

SATS *General Botha* Old Boys' Association

FEBRUARY 2022

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JOINT NEWSLETTER

CENTENARY CELEBRATION

SAVE THE
DATES!



4-6 MARCH 2022
CAPE TOWN

MISSION STATEMENT

The Centenary Committee Undertakes to Convene a Gathering of S.A.T.S. *General Botha* Old Salts and Partners in the Maritime Industry in March 2022 to:

Celebrate the Arrival and Commissioning of the South African Training Ship *General Botha* and to honour her benefactors, together with all those who trained in her as Ship, College and Academy and who fulfilled their legacy of honourable duty during a century of service.

Enjoy the Collegial Fellowship of Old Friends and Shipmates.

Continue and Sustain the Heritage of S.A.T.S. *General Botha* through the *General Botha* Old Boys' Association and Bursary Fund and, with our Partners in the Maritime Industry, to actively develop a future generation of competent young South African mariners imbued with a shared ethos of Honour and Duty.

Raise Funds for the S.A.T.S. *General Botha* Old Boys' Association Bursary Fund.

FORTHCOMING CENTENARY EVENTS – *virtual Zoom & Physical Attendance*

COVID-19 PROTOCOLS APPLY

Thank you to those of you who have already responded.

- **Friday 4th March, 1030 for 1100 –Annual General Meeting** the Grill Room at Kelvin Grove Club, Camp Ground Road, Newlands. A sponsored light lunch will be served after the AGM. Card bar, no cash accepted by the club. Whether you attend in-person or online via Zoom there is no charge. The links for the online events shall be sent to you at the end of February (after you have booked).
- **Saturday 5th March, 1030 for 1100 - Centenary Celebration** the Ball Room at Kelvin Grove Club, Camp Ground Road, Newlands. Dress – club blazer and OBA tie preferred.
 - In-person: Cost R600 per person **including** lunch after the event at 13:00.
 - Online: via Zoom, a suggested donation of ZAR200 or US\$20 will be appreciated. This will be allocated to defraying the expenses of the production.
- Please note that the online celebration program is not watching those in the room having lunch, which would be boring to say the least. The online celebratory program shall be an interactive audio-visual event. Please join us for this on which we have expended a fair amount of our financial reserve. The links for the online events shall be sent to you when you book.
- **Saturday 5th March, 1230 for 1300 – Commissioning Day Lunch**, The Ball Room Kelvin Grove Club. Partners welcome. Dress: club blazer and tie preferred or ladies equivalent. Card bar, no cash accepted by the club. The lunch shall not be screened on Zoom.
- Should any member find difficulty with the price, whether attending in person or Zoom online, please contact Tony Nicholas or another committee member. What is vitally important to us is that you and your partner attend the function. We look forward to seeing you all there on the day.
- **Sunday 6th March @ 1000 – War Memorial Service**, at our cenotaph, corner of Heerengracht and Hertzog Boulevard, Cape Town. Followed by refreshments in the City of Cape Town Civic Centre Concourse. In case of inclement weather, the service shall be held in the City of Cape Town Civic Centre Concourse, close by. Dress: club blazer and tie preferred or lounge suit, with medals, or ladies equivalent. The service shall also be screened live on our Facebook page. Thus, wherever you are in the world, you can join the service.
- **Tuesday 8th March, 1230 for 1300 – Pub lunch**, RCYC, R65 p.p., partners welcome.
- **Booking for all the events is important, please RSVP by Friday 25 February 2022** to:
 - Kathy or Tony Nicholas: +27 (0) 83 778 5957 or +27 (0) 82 555 2877 or email cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za
 - [Alternatively, contact Hugh James cptsecretary@generalbotha.co.za or +27 \(0\) 82 796 7606.](mailto:Alternatively, contact Hugh James cptsecretary@generalbotha.co.za or +27 (0) 82 796 7606)
- **Pre-payment for the Centenary Celebratory Event and the Commissioning Day Luncheon would be appreciated by our over stressed Treasurer. Payment details will be included in your invoice following your booking.**
- Logon details: These will be made available for each event at the end of February.

FROM THE BRIDGE OF CAPE TOWN

The year 2022 has dawned, our centenary year. 100 years ago on the 15th March the first intake of 75 cadets joined our training ship and she was officially christened two weeks later being the 1st April as our training ship. Much water has flowed under our keel since then but we can all be proud of our Bothie heritage. Her legend indeed still lives on, embodied by our members, our Association and our Bursary Fund. To celebrate this unique achievement let's all contribute to the celebration by submitting Bothie anecdotes or events that you recall on an ongoing basis, don't wait for me. Post directly on our Facebook page or send to me for posting on Facebook or inclusion in the 2022 newsletters. I look forward to an interesting year full of great stories.

All are aware that we have published a book to mark our centenary and initial sales showed good interest. However prior to publishing we had to decide on the number of books to publish, a difficult and unknown quantum. We decided on 50% of our membership, surely at least 50% of our membership would be interested, I believed. Interest has waned and we still have 145 books in stock.

We have invested a lot of money in the book, drawn on our reserves, and need to recoup the expense. Details of the book had been included in previous newsletters, on Facebook and numerous emails. If you wish the detail again contact me.

Similarly we are investing a lot of our financial reserve in the centenary weekend, detailed below. We are doing our utmost to keep the cost to members affordable and as a result we are not recovering our outlay. Therefore I expect, nay demand, unprecedented support from all our members globally. If you are unable to be present in person, then join us on Zoom, it is not complicated. Ask your grandchildren to handle your Zoom affairs for you.

Well, one cannot avoid talking about COVID-19 these days; we just have to learn to live with it. The unexpected knee jerk reaction of the UK government last December caught at least one of ours off guard, one Ian Lindsay (1963 Term) who was here on vacation. Ian had to curtail his visit and missed our December lunch function. When I asked whether he had got home safely, his response was; "Not quite. We are currently 'banged up' in 'Stalag' Novotel Hotel at Stansted airport subject to 10 day quarantine. Guards at the door, guards at the end of the alleyway and only allowed one exercise period morning and afternoon (with an accompanying guard) and we are almost R100,000 poorer. Total shambles and a disgrace given that we have tested negative on departure and on arrival - but of course end game is that we cannot unfortunately attend the GBOBA lunch. Hopefully next time." Indeed, next time sir.

You shall read in your bursary fund newsletter of the, again, successful Marine Bursary Golf Day last November, this has enabled your bursary fund to provide tertiary bursaries. Various people have been involved in running this event over the years but special mention must be made of Keith & Mary Burchell and Neil Lawson (1960/61 Term) who have worked tirelessly over the years and have now stepped down from the event. Your bursary fund chairman Simon Pearson (1967 Term) writes; "That was a great success day due to your co-operation, hard work and commitment. Each one of you and your spouses and friends made the day a fun day for all the golfers and us bystanders. Keith, Mary and Neil, we will sadly lose your involvement in future events but hope you will always feel welcome to enjoy visiting and passing on your expertise. I truly hope that next year will not let the Bursary Fund, and our youth, down in what has been achieved over the past years. I am immensely proud of this B F Team and I'm sure you are too."

SCRANBAG

P.F.H. YUILLE 1976 #2545. Our galley wireless has just flashed up; Peter and Verna are now in the UK. Presently based in Portsmouth and is job hunting. Anyone in a position to assist Peter, contact us for his details. Until recently Peter was on harbour tugs.

R.L. NEETHLING 1966 #2287. Our sonar has found Rodrick in some strange named place in Canada, Van Kleek Hill. There he bought 50 acres in 2014 which is mostly forest with a few acres of pastures. His son is Chief Test Pilot for Bombardier Aircraft. Wow.

G.R. HANSEN 1977 #2565. Garth has recently retired from P&I and established his own surveying company, Maritech Services. So if you are in need contact Garth.

V.J. HAWKINS 1978 #2629. Bulletin in that Vincent retired last year from piloting on the Manchester Ship Canal. But what did you do all the years before joining Manchester Pilot Services?

BRIAN INGPEN HONOURED WITH PRESIDENTIAL AWARD

Honourary member of our Association as well as a renowned maritime author, Brian is first and foremost an educator. Brian has spent 46 years in education and was a founding father of Lawhill Maritime Centre of Simon's Town School where he taught for nearly 27 years.

He also compiled the National Senior Certificate-approved Maritime Economics curriculum for Grades 10, 11 and 12 which is taught at Simon's Town School's Lawhill Maritime Centre and at selected schools in KwaZulu Natal, the Eastern Cape and Gauteng.

At an awards ceremony in Pretoria recently Brian received the National Order of the Baobab Silver Award from President Cyril Ramaphosa.

A remarkable achievement, Bravo Zulu Brian.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

Bobby Pitcher, widow of **Denys Pitcher 1943/44**, sadly passed away 1st January 2022. Bobby is remembered as a soft spoken lady but always a loyal supporter of the Bothie cadets.

R.D. BRADLEY 1956/57. Unfortunately we do not know much of Robert's early career and further information shall be appreciated. 1964 he was working for Modern Hairdressing Supplies and 2004 he was with the City of Cape Town Finance Department. Retired 2005 and sadly passed away 28th December 2021.

C.G.P. OGG 1951/52. After G.B. Colin joined Ellerman & Bucknall and completed his 3 year apprenticeship. Thereafter served with African Coasters, Bank Line and China Navigation. Spent some time building and sailing a Chinese Junk with Mike Briant (1953/54) before obtaining Master's Certificate and spending a couple of years as Master of various coastal vessels. After a spell at Liverpool Polytechnic, returned to Durban and joined Unicorn. Spent 23 years as Line Manager of various Unicorn Services before retiring in 1993. 1997 Proprietor of a Bed and Breakfast establishment outside Durban. 1964 Master of Smith's Coaster "Intombi".

Slipped his cable 23rd December 2021.

Mike "Junkman" Briant writes; "those who have had a chance to delve into my little tale of eccentricity, 'A Boat of China' will realize that Colin played a vital role in the realization of that dream - the junk *Ying Hong* would never have come to be built nor the voyage undertaken without Colin's participation and enthusiasm. He was the vital spark that lit the powder train and kept it alight - and there were some decidedly dim times in its fizzling course, believe me.

We were officers in the same China Nav. ship s.s. *Fengtien*. It was in that ship that the idea was born, and to quote Colin's words recorded in the book - 'I'd be a bok for that.' That was Colin to a Tee. He was unfailingly 'A bok' for just about anything.

Cognitively quick, (much quicker than me in most things), athletically quick also, an excellent swimmer and able to do amazing things off a diving board. A better navigator also, in those days when practical navigation was so crucial, one of those guys who could look at the chart, then come on deck and recognize all those features duly stored away in the old noggin.

We made contact in more recent years and enjoyed sharing those memories of voyaging together. He was a truly wonderful shipmate, one of the best and I shall forever esteem his memory.

Hamba Gashle Colin."

R.J.C. POERNER 1948/49. We previously reported Rene's sad passing. Tom Fraser sent this tribute.

RENE JOHN CONRAD POERNER

06 May 1932 to 08 July 2021

Cadet No 1564 and Chief Cadet Captain (1949)

Awarded the Kings Gold Medal on 10 December 1949

On 08 July 2021, a GBOBA member of many years, cadet no 1654 (1948/49), Chief Cadet Captain Rene' John Conrad Poerner, went over the side peacefully at home.

After a period of mourning, on Thursday 18 November 2021, Rene's widow, the warm, friendly and ever-smiling Karen Poerner, hosted a life celebration event for Rene at their beautiful home in Linksfield, Johannesburg.



Rene Poerner proudly in his Bothy Blazer

After *General Botha*, Rene sailed with *Safmarine*, then came ashore and went into business for himself. In true Bothy tradition, he built a successful business, Torque Tools that today and decades later, is well-established and continues to sail onwards with his son at the helm.

Some fifty invited people were present at the celebration including Karen, Rene's warm-hearted widow, many members of Rene's family, close friends, business associates, domestic staff, company staff and the GBOBA through GBOBA Committee member Tom Fraser.

A number of people were asked to say a few words. Listening to the speakers, it was noticeably clear that Rene was well liked and loved by those who knew him. It was also most evident that Rene

enjoyed a vibrant life; especially for somebody of his age, and that he has left a fine legacy.

Tom spoke fondly and highly of Rene as a loyal and unselfish Johannesburg member of the GBOBA who truly lived the GBOBA Mantra of “Honour & Duty.”

Rene was one of the most loyal Johannesburg Branch members. Tom shared how he remembers very clearly since moving to Johannesburg from Cape Town in 1993, that Rene was one of those loyal and committed old boys, who steadfastly and solidly attended the GBOBA (Johannesburg Branch) Commissioning Day lunch events every year. This was “Honour & Duty” at its very best.

Rene never missed a beat, always proudly attired in his Bothy blazer, tie and his cap. That was Rene to the end. A true and loyal GBOBA member.

But there is more.

From about 2015 onwards, when the highly active Johannesburg Branch started to steadily become smaller and smaller every year as members aged and sadly passed over the side, things got to a point at which it was no longer viable and no longer affordable for many of the remaining members, to have lunch at a venue or restaurant. Those days were sadly gone.

As a solution for the few remaining comrades who were keen to continue gathering every year, it was Rene and Karen Poerner who unselfishly offered their beautiful home in Linksfield to what was left of the GBOBA Johannesburg community, where the Johannesburg Commissioning Day lunch and gathering took place from 2018 to 2020.

Rene and Karen were fantastic, warm and friendly hosts.

At each gathering, after formal deliberations were over, which included a “Toast to the Ship” and a “Toast to Comrades who have passed over the side”, a wonderful afternoon of comradeship was enjoyed by all.

If you were a fly on a wall, you would have observed a room that was filled with true comradeship, cheerful banter, smiles and laughter, all fueled with appropriate “liquid “refreshments.” That is what happened each time at these wonderful gatherings, until the inevitable “time to go home” and “saying goodbyes,” sometime for the last time, would arrive.

In closing, Tom thanked Rene and Karen for everything that they have unselfishly done for and meant to the GBOBA Johannesburg community over many years.

Karen Poerner replied by thanking Tom for his words and thanking the GBOBA, the committee and all its very special people, especially his Johannesburg comrades, for what they meant to Rene throughout his life.

May our dear GBOBA comrade and Chief Cadet Captain (1949) Rene John Conrad Poerner’s soul rest in peace, as he sails and navigates those beautiful oceans way up there in the sky.



Chief Cadet Captain Rene Poerner receiving the King's Gold Medal from Vice-Admiral MC Carthv on 10



Tom Fraser with Karen Poerner.

WINNIE THE BEAR STORY – Stephen Bayman 1959/60

I was company rep. on a McDermot construction barge in the Persian Gulf. I heard this wonderful story from the Irish surveyor on the barge. He was on a vessel where the Chief Engineer was called Captain McNab. He had been a Captain in the Army and he still used his old title. The master was not too happy about it but tolerated it because he was a good engineer and a good bloke.

The Chief Engineer had done a favour for a Russian guy who was married to a famous ballet dancer. He also had the honorary title as the keeper of the King of Siam’s pigs. To return the favour the Russian asked the Chief Engineer if there was anything he could do for him. Captain McNab said there was nothing he wanted. The Russian guy protested and said surely there was something. McNab, after

some thought, said that he had always wanted a little bear. The Russian said that he could not promise, but he would see what he could do.

The crew had almost forgotten the Russian when a year or two later a box with a little baby bear arrived on the vessel. The bear was immediately named Winnie, not after Winnie the Poo, but after Winston Churchill.

The Master, Chief Engineer, and crew were delighted with the cute and cuddly little bear. The little bear was very friendly. However, after a year or two the bear had grown to 6 foot and was getting cantankerous. What to do?

After much thought and perseverance, John, my surveyor friend who had a lot of contacts around the world, made arrangements with Whipsnade Zoo in Liverpool to take the bear, but the zoo had stipulated that they would only pick the bear up in London.

PAN AM, got involved thanks to John. PANAM were just starting international flights and thought it might be a good advertising gimmick, to take the bear to Heathrow.

PAN AM at that time had half passengers and half cargo, the passengers in the front and the cargo in the rear. Winnie was duly sedated and crated and loaded onto the plane.

Halfway to the UK the sedation was beginning to wear off and Winnie, with one clout broke out of the crate and eventually staggered through a door to the passenger area. There was total panic, but no one was hurt. The plane had to make an emergency landing.

Winnie re-sedated and re-crated and the trip to the UK continued – PAN AM were not best pleased, they were not happy campers.

Whipsnade Zoo duly picked up Winnie and that was almost the end of the Story.

A couple of years later McNab paid off in Liverpool where he hired a car to get home. He was drunk, and while driving along he saw the sign to Whipsnade Zoo. He thought “I’ll just go and visit me old mate “Winnie”.

He got to the zoo and he eventually found the bear enclosure and he looked for Winnie, but there were about 6 bears there, and he could not make out Winnie. So he called out “Hey - Winnie”. Well one of the bears immediately stood up and roared.

There was a sort of high fence and a moat around the enclosure, but no trouble to McNab, he climbed over the fence and jumped the moat and ran over to Winnie, They hugged each other and danced around.

Families and children watching this were freaking out and called the zoo keepers.

After they had got McNab out of the enclosure, he explained Winnie’s history to them.

It all ended happily.

GBOBA UK BRANCH

A very warm welcome from a wintry UK, and New Year wishes to all. With Covid-19 now retreating into the pages of history for us in ss GBOBA-UK at the time of going to press, the future is looking much more promising as restrictions have now been consigned to the historical gash-can, and we are now able to look forward to the onset of Spring, sans masks and other plague paraphernalia.

One of the more agreeable features of having to deal with the early onset of darkness over this season has been our Monthly Gatherings, which we accomplish via the internet platform, “Zoom”. By the time that you read this, we will have had our sixth Gathering. We meet at 18h00 local time on the second Tuesday of every month, and we have a wide range of OBs attending, spanning the decades and of course the last two incarnations of the Ship. Please contact me at martrainltd@gmail.com if you’d like to join us.

The topics of conversation range across the spectrum from politics (risky, but exhilarating) through to the very latest in maritime thinking and practice, eg Derrick Kemp (GB1957/58) enlightening us on current MCA thinking in respect of Lithium-Ion batteries and their views on how seafarers should deal with fires on the car deck - thanks to his work with the Honourable Company of Master Mariners.

OBs are invited to bring a beverage of choice and to enjoy their peers’ company for an hour, once a month. On average, 12 of us gather to put the world to rights, and yes, to reminisce. Ron Duigan (GB1982), son of Basil (GB1952/3), shared some Sailing Day 1953 memorabilia from his father’s time at Gordon’s Bay which evoked memories of that Ship for those OBs present. At an earlier Gathering,

the future of ships' bunkering was discussed in detail – so as you can see, the discussion is pretty wide-ranging and provides the opportunity to remake old friendships.

Thanks to Simon Brebner (GB1979), currently Chief Executive of Peterhead, Netherlands-based Dennis de Witte (GB1979) has joined the muster list for our Gatherings as an honorary UK Branch member.

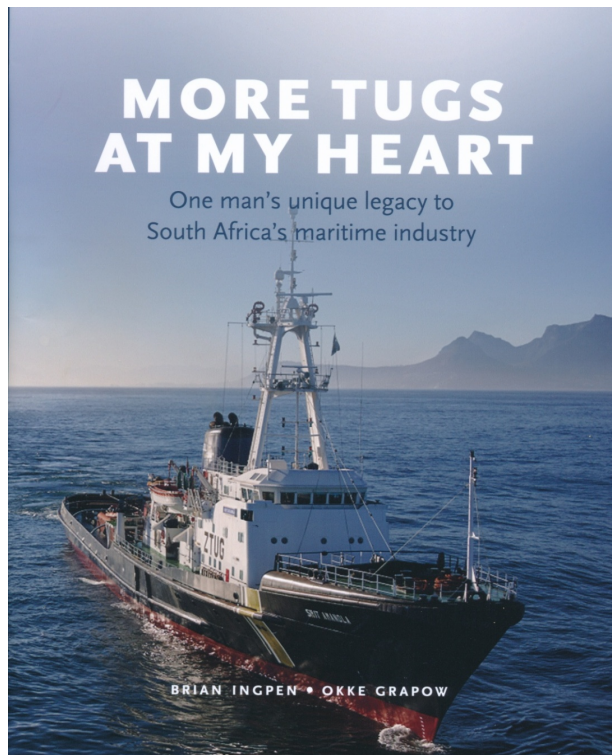
As a direct result of the Gatherings, momentum is building to meet face-to-face in the near future. Ewan Kirkbride (GB1984), Derrick Kemp, a selection of ales and yours truly are in the throes of planning a NW UK regional meeting at a pub in Southport, to be held soon. Others are in danger of doing likewise in their regions...

The Falmouth4Orders event has had to be cancelled, regrettably. Ted Fisher (GB1954/55), my illustrious predecessor (who kept the GBOBA flag flying for us here in the UK for many years), is currently dealing with those arrangements, and a Midsummer gathering is planned. More on that later.

Two OBs have surfaced in our waters recently, Peter Yuille (GB1976) and Vince Hawkins (GB1978), the former is currently settling down to a new life here; the latter has been here for a while. While Vince is not a Zoom fan (and who can blame him after the Covid experience?), but we're hoping to see Peter at our next meeting.

So that about wraps it up for this instalment, our eyes are firmly set on the Centenary celebrations and we are encouraging as many of our Branch to join everyone virtually over the Celebratory period – I'm sure we'll see you all there!

Jonathan Warren (GB1980). martrainltd@gmail.com



240mm x 190mm - 336 pages - Over 100 photographs – Case bound

Aged nine, Okke Grapow conned a launch in debris-strewn Kiel harbour in war-ravaged Germany. Time aboard his father's fishing boat after the family had moved to South West Africa (now Namibia) intensified his sea fever, and two years of intense maritime training at *General Botha* in Gordon's Bay embarked him firmly on a sea-going career in which he moved through the ranks to command. With waypoints in marine diamond recovery operations and whaling, his was an unusual voyage to an executive role in planning the construction and operation of large salvage tugs, anti-pollution vessels, ore carriers and other vessels. Paramount was his experience and leadership in the local and international salvage sector. But this is also a love story that surrounds Okke's late wife Gudrun – his anchor in life. The book reveals cameos from the very different life of Captain Okke Grapow.

Enquiries and Orders: okkertgrapow@gmail.com

Gauteng News – AKA “Alang Beach”

There has been talk recently in our social media groups and articles on-line regarding unmanned vessels and the so called progress being made in this field. It is of course a very broad ranged topic with numerous points of view and I suspect some very dubious arithmetic with respect to the bean counters Holy Grail, *savings*, being achieved should all this technology be implemented.

The popular counter argument to all of this is the apparent loss of jobs for deck and engine officers, and that's where the logical analysis of the situation ends for very many engaging in that discussion.

In the not too distant past we bade farewell to the traditional Sparky who had been sitting in a shack behind the bridge since before the Titanic went down. He, and a good few she's, were ousted by

technology and we lamented, but got over it, and willingly or unwillingly had to embrace a side attraction to simple sea going called GMDSS. It should be a stark reminder to those who now spend ages gazing at a plethora of display monitors instead of looking through the bridge windows behind the monitors, or standing on the bridge wings getting some fresh air, as to how close to home the next fall of the bean counters axe will be.

But who in their discussions over numerous beers even spares a thought or gives a damn for the collateral damage which will be inflicted on the cooks in the galleys. They too will unceremoniously be consigned to the gash can and gotten rid of. They won't even have the honour of a burial at sea like in the old days... now they will be carried ashore in plastic bags and end up in a landfill site. It seems a sad end to a very noble profession. Did we accord them the respect due to them during our time at sea...I think not. It was too easy just to accept them as part of the furniture and the Grocers problem, or something to moan about at tea time in the duty mess.

I earned a new found respect for the ships cooks while on a square rigger. We had a tour of the dry stores cold stores and fridges. How boring those places were. Hundreds of assorted tins, bags of powders, and crates of rotting potatoes and onions and other vegetables. Full carcasses in the fridges and whole staring eyed fish, all of which had to be converted on a daily basis to fulfilling meals, and on occasions the term "appetizing" being a fitting adjective to what they conjured up from such menial ingredients.

So we can if we wish paint a dismal picture of where we think the personnel aspects of the maritime industry is headed, but is that actually the case? Are boring short sea two or three day trips which are repeated day in and day out all that mentally inspiring for the officers on board? Perhaps that form of press ganged slavery and mental torture can easily be dispensed with.

Where is there a glimmer of hope for what remains of the traditional Mate or oily Gingerbeer? It must be in the manning of the type of ships we never knew in the old days. The heavy lift ships, the submersibles and semi submersibles, specialist cable and pipe layers, crane barges and infrastructural specialist installation vessels to describe but a few. There are far too many specialist people on board those ships and it will take a very long time before Artificial Intelligence and the exponential amount of support monitoring and software and shore side computer infrastructure required could ever cope with that scenario. They all have to be fed and have linen and work clothing washed in bulk. Someone has to feed and look after the doctor on board.

One could argue that there is a strategic advantage in maintaining a critical mass of solid experienced seafarers to man the supply vessels in times of crisis. That holds true when considering that a ship can actually get from A to B via whatever route is chosen with one good man with a sextant, almanac and clock and a few charts, despite every AI monitoring communication channel to some underground bunker being either blown up, inadvertently dug up, or jammed. Not to mention the engineer who can still feel, hear and see, and understand and develop a report with the mechanical monsters he tends when the data loggers and sensors and communication links to the shore wizard are toast.

That notion is of course easier espoused than actually implemented as the Americans will tell you, based on their National Defence Reserve Fleet reactivation exercises.

The debate and fight will go on for a long time until finally the men and women with multiple tally boards hold sway, subtly convincing us it's going to save us all a lot of money and make our lives easy. They will be arbiters of what terms in the big equation will suit them and be presented to us in their explanatory notes. Their sweet talking will become truth and practical logical and expedient factors will be dispensed with... insignificant in their wondrous big picture.

Keep steering between the anchors...(providing they still allow you two at the bulb end!)

Australia Branch Newsletter

A small but successful Lunch gathering was held at Brooklyn NSW (North of Sydney) on 27th November 2021. The first GBOBA Aust function for 2 years.

Sunday 9th January 2022 turned out to be a memorable date. The Australian consignment of The Legend Lives On (delayed in Transit since 10 Nov 21) landed on our shores following Qantas resuming the Covid suspended Sydney Johannesburg Sydney flight on 7th January. At time of writing all but 2 copies have reached their destination. Consensus as expressed by Tony MacQuillan in an email to Tony and Paul

*Congratulations you two on a masterful work! Being in the publishing game here, I know more than most what a great effort you have both imparted. Well done and thank you.
I am sure I am just one of the GBOBA multitude who will treasure the book and so will our progeny.*

From GBOBA Sydney; Grenville Stevens 2189 60/61

As we enter the Centenary year of the General Botha, I reflect on what it meant for me to have had the opportunity to be a part of this great institution.

I grew up in a middle-class family surrounded by eccentric relatives, skeletons in the cupboards, births, and deaths. Growing up in Port Elizabeth suburbia I did not think outside the world of our middle-class environment, however I was very fortunate to have a father with a brilliant mind and an enlightened outlook. I did not appreciate it then, but my father was a man of the world, he had many unused talents and unfilled dreams; he took us into many different realms of living. It was thanks to my father that I had the good fortune to be part of the General Botha Nautical College fraternity.

My father wanted to go to sea but was denied the opportunity to fulfill his dream, he loved everything about the sea, he sailed on trawlers, he took us as a young family (circa 1953) on the coal burning African Coaster "Border" from Port Elizabeth to Durban and return. His employer, General Motors Port Elizabeth, sent him to Michigan USA. He flew there but sailed back on the Farrell Lines 12 passenger cargo ship "African Planet". He built two yachts in the backyard of our homes.

This fervent love of the sea then turned to me, and my father announced that I was going to the General Botha. I obeyed undertook the entrance exam and was duly accepted; granted a Clan Line bursary, the list of personal articles required plus the one large and one small regulation suitcases were acquired. The day dawned and there I was on the platform of Port Elizabeth station to board the train to Cape town. My mother howled her eyes out for days thinking that I was going to fall off the edge of the world. For me the adventure of my life and the moment that shaped my future was about to start.

The Bothie lifted me from hum drum middle class Port Elizabeth suburbia to the World stage. From that day on my life was a continual series of changing horizons and international exposure. The Bothie "upbringing" provided the bed rock which carried me through my working life from Deck Officer to Shore based international shipping, migrating my family to a new homeland and up the corporate ladder culminating in my role as General Manager Australia and New Zealand for the Dutch airline; Martinair Holland.

From GBOBA Sydney; Peter O'Hare 2247 1964

While at General Botha in 1964 I applied to Blue Star Line via the Cape Town office for employment.

This was accepted due to General Botha training, Family and personal History including my father's birth and family in Liverpool, England.

I returned home to Port Elizabeth in December 1964 and was accepted to Cadet position departing late January.

The new Halifax Star arrived from Cape Town at the beginning of February. My employment date was 4th February 1965. My South African Passport was retained due to local issues. The ship was on voyage 2 from UK to Australia to commence her presence in the Australian trade to and from the East Coast of USA and Montreal, Canada via the Pacific Ocean and Panama Canal. The Captain was Scottish and all other Officers from UK, except for a couple of Australian engineers. I was the only South African. All the non-officer crew were locals from Barbados. Bridgetown. The ship was built in Sunderland, England by Bartram and Sons. She was just under 8000 tons with 4 hatches. The ship would trade across the Pacific about 3 times per year. The crew would go home by aircraft from Florida after 2 voyages. Their countrymen would provide a crew for the next 8 months.

Senior Officers including the Captain would be on board for two trips and then flew back to the UK from New York. Their replacements would arrive from the UK at the same time. All other Officers would be on board for 2 trips and then change with a group or individuals from UK based ships in Australia. This meant they could go home once a year for a couple of months.

I was employed as Junior Cadet on the Halifax Star for the discharge and load in Australia and then used around the Australian Coast and back to the UK on other Blue Star ships. These were older ships including one which was an ex-Woolworth aircraft carrier. (South Africa Star), ex USS Winjah and HMS Reaper.

I called at the UK a few times on ships of a few kinds mainly at Hull, Liverpool and London. I also did a number of trips to the US and Canada via the Pacific Ocean.

I had family in Liverpool in England, New York and Boston in USA. In London I had good friends who took me places and the Blue Star Line sent me to a four-day Merchant Navy Deck Officers course at the Royal Navy Officers College in Dartmouth.

Two trips that I also was on mainly as Third Mate were from Australia to Japan and Taiwan.

When a Second Mates' Certificate became needed, I stayed ashore in Melbourne and attended Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. I did well. Even met my wife to be and others in Melbourne. My certificate is dated 17th May 1968.

I had been home to Port Elizabeth only twice while with Blue Star. One was a short stay while the ship went from Cape Town to Lourenco Marques. The other was a two month trip between ships. During this stay in Port Elizabeth, I got a 6 week job with Ford Motor Company using computer work for sales records.

At the beginning of 1970 I left Blue Star in Australia, got married, and took a passenger liner trip with my wife from Melbourne to Durban. The day after arrival back in Port Elizabeth, I had an interview with Ford and achieved a good job. I stayed on for four contented years, and then my wife and I took another passenger ship from Cape Town back to Melbourne.

Within a couple of days there, I was back working for Ford. This time it was at the Head Office next to the factory in Broadmeadows. Computer work again being the main job.

After a year or so I was transferred to the Dealer Control Office in Sydney, where I spent a year, or two, mainly working with New South Wales Dealers, but particularly the main Sydney Dealers. Then I was moved back to Melbourne and after working locally and overseas, I was promoted to run Dealer Training in Australia, New Zealand and Asia for the Ford Marketing Institute.

Countries like the Philippines were regularly visited for a month, or more, and I got to know important Ford Dealer and other influential people, who helped further my career. A high point was when Edsel Ford, the US CEO, organised an almost two month trip to Detroit and to interesting dealer areas in the US.

Durban Branch News

We report the passing of Colin Ogg and a far too frequent occurrence these days. Colin was a most loyal member of the Durban Branch and regularly travelled from Howick to Durban to attend our functions for more years than I can remember. Roy Martin attended the family gathering in Howick and read out a message on my behalf. Colin's presence at our functions will be missed especially as he was well connected and the O.B.A was a place that he could renew old friendships.

Our Christmas lunch was attended by fifteen members with wives and was most sociable – sadly the service at the venue wasn't the greatest but it turned out well as the barman kept the drinks flowing during the delay and a festive and joyous mood resulted.

A couple of us will be in Cape Town for the 100th and we hope to renew friendships – let the good times roll. Regards, Derek McManus.

Off my Bookshelf - Scribe

Simon Winchester (of whom I have written about his books previously) is an Englishman who now lives in the U S of A, a geologist, journalist and for more than thirty years a foreign correspondence for various publications reporting from almost every continent. The book I have recently read with great interest was "*Pacific, The Ocean of the Future*". To quote from the flyer – "Travelling the circumference of the truly gigantic Pacific, Winchester tells the story of the earth's largest body of water, and – in economic, political and military terms- the ocean of the future." The book sets the stage of the *Bounty* mutiny, the Boeing Company, of Captain Cook, Robert Louis Stevenson and Admiral Halsey, the home of tsunamis and the largest-ever American atomic explosion, not to mention the origin and history of surfing and surf boards and the Sony portable radio. His journey is "a grand depiction of the problems and potential of the Pacific expanse."

The book ends with the positive true story of the "Hokule'a", a traditional Hawaiian aw'a, or sailing canoe, built in 1975 on the island of Oahu. It was able to show, with a Polynesian crew and 'way finder' or navigator, that it was possible to cross long distances of the Pacific without any kind of

navigational instruments or almanacs. In 2014 the vessel embarked on a circumnavigation of the world with no clock, compass, sextant, radio or GPS. While sailing around the world the Polynesians' message has been "malaga honua" meaning "Take Care of Where We live. It is all we have or ever will have. It is precious. Learn from it, respect those who know and sense it already, and take good care." You can find more about this voyage at <http://www.hokulea.com/worldwide-voyage/>. *I do appreciate it when a story ends on a positive note like this, do you? – Scribe*