
readers' letters

The other side of T. B. Davis

Sir,

The letter in *CLANSMAN* no. 31 by cadet R. G. Kirkby about the General Botha Academy revives a few memories—especially when he mentions T. B. Davis, who came from the Channel Islands. T. B. Davis donated not only the General Botha but the Howard University which stands up on the Berea in Durban, in memory of his son Howard who was killed at Delville Wood in the first world war.

Throughout the 40 years I served in the Clan Line I got to know T. B. Davis very

well. He was considered by some to be a hard man without sentiment, but I found him otherwise. I also knew his brother Lee whose two sons served part of their apprenticeship in *Clan Macrae*, in which I was second mate, before going on to obtain their masters' certificates and then to take up positions in Brock Stevedoring.

Once when TB invited me to dinner, in the hallway I was attracted by a picture of a barque with all sails furled lying at anchor in the Downs. There was something familiar about her.

"*Crown of India*," he explained, seeing my interest. "Yes, I served four years in her," I replied.

"I was chief mate on her," he said. "Before your time, of course." "Yes," I exclaimed, "Thank God." He gave me a wry

smile as we passed into the dining room.

Some time later, after he died, his other son came down to the ship I commanded and gave me the picture saying that it was his father's wish. I still have the picture.

Capt. B. A. HARDINGE,
6 Laleham Close,
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Yes, 1912: and I was that ragtag junior

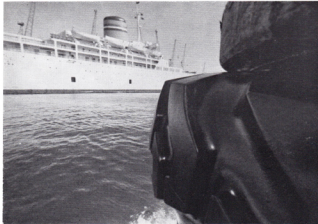
Sir,

With all deference, may I point out a minor inaccuracy in the caption to the most interesting ancient photographs (wonder how they came to be unearthed?) of the interior of the Union-Castle Southampton office in Canute Road? They appeared in the contribution by Jack Wood of *Cape Times* fame (Mail Day, *CLANSMAN* no. 31).

The top picture shows the general department on the upper floor (the inner sanctum—the manager's room—led off this). I am the ragtag and bob-tail junior appearing in the photograph, so I know that these photographs were taken in 1912, not in the '20s—some difference, although the interiors did not change. Next to me was Charlie F. Dashper (he later transferred to the publicity department in the former Fenchurch Street HQ). The other is Alec Dudley, head of the department.

The lower picture is of part of the outward freight department on the ground floor at the east end of the building. The figure sitting on the extreme right in the foreground is Freddie Mollett, who enlisted in the Royal Flying Corps at the outbreak of the 1914 war. He was a lieutenant and, alas, was killed.

CHRIS MANLY,
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■ The Firestone Tyre & Rubber Co. went looking for a dramatic way to show how their product stands up to all that thumping and grinding between roads and vehicles . . . and they came up with the mailship SA Vaal. They made a television commercial showing a Firestone earthmover tyre mounted as a fender on the bow of the tug Assurance, owned by Husbands Shipyard—including action shots of the tug-mounted tyre giving SA Vaal a few disrespectful nudges. A team from *Illustra Films* and Firestone ad. agents *Winship, Webber & Co.* spent three days at Southampton in September 1974 making the commercial.

