

S.A.T.S.

**6 Davallen Avenue,
Glenashley, 4051**

Chairman: Derek McManus
Tel. (H): +27 (0)65 889 0845

Secretary: Howard Jackson-Moss
jacksonmoss@telkomsa.net
Cell: +27 (0)83 300 9891
Tel (O): +27 (0)31 572 3901



**PO BOX 414
Muizenberg
7950**

Chairman: Tony Nicholas
cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za
Tel.: +27 (0)21 788 5957
Fax: +27 (0)86 233 6410
Cell: +27 (0)82 555 2877
Secretary: Hugh James
hughsig8@gmail.com
Tel: +27 (0)21 531 8792
Cell: +27 (0)82 796 7606

GENERAL BOTHA OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

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

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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.

FROM THE CAPE TOWN BRIDGE

There has been much activity over the past quarter, inter alia your bursary fund AGM at which another of the founding members has stood down from holding office, namely Paul Semark 1960/61 who held office as the fund's vice chairman since the fund's establishment in 2011. Chairman Keith Burchell expressed our appreciation appropriately; "I would like to express my sincere thanks on behalf of EXCO and the Board for your tremendous contribution to the establishment of the fund and all the various associated contributions to the Funds growth, providing us with sage advice in respect to the course we should follow. Thereby helping us to achieve our agreed our goals and objectives. You have in addition successfully developed and edited our Annual Report which has proved to be extremely well received and which has played its part in raising the awareness of the Fund.

In honour of all of this we hope you will accept being made a Life Governor of the Fund after your retirement at the AGM." And, on behalf of the entire Old Boys Association, Bravo Zulu Paul.

Brian Hoatson 1941/42 completed his auto biography of his seagoing memoirs which he published for exclusive distribution to his family; Brian kindly sent us two copies of his book. It is very interesting reading, a valuable record of yesteryear when a maritime career was both challenging and at the same time rewarding. We have donated a copy to the National Library of South Africa, a valuable addition to our maritime history.

An interesting piece of Bothie memorabilia was offered for online auction recently; the telescope that was awarded as a Bothie prize to David A. Hall GB Cadet 214 term 1925/26. Members shall recall that David Hall was in command of the newly commissioned frigate S.A.S. *Natal* and whilst still on working up she was credited with a sinking of a U-Boat during WWII. The telescope is inscribed; Presented by - *Col W.T. Davies CMG, DSO, MD. to D.A. Hall - S.A.T.S. General Botha 2nd Prize Nautical Astronomy 1926.* Rather sad that such heirlooms are lost to the family.

Also of interest is that two cadets of term 1960/61 won the Navy League Essay Competition; Ian Fishley in 1960 and Paul Semark in 1961. The prize was a book voucher value R3.00 Wow, much have been a princely sum back then.

I remind members again of the regular monthly lunches hosted at the Royal Cape Yacht Club as well as the quarterly Southern Chapter lunches hosted at the Seven Seas Club in Simon's Town. We have some very interesting speakers lined on the aft deck for the RCYC lunches which we host jointly with SOMMSA on a quarterly basis. Keep an eye on the email notices; we look forward to your support.

Finally, Adrian Havenga is looking for a pair of Barr and Stroud CF41 binoculars. These were used during WWII and by the S.A. Navy. Contact Adrian: mudbank69@gmail.com.



I wonder what the background is to such an unusual email address.

GBOBA BURSARY FUND NEEDS YOU!

Those of you that attended your bursary fund's AGM last month shall know that most of the fund's founders have stepped down from office. They are all Bothie 1960/61 and thus their Bothie 60th anniversary is on the horizon.

We owe them a vote of thanks and Bravo Zulu for their foresight in establishing the bursary fund and its positive growth over the intervening years. Theirs is a legacy of "giving back" in the true spirit of our training ship's motto; Honour and Duty.

We view the bursary fund as the vehicle to perpetuate the legend of our training ship and those that trained in her.

This leads us to the next chapter in our Bothie history; the replacement of office bearers to continue the legacy. Presently we have identified a chairman who has the highly prized credentials for the position in our view. This leaves us with two crucial posts to fill; vice chairman and treasurer.

In mitigation I remind members that the bursary fund has two administration staff that provides support to the office bearers. Thus the tasks of the fund's office bearers are not onerous.

The office bearers need not be Old Boys or Girls per se, it could be a spouse, family member or someone with the desire to assist in upholding the fund.

You may well ask why I and others close to the fund do not accept the office? The answer to that is we are too thinly spread. There are precious few of us doing our best to serve our maritime industry and legacy.

Take Dennis Henwood and myself for example; both of us are office bearers of the GBOBA, the Bursary Fund, SOMMSA (Master Mariners) and CTSH (Cape Town Sailors Home). Dennis also runs his own business simultaneously and we are both Chairs of two of your Bursary Fund's sub committees. We simply do not have the capacity to accept more responsibility.

Now is the time for Bothie Old Boys to honour our training ship's motto; Honour and Duty. Please contact one of the undersigned with urgency. We look forward to hearing from you.

Tony Nicholas / David Main / Dennis Henwood / Rob Gardner

Denys E. Pitcher GB Cadet 1316 Term 1943/44 - an end to a Bothie chapter.



A highly respected officer and gentleman Denys was the last Captain-Superintendent of our *General Botha*. To commemorate his contribution to the legacy of our training ship we recently unveiled a plaque in his honour in pride of place (and adjacent to Philip Nankin's plaque) at the Cape Peninsular University of Technology Granger Bay Campus, previously our Bothie.



The function was hosted by the university and attended by Old Boys and Deny's family members. Interesting that one of Deny's grandsons is presently studying at the same campus.

The family were grateful and emotional for the honour bestowed on Denys.

Denys joined Union Castle Line in January 1945 and served as cadet on the hospital ship *Gerusalemme*, the *Rustenburg Castle* and the *Dunnottar Castle*. Obtained 2nd Mates Certificate in August 1946 and joined Safmarine. Served as 4th Officer on the *Constantia* and the *Morgenster* until May 1948. Sailed as 2nd Mate with Smith's Coasters until August 1948.

Was with the Pietermaritzburg Corporation as a draughtsman from September 1948 until December 1949.

Joined the Anglo Saxon Petroleum Company in January 1950 serving as 3rd Officer on the *Northia* the *Pellicula* and the *Acavus* until December 1951. Obtained Chief Mates Certificate in March 1952. Appointed 2nd Mate on the *Crista*, the *Hemidonax* and the *Neocardia* until March 1955. Obtained Master's Foreign Going Certificate in September 1955 and joined SANC *General Botha*. Served as 3rd Officer from November 1955 until December 1957.

Joined the SAR and H Service in January 1958 and served as Mate until July 1958. Appointed Lecturer-in-Charge, Nautical Academy, Durban, by the Natal Technical College in August 1958. Co-opted to serve on the Nautical Training Advisory Board and attended several meetings in Cape Town during 1959 and 1960.

These meetings culminated in a recommendation to the Government that nautical training be centralized in Cape Town. This recommendation was accepted by the Government. However, Dr Aston Williams Principal of the Natal Technical College disputed this decision, maintaining that his College was an autonomous institution and could offer courses considered desirable.

In these uncertain times Denys elected to transfer to the Nautical Academy Cape Town. In fulfilling its decision to centralize nautical training in Cape Town the Government authorized the building of an establishment at Granger Bay, called the South African Merchant Navy Academy *General Botha* which offered a one year cadet course, courses for students preparing for their certificates of competence and courses for the various fishing grades. Staff from the Nautical Academy, Cape Town were given Academy posts. From January 1966 until July 1990 he was Training Officer, Chief Officer, Acting Captain Superintendent (on three occasions) and Captain Superintendent (from 1985).

Denys was active in the affairs of the GB OBA and was Chairman of the OBA Executive Committee and Chairman of the SATS *General Botha* War Memorial Fund. Played an active role in the Society of Master Mariners (SA) serving in the capacities of Hon Gen Treasurer and Hon Gen Secretary and was President in 1975

During a period of extended leave Denys was appointed as Master of the mv *Ovambo* and made several trips calling at Luderitz and Walvis Bay.

Denys obtained a National Higher Diploma in Post School Education in 1985.

Then invited to address the OBA Qua Vadis meeting in September 1988 to explain the background and reasons for the integration of the Academy into the Cape Technikon.

During a meeting of the Board of Control (SAMNA GB) in August 1989 he asked Captain Dave de Wet (GB 1957/58 and member of the Board of Control) how the GB memorabilia can be preserved. He suggested the establishment of a trust similar to the *Unitie* Trust which had been drafted by Jonathan Mort of Fairbridges. Mr Mort was requested to make a similar draft for a *General Botha* Trust. This he did and details of these negotiations were discussed and accepted at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Control in October 1989. A display of memorabilia was arranged in the Maritime Museum Cape Town. When this museum closed the display was transferred to the S.A. Naval Museum Simon's Town where, with contributions from OB's and the dedication of Ian Manning [1955/56] a magnificent display is now on view.

Appointed a Trustee of the General Botha Trust in May 1990 but resigned due to ill health in January 2013. Deceased 12th September 2018. The Legend Lives On!

SCRANBAG

D.P. de WET 1957/58 #2044. Dave stayed long enough in Cape Town to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the S.A. Navy Submarine Service; in fact Dave commissioned the navy's second submarine SAS *Emily Hobhouse*. Dave and family have returned to Philippines where I believe he is neighbour, well not too far away, of Old Boy Graham Reinders 1958/59. When asked for his postal address Dave replied; "If something arrives at the local PO, a note to that effect is scribbled on a scrap of paper. The scrap is passed on to the Magaso area chief who sends someone to the address and sticks the scrap on any pole near the gate. Not recommended unless by prior arrangement." Well, as long as someone does not switch email off.

C.P. CLEVENOT 1987 #2898. Old Boy Charles Kingon 1981 conned his mighty vessel to the pilot boarding area of Tauranga (New Zealand) and who should walk onto his bridge? None other than Chris Clevenot with whom we lost contact in 2001. It has taken 18 years for me to track down Chris, but find AWOL Old Boys & Gals we shall. Chris tells us that he has been a pilot for the Port of Tauranga for the last eight years, before that was pilot-tug driver in Auckland for about five years.

L.B. HELLMAN 1967 #2302. Finally, Les Hellmann has finally managed to get his career history onto our database.

"Attended the Bothie at Granger Bay in 1967. Joined my first ship as cadet in Cape Town February 1968 during the age of chronometers and sextants, and signed off my last ship as master in Lome, Togo in January 2008 during the age of GPS and ARPA.

Between May 1979 and December 1983 I was with the SAR&H in Cape Town, and from January 1984 to June 1987 I was a land lord working for Charrington Breweries in the UK.

I was appointed as Master in September 94 in my second spell at sea."

D.J. MAIN 1971 #2396. David recently informed us that he had retired, confirmed by Joan who requested we find something to keep David out of the house and from stepping on her toes. But David managed to evade our best efforts at slinging him on board and stayed on contract with Smit Salvage South Africa. The below with appreciation to author and journalist Brian Ingpen and the Cape Times.

"I enjoyed a cuppa last week with Captain Dave Main, a towering figure – literally and figuratively - in the salvage world. Our conversation ranged over several topics, including the early passing of his parents leaving Dave an orphan at a tender age.



His uncle, Captain Ed Makkink, master of the Durban harbour tug FC Sturrock, took him in and, during school holidays and over week-ends, gave young Dave the run of the tug, stimulating his interest in ships, and ultimately pointing him towards a sea-going career.

After a year aboard Safmarine's *SA Trader*, he went to the training academy *General Botha* where his leadership qualities and his gregarious, caring nature earned him the academy's highest honours - the Gold Medal and his appointment as Senior Cadet Captain.

Returning to sea in 1972, he was one of the cadets hand-picked to sail in Safmarine's mail ship *SA Vaal*, a time that Main describes as "a fabulous experience". After gaining his second mate's ticket, he returned to the mailship as third mate.

His entry to Safmarine's tug division – and the start of his association with tugs and salvage - came when he went to a shipyard in Leith, Scotland, to stand by the salvage tug *SA Wolraad Woltemade*, then under construction. In that context, he met Captain Okke Grapow and Pim Zandee whose respective roles in the tug operation gave Main a strong base for his later career. After trials and commissioning, the tug towed a jack-up oil rig to the Magellan Straits to become the first to drill in that area. Time aboard the tug's Durban-built sistership *SA John Ross* (now *SA Amandla*) took him to the Far East where the tug undertook several long-distance towing operations.

With the ink barely dry on his master's certificate, the 25-year-old Dave Main was appointed master of Land & Marine's tug *Causeway Adventurer* in 1978, where he worked with the irrepressible Captain Dai Davies, another of his role models. He had hardly stowed his gear aboard when he was ordered to head for Quoin Point where the obsolete tanker, *Peter Maersk* – one of two under a tandem tow to the scrapyard when the tow parted - was being driven ashore by a heavy swell and onshore wind. Amid

adverse conditions, Main manoeuvred his tug to connect a line to the tanker and, with a Lloyd's Open Form in force, towed her to Port Elizabeth.

Fast forward through a few years in various positions ashore in Saldanha Bay, Durban, Maputo and Cape Town. Yearning for the world of salvage and tugs, he seized the opportunity to return to that sector when offered the fleet manager position at Pentow Marine, the combined operation of the Safmarine's tug division and Land & Marine Salvage.

Move to September 2001. Dave Main was on Scarborough Beach where the bulker *Ikan Tanda* had stranded amid horrendous seas. With Captains Ian Carrasco (salvage master aboard the casualty), Nick Sloane (directing operations ashore) and Ian Merriman commanding the tug, the refloating operation represented six weeks of hard work, patient and meticulous planning. Then, at spring high tide in the wee hours of 17 October, the tug made a final and successful pull.

That *Ikan Tanda* was refloated from the reef that had held her for so long without oil spillages or other environmental damage was one of numerous good moments in Main's long career. Other successes have followed for the team of which he has been an integral part: the containership *Sealand Express*, being refloated from Sunset Beach, also after a six-week operation in 2003, or the tug pulling the derelict tanker *Phoenix* from the beach north of Durban, an operation overseen by Captain Kevin Tate, another experienced salvage master.

Grounded barges refloated at Jacobsbaai – a triumph sobered by the tragic loss of one of the salvage team – or the salvage of the freighter *Kiani Satu*, ashore near Buffalo Bay – again with Captains Carrasco and Merriman drawing on their experience - and numerous successful ship-to-ship oil transfers and ocean towage operations are among additional achievements. With characteristic humility, he deflects credit to splendid teamwork by the tug crews and personnel ashore – folks like Dave Murray, a seasoned salt who, inter alia, manages the tug.

In semi-retirement, Captain Main rightly looks back with a sense of real accomplishment – and ahead to exciting developments. With new, purpose-built salvage tugs on the horizon, he has interesting perspectives on the course ahead for South Africa to fulfil its obligations in maritime search and rescue operations in which experienced salvage teams and tug crews are crucial.

Since he has mentored many of them, Dave Main is upbeat about those young, oomph-filled South African mariners who are choosing salvage-related careers, and rising admirably to the associated challenges. This bodes well. Increasing traffic and enormous ships pass our coast. If something goes wrong, efficient and energetic local salvage teams can move into action."

H.P. SCHÖDER 1954/55 #1924. Members shall recall that we reported on Hans receiving a prestigious award from the Japanese government in a previous newsletter. We spotted a recent media report of Hans receiving another award; the Order of the Rising Sun, Silver Ray. The Order of the Rising Sun is a Japanese order, established in 1875 by Emperor Meiji. The Order was the first national decoration awarded by the Japanese government, created on 10 April 1875 by decree of the Council of State and is awarded for long and/or especially meritorious civil or military service.

O.S. BALL 1961/62 #E58. After being AWOL for many years Owen checked in recently and informs us that he is a proud member of the Professional Loafers in Durban.

"After I qualified was offered a position with Safmarine, but on the eve of departure met my wife to be then, and happily married ever since. Self-employed (Kindeace (Pty) Limited) as a consulting design company for 36 years in the material handling business. 2019 retired and building model boats J Class Endeavour 1:33, SL Bat Windemere steam launch 1:12, Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter 1:33 that my father was on in the depression years. Cardiff Harbour etc, all radio controlled and fully functional. Looking down the list of my fellow cadets is most nostalgic yet feels like yesterday, with so many stories to tell."

D.B. TEAGUE 1975 #2510. David has made his way back to our shores;

"I have kept my update clean and not mentioned the time I spent in prison or the time in drug rehab and the time as a mercenary in Libya. I have also not mentioned the time I spent at the Playboy mansion after old Hugh Hefner died simply because all the above may be simply dreams or nightmares." Great pity the Playboy mansion part is only a dream, or was that a nightmare?

1974 - 82 sailed with Safmarine through the ranks to Second Officer. Then sailed with Unicorn Lines 1982-1983, obtaining Master's C.O.C. in December 1983. April 1984 joined Portnet in Richards Bay as First Officer, resigned in April 1987 to manage a branch of an analytical/surveying/sampling company for five years. 1992 returned to Portnet as tug master and 1997 appointed Harbour Pilot in Richards Bay. Was actively involved in the Naval Cadet Corps. 1999 resigned from Portnet and relocated to Doha, Persian Gulf. Spent five years at Halul Island oil terminal working with Neville Gibbs-Jones (GB 1974) on the SBMs then transferred to Ras Laffan for four years and worked with GB Old Boys Peter Tissink (1977), Peter Blackett (GB 1974), Rob de Koning (GB 1971), Mike Grindley (GB 1968) and Rob Reuvers (GB 1968) as a harbour pilot. 2008 returned to SA, no permanent work available so headed off to Nigeria and spent two years as pilot/load master at Bonny SBMs and one year on a FPSO as marine superintendent. September 2012, relocated to Esperance Australia to work with GB Old Boys Rob Lovell (GB 1975) and Steve Dickason (GB 1975) as a harbour pilot. Returned to South Africa mid 2016, surveying in Richards Bay.

Sailor of the old breed - Cecil H. Filmer Cadet 553 Term 1931/32

Derek McManus, Durban branch chairman, send us a scan copy of an undated newspaper clipping telling the story of this Old Boy sailing his 1,800 ton Tongan freighter, on which he was Master, when her tail shaft oil seals failed. Using hatch covers and other tarpaulins he sailed his vessel among the South Seas Islands for 330 nautical miles before meeting the tug sent out to assist. Indeed a sailor of the old breed, I doubt if today's 24,000 TEU container ship masters could achieve the same.

Runner up for King's Gold Medal and after G.B. appointed Midshipman RNR. Apprenticed to Houlder Brothers for three years. Then joined the Royal Navy as Sub Lieutenant. After promotion joined the Fleet Air Arm and obtained 'wings' in 1938. In 1940 dive bombed the German Cruiser 'Konigsburg' and assisted in her sinking, first time in aviation history that a major warship was sunk by air attack. Shot down twice, second time captured and spent five years as a prisoner of war. Returned to flying after the war until 1958, retiring as Lt Commander. Joined the Merchant Navy and within a year was Master of small ships belonging to South Island Government of Tonga, for five years. Following 14 years commanded tankers supplying fuel to most of the South Pacific Islands. 1995 retired. Deceased August 2007.

Biographical sketch of the course of one's life - P.R. Leslie Cadet 342 Term 1927/28

Another interesting old document received from Derek McManus, Durban branch Chairman, unfortunately undated. Philip Leslie passed away 10th September 1999.

Born 11th June 1912, Florida, Transvaal. Schooled at Grey College, Port Elizabeth, from the age of eight years and joined S.A.T.S. *General Botha* 1927. Obtained 1st Class Navigation and Seamanship Board of Trade Certificate. Parents refused permission to follow a seafaring career on account of two cousins and uncle buried at sea whilst serving in P&O. Joined staff at Wm Cotts, Durban 1929-1936 as junior shipping clerk. Removed to Government Areas (State Mines) Brakpan 1936. March 1937 married Joyce Schweizer in Cape Town. Two daughters born of the marriage. Joined Vacuum Oil Co., subsequently Mobil Oil, Johannesburg 4th July 1938.

Attested for war service with S.A. Seaward Defence August 1940 as A.B. Went on officer's Training Course, Cape Town Castle. Gunnery 92%, Signals 85%, Rifle Drill 10%, Squad Drill 40%.

After commissioning sent to Walvis Bay as examination officer for nine months under Lt Commander N.P. Curtoys and Commander G.V. Thomas.

Returned to Cape Town and, after three weeks, was on embarkation leave prior to departure for the Mediterranean September 1941.

Drafted to escort A/S ships, serving in *Southern Sea*, *Southern Maid* and *Protea* as 1st Lieutenant. Promoted to Lieutenant 1st July 1944. Returned to R.S.A. December 1944.

In command of SAS *Immortelle* but unable to endure lazy patrols off Cape Town after three years in Mediterranean convoy escort work, was transferred to Port Elizabeth under Captain James Dalglish's instructions to demobilize approximately 100 naval ratings. This after attending a two week "Demob" course in Pretoria.

Recalled to Cape Town to take over the recruiting section for the permanent South African Navy - ratings thence officers.

Demobilised 1976. Returned to Mobil Oil Cape Town as senior industrial salesman until March 1958 when transferred to Rhodesia as Public Relations and Advertising Manager for Southern and Northern Rhodesia and Malawi.

Retired 1972. In 1978 returned to R.S.A. Retirement occupation essentially wood turning - furniture and fittings. Sadly lost elder daughter in 1987. Remaining daughter (was) sister-in-charge of Durban's Blood Donor's Clinic, having completed nursing training at Cape Town Groote Schuur and Queen Victoria Johannesburg. Wife (was) Senior Legal Secretary with Salisbury's largest legal firm for eighteen and a half years.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

K. MEYER 1952/53. We bid farewell to another of our legends who served our industry and legacy with dedication for so many years. Keith had a varied and interesting career starting as an apprentice in SAR&H Ships 1954/1956. As Mate in Thesen's Coasters 57/61. In Command SA Air Force Crash Boat Squadron 62/68. Thereafter joined the SA Navy 69/90. Retired with rank Captain (SAN) 1990. Keith contributed much to our maritime industry, heritage and sailors welfare. Past chairman of the S.A.T.S. *General Botha* Old Boys Association, Mission to Seafarers and the Cape Town Sailors Home. I took over the chairmanship of the association from Keith but he remained my mentor and a proud Bothie Boy. He shall be missed.

A fitting tribute written to Ann and family; "Keith was a warm, friendly, welcoming man who went out of his way to help, where help was needed. His 'Cheeky' grin and gentlemanly demeanour were all part of his charm. As a past Chairman, and continuing stalwart of that 'noble band of men' the empty chair will serve as a reminder of the many years of faithful service he gave to the Association, and though he is now departed, he will not be forgotten. Please accept my deepest sympathies on your very sad loss."

P.E. BITZKER 1952/53. A good friend and class mate of Keith Meyer, Peter slipped his cable 17th June 2019. After G.B. Peter joined the S.A. Navy as Midshipman. Then followed various appointments both ashore and afloat specialising in Gunnery with rapid promotion to Commodore. 1976 - 1984 appointed as the Defence Attaché at the S.A. Embassy in Bonn, Germany. 1985 returned to S.A. and appointed the Director Naval Inspectorate, Naval Headquarters in Simon's Town and in 1986 appointed Inspector General (S.A. Navy) until retirement in April 1986. In the words of one of his term mates; "A real gentleman who performed a difficult task with sincerity and duty bound."

I.K. HEATHFIELD-ELLIOTT 1942/43. Keith passed away on 18th June 2019 in Napier. He served in the North Sea during the war and was in London on VE day. On coming ashore he trained as a photo lithographer in the printing industry and remained in the industry until retirement.

A.D. FORSTER 1944/45. Dennis passed away following a heart attack 12th June 2019. Dennis joined Blue Funnel in 1946 as Cadet. Subsequently served with Strick Line of London and with Safmarine. Obtained Masters Certificate in 1955 and joined the South African Harbour Service in Durban as Chief Officer on a tug. Subsequently served in all grades and retired as Assistant Port Captain, East London in 1991.

A.E. DUNCAN 1958/59. Andrew passed away 18th September last year.

1960 - 68 service with British & Commonwealth and Safmarine: obtained Masters FG.

1969 - 85 various shore jobs - auditing, accounting, financial management etc, including a number of years abroad as financial controller of Drew Ameroid International, a major supplier to the Marine Industry (133 ports worldwide).

1974 - Associate Member - Chartered Institute of Secretaries and Administrators. 1981 - Fellow of the above Institute.

1985 - 90 more shore jobs of a consultative nature, mainly management systems, including computer systems. 1990 - Established Cape Bunkers (Pty) Ltd, a supplier of Marine Bunker Fuels and Lubricants. 2003 - 11 Senior Bunker Trader with TRT Bunkers. Worked for over 50 years of which at least 40 were in the Maritime Industry.

Andrew's daughter, Rosemary, writes from Korea;

"For my whole life my dad regaled me with (often wild) tales of his years with the merchant navy, which no doubt inspired me to dream of exotic travels myself; he also loved telling me how easy I had it compared to his years of tough discipline at the *General Botha*-which he took great pride in! Whenever we took road trips past Gordon's Bay we had to have the GB sign proudly pointed out and we were told how he had the duty of cleaning it up!

We scattered his ashes in the sea off one of his favourite spots in Melkbosstrand.

Thank you for keeping these traditions alive and also to the GB for its large part in making my father the strong, good and interesting man he was."

K.M. WILSON 1974. Kevin was previously at sea with Safmarine and Unicorn. Left ocean going 1984 and spent six month sabbatical in New Zealand. Joined the then S.A.R.&H. Served on dredgers and twin screw, Voith and Schottel craft. 2012 senior tug master in Durban. June 2014 retired and moved to USA. Deceased 27th April 2019.

Our condolences to family and shipmates.

AWOL

Newsletter returned from **John Stryder 1953/54** marked "gone away", last known address is: 13 Stuurboord Road, Seaview, Port Elizabeth. Now surely our many PLZ members can Search & Rescue for us.

Class mates have been attempting to contact **Barry Holmes 1973** and obtained his email address. Well so we thought as all attempts to contact Barry by email have failed. Someone must know where he is and have him contact us. Alternatively send us Barry's phone number.

Paw Prints.

There is only one dog to have ever left paw prints in the North and South Poles. His name is Bothie.

When Explorer, Sir Ranulph Fiennes, (actor, Ralph Fiennes is a second cousin) and his wife, Virginia went around the world via both poles with the three year long Transglobe Expedition, they took their two year old dog, "Bothie" with them. "Bothie" had his own special bright red polar suit, balaclava and boots to keep him warm in the Antarctica, and when on a ship, he wore a safety harness. Though a good traveller, an intrepid hunter he was not; his response to seeing his Antarctic penguin was to run away at full bore.



UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH – Ted Fisher

As I write, my mind is distracted with preparations to be made....! Our lives can become so busy, that events begin to stack up and become a distraction for the task in hand. This especially when one has through medical circumstances been laid low, however, all appears well on the recovery path!

School of Navigation Warsash -for those who were fortunate to attend this prime establishment doing a radar course or 'school time' in advance of taking the 'old style' Certificates of Competency the college is named Warsash Maritime Academy a full part of Southampton University. It has the largest Ship Simulation Centre in the UK – The President of the UK Chamber of Shipping Sir Michael Bibby recently opened this new centre. Very exciting for all new entrants and indeed seagoing old timers as ship training simulators are now favourably compared with those used by airlines, transport in general. Great for the port of Southampton which is busier than ever with cruise ships, container traffic and other general traffic. Suggest if interested you view online www.warsashacademy.co.uk also Warsash

Association – Home (Facebook)

Old Pangbournians Society – an invitation for Friday 21st June was received from two local Chichester members Ralph Godfrey and Michael Askwith (the organiser) to a BBQ at his home in Bracklesham Bay near Selsey. Also included were Old Worcesters, Old Conways and General Botha Old Boys.



L-R Mike Heydenryck, Ted Fisher, Barbara

Sadly, not enough notice for the latter group, however, Peter Heydenryck (52/53) his wife Norma and brother Mike (over on holiday from Cape Town) myself (54/55) and Barbara were able to represent our organisation. Mike may well be known to Capetonians as he served for many years as an Engineer within the Harbour Service in South Africa. It was a bring-and-share BBQ lunch and tea, informal get-together of friends and contemporaries who trained at the various nautical academies. This the third joint summer bash held (first for us) with wives and one daughter a total of 26 guests.

Weather excellent if not a bit 'blowy' on the coast. Fantastic spread of food and drink!

D-Day – 2019 – our own Richard Hellyer (56/57) made his annual final crossing to Pegasus Bridge France and has reported it was as always, a brilliant experience. Time however, is catching up with attendees as this year minimal veterans arrived and those who did were very frail. Richard stated he just marched across the bridge and back behind an American group of pipes and drums. They were the best he had heard, the group made up of fireman from across the USA. Apparently, every fire brigade in the US has a pipe band. They have been invited to the Edinburgh Tattoo!!



HSL 102, Richard sailed from Portsmouth to Pegasus Harbour

This is the end of Richard's D-Day history, 5 years making sure that the Merchant Navy, who had more ships at D-Day than anyone else is remembered.

Well done Richard and congratulations from all GBOBA members for your contribution over the years. One of the good things of our Newsletter is it gives an opportunity to look back on our time in training, time at sea, whatever length we served and to appreciate the long in most cases the full lives of our Old



Boys at sea, ashore in industry or the now very ever changing Harbour Service. Informal gatherings indicate the sad passing of many.

In the last Newsletter, I did make mention of the scale model (in glass case) of Elders & Fyffes ss 'Chirripo' by the reception desk of Southampton City Maritime Museum. I served as 3rd and 2nd Mate in the 60's sailing to West Africa, West Indies and European ports. The picture was not published so am including it in this issue by hopeful permission of Hon Editor!

My best wishes to all. Ted Fisher tedefisher@aol.com

Gauteng Branch – Alan Ford

A newsletter can sometimes be compared to a quarterly meal for starving mariners, or as in our case mostly ex mariners. So, the fare today is ships biscuit and salt pork. Let's deal with the bland stuff first, that being the admin stuff, akin to ships biscuit.

There have been no reports to the gangway watchman of anything untoward with the Gauteng Branch ships company. Probably most of them are suffering in silence in some way, but do not want to report to the gangway office in case there is a chance the Second Mate will whip out his trusty dose muti thick hypodermic needle and add something to the chemical cocktails flowing through our veins these days.

However, our branch headcount has recently increased by one with the signing on of Captain Brian Kewley, No.1360 44'45. Gaining an Old Salt of that vintage in this day and age is a rare and great privilege for our Branch. Welcome Brian!

Moving on to the salt pork which of course includes some nasty rancid fat.

I recently returned from a month long family visit to the Cayman Islands, and it brought home to me how lucky our branch members actually are up here on the Highveld. We have an asset here, which perhaps only the 'Stralian crew down 'Sinny way can come close to, and that is the generally good weather. The Northern Hemisphere has experienced some unusually hot weather this year and the Caribbean has not escaped these vagaries. Apart from making the locals and tourists a bit more sweaty and uncomfortable than usual, the rate at which the Sargasso weed is growing in the region, apparently nourished by agricultural nutrients washing down the Amazon and ending and heading up North past

the area, has been extraordinary. The vast golden mats drift Westwards and beach on all the islands in the region. Once there they pile up sometimes a metre high on the beach and begin to rot. When one is in the proximity of a bay or inlet which has captured the weed, the hydrogen sulphide smells worse than Sasolburg on a bad winter's day. Despite the complaints that emanate from the tourists and local business, the weed keeps coming, and there is nothing they can do about it.

They say that Sargasso weed is vegetatively regenerated, so all of it is supposed to be genetically identical. I have a small glass bottle of desiccated Sargasso weed standing on a shelf in my bar at home. This little sample was gathered off the South American coast some time in 1970 when for some or other reason we stopped engines for an hour or two. I was fascinated by the beautiful golden colour of the plant, so got a heaving line and attached a wire hook to it and fished a piece up over the side of the SA *Huguenot* to see what the stuff looked like. I still have some faded Instamatic pictures of it. Now I'm wondering if some geneticists with all their fancy genome sequencing equipment would like to have a look at some 50 year old weed to see if it has the same code as they claim.

I visited the turtle breeding centre on Grand Cayman and was astounded by the size of old ladies in the captive breeding stock. They are monsters weighing hundreds of kilograms, and one can understand why they were such a prized source of fresh meat until fairly recently. The population is recovering well and a small number are harvested for local traditional consumption. Caymanians have a rich nautical history based partly on the sailing schooners which were engaged in the turtle and inter island trade, as well as the supply of seamen to some well know American big metal shipowners. The Cayman Coat of Arms motto which appears on the fly of their national flag, which is a defaced Blue Ensign, "*He hath founded it upon the seas*", attests to this.

One would think then that the locals would ensure that their National Ensign is correctly flown on the full rigged mast in front of the Turtle Centre. But no, the National Ensign is fluttering away at the truck instead of the gaff. Emails to various local entities which one would think would take an interest in such things remain unanswered, so Mr Grumpy will continue his mission to rectify the situation, using our Motto, *Honour and Duty* as a basis for stirring things up with a letter to the local online newspaper. That was the pork... now to the rancid fat.

The UK Hydrographic Office recently announced the availability of an online version of their portfolio of electronic charts. Ostensibly and understandable to a degree, to facilitate head offices involvement in what is referred to as shore based decision making, which to my mind is a rather broad based definition. The article says the following: *The new service gives superintendents and planning teams access to more than 15,000 Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs), updated weekly, to support vessel tracking, planning and for use in accident and emergency incidents.*

While one can understand that there are some advantages with regard to tracking and accident and emergency situations, it's the planning bit which I think should be investigated a little deeper. To me it's the thin edge of the wedge with regard to what we knew as the Second Mates job of taking some pencils and erasers, parallel rulers and a pile of paper charts and doing the voyage planning which was presented to the Old Man for verification. Granted, today it's done with GPS waypoints on electronic charts, but still largely a function of on board navigation officers. When the office gets to select the waypoints and courses to steer and emails them to the captain then it's a workflow process which needs addressing if the mariner is not to become entirely redundant. Who is going to carry the can when a rock and the keel plate want to occupy the same spot at the same time. How are these shore side office dwelling 9-5 "second mates" going to gain their experience in the first place?

Aaahh! fear not, my hearty's there are things called algorithms which will ensure that seagoing experience is not required to do voyage planning. I hear the Boeing 737 Max8 and 9's will again soon be winging their ways across our skies in the very near future. And just think of the money the bean counters can save by having one shore mate doing a bit of the work of fifty of them on the company ships.

A pilot was telling me the other day that filing a flight plan in the US for a private flight follows pretty much the same routine these days as what the young mariners will soon face. If you want to fly from little airport A to little airport B an almighty algorithm will tell which way you will go, and that may not be the way you actually wanted to go.

And things are already worse for our below deck crew whose primary job is make the propeller go round. A desk bound shore chief will monitor multiple engine rooms via the old Interweb. I hope he can see from his desk silly things like a crack in the exhaust duct which is discoloring pristine white insulation, and see a drip at a flange, and that nut which has vibrated loose and is about to fall into the bilge. Until the Spring time, keep your luff's wrinkle free.

https://gcaptain.com/admiralty-vector-chart-service-avcs-now-available-online-to-support-shore-based-decision-making/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Gcaptain+%28gCaptain.com%29&goal=0_f50174ef03-6457243c39-165257469&mc_cid=6457243c39&mc_eid=dd3de536a9

Nurturing Sea Fever – Bursary Fund News

The GBOBA Bursary Fund mentoring program includes termly visits to NSRI stations. The students are given the opportunity to train under the station commander and gain experiences on and in the water and most importantly sea time. The program works towards the category E SAMSA approved skippers ticket. Preparations are being made for the introductory camp in September this year, which will be held in Kommetjie Cape Town. We wish to thank the bursary fund mentors and GB Old Boys, Jon Klopper, Blackie Swart and Rob Gardner for their time and dedication to the program. Thanks to NSRI for the kind of passion that nurtures sea fever in our students. The Grade 11 students visited Hout Bay station. To stay up to date, and to view the photographs during practical training, please visit the bursary fund Facebook page.

The matric bursars are fortunate to receive a week long tutorial in July, for one on one workshop in maths and science. It is during this time that the students are also mentored for the impending leap into tertiary education. The students are introduced to industry professionals. The tertiary mentor committee interact with the matric students over this period and conduct tertiary bursary interviews. The bursary fund wish to thank Captain Tony Nicholas for leading this initiative and for organising the matric tutorials. Thanks to SAIMI for the continued sponsorship. Thank you to the GB Old Boys for mentoring our bursars and leading by example in “honour and duty”.

Bookings are now open for the S.A.T.S. *General Botha* OBA Bursary Fund Golf Day. The Marine Bursary Golf Day is sponsored by Fendercare Marine this year, *to be held at the Rondebosch Golf Club on 21 November 2019.*

Owami Zuma, General Botha Grade 11 student and sponsored by the NSRI returned home after 11 days in Spain with the Marine Inspirations (MI) team. Owami and four of her peers joined Captain Phil Wade, Mrs Anne Wade and Captain Anthony Just for an international maritime perspective. The bursary fund help raise funds for this annual trip during the Golf Day and Big Bottle of Wine Party. Thanks to the MI team for nurturing sea fever in our young bursars.

Owami Zuma has also won the Most Improved Rope Work Award at the recent False Bay Yacht Club Annual Youth Awards. She also takes on the role of Captain for the new season. Congratulation Owami!

Tertiary students Menelisi Mkhize and Avela May are recovering from their mid-year exams. The students are doing remarkably well and look forward to next year's practical experience. Loyiso Jantjies, past student, reports that he will join Vuka Marine this August to continue with his OOW.

For a full version of the BF newsletter go to www.gbbursaryfund.co.za.

“GENTLEMEN - THE GHOST!”

Extract from book, *Gentlemen - The Ship!* Author -Ian Manning's (GB 1955/56); Acknowledging the publisher, The Naval Heritage Trust

Captain Renouf's delivery voyage report.

"One night when we were at dinner the second steward rushed in and announced he had seen a ghost of a Naval Lieutenant Engineer bending over the dynamos. We laughed him off, but a few days later, the steward again insisted he had seen a ghost and this time it was a Lieutenant-Commander. We had a look around and that was the end of the ghost. It was the first I had heard of a ghost getting promotion!"

Excerpt from Lawrence Green in his book, 'Harbours of Memory'

"Now the weather was fine and all went well until a steward rushed into the wardroom one night while dinner was being served and shouted: "I've seen a ghost. There's a ghost in naval officer's uniform bending over the dynamos." Others reported the ghost in various parts of the ship from time to time. Nevertheless the 'General Botha' reached Table Bay thirty-eight days out from Plymouth without further trouble. All those who had brought her to South Africa left her for good, but the ghost remained on board, a legend that died only when the 'General Botha' left her moorings for the last time..."

What am I Reading off my Bookshelf? Scribe

Salcombe Master Mariners and the Triangular Trades

In my last copy of "What am I reading off my bookshelf?" I asked the question what is a "Brassbounder". Sadly, I had no responses. Never the less I hope that many have taken an interest in that worthwhile book "*GENTLEMEN – THE SHIP*" by Captain Ian Manning SM MMM SAN (Ret.). My recent reading was a novel about submarine activity in the Cape Agulhas region during the 2nd World War which is full of intrigue. I will share it in another newsletter hopefully. However, having read that book it led me on a little exploration trip to the Cape Agulhas area to learn a bit more about the terrain and coast that made such submarine espionage possible (I will tell you about that book another time).

My travels led me to the farmstead of an old school friend whose land stretches inland over the hills from the rocky coast just west of Quoin Point. There, in the family home I found three interesting paintings (family heirlooms) on the wall of three sailing vessels. On looking behind the framed paintings I found inscriptions describing the brief history of the ships dating back to the 19th century. In the ancestry of the family there were three consecutive generations of Master Mariners either commanding and or owning the three ships on the wall. The family were all out of Salcombe, Devon, and the ships were the Brig "*Clara*" (circa 1860), the Hermaphrodite Brig "*Augusta*" (circa 1884) and the 3-Masted Barque "*Pass of Lenny*" (circa 1901).

Now, what particularly caught my eye on the inscriptions was the trades of these vessels. On the back of the painting of the "*Augusta*" was written "*The little clippers did a triangular run – a) with any cargo from England to Canada; b) dried fish from Newfoundland or Labrador to South Italian ports; c) oranges and lemons thence to England. The last was most important and the most profitable run, and had to be made quickly (no refrigeration). It was a dangerous game, since everything had to be timed for the orange crop, and this meant crossing the North Atlantic in Winter. The "Augusta" (and about 80 other West Country ships) went down with all hands in the 'Great Storm' of January 1886 off Labrador. The only son of the above vessel's Captain was born the year before in June 1885*".

I researched the vessels and trades and found on the internet the Salcombe Maritime Museum (www.salcombemuseum.org.uk). The curator has written up some interesting history of these ships and the triangular trade which in fact dates pre-Napoleonic Wars period, although with different cargoes over time. None the less, the trade routes, the innovation without the technology we have today including refrigeration, the hardships and the fascination is all well worth reading about.

The museum records cover the interesting history of the small port of Salcombe which was more than just serving the fishing trades, but also indirectly serving these triangular trans-Atlantic trades (the locals were prominent Master Mariners, Owners and crew) as well as boasting five prominent ship builders who designed and custom built the sailing vessels for the cargoes of the time. The sails and Brig rig were fine tuned to meet the requirements of speed, fast turn around and fine to windward against the prevailing weather.

Salcombe is now very high on my bucket list to visit. I also see that there is a coastal path to walk and explore the region further, as I did last September in Cornwall.

Of further interest, I note in the curator's records that these fast clippers were some of the last sailing vessels trading out of the UK in the early 1900's as steam took over. This means, if we take into consideration our "*Lawhill*" and "*Passat*" that trading sailing vessels in the southern oceans outlived the North by about 40 years till the late 1940's. Perhaps that was because of the perseverance of the Scandinavian traders in the Southern Atlantic and Antarctic regions. I wonder had T B Davies

happened across one of these Salcombe clippers to donate to SA instead of the “Thames”, where that would have lead our Maritime Training and Education? – Just a thought!

Trinasty – Mike Briant, aka Mozwate

Mike writes that he has sent Tony copies of his book “A Boat of China” which is awaited with anticipation. He reports that “all going well in B. C. with glorious weather at this time of the year, a particular good summer so far. We so enjoy getting the O.B’s Newsletter, keeping us consciously aware that ‘the legend indeed lives on’.” Thank you, Mike, and thanks for the poem ‘Trinasty’ which is presumably compiled by yourself –

Trinasty

Tom Weatherby ran off to sea to serve before the mast,
Nor saw again his native shore till eighteen months had passed,
He served in sail from that day on and had his share of knocks,
From bucko Mates of Yankee ‘hells’ and swinging downhaul blocks,
He always did as he was bid, his work it did him proud,
First man to the yard arm and last man off the shroud,
He was sinewy and brawny, his tattoos were quite obscene,
And his teeth had known the scurvy and were few and far between,
His left ear wore an old brass ring, his nose an ugly scar,
While the lobe of the right had been bitten off by a slut in a Chilo bar.
He knew ‘salt horse’ and ‘dandy funk’ and ‘donkey’s breakfasts’ too,
Had had his share of ‘belaying pin soup’, foul water and burgoo.
He never served in steamers, nor ever worked ashore,
But was frequently set up by crimps or taken by a whore.
One ‘Old Man’ got him studying at the age of twenty-eight,
So he went and sat his ticket and passed for Second Mate.
As an officer he changed his ways and exercised his mind,
Though his taste in drink and women remained staunchly unrefined,
He was serving as the First Mate in a cranky full-rigged ship,
Had set his sights on ‘Masters’ and had signed on for the trip,
The trusses sheered, the slings were riven, the gear was old and worn.
The topsail yard took charge and fell and from the lifts was torn,
And Tom and half his watch were lost and buried off the Horn.

* * *

Fred Weatherby had been at sea for more than thirty years,
From the day he signed indentures and sailed with Andrew Weirs,
He’d reckoned he’d been lucky to find himself a berth,
Though the fifty guineas premium sorely strained his father’s purse,
A modest genial man was Fred, though accustomed to command,
And beneath his ‘Bombay bloomers’ he was comfortably rotund,
He smoked his fifty fags a day a habit he’d begun,
In the blacked-out convoy watches on the North Atlantic run,
His ruddy, grizzled vizege with incipient double chins,
Bespake of curry lunches and preprandial pink gins.
He was infinitely prejudiced and firm in his beliefs,
The Company’s needs must aye be served and grudgingly the Chief’s.
He detested foreign agents and professed abiding hate,
For that ‘bloody modern radar thing’ and that ‘smart-arsed Second Mate.’
He knew every port from Panama to Leith and Singapore,
Their copper and their copra, rice and jute and iron ore,
His runs ashore in younger days, had been sometimes indiscreet,
He’d got the crabs in Kobe and a dose in Bugis Street,
The depression years went hard with him, he was six months on the beach,
Till an A.B.’s job on a collier finally came within his reach,
Perseverance paid off stintingly, the grudging hand of fate,
Had brought promotion bit by bit, he’d got back to Second Mate.
Grace Weatherby had been a nurse in the ward in which he lay,
Survivor from a Liberty ship torpedoed in the Bay’,
Their little home in Surbiton was kept spotless, neat and clean,
For Fred’s infrequent visits which disrupted her routine,
To the prospect of retirement he looked longingly ahead,
Though his wife’s anticipation was far more akin to dread,
And when at last it came to pass, in six months he was dead.

* * *

* * *

Scott Weatherby was selected from a class of twenty three,
At the Polytechnic Nauticale in Europort on Sea,
He was slim and rather pale and athletically inclined,
With superb co-ordination and a quick perceptive mind,
Somewhat casual in appearance, you could hardly call him neat,
His coveralls needed ironing and were baggy at the seat,
His sparse moustache had highlights, his receding hair was black,
And tied up in a pony tail, hanging halfway down his back,
His psychometric profile showed a temperament in phase,
For extended sea-going duties of up to ninety days,
He passed out with some distinction and commenced his time at sea,
On a new self-trimming bulky' as a watch keeper G.P.,
He rewrote the onboard software which provoked a nasty row,
And he dropped the starboard anchor through the vessels bulbous bow.
He was seldom prone to swearing or impatience under stress,
Though he once became quite violent with the toaster in the mess.
His leaves ashore were spent in Spain or at his Chelsea flat,
Where he had a strange involvement with a nightclub acrobat,
He was trained in pivotal planning and statistical control,
Had produced a nifty paper on bulk-vacuumed aerosol,
Though generally abstemious he would sometimes take a glass,
Of continental lager or perhaps a joint of grass
He once got smashed on daiquiries, a legless total wreck,
And lost his contact lenses in an all-night discotheque.,
His career was all important, his ambition to succeed,
He got every qualification that a mariner could need,
From handling toxic waste techniques to Admiralty law,
And he'd crammed in three years sea time by the age of twenty four,
He foresaw in twenty twenty five the ultimate collapse,
Of the moribund merchant service, so he went and joined the Japs,
Eventually he got command of a new V.L.C.C.,
When the 'Old Man' had a breakdown and disappeared at sea,
The telefax from the charterers was staggeringly brief,
A chopper would lift off the crew while passing Tenerife,
The option had been taken - Remote control (Unmanned),
And for Scott, the humiliation of relinquishing command,
To a base-control computer situated in the Strand.

* * *

Hagar at Sea – Sound familiar!?



Letter to my boss...

I have enjoyed working here these past several years. You have paid me very well and given me benefits beyond belief. I have 3-4 months off per year and a pension plan that will pay my salary till the day I die and then pay my estate one year salary death bonus and then continue to pay my spouse my salary with increases until my spouse dies along with a health plan that most people can only dream of having.

Despite this, I plan to take the next 12-18 months to find a new position.

During this time I will show up for work when it is convenient for me.

In addition, I fully expect to draw my full salary and all the other perks associated with my current job.

Oh yes, if my search for this new job proves fruitless, I will be coming back with no loss in pay or status. Before you say anything, remember that you have no choice in this matter. I can, and I will do this.

Sincerely,

Every Member of Parliament running for re-election