S.A.T.S.

PO Box 22015,
Glenashley, 4022

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

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

PO BOX 4515
CAPE TOWN
8000
Chairman: Tony Nicholas

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

GENERAL BOTHA OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

http://www.generalbotha.co.za

February 2017

JOINT NEWSLETTER

Has your address changed? Please send your updated details to Tony Nicholas Chairman Cape Town (details above).
Do you have an interesting article for this newsletter? Please send your contributions to Dennis Henwood, dhenwood@iafrica.com Phone: +27 (0)21 6716373. Fax: +27 (0)86 6706710.

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

FORTHCOMING CAPE TOWN EVENTS

- **Saturday 4th March 2017, 1030 for 1100** – Annual General Meeting, Kelvin Grove Club, Camp Ground Road, Newlands, next door to Newlands Cricket Club.
- **Saturday 4th March 2017, 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, please note we have maintained same price for past four years. 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.
    - Booking for the Commissioning Day Lunch is important, please RSVP by Tuesday 28th February 2017 to:
        - Kathy or Jacky or Louise Nicholas: phone 021-788 5957
        - Email: cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za
        - Facsimile: 086 233 6410
    - 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.
- **Sunday 5th March 2017 @ 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. We request that members make a donation towards the Mission to Seafarers at this function.
- **Tuesday 14th March, 1230 for 1300** – Pub lunch, Royal Cape Yacht Club, R55 p.p., partners welcome.

PTO for other branch events elsewhere

GAUTENG COMMISSIONING DAY LUNCH

- **Sunday 26 March 2017** – Lunch hosted by Rene and Karen Poerner
- **Cost** – R150 per head for the meal (cash at the door) bring your own wine
- **Seating** – limited to 25 persons so book early
- **Contact** – Alan Ford alanford@global.co.za for bookings and further details

DURBAN BRANCH AGM & DINNER

- **Saturday 4 March 2017** – 18:30 for 19:00
- **Venue –** At the home of Roy Martin
- Supper will be served on the Mess Deck; grog supplied as usual
- Once again this is planned as a social function, with the AGM preceding supper.
- Bring your partners along.
- Further details contact Derek McManus (Tel. 031 7673719)

AUSTARLIA BRANCH AGM & COMMISSIONING DAY LUNCH

- **Saturday 18 March** – contact Peter O'Hare itspeterohare@outlook.com for further details

January has come and gone, the year is well under way, New Year resolutions will have been made and for many we are back to the routine after busy holidays. Where does the time go to so quickly? Well, if it has all been too fast for us, February is never too late to wish all Obies and your families best wishes for the year remaining. May the resolutions you have made progress and be successful, and if you have not made any resolutions yet, well, it is never too late to make a fresh beginning – Happy 2017.
Included in this February edition we have as usual a variety of news and interest including another extract from the Log of the Lawhill. Our Man in Gauteng, Alan, recalls some of the gastronomical delights from the galley in his regular Boilerplate, and challenges readers to send in their fond or not so fond memories of meals at sea and elsewhere. Ted Fisher points out interesting comparison of the history of the five training establishments. Two interesting descriptions of life in Oman described by our newest OBA branch in the Muddled East. The Slop Chest and banking details are listed on page 14 for your convenience. Enjoy!

HEROIC *GENERAL BOTHA* FUNCTION (Appeal from the Chairman)

During my recent archival research I unearthed an invitation sent out in 2002 by the then chairman of our Gauteng branch, Ivor Little GB term 1953/54. With the forthcoming respective branch Commissioning Day celebrations I believe this is embodies the spirit of the OBA and worth repeating (although edited) for prosperity.

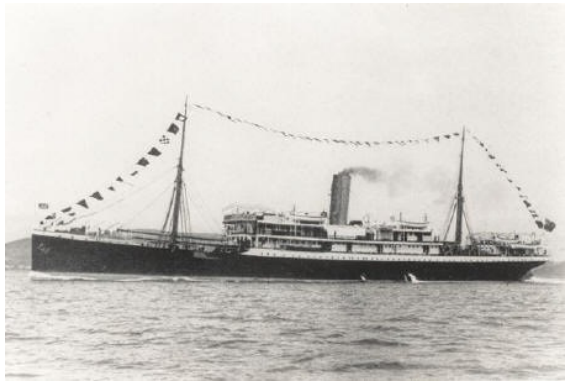
> "You may or may not have noticed from your calendar that 21 March is 'Heroes Day'. There could not be a more appropriately named day for a Bothie Old Boys Reunion. By the time we have stormed a few Castles, taken out a Lion or two, dodged a few flying Red Bulls and visited the Amstel, Carlsberg and Klipdrift we would be heroes indeed. Add to this the fact that such long term Bothie friends as Captain Morgan, Colonel Jack Daniels, the Counts Pushkin and Smirnoff have also promised to attend and one has a volatile mixture even for Bothie Boys! Even that well-known top hated seafarer Johnny Walker might drop in!
> This is a preliminary notice to mariners.
> We will issue a final notice to mariners, appropriate chart block of the Approaches to Valhalla and muster list of those attending in early March. We hope to hear from you before then."

Indeed I hope to hear from many members attending our 2017 March events.

FROM THE BRIDGE OF ss CAPE TOWN (Chairman, Tony Nicholas)

Talking, well at least writing, of steam ships this year is the centenary of the tragic sinking of the ss *Mendi* 21st February 1917 with high loss of South African lives in the English Channel, far away from home for those poor souls. Besides a memorial service held in Cape Town the South African Navy has dispatched their Frigate SAS *Amatola* to host a memorial service at the location of the sinking.

Included in the dignitaries on board were family descendants of those who lost their lives in the accident.



Forthcoming is our annual *Bothie Weekend*, our AGM followed by our Commissioning Day Dinner and our War Memorial Service. Term 1967 is having their 50th reunion at the same time, which promises to be a memorable reunion. Unfortunately I have not heard of any other class reunions; perhaps they missed the Blue Peter on our yardarm. For the past four years we have included the bursary fund AGM with our Old Boys Association AGM. Due to the growth of the fund this practice has become unmanageable and therefore we have decided to hold the fund's AGM separate from the OBA AGM later in the year. Thus each respective AGM shall be a focused meeting.

Our bursary fund under the chairmanship of Keith Burchell, GB term 1960/61, has grown with the support not only of our OBA members but also other corporate sponsors. (*see Page 8*)

During class reunions in 2011 I took the groups (which included 60, 50, 40 & 30 year reunions) to visit Lawhill Maritime Centre (LMC) in Simon's Town. What our members experienced there (a visit to Lawhill Maritime Centre is heart warming) reminded them of their Bothie training and the benefits they gained from Bothie training. During the presentation given by Brian Ingpen of LMC I mentioned to the members that although the OBA sponsors an annual prize to a worthy student we are unable to afford awarding bursaries. I was thus approached by a group of members wishing to launch a bursary fund in the name of our association. After some consideration and consultation I agreed to the use of our association name and hence the bursary fund has remained closely linked to the GBOBA.

My reasons?

One is the fact that over the years of our training ship's existence many of the cadets joined the Bothie on bursaries.

Over the years I have often been asked by some Old Salts what I am doing to perpetuate the GBOBA. Well, our present GBOBA constitution allows for new intake of post 1987 graduates as full members of the GBOBA. However, as expected, there has been little interest among post 1987 graduates in joining the GBOBA. There are of course some Old Salts that disagree with the present constitution with the view that the Bothie and those of us that trained on the Bothie are unique. True. So, without new member intake our GBOBA shall eventually cease to exist. Sadly our history shall disappear, a fact which distresses me.

But now we have a bursary fund that is perpetuating the name, the history, the legend of the Bothie and doing so with much success. The S.A.T.S. *General Botha* and Old Boys per se are in the industry view again with deserving respect for our Bothie and those of us that trained in her. The Legend Lives On through the bursary fund.

This year 13th May is the 70th anniversary of the sinking by gunfire from Scala Battery of our original training ship, S.A.T.S. *General Botha.* She is still visited by divers, the dives being run by a step son of Old Boy Mike Foulis who cleans our plaque on the ship on every dive. He is preparing some media footage for us which we shall screen at one of the forthcoming functions. I shall also post a selection on our Face Book page to mark this anniversary.

I recently accompanied GB Trust members Kieron Cox (GB Trust Chairman - GB term 1969) and Ian Manning (GB term 1955-56) to meet with the son (Graham) and daughter (Helen) of our late member George Thom GB term 1946/47 at our GB display in the S.A. Naval Museum Simon's Town. There they proudly and very emotionally handed their father's King's Gold Medal and Silver Efficiency Medal to the GB Trust. The family had travelled from Australia. It is intended to display these together with other such valuable items in the museum once security of such

items has been improved.
In closing it is pleasing to note that the Garden Route GBOBA group is active. Stuart McAllister is arranging their regular lunch meetings. So, when in the area contact Stuart for a lively meeting.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

C.P. REDMAN 1986. Sadly Christopher passed away 29th September last. We would appreciate any career detail of his.
J.F. TULLY 1947/48. Jim passed away 23rd December last. Term mate Richard Edwards writes; "Jim arrived in S. A. about 1940 with his parents and still had an English accent, hence his nickname of Limey. Jim was unfortunately colour blind so didn`t go to sea. Some years later, he left for the UK and lived for a while on a canal barge on the Thames, upper reaches. His dad was a land surveyor and we believe he followed that for a while, but eventually worked for a Civil Engineer on bridge design and construction. After retirement time he worked for quite a while on a part time basis."
G.M. NUNN 1979. Gavin sailed with Unicorn before coming ashore and working at I & J. He left I & J in 1996 and formed his own company called Octopus Electronics which was involved in fibre optic cameras to inspect underground pipes etc. He was diagnosed with a brain tumour in the middle of 2016, sold his company and passed away on the 15th November, 2016 shortly after his 60th birthday. The bell we have hanging in the Maritime Room at CPUT was donated by Gavin many years ago.
T.I. van der POLL 1942/43. Tertuis passed away 29th November 2016. Little is known of his career; Reported in "Old Salts" 1947/48 Third Officer of the 'Gamtoos' employed taking stores to Marion Island. Promoted to Second Officer. Further information would be welcome.
Our condolences to family and shipmates.

SCRANBAG

I.P.D. MERRIMAN 1973 #2447. With Ian in command the AMSOL tug *Smit Amandla* was dispatched on Monday 9th January from Cape Town to proceed to the disabled bulk carrier *United Stars* which was drifting in close proximity to Mossel Bay. This is Ian's 100th towage contract involving the big tugs during an exceptional career. Bravo Zulu!
M.H. PICKERSGILL 1974 #2483. Some welcome news. Mike & Nadine have taken a break from renovating houses in the UK and have bought Masons Arms. As the name suggests this is a pub in Gilcrux, Cumbria. So if you can find the place you know where to stop for a pint or six.
R.K. HOOLE 1979 #2644. Rob is on the waves again, last December he set sail in his catamaran LALAMANZI across the Atlantic, hoping to sail on through the Pacific.
M.A. MEYER 1985 #2870. Appears Mike has left Dubai and perhaps resident back in S.A. again. Although he gives a Mozambique mobile phone number and signs himself as "Sea Projects". Please send an update Mike.
W.R. FLANAGAN 1977 #2585. Walter & Estelle reports that they are now full-time voyagers in the South Pacific on their yacht sv Pacific Spray, heading towards S.A. in 2017. So if anyone has contact with Walter remind him of our Bothie functions in jolly old S.A.
S.C. PROCTER 1973 #2453. Stewart has retired for the second time. What now Stewart?
C.P. SUTTON 1983 #2816. Chris is moving around again, here a summary of how he has occupied himself. 1982 - 1988: Safmarine. 1988 - 1994: Polaris Shipping - various positions, last being Branch Manager, Richards Bay Agency office. 1994 - 1999: Operations Manager for Christensen Canadian African Lines (CCAL) based in Durban. 2000 - 2005: Operations Manager - Seaboard Overseas Ltd. 2005 - present: Grindrod Shipping - first as Operations Manager for Commodity Trading Division, Atlas Trading & Shipping. Currently General Manager, Operations, Durban for Island View Shipping, a division of Grindrod.

SOS

Newsletters returned from **Roy van Litsenborgh 1958/59** and **David Atkinson 1985.**
A class mate of **Paul le Sueur 1972** has enquired of Paul. His phone and email remains unanswered.
Urgently seeking **David Lowe 1969**, disappeared off radar since 1969.
Their phone numbers remain unanswered. Where are they?

The Log of the Lawhill: Sunday, November 30th, 1947. In the years to come some of you may retire from the sea and you will wonder what would be a suitable job ashore. For the benefit of our readers we have made arrangements with Captain Shagwax to publish his famous book of three courses; "How to become a Barman" in three simple lessons. This course is copyright throughout the world, Trista da Cunha excepted.

Now in choosing a career what more interesting, fascinating and honourable profession could one have than that of a barman? When a man has got good news such as a win on the races or the birth of a son (navigating officers please note) he goes to the barman to celebrate. If he gets bad news such as his mother-in-law recovering from a serious illness he goes to the barman to drown his sorrow. If he gets his yards aback in the street and does not know what to do or where to go, he makes for the next Pub to think it over.

Lesson No 1: Shows how to pour out a glass of beer with a 2 1/2 inch froth collar on it and get away with it. The customer pays for a full glass and gets about 80%.

Lesson No 2: Shows how to hold the brandy and spirit measure with a list towards the customer so that it overflows on his side and is 3/4 of an inch short on the far side.

Lesson No 3: This extremely important chapter explains how to convince the regular customer that his account for the week is £3.10 whereas he only ordered drinks to the amount of £2.50 It also says how to go through a drunks pocket when helping him out to the street.

(*Copied verbatim from the original document, not my spelling errors*.)

Gauteng Branch News (Alan Ford)

Dredging through the maritime newspapers is currently rather boring, and nothing seems worthy of repeat in this esteemed journal. You can't give Panamaxe's away, 6 years old box ships are headed for the knackers yard, and ports are clogged with laid up drill rigs and service vessels. The only signs of life are seen in the cable, pipe lay, and offshore wind industries. The mega cruise ships seem to be doing well also, with quite a few passengers jumping/falling over board in 2016. So where does input for this quarters news letter come from, well as usual the contributors have to take their regular lead from the Big Bang Theory and conjure something out of nothing.

During the festive season certain foods come to mind. Depending on where one is currently billeted, the fare differs. Australian 'baabie', S'efrican braai, American turkey and Dutch ham are just a few examples of popular December fare from around the globe. This led me to remember certain dishes and edible bits and pieces that vividly remind me of some particular instance during my seafaring days.

I will say up front that in general Safmarine food was pretty good, all things being equal, and certainly gave foundation to my current girth from an early age. But certain dishes or food items instantly bring vivid flashbacks to various occasions which in themselves were of no particular importance.

Marrow bones on toast was on the S A Huguenot's menu as a regular starter. I had never had marrow on toast before then and took an instant liking to it. Today if one can find a tame butcher to supply some good sawn up bones, one pays an exorbitant amount for them, and then one has to find someone to do the roasting for you, unless you are into self home catering. Put a plate of roast marrow bones in front of me and it's as if I have stepped into a time machine and gone back 45 years.

Give me a radish, and I'm instantly back on the port bridge wing of the fully loaded ST Gondwana going through Malacca straits after lunch….trying to stay out of the firing line of a very tense set of senior navigators who were for some reason overly concerned about the indicated foot or two of water under the keel at the time.

Sharmin bread.. that terrible white tasteless fluffy stuff which was loaded in New York for Southbound trips. It was the perfect accompaniment to the powdered milk which seemed to appear within days of leaving the Ambrose Light in our wake.

Mulligatawny soup was a rare treat, and though rarely encountered today, still brings memories of something spicy and hot with just a hint of Cape Malay influence.

When up for tickets at Bothie, non-descript Saturday lunches were augmented with plenty of freshly baked brown bread and mashed avocado, salt pepper and sometimes for those who enjoyed it, a drop of

lemon juice. Every time I eat avo on bread either toasted or plain, I'm back sitting with 2 or three senior students in the Mess Hall at Granger Bay, pigging out on the stuff, thus rendering thoughts of quiet afternoons studying thereafter useless.

There are many more which come to mind from time to time. I'm willing to bet that there are hundreds of such mind pictures and taste senses which are still stored away in your minds. From The Ship to Gordons Bay, Red Hill and Granger Bay… from ancient steam tankers to the fruit ships, big whites and various vessels in far flung corners of the world, there must be food memories to share, each with their own individual personal provenance.

I think it would be fun for the readers to think about foods and meals which bring to mind strong reminiscences of their days at Bothie and at sea, and to send in some of their favorites, both good and bad. We can publish them in a following news letter, and I'm sure there will be many which you have long forgotten about, and which will jog your memories. What a pity we do not yet have the technology to upload memories from our minds to YouTube… how cool will that be when it happens.

Subsequent to me penning the above a similar topic appeared on the Safmarine and Unicorn Officers Face Book page. For those who can, swing past there, for more reminiscences.

Still on the topic of " 'n bord Kos"…

This year's Gauteng Commissioning Day Luncheon will move to a new venue. Cost escalations at commercial venues were just getting a bit too much, and I fear putting the event out of budgetary reach of many pensioners.

Our resident Gold Medalist, Rene Poerner and his good wife Karen have answered the call to Duty even after he left the ship about 66 years ago, and have offered his home and kitchen to host the event. Some of us who have had the privilege to dine at this auspicious establishment in the past judge Karen to be a Master Chef and that we will have a meal befitting the senior officer's mess on the old QE2. Rene is also from what I hear, more than just the galley boy in that establishment and can convert ingredients to superb dishes with ease.

For the paltry sum of R150 per head I think it is back in the ballpark cost wise. However seating is limited to about 25 heads, so Cadets and Spices will receive booking preference above guests this year on a first come first serve basis. I will communicate further within the Gauteng email distribution list. Please jump around, look alive and indicate your intentions as soon as possible.

There is no guarantee *yet* that we will have sponsored wine this year, so please plan to bring your own tipple… it just makes things so much easier from an organizational point of view. Please…. cash at the front door only…. this year, that also makes the Pursers (me) job easier so that he doesn't have to bother with secondary EFT's etc.

GBOBA-UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH- Ted Fisher

Here we are again into another fun filled and exciting year!! The AGM and Commissioning Day lunch at Kelvin Grove will be followed by the Memorial Service over the weekend 4th / 5th March, on behalf of all the UK Old Boys, we offer our congratulations to our Chairman Tony Nicholas and his Committee for their continued unstinting hard work keeping our organisation afloat. Congratulations also to Keith Burchell and his team for their commitment to the Bursary Fund, the Lawhill Maritime Centre, all a great effort in further training of youngsters for a sea career.

The passage of time is unbelievable, however, as one who had a relatively short sea going career I'm pleased at being able to have fond memories and a continuing interest in the sea and shipping through Worthing Sailing Club, our network of Old Boys, Facebook and nautical publications. Of interest a fellow Probus Club Member commenced his seagoing career aboard Mercury then into Elder Dempster and Ben Line. With this in mind, and reading *The Dog Watch December 2016* magazine of *The Association of Old Worcesters* (AOW) a review of the historic roots of the training ships, Conway, Mercury, Pangbourne and our own General Botha, I find this food for thought indeed! The following précis from the article by AOW President Colin Steere (1947), copied for the reader's interest:

"ONCE SPORTING RIVALS, NOW SHIPMATES OF THE FUTURE"

Decline of the British flag and changes in the training of merchant marine deck officers spelled the end of pre-sea training schools of the type in place since the 19th century. Within a few years of Worcester's demise in 1968 these colleges had all but vanished.
Not so their former cadets. Sadly, though, once thriving groups of Old Boys are now themselves in decline as member numbers inevitably slide. As the associations, including AOW, decide their future, we take a look at the historic roots of Conway, Mercury, Pangbourne and General Botha.

HMS Conway – Nautical training college opened 1859, moored at Rock Ferry, Birkenhead. The two-year course was four terms. 1876 HMS *Nile* was the last Conway afloat. 1941 moved to Bangor in the Menai Strait away from enemy bombing. 1949 moved through the Swellies - a part of the Menai Strait known for its difficult navigation – to Plas Newydd, the Marquis of Anglesey's estate. 1953 Conway was towed back through the Swellies to go for refit. Sadly the vessel ran aground and was lost. A fire in the wreck ultimately destroyed her. The cadets lived in hutted camp until new buildings were completed in 1963, when there were about 300 cadets. In 1968 the Conway became a voluntary aided school and the Captain Superintendent was replaced by a Headmaster. Conway closed in 1974. *Motto: Quit Ye Like Men Be Strong*.

TS Mercury – Founded in 1885 to offer a free or almost free sea training to fill the gap between the fee paying training ships (Worcester & Conway), and those for reform boys. The barque *Ilovo* (renamed *Mercury*) was moored at Binstead, Isle of White. 1892 the establishment moved to buildings in Hamble, and the ship was used only for accommodation and seamanship. The Royal Navy took most of the boys as Boy Seamen. 1914 the Admiralty loaned HMS *President* to replace *Ilovo*. After the war the boys mostly joined the merchant service. 1968 Mercury closed and some of the boys went to the newly formed Merchant Navy College on board *Worcester*. England cricketer, all-round sportsman, diplomat and politician, C B Fry was Captain Superintendent for 40 years to 1950. *Motto: Men are the Souls of Ships*.

SATS General Botha – 1920 the obsolete cruiser, *HMS Thames* was sold to SA and sailed there partly manned by Sea Cadets. She became a full time training ship for boys for a career at sea and named *SATS General Botha* moored off Simon's Town. It is said that she directly contributed to the establishment of the S A Navy. 1942 because of the war moved to Redhill, their sports complex, and the ship was commandeered by the navy. After WWII the vessel, beyond economical repair, was sunk by gunfire in False Bay. August 1947 Commander Legassick DSO RNR, an Old Worcester, appointed Captain Superintendent. The following April the establishment moved to Gordon's Bay. It became the South African Nautical College General Botha. In December 1958 the S A Navy took over the college. It became the South African Merchant Navy Academy, General Botha. The last cadets left in 1987. *Motto: Honour and Duty*.

Nautical College Pangbourne – The youngest in the group, Pangbourne is singular in its survival as a college. Indeed, it is thriving as an educational establishment, if not as a pre-sea training school in the earlier sense. Pangbourne celebrates its centenary 2017. Founded by shipowner Sir Thomas Devitt (Devitt and Moore) training boys to become officers in the mercantile marine. The Devitts wanted boys to have a well rounded education in case they later changed their minds about going to sea. It was the only one of the five colleges which was never afloat, having been conceived and accommodated on dry land, in Berkshire. Naval uniform for cadets , and in common with Worcester and Conway, pupils became Cadets RNR. 1969, as demand for pre-sea officer training declined, it became Pangbourne College with more emphasis on academic subjects. The school now has approximately 400 coeducational pupils, day and boarding. *Motto: Bravely and Faithfully*.

A Blast from the Past – Ian James Blaney, GB 39/40, Cadet No.1025, went AWOL until he made contact back in September 2015. Details of his career were published in a previous edition of our newsletter. However, Ian has not been able to obtain but, through the kind generosity of Tim Cowley GB 60/61 and our Chairman, a striped tie, blazer badge and peak cap was forwarded to Ian. His picture showing him dressed in stated items is published for all to see (but what about his belt, have you

noticed?). No prizes for guessing Ian's age, he and I share that knowledge through humorous telephone conversations. Ian and his wife Joyce of 70 years are fit and well, residing in Cardiff, plus two sons and three grand-children. Like a few of us Ian completed his cadetship with Union Castle Line, then various companies to Master's Certificate before Mersey Docks and Harbour Board.

So far as a **social event** is concerned a plan is being hatched for a gathering somewhere in the early summer. Again, a plea I would welcome suggestions of venue/area or whatever to share with my committee of one!!

Regards to everyone –

Ted Fisher Tel Home: 01903 744400, Mob:07702635017. Email: tedefisher@aol.com

Australia Branch News January 2017. (Peter O'Hare)

A pre- Christmas lunch was held at the Chatswood RSL Club in Sydney on Saturday 6th December. This venue is at the Chatswood rail station and ideal for commuting and will be used in the future including the Commissioning Day Lunch. Attendees were: Gordon & Bettie Maxwell with daughter Judith 40/41, Stan Damp 47/48, Rudi Auer 59/60, Peter & Jenny O'Hare 64, Peter & Liz Kroon 69, Roger & Maura Pike (Old Pangbourne).

Our next meeting will be the AGM and Commissioning Day Lunch on Saturday 18th March 2017.

Please let us know if you are visiting Australia.

Grenville Stevens Chairman, Andy Fotheringham Vice Chairman,

Peter O'Hare Hon Sec Treasurer itspeterohare@outlook.com.

GBOBA Bursary Fund Report

It is a great pleasure to report that all the GBOBA Bursary Fund bursars passed their year-end examinations and move on into 2017. It is particularly pleasing that the two grade 12 students obtained university entrance passes and Archie Leeu will proceed now to the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, on a full AMSOL Bursary to continue his maritime studies at tertiary level, Keanon gained entry into CPUT but will have to make a choice in respect of taking up the GBOBA BF Bursary to SSTG or proceeding to CPUT without a Bursary. The extra-tutorial support that GBOBA Bursary fund provides, being fully justified by their success. We wish them all ongoing success. This year, the Fund has its first bursar attending the maritime studies department of Durban University of Technology on the newly instituted three-year course, having been awarded the Captain Steve Ray Scholarship. It is very useful that Nomkhitha Mbele moved to Durban during 2016 and is representing the Fund there, providing local administrative support and mentoring for the Durban based bursars.

Four new boarding bursaries were awarded for grade 10 at Lawhill in December, two of which are sponsored by the Royal Cape Yacht Club. One Grade 12 scholar has received a sponsored Bursary as a day Scholar and one a GBOBA Boarder Sponsorship. In addition, one grade 10 day-scholar award will be made during the first term, this will bring the total number of students at Lawhill during 2017 benefiting from the Fund's programme to 14, This is a truly remarkable growth from the original 2 half-bursaries awarded in 2012. This is a clear demonstration of the growing appreciation and support of the work of the Old Boys' Association, from both individuals in the GBOBA network and corporate sponsors within the maritime industry.

It was encouraging to be able to facilitate workplace experience for several of our bursars during the December-January holidays at MDSol in Cape Town and Sub Tech in Durban. This is a hugely beneficial experience for them and it is hoped that it will become a significant feature in the Fund's programme. The feedback received from their employers was very positive. These young people are excellent ambassadors in every respect.

The Fund goes into 2017 in a sound financial state thanks to the sustained support from sponsors and donors, both private and corporate. The annual golf day was a great success once again and has become a definite highlight of the Industry's social calendar. In addition, the Fund's management team has been

strengthened significantly by several new volunteers: Lloyd Merriman, Yvette de Klerk, Colin Flockhart, Charles Kingon and Tiaan Rabe have all been welcomed aboard.
The launching of the GBOBA / Marine Inspirations sponsored sail-training L26, *Homero* which was purchased by a donation from Mrs Caimari and named in honour of her late husband. The other funds raised at the Big Bottle Wine Party will be used to support annual maintenance and other running costs of the *Homero*. The *Homero* will enable hands-on seamanship and boat handling training for the Lawhill students.
This function together with the commissioning of the extensions at Lawhill, which increases it's boarding and classroom capacity, will launch us into 2017.
The Old Boys Association cannot resurrect the Bothie, but it can ensure the continuation of its heritage of educating the youth of South Africa for maritime service through the work of its Bursary Fund. The voyage continues – "full ahead!"

JAPAN HONOURS HANS PETER SCHRÖDER 1954/55 #1924

The Legend Lives On in many spheres of life, here an extract from the newspaper Bolander.
In a moving ceremony at Stark-Condè Wine Estate in the Jonkershoek Valley outside Stellenbosch on Friday, October 28th 2016, the Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency Shigeyuki Hiroki, presented a certificate of commendation to the estate owner, Hans Peter Schröder, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Fumio Kishida. In reading the commendation, Mr Hiroki noted the significant contribution Mr & Mrs Schröder made to South Africa Japan relations including the founding of the Cape Town Japan Club in 2007. "Thanks to Hans and Midori today, the Cape Town Japan Club is an active association of friendship and cultural exchanges" the ambassador said.

Bravo Zulu Hans and Midori, The Legend Lives On.

MOMENTS IN BOTHIE HISTORY

C.E. GREENACRE 1949/50 #1598. 1947 Colin was made Honourary Life Member of the Royal Cape Yacht Club, Table Bay Harbour. "At the time the RCYC committee wanted to honour all those members who lost their lives in the Second World War It was decided to make members of any sons of the above who were keen on sailing. I was the only one.
My father J.H. Greenacre (ex Cadet 198 Term 1925/26) was lost on the HMSAS Southern Floe in February 1941."
T.B.F. DAVIS. Not a well known fact is that our benefactor also became the first president of the Society of Master Mariners of South Africa which was formed in 1940. The first annual general meeting was held at Howard College, Durban, on April 15th 1941. He also established Howard College in memory of his son which is now part of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal campus.
NATIONAL SEA RESCUE INSTITUTE SUPPORT. As reported on our Face Book page recently a donation was handed over to the NSRI at our December lunch celebration which was hosted jointly with the Society of Master Mariners of South Africa (SOMMSA). SOMMSA President Rob Whitehead (GB term 1973) spoke on the occasion before handing over the donation to the NSRI Chief Executive Dr. Cleeve Robertson.
"Following a tragic accident off Stilbaai in 1966 when 17 fishermen drowned during a storm, Miss Pattie Price (whose own life had been saved by a RNLI lifeboat in the English Channel) began a committed letter-writing campaign to motivate for the formation of a sea rescue organisation in South Africa.

Captain Bob Deacon (GB term 1947/48) a well known long serving member of the society and Ray Lant were the first volunteers to respond to this call and in 1967 the South African Inshore Rescue Service (SAISRS) was born - its first rescue craft - a 4.7m inflatable boat called Snoopy was donated by the Society of Master Mariners. Soon the SAISRS became the NSRI and today carries on the proud tradition of volunteering started in 1967. All rescue crew of the NSRI are still unpaid volunteers.
Since its commencement then, the Society of Master Mariners has been a supporter of the NSRI. Over the years our support has been cyclical along with the fortunes of the South African maritime industry.
In 2013, two of our Saldanha based members, Lance Tiedt (GB term 1987) and Kevin Moran (GB term 1973), raised their concern about the lack of reliable rescue services in Lambert's Bay - a particularly dangerous coastal area for fishermen. Their initiative brought all the role players together and saw the establishment of the new station in Lambert's Bay.
Since then, the Society has been looking for ways in which we could further enhance our support for the NSRI generally and particularly for the Lambert's Bay Station.
We are fortunate enough to have an enthusiastic young member of the Society who identified an opportunity to link the 40th anniversary of the two deep sea salvage tugs *John Ross* and *Wolraad Woltemade* with a fund raiser for the NSRI.

Like many South Africans Lloyd Merriman has a strong emotional tie to these Old Ladies and produced a range of wines labelled to commemorate this 40th anniversary. Our sincere thanks must go out to Lloyd who did all the hard slog himself - no doubt roping in his wife from time to time - and made this happen.
Our thanks to Society members and to the GBOBA members who supported this initiative and bought these wines.
The fruits of Lloyd's labour brought a donation of R60,000 to the NSRI."

Greetings from Oman - John Abercrombie 1969 #2356

In late February of this year (*2016*), I contacted the International Maritime College Oman as I had heard they were advertising for Staff. After many communications and having submitted an application and my revamped CV, I was made an offer of employment as a Senior Teacher in the Short Course Training Unit. That was the easy bit.
In a short space of time I received an air ticket, a visa and soon found myself packing my bags and saying goodbye to friends. It all seemed to happen very quickly but in fact it was about six weeks since my application that I found myself on a flight to Muscat Oman, via Dubai. At about midday on 16 April I arrived in Sohar, two and half hours' drive north west of Muscat and early the next morning Sunday 17 April, I reported for work at the College. I was fortunate in that the Deputy Dean Academic Affairs, Patrick Wells, took me under his wing and my initial stay in Oman was made a lot easier, thanks to his generous help.
The College is an impressive sight (www.imco.edu.om) and I found it quite intimidating to be part of it all. Patrick Wells introduced me to the Dean and other members of the Management Team, the Heads of Department and the members of the HR Department who had, until then just been names on various e-mail messages. Later that day I was given a tour of the College and introduced to the Staff members who were not involved in lectures – there seemed to be over a thousand names and I confess I became less able to recall any names as the tour progressed. I found the 'same-ness' of dress style (all the Oman men wear white (usually) "dishdasha" robes and a turban head-dress and all the women wear black "dishdasha" and head scarves) added to my lack of recall but I suppose in truth, the problem becomes worse as one ages! It has taken some months to get to know the names of many of the folk I was introduced to that first day!
Today men's dress is referred to as Omani and women's dress is Omaniya as, until about 1970 when Sultan Qaboos decreed a national dress style, various styles existed due to the ever-changing borders and the nomadic nature of the population. The national dress is not the only thing Sultan Qaboos has

changed since he became Sultan. In 1970 there were very few decent roads and the only school was in Muscat. Today Oman is a thriving modern community with fantastic roads, over 200 well equipped schools, universities and colleges, modern ports and a thriving shipping community with Oman Ship Management Company and National Ferries Company being two of the major local players. In addition fisher communities are found all along the coast, providing employment to many.

My work as a facilitator of short courses started shakily as I was faced with students very different from those in SA. It did not take long to get accustomed to the environment and now I find myself embracing the many challenges and enjoying the teaching role. The short courses training unit consists of two facilitators, the HoD and an admin assistant. We have been very busy developing training material, delivering courses and preparing for a European Maritime Safety Authority (EMSA) Audit which took place during the first week of August. We are mainly involved in delivering the so-called STCW short courses but will be delivering a tug master's course next semester and simulator training to the Port of Sohar pilots.

The college offers theoretical training for deck and engineer officers all the way through to master's and chief's level as well as programs in port and shipping technology (PST), many foundation programs mainly serving as bridging programs to the higher level semester programs, with English being a major subject for the local school leavers. The nautical science (deck and engineering) programs offer short courses as well as the PST section but these tend to be specialist courses such as process operational technology courses for the local oil and gas industry and many others.

Recently I was required to develop a course in draught surveys and the use of the IMSBC Code, and deliver it to terminal operators employed by Vale, a Brazilian bulk shipping company specializing in the shipment of iron ore fines. Here in Sohar, the so-called 'Valemax' very large bulk carriers (in excess of 380000 tonne deadweight and the longest ships of any type afloat today) bring in the fines, the local plant in the port refine it and exports iron ore pellets in smaller vessels such as a 75000 tonne Panamax bulker. The local port is considered one of the top ten natural deep-water ports in the world.

There is a strong ex-pat community in Oman, with many of the staff at the college coming from India, Pakistan, Iran and soon there will be four South Africans. I have accommodation in *Sohar Gardens Residences* which is not far from the College and very comfortable. Generally the cost of living in Oman is pretty similar to RSA but there is a much greater variety of food available with many nationalities being catered for by the various supermarket-type stores.

The local Oman people are peace-loving gentle folk, curious and polite and will go out of their way to assist anyone in difficulty. They are generally aggressive drivers and never drive slowly so one needs to have ones wits about one all the time. There is much to learn about Muslim and Arab customs, the language and the history and I am enjoying sharing the experience with my wife since she joined me here about a month ago.

Reflections on Oman in the Muddled East (Colin Johnsen)

Oman is hot, very hot, in fact very, very hot. If Gorima's hot chilli paste could be converted into still air then that would be the atmospheric conditions 24/7 during the summer. On this day in August it was 42° C and the previous night it was 38° C with not a cloud in the sky or a gasp of wind, putting the Beaufort scale at zero and where even light airs would be welcome.

There are very few dogs or cats. Probably because dogs would burn their paws off and cats wouldn't be able to scratch any kind of hole in the stony ground for a crap. There's also not much grass, except in specially cultivated beds within high walled compounds, where they probably also have the other kind to smoke as nobody can see into these urban forts. Saw a couple of camels but nobody really knows what they eat and the cud they constantly chew could be a piece of tyre from a scrap heap. Nothing else would last as long for a desert crossing.

Another mystery is the water, well fresh water that is. Plenty in both hot and cold water taps but not a drop anywhere outside. A local mumbled something about a wadi but that could mean anything. Near the port is a gigantic desalinator using the Sea of Oman, so domestic use is probably met with that. Can't imagine boreholes dredging up enough and anything sucked up from the desert must be filtered camel pee anyway. A blessing is that with no water in this land there are absolutely no mozzies.

Yesterday I asked the driver to stop at a shop for some fruit but he didn't understand, so I made the motions of peeling a banana and putting my mouth over the end to eat it. He covered his eyes and shrieked "No, no, no!". So I said "Banana, banana". He replied "Mamba, mamba". I then made eating motions again and he threw up his hands shouting "No, no, no!" Seems as though snakes are not on the menu here.
Anyway I finally got the right Arabic word, or thought I did when I asked for "Fukawi" at the shop. The attendant shook his head. So I tried "Fookawi". No. Then tried "Fookit". No. Turns out the right word for fruit is "Fuwaki". Selected some fruit, all imported. Tried to buy milk but all they had was condensed. Eggs are powdered. Bread is only sold as sliced white. Bacon is non-existent. Sweet scrambled eggs on toast with no bacon didn't appeal so I left with the fruit only.
Alcohol is expressly forbidden, as it's a poison cunningly devised by infidels to trap unwary Omanis into revealing intimate secrets, both personal and political, by the second glass. So one has to register for a license. In fact this includes a declaration, countersigned by your employer, that you are probably an alcoholic. Very convenient when it comes to finding a reason to get rid of a troublesome infidel before your contract ends.
Actually buying alcohol is fraught with peril. Either in the form of extortionately high prices at the few "international" hotels, or trying to find the specially licensed retailer with his triple-locked entrance with no hint of what's inside as no advertising is permitted. Therein lies the peril because, unless you know where to find him, you are going to remain a thirsty infidel. Once bought your problems are not over because you have to sneak the plain wrapped parcel into your vehicle and hive off to your private abode. Alcohol is not allowed in public so you could be caught in possession, with no chance of parole.
Big news and debate (by men only) in the local English paper is the burkini, a two-piece overall worn by devout women when attempting to swim. I always thought this was the kind of PPE favoured by lekkies on board.
The men all wear a long white nightdress all day known as a dishdasha, with either a turban or skull cap. Turbans would seem the better option in construction because they're thick enough to fend off a falling brick. Footwear is optional which means various types of sandals. If there was a maniac wielding a sword in the street the menfolk could possibly hoik up their dress and run, but the unfortunate women would be left to face the lunatic. Under no circumstances would they be allowed to expose any part of a leg to a stranger, and anyway it might incentivise the lad to carry out a suppressed fantasy or something.
The women all wear a black night dress called a burka or abaya, which leaves only the face and hands exposed. They are required to do the bidding of their menfolk without complaint. No idea what the punishment would be for trying to be uppity - could be a thousand lashes or something. There's also the pillar box type which means the covering allows only a slit for the eyes, and even some who are completely covered. Hard to tell if they're watching you or catching a nap. Wouldn't want one of them alone on the bridge at night. Imagine the strain of trying to use the binoculars through fabric. If they spoke would you even know it was them if you can't see their lips move. Women talk with their hands so that's always a clue.
To the east the Sea of Oman stretches off into a grey haze, and inland the desert stretches off into a brown haze. When the dust clears there's a splendid view of a mountain range about 100km inland which definitely requires exploration, just to see if there really is water in some wadi. Tried to ask for a road map – Arabic word "kharita" – which sounds like an Arab woman's name, but the only response I got was a shrug. A turbaned elder said there was no such thing as every devout Muslim knows the way and the truth. He could have been confused or maybe I was. However, there's a whole network of uncharted tarred roads and camel tracks. The AA should be informed.
A question asked of me by an ex-pat was "What has been the biggest challenge to living in Oman?" My immediate reply was "Finding a dry toilet".
All toilets here have an essential accessory: a tap with a short length of hose and a nozzle. The purpose is for locals to lift their nightdress up around the neck, when they've finished their business, and hose themselves and the whole booth liberally with water. It is most disconcerting for an infidel next in the queue when he sits down on a wet seat with his boots ankle deep in water. Part of the challenge is to

find dry toilet paper, and a big thank you must go out to all those considerate souls who hang the paper roll up on a nail or coat hook behind the door, safe from the hose down.
Car washes here are amazing. For the equivalent of R80 a poor looking Indian chap will "clean" your car, outside only. He will start with half a bucket of muddy water and finish with the same amount in his bucket. Their technique is to use the powdery dust that covers all vehicles as a sort of rubbing compound to give the vehicle a dry rub and the result is a shiny car. However, one wonders how many car washes it'd take to rub the paint off altogether.
Government departments dealing with the general public are like any other around the world. Long queues of listless zombies shuffling forward every half hour or so while a disinterested clerk sits in a cubicle, then pushes off for an hour for an unexplained reason. Always thought it was a tactic to pee the public off enough to get them to forget what they came for and go home.
The one exception to the universal rule for queuing in a public place occurs here in Oman, and this exception is infuriating. An upper class turbaned and night-shirted arsehole will enter the hall in his mirror shades and walk straight to the cubicle. Any peasant at the front of the queue is shoved aside while the overlord thrusts his documents at the terrified clerk who drops everything to attend to him. The insanity of this situation is compounded by the downtrodden acceptance by the general public. To an infidel like me this behaviour is totally unacceptable and deserves a kick to the nuts, but it needs to be put into perspective. Any threatening move towards an upper class citizen could get one a lengthy spell behind bars, for insolence, intimidating behaviour and an array of other trumped up charges.
To buy meat one needs to go to a supermarket or "Meat Sale" shop where you can buy an assortment of mutton, goat, camel or beef but not a hint of pork. However, there are a couple of outlets that sell the forbidden stuff, in a separate room with a separate entrance and manned by lower caste Indian labourers whose contamination is of no concern to your average Omani. Once you've made your selection its fully wrapped to cover the indecency and the receipt is taken to the main shop with your cash to pay for the pork. Under no circumstances is the female Omani cashier allowed to catch a glimpse of pork. Your receipt and change is brought back and you exit away from the curious stares of "normal" customers.
Imagine the conversation between two Royal Omani Policemen (ROP): "Hey Abdullah, this morning an infidel's coat flap blew open in the wind and I saw a bottle Jack Daniels, so I nabbed him". "That's nothing. Yesterday I nabbed an infidel who was scaring a bunch of women at a bus stop. The lunatic was waving a packet of pork chops at them". ROP crime stats must make interesting reading.
Districts in Oman are called Walyats, and the chap who presides over a district is known as a Wally. It might sound hilarious but its true. These Wallys are also of the overlord class and apparently not to be trifled with. He could decide on executions, stonings, lashes - all the usual clutter of decision-making that fills up the day of a typical high-ranking official. Annually he has to attend a conference, so imagine a room full of Wallys. Easy enough when you've seen a parliamentary session in the old Mother City.
Shoe shops should be called sandal shops because they sell little else. Sandals are part of national dress but are kicked off at every opportunity while sitting, so that fingers can be rubbed between toes or for any other pleasurable pedal activity. Naturally it must be done with the right hand because the left is only for toilet usage. One is cautioned to not shake with the left hand, ever, as its regarded as a supreme insult, lowering the status of the handshake greeter to toilet level. Much the same could be said of the rest of this article.
Kindly note the author has added more than a pinch of salt to already fictitious characters and events and no offence is intended except where it is due.

Tail Piece

"A Liberal's paradise would be a place where everybody has guaranteed employment, free comprehensive healthcare, free education, free food, free housing, free clothing, free utilities, and only law enforcement has guns.
And, believe it or not, such a place does indeed already exist: It's called Prison." - Sheriff Joe Arpaio, Arizona. USA

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