

readers' letters

Business women should join the B&PW movement, Scottish member recommends

Sir,

Having recently completed two years as president of the East Kilbride Club, Scottish Division, of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, I considered the time opportune to convey greetings to B&PWs who are also readers of CLANSMAN.

It was with a certain amount of pleasure at having been chosen to fill the office of president and apprehension of what lay ahead that I entered my two years in office. But I look back with great satisfaction to what was a very happy period of my life.

To the untutored I would stress the point that my organisation has no connection with the Women's Lib movement. We do seek a certain modicum of equality, more especially of opportunity, with our male counterparts. Unlike our more clamant sisterhood of Women's Lib we go about our business in an efficient and orderly manner; this was brought home to me after attendance at two annual conferences, one at Eastbourne and the other at Llandudno. Many resolutions discussed at these conferences and passed by the attending delegates have now become integral parts of our national legislation and the subjects dealt with are as diverse as the members who consider them.

I would commend membership of a Business and Professional Woman's Club to all ladies, no matter their age, as a worthwhile interest. It is a stimulating experience which opens the door to many channels and introduces one to a wide area of friendship. I hope my letter will induce any hesitant recruits to join and become active participants in B&PW affairs.

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■ Aileen G. Struthers, head typist at Glasgow and past president of the East Kilbride Club, Scottish division, of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. She wears the president's badge in this picture.

Trevessa's lifeboats: fate still in doubt

Sir,

The fate of the *Trevessa* lifeboat that was borrowed from the Mauritius museum for *Clan Colquhoun* is still in doubt as several conflicting stories have been told.

It is correct that the lifeboat was landed at Calcutta in care of the agents, James Finlay & Co. Limited, with a request that it should be returned to Mauritius at the first opportunity.

On my next visit to Calcutta which was some years later I inquired about the lifeboat and I was informed that it had been shipped on a Norwegian vessel for passage to Mauritius via South Africa and that this Norwegian vessel had been sunk by enemy action and the boat lost. As I had made a promise to the museum authorities in Mauritius that the boat would be returned I would like to think that my story is correct and that the boat had met an honourable end and no blame attached to anyone except the Japanese. The doubt that arises

in my mind is that there does not seem to be any record of the Mauritius agent, Adam & Co., being advised that the boat had been shipped from Calcutta.

The storm damage sustained by the *Colquhoun* in the cyclone, so vividly described in a previous issue of CLANSMAN, was so severe that the ship was not fit to proceed on the voyage to Calcutta and as Mauritius was the nearest port we put into Port Louis for assistance. The loss of the lifeboats was serious as we were heading right into the Japanese war zone. The position was made worse as we had 80 extra Indian seamen on board for repatriation to India in addition to our own crew of 135 which included 13 DEMS ratings.

Although there were excellent facilities in Port Louis for carrying out ship repairs the building of new lifeboats would have taken too long and we could not afford the time. When our efforts to procure lifeboats were unsuccessful the Governor of Mauritius eventually gave us authority to commandeer any boat on the island that might be of use. We knew of two boats that might be of some help, one was the *Trevessa* lifeboat and the other a small lifeboat belonging to the Raphael Fishing Company. A request that these boats be given us on loan was granted. So with these two boats and one of our own that had been patched up, along with numerous rafts, we set off from Mauritius to continue our voyage.

The lifeboat we got from the Mauritius museum was one of two lifeboats that had made epoch-making voyages after the sinking of the *Trevessa* in the South Indian Ocean. Both boats managed to make landfalls but alas, many of the seamen who had taken to the boats at the time of the sinking perished from exposure, thirst and hunger. One of the boats made a landing at Mauritius and this is the one we got from the museum. It had been there for 17 years.

In order to get the boat out, the wall surrounding the museum had to be broken down. The boat was in very poor condition, which can be understood considering what the boat had gone through on the voyage, then being in the museum for such a long time. After some patching up it was passed as serviceable but not, I am afraid, up to BOT standards.

There have been some inquiries regarding the second lifeboat from the *Trevessa*. This lifeboat landed at the Island of Rodrigues some 300 miles distant from Mauritius. The two boats had acted independently most of the time during their voyages and it is amazing that both of them should make miraculous landings on separate islands, in the middle of the Indian Ocean. The Rodrigues lifeboat was sent to