SATS *General Botha* Old Boys' Association

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May 2023

JOINT NEWSLETTER

CAPE TOWN CALENDAR

MONTHLY	Pub lunch, Royal Cape Yacht Club, second Tuesday of every month without fail. Rig of the day, casual.
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.

From the Bridge of Cape Town – Tony Nicholas, Chairman

Our 2023 AGM, Commissioning Day celebration and Memorial Service weekend events were all successful, our appreciation to the members who attended. This includes those that joined the AGM on Zoom, a remarkable and useful tool that enables all to participate and contribute to your alma mater. We were pleased to host Old *Conway* member Stuart Johnston and his lovely wife Margie at our Commissioning Day Luncheon, a very entertaining couple. Stuart presented the GBOBA with their plaque (*adjacent picture*) in recognition of the camaraderie between our training ships and alumni. A bond that still sails the Seven Seas today.

We also invited a few of your bursary fund graduates to the Commissioning Day Luncheon to experience more of our Bothie ethos. The event was thoroughly enjoyed by the young men and women and has hopefully inspired them to launch their own fraternity. It was pleasing to see how your generosity and our mentorship program has benefitted them and moulded new leaders in the industry.

The overall attendance was disappointing though and the reasons therefore we need to understand. Twenty-three members attended the AGM and Commissioning Day celebration, and sixteen members attended the Memorial Service, only 9% of the overall attendance. Very disappointing considering the dedication of your committee members in planning these events for you, the alumni. What are the reasons for this sudden lack of interest? We advertise the dates at least two years in advance; so, let us know your thoughts, please.

It was pleasing to welcome a few visitors over the past few months. Namely Andy Fotheringham 1976 from Australia, Douglas Peel 1971 from USA and John Briant 1985 from Canada. Again, if you let me know in advance, I shall motivate your Bothie classmates to attend. Janice and Patrick Doyle, both 1986, were also in Cape Town for a visit but unfortunately could not attend any of our functions.
This quarterly publication does not cover all the interesting news and items of historical interest. To supplement your association newsfeed, I make regular use of Facebook. I am very aware that many are not interested in using Facebook for various reasons. But I urge you all to at least view our GBOBA Facebook regularly. One does not need to be active on the application, one can simply keep up to date with our posts. All you need to do is type in the search field the words 'training ship' or 'General Botha' to find our page. Then just click on 'join'. That's all. Again, I am aware that some Old Salts don't own a computer. No problem, you can use your phone to find and view our Facebook page. If you are unsure how to set this up, ask your children or grandchildren. I look forward to seeing more of you there.
Cheers until next time, Tony.

SATS *General Botha* memorial.

We are in discussions with the City of Cape Town to relocate our memorial from the city foreshore to Jubilee Square in Simon's Town. Its present location has become untenable due to vagrants defacing it, drug paraphernalia and other unspeakable litter and the risk of theft of the three bronze plaques. Even if thieves fail to remove the bronze plaques, they shall surely cause extensive damage.
Considering the fact that every cadet named on the memorial trained on the ship moored off Simon's Town jetty, we believe it is better placed in Simon's Town. Jubilee Square is managed, on behalf of the City of Cape Town, by an NGO which has firm control on the area.
Please let us have your thoughts on this, preferably on email or WhatsApp. In the meantime, we are proceeding full ahead.

SCRANBAG

R.M. MUNRO 1984 #2841. 1982 – 1991 Cadet / 3rd Officer Unicorn Lines. 1988 - 3rd Officer Seconded to Sea Fisheries. 1990 -1991 2nd Officer De Beers Marine. 1991 – 1993 Chief Officer Unicorn Offshore. 1994 - 1995 Chief Officer OSA / Ocean Inscape Limited (OIL). 1996 - 2000 Master Portnet Durban. 2001 – 2003 Chief Mate Tidewater. 2004 - 2007 Master Tidewater. 2007 - 2007 Port Captain / Safety Officer. 2007 - 2017 Operation Manager Tidewater. 2017 - Fleet Manager Eagle Bulk Shipping. 2023 – with TAMAR Ship Management as Training Manager and Technical Manager. TAMAR / Taylor Maritime is company that has bought Grindrod Shipping.

Clive & Andy

D.C. VAN ONSELEN 1984 #2849. Whilst chatting to Andy Fotheringhan during his Cape Town visit recently I commented whether Clive was still alive as I had not heard from him for a very long while. The galley wireless soon hummed; "Still alive as your informer has advised, see photo for proof. I'm still COO for Sealand Asia based in Singapore and living in Malaysia. (For now…. Mærsk is busy consolidating all brands under the one name). We run around 100 ships within Asia in area bounded by Bangladesh in West, Indonesia in South and Japan in the East (unfortunately closed a very good trade to Russia last year). Covid gave us two very difficult but profitable years, and now we are heading in for some very tough times with over supply and SGT demand." Malaysia, exotic. Enjoy and regards to Lyndel.
N. CHETTY 1987 #2897. Keeping a radar plot of all our members is a task suitable for the best Search and Rescue teams. The last I knew Neil was in Bangladesh. "Since leaving the sea in 1995 with Safmarine, I moved to National Ports Authority as Pilot in Durban Harbour in 1997, and in 2005 became the Harbour Master for Port Elizabeth. In 2009 became the Port Manager for Port Elizabeth and built the new port of Ngqura. In 2014, I joined Zadco in Abu Dhabi, UAE as an offshore Harbour

Master and since September 2017, with Hutchison International Terminals in Port of Ajman, UAE as a Manager Marine Affairs. Since 2019, I moved from UAE to Bangladesh on a two-year LNG Terminal project. In 2021 I returned to Transnet Port Terminal as Managing Executive for Richards Bay Terminals. From Jan 2022, I was appointed General Manager Projects in Transnet Port Terminals HQ Durban, my current role".

D.L.R. BERTRAM 1984 #2824. Having assisted with a local Nautical Institute seminar recently I noted David's name in one of the emails, initiating my radar CPA alarm.

October 1986 - Obtained Class 4. End 1987 - Resigned from Unicorn. End 1991 - obtained Bachelor of Journalism at Rhodes University. April 1992 - obtained a Commercial Pilots' License. May 1992 - re-joined Unicorn. July 1992 - joined Lifara International and sailed as Chief Officer on LPGC *Hetland.* July 1996 - Marine Surveyor with A.R. Brink & Associates, Durban. January 2002 - Joined Mediterranean Shipping Company as Fleet Safety Officer based in Durban. July 2005 - Became Operations Manager for MSC in charge of all ports and all port operations as well as Fleet Safety Officer. October 2009 - Director Shosholoza Operations (MSC South Africa BEE operations company). October 2010 - Country Manager MSC Swaziland based in Matsapha Swaziland. October 2017 - resigned from MSC and moved to Plettenberg Bay to play golf and fly. November 2021 - Left South Africa to live in the UK. January 2023 - Joined The Nautical Institute as Senior Technical Advisor.

R.D. WATKINS 1976 #2560. My long-range radar plot found Rod on an exotic island.

Passed CNO 1980. Stayed with Safmarine for further 18 months. Served as 2nd Mate on the *S.A. Hugenot* & *S.A. Vergelegen*. Passed commercial pilots license in 1982. Flew as Charter Pilot in Johannesburg. Passed Airline Transport Pilots License 1984. Joined Dorbyl Ltd as Line Captain on Corporate Jets (Citation & Lear). Joined SAA in 1987 as First Officer serving on B747 & B737's. Senior First Officer on Boeing 747's serving all international destinations until gaining command in 1997. 2018 retired. "I took early retirement from SAA in December 2018 after 33 years, 22 of which were as Captain mostly on our international services. I was fortunate enough to get to fly most of the Aircraft that SAA operated B737's B747's and Airbus A340's and A330's. I sold my share of a small aerobatic aeroplane, an RV7 and no longer fly, sadly. My feet are now firmly on the ground after logging 26450 hours of flight time.

"My wife, Sharon and I have taken the plunge and moved to Mauritius and reside in Pointe aux Canonniers with the hope of continuing on to Australia's east coast mid next year to be closer to our two daughters and grandson. I hope to be catching up with the likes of Mike Carrington, Andy Fotheringham and Al Snyders. We shall miss SA tremendously but new horizons await."

A Bothie reunion awaits.

D.S. REES 1984 #2846. Another successful radar plot acquired David's position. "Initially sailed with Safmarine, I ended up as a 2NO with De Beers up on the west coast for a short stint after class 4 and in parallel, was awarded a bursary to study Industrial Engineering through JCI, one of the then big mining houses late 80's. Never got round to class 3. Post graduating, I ended up running the operations (manufacturing, maintenance, supply chain and distribution) for a works in Johannesburg on the East Rand. Rather interesting at first in that it had CNC machining, a super alloy Foundry (nickel based metals such as 3CR12, 316 etc) with both traditional sand and Investment Casting (Lost wax process) for high tolerance components but in the end, Johannesburg and the foundries wasn't really my thing so I ended up getting into SAP software mid 90's which was just taking off. I ended up advising companies on its implementation working on several programs for a few years and left SA late 90's and headed for London given the demand for SAP skills and the pound, where I still live. I married a lovely lass from Edinburgh and one son who is just finishing A levels. I now run the UKI and Benelux SAP consulting practice for one of the large global systems integrators."

Interesting and a long way from a maritime career.

C.A. HARWOOD 1958/59 #2108. Colin decided to enter the medical profession and after studying at the University of Pretoria joined the S.A. Defence Force. Colin recently sent his biography of his military deployments in war zone which is fascinating reading. Firstly, in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), then Angola and Caprivi Strip, and after immigrating to Canada was deployed to Rwanda during the

civil war there. The war zones were obviously hazardous, but Colin does relate a number of humorous incidents. One such:

"One Surprised Lioness and Two Petrified Humans: Then there was my own close encounter with a lioness. Every second Saturday, three or four of us would take turns to drive across the valley in two vehicles, up the southern rim of the escarpment and then south on the high plateau to the city of Salisbury to obtain supplies for the camp personnel. We obtained food, a 16mm movie film roll or two for the camp projector and copper articles or other gifts (there was a copper mine and refinery nearby). Company employees also made beautiful copper pictures, vases and other objects. When my turn came we bought supplies for the camp and gifts for our families, also enjoying the outing to civilization. On our return we were rather late in reaching the escarpment to the Zambezi Valley and it was almost dark by the time our vehicles started to descend the ±800 ft. down into the valley. I was in an *Iltis*, which looks like a boxy jeep, whose doors had been completely removed to facilitate fast escape should we be ambushed by terrorists. It should be mentioned that we always carried our personal weapons with us and often other arms, such as grenades, as well. If attacked, we were to quickly jump or roll out of the vehicle and scramble into the roadside bushes so that we were less of a target and could return fire. That was the required procedure, which wouldn't have worked if we had first been hit by an RPG (a Russian shoulder-carried rocket-propelled grenade). I sat next to the driver and both of us had a front windshield but a 4 x 6 foot opening at the side with one strut vertically down the middle, instead of two doors. As we drove down the winding road that descended into the valley, a big lion suddenly jumped down from the 8 to 10 foot high embankment on the left side to the road in front of us. The driver, sitting on the right-hand side, jammed on the brakes so that we would not run into it. After looking at us, the lion continued across the road and down the embankment to our right. Thinking we were lucky, I looked to the left and nearly died! A lioness had been following the lion; she had jumped onto the left side of the roadway, but was stopped by the vehicle which was blocking her way. She was right opposite my open side of the vehicle! We are told that the human body is made up of about 70% water – don't believe it – I felt like I was 100% water, and had nowhere I could hide! I yelled in fright, and she gave a loud snarl, letting out nasty smelling breath from about 3 feet away. The driver was in a panic and was trying to get the spindly floor gear shift into reverse, just about 'tying it into knots in the process. Eventually he succeeded and we shot backwards, nearly going over the edge of the lower cliff in the process. The lioness gave a parting snarl and disappeared after her mate. It took us a while to 'solidify back into functioning humans' after that experience!"

Colin is the only human doctor that I know who has done a tooth extraction on a live male lion, but that is another story.

P.J. SOANE 1961/62 #2215. Our Australia branch chairman, Grenville Stevens, has been active in his Search and Rescue roll recently. Grenville writes; **"**We met up with Peter and Joan Soane whilst staying with Dick and Libby Pollecutt in their Nowra NSW home. Peter and Joan were hauling their caravan from their home at The Oaks to Lake Tabourie and overnighted in Nowra. We had a great catchup with stories and news dating back to 1961. Many memories and laughs. During our happy talks I recorded Peters history.

P J Soane Cadet 2215 1961/62 - 1963 -65 Safmarine *SA Merchant*, *Safdan Helene*. 1966 Second Mates GB Granger Bay. 1966-69 Unicorn and Mates Certificate, Technical College Durban. 1970 Moved to Mbabane Swaziland. 1972 November Immigrated to Australia. 1972-1984 Employed in Sydney Container Terminals. 1985 Own business, Mower Supplies. 1990 to present Builders Licence obtained. Commenced own company doing property maintenance, Repairs and Renovations."

D.P. NEAVES 1971 #2398. Don says "Yes, kinda retired. I volunteer on SS *Shieldhall*, a triple expansion steam ship that was a "BOVRIL" boat carrying sewage sludge out to sea in its heyday 50's, 60's and 70'swhen she also carried retired seafarers to sea on day trips. The four tanks are now workshops for carrying out repair and fabrication work for the ship. Great. I now also volunteer at the Maritime Volunteer Service in Portsmouth, and this month we are starting a new unit here in Southampton. I'll be one of the founder members. Training cadets and adults who have never been to sea but are keen supporters. In all about 2 to 3 days a week at moment, increasing during the summer." Wow Don! those poor retired seamen must have done something very wrong to be dumped on a

"Bovril" boat for a daytrip. Reminds me punishment on the old *Cable Restorer* was luxury compared to this.

AWOL (for the younger generation: **A**bsent **W**ith**o**ut **L**eave)

Rob Hooykaas 1960/61 retired as a senior pilot Durban harbour has reportedly joined his daughter on a farm in the Vryheid district.

Does anyone have contact with the below Bothie 1978? Please advise.

- 2608 R.M. O'Malley AWOL since 2011.
- 2632 M.O. Sangster No email and not answering phone.
- 2635 P.R. van der Walt AWOL for a very long time.

I look forward to hearing from you.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

V. GOLDSWAIN 1949/50. Vincent Goldswain slipped his cable in 2021. Unfortunately, I have no career details of him and would be grateful for any information you can share.

C.H. SHEARD 1976. Clive **s**ailed with Safmarine from 1976 to 84 when he joined the S.A. Navy as a Lieutenant until 1988. Then worked for Portnet as a Tug Master and a Pilot Port Control Officer until 1995. Relocated to Port Rashid, United Arab Emirates as Assistant Harbour Master, Dubai Drydocks. 2003 still working in Dubai (UAE) with a marine surveying company, Matthews Daniel. August 2012 - transferred to Perth (for GL Noble Denton) after 17 years in Dubai. During that time had 8 years in Dubai Drydocks, 8 years with Matthews Daniel (Marine Surveying job) then 1 year with GLND. In May 2012 joined GLND in Perth.

Deceased 31st March 2023.

A.E. VOWLES 1959/60. Alex was GB Engineer Cadet E39 and became an apprentice S.A.R. & H. Millwright, Married 1962. Three months at sea with Safmarine, S.A. Letaba. Then two years as assistant engineer at Vaal Reefs, Orkney. Joined family business in 1964 to 1984. structural steel, "Steelways (Pty) Ltd". 1972 started "Antalex Jersey Stud." Second biggest in R.S.A. Sold in 1990, retired. Subsequently established Antalex Dairy and Milk Distribution Co. in Benoni. Subsequently his son runs business. Sport: off road racing, Toyota Hilux 4x4. Deceased 20th March 2023.

D.G. JUPP 1941/42. Highly respected in the maritime industry, Dougie slipped his cable 11th March 2023 aged 97. 6/1/1943 - Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Co, M.T. "Miralda". Converted to a Macship for North Atlantic convoy duty. Thereafter M.T. *Goldmouth*, involved in "D Day" Normandy invasion carrying fresh water for the troops. March 1945 - obtained 2nd Mates Certificate in London. Then two years as 3/0 and 2/0 on M.T. *Tancred* attached to British Pacific Fleet. Then ss *Umtali* & *Umgena*, Bullard King. 1948 - Mates Certificate, Cardiff. Returned to S.A. Joined Mitchell Cotts Ships Agency. Spent next 40 years in ships agency in Cape Town. Retired 1988 as Regional Manager Freightmarine/Rennies Ships Agency.

Previous committee member Cape Town Branch, chairman of the War Memorial Fund as well as a committee member of the Cape Town Sailors Home.

Deanna Collins writes; "A wonderful Man, a true professional Gentleman, who supported Safmarine agencies arm, for many years and who was always available. May his soul rest in peace with all the other remarkable mariners who have passed on. To his family, sincere condolences."

G. STALLING 1953/54. Gerry Stalling was yet another cadet from Jo'burg, in his case from Highlands North High School. He was continually skirmishing with authority and yet was an excellent student. He won a geography prize and the prize for class proficiency and in his senior year, was coxswain of the Quarterdeck cutter crew when it won the Inter-Top Cutter Race.

On leaving the Botha Gerry joined Northern/Southern Steamships being appointed to their President Kruger along with Okke Grapow.

After a few trans-Atlantic voyages, followed by a run to the Far East, Gerry was transferred to the President Steyn, an ex SAR&H ship. There he found Ronnie Wege as his fellow cadet. Ronnie, having gone to sea first, was the senior and eventually, when he left, Gerry stepped up to uncertificated third mate in his place.

In the latter stages of his apprenticeship, when the ship was laid up at Borrowstounness (Bo'ness) in Scotland, Gerry met Sheena Rangley. They were married in 1960 while he was studying for his second mates. Two children, a boy and a girl, were born from this marriage. Gerry then signed up with Ben Line on the Far East run, then moved across to Mobil and finally to Stephenson Clarke, before obtaining his masters. By then his marriage had ended in divorce so Gerry joined Imperial Oil of Canada and spent four years alternating between their two deep-sea ships on the Aruba to New York and Canada run and the Persian Gulf to Europe run.
A fellow officer tipped him off about a ferry job where he could be home every night and, following Mark Twain's advice to 'head west, young man', Gerry joined British Columbia Ferries as a civil servant. He spent 26 years with them, ending up as Senior Master in the huge Vancouver to Nanaimo ferries. During this time he met Lana Brovold of Vancouver and they were married in 1984.
He and Lana are enjoying their retirement in Nanaimo, Canada, from where Gerry was doing an excellent job as chairman of the North American Branch of the GBOBA. Deceased March 2023.
Mike Briant writes; "Sad to say, another of our number has slipped his moorings. Gerry Stalling, after a battle with lung cancer has passed away. Will remember him for his wry sense of humour and his tendency, right to the end, to understate things.
God bless you Gerry. Go well."
K.R. STEWART-COLLINS 1957/58. Many shall remember Keith as larger than life Bothie Granger Bay officer, sadly passed away 24th February 2023.
Sailed with Safmarine as a cadet, 1964 Second Officer in *South African Vanguard*, and later with SAR & H on the coal run, and Thesens coasters. Joined the lecturing staff at S.A.M.N.A. General Botha in 1969 until retirement in 1990. Lived in the USA for five years. Settled in UK.
T.D. SHIMMIN 1967. 1968 - sailed on the *Nahoon*, Unicorn Lines. Then Terry joined a coasting company, but only for a few months. After that he went into the commercial world and was a sales representative. Passed away January 2023.
L.R. FARGE 1980. Previously at sea before running a restaurant in Millnerton, Cape Town. Retired early and spent last twenty odd years wandering around the tropical seas on his yacht living off his catches as he was an avid fisherman and the occasional charter. 2007 Moved to Queensland Australia where he had a T shirt shop selling to the tourist trade on the Sunshine Coast. Deceased 20th February 2023 in Grenada.
Malcom Hartwell writes; "I never sailed with Les, but he was at A and B course with us. Larger than life character, full of laughter and very generous. Also, our braai master which is why he ran a restaurant (ribs and grills were the speciality) in Milnerton when he left the sea and made a great success of it. Mark Spinoy worked for him for a while and was allegedly fired (mentioned in jest) for eating too many ribs and drinking too much of his brandy. I never saw Les after Bothie, but he retired early and has spent the last twenty odd years wandering around the tropical seas on his yacht living off his catches as he was an avid fisherman and, I think, the occasional charter. He made a point of posting pics on Facebook of where he was every year or so just to remind us deskbound monkeys that there was more to life than work."
R. VAN DEN BERG 1960/61. Sadly Rob passed away 5th February 2023. In his own words; "After *General Botha* messed about for a few years with Barclays bank in Durban and Lever Brothers. 1964 - I discovered I had an aptitude for computers and worked as a computer programmer until 1974. I then changed direction again and entered the design and fashion industry. 1979 - I became General Manager of Truworth's Man Shops for the The Wool/Tru Group. 1983 - after making them a great deal of money, I decided to work for myself and started my business, Robins Nest Interiors based in George. I did not forsake all my Bothy training as we own and sail a Beneteau 35' keel boat named Moon Shadow."
Extract from obituary:
Following spells as a laboratory assistant and computer programmer in Durban after his matriculation at *General Botha*, he joined the clothing group I L Back and Company in Parow, Cape Town, in 1966 as a senior computer programmer. In 1973 he joined Foschini Limited, where he rose to the position of group systems manager. He was appointed a member of the Computer Society of South Africa in 1975 on the grounds of his contribution to the industry. Having developed a keen interest in merchandise

procurement, Rob joined Truworths Limited in 1977, where he attained the position of Divisional Merchandise Executive (Menswear). In 1983 Rob moved to George to set up Rob & Lynne Interiors. The name of the business later changed to Robin's Nest Interiors.

K.H. ERIKSEN 1978. Konrad passed away unexpectedly 16th April 2023. Previously sailed with Unicorn. 1995 - Manager of Richards Bay Steel Stevedores. 1996 - Transferred to Cape Town as Branch Manager of National Stevedores (previously Keeleys Stevedores), later became P&O Ports. 2008 established KV&B Consulting Services. Then employed by Island View Shipping as a supercargo in Tamatave, Madagascar, before retirement.

Our condolences to family and shipmates.

From the bridge of Durban – Mike Melly

The past three months have been somewhat busy, with an AGM, a Golf Day, and interactions with various people on the training and education front.

Firstly, we held a successful AGM albeit with a disappointing attendance of only 11 members. Our own Malcom Hartwell gave a very interesting presentation on the many changes which have happened at sea in recent years, which was thought-provoking and introduced a subject we really need to get back to. We often hear old salts expressing firm opinion on "how it was done back then, and it worked" or something similar. The reality is that today's ship is a very different place to what it was back then. Engines are very different, even fuels. What hasn't changed is that ships are (still) manned by people, and that's where we do remain relevant, provided we are open to understanding today's realities. Training is very different too, and yet, some things don't change. The model of training is still one of the best, although there are newer subjects which would probably have interested us greatly, had that technology been available in those times. Yet, ship handling hasn't changed a great deal, people haven't changed that much, they still dream the same way we did, they make the same mistakes we did, and it's very interesting listening to them as they grapple with new ways which are often much more advanced than ours' were.

Mike Melly was re-elected Chairman, making the point that he had no intention of competing for longevity with our previous Chairman, Derek McManus, who served in that position for 30 years! Rod Hall was welcomed to the committee, which had been somewhat depleted in the past year due to illness.

With the AGM behind us, we turned our attention to the Golf Day, which was held on 26th April. We had a full house of 20 4-balls, and raised around R71000, down a tad from 2022. Very sadly, the event was not well-supported by either the Old Boys, or by the Society of Master Mariners, whose event this is. Is this Natal fever, or is it apathy? Perhaps we all have different things to worry about these days. However, we do appeal to all to get involved in all our various activities on one way or another. That includes monthly luncheons. Of course many members may be from different years, different classes, but that's okay. The more who attend, the greater the chances are that you'll bump into an old mate. If not, regardless of whether we were there or 50 years apart, we share a common bond which can never be broken.

I believe that it is fair to say that what we have achieved with the Golf Days in particular, is not merely that we have raised funds for tertiary training, but that we have created a much greater awareness of the SATS General Botha, and all that our proud name stands for. We have forged new, relevant relationships. Companies, institutions, Organisations are taking note… So lets' get out there in force and wave that flag even higher.

Cheers, Mike.

Capt. Warren's command - "*Dressed & ship-shape for the Coronation.*"

UK Branch – Jonathan Warren

Hello from the UK, we are very slowly but equally surely making our way into summer as you descend into winter. Spring is all around us, trees bursting into green, and yesterday I saw the first brood of ducklings following their mother as I made my way up the cut.

There is not much to report from our part of the world, save to say that we meet every second Tuesday of the month over zoom at 18.00 local time. The OB Gatherings have a core of regular attendees from both the

UK and the Continent and we set the world to rights. Please feel free to contact me on our WhatsApp group +447412494774 to be added to our mailing list.
Donald Neaves (1971) reports that he has been very busy getting the steamship SHIELDHALL up and running with a group of volunteers in Southampton, and thanks to Tony's efforts, John Piggott (1976) has also surfaced - but my last-minute invitation to the monthly Gathering clashed with other commitments, so we did not have the pleasure of re-establishing contact last month. Yesterday, my other half and I had the pleasure of meeting Neville Gibbs-Jones (1974) and his lovely wife Anne near Northwich, where they instructed us in the rudiments of crown green bowling. They crossed the pond about six years ago and are very happy here in England.
Dates have yet to be finalised for our Midsummer Meeting in Liverpool in July, but all will be revealed over zoom or on our WhatsApp group – this is just a preliminary notice for anyone who might be interested in a weekend with old salts and new chums in glorious, sunny Liverpool. There is much to do and to see in the city, so it should be a very pleasant weekend.
Best wishes to you all, until next time, Jonathan.

Australia Branch – Grenville Stevens

John and Pauline Sampson 1674 50/51 have arrived at their new home area in Queensland and are in the process of finding a home to purchase.

From Grenville Stevens 2189 60/61 In an attempt to locate the house used by the General Botha in 1965 as a temporary the Nautical Academy posted the following on S.A.T.S. General Botha OBA Facebook -

1965 Together with a few others I studied for second mates at GB, which at that time was housed in temporary accommodation adjacent or inside the Cape Town Gardens in an old double story house. Can anyone shed any light on where that house was located and why was Capt. Nankin based there instead of GB Gordons Bay which only moved to Granger Bay mid-1966. A grey area. I recall the house but not location. One or two other GB lecturers were there. Captain Nankin did the Radar training course.

Apparently, no records exist of this temporary "Nautical Academy" located in the Cape Town Gardens. The accommodation was a grand Victorian era house.

Apparently similar in design to this house:
The following comments were received in response to the Facebook post:

From George Stibbe - I have had a look at the Gardens in CT via Google Earth, and it has changed a lot. I think it was near what is now Company Rose Gardens, and one would have parked somewhere in Hatfield, or St Johns Street. There was a lawn just outside the building where we used to sit at lunch time. If I am correct, Dan Hayward was also there at the same time.

From Margie Fishley - Phil Nankin, Dennis Pitcher and Buck Buchanan were in the WW2 Nissan huts near the sea at Mouille Point, which later were demolished. The school then moved up to the Gardens.

From Tim Cowley - I did my Second Mates at the converted house in The Gardens that you have mentioned. I can vaguely remember the house but am scratching my head as to exactly where it was. I know it was accessible by road, as I used to park my Morris Minor close by.

From GBOBA Fremantle: Andy Fotheringham 2525 1976 Trip to South Africa

A recent trip to South Africa was primarily to see my mother, whom I hadn't seen since my last visit in 2016. In the same 'home' is Ken Shirley. Ken and I have quite a history both family and professionally. Ken was my Training Officer when I was a senior cadet on the SA 'Vergelegen'. Ken's parents were also neighbours of my father's cousin in Brighton Beach.

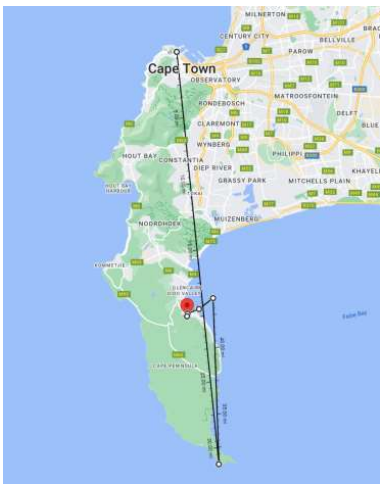
Mike Melly was also good enough to organise a gathering at Stella Sports Club. It was good to see Dave Teague, whom I was also at school with and Mike Jones, whom I haven't seen for many years. Another person who made the effort to come and see me, although not an Old Boy was Hilton Jones. Hilton and I sailed together many times on the 'Wolraad Woltemade' and the 'John Ross'.
I also travelled to Port Elizabeth to see a fellow Australian Mike Carrington. Then I travelled to Jeffrey's Bay to see Thys Greyvenstein. We sailed together on both Astors. We were chosen to set up the safety system on the second Astor and train the crew prior to and during her 'maiden voyage'. Then it was onto Visit Stuart and Sheila Macalister in Wilderness. I had a lovely afternoon with Iain and Pam Ross at Hoekville.

I had a weekend with my sister at Stilbaai. Then I travelled up to Bonnievale and had an evening with Gavin and Jean Durrell. I had sailed with Gavin on the first Astor.
Finally, I spent time at the regular monthly lunch where I saw John Armstrong, Kevin Tate, Greg Pearce, Black Swart, Chris Kortum, Simon Pearson, Dave Teague (again), Lloyd Merriman, Andrew Walker, Hugh James (who took the position of secretary), Dennis Henwood, Jimmy Cook, and of course our chairman and a few others whose names already escape me.
From South Africa I spent time in Singapore and Johor Baru with Clive and Lyndal van Onselen. Regards from Andy Fotheringham.

Discovery of WW2 SS 'Montevideo Maru' wreck
The ship at the centre of the worst maritime disaster in Australia's history, 81 years after it sank, has been discovered more than 4,000 metres beneath the sea off the coast of the Philippines.
Japanese transport ship SS 'Montevideo Maru' sank with about 979 Australian troops and civilians on 1 July 1942.
Innocently torpedoed by an American submarine (unaware the ship was carrying prisoners of war and civilians captured in Rabaul PNG). Fatalities were about 1,060 prisoners i.e. 850 service members plus 210 civilians from fourteen countries.
The location of the wreck had remained a mystery for decades — until now.
SS 'Montevideo Maru' discovered after 12 days of searching in the South China Sea, by a team led by not-for-profit 'Silentworld Foundation', deep-sea survey specialists 'Fugro' was supported by the Australian Department of Defence. click here

Alang Beach
The Interweb has for the last few months been reporting widely on a recent technological phenomenon confronting humankind. Referred to generically as AI, (the acronym for *Artificial Intelligence*), to the layman it is perhaps of little interest. But so was the Wright Brother's flight a mere 120 years ago. If recent history trends in the maritime industry are anything to go by, where computer based technology has had such a profound effect, it is now obvious that the propeller heads are not finished with us old sailors yet, and we will be swept along in the tsunami of software development overwhelming mankind in general.
Google, something wich is today just an accepted part of our daily lives was just the start, we are headed for changes in the way we conduct ourselves day to day which are as incomprehensible as today's Mach2 fighter jets would have been to Wilber and Orville on a windswept grass field back in the day.
At present, with respect to AI for general use, the boffins are trying to develop a one size fits all application which has found, by virtue of its innate nature of being a text based system, a following by student's writing papers without doing the prerequisite homework. This will be a short lived easy way out before the checks and balances are developed to discover plagiarism. They don't refer to them as *Large Language Models* for nothing.
To make the answers intelligible the computers talk to us in plain language. This has encouraged the systems current short comings to be labelled in words we are well accustomed to, one of the types of

answer classification I most like is *Hallucination* which Google explains is the generation of outputs that may sound plausible but are either factually incorrect or unrelated to the given context.
So with the help of a recently IT qualified young man called Josh Peel who is the son of one of our American Old Boys we decided to ask this new-fangled program which goes by the name of ChatGPT, some simple navigational and seamanship questions. This was purely a fun exercise, just to see what would happen.
Starting in local waters we asked ChatGPT to plot a course from Cape Town to Simonstown. Even though our initial question was in hindsight poorly defined, it still chose, after further clarification "we are in a ship" to send the ship over the rockiest route it could find, as shown in the adjacent chart.



The question was as follows:- "*Plot a course and list the waypoints in latitude and longitude for a voyage by ship from Cape Town harbour to Simonstown Harbour*".
Why it still thought it prudent to take us to Cape Point is a mystery. So for that exercise the software earned a big fat zero.
On a grander scale we asked it for the closest point of approach to Ascension Island on a course from the Ambrose Light Ship to Green Point Light House. Again our initial definition was poor because the Ambrose Light Ship is no longer stationed where it was last time I visited New York. It's now a museum ship moored at a dock on the East River... fair enough.. but close enough for all intents and purposes. When it came to deciding where Green Point Light House was, the wheels fell off. The position it gave was somewhere in a little bay further up the East River nowhere near any lighthouses or even lateral buoys. So that exercise put the score at 0 and 0. So much for understanding language! We typed in the Lat's and Long's and got an admissible answer eventually.
Then we tried an arithmetic problem. In essence the question was to calculate a TPC immersion for a new draft after loading 40 tons. The metric system proved to be the systems down fall after hallucinating about what TPC is all about. The answer was out by a factor of ten. So we tried exactly the same values in Imperial units and asked it to calculate a TPI, with which it was happy and gave a correct answer. Oh dear...the score was zero for three now in my "rest of the world, non-feet and inches" book!
Then we asked ChatGPT a more subjective question, as to whether white was a good colour to paint a ship's deck. The answer was vaguely admissible and the blurb it gave suggested it was not a good idea.
So we can rest assured that there is a stupendous amount of work for the coders and testers to do before a young Second Mate (office bound route planner second class,) can confidently speak into the microphone on the bridge... ah sorry.. the Head Office, and tell the ship its going from Cape Town to Durban. But it will come to pass, as sure as nuts.
There are extensive research papers currently published on all aspects of navigation, be it on sea or in the air regarding the human interface with these systems. One of the serious problems is loss of skills which navigators suffer when regularly using automated systems. Somehow these skills need to be obtained and refreshed and ingrained to become second nature. How many hours did we spend as Cadets steering ships just to get that feel. I would hope that cadets today are still taught to steer.... are they? A problem today I would bet is how many Captains go up on the bridge and spend an hour or two on the wheel steering a simple straight course in various sea states. One of the conclusions of the Air France crash in the Atlantic some years ago was that the pilots did not know how to fly their aircraft manually at high altitude.
To curb this exponential increase in so called intelligence availability and utilization, currently the cost of computing and data base size is a hugely limiting factor. Trust is also, as the random tests given in the examples above, not yet up to scratch. But fear not, wise people in the know forecast that other unknown demon and cohort called quantum computing will sort those short comings out at the drop of a hat.
The dark and scary side to this new-fangled extremely powerful software, as pointed out in a recent interview between our man from Pretoria Boys High and the now ex Fox News show host Tucker

Carlson, is that the software is currently completely unregulated and will undoubtedly end up being exploited by the dark side for a myriad of nefarious reasons. The horse has bolted, the ship has sailed, the bitter end is long gone through the hawse pipe, the genie is out of the bottle... however you want to say it, society has created a demon which it currently has no idea of how to control.
It brings back visions of the old charts which had warnings for the then brave mariners... "There be monsters", and pictures of Krakens in uncharted and unknown waters. The way things are going for those who venture upon the sea in future, the Hydrographic offices around the world will have to invent some new charting symbols for the old ECDIS which depict the many dangerous entities such as Krakens, Cthulhu's, Sirens and most dangerous of all.... tempting mermaids.
The situation perhaps brings to mind a verse from the Styx song release from 1981 "The Best of Times" click here, perhaps there was a bit of sailor in the writer's blood.
The headlines read "These are the worst of times"
I do believe it's true
I feel so helpless like a boat against the tide
I wish the summer winds could bring back paradise
But I know, if the world turned upside down
Baby, I know you'd always be around
Fade out with the music until next time...

Facts of the Day

The Daily Maverick had an intriguing statement of fact recently. It stated – "Most cruise ships have a morgue."
So, I was just wondering while reading Fother's grand tour SA and his reminiscences (Page 8 & 9 above), whether or not this morgue was part of the safety plans he and Thys prepared for the *Astor*. If their plans were good, then hopefully they did not have a need for the use of such a final facility.
Reading this morbid statement led me to ask the question – where would this morgue be situated in the vessel? If it is the dead centre of the vessel, where all mortals go, then will that be 'G' or 'M', or the height of the 'GM', or would it be the 'LC of G'. Perhaps it is just the 'tipping point'! Never the less, only the Naval Architects will have the answers, I suppose.
Whatever happened to the length of canvas and some scrap metal all sewn up by the Bos'n with the last stitch through the poor soul's nose, and then "Heave-oh!"? – *Scribe*

HISTORIC WIN

2023 Has seen some remarkable achievements for South African women on the sports field. One in particular being our ladies cricket team reaching the finals of the T20 World Cup. However, more recently of significant note, South African sailor, Kirsten Neuschäfer made history on April 27 when she became the first female to sail, solo and non-stop, around the world without the help of modern equipment (yes, good old celestial nav.!!), and having rescued a fellow competitor under challenging circumstances, demonstrating exceptional seamanship.
The Golden Globe Race website (click here) reports – "**At 19:43:47 on Thursday the 27th, Minnehaha crossed the GGR finish line** before going up a channel lit in red, where the people of Les Sables gave her the warm welcome she deserved for coming first in the gruelling GGR 2022-2023. She had spent 235 days at sea, with an official time of **233 days, 18 hours, 43 minutes and 47 seconds** after her 35 hours of compensation awarded for **Tapio**'s rescue were discounted, and no fuel penalty since she only consumed 30.7 litres of fuel in her round-the-world voyage. …. Vendée Globe legend **Catherine Chabaud (FRA)**, came specially to greet and congratulate Kirsten on her historic win. "**Kirsten** is in the image of the race which promotes simplicity and sobriety, and it's led her to victory" she said on the stage where officials joined **Jean-Luc Van Den Heede**, **Yannick Moreau** and **Don McIntyre** to congratulate her. **Kirsten becomes the first woman to win a round the world race via the three great capes!**"

What greater gift could the Nation receive on such a significant day in South Africa's history – Freedom Day - than this woman's achievement? – *Scribe*

Sail & Motor Programme at Lawhill Maritime Centre (LMC) *From the LMC News*

That same day (Freedom Day in South Africa) as Kirsten's historic win, a group of Lawhill maritime students braved the Cape's wet weather to begin their sailing journey. Despite the weather (*see right opposite*), they could not have wished for a more inspiring role model than Kirsten!

Inspiring a new generation of sailors is what the Sail and Motorboat Programme offered by the S.A.T.S General Botha Old Boys' Association Bursary Fund (GBOBA BF) is all about. Lawhill is most grateful to all those involved in the Bursary Fund for the incredible work being done to provide our students with valuable skills, while … **CONTINUE READING →**.

The Worcester Merchant Navy Cadetship Scheme - *From The Dog Watch Dec. 2022*

It would appear that the Association of Old Worcesters (OW) has taken a copy out of our GBOBA in launching a bursary fund for cadets. "The first Worcester cadets in more than 50 years are set to begin their officer training course in January (2023). … the two new recruits are evidence of the success of the Worcester Merchant Navy Cadetship Scheme (WMNCS), which has been in existence barely a year."

The WMNCS is in partnership with Trinity House (TH), London. TH is seen as a big advantage in the administration with its staff and facilities available to manage the fund and its charitable status, there by relieving the AOW, which is a voluntary organisation, of the operation responsibilities. The UK Government principal objective to support seafarer training (SMarT) by providing 50% of the training costs of every MN officer cadet. This in order to facilitate an adequate supply of maritime expertise to meet the nation's economic and strategic requirements, which is relevant today in an era of de-globalisation.

This must all be seen as encouraging for our own Bursary Fund in S. A., but oh! for more resident ship owners and a stronger industry in our country, and thereby more berths for our young officers.

We wish the WMNCS success and longevity in their programme, and we watch this with great interest.

Fast – or Smart? (Anon.)

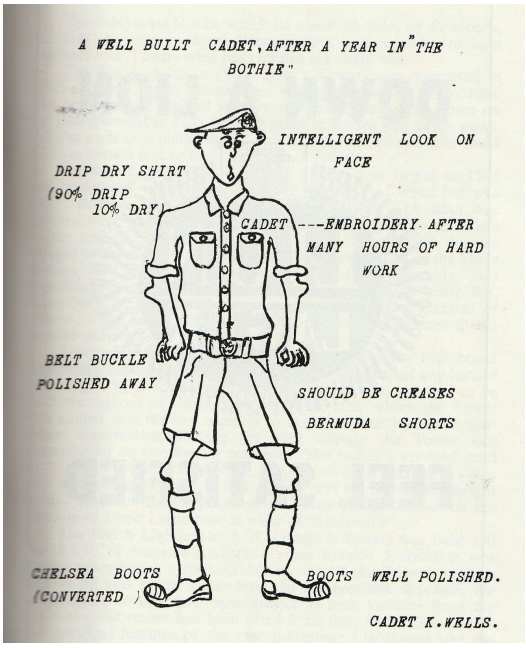
An Airbus 380 is on its way across the Atlantic. It flies consistently at 800 km/h at 30 000 feet, when suddenly a Eurofighter with a Tempo Mach 2 appears. The pilot of the fighter jet slows down, flies alongside the Airbus and greets the pilot of the passenger plane by radio: "Airbus, boring flight, isn't it? Now have a look here!" He roles his jet on its back, accelerates, breaks through the sound barrier, rises to a dizzying height, and then swoops down almost to sea level in a breath-taking dive. He loops back next to the Airbus and asks: "Well, how was that?" The Airbus pilot answers: "Very impressive but, watch this!"

The jet pilot watches the Airbus, but nothing happens. It continues to fly on a straight course and steady speed. After 15 minutes, the Airbus pilot radios: "Well, how was that?" Confused the jet pilot asks, "What did you do?"

The Airbus pilot laughs and says: "I got up, stretched my legs, walked to the back of the aircraft to use the washroom, then got a cup of coffee and a chocolate fudge pastry."

The moral of the story: When you're young, speed and adrenaline seems to be great. But as you get older and wiser, you learn that comfort and peace are more important.

This reminds me of a story, I think it was Captain Percy Sharps's book "Tales of Table Bay", where the story is related of the Queen Mary on a trans-Atlantic passage. The liner "United States" overhauled the latter, and in passing the Captain of the United States signalled the Master of the "Queen Mary" with "Sorry to pass you at such a rate of



knots". To which the Master of the slower promptly replied "Not to worry, old Chap, a good lady would not like to be seen in such fast company!" – Scribe