

SATS *General Botha* Old Boys' Association

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MAY 2022

JOINT NEWSLETTER

2022 CENTENARY CELEBRATION YEAR



MISSION STATEMENT

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

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

Enjoy the Collegial Fellowship of Old Friends and Shipmates.

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

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

UPCOMING EVENTS TO DIARISE

Durban Branch -

Monthly lunches will in future be happening on
the **FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH.**
VENUE STELLA SPORTS CLUB, HELEN JOSEPH ROAD, GLENWOOD
Further details Chris Smith (Secretary) Durban@generalbotha.co.za.

Durban Marine Bursary Golf Day will be held at Mt Edgecombe golf course, on 1st June.
This will be sponsored by Grindrod Shipping. (see Page 8 below)

UK Branch -

The Meriden Midsummer Meeting Saturday 2 July at 18:00
VENUE - Bull's Head Pub, Main Rd., Meriden, Coventry CV7 7NN.
BOOK WITH JONATHAN GBOBAUK@gmail.com.

From the bridge of Cape Town.

Over two years of planning, sweat and nervous tension culminated in our centenary celebration March 2022. The use of Zoom certainly made all the events inclusive for all members worldwide. The AGM on the Friday was attended by members from as far afield as New Zealand and Alabama, despite the time zone difference between us. We certainly hope to see more of you all out there when we use the online facility.

By all accounts the celebratory event on the Saturday was well received by all who attended, not only those in the ball room with us, but also those that again joined us on Zoom. There were much banter and Bothie stories being told between the Zoom attendees who, again, joined us from all over the world, including Charles Kingon from his ship at sea. All present in the hall were correctly attired in the rig of the day, Bothie blazer and ties. It was interesting to note that some of the online Zoomers were in some semblance of uniform. Donald Neaves, Andy Cross and Charles Kingon all wore their Bothie caps. Charles added a sailor suit for the auspicious occasion, not his captain's uniform, the type of sailor suit that moms' tend to dress their baby boys in. Jonathan Warren also in Bothie cap and in recognition of the occasion his Bothie blazer, badge,



**Arrival at the Centenary venue,
welcomed by TSW Cadets.**



**The Centenary luncheon held in the Ball
Room of the Kelvin Grove Club.**

tie, and proudly his Merchant Navy Medal. But what was not known was that below the table Jonathan was in pajama trousers and fluffy slippers. The camera eye sees all.

I am however somewhat disappointed by the number of Zoom attendees. Only about 43% of those who had booked, and made a donation, actually logged on to join the celebration. Disappointing.

Those in the room on the day had the opportunity to view a valuable and historical collection of memorabilia on display. This required some preparation as well as sweat but I did not notice members actually viewing the display, again disappointing. We screened the display on Zoom for those that joined us online on the day.

Whilst I am grumpy; we had advertised the March 2022 centenary dates for over two years. But as the dates drew near I suddenly start receiving emails making excuses not to attend, either in person or on Zoom. Thus I think to myself; why do I bother? Not motivating at all.

But I owe the Zoomers an apology; we failed to include you during the proceedings on the day. We intended to interact with you during the breaks between video chapters but unfortunately we got caught up in the occasion. Sorry. The Sunday Memorial Service was well attended and again live streamed making it inclusive for every one wherever you may be. We certainly hope that this is appreciated by everyone as many months of planning and coordination is required and the cost is rather high.



The Cenotaph after the Memorial Service and Wreath Laying Ceremony

The celebratory “weekend” was rounded off by an excellent lunch at our Royal Cape Yacht Club on the Tuesday, following a day of rest on the Monday.

However the year 2022 is our centenary year. Let’s collectively keep the celebration alive. I look forward to news of your own centenary celebrations from all over the world, or other initiatives marking the important date in our maritime history.

Everyone knows, or should know, that we commissioned a documentary film to mark the centenary of our training ship which also serves as a remaining legacy and record in South African maritime history. Mailing items around the world from South Africa has become problematic over recent years. Therefore we have uploaded the film to You Tube, somewhere up there in the IT cloud. All you have to do is simply click on the below links to view the film. We are providing it free; it has been underwritten by your Association’s Cape Town and Durban branches.

Of course we would welcome any and all donations to keep the Association afloat for the next 100 years.

The full documentary film, with chapter headers:

<https://youtu.be/Huz2Htkebac>

Celebratory event video (updated with high resolution footage from cameras):

<https://youtu.be/WQLZII438xA>

Bursary Fund boardroom video:

<https://youtu.be/eKpgZ1d5ckk>

2022 Memorial Service:

<https://youtu.be/shOkXqglp4w>

If you have any difficulty in accessing the films via the above links on your computer, ask your grandchildren to help. We would appreciate your feedback after viewing the film.

In addition we have produced a “board room” copy of approximately eight minutes which your Association has donated to your Bursary Fund to assist the fund securing sponsorship. In this way the legacy of our training ship, and those that trained in her, shall live on in history.

I have included the boardroom version in the links above, if any of you can use it to raise support and sponsorship for your bursary fund we shall be pleased to hear from you.

Photographs of all our March celebratory events were posted on our Facebook page.

Now, let’s start planning the Old Boys’ Association centenary in 2031. Never too early, let’s hear your proposals.

Michael Duff 1959/60 reflects.

Sitting here, in the cool of the early morning, in my tin can, in a dusty Mexican boat yard, with a few cups of coffee in me and before the hot sun rises too far into the eastern sky; I began to reflect nearly 2 months after the fact, of the Bothy Centennial Celebration. What a great success it was !!

Kudos to the organizing committee and especially to Tony Nicholas.

I thought obliged to report to colleagues of my era, 59/60 and whoever else might be interested in my impressions, those of you that are still afloat.

I was left quite proud after 4 days of immersion into Bothieism, attended by a significant number of white and bare skin topped Obies!!

I also felt proud to be in the company of a large group of our chums. What a fine bunch of men!!

I was their only Old Salt!! Pity none of ours were there!!

I found it remarkable how alive and well the culture of this great South African institution remains today as a significant factor in the Maritime Industry of SA and around the world, so it seemed to me in listening to all these pre and post former graduates of the Bothy!!

In our day it was often said the *General Botha* was a light reformatory?? That description emanated in pre SAN days when merchant naval colleges globally were run with a similar curriculum and tradition.

I don't think that was an appropriate or fair description. It was in fact a grounding point for those of us that needed to be..... Many did and still do at that vulnerable age!! As a bonus we were taught the elements of leadership, discipline and self-respect.....Honour and Duty. Pity society is moving away from institutional learning, especially in our automated world where so many young people are left in a jungle of uncertainty.

In later years as nautical institutions drifted into obsolescence with technological change, Bothy, the way it was of tings, rosies, cockachests and legfreezes, keel hauls and boat shed hangings, perhaps its darker side depending on your point of view, it became more sophisticated from those wild dubious days that did harm to a few, but to many and most, had a positive effect, instilling those basic values of camaraderie, discipline, hard work with pride and honour.

I've always felt honoured to have gone to the SANC *General Botha* and thanks to all those that were part of my life for two years. You all did me good!!

30 + years of dedicated service – by Tony Nicholas

At the Durban branch recent AGM **Derek McManus 1956/57 Term** stepped down as chairman to officially enjoy his retirement. Cape Town Chairman sent Derek this greeting;

“On this day of your Durban Branch Annual General Meeting let’s reflect on a century of achievements and service our training ship and those that trained in her have made, not only in the maritime sphere but in every sphere they entered into. A fine record and tradition.

Not least yourself Derek. I don’t have a record of when you joined the Durban branch committee but I do have a record that you took over the chair in 1992. That is 30 years of loyal service to the Association, true to our ship’s motto; Honour and Duty.

We wish you good health, fair winds and following seas as you navigate your next course to a safe harbour.

On behalf of Cape Town committee and members, and members worldwide, we salute you.

Gentlemen – The Ship!”

NOASA & NHT

A century of naval service marked by Naval Officers’ Association South Africa and Naval Heritage Trust – Tony Nicholas

I doubt whether this is matched anywhere else in the world, we share the exact same date as the South African Navy, 1st April 1922. To mark this milestone the NOASA hosted a celebratory function in the Seven Seas Club Friday 1st April 2022 which I was honoured to attend as their guest. A pictorial overview was screened covering the past century. Our training ship and many of our Old Boys featured prominently in the record. The pictorial overview can be viewed [here](#).

The following Sunday 3rd April 2022 the Naval Heritage Trust South Africa hosted a service of remembrance and wreath laying ceremony in the historic Dockyard Church, West Yard, Simon’s Town. Refer to the article **A Maritime Centenary Celebration Year for SA** on page 9.

General Botha Centenary Weekend - From the Event Director Hugh James

We were fortunate that the Planning Committee started its work before the onset of the Covid-19 epidemic as, by that time, we had already gained momentum and were loath to abandon a voyage that was already underway. Nevertheless, we had to make many changes of course especially as we realised that travel would be restricted and that we would need to organise a hybrid event quite different to our traditional Commissioning Day AGM and luncheon.

The committee members did sterling work guiding the process with useful ideas and planning. To cope with changing circumstances, we had to give up some of our planned activities but there was never a word of complaint.

Special thanks go to Peter Coetzee and Dennis Henwood who organised the War Memorial Service and AGM respectively. Dennis also liaised closely with Kelvin Grove Club. Bruce van der Meulen facilitated payments from all over the world. Tony Nicholas had a clear vision of what the Centenary weekend should achieve and ensured that we reached our waypoints on time.

Although not a member of the Planning Committee, Simon Pearson joined the sub-committee that met with the videographers and did a great job as MC of the GB Celebration.

We were all sorry that Nicole Burchell, our Event Manager, had to resign last year because of ill health. I hear that since undergoing surgery she has made steady progress.

I do wish to place on record thanks to so many of you in South Africa and around the world who supported the Centenary weekend by attending here in Cape Town or online. For me, it was a wonderful experience interacting with so many Old Boys and realising how strong the bonds between us are.

Many of you donated towards the Centenary weekend and the SATS *General Botha* Bursary Fund. With your generosity, we were able to achieve the goals of our Mission Statement. Thank you!

From the Planning Committee - Chairman: Tony Nicholas; Event Director: Hugh James; Treasurer: Bruce van der Meulen; Committee: Keith Burchell, Peter Coetzee, Tom Fraser, Ted Fisher (Until mid-2021 - UK), Ian Hare, Dennis Henwood, Glenn Käsner, Charles Kingon, David Main, Derek McManus (Durban), Neil Mouton, David Murray, Chris Smith (Durban), Andrew Walker, Jonathan Warren (UK).

SCRANBAG

P.J. UREN 1982 #2787. Galley wireless alerted me that Peter had transferred as harbour pilot Saldanha, lives in nearby Langebaan. This in 2008. I have been posting hard copy newsletters to his last known address in Durban, wonder where those ended up. An unnecessary expense, hope you feel a twinge of remorse Peter.

G. HILDYARD 1980 #2691. Gordon has recently retired from piloting ships around Durban harbour. The association expects to see more of you now, monthly lunch as a start.

H.R. BAUMGARTNER 1969 #2357. John crewed on the ketch Howard Davis on the first Cape to Rio yacht race 1971. He reports from Switzerland:

"I sailed for eight years on various types of ships and with several different shipping companies. I then started a university course for translator/interpreter, studying in Paris, Valencia and Zürich over a period of four years. I subsequently recycled myself from physical shipping to commercial shipping and became involved in chartering, operations, freight and commodity trading, ship financing and project shipping. Officially retired I am still involved in a couple of projects including one dealing with plastic/waste removal from the oceans."

R.M. REID 1967 #2313. Rob joined our AGM on Zoom all the way from New Zealand, the wonders of modern technology. First time we have seen each other for 22 years. Rob and Sue are well settled somewhere remote.

1967 Winner of the Nettleton Trophy for Management of Boats. Second Best Cadet of the year award. After G.B. went to sea with Safmarine. Soon after obtaining Masters Certificate came ashore into Safmarine's Container Operations Department. Later became hazardous cargo specialist with Safmarine. 1994, Operations Manager, Europe trade, Safmarine. 1999 - retired from Safmarine. 2000 moved to New Zealand. 2003 operating a ferry between Gulf Harbour and Auckland as well as a vending business. 2004 sold the vending business and Master on Fullers Ferries. 2016 Retired and moved to Northland.

B.W. MORRIS 1986 #2889. Someone managed to haul Blaise out of his cabin to attend our March monthly lunch meeting, the last of the centenary long weekend.

Mostly at sea since 1985 except for a 2 year spell where he did furniture making. Then with Maersk Supply Service as Chief Officer, previous to that master with Tidewater in Angola.

Had also been tug master in Cape Town Harbour as well as years on the S.A. Agulhas on the South Atlantic and Antarctic runs. Also did time in diamond mining.

2022 Cape Peninsula University of Technology lecturer.

M.P. MELLY 1978 #2606. Mike has taken over the helm of our Durban branch, although he is still serving at sea. The wonders of modern technology.

“I joined Unicorn as a cadet, and then came ashore in 1988 after serving mostly on tankers. I joined Caleb Brett (now Intertek) and then P&I Associates in 1990. I was appointed Managing Director of Calcon, a subsidiary of P&I Associates and Pentow Marine, and bought out the company in 1992 due to the sensitivities of the tanker business at that time. The Inspection and Testing activities were merged with Gazelle Testing Services 10 years later, and I sold my shareholding in that firm to Inspectorate in 2006. I had by then become very involved in an international NPO called Retrouvaille, and with Caryl, served a term on the International Board from 2009-2013, ending up as International Coordinator/President. I continued working for the organisation in the interesting role of Organisational Change until about 2019. I continued with P&I surveys throughout, as well as my long-distance trucking and broking business (Calcon and Buffalo Tankers) until 2016 when dark clouds gathered over that market, and I decided to revalidate my CoC in order to up skill myself with all the new technology which had been introduced since I left the sea. This led me to join Grindrod Shipping as Marine Superintendent, aka Fleet Mentor aka Career Development / Cadet Training for Unicorn (the wet fleet of Grindrod Shipping,) then the dry fleet (IVS) also. Through this, I became aware of and very interested in the activities and sterling achievements of the GBOBA Bursary Fund, and joined the board in 2020. I "retired" again that year and once again answered the Call of the Sea, returning as Master on IVS bulk carriers. I remain very interested and actively engaged in mentoring and training. I serve our OBA on the branch committee in Durban, as well as on the BF committee in Durban. (2022)”

R.J.D. DUIGAN 1982 #2759. The Bothie network is more efficient than the Mafia network. We find Ronald somewhere in the UK.

After G.B. sailed with Safmarine until obtaining his Chief Officer's Certificate end 1986. Started studying full time first with UNISA and later at the University of Cape Town on a Mobil Bursary graduating in 1990 with a BSc (Chemical Engineering) with honours. Then worked at the Engen (ex Mobil) Oil Refinery until 1994 when he joined Kinetics Technology International BV, a Dutch company, at their branch office in Johannesburg. Has completed several foreign assignments with them doing design work on chemical plants destined for Poland, India and South Africa. 2003 Divisional General Manager at EnviroServ, Johannesburg. 2007 relocated to UK as Manager of Technology Projects for Shaw Stone & Webster. 2013 left Shaw Group, joined Technip France based in Paris as Vice President Downstream Onshore Business Unit.

2017 -2021 Lived in the Netherlands in Bergen op Zoom working for Cargill, joint leader of central engineering organisation. 2021-present (2022) moved back to UK, freelancing, helping a hydrogen technology start-up find funding, and contracting/consulting to TechnipEnergies in proposal management.

P.J. PEISER 1961/62 #2211. Last I knew Peter lived in Hermanus and was at sea with Mobil in 1964. A recent communiqué announced him “stuck in Tobago”. Unfortunately further emails remain unanswered and phone numbers “not available at present”. Someone must have contact with him. Let me know.

S.D.V. MICKLEBURGH 1981 #2745. Sean goes off grid occasionally somewhere in New Zealand but the Bothie network gets him back online again. Came ashore in 1983 - Farming and trading in agricultural commodities in South Africa. Became involved with shipping South African grains around the world with Continental Grain. Moved to New Zealand in 2010. Ships Agent in Tauranga. Initially with Inchcape but an independent since 2014. Their main focus is: Log exports from Tauranga, Animal Feed imports, Tanker imports, Coal imports. Also does a bit of OPA work. “In my spare time I enjoy riding my motor bike around this beautiful country - It’s not Africa, but it’ll do.”

G.H. CLACK 1973 #2432. Our centenary events certainly got many long AWOL members out of their man caves, Graham being one such.

“10 years with Safmarine. Then Safmarine (Arthur Bluett) seconded me to Bothie for 6 months as lecturer/instructor. Came ashore for a while to start a family and joined Sea Harvest at Saldanha Bay holding Fleet Training and HR portfolio. Then spent 9 years with Irvin & Johnson in various posts: Marine Superintendent Development, Freezer Fleet Fishing Master, Senior Marine Superintendent and acting Marine Manager. Thereafter did a stint of farming in Tulbagh and found it was more profitable to be in the Marine Industry and joined Portnet in Cape Town as Tug Master also obtaining a 10,000 tonne Pilot License and did some piloting in Cape Town during my spare time. Thereafter joined OCTO Marine later known as Smit Terminals and was back offshore as Master on the Deep Salvage 1 (dive support in

Oil & Gas) on the west coast of Africa and later the Tinitini. Involved with start-up of new marine oil terminals (GPC) in Georgia for 2 years, followed as Marine Superintendent at start-up of new terminal in Russia for 2 years. Then SMIT Terminals moved me to the UAE as HR Manager. After a total of 8 years with SMIT I joined Noble Denton Middle East as Senior Marine Surveyor and later Principal Surveyor and Marine Consultant. In this position, I did some interesting projects for Saipem as Project Marine Advisor on the 4 billion dollar Dolphin Project in Qatar & UAE (offshore construction) - we chartered a total of 85 offshore vessels for this project to carry out diverse offshore works. Also enjoyed Consulting for Maersk Oil Qatar on an oil field extension development project in the Al Shaheen field. I was also doing many rig moves and VLCC Ship to Ship (STS) piloting. After 5 years with Noble Denton, Zakher Marine International requested me to join them as Special Projects Manager carrying out Strategic Corporate Development projects. I was building capacity within the company. Zakher Marine International (ZMI) then transferred me to Qatar as Country Manager for a while, and then ZMI needed me in Saudi Arabia as Country Manager operating a fleet of 15 vessels chartered to Aramco. After leaving ZMI, I joined Atlantic Maritime Group as Country Manager in Saudi Arabia. I left Atlantic Maritime Group just before the dreaded lockdowns began. I founded EcoPack www.ecopack.co.za 11 years ago, company dealing in environmental food packaging. I started Metro Organics in 2017, an Organic Urban Farm in the heart of Noordhoek. This is what I am occupied with in my "retirement" and loving it. Besides the farm, Metro Organics has two retail outlets selling organic vegetables, vegan and ethical produced food products."

AWOL

Gary James 1983 last known address Middlesex, U.K. Find him and revert.

A.C. RATHBONE 1972 #2423. Galley wireless is abuzz with the news that Alan is somewhere on the continent of Australia. His email remains unanswered, perhaps no such technology wherever he is. I would appreciate someone phoning him +61 420 548 099 and reporting back.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

D.W. BRINK 1957/58. Neil slipped his cable 18th March 2022. 1964 he was 2nd Officer in the South African Merchant. 1995 - Port Captain, Port of Richards Bay. 2003 - Relocated to Cape Town responsible for National Port Authority Marine Nationally.

Went to sea with Safmarine for 11 years and obtained his Masters. Joined SAR&H (eventually named Transnet National Port Authority of SA). Became marine pilot. 2003 - became National Harbour Master - being in control of all the National Ports harbour masters and as such formed part of the head office team. 2004 Retired, but did marine consulting work - which took him to Madagascar, England and Mozambique. Fully retired 2012.

J. GEMMELL 1947/48. John passed away 11th February 2022 at age 91.

After G.B. John joined Shell Tankers and served on m.v.'s *Nukulana*, *Liparus*, *Caperata*, *Nuttallia*, *Tagelus*, *Donacilla*, *Goldmouth* and *Bursa*. 1951 joined the S.A.R. & H *Hangklip* and later came ashore to spend 30 plus years in the insurance industry. 1997 active Caledonian Society Member and in 1994/5 was appointed Federation Chief for Southern Africa.

P.L. SNYMAN 1975. "Peter" sadly passed away unexpectedly shortly after attending the Durban AGM, 2nd April 2022. He initially sailed with Safmarine and later joined Grindrod Marine before starting his own business of maintaining swimming pools.

Our condolences to family and shipmates.

DURBAN BRANCH NEWS - *Chairman Mike Melly*



The Durban branch AGM was held on 30th March, and was attended by no fewer than 20 members at the Stella Sports Club, which has subsequently been selected as our new venue for all monthly lunches. (**1st Wednesday of every month.**) The food is great, service excellent, and prices most reasonable. (R125 for a 2-course meal AND a beer!)

Derek McManus retired as Chairman, after an amazing 30 years of service in that position, for which we are forever grateful. Mike Melly was elected to succeed him. Despite still being at sea (or rather, being back at sea) Mike accepted in the confidence of having a great team of committee members, being Chris Smith (Secretary/Treasurer,) Roy Martin (Vice-Chairman,) Howard Jackson-Moss, Peter Snyman, Rob Farren-Hanford to carry the baton in his absence. Sadly, Peter Snyman passed away after a suspected heart attack, just a few days later.

The main news to be shared, is that the inaugural Durban Marine Bursary Golf Day will be held at Mt Edgecombe golf course, on 1st June. This will be sponsored by Grindrod Shipping, with all proceeds going to the GBOBA Bursary Fund. Some committee members are heavily involved in organising the Golf Day, and a number of others offered to assist on the day, so we expect to see Bothie Boys out in force on 1st June, resplendent in their Bothie caps (and maybe shirts.) KZN needs some light relief after a miserable month or two, and we sure intend to provide it! We do still need 4-balls and sponsors for holes and prizes, so if you are able to assist, please email golf@generalbotha.co.za (to book a 4-ball or to play) or golfplus@generalbotha.co.za (to sponsor.)

True to form (that is, in the philanthropist sense) the branch has also decided to sponsor two “wet” holes, which will be manned by members. So, a fun and memorable day is expected!

See you 1st June at Mt Edgecombe! (There will be no monthly lunch unfortunately, as we’ll be “on course” that day).

&

S.A.T.S. General Botha
OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION
BURSARY FUND

Grindrod Shipping Marine Bursary Golf Day

1st JUNE 2022 – “The Woods”- Mt Edgecombe Country Club

The event is hosted by the S.A.T.S. *General Botha* Old Boys' Association Bursary Fund (incorporating the Society of Master Mariners South Africa Bursary Fund) in support of their legacy marine bursary program for disadvantaged learners and students studying towards secondary and tertiary maritime studies.

The competition format is **4-BBB Stableford**

Golf Course related sponsorship opportunities:

- 4 Balls : **R2000** per 4 ball.
This excludes golf carts (which should be booked directly through the Pro Shop, in good time. Call 031 – 502 1010)
- Wet hole sponsorships 2nd, 7th, 9th, 12th, 15th : **R5000**
- Special hole sponsorships 1st, 5th, 9th, 10th, 14th, 16th, 18th and the Putting Green : **R7500**

Other sponsorship and prize provision opportunities:

- Half-Way House eats and drinks | **R5 000** (part sponsorship available)
- Prize-giving snack platters | **6 x R2000** or **R12 000**
- Special prizes for nearest the pin on the 9th hole
- Special prizes for nearest the pin in 2, on the 9th hole

Bookings

To book 4 balls or hole sponsorships contact: golf@generalbotha.co.za

To sponsor Half-Way House and/or snack platters or prizes: golfplus@generalbotha.co.za

Please include the name of the company or the person booking and the type of sponsorship in the email subject line when emailing a reply.

NB:Section 18A tax certificates / receipts cannot be issued for golf day fees or sponsorships.

UK BRANCH NEWS - Jonathan Warren

Please note the new email address of your UK Branch Chairman is GBOBAUK@gmail.com.

The last signal from ss GBOBAUK was sent navigating through the final weeks of winter, headed for slightly warmer climes. Today is a partly sunny day, and we’ve been enjoying the full thrust of Spring, now that the First Point of Aries has been passed and the Sun is firmly back in our hemisphere. Bare-branched trees lining the canals are bursting from bud into green-leafed glory and over the Easter weekend the water has been littered with ducks trailing up to a dozen ducklings, appropriate to Eastertide. Congratulations are in order for Mother Ship in Cape Town for their very successful Centenary Celebration, which was attended by a number of us here in the UK, using zoom, and through that medium were able to participate. After what has been correctly characterised as a world-class centenary celebration that reached every corner of the GB diaspora, they focused on their lunch, and we chatted amongst ourselves and consequently are resolved to meet in Meriden, in the middle of England, in early July.

Meeting in Meriden will allow us to rekindle old relationships as well as to forge new ones, and the intention is to supplement the virtual zoom meetings with a real face-to-face one, perhaps developing to something that we as a Branch do annually. The Meriden Midsummer Meeting is scheduled for the first weekend in July, the highlight of the event being dinner at the Bull’s Head pub (Main Rd, Meriden, Coventry CV7 7NN) whose website address is <https://www.thebullsheadmeriden.co.uk> for Obies and Partners on Saturday 2 July at 18.00. If you would like to attend, please let me know [HERE](#) so that I can

make a booking in good time. The pub also has rooms available for you to book. I'll arrange the table, you do the rest.

So far, those of us in the north west of the UK have managed to meet in person as a NorthWest branch, at the Fisherman's Rest in Southport suggested by Derrick Kemp (GB1957/58), attended by yours truly, Ewan Kirkbride (GB1984), Vince Hawkins (GB1978), and two spouses. It was a very successful day out, a brisk late winter afternoon of companionship, good food and drink in the hearty atmosphere of the pub.

We continue to meet at 18h00 local time on the second Tuesday of every month which now translates to 18.00BST, ie GMT+1. Please contact me at [here](#) if you'd like to join us. One of the distinct benefits of CT's Centenary Celebration is that more links were forged and our Gathering has grown a little, welcoming Finn Kronholm (GB1987), as well as a few of those Obies who are living on the Continent, Dennis de Witte (GB1979) and Graeme Stephan (GB1978), both of whom hail from the Netherlands these days.

Good news is that Peter Yuille (GB1976) has now begun a new chapter in his life as a Chief Officer for Wightlink since his last mention in this column, which is a fine note to end on. Until next time.

Jonathan Warren (GB1980). GBOBAUK@gmail.com.

AUSTRALIA BRANCH NEWS - Grenville Stevens

From a La Nina rain-soaked East coast of Australia our thoughts go out to those who have suffered in the recent floods in South Africa

No GBOBA activity to report from down under. Total silence from GBOBA members except for a small minority who keep in touch.

Contacted Andy Fotheringham in Western Australia. At moment he is on a well-deserved break visiting Brisbane.

The 100th anniversary celebrations have come and gone.

3 Australian based Old Boys joined Zoom for the Lunch and proudly Sydney based Alistair Tiddy (1971) participated in the celebration offering the prayers for the celebration and future of the GBOBA

Sincere thanks to the Centenary Committee for well executed celebration and a memorable occasion.

We intend planning a celebration down under to commemorate the 100th Anniversary. Details to follow.

The subject has been broached with Cape Town for the disbanding of the Australian Branch of the GBOBA as we no longer meet the Rules and Regulation under the Constitution. This will be discussed further and then actioned accordingly. Grenville grenville.stevens@gmail.com.

A MARITIME CENTENARY CELEBRATION YEAR FOR S. A.

While the past 100 years of history and the legend of the S.A.T.S. General Botha is being celebrated, and its heritage sustained through the *General Botha* Old Boys' Association and Bursary Fund, so too the S.A. Navy 100th anniversary of its founding on 1 April 1922 has also been recognised this past month. However, sadly that occasion was not deemed to deserve the ceremony that it did so fittingly receive on the occasion of its 75th in 1997 when there was a grand Fleet Review and salute received by the then President Nelson Mandela, and many festivities in Simon's Town and Cape Town. This year's centenary occasion, sadly, was marked by only a small group of retired members of the S. A. N., a number of them having begun their careers on the S.A.T.S. *General Botha*, who showed appreciation for the history and foundations of the present Navy.

The Naval Heritage Trust held a fitting Service of Remembrance and Wreath Laying Ceremony in the Dockyard Chapel and Museum in Simon's Town on Sunday 3 April led by Rev. Ralph Thornley SAN Chaplain (Ret). This was in honour of "all those members who died on service and while serving in the SA Naval Service, SATS *General Botha* (wreath laid by our Chairman Tony Nicholas), the Seaward Defence Force, the South African Naval Forces and the South African Navy."

In his address the Rev. Thornley highlighted the following interesting history about the founding and development of the Navy (*with appreciation and permission of Rev. Thornley*). The 1st April 1922 marks the official birth of the South African Navy – although the title South African Navy only came much later. Also, on that date, which happened to be a wet and miserable Saturday morning, the official naming ceremony of SATS *General Botha* was carried out by Mrs Smuts on behalf of the widow of General Botha who happened to be ill at the time. So, 1st April remains a significant date in our maritime history.

The very beginnings of the South African Navy can be traced back to 1861 with the formation of the Port Elizabeth Naval Volunteer Brigade but they merged with a voluntary artillery unit the following year. 1861 was also the date when Roman Rock lighthouse gave light for the first time and has done so ever since. In 1885 a part time voluntary unit known as the Natal Naval Volunteers (NNV) was formed in Durban. There were no ships, but men were taken to sea on weekends when Royal Navy ships visited the port. These men manned the six-inch guns that were to defend Durban from Russia in her programme of expansionism. A similar unit was formed in Cape Town 1905 known as the Cape Naval Volunteers (CNV). The two units would later become SAS Inkonkoni and SAS Unities respectfully. In 1913 these units formed the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (South African Division). There were no ships but when the first world war broke out there was manpower that went to supplement the Royal Navy. After the war the government decided to form its own naval service.

Quoting from "South Africa's Navy- the first 50 years" compiled by Commodore J.C. Goosen SM. "Wednesday January 11, 1922 passed as an ordinary day in the harbour of Simon's Town but late in the evening something happened. Out of the summer's night three ships drew in, reported themselves and dropped anchor for the night." They had left England more than a month before and apart from the duty staff no one took much notice of them until a report in the Cape Times gave as a heading "Nucleus of Navy". The three ships were HMS Crozier originally a Hunt class minesweeper and renamed HMSAS Protea. The two smaller ships were Admiralty class trawlers HMS Foyle renamed HMSAS Sonneblom and HMS Eden renamed HMSAS Immortelle. On the 1st April 1922 the SANS – South African Naval Service - came into being alongside the RNVR (SA Division) and was tasked with protection of territorial waters, minesweeping and hydrography. By 1929 there was a worldwide depression and by 1934 Protea was sold off and the two trawlers returned to Britain. The SANS disappeared as a seagoing force and all that was left was an office with a very small staff. That's how it stayed to 1939 - the outbreak of the second world war. There were no ships but there was the RNVR (SA Div) which had grown in numbers. So, there was manpower. With this manpower and the requisitioning of trawlers and whale catchers the Seaward Defence Force came into being. An unfortunate name as it was often referred to as the Seaweed Defence Force. These little ships were converted into minesweepers and anti-submarine vessels. South Africa built up a fleet of more than 80 ships doing stout work off our coast and in the Mediterranean. When the ships in the Mediterranean had completed their deployment and were due to come home, it was Admiral of the Fleet Andrew Browne Cunningham RN also known by his initials as ABC who asked General Smuts if the ships could stay a little longer because they were doing such fine work.

By 1942 having amalgamated with the RNVR (SA Div) the name was changed to SANF South African Naval Forces. The SANF grew to more than 10000 personnel including 280 SWANS. Some 3000 men served in RN ships and were always referred to as Springboks. The number of war casualties is given as 338 men killed and 5 ships sunk. It is not possible in these few pages to give any detail of the action and dangers these Springbok sailors faced nor to give all the decorations and medals these men won. One might say that if it had not been for the war the navy may never have come into being. At the end of the war South Africa received three Loch class frigates. HMSAS Good Hope, HMSAS Natal and HMSAS Transvaal. Natal achieved a war record when she sank the German u boat U714. She was straight out of the builder's yard enroute for workup when she encountered the u boat which had just sunk a vessel. The action took place off St Abbs Head Scotland on 14th March 1945. The captain of the u boat was Hans-Joachim Schwebke aged 27.

It was the late Lt George Heard SANF who mysteriously disappeared at the end of 1945 who wrote these words shortly before his disappearance. *"Let us remember in our salutations the men of our own little navy, so young in years so worthy in seafaring achievements. To that little navy we already owe so much. But its not enough that we should honour it for what it has done in the past. Rather let us keep and preserve it for what it may do in the future."*

On 1st July 1951 the SANF was reconstituted as the South African Navy.

In his address the Rev. Thornley spoke of his prayers and concerns for our sailors (*present and past*) on watch especially during the night hours. What of the men in the engine room when a torpedo could come crashing through the side of the ship at any moment? What of the bridge staff, the prime target in a surface engagement? Looking at the Roll of Honour at the back of the church I wonder what pain, suffering and fear these men must have gone through. I am reminded again of the verse in the hymn we sang earlier. *"In the darkest watch of night time may we feel Thy presence near"*. We must never forget our need of

God or the power of God. These are selected verses from Psalm 33. *Let all the earth fear the Lord, let all people of the earth revere Him. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. No king is saved by the size of his army, no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance despite all its great strength it cannot save.*

Why God allows wars I cannot answer that. But the ancient philosopher Plato has this to say. *“Wars and faction and fighting have no other service than to the body and its lusts, for it is in getting of wealth that all our wars arise.”*

(Scribe - Why, indeed, do we have to endure the pain of war as is happening presently in the Ukraine and 39 other centres of conflict. Seafarers, a number of our own Obies and some of our Bursary Fund students included, have endured the uncertainty and suffering as they go about their work at sea around the world. The past two years of COVID -19 and right now the Russian invasion of Ukraine have impacted many of their lives. I heard the other day of one of our Captains whose Ukraine Chief Mate had been conscripted into the forces to defend his country, and another shipmate who had died. Oh for the wisdom of Plato and peace, and let us not forget all of those merchant and naval seafarers in our prayers.)

Memory of Yesteryear -Ted Fisher

Meeting all at the 2014 Weekend of the 1954/55 Group showed how much ‘The Legend Lives On’...amazing the yarns which emanated over the period we spent at Silver Mist Mountain Lodge and our evenings out in Hout Bay and Constantia Village.

Some time ago during the exchange of emails covering Northern Steamships etcetera, I’m sure Ivor Little asked for a contribution from someone who went to sea in a ‘Spiffy Outfit’-----I had the so called pleasure of being appointed to join Union Castle Line, the only reason I can think it came my way was because I had relatives in the UK who could take care of me should some misfortune befall me!! Thankfully this did not arise.

I recall the uniform clothing list my parents received from the company and the frustration of trying to locate a ‘greatcoat’ in the December heat of East London...how were I and my parents to know the list really applied to a Junior 4th Officer heading for his appointment on a Mailship!

I joined the Roxburgh Castle in Durban in January 1956, all resplendent in uniform as instructed by the Marine Super of the day. I duly pitched up on board, found the Mate (sorry Chief Officer in U-C) only to be told to get changed into ‘working gear’ and start chipping/scraping congealed sugar off the hatch beams of No 3 hold to ensure a ‘snug’ fit of the hatch boards that evening.

As cadets, we only seemed to wear uniform at mealtimes....what a chore getting cleaned up!! Mailship’s a distant dream.

The following three years were spent on a number of fruit ships and general cargo round Africa, Red Sea ports, Europe, Scandinavia. I recall the long spells loading/discharging, if not on cargo duty then ship duties chipping and painting under the sharp eye of the Bosun with the odd bit of study thrown in!!

All good things come to an end and eventually having served on eight of the company vessels, ending up as we all did as the senior cadet. Sir John Cass for Radar, thence Warsash for 2nd and 1st Mates tickets...memories of the Rising Sun and Silver Fern not forgetting The Bugle at Hamble.

A summer spell as a Deck Chair Attendant on Worthing Beach Front appeared a reasonable reward for obtaining 2nd Mates.

Back to sea 3rd Mate in Houlder Bros loading Iron Ore from Monrovia to Barry Docks in Wales or Workington Cumbria. Elders & Fyffes (Bananas) as 3rd and 2nd Mate. Sadly, failing the eyesight test became a problem prior to Masters. I believe my pre-sea training and seagoing career served me well for my business life ashore. **Ted Fisher GB1954/55 No 1875.** *Ted had clearly revisited his youth as this article was accompanied by some very up to date clearly recent photos of those pubs. Apologies Ted but space does not allow inclusion of same in this full edition. Perhaps next time!*

Chilled Chardonnay to Compliment a Celebratory Meal

Obie Nick Sloane was most generous in his support of the centenary celebrations and donated the wine to serve at the lunch, and this was highly appreciated by all present. Here is he explains the history and background to the wine and why he chose it for the day - Thanks Nick!

The Oscar Browne Chardonnay wine was named after the Gordons Bay Naval College (General Botha) training venue known as Camp Oscar Browne. The idea to use this remote area was initiated by

Commander Andrew Browne, of the British Royal Navy. He had married Anne Denniston whose family originally owned the property. The camp was used by the Gordons Bay Naval College for their “officers in training during Practical Leadership Training exercises,” as their land based or bushveld venue.

Over twenty years, Able Seaman Keith Downes (who subsequently became the owner of the property) facilitated the use of Camp Oscar Browne by the Gordon’s Bay Naval College.

A citation awarded to him reads...“Mister Keith Downes has been awarded a citation for his services to the South African Navy; the Chief of the Navy’s Commendation Certificate.”

The property was never developed during all the years that it was being used as a training camp, so when the Gordon’s Bay Naval College ceased to use the training facility, it provided the Downes family the opportunity to develop it into an apple, pear and wine farm.

“This wine honours that relationship between the land and the sea, a farmer and the Naval officer.”

The Oscar Browne Chardonnay was launched last year, the year of oubaas Komander Browne's 100th year. His centenary celebration date having an auspicious string of ones and twos: 21-12-21.

Additional footnote, but not related directly to the wine: James Downes, (Keith’s youngest son who now farms the property) is married to Elizabeth Hobson, whose Grandfather was Commodore Frederick Dean OBE (1900–1983). Director, South African Naval Forces 1946 – 1951.

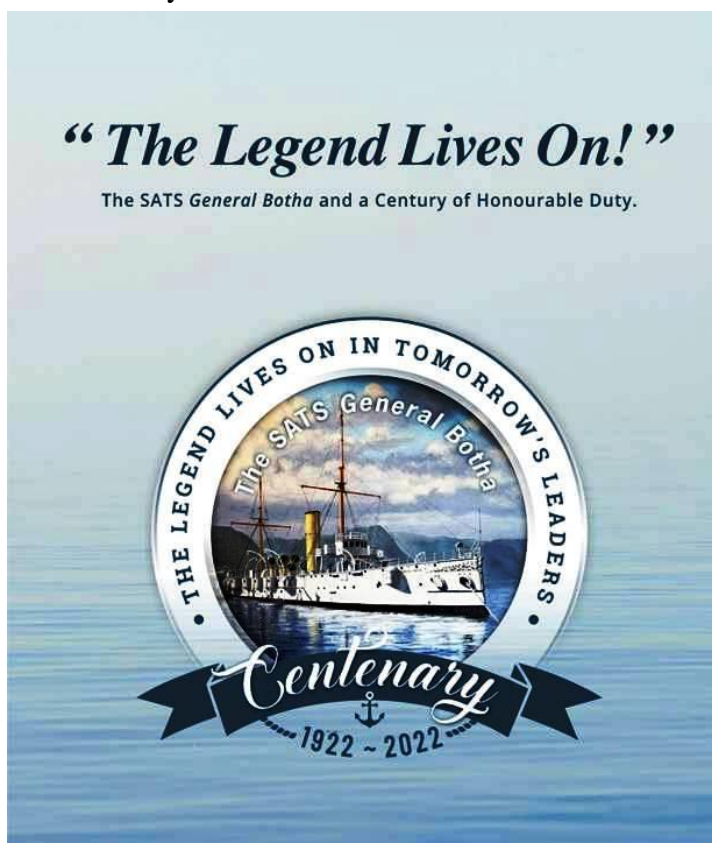
Off my Bookshelf - Scribe

The month of March being the Centenary Celebrations it has been enlightening to be reading several books relevant to the GB. Of course “*A Name Among Seafarers*” has been a good reference in checking back on facts. So, I have out on the tables in the living room, bedroom and office four books to delve into and read chapter at a time. All of them are very recent and topical publications this year. They are: -

1. “*The Legend Lives On!*” by Paul Semark (E55, 1960/61) and Tony Nicholas (2399, 1971).

A century of honourable duty. – what the readers say -

- **Phil Wade** (2196, 1960/61) - I am amazed and extremely impressed by the Centenary Book and have thoroughly enjoyed reading it. Well done mate!
- **Harold Lincoln** (E31, 1959/60) - The book is well worthwhile, nicely produced, well written and interesting.
- **Allan du Toit** (Rear Admiral Australian Navy) - BZ. You and Paul can be very proud of the end product which does the Bothie proud.
- **Harold Lincoln** (E31, 1959/60) - Many congratulations on the publication of *The Legend Lives On*. It is a wonderful memory of my years at *General Botha* and of my shipmates there, many of whom have become lifelong friends. Beautifully printed



and bound, well illustrated, the book is a handsome piece in its own right. You have obviously put a great deal of effort into its production and into the research it must have taken. Your inclusion of the “Beyond the Horizon” section is a welcome reminder that South Africans continue to contribute in no small way to the seafaring profession. It was gratifying to learn recently that the first Lawhill student to do so had qualified as a shipmaster. On a personal note, as a former (more years ago than I care to remember) Executive Officer of TS *Woltemade*, I am delighted by the collaboration between the Lawhill Maritime Centre and the Sea Cadet Corps. The movers behind the bursary fund

are to be complimented on their achievements. Thank you for all you have done in producing this fine book and for all your effort in putting together the 100th anniversary celebration March 2022.

Order your copy NOW! Email: cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za or phone: +27825552877

2. *“More Tugs at My Heart”* by Brian Ingpen and Okke Grapow (1824, 1953/54) (Publisher - Brian Ingpen brian@capeports.co.za). Following on from Okke’s first book *“A Tug at my Heart”*, this book reveals cameos from the very different life of Captain Okke. As a young boy living in war torn Germany, dodging bombing raids and growing up on a farm where the women and young children did the hard work while the men were fighting the war, his formative years were a good grounding for his career ahead. Aged nine immediately after the war, he skippered the launch that took his Master Mariner father out to ships in the wreck strewn anchorage of Kiel adjust ships’ compasses. Then immigration to S. A. with his family and having to learn English at school, on to Swakopmund and working on his father’s fishing vessel, and then back to Cape Town to the Bothie for two years to complete his schooling, firmly embarked him on a sea-going career and, as the title page puts it, to *“One Man’s unique Legacy to South Africa’s Maritime Industry”*. With waypoints on tramping cargo ships, studying for Masters and Extra Masters, marine diamond mining, and into the corporate management and executive planning and operations and construction of tugs, harbours, ore carriers, and on to salvage tugs, anti-pollution vessels and aircraft (qualified helicopter pilot). Paramount has been his experience and leadership in both local and international marine salvage. But this is also a love story that surrounds his late wife Gudrun - *“his anchor in life”*. There is much more to find out about this Bothie Boy than you will read in the Muster List.

3. *“Cape Town’s Dockland”*, Cameos of Shipping in Cape Town by Brian Ingpen (Publisher - Brian Ingpen brian@capeports.co.za). Another addition to the Ingpen collection, and a sharing of his vast *Brian Ingpen - George Young collection* of shipping photography over the decades. From the Author’s Preface writes *“This book is not a definitive history of Cape Town harbour. Rather than recording every event, I have tried to capture the atmosphere of Dockland as I have known it for more than three score years.”* A record of ships, shipping activities and anecdotes around the docks and on the wharf side from 1860 to the present. The Foreword by Rob Young. Many a Bothie Boy mentioned in these pages, the list of Port Captains/Harbour Masters included.

4. The fourth book I had already completed reading, but worth mentioning here with the relevance of the relationship between S.A Navy and Bothie (the Bothie has been referred to as the *“cradle”* of the S.A.N). The title of the book is *“President Mandela’s Admiral”*, by Vice-Admiral Robert C. Simpson-Anderson (Publisher - Naval Heritage Trust). This is a first-hand account of the experiences of the Author as Chief of the South African Navy 1992 to 2000 *“a period of unprecedented political, social and structural changes in South Africa. Besides having to maintain the Navy’s operational readiness in the face of ageing vessels and declining budgets, personnel from the armed wings of the former opposing freedom movements had to be integrated into the Navy, new politicians had to be familiarised with the need for a capable Navy, and a long campaign had to be fought for new frigates and submarines”*. Once again a number of Bothie names found through these pages revealing the influence and leadership of those who trained on The Ship. In addition, what I found so topical was the chapter about the star-spangled world-class celebration and fleet review of the Navy’s 75th anniversary in 1997. How sad not to have had the same celebration this year for its centenary.

Alang Beach

A discourse on the Ships Crest and its uses and variations over the last hundred years.

I wanted to have a GBOBA badge machine embroidered on the top of some small potjie cozies I am making. This requires some artwork for the machine, and as a general rule, the better the artwork the better the finished product will turn out. That is where I went into freefall down a rabbit hole from which I have yet to fully emerge.

I had this idea of searching for the "correct" registered design, a bit like the quest for the Holy Grail, and as of this point in time I have not yet uncovered such a thing, and I doubt I ever will, unless many

hours are spent in the archives going through the Board meeting minutes from the very early days. What has been of greater interest to me than original artwork has been the number of variations which have been accepted by all over the last 100 years? Somehow, it appears to me, there are parallels between bio genetics and the whole world of heraldry. The question is in this day and age of computer graphics, will such variations continue to emerge or will there now be a significant slowdown and return to basics as it were?

I think the lack of technology available to artists and craftsmen over the last 80 to 90 years, has forced these changes to occur via the artists perceptions and their hands. Today most but certainly not all of that interpretation influence has expired, and hopefully our Ships Crest and its offspring will have a far more stable and robust "genome".

I'm sure that there is a huge amount of research which can be done on similar heraldic variations cropping up in a gazillion badges, medals, plaques, insignia, etc across the entire world. I would guess that there is a common thread running through all of these examples and that they are all strongly connected to the advances in technology (or lack of) over time. This article and its publication parameters do not permit me to go into too much depth, or espouse hypotheses which I probably would not be able to substantiate without the in depth research to back them up. I shall leave the reader to ponder the colorful issue and come up with their own conclusions.

Some broad history - Our first real reference tome Wilhelm Grutter's Book "*A name among seafaring men*" published nearly fifty years ago, gave me my first lead on where to jump into cyberspace. On Page 25, Wilhelm tells us that the Ships Crest was decided upon at a Board meeting on 17th January 1923. It was to be in the form of a General's badge in the British Army, and its selection possibly influenced by Louis Botha's service in that arm of the military. I would love to know if the minutes for that meeting are held in the archives and specifically if there were any forms of artwork presented for perusal by the Board members and which may have been kept as part of the meeting record. That would cast in stone the roots of our crest's genetics and an interpretation of such artwork would tell a thousand words.

The recorded registration of our GBOBA badge dates from April 1939 and gives a loose description of the main components of the ships crest which were incorporated into the badge. It is of great significance that only broad word definitions, devoid of any specific detail are registered. Does this, by implication, mean that any interpretation which fits the description is therefore valid? It's an interesting philosophical discussion which needs to be had around the braai fire, dinner table, and at current GBOBA Committee meetings.

An interesting thread which became apparent was the definition of the term Imperial Crown. There are 2 physical examples in the Tower of London. The earliest, The Imperial Crown of India from 1911 which predates the Ship, and the second, George VI's Imperial State Crown of 1937. The third reference to an Imperial Crown is a symbolic one and refers to a standard depiction of a crown. King Edward VII must have also thought about all these artworks proliferating at the time and decreed that there be a standard definition which ended up having visually the closest resemblance to Queen Victoria's small Diamond Crown. This graphic of the Tudor Crown as it is known, represented the Monarchy or State and was in use in its original form from 1902 until 1953, when Queen Elizabeth modified the design with new depressed arches. Interestingly after 1953 many, but not all forms military and government and colonial insignia were modified to show the new EIIR design. I wonder if there is record of whether the Board or OBA committee considered the possibility of changing to the new Crown artwork or not. So there is another topic to argue over... if someone today developed a new Bothie OBA logo which showed the new crown, would that be allowed? The lawyers amongst us can pick sides and plead their cases.... that would be interesting, not so Honourable Tiddy?

Even though King Edward VII and his successors told their subjects which way things were supposed to be, a lot of the capricious artists employed to design stuff didn't listen, and started twisting the old standard "gene", breaking it and cutting and splicing in more and more variations, and no one seemed to notice or give a damn, not even the 1923 Board. From the get-go, at least in the printed format, we lost the depiction of the Sovereign's Orb and Cross, put our own jewels on the headband and changed the anterior arch to something which remains strange to this day. This is why if the 1923 Board Minutes included artwork it would tell us so much. Interestingly, the Orb and Cross Pattée does appear on the Ships Crest carving on the Memorial Board, which as far as I can tell is the earliest physical manifestation of the Ships Crest. Even at that early stage, the carver made his own changes to the top and bottom edges

of the head band, showing them as some form of string of round cut jewels in gold. The arches also suffered his different interpretations, although the central row of round diamonds on the anterior arch is still there, a detail feature which soon disappeared unnoticed it seems thereafter. Edward VII's standard design shows three Cross Pattée, the central one flanked each side by a Fleur de Lis and a left and right side view of the next pair of Cross Pattée. On the Memorial Board the left side end view Cross is visible, but on the right side it is not there. This is an interesting observation as in later 3 dimensional renditions of the Crest, such as the Shield we can purchase from the Slop Chest today, as well as some of the current artwork available, the left hand edge viewed Cross has also disappeared. Intentional or accidental... who knows?

The well prepared lawyer may plead that the Orb and Cross went missing from some forms of the Generals badge before Bothie got hold of it. I suspect this may be because of the requirement to simplify the design to make it suitable for gold wire embroidery which has relatively poor definition, but on the other hand examples are shown on the interweb of cast metal badges for the same ranks which still maintain the Orb, correct arches (with diamonds), but lost the sword and baton and butchered the laurel wreath horribly.

In essence it seems there was a free for all amongst the manufacturer's artists and artisans. They seemed to do exactly as they pleased. Today we would call them graphic designers.

I can go on describing the variations which have manifested in our OBA badge physical embodiments and printed forms. There are lots which meet the eye once you look deeper.

I would like to take this research further and lodge a document somewhere accessible to us all to read. I would like to generate if possible a sort of family tree with timelines and cross references to all the variations. I haven't even discussed the sword, baton, ribbon scrolls and wreath here, never mind the invention of the South African version and all the embedded meaning contained therein. That will be for next time, new information having come in from Ian Manning just minutes before submitting this to the Editor in Chief.

The embroidered flags we have contain heresies and heraldry sins which are unforgivable, and yet they form part of and are accepted as components of our interesting history. Much to be done ladies and gentlemen, further help on this fascinating endeavour would be greatly appreciated. Thanks must go to our long suffering Chairman and others on the FB page who have contributed so much already. Between our esteemed webmaster and myself we will come up with a way to have the information easily accessible to everyone. In the mean time, until the jury is out on this matter I will have to continue to wrap my potjies containing pap and sous in dish clothes and hot hands while I braai the wors.

The Author of this article has expressed his own interesting observations and opinions on the history and designs of our crest and badge. We encourage some further debate and discussions from other readers' and their opinion and research on the subject - Scribe.

Tail Peace

When we mention the date 1st April, the first thing that comes to mind for most people is April Fool's Day, the origins of which are shrouded in mystery. One such theory - Some historians speculate that April Fool's Day dates back to 1582 when France switched from the Julian calendar to Gregorian calendar. In the old calendar New Year's Day was celebrated on the 1st April but in the new calendar on 1st January. With no modern communication news travelled very slowly and many people did not hear of the changes and continued to celebrate New Year on 1st April.

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This morning on the highway, I looked over to my left and there was a woman in a brand new Polo Golf with her face up next to her rear view mirror putting on her eyeliner. Can you believe this? I looked away for a couple seconds and when I looked back she was halfway over in my lane, still working on that dam makeup.

As a man, I do not scare easily. However, she scared me so much; I dropped my electric shaver, which knocked the steak and kidney pie out of my other hand. In all the confusion of trying to straighten out the car using my knees against the steering wheel, it knocked my cell phone away from my ear which fell into the coffee between my legs, splashed, and burned Big Steve and the Twins, ruined the damn phone, soaked my trousers, and disconnected an important call.

Damn women drivers. *Drive safely!!*