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GENERAL BOTHA OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

http://www.generalbotha.co.za

AUGUST 2018

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.comPhone: +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.

GBOBA/SOMMSA/SAIMENA JOINT LUNCH

- Tuesday 9th October, 1130 for 1200 – Pub lunch, Royal Cape Yacht Club.
- Speaker:**Captain Nick Sloane – Plan to tow an Iceberg to Drought Stricken Cape Town**
- NOTE the earlier start time. Cost R55 per person excluding gratuity.
- Booking for the lunch is important, please RSVP by Sunday 10th June to:

Kathy Nicholas:	Phone 021-788 5957
Email:	cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za
Facsimile:	086 233 6410

FROM THE BRIDGE OF s.s. CAPE TOWN

For some this has been a busy quarter. Those of you that follow our Face Book page shall have seen my posts of our Lawhill Maritime Centre bursars joining the Sea Cadet Corp TS *Woltemade* for their eight-day winter camp. Seamanship which included sailing, pulling, rope work, building sheer legs, raft building, parade drill, gangway watch throughout the nights, lash up and stow hammocks (yes, they do sleep in genuine hammocks), PT at 0500. Well, all the naval discipline. Yours truly had to show leadership which required me to lead their morning run at 0500. The week prior to the camp your bursary fund hosted the grade 12 bursars to a week-long intensive math and science workshop to boost their results in these vital subjects.

After six years and a long road your Bursary Fund is due to achieve its first OOW. One of our first two bursars at Lawhill Maritime Centre,TsosoHanong, is soon to write his OOW Oral having been with MSC as a cadet in his last session at sea. Helping Tsoso to prepare for this important exam is Old Boy Chris Smit GB 1968. A Bravo Zulu to your bursary fund.

The galley wireless buzzed that the old Cable Restorer, presently alongside in Simon's Town naval harbour, may be scrapped. No final decision yet. The owner, Simon's Town Museum, is evaluating various options and suggestions. If this happens it shall be a loss to maritime history. Having been built

during WWII use was made of whatever material was available. Bridge deck head beams are brass, her propellers are cast iron. Following my Face Book post on this subject Patrick Atwood wrote; "Since my last email to you, I have had quite by chance a couple of email exchanges with Mike Carrington. He was fortunate enough to do a couple of spells on the Cable Restorer and shared some interesting snippets about her which I thought may be of interest.

On the monkey island there is apparently a unique brass measuring magnifier apparatus, which is about a metre in horizontal length with an eye piece situated at its centre with lenses at each end, (something like the eyes of a hammerhead shark) which can be adjusted on a landmark and thus accurately measure the distance to the apex of a triangle - much like taking a horizontal sextant angle. If you can get your hands on it, definitely a piece worth displaying at the Lawhill Centre.

You may recall me suggesting (if a location and finances could be found) of displaying her stern showing the rudder and props. Mike (who did not know of my suggestion) had this to say about her steering gear, 'The Emergency steering mechanism and the steam steering mechanism is an engineering masterpiece'. Referring to the engine room, he went on to write, 'The twin, triple expansion steam engines were a pleasure to behold and the DC steam generator was totally silent while its massive flywheel rotated'.

It would be such a shame if the ship cannot be saved, but if the worse comes to the worse, hopefully many of her unique bits will be saved."

Further to our previous newsletter, which I trust everyone read and diarized, we have fixed our Cape Town dates for the next four years. Please be reminded that 2022 is the centenary of our famous ship's commissioning and therefore there shall be a longer program planned. I wait patiently for your contributions to our Centenary Book.

For the purpose of planning your travel arrangements, particularly reunion groups and those from afar (such as Simon's Town and our *Weskus* - and those from over our border), the forthcoming dates for our AGM, Commissioning Day Dinner and War Memorial Service are listed below. Constitutionally we should have the Commissioning Day event on or about the 15th March which is the date the first cadets boarded the ship in 1922. Recent years we have avoided the bicycle race (when the City of Cape Town streets are shut down) 2nd Sunday of March.

- 2019 Saturday 16th & Sunday 17th March
- 2020 Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th March
- 2021 Saturday 20th & Sunday 21st March (Monday 22nd is a public holiday)
- 2022 Centenary year - Thursday 17th & Friday 18th & Saturday 19th & Sunday 20th March (Monday 21st is a public holiday)

We look forward to your overwhelming support.

On the subject of Face Book Rev Ralph Thornley writes:"For those of my generation who do not, and cannot, comprehend why Facebook exists: I am trying to make friends outside of Facebook while applying the same principles. Therefore, every day I walk down the street and tell passers-by what I have eaten, how I feel at the moment, what I have done the night before, what I will do later and with whom. I give them pictures of my family, my dog and of me gardening, taking things apart in the garage, watering the lawn, standing in front of landmarks, driving around town, having lunch, and doing what anybody and everybody does every day. I also listen to their conversations, give them 'thumbs up' and tell them I 'like' them. And it works just like Facebook. I already have four people following me: two police officers, a private investigator and a psychiatrist."

Well, there is hope for some of us. Until next time; Cheers.

SCRANBAG

B.P. FARMER 1983 #2797. Bernard has just retired from Namakwa Sands (Tronox). We wait for news of his next venture, in the meantime; "After Bothie, I went to work at Caltex Refinery as a Process Operator. From there to Sasol to qualify as an Instrument Tech. Came back to Caltex, then Botswana for six years, after returning back to Cape Town. I then worked on the rigs off Angola for two years, before coming to the West Coast and working at Namakwa Sands.

I still sail a lot, on my own yacht, a Charger 33, which is based at Royal Cape Yacht Club. Do a lot of racing there, as well as the offshore races such as Vasco. Plan to do Rio race in 2020, as well as Vasco again next year to defend our title."

R.J.B. WILSON 1956/57 #2029. After much pleading, I finally succeeded in Ron sharing some detail with us. Ron is also supporting your bursary fund by sending one of his valuable paintings for the online auction. "Tony made me do this. Sorry guys. After the Bothie I sailed with Malcolm Clark and Clyde Hyman on Safmarine,terrific guys. I grew a beard and had a terrific time, being banned by the Captain from going ashore in New Orleans (now you has jazz, jazz, jazz) for being *stroppie* to the purser, I was cocky then. Not now.

I sailed for eleven months with NO tattoos then came ashore to be with my childhood sweetheart I had first met in kindergarten (as wee kids she stole my blocks in Dunnottar Gauteng...we're still together 57 years later) I don't have the beard anymore and still have no tattoos. But, but - we do have three wonderful children who are grownup now, living 15 minutes from our condo in Victoria BC. I am 79, still a child I hear you say.

After Safmarine in 1959 the SABC sounded like a good idea and I stayed with them until retirement at age 52 at which time we immigrated to Canada to be with my ailing mother on Vancouver Island. There were no jobs in broadcasting here, unemployment ran at 11% in 1992 and I wasn't earning anything except the thrill in Vancouver of a short one-to-one with Diana Krall who went on to become a world-famous jazz pianist and singer.

- Since then I have been painting pictures, see some on http://artist-ron-wilson.blogspot.com
- www.artistwilson.com
  http://fineartamerica.com/profiles/ron-wilson/shop
- and http://fineartamerica.com/profiles/ron-wilson/shop

C'mon Tony - this is my living here....Ron."

R.A. TIGLER-WYNBRANDI 1979 #2660. Planning is well underway for class 1979 reunion next year and as usual the gain in locating AWOL ex cadets is my reward. Roderick has been found in Canada and my plea for further information from him remains unanswered.

J.L. STEWART 1979 #2659. Despite my posting James's newsletters to an address in Gauteng for MANY years, Guy Barker has found him in Thailand. Again my communication to James remains unanswered. Can anyone assist?

D.C. JOHNSTON 1969 #2369. Duncan is another one who chooses to ignore your chairman. Anyone have contact with him? Believe he is still in Plymouth, England.

V. WERTH 1979 #2665. Another one whose newsletters I have been mailing to Kwa-Zulu Natal for MANY years we findViggo in some strange place named Katy, USA. He reports from Texas: "Safmarine - cadet class starting 1978, Weltevreden, Vergelegen, Hexriver, Mistral Universal, Huguenot, Sederburg, Waterberg.

SA Agulhas - joined the ice team in 1981 with a shiny new ticket, was with them for 3 years.

Pentow Marine - Salvage, Anchor-handling & DSV. Wolraad, Ross, Salvor, Skua, Service, Jade Fish.

OSA - Anchor-handling. Werdertor, Herdentor, Schepelsturm, Holstentor, Imkenturm.

OIL - Anchor-handling, Oil Tempest, Oil Provider.

Pentow Marine - Anchor-handling, SBM & pipe-laying. Skua as Master for years.

Reading & Bates Falcon - Anchor-handling on Champion (Smit 110 class). Then moved from years as Master to a lowly Assistant DPO on the drillships, quite a change starting from scratch.

Moved up quickly to DPO, Sr.DPO, Chief Mate & Master. RBF became Transocean Sedco-Forex then Transocean - all DP drilling rigs worldwide (same coverall - different logo).

Peregrine III, Sedco 709, Deepwater Frontier, all as Master/OIM.

Then I got selected to run the construction & mobilization project of 2 newbuild DP3 drillships.

Lived on Geoje Island in Korea for a few great years at the shipyard.

Vantage Drilling - Was poached from Korea by ex-Transocean team at Vantage to start up the company from scratch in Singapore. Quite a challenge with nothing in place, no policies, manuals, procedures. Since then we've built 3 new DP3 drillships & 4 high-spec jackups in Singapore & Korea. Also built 7 other DP rigs for other companies in Korea, Singapore & China

For the last 8+ years I've been managing Marine Ops, DP Ops, Regulatory Compliance, DPA, CSO. Transferred to Houston 6 years ago when we set up the Head-Office here & quite settled by now in the centre of the drilling universe.
I'm also Rig Manager for the Titanium Explorer DP3 drillship which is presently hot-stacked alongside in Ngqura."

S.M. DOYLE 1985 #2862. Sean is another who failed to keep us advised of his change of address necessitating some Search & Rescue on my part. He writes: "I was a cadet with Safmarine and attended Bothie in 1985 where a week before final exams I failed my sight test so no merchant navy career for me. I left S.A a few months later after deciding that I would prefer doing my national service in the Caribbean not Angola and joined Windjammer cruises as a unlicensed 2nd Mate. I then started running yachts and after obtaining a 3000 ton U.S. license ran and built numerous large motor yachts worldwide. I left running yachts and settled in Fort Lauderdale where I have been a yacht broker [Merrill-Stevens Yachts] since 2000."

A.J. TIDDY 1971 #2405. We often see Face Book posts from Alastair defending Australia's finest in court. "Things have changed somewhat for me over here in Aus, so an updated record is probably in order. Caught up with Simon and Anne Pearson when they were over here recently and it is always good to see 'old' friends again. (ED - We are still waiting for the famous photograph of Alastair in his OBA cap that Simon carried so diligently across the oceans.) After leaving school, served my national service with the Royal Rhodesia Regiment and the Rhodesian Corps of Signals. Re-mustered to the Royal Rhodesian Air Force after being accepted for flying training as a pilot on 6 Squadron, based at RRAF Thornhill near Gwelo. Left the RRAF after being injured in a motor vehicle accident that left me in hospital for six weeks, by which time my fellow pilots had moved ahead in their training.
Found myself in Durban with no money and no job, but found an advertisement in the local newspaper that Safmarine were looking for deck cadets. So I thought "What the heck, I'll give it a go and see something of the world." So I found myself a cadet for the 2nd time in my life.

Served on the S.A Hexriver for all of 1970 before going the Bothie in 1971, sailed on the Far East run on the S.A. Morgenster and then was transferred to Union Castle for a year on the S.A. Oranje. Met some great shipmates with whom I am still in regular contact. Sea life does that to one. Went ashore to sit 2nd Officers Certificate and then went back to the Far East run on the S.A. Constantia with Captain Brian Evans – great ship. Transferred back again to Union Castle as 3rd Officer on the S.A. Oranje, sailing with Robin Thompson as Captain. Finished off sea time for Chief Officers Certificate in the S.A. Sugela with Ernie Hinterlietner as the Captain, a very happy ship. Completed Chief Officers Certificate in 1975 and then did a short stint as Chief Officer on the Zwartkops with Unicorn to fill in some spare time and earn some extra cash before getting married.
Swallowed the anchor in 1976 when Annette and I were married, and transferred ashore to Safmarine Computer Services as programmer and eventually Project Manager. Spent five years working with the Anglican Church in Cape Town before returning to IT as a Project Manager and consultant. Started law studies in 1984, which were halted when I immigrated to Australia in 1989 and we settled in Sydney. In 1990, I went back to University to complete the MBA, graduating in 1993.
After a variety of roles in strategy and planning, I finally completed my law studies (Bcom, (Law) and LLB) that I started in South Africa, and was admitted as a Lawyer of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. I spent time with the national telecommunications carrier (Telstra) in corporate practice, specialising in litigation mainly in the areas of Competition and Consumer Law. Left Telstra in 2008 and went out on my own doing corporate advisory work in corporate governance, compliance and mergers and acquisitions. Went back to University of Sydney Law for further studies, graduating in 2013 with a Masters of Laws. In 2013, I went out into the private sector and now run my own law practice practicing in Corporate, Civil disputes Property, Employment and Criminal. I am content to have my colleague lead the Family Law practice, which I reckon is legalised blood-sport - I am quite happy to muck in defending the (alleged) criminals and jail-birds any time."

R.W. FISHER 1944/45 #1352. Robin recently sent us an interesting article on his Red Hill Bothie for the planned Centenary Book, but here more of his reminisces; "1945 after two years with *Gen. Botha* I sailed to England with three others to join Blue Funnel (Alfred Holt) as a midshipman. After sixyears I sailed to Sydney and joined a company called Burns Philp which sailed between Australia and Papua New Guinea.My first job with them was 3rd Mate on their passenger cargo ship "Bulolo".After fouryears I took the Masters exam in Sydney.Once established as a Sea Captain and four years later, I was eligible to apply to become a Port Phillip Sea Pilot and was successful in 1962.The Port Phillip Sea Pilots operate out of Melbourne and are a well known and well run private Pilot Service with about 40 Pilots. The entrance to Port Phillip Bay is notoriously difficult. I enjoyed my 26 years with the Service.
On retirement my holiday house in the warmer climate of NSW seemed a very attractive proposition, and after buying some extra land my wife and I planted 1200 protea plants. 10 years later we decided enough was enough and we officially retired.We live in a beautiful area with many beaches, a beautiful lake and the Great Dividing Range close by.
Our family is scattered all over Australia and they all love joining us for holidayshere in Forster/Tuncurry.With my best wishes, Robin."

R. JOHNSON 1958/59 #2111. Following his returned postal newsletter I phoned Richard's Cape Town number and was lucky to find him here in Cape Town. He tells me that he did a circumnavigation in his yacht between 2000 & 2011. Now lives in some tropical paradise and only visits his Cape Town home on occasion, when the sun is shining. All we know is that Richard previously owned the courier company Crosscape Express but no further detail received from him. Well, perhaps one day he shall write.

J.E. COOKE 1961/62 #E61. Those of you that follow our Face Book page or read Maritime Review Africa shall have noted that Jim recently celebrated the 40th anniversary of his company Atlatech which provides diving, salvage, shipcleaning, pumping, drydock, painting, oil pollution control and stevedoring services. You name it and he does it. Jim remains mute on his entire career but we know that he became a S.A. Navy diver after Bothie. In 1983 he was awarded the Woltemade Decoration for Bravery, Silver for laying demolition charges on the bow section of the burning oil tanker Castillo de Bellver. Onwards and upwards Jimmy.

AWOL

William Bowles 1953/54 last known in Port Elizabeth gone AWOL. Please SAR and respond.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

BRIAN GUY. We have been alerted by Harold Lincoln that Brian Guy passed away 7th June. He was the first Bothie Engineer Officer and held the post for the four years that the Engineering Cadet course was in effect, starting with 1958/59 and ending with 1961/62. He went on from Bothie to join the South African Navy from which he retired in the rank of Captain. Harold remembers him as being unflappable and a serious and helpful mentor

S.W. ALDER 1945/46. Sydney's newsletter recently returned from Port Alfred marked "deceased". Any further information including his career welcomed.

C.S. HYMAN 1956/57. Clydesailed with Safmarine until 1959 when he joined the General Post Office as a pupil technician and obtained his electronics diploma in 1964. Thereafter worked for Marine Diamond and Aircape as an electronics technician. In 1970 joined Plasser Railway Machinery as electronics supervisor and in 1993 Plessey Telumat until retirement in 1995. Deceased 6th June 2018.

D.E. BARBIER 1955/56. After G.B. Dan went to Agricultural Collage at Potchefstroom for two years before becoming a learner farmer in the Winterberg. Later joined the Sir Abe Bailey Estate in Colesberg in charge of general farming and the sheep stud. Later moved to Komgha before purchasing his own farm at Kei Road in 1961 where he farmed sheep and cattle until 1978. Thereafter farmed at Steynsburg until retirement in 1993. Deceased 12th April 2018.

R.A. WILLS 1974. Rodney joined Unicorn Shipping for aboutfive years where he later became very involved with HR especially worker rights and representation. This led to him joining Andrew Levy

and the Contact Group - Gemini Consulting in the early 1980's. He was a Director at the Contact Group (a well known HR and L&D consultancy at the time) from 1983 - 1992. From 1992 with his wife Ria as a partner, own consulting company, Ntinga Transformation Services. Deceased 15th March 2018.
Class mate Mike Pickersgill; "More than a little shocked to hear of Rod's passing, probably because the last I saw of him was at the Bothie, I seem to remember him as a young man still. We're all getting older lads and I hate reading obituaries.Rod and I sailed together for a short while on the Frontier as cadets. Rod was older than the rest of us and took it on himself to get the daily job list from the mate for all cadets and invariably this meant he left himself with the best (easiest) job! The mate caught onto this however and gave him a special job chipping inside the heavy lift mast with an air chipper."
Class mate Chaz Leeraar; "Good day, bad news all round, my sincerest condolences to his family and friends. What a big friendly, likeable and amiable chap he was as Cadet Captain at Bothie, kept us somewhat under control but in a decent way. When people of our generation start departing, it really does make one contemplate life just that little bit more!"
F.H.T. RAYNER 1942/43. Francis passed away 25th May. A loyal and staunch supporter and regular at OBA Gauteng reunions. See Gauteng News below. Any further information on his career would be appreciated.
W.W.L. SCOTT 1943/44. After Bothie Bill worked as a Deck Hand on the tug Schermbrucker and in 1945 joined Elder Dempster Lines. Sailed as Cadet in the New Brooklyn, Calgary and Accra and as Third Officer in the New Texas and Biafra. Joined Safmarine 1948 and sailed in the Constantia from 4th Officer to Chief Officer. Obtained Master's Certificate in 1953 and joined the Morgenster as Chief Officer. Left Safmarine in 1956 and then worked in the screen printing industry for Paramount Art Studios in Port Elizabeth and Clarion Display and National Screenprint in Cape Town. In 1960 formed own company, Cape Screen Process and subsequently Durograph and Containermark. These companies manufactured heat transfers, membrane switches and industrial decal markings. Retired in 1998 and in 1999 formed Nova Design doing web design, consulting and email marketing. Bill designed our OBA original website. Deceased 15th June 2018.
Our condolences to family and ship mates.

Gauteng Branch Newsletter – *Alan Ford*

So far the bridge has had no reports of members coming to the second mate looking for medication of any sort, but I'm sure that behind the scenes Old Boy maintenance proceeds as normal with copious amounts of tablets and expensive potions being consumed on a daily basis.
We have however lost one member since the last issue. **Francis Rayner: 1250 42/43**. He passed away in his sleep at the age of 91 on 25th May. Condolences to his daughter Wendy, Francis's younger brother John 1479 46/47, and family. I did not have the privilege of meeting Francis at any of the annual functions, but from what I understand Wendy kept him up to date with Bothie news.
I have recently been deployed by Cape Town Head Office as acting Foreign Secretary cum envoy, and have made two forays north of the Jukskei River into government strongholds. Danger pay and overtime claims will be settled at the proposed '71 reunion in three years' time. Hopefully the paperwork to resolve tax issues will be forthcoming and surplus funds in Old Boys estates can start streaming unhindered into the Bursary Fund.
The maritime papers have not thrown up much of interest to report on during the last three months. Naval architects in the various spheres of maritime commerce seem to be having a field day which what to most old salts look like really outlandish vessels. The bows of cruise ships have gone from the extreme forward rake of the 80's, to vertical, and very recently some are sporting what I think are called reverse curve stems. Hull artwork is becoming very popular and almost a requirement to entice young passengers to come aboard and hammer their credit cards. I mean who wants to party day in and day out on a plain old white ship these days.
Even in the heavy lift and offshore construction sectors, where visual aesthetics of ship design have long since been delegated to the trash can by the bean counters, one sees evidence of larger than life

advertising and colour appearing on the topsides of these massive fit for purpose marine vehicles. It's getting hard to call them ships any more.
While we can all lament the passing of beautiful ships of yesteryear, what is obvious is that the maritime sector is not stagnant; it is evolving at a fast rate to meet the challenges of modern technology, and infrastructural development. It is also creating a whole new set of seamanship skills in parallel. The requirement of keeping any eye on the t'gallant's jittery luffs, to make sure that you are as close to the wind as you can safely get, are now replaced by monitoring ballast tank levels and crane reaches and loads on an array of flat screens. Bosuns with knives and marline spikes are now replaced with young computer savvy Electro Tech officers who become worth their weight in platinum if the systems should fail. Out of all of these modern versus old contrasts and evaluations, the young and ancient officers need to understand and respect each other's skills and experiences, for there is one parameter which in essence will never change, and that is seamanship, in all its vast, diverse, historical and current, unobtainable glory.
While doing some pleasant research on one tiny aspect of this clash of new and old, with respect to the rebuilding of the famous old schooner Bluenose II, I found an article on the history of Westward. She was one of the magnificent J Class yachts from the early 20th century era.
The website URL given below cuts to the chase on page 8 of the "flipbook" where in it gives some of the history of T B Davis, a name with which we should all be familiar. For those who do not have access to the "interweb", or their own copy of "A Name Among Seafaring Men", here is a précis of his history, some of which was not recorded in Wilhelm Grutter's book pertaining to our Bothie history and Davis's donations to South African society.
Thomas Benjamin Frederick Davis, born in Jersey, went to sea at the age of 15, and soon after nearly met his maker when swept overboard and was lost for 19 hours in an icy sea. He was rescued and returned home to attend his own memorial service. He joined the RNR and obtained his Extra Masters Ticket. Thereafter his connection with South Africa started when he moved to East London to start a stevedoring business which in a short period extended all the way to Mombasa. After amassing a fortune he returned to England after WW1 and bought Westward in 1924. He raced her until 1935, when he retired from racing after 174 encounters with King George V's Britannia.
Davis's family could not find a suitable purchaser, or afford to maintain his beloved yacht after his death, so in accordance with his will she was stripped of all hardware and finishings, and sunk off Hurd Head at 12:45 PM , 15th July 1947, with a charge of dynamite, 60 miles from her old rival Britannia. This was two months and two days after Our Ship was committed to the deep off Simonstown.
Davis had returned to South Africa and died in Durban in 1942. The information below does not mention his acts of philanthropy but gives some interesting background to the type of sailor and man he was.
http://www.yachteleonora.com/CFDOCS/cms/cmsout/index.cfm?GroupID=128&MandID=1&meID=115&
Alan Ford alanford@global.co.za

UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH – *Ted Fisher*

Well, here we are, Britain's in meltdown as our heatwave continues 31C (88^0F) Doctors shut their doors, trains on go-slow (buckled rails) and Trade Unions said it was too hot to work – it will be long forgotten, history, by the time this Newsletter is received in August!! Ho Hum!
Steamship ss*Shieldhall* – It was July 1988 30 years ago that Southern Water Authority passed ownership of this vessel to a recently formed charity, The Solent Steam Packet Company. It is now enjoying a glamorous role as a passenger vessel, a flagship for the National Historic Fleet. Based in Southampton and crewed by a team of dedicated volunteers it operates day cruises in Southampton Water to The Solent through to the Isle of Wight, Bournemouth and Poole. Passengers are able to enjoy Cowes Annual Firework Display or Bournemouth Air Show, experience the*Shieldhall* Jazz Band or just embark on a short interesting social occasion. A full and diverse programme from May through to September each year attracts an enormous public following.

In June two former GB Old Boys **Ted Fisher 1954/55** and Barbara, **Harold Lincoln 1959/60** with Lorraine embarked to take passage down Southampton Water to the Solent enjoying commentary of sights port and starboard, Hythe, Fawley Oil Terminal, Warsash College, Itchen River, Hamble and Calshot. On return we had passed outward bound the vast cruise liners Aurora, Azura and Royal Princess – needless to say the opportunity to sound the whistle was well received by all. Picture shows the happy couples.

As with all cruises passengers have full access to Bridge (traditional instrumentation) Engine room (with original triple expansion steam engines) Boiler room, indeed all spaces. For information go to www.ss-shieldhall.co.uk-----if there is sufficient interest from UK or other Obies, the Hon Scribe is prepared to arrange an event down memory lane during summer 2019!!

From the Archive: As we all grow older memories and the reality of life sets in.

(1) depicts the Bridge (?) of the SANC General Botha during a training period in 1955: from the left Ted Fisher, Keith Meiklejohn, Mike Harvey, the late Fred Dieterle, and Hugh Lendrum, being observed by Chief Officer Thomas.

OLD GENERAL BOTHA BOYS

Last night these three former students of the General Botha Nautical College were the guests of the East London branch of the Old General Botha Boys' Association in the Comrades Club. They are, left to right, V. H. Mitchell (17), E. E. Fisher (18) and P. Sumption (17). Mr. Mitchell is from Bethlehem in the Orange Free State. He failed an eyesight test and cannot go to sea. Mr. Fisher, who lives with his parents at 18 Jackson Street, West Bank, was educated at Selborne College. He goes to sea in his first ship some time this month. As yet he has not been informed as to what ship of the Union-Castle Company, which he has joined, it will be. Mr. Sumption's first ship will be the Clan McTaggart, which he joins in East London Harbour on January 13. He is at present living with his parents at 26 Chamberlain Road. He attended Cambridge High School.

(2) depicts Old Boys from left **Haig Mitchell53/54,Ted Fisher 54/55** and the late **Peter Sumption 54/55** were guests **January 1956** of the East London Branch of the Old General Botha Boys Association in the Comrades Club, East London.

Having reasonable good health, we must be thankful for. Pray for those who are unwell.
Best regards and good wishes.Cheers all, from Ted Fisher.tedefisher@aol.com

Durban Branch News – *Derek McManus*

In the good old days there was a column "Talk of the Port". Well here is my attempt to update happenings here.

Firstly, a pilot boat seemed to lose sight of the fact that the channel has two sides and somehow cruised up the beach on the North side – a bulk courier seemed to have defective ABS brakes and knocked over the bulk loading system at a cost of R150million. A harbour pilot fell off the ladder and drifted to higher authority – sadly she had no lifejacket as there was none that would fit. A harbour tug got between the car carrier and the wharf and I believe that the beam is now somewhat smaller and is a

likely write off. Where are the days of Bothy Boys only getting a port job after gaining experience at sea?
It is with regret that Clyde Hyman (1956/57) my year passed on suddenly. Clyde remained in contact with me on HF Radio (in morse code nogal now only known as CW - carrier wave). Clyde like myself had Ham licenses and worked on a number of DIY projects over the years and built mainly low power transceivers and test equipment.Clyde was one of those great spirited people very mischievous and particularly astute, to almost the point he removed 2 screws from Ollies desk drawer to access the key to the store where the magneto was kept, this was used to great effect in giving a 30,000v jolt to those unfortunate enough to be on the receiving end. Clyde was in the first whaler crew and all will have fond memories of him – he passed away peacefully in his sleep.
Our Christmas lunch will be held in late November and details will follow in the next newsletter.
Derek McManus, Durban Branch.

THE THOMSON FAMILY AND THE GENERAL BOTHA

Robin (Robert Thomson) Gratjios, GB cadet number 1998; 1956/1957 writes; "I do not know of any other families who had so many of their children pass through the GB."
Two young brothers from a farm in Perthshire Scotland signed up as horse handlers to serve with the British army during the Anglo - Boer War of 1900 - 1902. Thereafter they returned to Scotland, married and with their brides immigrated to South Africa where they joined the Police service,originally the British South Africa Police (BSAP).

TY Thomson & Dick Thomson

The elder of the two brothers Robert McKie Thomson, my grandfather, remained in the police service until he retired as the public prosecutor in Stellenbosch. William, the younger brother joined De Beer's as their farm manager and diamond collector on the company farm at Sydney on Vaal, near Kimberley.
William had four sons who all undertook their training on the *General Botha*. Richard (Dick) GB cadet number 896 and Tom (TY) GB cadet number 897 served on the ship 1936 and 1937. Dick was the chief cadet captain during 1937 and he joined Blue funnel as a midshipman. TY served his cadet-ship with Silver Line. They both met in Liverpool during 1941 to write their second mates. On gaining their second mates they before joining the Diomed as South Africa where Dick joined both served on the UK coast supernumeraries and returned to the SA Coastal Defence Service and TY joined SAR ships.
Robert (Robin) Thomson GB cadet 1067; 1939 and 1940. Robin joined Blue Funnel during 1941. His first ship Anchises, was sunk off the north west coast of Ireland. Dick and TY were on the quay side to meet him when the survivors came ashore in Liverpool. Robin completed his second mates with Blue funnel and returned to South Africa as fourth mate on the Sarpedon, an old Blue Funnel passenger ship. He served with Maersk Line on one of their tankers and with SAR ships before joining Safmarine'sMorgenster in New York during 1947. His first appointment as master with Safmarine was five years later. When Safmarine ventured into stevedoring he was appointed manager of SA Stevedores in Durban. He returned to the fleet serving on the bulk carriers, the big whites and finally on the passenger ships before he retired. His lovely wife Helene joined him on most of the ships he served on as master.

Chris Thomson, GB cadet number 1202; 1941 and

1942. On leaving the Botha Chris joined the Royal Navy as a midshipman. He served on board HMS Ceylon and was on board when the Japanese surrendered Singapore to the allied forces.Following WWII, Chris came ashore and worked in personnel management.
My grandfather Robert McKie Thomson purchased a small farm outside Stellenbosh before he retired. A large family house was built that could also serve as a guest house. The intention being that my father William Thomson would run the farm. All went well until February of 1941 when William was killed while serving with the SAAF as an aircraft mechanic in Egypt. I was adopted by my father's sister and her husband during 1945 and took their name Gratjios.

BOB DEACON 1947/48

Keith Lindsay 1960/61 writes; you asked for information relating to Bob Deacon. I was very friendly with Bob and Kathy Deacon whom I got to know at GB Granger Bay when doing Mates in 1966 and Masters in 1969. Bob was on the teaching staff. He was a close buddy of Phil Nankin with whom he had sailed in square-riggers.
Bob was a founder member of the NSRI and I have a vivid memory of going out with him in an inflatable launched from Three-Anchor Bay after an I&J trawler sunk in collision south of Robben Island. He had NSRI painted on the side of his private car - which annoyed Kathy no end!
I was a lecturer on the staff of GB from January 1975 until April 1978. One day I was Duty Officer and Jimmy Smith was Duty Instructor. He was sitting in the wardroom with his foot up on a cushion when Kathy walked in. "What's wrong with you?" she asked. "I've got gout in my foot." "You will have to stop drinking Jimmy." Long pause, "Can't they amputate?" says Jimmy.
Other partly remembered items about Bob. He was a trawler skipper off Gough Island catching crayfish at one time, and also worked for Marine Diamonds. He started his own cargo surveying business in the early 1970's. He died of a heart attack in the mid-70's.

NSRI & SOMMSA

Many Bothie Boys, as members of the Society of Master Mariners' of S.A., were instrumental in the founding of our NSRI including **Bob Deacon** GB 1947/48 and Bothie staff member **Len Ellis**. The Society continued in this tradition as part of the Society's 75th anniversary; following a fund raiser the Society made a sizeable donation to the NSRI towards the establishment of a Lambert's Bay Station.

NATIONAL SEA RESCUE INSTITUTE - THE EARLY DAYS

With thanks to the NSRI and Andrew Ingram.

The idea of an inshore Sea Rescue service came out of a meeting on the 18th of August 1966 atthe South African Society of Master Mariners' twenty-second congress. It was on this day thatthe attendees agreed to the resolution that formed the basis of the NSRI as we know it today.
This was their resolution:
"That the Society of Master Mariners, S.A. launch a national life-saving institution for the saving oflives at sea resulting from accidents which occur off the shores of the South African coast, by thebreakdown or swamping of small craft within an area of approximately five miles from the shore.
Deep sea rescue services are adequately provided for by the administrations harbour tugs, but it isfelt that the close inshore rescue services are urgently required and can best be provided for bypowered inflatable dinghies, which are portable and can readily be moved to the required area.
Towards this end the society is prepared to donate the first inflatable craft with which to inauguratethe scheme."
The Master Mariners intention was "to promote the formation of a national body who would raisethe necessary funds and organise the institution on a national scale and expand as required."
The essence of the new rescue service would be that its crew members would all be volunteersreceiving no payment, and so it has remained to this day when some 1000 men and women areserving their communities.
The sea rescue plan was rapidly taken forward with Pat O'Sullivan of the Inshore FishingIndustries voted in as the first Chairman, a position that he held for twenty years. On the 21st ofSeptember 1966

the *South African Inshore Sea Rescue Service* (SAISRS) had its inauguralmeeting and on the10th of January 1967 the first Inshore Rescue Boat (IRB 1, named Snoopy),which was the same as the RNLI's very successful fleet of fast small craft was put in service.Captain **Bob Deacon** (GB 1947/48) was elected Honorary Chief Administrative officer and charged withresponsibility for operations, crew enlistment and training. Four days later Snoopy was in serviceand operating from Three Anchor Bay. On the same day the first call-out came. What was thoughtto be a body in Camps Bay turned out to be a barrel and the boat was not launched. Which wasfortunate as Captain Bob Deacon was sick in bed.By mid March 1967, Station 1, operating from boat shed no 6 in Three Anchor Bay had fouroperational crews consisting of Coxswain, Mechanic and two crewmen. The most experiencedmen from these crews were designated 'bad weather crews." Operations came one after the otherin these early days, with two high profile calls at the end of March propelling the newly formed searescue organisation into the limelight.

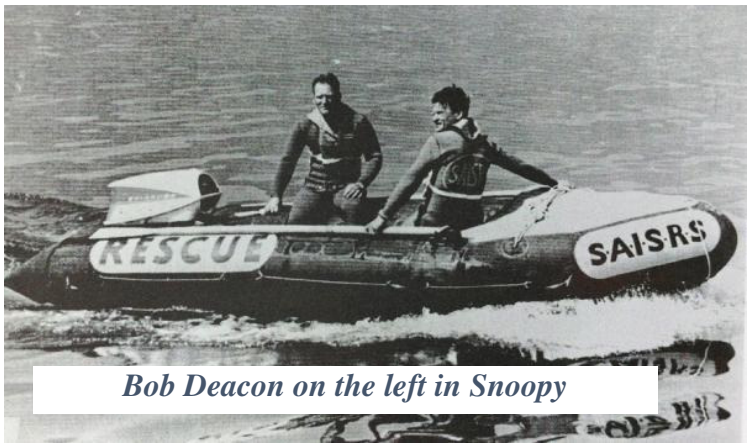
It was on the 27th of March at 12h00 that IRB 1 was launched to rescue 4 students who weretrapped on the wreck of the S.A. *Seafarer*. Rough seas prevented Coxswain Harry Nagel and hiscrewman F. Hall from getting close to the students and they came up with the plan of floating alifejacket attached to a rope down to the them. One at a time the youngsters jumped off thewreck, grabbed the lifejacket and were pulled to safety.

An hour after completing that rescue the same rescue crew launched Snoopy for the second timewhen they saw the fibreglass 'speed boat' Lucky Jill on fire half a mile off Three Anchor Bay.Because of the urgency of the situation, Coxswain Harry Nagel simply drove Snoopy up the sternof the burning boat, which was sinking, to rescue five members of the van Embden family. Nosooner were they a safe distance from the Lucky Jill when she exploded. A huge crowd includingmembers of the Press witnessed the rescue which was also photographed by newsphotographers.

Pat O'Sullivan and his board members were hard at work in the background obtaining aCertificate of Incorporation recognising the sea rescue service as a charity and allowing theSAISSRS to fundraise. It was on the 5th of July 1967 that they changed the name to the NationalSea Rescue Institute (which was less cumbersome and worked in both English and Afrikaans).

Bob Deacon was as busy as the board. Not only was he operational at Station 1 Three AnchorBay, but he was on a mission to set up more sea rescue stations. The first of these formed underthe newly named NSRI, was at Bakoven and was designated Station 2.

The NSRI recruits at Bakoven started building the first purpose built rescue base to house their16ft Munna (16 - 01 where 16 refers to the length of the boat and 01 to the first in that class). Shewas originally stored in a shed at the bottom of the Bakoven beach steps and the two 40 HpJohnston engines, and fuel, was kept at a crewman's house in Beta road.



Bob Deacon on the left in Snoopy

Len Ellis (GB signals instructor), one of the original Three Anchor Bay coxswains was appointed Station Commander atStation 1 which was moved from Three Anchor Bay to the Dorman Long Swan Hunter's slipway inCape Town harbour's lay-up basin. It appears that this decision was taken because of repeatedstorm damage to the Three Anchor Bay boat house. The second boat to come off Tony Munna'sjig, number 16 - 02 (no name), was initially stationed at Station 1 from December 1967 to 10January 1968 when the NSRI's first 18 ft vessel, also a Munna, was delivered to Station 1. Shewas named the *WolraadWoltemade*… number 18 - 01 and was officially launched on the 20th ofJanuary 1968.

16 - 02 was then sent back to Three Anchor Bay to re-establish a rescue base there. Because theThree Anchor Bay volunteers used the radio call sign 'Rescue 3' the name stuck, and the stationat Three

Anchor Bay became known as Station 3 … despite the fact that Three Anchor Bay washome to the countries first Sea Rescue station.

What amI Reading off the Bookshelf?*Dennis Henwood*

On Her Majesty's Nuclear Service, *Author – Commodore Eric Thompson MBE MSc CEng RN DL.*

Just as many of us have experienced in our time at sea good ships, happy ships, bad ships, great Captains and miserable ones; different ships, different splices; so, it seems it is not very much different on board a RN submarine, both conventional diesel and the modern Polaris nuclear subs. Thus, wrights Eric Thompsonin his autobiography of his life long career in the RN.

I was intrigued to read about daily living below water for three months in a life of stealth silence, watching and waiting, with only the Captain and Navigator knowing their exact location and on 15 minutes notice to fire a nuclear ballistic missile. No, this is not Star Wars, it is the true story of the 'Cold War' and what the author believes has been the one factor that has prevented a Third World War.

In his Introduction, Eric writes – "*My story celebrates the fact that I have lived through the second-half of the twentieth century and have never known a world war. Had I lived through the first-half, I would have faced two world wars, the bloodiest in the history of the human race. I am from the luckiest generation and am truly grateful for that, but peace did not happen by accident; I have lived under a nuclear umbrella through the forty-six years of the Cold War. …… Inspired by the heroes of the Second World War, I joined the Royal Navy in 1961, volunteered for submarines……. My career spanned thirty-seven years and ended as Commodore in charge of Faslane, the operating base for our strategic Nuclear Deterrent submarines. I was but one of thousands of men engaged in the peace keeping mission. We were all anonymous, quietly doing our duty and far from the public eye. Heroes were not required but nor were we robots; we also had lives to lead.*"

During the Cold War, nuclear submarines performed the greatest public service of all: prevention of a third world war. History shows that they succeeded; the Cold War ended peacefully, but for security reasons, only now can this story be told. Eric Thompson is a career nuclear submarine officer who served from the first days of the Polaris missile boats until after the end of the Cold War. He joined the Navy in the last days of Empire, made his first sorties in World War II type submarines and ended up as the top engineer in charge of the navy's nuclear power plants. Along the way, he helped develop all manner of kit, from guided torpedoes to the Trident ballistic missile system. In this vivid personal account of his submarine operations, he reveals what it was like to literally have your finger on the nuclear button. In his journey, the author leads the reader through top-secret submarine patrols, hush-hush scientific trials, underwater weapon developments, public relations battles with nuclear protesters, arm-wrestling with politicians and the changing roles of females and homosexuals in the Navy. It is essentially a human story, rich in both drama and comedy, like the Russian spy trawler that played dance music at passing submarines. There was never a dull moment. Behind the lighter moments was a deadly serious game. This, the inside story of Britain's nuclear deterrent, reveals the secretive life of submarines and the men who served on them; they kept their watch, and by maintaining the threat of `Mutually Assured Destruction' helped keep Britain and the world safe. (ISBN-13:978-1-61200-571-3)

Some Light Words Of Wisdom –

Received from PimZandee, with apologies to those Obies on his mailing list

Found this excerpt in Alex Hogg's BizNews this morning:

The social psychologists after whom the Dunning-Kruger effect was named started their journey after hearing the story of Pittsburgh resident McArthur Wheeler. In 1995, the 44 year old robbed two banks after spreading lemon juice on his face, convinced its chemical properties made him invisible to surveillance cameras.

Wheeler's self-assurance stemmed from the conviction that as lemon juice is used to write invisible letters, it would do the same for faces. His story sparked Justin Kruger and David Dunning into researching the "miscalibration of the incompetent." They concluded Wheeler was no isolated example.

They found the arrogance of ignorance is commonplace. Unfortunate souls thus afflicted don't know what they don't know – and reject any evidence that suggests their beliefs are wrong. Explains a lot, doesn't it? If you thought education was expensive, try ignorance.

Commemorating the Centenary of the Two-Minute Silence, May 2018 by Regine Lord

(*With permission*)

(*The full version of this article was published in the June issue of Military Despatches,* https://www.hipe.co.za/Vol%2012%20June%202018.pdf)

On Monday, 14 May 2018, the Noon Gun of Cape Town fired not just once, but twice, with a brief pause between the two thunderous booms. The reason for this unusual occurrence was that a special tradition was being commemorated that day: The Centenary of the Two-Minute Silence, which was first introduced right here in Cape Town on 14 May 1918.

In 1918, news of the terrible battles being fought on the Western Front in France, and of the many soldiers killed and wounded, had been reaching their families in Cape Town. When lists of casualties were read out during church services, parishioners were asked to participate in brief moments of silence in honour of the fallen.

Cape Town Mayor Sir Harry Hands was grief-stricken on receiving the news of the death of his eldest son, Captain Reginald Harry Myburgh Hands. After days of continued fighting and being repeatedly exposed to mustard gas, Captain Hands had died during a poison-gas bombardment on 20 April 1918, while off-duty and seemingly safe behind Allied lines.

After a special City Council meeting, at which those present expressed their sympathy to the Mayor and his wife, one of the councilors, Mr Robert Rutherford Brydone, approached the Mayor in his office at the City Hall. On hearing the boom of the Noon Gun, and the Westminster Chimes coming from the clock tower, they stood up, united in their grief, to observe the traditional Angelus pause that was common practice in the Anglican Church they both attended.

Councillor Brydone then suggested that the observance of a brief period of silence be introduced in the city centre, in remembrance of all those who had fallen in World War I. Mayor Hands was taken by this idea, and after some discussion, it was implemented. The daily public ritual was synchronised with the firing of the Noon Gun on Signal Hill, to remember the fallen and acknowledge their ultimate sacrifice, and to give thanks for those who had returned alive, wounded and carrying the scars of the terrible fighting they had endured.

Thus, on 14 May 1918, as soon as the Noon Gun was fired, all residents of Cape Town stopped what they were doing, traffic and trams came to a halt, and all stood in silent prayer, heads bowed, thinking of their loved ones who had given their lives and those who were still fighting on the battlefields of WW1. A bugler on a balcony of the Fletcher and Cartwright building on the corner of Adderley and Darling Streets, played the Last Post and then the Reveille to signal the end of the silence.

In Cape Town, this midday pause continued daily until 17 January 1919; it was revived once more during the Second World War.

A year after the signing of the Armistice had ended the Great War on 11 November 1918, an annual Armistice Day service was being introduced by then King George V. It was to be held throughout the UK and the Commonwealth at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month every year, marking the time and day on which WW1 – ostensibly the War to end all Wars – finally ended.

South African author and political figure Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, who had personally experienced the impact of the two-minute silence in Cape Town in 1918, wrote to King George V, suggesting that it be adopted for the Armistice Day service. The King was so taken by this proposal, that he immediately approved it and gave instructions for its adoption throughout the British Empire.

And thus, this simple yet profoundly stirring ritual spread throughout the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and beyond.

The special commemoration ceremony at the Noon Gun on 14 May 2018 brought together the SA Navy, the City of Cape Town, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sports, the MOTHs of the Western Cape and other key stakeholders.

Chief Petty Officer Dudley Malgas took the microphone, and shared some of the history of the Noon Gun and his own experience of firing it every day for many years. There are in fact two guns, both of which are loaded, in case one fails. Designed by Captain Thomas Blomefield and cast by Walker and Co., London, these original 18-pounder smooth-bore muzzle-loading guns date back to 1794, making

them 224 years old this year. They had arrived at the Cape of Good Hope in 1795, during the first British occupation. They weigh more than two tons each, and are loaded with 1.5 kg of black powder. They are the oldest working cannons in the world.

Originally located at the Imhoff Battery, on the seaward side of the Castle of Good Hope, the two large guns were temporarily moved to the Castle when the Imhoff Battery was demolished in 1896 to make way for Strand Street and the railway line. A few years later,they were relocated to the newly constructed Lion Battery on Signal Hill on 4 August 1902, no doubt because they were so deafeningly loud.

The custom of firing the gun at noon actually only started in 1903, the year in which Standard Time was introduced in South Africa. The gun was originally fired as soon as the artilleryman on Signal Hill saw a signal flare – and later the dropping of a time-ball – at the South African Astronomical Observatory at 12pm. As this manual method proved unreliable, the SA Navy apparently began to use the clock of the City Hall in Darling Street on the Grand Parade to trigger the firing. According to CPO Malgas, however, they soon realised that, while the Noon Gun was using the City Hall clock to determine the correct time, the City Hall clock was in turn using the Noon Gun to reset their clock!

Nowadays, the gun is fired remotely. The Astronomical Observatory (which has an extremely accurate atomic clock) sends an electrical signal down the wires a few milliseconds before noon, thus igniting the firing cap on the cannon and sparking the gunpowder. At the Centenary celebrations, though, the guns were fired manually. CPO Malgas demonstrated charging and loading the gun, inserting a small white bag of black powder into the barrel and pushing it down with a long wooden ramrod.

The Last Post was stirringly performed by young bugler ZubairAbader, smartly attired in his school's Marching Band uniform. He is a learner from the South African Colleges Schools (SACS), which is the oldest school in South Africa, having been founded in 1829.To this day, SACS continues the tradition of sounding the Last Post at the end of each school day, in front of the honours boards that list the names of past pupils who died on military service during the 20th century. As the last notes died away, the first gun fired a thunderous report, setting off car alarms nearby. Everyone, military and civilian alike, stood quietly and solemnly, as the noise of the alarms died down and the clouds of smoke billowed and dissipated. All that could be heard was the flags and banners fluttering in the gentle breeze and the distant sound of traffic in the city below.

Suddenly, the second gun fired – BOOM! As the smoke drifted away into the blue sky, the Bugler began to play the Reveille, signalling the end of the two-minute silence.

Among the guests at the commemoration service was a special visitor had travelled all the way from Bloemfontein to attend: Mrs Joan C. Abrahams, affectionately known as "TannieMossie" (Ma Sparrow). A long-time supporter of the military, she has developed a very close bond with, in particular, the South African paratroopers.

P.S. I would like to thank Mrs Joan Abrahams (TannieMossie) for the information she provided in her draft manuscript, "The Silent Pause of Remembrance". In it, she clears up the confusion around the origins of the silent pause. Most online sources suggestthat the Councillor Robert Rutherford Brydon (without an 'e') had lost his son Major Walter Brydon in World War I, and that this prompted him to propose the introduction of the Two-Minute Silence of Remembrance. The Councillor's surname was in fact spelt with an 'e' – Brydone, and his son's name was Robert GilrayBrydone; he served as a medic and survived World War I. Maj Walter Brydon (who was not the Councillor's son), was a South African, whose parents were Jenny Hay Brydon of London and the late William Walter Brydon of Belfast. Maj Walter Brydon served as gunner on the Western Front, in both the 71st and the 73rdSiege Batteries, until he was appointed as the Commanding Officer of the 73rd Siege Battery South African Heavy Artillery. He was wounded three times and then gassed, before being killed in action on 12 April 1918.Coincidentally, both Captain Reginald Hands and Major Nugent Fitzpatrick (the son of Sir Percy Fitzpatrick) served in 'Brydon's Battery' when they were killed. No doubt adding to the confusion of Brydon/Brydone is the fact that the plaque, which was unveiled at the Noon Gun in 2008, spells the Councillor's name as 'Brydon'.

In Conclusion

"Sunshine is delicious, rain is refreshing, wind braces us up, snow is exhilarating;

there is really no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather". -*John Ruskin*