

SATS *General Botha* Old Boys' Association

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AUGUST 2022

JOINT NEWSLETTER

2022 CENTENARY CELEBRATION YEAR



MISSION STATEMENT

The Centenary Committee Undertakes to Convene a Gathering of S.A.T.S. *General Botha* Old Salts and Partners in the Maritime Industry in March 2022 to:

Celebrate the Arrival and Commissioning of the South African Training Ship *General Botha* and to honour her benefactors, together with all those who trained in her as Ship, College and Academy and who fulfilled their legacy of honourable duty during a century of service.

Enjoy the Collegial Fellowship of Old Friends and Shipmates.

Continue and Sustain the Heritage of S.A.T.S. *General Botha* through the *General Botha* Old Boys' Association and Bursary Fund and, with our Partners in the Maritime Industry, to actively develop a future generation of competent young South African mariners imbued with a shared ethos of Honour and Duty.

From the bridge of Cape Town – Tony Nicholas (Chairman)

Continuing on our centenary year theme the past quarter has been rather busy. Our Durban branch held their inaugural bursary fund golf day to raise funds towards tertiary bursaries, and by all accounts, and the financial result, the event was a resounding success. Bravo Zulu Team Durban.

Charlie Kingon completed splicing together Old Salts Yarns 2022; this is a collection of Yarns not to be missed. Bravo Zulu Charles. Captain Charles has just, at the time of writing, had a major engine breakdown in the Strait of Gibraltar. A bad day one can do without.

We are committed by our constitution to support your bursary fund and this also forms part of our Centenary Mission Statement. A number of our UK based members initiated this by each making a generous donation towards your bursary fund. Bravo Zulu Team UK.

In addition we requested a donation to view the centenary documentary at the March centenary event. This proved to be a success and at your bursary fund's Annual General Meeting in June your association donated R70,000 to the fund. Bravo Zulu Team Bothie Boys and Girls.

Our Training Ship's exhibit in the South African Naval Museum has been somewhat neglected since the museum's sole civilian staff member retired. We have partnered with the museum to fund a Clean Ship of our exhibit on a weekly basis and the exhibit is already showing improvement.

Embarrassingly it has taken 50 years to note date errors on two of our honour boards in the museum. I had these corrected recently. A bit of sweat involved to dismount them, carry them up the steps to my car and the return journey. They are a tad heavy. Fortunately I have two teenage grandsons to pressgang into service.

The Legend, our training ship and those that trained in her, are still well known and respected in the industry as well as military circles. Thus I regularly represent the association at functions and parades as well as laying a wreath at memorial services; most recently the Delville Wood Memorial Service.

I am pleased to note the UK branch had a successful and convivial reunion somewhere reputed to be the middle of England. Again Bravo Zulu Team UK and may such initiatives continue.

Team Durban continues their monthly lunch meetings scheduled on the first Wednesday of every month. I need to drop anchor there soon to test the temperature of their beverages.

Kathy and I recently joined our Team West Coast at Langebaan Yacht Club for an excellent lunch meeting. It is great to meet up with members who we have not met in many a year.

Our Cape Town monthly lunches continue unabated. These are hosted at the Royal Cape Yacht Club on the second Tuesday of every month. This has been a fixture on our Cape Town calendar for many years, perhaps 40 years, and out of town visitors often arrive to join us. Please do keep this in your diary; we look forward to all such support.

Nic Sloane was recently invited by the International Women's Club of Cape Town to give an illustrated talk. Nic generously donated his speaker's fee to your bursary fund. Following in the footsteps of our benefactor T.B.F. Davis methinks.

In between I managed to take my two teenage grandsons on a two week Safari around South Africa, thoroughly enjoyed by all. So if at times I appear to be AWOL, I do actually apply for leave from your committee.

Let's continue the centenary celebrations and strive to make a difference.

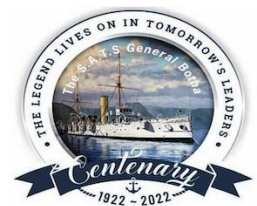
Old Salts Yarns - Centenary Edition

Finally, your long awaited Old Salts Yarns 2nd Edition. 162 pages filled with fascinating yarns dating back to 1934 and to date, a historic collection not to be missed.

Cost price of a printed and spiral bound copy is ZAR350, excluding a donation to keep your association afloat and on even keel - I shall print on request.

Courier delivery in South Africa is ZAR100 – delivery overseas is rather expensive – shall quote on request. Alternatively, we are offering it in soft format, attachment to an email, in return for a donation to your Association.

You may then read it on your computer, tablet, et al, or take the file to your local print shop. **To order email: eptchairman@generalbotha.co.za or phone/WhatsApp: +27825552877.**



Old Salts Yarns
"Both Watches" – Centenary Edition
1922 – 2022

SCRANBAG

G.J. HARMS 1987 #2907. Graeme is on the move again. "I have left Transocean and now work for Vantage, a drilling contractor 6th generation ultra deepwater drill ship West Polaris preparing for work in India, I am currently Master / OIM onboard."

R. CAMMINGA 1978 #2624. Unknown to your long suffering information officer, which is I; Roelof went AWOL a while ago. Mike Melly acquired his target in a paradise location judging by the Google Earth screen shot Roelof sent. 1995 - Manager of Omni Stevedores, Port of Richards Bay. Then joined Island View Shipping as their Richards Bay Representative and later appointed their Branch Manager. 2019 launched his own company, Agulhas Consultancy. 2022 with Port Ehoala, Madagascar, as Terminal Manager.

A.C. RATHBONE 1972 #2423. We occasionally lose Alan off our radar but have recently acquired his target. "My wife Glynis and I are currently in Bangalow NSW and will be here for four weeks, then moving on to Brisbane. We spend a lot of time in Canberra and will be back there in late August 2022 for a little while. All the best, Alan."

M.W. HARRIS 1981 #2739. The galley wireless valves warmed up and rumoured that Mark had relocated to somewhere in the UK. My radar acquired him in West Sussex.

M.J. GIBSON 1981 #2720. Mike is another who went AWOL but with SAR (Search and Rescue) Mike Melly he was found somewhere in world, UK being home base now.

1989 Working for Sealink, a marine supply services company running off port limit launches, a division of Pentow Marine. "I did 4 years with Safmarine and came ashore to work in ship' agency, marine surveying, offshore launch services and started a marine services company called BOSS. We did offshore launch services, marine security, crew transport, lifeboat servicing and certification, life rafts and equipment in Durban, Cape Town and Richards Bay. We also started a branch in Ghana. 2010 sold my interest in the company and was working as a freelance marine consultant. Since 2010 I was involved in the *Margaret* barges and *Long Charity* salvages in SA for Teras Offshore, Singapore. I then went to Gladstone (east coast Australia) to start up the arrival / offloading of modules on Teras tug & barges for the Curtis Island LNG projects for 7 months before transferring to Singapore to run operations for the 2½ year project delivering 97 modules on 92 tows from Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand. I then also ran Jack Up Rig operations for Teras in SE Asia, Middle East, Nigeria and Saldanha Bay, while also doing various other towage services worldwide. After 8 years I left Singapore for London where I have been doing consultancy work for O&G start ups in Indonesia, North Mozambique, China, Middle East, Nigeria and Australia for the last 2½ years."

G.T. DOBSON 1982 #2776. Another AWOL that appeared on Mike Melly's radar. All we know is that Greg is somewhere in Kwa-Zulu Natal, but we know not his exact position nor his phone numbers or any details. Appears his EPIRB is inoperable. We wait for his emails to be answered.

A.A.J. NORRIS 1968 #2341. Alistair previously sailed with Safmarine and later based ashore in their Bulk Division. Subject division sold in 1999, retained name of S.A. Marine Corporation.

2001 resigned from S.A. Marine Corporation. After leaving Safbulk, opened a small operating agency based in Cape Town named Sun United Management. Sun United's principals are engaged in the rice trades into South and West Africa from SE Asia and India using time-chartered tonnage. Retired from Sun United Management in mid 2018 and now working as a consultant in the rice trades.

Now that you are retired Alistair we hope to see you at our Bothie functions.

Malcolm Clark 1956/57 Term reminisce from Canada.

Was reading the latest newsletter and noticed that you were asking for info on R.D Bradley 56/57. I was on the *SA Pioneer* on her inaugural trip into Capetown in 1958 and had a visit from Robert Bradley and Clive Anthony Reid who had both attended the Bothy in 56/57 at the same time as me. They had both joined the SAR & H and spent a short period aboard the *Dahlia* hauling coal from Lourenco Marques (now Maputo). It was my understanding that Clive joined the SA Navy afterwards as a diver.

Another person I sailed with of whom you had little info on was Donald Daniel Hoy No.1949. He joined Safmarine and I joined him in New York aboard the *SA Pioneer* in 1958. He spent the majority of his time on this ship but came ashore for a brief spell to work in Johannesburg in 1962. Following

this he joined the SA Navy with his last assignment being the naval attaché in London where he passed away.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

N. HARRIS 1957/58. Nicholas served his time with Ellerman and Bucknall and then joined the British Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm. His service included an instructor at the US Navy's Fighter Weapons School, popularly known as TOPGUN. Subsequent service included second-in-command of the destroyer HMS Bristol, which led a convoy of reinforcements to the Falklands in May 1982; the British Naval Attaché in Rome from 1987 to 1990, and head of Defense Medical Services Reorganisation from 1994 to 1997. Retired with the rank Commodore. Born 24/09/1941, deceased 18/04/2022.

COLIN FLOCKHART, associate member. Sadly Colin passed away 2nd August. Colin was a prominent figure in our maritime industry and served on the SOMMSA Executive for countless years. Lloyd Merriman writes; "Possibly one of his toughest tasks in years gone by, was his ability to lure eleven unsuspecting, highly injury-prone, well past middle-aged men to take the field against SAIMENA in the annual cricket match. With the promise of cold beers and a braai he seemed to get it right. Of course you would see him standing umpire or setting up the ice trailer while hamstrings were tearing and fingers were breaking! Colin will always be remembered as one of the SOMMSA legends."

R.G.M. LORD 1969 #2372. After G.B. Rob joined Safmarine as Cadet. Was later seconded to North America as a Cargo Superintendent. On his return was posted as Cargo Superintendent on the SAECS/Transatlantic joint RoRo service for a while before joining Safmarine shore staff. Served in various positions before being promoted to Marketing Manager of Saflink (Agency Division of Safmarine), Western Cape. June 1997 seconded to Zimbabwe as Saflink Representative responsible for Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique. August 2000 - transferred to Port Elizabeth as Safmarine branch manager. 2004 in Safmarine H.O., Cape Town. 2011 retired. Deceased 4th June 2022.

R.P. EDWARDS 1947/48. Aged 91 Richard passed away 29th June 2022. Little is known of Richard's early career, details would be appreciated. 1966 Richard retired as Sales Director from Premier Stationary Manufacturing in Cape Town. Following retirement he was a regular volunteer at the Fish Hoek Valley Museum and was also a member of the local astronomy club and the Fish Hoek Gardening Club. He had a keen interest in astronomy, plants and animals, and was a fountain of knowledge on anything to do with World War II and shipping. In his younger days, he was a keen hiker and mountain climber.

Our condolences to family and shipmates.

SOS

Allan Quine 1966 Term email is failing and his phone number "does not exist". Last known to be in the UK somewhere.

High praise for South African seafarers following location of *Endurance* wreck

Local team proud to be part of this historic milestone – 9 March 2022

This morning the Falklands Maritime Heritage Trust announced that the wreck of Sir Ernest Shackleton's ship *Endurance*, lost in 1915, has been located successfully in the Weddell Sea.

A multinational team of experts aboard the South African Antarctic Supply Vessel *SA Agulhas II* departed Cape Town on 5th February on the Endurance22 Expedition. Onboard the vessel, 43 local seafarers under Captain Knowledge Bengu would provide critical support to the expedition team.

Donald Lamont, Chairperson of the Falklands Maritime Heritage Trust, in a letter to Captain Bengu highlighted the essential role played by the South African ship:

"As we began planning this expedition, we looked no further than South Africa for the ship we needed and for the Master, Ice Pilot and crew who could get us to where we are today. You have ensured that our expedition team had the right platform in the right place and at the right time. This is your success and that of those who serve under you."

This sentiment was echoed by Expedition Leader Dr John Shears who noted that the Officers and Crew of the *SA Agulhas II* had been "simply outstanding"; going on to thank all partners especially in South Africa who played a vital role in the success of the expedition.

The *SA Agulhas II* is owned by the South African Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) and the vessel is managed on their behalf by local company AMSOL. As the

leading employer of South Africa seafarers, AMSOL ensured that client requirements were met over months of pre-voyage planning that included the implementation of stringent COVID19 prevention protocols, a seafarer vaccination programme, as well as local procurement to supply the vessel and specific Endurance22 Expedition requirements. The company was also able to provide training berths for five South African Cadets during the voyage; exposing these young men and women beginning their career at sea to a once in a lifetime experience.

AMSOL's Chief Executive Officer Paul Maclons:

“Since 2019, we have been proud to be part of the team involved in the quest to locate the wreck; a unique project that drew on expertise from across our company. On the occasion of this historic milestone I would like to congratulate the Falklands Maritime Heritage Trust and the Endurance22 Expedition team. I extend my thanks to Captain Knowledge Bengu, Officers, Crew and AMSOL support personnel for their professionalism and commitment to the objectives of this voyage.”

“A HOUDINI” – A Yarn from Stephen Bayman 1959/60

It was about 1962. I was 3rd mate on the *Crystal Diamond*. I cannot remember exactly where we were at the time. Somewhere on the East coast of the States. Pensacola seems to ring a bell. Anyway, we were stuck in the middle of nowhere in a very small port, loading a bulk cargo. Evening came and some of us officers thought we should get ashore to check out the talent. The 2nd. Engineer, 3rd engineer, 4th engineer, a junior engineer and myself, a Jaarpie 3rd mate. We managed to get hold of a taxi and requested that he take us somewhere of interest to jolly jack where we could scope out the girls.

After quite a while he dropped us off at a fancy looking cafe. We all sat down and ordered coffee or tea, there was no alcohol available. Also, there were no girls to look at as well. The waiter came around and gave us the bill. We passed the bill around in astonishment, \$3.00 for a cup of tea. We were on British wages and this seemed completely out of hand. Remember, it was 1962. Well, after a general moan, the 2nd engineer asked us if we had ever seen a “Houdini”. We said no - with that he jumped up and started running down the road. A split second later I realised the situation and started running after him, shortly to be followed by the rest of the gang. We never did pay that bill. We caught a taxi back to the ship and flattened a case of beer.

UK BRANCH - Jonathan Warren (1980).

Since last we exchanged signals, summer has exploded onto the British landscape, and we UK OBs have met in the very middle of England at the Bull's Head in Meriden. Interestingly enough, OBs were wont call it “Meridian” in the runup to our meeting – evidence of fine celestial navigators still extant!

After a surfeit of gathering virtually it had been proposed and decided that we meet physically, so to make everyone's journey relatively equidistant, this central location near Coventry was chosen. We were fortunate in that six OBs were able to make the journey, so our fine meal - hopefully the first of many - was supped by Ted Fisher (1954/55), Derrick Kemp (1957/58), Tristram Greensmith (1973), Donald Neaves (1971), Ronald Duigan (1982) and myself together with our better halves, keeping us on the straight and narrow.



Bothie Meets Meridian



Derrick's GBOBA Flag

*L-R Tristram Greensmith, Ted Fisher,
Derrick Kemp, Jonathan Warren, Ronald
Duigan, Insert Don Neaves*

In view of the occasion we'd voted that our dress code would be Bothie regalia, jacket and tie, medals (OBs' No1s?) and smiles! Given the passage of time, any form of Bothie regalia was deemed appropriate. The very popular and ubiquitous baseball caps predominated, although Derrick, Ron and I had unearthed our original Bothie ties. Don trumped us by wearing a Bothie belt he'd had commissioned! Mental note: check if Davis Stevens is still in business, an order for OB ties might be forthcoming...

Appropriately, we were able to toast The Ship beneath our flag, which the Management kindly allowed us to “hoist” in

the dining room, see opposite, bordered by the late evening sunlight streaming into the room. Derrick has had some flags made up for us, one of which is worn proudly on *STRONGHOLD*, showing the flag on the Canal System. At the time of going to press, he has three remaining, at the bargain basement price of only £45 each. Contact me for details at GBOBAUK@gmail.com. Thanks to Donald for taking this picture and the others providing them for your pleasure, since I'd stupidly forgotten my mobile on the boat in my haste to get going that morning!

The Meeting consisted of pre-meal drinks, a dinner, post food yarning and more drinks after, followed by bed and breakfast the next day.

We visited the National Arboretum after breakfast, which Ted has covered below in his excellent contribution to this column. Breakfast itself was a leisurely affair, as befitted a Sunday morning. As can be seen below, none of us were seriously worse for wear, unlike the UK 1980 class reunion some years before, attended by myself, Greg Atherton and Chris Sturgess which necessitated a stop in Coventry to wander around the Cathedral.



Morning After the Night Before

L-R Ted, Barbara, Kathleen, Jonathan, Don, Derrick & Ronald

It was the consensus view that our Meriden Midsummer Meeting had been a roaring success, very much worth the effort to meet physically, so thanks to everyone for attending and making it so - a physical meeting in Liverpool has been suggested for later this year; more on that later.

As always, we continue to gather virtually over Zoom on the second Tuesday of every month at 18.00 local time (currently BST = GMT+1) and we have a Whatsapp Group (07412494774), so feel free to join us to socialise, to solve the problems of the world, and to generally have a good time giving expression to our

common heritage.

Visit To The National Memorial Arboretum Alrewas Staffordshire - Ted Fisher GBOBA-UK.

Six members of the GBOBA – UK Branch 2 ladies and Jonathan's husband Grant Wood gathered in the afternoon of Saturday 2 July for an overnight stay in The Bull Inn, Meriden (*see above*). Those



Ted Fisher, Barbara, Donald Neaves, Kathleen, Ronald Duigan, Jonathan Warren & Grant Wood

present were Ted Fisher 54/55, Jonathan Warren 1980, Donald Neaves 1971, Derick Kemp 57/58, Ronald Duigan 1982 and Tristram Greensmith 1973. Ladies were my Barbara and Donald's Kathleen. During a splendid convivial dinner that evening we confirmed an earlier unanimous decision to visit the National Memorial Arboretum, a British site of national remembrance near Alrewas, Staffordshire. Nearly 400 memorials are housed in the 150- acre parkland of growing woodlands and gardens. From those made in glass and steel to bronze and stone one finds memorials of all shapes and sizes.

The memorials are rich in design and symbolism and celebrate lives lived and remember lives lost. Tales are told of camaraderie, inspirational feats, inspirational leaders, heroism in astonishing circumstances. Resilience shown in the darkest

of moments, strength, bravery and care by Her Majesties Armed Forces. Memorials are by service type, regiment, association and role. The Arboretum was the idea of Commander David Charles CBE who, having been inspired by a visit to Arlington Cemetery and the National Arboretum in Washington DC, believed a National Centre of Remembrance was needed here in the UK to ensure we never forget those who gave their lives in service during and after World War 2.

Within an area surrounded by trees we have a Merchant Navy Section where there are commemorative memorials of the Wartime North Atlantic Convoys, Falklands War, Malta Convoys, The Honourable Company of Master Mariners, Brick Plinths representing many past companies who lost ships



during the War, Union Castle Line, Blue Funnel, Shell, P&O to name but a few.

One Brick Plinth stands out depicting the Training ships later Nautical Colleges HMS Conway, HMS Worcester, SATS General Botha, Nautical College Pangbourne (*see on right*).

The Arboretum is a registered charity, entry to this marvellous parkland is free, it exists on donations and legacies by the general public. Our own plinth was first installed shortly after the centre was started in 2000. GBOBA-UK member Alan Bole 49/50 was one of the organisers of our plinth. It had to be refurbished a few years ago funded by the UK members of the respective colleges.

Needless to say, the most outstanding is the Armed Forces Memorial as are those of the Emergency Services and Civilian organisations, Police, Ambulance, Royal Air Force, South Atlantic Medal Association.

We would encourage any of our GBOBA Members who visit the region take time to spend around the NMA. For further information visit: info@thenma.org.uk T: 01283 245100.

CANADA – CENTENARY CELEBRATION - Gerry Stalling 1953/54 Term.

After a few years of COVID restrictions, we managed to start our voyage to normalcy again. We would like to congratulate Tony, and "the committee" on what by all accounts was an excellent 100 year celebration. I was sorry to have missed it, but will try for the next one. Time has played havoc with our lives; we're all getting long in the teeth.

On Vancouver Island we try for four gatherings per year of the old schools, *Conway, Worcester, Pangbourne & General Botha*.

Our first get together at the 4 mile pub (not yet politically correct at 7.4 km pub) in Victoria was attended by seven members; also in close attendance were Ron & Malcolm's wives.

Bothie produced four of us, Ron Wilson (1956/57 Term) from Victoria, Malcolm Clark (1956/57 Term) from Duncan, and Mike Briant (1953/54 Term) & I (Gerry Stalling 1953/54 Term) drove down from Nanaimo a 240 km round trip for lunch was a pleasant respite from living behind a mask in isolation, the isolation sort of reminded me of the good old days on Mobil tankers!

This part of the world is not only experiencing the effects of global warming, but also "La Niná", which is the Pacific playing games with our climate, hence although we're supposedly well into summer, it feels like spring with a lot more rain than usual. 368 mm in November, 159 mm in April, and, living as I do in the lee of a 1,000m hill I think I get a lot more dumped on me than does Mike living down at the waterfront. Enough complaints, we'll soon be complaining about our summer drought & water restrictions whatever, if seamen aren't complaining, they're not happy.

Australia Branch News – Grenville Stevens

Sadly, Social activity has been non-existent. However, as stated previously we must honour the 100th Anniversary with some form of gathering down under. Hopeful Spring will bring in a new environment.

Cadet 2423 Alan Rathbone 1972, after a period of AWOL contact has been made and Alan is back in the GBOBA fold.

Cadet 2696 Paul Motson 1980 Term - has gone off the radar and despite efforts contact has not been established.

Cadet 1121 Captain Gordon Maxwell 1940/41 celebrated his 98th birthday late July. A great milestone for our oldest old boy.

From GBOBA Sydney 2405 Alastair Tiddy 1971

Many Old Salts (and young ones too) may be familiar with what I call The Sailors Psalm (Psalm 107:23)

“They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep.”

In my experience, I have found that seafarers have a healthy respect for the oceans upon which we sailed. We have at various times experienced the glass-like calmness of the tropics where the ships wake left hardly a ripple as well as the phenomenal turbulence of a tropical revolving storm that defies description.

I have sailed with many shipmates, both men and women, who have shared a Christian faith. And those who did not, nonetheless, had a healthy respect for the Creator God whose power we all

experienced and witnessed while *'doing business in great waters'*. While some were indifferent to faith, I cannot recall any shipmate who openly expressed view rejecting the notion of God. Probably because we have *"seen the works of the Lord and His wonders of the deep"*. Indeed, on the mail ships, the Captain led the Divine Service every Sunday which was well attended by the Officers, and we always had a Christian burial service if we had to farewell a shipmate at sea.

During his earthly ministry, Jesus did not condemn or exclude people who did not openly profess their belief in Him as the Son of God. Rather, he encouraged those who were enquiring or searching for meaning in their earthly lives. He healed people who did not believe in Him as He did with the Syrophenician mother of a sick child (Mark 7:24).

He reserved His harshest criticism for the self-righteous and the spiritually-proud of the day – usually the established religious leadership, whom He called a nest of snakes (Matt 12:34). Jesus even reached out across the cultural taboos of the day to people whose lives may have been empty and lacking true meaning. His encounter with the Samaritan women at the well (John 4:7) broke so many cultural 'rules' that even His disciples were astonished. But the point of that encounter was to show that Jesus reached out to people regardless of their situation. The life choices of the Samaritan woman (she had 6 lovers) had led to her being ostracised by her community and her responses to Jesus, as recorded in John's Gospel, revealed a deep and real emptiness within her. Jesus' simple act of acceptance of the Samaritan women and her faltering response, brought her a sense of renewal and meaning in her life.

My own walk into faith was quite unremarkable. I grew up in a non-Christian home but went through the rituals of Baptism and Confirmation. But that was the extent of my encounter with Christianity as a young person. I was not vexed with any of the questions such as "What is the meaning of life?" and "For what purpose am I on this earth?" I was too busy enjoying an uncomplicated and laid-back life at sea.

My commitment as a Christian did not involve flashing lights and voices from heaven on the Damascus Road and even spiritual encounter such as the Samaritan women. Rather it was a slow, nagging sense that there was something lacking; that there was something more to life – not feeling fulfilled, as it were. True, I was very happy with a sea-going career, I enjoyed the company of good shipmates, some of whom are very good friends today 50 years later. I had no cares or worries, and life was good. But there was still the sense that there was to be more in life.

A chance encounter with a Christian led to a tentative acknowledgment that perhaps the Christian faith was the way to a fulfilling life. That hesitant and doubtful step taken 50 years ago proved to be on the money. There was a changed perspective to life in that events that affected me were not just arbitrary but that there was a higher purpose behind them. Let me try and explain.

There is a view in some quarters that Christians are immune from the storms of life. This is not the experience of many Christians and indeed, we are told in Scripture to expect the storms to come. What is different is how we deal with these events.

In the Gospel of John Chapter 6, the disciples are caught in a storm on Lake Galilee when Jesus comes to them walking on the water. The disciple, Peter, at Jesus' bidding gets out of the boat and walks towards Jesus on the stormy seas. All is well until he takes his eyes off Jesus and focusses on the storm and waves, which then overwhelm him. The message to us today is that we will inevitably face storms in our lives – loss of a spouse, retrenchment or ill-health. We cannot escape these events, but if we have our focus on Jesus, these stormy events will not overwhelm us. The concluding event of that episode on Lake Galilee is that when Jesus gets into the boat, the storm subsides. So too with us. When we invite Christ into our lives and our life's circumstances, the storms subside. We find the calm of a Godly Presence.

As Christians, we place our faith and trust in God's Promises and plan for our lives. I realise that some may find the notion of blind faith in an unseen God difficult to accept. But consider for a moment how much of our lives is based on blind faith.

As seafarers, we have faith and trust that the naval architects who design our ships, are qualified and exercise their skill in a diligent and professional manner. Think of the many unseen workers in the steel mills and others who make the components for the construction; and the shipyard teams, who we will probably never meet, that we trust to build a truly seaworthy vessel. Of course, we have the surveyors who provide documentary evidence that everything meets the required specifications. All of this is confirmed through experience when the vessel does not break up or sink when the storms hit us.

The Christian life is not too different. We have documentary evidence of God's promises in the Bible that He would never leave us or forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:8), especially in the culmination of Gospel narratives (Matthew 28:20). And we have those promises confirmed to us in life experience that when we do commit our lives to God as He has in mind only what is good for us. I can recall numerous instances where my life was steered towards blessing and away from danger and every experience reinforces my trust and faith in God.

I have found that the Christian life has much to be enjoyed at every stage of life's journey. True, there are some aspects of my early life that I choose not to do anymore, but the Christian life is a lot more that complying with the injunctions of "Thou shalt..." and "Thou shalt not...". I can still enjoy a good Macallen 18-year-old single malt on a Friday night after a busy week in the law courts.

As every stage of life brings new and different challenges – 'storms' if you like that I have to go through. I still think that I am 70 going on 20, but the reality is that there are many things that I used to do, and while the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. But this does not stop me from enjoying the blessings of a Christian life.

The invitation I found most compelling when I took that first tentative step more than 50 years ago is in the Gospel of Matthew 11:28 "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest*". It is an invitation that I believed and have validated through experience and have never regretted.

From GBOBA Adelaide 2548 Michael Carrington 1976

I have just received notification for my clearance from two weeks of Covid isolation while also liberating me from the rehabilitation program after a shoulder replacement operation, enabling me to return to work tomorrow (20th July 2022).

The shoulder replacement surgery occurred in late April using a new technique called the Affinis Short stemless shoulder replacement.

In short, the three components that make up the 'new' shoulder device are manufactured using a 3D printer and are accurate to less than 0.5mm.

The pioneering implant design and materials upon insertion and replacement are less invasive and consequently reduce the period of healing and rehabilitation while I remain a "case study" for this procedure, - so I will advise you as to how I'm getting along in, - hopefully, the many years ahead.

Prior to the operation, Cheryl and I were fortunate to have done a fair bit of caravanning and camping where Cheryl ended up doing most of the hard 'yakka' while I stood watching due to my troubled and 'frozen' right arm!



The highlight being our 13000 km road trip 'anticlockwise' around the western half of Australia.

Our first stage was the 3850km, colloquially referred to as "just up the road" trip through the 'Red Centre', from Adelaide to Kununurra via Darwin, initially taking in the dry ochre-coloured terrain, eucalypts, spinifex, roadkill, wedge tail eagles to the humid lush green tropical vegetation around Darwin.

Cheryl and I enjoyed the change of scenery, flora and fauna while heading north, bush camping and exploring the East Macdonald Ranges and parts of the Kakadu National Park.

It was interesting staying over and experiencing the historic WW2 ruins of airstrips, bunkers and Gathering Points found around the northern part of the

Northern Territory, - used when the Australians were faced with the offensive onslaught of the Japanese troops and airstrikes during the last world war.

During some of our stops we were fortunate to be invited in by the local Aboriginals who are keen in allowing the 'Western Folk' to experience, learn and embrace their customs and way of life which usually includes partaking in their smoking ceremony, exploration hikes to their cave paintings, grieving customs, folk lore and sharing kangaroo tail with the local bush tucker.

Up north, we also discovered that the kapok tree with its bright yellow flowers signals seasonal changes and plays a significant role in the lives of the aboriginal's way of life.

To me, - 'kapok' simply meant fibres used to stuff life jackets and other life preserves, mattresses, and pillows whereas the aboriginals observe that when the tree is in bloom then it's time to harvest freshwater crocodile and turtle eggs.

Our west bound trip stopped at Lake Argyle which is said to be one of the largest man-made lakes in the Southern Hemisphere and clear of any saltwater crocodiles thus being a perfect place to test the buoyancy of a couple of “Bush Chook” tinnies (Emu Larger beers) while swimming and eating barramundi.

The vegetation around the Kimberley region reminded us of the Northern Transvaal, Limpopo areas with its massive boab trees, of which some were even used, historically as “temporary holding cells” for prisoners in transit.

It too was awe inspiring to see the unique, magnetic ant nests and the massive, seven-metre-high cathedral ant mounds found in this area. The smaller ‘magnetic’ ant mounds which stand about two metres high are so named due to their main axis mysteriously being aligned to the earth’s north – south magnetic field.

Purnululu, or the Bungle Bungles is a World Heritage listed site in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, consisting of a spectacular series of orange and black banded, naturally sculpted sandstone rock mounds, standing about 250 metres above the semi-arid desert.

The 100km dirt road to get to Purnululu from the tar was the worst road that we had ever travelled on and evident by the number of vehicles awaiting on recovery tow trucks, having fallen victim to the heavy corrugations. The cost of retrieval in those remote areas can amount up to \$8000!!

The Horizontal Waterfalls, near Derby are another “wonder of the world” in that a 10 to 12m tide is constrained and naturally forced through a 15-metre-wide chasm in a rock face, causing a four-metre high “horizontal waterfall” wave to develop.

A trip in a seaplane to the floating pontoon nearby allows one to embark on and experience an exhilarating trip through these falls aboard a high-powered boat, manned by highly skilled crews that certainly gets the adrenaline ‘pumping’.

We were halfway through our trip in the Pilbara area of WA area when we met up with friends, Gordon, and Heather Combeer from Adelaide, - Heather being the daughter of the late Captain **Jim Buchanan GBOB, # 1398** who were also travelling around Western Australia with their off-road caravan.

Having travelled about 6500kms, or roughly halfway through our trip we arrived at Port Hedland amidst its WARNINGS; -Swim but beware of stingers, stonefish, sharks, and crocodiles! - the world’s largest bulk export port which includes iron ore, salt and lithium, noticeable by the 64 giant bulk carriers out at anchorage.

Shipping movements at Port Hedland are governed by the state of the 9m tidal range where up to eight Cape Size, 160 000 dwt laden bulk carriers are sailed on the flood tide, immediately followed by up to eight light, inward bound bulk carriers.

Currently the iron ore export from Port Hedland is in the excess of 550 million tonnes per annum.

While in Port Headland we traced the previous ‘stomping ground’ of where **Leon Strydom, GBOB # 9059** was the Marine Operations Manager at Port Headland and has since moved to Adelaide where he is the Manager Port Services, Flinders Ports, Port Adelaide. **Mike Rowe, GBOB # 2572** also resided at Port Headland where was a Marine Pilot prior to moving to Esperance to again work as a Pilot.

For the next three weeks our south westerly track with the Combeer’s took us through the Gascoyne region to the splendid Coral Bay and it’s Ningaloo Reef until the south westerly winds set in, forcing us to travel inland and southwards through dirt and the gold prospecting areas around the Gascoyne River, stopping at Meekatharra for fuel and fresh water, - a scarcity in this region.

About 500kms southeast of Meekatharra, we camped at Leonora, made famous by the “Sons of Gwalia” gold mine where Herbert Hoover served as the Mine Manager in 1898, later becoming the US President. A most intriguing and remote ‘wild’ area of Western Australia.

250 kms south of Leonora is Kalgoorlie Boulder which is yet another ‘lost’ town in the middle of the desert with a unique atmosphere and its “Super Pit” open mine surrounded by beautiful, historic buildings, museums, hotels and even a couple of South African gourmet food shops, a Nando’s fast-food outlet indicating the number of ex South Africans who now live and work in this gold mining town.



The remaining 2200 kms was almost east southeast for us, taking in the “90 Mile Straight” across the Nullarbor and around the Great Australian Bight to Adelaide thus ending our 13000kms journey, exploring the western half of this amazing Country, Australia. We then met up with **Gordon Hayward, GBOB # 2834**, who is a Marine Pilot at Port Adelaide and had kindly kept an eye on our house during our absence. “Hooroo”

Kind regards, **Michael Carrington GBOB # 2548** Tug Master, Port Adelaide, South Australia. *See note on bottom page 14.*

From The Bursary Fund Chairman – Simon Pearson

In the OBA’s centenary year we were delighted to hear of the success of the 1st Marine Bursary Golf Day in Durban. Well done to all and everyone who participated to make it an event of note in the KwaZulu-Natal calendar and thank you to Grindrod Shipping for being the main sponsor.

Our Sail & Motor Sub Committee have much to be proud of in the success story that is making the press locally. Certificates of Competency in vessels under nine metres - congratulations to our own famous five. And to add to the accolades, we have Bursary Fund students Juvandrè been awarded his day skipper licence funded by the TK Foundation Youth Sailing, as well as Nqobile, Afika and Thobeka also have their Skippers Certificates in partnership with Sail Africa. On 23rd and 30th July a large group of LMC students attended a course at the NSRI Station 10 completing their Pre-sea Training in preparation for being the new intake to participate in Sailing or Motorboat training. Our deepest gratitude for all the hard work that has been done by Blackie Swart and his Sail and Motor team to make this all possible.

On a similar topic may I just add my gratitude that the Bursary Fund continues to forge good, healthy and strong bonds of friendship and co-operation with these related organisations such as Sail Africa, National Sea Rescue Institute, Royal Cape Yacht Club, False Bay Yacht Club, Lawhill Maritime Centre, Sea Cadets etc.

On the staff front we are pleased to welcome Ms. Dana Retief a former pupil of Simon’s Town School as our new Student Administrator to work alongside the General Manager, Thalia Hock in the office.

Last but not least we look forward to the upcoming Fairship Marine Bursary Golf Day on 17 November 2022 at Rondebosch Golf Club and we hope that as always, this event will be well supported by the Old Boys. Regards from Simon Pearson, General Botha Old Boys’ Association Bursary Fund Chairman.

Alang Beach

Criss crossing the field of comment on things maritime seems to be a tricky pastime. After the rabbit hole of the Bothie logo investigations last time, I again unknowingly fell down yet another apparent rabbit hole, this time of a completely different nature. I was quietly minding my own business and reading one of the social media group pages when I came across a post asking for opinions from Master Mariners on whether it was a good idea to have a reversed set of steaming lights for tugs which love to go backwards from A to B, just to save confusion on everyone’s part. The post elicited a few responses good and bad but that is not of too much interest. What tweaked my curiosity was what did the "Book of Words" a beloved Joe Almond phrase, have to say about the problem, and why should only Master Mariners have skin in the game?

But before we dive into the Colregs, lets agree that the rules should be understood and applied by all persons who have command of whatever form of things which float, wherever they may be found going about their business, lawful or otherwise.... a subtle point which perhaps had been forgotten by the poster and some post repliers.

A lot of questions remain unanswered in my mind after reading through the Colregs a number of times seeking clarity on things from a totally different perspective. We all know that these rules have been formulated over a very long time and have admirably served their purpose. We have learned them off by heart and used them to find our way through difficult scenarios placed before us on the lecture room table, ticket examiners, and real life situations on the bridge of ships, or at the oars of a pulling boat or the helm of a dinghy.

Things have changed over the years when it comes to the design of vessels. Let’s consider tugs or multitask workboats as an example, as these types of vessels are apparently exhibiting the

characteristics which could be causing what were previously simple basic unquestionable assumptions to be not quite so clear cut, and potentially wrong.

Can you easily, and with almost complete certainty, tell which way a crab is going to run to get away from you.... left or right? We also expect sharks to only swim forwards.... backwards for any distance would be highly irregular.... if at all possible. These things we take for granted without even thinking about it. We glance at the objects profile and instantaneously make a decision as to which way it is capable of, and most likely to be going.

Not quite such a fast background decision can reliably be made with a brand new small ship handling tug blustering up and down a channel on its way somewhere... even with the huge advantages of clear visibility and daytime. Unless of course you have intimate knowledge and experience of the environment in which the situational determination takes place.... something which I believe was erroneously assumed by one of the social media post respondents.



We can take a closer daytime look and the modern little harbour tug in question, of the type found in larger sprawling ports around the world. Let's look at it from different vantage points and different observers. On one hand from a skipper of a smallish weekender powerboat with a height of eye of maybe 1-2.5 metres above water level and another observer standing on the bridge wing of a lightly ballasted bulk carrier. Each would have a very different opinion of the outcomes of a physical encounter with the tug doing 5 knots.

The little guy close to the water can really only see the tug in a horizontal plane by day. The sheer line is perhaps not as clearly defined as is normal with most vessels. The length to beam ratios are perhaps on the small side, and the 360 degree view superstructure and funnels(if present) and exhaust pipe positions don't offer much help to the non professional in categorizing which way the naval architects decided which was the bow and which was the stern.

The mariner on the bridge has more of a plan view or isometric view of the little tug. The sharp end and the flat end are not as clearly well designed as was the case in the old days, and the superstructure which looks more like a miniature airport control tower with long sharp chrome spikes belching black smoke and perhaps a carousel tow hook offers a different set of visual clues. Even if this inelegant contraption bumped into him it would not be of any great concern.

Remember the high up bridge wing is offering a far better isometric view of the surroundings, and such a vessel is most likely protected by the Colregs (Rule 3 General Definitions [h]) as having the right of way.

Yet both mariners are bound by and need to act in accordance with the same set of rules.

So before we complicate the issue with the night time aspects of this problem, there are a few other factors to consider. For example, what is the definition of the term "to alter course to starboard". Not so easy when you come to think of it. The Colreg definitions are shtum on that... I mean it was a dumb question in the old days. The assumption was made that the regulations were written for vessels which 99.99% of the time when under way were going through the water sharp end first and propellers following. Turning to starboard meant that the vessels heading would change in a clockwise direction by turning the steering wheel in a clockwise direction or moving the tiller to port. In other words the vessel would end up somewhere in a semicircle of water surrounding the vessel on its starboard side in relation to its original course.

Now we take away the steering wheel and substitute a joystick on a centre walk around console or even a portable hand set - Heaven forbid. We can for the purpose of understanding, for the time being dispense with the meaning of Port and Starboard and substitute the terms "this-a-way" or "that-a-way". Oh and before we confuse ourselves further, when the Colregs were first written to incorporate the problems of power driven vessels, propeller shafts which lined up with clearly defined fore and aft vertical planes of the vessel were de rigueur. Azipods with variable pitch were some sort of untaught of abomination.

So this is where it gets confusing. For whatever hydrodynamic or efficiency or convenience reason some of the tug skippers have formed the habit of steaming/motoring/sailing backwards in accordance with the framed General Arrangement diagram on a bulkhead somewhere in the vessels accommodation , from waypoint A to waypoint B. How does he decide what "altering course to

Starboard" means to himself and how does it appear to other nautors in the vicinity? One must note that there is in real life a term called manoeuvring (which lacks definition in the Colregs). Manoeuvring is different to steaming unfettered on a particular relatively constant course from one location to another. Does the tug skipper when going from A to B, put his steering device the same way as his green light fitted to the vessel, and end up in the wrong 180 degree quadrant according to an observing confused power boater? That would look like an alteration to Port to the confused observer.

It seems that perhaps the Colregs are deficient in a few respects pertaining to the new vessel design parameters we now find ourselves dealing with... for instance..

A clear definition of manoeuvre. What constitutes manoeuvring and what constitutes "steaming" or "sailing" or perhaps in modern parlance with respect to tugs in particular, "commuting".

A clear definition of what is meant by "Ahead propulsion" and "Astern propulsion". Imagine the confusion if there was such a contraption as a pair of variable pitch counter rotatable bladed azipods. There's no law against that as far as I know. That may sound silly at first glance but it has relevance when deciding how many yanks you are going to give on the whistle lanyard.

Now imagine how much more complex the scenario becomes at night when the small boat mariner is required to make decisions on a very few specific lights in amongst powerful deck lights on the tug and a background of harbour lights of all colours, heights, and luminosity.

Lets look at a worst case scenario where the hypothetical tug is motoring up Maydon Channel in the dark and meets the little powerboat coming down from Bayhead on a collinear but opposite vectored courses. What purely visual facts does the little guy have at his disposal to determine his course of action? And I say purely visual for a reason which may become apparent later. According to the law he should only be making his interpretation on which running lights he can see, and in this case all he can see (amongst the other visual clutter) is a single white light. He then has to make a further judgement on what he can't see, and that would be either or both of the side lights and a masthead light. This leaves him with an aspect arc of uncertainty of 135 degrees as opposed to seeing the tug traditionally more or less forward of the beam which would give an arc of uncertainty of only 112.5 degrees.

Can he safely guess which way the strange vessel ahead of him is going to alter course in relation to himself? Is this vessel's bearing going to open clockwise or anticlockwise? There is no way of knowing.

I think it is clear that ambiguities can clearly make navigation decisions very difficult for some skippers. You can work out all sorts of hypothetical situations which are quite within the bounds of reality and legality and which could potentially become dangerous. The light weight bulky could not really care what is in front of him, he knows that the chances are that whatever is obstructing the channel will get out of the way as a matter of prudence and survival.

Good seamanship dictates as one of its overall principles that the navigator must take into account all available information. In cases where the relatively meek will encounter the relatively mighty, there are a number of other information sources which have to come into play, none of which are catered for in the Colregs.

Some aspects to consider as you sit on your bar stools watching your beer go flat while thinking about this topic, or argue around the braai fire, could perhaps go along these lines --

AIS data contains fields which contain true heading and course over ground. Perhaps software could be developed to identify when there is a close window of probability (taking into account potential for current and vessel leeway) that the vessel is in fact making significant "stern way" and make the little ship arrow shaped icon flash or become highlighted in some way, like those damn loud reversing hooters on key side vehicles that used to annoy us. Or perhaps extra message slots can be transmitted which indicate that the vessel is running /steaming/sailing/commuting astern. It is probably not too difficult to develop... implementation is another story as it affects ALL AIS receiver systems and not just some electrical modifications on a minute percentage of vessels.

VHF is a handy tool. The two vessels can communicate with each other before it becomes a ring clenching sweaty occasion. Port Control, if they are awake, can take a leaf out of their Air Traffic Control counterparts and micromanage the movement of all targets on their radars, but that is not a fool proof solution because really small vessels may not show up (container crane/berthed ship shadows for example). Not much use in open water encounters when we have to fall back on the Old Rule Book.

Local knowledge as a problem solution was touted on the social media post, but that is a poor assumption given that there are such things as legal visitors to a particular port and there is no way they can legally be held responsible to have "Local Knowledge" at hand. Don't forget the Colregs are supposed to be a one size fits all, all-encompassing panacea to prevent boats bumping into each other. I shall leave you to contemplate and inwardly digest the problem, and then decide if you think that the option of installing a reversed set of steaming lights along with standing company orders would remove the ambiguity, or should we just carry on with the current unsatisfactory situation which could lead to accidents? *It would be good to have some discussion or debate on the above subject or any other topic in our newsletters - Scribe.*

FOUR GBOBA FRIENDS OF MANY YEARS GATHER IN JOHANNESBURG

On Sunday 01 May 2022, "Not-So-Old-Salt-But-Getting-There" Tom Fraser and his beautiful Pat hosted Two "Old-Salts-Who-Are-Already-There" Joe Birtles and his beautiful wife Cheryl and Alan Ford (*The Stickler*) and his beautiful wife Jenny Ford and "Not-So-Old-Salt-But-Getting-There" old



L_R - Alan Ford, Tom Fraser, Joe Birtles & Charles Kingon

boy visiting the big city from Cape Town (Slaapstad), Charles Kingon and his beautiful wife Jenny.

The day evolved around a "Potjie," great friendship of many years, interesting conversation, and couple of toasts. Within moments of his arrival, *The Stickler*, in his typical fashion, questioned Tom about where he got the poi from for his potjie, as poi is an ancient Polynesian equivalent of our mashed potato. The correct spelling for what was happening in the fireplace is "Potjie."

To ensure that all managed to arrive at the final destination waypoint safely and on time, an invitation, in the form of a

NOTAM ("*Final Notice to Mariners ... Poitjie afternoon*"), was sent to all travellers by the hosts, including a weather forecast, which for a change, proved to be accurate. After arriving late at the fairway buoy, Alan Ford cited lack of wind when crossing the line between Northern and Southern Jo'burg. We were blessed with a beautiful blue sky Highveld Autumn day.

The very first thing that Charles Kingon did upon is arrival, not knowing that he was being watched, was to set up a beer glass on a table and take a typical "Charles Kingon" photo of the glass.

Conversation in typical GB OB style covered many subjects discussed by this bunch of old sailors including finding solutions to the many problems of the world and (wait for it, yes wait for it...), a robust discussion triggered by *The Stickler*, on potjie technology and tradition.

As our Chef of the day, the host did his best to make a traditional Beef Potjie, but is hesitant to comment about the final result, which he left up to the guests to rate. The guests were quite satisfied and heartily consumed their "bord kos" that was presented at the Mess lunch, in the best ravenous cadet style that we know.

Two important toasts were not forgotten. During the afternoon, we all donned our "Bothy" Caps and toasted "The Ship." We also separately toasted the 100 - Year Centenary Year of The Ship and the team that planned and executed this very special occasion in the life and history of the ship. *The Stickler*, being what he is, donned an old "beige" variant of the Bothy cap.

One very clear picture that did emerge during the afternoon is that we have two talented engineers and craftsman in Joe and Alan. In fact, Joe Birtles and Alan Ford should have worn purple under their epaulettes. Now fully in their retirements, they have found solace and the meaning of life in their well-equipped workshops, to which their homes are attached. They do incredible things with wood and steel and they very clearly, have traded in their carpenters' dog's paws and pail of red lead for the finer details of spray work, detailed CAD drawings, general engineering works and lethal electrics.

There is also an emerging artist in Joe, who is focused on executing interesting metalwork-based projects, including recently modifying a trailer for the transportation of a motorbike.

Alan has the most incredible collection of pressure lamps in his "Mancave," amongst many other wonderful items from the past that you will find dotted around his home. He is also the proud owner of an "*Alan Ford Design*," large glass-bottomed boat on a large trailer in his boatshed, at the bottom of his garden, which appears to be an ongoing saga of many years, with the boat seeming to go... nowhere.



As proof of his naval architectural skills, this unique boat is designed to float, (*if it ever sees water again*), with a 2 square meter hole in the bottom and a crew compliment of 10.

All in all, a great afternoon of friendship, comradeship, banter, great and sharp humour, smiles and laughter, together with a healthy lunch and good wine was enjoyed by all.

Before we knew it, it was time to say “*Adios.*” After departing from Tom and Pat in the late afternoon, all travellers reached their home ports safely.

The next get together will take place sometime in August 2022.

Unfortunately unable to fit in many interesting photos of Australia from Mike Carrington (with apologies to Mike & Grenville). Drop him a line if you want to see more. Similarly my apologies to other contributors, but as you see 14 pages space does not allow – Scribe!!!