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GENERAL BOTHA OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

http://www.generalbotha.co.za

February 2018

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 3rd March 2018, 1030 for 1100 – Annual General Meeting, Kelvin Grove Club.
- Saturday 3rd March 2018, 1230 for 1300 – Commissioning Day Lunch, Kelvin Grove Club.
- Sunday 4th March 2018 @ 1000 – War Memorial Service, at our cenotaph. In case of inclement weather the service shall be held at the Mission to Seafarers, Duncan Road, Table Bay Harbour.
- Booking for the Commissioning Day Lunch is important, please RSVP by Tuesday 27th February 2018 to:
  - Kathy or Jacky or Louise Nicholas: Tel. 021-788 5957; cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za; Fax 086 233 6410
- **For further details please refer to the email from Tony Nicholas.**

DURBAN AGM & LUNCH

Durban Branch will hold their AGM this year on the same day and venue as the monthly lunch:

- Venue Royal Natal Yacht Club
- Durban AGM 7th March 1200 for 1230
- Commissioning Day Luncheon follows immediately after the AGM.
- Some liquid refreshments sponsored on the tables.

FROM THE BRIDGE OF CAPE TOWN – Tony Nicholas Chairman

Another quarter has passed by and kept us busy, including our year end lunch function to which we invite our widows as guests of the association; the Marine Bursary Golf Day and BBWP (big bottle wine party) both in support of your bursary fund; Sea Cadet Corp TS Woltemade prize giving parade; NSRI training camp for your bursary holders; hosting twenty strapping cadets from the Massachusetts Maritime Academy; reviewing all eleven bursary fund bursars followed by a guided tour of our museum exhibit; what have I omitted? Phew, it is not surprising I have gout. I have posted snippets of

all the above on our Face Book page. Peter and Jenny O'Hare visited Cape Town in December and Tony, Cathy and Dennis enjoyed a magnificent 'Brunch' and chat with them at the Victoria & Alfred Hotel. Good to see you Peter and thanks for the support from you and the Australian Branch.
On the subject of Face Book, I again encourage all members to join our Face Book page. One does not need to be active on Face Book to be able to read our GBOBA page. There are many items of interest that I post there that I repeat in our newsletters for the benefit of those that do not have a computer or smart phone to access our Face Book page, thus my apology to those who do read our Face Book for the duplication. But, not everything I post on Face Book makes its way to this quarterly publication. Solution? Join us on Face Book.
As detailed above our March *Bothie Weekend* is fast approaching and I encourage all members, certainly the locals, to support the events. Much blood, sweat, tears and toil goes into arranging these events and it is disappointing when we receive poor support. I look forward to seeing at least all our locals on the respective days.
Term 1968 reunion is gaining some momentum initially at Dead Slow Ahead but when Malcom Reading rang Full Ahead from Canada the event has the proverbial bone surging ahead. Term 1978 reunion is also on the move; thus I expect a good turnout once they remember their Bothie motto; Honour and Duty.
Mariners Braai - *WesKus*. Yep, our West Coast fraternity arranged another of their famous (or should that be infamous) braai's recently. By all accounts an enjoyable event but unfortunately not one of them thought of taking a few photographs for us. Have they not yet figured out that their phones double as a camera?

Old Salt Richard Lawrenson 1938/39 #989 recently sent me two interesting photographs. One of himself on board a vessel, and a group photograph taken on Trafalgar Square in London 24th May 1944. The group comprises: Richard Lawrenson, J.A.S. Giddey, A.C. Thomas, G.W. Clancy, A.G. (Sailor) Malan, L.L. West, J.M. Kendal, W.D. Duncan. Besides Richard Lawrenson, A.C. Thomas and Sailor Malan what happened to the rest in the photograph? I would appreciate any and all information and recollections.
In case you have not been following the news, Cape Town is featured every bulletin both locally and internationally; we are running out of water. Serious. I hope to report favourably on our rain and water levels in our next quarterly publication. In the meantime think of us when you drop a few blocks of ice in your whiskey. Oh no! Is water also used to make beer? Bothie, we have a problem.

Nettleton Trophy: Management of Boats Shield

All should be aware by now who John Nettleton was, GB Term 1931/33 and awarded the Victoria Cross during WWII. Now we are in search of the above named trophy which went AWOL some years ago. Andrew Cross won this award in 1966 and was awarded a much smaller plaque, he does not recall the original. The original we wish to locate is described by our historian, Ian Manning: "There is a similarity between the original Nettleton Trophy and the one awarded to Andrew Cross. However, the original's shield-shaped wood "backing" was about 400 mm high and a bit less in width. Onto the wood on the obverse was fixed a silver or nickel-plated shape of a 27-ft. whaler under sail. Details of rigging and of the boat itself were engraved onto the metal silhouette. In the border between the edge of the wood backing and the edge of the silhouette were several [15 – 20?] small shields on which the winners' names and term dates were engraved. There was also a plaque with the trophy name on it. On the reverse was a stand to hold the whole thing upright on a horizontal surface."
If anyone can guide us in locating this trophy we would be appreciative. In addition please check your records; we would like a photograph of the trophy. I look forward to hearing from you.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

P.D.H. HOPE 1952/53. Peter passed away 10th January 2018. Previously Manager of Crown Air, air conditioning, ventilation, skylights and heating company in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Any further information of Peter would be appreciated.

F.H. WHEELDON 1941/42. Frank passed away 3rd December 2017. After Bothie he joined the m.v. Seelandia and later the ss Dalia until the end of WWII. Joined Burroughs Machines in Johannesburg and from there Goldfields Mining House. In 1963 set up his own business manufacturing laboratory apparatus called Rutland Industries. Retired end of 2000.

P.M. CAVANAGH 1978. Peter unfortunately weighed his anchor last September. After school Peter did his twelve months military service based in Potchefstroom and thereafter joined the Bothie. After a period with Safmarine he worked for the Durban Corporation and then the Transnet National port Authority and finally for an accounting firm in Durban.

Our condolences to family and ship mates.

SCRANBAG

A.E. CRABBE 1969 #2365. The suggestion of a 50th year reunion next year has brought some interest and prompted Tony to send us an update. Joined Deutche Afrika Linien Gmbh. with Neil Brown and Keith Wright. On the sale of M.V. Stellenbosch in 1983 moved with the vessel to the new owners as master. Worked as tug master and pilot in East London. In 1998 moved to Dubai Drydocks as Dock Master/Pilot. In 2008 moved to Marine Superintendent for the Dubai Royal Fleet and thereafter as DPA/CSO for the Abu Dhabi Royal Fleet.

Now owner/partner with Fabyachts, a yacht management company in Dubai, while cruising the English canals and rivers in the summer on his wide beam "Marimba".

M.J.P. MOOLMAN 1977 #2592. Our website lured Mike in from the wastes of the Indian Ocean.

Attended S.A.M.N.A. General Botha Merchant Navy Academy from June 1977 to December 1977, while in the employ of Safmarine training as a navigation cadet. Since leaving Safmarine in July 1978 I was conscripted to serve two years in the South African Defence Force, doing bulk of my service in Pretoria - Military Intelligence. Worked on the then South African Railways as an Apprentice Telecommunication Technician. Qualified as a Telecommunications Technician, passing my trade test at Oliefantsfontein in 1985. Worked in the SAR telecommunication department in Richards Bay KZN. 1995 to 1999 Employed as a Representative for Forest Sales selling structural timber, based in Durban. 1999 to 2015 Employed with the then Hans Merensky timber company. Accounts manager in KZN/Lesotho. 2016 Employed with Hillermann Brothers, sales representative; KZN, Eastern Cape, Lesotho.

B.I. ALGAR 1939/41 #1022. Basil's son recently sent us an extract of Brian Ingpen's book "Unicorn Navigating New Frontiers" which features Basil's interesting career. (*With permission Brian Ingpen*)

"Basil Algar, sent to the four masted steamer *Sontay* as a cadet after leaving the training ship *General Botha* and joining Union Castle in 1941, spent the entire war on the former Vichy French troopship that has been captured while on a voyage from Madagascar by a joint South African and British naval squadron. She had been brought to Durban, where her accommodation was modified to carry over 1 800 troops, and she was placed under Union-Castle management. Shortly after sailing from Durban, the ship came under attack from a submarine in the Mozambique Channel, but the Royal Navy gunnery crew fought off the submarine with the vessel's six inch gun mounted on the poop. Surviving several aerial attacks in the Mediterranean, the ship moved troops along the North African coast, participated in the invasion of Italy and then sailed for India to take troops to Burma. Indeed, she carried the first British troops up the river in Burma after the occupation of that country by the Japanese.

Algar worked for a spell in a bank after the war, but the call of the sea lured him to serve with a small Greek company trading out of South Africa, as well as on ships operated by South African Lines, Mollers of Hong Kong, and Safmarine, and on South African harbour tugs. The time with Mollers was particularly interesting. He joined their *Alpha Oranje* in Durban at the start of a long voyage to Hong Kong via India and Aden. A spell on a salvage tug proved useful later during his career with Unicorn as did his service on *Louise Moller*, a tanker that tried to break a blockade by the Nationalist Chinese in the approaches to Shanghai.

His first command was SAL's *Kaapland* and he also spent time in London as the company's cargo superintendent. After his return to South Africa he was appointed master of Point Shipping Company's *Komati*, formerly Smith's coaster *Mead*. He responded favourably to an approach from

Ron Sellick to join Smith's Coasters as their marine manager and became a familiar figure on Maydon Wharf for years, taking personal interest in the cargo operations and the running of the ships. The report of the manager of Smith's Coasters in June 1956 included a note about Basil Algar:

The employment of Captain Algar as Marine Superintendent has raised and is still continuing to raise the standard of our operation at Maydon Wharf, and the standard of our ships' maintenance and husbandry out of all recognition. Captain Algar has proved eminently successful in the job for which he was employed.

His initial misgivings about the merger with African Coasters were put aside as Algar moved from stevedoring manager in 1966 to marine manager of Unicorn in 1968, positions he found extremely challenging and exciting as he was still directly involved in cargo handling innovations and found the team with whom he worked extremely good. The highlight of the career of this remarkable man - who also had an intense love of fine art and a proven ability as an artist and cellist - was his appointment to the Unicorn board as marine director in February 1975. When he retired in 1984 he could certainly reflect on an unusually interesting and varied career in shipping. His experience had been invaluable to the company as it embarked on a fleet renewal programme, developed containerization, and ventured into the offshore supply vessel business. At both Smiths and Unicorn Algar was personally responsible for improving the management systems for the ships' operations and for tighter discipline aboard the vessels. Overall, his contribution led to a more efficient coastal shipping industry."

A remarkable career; Basil at age 94 remains a proud Bothie Boy.

M.C. CULLEN 1954/55 #1866. Michael wrote in recently. "Joined S.S.*Dalia* at Cape Town in March 1956, sailed to Lourenco Marques (now Maputo) and back. Ships articles expired so I had to sign off. I declined to sign on again as I had always been a keen sportsman and missed my soccer and cricket while I was at sea. I went to Vereeniging where I had grown up and got a job with John Brown Land Boilers as an apprentice Fitter. I met up with my wife, Beryl, who was in matric that year and we have been together ever since. We married in 1960 and have four lovely children, one girl and three boys. Our youngest son, Michael, played hockey for South Africa.

In 1959 I secured a position at the Union Steel Corporation as a sales clerk on condition I played soccer for the company team in the local league. In 1963 I joined Caltex Oil Company as a sales representative. In 1966 I and three of my peers, all Sales Reps from Caltex, started a business building the canopies over petrol pumps for the oil companies.

We built the canopy at a new BP Garage in Germiston and BP asked us if we would like to be the operators. I jumped in and took up the challenge. Beryl gave up her teaching position and we ran the business together. Some years later we decided to move to the Natal South Coast where we bought a trading store which we ran for some years. The trading store we converted to a supermarket and opened an Estate Agency Business from the same premises. We moved to Durban in 1980 and opened another branch of our Estate Agency in Durban. I retired at the age of 50 and we spent most of our time following the Natal and South African Hockey teams around the country and around the world. We are retired and live on the Berea in Durban." A true adventurer and entrepreneur.

S.H. TRUEBODY 1978 #2616. "I attended both A and B semesters at Bothie, afterwards doing contract work in various fields. 2017 serving as a Dredging Master in Durban with Transnet National Port Authority." We look forward to meeting at your class reunion next month Stephen.

W.D. STEEL 2001. Wayne has left our shores for French living. "I received a permanent job offer from a surveying company based in France and will be looking after their marine/nautical department. I will be based at their head office in Paris [there are worst places to live in I know)] but will be doing a fair bit of travel to the marine regions in Europe and the UK."

Attended the maritime studies programme at the Cape Technikon Granger Bay campus in 2001. Joined Teekay Shipping as cadet and upon completing sea time obtained 2nd Mates ticket with tanker endorsement. Sailed onboard tankers with Teekay until 2005.

Came ashore and worked in operations and vessel management before joining Rennie Murray & Co. as Marine Surveyor. Completed post graduate studies in Maritime Law at the University of Cape Town. January 2018 relocated to France, joined a marine surveying company.

W.F. GOLDSMITH 1951/52 #1713. Bill informed me recently that he is retiring from business ventures. However we have no idea what Bill did during the past 64 years? I wait to hear from Bill which shall be interesting reading.

M.J. MCKENNA 1979 #2649. In preparation for their 2019 reunion the Search & Rescue team brought in Martin whom has his own marine cargo surveying company in Durban.

DENIS MACLAGAN ROTHON 1934/35 #770 A casual comment by Bruce van der Meulen (better known as Boogi) to a business supplier brought an unexpected response. The business man turned out to be the son of our Old Boy GB cadet 770. "Wait a moment" he said to Boogi and disappeared to a back room. Reappeared with original documents which are photographs during WWII and a hand written (no computers in those days) letter from Denis Rothon to his parents. The letter details his experience of being torpedoed whilst serving on board the mv *Gogovale*, date of the attack was 4th August 1940. This is very interesting history and a valuable addition to our archive; the letter I believe shall be of interest to many of our Old Boys and thus have copied an extract of it below. Some words are undecipherable and I would appreciate any assistance in filling those blanks. The convoy route was Montreal to London, the letter does not show what rank he was on board at the time but appears he was either a senior cadet or third officer.

This is what we have on record of Denis Rothon, unfortunately we have nothing of his subsequent career. Again, if anyone can assist with further information please contact me.

29th June 1935 member of the cutter crew race against *General Botha*, *Conway* and *Worcester*. Was a Senior Cadet Captain and awarded first prize for sportsmanship. Joined the Merchant Navy and was torpedoed during WWII which he survived. Deceased 1978.

"Glasgow August 1940.

We came over in a convoy of 54 ships and on the morning of Sunday August the 4th at 1.25 am we were torpedoed. We were hit just forward of my room. My room was completely wrecked altho' I was unhurt. I couldn't find my life jacket in the shambles so had to get out. Deck in the room was then about four inches under water & the ship had a terrific list. I scrambled along to my boat but it had been washed away. The boat above my room was blown up. The starboard boat managed to get away with about 24 in it. The Captain, Chief Officer, myself, Junior Wireless Operator, 2nd & 4th Engineers, 3 sailors and 3 firemen were left aboard. We had no lights and it was pitch black. So we sat down to wait for dawn. Meanwhile we managed to get the emergency wireless dynamo working & sent out our S.O.S. which was picked up by a Northern Ireland station 600 miles away so we thought our chances of being picked up very slim.

When dawn broke at about 5 am we saw that another ship had been caught as well. The ship (ours) was slowly getting a bigger list so the old man said abandon ship but we refused. So after a bit we compromised. 6 lads went aft to a 30 foot gangway, the captain & chief officer stood by a small raft on the bridge. The two engineers, the W.T.O & I went for'ard to the raft lashed to the rigging. The bulwark was under water so we had to wade to the rigging & climb up & sit on the raft. It was bitterly cold. I had pyjamas and a raincoat on and the others were dressed about the same. I don't know how long we sat up the ????? but the 4th eng was just about falling off with cold, we weren't much better. And then as we rose to the crest of the wave I saw a wee ship on the horizon & I sung out "DESTROYER" and then I thought maybe it's the sub come up for another attack, but no it was a destroyer. It came belting up at about 30 knots. They picked up our lads who had got away in the boat & also the other ships crew & then came off for us. Meantime we risked going to our various cabins & got my trousers and uniform jacket. The boat came as near as they could & we had to jump for it, so we were all dragged aboard like drowned rats. As soon as we got aboard the navy lads dished us up with old clothes & rum. Boy oh! Boy is that rum rough stuff I felt like taking on all the Huns single handed.

The destroyer picked up our S.O.S.at about 2 am but couldn't answer because they would then give away their position to any submarine, so they couldn't relieve our feelings any. If they could only have let us know we wouldn't have lost so much hair but it was too dangerous. When I say we were 600 miles away I mean that distance from England."
One can only imagine what his parents felt when reading his letter.

AWOL

Newsletter returned from **Peter Hall 1952/53**, last known address Zuurfontein, Gauteng. Please find him for us.
A recent article in the NSRI magazine featured our Old Boy **Bob Deacon 1947/48.** I remember Bob as a surveyor lugging a massive radio around town and the port, it must have been the size of my printer and goodness knows what it weighed. We have no further details of his earlier career and would appreciate any details that members recall.

DURBAN BRANCH NEWS - Derek McManus

It is with regret that we missed the last newsletter. Unfortunately, I was unaware that our contribution had not been forwarded.
On the local scene, Howard and I attended a prize giving at Sail Africa and met Owami Zuma, who is currently at Lawhill Maritime Centre doing three years there. Owami is certainly a good candidate and I am sure will do us proud.
Some 26 members gathered at the Royal Natal Yacht Club to enjoy some Christmas Fare and celebrate 85 years of the OBA in Natal founded by Herby Horsley in 1932. It's a pity we don't have anyone around that can relate to their gatherings which I am sure would have been very spirited affairs.
We are still in the process of finalizing details of our AGM and hopefully can come up with something that can motivate a better attendance.
The passing of Peter Cavanagh listed in Anchors Aweigh. Peter attended our functions way back and although went AWOL, I still crossed paths with him on occasions. He went to school at St Henry's College and then did the compulsory 12 months in the Army in Potch. This was followed by six months at Bothy. After a stint with Safmarine worked for the Durban Corporation and NPA and finally for an accounting firm in Durban.
Another of our members Peter Hope (Cadet 1771 Term 1952/53) passed over the side recently. Peter joined the fold about 10 years ago and always spoke of his Bothy days with great joy. He joined the Navy at one stage and was later involved in refrigeration. Always sad to see the passing of OBs which is far too frequent.
It was good to see Tony Da Silva at a recent lunch, as well as Ian "Cracks" Carrasco. Tony has hung up his sea boots and am sure looking forward to finding a desk job, if he hasn't done so already.
Thanks for the messages received from Cape Town and Australia Branches for the 85th.
Hoping for a good response to our AGM, details of which shall be circulated in the near future.
Regards, Derek McManus.

GAUTENG BRANCH - Alan Ford

Voyage two zero one eight started a few weeks ago at the time of writing. We have dropped the old pilot who was wearing a nice red suit with white fur trimmings, rung Full Away on Passage, and are now up to a smokeless modern sea speed of 10 knots. Put your caps on backwards guys!
Sadly, our branch lost our oldest member, Frank Wheeldon 41/42 in December. I first came across Frank when I was in about Standard 8. It was a calm grey Saturday afternoon at Vaal Dam in January and the day before the annual Round the Island Race. I was sailing my little Dabchick, and passing me to windward was what was for the time and place, a leviathan of a yacht in the form of a trimaran, easily the biggest of the very few "keelboats' on the dam. I clearly remember there being a lot of pretty young women swanning around the vast expanse of deck. At the time, I would not have known who he was, nor did my father watching from the shoreline, who had preceded Frank by some 4 years at the Bothie. If he had, maybe he could have organized me a crew job. I would happily have ditched my little Dabbie for a crew job amongst the rest of them, but alas it was not to be.

Frank was a pioneer in the inland keelboat yachting scene which was just getting started at Vaal Dam in the sixties. I can clearly remember a time, a year or two prior to Franks *Diana* being launched from the old flying boat slipway at Deneysville, only seeing 4 or 5 boats swinging on their moorings. One was a Yachting Monthly Eventide, a Yachting Monthly Senior, another was a Silhouette, which had an ugly reverse sheer, and one or two other nondescripts. Fiberglass had yet to make its mark on the boating scene.

Frank was a founding member of Deneysville Aquatic Club, as well as of the Vaal Cruising Association, and later started his own private yacht club, Aloe Yacht Club at the foot of his property at Aloe Fjord. Over 40 years later through a connection with his son in law Heinz Lindner, also well known as a Highveld boat builder, I came across his beloved plywood *Diana*, storm wrecked, stripped and delaminating on Franks piece of private shoreline.

January is the month when thoughts turn to organization of the annual Commissioning Day Luncheon towards the end of March. Housekeeping of the branch contact details takes place, and I find more and more cadets to be hull down over the horizon, or in modern parlance I'm no longer in range of their AIS transmitters. Never the less I have had a reasonable response to my cryptic email regarding the proposed event location and event date which was missing. So for anyone who is still in the dark and did not receive the follow up apologies, it is set for 18th March. Again this year our now most senior cadet Rene Poerner has kindly offered to host us at his mansion on the mountain despite his brand new stainless steel knee. I have been able to muster a good contingent so far, and I'm hoping that I will not have to call the riot police at worst, or at best, station the noise abatement monitors on his boundaries as the 12 to 4 afternoon watch blurs into the 4-8 evening watch.

Many an old seafarer has lamented the disappearance of the sextant from the bridge and spoke of the day when the SatNavs get switched off. But now there is a new sextant on the block, even if it is only a navigational system acronym. Not designed for sea ships, but space ships.

As we all clearly remember keeping time is fundamental to navigation. We remember the beautiful chronometers wound by the Second Mate, then the much more accurate signals produced by electronic circuits buried somewhere in computer chips in GPS receivers, these then being corrected by atomic oscillator clocks in the heart of the US of A. That's all fine for us to go to the Moon and back, but when in the future we as the human race decide to venture further afield out into the cosmos and leave behind our Blue Planet, we will need a new source of timing signals for our cosmically referenced navigation systems.

Cosmologists have discovered that collapsed stars of a certain size, because of their high rotation speed, emit electromagnetic pulses from their poles which appear to be extraordinarily constant and at a millisecond frequency which suits using these pulses from over seventy pulsars, in exactly the same way as we use earth bound atomic clocks.

The development of the system is still in its early stage, but so far they have found in tests that they can presently calculate distance to about 10 miles. While that is of very little use today on Earth and would frustratingly leave you driving around in random patterns in a city looking for your new girl friend's house, in space given the huge distances and speeds of spaceship travel, that is extra ordinarily accurate. They hope to eventually reduce the error to about 3 miles.

So what is this program called:- Station Explorer for X-ray Timing and Navigation Technology (SEXTANT). If you are interested you can read the full article here:- https://newatlas.com/nasa-tests-space-gps-pulsars-sextant/52961/.

Not many modern ship designs can boast being pretty…functional yes, maybe. But this particular coastal specialized small bulk carrier caught my eye in the papers a while back. I would think that sitting in the plush and comfortable captain's chair looking out over that glossy red bonnet might give you ideas that you're driving a seagoing red Ferrari. And what is also nice is the funnels are far enough away so as not to give you those wonderful aromas of diesel exhaust. No rattling bridge doors either.

The only tricky situation for a cadet that I can see is that to do his/her morning and afternoon flag rounds while in port, he/ she may find that hoisting and lowering a stem jack on a frozen slippery red bonnet could lead to an unwanted bath in freezing water. Maybe they don't bother with stem jacks anymore.
I bet the old SAR+H mooring gangs could easily have sent their beautiful and deadly heaving lines through that tiny target area just below the name EGBERT. How they get the strings ashore these days would be an interesting exercise to watch. *Alan Ford, Gauteng*.

UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH – *Ted Fisher*

Great, another contact from blue yonder! Last month I received a message and in turn spoke with one stranger John Hirst of Ascot – UK an Air Historian and member of The Spitfire Heritage Trust. They are currently renovating RAF Hendon Museum, the late Group Captain Adolph Gysbert (Sailor) Malan ex- SATS General Botha (1923/24) is to be featured and as the Museum will be digital it is of importance details are correct. RAF Hendon hold the personal files of all RAF personnel so they do have his War Record. The St Georges Church/Museum at RAF Biggin Hill is also being renovated, this too will be online so, a GB Crest will look good alongside a 74 Squadron Badge.
Needless to say, I referred John to our Chairman Tony Nicholas who provided a Muster List profile and History of A.G Malan, pictures of SATS General Botha and indeed, the background and History of General Louis Botha himself. This further led to our Museum Curator Ian Manning providing the Muster List profile, background of another famous Old Boy Squadron Leader (later Wing Commander) John Nettleton VC ex- GB (1931/33) who led the famous raid on Augsborn in 1943. He too will feature in the display.
There is no doubt John Hirst will keep Tony Nicholas appraised of the restoration work with material/photographs that can later be included in our Newsletters and on the Face Book page. The SATS General Botha, its history will be central to what The Trust are doing.
The Legend Lives On.
I am pleased to report no bad/sad news of Branch Members so assume all is well!
On a personal note, early last September I celebrated my 80th Birthday. Barbara and I together with long term friends Chris and Jen (he an ex-Marconi Radio Officer) embarked on a memorable Riviera Travel river cruise on the River Rhine on board MS **Jane Austen** from Cologne in Germany to Basle in Switzerland. The river runs down through Switzerland, Austria, France and Germany. Many cities were passed and some visited, the famous Rhine Gorge, super scenery. For Chris and myself much time was spent on deck during passage and we were in awe of the busy close quarters shipping scene of barges, container vessels, fuel tanker barges and of course the passing ever changing shore side scene of mountains, waterfalls, housing together with industrial sites. From Basle a coach to Lake Lucerne nestling amongst stunning mountain views. The atmosphere on board with fine accommodation, food, fellow (140 number) passengers and fantastic crew members were a credit to the company.
Euro-Star train from St Pancras London to Brussels, coach to Cologne and eventually return from Basle to Paris via French TGV to join Euro-Star back to London.
As Hon UK Scribe I regret Barbara and myself are unable to attend for the forthcoming March AGM/Commissioning Dinner, however, may I on behalf of all UK Branch members offer our thanks to Chairman Tony Nicholas together with his Committee for leading all through another successful year. May the gathering in Cape Town go well with all reunion activities.
Everybody go well for the year ahead – *Ted Fisher.*

AUSTRALIA BRANCH NEWS

We had pre-Christmas Lunch in Sydney on 18th November with 13 attendees. Gordon Maxwell 40-41, Stan Damp 47-48, Rudi Auer 59-60, Grenville Stevens 60-61 accompanied by Suzette and their Grandson Jonathan Taylor, John Baxter 61-62, Peter O'Hare 64, Peter Kroon 69, Roger Pike old Pangbourne and Maura, Gerry and Helen Hallock Hon Members.
Old Boys in Australia now exceed 70 but are well spread out. 50% are Granger Bay OB's,

Our next function will be the Commissioning Day Lunch at Chatswood Sydney on Saturday 24 March. All are welcome.
Grenville Stevens Chairman; Andy Fortheringham Dep. Chairman; Peter O'Hare Hon Sec/Treasurer

GBOBA Bursary Fund

Our six Grade 12 bursars produced a mixed bag of senior certificate examination results at the end of last year, ranging from the excellent, with several subject distinctions, to the disappointing. Unfortunately, three failed to meet the grades required for university entrance. We will be addressing this issue with our Tutors, Lawhill and through them the school to address areas of concern.

Two have been granted post-matric internships within the maritime industry, enabling them to revisit their grade 12 studies part-time in preparation for repeating their examinations in November, should they so choose. Two have received GBOBA BF Bursaries to SSTG Navigating OOW. One is looking at taking up a Loan / Bursary at SSTG for the Navigation OOW Course. One has registered with the Northlink TVET College for various Engineering subjects. We wish them all well for 2018!Our mentors will be there monitoring and supporting them going forward to enable them to meet their goals.

Being conscious of the fact that Mr. T.B.F. Davis' magnificent gesture of purchasing HMS *Thames* in 1920 was to provide a permanent home for the naval cadets of Cape Town, and that it was a group of those cadets that crewed her on her voyage out to her new life as SATS *Genera*l *Botha,* it was particularly pleasing that the Fund's close association with the Sea Cadet Corps at T.S. *Woltemade* during 2017, resulted in our awarding two of the three bursaries for the new grade 10 Lawhill intake to cadets from their programme.

This year's programme started early for both the Fund's administration and the Lawhill bursars, with their induction camp with the NSRI. The camp was the first event of an ongoing programme of training, in collaboration with the NSRI, which will make a major contribution to the development of practical seamanship skills in our bursars. Importantly, it will also assist in the nurturing of their key values of service, leadership, teamwork and discipline.

Smangaliso Dlamini, one such GBOBA Bursary Fund student, studying navigation at Durban University of Technology and dedicated to a career in navigation, travelled to Cape Town NSRI Headquarters, to join 11 of his GBOBA BF peers of grades 11 and 12 and beyond for the NSRI camp. He, upon reflection on the five days of teaching and learning, emphasised that what he gained was character building and that this "hidden curriculum" would be shared and threaded into every conversation and interaction he would have with community, family and friend.Smangaliso and the other young men and women, through this camp and of course other *General Botha* Bursary Fund initiatives, have learnt more than just sea safety and gained more than those maritime skills of co-ordinates, ropes and knots, but of communication, negotiation, tolerance, respect, patience and dedication. And more importantly, that this 'code of conduct' is to be shared and gifted forever more.

In addition, this camp was followed by an exciting field trip to the Saldanha Port. Thank you to everyone who made this happen!The unstinting work and enthusiasm of the NSRI staff and our Fund's team during a particularly busy, family-orientated, time of the year is deeply appreciated.The result of such dedication is that every camp participant was given the opportunity to begin the new academic year with a suitcase full of knowledge, skills and values. The students are equally delighted to be visiting NSRI stations throughout the school term as to ensure continuity and ultimately success in this new venture.

The first of the regular term mentoring interviews for the Lawhill bursars was held at the end of January, shortly after the beginning of the new school year. A novelty this time was that they were held at the Navy Museum in Simon's Town, enabling a guided visit and exposition of the SATS *General Botha* section of the museum. It is considered fundamentally important that the Fund's bursars are conscious of the Bothie's story and values, and that they are the beneficiaries of the Bothie legacy of developing the youth of South Africa for maritime careers.

***VICTORY* AT SEA** By Captain Ivor C. Little SM., MMM, SAN. (RTD)

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It was October 1959 and I was on top of the world having just passed "First Mate Foreign Going" and, after a week-end of celebration, decided that with nothing better to do I would call in at my company's head office and let them know of my success.

The Company in this case was the South African Marine Corporation, more commonly known as Safmarine, and in 1959 it was just starting out on a mind-blowing expansion, to an eventual fleet of 57 ships at the advent of containerisation.

When I dropped in at the head office in Cape Town the fleet numbered eight ships, six on liner trades to the USA and Europe and two tramping. The Company had a constant shortage of officers and engineers and promotion was rapid. A Master's certificate guaranteed a position of Chief Officer and officers well-known to the Company, with a proven track record from cadet through to chief officer, were finding themselves as Masters at the age of 30 and superintendents a few years later.

I strolled blithely into this personnel department nightmare, quietly prepared to announce my success and then being told to go home for a bit of leave before being called. This was definitely not to be. The Chief Personnel Officer was a charming fellow named Peter Etherington, who made me welcome, proffered his congratulations and then got straight down to business.

He was desperately short of a third officer for the "*Vergelegen"*, due to sail that evening. Would I do the Company a favour (which, of course, would not be forgotten, etc. etc.) and sail in her as third officer, but on a second officer's salary of £72 per month? Well, why not? I had just had six weeks study leave, was foot-loose and fancy free and, if it put me in the good books of the personnel department, so much the better.

A quick trip home to pack and advise the folks and back to the Victoria Basin in Cape Town brought me on to the "*Vergelegen"*. She was an AP3 Type Victory ship, built in 1945 as the *Westbrook Victory* by the Bethlehem Fairfield Shipyard in Baltimore, USA. She was powered by Westinghouse turbines, which pushed her along at a steady 15 knots but could do, rumour had it, if pushed and being hunted by a submarine, up to 18 knots. She was a small ship by later standards, being of only 15 199 tons displacement, 10 789 tons deadweight and 161 metres in length.

As built, she had been fitted with twelve gun positions; a fully equipped hospital; long-range deep fuel tanks and a thousand tons of ballast. She had spent eighteen months as a troopship carrying 2 500 troops before being laid up in reserve. In 1946 she was put up for disposal and in January 1948 was purchased by Safmarine and extensively modified. Her holds and hatches were re-modelled and luxury accommodation for 12 passengers fitted on the boat deck. Following the custom of the day, this was decorated in white pegamoid leather furniture and light eau-de-nil paint work. The passenger accommodation was air-conditioned throughout.

By contrast, the officers' war-time accommodation had been left untouched and my cabin was a small hutch at the after end of the lower bridge deck and very spartan. It was furnished with a steel bunk, a chair and a cupboard. The nearest bathroom was at the far end of the alleyway and shared with the other officers and cadets. Directly across the alleyway from my cabin was a tiny compartment completely filled by a massive Sperry master gyro compass..

At that stage Safmarine was naming its ships after South African Dutch colonial wine estates, and the name "*Vergelegen*" was derived from one of those. Pronounced "Fair-ghe-leeghan", with a guttural "g", it meant "far-lying" and always proved almost unpronounceable to American and British officialdom.

I found that the ship, in common with other Safmarine ships, was in impeccable condition and well-maintained. The "*Vergelegen"* was also, I was to find, a happy ship.

On storing my gear in my little hutch, I duly reported to the Master for signing on. He was Captain George Smith, an Englishman and ex-Union-Castle officer who was stocky, slightly plump, completely

bald and the soul of affability. I found him a charming man and a pleasure to sail with. While signing on I found that I had a ready-made group of friends aboard, in that I had sailed with two of the engineers in a previous ship. The Chief Officer, Denzyl Collins, was a true Safmariner, having come up through the Company from cadet; the second officer was a Scotsman, Jock Parks, ex Elders and Fyffes.

The formalities completed and the ship battened down, we sailed that evening for the usual Safmarine coastal discharge trip – Port Elizabeth, East London, Durban and Lourenco Marques (now Maputo). The discharging completed, we then turned around and headed back down the coast in ballast, with a brief stop in Port Elizabeth to land a crew member with appendicitis. It was then on and around the Cape of Good Hope and up the West Coast to Walvis Bay, in what was then South West Africa but is now Namibia.

In those days this was a forlorn and desolate port which existed mainly because of the large pilchard fishing industry and nearby copper mines. The roads were paved with salt, there was not a blade of grass to be seen anywhere and most of the houses were built on stilts, to raise them above the level of the drifting sand blown in from the surrounding Namib Desert. Besides the houses, there were a couple of general dealer stores; two fish factories and two hotels - the Mermaid and the Flamingo. The latter had a small cinema and an Oningo Bar and was a popular spot with seafarers where they could enjoy a meal and a drink at the bar before taking in a movie, which made for a pleasant evening. Here we loaded a full cargo of copper ore for Corpus Christi, Texas.

On departure from Walvis Bay, we settled in for the long run across the South Atlantic to the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico. It was by no means a trying crossing. Safmarine's ships were very well run with top class "Cape Coloured" crews and excellent food. A cinema was rigged every evening on the boat deck if the Purser had not organised some other form of entertainment, and a wood and canvas swimming pool soon made its appearance on the fore deck.

Officers dined in the passengers' saloon and uniform was *de rigueur*. This was a grey uniform with black shoes and epaulettes with silver stripes. In the evening a black tie was added. Usually with a fancy tie-pin as was the custom of the day. In winter we wore normal merchant navy "blues". At 17h00 every evening the Captain and all his officers and engineers would gather in the passengers' lounge to socialize with the passengers before dinner. There was no excess drinking and after dinner we were free to either break away or join in the evening's activities.

As third mate I would relieve the mate on the bridge for his dinner and do the evening watch from 8 to 12. The bridge still showed signs of the ship's war-time origins. The deck was coated with a red composition and all the fittings were painted grey with no brass-work visible. There was a large wheel, but no automatic pilot, so there was always a quartermaster on duty as well as a bridge look-out. On the starboard side was a large American radar set and in the centre, ahead of the helmsman, a magnetic and gyro compass. A flag locker and two engine-room telegraphs made up the rest of the furnishings.

Across the front of the wheelhouse were three large portholes with heavy ports which swung upwards and were held by suspiciously fragile-looking chains. I took care never to stand under them. Across the front of the bridge, and ahead of these ports, was an enclosed walkway with large amour-plated windows. This was floored by wooden duck-boards which made an unholy noise when you walked on them. A quaint anachronism was the striking ship's bell clock behind the quartermaster. This would strike out the time and the quartermaster would then repeat it on the ship's bell mounted outside the bridge front, by tugging a fancy embroidered rope above his head. It was actually quite reassuring when off-watch to hear the bell chiming out the passing of the day!

Corpus Christi, situated almost on the Mexican border, is a lovely city of palm-lined streets and pretty tiled-roof houses. We were berthed almost under a bridge next to the harbour and much to our surprise, because of this, received a number of casual visitors. It seemed that there had been until recently a South African Air Force contingent at the local air station and a number of people who had known them had seen from the bridge the South African flag and our port of registry of Cape Town on our stern. It was apparent that our Air Force predecessors had made a good impression and so these visitors had come down to the ship to have a look around and say "Hi". I wish that the same could have been said about us. Our Second Officer, a Scot by the name of "Jock" Parkes, decided to visit one

of the local bars and found himself in good company and thoroughly enjoying the live music show. However, at some stage in the late evening the band struck up "The Eyes of Texas are Upon You" and Jock, who was ever the comic, started clowning around with the words. In a trice his newfound friends forcibly evicted him and sent him back to the ship in disgrace!

From Corpus Christi we set off on Safmarine's usual loading run of 21 ports in 27 days around the Gulf of Mexico and up the east coast of the USA, ending in New York where we loaded in the Erie Basin in Brooklyn. Loaded down to her marks, the "*Vergelegen'* then sailed for Cape Town, via the south of Bermuda. We arrived home on Christmas Eve 1959 and there I found that, true to Peter Etherington's promise, my relief was waiting on the quayside. Safmarine was a no-nonsense outfit which demanded its pound of flesh, but its personnel department was excellent and could always be relied upon to keep its word.

Things were still tight in that area though for on 2nd January, after the Christmas season at home, I joined yet another Victory ship, this time as Second Mate.

The ship was the "*Constantia*", in most respects the identical sister ship of the "*Vergelegen"*. She had been built in 1945 as the "*New Bern Victory"* by the same builders and was bought by Safmarine in June 1947. She was Safmarine's first ship and still beautifully maintained. As second mate I now had a large and roomy cabin next to the Master's cabin. It was still very spartan and I still had to use the communal bathroom, but now I also had a settee! She was on the same run as the "*Vergelegen*" and so once again it was up the South African coast and back to Walvis Bay, this time to load chrome ore for Gretna, across the Mississippi River from New Orleans.

This was accomplished with a stop at Port of Spain in Trinidad for bunkers. I found that once again I was a stranger in a new ship, as the only person I had sailed with previously was the Chief Engineer. All the other officers were to become new friends. The Chief Officer was a handsome, fair-headed young Englishman named Bill Edwards, ex-Ellerman Wilson, and the third officer a happy-go-lucky-young Geordie, ex-West Hartlepool tramps, by the name of Tom Ellerington. The Captain was a short, thick-set and crusty old South African sea-dog by the name of "Scotty" Edwards. He was very popular with both his officers and the company management, but could be very brusque and off-hand. He was also a great entertainer who enjoyed having a drink or two, sometimes with unfortunate results, and we never really got on with each other.

The "*Constantia",* although efficient, well-run and hard working, was not a happy ship. Safmarine used Cape Coloured crews who, in my opinion, are among the best in the world but the "*Constantia"* crew had a rotten core of ne'er-do-wells who caused continual tension between the coloured crew and white officers, particularly in port. There was also bad blood within the ranks of the officers and while on the US coast one of our South African cadets, for some real or imagined reason, beat up the British Third Officer, Tom Ellerington. Captain Edwards sorted the matter out and it did neither of their subsequent careers any harm as both went on to command their own ships.

All ships have definite personalities and for the time I was in her I formed the impression that the "*Constantia"* was, if not a killer, then a very unlucky ship as far as her crew was concerned. On the ship's previous trip a young deck hand had been accidently burnt to death in the crew's quarters and death struck again at the end of our transatlantic crossing. While lying alongside in Gretna our Fourth Engineer, a young man from Durban by the name of Ronnie Winn, noticed an oil-fouled bird struggling against the side of the ship and decided to rescue it. Throwing a light line over the rail, he descended it hand-over-hand to the waterline. Once there he found that he could not reach the bird and, hampered by his loose boiler suit and heavy engine room boots, found that he no longer had the strength to pull himself back up again. Letting go, he disappeared under the water and didn't come up again. Notwithstanding an extensive search by the Coast Guard, he had gone without a trace. He was 24 and was to have been married on our return to Durban. A humane act based on good intentions had in a trice turned into an unnecessary tragedy.

Finishing our discharge at Gretna, we moved to New Orleans to start our usual loading schedule up the US east coast. We called briefly at Port Arthur and Beaumont in Texas and then on to Galveston and Houston, making our way up the Houston Ship Chanel in a raging blizzard. There, to my absolute dumbfounded amazement, Captain Edwards invited me to accompany him to lunch with the agent at

the famed Petroleum Club, a hangout of the rich and famous in that city. I have no idea what his motive was but I do remember a wonderful lunch, ending in brandy and cigars, both wasted on me as at that time I neither drank spirits nor smoked. We returned in time to sail for Charleston, Newport News and Baltimore and then on to New York. From New York it was home again to Cape Town for an exact repeat trip back to the US, the only difference being that on this later trip I got married.

Because of the intensity of the loading programme on the US east coast the deck officers rarely got ashore, so we had an informal arrangement that one would get time off in New Orleans, where we had a two-day stay, and the other time off in New York. I had a fiancée in New York so the third mate would pick up my cargo watch for me and I would his in New Orleans. Double shifting like that left one completely knackered but we were young and tough------!

Anyway, some how or other my fiancée, Anne Cullen, and I were married and even managed not only to have a reception in her home town of Fort Lee, New Jersey, but even squeezed in a two-night honeymoon at the Waldorf Astoria hotel in New York. Sod's Law then intervened. On our arrival back in Cape Town we were informed that the ship was now being placed on the west coast of the UK run – devastating news for a young second mate who had just acquired an American wife!

This was a bit of a shock but also a blessing in disguise because at that time Anne was working for the Haley Corporation, a large travel agency in midtown New York, and had access to a few travel privileges. After a quiet chat to Safmarine's personnel department it was arranged that she could board the ship in the UK and accompany me on our trip around the UK coast, and that is in fact what duly happened.

In the meantime we did our usual discharge run up the South African coast, in this case as far as Beira in Mozambique, where we turned around and did "all stations" back down again, as we loaded cargo for the UK. Sailing from Cape Town, we made a brief stop at Las Palmas in the Canary Islands for bunkers and then continued on to Avonmouth, our first discharge port.

The weather in the UK at that time was cold, wet and windy and the general view that we had for most of that trip was that of rain sleeting down on to dreary docksides and of wild sea passages in which we rolled and pounded our way around the Irish Sea. From Avonmouth we rounded the Welsh coast to Ellesmere Port on the Manchester Ship Canal. There Anne joined me and the Purser gave us a passenger cabin for own use while she was aboard. Here we were also invaded by the officers of one of our *Victory* sister ships, the *Morgenster*, which was loading in nearby Birkenhead, and a rambunctious party ensued.

The "*Morgenster"* (Morning Star) was one of three original 'Victory" ships acquired by Safmarine in 1947/48. Originally the *"Westerley Victory",* she was an exact replica of the "*Constantia"* and *"Vergelegen"*. She was considered by many to be the personnel department's unofficial 'punishment' ship and was accordingly a very happy one, whose officers were quite determined to prove that their reputation as party-goers was not unfounded!

From Ellesmere Port we moved back down the Canal to Liverpool and then across to Belfast in Northern Ireland, a city not yet wracked by sectarian violence, and during my time off there my wife and I took a delightful and scenic bus tour through the beautiful surrounding countryside. The ship then crossed back to Glasgow in Scotland and we steamed up the River Clyde on a lovely sunny day. This was in the heyday of the British shipbuilding industry and it was fascinating to see the green rustic farmlands along the banks of the Firth turn into a scene of massive engineering activity as we neared the city. That night Anne and I went along to a music hall show recommended by a local taxi driver where a tenor sang "The Song of the Clyde" which, whenever I hear it today, always brings back memories of Glasgow.

The "*Constantia*" then started loading for South Africa, steaming all the way back down to the Bristol Channel to Newport to load tin, and then back up to Birkenhead. Here Anne had to leave me to return to New York.

From Birkenhead it was back to the Bristol Channel to Swansea to top off and pick up our passengers. There we had a narrow escape in the entrance locks when, for some reason known only to the engine room, the ship failed to go astern in order to stop and only by dropping both anchors did we avoid knocking down the lock gate and thus possibly surfing through it and into the harbour!

The rain continued pelting down but in between showers we got our cargo in and headed south, back in to sunshine via Santa Cruz de Tenerife and Walvis Bay, to Cape Town. This was followed by the usual haul up the coast as we discharged before the ship went into dry dock for her annual refit and survey. There I paid off and flew home in a South African Airway *Skymaster* for my first leave not to include study time. A short while after I left the "*Constantia"* a galley boy was killed when he was caught against a steel bulwark by a large steel hatch pontoon swinging through the air while being hoisted, thus maintaining the *"Constantia's"* unlucky reputation.

My next ship in Safmarine was the "*South African Pioneer",* a very much more upmarket ship, and I cannot say that I missed the spartan accommodation or drafty bridges of the *Victory*s, but looking back nostalgically it was an interesting experience to sail in those highly efficient American-built ships. Safmarine kept them in service long after they were dated and obsolete. Their names were changed in 1961 when the "*Vergelegen"* became the "*South African Victory"*; the "*Constantia*" the "*South Africa Vanguard"* and the *"Morgenster* "the "*South African Venture*".

When the prefix "South African" became politically explosive a few years later, the "*South African*" in the name was shorted to "*SA*". In 1969 the trio were sold. The "*SA Victory*" (ex- "*Vergelegen*") was scrapped; the "*SA Venture*" (ex-"*Morgenster")* became the "*Hong Kong Weaver*" and the "*SA Vanguard"*, (ex "*Constantia*") became the "*Isabene",* owned by the Fairwind Maritime Corporation of Panama. She capsized and sank off Karachi while loaded with a part cargo of wheat in the early 1970s.

Looking at pictures of those old World War II transports it is a tribute to Safmarine's management that from those three work horses they built up a magnificent fleet encompassing cargo liners, tankers, deep-sea tugs, sugar and ore carriers, passenger liners and then container ships, before being taken over by the Maersk Group, which has kept the brand name going.

Astro Navigation

A letter in the May 2017 issue of Sea Breezes by a friend of Ted Fisher, David Walker:

> "I agree with his thoughts (*reply to a previous letter*) of the Noon position being nothing more than an 'Astronomical Running Fix'. When one reads the autobiographies and stories of the sailing ships in late eighteen hundreds, it is very often the only way in which they fixed the vessel's daily position, ie Long by Chron and a Meridian Altitude. Sometimes there may have been as few as only two qualified to do so. With the advent of more qualified officers and the liberal attitude toward apprentice training which allowed them on the bridge, there was a veritable line up for the daily Meridian Altitude led by the Master. One wonders when the Sun had reached its zenith and all altitudes were compared how was the worked altitude/latitude arrived at. Was the total number taken averaged? Did each officer/apprentice work his altitude and the Latitude averaged? Were positions compared and plotted to decide on a Noon? It begs the question as to how reliable the Noon position was using the former methods. I would have taken the altitude of the more experienced in sights, i.e. those capable of recognizing the value of the horizon of the day, and plotted individual positions to decide the Noon Position. The apprentices would do the same and by comparison they in turn would learn the value of their sights. Finally, I sailed on a small vessel on a regular run between the East Coast of Australia and Papua New Guinea. It was common practice for the Second and Third mates to work the Long by Chron and the Master would join us on the bridge for the Meridian Altitude. After the Sun had passed the zenith he would ask us for our altitude. He would then read his sextant and declare the altitude to be used for Noon. It was not until years later that I learned that he had impaired vision in one eye! Thank goodness for a good Star Fix."

With permission David Walker

> *An old sea captain was sitting on a bench near the wharf when a young man walked up and sat down. The young man had spiked hair and each spike was a different colour … green, red, orange, blue, and yellow. After a while the young man noticed that the captain was staring at him.*
> *"What's the matter old timer, never done anything wild in your life? "The old captain replied, "Got drunk once and married a parrot. I was just wondering if you were my son!"* (Anon. received from Rev. Ralph Thornley)