SATS *General Botha* Old Boys' Association

www.generalbotha.co.za

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February 2023

JOINT NEWSLETTER

FORTHCOMING CAPE TOWN EVENTS

- Tuesday 14th March 12:00 for 13:00 – Pub lunch, Royal Cape Yacht Club, partners welcome. Rig of the day, casual.
- Saturday 18th March 2023, 10:30 for 11:00 – Annual General Meeting, Kelvin Grove Club, Camp Ground Road, Newlands, next door to Newlands Cricket Club. Your personal attendance encouraged, bound by Honour and Duty.
    - To accommodate members beyond our borders the AGM shall also be live streamed on Zoom.
    - Meeting ID: 822 1500 7488 Pass code: 004766
- Saturday 18th March 2023, 12:30 for 13:00 – Commissioning Day Luncheon, Kelvin Grove Club, Camp Ground Road, Newlands, next door to Newlands Cricket Club. Partners welcome. Rig of the day; Number 1, i.e., club blazer and tie preferred or ladies equivalent. Price R360 p.p, Cash bar. Should any member find difficulty with the price please contact a committee member. What is vitally important to us is that you and your partner attend the function. We look forward to seeing you all there on the day.
- Sunday 19th March 2023 @ 10:00 – War Memorial Service, at our cenotaph, corner of Heerengracht and Hertzog Boulevard, Cape Town. The service shall be followed by sumptuous refreshments in the close by Civic Centre Concourse. In case of inclement weather the service shall be held in the close by Civic Centre Concourse. Rig of the day; Number 1, i.e. club blazer and tie preferred or ladies equivalent, with medals.
- Booking for the Commissioning Day Lunch is important, please RSVP by Monday 13th March 2023 to:
    - Tony Nicholas: 082 555 2877
    - Email: cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za
- **Pre-payment for the Commissioning Day Lunch would be appreciated by our over stressed Treasurer. Payment details in the Slop Chest section of this newsletter.**

DURBAN MARINE BURSARY GOLF DAY

This will be held at **Mt Edgecombe golf course on 26th April**.

We look forward to building on the success of 2022, and a larger field. All Bothie Boys in K-ZN, please note that this is YOUR Golf Day, YOUR way of giving back. You can do so in several ways, so please just call Mike Melly on 0832539586, or drop him an email on durban@generalbotha.co.za.

From the Bridge of Cape Town

Our centenary year has passed, a year filled with celebrations, activities and goals achieved. These goals have mostly been reported in the newsletters and all definitely recorded on our Facebook page with accompanying photographs. I am extremely appreciative for all the support received from members, not only by attendance at celebrations and functions but also from your committee members. Their support and hard work in the engine room certainly made 2022 a success. But let's not leave it there; make every year, every month, every day a Bothie OBA day.

As noted above our March *Bothie Weekend* is looming on the horizon and I trust we shall again receive your support. The lifeblood of any organisation is its members, i.e., YOU. Thus you are duty and honour bound to attend. Months of preparation and cost incurred, so don't allow me to lament. For the benefit of our over border members, that includes our Deep South and Boerewors Curtain members, both the AGM and the Memorial Service shall be live streamed. I look forward to a full house again.

Our monthly pub lunches continue to be hosted at the Royal Cape Yacht Club, the SECOND TUESDAY of EVERY MONTH without fail. Recent months Johan Carse 1961/62 from NZ and Bob Hoekstra 1976 from UK have joined us and by all accounts enjoyed their visit and renewing old friendships. If you below the horizon members let me know in advance, I can alert your class mates to be there in force.

Peter Coetzee with past LMC Bursary Fund Luyanda Dlamini and Busang Tsukulu

It is always sad to record the passing of our members and more so when one such as Peter Coetzee 1960/61 slips his cable. Peter has been a hard-working member of our association committee for many years, in addition your bursary fund, the Cape Town Sailors Home and chairman of the Cape Town Maritime Institute. His dedication to these charitable organisations is legendary and always with humility. In recognition of Peter's contribution to South Africa's youth, Lawhill Maritime Centre of Simon's Town School planted a tree in his memory. The ceremony was attended by Peter's family as well as his Bothie alumni. He shall be missed but not forgotten.

Some of us date from the era of gramophone vinyl records and when scratched the needle would get stuck and the music in an endless loop. Remember? Well, I may sound like that "stuck record" but here goes, again. PLEASE inform us of any change of details, phone numbers and email addresses included. Even more important if you relocate elsewhere. Some have failed to provide us with their email addresses and thus I post hard copy newsletters to a street address for years, only to find out via our galley wireless that some individuals had immigrated YEARS ago. Not only is this wasting my time, but the association incurs expense which is a limited resource.

The world of communication is changing at a rapid pace. Included in this is our Facebook group. I do my best to keep it current and post items of historical interest. So, join up; if you find this a challenge, ask your grandchildren to set you up. If John Mellows 1955/56 can manage, so can you!

At long last Cape Town branch has set up a WhatsApp group, following the example set by other branches. But we do not have all your mobile phone numbers on record, so if you are not presently on the group please send me your number, to 082 555 2877. The messaging is not intrusive, only notable events or messages are sent. I look forward to hearing from you.

Unfortunately, the Classes/Terms of 1983, 1973, 1963 and 1952/53 have not taken up my challenge of arranging their respective reunions to coincide with our March activities in Cape Town. Great pity. But all is not lost; the ship is still afloat, start assembling your convoys. Liaise with the respective Classes and Term. You are Honour and Duty bound!

Our various books and publications are still available in the Slop Chest. Many accolades have been received of them; so, I look forward to your orders without delay.

Cheers.

SCRANBAG

1731 TED SCHURR 1951/52. Ted has recently celebrated a milestone; 16th December 2022 marked 60 years since he was ordained as an Anglican Priest. The past 60 years has taken him all over South Africa and since retirement he has served in various European countries. We have unfortunately lost contact with Father Ted, so if anyone has contact, please let me know.

2533 TREVOR HOLMES 1976. Trevor has retired to somewhere in Kwa-Zulu Natal, we wait to hear from him. 2007 - ran a company called Strategis. A marketing company with a strong GIS [Geographic Information System] and statistical modelling base. Known as Spatial Economists. 2015 - MD of Lightstone Explore - a research company in the retail and business fields with a focus on GIS. 2022 retired to Kwa-Zulu Natal.

2791 ANTHONY BRITON 1983. Another on our defaulters parade. Mails returned, I called at his last known residential address. Long gone. A faint target on the radar and I acquired him in England. We await further details Anthony.

2178 ROB HOOYKAAS 1960/61. All we know is that Rob was a cadet on the South African *Victory* in 1964. Does anyone have any further news of Rob?

1957 MIKE MARWICK 1955/56. After finishing at the Bothie Mike went to sea for a number of years, but then enrolled at Durban University, where he was in the late 1960s rather notorious (and much-loved too) for his outrageous behaviour! He graduated with a BSc, and then spent a number of years in the 1970s doing various things. He went back to sea from about 1978-84 (Unicorn and Safmarine), and then had a stint with SA Stevedores in Durban. Over the last few years, until his retirement in 2017, he had been working as a marine surveyor-come-deep sea pilot and as a safety officer in the UAE and the Azores.

SVEN POLTER 1992. Sven certainly has adventure.

"Commenced cadetship with Safmarine in 1990 and left as 2nd Mate in 1999 when APM/Maersk took over. After completing Tech (T4) at the end of 2000, I joined the SMIT Amandla Marine managed DEAT fleet as Chief Mate on board the *SA Agulhas*, completing two annual SANAE relief voyages to Antarctica; also part of the *Magdalena Oldendorff* rescue mission in August 2002 under Captain Kevin Tate (1976). Later also served on board the fisheries research and environmental protection vessels, including command of the *Sarah Baartman*. Left SMIT Amandla Marine in 2007 to sail with Briese Schiffahrt, Germany on BBC Chartering heavy lift vessels for one year. With a daughter in my life, I pursued a shore-based career in 2008. Unable to find suitable employment in Cape Town, ended up in Dubai in mid-2008 to take on a position as Marine Surveyor with BMT Marine & Offshore Surveys, later Braemar Technical Services and then AqualisBraemar.

After being headhunted, I joined Charles Taylor in January 2021, also in Dubai, who started up a new Marine Technical Services division. One year later, however, Charles Taylor gave up on this new venture and the project was canned. After 14 years in Dubai, I considered it was the perfect time to pack up and leave the Middle East and made that termination work in my favour. Since March 2022, I am based in Rotterdam with Van Ameyde Marine as a Senior Marine Surveyor."

2554 DEREK MAYO 1976. Derek joined Safmarine as cadet 1976 and after reaching 2nd Officer 1986 for Gundlefinger and Son as a Cargo Planner for two years. Then in 1988 until 2015 joined South African Container Depot (SACD) as Container & Cargo Manager, retired 2015, followed by one year as Operations Manager for NGO We Are Durban. 2016 to 2021 Church Hospitality and Integration for Olive Tree Church. 2022 emigrated to London, UK, where he joined Porters Estate Agent Balham London as a Property Negotiator and also an Administrator with National Health Service (NHS).

ANCHORS AWAY

PETER COETZEE 1960/61. Peter sadly slipped his cable 8th January 2023. Peter was a Sea Cadet at SAS *Unitie* before joining the GB. He initially sailed with Safmarine and finished his career in the warehousing industry. Peter joined our training ship association committee and subsequently took on further responsibilities with the Cape Town Sailors Home and Cape Town Maritime Institute, which is closely associated with TS *Woltemade.*

One would think that his time was fully occupied with these charitable organisations. Not the Peter we know. When our bursary fund was established Peter led by example as a founder member.

Over the years Peter served these institutions diligently and with humility. He cared for the youth, he believed in giving back, he shared his experience and wisdom unreservedly and gained their respect and appreciation.

I came to know Peter well, we worked closely together and I knew I could always rely on Peter to complete a task correctly and on time. Never one to be in the front rank, I think he did his best to avoid any accolades. That is the Peter we know and shall always remember.

Simon Pearson writes: It is with deep regret that we heard today of the passing of our colleague and friend Mr. Peter Coetzee. Peter was a valuable and hardworking Board Member of the SATS GBOBA Bursary Fund and other organisations such as the GBOBA Committee, CT Maritime Institute and the CT Sailors' Home Committees. He will be sorely missed as he promoted his Alma Marta with passion and lived out its 'Honour and Duty' declaration without question or hesitation. We pass on to Dalene, his wife, and his family and many friends our sincere condolences. May he Rest in Peace.

Class mate Paul Semark writes: So very sad. Peter was one of the best; a gentleman, and friend to all. He contributed so much to others, particularly through his commitment to many maritime-related organisations; in particular, to youth development and the OBA. He will be remembered and sorely missed. *Bon voyage Peter!*

2424 CLIVE SMITH 1972. Clive was a cadet with the German company SA Lines and was at the wheel of the SA *Oranjeland* when it ran aground departing East London in the 70's. Later Clive joined the harbour service with Portnet Cape Town and served many years as a pilot there. Deceased 17th January 2023.

Class mate Alan Rathbone writes: At GB I remember him being a real gentleman, very intelligent and always willing to assist those less gifted in the finer points of celestial navigation and electronics. He was a member of a group of A+ students who were often seen at the end of a lecture at the board discussing circuit diagrams and other complicated stuff.

GARETH DE JONG 1955/56. Another proud servant of the GBOBA, Gareth passed away 30th December 2022.

1957 - 60 - Midshipman. Alfred Holt & Co (Blue Funnel Line). 1961 - 66 - Third and Second Officer, British & Commonwealth Clan Line/Spingbok Line and Safmarine. 1964 second officer in the South African Victory. 1966 - 68 - Chief Officer and Master with African Coasters.

1968 - 95 - South African Transport Services (now named Transnet National Port Authority) Deck Officer. Tug & Dredger Master, Pilot, Assistant Port Captain, Operations Manager Breakbulk Cargo, Marine Operations Manager and 1995 Dry Docks Manager Portnet Cape Town. 1994 Honorary Secretary - Treasurer of the War Memorial Fund Managing Committee. Retired 1998.

Robin Fisher 1944/45. Robin passed away 15th November 2022. 1988 - Retired as a Port Phillip, Australia, Sea Pilot. Took up flower growing and specialised in Proteas.

1945 after two years on the General Botha he sailed to England with three others to join Blue Funnel (Alfred Holt) as a midshipman. After six years he then sailed to Sydney and joined a company called Burns Philp which sailed between Australia and Papua New Guinea. His first job with them was 3rd Mate on their passenger cargo ship "Bulolo". After four years took the Masters exam in Sydney. Once established as a Sea Captain and four years later, became eligible to apply to become a Port Phillip Sea Pilot and was successful in 1962. The Port Phillip Sea Pilots operate out of Melbourne and are a well-known as a well run private Pilot Service with about 40 Pilots. The entrance to Port Phillip Bay is notoriously difficult. Robin enjoyed his 26 years with the Service. On retirement his holiday house in the warmer climate of NSW seemed a very attractive proposition, and after buying some extra land, together with his wife, planted 1200 protea plants. 10 years later they decided enough was enough and officially retired. Lived in a beautiful area with many beaches, a beautiful lake, and the Great Dividing Range close by.

Lindsay Sargeant 1957/58. After Bothie Lindsay joined the printing industry. Retired when he reached age 60. Born 2nd November 1940, deceased 26th October 2022.
His daughter writes: Thankful to have received the books and give them to my dad as an early birthday present but sadly he didn't get the opportunity to read very much as he passed away on 26th October 2022, one week shy of his 82nd birthday. I will however indulge in reading them, and am sure there will be treasured stories in the pages that will make me nostalgic - as I can barely remember a conversation with my dad where the navy was not referred to or mentioned in a story, life lesson, or integral values to live by. My dad lived by the GB ethos and values and this has made a huge impact in my life too. He was exceptionally proud to have been a Botha boy albeit a short time due to medical issues. My sister and I miss him dearly but are grateful for many fond memories with our amazing dad, and for being able to spend his last few weeks by his side.
Mike Barwood 1981. Mike passed away 5th November 2022. He started a business in 1996 called Max design, doing logo design, letter heads and the like. Any further information of his career would be appreciated.
Bob Terry 1972. Bob sadly slipped his cable 25th January 2023. Bob. joined Safmarine as Cadet, obtained Masters Certificate and rank of Chief Officer. Seconded ashore to Safmarine's Container Vessel stowage office (MARSCC) and later as Cargo Superintendent with the SAECS/Transatlantic joint RORO Service. Promoted to Manager of the RORO Office and another promotion saw him as the Safari (Far East Trade Conference) Management Office Operations Manager. September 1995 - Transferred to the Safbank Office (USA Trade) as Operations Manager, later promoted to Trade Operations General Manager followed in 2001 to Trade Executive. October 2002 appointed Regional Executive for Unifeeder renamed United Africa Container Lines in 2004 and following further mergers to Ocean Africa Container Line. Retired 2011.
Class mate Roy Martin writes: "Condolences on your loss, on my behalf and my entire family, both here and abroad. Further, on behalf of all our '72 Bothie shipmates, wherever they might be! We bid Bob a very fond farewell, a truly great shipmate and a very true friend! He will be sorely missed! Roy, family and all our Bothie '72 shipmates!
Our condolences to family and shipmates.

AWOL

We managed to acquire Joe Curran on our radar but class mate **Ferdinand Santana 1973** remains lost in the sea clutter.
John Haskin 1948/50 last known in Constantia, Cape Town.
Dave Rees 1984. Search and Rescue was activated 1995, finally managed to receive a response via Facebook Messenger, followed up with emails. But alas, no response. Where is he?
Ivan Payne 1946/47 last known in Hillcrest, Durban.
Geoffrey Williams 1976 remains elusive despite all our radar sweeps.
John James 1956/57 last known in Fish Hoek, Cape Town. Off our radar.
Chris Macleod 1955/56 last known in Constantia, Cape Town. Email and phone numbers rejected.
E53 A.W. Robinson 1960/61. Last known in Durbanville, Cape Town, but recently reported as property manager at a resort on the banks of Swartvlei in the Southern Cape.
E57 P.B.T. Vorster 1960/61. Last known living in Wilderness, Southern Cape.

Durban Branch News

Durban branch's annual lunch was held on 7th December at the Stella Sports Club, which is also the venue for monthly lunches. We had a great attendance, with over 32 members and spouses & partners present. (The honourable members of the committee did try a head-count, but by that time of the afternoon we were unable to agree the final numbers as certain miscreants kept on standing up and walking around!) It was certainly a very successful event, with some members who work out of the country, happily being in Durban at the right time. It was great to see them all.

The highlight of the lunch was that it provided KZN members to properly thank Derek McManus for the 30 years he served as Chairman, and for the

additional years he'd served on the committee. Again, we're not very good at arithmetic, but his service to the OBA has been much longer than some newer members have been around. He was presented with an original painting of The Ship, painted by Basil Algar, suitably framed. Additionally, we presented him with a "Bothie" plaque, suitably inscribed. Of course Derek replied to the short presentation address, in his usual indefatigable style. Roll on 2023. We have several plans in the pipeline, which we'll share once the sully season is done, and all are back home.

Finally, remember the **Durban Marine Bursary Golf Day on 26th April**.

Kind regards, Mike Melly 0832539586.

UK BRANCH

Well, that bump you heard was us getting over the Winter Solstice!

The sun is now finally making its slow ascent into the Northern Hemisphere, and after a bit of a cold snap which resulted in frozen canals, roads and everything else, it seems that we are now slowly but surely emerging from our winter hibernation as Spring beckons.

Bothie news-wise, we have more to report this month than we did last time I put fingers to keyboard.

Left to right - Ewan Kirkbride, Nicola Murray, Jonathan Warren, Derrick Kemp

At the beginning of December, a small party gathered at a canalside pub here in NW England, where we shared memories, a good meal, and good company. The picture shows our group, which includes Nicola Murray, former Secretary at Granger Bay during the 80s. Nicola was touring the UK at the time, and stayed at Chez Warren for a few days, so we took the opportunity to have a bit of a pre-Christmas get-together!

In other news, another OB has surfaced here in the UK, Derek Mayo (1976), and so he's been invited to join our Gathering (on the second Tuesday of every month) in a few days time. These Gatherings attract a small but regular following, and it's great to meet for that hour and share reminiscences and put the world to rights generally after toasting the Ship. It is a very informal affair, indeed the only formality is the Toast.

Australia Branch

A successful (notwithstanding a low turnout) 2022 Lunch gathering to Commemorate the GB Centenary was held on Friday 16th December 2022. We acknowledge those who made the effort to attend, some enduring a long train journey from beyond Sydney to show their support.

We were delighted to welcome one of our "Senior Old Boys", Ted Thorpe 1952/53

A thank you to those Old Boys who RSVP'd.

Captain Robin Weatheritt Fisher 1352 1944/45 As listed in Anchors Aweigh; Captain Robin Weatheritt Fisher passed away on 15 November aged 94. RIP

John Sampson 1674 1950/51 and Mrs have sold up in Victoria and will head north to Tropical Queensland to a town called Ravenshoe. ETD is sometime in March so we will await new address details.

From Graham Jones, Adelaide (Son of Late Gordon Jones 1181 1941/42 GBOBA Durban Branch chairman for 30 years}

I thought that I would let you know that Mum, Joyce Jones (it was thirty years ago on the 26/6/1992 that Dad passed away in Adelaide) will be turning 96 on the 17/1/2022. We will be celebrating with the family and a few friends on Saturday the 14/1. Mum is well for her age. She still lives on her own with a minimal level of support. She stopped driving three years ago and sadly the pandemic has caused her to be more isolated than she or I would like.

Dad (Gordon Jones) was the Chairman for GBOBs Association, Durban branch until he passed away suddenly on the 26/6/1992, he was 67 at the time. Dad took over from as Chairman from Herbie Horsley. Dad was in Adelaide, Australia when he died. At his funeral in Adelaide the six pall bearers were all Botha Boys. Dad's coffin was draped with the Botha flag.

Mum and Dad came to Australia a number of times. Dad met Mum in Sydney in 1944. We was a cadet officer on the SA Govt ships (the Dahlia, The Erika and the Salandia (it was commandeered in Cape Town shortly after start of the war). He met Mum, whose family on her mother's side all came to Australia from Cornwall and Scotland, ironically a month apart on different ships, as free settlers in 1858. At twenty Mum left Australia and married Dad in Durban in 1947.
The Botha, the Jackie Fisher Shellhole (many ex-navy and merchant navy types) and the full suite of the Masonic lodge [Irish, Scottish (where Dad was the Provincial Grand Master for South Africa at the time of his death), and a wide variety of special orders, were the basis of my life growing up.
I recall attending (plus Mum) the Aust Bothie AGM when held in Adelaide. The year escapes me. I remember John Fisher was there plus a number of interstate Botha Boys.
Dad loved the sea and the three homes that he and Mum had in Durban all had views of the sea. I spent many hours on ships with Captains. I too grew to love the sea. One of Dad's special friends was Captain Roy Harbor, I think that he was on the Botha in 1926. I spent many hours on the Clan boats in Durban when Uncle Roy was the Master. We all at various times spent time with Roy and Alice in the UK.
After Alice's death Roy moved to Rockingham in WA. Young Roy, as we called Roy's son, had migrated to Perth. Roy married again and saw out his days in Western Australia. He and his new wife came to aspire Australia and we spent time together at the Fisher's hills retreat.
Blessings to you and all the Australian Bothy Boys and my best wishes to everyone for a happy and healthy 2023.

The James Craig Built 1874 Restored Sydney
An interesting story.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmHb0D7WW7w.
GBOB Nigel Hobbs 1959/60 worked as a volunteer on this reconstruction. We "think" that is Nigel (subject to confirmation) in the back row on the extreme right, before the wreck was recovered in Tasmania.

Alang Beach

I suspect there was no serious remorse at seeing the two last waypoints of Christmas and New Year 2022 disappear in the wake. Let's hope 2023 is clear of obstacles and our passage through it can mostly be taken care of by the Auto helm.
There are no current maritime discussion points in the news that I am aware of which merit learned armchair opinions from my position on top of my suite of containers in the corner of the scrapyard, so I will have to revert, yet again to the gift that keeps on giving... my You Tube feed.
The Algorithms which The Google have selected for me a few "vlogs" posted by a young man called Joe Franta. He posts about his nautical career which described until recently his life as an AB in the American Merchant Marine. I have found these quite interesting from various points of view. He has been lucky to have been posted to various types of ships so far in his career. It is very obvious that despite all the technological advances we hear about in the industry, life on deck has not changed very much since our days as cadets. The complaints about lack of sleep and long hours are still very evident, and maybe the average shore side viewer would feel a modicum of sympathy, but not I! Welcome young man to the old States run adage.. 6 on and stay on.
His tools of the trade have not changed except for the addition of more electric tools to complement the needle gun and chipping hammer. To fulfil his artistic talents the Company still supplies lovely and fitting palettes of colour, though their application is still strictly limited to conform with the overall colour scheme of the ship chosen by the head office corporate image consultants. I doubt that what I took to be a tin of red lead paint still contain lead oxide... I don't know. He still used such tools as dogs paws and flat brushes. Its so heartening to see such timeless skills being passed down through the generations. But technology creeps in everywhere and battery driven grease guns makes ones hours strolling on deck so much more relaxing and pleasant.
Recently he attended what the Yankees (and I suppose the Confederates) called Phase One of their Unlicenced Apprenticeship Program at an institution called Piney Point in Maryland. What I noticed is

that the average age of the "cadets" is much older than what we were used to. Apart from that all very similar to the program we were offered to study at our own hallowed establishment. An interesting addition to their curriculum when going back to sea for a few months as Apprentices was the requirement to do a couple of weeks Galley Duty. Peeling the tatties and onions and endless washing up can't do anyone any harm, and probably (although the opposite may be true) gives them a better appreciation of what is served up to them in the various messes as they eventually climb the ranks.
The runs ashore and ensuing antics and comradery are all still the same, so they too will make long-time friends and still be communicating with unknown amazing technology in 2070 or thereabouts.
Another interesting little documentary video popped out of the woodwork the other day, which again lead to comparisons of the past and present in the maritime industry.
It was about what was apparently the largest wooden ship every built.
She was the ***Wyoming*** a six masted schooner of 1909. With a hull length of almost 330 feet and draft of 30 ft she certainly extended the limits of *commercial* ship naval architecture at the time. It is perhaps interesting to draw some parallels between the early 1900's and where the industry stood a mere 70 odd years later, when the large tankers started coming off the stocks.
Wyoming was designed as a fuel carrier and fully loaded carried 6000 tons of coal to feed the growing American industrial giant.
Flexure of the hull was probably the greatest design challenge. Being planked with 6 inch thick pine, the caulking specification and installation procedure must have been very interesting. 90 iron diagonal cross braces were used to limit distortion of the hull in a seaway, but that proved to be insufficient in the long run and lead to her ultimate demise after a grounding after an amazing and very profitable service life of nearly 25 years. Certainly that was well in excess of the average lifespan of the early steel hulled super tanker fleet.
So taking all things into consideration, would you rather have a permanent steam driven engine pumping the bilges, or just have the ship catastrophically and unexpectedly break in half, like steel ships are sometimes want to do?
From a purely technical point of view (no bean counters and greenies allowed in the drawing office) where could we be today with cold moulded wooden laminate construction and modern epoxy adhesives. I'm willing to bet that an even bigger wooden ship could be built to last even longer. I mean 6 masted sailing rigs may well be back in vogue in a few years' time!!
The big steel ship brigade will of course point to the Great Lake steamers which are in general pretty long in the tooth (50 years or more)... and they have a point, but I would argue that there is no salt water involved with them. Fresh water is their friend, which is of course the opposite with wooden vessels. Then there are those who would point out the existence of massive naval steel ships such as the Dreadnought class at the time. But they would hardly fit into the category of profitable commercial ships with a few sailors on board.
So, as always, think about it and after sleeping on it for a few nights, ague the various merits of very big steel vs wood ships when next you are at a loss for a discussion topic over the fire at a braai or down at the pub.
Here is a good YouTube video giving you more study material to strengthen you case.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKKkeMeGxmo

Bell Book – August 1994 newsletter

DEMOLITION PARTY – *Tony Nicholas*

Early in May it suddenly dawned on the committee that the Granger Bay *General Botha* was due to close its doors and be demolished. The present establishment is making way for a new hotel to which the hotel school will be attached. The Technikon's department of Maritime Studies will also be housed in the new establishment and the present boat shed will be retained as the survival training facility. It was decided to host a cocktail party to mark the sad

occasion but targeting only post 1966 (the year Granger Bay Bothie opened its doors) cadets as well as ex and present staff (honourary members). The party was held at the *General Botha* itself on 10th June, 1994. Due to the late timing only local Obies were mailed the invitations. The occasion turned out to be a huge success and this no doubt displays the pride that Obies have in their training ship and their concern of the Bothie's survival as a training ship. Word quickly spread of this function and calls started coming in from 'youngsters' not on our mailing list. We recruited almost a dozen new members. One such new member is J.A. (John) Klopper, #2837 1984. I remember John joining my vessel some years back, berthed in East London, on which I was Mate. I could not believe my eyes to see a cadet ascending my gangway with his safety boots and boiler suit under his arm. A sign of a good cadet. He was.

All such occasions necessitate a speech. My speech focused on four points. Firstly, the Bothie itself. Secondly, the Bothie Boys and Girls themselves. Here I got myself into trouble for not mentioning that we have Bothie Girls, one of whom was present that evening. I tender my apologies. You Girls were built into my speech but in the heat of the moment (or cool beer) one dispenses with ones notes and flies off the cuff. Sorry. Thirdly, the officers who 'trained us and turned out the Bothie Boys and Girls.' I made mention of P.T.I. Smith (who was present, but maybe not correct) and I heard a remark that he was not present but at Doctor Levy. Some of your Obies will be able to relate to that remark. Fourthly, the party. And what a party it was. The pub ran out of Castle beer and they finally decided enough was enough, after all it was supposed to be a cocktail party.

The bar closed and being true blue Bothie Boys and Girls, which in this case includes the wives, a large contingent relocated to a local tavern. The Chairman decided he should also attend to show his mettle. Well, one certain Obie decided he had had and wished to retire. No problem, he was dispatched to bed and his able wife joined the late night festivities. Should he remain nameless? I think not, Gavin Durell, now you have to save your reputation. Well done Jean. As I said, word spread. Although not having been mailed the original invitation, Dave Rennie #2677 1979, appeared from Durban. Now there's dedication.

Whilst perusing through the mailing list looking for local Obies, I came across an address in 'Grootdrink'. Now where in the blazes is that? I wondered. Not having the answer, I duly mailed to said address. To my amazement farmer Americo Barata, #2666 1979, drove some 800 kms to attend the party. As I said, dedication. Or is pride, or nostalgia?

Another point that I made note of. Mark Baumgarten, #2522 1976, seemed to be wearing a 'Springbok Tie for Drinking'. When the Chairman eventually left (after all one must maintain some dignity) Paul le Seur was hung up on a peg in the bar corner with his tie around his knees and John Gibson was doing his best to prevent the bar counter from falling over. A memorable night. Also, at this party Jimmy Smith sent his best greetings to 'Dynamic' Derek Kemp. Hope you heard him, Captain.

Off my Bookshelf - *Scribe*

Two books recently read and of interest. Both fresh out of the Slop Chest and paid for!

SA Training Ship General Botha, War Record 1939 – 1945; by Mac Bisset and Tony Nicholas

ISBN: 978-0-6397-3876-5

Well, what can I say? Your Chairman is spreading his talents in the company of other well known researchers. Yes, he is getting a name for himself not only as a author ("The Legend Lives On", centenary book together with Paul Semark), but he is also becoming an accomplished researcher and historian. One only needs to read the interesting stuff he regularly writes at the beginning of each quarterly newsletter in "*From the Bridge of Cape Town*" and the Scranbag to realise how much research has been put into finding out about Bothie Boys and their related history to realise this.

I read the book with interest, but found it more of a reference document, with a lot of data and lists. It covers chapters on the Bothie and its staff during the Second World War, and the adventures of Bothie Boys in just about every campaign in the Merchant Navy, the Royal Navy, Royal Naval Reserve (RNVR), Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and the South African Navy which was at the time a was the Seaward Defence Reserve and the RNVR (SA Division) which on 1 August 1942 amalgamated to form the SA Naval Forces. Then there were those who fought withgreat distinction in the Royal Air Force, Royal Airforce Volunteer Reserve, Fleet Air Arm and the SA Airforce who are recorded as earning

more awards of gallantry than any of their former shipmates. Then there are also some who volunteered for the army serving with distinction in a number of campaigns.
But it wa salos about those who stayed to keep the training ship going. From the Introduction "*The Second World War was undoubtedly the finest hour in the history of the SATS General Botha. The outbreak of the war threatened its own existence because of the departure of reservists and other staff members who decided to join up, and the loss of the ship …*(required by the Navy) *… The importance of the contribution of South Africa's war effort made by the staff of the SATS General Botha should never be forgotten and their names have been included at the end of the Roll. …*"
Indeed, the Roll is all inclusive and I found very interesting names and facts. There is a comprehensive list of every cadet who served in the war (50 pages nog al!) which was just about all the cadets with few exceptions. I also found interesting the long and comprehensive list of a wide range of schools that the cadets had attended prior to the Bothie – the best Afrikaans Hoer Skoole and English private/church schools to the regular local primary and high schools.
Not recommended for a holiday light read, but a useful resource to keeping The Legend live on. *Well done r. Chairman.*

"JUST NUISANCE AB" His Full Story – by Terrence Sisson. ISBN: 978-0-949-98938-3
I have only part read this book, but so far finding it quite refreshing (especially after the above!!!). I mean what a delight to find such a light-hearted true story even if some of it probably exaggerated by the sailors' experiences in their escapades ashore in the company of such a canine companion.
The book's predecessor "**Just Nuisance – True story of an Able Seaman who led a Dog's Life**" by Leslie M. Steyn is also on my bookshelf inherited from my father who used to tell us about this unusual almost human fellow. Sisson's book affirms what Steyn originally wrote with more detail and filling in some of the gaps.
First edition was June 1985 (Steyn's book was published in 1941 and revised in 1968), and has been reprinted in November 2022 by the Naval Heritage Trust. Extract from the first chapter "*Young Nuisance*."

> *The dog who was to be the only officially enlisted animal in the Royal Navy in peace or war, was born on 1 April 1937. This April Fools Day birth was definitely not augury for the wisdom and intelligence he acquired as the dog grew to maturity. He was born to a Great Dane bitch named Diana, while his sire was called Koning. Both his parents had high falutin' pedigrees. This naval dog was registered with the SA Kennel Union as The Pride of Rondebosch. …. I have not been able to establish exactly how many puppies were born in this litter, but there were at least two, both male – one the naval canine later to be known as Nuisance, and his brother eventually called Bats. Bats was a naval slang term applied to any person who had abnormally long ears or large feet. ……. Both Nuisance and Bats had their names conferred on them by men of the Royal Navy when they were about a year old, at the Naval Base at Simon's Town* (HMS *Afrikander 1*).

You can follow up on both of these books and others in the Slop Chest on the back page of this Newsletter.

"THE CAPE RAIDER" a Jack Pembroke Naval Adventure – by Justin Fox
ISBN: 978-1-48590-442-7 (Print) ISBN: 978-1-4859-0475-5 (ePub)
While visiting a friend in George recently, I was asked to deliver this book to the owner. I have to admit and apologise to the owner for the delay in delivery, as I can not put the book down (present tense). It is by my bed and to be completed soon. So, I will have to report back in more detail about this historical thriller based on the pioneering days of the Seaward Defence Force and converted whale hunting vessels converted to minesweepers during the second world war.

Freemantle Maritime Museum

Simon Pearson 2312, 1967 – Simon has been on a trip to Sydney and Perth to visit his Australian family. He writes – "Had a fascinating 4 hours in the maritime museum of Freemantle. They have a lovely model of the Lawhill (pictured right in her Filand colours) in this museum. Such a great

museum, ……..”

The Revd Arnold Hirst (53/54) - a remarkable Bothie old boy

Below is an extract from a joint obituary (*back in c. 2007 I think*) contributed by Bishop Christopher Gregorowski and ex-cadet Mike Briant (53/54); Final edit by Barry Cullen (53/54).

Arnold Hirst was born in Johannesburg 26th June 1936 and educated at St. Andrews College Grahamstown. He joined the Bothie with the Class of 53/54. In a recent message, Mike Briant, (The "junkman" living now in British Columbia) asked: We used to call him "Johnny" Hirst. Why? He was always up to something, "pushing his luck" - usually something dangerous or likely to get a whole lot of us into trouble. Such as the construction of the tower of iron beds. What a character!"

That story is worth repeating. From Mike’s classic, *"Memories of the Main Hall"*:

> "Tilting at the windmills of discipline and regulation holds an everlasting appeal. It is an activity for which Bothie boys never seem to be short of inspiration. It is our most popular diversion, the most ardently pursued. Truly this is our greatest entertainment. Intrinsic to it is the ludicrous, that vital touch of comic. The sillier, the richer the vein, the more durable the fun. This largely because each nugget of tomfoolery is, in a way, a challenge, testing the intellectual fortitude of the officers. These hardy characters deal with all delinquency in the time honoured fashion, directly and unbothered by such tiresome considerations as clemency or fairness. Such impartiality calls for a demeanour both stern and composed, unaffected by circumstances, no matter how ridiculous. The merest flicker of amusement, the slightest acknowledgement of the absurdity of the situation and we triumph. Every eye watches keenly for that involuntary twinkle, that twitch at the corner of the mouth, the sign that will tell us that the bails are off. Imagine Queen Victoria censuring: "We are not ....." with her upper lip atremble. Authority has its own demands, not least here, on the Bothie, but invariably, we watch in vain.
>
> It is "Make and Mend" on a Sunday afternoon, that comfortable dog watch, traditionally set aside for sedentary occupation, it being tacitly permitted the whiles, to sit upon ones bunk. There is a discussion group at the North end of the hall. Over a concoction consisting of dates and smarties compounded in marmalade, they applaud the benefits of a life at sea. The glamour of foreign ports, the flesh pots of the East, fanciful romantic encounters, all enjoyed in equal measure to the remnants of Chicks Lawrence's "gwogbox" spooned up on the handles of their toothbrushes.
>
> Further West, Junior Young settles himself python-like round the rim of his locker and extracts the last vestiges of peanut butter from a jar with his forefinger, while not far away, "Feet" Shewell (Bill's younger brother), gazing upward as though in a trance, endeavours to suckle inspiration from the cap of his fountain pen. He is developing a tender, calligraphic relationship with a young lady in Boksburg discovered in the back pages of Outspan magazine. Not far away, Fisherman Barry Downing and Joe Stalling inspect the ruin of Stallings socks and discuss the possibilities of a heel reconstruction job.
>
> The piano twinkles cheerfully, somebody practices paradiddles on the side of a locker and mellow light, flecked with occasional motes of undiscovered dust, filters down over all. It is a peaceful scene, pastoral almost, yet it cannot last. The urgent juices of life, gurgling round in young bodies demand activity, preferably of a precarious nature. A game of Bok Bok is suggested. (The last one resulted in a dislocated shoulder and fifteen candidates for Monday mornings Chief Officer's report.) Somebody, Clive Douglas is it? points to the fact that the main hall rafters are a good 20 feet above the floor. How many beds do you reckon we could fit one on top of the other?
>
> It is a challenging project, demanding teamwork and planning and is not lacking in the essential element of risk. The odds of attaining the summit and then successfully dismantling the structure without incurring either injury or discovery are the sort that bookmakers do well in. The foot of each bedpost has a socket which fits neatly onto the

top of the one below. Thus five beds are raised piecemeal and reassembled one atop the other, forming a structure fifteen feet high, impressive but not altogether stable. Support for the project is immediate and universal, cadets are strung out like ants hanging on at various levels to pass up the heavy sections. The hall. normally immaculate is a shambles with discarded bedding strewn everywhere. Arnold Hirst, swaying precariously on the top, shouts instructions: "Come on you guys, get a move on. We need a head section up here....." He peers over the brink to find out why he receives no response. His gaze is met by that of duty instructor Jim Davis, wooden-faced, arms clasped behind his back, rocking gently on heels set well apart."

Arnold did not go to sea. He gave the commercial world his best efforts; clearly not to his satisfaction for in 1958, surprising family and friends, he enrolled at St. Paul's Theological College in Grahamstown and entered his new calling with enthusiasm and dedication! He was ordained deacon in Cape Town in 1960, priest in 1961.

He was friend of rich and poor alike. He loved to tell the story of an occasion when he and a number of others were arrested on a protest march with their leader, Archbishop Tutu, then Bishop of Johannesburg, to spend the night in John Vorster Square. The police made heavy weather with taking the names of some of the clergy they had arrested. By the time they got to Arnold, everybody was hot, tired and thirsty. "Name?" "The name is Hirst - rhymes with thirst." That broke the ice a little.

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