S.A.T.S. *General Botha* Old Boys' Association

AUGUST 2020

www.generalbotha.co.za

6 Davallen Avenue, Glenashley 4051

Chairman Derek McManus
Cell: + 27 (0) 65 889 0845

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

PO Box 414, Muizenberg 7950

Chairman Tony Nicholas
cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za
Cell: + 27 (0) 82 555 2877

Secretary Hugh James
cptsecretary@generalbotha.co.za
Tel: +27 (0) 21 530 4484
Cell: + 27 (0) 82 796 7606

NOVEMBER 2020

JOINT NEWSLETTER

CENTENARY CELEBRATION

SAVE THE DATES!

4-6 MARCH 2022
CAPE TOWN

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.

~

Raise Funds for the S.A.T.S. *General Botha* Old Boys' Association Bursary Fund.

MISSION

Remember the Past

Celebrate the Present

Secure the Future

www.generalbotha.co.za

Chairman Tony Nicholas
+ 27 (0) 82 555 2877
cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za

Event Director Hugh James
+27 (0) 82 796 7606
cptsecretary@generalbotha.co.za

Event Manager Nicole Burchell
+27 (0) 67 879 5538
centenary@generalbotha.co.za

S.A. Training Ship *General Botha* Centenary Celebration – Cape Town

The year 2022 marks the Centenary of our training ship's commissioning.
Although the ship is no more, we plan to have a meaningful celebration in which to *Remember the Past, Celebrate the Present* and *Secure the Future*.
Diarise the dates and plan to come and join the celebration in Cape Town. We are looking forward to seeing you!

Programme 2022

Friday 4th March 2022:	11:00 Annual General Meeting
Saturday 5th March:	Morning: Excursion to Simon's Town to the S.A.T.S. *General Botha* display at the SA Navy Museum and the Lawhill Maritime Centre. Evening: Our major event! Commissioning Day Dinner preceded by the launch of our Centenary Book.
Sunday 6th March	Service of Remembrance and Wreath Laying Ceremony at the S.A.T.S. *General Botha* War Memorial.

Opportunities for Sponsorship

The planning committee's goal is to make the Centenary Celebration as self-funding as possible as well as being a fund raiser for your Bursary Fund.
There will be sponsorship opportunities for businesses or individuals such as: Venue hire, transport, book launch, gift books for invited guests, media and media development, dinner event manager's stipend, sound and first aid at the Service of Remembrance and tea after the service.
Should you or your organisation be interested in helping to sponsor the celebration, please contact Tony Nicholas or Hugh James: Contact details are on the Newsletter masthead.

Secure the Future - Sale of tables for the Bursary Fund

Our major fund raiser will be the sale of tables - seating 8 guests each - at the Commissioning Day Dinner with the profit going to the Bursary Fund.
Further details will be given in future Newsletters.

INDICATION OF INTEREST

We have had a good response to our emailed request for 'indication of interest' and are looking forward to the celebration in 2022.
If you have not yet sent us a reply slip, please do so soon. **REPLY SLIP ON THE BACK PAGE**.

If you receive the Newsletter by post, a reply slip is attached which has our postal address. Even better, ask a friend to send us an email with the details to centenary@generalbotha.co.za

Accommodation in Cape Town

It is our intention to provide an information package in March 2021 listing suitable accommodation.
Block bookings: If you are interested in a block booking, it will assist our planning if you indicate this on the attached reply slip or, if you have already returned it, please email Nicole: centenary@generalbotha.co.za.

FORTHCOMING CAPE TOWN EVENT – YEAR END LUNCH

- Venue: Royal Cape Yacht Club, Duncan Road, Table Bay Harbour.
- Date & time: **Tuesday 8th December, 1230 for 1300**.
- Lunch cost: R225 p.p– Partners welcome
- RSVP: Kathy or Tony– phone: 083 778 5957 / 082 555 2877
- or email: cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za
- RSVP by Tuesday 1700 1st December.
- Superb menu and even better company. We look forward to your strong support.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Booking to attend is very important, no booking in advance no seat. The Chef at the club requires firm numbers about a week in advance to ensure we are well catered for. Your cooperation in this regard highly appreciated.

- Bank: Standard Bank
- Branch: Thibault Square, Cape Town
- Branch code: 02 09 09
- Account name: General Botha Old Boys' Association
- Account number: 070835128
- SWIFT: SBZA ZA JJ

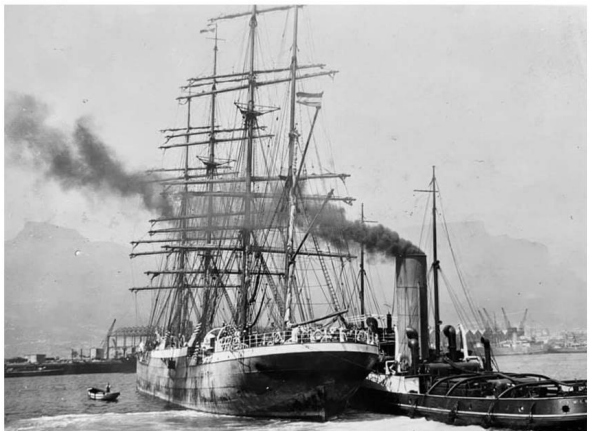
Please ensure your surname and name is used as reference for your EFT payment. If processing an EFT is not practical (e.g. overseas members) please inform us.

From the Bridge of ss Cape Town - Tony Nicholas

Taking the various levels of lockdown over past months as a result of COVID-19 into consideration one would think that my desk has been relatively slow. NOT SO says I. The work of the association and your bursary fund, planning for the Centenary, scripting a Centenary Book plus a myriad of other tasks that continuous, and voluminous at times, correspondence brings in belies that notion. I am indeed fortunate to have a supportive committee who are taking some of the strain on the windlass.

On the subject of Centenary Book, this is evolving into three books but you shall have to remain patient for the details. Your contributions to these books have given a welcome boost to our archival records as well as amusing anecdotes, some of which shall be used in our newsletters.

Norman Eaglestone 1971 recalls; "What I do remember more clearly was those first several weeks on board when we were not allowed to leave the base. Never thought much if it, until the nurses began moving into the building across the road. Every afternoon after class I remember hanging out the dorm window, with some of the team mates and shouting; 'Hi, we are coming soon.' This went on for a few weeks. When we did finally get to leave and go across the road they were pretty nervous of us all. After hanging out if the windows, waving arms and shouting every afternoon, they came to the conclusion it was a loony bin - not a naval academy. Probably somewhat accurate."



Lawhill assisted by TS Mc Ewan circa1933-34

Cape Town as well as Durban branches have resumed their monthly lunch meetings much to the relief of some who welcomed the opportunity to socialise again. But be assured that strict health protocols are maintained at these meetings to curb the pandemic. Thus we look forward to your support and growing attendance again.

You shall have to wait for our Centenary Book to read about **Greg Atherton's 1980** adventurous sail solo crossing of the Atlantic last year. But it is interesting to note that Bothie Boys assisted Greg with weather route planning. **Les Farge 1980** was also cruising about on his yacht somewhere in the Caribbean

assisted Greg with forecasts and route suggestions. In addition **Jonathan Warren 1980** also provided much valued weather routing from his desk at Liverpool's John Moore University. The Bothie comradeship ensured Greg had a safe crossing.
Lockdown has also prompted many to tidy up their old albums resulting in some interesting photographs coming our way. This photograph circa 1933/34, from a 90 year old album that **Ian Fishley 1960/61** inherited from his Dad. His Father was the mate on the tug at the time – obviously a tug of the coal-fired steam reciprocating engine era. I find it fascinating how the Lawhill frequently interconnects with Bothie Boys.
Breaking news! **Nic Sloane 1981** has been nominated for "The Elmer A. Sperry Award 2021" for his part in the salvage of the Costa Concordia. This is a very prestigious award which is highly deserved. Nic's nomination is second to Space-X so he moves in high circles. I am positive that Nic shall be honoured when final voting takes place. Bravo Zulu Nic and team.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

D.F. SILBERBAUER 1943/44. Dickinson passed away 10th September at the great age of 92 years. Arne Söderland kindly shared this obituary from his Spindrift.
After matriculating from Rondebosch Boys' High in 1942, Dickinson Silberbauer joined the SATS General Botha, then located on Redhill, in 1943 with the intention of joining the Royal Navy and then becoming an aviator. On completion of the two year course in late 1944 he attended an interview with the Royal Navy and was accepted for training in the UK as a cadet.
He took passage to the UK in the liner *Mauritania* and in September 1945, after a few months exploring London, commenced initial cadet training at Eaton College in Cheshire. Three months later he joined the training cruiser HMS *Frobisher* with other RN cadets for a cruise in the Caribbean and then to the Scottish Islands, Norway, Sweden and Denmark. In June 1946 he was appointed a Midshipman and appointed to the aircraft carrier HMS *Ocean* in the Mediterranean Fleet which was stationed in Greece.
He was aboard *Ocean* with a force of cruisers and destroyers operating in the vicinity of the Corfu Channel during the international incident when the destroyers HMS *Suamarez* and HMS *Voltage* struck mines laid by the Albanians and were seriously damaged. Times became very tense but the rest of his time there was more relaxed with visits to Istanbul and Haifa.
In December 1947, having passed his Midshipman exams and promoted to A/SLt he returned to the UK for a six-month course at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich. He then joined the River class frigate HMS *Helmsdale* for a short while before commencing his 'long courses'. The first course was flying but he soon realised he was not cut out for a career in the skies. After completing all his courses in November 1949 and now a SLt, his first appointment was to the LST HMS *Messina* in the Mediterranean.
During this period she operated in the Eastern Med and the Persian Gulf before returning to the UK and transferring to the LST HMS *Striker*. At the end of 1951, with four months leave due to him, he flew back to South Africa. On returning to the UK he made the decision to join the South African Navy, most likely due to his having met Sally Calverley, his future wife whilst on leave.
In May 1952 he joined HMSAS *Jan van Riebeeck* in Durban as Gunnery officer. When JVR paid off he was part of the commissioning team for the newly acquired SAS *Simon van der Stel* being prepared in Simon's Town. *Simon van der Stel* commissioned in 1953 and joined the rest of the small fleet in Durban.
On 26 September he married Sally, the wedding being held in Knysna and made special by the presence of SAS *Pietermaritzburg* which had been arranged especially for him. She was the last ship to officially visit the Port of Knysna as it ceased to be a commercial port on her departure. In 1954 he was given a break from sea duty with an appointment to SAS *Unitie* as training officer – probably due to his writing a scathing report on the standards of Citizen Force and balloted members.
From there he was next sent to the UK to collect the SDB SAS *Nautilus* which sailed home with SAS *Kaapstad* and SAS *Pretoria*. It was not long before he moved again, as Navigating Officer of SAS *Good Hope*, a very happy time for him. It was during this time that the Navy moved to Simon's Town and him to SAS *Vrystaat*.
In January 1958, with Sally, two sons and a daughter on the way, he returned to the UK as Naval Liaison Officer at South Africa House. It was a busy time with ships being commissioned and men

under training, but in 1961 politics changed it all when South Africa became a Republic and the family returned to South Africa where he returned to *Vrystaat* as Executive Officer in January 1962.
From 1963 to 1965 he served as Staff Officer Training Officers at SAS *Saldanha* and an appointment to SAS *President Pretorius* as XO followed. In 1967 he returned ashore to COMARDEF where he coordinated the search by SAS *Simon van der Stel* for two missing weathermen on Gough Island.
Providently he then assumed command of *Simon van der Stel*, his final seagoing command. In 1972 he was appointed to the Directorate Training and Manning, which he considered a trying time but of great interest. The SAN had new submarines and ships that required all sorts of support from training and manning point of view.
In 1974 it was back to the UK again, this time as the Naval Attaché. Although it was a quiet time due to politics, he worked hard at restoring relations with various foreign attaches, ignoring politics and concentrating on professional naval matters. His success was borne out at his farewell function where the Ambassador was surprised by the attendance with even the Russians and Pakistanis attending.
Back in South Africa he attended the Joint Staff Course after which he was appointed to the Directorate of Foreign Relations in Pretoria and thereafter an appointment as Director Civic Action. In 1981 he finally returned to the Cape and was appointed to Naval Operations Command, his final appointment in the Navy before retiring in December 1983.
Cdre Silberbauer was an accomplished squash player and enthusiastic albeit amateur cameraman. His dry sense of humour and calm reserved nature were well known to all and his book *'If you can hold up your hand, hear me!* or *If you can't hear me, wave….!,* (Dedicated "To all jokers and sportsmen") gives a unique insight into the early social history of the South African Navy. A true gentleman - he will long be remembered by all who had the privilege of serving with him or just knowing him.
It is of interest to note that his midshipman's dirk was worn by Midshipman (later Admiral) Hugh Pigot Williams, RN, who entered the Royal Navy- in 1871 and retired in 1915. During the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 he commanded HMS *Sybille* and the military base at: Lambert's Bay. He was naval adviser to the Turkish Government from 1910-12. The dirk was presented to 'Midshipman Dickin F. Silberbauer' during his midshipman training in the RN.
K.T. DOWNIE 1987. Ken has just recently emigrated from Australia to Canada with his family and shortly thereafter passed away, 20th October.
Sailed with Safmarine and in 1992 to 1993 worked in Safmarine's Container Stowage Co-ordination Centre in Cape Town. Thereafter freelanced as deck officer and skipper on various types of vessels including yachts and supply vessels, before relocating to New Zealand in 2000.
2003 working for NYK Line as a Ship Planner/Logistics Officer.
2007 moved to Sydney as National Operations Manager, Hanjin Shipping Line.
Later joined Patrick Stevedores as an Operations Planner at their Melbourne head office and thereafter National Marine Operations Manager for Maersk & Hamburg Sud Shipping Lines.
C.D. GIBSON 1964. Clive sadly passed away 1st August following a long illness and left a very generous legacy in the way of a bequest to your *General Botha* Old Boys' Association Bursary Fund.
After Bothie Clive joined Clan Line and studied at Kings College. Previously with Pentow Marine, Master of the *Causeway Salvor* and was involved with the Single Buoy Mooring in Durban and Mossel Bay. Further details of Clive's career would be appreciated.
M.G. BARNES 1963. Mike passed away 20th October following a long illness**.** After G.B. joined Safmarine, sailed on various vessels including tankers. When Safmarine introduced containerisation Mike transferred ashore as a Stowage Coordinator for the container vessel fleet. He became manager of the Department in 1983. Four years later he was offered the post of Fleet Training Officer, a position he held until 1990. Still with Safmarine he then moved to container control as LAN Administration maintaining the programs which tracks the movement of containers. In 1993 he returned to sea and sailed as Chief Officer with a Dutch coasting company for a few months, before rejoining Safmarine as Chief Officer. July 1997 promoted Master with Safmarine. Retired. Deceased 20th October 2020.
P.D. MURRAY 1952/53. Another of our legends slipped his cable 27th October past. Peter sailed five years with Blue Funnel Line which included attending the Outward Bound School in Aberdovy. In 1958 he joined Safmarine as Third Officer and 5 years later joined the S.A. Harbour Service. Served in various ports around the country on dredgers and tugs as well as harbour pilot. 1988 became Assistant Port Captain of Richard's Bay until retirement in 1993. Since 1967 Peter had been involved with the

Mission to Seamen Institute in each port that he served. On retirement he was appointed manager of the Mission to Seafarers in Port Elizabeth. A highly respected man who gave so much back to the seafarers.
Graham Jooste writes – "Thanks for letting me know about Peter Murray. His nickname was "Hurray Murray", because of his unruffled manner. A great quiet team man that you could always rely on. Quiet of nature and steadfast of purpose. Bless you all. Graham Jooste, 1772. (*See Page 8 what his son Dave Murray had to say about his father*)

Our condolences to family and shipmates.

SCRANBAG

M. LIPOWSKI 1980 #2694. Marek has had an interesting time prospecting for diamonds. Joined Safmarine in 1979. Resigned 1986 as Second Officer. Joined Department of Environmental Affairs and sailed on m.v. *Agulhas* and r.v. *Africana* as Chief Officer. Resigned in 1988 and joined De Beers Marine. Obtained Class 1 certificate in 1991 and promoted to Relief Master in 1992. Promoted to Master in 1994. 1996 sailing as master on m.v. *Douglas Bay* engaged in diamond prospecting off Sierra Leone, West Africa.
1994 till 2020 sailed as master on De Beers Marine South Africa and Debmarine Namibia vessels *Douglas Bay, Grand Banks, Coral Sea* and *Debmar Pacific*.
B-J.E. WALTHER 1983 #2821. I still have Bernd's address and phone in Kuwait but the galley wireless tells me he is the Managing Director at IBRR Port Myanmar. Regrettably my emails to Bernd remain unanswered. One day hopefully we shall hear from him.
P.M. CARTER 1979 #2667. Philip has left our shores and is now "looking for some work of sorts in Southampton".
1978 joined the S.A.R. & H. Dredger, Reebok, and Unicorn in 1979 as Cadet. 1984 left the sea and started a carpentry business but in 1985 joined Rennies as a supervisor, warehousing. 1986 rejoined Unicorn Lines and obtained Master's Certificate in 1992. 1993 joined Portnet as Mate and Master on Harbour tugs. 1994 joined P&I Associates as Marine Surveyor and was later promoted to P&I Operations Manager, Durban. March 1997 joined D.S. Oliver as a Marine Surveyor. Later same year formed own marine surveying company, Master Marine Survey. 2020 immigrated to England.
D.I. LOUBSER 1981 #2742. David went AWOL in 2017 but I guess the galley wireless reached him that he was being sought. Once he had ascertained that it was not the tax man he returned to the Muster List.
"After leaving Bothie remained with Safmarine until 1984, leaving to attend the Universities of Witwatersrand and Cape Town. I am now an environmental consultant working on the Kapiti Coast of New Zealand. After emigrating to New Zealand in 2002 and working on climate change related activities for a few years, wanderlust took hold again and I left NZ to worked and live around the world. I project managed the topographic and bathymetric mapping of a new port development on the Gulf of Bahrain in Saudi Arabia, I consulted for the Abu Dhabi Environment Agency for a while and then moved back to Africa to work for a large environmental NGO based out of Nairobi, as the Director of Climate Change I got to travel and implement projects around the continent. In 2015 I moved back to the Pacific region where I took up a diplomatic role as Head of Mission in Vanuatu for the Pacific Regional Environmental Agency, while based in Port Vila Vanuatu, I got to travel and work around the SW Pacific. 2019 I moved back home to New Zealand."
B.G. NELSON 1985 #2871. Last I knew Barry was working for Gearbulk in Australia but his email address there failed. Grenville Stevens managed to establish contact and obtain his new email address. But even so he fails to respond to us. If anyone corresponds with him please remind him that I am not his nemesis.
D.W. LOW 1952/53 #1776. Dennis went AWOL from our address list but diligent SAR (Search and Rescue) but Ted Fisher over in the United Kingdom acquired his radar target again. We wait to hear from Dennis including a summary of your career since leaving Bothie.
WERNER WIEHART #2894. Andrew Ainsworth reports – "A number of us "SA Connie" survivors got some bad news from Werner's missus over the weekend - Werns was attacked in Port Elizabeth by a group of thugs in broad daylight while riding one of his prize bikes on Friday - its ugly reading, and

while he is still ensconced in ICU - the good news is that he is now breathing on his own again. No doubt a long way to recovery awaits him". We wish him a speedy recovery.

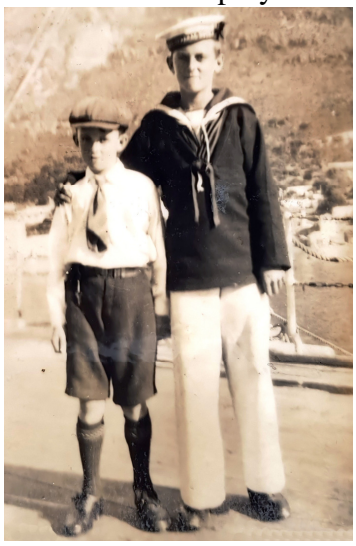
AWOL

David Maccallum 1957/58, last known somewhere in Gauteng.
Spread the search parties wide please and report in.

D/JX177512 / 330609V ABLE SEAMAN FRANCIS JOHN WITHERS
HMS *CARNARVON CASTLE*

It is always interesting how information reaches us. This detail was sent from one medal collector to another, Arne Söderlund, who passed it on to Ian Manning 1955/56 who in turn passed it on to me for our archival record.

Frances John Withers (Cadet 106, Term 1923/24) was born in Woodstock, Cape Town on 16 March 1908. His father, Charles Francis Withers had emigrated from Ireland and was employed as a Telegraphist at the Cape Town General Post Office. His mother, Agnes Margaret, was the daughter of Preston-born Battery Sgt. Major John Stratton of the 48th Field Battery, Royal Artillery. Francis had a younger brother Donald Archibald who became a Telegraphist.



Francis and his younger brother Donald 1924 reduced

After attending *Franschhoek High School* he was a Cadet in the South African Training Ship *General Botha* during 1924. He failed Seamanship and Scholastics and on 08 January 1925, young Withers, now aged 16 and standing 5ft 7½inches tall, was accepted as a recruit by the fledgling South African Naval Service [SANS] (Permanent Force). He was rated as a Boy and allocated the number N10049 and posted to HMSAS *Immortelle* a minesweeper which had been presented to South Africa by Britain in 1921 – then named *Eden.* Withers was rated Ordinary Seaman on 16 March 1925, his 17th birthday – and Able Seaman on 16 March 1926. He passed his Educational Test, Part I on 6 July 1926. He purchased his discharge on 7 February 1927. His Conduct Sheet indicates that his character had been 'Very Good' and his ability 'Satisfactory' throughout his 3-year service with the SANS.

From October 1928 to 14 November 1934 he was employed as a plant operator, box making machines, at the United Tobacco Company Kloof Street, Cape Town. In November 1934 he became a barman at the Fountain Hotel in the City. On 14 December 1935 he moved to what was no doubt a more congenial 'watering place', the Men's Bar of the Paardevlei Club in Somerset West. Married on 9 April 1936, he and his wife Hildegarde Elise Adela set up home at 39 Mills Street, Strand.

War clouds were looming. Hitler's panzers Invaded Poland, and on Sunday 03 September 1939, Britain declared war on Germany. The very next day, 04 September, Withers reported to Simon's Town to volunteer for service in the Royal Navy [RN] for the duration of hostilities. Given the number D/J 177512 he was carried on the books of the RN Depot ship HMS *Afrikander* for three weeks.

On 30 September he was drafted to HMS *Carnarvon Castle*, the Union Castle Mail. Steamship Company's passenger liner then being converted at the RN base at Simon/s Town to serve as an Armed Merchant Cruiser, [AMC].

After a brief interlude 05 to 16 November 1939 in the sloop HMS *Auckland* he returned to *Carnarvon Castle* on 17 November 1939. The AMC: was soon at sea in her new role to safeguard the South Atlantic against the activities of German surface raiders and blockade runners carrying urgent supplies to the German Reich. Sometimes she operated in company with consorts similarly equipped with outdated guns, sometimes she was on her own.

Withers, as a member of 'White Watch' 6-inch gun crew was aboard to share the excitement of *Carnarvon Castle's* only major naval action - her early-morning engagement on 05 December 1940 with the German surface raider *Thor* off Montevideo. The AMC could muster a broadside of only four 100-pound shells. Nevertheless, Captain Hardy DSO, gave orders to close with all possible speed and engage the enemy. During the five-hour running battle *Carnarvon Castle* suffered heavily, sustaining 27 hits which caused four dead and 27 wounded. While the enormous bulk of the AMC had suffered

severe punishment, *Thor* was undamaged. Nevertheless, Fregattenkäpitan Otto Kähler decided that discretion was the better part of valour and the raider 'made smoke' and disappeared into the distance.
Granted a few days asylum the battered and severely damaged *Carnarvon Castle* limped into Montevideo where the most urgent repairs, sufficient to allow her to cross the South Atlantic for a total refit in Cape Town, were hurriedly carried out. Some of the ship's company enjoyed the 'Montevideo interlude'. Withers, for one, found there was little wrong with a well-grilled Uruguayan steak!
For some months, *Carnarvon Castle* was idle in Cape Town undergoing repairs - then she was off again, Withers still a member of her crew, to resume her patrol duties in the Atlantic. Withers remained in the ship till. 13 July 1943, when he was drafted back to HMS *Afrikander*. *Carnarvon Castle* sailed off to finish the war as a troopship ferrying service personnel and civilians between New York and Britain.
From 03 May 1944 to 01 May 1945 Withers served at Admiralty House, Simon's Town where he may have been employed in his civil occupation as barman.
At the annual assessments throughout his naval service his 'character' was consistently recorded as 'Very Good', and his efficiency in his rating as A/B 'Satisfactory'. Though granted his first Good Conduct Badge on 04 September 1942, this was subsequently twice 'deprived' and twice 'restored'.
His secondment to the RN ended on 07 July 1945 and he was transferred to the South African Naval Forces. Withers was discharged from the SANF at the Westlake Dispersal Depot, with demobilisation benefits on 05 November 1946. He had served 07 years and 46 days. He returned to his pre-war occupation as barman, now at the Western Province Sports Club, Kelvin Grove, Newlands and to his home with his wife at 87 Roodebloem Road, Woodstock, Cape Town. Francis Withers died on 04 April 1967.

P D Murray Senior & P D Murray Junior

P.D. Murray 1981, # 2726 (Dave) tells a story of his father **P.D. MURRAY 1952/53, #1784 (Peter)** – "I started my sea going career on the cadet ship "SA Vergelegen" in 1980. One of the first orders of the day was for all the cadets to get our steering certificates, which we all achieved on our 1st trip to the Far East. I did my first port entry into Hong Kong, which went well, thank goodness. Thereafter I was awarded a brand new steering certificate. On return to the South African coast, I was down at aft mooring stations preparing for port entry into Port Elizabeth when I was summonsed unceremoniously to the bridge by Capt. Derrick Kemp. When Capt. Kemp summonsed you, you did not ask why, you just did!! He instructed me to go and get changed into my uniform and to come back to the bridge. On querying this very respectfully, I was told that as he had been advised that my Dad (who was then a pilot with SAR&H in Port Elizabeth) would be piloting us in – and he added that if there happened to be a cock up on port entry, he would be able to fire us both in one fell swoop, utilizing economies of scale. This was my first time of steering in to port unaccompanied, and I was nervous as all hell, made even more so in that it was my Dad, Peter Murray, would be doing the piloting. When he arrived on the bridge, he was pretty surprised to see me on the wheel, and came across and said to me under his breath "Mess this up and you will be disowned right quick".
My Dad was still part of the old school, when most pilots used two tugs, he still believed in common or garden seamanship and only ever used one tug for'd and relied on transverse thrust to bring the stern in. The for'd tug was still one of the old SAR&H steam tugs, the "CF Kayser" which came heaving up spewing black smoke to make fast on the bow. I was really wishing he had ordered two tugs, this would have made me feel a little better, but that is how my Dad did it. Proper seamanship uber alles.

Luckily all went well and he put her gently alongside, much to my huge relief. Suffice to say, we both kept our jobs. I bought my Dad a beer (one of many) that evening.
I am really proud to say that my Dad was one of the most respected pilots on the SA coast. One of the toughest and demanding Masters that I ever sailed with, the invariably grumpy Scotsman Sandy

Buchan once confided in me that my Dad was one of three pilots the world over that he trusted his vessel with - a rare compliment indeed as Sandy Buchan normally had a love / hate relationship with pilots in which love rarely featured.
The above picture depicts a model of the steam tug "Sir William Hoy " that his boys (all five of us; all five of us ended up at sea for various lengths of time, two with Safmarine and the other 3 with the SA Navy) gave him for his 70th birthday. It was also in fact his first command – it still holds pride of place in his lounge in Port Elizabeth. The painting is of the steam pilot boat "William Weller" which he had a long relationship with and was given to him on his 50th birthday.

LEGENDS OF JAPAN - ROY MARTIN 1972

Just a short story on Jannie Gous 1958/59, I lived in Japan with him for the building of the *Sea Transporter, Sea Merchant and Sea Pioneer*. In winter in Japan, he would walk or cycle down to the shipyard from our residence in a Safari suit, the kind with short pants. He taught one of the locals, a chap who ran the local pub (Kamagya-san) how to make biltong. The guy hung it on his roof with wire cage around it to keep off cats and other predators. When we arrived at the shipyard in the morning, the whole yard would know how many beers the *Gaijons* had consumed the night before, there was something like 8 of us there and 3 or 4 beers each after work before eating dinner was quite usual. The 'talk' in the yard the following day would be something like 'Ah 32 Beero', so one night we decided to give them something to talk about and hit back more than 50 beers before dinner, it was worth it for the oohs and aahs the next day!
When I was in Japan we had Captain John Cringle, Jannie Gous 1958/59, Cliff Ellams, Duncan Shepherd, Joe Birtles 1973 and a few other chaps. We were asked the one day if we had felt the earth tremor the night before, not one of us had noticed it, but all the Japanese had felt it. Arriving that night at our residence by bicycle after a few beers, John Cringle lost his balance as he was parking his bike and knocked over the row of parked bicycles. As he looked up from his fall, his first words were 'did you guys feel that earth tremor?'

News from the Gauteng Branch – Alan Ford

I put my Human Resources hat on this morning and sat and listened.... nothing. I will take that as being a good sign all things being equal. I took that hat off and replaced it with my News Commentator hat, switched it on, and pressed replay. I found that a couple of weeks ago I logged something which my AI App had picked up on and that was a story about possible regulation of a phenomenon called Methane Slip. Now I'm sure you can imagine what went through my mind when I read that headline. Shipboard electronic wizardry has come a long way over the last couple of years and there are now an alarming number of alarms to alarm an unsuspecting OOW.... but a flatulence gas detector with a blinken light und hooter on the bridge was, I thought, a bit beyond the pale. So I read the article to find out what it could possibly mean.
It turns out that it is nothing more than the quantity of gas which remains unburned on LNG fired new fangled ship engines. The gas is basically methane, and as we know from the greenies who would love to exterminate our source of curry mince, steak and oxtail, it is apparently very deleterious to the atmosphere. It is apparently quite a significant amount, I have no idea how many cows worth or bridge officer's worth of by product or bypass gas it is, but it is of concern. For those engineering and scientific types who want to know more, here is the Universal Resource Location in the Interweb [Here].
While on the subject of gas, if seems like SA is having to keep up with the Jones when it comes to its marine fuels offering. This could be a good thing as far as job creation is concerned. I'm sure you all remember back in the day when you were young lads (and perhaps the odd lass) when bunkering meant there were hundreds of guys running up the gangway with sacks of coal on their backs, and dumping it down scuttles and making a darned mess.... well I wonder if we are now going to see the same type of strong young fella's running up the gang way with 19kg gas cylinders on their backs, connecting them upside down to a huge manifold with little hosepipes, standing around having a fag while their tank empties before going back to collect another from a huge stockpile behind the sheds. I don't know, maybe they have made it a bit more automated and easier?
Here is a cutting from the newspaper in this regard, see what you make of it:-

South Africa to start LNG bunkering from 2021 *South African LNG company DNG Energy has received final authorisation from Transnet National Port Authority (TNPA) to start LNG bunkering operations in the Port of Coega, in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Commenting on the authorisation, DNG Energy Group Chief Executive Officer, Aldworth Mbalati, said that South Africa is poised to become an LNG bunkering hub in the Southern Hemisphere. The licence enables the company to respond to environmental, legislative and business needs for the South African and the international LNG fuel markets. The licence is a first in Africa, and will enable DNG Energy, using its floating storage unit (FSU) in Algoa Bay, to offer offshore as well as on-shore logistics with ship-to-ship transfers, as well as LNG 'milk runs' within the country. Mr. Mbalati added that the licence opens up a way to deliver LNG in South Africa as early as 2021.The Company will now seek to finalize its terminal infrastructure at Algoa Bay and complete the delivery of its storage and bunkering equipment.* ***Source: safety4sea***

So we will finish with one of those typically boring log entries which must have been recorded a thousand times in a handful of variations. "Ship moving easily to light SW swells, partly cloudy and light Easterly wind. Course 313 True 336 Mag. Speed 21 knots."
From the bridge of SA Vaalie... going nowhere.

United Kingdom Branch – Ted Fisher

Well, I hope all have had a reasonable year to date and kept well. All of us must agree 2020 has not quite panned out as we expected – Covid -19 has scuppered plans and affected lives tremendously. Fortunate we have in the UK, enjoyed a warm and mainly dry summer. Now entering a difficult winter in all respects.
On a positive note **Falmouth 4 Orders 14-16 June 2022**, the plans are well underway for the gathering of Worcester, Conway, Pangbourne and General Botha to join and reflect upon their heritage.
Having emailed the UK Membership resulting response has been most satisfying. Deposits have been paid direct to the AOW. To those who have yet to respond please make contact on **tedefisher@aol.com.** Good to mention a few of our UK Membership have indicated an intention to be in Cape Town for the S.A.T.S. 'General Botha' Centenary Celebrations 2022
The circular has prompted replies of interest, especially from new arrivals to the UK over the past year or so.
Delighted to have spoken for the first time ever with Captain T.N. Skead GB 50/51 who resides quietly up in Carlisle, Cumbria. He originated from the Transvaal and entered Dartmouth as a Cadet following Bothy, passing out in 1953 third in his class. He took part in the Coronation review at Spithead, he also won the Queens Sword for the best all round Cadet during the Autumn cruise of the Cadet Training Ship ''Triumph'' Having joined the Navy he eventually resigned with the rank of Lieutenant Commander, he joined British Overseas Airways in 1966 from which he retired as Captain in 1989.

Congratulations to T. N. E. SKEAD (1950-51), Midship[illegible], of Machadodorp, Transvaal, who won the Queen's Sword best all round cadet during the Autumn cruise in 1953 of [illegible]et Training Ship "Triumph."

Thomas enjoys fishing for relaxation and is the proud Permit owner of a section of River Fishing Rights.
Another who has been off our radar for some time is Mike Fincken GB 1987. He is still sailing as Master with Greenpeace (coming up to 25 years with the organisation) and indeed had 10 years with Safmarine, prior to Greenpeace. He moves between three ships, most recently Master on the 1975 built icebreaker 'Artic Sunrise'. During the great lockdown of Wales, he missed the entire thing by a week on either side – a 4.5 month voyage (usually 3 months) due to difficulty in crew reliefs. His voyage was spent sailing Montevideo to Amsterdam where they made use of the downtime due to Corona and brought all their annuals forward spending 2.5 months in a Shipyard. By the time work was completed they had worked out a way for crew to join

following quarantine and testing. They set off on the first campaign to break the ice of covid craziness by documenting fisheries on the Dogger Bank with an eye on changes to the common fisheries policy expected from Brexit. He is currently on leave in Aberystwyth, Wales. All three ships are active. 'Esperanza' dropping stones on the Dogger Bank to frustrate fishermen, then 'Arctic Sunrise' is just returning from summer sea-ice research and 'Rainbow Warrior 3' has now blockaded an oil shipment in Sweden. For your reading pleasure Mike has suggests the link: https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/how-to-stop-trawling-from-trashing-the-north-sea#.
That is about it from the UK. Best regards from Ted Fisher.

Australia Branch November Newsletter

From GBOBA Sydney; Grenville Stevens 2189 60/61

We have asked our Australian GBOBA Old Boys for a contribution to this Newsletter. Five have responded; sadly, the majority remain mute! Currently, we are trying to contact two Old Boys who have not gone AWOL, but just do not appear to answer their phones.
Contacted Joyce Jones widow of Gordon Jones 1181 41/42 (Gordon was Chairman of the GBOBA Durban Branch for 30years) who lives in Adelaide. Joyce emailed as follows; I'm doing okay just self-isolating at home like lots of people these days. I hope all is going well with Botha Old Boys as like to hear your news. Thanks for keeping contact.
Meanwhile, Peter O'Hare and Errol Hunter remain in Residential Care facilities. Errol celebrated his 75th birthday recently. He asked, via Robin Gratjois, that we pass on his greetings to the GBOBA.
We were shocked and saddened to learn of the sudden passing of Ken Downie in Vancouver.

From GBOBA Sydney Rudolf Auer 2137 59/60

Tuesday, 17 March 2020, was our last organised Old Boys' date for a gathering at Chatswood, NSW. Since then things gathered downward momentum much for the worse, as we coped with the Covid 19 pandemic. Before this date, the realisation dawned on us that some National effort was necessary, and here we are seven months later, and much the wiser, poorer but in a new era hopefully. Thankfully, none of our members seem to have been affected. Albeit, we have had our shocks, such as the passing of Jack Hewitt, and the loss of Ken Downie in Vancouver.
The worldwide lockdown is still running, or limping, and remains far too newsworthy. For Diana and me, the lockdown was a just a paper exercise, with us little affected. We remained at home and gardened, did some woodwork, and lots of clearing away and throwing out. I have my kayak repairs in hand. But of course, I miss the GBOBA gatherings and the sad closure of all the other clubs and centres in our area. Like everyone these days, we also miss our usual family meetings and seeing our grandchildren.
Best wishes and love to all.

From GBOBA Sydney Alastair J Tiddy 2405 71

After leaving school in Rhodesia, did my national service with the Army before joining the Royal Rhodesian Air Force, as a Officer Cadet Pilot. Left the RRAF after a serious motor vehicle accident and took time off overseas.
Joined Safmarine in 1970 as a Cadet, as one of the first batch of cadets that went to sea first, before going to the GB.
Sailed on the 'Hexriver' doing the UK/Continent and Mediterranean ports. A happy ship while Rob Riley was Chief Mate.
Came ashore in 1971 to the GB at Grainger Bay, and served as Junior Cadet Captain of Starboard Watch.
After graduating from GB, assigned to the 'Morgenster' on the Far East run, before being transferred to the 'Oranje' on the mail ship run. Met some great shipmates with whom I am still in contact.
Came ashore for Second Mate's ticket in 1973, before being posted to the 'Constantia' (Brian Evans, Master) on the Far East run – another very happy ship. After one voyage, transferred back to the 'Oranje' for a second tour as 3rd Officer, again meeting up with good ship mates, and with Robin Thompson as Master.
At the end of that tour, I was transferred to the 'Sugela' to finish off sea time for Mate's Ticket – another very happy ship. Did a long tour to the Far East and Australia, and after 18 months without a break, I felt ready to come ashore for the Mate's Ticket.

Sat the Mate's Ticket in 1975, which I passed, and applied for a shore posting with Safmarine Computer Services, which was successful.
After a long engagement, I married my long-time fiancé, Annette, and we have two sons, Jon and Malcolm, and now a lovely daughter-in-law.
Worked on the computer systems to prepare for the arrival of the container fleet.
Took a break from Safmarine Computer Services in 1979 to spend time working with the Anglican Church in Cape Town, before returning to Safmarine in 1984.
Held various IT roles in Cape Town before emigrating to Australia in 1989. Have always wanted to move across to Aus after my visit on the 'Sugela' in 1975; as it presented so many attractive opportunities. Settled in Sydney.
Worked for various banks in Sydney before returning to my legal studies to complete the requirements for admission as a lawyer.
2006 admitted as a lawyer in the Supreme Court of New South Wales and worked in the legal department at Telstra, the national telecommunications carrier.
Went out on my own doing corporate advisory work for the next few years before starting a private law firm, Rockdene Lawyers - which I now run.
Rockdene Lawyers provides legal service to private and business clients in Business and Commercial Law, Commercial Litigation, Family Law, and Estate Planning.
We have grown to 3 lawyers, and 2 support team members, and outsource accounting and IT support.
The business is growing and we are seeking to expand into Migration Law.
Annette and I have set up home in Castle Hill, anorthern suburb of Sydney, which is close to the office.
Having just clocked up 30 years in Australia, we were hoping to make a visit for the 'Class of 1971's 50th Anniversary' and to catch up with family and friends, but sadly it looks as if the COVID issue has put paid to international travel out of Australia for the moment.

From Yass, New South Wales, Tony MacQuillan (#1662) 50/51

Tony tells us he has just published the biography of yet another Yass NSW community icon, 'lest-she-be-forgotten'. She is 88, and the founder of several Yass community organisations established in the nineteen fifties, sixties and seventies.
He says this is how he manages to keep 'out-of-the-pub' and 'out-of-jail' since he retired there in 2000. Since then he has written several bios and self-published them all, because no one else offered.
Anyone who knew Sandy at the Bothie, Union-Castle and P&O, who might be interested in what an 85-year-old Bothie boy does in retirement in country NSW; can view his local historical society's website: https://www.yasshistory.org.au/public.htm. He says his most fascinating bio adventure was with his friend, local Aboriginal Elder, Eric Bell OAM. A PDF soft copy may be viewed free at: https://www.yasshistory.org.au/PDFs/Eric%20Bell%20book%20April%202011.pdf. Meanwhile, the next venture is researching and writing about an historically interesting local mining area with the improbable name of *Tangmangaroo*."

From GBOBA, Queensland, Michael Pomfret 1728 51/52

"*Attention on Deck*"!! We here in Queensland are fine, we really had only some 'annoyance' restrictions, which happily are mostly gone, the old "just under a fathom" still applies between crew members, so we are still alert.
We both play golf now, as usual I am out there three times a week after I stopped sailing (Adams 12) about a year ago, as I felt that I was not agile enough (racing twice a week), and not as strong as I once was! So as not to let the skipper and crew down by being a passenger; I resigned after seven years of great sailing competition. However, if I ever should win a gigantic Lotto prize, the first thing on my to-do list is to buy a boat that could cruise AND compete, it must however, have power winches!
Queensland OBA appears to have sunk, but I enjoy the Newsletters, particularly as of now - it is 69 years since I boarded SANC GB at Gordons Bay.
Keep in touch, and my very best regards to all OBA's! Mike Pomfret.

TIM aka THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM né *HOWARD DAVIS*

Our Bothie history continues to be written. **Dave Murray (1981)** knows how to operate newfangled apps on his phone and one of these alerted him to the fact that a music artist had purchased our training yacht. Years ago we donated our Bothie plaque to the then owner. I am pleased to note that it is still on board proudly displayed on the bulkhead of the master cabin. David writes;

"Re the Howard Davis, I have built up a bit of a rapport with Ard Matthews of Just Jinjer who has bought the *Howard Davis* and is restoring her. This has been quite surreal, I am a passionate music fan, and I love his music and have been a big fan, and have seen him and his band live on a number of occasions. Believe it or not he and his band are the bestselling rock musicians of all time in South Africa. I have been to many of his shows, and now to be speaking to him about the Hot Dog (or Olympic Flame) is quite weird – as mentioned above, quite surreal. By the way, with his band, the term rock is a misnomer – it is really quite melodic music, and not too loud.

He has put in a new exhaust system, keel bolts and engine, completed her refit and painted black.

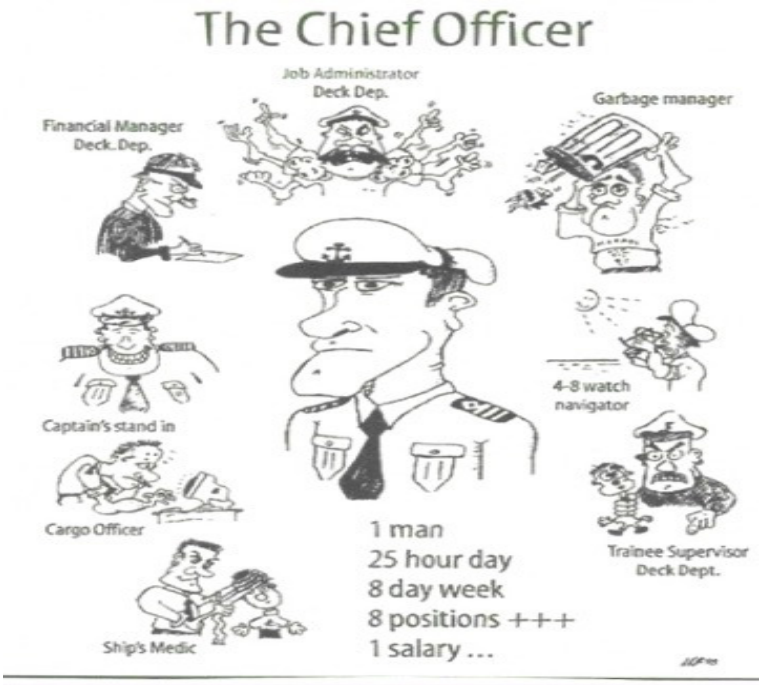
He reckons the keel bolts were rotten, it was just a matter of time before it dropped off – I didn't realise but it is a 15 tonne keel.

The Impossible Machine.

He has named her TIM (after his SAMA award winning album – **T**he **I**mpossible **M**achine). He is aware that mariners regard it as bad luck changing names of vessels, but he is aware that when she was in the V&A she was called the "Maharani" or something, so he reckons he can rename her as that will have broken the jinx. He also reckons that he is aware that ships are she's, and he has given it a man's name. But then he reckoned that we / Bothy called her the "Howard Davis", so we set the trend and he is only following.

He loved my e-mail about her history, and would love to be a honorary member of the OBA 😉. He feels quite honoured to own her now knowing where she has come from and her proud history, he was completely unaware. I asked him about his plans for her. When he bought his place in Hout Bay he had a vision of setting up a recording studio in it, which he did. He recorded the album "The Impossible Machine" in it which as I said won the SAMA last year for best Rock Album last year. When he saw the "HD" he immediately had a vision of a recording studio in the aft cabin.

However he is keeping his options open. He reckons he is just an amateur sailor, he has done his coastal Yacht Master course, but plans to do his Ocean Going course soon. He does want to sail her, but really wants to retain whatever pieces of "HD" history he can in her, and has asked me if we can give him more details about her history, where she came from, her Cape to Rio guard ship history, etc. Do you guys have anything, or do you know where I could get it from? It would be great to on pass to him. (Andy Cross 1966 could add details.)



Sent by Ted Fisher

He also says that once he is up to speed he plans to "sail east" and see where this takes him. He says east may only be as far as Knysna, but saying he is going east "sounds good"😉 He would love to meet up with some of the OBA – maybe once it is all set up we could get him in for a chat and a beer. He is a pretty big personality in SA. He asked me to on pass that now knowing a bit of her history, he feels honoured to own her and asked me to on pass that he will always bear her history in mind and try and do her justice knowing where she came from and that she is part of South Africa's maritime history."

S.A.T.S. *General Botha* Centenary Celebration 2022

Indication of Interest

Reply Slip

Name:…… General Botha Year: …….

Postal Address: (if you do not have an email address) **……**

……

…… Post code:……..

Date	Event	Indication of Interest Mark with an X		Number attending
		Yes	No	
Friday 4th March	Annual General Meeting			
Saturday 5th March	Simon's Town Excursion (Limited numbers)			
Saturday 5th March	Book Launch and Centenary Commissioning Day Dinner			
Sunday 6th March	Service of Remembrance and Wreath Laying Ceremony			
Accommodation:	Block Booking			-
Comments				
Dietary Requirements (if any)				

Please return your reply slip to Mrs Nicole Burchell: centenary@generalbotha.co.za

Postal address: **Mrs N Burchell**
GB Centenary Event Manager
PO Box 414
Muizenberg
7950
South Africa

Note: In terms of the Protection of Personal Information Act (4 of 2013), personal details will be kept on record and will not be divulged to third parties. Please direct any queries to Mrs Nicole Burchell.