



**INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE**  
**International Brigade Memorial Trust**  
**Ymddiriedolaeth Goffa y Frigad Ryngwladol**

**Annual Commemoration in Cardiff**  
**13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

**Coffáu Blynyddol yng Nghaerdydd**  
**13<sup>eg</sup> – 15<sup>fed</sup> Hydref 2017**



**Welcome to Wales**  
**Croeso i Gymru**

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# **Wales and the Spanish Civil War**

## ***Background***

During the 1920s and 1930s there was a recession in the South Wales coalfield that decimated the coal industry and led to severe deprivation. At that time Wales and Spain had much in common including the poverty and persecution of miners and other workers. Welsh miners identified with the miners of the Asturias and their poor working and living conditions and there were communities of Asturian miners who had settled in Dowlais and Onllwyn. Wales has a history of internationalism and miners identified with the Basque and Catalan Independence movements and the desire for political, cultural and linguistic recognition.

## ***The Fed***

The South Wales Miners' Federation (The Fed) was an important political influence and their President Arthur Horner visited Spain in July 1937. The Fed raised money for relief work in Spain, and supported dependents of Brigaders as well as paying the medical bills of wounded Brigaders. The Fed also helped to support the Basque Children's homes in Wales

## ***Who went to Spain?***

Over 200 Welsh men and women left for Spain. The majority were miners or unemployed miners but not all were. For example Alun Menai Williams was a medical orderly and Margaret Powell and Thora Silverthorne were nurses. Harry Stratton was a taxi driver, Morien Morgan a student and Brazell Thomas a steel worker. Ramon Rodrigues from Dowlais, Francisco (Frankie) Zamorra and Victoriano Esteban from Abercrave were killed in Spain fighting for their homeland.

## ***Why did they go?***

*"They went because their open eyes could see no other way"*. The majority of Brigaders were trade unionists and political activists and could see the danger of fascism. They knew that the Spanish Civil War was a practice ground for the Second World War.

## ***How did they go?***

The Communist Party organised most volunteers and the usual route from South Wales was to go to the left bookshop in Cardiff and get directions to the bookshop in London. From there the route was to go via Victoria - Newhaven - Dieppe - Paris. In Paris volunteers were medically screened and if declared fit were taken south to the Pyrenees. They walked over the Pyrenees at night into Spain and were taken to Figueras. Eventually they were taken to the International Brigade Training Base at Albacete south of Madrid.

## ***What happened in Spain?***

Poor and inadequate training was given and the lack of arms, ammunition and other equipment hampered the efforts of the Republican Army. The Brigaders also faced insufficient rations, poor uniforms and lack of blankets. There were high mortality rates during the battles of Jarama - February 1937, Brunete - July 1937, Belchite - August 1937 and March 1938, Teruel - December 1937, Aragon Retreat - March 1938, Ebro - July to November 1938.

## **Welsh Brigaders at the Ebro**

*"I am proud to say that Wales is well represented in the British units here by its sturdy and freedom-loving coal miners. The Welsh National Anthem...has been sung more than once in the trenches on the Madrid and Aragon fronts and by now many brave Welsh miners have been killed... they died to preserve democracy not only for Spain but also in Wales. History will prove that these Welsh miners did not die in vain."* Tom Jones (Twm Jones Sbaen) Welsh Volunteer from Rhosllanerchrugog



### ***Welsh Casualties***

Thirty-five men died in battle, one prisoner Tom Picton was executed in prison and many returned home wounded. Tom Jones nicknamed Twm Jones Sbaen spent three years in Franco's jails under sentence of death. His sentence was commuted to thirty years in jail and eventually following a public campaign he was ransomed by the British Government and returned home.

### ***The role of Welsh Communities***

Welsh mining communities pledged support for the Republic and despite the poverty in the valleys door-to-door collections of money, food and clothing were made. For example Pontypridd collected 12 cwt. of food and Rhondda Communist Party collected £60 in pennies through street collections. Lewis Jones author and political activist died after speaking at over 30 fundraising rallies in one day.

### ***Basque Children in Wales***

The bombing of Guernica on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1937 led to the evacuation of Basque children to other countries including the U.K. The Habana sailed to Southampton and to accommodate all the children homes were set up around the country. In Wales these were in Caerleon, Brechfa near Carmarthen, Sketty Park Swansea and Old Colwyn. There was no government funding and it was the communities, which supported the children.

### ***Welsh Sea Captains***

Ships from Welsh ports had traded with Spain and Captains Potato Jones, Ham & Egg Jones and Corn Cobb Jones were blockade-runners taking supplies to the Republic. Merchant ships that were targeted by Fascist ships and sunk while Royal Navy ships watched and did nothing. The Film 'Britain Expects' commissioned by a committee of

British Ship Owners, The Officers (Merchant Navy) Federation and the National Union of Seamen was made to highlight the issue. The film however was banned by the British Board of Censors and not shown during the war.

### ***Returning home***

By September 1938 it was apparent that the Republic was all but defeated and Prime Minister Juan Negrin ordered the International Brigades to be pulled out of action. In October 1938 a huge rally for the survivors was held near Vinebre and later in October there was a farewell parade in Barcelona. It was at this parade that La Pasionaria made her famous speech. In December 1938 the British Battalion was repatriated and Brigaders travelled through France to Dieppe by train. From Dieppe they travelled by ferry to Newhaven and then by train to London and a welcome at Victoria Station.

### ***Wales in at the beginning***

This is not something to be proud of but Cecil Bebb from Pontypridd piloted the plane taking Franco from the Canaries to Morocco in July 1936. The trip was organised by MI6 and British supporters of Franco.

### ***At the end***

This is something to be proud of: Archie Dickson from Cardiff Captain of the S.S Stanbrook rescued nearly 3,000 refugees as Alicante fell to Franco's forces in March 1939



Captain Archie Dickson from Cardiff

### ***And at the very end***

The Republican Government fled via France to the U.K. and landed at Milford Haven. A Greek Captain Ionnais Colentzos who had married and settled in Cardiff transported the exiled government to Milford Haven. Juan Negrin had a gold pocket watch inscribed with his name, which he gave to Ioannis.



Memorial to the Welsh International Brigaders in Cathays Park

## Programme of Events

All events are open events and non-IBMT members are welcome

### Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October

#### 19.00 – Wine Reception – Sponsored by Unite the Union

Unite Building, 1 Cathedral Road (at the junction with Cowbridge Road East)

Followed by a film show

- **Return Journey** – This award winning film lasts 30 minutes and shows Alun Menai Williams return to Spain. **Sarah Dickins - BBC Wales** who produced the film will introduce it and answer questions.
- Brief talk on the story of **Archie Dickson and the S.S. Stanbrook** and the campaign to get the plaque sited in Cardiff Bay.
- **The Stanbrook Plaque** will be on display.
- **Britain Expects** - Film lasts 13 minutes and shows how British merchant ships were sunk by the Fascists whilst the Royal Navy did nothing to protect them
- **Graham Davies** author of the book '**You Are Legend**' –**Welsh Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War** will be selling his book and signing copies prior to the talk he will be giving on Sunday at Big Pit

Merchandise etc will be on sale

### Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October

**11.00 – Commemoration** at the Wales Memorial, Cathays Park (behind City Hall)

#### Speakers

Dr. Hywel Francis

Mick Antoniw AM

Dr. Dafydd Trystan Davies

Rob Griffiths

Laying of floral tributes - Cor Cochion Caerdydd will lead the singing

**14.00 – AGM** opened by Carwyn Jones First Minister of Wales

GMB, Garley House 17 Newport Road (opposite Mercure Hotel) **Sponsored by GMB**

**19.00 - Social** at the Temple of Peace, King Edward V11 Avenue (Two minutes walk from the Memorial)

A cash bar will be available.

**Entry £10 per person pay at the door**

### Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> October

**10.15 Excursion** by coach to National Mining Museum at Big Pit, Blaenavon.

- Free admission to Big Pit
- Coach fare - £10 per person

The coach will leave from outside the Museum (next to City Hall). Please note that seats are limited and if you have not pre booked you cannot be guaranteed a seat

**The coach leaves at 10.15** Please be prompt.

**11.30 Commemoration** at Big Pit memorial to Welsh miners who went to Spain.  
Speaker Wayne Thomas NUM

**12.00** Graham Davies author of the book '*You Are Legend*' - *Welsh Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War* will talk about his book.

**Attractions include**

Exhibition of mining, mining galleries, pithead baths, historic mining buildings,  
Underground tour, cafe where refreshments can be bought, gift shop

**14.45** Leave Big Pit, **15.30** Arrive back in Cardiff

## **Places to visit in Cardiff**

### **Cardiff Castle – Castell Caerdydd**

Cardiff Castle is one of Wales' leading heritage attractions and a site of international significance. Located within beautiful parklands at the heart of the capital, Cardiff Castle's walls (including the famous animal wall) and fairy-tale towers conceal 2,000 years of history. There is a Roman wall, Norman keep and parts of the castle date from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Following the death of the 4th Marquis of Bute, the family decided to give the Castle and much of its parkland to the city of Cardiff. There is a charge for admission

### **National Museum of Wales – Amgueddfa Genedlaethol Cymru**

Situated at the Civic Centre Cathays Park. Home of the famous Davies Art Collection, Welsh dinosaur and other interesting exhibits. Admission free

### **The Old Library – Yr Hen Lyfrgell**

Situated in The Hayes this is Cardiff's first Welsh Cultural Centre. A unique opportunity to celebrate, use and hear the Welsh language in an iconic building at the heart of our capital city. There is an exhibition **The Story of Cardiff**. Also in the building is **the tiled corridor** that is well worth visiting. Admission free

### **The Arcades**

The Castle Quarter is comprised of three outstanding Victorian / Edwardian arcades, all located within a short distance of Cardiff Castle – Castle Arcade, High Street Arcade and Duke Street Arcade. Originally home to many specialist shops of the era – drapers, apothecaries, tailors, jewellers and fortune-tellers.

### **The Millennium Stadium**

Currently known for sponsorship purposes as the Principality Stadium, is the national stadium of Wales, located in Cardiff at Westgate Street. Take a tour of the Stadium that is the venue of many events including rugby and football matches, speedway as well as concerts. Admission charge – tickets available at WRU Gift Shop

### **Cardiff Bay – Bae Caerdydd**

Y Senedd (seat of the Welsh Government), the Millennium Centre (Canolog Milleniwm), the Merchant Seamen Memorial, the Pierhead Building, the Norwegian Church and the Captain Scott Memorial are all in this area as are many restaurants.

- **The Baycar** (Service No 6) is the easiest way to get between Cardiff city centre and Cardiff Bay. Buses operate every 12 minutes Mon – Fri and every 15 minutes Sat – Sun day times/every 20 minutes in the evenings. Bus stops include Westgate Street, lower St Mary Street & rear of Central Train Station.
- **The train** leaves Queen Street Station Platform 1.

- **The Waterbus** leaves from Bute Park opposite the Holiday Inn.

### **City Sightseeing Tour**

The red buses leave from outside Cardiff Castle main entrance. This is a good way to see Cardiff and learn about the history of the city.

### **Castell Coch**

Castell Coch in English translates as the Red Castle and refers to the colour of the stonework. Built in the 1870's on the site of an old fort and decorated by William Burges as a medieval gothic castle. It is about 4 miles from the city centre and well worth a visit. There is a charge for admission

### **St Fagan Welsh Folk Museum – Sain Ffagan Amgueddfa Werin Cymru**

St Fagan National Museum of History, commonly referred to as St Fagan after the village where it is located, is an open-air museum in Cardiff chronicling the historical lifestyle, culture, and architecture of the Welsh people. Buses operate between Cardiff City and St Fagan National Museum of History throughout the year: Admission free but there is a small charge for the car park

- Easyway 32A – stops in the main car park of the Museum.
- 320 – stops at St Fagan village.
- 321 – stops at St Fagan village.

### **Taxis**

There are taxi ranks at Central Station, St Mary Street, Park Place and other locations in the city centre. Useful phone numbers

Dragon Taxis 029 20 333333      Premier Taxis 02920 555555  
 Capital Cabs 02920 777777      City Taxis 02920 400400

### **Contact numbers**

- Mary Greening IBMT Wales Secretary - mobile +44 (0) 77726 20279  
[memsec@international-brigades.org.uk](mailto:memsec@international-brigades.org.uk)
- Nina Londragan - mobile +44(0) 07530 915925



### **Jarama Valley**

There's a Valley in Spain called Jarama,  
It's a place that we all know so well,  
It is there that we gave of our manhood,  
And so many of our brave comrades fell.

We are proud of the [British Battalion](#)  
And the stand for Madrid that they made,  
For they fought like true sons of the soil.  
As part of the Fifteenth Brigade.

With the rest of the international column,  
In the stand for the freedom of Spain  
We swore in the valley of Jarama  
That fascism never will reign.

Now we've left that dark valley of sorrow  
And its memories of regret,  
So before we continue this reunion  
Let us stand to our glorious dead.

### **The Internationale**

Arise ye workers from your slumbers  
Arise ye prisoners of want  
For reason in revolt now thunders  
And at last ends the age of cant.  
Away with all your superstitions  
Servile masses arise, arise  
We'll change henceforth the old tradition  
And spurn the dust to win the prize.

#### *Refrain:*

So comrades, come rally  
And the last fight let us face  
The Internationale unites the human race.

### **Mae Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau**

Mae hen wlad fy nhadau yn annwyl i mi,  
Gwlad beirdd a chantorion, enwogion o fri;  
Ei gwrol ryfelwyr, gwladgarwyr tra mad,  
Dros ryddid collasant eu gwaed.

Gwlad, gwlad, pleidiol wyf i'm gwlad.  
Tra môr yn fur i'r bur hoff bau,  
O bydded i'r hen iaith barhau.