

## S.A.T.S.

**PO BOX 2454  
DURBAN  
4000**

**Chairman:** Derek McManus  
Tel. (O): +27 (0)31 3039563  
Tel. (H): +27 (0)31 7673719  
**Secretary:** Ernest Nellmapius  
[ernest@bsu.co.za](mailto:ernest@bsu.co.za)  
Cell: +27 (0)83 253 7975  
Tel (O): +27 (0)31 202 8242  
Fax: +27 (0)31) 201 2458



**PO BOX 4515  
CAPE TOWN  
8000**

**Chairman:** Tony Nicholas

[cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za](mailto:cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za)  
Tel. (O): +27 (0)21 421 4144  
Fax: +27 (0)86 604 0811  
Cell: +27 (0)82 555 2877  
Tel. (H): +27 (0)21 788 5957

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

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

**February 2007**

### **JOINT NEWSLETTER**

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

Tony Nicholas, [cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za](mailto:cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za), Cellphone: 082 555 2877, Phone (H): 021 788 5957.

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

Dennis Henwood, [mailto:dhenwood@iafrica.com](mailto:mailto:dhenwood@iafrica.com). Phone (H): +27 (0)21 6716373. Fax: +27 (0)21 6713816

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

At the time of writing it is still appropriate to greet folk in the festive manner by wishing everyone happy New Year, etc. However, by the time you receive this edition it will be mid-February and we will all be well into the year and getting on with all the great plans and good intentions set out at the beginning of January. Never the less, I take this opportunity to wish all of you Obies, and your families and loved ones, a safe, happy and fruitful 2007. For many of us we have plans of work and travel and our diaries are filling up rapidly. Please include in those plans – and diarise now before they are overlooked – the dates and events advertised in this newsletter in your respective area. There are activities organised in all the branches, and your local committees and “drivers & pushers” have gone to a lot of effort to keep the Association alive. So, please will you support them as far as possible?

### **GENERAL BOTHA BOAT'S BADGE.**

I have in my possession an original General Botha Boat's Badge (I assume from one of the cutters). This is bronze, with what appears the original paint and with a teak back-board (circular). This came from a deceased estate (not a Bothie Boy) for which the GBOBA paid R300. It was then auctioned off at the last Cape Town lunch and the R300 recovered. For my sins I was the successful bidder!!

**I now propose that we auction this badge off through the distribution of this news letter to all Obies. The bid will start with a minimum reserve of R300 plus shipping/postal expenses. Closing of the bids will be at 12:00 Friday 2 March. The successful bidder will be announced at the Cape Town Branch Commissioning Dinner that evening.**

**My intention in this is to raise some funds to assist with the maintenance of the GBOBA exhibits at the SAN Museum in Simon's Town.** It is also to have a bit of fun and interaction. Please respond to [dhenwood@iafrica.com](mailto:dhenwood@iafrica.com) or telephone +27 (0)21 6716373 to place your bids. I will reply to all bids with copy to the other bidders so that you are all kept informed of the progress. Being bronze the badge is quite heavy (2kg), and as the successful bidder may be outside of Cape Town, it will be necessary to add shipping costs to the final price. But don't let that put you off bidding! I look forward to your participation. **Scribe – Dennis Henwood.**

## **FORTHCOMING CAPE TOWN EVENTS.**

- Monthly lunches continue to be hosted at the Royal Cape Yacht Club, Table Bay Harbour on the SECOND Tuesday of EVERY month. New caterer in situ. 1230 for 1300 unless advertised differently in the newsletters.
- Annual General Meeting – Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2007 @ 1800.
- Commissioning Day Dinner – Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2007 @ 2000.
  - Venue: Kelvin Grove Club, Rondebosch.
  - Dress: Dinner suit or at least a tie and jacket.
  - Cost: R150 per person.
  - RSVP: Kathy Nicholas, phone 021-7885957 or email [cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za](mailto:cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za) or fax 086 604 0811 by 26<sup>th</sup> February.
- War Memorial Service – Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2007 @ 1000. At our cenotaph corner of Heerengracht and Hertzog Boulevard, Cape Town. Followed by refreshments at the Mission to Seafarers, Duncan Road, Table Bay Harbour. In case of inclement weather the service shall be held at the Mission to Seafarers.
- Joint lunch meeting with the Society of Master Mariners – Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2007, 1130 for 1200 – Royal Cape Yacht Club, Table Bay Harbour - Lunch will be preceded by a presentation from Old Boy Mike Fincken, master of the Greenpeace vessel Rainbow Warrior.
  - RSVP: Kathy Nicholas, phone 021-7885957 or email [cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za](mailto:cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za) or fax 086 604 0811 by Monday 1200, 12<sup>th</sup> March.
- 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the sinking of the Ship – Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2007, 1200 for 1300 – Seven Seas Club, Simon's Town – Lunch preceded by a report of the dive on the Ship that morning and those who trained on her shall regale the gathering with their stories, escapades, life on board.
  - RSVP: Kathy Nicholas, phone 021-7885957 or email [cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za](mailto:cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za) or fax 086 604 0811 by Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> May.

### **DURBAN FUTURE EVENTS**

**The GBOBA, Natal, AGM is scheduled for**

**Friday 23 March 2007**

**TIME: 18h00 for 19h00 at Point Yacht Club.**

**Cost: R75**

**Bookings via Candy 031 - 5692585**

### **AUSTRALIAN BRANCH NEWS**

The Australian Branch extends its best wishes to Old Boys everywhere. Please let us know if you are in our area and we will put on a few drinks at short notice.

Alan Bole is in Australia at the moment and we will have an informal lunch in Sydney on 17<sup>th</sup> February.

**The Australian Branch 2007 Annual Commissioning Day Lunch and AGM will be held in Brisbane on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2007.**

While normally held in Sydney this annual event has in the past been held in Adelaide and Melbourne. Next year is Brisbane's turn. This will be a Lunch held on a vessel named "Kookaburra Queen" on the Brisbane River with more drinks to follow at a dockside tavern. We have a deck reserved for us and it will depart from Eagle Street Pier at 1215 for a 2 hour river cruise and lunch. Boarding will be at 1130.

Besides Australian and New Zealand members, all are welcome. Please note that we include wives, partners and siblings in our celebrations.

Regards to all, Peter O'Hare Hon Sec/Treasurer Australian Branch. Email [peteroh@bigpond.com](mailto:peteroh@bigpond.com).

### **Gauteng Branch.**

The Annual Commissioning Day luncheon will be held at 12h30 on Sunday 18 March at the Linksfield Club and will be hosted by Rene Poerner and Karin Single. Gauteng members will be individually advised with directions to the venue and the cost of the luncheon, which is still to be finalised.

## **FROM THE BRIDGE OF s.s. CAPE TOWN – Tony Nicholas, Chairman.**

This New Year has finally arrived, 2007. And what shall we do with it? The obvious answer is to continue to grow our association and promote the legend of our Ship. With the valued support of all our members this objective is easy to achieve. On that note the first piece of good news is that the catering dispute at our monthly lunch venue, the Royal Cape Yacht Club, has been resolved. A new caterer moved in promptly and almost immediately the club members' support returned. The January lunch proved successful prompting positive comments from all who attended. One did not simply receive a *piece* of chicken, but a rather large portion of half chicken. Thus we can look forward to a revitalized monthly lunch meet with the valued support of our members.

All are to make a very bold note in your diaries of this year's AGM and Commissioning Day Dinner followed by the War Memorial Service. These are very important dates and traditionally the high light of the association's annual calendar. Thus we anticipate members valued support.

This year also marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of our ship in False Bay, 13<sup>th</sup> May to be more exact. Although the event was a sad one your committee is considering marking the event this year. A group of experienced divers are planning a dive on the wreck on the day and we expect to participate in the day's events, perhaps culminating with a social meeting after the dive. There may be some video material available for us to view. Please watch this and the May publication for details.

### **SOS**

**John Lord 1945/46**, last known in Colchester, England and **Lawrence Ridgway 1958/59** last known Oxon, England. **John Driver 1960/61** last known in Crystal Park, Gauteng. All get your fingers out and find them for us.

### **ANCHORS AWEIGH.**

**J.A.S. GIDDEY 1942/43.** John passed away 24/10/2006. He left boarding Rondebosch Boys' High School in Standard 8 when he was 15 and joined the General Botha. From there he served at sea for his apprenticeship on merchant ships on the trans-Atlantic run and through the Mediterranean and Suez to Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka. He then came ashore and graduated as a CA at UCT. He was in the financial business for many years and acted as our auditor as well. Retired in 1996.

**J.R. STARKEY 1938/39.** James's mail has been returned marked "deceased" from his Durban address. He served in the Royal and South African Navy during WWII. Nothing else is known of his career and again I invite members to fill the blanks.

**R.M. BECKET 1948/50.** Rob joined Clan Line in 1951 and stayed until 1955. Then he joined Old Mutual at Pinelands and worked in the Powers SAMAS Department. Did a District Office Course and opened a District Office at Stanger, Empangeni, Eshowe. Later returned to sea with Smith Coasters and obtained Masters Certificate. Joined S.A.R. & H. in May 1970 and was with them until August 1993. In that time had been Master of the 'F.C. Sturrock' and did a few distress jobs. 'The Voith Tug, Paul Sauer' was next. Next was the 'Jan Haywood', another Voith. Last in the tug line was the 'Bart Grove Shuttle'. He then understudied on the Dredger 'Ribbok' and took over as Master in 1986. 1989 moved ashore and 1993 retired. Deceased 03/01/2007.

**W.A. CODRINGTON 1950/51.** In 1952 Bill joined Anglo Saxon Petroleum Co (Shell Tankers) as apprentice, promoted to 2nd Officer. 1960 joined Union Castle Mail Steamship Co. until 1972 when Chief Officer. His time with Shell included 5 years as Cadet Training Officer both ashore and afloat. 1973 joined Gulf Oil Tankers and served in command of their tankers until 1976. Then joined World Wide Shipping Agency in command and served at sea until 1979 when he came ashore in Hong Kong as Port Captain and latterly in charge of group safety, training and environment with various ancillary responsibilities. He also served on assorted nautical and educational committees in Hong Kong. Bill was appointed a Director of World Wide Shipping Agency on the 1st of January 1994. 1998 retired in London but continued to act as Marine Advisor to World Wide Shipping Agency. Deceased 01/12/2006.

**J.H. SHONE 1943/44.** John and Sheila tragically passed away in a car accident whilst on holiday in South Africa, 29<sup>th</sup> January. 1945 to 1954 John was at sea as apprentice and Junior Officer. 1954 - 1955 Studied at School of Navigation, Southampton. Obtained extra Master's Certificate 1956 - 1957 at sea as Chief Officer. 1957 - 1960 Assistant Marine Superintendent Shell Tankers U.K. 1961 - 1963 at sea as Master 1964 joined the British Department of Trade as Surveyor and promoted to Chief Nautical surveyor in 1982. 1982 - 1987 Deputy Surveyor General with the Department of Transport. 1988 - Retired. John was also a prominent soccer player at Tabard in the fifties, sixties and seventies before moving to Chichester where he took up refereeing, retiring from the sport in 2001.

*Our sincere condolences to family, friends and shipmates.*

### **SCRANBAG**

**A. BAARTMAN 1960/61 #2166.** Arie has recently retired from the NPA and moved back "home" to Cape Town. Thus we expect to see you at the Bothie functions young man. Monthly lunches held on the second Tuesday of EVERY month.

**P.J. HEYDENRYCK 1952/53 #1770.** Peter has relocated from England to Perth. Perhaps the weather is better down there?

**T.J. HOLMES 1976 #2533.** Trevor runs a company called Strategis, a marketing analytical company, with a strong GIS (Geographic Information System) and statistical modeling base. "We are, in two words, Spatial Economists. We do market segmentation for Direct Mailing Campaigns, Demand Forecasting Modeling for the Telco Industry, Location Modeling for the Motor Industry, Automated Valuation Modeling for Property Valuation, etc." Phew, sounds complicated Trevor.

**M.G. BROWN 1960/61 #2168.** Mike and Laura decided to retire from the hectic lifestyle in Velddrift, West Coast and took their motor cruiser off cruising the Med. Last heard of somewhere in Greece. "Our boat is called Venturer and is a motor yacht. We leave tomorrow morning from Mandraki Harbour in Rodos where we have been for 3 months for Marmaris Turkey." We look forward to further news of their adventures.

**M.A. MEYER 1985 #2870.** Mike has recently left the NPA Saldanha Bay for the bright shopping lights of Dubai where he is GM for Platinum Yacht Management. He has offered us his services as Dubai correspondent and thus we eagerly await news of his adventures in the desert.

**G.J. STOCKLEY 1949/50 #1621.** Gordon has sold up in Kwa-Zulu Natal and moved permanently to Leisure Isle, Knysna. Anyone passing that way pop in for an ale.

**P.D. STOWE 1968 #2348.** Email is a wonderful communication tool but unfortunately lacks the personal touch. Peter was promoted to Harbour Master in Saldanha Bay two years ago and his newsletters followed him there by email. A belated congratulations Peter.

**A.P. JUDGE 1964 #2244.** Andy and family have moved to some place called Matamata in New Zealand. I still await your postal address and phone numbers Andy, as well as what you are up to down there.

**G.H. WILLIAMS 1976 #2543.** Geoff and family recently went AWOL from their idyllic Caribbean island but fortunately there are members out there that read and respond to my SOS. "Thanks for tracking me down. I wish I was lazing in Cruz Bay. I have been living in the Caribbean for the past 16 years. I have a surveying business based on Tortola in the British Virgin Islands. I spend my time surveying yachts. Earlier this year we moved to France. Home is now in a village in the Provence area of France just north of Aix-en-Provence (40 minutes by road north of Marseille). It is a beautiful area and where all the good food and wine comes from. I rattle between the Caribbean and France and I hope to spend more time doing business in the Mediterranean during 2007." One correction; good food and wine originate from the Western Cape, jolly old S.A.

**Arnold Hirst 1953/54.** Retired from the Anglican priesthood at the end of July 2005 and is currently living in Wickham in England.

### **SIR WILLIAM CODRINGTON – AN OBIE REMEMBERS**

I was saddened to learn of the sudden passing of Bill Codrington. In my mind he will always be "Flossie", the nickname given to him, I believe, by Instructor "Tackies" McGee. He was my class mate,

a shipmate and a really good bloke. On 13th February, 1952 we joined our first ship together in Cape Town, the 9,000 dwt 'Lotorium' of the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company - the precursor of Shell Tankers. A few days out of Cape Town en route Fao in Iraq, the old man had a fit when he discovered that Bill had repaired on board with an antique revolving four barreled pistol, a formidable Chinese dagger in an ornate metal sheaf containing two ivory chopsticks, his great-grandfather's cavalry saber worn in the Crimean campaign, a point two two rifle and 150 rounds! The old man solved the ammunition problem admirably, by having Bill join him on the poop deck where they engaged in a series of contests firing at old paint tins as we steamed North-east through the Indian Ocean. The dammed sword was another matter. Hung on a peg inside his wardrobe, it awakened the half-deck regularly whenever 'Lotorium' encountered a beam swell. Nine weeks after joining her, 'Lotorium' arrived in Cardiff for a five week dry docking. It was April and our first Saturday marked the end of the rugby season. Bill wanted to go to the Arms Park where Cardiff was playing Harlequins but I persuaded him to watch the League match between Cardiff and Wigan instead. Played in a cold and windy open stadium with only a hundred or so spectators it was a disastrous one-sided game won by Wigan 74 to 3. I have never been to a rugby league game since! Going to the Festival Ballet was a much better choice. We saw Scheherazade and The Polovtsian Dances. Having been incarcerated on the Bothie for two years an evening of nubile bare-midriff young ladies in diaphanous pantaloons prancing around the stage was hugely erotic. After passing for Second Mate, Bill in UK and I in Cape Town, we were each sent to Singapore and appointed Officer in Charge of two Shell vessels. There was a serious shipping slump, eventually terminated by the closure of the Suez Canal in 1956, and many hundreds of ships were laid up in Singapore's eastern roads. I had the tiny Fusus, just over a 1000 dwt while Bill drew the larger case oiler (dry cargo ship) 'Cerion'. We had crews of 3 elderly quartermasters and one chief steward. There was no power on the ships and consequently no radio communication or refrigeration. The ship chandler's boat called twice a week with ice for the cold room and fresh food and since we could order what we wished, we lived high on the hog. The Shell launch 'Makota' ran a bus service 4 times a day and we could go ashore as we wished. It was the best job I have ever had but unfortunately sea time did not accrue and since we were both ambitious spent considerable time at the office angling to get the next available third mates berth. I slept in the master's cabin naturally, and, since there were incidents of dacoits raiding laid up shipping in the large dark anchorage, always had the ship's colt 45 to hand. The steward would wake me with a cup of tea and toast at 6 bells and we would discuss the menu for the day. Bill was following the same procedure on 'Cerion'. The choice was limited only by imagination so that fillet steak and eggs for breakfast was not uncommon. Sipping tea on the boat deck, one would scan the anchorage with telescope checking new arrivals until our scheduled communication time arrived - just looking out for each other. We both were concerned about communication to shore in the event of an emergency and so removed scores of batteries from the alarm bells in our ships and rigged them up in series and parallel to give the voltage and power required by the Aldis lamp. I remember putting on a for lunch for some of the officers billeted at Connell House awaiting appointment trying to outdo Bill's earlier lunch. I doubt that I did. While Bill remained in Shell we met in ports throughout the Archipelago and enjoyed some excellent nights. I last saw him in 1961 when he visited me in Liverpool where I was studying for extra's and we did a walk in the Lake District. We corresponded intermittently as late as 2002. Vale Flossie. He will be sadly missed. **John Sampson 1674.**

### **THE LEGEND LIVES ON – SAILOR MALAN 1924/25 GRAHAM JOOSTE REPORTS.**

The Military Museum in Johannesburg has honoured Sailor Malan. A new hanger has been opened, with plate glass windows and entrance into a most prestigious display. On the wall is a huge picture of Sailor with his dog Peter and the statuette he received from Indonesia for a Fighter Pilot during the Battle of Britain. This Hall is called the Sailor Malan Hall and of course mentions the General Botha. It houses a BfME109E which as we know was Sailors main adversary in the air during the defense of the British Isles. His decorations DFC and Bar, DSO and Bar, Croix de Guerre of Belgium, Military Cross

of Czechoslovakia, French Legion of Honour, Croix de Guerre of France with Palm are noted on the display.

### MAST DUTY

Remember the laggards sent up the masts of Dromedaris at Gordon's Bay? Gerry Stalling reports; "I was the one standing on the foremast mast table of the Dromedaris. It was C/off Thomas who put us there as punishment for being last in the cross country. Richard (Dick) Whipp could have been on the other mast table or maybe Johnnie (blondie) Stryder? Legassick looked up, saw us & I think he panicked. We had been told to not move, & been up there for at least an hour already, standing to attention. He got us down real quick! Needless to say, we were last not only because we didn't rush, but had a few 'smoke' breaks along the way. If we'd been more honest like some of the winners, we also would have taken short cuts instead of doing the whole Steenbras Dam roadway."

### NEWS FROM DURBAN – Chairmans Report - Durban Branch.

Apologies from the Durban Chair for the lack of news for this quarter. It is with regret that I have not had the time to be Bothy active, but will endeavour to devote more time to this slot during 2007.

It is hard to believe that a whole year has passed since my 50th reunion at the College, and how wonderful it is to recall that memorable occasion - what fun trying to place people 50 years on.

Elsewhere you will find details of the forthcoming AGM - Lets make it one to remember. In fact this is the 75th AGM of the Durban Branch - Durban was one year behind Capetown in establishing the OBA locally.

It is 60 years since the "General Botha" was scuttled in False Bay. (On the 13th May 1947) There are moves afoot to have a diver secure a plaque on the wreck in memory of the occasion. There is already considerable interest in a contingent travelling to C.T. to participate in the activities, please keep the middle of May in mind.

I learn from Fred Petters that a lapel badge is available to those who served in the armed forces up to 31/12/59. It is certainly a most beautiful badge and those who qualify can contact the following:- **Veterans Agency**, Northcross Lane, Thornton - Cleveleys, Blackpool, Lancs., 7Y5 3WF. It is also available to certain Merchant Seamen who should apply to the **Merchant Navy Association**, 9 Caxon Way, Caister, Market Rosen, L.47 6SG, England. Where do we get something for buckshee these days?? Dennis Banks has received his, so it is worthwhile to apply.

I was very sorry to hear of David Knight passing over the side. He was a great character and provided tremendous support to the Obies, especially in the days of the Merchant Navy Officers Club. On one occasion he did not go straight home after a function and his good wife called me every hour to find out where he was but eventually he did arrive home.

Our monthly luncheons continue to be very pleasant meetings at a great venue on Durban's bay.

The Naval Officers Association, battle of Trafalgar commemorative dinner was held at DLI on 21 October 2006 and as usual was a memorable event.

Derek McManus. Chairman.

**Captain David Michael Knight** (1943/44, #1304). *Extracts from a eulogy read by his daughter, Mrs Elizabeth Edwards.*

Dad, or DAVE as he was known here, moved to Scottburgh 4 years ago, after having lived in Durban all his married life. After his wife Gill died, he felt he needed to be close to family. To all those he met on the streets of Scottburgh in and about his shopping, you all filled an important part of his day. David Michael Knight was born to Arthur and Lillian knight in 1927. He was a brother to John, Pam and Patty. As a youngster, and all the grandchildren loved to hear his tales of his childhood, he was always the CAPTAIN in all their games. They would sit in the trees, with him at the top as captain and they the crew. He encouraged his sister to smoke banana leaves under the house, whereupon his grandfather made them both smoke a proper pipe. No trouble to him, he sat down and enjoyed it. When we travelled with him on the canals in England, he certainly enjoyed still being the Captain, even if it meant huffing and puffing about "this useless" crew, who wouldn't get up at 6 and get sailing! The love of the sea was in his blood. His father a Captain, in the British navy, enjoyed a wonderful career. His

diaries of the Dardanelle's, and other journeys were prized by dad, and allowed him to get to know his father a little, after he tragically died when dad was 8. He was nicknamed Bonzo, and my grandfather's entry just a day or so before he died was about fixing Bonzo's bicycle. He obviously provided great joy to his father. Dad then came to live with his mother and her parents in Durban, where he attended the Durban prep, and then was schooled at Hilton College. I know he kept snakes there, and as a child we had to visit the snake park in Durban, which I hated. Dad joined the General Botha in Simon's town and so started his career on the sea that he loved. We are so glad that he was able to see his "ship mates" this year at the 75<sup>th</sup> reunion in Durban.

Dad Joined Andrew Weir shipping, and journeyed frequently to the East, Lorenzo Marques and so on. He recently enjoyed telling us all about India. It was probably here that he cemented his love of rice, and we all know him for his quote "RICE IS LIFE". He loved Chinese foods and became an accomplished Chinese chef. Dad worked ashore for a while at Olson's breweries, where he met Gill his wife. He then joined Bank Line; tried working ashore again at Wilson and Collins but the call of the sea was too great. He just made it back for my birth after fetching the Minnita a new commission. In order to be closer to his family, dad then joined Smith's coasters and Unicorn. We will remember dad sailing past whilst visiting my grandmother, and us jumping into the car racing to the docks to see who would get their first. Many a night we would go down in our pyjamas to meet him at the docks. As the ship came alongside, he would jump off before it was tied up, to get to us. John and family in Cape Town, would wait and look out for the Inkozi from their balcony and rush down to the docks to meet him. Little Pam and Judy adored their Uncle and felt quite special when he would flash the ships lights as he sailed past. He was a dare devil, and would bring the ship in close to the shore much to the amazement of those on the beach. He got to know the coast like the back of his hand and was very well respected by all his colleagues. He was a skilled navigator, and would tell me that these modern day captains wouldn't be able to sail if they didn't have all there new fangled technical toys.

Dad believed in doing things the old way, the proper way, even so that all his woodwork was done mostly by hand. He has produced some wonderful pieces of furniture, which will serve as heirlooms, doll's houses, the rocking horse, and pirate's chests with secret drawers and treasure maps, stools, chests and so on. His joints and hand carvings are to the millimetre! Dad loved Calligraphy, and used to make his own quills at times. Most of us received envelopes, beautifully written sealed with wax and stamped. He loved egg sandwiches and going to the Durban Drive Inn, where we must have seen every cowboy movie ever made!

He was loving, loved jokes, having his back tickled, wore long socks and shorts, cheated on his diabetic diet, told pirate stories, adored his dogs, had afternoon tea on a tray in the lounge, had strong opinions about EVERYTHING, and wasn't afraid to voice them which constantly got him into hot water, or had his feet in his mouth. So long, dad, brother, friend, and grandpa.

*Sounds like a typical Bothie Boy!*

#### **UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH – Ted Fisher.**

Suffice to say we have had more than average rainfall, reservoirs are full, hosepipe bans lifted and we now look forward to more frost, snow, gales then it will be Spring!

**Social** – our combined Christmas Lunch on Sunday 3 December with Conway Solent was an excellent function at the Crown Hotel Lyndhurst. The hotel did us proud and our thanks to Chris Nelson Old Conway for the organisation – name lapel badges together with individual named menus was much appreciated by all forty odd guests present including wives/partners. We were pleased to welcome first timers Tim Cowley (60/61) with Tiki, Richard Hellyer (56/57) and Barbara, Peter Bush (56/57) and Sylvia.

Regular attendees were Donald and Kathleen Neaves, Ken and Pam Snow, Rob Myburgh and Val, John and Sheila Shone, Douglas Wrathmall and Dolly, Hugh and Rosie Scheffer, Alan and Maureen Garton, Ted and Caroline Fisher. Glenys Woudberg with daughter Karen had a spot of Sat Nav problem, however, still made the venue. Interesting in that Glenys and Tiki had not met since they last worked together in the Standard Bank Cape Town during 1968! Peter Bush had not seen Doug



Wrathmall or Richard Hellyer since leaving Bothie in 57! Photographs to view should be available off our Website.

**Contacts – James Todd (47/48)** rang in from South Shields Tyne & Wear. James has been AWOL for many years but, thanks to his Grandson and the Internet he has made contact. Kindly he let me have a wonderful historical report on his time at Redhill and first move to Gordons Bay in 48. *See his letter below.*

**Rev Arnold Hirst (53/54)** has also due to retirement and relocation been AWOL for a couple of years. Through a personal friend of Caroline he and Jill have now been tracked down in Wickham, Hampshire (near his former Parish). We hope to meet in the near future with his career details for the next Newsletter.

**Peter Heydenryck (52/53)** reported in following his and Norma's relocation to Perth W. Australia where they are now more or less settled in Applecross, a suburb of Perth. Contact e-mail: [peterheyden@bigpond.com](mailto:peterheyden@bigpond.com) so, our Australian Obies could be in contact. Peter and Norma will be missed from our shores.

**Stewart Edwards (54/55)** and Pam are back briefly in UK from their holiday pad in Florida with Stewart off shortly to the Cape for a couple of months staying partly in Gordons Bay.

A social event should be on the cards for the Spring early Summer so in the meantime may Caroline and I extend our best wishes to all for the year ahead.

**Ted Fisher** e-mail: [tedfisher@aol.com](mailto:tedfisher@aol.com) Tel: +44(0)1903 744400

**Stop press** - This awful news of the tragic death of John and Sheila Shoan (*see Achors Aweigh above*) has left Caroline and myself totally stunned. We only saw John and Sheila at the Christmas lunch in December. They were indeed a wonderful couple and have given much support to the GBOBA locally here over the years, indeed, from the time I became involved some nine years ago John and Sheila attended most functions, we spoke frequently by telephone and visited their home near Chichester. The local Bowls fraternity must be in shock too as Fishbourne Club was their haven - I reported on their joint Bowls success in their 50th Anniversary year some 18 months ago. From myself and the UK members and wives we express our sadness at this loss. **Ted Fisher.**

### **Cadet J Todd, 1947/48, #1533.**

*The following is an extract from a letter from James Todd to Ted Fisher.*

Dear Ted, First of all I would like to thank you for all the interest you have shown and all the information. I might never have got to know how strong the GBOBA is if it had not been for my grandson finding it on the internet. I joined the S. A. T. S. General Botha in January 1947 at the Redhill Camp. I was lucky in one way because I had been away at boarding school since the age of 12 years so I was an old hand but I felt really sorry for those leaving home for the first time. The sending of all civvies home getting a locker that seemed too small to keep the ship's cat in never mind all my kit the issue of a hammock which took some getting used to (wonder why they would not allow stretchers) the 6 a.m. calls with 15 minutes to get up lash up your hammock with seven turns have a shower and get dressed in P. T. rig and fall in outside for P. T. I had never seen a stiff collar and studs in my life and it took some getting used to putting on these collars. I soon realized that by becoming a batman got you out of a lot of trouble but unfortunately I can not remember who I was batman to. In 1948 when I was promoted to J. C. C. I am sure that my batman was No. 1564 J. Poerner.

While on Redhill we witnessed the sinking of the original ship which was towed out and sunk by gunfire. The only time we got out of the camp was when we were taken by lorry to play matches against other sides or going on parade. Unfortunately I came from Joburg so I did not get home on the short holidays. They did feel sorry for us once and arranged for the Senior Cadets to visit a wine farm. Unfortunately some of them came back the worst for drinking so the Junior Cadets trip was immediately canceled. I have forgotten what the punishment was in Gordon's Bay but at Redhill there was the Bothie hop and press ups. Woken up at 0530 for the punishment to be carried out on the quarter deck. Making sure you were the right religion so you were left as fire watch team. With that fire pump hand operated I do not think we could have fought a fire.



In 1948 we were transferred to Gordon's Bay and believe me it was like heaven. Beds to sleep in, boats to row, although an hours rowing one of the cutters your hands and arms felt like dropping off. Our claim to fame that year was a call for help had come in from a boat in trouble in the Bay and one cutter and crew were sent out and actually arrived at the scene before the lifeboat. When we first moved in they still had two air sea rescue boats still moored there. I never thought I would see pictures of the marching out parade from Redhill and the marching in parade at Gordon's Bay. The facilities were so much better and the people of Gordon's Bay sent a deputation to the Captain asking why the only time they saw the Cadets was when we paraded through the town and guess what they started allowing us out of camp at a weekend. Weren't the girls lucky to have all of them cadets running around? They even organised a dance in the hall. It was packed out. On the passing out parade I was presented with the John Lewis Sportmanship cup which I still have (replica) a sextant for maths I think presented by the Master Mariners of England unfortunately I do not have this prize. I have also a pair of binoculars with the name tag removed from the top and I am missing another cup I received for something. I would appreciate it if there are any records could somebody check on these last two items? As you can see I had a very productive time at the training ship and thoroughly enjoyed it in hind sight. What also sticks in my mind is doubling up to the table saluting shouting out your name and number taking off your hat and having one shilling old money dropped into your hat which took about ten minutes to find it and what delights to spend it on in the tuck shop. Being batman you were paid three pence a week and being promoted to J. C. C. I think you got an extra nine pence. I remember at Redhill odd Cadets would get a food parcel from home and if it had a tin of condensed milk in the parcel we would get the galley staff to boil it so when you opened it the milk had turned to caramel. That was heaven. In January 1949 I joined my first ship in Port Elizabeth with Cadet 1516 J. Gemmell and when the ship the MV Nuculana reached Liverpool England we were split up which the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company always did. I never came across Gemmell again but my parents who kept in touch with his parents told me that when he finished serving his apprenticeship he took his ticket before returning to South Africa. I on the other hand got leave after one year then after joining my next ship I was paid off in Singapore joined another ship in which we called in for bunkers at Cape Town in 1950 and that was the last time I had been in South Africa. I stayed at sea and got my First Mate Foreign Going ticket. In 1957 as soon as I was old enough to not be called up for national service in England and because of the length of trips I joined the River Tyne Police. In 1977 I got disillusioned with which way the police were going and I returned to sea. I took my Home Trade Masters and sailed as Captain on small coastal ships trading on the north east coast until 1991 when I was forced to retire owing to ill health.

Yours sincerely, James Todd.

#### **A MESSAGE FROM OUR WEB-MASTER.**

Dave Powell gave me some photographs last year which were given to his Mother by Mrs Pennington, widow of Captain Joe Pennington. They were obviously taken professionally and as far as I know are the only official photographic record of the ship in the late thirties. I have put them on the web site [www.generalbotha.co.za](http://www.generalbotha.co.za) under History > The Ship > Ship Photos. There are two 'albums' which I've called Captain Pennington's Photo Albums. A suitable addition on the anniversary of the scuttling? Cheers, Bill. *(I have looked at these photos and they are very interesting and of excellent quality. They give one a very good idea of life on board in those days – Scribe!).*

#### **General Botha "Southern" Lunch.**

The next GENERAL BOTHA "Southern" lunch is scheduled to take place at the Seven Seas Club, Simon's Town on Tuesday 17 April 2007 at 1200 for 1230. Reservation is essential. Please telephone Brad Wallace-Bradley on 021-786-1957 or Ian Manning on 021-782-1559 before 1700 on Friday 13 April 2007.

### **Letter from Bob Hind.**

I enjoyed reading the latest news letter particularly the story of Herbie Horsley. Unfortunately there was no mention of the contribution that Herbie made to the War Memorial Fund. I was led to believe that a lot of the fund raising from the dances went towards the War Memorial Fund and Herbie was one of the prime movers in the establishment of that fund. Could you please verify the above? Life in NZ goes along well for the Hind's and we enjoyed the company of Alan Pembroke & Tas Obrien albeit for only a short time. We are looking forward to a visit from Bill Damerell early next year when he is due to attend a Cape Horners reunion in Tauranga which is only 120 km from us. I am now well and truly retired now, but am busy as I have ever been. Play golf 2 or 3 times a week and I am the president of the Thames golf club. My 4 year old Grand daughter wants to know " where do sleep on the golf course Gramp's?" Here's wishing you all a Merry Xmas and a healthy New year. Yours aye, **Bob Hind 1884 54/55.**

### **S A SHIP SOCIETY, CAPE TOWN.**

*For those living in Cape Town who have not done so yet, I can recommend a visit on a Thursday night or Saturday afternoon to the Ship Society opposite 'F' Berth in Duncan Dock. Also for those visiting Cape Town, this is a worthwhile visit. I include the following advertisement from the Society:*

Dear Sir/Madam, I have taken the liberty of writing to you in the hope that all those interested in shipping and all things maritime, might be able to be of assistance in preserving the history of shipping in South Africa.

The S.A. Ship Society is currently renting rooms in a building in the docks, Bond 1 opposite F berth in Duncan Road, where a wealth of information and items representing shipping in S.A. are on display. The library of books and videos is in itself valuable treasures and are sought after for research purposes. The shipping paraphernalia on display also draws visitors from overseas. Meetings are held on the first and third Thursday of every month at 20h00. Guest speakers of note have to date given interesting talks and visits of interest are arranged. The last visit was a tour of the S.A.Navy's new submarine in Simonstown and the latest guest speaker spoke on Pirates & Piracy (from ancient 'gung-ho' pirates up to and including modern day piracy). This history of shipping needs to be shared by everyone as it plays a significant part in the global history of shipping. It also plays a vital role in education, especially if youngsters are to be encouraged to follow careers in shipping fields, which indirectly could be a spin off for all companies connected to shipping. What better way to incite the youth regarding shipping than by marketing the Ship Society and making it known to all. I appeal to you and all companies related to shipping, to give thought as to how the treasures of the Ship Society can be preserved and appreciated by all that visit the rooms. You may contact the Chairman Brendan Doyle 082 851 5462 email: [brendan@doylegb.co.za](mailto:brendan@doylegb.co.za) or the Secretary Pauline Brueton 021 - 434 5528 who will be only too happy to listen to your ideas and give you more information.

### **LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ABOUT CAPTAIN LEGASSICK.**

For several years I have been researching and collecting information about Captain G. V. Legassick. My intention was to write a "biographical note". This is mainly for my own interest but also for GENERAL BOTHA records and the archives. Input has been very sporadic and has come from a large variety of sources. The task has proved very interesting. I am now satisfied that all official information sources I know of have been fully explored. The biographical note – about 90 000 words - is almost ready for editing. Much of the information received has come from former GENERAL BOTHA Cadets. I have used most of their input. Before finally closing my research, I encourage anyone who may have comments, anecdotes, photographs or any other contribution, *positive or negative*, concerning Captain Legassick to send it to me at one of the following addresses before 30 April 2007: Captain Ian Manning SA Navy [Ret], 18 Forrest Way, GLENCAIRN 7975. Or at my e-Mail address: [imanning@iafrica.com](mailto:imanning@iafrica.com).

## **THE CLIPPERS: The fastest square-riggers in the World.**

**By Alastair Mackay 1944/45, #1366.**

### **PART I.**

*This is the first of a series that will be published in the next few news letters which I trust you will find interesting.*

The Clippers were exceptionally fast sailing ships, developed primarily in the United States and latterly in Britain, between 1820 and 1870. The term probably arose from people using expressions like "going at a good clip", or "clipping time off the passage". There were many factors which contributed to the building of these ships – the earliest originating in Baltimore U.S. after the 1750's - the first "Baltimore Clippers" being small fast, cutter, or schooner rigged, ships with two masts, as seen in the picture.

These Baltimore Clippers were built for all the wrong reasons, as we look back, judgmentally, today. There was a demand from American privateers – to prey upon British merchant ships; don't forget the famous Boston Tea Party of 1771, followed by the War of Independence. There was a demand from pirates – to prey on any ships laden with valuable cargoes; like certain politicians the Governor of North Carolina looked the other way when a pirate was looking for a quiet cove to lie up in! There was a demand from slave traders – to supply the planters in the Southern States – and smugglers needed a nippy vessel to supply contraband goods to anyone prepared to buy them; much like today. These ships, being small and fast, sailed the coastlines of the Americas, Caribbean, and as far as North Africa and Europe. However, the Brits also used them, to hunt down the privateers and pirates, and all the captured vessels were taken back to England; where they were measured, and their dimensions and proportions carefully noted, and made available for shipbuilders to incorporate in new buildings. One of the main features of a clipper was a relatively slim hull, compared to earlier ships, such as the East Indiamen. These were bluff bowed and heavily built with a broad beam to maximise cargo stowage, for the trade between Europe and the East. The fine lines of the clippers were extended during the 1800's, the proportions between beam (width) and length growing from four beams to 5.6 beams about 1850 and by 1860 had reached 7.2 beams. The other main feature was the huge spread of sails, on lofty masts, and very wide yards; these being extended to carry studding (stun') sails. The advent of steam tugs, in the 1850's encouraged the building of very long sailing ships – difficult to handle in port – as they could be towed in and berthed with their assistance.

An important feature was the calibre of their captains – seamen of the highest quality, who had a mania for speed, and drove their ships and crews to the limits of their strength. The clippers flew before the wind, through the heaviest seas, and it was said that the crews would wager their first month's wages on the outcome of the voyage, in their quest to be the first ship home with their cargo. One should remember that although these ships may have been difficult to handle in port, their fine lines, with forty or fifty sails of every shape and size, enabled them to sail in every direction except straight into the wind or up to a point (11.25°) on either side.

### **THE GREAT MIGRANT RUSH.**

The world was changing, politically speaking, and many historic factors influenced Clipper Ship development. The Napoleonic wars were over by 1815, and, as Europe settled down, a movement of peoples to the Americas, Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand, seeking a better life, grew to a flood. All these people had to travel by sailing ships, which, in the early 1800's, would have been mainly large slow East Indiamen. Migrants endured great hardships on the long tedious voyages; death from scurvy was an ever present threat to the crews, and posed an equally dire threat to the passengers, quite apart from other risks due to shipwreck or foundering at sea. A ship offering a fast passage measured in weeks, instead of months, became a popular choice; and many shipowners started focusing on fast passages for emigrants when they built new ships. In the period 1815 to 1875 there were 8,5 million emigrants from the British Isles alone, of which 350 000 received government assistance. After 1830 there were 60 000 per annum entering the U.S., and the Irish potato famine of 1847 made these numbers go up by 50%. One mustn't forget that France, Spain, Germany, Italy, and Greece, all have a big part in the population of the Americas.

George Thompson started the Aberdeen Line in 1825, at the age of 21, with six partners. They had three small fast brigs, of which the largest was "Sir William Wallace" of 321 tons. They were striking

looking ships with dark green hulls and white masts and fittings, and their first trade was the supply of fast passages from London to Quebec, mainly for migrant passengers, and returning with timber, furs and wheat. The Aberdeen Line prospered and expanded into more and bigger ships, and, with N. America, traded into the Baltic, Mediterranean, then, later, going around the Cape of Good Hope, to Australasia and the Orient. Thompson was one of many shipowners around at that time, who realized that they had to change radically in order to compete on the world shipping scene. I mention his name because, further on, I will tell you about his clipper "Thermopylae".

*To be continued ... ..*

### **Christmas Cracker funnies!**

We had a great turn out of Obies and their partners for the lunch in December at Mowbray G.C., and it was great to have some overseas visitors such as Alistair Struthers and Andy Fotheringham. We also had 16 widows of Obies, and I think there were some fond memories and reunions. Eight members of the Society of Master Mariners and their partners also joined us. Well the food and service may not have been the greatest, but the fellowship and humour made all the difference. Did you take note of the contents of your Christmas cracker? I picked up the following from the garbage littered about after the lunch in December at Mowbray GC.

What do you call a woodpecker with no beak?	A headbanger!
Why can't bananas sunbathe?	Because they peel!
Why did the prune go out with the sultana?	Because he couldn't find a date!
What do you call a snowman with a sun tan?	A puddle!
How do you make a Mexican chilli?	Take him to the North Pole!
What did the big phone say to the little phone?	You're too young to be engaged!
Why did the golfer wear two pairs of trousers?	In case he got a hole in one!

### **Holiday Greetings to Everyone**

*Apologies to those who have seen this. I know it has done the rounds, but for those who have not I thought this was a very clever festive message.*

I wanted to send some sort of holiday greeting to my friends, but it is so difficult in today's world to know exactly what to say without offending someone.

So I met with my attorney yesterday, and on his advice I wish to say the following:

Please accept with no obligation, implied or implicit, my best wishes for an environmentally conscious, socially responsible, low stress, nonaddictive, gender neutral celebration of the solstice holiday, practiced with the most enjoyable traditions of religious persuasion or secular practices of your choice with respect for the religious/secular persuasions and/or traditions of others, or their choice not to practice religious or secular traditions at all.

I also wish you a fiscally successful, personally fulfilling and medically uncomplicated recognition of the onset of the generally accepted calendar year 2007, but not without due respect for the calendars of choice of other cultures whose contributions to society have helped make our country great (not to imply that our country is necessarily greater than any other country) and without regard to the race, creed, colour, age, physical ability, religious faith or sexual preference of the wishee.

By accepting this greeting, you are accepting these terms:

This greeting is subject to clarification or withdrawal. It is freely transferable with no alteration to the original greeting. It implies no promise by the wisher to actually implement any of the wishes for her/himself or others and is void where prohibited by law, and is revocable at the sole discretion of the wisher. This wish is warranted to perform as expected within the usual application of good tidings for a period of one year or until the issuance of a subsequent holiday greeting, whichever comes first, and warranty is limited to replacement of this wish or issuance of a new wish at the sole discretion of the wisher.

Disclaimer: No trees were harmed in the sending of this message; however, a significant number of electrons were slightly inconvenienced.

*And on that note I leave you to get on with the remaining 10½ months of the year in the least complicated manner.*

"The Pessimist complains about the wind, the Optimist expects it to change and the Realist adjusts his sails." "A cloudy day is no match for a sunny disposition." (author unknown)

*I look forward to hearing from you with your bid for the badge. Scribe – [dhenwood@iafrica.com](mailto:dhenwood@iafrica.com).*