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GENERAL BOTHA OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

<http://www.generalbotha.co.za>

August 2009

JOINT NEWSLETTER

Has your address changed? Please send your updated details to Tony Nicholas Chairman Cape Town (details above).

Do you have an interesting article for this newsletter? Please send your contributions to Dennis Henwood, dhenwood@iafrica.com Phone: +27 (0)21 6716373. Fax: +27 (0)86 6706710.

Can you read this Newsletter? If not please let us know. We can send you larger print if it is necessary.

Do you deserve a medal?

Mac Bisset (Retired S A Navy) writes:

It appears that half of the General Botha Old Boys who served in the Lawhill from 1942 – 1945 never received their campaign stars and medals for service in the 2nd World War. It is not too late for them to apply for these awards. Applications should be addressed to the **Director, Documentation Centre, Private Bag X289, Pretoria, 0001**. Those who served in the Merchant Navy at sea for 28 days qualified for the War Medal 1939 – 45. Those who served in war zones for the requisite time qualified for campaign stars as well.

Talking of which there has recently been discussions in the Cape Town Committee and amongst others that those Obies killed in action in war campaigns subsequent to the two World Wars should be added to the Role of Honour at the GB Cenotaph in Cape Town. If there are any particular names that we should know about please would you inform the Chairman, Tony Nicholas or your local branch committee?

It is the custom at our annual memorial service to invite anyone who wishes to lay a wreath in remembrance of a loved shipmate or to have that persons name mentioned.

The building of the **New Lawhill Maritime Centre** at Simon's Town High School is coming along. Phase one has been completed and the students have taken up temporary residence while the rest of their old accommodation is demolished to make way for phase two. The building will be completed in December in time for the 2010 academic year.

The Centre is an upgrade on the original Hostel accommodation donated and built by by Safmarine using an innovated double story design out of retired freight containers. The new centre will be more than just a hostel. In addition to the two wings accommodating boys and girls, there will be the classrooms for Maritime Economics (taught by Brian Ingpen) and Nautical Science (taught by Godfrey Schlemmer). This is an exciting step forward in maritime education available to all South African youngsters from all over the country.

FROM THE BRIDGE OF ss CAPE TOWN

The interest and enthusiasm of our Old Boys never fails to impress me. There are groups working feverishly on class reunions; those that I presently know of are the classes of 1959/60 and 1960/61, details elsewhere in this publication. There are more on the slips, thus the Legend Lives On through the comradeship that the Ship fostered so many years ago. Gerry Stalling in Canada has compiled a very useful summary of all members living over there, including the USA. A very useful pocket guide for any visiting over there and available on request either from Gerry or myself in Cape Town. No longer any excuse for not looking up shipmates and enjoying a few pints together.

Your committee has decided to continue with the publication of the A4 size format of the newsletter for those that still receive theirs hard copy. But please be reminded that this is at a much higher cost to print and post. Thus any donations to the association to support this initiative are particularly welcome, as our funds shall not last indefinitely. Since we do not have an annual subscription policy we are very reliant on donations to maintain the existence of the association and the goals to be achieved.

The monthly lunch meetings continue in Durban and Cape Town, **Cape Town** on the **second Tuesday** of each month at the **Royal Cape Yacht Club**, and in **Durban** on the **first Wednesday** of each month at the **Royal Natal Yacht Club**, 1230 for 1300, unless otherwise advertised in this newsletter. Attendance varies but indicates the continuing support of the meets and lunch. A worthwhile outing at a very reasonable cost. Old Boy Bill Shewell gave a very interesting talk at the June lunch of Cape Town's V&A Waterfront, those who missed it your loss.

I take this opportunity to remind the cadet class of 1971 that it is our 40th reunion in 2011. Therefore this early warning radar is urging you to mark your diaries for this event in Cape Town and prepare your travel arrangements, the reunion shall be planned for the dates 3rd to 8th March. See you ALL here then without fail.

Other than the above the past quarter has been relatively quiet on the GBOBA front but further meetings are scheduled, thus consult the newsletters for further information.

FORTHCOMING CAPE TOWN EVENTS

- Venue: Royal Cape Yacht Club, Duncan Road, Table Bay Harbour.
- Date & time: Tuesday 8th September, ***time to be advised***, lunch served at 1300.
 - Lunch cost: R42 p.p - Partners welcome
- Subject: ***we are trying to get a speaker of interest which is to be confirmed***
 - RSVP: Kathy or Louise or Jacky – phone 021 788 5957 or email cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za by Monday 1200, 1st September.
- ***NB: At the time of going to press we have not received confirmation from the speaker. Arrangements will be confirmed to all local members by e-mail once this has been arranged. We suggest that those not on e-mail please phone one of the committee members closer to the time for an update.***

AGM & COMMISSIONING DAY LUNCH	WAR MEMORIAL SERVICE
2010 SATURDAY 6 TH MARCH	2010 SUNDAY 7 TH MARCH
2011 SATURDAY 5 TH MARCH	2011 SUNDAY 6 TH MARCH

SOS

NAME	CLASS	LAST KNOWN LOCATION
Dean Foster	1980	Kestell, Free Sate
Paul van Rensburg	1972	Cape Town

Michael Downes	1985	Tauranga, New Zealand
David Smith	1942/43	Fuengirola, Spain
John Claasen	1980	Cape Town
Schalk Neethling	1959/60	Daniels Kuil, Northern Cape
Sean Mickleburgh	1981	Hillcreast, Kwa-Zulu Natal

Despite my best efforts I have been unable to trace any of the above. Please assist and revert to Cape Town Chairman.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

A.M MACKAY 1944/45. Alastair and his wife, Ann, were recently attacked in their East London home. Sadly Alastair did not survive the attack and passed away 17th July. 1946 he went to sea with Ellerman & Bucknall and in April of the same year joined the British Tanker Company. Served on tankers and on tugs in Persian Gulf ports, promoted Chief Officer in March 1953. 1954 returned to S.A. and sailed with Thesen Coast Lines. After achieving Master's Certificate he joined the General Botha as Third Officer at Gordon's Bay teaching navigation and cargo work. Thereafter joined Landing & Shipping Company of East Africa as cargo superintendent in Mombasa and Dar es Salaam. 1957 returned to S.A. and joined S.A. Harbours. Served in most ports and vessels and retired as Port Captain. He was instrumental in founding the S.A. Marine Pilots' Association. In 1995 he became an independent marine surveyor and shipbroker in East London. 1999 retired.

Alastair was a fine gentleman and very knowledgeable in his trade. He submitted regular interesting articles to this publication and always promoted the maritime industry of South Africa.

H. TURKSTRA 1981. Henk was with the Transnet National Port Authority when he unexpectedly passed away whilst inspecting his tug in dry dock.

H.C. BERRY 1932/33. Hugh served as cadet with Anglo Saxon Petroleum Company. His war service included; November 1939 - HMS Comorin, HMS Queen of Bermuda (AMC) and finally HMS Tay, a River Class Frigate. Was first Lieutenant, initially midshipman and Sub Lt RNR. Then LT SADF seconded to the Royal Navy. After the war, he was in the textile business until retirement. Deceased 16th May 2009.

H.N. WILCOCKS 1955/56. Henry was a Silver Medalist on the Bothie. After GB he joined Stewart & Lloyds for 26 years, numerous transfers around Africa. 1982 moved to Cape Town and joined Inkledon Engineering and later MAC Steel for six years. 1997 retired. Deceased 09/05/2009.

P.W. GOURLEY 1949/50. Passed away earlier this year. We have no career detail of Patrick and any contribution would be appreciated. Similarly we would like details of his namesake or family member, Denis Gourley 1938/40 who passed away in 1981.

E. EBELTHITE 1928/29. (Also see obituary included in the KZN Branch Newsletter below) Reported in "Both watches" 1952; in command of the Dredger "Springbok." Eric served four-year apprenticeship with Andrew Weir on their Luxmi and after obtaining qualifications, two years on the Tinho followed by two years sailing with William Cotts of London. On declaration of WWII Eric joined Elder Dempster sailing on the Cochrane that survived the war convoy duties. Late 1942 spent six months with the S.A. Air Force and then joined the S.A. Harbour Service. Here he served in all ranks in all ports and retired as Port Captain of Durban in 1976. Later continued with contract work as master of harbour dredgers until final retirement in 1982. Deceased 08/05/2009.

Our sincere condolences to family and ship mates.

B.H. LAWRENCE 1944/45 – reminisce from Dennis Foster 1944/45.

I was very sad to hear of Brian's recent death, Brian and I were very good friends on the training ship and in later years. After Bothie in 1946 we both joined Blue Funnel Shipping

Line, now operating under another name. The company's office was in Liverpool, England and at that time had a fleet of approximately 120 ships, having lost some 40 ships during WWII. Brian and I were appointed to our first ship, the twin screw steam ship Diomed. Jimmey [James] Barber joined us as well. [Note: we have no detail of James Barber 1944/45 and would appreciate any contribution.] We were known as midshipmen, not cadet officers. Anyway, Brian and I served the next ten years with this company until we both obtained our Master FG certificates and then joined the S.A. Harbours as first officers on the tugs and dredgers. I am not sure what happened to Jimmy Barber but I believe he went to Australia. Brian stayed with the Harbour Service until about 1960 and then said to me that the harbour service was not for him and was going back to sea. He joined Safmarine as first officer and soon after was given command of various ships. I have vivid memories of him being Master of one of Safmarine's heavy lift ships, the mv Van Der Stel. Brian stayed with Safmarine for many years until about 1988 when he left Safmarine and joined an international charter company; his role was monitoring the ships charters and cargoes carried. He would ensure the various cargoes were properly loaded and delivered. He subsequently married and settled in Taiwan from where he carried on this particular job. I last had contact with Brian when we both celebrated the 1944/45 50th reunion in Cape Town in 1995. We had a wonderful time.

VANCOUVER BOTHIES – Gerry Stalling 1953/54.

Gerry recently arranged a GBOBA reunion over *there*, a number of interesting photographs are posted on our website. Gerry writes; Managed to get seven of us together, at Maple Bay @ the Brigantine pub for lunch (20th June), down the road from where Jamie had his farm. Mike Davis' wife (Virginia) isn't due back from Labrador till Tuesday. Mike Briant's wife was at a wedding but he opted for the Bothies. 7 out of 9 from the 'Island' is not a bad turnout, I am still working on getting a fuse lit under the mainland guys and shall see whether I can 'con' somebody in Washington state to throw a braai or something. Ainsworth & Douglas are newly arrived retirees from the 'east' (coast). It would make for equidistant travel for Vancouver, Island & Portland (and Granite falls). Simon Lisiecki is coming down from Alaska to do a 'wooden boat' building course (one year), he'll be in Port Townsend WA, across from Victoria. I had a good trip to Montreal (two weeks), but didn't get spare time to contact the three Ottawa guys, maybe next year when I go. Doing an Alaska Cruise in July (two weeks), & will try to contact Lisiecki then. [Great to see the GB is alive and well over there.]

SCRANBAG

S.R. GALLOWAY 1965 #2265. (nickname ROY alias PUKE). It was us who put a coco pan through the pump station on the mountain which left Cape Town without water for a couple of days. Great sailing on False Bay, aft main and check fore! Good snorkelling and fishing as well. Girls were a problem, not enough to go around, luckily I had my cousin in Worcester where I spent my off weekends. Joined Safmarine (who else?), first ship was SA Seafarer.(happy ship). Did one trip to UK west coast Wales & Scotland. Ran aground on rocks off Moullie Point on return voyage. Joined SA Statesman shortly thereafter (crappy ship) got taken off in Walvis Bay and flown back to Cape Town for the Seafarer hearing. Captain Ian Branch temporarily lost his licence and I lost all interest in the sea. I felt we were treated rather badly by the shore-wallahs (not Saf. they were great, but the bureaucracy who didn't know their port from starboard) who treated us as some form of low-life. I was due to rejoin on a RoRo in LM, but due to passport problems and the fact that I had lost everything (including my mini-baggpipes) I resigned. I joined Barclays Bank DCO in Pietersburg, and worked there till 1969. Passed all my courses and obtained an incomplete B.Comm through UNISA. Got a job at the University of the North as an Asst. Buyer, worked my way through the ranks and retired as a Director (Financial Systems) in 2002. I have played senior club cricket, provincial tennis and presently provincial bowls.(Limpopo if you are interested). P.S. don't ask where my alias comes from.

J.E. SHEWELL 1953/54. "I live in Aberdeen Scotland and am retired. I must admit I feel a bit disconnected from S.A.T.S. My life is so different from where I started in the Merchant Navy, despatched there by my Father all those years ago, though I am still connected indirectly to the sea as Volunteer Chairman of the RNLI Aberdeen Lifeboat Fundraising Committee. I created and ran an audio visual, exhibition and an oil industry information service for 26 years to then sell it and retire. My main interest is photography, a hobby I have had most of my life. I am a member of the Bon Accord Steam Engine Club, traction engines, not railway. I do the publicity and photography and the web site so life is never dull. Interestingly enough, I get hits on the site from South Africa and also featured the James Hall Museum nr. Jo'burg while visiting my Daughter who lives in nearby Pretoria. I think it is amazing that the interest in the organisation persists to this day and no doubt due to the communication between old salts and the work of the office bearers. I did attend one meeting at Cape Town a while ago while on holiday with my brother Bill Shewell [1951/52] who still participates and lives in Cape Town."

P.G. STACEY 1964 #2253. 1965 -1970 Safmarine - cadet, 3/o, acting 2/o - Reefer, general cargo, tankers. 1970 -1973 Durban Lines - c/o, master. 1973-1974 Harbour Service Durban - tug mate. 1975-1977 DOT Ship Surveyor Durban. 1978-1981 Mark Harvey & Ass - marine surveyor, partner. 1982-1984 Bulk Charters (Pty) Ltd -bulk ship management - operations Director. 1985-2009 Island View Shipping - bulk ship management - ops manager, pool ops manager. 2009- ?? Retired?? - Who knows - watch this space!!. Other industry related interests: ASABOSA Durban chairman - years ???. Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers - fellow - education officer, committee member. NSRI - coxswain and station commander Durban - about 13 years.

R.B. PREISS 1964 #2250. Brain sailed with Safmarine in 1965/66 before leaving the sea and joining Ford Motor Company in Port Elizabeth. Eventually he was based in Johannesburg, responsible for exports into Ford Europe. 2009 retired and returning to Port Elizabeth.

R.A. HIND 1954/55 #1884. "Read your excellent newsletter and noted with interest W R Flannagan's plan to set up a New Zealand branch, I am prepared to help him in his endeavours. For myself I am keeping well, and taking a break from my Paddleboat. It is the duck shooting season and it is not wise plying the rivers with excitable shooters along the banks blazing away while we pass by. The bl----- authorities made here made me take a course in small boat engineering stating that a Master's ticket is not sufficient. At 71 years old and with over 50 years experience with ships and boats I was to say the least a little bit peeved. Pleased to say I passed and am awaiting my offshore Launch Masters Certificate." We look forward to the establishment of our NZ Branch; perhaps you could teach the locals to play rugby.

W. HEPPLWHITE 1988. 1997 William left Richard's Bay for Durban and joined Maritech Services, consultants and surveyors to the legal and commercial maritime industry. 2009 Operations Manager at Hoegh RSA H.O. Then transferred to India with Hoegh Autoliners as General Manager Operations.

H.J. SHIRLEY 1976 #2315. "On my side I am now in my 10th year in Mozambique and currently the Port Authority Director. I was Operations Director until beginning of 2008. MPDC is splitting the two functions of Operations and Port Authority into a more formal structure. Looking forward to attending one of your lunches in the not too distant future. Have to admit that as an old Fish Hoek boy the Seven Seas Club venue has appeal!" Indeed, and the Seven Seas Club is now run by Old Boy Chris Els, class of 1971, so we are assured of a tumultuous welcome there.

K.B.T. OAKES 1975 #2501. "Received this months email and see you are looking for me. [Indeed] I have returned to sea after 27 years ashore. I spent 21 years with the Spar Group as I.T Manager and six years running my own hardware business. Sadly this didn't work out. Joined Smit Amandla Marine in November last year to get my sea time in to get my ticket re-

instated. I passed again in April this year and am presently on the Smit Amandla (John Ross) as 2nd Mate.”

J.P. LAMBERG 1976 #2553. Previously Jon was the owner of J.P. Lamberg & Associates based in Richard’s Bay. “Diane and I relocated from Richards Bay to Durban in March 2009. Still surveying, but enjoying the increase in cultural events and looking forward to chewing the fat with a few Bothy Boys.” Never mind chewing fat; it is Castle and biltong.

S.C. VILJOEN 1067 #2319. Chris has been AWOL for a while but the OB network finally reeled him in. “I am now semi-retired, doing the occasional jobs for Oldendorff Carriers and Saga Forest Carriers when they are short. I am living in Coqueiral, a small coastal community north of Vitoria in Brazil. I recently attended the IFSMA AGM on behalf of SOMMSA at the request of Roy Martin. It was an interesting experience to see what is up with safety these days. Most of the ships I deal with have PRC crews, so not much communication there. If you and Kathy ever decide to make a trip to Brazil, be sure to look me up. Rio is just an hour from here.” Now there is an interesting proposal.

C.T. CLARKE 1947/48 #1506. I have put some of the old pictures of my two years on the Bothie in a blog. Anybody interested will find it on <http://cadet1506.blogspot.com/> Warmest greetings from Australia.” The capabilities of our members; amazing.

D.C. SNOWDOWNE 1958/59 #2126. Dave has been in the Forestry and Sawmilling industry since leaving the Ship. 2003 Operations Manager of Koppers Arch Wood Protection. 2009 Retired.

J. CARSE 1961/62 #2199. After being on the AWOL list for a while we eventually had word from him. 1975 to 1999 with Portnet, last three years as Marketing and Port Manager, port of Cape Town. 1999 returned to sea with S.A. Marine Corporation as Chief Officer and later with Safmarine. 2000-2006 GM, Lamnalco Nigeria and Oman. 2006-seconded to Abu Dhabi JV ADNOC-Lamnalco. So he is still happily working in Abu Dhabi.

1960-61 Year Reunion - Keith Burchell

The 1960-61 year intake (the last intake to have the privilege?? of having chums) are busy organising a Re-Union in March 2011. Keith Burchell, Phil Wade and Pete Coetzee took up the task earlier in the year and have already had two gatherings of Obies at Phil Wade’s town house in Devonvale Golf Estate in Stellenbosch. This was supposedly to start the ball rolling. A number of our chums and year shipmates were able to attend the second one, and thanks to Phil and his lovely wife Anne a great time was had by all. Since then a number of volunteers have put their hands up to join the organising committee i.e. Des and Mary Frylinck and Dannie Meyer’s wife Anna. Any other takers? This last few weeks we have been getting down the serious business of organising a Hooley to beat all of the past reunions. Hopefully the proposed list of events extending from Thursday 3rd March 2011 and ending on Tuesday 8th March 2011 will end with an event where all Obies, besides having the chance of meeting with 60/61’s at the AGM and Lunch, will get the further dubious pleasure of partying with all of them (At least those left standing) at a combined event probably a Dinner Dance (TBC) in aid of GBOBA Funds. We will also be looking at inviting those Obies that are interested (Especially those from 60-61 and 61-62) to join us at some events still to be confirmed. We will be establishing a Web Site linked to the GB website and those interested will be able to keep track of the planned events and those planning to attend. We will also be regularly giving event updates to the News letter. Peter Coetzee will be liaising with the GBOBA committee and coordinating all the events, to ensure the smooth running of both ours and the combined events. We appeal to anybody with contact information on the following missing Obies to let us know there whereabouts and contact details. Rob Hoykaas, John Nezar, Derek Russell, Martinus Roelofse, Robin Van Den Berg (last known to be in George), Paul Seamark and Peter Von Abo. In addition we are keen to get in contact with family or widows of the following that have past over the side: Dudley Buys, Chris Kriederman, Paul

Morgan and Dick Ophorst. Finally we are also interested in contacting the following that left during the course: Gordon Maxwell and Johnnie Tofte.

The reunion organizers have created their own website which contains some interesting details including their schedule of events. Site name: <http://gb60reunion.yolasite.com>

THE LEGEND LIVES ON – ships badges on Selborne Dock walls.

In the "old days" ships which entered the Selborne [dry] Dock, Simon's Town, for the first time could paint their badge on the dock wall. SATS GENERAL BOTHA was dry docked six times [as GENERAL BOTHA] and duly painted [and repainted] her badge on the wall. The custom was that you painted [or repainted] your own badge and the badge of another ship unlikely to call again, each time you were docked. This custom has effectively now fallen away and anyway some of the work that was done was very poor and inaccurate. Nowadays the Naval Dockyard repaints all the badges every few years and endeavours to do it accurately and professionally. Recently the Simon's Town Naval Dockyard contacted Ian Manning for a detailed picture of our ship's badge. Thus we expect to see our old ships badge accurately spruced up soon.

KZN BRANCH NEWSLETTER DURBAN - JULY 2009

We continue to enjoy excellent monthly lunches at the RNYC and have mixed with some interesting visitors from afar, including an Engineer from a trawler that hails from Iceland. Capt Eric Ebelthite, 397, 1928/29 passed over the side in May. At the time he was the oldest Bothie boy. See a brief history below, kindly provided by his daughter, Avenel.

The KZN **Christmas lunch** is booked for **Tuesday 15th December** at the Westville Club. This is the day before the public holiday so Obies can really relax and have an extended get together. This is the same venue as last year where we enjoyed a very good lunch. All agreed that the access and parking are very convenient. We have secured bigger room so should be more comfortable.

On Monday 13th July 4 Durban based Obies set off for Weston Agricultural College near Mooi River and met up with a group of Obies and wives from Pietermaritzburg and the Midlands. We met at the memorial to horses and mules that were killed in service during various wars but particularly the Anglo-Boer War. The memorial is one of, apparently only three in the world: the other two being in Britain and Argentina.

The Bothie's interest in the memorial rests on the fact that tens of thousands of horses were brought to South Africa by sea from all corners of the globe. Over 300 000 horses etc were lost during the Anglo-Boer war and it is estimated that 30 000 horses and mules were buried on the farmlands on, and immediately surrounding, Weston. An added motivation for the visit is that Gen Louis Botha was born in nearby Greytown and he campaigned very successfully in that area.

According to The Witness of 2nd June 2009

"The memorial is not only in recognition of the thousands of British Army horses who arrived at Weston Remount Depot to be broken in and, or, recover from the weeks-long sea and train journeys that brought them here, but also pays tribute to the thousands of Boer horses who served loyally alongside their masters during the Anglo-Boer War,"The memorial has been designed in the shape of a horseshoe, mounted by an obelisk-shaped monument created out of old horseshoes found on Weston's farmlands. The structure is topped off by a specially crafted bronze statue.....The monument is backed by a Wall of Remembrance where plaques commemorating the animals lost in battle have been mounted. A box containing some bones of horses buried on Weston Farm was sealed within the Wall of Remembrance." For further information see:

[http://www.witness.co.za/index.php?showcontent&global_id\]=23468](http://www.witness.co.za/index.php?showcontent&global_id]=23468)
and <http://www.merchant-navy-ships.com/index.php?id=99,0,0,1,0,0>

Ray Walker constructed an attractive display box housing a GB plaque, brief history of the Bothie and a picture of the ship. At a short ceremony we handed over the display and “A Name Amongst Seafaring Men” to the Weston staff. The items will be displayed in the museum. Two Officers from Durban, namely Matthew Everitt and Nigel Lewis-Walker, who have a mutual interest in the memorial, were also there and presented us with the book outlining the history of Umvoti Mounted Rifles. They also presented us with a breach block of a 4.7” naval gun found on the battlefield. We were also given some horse shoes found in local fields.

After the ceremony we viewed the very interesting museum dedicated to horses and then moved on to the Bierfassl restaurant. There we enjoyed the local beer and various German dishes. After a wonderful meal and fellowship we left for Durban but en-route popped in at a wine farm owned by George Foulis’ niece and husband.

Overall we enjoyed a most interesting day and it was good to meet up with the Obies and wives from the Midlands area.



ERIC EBELTHITE (28 December 1913 to 8 May 2009) by Avenel Ebelthite.

Eric Ebelthite attended Umgeni Road Infant and Primary School (now the Provincial Licensing Bureau) in Percy Osborne Road until 1927. Spent two years (1928 and 1929) in the Training ship “General Botha” at Simon’s Town and then went to sea and served an apprenticeship of four years in Andrew Weir’s Indian-African Line ship “Luxmi,” a motor ship 384 feet long with a speed of ten knots. Traded at regular three-month intervals between South and East African ports and Bay of Bengal ports from Colombo to Rangoon with cargoes of gold, coal, coke and wattle bark northwards and gunnies (bags) of rice, tea, teak, coconut oil, wax and gramophone records southwards. This went on for four years after which he obtained his 2nd Mate’s Certificate at Durban in 1934. Nearly two years was then spent in another of Andrew Weir’s ships the “Tinhov” which traded to the Far East, Singapore, Hong Kong, Saigon (Ho Chi Minh) from Durban and Lourenco Marques (now Maputo) via Madagascar, Reunion and Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. Cargoes were coal northwards and rice, clothing, fireworks, timber and matches southwards. During this time duties as 3rd Mate were carried out. Passed certificate for Mate at the end of this period at Durban in 1936 and then spent six months in the “Incomati” (also Andrew Weir) which was a new ship built for the trade between South Africa and India. Her sister ships were the “Isipingo” and the “Inchanga”. Next ship was the “Saint Dunstan” owned by William Cotts of London. Here about a year was spent as 2nd Mate trading with a bulk cargo of scrap (South Africa via Mauritius to Japan). Then with a cargo of bagged sugar from Cirebon in Java to Casablanca in Morocco and from there with phosphates back home to Durban. Many coal voyages followed on the S.A Coast, Durban

and Lourenco Marques to Cape Town and after about a year in another Wm Cotts vessel the "Saint Agnes" to Mombasa, Dar Es Salaam and Port Sudan. Eric passed for Master (Foreign going) in March 1939. The day after war (1939 - 45) was declared in September joined one of Elder Dempster's ships the "Cochrane" as 2nd Mate. She took him to many West African ports from Doula to Freetown and across the Atlantic to Bermuda, Philadelphia, New York, Sydney, Nova Scotia and Montreal. Cargoes of sugar (to America and Canada), dynamite to the Gold Coast and many other South African products, wines, tinned fruit and jam, beer and a lot of foodstuffs. All of which was in short supply on the West African coast because the ships normally trading there were now employed in the war effort to other ports. The southwards cargoes from Montreal were mostly general with regular shipments (about 1000 tons each voyage) of dynamite to the Gold Coast. The ship also made regular voyages to Great Britain, all of which were in convoy. However, she was a very lucky ship and was never subjected to any bombing and only once sighted a German submarine. Although the convoy was attacked on this occasion and several ships were sunk, the "Cochrane" escaped. Eric left her in August 1942. Her good luck continued throughout the war and in 1946 she was back on the West African trade, now oil-fired. Six months was spent in the South African Air Force in 1942 and 1943 but this service did not profit the SAAF (although he enjoyed it) and in April of that year he transferred to the Harbour Service of the SAR& H (now the National Port Authority) and started his career as a Harbour Marine officer. Service was performed in many of Durban's harbour craft - tugs, hoppers and dredgers and in 1951 promotion came and he was moved to Cape Town as Master of a grab dredger, the "Springbok". She was about 180ft long, fitted with two cranes, which worked the grabs. These were lowered to the bottom of the harbour and grabbed up mud and sand where the bottom was too shallow and dropped into the hopper. When the dredger was loaded she was steamed out into deep water and the doors in the bottom of the ship opened and the spoil allowed to slide out. After a year in Cape Town he transferred to Port Elizabeth for a year. Next promotion was to Durban as Master of the tug "Sir David Hunter" in 1953. A further promotion as Master was to East London with the family this time two years later in 1955 to the Special Class dredger "Rietbok". This was South Africa's largest (at that time) suction dredger. She had a huge pipe about 3 ½ feet in diameter in her bow connected to a pump, which worked exactly like a vacuum cleaner. This pipe was lowered to the bottom of the sea (usually outside the harbour) and sand sucked up into a hopper as in the small dredger with a grab crane. In 1956 promotion came as Pilot at East London and in 1958 they transferred back to Durban and remained there for the remainder of his life. Successive steps up the ladder followed to Assistant Port Captain when he spent many shifts in the Port Control office controlling shipping in and out of the harbour from 1967 to 1973 and then as Deputy Port Captain and Port Captain until retirement came at the end of 1976. After a year at home he was re-employed in the harbour again as a casual Mate acting as Master of the hopper "Eland" working with the dredger "Steenbok" in Durban, Richards Bay (twice) and Port Elizabeth. Five years of this brought him to the end of his association with the Harbours in 1982. Since 1982 he had been really retired except for an active life maintaining the two houses he had owned and several cars.

At the age of 90 Eric completed his Memoirs entitled "Memoirs of a Master Mariner, Boy and Man – Capt Eric Ebelthite" which gave an informative and entertaining account of not only his childhood but also his life at sea and home.

Eric married Madge on 15 September 1945 and they had 12 children (6 boys and 6 girls).

Two of his sons followed him into the harbour service, Axel retiring in Richards Bay a few years ago and Rodger who relocated to Dubai and now works as a Marine Pilot there.

For the last five years they lived with their son Ivan and his wife Rosemary first in Cowies Hill and then for the last year of their lives lived in Uvongo on the South Coast when Ivan and Rosemary moved there.

Eric's memories from his life at sea and in the harbour service remained with him until his death and he could recall in details incidents that occurred during his time at General Botha, at sea and in the harbour service.

Madge passed away on 29 March 2009 at the age of 85 and Eric passed away almost six weeks later on 8 May 2009 at the age of 95. Eric remained a devoted, loving and respected husband, father, father in law, grandfather to 27, great grandfather to 14 and brother to his two surviving sisters right to the end of his life and will be sorely missed by all.

UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH – Ted Fisher

The GBOBA/CONWAY Summer Lunch was held as forecast on 19 July at The Goodwood Park Hotel Golf & Country Club near Chichester Sussex. There were 22 guests who enjoyed an excellent lunch with plenty of banter and humour as would be expected on such an occasion! A number who could not attend were kind enough to give apologies, naturally appreciated.

GBOBA- Donald & Kathleen Neaves, Chris Nash, Doug Wrathmall, Ken & Pam Snow (over from Isle of Wight) Keith & Liz Collins together with daughter Emma, Hon Members Alan & Maureen Garton (having just returned from a Norwegian Cruise aboard P&O's Aurora) myself & Barbara.

CONWAY- Chris & Anne Nelson, Alan & Viv Burns, John & Myra Tubb, Val Murray – great pleasure to have attend Ricky & Maggie Flint over on a visit from East London SA, Ricky an Hon OBIE. We sailed together as cadets on the Kenilworth Castle way back in 1956, much water flowed since and many a yarn spun during subsequent visits to their lovely home in Seavale. Rick & John Tubb were fellow cadets on the Conway

Contacts- from **Harold Lincoln 59/60 #31** whilst mainly resident in Hingham MA USA, has a home in Lymington Hants. Harold was over on a visit and hopes to attend our Christmas Lyndhurst meeting. I note from the website Harold has never provided details of his career since leaving the college so perhaps our Chairman could persuade accordingly! **Brian**

Georgeson 57/58 #2049 (all details available) came on enquiring the whereabouts of a said Richard Hellyer – hope Dick did not mind me passing on the information which enabled Brian to visit Dick & Barbara before returning to SA. Enjoyed a couple of long phone chats with Brian – I really enjoy country/hillwalking but, Brian..... mountain climbing Scotland & Norway!!

Capt Donald Neaves – previously I mentioned Donald assisted in the delivery of a new Isle of Wight ferry 'Wight Sun' from Croatia to Portsmouth. Well, for those still interested in matters nautical please visit the web : www.wightlink.co.uk/new-ships/wightsun..captains log.aspx. A very interesting read and pictures – Donald, is second from the right in main photograph!

Social- The next joint **GBOBA/ Conway function is on Sunday 6 December at The Crown Hotel Lyndhurst** – our Christmas Lunch, always an excellent event upon which to end the year. More details in the next Newsletter.

Finally, on a personal note I've taken on the role as Social Chair/Sec of our local Probus Club and also this year Vice-Chairman until April 2010 - felt quite honoured to be asked to fill the position. Probus is of course a club for retired businessmen. Monthly lunch with speaker, outings, walks. Our ladies also participate in social events. Interested to know whether Probus is available out in SA?

Finally, finally for those interested a couple of photographs will be posted out to Dennis Henwood for our website. All the very best to everyone,

Ted Fisher e-mail: tedefisher@aol.com Tel: +44(0)1903 744400 Mob: +44(0) 7702 635017

FROM THE GAUTENG BRANCH

The next Gauteng get-together will most probably be held during the first or second weekend

of September. At the time of writing the date and venue have yet to be finalised. Gauteng members will be individually advised closer to the meeting.

Southern Lunch

The next GENERAL BOTHA Southern Lunch will be held on Tuesday 20 October 2009 at the Seven Seas Club, Simon's Town at 1200 for 1300. Those wishing to attend are requested to telephone **Brad Wallace-Bradley** on **021-786-1957** [Ian Manning will be on vacation in the UK] **before 1700 on Friday 16 July 2009.**

Please note that the Seven Seas Club dress code requires shirts worn by members and their guests to have collars [i.e. no T-shirts or sweaters] and shoes to be worn with socks.

Australia Branch News

4th August, 2009.

On Saturday 19th July an informal lunch was held in Sydney. A good day was had by all. 15 attended including Old Boys Charles Parsons, Cedric Clarke, Stan Damp, John Mc Tavish, Grenville Stevens and Peter O'Hare.

Our next Lunch this year will be held in Sydney in late November.

Regards to all and please get in touch if you are going to be "Down Under"

Grenville Stevens (2189 60/61) Chairman

Andy Fotheringham (2525 '76) Vice Chairman

Peter O'Hare (2247 '64) Hon Secretary, Australia Branch.

3 San Giorgio Circuit, Castle Hill, NSW 2154. Email peteroh@bigpond.com.

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FRV AFRICANA : ELEGANCE AT SEA

By: Ivor Little – 1953/54

(This is the first episode of an interesting reflection of his career at sea and will be continued)

When I look back over a long career at sea - at good ships and at bad ships, happy and miserable ones - one very happy command stands out in my memory.

She was the 2 451.63 grt Fishery Research Ship *Africana*, owned by the South African Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism's Division of Sea Fisheries. She was the epitome of "Daddy's Yacht" – white with a red waterline, lots of gleaming brass work and topped off with an orange funnel with blue and white bands. Towards the end of my stay as Master her appearance was ruined when some government official suddenly woke up to the fact that the old apartheid flag colours of orange, white and blue were 'politically incorrect' and had the funnel summarily repainted blue with a black top. This clashed dramatically with the rest of the colour scheme, which then looked quite garish.

She was not a big ship, being 77.85 metres long and with a beam of 15.25 metres, but she had beautiful lines and looked very purposeful.

I remember arriving in my car on the quayside in Cape Town to take command and admiring the lovely curve of the soft-nosed stem as I approached her along the quay. She was absolutely immaculate with not a bit of rust anywhere. The companionway was fitted with a canvas strip bearing her name; there was an ornamental lifebuoy on a wooden stand at the head of the companionway; a stem jack for'ard and an ensign aft whilst her fishery protection pennant fluttered at the yardarm. Inside she was just as immaculate and everything shone and smelt of polish. I was instantaneously proud of my new command.

Unfortunately, as often happens, the smart appearance hid a very rotten core. The ship was propelled by two large electrical motors generating 895.2 kilowatts and which had suffered a major electrical "explosion", for want of a better term. These had been removed and sent up to Durban for rebuilding and the ship had been laid up for almost a year. Her engine room stood open to the sky and was a filthy, forlorn space. Her sea-going crew, although nicely

dressed in matching blue overalls, had degenerated into a quarrelsome bunch of “nine-to-fivers”, dominated by shop stewards, won’t works and layabouts. They had long since tired of a daily routine of polishing, shining and touching up paintwork and were more interested in going home on the early train. The only officer on board prior to my joining was the Purser, a pleasant efficient St Helenan out of his depth in trying to cope with indiscipline and laziness. My first job was thus to clean up this mess.

I boarded her in October 1998 and was joined by a Chief Officer a few days later. His name was George Foulis and he was a bluff shipmaster of many years experience. Without going into the gory details, it should be enough to say that between the three of us officers a pogrom ensued in which the crew found itself being dragooned back into shape. To be fair to all concerned, we were helped by the sudden air of bustle brought on by the arrival back from Durban of the engines and the fixing of a date for going to sea.

By early December 1998 she was ready. The dry-land sailors among the crew had quietly moved on to other government ships, where the possibility of going to sea was less obvious, and the shop stewards had exhausted every avenue of litigation. “Trials Day” came around, the engines worked and the ship declared “ready for sea”. I then received the rest of my officers. The Engineer Officers had been drifting aboard slowly as the engines were installed and now it was the turn of the deck crowd. On sailing day I found to my surprise that I had a Supernumerary Master, a Chief Officer and a Second Officer with Class 1 certificates and command experience, and a Third Officer who was a qualified Patrol Boat Master, also with command experience in that field. Likewise, the engine room was overflowing with certificates – even the Fourth Engineer had a Class 1 certificate that he was in the process of revalidating! I also had, of all people, a radio officer, even though the ship had been newly fitted with the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS). Thus weighed down with nautical knowledge, plus a carload of engine experts (one of whom had a second mate’s certificate!) we sailed 120 nautical miles northwest into the South Atlantic from Cape Town and then back again, all in a south easterly gale.

When we got back in we found the paint stripped from her bows and the bar stripped of its stock by the experts, but the engines were pronounced fit for service.

So far, so good. We then stored the ship for her first scientific voyage of 1999 and stood down over Christmas and the New Year. *(To be continued in the next newsletter)*

Income v Expenditure

It is the holiday season in a small town, but it is raining so there is not too much business happening. Everyone is heavily in debt. Fortunately, a rich Russian tourist arrives in the foyer of the small local hotel. He asks for a room and puts a \$100 bill on the reception counter, takes a key and goes to inspect the room located up the stairs on the third floor. The hotel owner hurriedly takes the banknote to his butcher to whom he owes \$100. The butcher rushes off to his supplier to pay his debt of \$100. The wholesaler rushes off to the farmer who sold him the pigs to pay his debt of \$100. The farmer is relieved to pay the postmaster for services provided on credit. The postmaster runs off to the hotel to pay the balance of \$100 for the hire of a room for his family wedding reception.

At that moment the Russian tourist comes back down to reception and informs the hotel that the proposed room is unsatisfactory, takes his \$100 back and departs. There was no profit or income, but everyone no longer has any debt, and the small townspeople look optimistically towards the future. *Could this be a solution to the global economic crisis?!*

The Pessimist complains about the wind, the Optimist expects it to change and the Realist adjusts his sails. (author unknown)

"A cloudy day is no match for a sunny disposition." (anonymous)

"In nature there are neither rewards nor punishments; there are consequences." (Robert Green Ingersoll).

With greetings from the Scribe dhenwood@iafrica.com