

SATS *General Botha* Old Boys' Association

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February 2024 JOINT NEWSLETTER

CAPE TOWN CALENDAR

MONTHLY	Pub lunch, Royal Cape Yacht Club, second Tuesday of every month without fail.
2024	16 March 2024: AGM and Commissioning Day luncheon.
	17 March 2024: Annual Service of Remembrance and Wreath Laying Ceremony.
2025	15 March 2025: AGM and Commissioning Day luncheon.
	16 March 2025: Annual Service of Remembrance and Wreath Laying Ceremony.

For those of you travelling in from beyond our Cape Town border, let us know of your travel plans.

FORTHCOMING CAPE TOWN EVENTS

- Tuesday 12th March, 1200 for 1300 – Pub lunch, Royal Cape Yacht Club, partners welcome. Rig of the day, casual.
- Saturday 16th March 2024, 1030 for 1100 – 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: 896 5377 6377 Pass code: 521603
- Saturday 16th March 2024, 1230 for 1300 – Commissioning Day Luncheon, Kelvin Grove Club, Camp Ground Road, Newlands, next door to Newlands Cricket Club. Partners welcome. Rig of the day; club blazer and tie preferred or lady's equivalent. Price R380 pp., 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 17th March 2024 @ 1000 – War Memorial Service, Jubilee Square, Simon's Town. The service shall be followed by sumptuous refreshments in Lawhill Maritime Centre, Simon's Town School. In case of inclement weather, the service shall be held in the S.A. Naval Museum Chapel. Contact a committee member if directions required. Rig of the day; club blazer and tie preferred or ladies equivalent, with medals.
 - **Booking for the Commissioning Day Lunch is important, please RSVP by Monday 11th March 2024** to: Tony Nicholas: 082 555 2877, cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za
- **Pre-payment for the Commissioning Day Lunch would be appreciated. Payment details in the Slop Chest section of this newsletter (Page 12 below).**

From the Bridge of Cape Town

Welcome to 2024, the first couple of weeks start slowly but by the time schools open again, everyone else has risen from the holiday stupor. All 2023 activities have been extensively reported on Facebook with photographs. In addition, we are in the process of creating regional WhatsApp groups which has proved popular. It is regrettable that many members do not follow us on Facebook and some decline to remain on our WhatsApp groups. WhatsApp in particular has become the choice of communication these days and is much more effective than emails. Thus, we encourage everyone to use these, you are missing some very interesting news and anecdotes. If a challenge; ask your children or grandchildren to set you up.

Our priority presently is planning our March events. The theft of our cenotaph plaques was a downer for us in 2023 and unfortunately the replacements shall not be ready by 17th March this year. But, like all good strategists, we have adapted our plan. Looking towards the future the memorial service shall be held on Jubilee Square, Simon's Town and the after-service refreshments shall be served at Lawhill Maritime Centre, Simon's Town School. Of course, as traditional, our Annual General Meeting followed by our Commissioning Day celebration shall take place Saturday 16th March, Kelvin Grove Club, Newlands, Cape Town. We look forward to your overwhelming support.

The survey we initiated a few months ago has brought in many interesting suggestions which have been summarised in a workable format. Your "Think Tank" consists of members across the Bothie decades with a balance between Gordon's Bay and Granger Bay. Further communication shall follow but we definitely need younger members to come to the fore and take over some of the roles within the Association. We look forward to welcoming you, whoever you are, on board the bridge.

Until next quarter, have Bothie fun out there. Cheers, *from Tony (Chairman)*.

SCRANBAG

J.R. EVANS 1980 #2686. John disappeared in the sea clutter 20 odd years ago; recently our Search and Rescue located him in the turbulent waters of A.R. Brink & Associates in Durban. 01/79 - 12/82 - Cadet and Third Officer with Unicorn Lines. 01/84 - 04/84 - Basic training with S.A. Navy at Saldanha. 07/84 - 07/86 - Ships Agent with African Coaling. 07/86 - 10/86 - Travelling in Europe. 02/87 - 06/90 - Marine Surveyor with M&L Inspection. 07/90 - 01/96 - Marine Surveyor with A.R. Brink & Associates. 1996 Cargo Surveyor with Patterson & Associates in Zimbabwe. 2024 found in Durban with A R Brink & Associates.

R.C. BAIRSTOW 1986 #2874. After coming ashore in 1987, joined the SA Navy and served on the SAS *Tafelberg*, (where we saw operations and exercises on the East Coast) I then served on the Stone frigates SAS *Saldana*, SAS *Simonstown*, SAS *Wingfield*. With the end of the border conflict, I left the SA Navy and joined Nedbank. After training and furthering my education through the Institute of Bankers, and at UNISA and then later the University of Leicester. I worked in Trade and Trade Finance. I spent time at ABSA Head Office and then moved to Citibank in International Corporate Banking and Finance. In 2002 I joined Standard Chartered Bank in Kampala Uganda. I served in various senior roles in Corporate Banking and Finance in Kampala, Singapore, Jakarta, Lusaka, and Nairobi, attaining the position of Managing Director Corporate for East Africa where we financed Governments and major infrastructure projects. I left Standard Chartered in 2015 to join I&M Bank in Kigali as CEO, in October 2023, I returned to Uganda to run the latest acquisition in the I&M Group, Orient Bank Uganda, (now rebranded as I&M Bank Uganda Ltd).

S.L.E. HOSKEN 1961/62 #2205. Poor visibility obscured our semaphore messages to Stephen and thus we dispatched Ziggy Duwe on Search and Rescue mission which was successful. We know not what Stephen did immediately after Bothie but eventually was a Captain in SAAF. He flew 108 commando squadron and was based at Ondongwa and Messina, Operations Officer in Angola. He was also an Eastern Province biathlon and triathlon. Later worked in the civil engineering department of the Port Elizabeth Municipality. Worked as a young man for company Geo Physics looking for oil in South Africa and Mozambique. Loved rock climbing and was one of three that climbed one of the faces of Cockscomb. Did lay preaching and religious instructions



Captain S. Hosken SAAF

in both St Albans Maximum Medium and North End Prisons, Port Elizabeth. Was chairman for EP ACDP. Was chairman for both EP Concrete Society and EP Society of Engineers.

C.H. COPELAND 1953/54 #1814. One of our 'mad Rhodesians', Chris Copeland came from Prince Edward School, Salisbury. He proved an outstanding boxer, taking part in the Western Province Schools' Championship, along with various inter-school and inter-watch tournaments, ending his two years undefeated. He was also a member of the band and in his senior year he won a telescope for seamanship and a pair of binoculars for good fellowship. Chris commenced his seagoing career in Shell Tankers T2 tanker *Tectarius*, together with Dick Whipp and Mike Shaw. After a year he was transferred to the white oil carrier *Bela* on the Malaysian coast. In June 1956 he joined the *Volsella* and was promoted to fourth mate, serving on the Persian Gulf to Haifa run via the Cape until the 1956 Suez Crisis when the destination was changed to Thames Haven also around the Cape. As Chris said there was an awful lot of sea-time and precious little shore leave. In this ship he found himself in the first northbound convoy after the re-opening of the Suez Canal and was adjacent to the *World Jury* when she swung on her anchor cable and was purported to have hit a mine. In July 1957 he was transferred to the *Hydatina* as acting third mate with John Sampson (51/52) there as second mate. Chris attended the King Edward VII Nautical College in London in October 1958, obtaining his second mates' ticket in December 1958 after which he returned to Rhodesia on leave. During this leave spell Shell Rhodesia offered Chris a position in the company which he accepted and his first job was running the company depot at Mpulungu on the southern shore of Lake Tanganyika discharging fuel barges towed down from Kigoma by the lake steamer Liemba. As he said it was quite a change from the oil terminal at Mina Al-Ahmadi in Kuwait. Chris worked in all three territories of the old Federation. In 1982 he accepted a position with BP SA in Johannesburg followed by a move to the Eastern Cape and then Cape Town. He retired in 1995 from the position of National Market Development Manager after 40 years with the Shell/BP Group.

Chris returned to East London to relax, travel and play golf but instead, started his own fuel agency, selling products for Exel Sasol and BP and an environmental firm. He ran this for nearly 20 years until forced to give it up due to having to go a couple of rounds with cancer. While working in Ndola in 1966, Chris met and married Jenny Curtis and they have two sons both of whom are married, four grand kids and a great granddaughter. Sadly, like so many South Africans the family is spread out around the world with his elder son and family in the U.S. and his younger son and family in Mauritius.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

P.J. WADE 1960/61. The passing of any of our members is always a sad occasion, none more so than Philip. Phil and Anne had joined us at your bursary fund Sail & Motor year end and awards function on a Friday and sadly Phil weighed his anchor the next afternoon leaving a huge void, not only in Anne's life, but in our greater Bothie fraternity as well.

After leaving Bothie Phil joined Safmarine and then later Unicorn Shipping. After seven years in the Merchant Navy, he moved ashore into ships agency in Durban. Three years later joined a yacht sailing to Rio de Janeiro. Thereafter did a number of sailing races including the Whitbread Round the World Race on "Drum" in 1984 and later went commercial fishing off Alaska. 2010 saw him running a 45-meter sailing super yacht for an American family and have taken them to many exotic destinations. Had been with same employer for 18 years plus and had been instrumental in building three yachts for them. Retired 2018.

Founder member of the S.A.T.S. *General Botha* Old Boys Association Bursary Fund as well as Marine Inspirations.



Phil Wade & Kombisile Mthethwa

Sail & Motor Awards ceremony 17 Nov. 2023.

Deceased 18th November 2023.

Condolences and accolades have poured in from all over the world demonstrating the positive influence and outlook in life Phil had on many, particularly the youth of South Africa.

“What a surprise and shock! Phil had such a colourful personality that he will be sorely missed. He has left a memorable legacy in his contribution to the many young lives that he has influenced to date; His enthusiasm, zest and generosity have been lost to us all far too soon.

“*Bon voyage Phil!*” Paul Semark.”

“Phil was indeed a special person, an incredibly competent sailor who competed as Skipper of many sailing vessels in many world renown yacht races, The Cape to Rio three times, in the West Indies and an around the world race, Sydney to Hobart amongst many other sailing exploits. Designed, built and operated for almost 12 years a beautiful large sailing super yacht for a billionaire. Among other yachts he owned himself and sailed. Completing his last Atlantic crossing a couple of years ago, in a very small yacht he bought and fitted out to sail the Atlantic. His ideas and projects many times had incredible potential as in the case of the Bursary Fund and donation of *Homero*, The Sail and Motor programme and the “Lawhill students to Europe project”, both here and in Palma and the ongoing “Marine Inspirations projects for others around the world. He had an incredible fund-raising ability and was determined to leave a legacy through Marine Inspirations which I believe we will still see the fruits of in the future. He was sometimes short on the detail of how these projects would work and left it to many others to make these ideas work. He contributed his amazing marketing skills complemented these other skills and together with his continued energy and zest for life, most of time it worked. This was only achieved with a fantastic mate in Anne who gave him support in every way - they made a great team!! The amount of What’s App group messages are indicative of the above.” Keith Burchell.

“Dear Anne, I am very sad to have learnt of the sudden passing of Phil last weekend which has come as a great shock. Firstly, this is a great loss to you, and I send my sincere condolence. And secondly Phil’s parting will leave a void in our Old Boys’ and Bursary Fund activities. We will miss his cheerful smile, great ideas, his drive, and his constant encouragement. He kept us on our toes! Phil’s mentorship and devoted work with the young sailors is talked about frequently among everyone who came in contact with him. Furthermore, they also talk about your affection and encouragement, and we are also grateful to you for all that you have done alongside Phil for the students. So, thank you for Phil and you Anne for the great contribution you have made. With love and condolences from, Dennis Henwood.”

“Phil will be remembered for his work with Keith Burchell in getting the Bursary Fund formed and then the ‘Sail and Motor’ project initiated. Countless youth from around the country spent time on the water in a selection of craft to “Nurture Sea Fever”. With Phil’s own company – Marine Inspirations - he partnered the Bursary Fund to encourage sailing experiences in the Mediterranean from his home in Palma Majorca. Many of these past sailing youth are paying back in respect to their mentor and also to the maxim of the GBOBA – Honour and Duty.

When a strong tree falls it leaves many seeds to replace it and this is what is happening with our now departed Board Member, friend and mentor. With thankful memories comes also the sadness of Phil’s parting. To Anne, the family, all their many friends we commiserate with you all. This is a time of mourning that should have our full respect. Our Bothie flag flies at half-mast in the memory of one special Old Salt. All the Board stand to salute Philip Wade (1960/61) in this sad time.” Simon Pearson.

“I am saddened to hear of Phil’s passing. He was a generous and hospitable man, and he leaves an example for all in the Bursary scheme. A sudden departure is very hard on those left behind, and I send my empathy to his family and friends. Jesus said; “What you do for the least of my brothers, you do for me.” Phil will have his reward.” Keith Lindsay.

G.L. MAXWELL 1940/41. Another of our legends sadly slipped his cable 11th January 2024. After Bothie, 1942 – 46 Gordon was Midshipman, Sub Lieutenant R.N.R. Sub Lieutenant S.A.N.F. (V). 1947-49 he returned to Rhodesia, Umtali, Sabi valley. Town Engineer's Clerk, Surveyor. 1950-57 found him in Australia, Sub Lieutenant & Lieutenant RANVR. 1957-59 Papua New Guinea Marine Branch, Assistant Hydrographic Surveyor. 1960-61 NSW (Australia) Lands Department & Sydney Water Board, Assistant Surveyor. 1962-67 Lieutenant & Lieutenant Commander RANR. 1968-70 Australian National Line, 3rd, 2nd, & Chief Officer, then Assistant Terminal Superintendent. 1971 - 89 sailed as Master with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, Hydrographic Surveying. 1989 finally retired.

Reserve Decoration, Justice of the Peace.

He was Captain of a Mine sweeper at the Normandy Landings, WWII D-Day, after joining RNR from General Botha. A varied and very interesting career.

I.J. MANNING 1955/56. Another of our well-known legends, Ian sadly passed away 13th January 2024 and condolences have poured in from across the seven seas. Ian's one passion was research of the Bothie and in particular, Captain Gus Legassick, and had published three books on the subject. A stickler for accuracy his books is a fantastic historical record. Ian started his nautical career as a member of the Cape Town Sea Cadets sometime in the early 1950s. Ian went off to Bothy in 1955. After graduating from Bothy Ian attended the South African Naval Gymnasium where he spent the whole of 1957. After leaving the Naval Gym, Ian joined Thompson Publications in Cape Town as assistant editor of South African Shipping News and Fishing Industry Review, later being appointed as Editor. Sometime in the mid/late 1960s Ian joined Caltex Oils as an advertising executive. While being employed by commercial businesses Ian had kept up his naval career as a member of the South African Navy Reserve, then known as the South African Navy CF (Citizen Force), SAS *Unitie*, initially as a petty officer and later receiving a commission, rising to the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

In the mid-1970s Ian transferred to the South African Navy PF (Permanent Force), achieving the rank of Captain. During his career in the navy, he held various appointments including Executive Officer of the fleet replenishment ship SAS *Tafelberg*, Commanding officer of the Durban Indian seamen's training base SAS *Jalsena* and Commanding Officer of Naval Command West, based in Walvis Bay. Later Ian was appointed Flag Captain to the Chief of the South African Navy and as such served four Chiefs of the South African Navy in succession, Vice Admirals A.P. Putter, Glen Syndercombe (GB 1948/49), R.A. Edwards and 'Woody' Woodburn. Ian concluded his Naval career by presiding over court martials. Ian received several decorations including the SM and MMM. Ian married Angela Webber with whom he had two daughters, Margaret (who also served as an officer in the South African Navy) and Jennifer. Previously GB Trust Trustee.

Our condolences to family and shipmates.

AWOL

Geoff Lupton-Smith 1977, last known in Constantia, Cape Town and **Dieter Philipp 1977** last known in Singapore.

From the Bridge of Durban – Mike Melly, Branch chairman

Durban branch so often flies under the radar, but that certainly doesn't mean that we're not out there! Our monthly lunches are well attended, averaging between 10 and 12 Obies on the 1st Wednesday of each month. Our venue is ideal. It is quite central, has free and safe parking, and is a casual and friendly venue where we have a table reserved outside in the cool shade.

Our membership is quite widely spread inland, to the north, to the south, and on the distant outskirts of the metropolis. This does mean that we have members in outlying areas who I am sure would love to attend, but for whom the trip is rather long, especially after a few beverages. We also have a number of newer members who have been through Lawhill and gone to sea, and some who have come ashore and hold good positions in shipping companies' Durban offices. They too love the ethos and traditions of the "Bothie" and are proud to be members of our fine association. Of course, this helps in spreading the "Bothie" name out there amongst the many who have entered the maritime industry after our college closed, and in so doing, keeps our traditions alive and well.

We held a fine Christmas lunch at Stella Sports Club, who catered brilliantly. It was very well-attended by members and wives, who all enjoyed themselves. One certain designated driver indeed forgot that she was the designated driver, and allowed another certain Obie – a classmate from school days – to lead her astray to the point that she was no longer in a position to carry out her responsibilities to said original member who had driven her there! Such are the events which make up similar memories to the days at the Bothie!

The lunch was sponsored by the branch committee, using funds which had been bequeathed to the branch by an Obie. These funds were skilfully grown by past committees, and together with another bequest from an Obie, used for the purposes intended - branch socials, and education. Bearing in mind that the legend that is the "SATS General Botha" in all its' various forms was started by an act of generosity by Capt TBF Davis, it is fair to say that the legend lives on through continuous acts of generosity such as this and other – for example our Bursary Fund, some of whose recipients are now members doing exactly

what they were inspired to do – give back. Is this perhaps not the real legend?

We have also been delighted at the response to our golf-shirt campaign. This started off as an idea to provide local members with apparel they could wear monthly to show their allegiances, and to get the GB name out there. However, it took off like a Falcon 9 and we have to date produced around 150 shirts. This was not a fundraiser – hell, what a mistake! – but simply a way we could show that we belong together and to remind people of The Ship.

Our branch AGM will be held on 6th March – the first Wednesday – also at Stella, at 12h00, followed by lunch. Please do give some serious thought to putting your hand up to join the committee, some of us have been there for a very long time, others are over-committed, to say nothing of the fact that “fresh blood” brings in fresh ideas and keeps the OBA alive. It is certainly not onerous, and is actually a way to see Bothie mates and chat about the Ship a few more times a year! I hope to see as many members there as possible, not just to make up the numbers, but to enjoy the camaraderie and the bond that we share through our common voyage through life.. *Mike*

Australia Branch News

From GBOBA New South Wales Grenville Stevens 2189 60/61

As will be reported in Anchors Aweigh. Gordon Maxwell (1940-41), passed away peacefully in his sleep. He led a full life of 99 years.

The family are putting a short service history for the GBOBA.

Gordon was a staunch supporter and even into his 'old age' he would take the train from Blacktown and travel long distances to attend the luncheons.

RIP, another Legend passes on.

7th Dec 2023 The GBOBA Sydney Xmas lunch was held at Royal Hotel Wyong. Attendance was low but the RSVPs were a good indication that there is still some strength in the GBOBA Aust numbers.

Email correspondence was received from:

Jonathan Mann 2115 1958/59 He sends best wishes to all.

John Sampson 1647 1950/51 Celebrated his 90th Birthday. He wrote “I was sorry to learn of the passing of Alan Bole. He was my old salt, a Senior Cadet Captain, and a good guy. His brother Ivan was my chum and we sailed together as apprentices.”

From GBOBA Queensland Mike Pomfret 1728 1951/51

Alack and alas nothing to report on. With the weather here on the Sunshine Coast just basically wet and bordering the miserable. But as at this time no real problems. So far this month as at day 10 we have had 198.8 ml rain, which has encouraged my grass to grow with great enthusiasm, and my Lawn man to have a financially induced smile on his face. I am now 87, I'm still playing Golf two or three times per week. Please when contacting Cape Town send my greetings to all and especially to the survivors of 1951/52.

From GBOBA Western Australia Andy Fotheringham 2525 1976

26th November 2023 Graeme Stephan, Peter Blackett and Andy Fotheringham met for a catch up in Perth WA. Graeme was with the person who is taking over his job. They had travelled from Belgium and Holland so Graeme could introduce their customers to his successor.

Peter Blackett travelled up from south of Perth. As is usual we sorted the worlds' problems out over a few beers. The Last time I saw Graeme was in Brisbane when he did his world tour to celebrate his 50th Birthday. That was 15 years ago. We are coming up for having known each other for close on 50 years.



From GBOBA Central Coast NSW; Peter Kroon 2370 1969

Marion and Prince Edward islands - Not many South Africans know that South Africa has territory outside its borders. But in late 1947 in a highly secretive operation, the HMSAS Transvaal sailed from Cape Town, with sealed orders only to be opened when the vessel was clear of the coast. Those orders were to proceed to Marion and Prince Edward Islands, and annex them for SA. This was duly done, and SA acquired additional land.

First discovered in 1772 by Marion du Fresne, he was unable to land, and proceeded to New Zealand where he was killed by the Māori's. Several ships were wrecked over the years, with the Richard Dart being the most tragic in 1849, as 52 of her crew of 64 were drowned. Roald Amundsen passed by in November 1911, before being the first man to reach the South Pole.

Marion is cold and wet. SA has three weather stations outside the republic, Antarctica, Gough Island and Marion. South Africa was to blame for one of the most devastating environmental disasters. Mice had been introduced, some say by shipwrecks, but probably in the food boxes landed to feed the team. Once the base had been overrun by mice, the obvious solution at the time, was bring in some cats. Bad idea. Why should a cat hunt mouse, when he could just walk outside and help himself to some nice fat birds. The birds had no fear of cats, having never seen one before. The result was the bird life becoming endangered as the cats went feral and spread across the island. Solution, get rid of the cats, easier said than done. Cat flu was introduced in the early 70's but those that survived, became resistant and bred resistant offspring. They tried shooting them, but that didn't work because of inaccessible terrain. They tried trapping them, but the cats were too clever for that. The next plan was to bring Jack Russell's down to kill the cats, but the poor little dogs didn't stand a chance, and they got beaten up instead. Finally, after years of trying, they were finally eradicated by the use of new viruses.

It is really a miserable place, howling winds, freezing cold and wet, certainly not the place to go for a cruise.

Alang Beach – Anon

Thought for the day before we start... there seems to be an exponential relationship between one's age and the size of one's weekly pill box.

The Barber's intern and the Cadet.

As usual the pressure was mounting to find boilerplate to fill the allotted space in the news letter and quite by chance I was presented with an observation on life today when I was less than subtly encouraged by management to visit the barber shop this morning. It had over the last few days been pointed out in disciplinary conduct reviews that what I thought to be my carefully nurtured image of a distinguished senior officer and gentleman had drifted off course during the festive season and was now well within earshot of the wild and rocky lee shore of social unacceptability. I could no longer be deemed to be a smart and tidy, ready for inspection candidate for promotion. The image was more like I had just come in last in a 1960's nonstop Round the World yacht race.

The recent news had very little to offer in the way of meaty topics, apart from the fun and games and "skop skiet and donner" going on up there where hot dry sandy shores meet warm busy seas, but commenting on that lot is difficult if neutrality is to be maintained, so I grabbed to opportunity to record what went through my mind as I sat down in the big old chair and had a grubby damp Code 0 spinnaker thrown round my torso and belayed to my neck.

For the first time ever I saw a young man hovering behind my usual hair stylist, obviously a trainee fresh from Tunisia. A lad, probably as poor as a church mouse and very far from family and home, starting out in a trade which will hopefully serve him for life.... ring any bells? The similarities between him and the "standard cadet" as we knew from back in the day started to manifest and conjure comparisons.

Is it not so that we go in for a haircut and just assume that our friendly barber was born clever and experienced and could cut any style of hair on any head type presented to him... I never gave it a second thought until today, so while I sat there "having my hair done" I realised that we were very lucky back in the day to be cadets when it came to training.

We had years to accomplish the task, and we were paid for the work we did. We learned mostly by osmosis from the antics of Bosuns, Chippies and Mates, what the drill was. We had college time and lecturers and ultimately simulators to hone our skills as OOW's and navigators, but this guy had to learn

his skill PDQ to start making a few bob to pay back “the family” who had probably paid something towards airfares and board and lodging... and he at the same time wrestling with a new language and culture.

Analysts to day say that the workforce of the future will hardly be recognisable in terms of what skills will be developed and used, with technological development being the main driving force in this change. I thought to myself, this is where the old classical barber is quite safe in his career choice. He is not swamped by computers and software and the race to keep current. His technology has changed very little. The only item which I could see which had changed over the last 50 years was introduction of the slim line, lightweight, quiet battery driven electric clipper. No longer was the heavy monster with a 220V transformer buzzing around our heads with that unmistakeable sound, threatening to strangle us with the mains power cord.

I’m guessing that emulating the physical skills of a barber is a very long way down on the list of jobs which the AI techies and bean counters will be endeavouring to eliminate... which is a lot better prospect than that facing the modern seafarer.

And then I wondered about the inevitable day when the lad is first let loose with his sharp scissors on a completely unsuspecting customer.... like his first watch alone on the bridge as a 3rd Mate. Can he be trusted? Come to think of it did we ever trust who was on the bridge of the vessel on a steady bearing lumbering towards our Port beam. Usually not, but today we trust a new and untried barber a lot more I believe.

It was nice to see the regular barber explaining as he went, pointing out nuances... passing on his knowledge and experiences, giving back so that the traditions and skills have a viable environment in which to continue for the next generations.

Where to from here for the lad... what career opportunities await him? Most of us ended up ashore sooner or later. Only a very few diehards are still out there commanding ships. He could transition to becoming a hair dresser instead of a barber, he could dress flamboyantly and swoon over his clientele, he could become a celebrity favourite and be flown around the world to be at the beck and call of a super star. The nearest analogy I could come up with for a glamorous career for the lowly cadet is becoming a super yacht captain and mooring up like a tinned sardine at the Monaco Boat Show.

As I arose to pay I silently wished him well at his stage of life as he swept up the hair around the chair with a soft broom.... certainly beats a chipping hammer , dogs paw and a miserable Mate.

GBOBA Planning the Future – “Panel THINK TANK”

Background

Our Old Boys’ Association (OBA) is now 92 years old having first met in August 1931, and in those years our name, history and achievements are wide and highly spoken of. It all started with dedication and determination by a few Old Boys, as you can read in this extract from the brief history of the OBA on our website (www.generalbotha.co.za).

Inevitably and sadly, our membership is on the decline, our membership profile is that much older and certainly not going to get younger, and this must of course be accepted and understood. However, of greater concern more recently has been the poor attendance at our annual events and meetings which were in the past highlights of the OBA calendar. This has been the experience not only at our Cape Town and Durban branches, but elsewhere in UK and Australia.

There are, understandably, some practical reasons for this decline. However, there is also a perception of reluctance in some quarters to be a part of formal ceremonies and occasions. Your Chairman and Committee wish to have a better understanding of this and come to terms with what the consensus is of the wider GBOBA membership on this matter and the future of the OBA.

As alluded to by our Chairman in his opening message (page 2 above), a cross-section of our membership representing Gordon’s Bay and Granger Bay from each decade from the 1950’s through to the 1980’s and post General Botha have met on a couple of occasions last year and this year to debate and look for solutions going forward. This has been labelled the “Panel Think Tank” for that very reason. It is not a long-term committee, and the objective has been to report back at the forthcoming AGM.

Members will be aware of the survey “GBOBA – How can we Improve?” that was sent out last year to the full membership world-wide, and in which every member was given the opportunity to respond to

the questions. The responses from 64 Old Boys, whom we are very grateful for their contributions, were constructive and informative and from which a SWOT analysis was drawn up. The questionnaire responses and the analysis arising from this will be tabled together with a statement at the forthcoming AGM as an official record.

The Survey and SWOT Analysis

A collated summary of the 64 responses has been recorded as well as the SWOT analysis. This record may be considered as the best possible cross-section consensus that we may collect, and from which we may arrive at a better-informed conclusion and proposal to present to the AGM. **Please note, however, it is not the intention, at this point in time, to make any amendments to the constitution. Further more it was never suggested of this survey that the Association should close down.**

Should any member be interested to read these summaries they are welcome to contact Scribe (dhenwood@iafrica.com) who will be happy to share.

Initial response from the panel prior to the survey there were some of the opinion that we should be closing down before it is too late, and this came through to a lesser extent in the survey. On the contrary there were a number who stated, “as long as there is one Old Boy/Girl to have a beer with wherever in the world there will always be the GBOBA.”

The constitution states in Para. 2 “Objectives of the Association the sole or principal object to promote social and recreational facilities in a non-profit manner. ... to form a bond of fellowship among those who have been trained in the S.A.T.S *General Botha* ... or any other institution(s) which are considered to have replaced the Ship and to maintain a connection between the Association and such institutions.” Clearly we all have a responsibility in this regard, and, if the truth be known our social interactions and enjoyment of one another company is clearly alive in most regions as recorded in this and all past newsletters – the OBA is alive and “the Legend Lives On!” Our Australia and UK Branches and their respective leaders, Grenville Stevens (Australia) and Jonathan Warren (UK), primary function is maintaining this comradery. Theirs is not the responsibility of the business-end of the Association being the constitution, the funds we have, the data base and muster lists on the website, the memorabilia assets archives and preservation of our history. This part of our responsibility lies with your two constituted Branches, Cape Town and Durban. However, the latter two do also ensure and organise the “sole or principal object ...”.

There were some interesting observations from the summaries. Mentioned here are two Obies’ particularly observations –

A. *“It’s a Numbers Game - the key concern about long-term sustainability remains, given the inevitable erosion of numbers in an ageing membership”* says one member, who goes on to explain how he sees the numbers working by demonstrating the actual number of “*anchors weighed*” over the past 17 years (2006 – 2022) averaged 23,3 members/year passed away; and speculate a conservative 5% increase on this annual loss over the next 10 years. Hence he figures that over the next ten years with the current membership of 730, that by 2032 the membership would be 412 and that, he reckons is “*sufficient for an effective organisation.*” He further projects a demise in the membership over the following decade will be reduced to about 40 in 2041! He goes on to say -

*“Assuming this last theoretical group of 40 current members were all from the intakes from 1976 to 1987, the youngest amongst them would predictably be a mere 74 and the eldest a sprightly 85; making up a group large enough, and young enough, to be providing effective governance of the Association and the Bursary Fund for at least a few years beyond the termination predicted by the scenario (with even a smaller cluster able to look forward to the 125th anniversary of the commissioning of the SATS General Botha, in 2047!). In addition, **the scenario demonstrates that any move towards terminating the Association now is at least 18 years premature, even if no changes are made to attract and recruit new members to the Association during that period. It is suggested that a membership of >100 in 2041 would make the Association and its Bursary Fund sustainable beyond that year, implying an intake and retention of 4 new members per year during the next 18 years from now – hardly a difficult challenge!”***

B. Another observation concurs with the first. *“The Numbers Game indicates enough members to*

carry on the Association to 2044 provided we address the main identified issues within the Survey.” And here he summarises the outcome of the survey which are also listed in the SWOT Analysis.

- **Ensure committees are viable going forward.** This requires a succession plan for all office bearers. The business and administrative duties are unfortunately essential part of the Association if we are to preserve our history, take care of our money, maintain the critical data base and muster lists, even to the extent that all of these are ultimately disposed or distributed responsibly.
- **Communications and Social Media.** Continue and where necessary expand the successful introduction of Area What’s App Groups to more areas. With local persons taking responsibility from their own area group maintenance. Introduce more year What’s App groups. Use of other communications such as Face Book.
- **Formal Events.** Feed back highlighted issues with formal events such as the annual Memorial Service, the AGM and Commissioning Day lunch.
 - Bring more informality into events where formality is not an absolute requirement. The introduction of the OBA golf shirt allows recognition and satisfies this goal determination at the same time.
 - Take cognisance of attendance limitations of age, health and travel limitations, by the use of technology broadcasting so as to be all-inclusive.
 - Investigate ways to make the memorial service more inclusive of other religions or faith and considerate of the broader membership, keeping in line the historic reasons for the annual service.
 - Create interesting gatherings by including topical subject guest speakers.
- **Newsletter.** Continue the use of the News-Letter as the core distribution of news and events, at the same time as undertaking a revamp of the News Letter in line with suggestions made like a new look. Continue to distribute by email but place it on the Web Site and send links to it on the web via social media.
- **Membership.** Establish a workable plan to encourage more participation from past bursary recipients interest in and membership of the Association – Probably the biggest challenge. This challenge has more relevance in the Cape Town and Durban, or “*Main Branches*” and closer to the sustainability of the Bursary Fund. It is fair to recognise that this is not of interest to “*Regions*” elsewhere such as the UK and Australian regions. However, in the universal scheme of things the sustainability of the *Main Branches* must have some bearing on the continued existence of the *Regions*.

So, in conclusion, it would seem we do have a future to look forward to enjoying a yarn and a chat with fellow members over a refreshment or two if we value our heritage and if we want the Legend to Live On. *What do you think?*

Transparent benefits – putting human rights on the radar – Skuld P&I

Our Bursary Fund has, first and foremost, an invested interest in the young men and women who are the recipients of our bursaries. Similarly, it has a vital interest in our benefactors, not only to raise the funds, but also in the hope that they will ultimately employ these youngsters and offer them a career. For, surely, that is the objective. It is an infinite circle for us selecting good potential top students who will perform and satisfy to the expectations of his/her benefactor and employer. At the same time our task to find benefactors with the potential to not only ultimately employ these youngsters but also to have their best interests in their progression to a good future (the Bursary Fund has been talking to a few of these recently).

We began in 2011 with funding only school kids in Grades 10 – 12, and then we realised that this was pointless if those people had no means to continue to study for their profession. That is when we came alongside Master Mariners and their funds to expand to a Tertiary Bursary Fund. However, it does not stop there, because there is a need to help them find good safe employment out there in the big wide world.

It is the element of the “Employer” in the above equation that is being addressed here. We seek to find suitably accredited employers local and international ship owners/managers in the industry who may have an interest in supporting our Bursary Fund as well as, most importantly, investing in the studies, training and careers of our youngsters. However, it is unfortunate that not all owners/managers have the same interest in the welfare and safety of their charges. There are many stories of abandoned or neglected

seafarers in every sector of merchant ships, fishing and even yachting which we need to be aware of and warn about. The welfare and rights of the seafarer is a concern.

We are fortunate in the Bursary Fund to have on our radar some very reputable owners and managers of international companies from whom we have been and are benefitting from and with whom our youngsters have been afforded great opportunities to launch their careers.

And so, for the seafarer in general, and our bursar recipients in particular there is good news from this article (December 2023) **Transparent benefits – putting human rights on the radar** that comes to attention (click [Here](#)). Skuld P&I Chief Compliance Officer, Vincent Gustavi, explains “there’s a new norm in business. It’s no longer possible to have a sole focus on profit. Your stakeholders – from employees to customers, right through to investors – demand more. And rightly so!” There is a “triple bottom line”. While money talks, it’s no longer the only issue on the industry’s lips, with an increasing emphasis on “people, planet and profit” instead. The Norwegian Transparency Act may be national legislation, but,, it gives the entire industry “a taste of things to come”, shining the regulatory spotlight on the S in ESG (environmental, social and corporate governance), and the crucial issue of safeguarding human rights.

This may be just Norwegian legislation, but hopefully it sets the standard for international ship operations and management in general, and good news for seafarers and our youngsters.

Keeping the Legend alive – passing the Gift on.

Much has been said about our future during 2023. Some of it has been a sad admission that with few new members joining, we are on the decline. However, there has also been the odd quiet (and sometimes not so quiet!) voice reminding us that the class of ’61 inspired us after a conversation over a few frosties one day, that we could actually keep the Legend alive, by supporting youngsters wishing to attend Lawhill Maritime Academy. The idea grew, and whilst perhaps some members supported it more than others, the passion and enthusiasm of the majority prevailed to the extent that the Legend is very alive today, and that our name is promoted on a daily basis at the highest levels. It has become a name synonymous with generosity, “giving back,” dedication to our industry and other positive such principles. Indeed, it is our values which are admired by many, even if there are those who differ.

Some of us enjoy the regular get-togethers. They’re of course always enjoyable and an important part of our activities. But for many of us, although we too enjoy the get-togethers, we also have a mission which goes beyond the social aspects, as we strive additionally to be faithful to the last few clauses enshrined in article 2 of our constitution. ([Constitution updated 5/7/21 - S.A. Training Ship General Botha Old Boys Association](#))

Some of the most well-known, even famous Obies who have passed on, left legacies – Think Phil Wade and Sean Day who left us these past few months. Think Sailor Malan, the quiet but extremely influential Obie who left a legacy in several various ways. Some members bequeathed funds to the OBA to the lads to raise a glass to them every now and then, some bequeathed funds to our Bursary Fund. Some have become legends through their work, others will be remembered for their bonhomie and great company at a Bothie get-together. Think of yourself – you too are a legend, perhaps not as well-known but equally valuable to society.

Most of our (ok, my) generation are tired after a long, and very often, very successful career – thanks to the gift of the education we received at Bothie. Some prefer to relax with their slippers on in front of the telly, glass in hand, others do so watching the sunset in the bush. If there is one thing we all have in common, it is a firm foundation formed at the Bothie, which set us up for life. Those of us who are still reasonably fit and able certainly have a gift they could share in some way to help launch the careers of others, through mentoring and guiding them through their early years at college or at sea. In this way, the gift we received gets even bigger, it takes on a new meaning, and it eventually becomes part of our own legacy. But how? Here’s one way how...

The Bursary Fund needs mentors urgently, at all levels – learners at school, students at Varsity or college, and cadets and 3rd Mates at sea. These mentors will receive support from the very beginning, so if you think that you are unable to connect with today’s youngsters for example, we will present a workshop which will deal with any misunderstandings, concerns, or apprehension you may have.

If you have any questions, or are ready to raise your hand and say “Here I am” then please send me an email to mikemelly@gmail.com. Please write the word “OBA Mentoring” in the subject line so that I

can organise my emails – I receive a vast number each day and my inbox is the most untidiest imaginable. I look forward to hearing from you!

Mike Melly – Cadet 2606. Mentoring sub-committee of the SATS *General Botha* Old Boys' Association Bursary Fund.

ps, if you'd like to leave a bequest to the Bursary Fund, that too will be most welcome – contact Thalia Hock at gm@generalbotha.co.za who can tell you how.

SLOP CHEST

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

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