

# SATS *General Botha* Old Boys' Association

[www.generalbotha.co.za](http://www.generalbotha.co.za)

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November 2023

## JOINT NEWSLETTER

### CAPE TOWN CALENDAR


MONTHLY	Pub lunch, Royal Cape Yacht Club, second Tuesday of every month without fail. Rig of the day, casual.
<b>2024</b>	16 March 2024: AGM and Commissioning Day luncheon.
	17 March 2024: Annual Service of Remembrance and Wreath Laying Ceremony.
<b>2025</b>	15 March 2025: AGM and Commissioning Day luncheon.
	16 March 2025: Annual Service of Remembrance and Wreath Laying Ceremony.

*For those of you travelling in from beyond our Cape Town border, let us know of your travel plans.*


### The parbuckling Operation – Raising the Costa Concordia – Nic Sloane Royal Cape Yacht Club Regatta Centre 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023 @ 1945.

Our Royal Cape Yacht Club is hosting Bothie Boy Nic Sloane again; this time, as the South African Senior Salvage Master in charge of the operation, for the inside story of the *Costa Concordia* recovery operation. He tells the story on the engineering challenges, team challenges and how these were overcome.



- No cover charge.
- RSVP to: [cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za](mailto:cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za) – phone or WhatsApp: 082 555 2877 to book your seat.



In Honour of the  
60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the passing of  
Sailor Malan  
The South African Training Ship *General Botha* Old Boys' Association  
Cordially invites you to the  
Sailor Malan Memorial Lecture  
delivered by  
Dr Yvonne Malan titled  
'I Fear No Man'  
The life and legacy of Sailor Malan



Featuring Mr Riel Malan and Dr Crispian Trace in conversation.  
Date: Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2023  
Time: 1100 – please be seated by 1050  
Venue: South African Naval Museum, Simon's Town  
Cost: a donation of your choice to GBOBA bursary fund. Use the reference 03122023 and your name.  
RSVP: email: [cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za](mailto:cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za)  
WhatsApp +27 82 555 2877



### FORTHCOMING CAPE TOWN EVENT SAILOR MALAN MEMORIAL LECTURE

- Cost: a donation of your choice to your bursary fund. Use the reference **03122023** and your name.
- **RSVP by Thursday 1700 30<sup>th</sup> November.**
- Seating is limited, booking essential.

### FORTHCOMING CAPE TOWN EVENT – YEAR END LUNCH

- Venue: Royal Cape Yacht Club, Duncan Road, Table Bay Harbour.
- Note: driver of your vehicle needs to show his driver's license to gain access to the harbour.

- Date & time: Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December, 1200 for 1300.
- Lunch cost: R300 p.p. – Partners welcome
- RSVP: Tony Nicholas – email [cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za](mailto:cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za) – phone or WhatsApp: 082 555 2877
- **RSVP by Tuesday 1700 5th December.**
- Superb three course menu and even better company. We look forward to your support.
- Slop chest, including our books shall be available. Card payments accepted.

**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. Late booking requests subject to Chef's goodwill.

*From the Bridge of Cape Town- Tony Nicholas (Chairman)*

It has certainly been an active quarter. What with the Rugby World Cup stretching my nerves, Sailor Malan Memorial Lecture and Wreath Laying in Kimberley, Old Boy Nic Sloane illustrated talks, your bursary fund Fairship Marine Bursary Golf Day, opening regional WhatsApp Groups for more effective communication, a farewell function for the ZTUG SA Amandla (previously the John Ross) hosted by owner AMSOL, continuing monthly lunches at the Royal Cape Yacht Club and a nostalgic lunch at the Fireman's Arms; we are certainly not ready to ring Finished With Engines yet.

Old Boys would have read on our interim correspondence the theft of our cenotaph three bronze plaques. Only two were promptly recovered, albeit damaged. The City of Cape Town has committed to repair these and the manufacture of replicas. We are in continuing discussions with the City of Cape Town to relocate our cenotaph to a more secure and certainly most appropriate location, Jubilee Square in Simon's Town. This location overlooks the moorings of our original Training Ship and every name on the cenotaph trained in the Ship.

The City of Cape Town have reinstated their Civic Honours awards following a hiatus. Of particular

interest this year's Civic Honours List are two Bothie related; namely the late Old Boy A.G. 'Sailor' Malan and The Friends of Mostert's Mill of which a few Bothie Boys have been active volunteers over the years, namely; B. 'Brad' Wallace-Bradley, Jonathan Warren and H.A. 'John' Hammer, present chairman of The Friends of Mostert's Mill.

Sailor Malan's active contribution to the freedom of South African is well known; if not refer our August 2023 newsletter and our website. Sailor Malan was a pariah to the South African government at the time and on his untimely passing Sailor Malan was not



*Chair of Friends of Mostert Mill, John Hammer holding the key to the restored Mostert Mill on 1 November 2023.*

allowed the respect he deserved.

Mostert's Mill is a historic windmill in Mowbray, Cape Town, South Africa. It was built in 1796 and was, until it was gutted in a wildfire on 18 April 2021, the oldest surviving complete windmill in South Africa. The fire had started on Table Mountain and spread, severely damaging a number of buildings including an historic library in the University of Cape Town. The Friends of Mostert's Mill applied their expertise and toil to restore the gutted Mill to a near original condition. Bravo Zulu John Hammer and team.

Rounding off this quarter was a special experience for Old Boy Tim Cowley. Some may recall perched on top of a Cape Town scrap dealer for many years an iconic WWII Spitfire. This specific aircraft found its way to England where it was restored to flying condition and converted to a two-seater. In celebration of his



*Tim Cowley on the left.*

milestone birthday his family saw him firmly strapped in the Spitfire's cockpit for an historic flight. I am sure Tim thought of Sailor Malan's exploits in those sky's during the Battle of Britain and kept a keen lookout for enemy Messerschmitts. Very brave Tim.

### SCRANBAG

**E. VAN RENSBURG 1967 #2318.** Errol joined S.A. Lines and a year later joined Thesen Coasters. 1976 he joined Nature Conservation as a Resort Officer and worked in the Etosha National Park, Namibia, until 1990 achieving the position of Head of Tourism in the park. 1990 moved to Mossel Bay Manager the De Bakke Santos Resort. 2016 Retired, Living in Mossel Bay, Mossel Bay Golf Estate.

**D.C. VAN ONSELEN 1984 #2849.** Bothie Boys meet everywhere and Springbok rugby is the unifier. Clive recently met fellow sailor Rob Hoole, hopefully both Springbok supporters. Clive reports that he has recently retired, he writes; "Indeed I had the opportunity to leave a few years early when Mærsk merged my unit into the big machine and I chose not to go with it.

Coincidentally I met Rob Hoole for the first time yesterday when we were watching the France game. We are both in the same marina and have our boats up on the hard getting new anti-foul etc. We plan to keep our house in Malaysia for a while and sail around SEAsia getting up our yacht experience. Then will see where we head off to. An extended visit to Aus is on the cards for 2026/2027 but we have a lot to see in Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia before then."

**R.K. HOOLE 1979 #2644.** We are "drydocking" here in Langkawi starting tomorrow before heading back to Thailand in December and the hopefully jumping off for Sri Lanka, Chagos and Seychelles next year. Then hopefully home in 2025 to complete the loop, A good 45 years after the first circumnavigation on the Hexriver (most of the way) and the Nederberg the rest of the way in 1978/9." Where is 'home' Rob? We look forward to receiving your headline one day.

**B. LAWRENCE 1953/54 #1834.** Bryan has been on the move over the years since retirement but I managed to track him down somewhere in Paarl. His AIS remained steadfastly silent but I managed to obtain an update from Jeanne. Bryan Lawrence was a SACS boy, which brought him into instant conflict with the large Rondebosch and Wynberg contingents at the *General Botha*. There were no hard feelings however and Bryan soon made himself immensely popular by his ability to play the piano-accordion. He was promoted to Senior Cadet Captain winning prizes for navigation, for efficiency and for chartwork as well as being runner-up in the Queen's Gold Medal competition. He also served on the magazine committee.

Bryan was interested in both astronomy and the Royal Navy. On completing his two years at the Botha he was faced with a quandary as the entrance age for the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth was 18 and Bryan was only 17. It was thus a toss-up between going to university, taking up astronomy or going to sea in the Merchant Navy.

The romance of the sea won and Bryan went off to Ellerman and Bucknall as a deck cadet. He spent 15 months with them, serving in the *City Of Exeter*, *City Of Kimberly* (with Graham Jooste) and the *City of Carlisle* on the US/India run. By this time Bryan was bored with being a cadet and resigned. Acceptance of his resignation came through while he was in the *City of Carlisle*.

As an interesting aside, Bryan had acquired a saxophone during his time with City Ships and, more surprising, had got the 'go ahead' from his shipmates to practice on it! He based his repertoire on the jazz he picked up from the 'Voice of America'. On learning that Cadet Lawrence wished to resign, the captain of the *City of Carlisle*, a certain 'Black Jack' Jenkins, taking it as a personal insult, told Bryan to "Take your saxophone, get off my ship the moment she berths and play yourself back to Cape Town!"

Luckily it didn't come to that and Ellermans repatriated Bryan back to Pinelands in Cape Town, where he joined his father's packaging business, Amalgamated Packaging Industries. After starting at the bottom Bryan, finding that he had a flair for art, transferred into API's art department and after a while transferred to Durban. While there the old wanderlust kicked in and he resigned at the age of 21 to hike through Africa with a buddy. When they were all packed and ready to go, the Mau Mau problem in Kenya had escalated and Bryan's partner reluctantly pulled out of the venture, leaving Bryan stranded in Cape Town where he was saying 'good bye' to his folks. As a stopgap, his father offered to pay him for supervising the construction of a house he was building and for the next three years Bryan found himself in the building trade. He had also hugely improved his saxophone playing and formed a Cape Town jazz group called 'The Blue Notes'.

One of his friends had an attractive Danish sister, Jeanne Stilborg. She and Bryan were married in 1966. This entailed a move back to the packaging industry. By this time API had been absorbed into Nampak and Bryan thus devoted his career to them, doing free-lance building on the side. He entered the design field, rising to development manager at Nampak, before being 'head hunted' by the Deciduous Fruit Board in 1974. The DFB were in the process of changing from breakbulk shipment of fruit to containerisation and palletisation. Bryan, with his packaging and maritime background, was the ideal man to oversee this change-over which lasted four years to 1978. He first did the design work for containerisation and then managed the project. In the process, Bryan's designs were patented and two of them still have worldwide patents. In due course, in order to facilitate his designs, Bryan established his own packaging company to manufacture the design components.

While at DFB Bryan noticed that they were importing large amounts of a chemical compound to combat grape fungus and this product was available only from the USA. Hiring a chemist, he took time off to develop a successful similar product in South Africa! For the next 20 years Bryan served as packaging and development manager for his firm, which he named Macplant. In 1998 Bryan sold the business and retired. After building or rebuilding four Lawrence homes to a state of high perfection, Bryan retired in Noordhoek.

At the 60 year reunion, Bryan and Jeanne hosted Mike and Paddy Briant; these two having travelled all the way from British Columbia. Aside from the memorable events of the reunion, the foursome apparently enjoyed much excitement, repartee (of course) and downright fun!

Bryan no longer plays the saxophone, but has taken up the piano.

**M.S. BRIANT 1953/54 #1811.** Mike relates an amusing anecdote of involving him and Bryan Lawrence. "Great hearing about Bryan, bless his cotton socks. Seems like a hundred years since we last had word of the old horse. Paddy and I stayed with himself and Jeanne at our 60th in 2013 at their home in Noordhoek and thoroughly enjoyed it.

After leaving Bothie, and just before we each joined our first ships, Bryan and I went up Table Mountain for a bit of a climb, perhaps not a good idea as we had both had all sorts of shots; yellow fever, cholera, typhoid etc. We went up Platteklip Gorge, across the ledges and along Karells Ledge and planned then to go down Newlands Ravine. We knew that route, coming up, but had never been down it, and unfortunately the guide book is always written for ascending - it all looks different going the other way. We got hopelessly lost trying to find the route down and Bryan at that point was not feeling too good. By then the cloud had come over the mountain and it was beginning to get dark. I made an attempt at finding the way on my own and came within an ace of coming off - hanging on to a bunch of weeds with nothing below me but cloud. The upshot was that we gave it up. I made my way to the ranger's hut near the top of Skeleton Gorge, leaving Bryan with a Mars bar. When we came with a 'rescue' party, the lad was fine, fit and hearty, we made our way back to the ranger's hut and eventually got down and home at something like 2am. I shall never forget, as I live, that cup of coffee they gave us at the ranger's hut. It was probably Ace or Trekker or one of those, black, strong and like ambrosia. Mama!"

**W.A. WALKER 1963 #2232.** The recent passing of a shipmate has prompted some reminiscences, Will writes; "Such news makes one reflect on past memories and to realize how 50 years has slipped by so quickly. Enjoyed catching up on your respective journeys since leaving GB. So, here's a brief history of my journey.

I served my apprenticeship with Clan Line and thought I had my career path laid out till I met the one who was to eventually become my wife. So, I decided to move closer to home (her?) and joined African Coasters for a while before enrolling in a science degree at UCT and ended up working in the department of Oceanography. However, it didn't take me long to realize I was more right brain than left so set a course to use the more creative side of me. That took us to Canada and into the field of communications. I had every intention of returning to South Africa but never did find the return ticket! After studies in communications, journalism and broadcasting I joined World Vision Canada, an international non-profit humanitarian organization. My work included extensive travel and witness firsthand the suffering and plight of people affected by war, famine, poverty and sickness. So many stories to tell. Moved to England in 1985 to head up all communication aspects of a missionary organization working in Africa with schools, hospitals, community development programs, church work and of course the spiritual support. Again, I travelled extensively to most countries in Africa and as you can appreciate travelling in Africa is an experience in itself! Returned to Canada in 1990 and joined the staff of a large church in Toronto



providing care and counselling to those struggling with deep hurts and emotional issues. Retired in 2013 and moved to Vancouver Island to enjoy the slower pace of life. Most days I spend painting in my art studio and with fellow artists in this artsy corner of British Columbia. Our three children and four grandchildren also keep us active. Our two sons live in Alberta and our daughter in New Zealand.”

**M.L. BIMA 1963 #2220.** Further reminisces of Term 1963. “Joanne and Piet, just the other day (over fifty years ago) you were sharing your wedding photos with my wife Barbie and I, in CT. Wow! Talk about ships that pass in the night! (In '69 I was 2/O on the *Statesman* on the far East run.) In '71 I joined the CSIR's oceanographic research ship *Meiring Naude*. I became interested in the doings of the researchers, and ended up in the shore labs, learning computer science and being involved in data processing. Any seagoing became for data acquisition purposes. As Ian indicated, some life decisions occur by chance rather than design. In '79, I changed jobs and, for the next thirty years worked in the design and development of naval systems. For some thirty years we lived inland of Durban, and the last twenty have been here in Pretoria. I retired in 2010. I keep out of mischief by gardening, growing vegetables in hydroponics, cheese making, (These last two have been seriously curtailed by blackouts!), wine making, meat curing, coloured gemstone faceting, silver jewellery making, Irish whistle playing and serious Tai Chi.”

**P.J. UREN 1982 #2787.** I know not what Peter's earlier career was but in the 1990s we found him in the Durban harbour service and later a harbour pilot in Saldanha Bay. September saw further travels to the port of Sohar in Oman.

**R.S. WINTERBACH 1964 #2258.** Richard recently sent me his change of address, both physically and email. Wish all members were so diligent. “It was early January 1965 when I joined my first ship, the old *South African Vanguard* (the name later changed to *SA Vanguard*) at Cape Town which was at the time engaged on the USA run and occasionally to all the Caribbean ports of Venezuela and Colombia. After serving a period of 14 months on that ship, I was transferred to another grand old ship, the *SA Shipper*, on the UK/Continent run, where I served for approximately 5 to 6 months before being transferred from Liverpool to a new-build at Rotterdam (the *SA Weltevreden*) which was currently near completion. Five to six weeks later we set sail and headed south to Cape Town on the vessel's maiden voyage after loading cargo at various Continental and UK ports. It really was a grand arrival, the vessel flag-bedecked from the bow to the top of the heavy-lift mast and quite a gathering of visitors and on-lookers on the quayside. Before I knew it and the way time flew by, I was again transferred to the fully refrigerated vessel, *SA Drakenstein* which was also employed on the UK/Continent run and once to Lisbon in Portugal. My last vessel with Safmarine was the *SA Merchant* where I served for a short period of time before going ashore to write my Second Mate's certificate.

It was then that I was approached by Captain Stuart-Charles from the Durban Technical College to urgently help Rennie's Coasters by offering my services as Second Mate to one of their vessels which was berthed at Cape Town (awaiting a navigating officer). I agreed on condition that I would help them as relief Second Mate for one or two coastal trips only. But as it transpired, I was promoted to Chief Officer after the first two trips (to keep me in the Company) whereupon I wrote my Mate's Home Trade and stayed with them for the next two and a half odd years.

I thought I would make a clean break from ships and the sea and joined a supermarket chain as trainee manager, but after a few months I decided to resign (that wasn't for me) and approached Commander ND Lawton (RN retired) (since deceased) whom I'd met in the drydock while still serving with Safmarine a few years earlier. He was the Managing Director for International Marine Coatings SA (Pty) (Ltd). I was employed on the spot and loyally served the Company for 36 years. I wrote the FROSIO-NS 476 (Norwegian standard) Technical Service Paint Inspector exam in Newcastle-upon-Tyne which furthered my qualifications. Besides operating at all South African drydock locations, I was also regularly posted to other African locations as well, namely: Dakar, Abidjan, Accra (Tema d/d), Douala and Mombasa. I retired in September 2008 and contracted myself as technical service advisor to various marine related companies for two years.”

**P.M. CLARKE 1981 #2737.** Our galley wireless is humming with the news that Paul has returned to home port Cape Town. I still have Paul in Poland and await his response to my email. Does anyone have a phone for Paul?

## AWOL

**Arthur Snell 1950/51**, last known somewhere in Pretoria.

**Dieter Philipp 1977**, last known in Singapore. Reportedly now living in Germany and active on Facebook.

## ANCHORS AWEIGH

**M.G. GREENEN 1963.** 1964-1987 Gerry served as Cadet and Fourth Officer with Blue Star Line, Third Officer with Bank Line, Second Officer with Denholm's, Chief Officer with Safmarine before joining the S.A. Harbour Service in East London. 1987 Served as Chief Officer and Master in North Sea Supply/Stand-by rescue vessels. 1988 Senior Sea Survival Instructor and Senior Research Officer for RGIT Offshore Survival centre in Aberdeen. 1992 awarded Fellowship of the Nautical Institute in for his work in rigid inflatable boat operations. 1993 he joined the staff of the Nautical College in Fraserburgh "Driving" the Radar Simulator, teaching Class 1 + 2 Deck Officer (Fishing) and Officer of the Watch and Chief Mate Candidates. 1994 he was retained as visiting tutor to Brunel University and Imperial College, both of London, as Marine Design Consultant tutor to post-graduate industrial design students. 1998 Appointed as author for Lloyds of London Diploma in Marine Surveying. 2003 Curriculum Leader of Maritime Studies at Banff & Buchan College Fraserburgh Scotland. 2005 Sector Manager Nautical Studies at Banff & Buchan College Fraserburgh Scotland. 2010 retired - 2012 retained as supply lecturer in Health & Safety course delivery (including NEBOSH and IOSH). 2013 appointed by Lloyd's Maritime Academy as Course Director for their new Course - certificate in Marine Cargo Surveying. Retired August 2014. Sadly, passed away 9th September 2023.

**F.A. KOP 1971.** After school in the Netherlands and his final three years in South Africa when he moved there in 1966, Freddie joined Unicorn Shipping Lines in 1970 and passed 2nd Mates exam in February 1973. Then left the sea life in October 1973 to take up a career in Corporate IT as a computer programmer with Sanlam in Bellville, a large Life Insurance company. In 1981 he moved into their banking group of companies, Santam Bank, Trust Bank and Bankorpdata. In 1986 after 13 years in the Sanlam group of companies, he was offered a post as IT manager at Standard Bank of SA using leading edge computer technologies. Later promoted to Senior Manager in charge of all computer infrastructures. In his personal capacity, acted as Chairman of Randburg Scout Group, the Randburg Civil Protection Volunteer Corps and later the national Guest House Association of SA. In 1996, Fred and his wife started their own small hotel business (10 bedrooms). They bought a property in Cape Town, South Africa and managed that until 2001 when they sold it. Then continued running their hotel business in the Cape Town area until May 2005 when due to declining tourism to Cape Town/SA, they decided to move to the UK. Fred qualified as a bookkeeper through the Institute of Certified Bookkeepers (ICB) in 2010. Lived in the UK for 12 years where they first worked as a live-in couple for wealthy families. From 2015 to January 2019, Fred and his wife Adrienne worked as agency care workers in various care homes. In February 2019 they settled back in Fred's country of birth, The Netherlands. Born 31st October 1952, deceased 23rd August 2023.

**A.G. BOLE 1949/50.** 1951 Alan was indentured to the Blue Funnel Line of Liverpool, England. Outward bound sea school, Aberdovey, Wales 1961. Extra Master Mariner. Acting Assistant Marine Superintendent, Lecturer, Trinity House Navigation School, Hull. Specialised in Marine Radar. 1965, Senior Lecturer, in charge at Liverpool Radar school. 1972, Principle Lecturer in Electronic Navigation systems and simulation at Liverpool Polytechnic (now Liverpool John Moores University). Deputy Head, Department of Maritime Studies. 1980 to 1990 member of the Steering Committee of the International Radar and Navigation Simulator Lecturer's Conference. 1988, retired from Lecturing to undertake private consultancy. Elected fellow of Royal Institute of Navigation. Founder Member of the Nautical Institute, elected a Fellow in 1979. Captain, Merchant Navy Reserve. International Kite Flyer. R.Y.A. Yachtmaster Ocean and Offshore Examiner. Co-Author of a number of books on Radar and ARPA. Deceased 6th August 2023.

Keith Lindsay writes; "A very significant GBOB died Sunday, 6th August 2023. Alan was Deputy Chief Cadet Captain and an outstanding scholar at Bothie. He served with Blue Funnel and did Extra Masters in Hull, after which he taught generations of seamen. Fellow of the Institute of Navigation (no mean achievement!) and Fellow of the Nautical Institute. He was my supervisor, together with the Admiralty

Surface Weapons Establishment, for my PhD research programme. Alan and June were good friends for more than 40 years.

Other details in his obituary concerned his personality and attributes.

He had been a powerful competitive swimmer in his youth; He played the ukulele; He loved poems and wrote limericks; He was very careful with money; He cared for his wife through a long and demanding illness; He made dozens of model boats, sail and RC.” Indeed, a lifetime of accomplishments.

*Our condolences to family and shipmates.*

### “I Fear No Man” –

The Life and Legacy of Sailor Malan *Reported by D. Henwood (Scribe!)*

On the weekend of 16-17 September our Chairman Tony Nicholas and his wife Kathy led a contingent of Old Boys, Jim Cooke, Joe Birtles, Dennis Henwood and our wives to attend the memorial lecture and wreath laying ceremony in Kimberley in honour of **Adolph Gysbert “Sailor” Malan #168; 1924/25; DSO & Bar, DFC & Bar, Croix de Guerre (Belgium), Croix de Guerre (France)**. The occasion was to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sailor’s passing.

It began on the Saturday morning when the McGregor Museum hosted the Memorial Lecture in the Humanities Faculty auditorium of the new (only 10 years old) Sol Plaatjie University situated in the centre of Kimberley. Dr. Yvonne Malan delivered a very interesting paper entitled “I Fear No Man” informing us of the life and enduring legacy of Sailor Malan. Dignitaries attending included the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Andrew Crouch; U S of A Ambassador to S A, Reuben E Brigerty II, together with his Military Attaché, Captain Louw; Dr. Malan; Mr. Peter Dickens (SA & British Legion); Capt. Tony Nicholas (SATS *General Botha* Old Boys’ Association); Ms Sunet Swanepoel (CEO of the McGregor Museum); as well as friends and other interested people.

Prof. Crouch welcomed us and spoke about “*Sailor truly feared no man in the cause of justice. His legacy endures and still inspires us. We should thank God that such men lived. Our lives are their legacy, and their lives are our duty.*”

Dr. Malan, who is based at Oxford University, UK, is also Vice-President and Patron of the Spitfire Society, entitled her lecture “I Fear No Man”. She highlighted Sailor’s life from farm boyhood to Cadet on the SATS *General Botha*, to his short career at sea with Union Castle trading mainly to the U S of A, and then in 1935 changing career initially to the RN and then to flying for the RAF leading up to the beginning of the WW II in 1939. She spoke of his wartime experiences and acts of bravery as a pilot, and as Squadron leader of 74 Squadron during the Battle of Britain and on to RAF Group Captain during D-Day. In particular she focused on Sailor’s moral and political convictions in his determination to defeat fascism and the onslaught in the air over Britain. She went on to describe his distress when, on returning to his beloved country South Africa with his wife and young son and daughter, there was a change in the political scene with the rise to power of the Nationalist regime and first steps to apartheid with removal of Cape Coloured voters from the voters’ roll in 1950. He found himself once again having to defend the very principles and conviction in the face of another battle to defeat the fascist regime he had just successfully won in Britain and Europe. Through his leadership and determination he raised a following of 250,000 ex-servicemen recently returned from fighting the same battles to form the Torch Commando in direct defiance of his own kinsman, President D F Malan, and the apartheid laws. She went on to say that bravery, sacrifice and moral conviction are attributes demonstrated by only a few of us when circumstances compel us to do so. “*I fear no man is not a declaration, it is a call to courage to be brave and to do better.*” His leadership certainly demonstrated that.

At the age of 52 Sailor succumbed to Parkinson’s Disease on 17 September 1963. Hence the memorial lecture 60 years on. However, his prominent role in opposing apartheid and the Nationalist Government at the time was the reason he was denied any recognition and the government sought to erase the legacy of the



*Panel Discussion*

L-R – Dr Y Malan, Tony Nicholas, Peter Dickens



Torch Commando. Members of the S A D F, including the S A Air Force, were banned from attending the funeral, and if they did so they were not permitted to wear uniform nor their medals. Newspaper obituaries were censored and Sailor was written out of the country's history. Instead the US Air Force, the British Royal Air Force and the Rhodesian Air Force sent representatives in uniform to the funeral to honour his military achievements he so deserved, and in protest of the apartheid's regime.

Which made me think of our GB motto, "*Honour and Duty*". I find it no surprise that Adolph Gysbert Malan's formative training was, not only a free-roaming sharp shooting farmer's son, but that he had learnt his hard lessons of life and seamanship and prepared for leadership, with HONOUR & DUTY, on 'THE SHIP' in 1924/25. He was one of the earliest, and a very fine example of many countless cadets over the years 1922-1987, who have learnt their lessons well and carried those high principles through their lives as Bothie Boys in varied careers not only at sea but in the air, in business, in farming, in politics, religion, medicine and so much more. We are proud of them.



There followed a panel discussion on the subject, and then our chairman gave a short presentation on our Bursary Fund which raised the interests of the audience (one young boy enquired how he can be a seafarer) including the American Ambassador. Our Chairman also presented the university with copies of "A Name Among Seafarers" (English & Afrikaans), and our Centenary book.

The following day, Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September, a Service of Remembrance and a Wreath Laying Ceremony in honour of Adolph Gysbert "Sailor" Malan was held at his grave in the West End Cemetery, Kimberley, led by the Dean, St Cyprian's Cathedral. The American Ambassador had already

laid a wreath and paid his respects on Saturday due to other commitments. Wreaths were laid by Dr. Y. Malan in memory of A G Malan and on behalf of the Spitfire Society, Hornchurch Aerodrome Historical Trust and the National Spitfire Memorial; Mr. R. Malan, on behalf of the Malan family; Capt. A. Nicholas, on behalf of the SATS "*General Botha*" Old Boys' Association; Scout Ms. J. Maarman, on behalf of 74 Squadron, Royal Air Force; Ms. S. Swanepoel, on behalf of the McGregor Museum; Lt Col (Ret) C. du Toit, on behalf of the South African Air Force Association; Troop Scouter B. Williams, on behalf of the Royal Air Force Officers Club of South Africa and the Royal Air Force; Capt. (Ret) P. Dickens, on behalf of the South African Legion; Mr. N. Oppenheimer; Dr. D. Morris; El Daba Shellhole; Regional Commissioner Mr. N. van der Merwe, on behalf of Scouts South Africa; Siege Shellhole; Scout Ms. K. Williams, on behalf of the Spitfire Restoration Project.

This was a very fine and fitting ceremony in honour of Sailor. An excellent job was done by the Scouts and other helpers in cleaning up the site which is a very dusty and dry area. Sailor's grave and headstone is in good condition relative to the sad condition of some neighbouring graves.

It would be remiss of me not to highlight the exceptional hard work of our Chairman Tony as well Kathy his wife in the hours of preparation and correspondence planning this event with completely unknown factors. Using the model of our own memorial services at our cenotaph with the Sea Cadets as guard of honour, he enlisted the support of the Kimberley scout troop as well as the local SA Air Force Association. The troops were rallied, the flags presented (including our own flag) and the ceremony was a fine military precision exercise, fitting to the occasion – Bravo Zulu Tony!!





The job is not yet over as you will see from the upcoming Cape Town events (Page 1). On 3 December there will be a repeat of the Sailor Malan memorial Lecture at the S A N Museum in Simon's Town with funds raised going towards the Bursary Fund.

### **From *Alang Beach-Penthouse container***

#### **A time to reflect.**

It's already time to ring Standby for the end of the 2023 voyage and get ready to pick up the tubby red suited pilot to guide us to the berth. No time to hang about at the end of a bleedin' pick, the fairway buoy is already abeam.

I have really battled for about a month to find something which I deem could be of interest to the readers of this newsletter. I have dredged through copious daily newsletters of the main maritime news sources and found nothing out of the ordinary. Same old stories day in and day out about marine fuel challenges and changes, container rates, and how modern IT systems are sucking the life out of the enjoyment of being at sea, such as we selectively choose to remember in our dotage.

So there is nothing controversial to report this time, no opinions on subjects I probably know little about these days. I have thus been forced up against a blank wall and made to ponder a few things.

Often I forget who the readership audience of this esteemed publication are. I forget that the vast majority are very senior and experienced mariners who know a thing or two about what floating around in steel ships is all about. They have signed on and off many ships in their time and had to put up with all sorts of characters good and bad. They have very few sharp corners left and are able to scrub round most issues confronting them on a daily basis. Some readers were my instructors 52 years ago when my peers and I were invincible youth, some seafarers came after me and surpassed me and left me wallowing in their wake, creating amazing careers in many maritime and allied fields.

Since swallowing the pick so many years ago I think I have been able to continue to absorb through some sort of low pressure osmosis some of the characteristics these experienced gentlemen and a few ladies exhibit which go to make up a competent seaman.

I like to believe that the term "competent seaman" is somewhat akin to the speed of light. A velocity which we as sailors will never be able to approach no matter how hard we strive. A Holy Grail to put it another way. Some of us have perhaps obtained faster velocities in the past, some of us not so quick, some have maintained better average speed and can claim to be better seaman than others, but at times we all have done silly things which we regret and are embarrassed to admit. So long as we all strive to be better seaman each day at a time in every aspect of our lives, then we are all on a good course.

Trying to morph a quarterly branch activity report into something else has been an exceptionally challenging exercise over the last few years. No one handed me a route plan signed off by the Old Man. I have made mistakes and probably offended many, but carried on as best as I can. As the time approaches to Ring Finished With Engines - 2023, I thought as a gesture of respect to admit that when I have nothing relevant to say, to rather say nothing.

Until I hoist the P flag for 2024 ready to sail with hopefully new enthusiasm and ideas, take it easy, Respect and Best Wishes to each and every one of you. Alan

### **Australia Branch News – Grenville Stevens**

With the recent theft of the plaques from the War Memorial in mind, I recently came across the 1954 unveiling ceremony posted in a later Both Watches magazine. The unveiling took place on 11 October 1954 at Stal Plein. Quote "In Cape Town, where the ceremony took place in the open, October 11th, was one of those still and scorching days which so often follow a day of a boisterous South Easter. Chairs for the 600 persons present..." unquote.

**From GBOBA Central Coast NSW; Peter Kroon #2370; 1969**

Tristan da Cunha is the most isolated inhabited island in the world. It sits atop the mid-Atlantic ridge, at around 37 degrees South. There are a couple of minor



*Mrs. H. G. Botha-Errol (daughter of General Botha) unveils the Memorial at STAL PLEIN. She is accompanied by Mr. E. M. Owen Clough C.M.G., LL.B. (Chairman of the War Memorial Fund.)*

surrounding islands, namely Nightingale and Inaccessible. First discovered around 1507 by Portuguese Admiral da Cunha whilst on passage from Brazil to the Cape of Good Hope. There is no record of him having landed there, although later visitors found goats on the island, which may have been introduced by him, as it was the custom to land goats for fresh meat for following voyagers. Here I am going to leave out a lot of history and jump forward to 1827. Several shipwrecks had marooned sailors, but when help arrived some opted to stay there. There were fourteen people on the island, Mr and Mrs Glass, their seven children and five bachelors. These single men persuaded a passing ship to bring them a wife each from St Helena. One a Thomas Swain had sworn he would marry the first woman ashore, and true to his word, he married a negro widow and her four children.

Let's skip to more history and jump to the present. Today the population numbers around 250, a drop from the 350 before the 1961 volcanic eruption, when many of the evacuees chose not to return from South Africa or the UK. Today there are only seven surnames on the island, with a number of cousins marrying cousins...

In late 1961, the dormant volcano erupted, but fortunately the lava missed most of the settlement of Edinburgh. However, it wiped out the crayfish factory, the islander's main source of income. They evacuated to Nightingale Island, the smallest of the four main islands of the Group, measuring only 1.5 square miles, 18.6 miles away from whence they were rescued by the Royal Navy. Once the volcano quietened down, some returned, however many youngsters chose to remain behind in the UK or South Africa.

Introduced by shipwrecks rats infested the island and they play havoc with the important potato crop. So, an annual 'ratting day' was introduced, when all turn out to see who can win the trophy for the most rats killed. Only the tails are collected, and he who has the most tails, wears the crown. As a professional navigator, it shocked me to learn that a bulk carrier, 'MS Olivia' loaded with iron ore from Brazil, had run aground on Nightingale in 2011. The resultant oil pollution wiped out bird life and marine life. How did it happen? Quite simple, GPS or Sat nav. The navigator had set ten miles south of Cape Point as his waypoint or destination, and simply steered the course given without consulting any admiralty charts. That was really stupid wasn't it!

Here's my own experience of Tristan. My first visit was in 1975. As Chief Officer, I made a stupid mistake too. Weather permitting the islanders would launch a motorized barge, and come alongside to load the stores we were delivering from Cape Town. No one warned me, so without thinking twice I discharged cargo into the first barge, which when completed set off for the shore. That was the end of cargo work for two days. Why? Because I had discharged the alcohol shipment and the islanders were all as drunk as skunks. On future voyages, I made sure the booze went last!

And finally. I decided to climb to the top of the now dormant volcano for the view. Quite a climb, and breathless I chose to sit on the magma to catch my breath. Wow, after only ten seconds, I shot up with a burnt bum (and this was 14 years after the eruption).

**From GBOBA Yass NSW; Tony MacQuillian 1950/51**



I have an old seafarer acquaintance here in Yass in the throes of having his story recorded for his progeny. He will be 96 shortly. During WWII he followed his RNVR father to sea, but as an apprentice in a WWII Liberty ship. I was able to weigh in with some maritime research for him.

*In all, 2,751 Liberties were built between 1941 and 1945, making them the largest class of ships built worldwide. Each Liberty ship carried a crew of between 38 and 62 civilian merchant sailors, and 21 to 40 naval personnel to operate defensive guns and communications equipment.*



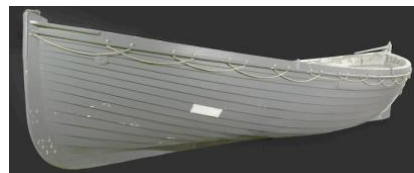
The ones loaned or sold to Britain apparently had ‘SAM...’ heading their names, including his. Strange, but presumably Uncle Sam was the reason.



My first P&O ship ss ‘Devanha’ was a cousin, built in Canada, rivetted not welded. Liberty ships were welded. P&O had tarted her up, teak decks and officers’ cabins none too bad, no aircon – just fans in spite of trading to the sub-continent. Deck crew were Hindu from Bombay, stokers Moslems from Pakistan and catering staff Goans from Goa. Lovely grub. But ‘Devanha’ was slow, 10 knots. According to Google:

“1947, Purchased by the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company Ltd from W R Carpenter & Co, Sydney and renamed Devanha from an Urdu word meaning 'hopelessly smitten by'.”

An earlier P&O ‘Devanha’ was a troopship in WWI, ‘HMT A3’ and later a hospital ship. She was a Gallipoli survivor and one of her timber lifeboats now resides in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.



Beautifully restored.

### UK BRANCH NEWSLETTER - Jonathan Warren

Winter is once more upon us, as we slowly make our way to the winter solstice!



L – R Grant, Neville, Anne, Derrick

We had a good summer, as Bothie news goes. We arranged a social meeting at a pub (where else) along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal near Burscough, where we whined, wine and dined the afternoon away. Present were Ewan Kirkbride(1984), Derrick Kemp (1957-58), Neville Gibbs-Jones (1974) plus spouses Ann Gibbs-Jones ,and Grant Wood. We lunched at the Farmers Arms got to know each other, and put the world to rights. As Grant and I are amateur bowlers and the Gibbs-Joneses much more experienced, one of the topics discussed was getting together in the Autumn for a crown green bowling session, and as soon as I have managed to get my A into G, this will happen at a nearby pub. Everyone thought this a great idea, so expect another pic in the next newsletter! One of the great things about the north of England is that there are pubs with bowling greens attached, as well as plenty of local greens.

Sadder news is that Jerry Greenen (1963) and Alan Bole (1949-50) have slipped their cables since last I put pen to paper. On a happier note, Don Neaves (1971) is kept busy with the restoration and running of *SHIELDHALL* in the Solent; a fine addition to our maritime heritage.

Our Whatsapp group [07412494774] is open to all OBs here in the UK, so if anyone would like to join, send me a message at that number, and I’ll add you. Certainly it does us good to stay in contact. Our monthly gatherings on the second Tuesday of every month continue to work well, and last night we were once again setting both the maritime and secular world to rights. One of the outstanding features of our zoom social is that we discuss anything and everything under the sun, as well as provide mutual support. Until next time, Jonathan Warren (1980).

### Off my Bookshelf - Scribe

“*The Ship Beneath the Ice*”, The Discovery of Shackleton’s *Endurance*, by Mensun Bound.

Most of us would have read the diary of Shackleton “*South*” and needs no introduction. What was entitled the ‘Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition’ intended to cross the Antarctic Continent from sea to sea via the South Pole did not succeed. Instead the expedition became an adventure of survival under the harshest conditions The enduring determination of the 27 men under the leadership of Sir Ernest Shackleton eventually survived to find their way to safety and home.

Bound’s opening note to the book – “*The story that unfolds between these covers is my story. I stress the word ‘my’ because I know that others will remember it differently. Over the two campaigns, there were*

*more than 150 people ..... Each will have his or her story, and all of those stories will be as valid as my own.”*

The book is in two parts because there were two campaigns to find the wreck of the *Endurance*. PART ONE: THE WEDDELL SEA EXPEDITION 2019 (January – February) was unsuccessful due to the Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV) which initially had technical problems which were finally resolved with the replacement of critical parts that were flown in, and then once operational, and sadly they lost the vehicle during one of the last dives in extreme ice conditions. PART TWO: THE ENDURANCE EXPEDITION 2022 (January – March) ended successfully using a different AUV (Sabertooth) when the apparently well preserved *Endurance* was found at a depth of about 3,000m lying upright on the seabed.

The book’s 400 pages are filled with a daily diary of the author with something of interest each day. Not only does he report the daily progress and position coordinates of the day, but there are a number of other fascinating anecdotes. For instance, Bound has studied intimately not only Shackleton’s *South*, but also the diaries and subsequent reports of the other diarists on the original expedition such as Hurley, Hussey, James, McNish, Orde-Lees, Wordie and Worsley. Giving a different perspective to that of Shackleton’s. Mensun Bound is a leading maritime archaeologist who has discovered some of the world’s most famous ship wrecks. He was born and grew up on the Falkland Islands where his parents ran a hotel, and so he is familiar with Antarctic conditions. In this book he also writes of his experiences, adventures in all sorts of sea and ice conditions.

The other aspect of the book I read with interest was that both Expeditions in 2019 and 2022 were on board the *S. A. Agulhas II* under the command of Captain Knowledge Bengu together with Ice Pilot Captain Freddie Lighthelm. These are two young and experienced South African mariners who carried out the voyages without fault and with professional seamanship, as one has grown to expect from our county’s seafarers. Reading this book, they are portrayed as among the best, and I have no doubt about that. We just don’t hear enough about our fellow mariners’ achievements.

The mission to find the *Endurance* was never going to be an easy venture. It carried costs and risk. Sir Michael Palin comment “*The story of Shackleton’s Endurance is one of the most extraordinary in the history of exploration. This is more than just an astonishing sequel. It is a tale just as powerful, and one that redefines the meaning of impossible*”. I can highly recommend the book.

#### **Finding matter for the Newsletter – Anon (Give-Me-A-Break!!)**

“Death, taxes, and **the Bothie newsletter**.... look on the bright side.... its the lesser of the three evils.

I don’t know if you have a passing interest in quantum physics, but these days they talk about matter popping in and out of existence in a background of quantum fluctuations. **Finding matter for the newsletter is probably harder than creating physical matter out of nothing.**

Never mind, we all bear the heavy cross of Honour and Duty, and 'Do our Best' as the Cub motto says we must.

You need to finance for me a lengthy sojourn to a little cottage high on the Amalfi coast with a supply of red plonk and pasta, so that when I am feeling inspired and the occasion takes me, I can scribe wondrous prose to light up the publication.”

*At the time of concluding this newsletter and sending off to the printer, we approach 11 November. A time to pay our respects to those who have gone before us and made the ultimate sacrifice. Lest we forget.*

*It always seems to early to greet the festive season and New Year in November, but time flies by and it is all upon us before we know it. Wishing all Obies and readers a blessed and safe festive season, peace and best wishes for 2024. – Scribe.*