# S.A.T.S.


**PO Box 22015,**
**Glenashley, 4022**

**Chairman:** Derek McManus
Tel. (O): +27 (0)31 3039563
Tel. (H): +27 (0)31 7673719

**Secretary:** Ernest Nellmapius
ernestn@saol.com
Cell: +27 (0) 835328198
Tel (O): +27 (0)31 5620005

**PO BOX 4515**
**CAPE TOWN**
**8000**
**Chairman:** Tony Nicholas

cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za
Tel. (O): +27 (0)21 421 4144
Fax: +27 (0)86 604 0811
Cell: +27 (0)82 555 2877
Tel. (H): +27 (0)21 788 5957


# GENERAL BOTHA OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

http://www.generalbotha.co.za

## August 2011

## 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.

### CAPE TOWN BRANCH – SEPTEMBER LUNCH

Joint function with SOMMSA and an interest talk by Capt. Nick Sloane or Capt. Kevin Tate on the grounding of the Bulk Carrier MV "OLIVA" on Tristan da Cunha in March 2011.

**Date:** **Tuesday 13 March 2011**
**Time:** **11:30 for 12:00**
**Venue:** **Royal Cape Yacht Club, Duncan Dock, Port of Cape Town**
**Bookings:** **Cathy Nicholas 021-7885957 or cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za**
**Cost:** **R50-00 per person for the lunch**

### GAUTENG BRANCH

The Gauteng Branch will be holding its Spring Function on Sunday, 16 October. The function will take the form of the usual luncheon and members will be advised individually of the venue at a later date, when arrangements have been finalized.

### GBOBA/CONWAY SOLENT.....Christmas Lunch resurrected for 2011

As the result of discussion, has been decided to again try and hold a combined GBOBA/CONWAY Christmas Lunch this year, venue the **Crown Hotel Lyndhurst date Sunday 4 December 2011 Time from noon** for a full **3 Course Lunch** to include **coffee and mints** at a very reasonable cost of **£24.50** per head. Chris Nelson of Conway Solent Branch is doing all the arranging, however, I shall co-ordinate and accept cheques for GBOBA members!We need an early response as the **Hotel require our deposit by 1st November** so chaps, seek out your diaries and let your ladies convince you to join in what has in the past been a most social occasion. Please, an initial yes or no response to me, Ted Fisher e-mail. Ted Fisher Tel: +44 1903 744400 Mob: +44 7702 635017 e-mail: tedefisher@aol.com

### Appeal from Colin Johnsen

I am compiling the history of the Dept of Maritime Studies at Durban University of Technology and would like anyone who has information on the period 1953 to 1970 to please submit this to me via colin.johnsen@gmail.com. Thanks. (*See page 12-13*)

**KZN BRANCH NEWS** - Ernest Nellmapius

Monthly lunches at the RNYC remain a great get together so Obies come along on the first Wednesday of every month and join your old Ship mates.The past few months have been quiet and cold in Durban and there is nothing much to report on.

**Christmas Lunch** – We have tentatively booked on Thursday 1st December at the same venue as last year. Watch this space!

On the right is a bit of history regarding one of our local Obies. Unfortunately this picture was not included in the last newsletter that showed Keith Meikeljohn. Both Colin and Keith served during 1956 aboard the Bank line ship, Luxmi.

*Right*: **Colin Knowler painting**

THE NATAL MERCURY, FRIDAY, AUGUST 3, 1956.

PLAN'

Sea Still Draws S.A. Youth

THERE has been recent criticism that young South Africans are not following in the footsteps of their forebears, who answered the call of the sea and created a great seafaring tradition.

But the critics are sometimes proved wrong and these two pictures show two young South Africans who have chosen the merchant service as a career, and have just returned to Durban in the Bank Line vessel Luxmi, after their first long voyage.

Colin Knowler (19) (left), of Escombe, Natal, was on duty yesterday painting the ship's bows. His thoughts were far from the monotony of life ashore as he hung suspended over the ship's side and recalled his recent trip to Japan, China and India.

Keith Meiklejohn (18) (below), from Benoni, Transvaal, smiles at life from the deck of the Luxmi. He intends to spend his life afloat. Both are apprentices aboard the Luxmi and are former Botha boys.

(Story Page 17)

**FROM THE BRIDGE OF s.s. CAPE TOWN** – Tony Nicholas

Besides the GBOBA it appears much of my time is measured by our rugby calendar. But considering my team's rather embarrassing crash at the semi final of the Super Tournament and our Springboks dismal performance in the Tri-Nations Tournament, best I devote my energy to GBOBA and stock up my fridge for the Rugby World Cup. Wonder which team to support, any suggestions? The content of this newsletter covers all our recent activities and initiatives; thus no need for me to expand on the various subjects. EXCEPT! The Lawhill bursary trust which has launched itself most successfully. As previously reported in our May edition the initiative was floated after a visit to the school during our March reunions. A letter of appeal has recently gone out and the response has been most encouraging, many members pledging financial support to this commendable initiative. For this the committee is most grateful and encouraged. Our sincere thanks to all. One such respondent and contributor Claude Dickson 1950/51 writes: "Just for the records, Frank, Warwick and I were all sent to the Bothie by the GBOBA. After my father died in 1944 it took them some time to discover where we were - at the Marsh Memorial Home in Cape Town (which still exists I believe). We were given the choice of going to the Bothie or staying where we were - it was no contest - and all our lives were changed for the better thanks to the perserverance of the GBOBA." Further news is reported herein by Keith Burchell. Fair winds all.

**Howard Davis Function hosted by Cape Windjammers**

Members will recall that we had previously reported on the excellent initiative by a group of people in forming the Cape Windjammers Education Trust with the purpose of exposing our youth to sail training. This trust has made progress and is in the process of evaluating some available craft for fitting out as a sail training vessel. In the meantime the owner of the Howard Davis [our GB training yacht of the GB Granger Bay era] willingly agreed to the Cape Windjammers using the HD during our Cape three week winter school holiday. Thus three

groups of nine youngsters of various ages spent five days each living and sailing on board the HD. A commendable initiative from which the youngsters given the opportunity can positively benefit. The Trust invited us GBOBA members to visit the HD whilst moored in the naval dockyard at Simon's Town. A group of us enjoyed their fine hospitality including lunch and refreshments on a fine sunny and warm winter day. We formally handed over a brass bell which was donated by our late Basil Bridgman which now forms the nucleus around which their training yacht shall be developed. The Chairman of the Trust comments:
"We appeal to any of your members who have the skills and the energy to volunteer for this project to come forward and be a part of what will be a historic moment in maritime training in South Africa. So if the association or the Trust feel that an active South African training ship would be an appropriate place to locate some of its memorabilia, then please note that we will need a nice big wheel - preferably from a sailing ship, a compass and binnacle, a bell, a walker log, and any such items that can once again have an active life of service to young South African sailors."

**SCRANBAG**

**P.A. POTGIETER 1973 #2452.** Pirate Pete spends much of his time earning a living in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. But they do let him out to attend some of our meetings here in the Cape together with dad class of 1945/46. Hope to hear from Peter soon.

**Kevin A. TATE 1976 #2542.** "I'm sitting on the mighty GLAS DOWR between Timor Leste and Australia. Thought I'd seen the last of the beast when she left SA. Towed her here from Singapore and now trying to hook her up to the mooring chains in 300m of water. Quite a few South Africans still aboard here."

**R.P. PAWLEY 1971 #2400.** During the course of our March reunion a group of us 1971 class mates gate crashed Roger's class at our Granger Bay Bothie. His initial incredulous look followed by a broad smile was a sight to behold. Roger sailed on various Safmarine vessels including the mail ship S.A. Vaal. After obtaining his Master's joined the harbour service in Port Elizabeth in 1980. 1983 he returned to Cape Town and joined the S.A.M.A. General Botha as a lecturer, subsequently named the Cape Peninsular University of Technology. Thus Roger is maintaining the Bothie traditions and follows in the footsteps of many fine Bothie officers.

**M.A. RIDDELL 1980 #2716.** Recently reported in a local business magazine, Mike has been promoted to Salvage Master at Svitzer Salvage Africa. He heads up the South African team of dedicated Salvage Experst and Divers. Well done Mike, we look forward to your "war stories".

**D.E. BARBIER 1955/56 #1927.** Dan has reported in; "We have sold our house and will be moving up to Benoni to my son. We are hoping to get a caravan and become gypsies for a while. I am also hoping to join up with the branch up there." Old Boys up there, watch out, the gypsy cometh.

**E.M. HURNER 1972 #2417.** A recent reunion notice prompted an interesting response from Eric, thanks for those kind words Eric. He writes further: "The situation with me has not changed that much since I last made my presence known to you about seven or so years ago. I still live in Switzerland, occasionally get to South Africa, but almost always to projects that are far off the beaten track, and with a tight time schedule. But this last bit of news has awakened the desire for some contact the next time I come to South Africa, so I shall make this known when I organise it." We look forward to your reunion, cheers.

**H.L. STROEBEL 1981 #2732.** Another report from Hilton; "We have relocated our office from London to Singapore. We are now known as Unicorn Shipping, a division of Grindrod Shipping Pte. Ltd. Island View Shipping has also become a division of Grindrod Shipping Pte. Ltd. We have moved into the same offices and will operate as separate brands, answering to a single Director. Myself and Hugh Scheffer, class 1971, sit in Singapore, with our technical and crewing support still in Durban." We now have four Old Boys based in Singapore, surely

sufficient for a monthly pub meet. Still await postal address and phone numbers from one though, namely Clive van Onselen.

**D. DREYER 1971 #2388.** Previously at sea with Safmarine. "My lungs collapsed at sea in 1975 and was told to go to Cable Restorer for a year before I could go back to sea, but decided I did not want to waste my time there , so went to university for a year to see if I would get into Vet school . I was fortunate enough to get into vet school and graduated from Onderstepoort in 1981.Was in practice for four years in Port Elizabeth, joined a partnership in Durban, then opened my own practice in Pietermaritzburg. We decided to leave SA, I sold my practice and emigrated to New Zealand in 1997. Been practicing in Private practice here in Kerikeri and then Auckland, and currently doing welfare vet work at the SPCA."

**N.A. WEST 1971 #2408.** Recent correspondence found Neville in Beira about to sail for Moma. On enquiring where Moma is; "It is south of Nacala and about 24 hour steaming north of Beira. I was on the same flight to Beira as Brian Greenwood 1952/53. He turned 75 on Friday last. He is sitting in Nampula now waiting for the weather to calm to also load a vessel in Moma. We are doing the function for the same Principal - him on his ship and me on mine. Small world." Brian have you not had enough yet?

**P.A.F. KNIGHT 1971 #2393.** The recent reunions have encouraged much correspondence between class mates. "Continued seagoing with Safmarine, which became Maersk, until 2004. Stayed ashore for a while, setting up our house in Green Point as a B and B. (The B and B continues, being run mostly by my wife, Karen). In 2005, the lure of matters maritime, as well as the need to earn actual money, I started working as an independent contractor for Noble Denton Marine Consultants in Aberdeen, Scotland which has continued to the present time (2011). (Noble Denton has recently merged with Germanische Lloyd). During this time, have worked both in the ND office in Aberdeen, as well as offshore, involved with a variety of oil industry related projects including vessel surveys and audits, wind farm load outs, rig moves, pipe lay operations and seismic surveys. A large amount of the work has been for BP, and am currently engaged for BP on a seismic OBC (Ocean Bottom Cable) survey in the North Sea. Just for your interest, heading back North on Sunday 26th - will be offshore for 5 weeks. Then Karen comes over and we will be boating on the canals in Holland for 2 weeks in August." What a life, sigh.

**C.H. JOHNSEN 1971 #2392.** Colin **s**ailed with Unicorn from cadet to Master on general cargo, container, tanker and offshore vessels. 1985-1990 with Portnet on tugs in Durban. 1990-1991 a Marine Surveyor based in Durban. 1992-1996 Lecturer in Maritime Studies at Technikon Natal. 1996-2002 Fleet Training Manager with Unicorn Shipping. 2002-2003 Training Manager of IDESS Training Centre, Subic Bay, Philippines. In 2003 returned to Durban and started own business as a maritime training consultant. In 2004 lecturer at the Durban University of Technology. From 2007 Head of Department, Maritime Studies.

**A. FORD 1971 #2391.** Alan joined Safmarine as Cadet and rose to Second Officer. Resigned after obtaining Chief Officer's Certificate. Joined IBM as Trainee Field Engineer. Progressed through the field support ranks, country support group, Product Development Group, Engineering and Scientific Group, and after 23 and a half years was retrenched. Subsequently self employed for a few years with Unix application support for BMW. Thereafter involved in industrial design projects across a broad spectrum of products for customers as well as projects of his own. Currently unofficially retired and keep occasionally busy with consulting on product design to an engineering company. Involved with sea scouting and currently look after sea scouting in Gauteng Province.

**F.A. KOP 1971 #2394.** Freddie writes in following the recent reunion; "After school in the Netherlands and my final 3 years in South Africa when we moved there in 1966, I joined Unicorn Shipping Lines in 1970 and passed my 2nd Mates exam in February 1973. I married Adrianne Patricia Botha in February 1973 with whom I have three sons. I left my sea life in October 1973 to take up a career in Corporate IT as a computer programmer with Sanlam in Bellville, a large Life Insurance company. In 1981 I moved into their banking group of

companies, Santambank, Trust Bank and Bankorpdata. In 1986 after 13 years in the Sanlam group of companies, I was offered a post as IT manager at Standard Bank of SA using leading edge computer technologies. I was promoted to Senior Manager in charge of all computer infrastructures. In my personal capacity, I acted as Chairman of Randburg Scout Group, the Randburg Civil Protection Volunteer Corpse and later the national Guest House Association of SA. In 1996, my wife and I started our own small hotel business (10 bedrooms). We bought a property in Cape Town, South Africa and managed that until 2001 when we sold it. We continued running our hotel business in the Cape Town area until May 2005 when due to declining tourism to Cape Town/SA, we decided to move to the UK. I qualified as a bookkeeper through the Institute of Certified Bookkeepers (ICB) in 2010.

**P.D. STOWE 1968 #2348.** 1969 Peter was at sea with Safmarine, 1977 obtained Master's and then appointed as Chief Officer and later Master on Safmarine's salvage tugs "John Ross" & "Wolraad Woltemade". 1984 joined Portnet [harbour service]. Worked through various appointments and ranks until appointed Deputy Harbour Master in Cape Town. 2004 appointed Harbour Master in Saldanha Bay. 2011 June - retired. Peter is now looking forward to more golf and more quality time on his boat fishing.

**A.E. CRABBE 1969 #2365.** Tony and Mike Meyer 1985 are with Platinum Yachts in Dubai. Tony writes; “As an update I worked at Dubai Dry Docks for 10 years from 1998 to 2008 as a dock master/pilot. In 1998 I joined Mike at Platinum Yacht Management. I am the Marine Super, CSO and DPA. P.S.- You asked what a “DPA” is: The DPA is the Designated Person Ashore (fall guy) in terms of the Safety Management Code, & CSO is the Company Security Officer in terms of the ISPS Code.”

**M.A. MEYER 1985 #2870.** I have been based in Dubai since 2006. After spending 10 years as a pilot in Saldanha, I responded to an advert in the Sunday Times – looking for a yacht manager in Dubai. I joined Platinum Yacht management in its absolute infancy at the delivery of its first yacht. I have built the company into a fully fledged yacht management company that boast a DOC for pleasure yachts and passenger ships with flag accreditation for UAE and Malta Flags. Our Fleet comprises of some premier mega-yachts in the World including the MY Dubai (162m) Dubawi (90m) and the MSY Dubai Magic (47m staysail schooner). We also have an 88m Shadow vessel and a 90m passenger ship included in the fleet. My DPA is ex East London pilot Tony Crabbe. Small world out here with so many South Africans actively involved in the marine industry out here. Please consider me as our Dubai correspondent - I am happy to help wherever I can.” We await Dubai and international yachting news from our Dubai correspondents. Happy sailing.

**G.P.GORTON 1985 #2865.** Grant has sailed as Bosun and Chief Officer on a motor yacht, had a partnership in a film development company and sailed as Chief Officer on a jack-up barge and a rig supply boat. 1997 - joined Bridge Marine Shipping Agency, Cape Town. Left Bridge Marine and joined Maersk Line where he stayed until 2000. Then with Sturrock Shipping since June 2000 based in Cape Town.

**Dave De Wet 57/58 and Graham Reinders 58/59.** Graham writes in from their piece of paradise. “They always say that life begins at 40. Wrong!! Life begins at 70. Dave and I have completed our Biblical allocations, so now we are free to enjoy life. Dave is a few kilometres up the road from me. The road is similar to the old 1960 road to “The Hell” in the Swartberg Pass on the way to Mossel Bay. Only the brave and the strong got through. Dave is practicing to be an “Amish” He has acquired a bull to do his ploughing. He has a black plastic pipe laying in the sun for his hot water. The electricity comes and goes as it pleases. None of this new fangled stuff for him. We are both at the base of an old volcano and the volcano decided that our properties were a good place to drop millions of tons of boulders before we got here. The Filipinos never move a rock, they just plough around it. Dave's crops lie in rows decided by an errant bull, undisciplined rocks and a small guy (Dave's Brother in Law) hanging onto the back of a plough made from off-cuts of rebar. His young daughter (just over a year old) is keeping him active. In spite of this Dave looks healthier every time I see him. I have a slightly

smaller place, 1.1 hectares. I have just done a coconut harvest. 100 coconut trees produced about 400Kg of dried flesh (copra) which they use for oil extraction. After Peak-Oil I guess I could run a small diesel quite cheaply on my own trees. My flock of sheep has given me 3 lambs in two months. I originally had 8 sheep, I now have a total of 15. I bought these sheep as grass cutters and for meat but my wife keeps finding excuses not to kill them. I am weak, so now we buy pork while watching the sheep enjoy the good life. At least I save on a grass-cutter. I recently put up a Hydroponic Greenhouse. I supply the local restaurants with lettuce. In true Philippine fashion, when we deliver my wife jumps on the back of my motorbike with about 20 plastic bags full of lettuce. We are as wide as a truck at the start and people have to get out of the way. With Jimmy Binos in mind, this is my latest Chinese motorbike. It is the best riding bike I have ever owned over 50 years but it is so typically Chinese crap. It is slowly failing one piece at a time, after the usual 10,000 kilometres. At least I put on a shirt when I go to town. If any of you wish to try poverty I can recommend it. The house is made of woven bamboo strips. I don't need air-conditioning because the breeze blows right through. The trees around the house will produce a few hundred Kg of mangoes in about a month from now. The up side was when my property tax for 2011 was only R35. The renewal insurance and registration for my motorbike was R140. Living in paradise is hell. Please stay where you are." Well, I trust our newsletters get through to your paradise.

**ANCHORS AWEIGH**

**A.H. HEINE 1943/44.** Arthur sadly passed away 13th May 2011. Attended Forest Hill High. After G.B. joined Holt Line and was in the Pacific during the WWII Japanese surrender. Returned to U.K. to write second mate's but discovered that his colour vision could not pass the test. Returned to S.A. and joined the National Cash Register Company, 26 years as accountant, retired end of February 1995 from Reef Engineering.

**R.P. SIMKIN 1934/35.** Ron sadly weighed anchor recently. After Bothie he was apprenticed to Hall Line until 1939 when he joined Ellerman Lines. 1942 to 1946 he served in the S.A. Naval Forces entering the S.A.N. Reserve in 1947. Joined the S.A. Harbour Service in 1946 retiring from there in 1978.

**I. DICKIE 1944/45.** 1946-51 Ian was with Ellerman Lines, lots of chipping and painting and the occasional brawl all the while improving his education. Married at age 21 and settled in Cape Town working in the Construction Industry setting up as a freelance agent in 1955. Eventually set up his own trading company supplying and later manufacturing construction equipment as import prices started to climb. Subsequently branched out of pure construction equipment and bought out Hill & Howie and Vicopac which now has branches in Jhb & Durban. Also manufactures retro-reflective traffic signs. Retired and followed an interest of swimming and cycling as well as marine biology and natural history. Sadly deceased 26/06/2011.

**D.J. MAKKINK 1939/40.** Born in Pietermaritzburg, 3 May, 1926, Derrick John Makkink was brought up in Upington and Walvis Bay. After starting his studies in Seamanship on the General Botha naval ship at Simon's Town he got his Mates', Master's and Extra-master's Tickets in Glasgow during WW2 where he met Eleanor, his wife. Serving on the notorious Murmansk Run, he survived numerous Arctic convoys supplying food and equipment to Russia as well as being stationed for a year on the Maine Hospital Ship docked in Malta. He worked for many years as a ship's surveyor before returning to sea as a ship's captain of commercial ships. He will be remembered as a man of fearless principle, a devoted husband, an example to his children and a loving grandfather. Sadly passed away 8th July 2010. Derrick was also 3rd Officer and Navigation and Instruments lecturer on the Bothie in 1953 and Gerry Stalling writes; "There must be quite a few memories about Derrick out there, particularly from those who were members of his sometimes tumultuous navigation classes, not to mention the night he had us all standing on the parade ground with our mattresses on our heads! Another legend passes on."

**R.C. BARRY 1978.** Richard passed away unexpectedly of meningitis in Accra 10th June. After 14 years with SACD, latterly their Marketing Manager S.A. Container Depots Durban, started his own freight management company, RB Freight Management in 2003. 2011 GM of a logistics company in Ghana, with offices in Burkina Faso.

**H.N. WILCOCKS 1955/56.** Henry was a Silver Medalist. After GB 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.

Henry Wilcocks was born 14 November 1938, in Pretoria, the second son of Jean Hillegert Dupré Wilcocks and Florence Logan. He attended the Sunnyside Primary School and then progressed to Pretoria Boys' High School. His love for the sea was stimulated by his membership of the 22nd Pretoria Sea Scouts and in 1956 he enrolled at the General Botha. At the conclusion of his training there he intended going to sea, but was advised against such a choice because of a slight hearing impairment. Henry decided to enrol as a trainee in the Stewarts and Lloyds training scheme and at the successful conclusion of his course he was posted to Durban and Empangeni. A succession of postings took him across southern Africa: Bulawayo, Umtali, Blantyre, back to South Africa in 1966 to Johannesburg, then on to Bloemfontein, Kimberley, Dundee and East London; then back to Kimberley. In 1983 after he had resigned from the firm, he took up a post as manager of the Cape Town branch of Incledon Engineering. At the age of 58 he was working for the National Trading Company when he was medically boarded and went into retirement. Henry's first posting to Kimberley was as sales manager which he held for 4 years. From 1972 onwards he was the branch manager at Dundee, East London and Kimberley. During his tenure in Blantyre he married Margaret Ann Riddell on 9 March 1963. She was a lass who was born in Forres in Scotland, and whose parents were working in Blantyre. Their son David John was born the following year in Blantyre. Their daughter Sharon Louise was born at the end of 1970 when the family was in Kimberley. Eventually the whole family settled and remained in Cape Town. Henry was particularly active in sport. At the General Botha he was the boxing champion for his weight division and while he was in Malawi, then known as Nyasaland, he played rugby for the national team. In Cape Town he was a regular member of the Pinelands Bowling Club. Throughout his life he was a real "man's man" and moved easily in all social circles. It was sad to see this genial and positive personality battle bravely with Alzheimer's disease over the last 12 years of his life. He passed away on 9th May 2009 in Cape Town.

**I. H. FIFE 1959/60** Ian Hoyle Fife died suddenly on the 27 October 2010. He was the son of **Alan Hoyle Fife 1926/27** who was a founder committee member of the GBOBA and remained an active member up to a few years before his death in 1997. Ian has been described in an obituary written by his colleague, Linda Stafford, as "a tough and uncompromising property writer and editor, …. His knowledge of the industry — "the game", he probably would have called it — was unimpeachable." Ian was born in Cathcart, Eastern Cape, and educated in Cape Town, Rochester in New York and Rhodes University in Grahamstown. He was a political journalist in Johannesburg and London in the 1960s and early 1970s. He formed a property marketing, publicity and design consultancy. In 1978 he bought his first property and in 1981 founded Newport Property Group in Cape Town. Victoria Junction was his last major development before selling up in 1997 and joining the Financial Mail as property editor. Linda Stafford writes: "A Damon Runyonesque character — many of his friends were Jewish and certainly he appreciated Jewish humour — he was an endearing colleague." Apart from property his interests were in travelling with his family and architecture. He is survived by his daughter, Pia Benn, four grandchildren and his partner, Wynne Doody-Pestell.

*Our sincere condolences to famiies and ship mates of the above.*

**SOS**

**James Falconer 1954/55 & Michael Nesbitt 1978.** We have no information on James or Mike, does anyway know anything of them? Please let me know:

cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za or at the postal address, phone numbers in the header of this publication.

**REUNIONS**

The recent class reunions have refreshed many memories, some of 60 years ago. One class mate of 40 years ago, **Alastair Tiddy**, writes; "I have just had a quick 'Captain Cook' (look) at the DVD that arrived safe and well yesterday. A really big 'thank you' to you all for putting it together and sending it on to me. I have a lump in my throat seeing all of the photos of our year at the Bothie. Looking back at all of those old pictures, I can only say that we had a fantastic year together. The only sad thing is that it passed all too quickly and we did not realise how great a time we were having. I recently made contact with my old English master from school in Rhodesia, and he said a profound thing, in that he "liked to remember his pupils in the glory of their youth". Looking at all of us, we were certainly in the glory of our youth – carefree, happy, enjoying life to the full, full of energy and good health. And the transport….! I recall Doug Peel commenting that the cadets' car park resembled a resurrected scrap yard and he was not too far off the mark. But it got us places and while the cars were not 'chick magnets', we somehow managed to find girls to date – and some of them even became our life partners – Kathy, Adrienne and Annette to mention a few. I can remember Neville West taking calls from Kathy at the public phone downstairs near the Common Room and calling out "Tony, your Granny is on the phone!" I was also pleased to see that Mike Mountjoy [deceased] was included in the credits – very appropriate as he was very much part of our year of '71. So thanks again to you all for including those of us who could not make it and for setting up the Facebook site. I am writing down some of my Bothie memories and will post them up there for comment and hopefully for people to add theirs as well. I recall one day when I was cadet captain on duty doing the rounds with Robin Gratjios who was Duty Officer, when we found the Starboard Watch heads blocked up with a 'sleeping beauty' of gigantic proportions. Robin observed that our problem was that the heads had 6" pipes and we had a cadet with a 9" ring. I have my suspicions as to the identity of the culprit, but I wonder if anyone else from the Class of '71 who can shed some light on this incident?"

**Peter and Jenney O'Hare, class 1964,** recently visited our shores. First stop was Cape Town and our July lunch and Peter managed to round up a good gathering of his class mates. Peter came bearing a gift; a somewhat well worn Red Ensign which is reported to have been flown on the old ship and liberated by a cadet. This, together with the ship's flag liberated from Gordon's Bay Bothie by one pirate [aka Brian Greenwood] shall be deposited with the S.A. Naval Museum in Simon's Town together with all out memorabilia there. Thanks Aus branch. Peter's visit has kindled a strong interest in the class to launch their 50th reunion scheduled for 2014. Appears Geoff Collins is best placed to initiate the arrangements and look forward to his communications.

**United Kingdom Branch** - Ted Fisher

Our summer as it is, appears to be rolling along and no doubt we shall look back and say ''average British Summer!'' Our Old Boys Network continues to work. **John Hall (1948/49**) has been AWOL for a number of years, however, he surfaced via e-mail recently having found the OBA website. I'm delighted he made contact; we spoke at length by phone. John would be pleased to hear from cadets/officers of his time particularly any in the UK living around or near his home in Woodbury Devon...can be contacted john@lacemakers.plus.com. After Bothie he joined Athel Line Tankers thence to GSNC eventually coming ashore to work for BMW in Reading. I'm sure our Editor would be pleased to have a detailed biography John so please details to dhenwood@iafrica.com.

Also in contact a call from **Brian Georgeson (1957/58**) en-route back to Cape Town following a walk along Hadrian's Wall (National Trail Tyne- Solway some 84 miles, worth a read (http://www.hadrians-wall.org). Brian made contact a couple of years back having just been

climbing in Norway-----going up to paint the GB anchor on the hillside outside Gordons Bay must have kindled his love for the mountains and his hobby which he enjoys when not at sea. That's about it for now, more news anon. Ted Fisher Tel: +44 1903 744400 Mob: +44 7702 635017 e-mail: tedefisher@aol.com.

**Australia Branch News** – Peter O'Hare

Our Mid Year Lunch was held in Sydney on Saturday, 6th of August. It was held later than usual as our Secretary, Peter O'Hare had only just returned from South Africa where he attended the July RCYC Bothie Lunch. Attendees were: John Fisher (35-37) and Wendy
Stan Damp (47-48) accompanied by Jennifer Partridge and Hugh Murray; Gordon Maxwell (40-41); John Mc Tavish (51-52); Grenville and Suzette Stevens (60-61); Peter and Jenny O'Hare (64); Jerry and Helen Hallock (Hon Member); Robyn Bowen (Widow of Des Bowen (41-42); David Rowden (Convener of the NSW Association of Old Worcesters).
David Rowen has suggested an occasional function with the other "Ships" which all have substantial membership in Australia, with Worcestors alone having 44 members in NSW.
Our next Sydney Christmas Lunch will be held on Saturday,3rd December at the Great Northern Hotel, corner Mowbray Road West & Pacific Highway, Chatswood from 12 noon.
Regards to all and please get in touch if you are going to be "Down Under". Grenville Stevens (2189 60/61), Chairman; Andy Fothringham (2525 '76), Vice Chairman; Peter O'Hare (2247 '64), Hon Secretary, Australia Branch, peteroh@bigpond.com Telephone 0417 028809.

**M N War Memorial on Tower Hill**

*In the last NL we included a piece about the MN War Memorial in London sent in by Paul Ridgway (not an Obie). He responded with the following:*

Thank you again for taking the trouble to put my photographs and news in your May newsletter. You may be interested in the attached Union-Castle connection with London.
Hard by the main entrance of the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, south east London, stands this handsome Hall's improved stockless anchor made in 1963. As I am sure your members well know the Hall's patent anchor was of a type introduced in 1888. An improved version appeared in 1910.
The example shown here belonged to the Union-Castle Mail Steam Ship Co. as a spare for vessels of the South African Mail Service and the cruise liner *Reina de Mar*. It serves as a memorial to the Cape Mail Service, operating from 1857 to 1977.With best wishes,Paul Ridgway.

**Donations**

The Committee is grateful to the following donors: K B Croome, Keith Lindsay, JJ Malherbe, Guy White, GC Leale, JA Rayner, L van Rouendal, P Prest, Capt James GM, A Ford, Jimmy Binos, KB Kewley, Schest, , JM Langridge, PE Bitzker, Miss Emma Lean, , IC LittleCapt D Pitcher, Frank Pascoe, IB Payne, ES Page, Richard Hogg, Pam Clarke, GF Macrobert, PJ Hayes, Mike Stakemire, JB Cullen, Ron Murray, Geoff Collins, Anna Meyer, Bill Damerall, D Jupp, Chris Els, Okkie Grapow, J Orrock. And we apologise to any others we may have ommitted without intention. These donations all contribute to the continuation of the

Association and its activities, in particular the costs of this News Letter which brings together so many Obies.

**Logical** – *Thanks to Gerry Stalling*

This is a story which is perfectly logical to all males:
A wife asks her husband, "Could you please go shopping for me and buy one carton of milk, and if they have eggs, get 6."
A short time later the husband comes back with 6 cartons of milk. The wife asks him, "Why the hell did you buy 6 cartons of milk?" He replied, "They had eggs."

**SATS GBOBA Bursary Fund:**

**Bursaries for 2012**

A selection committee has been established and is busy with the process which has been finalised, based on the management committee decisions in this respect as follows:

- To select bursary candidates from the year 10 class; not before year 10 as originally envisaged.
- To award 2 students part or full time bursaries for 2012 with agreement to fund them for 2013 should they fulfil the criteria of the bursary agreement. The decision on the award of full or part bursaries will depend on the amount available to the fund and its longer term ability through medium and longer term commitments to continue funding.
- To announce the award of the bursaries at the Lawhill awards ceremony in early November.

**Funding**

The personal contribution of initial contributors has indeed given great impetus to the income of the fund with a substantial amount of promised donations and commitment to longer term contributions boosting the total available funds as at the end of July 2011 to a total of R48, 800.

*The appeal letter sent out by Phil Wade who initiated the idea of the fund has resulted in a tremendous response with the promise of a substantial amount more contributions and longer term commitment to come*. ***Congratulations Obies you have lived up to the legend.***

*There is a need however to clarify the issue around amounts to be contributed – any amount is welcome which contributes to the fund – yes larger commitments are more than welcome as are longer term commitments such as monthly and yearly contributions.*

**Going Forward**

The Fund Management, now that most of the establishment tasks have been completed, (*We still await PBO registration confirmation from SARS),* has three main objectives going forward for this year:

- To finalise the selection process and complete selection of the students to receive the bursaries in 2012 and there award *as above.*
- To compile a short to medium term bursary budget and a budgeting policy to enable the fund to award further bursaries in the 2013-2017 period.
- To commence devising a *"long term funding / fundraising strategy*" to bring stability to the fund in order for it to continue fulfilling its objectives and those of the GBOBA well into the future.

Keith Burchell

**"NO REWARD FOR DUTY"**

**A Biographical Note on the life and career of Captain G.V. Legassick DSC RD RNR**

Old Boy Ian Manning 1955/56 has done extensive research on one of our Ship's respected Captain-Superintendent's and has produced a book on the subject. The Naval Heritage Trust has undertaken the publishing of Ian Manning's really excellent book on the life of Captain Legassick and is presently with the publisher. Although we realise that, initially at least, the

main source of interest in this book will be the members of the General Botha Old Boys Association, having now worked on the book to get it ready the NHT sincerely believes that it will attract a far greater interest in the wider maritime community of South Africa and possibly also internationally amongst maritime historians. The NHT is publishing this with the aim to make available to the public research that is of great importance to our naval heritage. Having got an initial quote on the cost of printing the book (in a 'soft cover perfect bound' format similar to all other NHT publications – it is approximately 300 A5 size pages) the expected cost is R120.00 per copy for direct sales (naturally plus postage and packaging for postal orders). We expect the book to be available September or October this year.
Therefore please let me know (Tony Nicholas) whether you are interested in purchasing a copy at your earliest convenience, besides those who have already placed their orders. Those living in North America who wish to order a copy there is a hope that we will be able to send them back to the States with Greg LeGassick who will be visiting SA in September

## The Naval Heritage Trust and Society

The Naval Heritage Trust was set up in the mid 1990s by a number of retired naval officers who wished to ensure that South Africa's rich naval heritage was not lost to future generations. Shortly afterwards the Naval Heritage Society of South Africa was established to support the Trust and although initially run as two completely separate institutions it was quickly appreciated that the limited resources of both the Trust and the Society would be better utilised if they were to come together as a single organisation.

**The principal objects of the Trust and Aims of the Society are**:

1. to generate an awareness of the South African Navy amongst the South African public at large, and to instil a sense of communal pride in South Africa's Naval heritage, both amongst the general South African public and serving Navy members alike;
2. to educate the general South African public about their Naval heritage, culture and traditions;
3. to acquire, by purchase, loan, lease, donation or otherwise, and to dispose of land, buildings, vessels or other objects, both movable and immovable, which are of Naval historical, architectural and cultural importance, and to restore and/or conserve these assets; and
4. to develop, manage and use such assets in such a manner that the South African public will be able to enjoy and appreciate their features.

Website: http://www.navalheritagetrust.co.za

## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE SEAFARER

Following my circulation by email to all Old Boys a reminder of the above important day **Patrick Atwood 1980** contributed in the Honour and Duty tradition. **"**I took up your call re the email you forwarded last Thursday re International Day of the Seafarer, with some contributions from me on their Facebook page. Since I don't know if you are on FB I thought I would share with you what I had done. My first contribution was to paste the following comment; 'If it wasn't for seafarers a great many around the world would starve or freeze and most of the rest would not enjoy the standard of living they have.' The organizers seem to have like it and I got a 'thumbs up' from them for this comment. I noted that Mike Carrington and Kenton Smith also posted comments on the page. I forwarded your email to the local ferries, pilot, boss and a few others. One person came back to me with the suggestion that it would be nice if we could mark the day by flying an appropriate signal from the International Code, from the signal station which overlooks the harbour heads. This was not as easy as it sounds to achieve, as time was short and even though the signal station had just undergone an extensive upgrade which included a new mast for the radars, my suggestion at including a jack staff in its design was met with a distinct lack of enthusiasm and accompanied with comments as to why would we want to fly flags from the signal station since we had got by not

doing so for so long as it had been many years since the last flag pole had to be removed because it had rotted away. As you know, seafarers tend to have a 'can do' attitude and we did not let that minor hurdle get in the way. The person that suggested flying the signal and I jury-rigged a jack staff from the radar mast. This entailed modifying a long boat hook by bolting a shackle to the end of it, using some rocket line (which actually had been used 'in anger' by the Coastguard to get a tow across to a yacht) and me donning a safety harness.
To mark the Day of the Seafarer and in recognition their contribution, Capt. Lew Robinson – who is still serving in the industry after more than 50 years – suggested that the signal Uniform Whiskey One be hoisted at the Beacon Hill Signal Station which overlooks the Wellington Harbour Heads. Wellington is the capital of the island nation New Zealand, and this is the first capital city in the world to see the dawning of the new day. At day break this signal was raised. Other than the organizers, a few others gave this posting a thumbs up. Looking at the names of those that did, it appeared that several did not come from an English speaking background so it can be fair to say that the International Code appears still in this day and age to work as it was intended. It was also good that no one posted a comment asking what the signal meant, so I'd like to think that others will have dusted off their Code of Signals and looked it up … the spirit of past Bothie signaling lecturers lives on – mine was the late Mr Ellis. This, and I'm sure quite a bit more, was initiated from all parts of the world from that email that you sent just a few days ago!"

**THE SHIP – UNDERWATER EXPLORERS – www.underwaterexploreres.co.za**
This intrepid group continue to explore our Ship and take care of the memorial plaque we placed on her. "21 MAY 2011 – We had been experiencing an unprecedented run of several weeks of mild weather, so with this in mind we had high hopes for the dive. Reports of great viz on the inshore reefs also bolstered our confidence. We were soon descending down the shot line and already at 25m you could make out the feint outline of the wreck 30m below – we knew it would be a great dive. The shot had landed amidships, just off the starboard beam and approaching the wreck side on in such great visibility made for an awesome sight. We then headed down to the stern and were soon swimming over the starboard prop support. The stern is very broken up, but still provides an interesting mix of mangled ribs and beams. After rounding the stern, the aft mast greets you, lying perpendicular to the wreck on the port side. She is still very much intact and offers great photographic opportunities, with the white sand providing a good contrast. From there we continued up the port beam, passing both sets of davits, still upright and looking like they had just launched a lifeboat!! We then headed up to the bow to view our plaque, but were saddened to see that our 60th anniversary plaque was missing. It is highly likely that the bindings have broken and it simply fell off the wreck, however we shall endeavour to fit a new one in the months to come. Time was up and we started our ascent. Visibility was an excellent 10m (horizontal) and we could also still see the wreck quite clearly from our 21m decompression stop – fantastic. In all my years of diving this wreck, this was about the third best visibility we have ever had, which really made it a special dive. On the ascent the seals were doing their thing and there were several of them with us up until we surfaced. On the surface the conditions were still as peachy as ever – flat, seas, no wind etc. What a great dive on the GB.

**HISTORY OF MARITIME STUDIES DEPT, DUT.**
**Colin Johnsen 1971** is compiling the history of the Dept of Maritime Studies at Durban University of Technology and would like anyone who has information on the period 1953 to 1970 to please submit this to him via colin.johnsen@gmail.com or via the address in the header of this publication. This is his material to date.
"The Natal Technical College 1907 – 1957" by Wyn Rees MA (Wales), Senior Lecturer in History, University of Natal, provided information on the origin of the Nautical Academy in Durban. In collaboration with the Society of Master Mariners of South Africa (SOMMSA) the

Natal Technical College started a school for Masters and Mates in Durban. “By June 1944, a memorandum setting out the agreement reached between the College and the Society of Master Mariners was submitted to the Department of Education.” Although there was a concern about the financial risk of the venture, with no subsidy from the State, the College Council decided to take the risk. “The N.T.C. Nautical Academy began operating in July 1945, in the Merchant Navy buildings in Gardiner Street in Durban, with two part-time instructors, Captains D.H. Underwood and G.H. Hougham.” There is no mention of how long these two gentlemen continued as part-timers and who their successors were. However, the fortunes of the Academy improved. “The Nautical Academy, although numbers are small, continues to operate and in 1953 the Government approved the creation of a full-time lecturing appointment which suggests confidence in the future of the experiment.” In an article in *The Outspan* of 21 April 1944 Francis H. Sibson wrote: “Major G.A. Chettle, SAAF, is one of the General Botha’s early cadets (1923-24). He joined the Ellerman-Bucknall Line as an apprentice, rose to Fourth Officer in 1928 but, like many others, was driven ashore by the Great Depression, becoming a freelance journalist. In 1935-37 he delivered ships all over the world as master in the service of a London company specialising in ship delivery. In 1937 he obtained his Extra Master’s Certificate, the merchant navy’s highest qualification, facing many hardships ashore to gain the time to study and sit for it. In the same year he became an associate member of the Institute for Naval Architects and joined the SA Harbour Service as Mate. In 1938 he opened the only school for Masters and Mates in South Africa at the Durban Technical College. In the next year he was also put in charge of the SAR & H Marine School at the Point. Released for war service he joined SAAF as navigation instructor.” The above information is not factually correct in that there was no *Durban* Technical College. Major Chettle may have assisted candidates for Mate and Master examinations but there was no formal recognition by the Department of Education for his school. No further information is available on the Nautical Academy for the period between 1953 and 1970. Capt Stewart-Charles took over the Nautical Academy in 1970 in 2 classrooms on the top floor of the Students’ Club House building on the current City Campus. He retired at the end of 1976 and Mike Stewart took over from him in January 1977 as the sole lecturer. He was joined by Len Newby in April 1977. In 1978 the Nautical Academy became the Marine Department within Technikon Natal. In 1982 the Marine Department relocated from the City Campus to its current location on level 5, S6, of the S Block. In 1987 Mike Stewart was appointed Head of Department and the Marine Department changed its name to the present title of Department of Maritime Studies. In 1988 the Department introduced the National Diploma in Maritime Studies and in the following year the National Higher Diploma in Maritime Studies. Mike Stewart: “When I started in 1977 the department was a sub department of Mechanical Engineering. At that time the Faculties did not exist as entities. From about 1983 the institution was reorganised into ‘Schools’, similar to today’s faculties. The ‘Marine Department’ became an independent department within the School of Engineering. This then became the Faculty of Engineering about 1994. In 2000 the Faculty of Applied Sciences was merged with Engineering to become the Faculty of Engineering and Science. This name changed again at the time of the merger, and then subsequently split, after I left, into the present arrangement.” (*Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, and Faculty of Applied Sciences).* Mike Stewart continues: “I was Head of Department from 1987. The position of Dean at that time was called ‘Chairman of School’ and was an elected and ‘part time’ position in that the incumbents still carried out their normal duties as well. I became chairman in 1990 but also continued as Head of Department. In 1996 the position became full time and was an appointment rather than election, and the title was changed to Dean. I was appointed after due process and at that stage handed over the Departmental Headship to Alan Parkinson.” Alan Parkinson joined the Department in 1990 as lecturer and was Head of Department from 1996 until he was medically boarded in 2004. During his tenure the sea-going qualification, the National Diploma in Maritime Studies, was accredited by SAQA and a shore-based

programme was installed. This programme had elective subjects within the National Diploma and was not a separate qualification. To comply with the SAMSA Code marine engineering subjects were added, as electives, to the Mechanical Engineering National Diploma in co-operation with the Mechanical Engineering department. Chief Engineer Peter Calder was the lecturer for Marine Engineering Knowledge and Nigel Rowe assisted with Naval Architecture for engineers although his focus was Navigation. Daniel Sabwelera, a Malawian with a Degree in Transport Economics, joined the Department in 1998 and took over as Head of Department in 2004. His tenure ended in 2007.

## SLOP CHEST

These slop chest items all proudly display our association insignia and is available from Cape Town branch. Place your orders without delay with Kathy or Louise Nicholas:
Phone: 021-7885957; fax: 086 604 0811; Email: cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za

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**PLUS PACKAGING AND POSTAGE!**
**Note: some items in the slop chest are available from Durban branch as well.**
**BANKING:**
Cheque or postal order should be made out to "General Botha Old Boys' Association". Post to: P.O. Box 4515, Cape Town, 8000
Alternatively, the payment can be made by electronic fund transfer directly into our bank account. Details as follows:

- Bank: Standard Bank
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