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GENERAL BOTHA OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

http://www.generalbotha.co.za

November 2013

JOINT NEWSLETTER

Has your address changed? Please send your updated details to Tony Nicholas Chairman Cape Town (details above).
Do you have an interesting article for this newsletter? Please send your contributions to Dennis Henwood, dhenwood@iafrica.com Phone: +27 (0)21 6716373. Fax: +27 (0)86 6706710.

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

CAPE TOWN FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- Venue: Royal Cape Yacht Club, Duncan Road, Table Bay Harbour.
- Date & time: Tuesday 10th December, 1230 for 1300.
- Lunch cost: R167-00 p.p - Partners welcome
- RSVP: Kathy or Jacky – phone 021 788 5957
- or email cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za
- by Sunday 1700, 8th December.

The KZN **Christmas lunch 2013** is booked for
Wednesday 27th November in the Trafalgar Room, Royal Natal Yacht Club

Cost R130

TIME: 1200 for 1300

The GBOBA KZN will provide wine

Please BOOK if you would like to attend the lunch. For catering purposes please book by the **latest on 22 November.**

There is limited parking on the club premises.

Contact either Howard, the secretary, by email at: jacksonmoss@telkomsa.net

FROM THE BRIDGE OF s.s. CAPE TOWN

At the time of writing the rugby Currie Cup final is over and the Sharks spoiled the Province party screams the newspaper headlines. Indeed many of us are deeply disappointed in the poor performance of Western Province in the final. Even my grandsons declined to watch. At least my beer did not sour. And now I have to endure the gloats of my Durban colleagues. Where is the Honour and Duty?

Over the years of existence of our ship many Old Boys became known in various spheres of our industry or other business disciplines. Today we have yet another, **Nick Sloane** GB 1981, who has become a *household* name in the marine salvage industry. Nick was in charge of the operation to right the cruise ship Costa Concordia that sank off the Tuscan island of Giglio. Nick led a team of some 500 people and over 30 different vessels in this operation which officials labeled a "daring and unprecedented engineering feat". The media elevated Nick to "pop star status" and when one sees how the media mobbed him I believe this to be an apt label. **BRAVO ZULU NICK!**

Another Old Boy who has found it difficult to swallow his anchor is **Andrew Cross** GB 1966. He embarked on a round the world yacht race on a yacht aptly named Invest Africa. Needless to say Andrew is the eldest crew member on board and perhaps in the entire fleet. He has just arrived in Cape Town in third place on the Rio to Cape leg. Many participants only sail on one or perhaps two legs of the race but Andrew has bravely opted to complete the entire race. Well done Andrew and fair winds for the remainder of the race.

The Cape Town Ship Society, as many know, has premises within the port here and their collection of memorabilia is fascinating to say the least and well worth a visit. Regular interesting speakers and film shows are arranged. The society welcomes visitors and are prepared to open the rooms for us at any time should we wish to arrange a group visit. Oh yes, they indeed do have a pub as well. Unfortunately the Transnet National Port Authority seems intent on squeezing the society out of the port by regular heavy increases in rental, I understand in the region of R9,000 per month these days. Thus your support would be welcomed by the Ship Society.

Another well known name of bygone years is **Adolph Gysbert Malan** GB 1924/25, better known to all as **Sailor Malan.** I recently noted an appeal in our newspaper for information of Sailor Malan to which I duly replied and met with the Doctor to share the little information we have of Sailor Malan. An interesting project is being planned to commemorate the Battle of Britain in which Sailor Malan, among others, played a pivotal role. Dr Chris writes:

> "I am the resident researcher in SA for the Spitfire Heritage Foundation and the Imperial War Museum in the UK. Although Sailor's life is well researched and documented I am still looking for possible missing bits and pieces that might have slipped through the sieve to make this an absolute complete recording of the different phases of his life. His time in the British Merchant Navy, for instance, I think, needs to be more scrutinized if possible. It is where you and your organization will be of great help.
>
> The project around Sailor Malan is part of an extensive commemoration project of the Battle of Britain in 2015 in the UK and all through the old Empire. At the same time Sailor and his beloved Spitfires will be honored at a ceremony in Kimberley where he was laid to rest in 1963 and not only there but all through the old British Empire this epic battle and its heroes will be honored.
>
> We also envisaged a trust in his name which will raise money for social welfare work among farm kids with Foetal Alcohol Syndrome in the Wellington area as well as for educational purposes."

Any further information anyone may have of Sailor Malan please let me know.

Finally family members are appealing for photographs of our late Old Boy **Gary David Roseveare** GB 1977. Class mates, Both Watches, search your old albums and desk drawers for photographs including Gary and send these to me. I look forward to a prompt and strong response.

SCRAN BAG

M.E. HULLEY 1973 #2442. Morris mentioned that he is considering retiring next year which may result in his building a 27ft Montague whaler, same as we had at the Bothie. He writes; "I am thinking

of retiring next year (2014) and apart from some other projects (of equal importance) I hope to build the whaler. Have already built a 17ft canoe (strip plank using Cedar, Ash, Douglas Fir and American Walnut) it is beautiful, but no-one in their right mind would pay the money I would have to charge for something as mundane as a 17 ft canoe. It's not for sale anyway. I hope the S.A. Navy is keeping our whalers in as good a condition as Joe Almond did - it would be a crying shame if they are not."
Previously at sea with Safmarine, 1982 Joined S.A. Navy Strike Craft Flotilla. 1984 a Marine Surveyor for SGS based in Durban. 1989 transferred to Cape Town as SGS branch manager. 1993 returned to sea as Chief Officer on a Moss-Gas stand by vessel. 1994 - A stowage coordinator with Safmarine's Cargo Department. 1998 - left Safmarine and moved to England and went to sea as Chief Officer with Ramsey Steam Ship. 2000 joined Borchard Line as ship planner. 2013 senior planner in London for Borchard Lines, a family owned shipping line operating 14 container vessels which run around the Med and UK/continent.
M.J.I. FINCKEN 1987 #2904. After ten years with Safmarine Mike joined Greenpeace where he is currently serving as Master. He writes; "I'm still sailing with Greenpeace, presently as master on the Esperanza in the South Pacific. I was down to join the Arctic Sunrise, but for various reasons ended up here - thankfully, otherwise it would have been me in the Russian gulag. I am living in Aberaeron, Wales where I am happily married and have a 16-month little boy. I don't foresee a holiday in South Africa in the near future." We await more news of your adventures.
DON ROWE 1956/57 & ROGER RYAN 1976. Had mail returned from these two AWOLs and noted that both had been employed by Natal Stevedores. Thus using my network managed to obtain new email addresses for them. Unfortunately to date, have had no response from them. Anyone who has contact with them please stop their tap until they reply. Cheers.
K.T. SMTH 1978 #2634. 1997 Kenton joined Unicorn Lines as Cadet and promoted to Master in 1998. 2002 working as a Cargo Superintendent in Mozambique. Joined SMIT (now SMIT Amandla Marine) in May 2003. Sailed on the Africana, the old SA Agulhas, the Algoa and was Master on the offshore patrol vessel the Sarah Baartman for three years before that contract ended in March 2012. Was also an extra watch keeper on the ill fated CS Chamarel when she caught fire in August 2012. Since then relieving Master between the Algoa and the SAMSA training ship SA Agulhas.
J.A. MULLER 1966 #2286. Sedate retirement is not for John, he writes; "I have been gifted a holiday & I'm off in January 2014 to Ushuaia - Argentina , pop onto a ship and do a 17 day voyage to the Antarctic Peninsular & up to South Georgia & across to The Falklands. Given all the modern GPS & navigational aids , I seriously doubt anyone ever uses a sextant anymore. But, for fun - I thought I'd try & resurrect some taking of sights & see how far out I am to the pin-point-GPSes of nowadays. Not that I can remember HOW to use a sextant let-alone work out a position. But - I googled " How to Use A Sextant " and was amazed to find a number of sites that can elucidate on a long forgotten skill I had. So, I was wondering if you might know where I could get a sextant - inexpensively, here in either Jhb where I live or anywhere in RSA for that matter. Just a long-shot? And, no urgency given it's just a fun idea that is brewing in my mind."
Appears reason prevailed? "On the Sextant: A friend – Alistair Christison [GB1965] made it known late yesterday that he has his sextant of many years vintage. Like me – he needs to resurrect "The How". We've agreed though, first thing is to check if the Russian Captain & or any of his offices have a sextant or if there is a back up ship's sextant. The HOW bit – will be fun given when I was taking sights no one even had a calculator on the ship. It was all done by long-hand. As Alistair says, save baggage weight & grab a GPS. Switch it on. Wait a minute. Read the Latitude & Longitude. Read the speed. Switch it off & retire for lunch. So, guys – I won't scour RSA for a sextant, anymore.
And then, Alan [GB 1971]: On the bark – or is it barque ... Europa. (We had a delightful debate a few weeks ago when a buddy joined it in Cape Town heading up to Mauritius. Seems bark is American & barque is European.) & to answer your question, No, we are on Aurora Expeditions' Polar Pioneer. www.auroraexpeditions.com.au . That trip on the bark Europa is seriously tough. It would be wonderful to bump into it (figuratively) down that neck of the woods, where there are no woods.
As good fortune has it, my brother 7-8 years ago did a birding & photographic trip & loved it so much that last year he invited me & my two kids & spouses to join him in 2014. I haven't sailed on a vessel

for any length of time for decades. So, I'm going to make the most of this trip & suck-up all & everything to do with the ship and, of course – the joys that the Drake Passage, Antarctic Peninsular , South Georgia & Falklands have to offer." Fascinating and we look forward to your report back to us following the *sextantless* voyage.

J. CARSE 1961/62 #2199. After many years with Portnet [the old SAR&H] Johan moved on to interesting period in the Middle East and has subsequently retired to New Zealand. "After > 4 years with IRSHAD, an ADNOC subsidiary, as DGM on secondment from Smit Lamnalco I left Abu Dhabi June 2010. Took up the post as GM with Aqaba Port Marine Services Company, a JV between Smit Lamnalco and the Jordanian Government until July of this year. Currently working out of NZ as consultant for Smit Lamnalco." We trust you have retained your Springbok colours down there in the Land Of The Long White Cloud.

S. POLTER 1992. Sven is also moving around recently. "After completing Tech (T4) at the end of 2000 I joined the SMIT Amandla Marine managed DEAT fleet as Chief Mate on board the "SA AGULHAS", completing two annual SANAE relief voyages to Antarctica and then being part of the "MAGDALENA OLDENDORFF" rescue mission in August 2002. Later also served on board the fisheries research and environmental protection vessels, including command of the "SARAH BAARTMAN". Left SMIT Amandla Marine in 2007 to sail with Briese Schiffahrt, Germany on BBC Chartering heavy lift vessels for one year. I became a proud father in 2008, at which time I decided to drop anchor in search of a shore-based career.

Unable to find suitable employment in Cape Town I immigrated with my family to Dubai in mid-2008 to take on a position as Marine Surveyor with BMT Marine & Offshore Surveys (inc. The Salvage Association). Although mean time the company has changed hands and is now known as Braemar Technical Services (inc. The SA)."

W.G. MORGAN 1964 #2245. Recently retired Glyn has been appearing at our regular functions here in the Cape, land of the best provincial rugby team. "Picked up Second Prize for Seamanship and the Character Prize, a bit of a surprise that one!

* Went to sea with Safmarine for some years on various cargo ships, reefers and an oil tanker. My first ship was the SA Statesman. Saw a lot of ports in Europe, the USA, the Far East and some other places.
* Decided to change the world and do Town and Regional Planning at Wits University. Left after two years with lots of friends, experience in mountain climbing, dinghy sailing. The world did not change.
* Joined Barlows and sold Caterpillar Tractors in the Northern Transvaal and Swaziland.
* Did some time sailing as Second Mate on the Voorloper, a Unicorn coaster, between Durban and Cape Town.
* Worked in a yacht shop in Cape Town called Wilbur, Ellis Co. Did a lot of sailing. Met my wife, Christine, got married.
* Rejoined Safmarine and was promoted to Master in 1995.
*I was with them until their big break-up some years ago.
* Safmarine's bulk carriers were sold to a Greek company and I went with them. I was in command of Cape Sized and Panamax bulkers and a couple of geared container ships. Crews were mainly Ukrainian, some Polish.
* Retired in February 2013.

J.B. ROSE 1950/51 #1672. John recently wrote in asking the name of a former Bothie chaplain, appears the correct chaplain is still a mystery. "After graduating from the General Botha I joined a British Shipping Company as an apprentice; subsequently obtaining a Second Mate's ticket in London. In 1955 I helped deliver a ship to New Zealand and remained ten years on the NZ Coast where I learned some mighty useful practical seamanship in somewhat primitive conditions, and earning a Foreign Going Mate's certificate with a Home Trade Master's endorsement. (Foreign going time was very hard to come by in NZ.)

I went out to the China Coast in 1965 to get enough sea time in to sit for a Master's Certificate; had some adventurous times in tramp ships where the seamanship learned in NZ proved a blessing. After gaining my FG Master's ticket I remained ashore in Hong Kong for ten years, working at first for local

shipping firms, then for the Marine Department during the Emergency, later spending five years as a Marine Surveyor.
Much of the remainder of my time was less exciting. I was ashore in Bushire handling cargo for the nuclear power plant site when the Iranian revolution broke out in late '78." I still await your postal address and phone numbers sir. We have no idea which continent you are presently residing on.
S. ALMOND 1990. We recently *found* Stuart in Australia and thus finally added him formally to our Muster List. "I guess this application is slightly overdue, considering I had been "gate crashing" the monthly lunches with my grandad [our beloved seamanship instructor JOE ALMOND] since before I was even a cadet! A brief history of my sea career:
I began my employment with Safmarine in 1991 as Navigating Cadet after a 3 month Basic Training stint in the SAN, which was the requirement at the time. Maersk acquired Safmarine in 1990 and I remained serving on board the Safmarine managed vessels for the remainder of my deep sea career, which spanned 20 years in total. I left Safmarine/Maersk in December 2011 after sailing as Master for the preceding 7 years. I then moved to Australia and began my career as a Great Barrier Reef marine coastal pilot in February 2012 working for Torres Pilots, where I remain employed now. I currently live in Brinsmead , which is a suburb of Cairns in far north Queensland."
P.M. TISSINK 1977 #2575. Appears Peter may be considering retirement as he has changed his postal address back to Cape Town. "Left Safmarine in 1987 as C/O on Nederburg and joined Portnet Durban as mate on the tugs with Rob Reuvers [GB 1968] and Peter Blackett [GB 1974]. Moved back to Cape Town in 1990 as mate / master on Portnet tugs and then pilot. Got first pilots license in Cape Town in 1995 and left Portnet in 2001 for Ras Laffan, Qatar and I am still here as pilot with Rob De Koning [GB 1971] playing with LNG carriers, tankers up to VLCC's and now dry docks as well.
Worked in Cape Town with my brother Hans, first as tug master and then later joined him in the pilots' wardroom. This was a fantastic experience and as naturally happens between brothers a lot of chirping went on when we were on the water at the same time!!!" Look forward to seeing you at our regular Bothie functions.
C.A. CLOETE 1979 #2640. Colin was one of the first to update us via our new revamped web site. Safmarine 1978 -1979, General Botha 1979, SADF Oudtshoorn 1980, Lt Marines 1981, IT Operations & contract programmer 1982 in various IT companies Deqtime, Ollivetti, Xerox. Sales & Management roles in ACTNET, DENEL, IBM. Started own companies, contracted in Saudi Arabia as project manager 2002 - 2005, Started own company Quintica Middle East in Dubai 2006 - 2011, sold company and now reside in Cape Town. Still waiting to see you at one of our regular Bothie functions Colin.
P.D.N. ROGERS 1956/57 #2020. Another welcome update via our web site. "Joined SA Navy 1958 retired 1992 since then kept myself busy as a Maritime Defence Consultant". Peter has also recently joined our GB Trust.
C.G.A. NASH 1961/62 #E66. Our revamped website certainly attracted some interest. "Christopher Nash. 1961 / 62 (E66). UCT 1964 / 66. British Army 1967, Royal Engineer, Retired as Colonel OBE 1994. Worked in a number of major international service companies across the globe. Currently part time international business development adviser. Live in UK."
E.W. KIRKBRIDE 1984 #2836 & J.N.J. WARREN 1980 #2705. Both Ewan and Jonathan have been *found* at the Liverpool John Moores University. We know not what they are lecturing there and await for news from them both with interest.
J.L. LOGAN 1955/56 #1966. Logan has become a regular at the GB Southern Lunches. "On going to General Botha I planned to join Shell Tankers. That unfortunately never happened due to my Father passing away while I was at the Botha, and I really enjoyed sport. This resulted in me being employed by Shell onshore in Cape Town in 1957. I did many different jobs over the next 37 years at Shell. I married a Camps Bay lady called Norah Paarman in 1964. We lived in Camps Bay for most of our married life apart from a 5 years working for Shell in Mossel Bay. In Mossel Bay we became good friends with Captain Keith Burchell [GB 1960/61] & his family who also grew up in Camps Bay & attended the Botha. We have 4 children & 8 grandchildren all living in Cape Town which give us great pleasure. I played Soccer for the Cape Town City Team, the first professional team in Cape Town. At the age of 40 I started playing lawn bowls & represented Western Province seniors for 5 years. After

retiring from Shell in 1994 we moved from Camps Bay to Hout Bay & then to Kommetjie, where we now live. All our houses have had sea views, the sea must have been in my blood." Indeed it was.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

R.L HUGHES 1955/56. Roy sadly passed away 1st October after a long illness. Roy sailed with Harrisons and thereafter had a long career with Safmarine retiring as Master in 1999.

B.G. ERSKINE 1943/45. "Berry" did his cadetship in Union Castle, sailed as a Junior Officer on mail ships. Thereafter joined British Tanker Company. Delivered two trawlers, Cape Infanta and Cape Columbine to I&J in Cape Town. Both built in Lubeck, Germany. Joined the S.A. Harbour Service in 1956. Retired in 1989 as Senior Pilot. Deceased 26/09/2013. Pat mentioned that; "He was always so proud of being a Bothie Boy".

J.D. DALE 1941/42. Word came through from a family member that John passed away December 2002. Would appreciate details of his career since leaving the Bothie.

P.A. WIJNBERG 1951/52. Paul sadly passed away 28th July. 1952 - "Chainy" and Queens Gold Medallist. 1953 - Midshipman S.A Navy. 1972 - 1975 - Naval Attaché, Paris. 1977 - appointed Director on the Staff at Defence HQ, Pretoria. Later seconded to the office of the Prime Minister before being appointed as the Officer Commanding Naval Command Natal 12/1980. 1986 - promoted to Rear Admiral. Appointed as Flag Officer Commanding Naval Command East. 1989 - retired, apply farming in the Elgin District. 2013 fully retired from farming.

R.E. HOGG 1956/57. Richard served as Cadet with Safmarine before joining Turball, Scott & Co, as Third Officer, a year later joined Wm Corys. 1962 returned to South Africa and sailed with African Coasters and Durban Lines before coming ashore in 1963. Then entered stevedoring with Union Castle, Grindrod and finally South African Stevedores. 1984 joined Vista University in their finance department until retirement in 1996. Deceased 20/10/2013. Richard remained a staunch supporter of the GBOBA from his home in Port Elizabeth. He shall be missed.

Our sincere condolences to family and shipmates.

AWOL

- **Peter Cavanagh** GB 1978, last known in Morningside Kwa-Zulu Natal.
- **Mark Sangster** GB 1978, last known in Bayswater Bloemfontein.
- **Peter Shaw** GB 1943/44, last known in Sun Valley Cape Town.
- **Peter Atherstone** (1950 -51), we have no information on Peter.

Everyone please assist to locate them and update our network. Cheers from Tony (Chairman).

KZN BRANCH NEWSLETTER - *Ernest Nellmapius KZN*.

We continue to enjoy excellent monthly lunches at the RNYC. Cost R80.

Four Durban members, Colin Knowler, Derek McManus, Ernest Nellmapius and George Foulis drove down the South Coast to visit Ray Walker at his Caravan Park. A great time was had and thanks to Ray and Rosie for hosting the group. A

nice braai was enjoyed under the large Lapa. Derek rigged up his Morse key on the lawn and made contact with some of his mates.
Special thanks to Alan Ford of the Johannesburg GBOBA Branch for his efforts in designing the artwork for the GBOBA Natal Branch Floating Trophy. The Trophy will be awarded annually to the "**Best Student Extended Curriculum"** at the DUT Maritime Studies Unit. The Durban branch agreed to provide a "tablet" to the rewarding student.
The Durban Chairman, Derek McManus, attended the Prize Giving at the Elangeni Hotel on 24 October 2013. According to Derek the event was very well done and between 300 and 400 people attended.
The **first lunch in 2013** will be on **Wednesday 8th January -** 1230 for 1300 at Royal Natal Yacht Club.The **AGM** and Commissioning Day dinner, **in KZN 2014, will be on Friday 14th March**.

GBOBA Bursary Fund – *Paul Semark*

Interviews of potential bursars for next year have been held at Lawhill. Final decisions will be made at the start of the 2014 academic year when the candidates' grade 9 results are available for review. Our current grade 10 scholar, Lethabo Morovhi, has made a tremendous effort to strengthen her mathematics, with extra tutoring, etc, and should achieve a satisfactory result at the year-end and continue on with our support into grade 11. She is well motivated, determined to succeed, and described as a role model in her class.
The Administrators intention is to fund three-year bursaries, with at least one learner in each grade, requiring a new award and two continuations annually. This is, of course, dependent on funding. The full boarding experience is considered to be very valuable, so it is hoped that this can be arranged for all our future bursars, even if new candidates are local day-scholars.
Great news is that our two grade 12 bursars acquitted themselves very well at the recent tertiary-scholarship interviews conducted by the Society of Master Mariners. Both of them have been offered scholarships for tertiary education in maritime studies. They intend to study at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology next year for S1 and S2 diplomas. We are delighted, and very proud of them. They will be encouraged to participate in the mentorship of those following them through Lawhill.
Our bursary support approach is distinguished by our commitment to ongoing personal mentoring for our bursars. This is particularly emphasized during their grade 11 year. The grade 10 study-programme provides the necessary foundation for them to relate profitably to the various extra-mural mentoring interventions, and is best left to the teaching staff, while the grade 12 year is virtually consumed by preparation for the matric examinations. Jerry Hookins pioneered this approach for us last year with our first two bursars, with great success. He shared these thoughts in response to the Committee's appreciation of his contribution:
"Thanks for your kind comments, but if you haven't got the proper seeds, NOTHING good will grow from them. As per usual in all these things it is a team effort, as the choosing of the right people in the first place played a massive role.
Just one thing I must share before I disappear into the Eastern Cape bush later this month, as I believe it is extremely important and relevant.
Quite early in the mentoring exercise, Tsoso made a comment that made me puff with pride as a Bothie Old Boy. He said: "What is it with you guys? You are all something different." Rather taken aback I asked him what he meant. He replied that he found it astonishing that all "guys from Bothie" seemed like they are the same family. When I mentioned that I had not seen some of them for over fifty years, he said: "But I bet it will be like yesterday when you meet and say hello again." And, when I joined the meeting in Cape Town earlier this year, indeed it was!
I think that we Old Boys tend to be forgetful or unaware of the close bond that exists between Bothie Boys, even when they don't know each other, and that, I think, is where the passion lies. Now with these first two bursars we have started the development of a sort of new breed of Bothie people, who have recognised that bond, and to some extent already share it. I believe that we should remember that and keep them close to us all somehow."

The preparatory work for the grand Golf Day on the 21st November continues unabated. The response has been very encouraging. It should be a real festival!

Australia Branch News – *Peter O'Hare*

On Monday 14th October we were invited to lunch with a recently formed group in Newcastle NSW. This group consists of ex mariners in the area and is led by members of the British training ships. A great day was had by all. General Botha was represented by: John Mc Tavish 51/52, Jonathon Mann 58/59, Grenville Stevens 60/61, Peter O'Hare 64.

A group is also being formed to organize a combined Training Ship celebration in Sydney in 2015 and General Botha will be part of this.

Pre Christmas GBOBA lunch

Where: Sydney on Saturday 30th November.

Venue: The Great Northern Hotel,

cnr. Mowbray Road & Pacific Highway, Chatswood.

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

Grenville Stevens (2189 60/61) Chairman; Andy Fothringham (2525 '76) Vice Chairman; Peter O'Hare (2247 '64) Hon Secretary, Australia Branch.

Piece of Maritime History passed from Australia to Namibia – *Dennis Henwood (Scribe)*

Talking of a group of mariners in Newcastle (above), I am sure they would have been familiar with the Floating Dock "MULOOBINBA" and Forgacs Shipyard. The local papers wrote nostalgically in December last year of the sad departure of the Muloobinba under tow to its new owners. Having served in the State and Naval shipyards and then Forgacs since her building in Japan in 1977, she left much history behind as she moved on to a new life.

The Muloobinba was initially towed to the ASL drydock in Batam, Indonesia where, through January to March this year, much steel work was done to the dock floor and double bottoms in preparation for the long tow across the Indian Ocean, around the Cape and then North to her final destination in the Port of Walvis Bay, Namibia. After arriving safely in Walvis Bay in July having taken shelter in a couple of 'Ports of Refuge' to avoid the Cape winter storms, work continued on the topsides to ready the dock for commissioning which was last October.

She is now called "NAMDOCK 3" and is the third floating dock in the Elgin Brown Hamer (Namibia) shipyard in the rapidly growing Port of Walvis Bay.

An interesting addition to the sale of the Muloobinba was the old steam powered floating crane that rode piggyback on the dock and is now afloat in her new port to continue in service.

I was part of the project team drydocking the Muloobinba. I think it was the first time that she had been in dock since building in 1977. It was a very interesting project that I felt privileged to be a part of. After all, one does not often have the opportunity to drydock a drydock! Despite the heat and humidity it was fascinating crawling around and exploring this dock as well as the floating crane!

FLOATING DOCK MULOOBINBA ■ Year built: 1977 ■ Builder: Hitachi Shipbuilding, Sakai, Japan ■ Size: 205 metres x 33.5 metres ■ Lift capacity: 15,000 tonnes ■ Cranes: Two ■ Arrived off Newcastle on January 4, 1978 ■ Muloobinba is the Aboriginal name for Newcastle ■ Two of the dock's biggest contracts were the Navy ships HMAS Manoora and Kanimbla.

Gauteng Branch Newsletter - *Alan Ford* alanford@global.co.za

The Spring Luncheon was held at Mungo's Portuguese Restaurant on Sunday 6th October.

Ten Obies and one young Worcester lad made muster accompanied by spouses and guests to bring the total headcount to twenty-four. The most ancient mariner was Rene Poerner of '48-'49 vintage, overseen by wife Karen and the youngest was the usual suspect, Tom Fraser '79, kept in check by Rina. The in betweeners in alphabetic order comprised Vic and Lucy Albert'52-'53, Mike and Monica Crewe '52-'53, Alan and Jenny Ford '71, Tony Hunter '53-'54, Ivor and Anne Little '53-'54, Keith Quayle '53-'54, branch newcomers Chris and Heather Salmon '69, Wim and Charlene Keirsgieter '58-'59, Ian and Louise Thurston (Worcester)'59-61. Apologies were received from Dan Barbier, John Bassil,

Bruce Dorkin, Kito Holz, Trevor Kilburn, John Orrock, Frank Redgement, Dave Sharrock, Gert Smit, Drummond Terry, Nigel Treacher, Ken van der Walt and Brian Watt.
There was an indication that some of the Gauteng branch members on my distribution list may not have received the initial invitation, (venue cancelled) and the subsequent invitation to Mungo's. If this was the case my apologies, and please let me know so that I can investigate what went wrong.
Karen Poerner from Headline Management, Carnival City, organized the wine sponsorship for the event; thanks to them the attendee's thirsts were quenched to an ample degree on a somewhat warm afternoon, judging by the general raucous level of conversation, which at times got out of hand. If it had been a formal meeting the chairman would have had difficulty in calling the gathering to order.
So as to ensure that Obies are warned far in advance, the date for the **Gauteng Branch 2014 Commissioning Day Luncheon** has been set for **SUNDAY MARCH 30 2014**. Please diarize this date as soon as you get your calendars for next year. The venue and program will be published later this year, or early in the New Year. I hope to make it something special and worth attending. Please don't let transport problems be a deciding factor, we will try our best to accommodate all who wish to attend.
Current nautical news and stories involving Obies is hard to come by up here on the Reef at an altitude of 2000 meters, so for this newsletter you will have to settle for a story of a fresh water voyage I undertook during the second week of November.
Due to my involvement with a particular youth movement, which I have mentioned before. I have become involved with a government initiative called the Co-operative Inland Waterways Safety Program, which is looking to bring together all parties involved in the use and management of all inland waters in South Africa. As part of this initiative I was invited to participate in an 'expedition" hosted by the Department of Water Affairs (DWA), which conducted a 300 kilometer, two and a half day voyage around the shore line of the van der Kloof Dam which is situated on the Orange River in the Northern Cape.
A flotilla of six craft, 5 of which were from the DWA, and one from the local SAPS Water Wing set off with about 30 people divided into various interest groups to conduct survey work around the dam, looking at aspects such as water quality, invasive species and illegal boat launching access points.
I teamed up with two gentlemen from the S A Navy Hydrographic who were adding the bells and whistles to their soon to be published official SAN chart of the dam. They have been involved in producing charts of the major inland waters such as Vaal Dam and Gariep Dam. Van der Kloof's chart will be the third in the series. It was fascinating to learn how they have gone about gathering the data for the projects from various sources such as old topographical maps, aerial surveys and the relatively new Google Earth satellite data. Their objective on this trip was to clarify a long list of questions regarding possible underwater obstructions, danger areas and actual heights and GPS locations of the many islands to be found in this stunningly beautiful stretch of water. Knowledge from local people regarding weather conditions and dangers was recorded for inclusion in the sailing directions to be drawn up and printed on the chart.
The job, they said, which was interspersed with much game viewing, rafting up on the water for teatime, lunchtime braai-ing, and overnighting in brand new game reserve accommodation chalets, was very hard, and someone had to do it.
Development plans for the area include the possibility of a passenger ferry for 20 or more persons to voyage over 60 kilometers through deep clean waters between two game reserves, so for any of those of you who are looking to come out of retirement, or a "shoreside" job, there may be a seafaring appointment for you in the middle of the hot dry flat Northern Cape, where big men eat meat and chicken is considered a vegetable.
The only other news snippet of interest is regarding the security of the AIS (Automatic Identification System), which has become mandatory on various classes of ships in recent years. It seems like the penchant of less reputable mariners to fool other mariners is still alive and well, and the old trick of painting fake gun ports on the sides of sailing ships has progressed to trying to fool the less vigilant by means of electronic methods, that what the modern bridge systems tells them is true. At this stage it appears that fake ships, wrong Aids to Navigation, and other simulated information can be transmitted to fool navigators into all sorts of compromising situations where they can become targets for piracy

and the like. Have a look if you are able to browse the Internet http://gcaptain.com/researchers-discover-security/.

United Kingdom Branch – *Ted Fisher*

The UK Branch had a lift in September...in an endeavour to encourage members from nearer the London area proved very successful with a Sunday Buffet Lunch attendance on 15th of 23 guests including ladies at The Sofitel Hotel Gatwick Airport.....a fine upmarket venue, an event enjoyed by all. Whilst many could not attend and bearing in mind the invitation went to all members I appreciated the e-mails of apologies----thanks chaps! Where do we go next? Those present included: Adair & Janet Butchins 1950/51 (London NW6); Peter & Norma Heydenryck 1952/53 (Chichester); Ted Fisher & Barbara 1954/55 (Storrington); Douglas Wrathmall 1956/57 (Portsmouth); Keith &Liz Collins 1957/58 (London SW19); Chris & Anne Nash 1961/62 (Pyrford Surrey); Donald & Kathleen Neaves 1971 (Southampton); Fred & Adrianne Kop 1971 (Fulmer Bucks); John & Yvette Piggott 1976 (Gravesend); Cerwyn & Carol Phillips 1978 (Maidstone); Finn & Lisa Kronholm 1987 (Birchington); Alan & Maureen Garton (Southampton & guests of Donald & Kathleen Neaves).

A reminder of the Conway Solent Lunch on the first Sunday of each month. Chris Nelson is not making formal arrangements in future, just turn up on the day to The Silver Fern Pub in Warsash, Hants from 1200 hours. You just do not know who you will meet!

The *Costa Concordia* saga reached a conclusion with a satisfactory parbuckling of the stricken vessel. It all certainly made the National Press with our own Nick Sloane hailed a hero as one report stated and rightly so. (*Unfortunately due to file size and space it is not possible to include the interesting and appropriate newspaper cuttings in the newsletter. If anyone is interested I can e-mail them on request to you – Scribe*)

A very interesting contact call from Brian Georgeson a month or so ago, he again walking The Thames Path to complete same from source up in the Cotswolds. At least this year he had fine weather unlike 2012 when it were a case of "mud mud glorious mud"...look forward to meeting with you in Cape Town next February.

Sad to learn of the passing of Capt Roy Llewellyn Hughes 1955/56 a chum of my year and I understand a CC in his senior year. Spoke with his wife Joyce offering our condolences. He lived in Lancaster UK and had been ill for a number of years.

By the time this Newsletter is read the year will be drawing to a close so may I wish one and all the best for Christmas and the Festive Season and indeed 2014.

Ted Fisher +44(0)1903 744400 Mob +44(0)7702 635017

Nick for Parliament!

With the elections looming next year in South Africa, rumour has it that Nick Sloane has been nominated to sit for Parliament. He is the only South African known to effectively right a sinking ship, and is called upon to do his bit for his country.

There have been many news articles in the world press praising Nick for his achievement, including one intriguing title "Rising Damp – Sinking a Ship is easy. Unsinking one, far less so". The writer begins "the greatest feats of ingenuity tend to have a certain glamour about them. To walk upon the Moon, visit the bottom of the ocean, to transplant a human heart – these stand out as glorious additions to the human understanding of the possible. On occasion, though, great ingenuity is required to deal with something bleak, dull and ugly. So it was with the salvaging of the *Costa Concordia*…." (Daily Telegraph Sept. 8 2013)

There may have been a large engineering team behind the operation who also deserve recognition or praise, but when it comes to the coal face it is up to the leadership and decision maker to bring it home.

There is a clever whisky advertisement on TV currently when a fisherman is called upon to fish out the local Pub keys through a small window that are locked inside using his fly fishing rod. He succeeds to the loud applause of the thirsty patrons with one of them shouting, "*Give that Man a Bells*". Well done Nick, I doubt that there was much liquid left in that Italian pub when you and your team were finished.

Class Reunions

Barry Cullen writes – "There'll be a very good attendance from the 53/54s reunion crowd for the AGM and Commissioning Day Lunch, Sat 1 Mar 2014 - and for the GBOBA War Memorial Service on the

Heerengracht, Sunday. But then we run out of time! With great regret then, it will not be possible time-wise to include the "Tea and Sumptious Snacks" at the Missions to Seafarers after the Memorial Service! The only day we have for Lunch at the Seven Seas Club, Simon's Town, followed by a visit to the General Botha Exhibit at the Navy Museum - is Sunday, after the Memorial Service. (With all of us in our seventies, we're not going to make this reunion into a five/six day event - as with Keith Burchill's famous 1961s reunion! ("All absolutely wonderful - but too much" was the reaction heard from many of their crowd!)."

November – We Remember

The Society Of Master Mariners, Cape Town Branch, held the annual service of remembrance at the Merchant Navy Memorial in the Port of Cape Town on Wednesday 6 November. Our Chairman was there as always to lay a wreath and represent GBOBA.

Sent in by John Mellows.

A POEM WORTH READING		
1. He was getting old and paunchy And his hair was falling fast, And he sat around the Legion, Telling stories of the past.	2. Of a war that he once fought in And the deeds that he had done, In his exploits with his buddies; They were heroes, every one.	3. And 'tho sometimes to his neighbors His tales became a joke, All his buddies listened quietly For they knew where of he spoke.
4. But we'll hear his tales no longer, For ol' Joe has passed away, And the world's a little poorer For a Veteran died today.	5. He won't be mourned by many, Just his children and his wife. For he lived an ordinary, Very quiet sort of life.	6. He held a job and raised a family, Going quietly on his way; And the world won't note his passing, 'Tho a Veteran died today.
7. When politicians leave this earth, Their bodies lie in state, While thousands note their passing, And proclaim that they were great.	8. Papers tell of their life stories From the time that they were young, But the passing of a Veteran Goes unnoticed, and unsung.	9. Is the greatest contribution To the welfare of our land, Some jerk who breaks his promise And cons his fellow man?
10. Or the ordinary fellow Who in times of war and strife, Goes off to serve his country And offers up his life?	11. The politician's stipend And the style in which he lives, Are often disproportionate, To the service that he gives.	12. While the ordinary Veteran, Who offered up his all, Is paid off with a medal And perhaps a pension, small.
13. It is not the politicians With their compromise and ploys, Who won for us the freedom That our country now enjoys.	14. Should you find yourself in danger, With your enemies at hand, Would you really want some cop-out, With his ever-waffling stand?	15. Or would you want a Veteran His home, his country, his kin, Just a common Veteran, Who would fight until the end.
16. He was just a common Veteran, And his ranks are growing thin, But his presence should remind us We may need his likes again.	17. For when countries are in conflict, We find the Veteran's part, Is to clean up all the troubles That the politicians start.	18. If we cannot do him honor While he's here to hear the praise, Then at least let's give him homage At the ending of his days.

	19. Perhaps just a simple headline In the paper that might say: "OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING, A VETERAN DIED TODAY."	

… and from Gerry Stalling

For all my Seafarering friends and to those that wished?..... LEST WE FORGET...
IN WATERS DEEP-A SAILORS END.

IN WATERS DEEP-A SAILORS END	
In ocean wastes no poppies blow, No crosses stand in ordered row, There young hearts sleep. beneath the wave. The spirited, the good, the brave,... But stars a constant vigil keep, For them who lie beneath the deep. 'Tis true you cannot kneel in prayer On certain spot and think. "He's there." But you can to the ocean go. See whitecaps marching row on row; Know one for him will always ride. In and out. with every tide.	And when your span of life is passed, He'll meet you at the "Captain's Mast." And they who mourn on distant shore For sailors who'll come home no more, Can dry their tears and pray for these Who rest beneath the heaving seas. For stars that shine and winds that blow And whitecaps marching row on row. And they can never lonely be For when they lived. they chose the sea. (AUTHER UNKNOWN)

Trombone days – *by Roger Layzell #GB 1773*

I guess my romance with the trombone started when I was about 7, listening to Glenn Miller music on the BBC during WW2. I loved that big brass section and the magic trombone harmonies with saxophones. However I never thought of trying to play a trombone until 1956, after I joined the R.F.A. Tanker "Wave Duke" as acting 3rd mate, at Wallsend (Newcastle on Tyne), undergoing extensive refit.
There was no watch- keeping so I frequently joined the junior engineers in their carousing around Tyneside at night, including going to the well-known Oxford Ballroom, which had a huge dance floor and a terrific big band with about four trombones. I loved the atmosphere but was still painfully shy and couldn't dance, and only stood in the band area, soaking up the terrific harmonies and watching the good-looking females. I was greatly impressed by the "Geordies" in many ways.
Then, by accident, I found myself looking through the window of a second-hand shop in Newcastle at a somewhat battered trombone, on sale for about 20 Pounds. That amounted to at least two months wages for me, but something made me buy it. I guess I'd gone big band crazy - this was the era of the really big bands. Finally we sailed from Wallsend bound for Houston, Texas, to load crude oil, and I got down to learning trombone.
Of course I did other things like taking star "sights" in my off watch time, using a borrowed sextant. These sights amazed me with their accuracy, and I think I irritated some people with my zeal for learning, including trombone practice. One fine evening as we approached the Bahamas I mentioned to the Master that, according to my sights, if we had fine weather, the following morning we would see the top of Great Abaco Island lighthouse pop up over the horizon at a certain time, on a certain bearing.
He smiled at me indulgently and said; "Thanks for that son, but I bet a Pound to a pinch of shit you're wrong". Next morning, at 10 minutes to the predicted time, we went to the compass on the upper Bridge and stood there watching the horizon on the predicted bearing. It was a **very** fine, clear day, with very little swell. Exactly on the time and bearing predicted, the top of the lighthouse appeared. "Well I'll be buggered", our Yorkshire Captain said softly, handing me a Pound, "You'll never do that again". He was right. I never did.

Whenever I was off watch and had no other duties, I taught myself trombone. The only instrument I'd played before that was a piano (at which I'd had a few lessons, insisted on by mother when I was in Aldershot). The place I chose, right forward in the mooring rope locker, was almost soundproof but was also extremely hot, and I sweated rivers there. At first I thought I'd never come right but slowly began to improve. However, by the time we reached Houston I realised I needed a mute, so that I could leave the rope locker door open for ventilation. So I went shopping for one in Houston, and in this was lucky to get the co-operation of my long-suffering Captain and the ship's agent.

The agent took me to a music instrument shop in Houston in his car, and I took my trombone to ensure I got a mute that fitted. A young man served me and quickly called his dad, (the owner) when he realised I was British. His old man came over and told me he had trained in Aldershot during the war in the US army. I told him I'd spent my childhood there and had bummed a lot of chocolate and chewing gum from Yanks, possibly him! He really warmed to me when I said I hoped he had not been one of those Yanks who left their used condoms hanging on the bushes around Aldershot!

Then he asked me to play a tune with the mute in, so I played Miller's simple "Pennsylvania 65000" (then the only tune I could play reasonably well!). It brought the house down when, after playing the three simple scales that start it, I lowered the trombone and said, with an American accent, "Pennsylvania six five thousand" and "Pennsylvania six five Oh Oh Oh", mimicking Glen Miller's band.

The owner was a trombone player and wanted to get another trom so we could have a session, but I said no thanks, I had to go, and what did I owe him. He said, "It's on the house". Texans, like Geordies, are the salt of the earth!

We did two more round voyages to the Americas from the UK, the second to Trinidad and the third to Curacao. I spent a lot of that time improving and increasing my trombone repertoire, as the mute cut the volume down by at least half, so I was able to greatly improve ventilation in the rope locker. There's a calypso that goes, "In Trinidad, in Trinidad, where de woman is good and de liquor is bad". The truth, from what I saw, is that even "de woman" is bad in Trinidad! Thereby hangs a tale (which I grant is almost unbelievable) whereby I emptied a brothel in Port of Spain, Trinidad, without any assistance. It happened as follows.

The junior engineers were concerned about me still being a virgin at the age of 19, and browbeat me into accompanying them to one of the local brothels – very clean and kosher, I was assured. So we went to the reception room where one inspected the meat and made one's choice. The women available were all ugly and overweight, so I was not aroused, and waited for my shipmates to finish. The reception room was on the second floor, so I stuck my head out of a window to study the local scene. Then I heard a police car's siren and could see the car zooming toward the brothel! I felt bad about the sordid scene and suspected this was some sort of extortion set-up, with police connivance.

Instinctively I ran around the brothel in a panic shouting, "Get out – police raid!" The result was amazing. About ten men followed me as I ran through the house to the overgrown garden at the back, then on to the end of the garden where a rotting corrugated iron fence leaned away, on the verge of collapse. Taking a brief look through an opening in the fence, I saw a deserted road on the other side so burst through, flattening the fence, assisted by a motley crew of seamen shouting in about 6 languages. We galloped off toward a main road, where we separated. I found out later from one of our crew who did not join this stampede that the cop car did not stop at the brothel! This was like a Woody Allen film!

However, the engineers "got me" on the next trip to Curacao, when they insisted I should join them in "bagging off"- as they put it, at "Happy Valley", the red light district. Fortunately a fairly attractive, clean looking Asian type was available. The union was consummated faster than you can say "Bim, bam, thank you Ma'm". I was relieved, in more ways than one, to be freed from having to "prove" my manhood, but was convinced that brothels were not for me.

By the end of my apprenticeship in 1957 I was quite an accomplished trombonist when I started attending a well known "Cram school" in London to prepare for the Second Mates Exam. Attending the same school were about 20 other candidates and we all lived in a hostel in east London near a famous and popular pub named "The Prospect, of Whitby". The latter was close alongside St.Katherine's dock,

near the Tower of London, when that was still a working dock. I believe this area is now named "Canary Wharf".
During this period my 21st birthday was on 29 October, and a large group of would-be Second Mates went to the "Prospect" that night to celebrate it - another good excuse for a piss up! As usual, the place was packed. After a few beers my Geordie friend suggested we get a taxi, get my trombone and return for a recital. He persisted, and I was amused by the idea. However, to avoid offending anyone too much, I brought the mute when I collected the trombone.
Thanks to my being somewhat pissed, the recital went remarkably well. I played about six mainly Glenn Miller tunes accompanied by ribald remarks from a strange mixture of common seamen and the upper crust of British society. To my surprise, there was hearty applause. A month later I passed the Second Mates exam, but never played the trom again. Thereby hangs another tale.

Festive greetings Happy New Year from the Committee and Scribe.
A cloudy day is no match for a sunny disposition (William Arthur Ward)
In nature there are neither awards nor punishments, there are consequences (Robert Green Ingersoll)

SLOP CHEST

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

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

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