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GENERAL BOTHA OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

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

FEBRUARY 2014 JOINT NEWSLETTER

Has your address changed? Please send your updated details to Tony Nicholas Chairman Cape Town (details above).
Do you have an interesting article for this newsletter? Please send your contributions to Dennis Henwood,
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Can you read this Newsletter? If not please let us know. We can send you larger print if it is necessary.

FORTHCOMING CAPE TOWN EVENTS

- Saturday 1st March 2014, 1030 for 1100 – Annual General Meeting, Kelvin Grove Club, Camp Ground Road, Newlands, next door to Newlands Cricket Club.
- Saturday 1st March 2014, 1230 for 1300 – Commissioning Day Lunch, Kelvin Grove Club, Camp Ground Road, Newlands, next door to Newlands Cricket Club. Partners welcome. Dress; club blazer and tie preferred or ladies equivalent. Price R265 p.p [NOTE same price as 2012 & 2103], cash bar. Should any member find difficulty with the price please contact a committee member. What is vitally important to us is that you and your wife attend the function. We look forward to seeing you all there on the day.
- Sunday 2nd March 2014 @ 1000 – War Memorial Service, at our cenotaph, corner of Heerengracht and Hertzog Boulevard, Cape Town. The service shall be followed by sumptuous refreshments at the Mission to Seafarers. In case of inclement weather the service shall be held at the Mission to Seafarers, Duncan Road, Table Bay Harbour. Dress; club blazer and tie preferred or lounge suit, with medals, or ladies equivalent.
- Booking for the Commissioning Day Lunch is important, please RSVP by Tuesday 25th February 2014 to:
 - Kathy or Jacky Nicholas: phone 021-788 5957
 - Email: cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za
 - Facsimile: 086 604 0811
 - **Pre-payment for the Commissioning Day Lunch would be appreciated by our over stressed Treasurer. Payment details in the Slop Chest section of this newsletter.**
- Tuesday 11th March, 1230 for 1300 – Pub lunch, Royal Cape Yacht Club.

Durban AGM & Dinner – Friday 14 March 18:30 for 19:00 at Royal Natal Yacht Club. Cost R130pp. Further details will be advised by Derek McManus (Tel.: 031 7673719).

FROM THE BRIDGE OF s.s. CAPE TOWN

We have successfully arrived in 2014 and our GBOBA appears to go from strength to strength, with the support of the member base. There were, I am sure, some notable events or milestones for us in 2013 but one takes top honour in my memory, Lawhill Maritime Centre. Many of us again attended their graduation and awards ceremony in November which, as I have written every year, is a most moving experience. Here are a group of young South Africans every year graduating with a trade in their hands, a highly respected trade. Our annual award of a pair of binoculars was won by Sinesipho Mvovo; a much valued award I may add. It was also announced at the ceremony that Old Boy Sean Day, class 1967, is providing scholarships for deserving grades 11 & 12 pupils there. There are so many Bothie Boys involved or supporting Lawhill it is humbling at times. Lawhill Maritime Centre recently won a most prestigious award, Brian Ingpen writes; "I attended the national awards ceremony for the Impumelelo Foundation and I am delighted to let you know that Lawhill won one of four Platinum Awards (this is the top category – the other categories being gold and silver)! We are really pleased with this!" Indeed, Bravo Zulu Brian. We also hosted a very successful Maritime Golf Day in support of our GBOBA Bursary Fund in November, but more about the bursary fund elsewhere in this publication.

There are two class reunions planned to coincide with our *Bothie weekend* first weekend of March this year, namely classes 1964 & 1953/54. We are always very pleased to host these as they bring classmates together who have not met for many a year, the stories they tell are entertaining and some hair rising but worthy of a Bothie Boy.

Our Garden Route group has also been active and a group of them recently attended a memorial service there. An Old Conway member, Andrew Gray, reports; "As the only Old Conway (it seems!) in the Mossel Bay area, I joined up with the OBs at the Cenotaph last Sunday [November] morning, rigged out in my blazer etc., and was privileged to be able lay a cross on the Memorial in remembrance of the many Merchant Navy men who lost their lives in the two great wars. The only Worcester Old Boy was unable to be present."

Well the rugby season is starting soon, so I look forward to exciting Saturday afternoons with a case of cold beer on hand. Hope my blood pressure can handle some of the games. Cheers all.

SCRANBAG

P. van GYSEN 1976 #2558. Peter's wife Sandy sadly passed away recently. Many of us knew Sandy well and we all had much fun together. We shall miss her. Peter has again relocated back to Abu Dhabi; "to carry on working for London Offshore Consultants doing mainly offshore oil and gas work with some P&I "thingies" as well. If anybody is passing through this way, my e-mail is psvgysen@gmail.com and contact is more than welcomed."

J.B. GOUS 1958/59 #2103. Johan's daughter, Zetta, has followed closely in her father's footsteps and has recently been promoted to Master with Safmarine/Maersk. A photograph of the two of them together shows a hint of a smile from Johan, but I am positive he is very proud of Zetta.

R.C.J. YOUNG 1976 #2544. Rob was initially at sea with Unicorn Lines until July 1986 after obtaining Master's Foreign Going (Class 1). Transferred ashore in various management positions until January 1996. Left Unicorn Lines and started own company in Johannesburg. Returned to Durban July 2000 and joined Lykes Lines in February 2001 in their operations department. Hapag Lloyd purchased CP Ships [Lykes Lines] in 2006. 2013 left Hapag Lloyd and appears to be employed in Mauritius. We look forward to further news from Rob.

A.L. VERMAAK 1983 #2819. 1995 Allan was manager of Voigt Shipping, Port of Richards Bay. Voight was bought by Inchcape Shipping and in 1999 Allan relocated to Cape Town as Regional Manager. Joined Inchcape Shipping in London January 2007 as their General Manager, Global Bulk Services and subsequently returned to Cape Town in same position. 2013 owner of Fairships, a ships agency company based in Cape Town.

T.W. FRASER 1979 #2643. Tom was browsing our GBOBA website recently which he realized was rather outdated prompting him to communicate an update. Wish all members were so diligent, thanks Tom. "1976 - 1977: National Service in the South African National Defense Force and Citizen Force

Officer for 17 Years. I was awarded 5 x medals. These included the Chief of the SANDF Commendation Medal for "Extraordinary Service rendered to the Republic of South Africa", relating to a particular large operation I was involved in. I am currently [2014] a reserve officer (Operations and Intelligence), with the substantive rank of Major (Lieutenant Commander in Navy speak).

1977 - 1982: Sailed with Safmarine and Unicorn Shipping Lines for some 6 years as a cadet and 3rd Officer. During this time I thoroughly travelled and saw the world.

1983 - 1985: I commenced my business career as a trainee, then General Retail Manager with the OK Bazaars in its heyday. I soon developed a knack for fixing problem branches.

1985 - 1997: Head-hunted into the Listed PG (Plate Glass) Group and was appointed to PG Bison as Group Marketing Executive. I was instrumental in the brand identity change of PG Wood to PG Bison. Completed an IMM Diploma in Marketing Management & the two-year Unisa Graduate School of Business Advanced Executive Program, (Cum Laude). During this period I was also a non-executive director of African Builders (Pty) Ltd for 6 years.

1998 - 1999: Headhunted by Wilsonart International, a Texas, USA based global company. Spent time in the USA then appointed Executive - Africa International Operations, based in Johannesburg.

1999 - 2010: Headhunted by Murray & Roberts and appointed as Group Export and Marketing Director of Group operating company Harvey Roofing Products (Pty) Limited. In 2001 I was appointed to the Global Corporate Office of the Murray & Roberts group in Bedfordview, Johannesburg, as Group Brand Executive. I had Group executive oversight for Brand Management & Marketing Communications across the Group's 35 operations worldwide.

2010 to present: Headhunted out of London and currently Group Brand & Communications Executive of Tenova Mining & Minerals, a part of the Italian owned global Techint Group, which does some € 25 billion turnover per annum.

1997 to present [2014]: Guest Lecturing, Public Speaking & Consulting - : In parallel to all the above, I continue to deliver guest lectureships at University Graduate Schools of Business on Strategic Marketing, Brand Management and Communications. I am also an active at subject related public conferences as Chairman and Speaker. I have also consulted to listed companies, locally and regionally in Africa.”

J.A. BIRTLES 1973 #2430. Joe recently provided sponsorship to our GBOBA Bursary Fund Golf Day fundraiser and this prompted some correspondence between us, having not met for many years. Joe, your contribution is highly appreciated. “Started with Safmarine on the S.A. Vergelegen 18/01/1972 and did the longest service, 10.82 months. In 1983 spent 11.34 months in Shimizu attending the building of the Sea class bulkers.

At the beginning of 2000 I was on the Ferosa which was taken over by Enterprise Shipping. Unfortunately the Management and myself were not too compatible and they offered me retrenchment which I gladly accepted. During my leave / retrenchment I forwarded my CV to numerous companies and was picked up by Safmarine / Maersk in Cape Town, they offered me a Chief Officer's job which I accepted towards the end of 2000. Strangely enough I was quite happy in this position and stayed as Chief Officer until I was promoted to Master once again on the Safmarine Concord 27/07/2004. During these last tours of duty the one that stands out is probably the handing over of the Oranje, 16/12/10 to 07/01/12 in China to Greek owners, last container vessel on the South African Registry.

Retired in May 2012 on attaining the age of 60 and subsequently I am working back to back on the Safmarine Chilka, 3 on 3 off and am basically on voyage contract.

When I sign off here I will have basically 20 years as Master, 14 as Chief Officer and 42 years in service.” We look forward to meeting again Joe.

I.B.T. MACPHERSON 1983 #2808. The galley wireless informed me that Iain had attended the Durban branch December lunch and information had been gleaned over a few pints that Iain had moved again. The galley wireless proved to be incorrect on one aspect but accurate on another. “Your hearing must be going as I did not attend the lunch in Durban recently! I have however relocated to Singapore. A brief resume update; 2009: transferred to Kuala Lumpur - Project Director for Tradeship (of which BIDM was a subsidiary). 2012: joined IBM in Singapore as Senior Managing Consultant - currently in

the role of Solution Architect for a customized SAP application implementation for NOL.” Wonder if this translates into English?

J.N. STRYDER 1953/54 #1855. Johnnie Stryder was the real "Bolandse Seuntjie", hailing from Fransch Hoek High School. He was a quiet and retiring lad with an unfortunate penchant for landing in trouble with the authorities. On leaving the "Botha" he drifted into the financial world and eventually established his own finance business. Johnnie also started building, renovating and selling houses, eventually ending up in Gansbaai before retiring to Seaview in Port Elizabeth where he still lives.

W.R. BOWLES 1953/54 #1810. Bill Bowles exchanged the strict Brothers of St Joseph's College, Rondebosch (Marist Brothers) for the rigors of the General Botha, where he won the Senior Certificate Prize for English. On leaving the General Botha, Bill married his childhood sweetheart, Betty Docherty and took a job with the Cape Times Ltd in the photo-lithographic section. He was the fifth generation of his family to follow a career in Lithography.

Unfortunately his first marriage ended in divorce when Betty refused to accompany him in a career change move to Johannesburg. During this period Bill travelled to Japan and Hong Kong and also met his soul-mate Peggy who consented to marry him in June 1961. A marriage that lasted through 48 years ending only at Peggy's passing in August 2009 after contracting Alzheimer's Disease.

His career moved from the then Transvaal to Mossel Bay from where he opened and ran various companies extending to both Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. Fate, however, intervened in the form of Peggy's illness and Bill personally undertook the care of the love of his life for almost three years at Nazareth House Port Elizabeth until her passing.

He retired from all forms of business activity in the early 2000's and now lives (although in poor health) in Port Elizabeth where he uses his flair for the written word and passes the time in this pursuit which has included two novels and an anthology to date.

M.D.W. VILJOEN 1979 #2662. Mike practices the Duty part of our motto, he informed me of his change of address before I reported him AWOL, Bravo Zulu Mike. "I was working for SAMSA in Cape Town as Deputy Principal Officer, but could not get comfortable with the daily grind in the traffic to work and back, so I accepted a position as Master with De Beers Marine Namibia on the mining vessel "Debmar Atlantic". After 18 months there, SAMSA offered me a position in their Saldanha Bay Office, which I accepted without hesitation. This is a whole new lifestyle for my family and we are very excited about the move to Langebaan. The recently announced IDZ in Saldanha is also something to look forward to, as the port is destined to become a service hub for the oil and gas industry, with obvious spin-offs to the local community. I was visiting the Transocean rig "Sedco 702" in Saldanha today, which is undergoing a refit at the MPT. Their support of the local community is quite phenomenal."

R.P. RYAN 1976 #2540. Roger was another defaulter who went AWOL but my network of mates around the country eventually brought him back onto our parade. 1995 - Port Natal Stevedores, Durban. 2013 Cargo Superintendent with Marine Care & Solutions. Joined Unicorn Shipping lines in 1975. Unicorn 1975 -1982 (sailed as chief officer). Joined Trident Marine 1982 (Marine superintendent), Trident Marine 1982-1983. Joined Natal Lashing Services 1983 - 1999 (Manager). Natal Lashing Services bought out by P&O Ports Services 1999, P&O Port Services 1999-2006 (Operations Manager). P&O Ports bought out by DPW, DPW 2006-2008(Operations Manager). 2008 Started my own company MCS (Marine Care & Solutions), 2008- present, MCS doing Super Cargo/Port Captains work mainly for Scan-Trans Shipping Aps /Intermarine World Wide. "Nearly all my work is out of South Africa."

R.A. DICKINSON 1976 #2549. Andy Fotheringham, somewhere in Aus, decides to contact his class mate Ron somewhere in China. Then Andy forwards me Ron's reply by Andy's subject line simply reads "hello Ron". Andy, how am I supposed to know who "hello Ron" is? Never mind, I managed to narrow the suspects down. "I am still in China, in a very rural part of China where I am one of about 25 foreigners in a city of 1.5 million!! The majority of these foreigners are English teachers of dubious distinction but none with a solid background in marine ancestry, hence if a Bothie boy was ever to pass this part of the world; it would most likely be on a ship and predominantly out to sea a way. I live in a city called Rizhao and work in a district called Lanshan and with the world markets the way they are,

very seldom get any business travel to any place around the region or further afield. Am still working for the Dutch company Vopak, the largest independent storage company for oils chemicals and gases and thoroughly enjoying the type of work that is required. China is a huge market and a huge country but too often is covered in a veil of difficulty for foreigners to make anything constructive here. Persistence and hard work (which should have been Bothie's motto) are the only things that differentiate a successful venture in this land as all else is short "termism" - I should know as I have been here just over four years and am beginning to feel as though I am making headway. Love the OB news coming through as it does but feel very distanced from being able to contribute in any way."

G.K. JOOSTE 1952/53 #1772. Had recent communication with Graham who writes; "I have moved from Tarkastad to Gonubie into a retirement centre and still write a monthly article for Farmers Weekly called Great Tales. Three articles about the GB were published namely, The Lendary Training Ship, No Recognition For Service (Gus) and The Cruise of the Kimberley. I am very busy doing historical research about the Boer War and my two books Innocent Blood and So Het Hulle Gesterf were well received many years ago. Tony, please ask any Obie in the Eastern Cape to contact me at gkjooste@gmail.com. Maybe something could develop." Yes, perhaps the re-launch of a GBOBA branch, or at least a regular get together over a few pints to swop salty tales.

A. Keller 1992. Antoinette has been quietly going about her business in SAMSA Cape Town and manly a student has been examined by her, hopefully Antoinette is not as fearsome as our past examiners. "1992 – 2005 at sea. 2007 – 2010 joined Safmarine ashore as Marine Superintendent with a short stint within the LOC as result of the Technical Organisation's functions transferred to Singapore. 2011 to date: employed by SAMSA as ship surveyor and deck examiner with appointment in 2012 as Deputy Principal Officer in SAMSA Cape Town office."

A.E. CRABBE 1969 #2365. Tony was until recently with Platinum Yacht Management in Dubai as Marine Superintendent. He has left there for a position in Abu Dhabi. We await further news.

M. DOWNES 1985 #2861. From New Zealand Mike moved to Cairns in Australia a few months ago. We know not what he is doing there and await further news from Mike.

R. Pawley 1971 #2400. Roger, a very proud father telephoned last December to tell us of his son, Steven, successful trip through Europe and Africa. This was no ordinary trip, as Steven and a friend, Reza Pakravan, successfully cycled from North Kapp in Norway to Cape Town, a distance of 18,000km through 21 countries, unsupported and carrying 30kg of equipment. This was achieved in 102 days without any major incident or accident. While Steven may not be a Bothie boy, GBOBA may also be proud of his achievement. Steven and his brother, Myles, were often in the past good choices to include in the Old Boys cricket team. Congratulations to the Pauley family. You may read more about this epic cycle trip at www.kapptocape.com.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

P.K. VAN RENSBURG 1972. Paul joined Safmarine as a cadet 1971 and worked his way through the ranks to Master. He had been with the company, latterly with Smit Amandla Marine, for 43 years and a Master for 20+ years. Passed away 14/01/2014.

L.M. LUYT 1954/55. Deceased 12/01/2014. After leaving the General Botha, Len returned to his home in Johannesburg where he joined The Shell Company of South Africa as a Marketing Trainee under the auspices of his father, an Executive of that Company.

His father's early death brought to an end what Len believed would have been a lifelong career with Shell. He had enjoyed every minute of a four year long intensive training period, but more as a dare than for any other reason, Len replied to an advertisement in the Sunday Times which called for applications for entry into the Northern Rhodesia Police Force. Six months after the dare, with forms and references from everyone but the Pope (including Captain Gus Legassick), Len found himself at the NRP training college in Lilayi, outside of Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia.

After a thrilling six moths training period, Len was posted to Ndola, as an Assistant Inspector, at first carrying out general duties and then, as a patrol car driver.

This was at the height of rising anarchy in the Belgium Congo, when the President Elect of the Republic of the Congo, Patrice Lumumba, was assassinated.

Len was one of the police officers seconded to the Belgium paratroopers when troops from Belgium (to whom the Congo had belonged), were sent to quell the rioting and pillaging of the country.

They were crazy days for a young South African, with excitement every day as Northern Rhodesia and Kenneth Kaunda were on the road to independence from Britain.

Len was very much involved in the political meetings which in those days, were held by UNIP, over weekends, where Kaunda would address thousands of his countrymen, from the top of an anthill (some as high as five meters, and six to eight meters in diameter), in the townships, whilst the Riot Police and the army surrounded those meeting places, armed with rifles, sten guns and even bren guns.

All to no avail of course, because on the 24th of October 1963 the flag of Zambia was raised for the first time, at midnight, in the Dag Hammerschold Stadium, Ndola. Len was there that night.

Not long after, the Zambian government wanted Len to surrender his South African passport, being an officer in the Zambian Government services, and thus ended that chapter of Len's career when he chose to resign and return to South Africa.

Whilst in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia, on his way back to South Africa by car, Len responded to a newspaper advertisement for a representative with a very large firm of Manufacturers Representatives, and started work the next day, selling every imaginable product including liquor, confectionary, fancy goods, tobacco lines, groceries, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, ethical lines and toys.

Len covered every city and town from Beit Bridge to Chirundu and traveled constantly, week after week, and enjoying every minute in representing some of the most famous House Brands from throughout the world.

Four years later Len was transferred to a now very independent Zambia, to the Ndola office of the same company where he was back again in familiar territory, calling on the well known towns of Chingola, Bancroft, Mufalaru, Luyansha, Broken Hill and Lusaka.

Back once again in South Africa, after enough of all the rumblings of independence now starting in Southern Rhodesia, Len was offered the opportunity to represent the agents for Omega watches, throughout South Africa, and so, once again, for four years, Len travelled the roads of South Africa, South West, Botswana, until being transferred to Cape Town to open a Regional Office for Omega, and be responsible for the Western and Eastern Cape and the O.F.S.

During those years Len received training in Switzerland, and other major cities of Europe and England, covering every aspect of the appointment of Omega stockists, (some prestigious jewelers waiting as long as twelve years before being appointed as Official Omega stockists!)

Ever evolving progress in the Japanese watch industry caused the downfall of many Swiss watch manufacturers and this eventually caused Len to return to Johannesburg as the National Sales and Marketing Manager for a national chain of up market jewelers.

Len's passion for motor cars eventually caught up with him when he had the opportunity to join the motor industry, first in a management position with Toyota South Africa and then with Nissan South Africa, where, once again he was on the move, transferred back to Cape Town as General Manager responsible for the fleet needs of the entire Sanlam/Sankorp group of companies.

It was here, in the automobile industry where Len met his future wife, the Purchasing Manager of a major insurance company.

Len and his wife, who herself retired in June 2010, were both very keen motor enthusiasts, and very much involved with almost all motor manufactures and their dealers and were fortunate enough to attend the launch of almost every new vehicle model onto the South African market, throughout the country, and which keep the adrenaline flowing for both Len and his wife.

Whilst cars were Len's first passion, ships were his second, and he never stopped regretting that at the time of leaving the Bothie, Len did not have the opportunity to go to sea.

By the way, that crazy, "laugh a minute", lovable character who was at the Bothie as Len's senior, and who spent many years at sea, was none other than Barry Downing, Len's cousin.

F. REDGMENT 1939/40. 1941 Frank was appointed Midshipman R.N.R. and joined HMS Cornwall. Served on her until she was sunk by the Japanese on the 5th of April 1942. Then served in HMS Anthony, HMS Whimbrel which included the invasion of Sicily and the Normandy invasion, and HMS Test. 1945 demobilized and after a few years in various jobs joined Messers Josiah Parkes and Sons,

manufacturers of Union Locks, and due course became Sales Director and then Managing Director until retirement. Deceased 24/12/2013. (see *Gauteng Branch Newsletter Page 9*)

J.A. TAYLOR 1944/45. John served his cadetship on various British India Steam Navigation Company vessels. After obtaining Second Mates Certificate did one voyage on the S.A.R. & H vessel 'Erica' and then rejoined B.I. After obtaining Chief Officers Certificate joined the Mining Industry, shaft sinking. 1958, emigrated to the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Sand shafts on the Copperbelt and worked on the tunnels at Kariba. Worked on the Copperbelt until 1974, emigrated to Rhodesia. 1978, returned to South Africa. Joined Aberdare Cables (Pty) Ltd as Commercial Manager. Deceased 18th October 2013.

A.R. CHRISTIE 1946/47. Class mate Warwick Stodel writes; "I have just received a note from his very caring wife Molly in the U.K that my mate Alwyn Christie (46/47) passed away on October. 31st. after a very long illness. What a wonderful lady she is, having nursed him through such a long period of illness.

Having not seen him since 1947, some years back he spotted my name in one of your newsletters and connected with me. We had been close friends in our Bothie days and as I lived in Clovelly he would come home with me for weekends as he was not from Cape Town.

As a result of him finding me, we set up that in 2005, whilst passing through the U.K., Patsy and I were able to spend a few wonderful days with him and Molly at their home in Southampton, he had already been ill for some considerable time prior to our visit.

I smile as I recall what a brave, kind and soft hearted fellow he was. He had a lovely garden to which he encouraged birds by putting out feed for them but was plagued by the local squirrels which would come and eat the bird food. So he put out a cage trap, caught the squirrels, then drove out to a nearby forest where he released them again!

He'd finished his life at sea as an engineer some while back; had to quit as a result of an eye injury."

After G.B. Alwyn served his apprenticeship with Southern Steamships on the T2 tanker 'President Brand'. After obtaining Second Officer's Certificate joined the Royal Fleet Auxillary after a working trip to the U.K. on the Pretoria Castle as AB. Lost the sight in his right eye after an accident on board and swallowed the anchor three weeks short of Master's Certificate. Following 2 years at a Government Training Centre and night school, took up engineering with a local Portsmouth firm as a Draughtsman. Later studied environmental engineering and joined another firm for 10 years going from Draughtsman to Technical Sales Manager. Left to start own contracting company designing, manufacturing and installing systems. Retired in 1995. Deceased 31/10/2103.

R.E. JOHNSTON 1942/43. Roy "Johnny" passed away 06/09/2013.

January 1944 to September 1948 - Union Castle Line, Cadet to Forth Officer.

1948 - Learner Surveyor in Cape Town City Council. Attended UCT part time studying to be a Land Surveyor. 1952 - 1963 - to Salisbury, Rhodesia, Land Surveying throughout Rhodesia in private practice. 1963 - to Johannesburg, worked in N.C.R. Computers in the selling side. 1964 - 1992 - started own land survey practice in Johannesburg. 1966 - Qualified as a Town Planner at Wits University. 1992 - Left survey practice in Johannesburg to start in Simons Town as a Land Surveyor, semi retired. Finally retired in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

H. WESTER 1982. Henk passed away unexpectedly in Maputo last November. Henk first sailed with Unicorn. 1999 - at sea with Aquamarit of Saudi Arabia. 2012 Maputo Harbour Master, Mozambique.

Shipmate Graham Douglas class 1978 writes; "Henk did his first few voyages at sea about 1981, as a cadet, with me, when I was 3rd Mate on the Umfolozi (Unicorn) to Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong. We conducted the first shipment of the RIGIGATA project. This was the dismantling of a aluminum smelter in Niagata, Japan, piece by piece, bolt by bolt and its shipment and re-assembly in Richards Bay for Alusaf. If my memory serves me correct there was 12 shipments in total. We then sailed to Europe (Germany, Holland, Belgium, Spain, UK), then to East coast of America (Charleston, New Port News, Richmond), back to Europe then to South America, (Colombia via the Panama canal) then back to a full SAF charter to East Coast of America again, returning to Cape Town ex New York.

This was probably the longest a Unicorn vessel was away from the RSA coast and Henk performed very well and received a great amount of experience during this 9 month period as did all those on board.

This was also, the first encounter for Henk and all on board, to be boarded by pirates while at anchor in Barranquilla, Colombia. All the hatch jacks, shackles etc were stolen and after a brief battle on the foredeck with our Zulu crew, the pirates bailed over the side into a fast flowing river. The Navy came out the next day to investigate the incident and informed the Captain, that we would be more than likely, be approached to buy back our equipment. This never happened as it later surfaced that one or more of them had drowned in the river. You may understand then why nobody ventured ashore in that port!!!

We never the less, had to open cargo hatches using Stulken derricks (50T), until reaching the USA where new jacks were delivered.”

B.G. ERSKINE 1943/45. “Berry” served his cadetship in Union Castle, sailed as a Junior Officer on mail ships. Thereafter joined British Tanker Company. Delivered two trawlers, Cape Infanta and Cape Columbine to I&J in Cape Town. Both built in Lubeck, Germany. Joined the S.A. Harbour Service in 1956. Retired in 1989 as Senior Pilot. Deceased 26/09/2013.

K.V. DUFFETT 1946/47. Keith was reported deceased recently. Reported in "Old Salts" 1947/48 Keith had joined the 'President Steyn' as an Apprentice Officer. Further details of Keith's career would be welcomed.

E.L. PARSONS 1959/60. Eddie passed away 24th January shortly after speaking to past shipmate Steve Bayman on the phone. After Bothie Eddie decided on fishing as a career, joined I&J on their fishing fleet and eventually promoted to Skipper. Later went into a partnership on his own fishing vessel Donna Maria. It was a tough profession requiring very long voyages out.

Our sincere condolences to family and shipmates.

AWOL

Don Rowe 1956/57 last known in Durban. I have an email address and phone number for him but he remains unresponsive to me for weeks/months. Anyone have any contact with Don?

John Wells 1943/44 last known in Hout Bay, moved no forwarding address.

Joe Tennant 1938/39 last known in Donvale, Australia.

All, please assist in tracing these AWOLs.

UNDER THE WHITE ENSIGN – RAY DICKIN 1937/39

Members may recall that we mentioned this very interesting book in this publication a few years ago. The S.A. Naval Heritage Trust has recently published the book in excellent format. Details on our GBOBA website.

This “blurb” [why do they call it blurb?] written by Barry Cullen GB 1953/54:

When four British midshipmen were delayed in their sea journey to South Africa, *General Botha* Cadet Ray Dickin and three of his shipmates were drafted, at break neck speed (“navy style”), as replacements to HMS *Dorsetshire* in Simon's Town.

This is the amazing story of Ray's adventures while serving in the wartime Royal Navy, worthwhile and lively reading to the end. Even more remarkable in that Ray was able to dictate his memoirs to tape between the ages of 80 and 83.

There are two underlying themes. First, the tale is set against the all-pervading backdrop of the Second World War. While on board HMS *Dorsetshire* although Ray came close to action in the South Atlantic, it was later when serving in destroyers and corvettes that he experienced action at sea in the Aegean and Mediterranean both during minesweeping operations and whilst escorting supply convoys for the Allies' during their North African campaign. Attacked and sunk? Yes, but I will not pre-empt Ray's story. 19 years old at the time, the horrors of war were grim, the sinking of one's ship horrendous, but in the more relaxed times at home port base waiting for action, or with a few days leave, life could also be good!

And this is where the second, and for me strongest, underlying theme of this book comes through: We share in these eventful times, as seen through the eyes of a 17/19 year old midshipman, later sub-lieutenant, then lieutenant in his early twenties. The excitement of going ashore in foreign ports, the wonderful hospitality given to the boys in blue by the 'expat' families, the girls, the parties. They lived life to the full! But as Ray concludes, these were the remarkable and often painful contradictions of war.

Gauteng Branch Newsletter

We lost Frank Redgement, number 1057, 1939/40 after a long illness on 24th December 2013. An amazing eulogy was delivered at his memorial service, telling us of his distinguished war service years in the Royal Navy. He was the recipient of many medals for participation in campaigns in many theatres of war around the world. The 1939 to 1945 Star, The Atlantic Star, The Africa Star, The Burma Star, The Italy Star, and the Africa Service Medal. In recent years he was awarded the Jubilee Medal, which commemorates "60 Years of Victory in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945". He was also the recipient of the Ushakov Medal from Russia, awarded for Bravery and Courage. Lastly he was awarded the Arctic Star which is a fairly recent medal for service in the Arctic regions. Certainly an impressive list for a sailor who early on in his career found himself adrift in shark infested waters after his ship had had big holes made in it.

We must thank Frank's generation, the survivors and those who lost their lives, who through their valor and deed saw to it that the majority of their sons and daughters were able to grow up with very little coloured ribbons and gongs affixed to uniform jackets. Franks nautical training at Bothie and in the RN predisposed his son Gavin to joining a Sea Scout troop in Johannesburg and becoming a Springbok Scout, and presently a Scoutmaster at a troop close to me. Gavin describes his father as "A tough man, but fair". What more could we ask of a Bothie cadet.

It's that time of the year when planning the Commissioning Day function require attention. The gap between costs and income increases inexorably, bunkers for the car and the cursed E-Tolls here in Gauteng are now a fact of life and add a significant chunk to the costs of travelling to venues for functions. Finding a venue which is acceptable to the majority of members is, as always, difficult.

To this end I have not yet been able to find a suitable location and catering arrangements which will allow as many attendees as possible to positively to respond to the invitation.

I feel that it is perhaps time to drop the second event of the year which is usually in September and referred to as the Spring Luncheon. Perhaps those who are seriously counting the pennies can try to save a few coppers throughout the year so as to be able to meet at least once per annum at the March functions. I would appreciate feedback on this idea.

At this stage we have circled **Sunday 30th March** for the Gauteng Branch Commissioning Day Luncheon. As soon as I have the rest of the plan in place, I will circulate particulars, and hope for a good headcount when it is time to raise our glasses and toast The Ship again. I would love to hear from anyone who would like to sponsor a few bottles of wine.

I see that a brand new 87 metre clipper rigged square rigger has been built in Holland and is presently being fitted out for the basic training of Oman Navy officers. Named Shahab Oman, she is the third in a series of sail training ships to be built at Damen Shipyards, the second having gone to Brazil. Have a Google if you can, it makes interesting reading. A luxury beyond our dreams for us here in South Africa... oh well , we shall just soldier on with the old SA Agulhas until we discover copious amounts of oil and have paid off the farm in KZN.

Alan Ford. alanford@global.co.za

United Kingdom Branch – Ted Fisher

A Very Happy New Year to all. Regret a short note for this, the first contribution of 2014.

The UK has experienced the wettest winter for over 100 years, indeed, records will show the highest rainfall since records began. Fields, homes, farms, coastal towns battered and flooded with Wales, South and South West the most affected. No doubt as the year progresses life will return to normal – social programme low on the Agenda!

However, for those who are interested the photographs of our September 2013 Gatwick Sunday Lunch now added to our website. My thanks to our web master Terry Purdon.

Some stats: My records show the following: UK General Botha Old Boys total 97.

Our earliest or most Ancient Mariner is John Henderson 1940/41 who resides on the Isle of Wight. In a recent conversation with his wife Joan, John is now 88 years young. However, sadly some two years ago he lost his sight. He has very fond memories of his time as a cadet and enjoys receiving the regular Newsletter which is read to him by either Joan or daughter Mandy. After Bothie a career with Ellerman Lines, Union Castle Line, a Pilot for Portsmouth and Southampton, indeed Cunard Line Choice Pilot for many years until retirement.

Next follows Mr M.A. Link 41/42 on the Isle of Man. Arthur George 42/43 from Godalming Surrey. Main era is 49, 50's, 60's, 70's & 80's with our youngest Mike Fincken 1987 a Master with Greenpiece. Mike contributed to Scranbag in our November 2013 Newsletter.

Finally, with Barbara I look forward to being in the Cape to attend the March AGM/Memorial Service, together with the Reunion Weekend of my 1953 Old Salts. Best regards and as always when in transit, please make contact. Ted Fisher Tel: +44(0) 1903 744400 Mob: +(44) 7702 635017.

English Stiff Upper Lip

On a train from London to Manchester an Australian was berating the Englishman sitting across from him in the compartment. "You English are too stuffy. You set yourselves apart too much. You think your stiff upper lip makes you above the rest of us. Look at me... I'm ME! I have Italian blood, Greek blood, a little Irish blood, and some Aborigine blood. What do you say to that?"

The Englishman replied, "Awfully sporting of your mother, old chap!"

Australia Branch News

We held our pre-Christmas GBOBA lunch in Sydney on Saturday 30th November. Venue was the Great Northern Hotel, cnr. Mowbray Road & Pacific Highway, Chatswood. Attendees were: Gordon Maxwell (40/41) and Bettie; Stan Damp (47/48) and guest Hugh Murray; Grenville Stevens (60/61) and Suzette; Peter O'Hare (64) and Jenny.

Our next meeting will be the AGM and Commissioning Day Lunch on Saturday 22nd March. We are hoping for a better attendance. This will be at the Great Northern Hotel in Chatswood, Sydney.

Australian Branch Secretary/Treasurer will be at the Cape Town AGM, Lunch and the Sunday Service as part of the 1964 50th anniversary of our time at Gordon's Bay and will report back to the Australian AGM. Regards to all and please get in touch if you are going to be "Down Under".

Grenville Stevens (2189 60/61) Chairman

Andy Fotheringham (2525 '76) Vice Chairman

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

News from Queensland:

The Queensland gathering was held on Sunday the 1 Dec 2013 at Kawana Waters Hotel on the Sunshine Coast. In total there were ten Old Boys, wives and children.

I travelled down from Mackay and the other person who travelled a long way was John de Villiers, son of the late Ian de Villiers. Also there were: Brian and Gill Hoatson; Mike and Margret Pomfret; Alistair, Carolyn, Amy and James Snyders; Simon Reynolds.

In the last 6 months I have compiled and distributed lists of Old Boys in New Zealand, China, Thailand and Singapore. Thank you to those who responded with their updated details.

I received a very interesting reply from Ron Dickinson who lives in Rizhao in China (*see Scranbag Page 4*).

We are having some very hot weather in south and eastern Australia at the moment. With this comes bushfires and most are started by lightning. One of the areas mentioned on the radio was Kyneton Victoria where Errol Hunter lives. I decided to give him a call and thank goodness he is safe, although he said there was a bit of smoke visible over the hills from his "small holding". South Australia is also being affected and let's hope John Hussey, and Gordon Hayward are out of the firing line. At the end of last year there were similar fires in New South Wales. Our Chairman Grenville Stevens is in the

process of moving to his retirement home in Port Stephens. Let's hope your retirement home was spared any damage. Regards from, Andy Fotheringham.

GBOBA Bursary Fund – February 2014.

The Fund has launched its third year with impressive momentum.

Our first two bursars matriculated last year with excellent results, and are now continuing their professional education in the Maritime Department of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. We wish them well with their ongoing studies, confident that they will excel and soon be joining "*they that go down to the sea in ships - that do business in great waters.*"

Our 2013 grade 10 bursar, Lethabo Morovhi, completed that year strongly and is well set to continue in grade 11 this year with our support.

The Committee's confidence in the Lawhill experience was reinforced when the fine quality of the teaching and student-development delivered by Brian Ingpen and his staff was recognised during 2013 through a platinum award from the corporate Impumelelo Foundation, presented for "*building capacity for service delivery*". This complements the Seatrade Award that the Lawhill team received in 2012 for "*investment in people*".

The selection process for new applicants for Fund bursaries begins with their interviews by a selection sub-committee scheduled for the 7th of February. Their recommendations will then be reviewed and decided by the Fund Committee, communicated to the successful students and announced as part of the Fund's report presented to the GBOBA Cape Town Branch AGM in March.

The major financial boost received from fund-raising and donations during the last few months has made it possible for the Committee to consider granting up to seven bursaries this year. A computer model has been developed that enables the Committee to assess the affect of various funding and expenditure scenarios on the sustainability of the three-year commitment that most awards entail. But while continuous careful stewardship is needed, it is marvellous to begin 2014 in a sound financial position. Several significant initiatives contributed to this healthy bottom line:

The Svitzer sponsored golf day, held on the 21st November, was an even greater success than the 2012 golf day, raising over R 70,000 for the Fund and an equal amount for the Society of Master Mariners. It was a marvellous day of golfing fun, with superb weather, generously sponsored holes, excellent golf and fabulous prizes donated by many supportive sponsors all contributing to make it so successful – long may this annual event continue to be a highlight of the Fund's calendar!

Phil and Ann Wade organised a veritable wine-fest at a restaurant near his home in Palma this January. With Phil's usual flair he hosted some sixty guests from his international network, raising over R45,000 for the fund, with the possibility of a repeat fest next year. Phil and Ann have shown us the way. Let his initiative energise us all!

Corporate three-year bursary donations have been received from Seaspans and Special Metals respectively. This is a very welcome development indeed. The bursaries will carry the corporate name, with the Fund Committee acting as the administrative trustees. The sponsors will be closely integrated in the bursar-progress and mentoring processes, with great benefits for all concerned.

A "meet the students" brunch is planned for the 12th April this year. In combination with a fun auction of maritime items, it is intended to raise some funds, but principally to enable contributors and potential contributors to visit Lawhill, to meet with the students and to experience the purpose of the Fund's work. The promotion of this event will begin soon.

So much has been done and achieved in the last two years, but much still remains to be done.

All is now set to forge ahead into year three - all hands are needed, welcome aboard! *By Keith Burchell.*

Captain Phillips – Review of the film. By Nick Cooper 1958/59 #2094.

I was curious to see this film for several reasons; to see how close it stuck to the original scenario, and if it in any way sympathised with the Somali pirates. I was not disappointed on either count.

I had been following this incident right from the very beginning and right through to the end when Captain Phillips and his wife were invited to the White House to meet the President. I thought at the time that this hijacking was the best thing (for all the wrong reasons) that could have happened to bring

this long running scourge to the attention of the world. It made international headline news, whereas previous and subsequent hijackings, and the torture and murder of seafarers barely make it past the maritime press.

I was Master of two sister ships to the *Maersk Alabama* for a total of seven years, so I was more than interested in all the technical aspects. Apart from a handful of Hollywood bloopers it was very good - as it should have been as it was filmed on the vessel itself. Captain Phillips joining the vessel, going straight to the bridge and apparently taking it out of Salalah without a Pilot had me squirming in my seat, but this is a film about piracy, not about the day-to-day operation of a merchant vessel.

The radar bleeping every time it swept over the following pirate skiffs was a minor irritation, and the Chief Engineer sneaking his way out of the engine room to immobilise the emergency generator was frankly rather silly, as it shows him ripping a bunch of cables out of a junction box, rather than just stopping it. But the emergency generator was not running anyway, absent loud diesel engine noise! Added drama at the expense of the technically correct, but never mind, it was a very well played scene. However, all these minor niggles paled into insignificance when the action started with the pirates leaping off their skiff onto the boarding ladder, all very realistic looking and gripping stuff.

The action and drama never slacken off at all right through to the end, and the producers have not shied away from showing the sheer brutality that Captain Phillips and his crew were subjected to. Sentiment or feeling sorry for the pirates is not what this film is about, and anyone who seeks to use the film to justify piracy for whatever reason will be disappointed.

The scenes shot inside the lifeboat were very well done, considering the tiny, hot and noisy space that it is. It always puzzled me why the attending warship didn't have a RIB standing by in close attendance, as they could have intervened and rescued Captain Phillips when he made his escape attempt off the stern of the lifeboat, but this is purely an observation I made at the time, without knowing any of the facts surrounding that particular incident.

All the warship, helicopter and SEALs footage was in the very best of Hollywood blockbuster film tradition, with lots of high-tech and very genuine-looking action going on. One is left in no doubt that the order that Captain Phillips was not to be allowed to reach or land in Somalia came from the very top.

But the part of the film that touched me most was the very final scene, showing Captain Phillips stunned and almost totally traumatised in the hospital of the warship. This scene alone deserves an Oscar, it was so dramatically portrayed. It sends a deep and emotional message that I hope gets through to everyone who sees it; that this is not Hollywood, but the stark reality of modern day piracy.

I highly recommend this film to not only the general public, but to all seafarers who already know about the reality of life at sea. Captain Nicholas Cooper FNI.

This review first appeared in the magazine Seaways, The Nautical Institute, with permission.

Chaplains at the Bothie

When John Rose wrote to us updating his history last year, he asked the question as to the name of the Chaplain in 1950-51 (*see J B Rose 1950/51 in the Scranbag of the November 2013 Newsletter*). Thank you to Ian Manning for providing the answer with the following extracts from mini-biographies he has compiled of the respective Chaplains.

EARP-JONES A. The Reverend Arthur Earp-Jones died aged 68 at Groote Schuur Hospital, Cape Town on 10 January 1951. At the time of his death he was Priest-in-Charge of Gordon's Bay (St. Philip's Church) and the Chaplain to SANC *General Botha*.

JODRELL DAY G. P. The Reverend G. P. Jodrell Day, was Chaplain to SANC *General Botha* and Rector of St. Philip's Church at Gordon's Bay. He took up his appointment about April 1951 when he relieved the late Rev. A. Earp-Jones. He left *General Botha* on 02 January 1954 and was relieved by the Rev Vernon-Vivian later in that year.

Colin Greenacre also responded to this with the following interesting reply:

In response to J B Rose request in the last newsletter asking for the name of the ships Chaplain.

When I joined the ship in 1949 we were all issued with a School Bible. The front cover was embossed with the ships crest, inside the cover was a sticker (with compliments of the Captain Superintendent), and the name of the Chaplain (A. Earp Jones). When I joined I registered as a Presbyterian, therefore I do not remember him but his name rings a bell. I have just spoken to Alan Bole who thinks the Chapman's name was (Vivian - Vernon)? Therefore we have two names which one is correct I do not know.

As a Presbyterian the Presbyterian minister from Somerset West visited us once a fortnight on a Thursday afternoon for a short get together.

On the first Sunday of the month we would have a church parade in Somerset West transported there by trooper and marching from the squared to the church, on dismissal all would file in to the church except for us Presbyterians, we would be picked up by the local Congregation members and taken to the Presbyterian Church for Sunday service. After church service the ships company would be transported back to the ship for Sunday lunch "corned beef and jelly and custard", but us Presbyterians would be taken to either the padre or another members house for Sunday lunch. In the summer the lunch was usually a buffet followed by fruit salad and ice cream, in winter a roast with all the trimmings followed with steam pudding etc.

After lunch we were driven back to the ship and according to standing orders our lunch of corned beef was kept for us. On those Sundays us Presbyterians were the best feed cadets on board. Please excuse any spelling mistakes or capital letters as I am new to the iPad and am dictating this letter I am no good at one finger typing

Please send my kindest regards to you all in Cape Town, and I hope you are all enjoying the lovely spring weather?

Tot siens, Colin Greenacre.1598

Bugle Call – “Taps”.

History of TapsBy [Rod Powers](#). Of all the military bugle calls, none is so easily recognized or more apt to render emotion than [Taps](#). Up to the Civil War, the traditional call at day's end was a tune, borrowed from the French, called Lights Out. In July of 1862, in the aftermath of the bloody Seven Days battles, hard on the loss of 600 men and wounded himself, Union General Daniel Adams Butterfield called the brigade bugler to his tent. He thought "Lights Out" was too formal and he wished to honor his men.

Oliver Wilcox Norton, the bugler, tells the story, "...showing me some notes on a staff written in pencil on the back of an envelope, (he) asked me to sound them on my bugle. I did this several times, playing the music as written. He changed it somewhat, lengthening some notes and shortening others, but retaining the melody as he first gave it to me. After getting it to his satisfaction, he directed me to sound that call for Taps thereafter in place of the regulation call. The music was beautiful on that still summer night and was heard far beyond the limits of our Brigade. The next day I was visited by several buglers from neighboring Brigades, asking for copies of the music which I gladly furnished. The call was gradually taken up through the Army of the Potomac."

This more emotive and powerful Taps was soon adopted throughout the military. In 1874 It was officially recognized by the U.S. Army. It became standard at military funeral ceremonies in 1891. There is something singularly beautiful and appropriate in the music of this wonderful call. Its strains are melancholy, yet full of rest and peace. Its echoes linger in the heart long after its tones have ceased to vibrate in the air.

The origin of the word "Taps" is thought to have come from the Dutch word for "Tattoo"- "Taptoe." More than likely, "Taps" comes from the the three drum taps that were played as a signal for "Extinguish Lights" when a bugle was not used. As with many other customs, the twenty-four notes that comprise this solemn tradition began long ago and continue to this day.

From the Scribe's Desk

At the time of writing we have already completed the first month of the year and moving on rapidly. Despite the challenges that lie ahead and are always with us, we pray for strength, perseverance, honour and duty. As you will have read in this newsletter, much was achieved last year, and in particular with

our Bursary Fund. We look forward to further successful fundraising this year in the form of the Golf day and other initiatives.

We also look forward to hearing of good participation and support at the various branch AGMs & Commissioning Day dinners. These are always good opportunities to gather and meet old friends and colleagues as well as new acquaintances. When one reads the many varied and interesting stories of Obies in these newsletters, then think of how many more one can hear from them over a beer at one of these gatherings around the world.

Thank you to the many contributions to the Newsletter. Wishing you all a full and interesting 2014.

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

"A cloudy day is no match for a sunny disposition." (William Arthur Ward)

"In nature there are neither rewards nor punishments; there are consequences." (Robert Green Ingersoll)

SLOP CHEST

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

Phone: 021-7885957 fax: 086 604 0811

Email: cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za

TIE [STRIPED]	R60
PLAQUE	R150
PEAK CAP [BASEBALL TYPE]	R115
‘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	R250
DVD "THE SHIP" Filmed on board during the thirties.	R40
DVD "RED HILL 1946/47" Collection of Rex Chamber's photographs with titles and accompanying music.	R45
DVD "SOUTH AFRICAN NAUTICAL COLLEGE GENERAL BOTHA 1954". Filmed by Barry Cullen and Chris Copeland.	R40

PLUS PACKAGING AND POSTAGE!

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

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

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

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