce would be appreciated.

M.A. MILTON 1956/57. Recently reported deceased, date unknown. After Bothie Mike joined the Rhodesian [now Zimbabwe] railways in their Building Construction Department and in 1963 transferred to their Electrical Department. 1969 went to the U.K. for two years and gained experience in factory management and production. 1971 settled in Durban and worked for Toyota and then Dunlop in production management. 1976 joined the Natal Parks Board as a Ranger and served as a District Conservation Officer on the coast. 1985 returned to Durban as a warden and specialized in community conservation management in urban and industrial areas, forming the first Urban and Industrial Conservancies in Africa in 1991. Retired in 1998 and was preparing to write a book on coastal conservation history. He was named the "Keep Durban Beautiful Association's" Super Citizen for 1991.

P.D.M. STEVENSON 1943/44. Peter, together with Shirley, previously owned a restaurant in Darling, Western Cape, before retiring to seaside village of Yserfontein. Following a long illness Peter passed away in November last year.

A.L. PHELPS 1931/32. Aubrey sadly passed away 28th October last year. After G.B. he joined Clan Line for a three year apprenticeship before returning to S.A. and joining Port Elizabeth Stevedores. This company was owned by T.B. Davis who donated the Ship S.A.T.S. General Botha to S.A. In 1940 he joined the 2nd Field Engineer Company and served in Egypt with the 8th Army followed by three years as a POW. After WWII he rejoined Port Elizabeth Stevedores in 1946 which was later bought by S.A. Stevedores, and retired as branch manager in 1976. Aubrey painted the Ship's badge on the dry dock wall in Simon's Town which is still there.

MARY HORSELEY, WIDOW OF HERBY HORSELEY 1928/29. Sadly, Mary passed away in December 2004. Herby was a founder member of our association and served on the committee for many years. After his passing in 1978 Mary gave the association a chairman's gavel which displays the Ship's badge in silver and a silver plaque dedicated to Herby's memory. I attended Mary's funeral service and was surprised that my GBOBA blazer badge and GBOBA tie was instantly recognized by the family members, including some fairly young family members. In the tributes to Mary mention was made of the dedication and hard work Mary showed towards the association, assisting Herby

with everything Bothie. Their children spoke very fondly of those days long ago, recalling them “spying” from the top of the staircase at the Obies and wives dancing the night away in their finery. From the stories that the family members regaled me with it was clearly evident that Mary was a remarkable woman who did much for the association. The legend truly lives on in this family.

Our sincere condolences to family and shipmates.

IN MEMORIUM – DOUG DUDLEY 1939/41.

Doug was my uncle and was born in Swakopmund in the then South West Africa. His father was the radio officer in charge of Walvis Bay radio. Doug served his time with Bank Line and remained with them throughout his time at sea. He served mostly on the runs to India, East & West Africa and the Far East. He also did one of Bank Line’s famous or infamous trips [depending on your point of view] round the world on the Losie Bank which took just over two years. Doug was one of the few survivors from the Tinhow which was torpedoed off Lourenco Marques shortly after dropping the pilot [there was another Bothie Boy on board who did not survive]. Doug was chief officer on the Luxmi when he applied for a manager’s post with East African Stevedoring & Lighterage in Dar es Salaam. His application was successful and he joined them, serving in Dar es Salaam and Mombassa for many years. Many years later he and his family returned to Durban where he joined S.A. Stevedores and served with them until his retirement. Doug leaves his wife Barbara whom he met and married in Dar es Salaam and four children. Our condolences go to his wife and family. Ian Harvey 1950/51.

And Dereck McManus (Chairman Durban Branch) writes: The passing of Doug Dudley last year cannot go without mention that the OBA has lost one of its most loyal supporters. Doug was a remarkable man and part of the Durban scene for too long to remember. When I joined the Association some 20 years ago Doug was there and along with the crew of the S. A. Stevedores never missed a Bothy lunch. Doug’s booming voice announced his arrival and departure and was as big as the man himself, not only in stature but simply as a great Bothie Boy, loyal to the last and respected by all. Doug will be sadly missed.

An extract from a tribute to Doug: “He was standing on the port side of the ship (Tinhow) when there was a terrific bang and bodies from the ‘tween deck flew past him. The ship had been torpedoed by the German Submarine U181 off the coast of Lourenco Marques. There was no time to man the life boats, so he stripped off his clothes and donned a life jacket. He handed his life jacket to a lady passenger who had been sunk 2 weeks before and she survived both events. In total 226 people died and 38 were saved. Doug and 15 others were on a raft for many days with no food or water. One by one they passed away. Doug spent his time guarding his vulnerable nether regions from the sting of Blue Bottles. After 3 days and 2 nights on the raft, with no food and water, half dead, the remaining 5 or so were washed up on the beach. Found by African fishermen late at night, they were carried to their Kraal and cared for until help came. From that day onwards he always had a great affection and respect for his African brothers and never could do enough for them.

SOS.

Stuart Lee-Roberts 1969, last known at Overport, Kwa-Zulu Natal. James Dow 1958/59, last known in Somerset West. His newsletter returned recently marked “left this address June 2002”. Perhaps brother Robert Dow can enlighten us? Doug Dreyer 1971, last known with the SPCA in Keri Keri, New Zealand. M. Elson 1992, last known to be serving with De Beers Marine and resident in Somerset West. Michael Viljoen 1979, last known resident in Bothasig, Cape Town. Syd Fenwick 1960/61, last known to be with

Cape Town Container Terminal now rumoured to be in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Ian Mackintosh 1944/45, last known at Anerley, Kwa-Zulu Natal.

Please assist and advise their whereabouts. If not known, check your local directories. SCRANBAG.

P.A.B. MILLIN 1958/59 #2118. Recent mail has revealed Tony and wife Sally as proprietors of Bay Tree House, a boutique guest house in Wilderness, Western Cape.

A.C. HAVENGA 1985 #2867. Adriaan resigned from Safmarine and the West Africa trade in October 1999. He joined Pentow Marine Terminals (then), Smit Terminals (now) as a Mooring Master in November 1999. He has done stints in Sudan, Ghana, Durban, Mossel Bay, Saldanha Bay and the E-BT oil field to present. The bulk of the work has been on the shuttle tanker Knock Dee loading Oribi crude at the E-BT oil field and transporting it to Cape Town. Summers out there are quite pleasant, winters are another story. Adrian's email address is mudbank and. I am sure there is a story attached to that name.

R.W. BRINDLE 1954/55 #1865. Bob has reported in having recently moved to Port Elizabeth. He mentions an open house to all Bothie Boys passing his way.

W.M.P. JONES 1983 #2804. AWOL Wayne has been found in Durban working with Chris Sutton, also 1983, for Seaboard Overseas.

B.G. NELSON 1985 #2871. Another AWOL Barry has been found working for Gearbulk, Durban.

G.H. WILLIAMS 1976 #2543. Geoffrey joined Safmarine in 1976 on the SA Huguenot. He sailed as Third Mate on the Kulu and SA Langkloof. Completed Second Navigating Officer's Ticket and joined SAFTUG serving on both the Wolraad Woltemade and the John Ross for a few very good years. Then he qualified as a Chief Navigating Officer (FG) in Durban. Left Safmarine and worked for the Israelis to complete sea time. Joined the Department of Environmental Affairs & Fisheries serving as Master on the r.v Afrikaner, Sardinops, Benguela & Custos. During this time qualified as Master (FG) in Cape Town. Then he served in Cape Town Port Control for about 2 years before sailing out of SA (1991) bound for the Caribbean on his yacht 'Tombi'. He worked for 8 years in the Yacht Charter industry in St. Martin and The British Virgin Islands as operations & technical managers. In 1998 qualified in the US as an Accredited Marine Surveyor and has been working with yachts ever since. His company is called West Indies Marine Surveyors and is based on Tortola in the British Virgin Islands, surveying throughout the Caribbean, Central America and occasionally in SA.

E.M. HURNER 1972 #2417. Eric has finally found the on switch of his computer and discovered us on the internet. He writes; "Left South Africa in 2000 and has worked at the Goetheanum, a conference centre in Switzerland. In 2004 he has worked on a volunteer coordination program that organizes young people who wish to work for a while in a social project in a development country.

R.J. Paterson 1972 #2422. Hi to you all, Sorry about losing touch and thank you for tracking me down. Can you believe it I am now the manager of an unfinished furniture store selling replicas of old styled furniture and custom finishing to customers desires.....life is indeed a strange affair, see www.countryfurniture.biz . The Rockies are covered in snow, the trout fishing is second to none and the peace and safety are wonderful to experience. Any and all Bothie boys needing a berth for a few days whilst in these waters are welcome.

V.A. Smeda 1975 #2505. Vic writes: "Just a quick note to say thanks for the Bothie newsletter that you and your team publish. For someone like myself located in the Midwest of the US, it is great to hear how the Bothie old boys are doing. I am working as a project manager for a management consulting firm in Des Moines, Iowa. I "changed course" in 1988 after a few years of boredom on the tugs and dredgers in

East London. I obtained a degree in IT, worked at NBS in their IT division for a few years and then came to the USA in 2001. I'm working mostly in the banking and insurance industries and the only ships I ever see are the river boat casinos going by on the Mississippi River." Thanks Vic!

THE LEGEND LIVES ON.

S.S. ATHERSTONE-REYNOLDS 1976 #2519. Simon has recently reported in from Brisbane where he is enjoying hockey and water skiing. He also talks about snow skiing somewhere in the winter. In between all this he makes his living with the RSPCA. His report in the best Bothie tradition; "Brian Hoatson organized a gathering of the SE QLD Bothie contingent on Sunday 28th at the Normanby Hotel in Brisbane. I'm happy to say I was the youngest member!! But the old codgers can certainly put the beer away!! Although I didn't know any of the guys, I do know Ian De Villiers' son John from way back when I still lived in PE. It took a while for the grey matter to work out how we knew each other as it has been some 25 years since we last saw each other. It was great catching up and reminiscing about the old days. Hell, we're getting old, aren't we! Herewith the names of the OB's that were at the luncheon (I think I have it correct!): Ian De Villiers 1936/37 and his son John (not an OB), Brian Hoatson 1941/42 (Jill), Michael Pomfret 1951/52 (Margaret), Dan Cain 1953/54 (Di), Richard Shaw 1954/55 (Gloria), Michael Niell 1958/59, John Baxter 1961/62 (Judith). All in all, a very pleasant afternoon was had. The next gathering will be sometime in the New Year and will be held up north in Buderim. Will be staying over so it should be pretty good as no driving will be involved!" Keep up the regular reports Simon. Honour & Duty.

MIKE FINCKEN 1987 #2904 - CLOSE QUARTER ADVENTURE.

I have been fortunate enough to squeeze in one more sea adventure into this wonderful past year. As captain of the Fogo Isle, a 500 GRT retired Norwegian sealer with a history of smuggling. I took a contingent of the Dutch Greenpeace action team out onto the North Sea for boat training, the last weekend of November. This was my first command and as true to my life was not without incident. The trip was made exceptional through the collision avoided with a beam trawler in the harbour of Ijmuiden. As we rounded the last corner in approach to our berth we lost both steering and engines, the ship kept swinging with all way on. Our pointy ice class bow was headed to ram the GO4, the trawler that a few months earlier had fired at us with rocket flares whilst on the Dogger Bank. 'Let go anchor' I shouted from the wheelhouse, the anchor dropped into the water and payed out as we ran up swiftly on collision course. 'Hold onto the anchor!' my following exclamation, five meters away the chain snapped tight and started to swing the Fogo Isle onto a less critical angle of approach. The engine came back on board and full astern was the first call, the Fogo Isle shuddered, crew ran off the bow but the ship came to a stop within one meter of the GO4. For me the most impressive thing was that through the counting moments my heart did not skip a beat, I continued to feel at peace. That wave of peace will serve me for the rest of this year, my wish for the next is simply for more peace and love. Over the past six weeks, I have stopped writing. Instead I have invested an hour or two a day in typing practice with a cd rom typing tutor. Now I can touch type and the words begin to flow with more ease onto the screen, albeit slowly. I look forward to a 2005 filled with enhanced communication and stories of life being lived, I am happy.

REMEMBER THE MEN WHO SERVED.

Peter Fitt 1955/56 was helping out over Christmas at Victoria International Airport and reports; "With the winter weather, delays and the increasing number of "seniors" traveling there is an increasing need to help and direct people. He is 91, full of bounce with a broad Scots accent; he was there to pick up his daughter. He gave his background away by stating "this is not the weather I signed on for". As I helped him

through the terminal he told me he had sailed out of Glasgow throughout the war as a Chief Engineer. As we parted he passed me a piece of paper and asked me to pass his poem on.

To the men of the MN

1. Remember nineteen forty three
When you and I we sailed the sea
We were young and oh so strong
We fought a war to right the wrong
2. The skies were gray when we sailed that day
No thoughts to our part in history
Many lived to tell their story
Deeds of bravery that brought them glory
3. In Maritime Museums across the land
A display of stories are on hand
Heroes names on every page
Names of battles they engaged
4. Their bucket of bolts, rusty old can
Home and haven to every man
From birth, slipping down the ways
Until she slipped beneath the waves
5. Friends of mine, friends so true
They gave their lives for me and you
An oily patch marked their grave
Gone but not forgotten
Adam A Milne
(Grandson of A. Milne)

Durban Branch, KZN news.

(Ernest Nellmapius reports)

The Christmas lunch on 15 December 2004 was very well attended, with about 62 Obies there.

We missed the group from SA Stevedores who usually attended with Dud Dudley who passed away earlier in the year. Our lunch was delayed a bit after many an old salt navigated and fought their way through huge traffic jams to get to the venue at the Durban Club on the Esplanade. Oh for the great open seas!! The venue and wine was excellent and food good but the portions were scant. Overall very good fellowship was enjoyed and the last groups left about 16h00. Fortunately the traffic had eased off when we set off for our home ports with an alert eye scanning the horizon for potential road blocks. We enjoyed the company of members from the Cape, Dave De Wet and Dave Powell and also Dennis Cowley from Canada. Alan Rathbone attended and brought a few visitors including his son Clive who captained the Springbok U21 team - they won the world cup! Clive now plays for Australia. Derek Mc Manus welcomed all and especially the visitors from Cape and further afield. He mentioned Clive Rathbone and apologized for the disapproving press in South Africa and wished Clive a happy stay with his family in Amanzimtoti.

Derek asked those present to attend the AGM on Friday 18 March and to attend our monthly luncheons in the new year. The AGM is planned to be at the Point Yacht Club. Overall a good time and great fellowship was enjoyed by all. A special thanks to Ray Walker and his secretary, Candy, for organizing the lunch and making the event a special and memorable occasion for those who made it there. A special welcome and thanks to those Obies who attended for the first time. The first lunch of the new year was attended by 8 Obies and a very good quality meal was enjoyed by all. Dough

Wrathmall from the UK visited with the Barmy Army and made contact with a few KZN Obies.

... And further news from Natal Midlands (George Thom writes ...)

Our depleted numbers have recently been boosted by 3 new arrivals in the area, Dick Whitaker 46/47, Les Green 52/53 and Stewart Bloomfield 54/55. Chris Barker (Conway) has been in touch having moved to Hilton. He is still involved at Richards Bay and was unable to make our January Bring and Braai. Apart from the above, known OB's in the area are, Reg Beavitt 39/40, George Thom 46/47, Williams -Freeman 43/44, (not seen for some time) Peter Partridge 52/53, Keith Meiklejohn 54/55, (irregular!) and Ian Munro (Conway). Our get together on the 2nd Monday of the month is well supported and looked forward to, wives and friends, one of whom is Geoff Byrom, father of George Byrom '85. On Monday 10th January mustered 17 at the Thom's, with apologies from the Byrom's.

Reg Beavitt, who is in his 80th year (and will probably be doing the same in his 90th), is as strong as ever, apart from cracking a few ribs after falling off a step ladder, while trying to board the Committee Boat at HMYC. I had the temerity to suggest he try to give it up. "WHAT" he demanded in his dulcet tones, "falling off step ladders" I replied. For once there was no answer.

Our get togethers at peoples' homes for the monthly meet have been successful. It has been decided that in future the venue will be at the Henley Midmar Yacht Club braai area on the verandah, overlooking the dam 1200 hrs bring and braai plus your own drinks. All the facilities are there, and if it rains, not a problem. Reg has in the past been able to arrange free access at the gate. He would like to give the gate guard a list of possible attenders. If any Durban OB's intend a day out would they please telephone him 033-330 3022. Best to do it at 0700 hrs as they are always out and about. Informing Reg is not necessary for our regulars.

It was good to see our Durban Christmas lunch so well supported. Would the Durban committee please find a venue outside of the central area? Traffic wise there was no pleasure getting there on the 15th of December. Regards, George Thom.

GBOBA – UNITED KINGDOM NEWS.

(TED FISHER Tel: 01903 744400 e-mail : tedefsher @aol.com)

The monthly December Pub Lunch at The Rising Sun Warsash was attended by five Conway couples plus Val Murray their Hon Sec together, with Doug Wrathmall and myself representing the 'Bothy' – an enjoyable occasion as always and we would be delighted to welcome all other 'Obies' should they be in the area.

Our third Port Solent pre-Christmas Lunch on Saturday 11 December 2004 at Olivo's Italian Restaurant turned out to be an excellent 'do' indeed. I am very grateful to those who apologised for non – attendance due to being abroad (work and or play) which indicates the Newsletter is read in conjunction with my invitation e-mail! We were pleased to welcome new members Rev. Arnold and Jill Hirst (53/54), Rob Myburgh (69), Alwyn and Molly Christie (46/47). Other stalwarts were Peter and Norma Heydenryck, John and Sheila Shone, Doug Wrathmall, Chris and Ann Nash, Donald and Kathleen Neaves with friends Alan and Maureen Garton, Hugh and Rosie Scheffer with finally Caroline and myself. For the first time we were joined by Conway Members John and Myra Tubb, Sean and Rosemary Guy, Alan and Vivien Burns. It is our intention to liaise closely with Conway friends to combine on future social functions. Perhaps any Old Pangbournians and Worcester members will read this and make contact!

Ahead in February next Friday 4th is the annual Southampton Master Mariners Club (The Cachalots) Sea Pie Supper at The Guildhall. Our table organised by Donald

Neaves. A number of our members are expected to be amongst the 600 plus attending, so more anon!! Best wishes to all. Ted Fisher.

NEWS FROM GAUTENG.

(Ivor Little writes ...)

The Annual Commissioning Day luncheon of the Gauteng Branch will be held on Sunday 13 March (two weeks before Easter) at a venue still to be arranged. Gauteng members will receive individual notices as to the venue and how to get there.

ACADEMY TALES 1. At a recent dinner party the conversation turned to unusual motor car accidents and I was reminded of the following story which concerned that well-known old sea dog, Bill Storm. At the time I was one of a group of students studying for Second Mates at the Cape Town Nautical Academy, in the Missions to Seamen building in Alfred Street. Bill Storm was one of our lecturers. It appears that at one time he had a job in Cape Town which necessitated a very early start in the morning. On this particular occasion Bill left his home in Fish Hoek well before sunrise and somewhere just before Clovelly ran in to the bum of an elephant which promptly sat down on the bonnet of his car and squashed it! It appears that the beast in question was the last in a string of elephants being moved by the Boswell-Wilkie Circus from the railway siding in Fish Hoek to their display venue in the early hours of the morning to avoid causing a traffic problem. At the subsequent court case the magistrate ruled in Bill's favour as the elephant was not fitted with a rear light!

On hearing me recount this, our hostess rather stunned me by saying that the story I had just told was nothing more than an urban legend as she had heard the same story about a lady in Zimbabwe! What I would like know now is whether this is in fact true? Is this just an urban legend adapted to include Bill Storm and recounted to us gullible young second mates or was Bill the origin of the legend? Is there anybody out there who can add a bit of light to this story?

ACADEMY TALES 2. It was a typical warm lazy morning after tea and the students of the Cape Town Nautical Academy were engaged in "self tut", that most boring of tasks which involved answering the questions in the "Self Examiner for Masters and Mates," and if you got stuck calling on the assistance of the duty lecturer. In this case it was Bill Storm who was slowly parading up and down the aisles between the desks of a bunch of half asleep students. Eventually his gaze fell upon Bob Underwood who was sitting in the back row with his eyes dreamily closed and a tightly rolled up wad of ink stained blotting paper sticking out of one ear. "What on earth are you doing, Underwood?" asked an astonished Bill. "I am listening to the Ink Spots, sir" replied a rudely awakened Bob. I shall draw a veil over Bill's reply but it was not pretty!

Does anybody remember the Ink Spots? I have never been able to listen to one of their recordings since then without being instantly transported back to Alfred Street!
Cheers, Ivor.

WEB SITE.

(Bill Scott surfs in ...)

To keep up with ever changing technology new second tier menus have been installed on the History, Muster List, and Gallery pages. We have also put a link to a **site map** on the home page under the main menu, which will enable navigation even if, for any reason, non Java enabled browsers might have difficulty reading the new JavaScript menus. See <http://www.generalbotha.co.za>.

GB TRUST ANNUAL REPORT.

(Report to be presented at the AGM in March)

I regret to report that the negotiations with the Cape Technikon (Now the Cape Peninsula University of Technology) regarding control and accounting for the GB Trust funds is still not complete. Fortunately the main players on their side are still there

despite the amalgamation, so at least we will not have to start over again from scratch. I am quite sure that finality will be reached before the end of 2005.

The GB display at the Naval Museum is in good shape and is being monitored continuously by Ian Manning, to whom the Trust is deeply indebted. A new display case has just been completed on the initiative of Ian, to house the numerous uniform items and other small artifacts that are being donated by former cadets. A number of the trophies and other metal display items have been identified as needing a good cleaning and polishing. The Trust is currently investigating how best to have this work executed. A matter of some concern to the Trust is the absence of a full-time officer in charge for the Naval Museum. Fortunately, Ian Manning's frequent presence at the museum serves to ameliorate the situation somewhat.

Another achievement during the latter end of 2004 was the completion of a new all-embracing list of GB artifacts. This has been "In the Works" for some time now and once again thanks are due to Ian Manning, for much of the donkey-work. It has been compiled using MS Excel, so that it is a dynamic document that can and will be updated on a continuous basis, as information on the whereabouts and status of items changes. During 2004, Simon Pearson stood down as the member representing the Tech. His place has been taken by Captain E D Snyders, the Head of the Department of Maritime Studies at the Granger Bay Campus. The two large anchors that were excavated at Grange Bay, during the building of the Academy, now stand at the foot of the mast and are deteriorating badly. We are endeavouring to obtain expert advice on how best to restore and preserve these artifacts.

Glen Syndercombe (Chairman, GB Trust).

COMMEMORATION OF THE END OF THE WAR IN EUROPE – VE DAY 1945

The South African Legion, Cape Town Branch, is arranging a luncheon at Kelvin Grove, Newlands, Cape Town to commemorate the end of the war in Europe. The luncheon will take place on Saturday 7th May 2005 and a senior officer concerned with Veteran Affairs will be the guest speaker. For further details and bookings contact: - S.A. Legion, P.O. Box 368, Rondebosch, Cape Town, 7701. Phone 021-689 9771, fax 021-685 6254, Email: salegion@mweb.co.za.

TOUR OF ITALY IN MEMORY OF MONTE SOLE 9TH TO 19TH APRIL 2005

This tour which is being arranged on behalf of the S.A. Legion by Titch Tours, Rondebosch, will probably be the last in which former members of the famous 6th South African Armoured Division could take part. Full details of the tour are available from Michael Johnson at Titch Tours: - Phone 021-6865501, fax 021-685 5506, Email titcheve@iafrica.com, P.O. Box 246, Rondebosch, 7701.

Who's Been Sleeping in MY Bed?

Barry Cullen, one of the Class of 53/54 who held their reunion at the SA Naval College in Gordon's Bay, March 2004 writes: Attended the annual Passing Out Parade of the SA Naval College on Friday 10th December 2004. This was a top of the range function; same atmosphere; same fresh south-easter! It was readily apparent to this observer that some of the traditions of Prize Day 53/54/55 have been faithfully handed down over the years, first by Bothie Boys, then the combined Bothie and Navy 58/66 and finally, Navy in full swing.

A hot summer's day, Admirals, commodores, captains, commanders, proud parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters seated on those comfortable blue leather navy chairs under shady permanent awnings, facing Table Mountain. A cheery spirit prevailed and now, with traditional precision and verve, the South African Navy Band struck up "All the nice girls like a sailor" - and the Midshipmen of 2004 (including eighteen midshipmaids, not their official title, they're all midshipmen) smart as a button in their white No 10s,

marched onto the parade ground. First impression: "Extremely smart!"

The programme:

Captain Lilla du Preez accompanied the Chief of the Navy, Vice Admiral J.F. Retief on his Ceremonial Inspection, the latter marching easily past the assembled midshipmen looking each directly in the face as he passed. The Company then marched past in Column of Platoons ("tops" to us) followed by an "Advance in Review Order" - utmost precision, smartness and style! Stirring stuff. (None of that slight hesitancy from the skeleton staff of regulars who helped our 53/54 reunion with "Colours".) This was Big Time "Navy on Parade" and I was delighted to see it. Commander Koos Hanekom, the exec officer, did a first rate job as Parade Commander.

"Captain Lilla" then gave a warm speech of welcome, followed by the awarding of prizes - eight midshipmen (two of whom were girls) marching up to the dias and receiving their awards from the admiral.

In conclusion, Vice-Admiral Retief gave an inspired from the heart address, remarked briefly on matters naval, congratulated the new Chief of the Navy due to take over in March 2005 and warmly congratulated the Midshipmen on completion of their training. As a rousing Finale, the Company:- Colour Party leading, Midshipmen, Navy Band bringing up the rear, marched passed in Column of Route to enthusiastic applause. Guests then drifted easily up the old starboard roadway (Bridge, Rec Hall and Main Hall resplendent in fresh white paint, blue trimmings) up to the old Messdeck for tea and cakes. Officers, midshipmen, midshipmaids, proud parents; decibel level rising! On my way down, passing the accommodation block - couldn't resist mounting the stairs, passing the lobby where Ann Little and Wendy Cullen had welcomed our party - and so out to the seaward passage, popping my head into the dorm used by us in 1954 / 2004.

Couple guys packing up. To a cheery greeting from me, dropped the memorable line that I had slept in this dorm fifty years ago! Polite smiles!

Thought, on my way down the starboard roadway: "What would our reaction have been, in 1954, to an old codger with walking stick popping his head round the corner and saying "Heh, heh, heh, lads! ***I slept here in 1904 !***" - *Well, polite smiles!*

Scribe – The following is, I think, an extremely interesting paper about the life of a Bothie Boy. Unfortunately it is too long to be included in its entirety, so we will publish it in 2 or 3 Parts.

THE FIRST THIRTY YEARS

COMMANDER A. S. POMEROY, D.S.C., R.N.

(Cadet 373 Class of 1927/29. Deceased 03/05/1990.)

When S.A.T.S. "General Botha" started her career as a training ship, she was moored at a berth just about as close as she could get under the window of the study of the Pastorie at Simons Town where Ds. de Villiers was at the time composing the music of our National Anthem. She flew the British Blue Ensign then, and the Dominie would have rejoiced when, six years later, our then brand-new National Flag was broken at our main truck for the first time, by myself. I have vivid recollections of the occasion: put it was more than thirty years before I was to serve under that flag again. There was no South African Navy or Merchant Service in those days.

Life at sea, even in wartime, is a routine-bound affair, though one would need to write a book to recount thirty years of it. To explain my absence, I give here some episodes that mark the way I have been, like buoys in a channel, but most of the time has been spent on passage from one buoy to the next, and that is not told of here.

On leaving the Botha in 1929, I joined, in Cape Town, the "Berrima" of the P. and O. Coy., then on her last voyage. On arrival in London, I was transferred to the "Mongolia" for a year's voyaging to Australia during which time I got to know the seaman's way of

life. It was the practice in this ship for the cadet of the watch to keep lookout duties in the crow's nest from 0400 -0600. It was my turn one day during a thunderstorm in the Australian Bight, when the foremast was struck by lightning. Fortunately, the mast had been painted the day before and as the paint was still wet I was keeping my lookout trick on the fore-castle head, or this report would have ended here.

After six months R.N.R. training I joined the "Kashgar", voyaging to China and Japan. I was cadet of the watch on the first day of our last voyage, when the "Hans Maersk" collided with us in the thick fog after we had dropped the pilot off Dungeness. Two years later the "Hans Maersk" entered Leith where she was "arrested", the warrant being nailed to her mast, and soon after I was involved in the only Court case of my thirty years at sea. For three quarters of an hour, I had to give evidence and be cross-examined before Lord Merrivale in Edinburgh, the opposing advocate trying to get me to refute my captain. Fortunately, I had a very clear recollection of the event and was able to acquit myself to the entire satisfaction of our advocate and my own officers. Later I was to sit on a Court of Enquiry myself and found that it had been a useful experience. Old Botha Boy Jeffreys, lost in the "Ceramic" during the war, shared digs with me in London when we were up for our Second Mates together. This was the time of the Great Depression. Present day second mates must find it difficult to believe that in so bad straits was the shipping industry, and jobs so scarce, that there were ships at sea in which every man on deck held a Masters Ticket, and the Bosun was an Extra-Master. Nearly all those of my Botha term had to quit the sea in order to earn a living. Some joined the Royal Air Force: "Pavlova" Thompson, since killed, Air Vice Marshall H. Graham, still in England, and Group Captain C. R. Taylor, now back in Durban, were among them. The excellent Company I had joined, however, created a job for me in their office to tide me over this time, though quite unobliged to do so. After two years of this and some more R.N.R. drill I was appointed Fourth of the mailship "Chitral". Seven years after joining the Botha I had my first job as a certified officer. That was the lot of the fortunate ones. The others never got there at all. In due course came promotion to Third of the same ship, which job carried the duties of Mail Officer. I regret to report that I once failed to land at Aden a bag of mail addressed to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales who was then touring Kenya (there was no airmail then). At Bombay, I explained my dilemma to an official at Government House and he, good soul, fixed things so that I heard no more about it.

Mussolini now gave my affairs a good push in a different direction. He ordered his troops to invade Abyssinia (now called Ethiopia). Britain apparently was very angry and called up some Reserves to commission part of the Reserve Fleet. I was among them. At Malta, I joined the minesweeper "Huntley", afterwards lost in the war. There is no space to write of my time there but I must tell you of Rupert Lonsdale, our First Lieutenant, who subsequently spent nearly the whole of World War II as a prisoner of war, and on release had to go through the ordeal of being court-martialled for surrendering his ship (the submarine "Seal") to the enemy, the first R.N. Officer to do so since Nelson's time. An account of fortitude and great leadership in adversity came to light and he was acquitted with honour to the great happiness of the whole Navy. He is now a Minister in the Church of England:

After a year of this, I returned to the P. & O. Coy. for a short while, serving in the "Kidderpore" between India and Japan and while there, like many others, was re-called to England and given a permanent commission in the Royal Navy. Nine months courses at Chatham and Portsmouth followed and then an appointment to the new cruiser "Newcastle". World War II broke out while I was there. We were ordered to Scapa Flow and one of our first duties was to support the Northern Patrol, comprising Armed Merchant Cruisers, in case they got into trouble. They soon did.

One afternoon when we were patrolling South of Iceland, we received a signal from the "Rawalpindi", a few miles to the S.E. of us, saying that she was being attacked by the German pocket battleship "Scheer". Our frantic engineers soon got "Newcastle" up to thirty knots and running before a cold front we could see approaching from the West, we were very soon on the scene. It was night now and dark, pitch dark, the darkest night I can remember; but the blazing "Rawalpindi" provided a beacon in the centre of the circle we steamed round until we saw the enemy silhouette, and what a surprise! There were two of them, "Scharnhorst" and "Gniesnau", much more powerful than the "Scheer" and each separately capable of blowing us out of the water. I will never forget the voice calling out ranges getting closer and closer. Then the front arrived with its rain and wind and blotted out the whole scene. By the time the first squalls had passed, the "Rawalpindi" had sunk and the two enemy battle-cruisers were Heaven knows where. We carried out a "Curve of search" at thirty knots to regain touch for the information of our heavy ships, but to no avail. There was no radar then.

Next, we provided cover for the small ships withdrawing the British Army from Dunkirk and were then ordered to Plymouth, our home port; but not for leave. The Germans had started to bomb the city, which had no anti-aircraft defences. We anchored off the Hoe to provide them and soon became the main target - bombs bursting all about, but they did us no damage. Although I had now been made the ship's Air Defence Officer, I must honestly say that I do not think that we did much damage to them either.

Our next job was an unpleasant one. France had surrendered to Germany and there were many French ships in British harbours. The Admiralty decided that they must be captured. "Newcastle's" objective was the Contre-Torpilleur La Triomphant, lying in Plymouth Sound. I had no part in the actual capture of this ship, which was carried out at night, but was officer of the watch on deck and it can be imagined that I had a busy time. Most of the captures at Plymouth were carried out with as little hurt as possible in the circumstances. In the case of the French Submarine "Surcouf" which the British Submarine "Thames" (I think) had been ordered to capture, the "Thames" crew managed complete surprise and their captain was able to get to the "Surcouf" captain's cabin where the C.O. was asleep. Waking him at the pistol's point, the British captain told the Frenchman to surrender as his ship had already been captured. The Frenchman pulled out a loaded revolver from under his pillow and each shot the other dead (or so I was told).

To sea again to bombard Cherbourg by night with the "Resolution". Our part was to act as a red herring and draw off enemy forces sent to intercept. In the event we were unmolested and returned to harbour as from a practice shoot; and there was my relief waiting.

Now an appointment as First Lieutenant of the destroyer "Boadicea", lying at Portsmouth being repaired after damage received at Dunkirk. A bomb had passed right through the engine room and out through the bottom without exploding but cutting the main steam pipe and killing everybody there. Our new Chief, who was soon to lose his life in the "Curacoa", and I had a tremendous time getting her ready for sea again due to the continual bombing of Portsmouth Dockyard, but we got away eventually to Scapa Flow to join the Home Fleet. After some time there, screening the heavy ships on operations, we were transferred to the Western Approaches as leader of the Fourth Escort Group based on the Clyde. Our enemy were the U-boats, except for an occasional long-range Focke-Wolfe reconnaissance-bomber. It was a world of asdics and depth charges. Life in the Western Approaches is described very well in Nicholas Monserrat's book "The Cruel Sea" and I will only tell you of a silly incident which happened during my two years there.

As leader, our station was always, immediately ahead of the centre column of a convoy and in fog, we had to be careful not to be rammed by the leading ship. One morning when doing this, a thick fog came down. Then suddenly a German U-Boat, lying stopped on the surface, loomed up almost alongside. We were so close we could have shot each other with revolvers, let alone blowing him to pieces with our guns, and he us with his torpedoes. Both sides were so astonished that nobody did anything. We ourselves could not stop without being rammed and when he disappeared in the fog astern, we listened for sounds of a crash and rending steel. Nothing happened and when the fog lifted

a couple of hours later the convoy was still intact and nothing untoward was reported, We felt a bit foolish about the whole affair, and said nothing about it when we returned to harbour. I dare say he did not either.

"Boadicea" was sunk later but long before that I had left to take up my first command, the old "V" & "W" class destroyer "Volunteer", also of the Western Approaches. Within a month, my ship's company had sunk a U-Boat in such a distinguished manner that my report of the operation was received at Western Approaches Headquarters with much scepticism. Some time after the war had ended I received a letter from a friend congratulating me on my being mentioned in dispatches for distinguished service against submarines. Surprised, I enquired further, and found that the German Admiralty records had been captured intact after Germany's surrender and the "Volunteer's" beautiful work confirmed. Although my part had only been to give the right orders at the right time, without which my chaps could not act, I was thus honoured on their behalf. I wonder who else has been mentioned in the enemy's dispatches. (to be continued ...)

Some bloopers from church bulletins....

The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been cancelled due to a conflict. Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.

Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get. Potluck supper Sunday at 5:00 pm - prayer and medication to follow.

We are now well into the New Year, so allow me to say at least that I hope 2005 is a good and fruitful one for all Bothie Boys, and I trust that you have found this an interesting and informative edition of our newsletter. Thank you to all those who contribute material for this letter and/or for the generous financial contributions that we receive from you which allows us to keep the news alive. Tony Nicholas - where would we be without him? - and I receive regular messages of appreciation from readers, and we want to thank you for your enthusiastic interest.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at your various Branch activities commemorating the Commissioning day of the Ship. If you are not able to attend, then I hope that you will note the date and time of the activities, be there with us in spirit, and raise an appropriate glass of your best poison and drink a toast "To the Ship!"

Cheers!

The Scribe (dhenwood@iafrica.com).