

## S.A.T.S.

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## GENERAL BOTHA OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

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

**May 2009**

### **JOINT NEWSLETTER**

**Has your address changed?** Please send your updated details to Tony Nicholas Chairman Cape Town (details above).

**Do you have an interesting article for this newsletter?** Please send your contributions to Dennis Henwood, [dhenwood@iafrica.com](mailto:dhenwood@iafrica.com) Phone: +27 (0)21 6716373. Fax: +27 (0)86 6706710.

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

### FORTHCOMING CAPE TOWN EVENTS PLEASE DIARISE

#### Joint GBOBA/SOMMSA Lunch

- Venue: Royal Cape Yacht Club, Duncan Road, Table Bay Harbour.
- Date & time: Tuesday 9th June, 1130 for 1200, lunch served at 1300.
- Lunch cost: R42 p.p - Partners welcome
- Subject: "Whose Port is it?" Based on the experiences of Old Boy Bill Shewell as the V&A Waterfront's Harbour Master, with commentary leaving the viewer wondering just who owns the port and has this owner maximized the area to the full benefit of the City of Cape Town or just for his trading activities.
- RSVP: Kathy or Louise or Jacky – phone 021 788 5957
- or email [cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za](mailto:cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za)
- by Monday 1200, 8th June.

#### Future

AGM & COMMISSIONING DAY LUNCH	WAR MEMORIAL SERVICE
2010 SATURDAY 6 <sup>TH</sup> MARCH	2010 SUNDAY 7 <sup>TH</sup> MARCH
2011 SATURDAY 5 <sup>TH</sup> MARCH	2011 SUNDAY 6 <sup>TH</sup> MARCH

For those of you who receive the hard copy of this newsletter by snail-mail, we continue to print the A4 version in the larger scale. As you are aware this requires bigger envelopes and additional pages printed which incurs additional costs in postage and printing. We have received many generous donations which are appreciated. However we make our appeal to all members to assist us in managing this additional cost in our budget to get this letter out.

## **KZN BRANCH NEWSLETTER DURBAN APRIL 2009 - Ernest Nellmapius**

The 76th AGM and Commissioning Day Dinner held on Friday 13 March was one of the best in many years. Twenty one Old Boys were there to enjoy the evening.

Heartfelt thanks to Roy Martin, his wife and daughter for hosting us at their home and for preparing a wonderful multi course dinner. Thanks to Tony da Silva for organising the beverages that were enjoyed by all. The setting in the large outdoor area was perfect and the Durban weather was ideal with a warm evening.

We were seated around a long table where we first held the AGM that went off smoothly. We had a very good turnout with a few Obies from afar, namely Dough Wrathmall who was visiting from the UK and Tony da Silva back from his ship on the west coast of Africa. A few new faces were also very welcome and we hope to see them again at lunches and other events.

The Durban Committee was re-elected en block but Dave De Wet stood down due to his frequent travel. Thanks to Dave for the valuable contribution he made at our meetings. We enjoyed a wonderful dinner with a Prawn and Avocado Cocktail starter and then French Onion Soup, Lamb Curry & Rice, Chicken Phylo Pie with vegetables, Fruit Pavlova & Cream or Ice Cream & Chocolate Sauce and to end Cheese & Biscuits with Tea & Coffee. After a few drinks many stories of the old ship were related and we once again realized what a great institution the Bothie was.

We also, with appreciation remembered Barney Olwage and the contribution he made to our branch. His bequest has been the saving grace of the Durban branch. Barney virtually never missed a GB lunch. On one occasion he was absent. Derek McManus and Tony da Silva went to find him at the Astra Old Age home. They took him a few beers and he promptly perked up a bit and appreciated the visit. Shortly after that visit a message was received about Barney's passing over the side. George Foulis and Derek McManus organized a memorial service at Astra chapel. There were none of Barney's relations at the service. Not long after his death the Durban Branch found out that Barney had left all his savings to the Branch.

After a most pleasant evening the last, well nourished, Obies stumbled off around 23h00 and fortunately all arrived at their destinations safely.

Our monthly lunches remain very good value for money at R60 per head and we enjoy a good natter at the RNYC where the pleasant views and nautical ambiance adds to the relevance of the get together.

### **FROM THE BRIDGE OF ss CAPE TOWN – Tony Nicholas**

Following another successful "Bothie weekend" I have the honour of serving as your chairman for another term, together with every committee member re-elected. The members' support of your committee is most encouraging and thus we strive to meet your expectations. A few initiatives were tabled which your committee shall follow up on. The lunch following the AGM was most entertaining with Kieron Cox, class 1969, giving a most humorous commentary to his photograph exhibition. Who could have ever guessed that those pimply youths are one and the same Obies we know today. It has become evident to us that these reunions usually take two years to motivate and therefore your committee has set the dates two years in advance, thus there is no longer any excuse not to attend these very successful events. We are aware of the classes 1959/60 & 1961/62 planning their class reunions and in addition I challenge the class of 1971 to meet in Cape Town Friday 4<sup>th</sup>, Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2011. Remember chaps, Honour & Duty, let's see a 100% turnout.

I recently attended the GBOBA Simon's Town lunch which was most enjoyable. A creditable attendance accompanied by an excellent meal very reasonably priced, made for a memorable hangover. This function is hosted at the Seven Seas Club and bookings are essential.

Contact Old Boys Brad Wallace-Bradley or Ian Manning to book your seat there. Members

attending will note that all the chairs in the club are sponsored and thus we have our very own sponsored chair in the club. The Legend Lives On.

Our Cape Town monthly lunches at the Royal Cape Yacht Club continue on the **second Tuesday of every month** and I look forward to your continuing support there. The attendance at these over the first quarter of this year has been most encouraging. The June lunch shall be jointly hosted by GBOBA and the Society of Master Mariners and is again to be preceded by an interesting presentation, details elsewhere. Again, as attendance at these exceed the norm, booking is essential.

I am not sure what name is given to the group but the Obies residing in the Southern Cape area also host a regular lunch reunion, reportedly a very festive occasion. Unfortunately their next lunch is to be hosted by Trevor Holmes in Knysna 9<sup>th</sup> May, too soon to advertise in this publication. Our best wishes to all down there and trust you all have memorable hangovers. Many members have commented favourably of the large A4 format of the hard copy newsletters we are posting. However, as previously explained and illustrated at our recent AGM, the cost to print and post the large format is expensive. We will be unable to financially sustain this indefinitely. Therefore regular donations [in lieu of subscriptions] are essential to sustain the newsletter in the future. Please consider sending some donation to the association, no matter how small [or large], everything helps towards the cause.

## **ANCHORS AWEIGH**

**E.G. WATTON 1965.** Ernie went to sea as a cadet with Safmarine where he completed his sea time for 2nd mates. He grew up in Johannesburg/Pretoria region and had a head start as he was a sea cadet as a schoolboy. He left the sea without writing second mates and joined Reunert & Lenz, an engineering supply company, as a sales rep. In the early Nineties returned to sea. He was employed informally by various ex-Bothy Boys, Brian Greenwood, Godfrey Needham and Frans Kies. He managed to acquire enough sea time to write a deck officer's certificate and was then able to get employment with Pentow on their smaller tugs. To conclude, he was a good seaman and should have stayed in the trade. He is remembered as a kind and easy going shipmate. He passed away suddenly on the 1st February 2009.

**R.B. HADCROFT 1952/53.** Robin sadly passed away 7<sup>th</sup> February. No information is available of his career and detail from members would be welcome.

**D.I. STUBBS 1936/37.** After G.B. Darrien joined s.s Griqua, Thesens Steamship Company as Cadet in February 1938. He left the Griqua as Acting Second Officer in November 1941, wrote and passed second Officers Certificate in December 1941 in Durban and joined the Seaward Defense Force in February 1942. From October 1942 he had command of Whalers and Trawlers converted to Minesweepers. Left the S.A.N.F February 1946 and went farming in the Swartberg, East Griqualand. In 1988 semi retired from farming and moved to a small holding in Boston, Natal. In 1994 he sold farming equipment and went into a retirement village in Howick, Natal. Deceased June 2008.

**G.A. SCHULTZ 1939/40.** January 1941 Gerald joined the Minesweeper HMSAS Larsen operating off Durban and later joined HMSAS Gribb in Beirut. February 1943 joined the Southern Isles of the 22nd Anti-submarine group which was commanded by ex Cadet D. Kinkead-Weekes (1934/5). He saw service in the Aegean and Western Mediterranean meeting convoys from Halifax Nova Scotia in the North Atlantic and escorting them through the Eastern Levant and Western Mediterranean. He was demobilized in March 1946 in Durban as Leading Seaman Gunner. He then managed a sugar estate north of Durban for 14 years. He studied Social Science through UNISA and in 1960 joined Natal University qualifying in Industrial Physiology. He joined Smith & Nephew as Personnel Manager in Pinetown. In 1971 he joined Berg River Textiles on the Board as Personnel Director and retired in 1984. Deceased 27/10/2007.

**K.D. PHIPPS 1961/62.** Kenneth joined the Bothie in 1961. However during his first year he received an injury which damaged his pancreas. This resulted in him becoming a diabetic.

Being a diabetic put an abrupt end to his aspirations of going to sea. He was forced to leave the Bothie and enrolled at the U.C.T. and eventually obtained a C.A. He did his articles with Deloitte's in Cape Town and stayed with them for a few years. In 1970 he decided to accompany his parents and sister and immigrate to the U.K. settling in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. There he married Pam and had a son Alistair. Kenneth was offered and accepted a position with the Royal Bank of Scotland. He moved to and settled in Edinburgh. He left the Royal Bank of Scotland after a number of years, and helped set up several internet banks, including Direct Line, Standard Life and IF a subsidiary of Halifax HBOS Banks. He was on the board as Finance Director with Standard Life and became Risk management Director with IF. He retired at the age of 58. Passed away peacefully on Thursday 12 March at home in Edinburgh, Scotland.

**P.L. SUMPTION 1954/55 #1913.** Peter was born in Cape Town 1938/04/08 and spent all his life in East London from the age of two. He attended Cambridge High School before going to the Bothie in 1954/1955. He then joined the Clan Line on the Clan McTaggart and had to leave the Navy on account of his eye sight. His land career started at the Post Office and then on to Baker King and in 1958 joined South African Railways and Harbours and worked himself up to the Chief Buyer of the Eastern Cape before he retired in 1992 and spent 16 years in Hamburg South Africa fishing and being a National Tour Guide. His angling was his whole life and his ambition was to become a Springbok Angler but made it up to the top six (Light Tackle Boat) in South Africa and just missed his Green and Gold. He married Leona Rissling in 1961 and had two sons Stephen and Andrew and was three years short of his golden wedding when he passed away on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2009 after a brave and courageous battle against the odds, never complaining. His son Stephen was in the South African Navy and spent most of his five years on the Strike Craft following in fathers footsteps his other son followed his career and has just been promoted to Head of the Buying section of a big hardware chain. I must add at this point that Peter was the first son of an ex Bothie Boy 1924/1925 Eric Stephen Sumption #193 also his uncle Cyril Sumption 1923/24 #126.

**MIKE FOWKES.** Many members will remember Captain Mike Fowkes, an outstanding gentleman of the seafaring profession. After serving 51 years at sea he sadly passed away of asbestosis on the 20<sup>th</sup> March. Mike was trained at Trinity House in Hull before joining the merchant navy in 1947. He was employed with Clan Line before moving to Safmarine in 1965, and retired from Safmarine in 1992 although he continued with contracts during his retirement.

*Our condolences to family and shipmates of the above.*

## SOS

NAME	CLASS	LAST KNOWN LOCATION
John Curran	1973	Lonehill, Gauteng.
Ken Oakes	1975	Tableview, Cape Town

I have exhausted all my avenues, landlines, mobile number, all to no avail. Please get mustered and find them for me.

## SCRANBAG

**C.M. KING 1977.** After a number of years as branch manager of MOL's Cape Town branch office, Chris has retired from MOL and launched his own company, Integrated Logistics Solutions. Good luck Chris.

**Q. FULLER 1977 #2586.** Quentin has moved to Melbourne Australia and has been appointed as the Deputy Training Manager for Ansett Aviation. Ansett has 12 Aircraft Simulators ranging from Boeing 767 to B737 as well as Airbus A320 to name a few. They do quite a lot of training for the low cost and regional airlines in Australia. Now lives in a quiet suburb called Croydon Hills about 30 minutes east of the city. "Any body passing this way can contact me on my mobile 0420479333 international code for Aus +61."

**W.R. FLANAGAN 1977 #2585.** Another 1977 class has proposed the formation of a GBOBA New Zealand branch. So how about it chaps, there are 20 of you down there. Walter signs himself as Impact Automation Limited, BSc ENG [Elect]. Sounds impressive and I look forward to receiving more detail.

**G.R. STEVENS 1960/61 #2189.** Grenville has also had a change of business scenario although remained in the same industry. "Martinair Holland ceased operations into Australia and as consequence the office closed down. Unfortunately I had the sad task of retrenching the staff and closing down the office. I have now started as New South Wales and Queensland General Manager for ACP Worldwide. Still in aviation but now selling cargo space on behalf of the airline as General Sales Agent (with Martinair we were the airline). ACP represents SAA, Martinair, Air Mauritius, United Airlines, Asiana (Korean) etc."

**D.W. LOW 1952/53 #1776.** Dennis found us some way; I suspect via our valuable website and writes in. "I now live in England, in the city of Milton Keynes. I and my sons run a biltong and droewors factory and are the largest manufacturers of the product in the UK. I have happy memories of my period at the Bothie and would like to contact two of my old mates, Brian Greenwood and Danny Le Roux both of the same intake year. I met up with them and a good friend Keith Meyer about 15 years ago at a dinner in Cape Town. I had good intentions of keeping in touch, but you know how it is – the pressure of business, and you can always do it 'tomorrow'. I hope it is not too late to make amends." Welcome back.

**D.P. de WET 1957/58 #2044.** Dave has recently embarked on a farming venture in the Philippines not far from class mate Graham Reinders. We wish you all success Dave. Take note though that I still have your detail on our database as Kwa-Zulu Natal and your newsletters are posted there. Please send us an update.

**W. HEPPLWHITE 1988.** We had lost contact with William who had left Richard's Bay some time ago to join Maritech Services in Durban. We have now found him as operations manager for Hoegh Line in their Durban head office.

**B. MOWAT 1988.** Bryan has recently returned after a four year stint in Tokyo, Japan, to England. However we are not sure what he did in Tokyo or what he is currently up to. Please send us an update Bryan.

**D.B. TEAGUE 1975 #2510.** Dave has returned to Richard's Bay from Qatar. Please send us an update Dave.

**E.A.J. HUNTER 1959/1960 #E30.** Errol reports that he has retired *again* and shall be riding his motorbike all over Australia. He is also attempting to motivate his class for a 2010 reunion in Cape Town. Dates published in my report elsewhere in this publication. 1959/60 contact Errol without further delay in this regard.

**D.I.R. KEMP 1957/58 #2058.** Derrick recently called at all our S.A. major ports as Master of the cruise ship Discovery. Having obtained command in Safmarine, including Safmarine's cruise ship Astor, Derrick had not been back in S.A. waters for many years. In addition his recent visit coincided with his 50<sup>th</sup> year service at sea anniversary. Thus it was arranged through our various contacts for every port to greet his arrival with the tugs water cannon display and visits from a number of Old Boys. In addition he was featured in both Cape Town and Durban's local media. These interviews and photographs are available for interesting viewing on our website [www.generalbotha.co.za](http://www.generalbotha.co.za)

**R.B.O. HELLYER 1956/57 #2002.** Richard is conducting some very interesting research and requests the assistance of our members: "I am looking for any history the Obies may have of their RN war time or after, service, to add to my researches [www.bmpt.org.uk](http://www.bmpt.org.uk) could you ask anyone with info to be in touch with me please [pathfinder@safemarine.co.uk](mailto:pathfinder@safemarine.co.uk) all ships welcome, especially the coastal Forces types.

**UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH – Ted Fisher e-mail: [tedfisher@aol.com](mailto:tedfisher@aol.com)**

For me it's back to the old routine! Having just returned from a most enjoyable and interesting Spring three week 3 Nations Tour of England Scotland and Wales with a week in Holland at

the start of the tour. Some 3,500 miles driving (which I enjoy in a comfortable car) and (yes, we're still imperial on distances!) with magnificent scenery especially through the Scottish Highlands and the Lake District. We now look forward to what the forecasters say will be a warm English summer!!

I did mention in the last Newsletter our intention to hold a summer lunch – the venue is the **Goodwood Park Hotel and Country Club Chichester West Sussex, date Sunday 19 July**, suggest we meet in the bar from **noon for lunch at 1300 hours. Cost will be circa £20-£25** and hopefully all will be happy for a set 3 course lunch to include coffee. Goodwood hosted us some three years ago a lovely setting for all to enjoy.

Unfortunately it's been a quiet period hence, a somewhat lean report for this issue. I understand Capt Donald Neaves has been transporting a new Isle of Wight ferry from Croatia for work in the Solent – hopefully an uneventful voyage, however, perhaps Donald will give our Editor a resume for the next edition?

I look forward to a positive reaction to the lunch – an e-mail with further details as a reminder in due course.

Best wishes to all

Ted Fisher Tel +44(0)1903 744400, Mob +44(0) 7702 635017 e-mail: [tedfisher@aol.com](mailto:tedfisher@aol.com)

### **Australian Branch News - Andy Fotheringham**

Our Annual Commissioning Day Lunch was held in Adelaide this year on the 14<sup>th</sup> March at the Largs Pier Hotel. There were 22 people in total and it was very heartening to see how many had travelled both Inter State and within South Australia itself. Simon Reynolds, Rob Lovell, Mike Pomfret and I travelled from Queensland. Grenville and Suzette Stevens, Jinny Parsons, Peter O'Hare and Mike Rowe from New South Wales. Errol Hunter from Victoria was on his way home from China. He had flown into Alice Springs and was in the process of driving his son's vehicle from there back to Kyneton in Victoria.

Within South Australia, John and Jinny Hussey travelled from Port Lincoln, which is equivalent in distance of Melbourne to Adelaide. Gordon Hayward came from Port Pirie, also a long way out of Adelaide.

Locally, we welcomed John Fisher, now our oldest OBIE in Australia, Cheryl Carrington and Graham and Kathy Jones. Mike Carrington was unfortunately away delivering a tug from Fremantle to Adelaide. Graham's father was Chairman of the Old Boys in Durban and he remarked that at his father's funeral in Adelaide they managed to find enough old boys to be pall bearers. Graham brought his mother along as well and she really appreciated the company of the Old Boys and their wives.

We also had representatives of Conway and Pangbourne; it was good to see George and Doreen Carter. George worked for many years with John Fisher in both Durban and Adelaide. The committee was unanimously re-elected for another year, so Grenville Stevens is Chairman Andy Fotheringham Deputy Chairman and Peter O'Hare Secretary.

The faire and company were very good and the venue did us proud. Most of the visiting guests stayed in the hotel and thoroughly enjoyed their stay there.

Queensland Old Boys had a gathering on the 5<sup>th</sup> April at a new venue, the Samford Hotel. Three Old Boys attended and it was well worth it. Simon Reynolds Al Snyders and Ian de Villiers. Thanks to John, Ian's son for one again bringing Ian along. Because of how small the gathering was, Ian de Villiers and Carolyn Snyders were able to have a good chin wag about Rhodesia.

One of items discussed was trying to get a Branch established in New Zealand. There are lots of OBIES there and it would be good if somebody could drive it. Peter O'Hare and I are prepared to come over for the first gathering. Lets hope it is soon.

Regards, Andy Fotheringham.

## **GAUTENG BRANCH ANNUAL COMMISSIONING DAY LUNCHEON – Ivor Little**

The Gauteng Branch held its Annual Commissioning Day function on Sunday, 8 March. 52 people, made up of ex-cadets, their wives and other guests, attended what turned out to be a first-class function at the very up-market Johannesburg Country Club in Auckland Park. It was a glorious autumn day and the club gardens were at their best to welcome those attending. Thanks to the good graces of James Hunter, son of Tony Hunter, we had a private dining room which was beautifully decorated in blue and white, with matching crested menus. Tony opened the proceedings with the traditional Bothie grace after the "still" had been piped by Old "Worcester" Ian Thurston, after which we enjoyed a top-class buffet washed down liberally by a seemingly unending supply of good wine, sponsored by James Hunter in his capacity of managing director of Specialised Freight Services.

There was no way in which we could have obtained this level of food and service at the price we paid for it and the Branch applauded a vote of thanks to Tony Hunter for his generous subsidising of the function, over and above his son's contribution. After another call for attention on the bosun's call by Ian Thurston, Ivor Little broke into the proceedings to propose the toast to "Our Ships" and to thank all those present for their continued support.

Those present were Frank Redgment (39/40) who received the prize for being the most senior "Old Salt" present, Dennis Banks (42/43), who received applause for coming all the way from Durban and conveying that Branch's good wishes, Ted Page (44/45), Laurie Barnes and Gordon Bennett (46/47), Gordon Cross (47/48), Rene Poerner (48/49), Drummond Terry (50/51), Bob Slatter (51/52), Vic Albert, Graham Jooste and Mike Crewe (52/53), Tony Hunter, Ivor Little, Eric Moir and Keith Quayle (53/54), Tony Jacquet, Ian Morrell and John Orrock (54/55), Archie Campbell (55/56), Donald Forbes (57/58), Wim Keirsgieter (58/59), Ian Thurston (OW 58/59), Brian Preiss (1964), Alan Ford (1971), Joe Birtles (1973) and Tom Fraser (1979). As usual Tom received the prize for being the most junior "Chum" present. Is there nobody out there who was at the Botha later than 1979 to break Tom's run of luck? It was also wonderful to see the enthusiastic support which we get from our wives and families for these luncheons.

We also received apologies from a further 18 cadets who were unable to make it and whose apologies were conveyed to the meeting, together with good wishes from the Cape Town Branch. In reply to a request for those present to actively seek sponsors to keep costs down, Rene and Karin Poerner and their two guests came forward with an offer which we cannot refuse and which we will tell you more about closer to September. - Ivor Little.

### **Southern Lunch**

The next GENERAL BOTHA Southern Lunch will be held on Tuesday 21 July 2009 at the Seven Seas Club, Simon's Town at 1200 for 1300. Those wishing to attend are requested to telephone Brad Wallace-Bradley on 021-786-1957 or Ian Manning on 021-782-1559 before 1700 on Friday 17 July 2009. Please note that the Seven Seas Club dress code requires shirts worn by members and their guests to have collars [i.e. no T-shirts or sweaters] and shoes to be worn with socks.

### **Commissioning Day Lunch, Cape Town Branch**

*Unfortunately the Scribe was not able to attend the lunch due to work and traveling commitments, and hence unable to report on the proceedings first hand. The Chairman has made mention of it in his report. Barry has come to the fore with the following anecdote: From Barry Cullen. (As related to guests at the Commissioning Day Lunch.) "The sterling efforts by the committee and in particular Peter Coetzee with the erection of two plaques providing clarity - on the meaning of the letters "GB" astride the anchor on the mountain at Gordon's Bay - are well known. However Peter, regret to say, there's a slight catch! (Peter, three tables distant, turns; slightly worried.)*

Our daughter Lisa, son-in-law Roly and their tribe of six have for many years, been driving out to visit us at Betty's Bay over Christmas or New Year. When the second boy, Alex, got to about three he probably saw the anchor and might have thought, "That's interesting!" (or words to that effect). Perhaps by 6 or 7 he had worked out that the letters were a "G" and a "B". Time passed. In January this year the family, with Alex now 10, were once again passing the harbour when Lisa, who had probably heard me discussing the Old Boys project said "So, does anyone know what the "GB" stands for?" In the stunned silence that followed from the rest of her kids, Alex piped up: "Huh! That's easy - that stands for "Grandpa Barry"!"

### **GENERAL LOUIS BOTHA'S MACHINE GUN**

**GUY DAVIES 1980 #2712** recently found some time for a cultural visit and writes of this enlightening experience: "I have returned to Dublin (actually the stunning seaside village of Skerries to be exact) after my 3-year sojourn in Asia - it appears the Irish Government has not as yet granted permission for the projects to continue which resulted in Dublin Port Company having to pull the plug on my services in Asia. They also terminated our Phnom Penh project whilst putting the India one on hold. This effectively leaves me 'out of contract' which in this Irish economic recession is a euphemism for being temporarily unemployed! However this is no bad thing as I was given an agreeable severance package and have managed to weather the storm with relative ease. This allows me to put my Ducati through its paces and simultaneously tour Ireland, although being on a motorcycle during these harsh winter blizzards resulted in me reverting to my 4x4 on occasion, very demeaning for a hardened Ducati man! Now, the main reason for this email was to highlight an interesting visit I made to London's Imperial War Museum recently. I was strolling in amongst the WW1 artefacts and came across a German 7.5cm mountain gun (a light canon would describe it better) with the following story attached to its information plate:

*The 7.5 cm mountain gun L17/08 was designed and produced by Rheinmetall at Dusseldorf. Only twelve guns were made and the entire production was sent to Germany's African colonies. The gun could be dismantled into five loads for transport by pack animals and could be fitted with a shield for the crew.*

*This particular weapon was surrendered by German Colonial Forces at Khorab to General the Right Honourable Louis Botha, Commander-in-Chief of the South African Union and Rhodesian Forces in South West Africa on 19 July 1915.*

I naturally assume this to be our namesake and as such thought it would make for interesting reading.

So, as you can see, my time is well spent although I am now focusing on landing a contract in order to resume a 'normal' life back at the grindstone."

Guy sent some photographs of this weapon which features some very intricate metal work engravings on the barrel. Once our new web master has found his way into our website we shall post these photographs [which are of historical interest] on the site.

### **Book launch – BAMBOO YEARS – J.G. PIKE 1942/43**

1<sup>ST</sup> January 1944 John was appointed Temporary Midshipman Royal Naval Reserve, served on HMS Newcastle and HMNZS Gambia. 1945 received Commander in Chief's commendation for valuable service. 1946 transferred SANF (V), subsequently released March 1946. Then went to the University of Witwatersrand and Imperial College London, where he qualified Civil Engineer. 1952 - 1964 - joined British Colonial Service, served in Nyasaland. 1965 - 1986 joined United Nations, served in London, Botswana, Saudi Arabia, Persian Gulf, Iran, Thailand and elsewhere. 1985 retired and then practiced as a Consulting Engineer based in the U.K. Deceased 26/09/1994 - his ashes were put to sea off Simon's Town. Before his passing John wrote a book on his war time experiences titled "Bamboo Years". This is a story of a young midshipman's experiences during the Second World War. As a teenager, he joined the Prince of Wales at Scapa Flow. He witnessed the sinking of HMS Hood in the

attack on the Bismarck and the Gneisenau, sailed with her when they carried Sir Winston Churchill to Newfoundland to sign the Atlantic Treaty, saw action in the Mediterranean and subsequently went to the Far East where the Prince of Wales was sunk in the Java seas. Based on fact and personal experience - it tells of the glorious days on board ship and of the deprivation of a Japanese Prisoner of War camp including the notorious Horuko Island yet he tells the story without rancour or complaint but reflects on the whole experience with a deep understanding of the time and the people involved. This book is available from John's widow, Sue, and can be contacted on [susan.ppike@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:susan.ppike@yahoo.co.uk) or alternatively from the publisher, Barny Books 01400 250246 [UK] [www.barnybooks.biz](http://www.barnybooks.biz)

### **Book launch – THE NAVIGATOR – R. KROS 1947/48**

“The Navigator” is an autobiographically-based spiritual journey by Raymond Kros. Raymond was born in Cape Town, went to school at Boys High and CBC in Kimberley, after which he spent two years at the SATS General Botha in Cape Town. From there he joined the British East India Steam Navigation Company as a cadet and later as a 3<sup>rd</sup> Officer. His travels exposed him to the various cultures, religions and ways of the countries that he visited. On his return to Kimberley, he worked at De Beers Head Office and then as a mine surveyor and a shift boss. Religion – more specifically, what he calls “Churchianity” – became a problem to him and he spent many years working through the problems caused by religions and found answers through spiritual understanding. He too found Apartheid problematic and had to come to terms with it and whether he was going to stay in South Africa during those turbulent times. He dispels certain superstitious beliefs, but more than compensates that with a strong understanding that gives upliftment to your life while challenging and conquering the universal fear of death. “The Navigator” grapples with these religious and apartheid-related anomalies and provides the reader – through many colourful, vivid and often entertaining stories – with clarity of thought and a definitive path to SPIRITUAL VISION. Raymond and Yvonne have been married for 55 years and have 6 children, 16 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren. The book is available from Michael Publications, P.O. Box 188, Muizenberg, Cape Town, 7950. Tel: 021 788 6911 e-mail: [Raymond@be-safe.co.za](mailto:Raymond@be-safe.co.za)  
Other books by Raymond Kros: “Space Station Earth” & “A Soul called Raymond”

### **Book launch – SOUTH AFRICA'S NAVY**

**Coauthored by R Adm CH Bennett & R Adm[JG] AG Soderlund**

This is a most informative and interesting book extremely well illustrated with numerous photographs covering the entire history of the South African naval force and its capabilities. Although the official birthday of our SAN is 1<sup>st</sup> April 1922 this book covers the history dating from 1861 to present day. There is a short review of “South Africa's Navy, A Navy of the People and for the People” on the following website – [www.defencweb.co.za](http://www.defencweb.co.za) – The site is also well worthwhile if you want to keep up with what the SAN is up to as seen by an outsider. No doubt the website shall also advise you where to order a copy, alternatively available from Old Boy Brian Greenwood - [brian@ghope.co.za](mailto:brian@ghope.co.za)

### **Cargo/Fishing Boat *Tegwani* – Hondeklip Bay – Blinder Reef *Yankee John* What do all these have in common?**

Elize Hough has for the last 2 – 3 years been on a quest to find information on, as she puts it, “*the elusive Kenneth Devenish Parsons*” who met his fate on 24 June 1947 when he and his six crew drowned when his newly built, 15 tons net 29 tons gross (built in Cape Town 1946) Cargo/Fishing Boat “*TEGWANI*” struck the blinder reef *Yankee John* 500 yards from the shore and sank.

Ms Hough contacted the Cape Town Branch for further information on the Owner and Skipper as she had found his name on the GBOBA website. Indeed his name is there as he was

Cadet #304 1926-28. You can read the updated history about him on our website in the Muster List.

We get requests from time to time, and with the help of various Obies who have an interest in history and the archives, in this case Ian Manning, we dig up all sorts of interesting facts and stories. In this case a number of news paper articles referring to the sinking tragedy and other stories about Parsons were dug up in the archives.

In one of the cuttings from a newspaper, Garies writes: *“Just after the Tegwani struck the rocks a huge wave struck her broadside while her bow was up and the stern down, and she sank within a few minutes in sight of onlookers on the shore. A boat was immediately sent out to the rescue, but there was no trace of the men. The Tegwani was plying between Cape Town and the west coast harbours. On her latest trip from Cape Town she sheltered in Saldanha Bay because of bad weather. She was leaving Hondeklip Bay for Cape Town with a cargo of canned crawfish and empty petrol drums when the tragedy occurred. – Sapa.”*

In another newspaper article about Obie K D Parsons dug up from the archives (paper and date not given, but I suspect it was the Argus) it appears that he had an adventurous and varied life. The article is headed “Climbed City Hall Dome – Mother Watched with Crowd”. It reads: *“Hundreds of people watched in wonder as a man worked at the top of the City Hall dome to-day putting up decorations for the royal visit. He is Mr. K. D. Parsons, who before the war was a rigger on the Reef. He was a naval officer during the war and since then he has been living in Cape Town. He told a representative of the Argus that when he read in the papers that a man was wanted to climb the dome at the City Hall he offered his services and was given the job. To-day he was fixing seven strings of amber coloured lights on the dome. Mr. Parsons said that in order not to disturb his mother, his father and he had not told her that he had undertaken this task. ‘But I am afraid she guessed it from the first,’ he said, ‘and when I left this morning I’m sure she knew that I was going to make the climb. Unless I am very much mistaken she is watching me from a car parked on the Parade.”* A picture reveals him hanging on to the spire atop the dome of our City Hall.

Ian Manning found further information about Parsons for Ms Hough and wrote the following: “I had not given up my attempt to trace information on Kenneth Parsons. I knew that *somewhere* I had read *something* about him but I just could not remember where. Anyway, going through my own copies of various old GENERAL BOTHA magazines I came across the following in *The Old Salts Magazine* for 1947-1948:

**IN MEMORIAM** - Kenneth Parsons, owner-skipper of the fishing boat TEGWANI lost his life when his boat struck the blinder reef *Yankee John* off Hondeklip Bay. Mr. Parsons had been a Merchant Officer. During the Second World War he became a Lieutenant in the South African Naval Forces [SANF] and served in the Mediterranean. He was aboard GENERAL BOTHA during the 1926-1927 term.

To sum up then we know the following:

Name: Kenneth Devenish PARSONS

Date of Birth: 13 July 1911

Place of Birth: de Aar, Cape Province. Son of Reginald Scott Victor Parsons

School: Dale College,

General Botha: 27 January 1926 to 19 June 1928

Employment: Joined the shipping company Houlder Bros & Co. as an apprentice officer on 01 November 1928. Subsequently he served in the ship AMERICAN TRANSPORT. He passed for his Second Officer's Certificate of Competency on 19 December 1933; was reported to have been seriously ill in London in 1933; returned to SA in 1933 and joined ISCOR; returned to sea in 1938 as Third Officer in the South African Railways and Harbours [SARShips] ship ERICA; served in the SA Naval Forces as a Lieutenant in the Second World War; purchased [or purchased a share in] TEGWANI; died when TEGWANI struck the reef *Yankee John* off Hondeklip Bay on 24 June 1947.”

*The following article which was published in the March 2009 edition of Sea Breezes has been brought to our attention by Pat Browne and Ivor Little. It is the story of the sinking of the ss Bradfyne and Cadet Paul Bucholtz #911; 1937-38 a survivor.*

CONVOY SC-11 AND. ....The ss "BRADFYNE"

British convoy SC-11 (slow convoy) – loaded to the gunnels with material for war-torn Britain in real peril of being starved into submission by Nazi Germany – attacked by a killer U-boat on a dark and stormy November night.

Montreal, Canada, October 1940. Just before the mighty Saint Lawrence River became closed by winter ice, the 4,740 ton British freighter Bradfyne (Reardon Smith Line, Bideford) was loaded with 5,000 tons of grain bound for Belfast.

The crew of 43 was made up of English, Welsh, Scots, Irish, one Finn, one American, one South African, and nine from the East of Suez – the latter were firemen and stokers, for the Bradfyne, although built as late as 1928 in West Hartlepool, was a coal-burner, almost 400 feet long and classified as medium size.

Sydney, Cape Breton, at the mouth of the Saint Lawrence on the North coast of Nova Scotia, was one of the gathering places for Allied convoys before facing the storms and U-Boats of the North Atlantic. Bradfyne sailed from there on 12<sup>th</sup> November 1940, in Convoy SC – 11 with 37 other Merchant ships.

Commander Alan K-Scott-Moncrief was Captain of the 282 foot Royal Navy sloop HMS Enchantress, which, together with three destroyers of the Royal Canadian Navy, Ottawa, Saquenay and Skeena, and the corvette Bluebell, formed the convoy escort. Vice Admiral F M Austin was the convoy commodore sailing in the merchant ship ss Landilo, and he had the unenviable task of trying to maintain sailing discipline ~ ships' positions in columns and rows; spaces between ships night and day; speed; stragglers. Standard convoy formation dictated a 1,000 yards gap between columns, and 500 yards between front and back of the next ship in each column. As the average period of a transatlantic voyage was two weeks, the Commodore got very little sleep: his ship was at the front of the centre column.

The weather was fine, and there had been absolutely no contact with enemy forces until the afternoon of Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> November. By then, the convoy was approaching the last leg of open ocean before turning into the comparative safety of the Irish Sea. Now the wind increased, and by evening it was blowing a full gale with winds from the West; great waves and horizontal, torrential rain battered the ships.

In the previous comparatively calm nights they had sailed in total darkness. Now, with zero visibility in the black, screaming storm, some of the ships made what could be interpreted as a fatal error - they broke the rules – they turned on their navigation lights so as to see each others' positions.

At 10.30pm, the convoy made an alteration of course. As hindsight would prove, this also was to help bring about a fatal occurrence in that it steered them directly into the path of a wolf of the wartime Atlantic Ocean, and the wolf had seen the lights!

Sliding through the black waters was Kapitanleutenant Joachim Shepke, one of Hitler's aces, in the submarine U-100. This was Shepke's third patrol, and already he had sunk twenty allied merchant ships and a destroyer (HMS Fury). He was 28 yrs old, blond, handsome and daring; a Nazi idol, and holder of the Knights Cross with Oak Leaves for bravery. Shepke's favourite 'modus operandi' was to locate a convoy, tail it while sending reports for other U-Boats to home in on, then surface at night and pick off his victims one-by-one, right under the noses of the escorts. The low, black silhouette of a U-boat, even at close quarters, was virtually invisible in the dark of night.

Some thought that submarines were unable to operate successfully in very stormy weather, but at 23:30 a torpedo from U-100 slammed into No 2 Hold on the port side of the Bradfyne, about one hundred feet from the bow, and it immediately took on a heavy list to port. The bridge structure was virtually destroyed, but there was no smoke or flames. Because of the 15-20 degree list to port, the starboard lifeboat could not be lowered, so the only other lifeboat

(big enough for 30 men), on the port side, was ordered to stand-by by First officer Philip Evans. This was the boat-station of two of the four apprentices (trainee deck officers) on board, and they got into the lifeboat together with another sailor and lowered away upon the orders of the Captain, Rupert Vanner.

On reaching the water and steadying the lifeboat, they expected other members of the crew to join them. But the waves were running extremely high, and the rise and fall of the ship and the lifeboat caused the holding gear of the falls to unlock, allowing the boat to swing free.

As the foaming swells lifted the lifeboat to the height of the deck railings, another Able-Seaman jumped in. The with the Bradfyne listing over even more to port, the lifeboat drifted away with the wind and tide, with no engine or sail to power it , and not enough men to man the oars.

From their wildly rocking perch in the open lifeboat, the four men could see Third Officer Stanley Lewarne letting off rockets and the Captain signalling with an Aldis lamp to other ships that they were in distress. But nobody came to their aid.

At the official inquiry on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 1940, 18 year-old Senior Apprentice Paul Buchholtz (from South Africa) told how they had seen the light of flares in the direction of the Bradfyne and thought it could be that the destroyer escorts were around the ship rescuing their shipmates.

The lifeboat with the four survivors (Apprentices Paul Buchholtz and Terrence O'Neill, Ordinary Seaman Tomas Inpherry and Able Seaman William Walker) drifted for three days and three nights in the stormy, freezing Atlantic, in constant danger of being swamped; stabilised only by a sea anchor and constantly bailing for their lives. On the fourth day they were picked up by the Norwegian ship Norse King, sailing in convoy SL-54, where their frostbitten limbs were attended to and they were treated with great kindness by the Norwegians. They were at last put ashore in Belfast on November 25<sup>th</sup>.

Apprentice Terence O'Neill, although only 18 years-old, had already survived a previous torpedo attack while serving on the SS Jersey City that was sunk by another U-Boat ace, Kapitanleutenant Otto Kretchmer in U-99 on 31<sup>st</sup> July, 1940, just four months earlier.

On the same night, and just an hour after the Bradfyne was hit, another explosion rent the air as another torpedo from U-100 smashed into the British freighter Justitia carrying steel and lumber. The corvette Bluebell picked up 25 survivors from the sea of the 39 crew on board. The torpedo had hit amidships, probably ending the lives of the engine-room staff immediately.

By now Shepke's radio "fix" had alerted U-93 to join the fray but, unaccountably, it failed to score.

Next, in the middle hours of this dark, stormy night, the Norwegian ship Bruse was torpedoed and sunk; then the Norwegian Freighter Salonica, carrying pit-props for Britain's vital coal mines went down. The hunter on each occasion was Shepke.

Escort destroyers Saquenay and Ottawa were ordered to pick up survivors. The destroyer Skeena had been absent from her convoy position for some hours, and was ordered to fire star-shell to indicate her location. She was now several miles to the rear of the convoy, hunting another U-Boat (possibly U-93?). She attacked with depth charges, with no apparent effect, but picked up a boatload of survivors. Enchantress was also busy recovering survivors.

And so, the battle raged all night, and at 7am on the morning of the 23<sup>rd</sup> November, with the light of dawn not yet showing, another tremendous crash, shook the convoy as the British Leise Maersk was torpedoed, yet again by Shepke in U-100. The crew were unable to lower the lifeboats, but eight managed to climb into a life-raft, and were later picked up – 17 others died.

The convoy was now within 200 miles of the coast of Ireland, and the weather moderated to Gale Force 6. But the attack had not moderated, and that evening at 2000 hours, once again in pitch blackness, the Dutch ship Bassum, carrying grain, was torpedoed and sunk.

Shepke was indeed the constant and determined assailant, and very typical of the tough U-Boat commanders. British air and naval support was now just 100 miles away, so, with his total bag a massive 25,000 tons of shipping and vital material sunk over just two nights and one day, Shepke retired from the scene.

However fate had not retired from the scene and in the early hours of 24<sup>th</sup> November the British Alma Dawson struck a German mine which blew off her bow. The crew took to the life boats; there were no casualties.

The surviving 30 ships of convoy SC-11 limped into port on the morning of Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> November 1940, together with the shocked and shaken survivors of the sunken ships, rescued from certain death by escort vessels despite the atrocious weather.

But what happened to the rest of the crew of the Bradfyne? All four survivors testified as to what they had witnessed as their lifeboat was carried away by the storm-driven sea; as Mrs O'Neill, mother of Apprentice Terence O'Neill, wrote to Doris Evans, wife of Chief Officer Phillip Evans, and Apprentice Paul Buchholtz.

"We saw Captain Vanner and, I think, all the crew, judging by the size of the crowd, on deck after the explosion. Being as the torpedo hit in the No 2 hold, it was possible that all the engine-room staff managed to survive and make it up to the deck, but it was too dark to identify anyone.

There was no panic, everyone was cool and calm, just waiting there quietly. There were two rafts left on the ship. We were quite helpless to manoeuvre and lifeboat and were soon swept away. We never saw the ship again." The remaining 39 members of the crew were never seen again.

but –

- The survivors had seen people on Bradfyne shooting off alarm rockets and star shell, and signalling with lamps to other ships close by.
- The ship had radio and two radio officers.
- Some survivors from all other ships attacked had been picked up in spite of the storm.
- The Bradfyne was already listing heavily to port when the survivors last saw her; did she suddenly capsize – roll over on her stricken portside and sink before the heroic escort vessels could find her in the storm-driven blackness?

Or did that equally heroic crew of the Bradfyne succumb at last to hypothermia and drowning in the bitterly cold North Atlantic Ocean, as would many more before the *Battle of the Atlantic* was finally won? They have no graves, but they are remembered with pride \* SB

### **CONFIDENTIAL**

Report of and interview with Mr P R N Buchholtz, Apprentice on the SS BRADFYNE  
Shipping casualty section, trade division 14<sup>th</sup> December 1940

Mr Buchholtz

We were bound from Sydney, CB, to Belfast with a cargo of 4,500 tons of maize approximately, and were armed with a 4" and one Hotchkiss gun; we were not flying an ensign at the time of the attack. The confidential books were on board at the time, but I do not know what happened to them. The number of crew, including the master, was 43, of whom four were picked up, but I do not know what happened to the rest of the crew.

We left Sydney, CB on 12<sup>th</sup> November formed up in a convoy of 38 ships, our position being No.93. At the beginning of the voyage the weather was good, but after seven days we ran into bad weather, two or three ships dropping astern of the convoy as they were unable to keep up the speed.

In the evening the Commodore ordered two ships out of the convoy as they were showing lights. These ships were No 72, the Panaolus and the Nicolas Angolas, No 73 in the convoy. No 51 of the convoy the Henri Mory changed places with No 53 the Atlantian, but as she was unable to keep up with the convoy the Henri Mory dropped astern.

Nothing further occurred until 22<sup>nd</sup> November, at 21.30 GMT, we were struck by a torpedo on the port side, forward of the bridge by No 2 hold, about 100 feet from the bow, I do not know

our exact position when we were torpedoed but our position at 2000 had been 55° 14'N. Our speed at the time was 6½ knots and the wind force 6 or 7 with a very choppy sea with huge waves. There was no flame or smoke, but all the superstructure and the bridge alleyway was broken and buckled. The ship listed immediately to port and we were unable to lower the starboard lifeboat. The Chief Officer ordered us to stand by the port lifeboat, and I got into this with a sailor as this was my boat station. The Captain gave the order to lower the boat, and just as this was being done the other apprentice jumped into the boat. By this time the Bradfyne was listing 15-20 degrees to port. Just as the boat was about halfway down a huge wave struck the boat, unlocking the falls and carrying away the painter. The boat remained against the ship's side with three of us in it. Another AB jumped into the boat when she was on top of a wave and about level with the railings in deck. We drifted rapidly astern and never had a chance to do anything and we never saw the ship again.

About an hour later we saw the light of flares from the directions in which the convoy had gone – we thought they might have been fired by destroyers round the Bradfyne. Before we lost sight of the Bradfyne we saw the Third Mate on the bridge letting off rockets and the Captain was signalling to some ship as we saw him with the lamp. The weather was very rough and the wind at gale force, so we were unable to do anything except lie to the sea anchor, even then we were continually shipping water. I tried hauling in the sea anchor and lying beam on to the sea, as being so light [only four in a lifeboat for 30] I thought we might be more comfortable, but the reverse was the case as we shipped several heavy seas. After this we streamed the sea anchor together with two buckets which we found much more satisfactory.

On Sunday morning, 23<sup>rd</sup> November, we sighted a ship but she did not see us: later in the day we sighted a flying boat coming directly towards us, but when it was about two miles off it turned and went away, although we lighted flares, fastening them to a boat hook and holding them in the air. Just before dark we saw another flying boat, but it never saw us.

After we had been afloat for three days and three nights a Norwegian ship, the Norse King, picked us up and landed us at Belfast.

#### SLOP CHEST

These slop chest items all proudly display our association insignia and is available from Cape Town branch. Place your orders without delay with Kathy or Louise Nicholas:

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