



INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST

Patrons Ken Livingstone
Prof. Paul Preston

Charity no. 1094928

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INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST

37 Reginald Road, London E7 9HS

Tel/Fax: 020-8555 6674

E-mail: [marlenesidaway@hotmail.com]

President: Jack Jones

Secretary: Marlene Sidaway

Treasurer: Peter Crome

Committee Members: David Marshall, Sam Lesser,
Richard Baxell, Rodney Bickerstaffe, Tish Collins,
Pauline Fraser, Katie Green

Co-opted Members: Gerry Abrahams, Jim Jump,
Dolores Long

Welcome to our sixth Newsletter. It is a little earlier than planned as we were worried about the possible postal strike later this month. This has put pressure on our editor, Gerry Abrahams, who is also organising our Annual General Meeting in Glasgow on 11 October (see back page).

Please, if you are planning to come to the AGM let either myself or Gerry know as soon as possible, particularly if you need accommodation and wish to take advantage of reduced rate block booking. We also need to know numbers for the civic reception which the city council is to give us immediately after the re-dedication of the memorial.

The council has been extremely generous and we are very grateful to them, particularly Cllr Charles Gordon. I hope many of you will be able to come to take part in what will be a very moving occasion, paying tribute to those Brigaders from Scotland who gave their lives during the Spanish Civil War, and of course to make decisions at the AGM that will ensure they are never forgotten. There will also be an exhibition of Scottish IBers kindly loaned by the Gallacher Memorial Library, and a screening of "Voices from a Mountain" followed by a social event which promises to be a very happy end to the day.

Sixty of us attended the Ebro Commemoration in July, including eight Brigaders – Ronald Bates, David Marshall, Jack Edwards, Bernard McKenna, Steve Fullarton, Sol Frankel, Bob Doyle and Michael O'Riordan. There were some very moving moments, notably the ferry journey across the river, when Brigaders scattered carnations on the water (fuller account on page 5).

The meeting in Jubilee Gardens was very well attended, and Chris Smith MP gave an excellent speech which drew a great deal of support from all present. The restaurant at the Travel Inn proved a more comfortable venue than we have had in previous years, and if we can book it next year I will try and ensure that the food service is better!

All good wishes. Salud,

Marlene Sidaway



At the memorial in Jubilee Gardens, London, for the annual commemoration.

Gathering at Jubilee Gardens

International Brigaders, families, friends and supporters gathered once again this year at the International Brigade Memorial in Jubilee Gardens, London, in July for the annual commemoration.

Every year a distinguished member of the labour movement or leading supporter of the International Brigades is invited to give the address. The list has included Ken Livingstone, Prof Paul Preston, and Rodney Bickerstaffe.

This year it was Chris Smith MP, former Heritage Secretary, who has lent his support to the campaign to have a memorial erected on Clerkenwell Green, where the International Brigade Association's archive is housed in the Marx Memorial Library.

The commemoration ended with a minute's silence in memory of the Brigaders killed in Spain, and then the singing of Jarama, representing the first battle in which the International Brigades fought.

The Jubilee Gardens memorial honours more than 2,100 men and women volunteers who left Britain to fight alongside the people of Spain in their heroic struggle against fascism, 1936-39. Many were injured and 526 were killed.

An inscription on one side of the plinth echoes some lines by Cecil Day Lewis: "They went because their open eyes could

see no other way" and sums up the reasons for so many volunteers going to Spain: they had seen democracy overthrown in country after country across Europe by the forces of Nazi Germany.

The volunteers, from all walks of life, included some outstanding writers such as Ralph Fox, John Cornford and Julian Bell, but were predominantly working class.

Pauline Fraser



Jack Jones (right) and Chris Smith MP.

Brief notes

Corbera

During our recent visit to Corbera, (see also Pauline Fraser's account on page 5) the 10 Brigaders on the commemorative trip signed a copy of "Memorials of the Spanish Civil War", which was given an illuminated dedication to the people of Corbera by Mick Jones.

Unfortunately, there was no opportunity to present the book formally, so Angela Jackson has taken it to the council offices, where it will be formally presented at the next official occasion, and hopefully be put on display in the library when it is re-furbished. Joan Brown also presented a copy of Paul Preston's "Comrades" in memory of her partner, Brigadier Chris Smith, and it will be displayed in the library.

Memorial mosaic

Eddie Adams and a dedicated team have been working on a memorial mosaic "Echoes Of Spain" which is to be unveiled by our President, Jack Jones, on Wednesday 8 October at 5pm.

It is situated under the A40 at Portobello Road, London W11. There is a pedestrianised way from the nearest tube, Ladbroke Grove, and buses 52, 23, 15 and 7 pass close by. Further information from Eddie Adams on 020-8964 9531. It is hoped that as many Brigaders and Trust members as possible can be there.

Terence Bayes

After watching a screening of "Voices from a Mountain" on the History Channel, Terence Bayes decided that someday he would like to visit the memorial in the Sierra Pandols to pay his respects. If anyone else has a similar desire and would like to accompany him, please contact him at e-mail [terrybayes@hotmail.com] or 64 Gregson Lane, Hoghton, Preston, Lancs.

Successful book launch

Warren & Pell Publishing successfully launched the re-publication of "Book of the XV International Brigade" at our July meeting in Jubilee Gardens, and plan to launch the re-publication of "Britons in Spain" by Bill Rust at our Annual General Meeting in Glasgow on 11 October.

Alan Warren said that as a mark of respect to those members of the British Battalion who died in Spain, they will be producing 526 numbered hardback copies and an unlimited number of softback copies. The hardback version will retail at £16 each, the softback at £8.99.

The royalties from this book are in the first instance for the beneficiaries of the estate of Bill Rust who must prove their identity to Warren & Pell within 12 months of the date of release to claim the royalties which they (W&P) hold in trust. Failing that, they will donate the royalties to the International Brigade Memorial Trust. Royalties for the "Book of the XV International Brigade" are also coming to the Trust and we are very grateful to Alan and Nigel for this gesture.

They are also planning to re-publish Hywel Francis' "Miners against Fascism: Wales and the Spanish Civil War" on St David's Day (1 March) next year.

Full details from Warren & Pell Publishing, The Old Bible Christian Chapel, High Street, Abersychan, Pontypool, Torfaen NP4 7AG, Wales. Tel: 01495-775 561 or e-mail [warren.ofbooks@virgin.net]. Web site: [www.warrenandpellpublishing.co.uk].

IB exhibition in Spain

Several people have mentioned the exhibition about the Spanish Civil War/International Brigade which started in Paris before moving to Barcelona and then Madrid. Bernard Monaghan asked if it would be possible to have it here but, looking at the excellent catalogue, we decided it would be impractical since all of the text, exhibits, posters, memorabilia etc are in French, and translation would be a hefty problem.

Website details of the exhibition are at: [www.bcn.es/virreinaexposicions/agenda2003.pdf]. The site for details of the Madrid exhibition and catalogue is: [www.elmundo.es/elmundolibro/2003/05/19/historia/1053361372.html], and for pictures from the catalogue, it is: [www.elmundo.es/elmundo/libro/albumes/brigadas].

For further information contact: Les Brigades Internationales, Images Retrouvées, M Lefebvre R Skoutelsky. ISBN: 2-02-052390-6. Publisher: Seuil 27 rue Jacob, 75006 Paris.

Escudero tribute to IBers

We mentioned in Issue Four about Paco Escudero's novel about a Spanish youth and his contact with British International Brigaders while in prison. We also told of his plans to write a more factual literary tribute to the Brigaders. This is now complete, with an English translation by Linda Palfreeman.

"La Trinchera (Diary of a British Brigadier during the Spanish Civil War)" draws heavily on the experiences of three Brigaders – George Wheeler, David Marshall and Sol Frankel – yet

could be the story of any of the 40,000 voluntary soldiers who went to Spain to fight against Fascism. It seeks to serve as a tribute to all of the volunteers, especially those who lost their lives during the conflict.

The book will be launched before Christmas, and we would also hope to have some copies available at the Len Crome Memorial Lecture in March.

Rededications

One of the main aims of the Trust is to maintain the existing memorials. Many of those listed in the IB memorials book (published in 1996) have been in existence for well over 20 years, and we need to be alert to any alterations which might be planned at their locations.

As reported in the last issue, the T&G memorial was relocated to the foyer of Transport House, London, and at the Annual General Meeting in Glasgow we will be rededicating the La Pasionaria memorial after its clean-up.

There is the probability that the plaque in the Peace Garden in Albert Square, Dundee, may be affected by planned refurbishment.

There is also ongoing dialogue with developers and planners about the future of Jubilee Gardens in London. We were reassured by our Patron Ken Livingstone's statement that he would personally ensure that the memorial remains in a prominent position in the gardens, but we still need to keep abreast of any new proposals and plans.

Memories of the IB

Olga Gascon Flanagan has sent details of a new book by her friend Caridad Serrano from Madrigueras, Albacete. It is compiled of memories which the villagers have of the International Brigades in Madrigueras, entitled "Los protagonistas de la historia y los testigos de la vida (una historia oral sobre la estancia de las Brigadas Internacionales en Madrigueras)". Graficas Albacete SL, 2003. More information from Olga, e-mail: [flanagan@menta.net].

Salud,
Marlene

IBMT Newsletter

Editor: Geraldine (Gerry) Abrahams
E-mail: [gerry@reelscoop.freereserve.co.uk]
Production Coordinator: Jim Jump
E-mail: [jimjump@mac.com]

President's message

The diminishing ranks of those of us who fought in Spain emphasises the need to keep alive the memory, more than ever.

We are now in the position financially to keep the contact necessary to ensure our memorials are properly maintained. I urge that every effort be made in that respect by our friends everywhere.

This should be an important feature of our endeavours along with the need to encourage educational activities.

I am sure that the relatives and the many friends who were able to participate in the commemoration of the Ebro

battles in Spain recently will be reporting back and stimulating renewed interest in the cause.

Fascism and fascist ideas are not dead, and increased efforts must be encouraged to expose the dangers. We all have a responsibility to get the story across, especially among younger people. This should be one of the issues to receive prominence in our discussions at Glasgow.

Salud,
Jack Jones



Obituaries



Eugene Downing

Eugene Downing, 1913-2003, Irish veteran of the XVth International Brigade and author of the first Irish language account of the Spanish Civil War, "La Niña Bonita / agus an Roisin Dubh", died in the Mater Hospital, Dublin, on 25 July, 65 years to the very day that he had crossed the Ebro.

In March 1938 Eugene had enlisted in the XVth International Brigade in order to defend the Spanish Republic against the forces of fascism. He fought in the Battle of the Ebro where he sustained a wound to his foot that resulted in a below-the-knee amputation. In the newspaper notices of his death, his family said of Eugene: "He lived his life with great integrity, strength and fortitude."



Edwin Greening

Edwin Greening of Aberdare died at Prince Charles Hospital, Merthyr Tydfil, on 9 July 2003, at the age of 92. An unemployed miner from Aberdare, South Wales, he left for Spain in 1937. After a few weeks training at Albacete, he saw action with the British Battalion at Jarama, Gandesa, Teruel, and Brunete.



Miriam receives her International Brigade medal from Bert Carnall.

A medal for Miriam

Miriam Beghin, who went to Republican Spain as a nurse in 1936, has finally received a medal for her services after IBMT member Bert Carnall spotted an article about her exploits in the local newspaper in Borehamwood, Hertfordshire, where they both live.

Bert immediately contacted Miriam, now aged 87, and gave her a spare medal that he had kept since taking part in the 60th anniversary commemoration of the International Brigade in Spain which he attended with IB veteran Wally Togwell.

Miriam, who said she was overwhelmed by the gesture, was a trainee nurse at London's University

College Hospital when she volunteered to go to Spain. Working in field hospitals tending the sick and injured in often desperate conditions, she stayed for over a year. While taking some fresh air one day she was hit by a fascist bullet – and was repatriated to University College Hospital, this time as a patient!

She continued to work as a nurse, but carried a permanent reminder of her time in Spain in the form of a two-inch piece of shrapnel in her knee. The metal was not removed until six years ago.

Bert Carnall, whose uncle fought with the International Brigade, was a founder member of the Friends of the International Brigade, now part of the IBMT.



Morris Mendleson

We were saddened to hear of the death of Brigadier Morris Mendleson, life-long fighter against fascism, and commended for his bravery by Bill Alexander. He was a one time Labour Councillor for Stockport Borough Council, an intellectual and a fine musician. We extend our deepest sympathy to his daughter Anna and all his family.

Also...

● Ivy Edwards, wife of International Brigadier Jack Edwards, died in January this year. When Jack went off to the Spanish Civil War she went round Liverpool with a handcart collecting food for Spain. She trained as a nurse with the intention of going to Spain herself but the war was over before she finished her training. As her daughter Margaret reports, when Jack returned: "He kissed her, her knees went weak, and she married him shortly after." She recalls her mother as an outstandingly bright, funny and honest woman who was a socialist all her life.

● Donations to the International Brigade Memorial Trust in memory of Sadie Thomas have so far totalled £120.

News from home...

Len Crome Memorial Lecture

IBMT committee member Richard Baxell is to give the 2004 Len Crome Memorial Lecture. His book, "British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War: The British Battalion in the International Brigades, 1936-1939", will also be launched at that time.

Marx Memorial Library

Members of the IBMT can go to Marx Memorial Library (MML) to consult the International Brigade Association Archive. However, individual membership of the MML brings further benefits.

The library produces an excellent bulletin, which frequently carries articles of particular interest to our members. The last few years have seen the publication of Prof Paul Preston's Memorial Lecture on La Pasionaria, an obituary of Bill Alexander, an article on Spanish fascism and, most recently, an article on the work of the International Brigade Association after 1945, featuring the numerous trials of Spanish political prisoners where the IBA intervened to defend the accused.

Membership fees are £10 waged and £5 unwaged. Members interested in joining should apply to Tish Collins, Librarian, Marx Memorial Library, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU, Tel: 020-7253 1485, or e-mail: [marx.library@britishlibrary.net].

Instituto Cervantes

The Instituto Cervantes runs Spanish language courses for Initial, Intermediate, Advanced and Higher levels. It has regular courses of one or two sessions a week to start/continue a comprehensive study of Spanish. There are intensive courses for those who want to make the most of the Spanish experience, which cover the same programme in a faster, more comprehensive way. There are also crash courses and special courses for examinations and business Spanish. You can also learn on line and they have just started a new Catalan course. During the year there are many cultural events organised by the Instituto.

Instituto Cervantes, 102 Eaton Square, London, SW1W 9AN. Tel: 020-7201 0750/2. E-mail [cenlon@cervantes.es]. Website [http://londres.cervantes.es].

Plaque unveiled to commemorate Basque refugees

Members of the International Brigade Memorial Trust joined with members of the Basque Children of '37 Association to unveil a plaque to the memory of some of those who provided humanitarian shelter to the Basque children who came to these shores as refugees in 1937.

On 23 May 1937 the *Habana* docked in Southampton with 3,861 children from the Basque region of northern Spain on board. A temporary camp was established near Southampton before the children were distributed to residential homes around the country. There were four homes in Oxfordshire, one of the smaller being Westfield House, Aston, near Witney, at that time known as St Joseph's, which catered for 30 children.

Financial support came from the Aid Spain movement, but local people also rallied round. In Witney, the Early family, who owned the famous blanket mills in the town, donated scarlet blankets to each new arrival. There was a Witney bicycle shop which loaned bikes for the older children to get to school.

IBMT member Cora Blyth was a young modern languages undergraduate from St Hilda's College, Oxford, and she volunteered her weekends to help the children. While Cora was at St Joseph's she met Luis Portillo who was teaching there. Luis, a Republican Spanish intellectual, had escaped from Spain with the help of a group of British parliamentarians. Luis' meeting with Cora Blyth at Aston sparked a lifelong love affair and they married and had five sons.

Many of the Basque children returned to Spain, even before the Second World War. Often it was not a joyous homecoming, with parents, relatives and friends killed tortured or imprisoned by Franco. For some, there was no home to return to and they remained in the UK and made a permanent home here.

For over 60 years the story of St Joseph's at Aston, went untold until a friend of Cora Portillo, invited her to a local history society meeting. Those who heard the story were moved by the tale of care and compassion. A group of us, including IBMT member Natalia Benjamin, decided there should be a permanent memorial, and set about organising a "Blue Plaque" for St Joseph's.

The plaque was unveiled on 17 July and 10 Spanish Basque citizens and their partners, two of whom had been residents at St Joseph's at the



Cora Portillo unveils the plaque.

time, joined the ceremony. In all, about 45 people attended the opening ceremony, including Labour councillors, the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, the present day owners of the property, local people from the village, and the press. But most important of all were the Basque refugees themselves and, of course, Cora Portillo.

A display of photographs and memorabilia was arranged by Natalia and Juan Moreno of the Basque Children's Association. This will eventually be made into a permanent archive of the Oxfordshire Museum Service.

Cora's speech was full of humour and compassion and the Spanish Republican flag flew overhead as the plaque was unveiled. She told of the hardships of daily life, of the trauma of the children thrust into an alien environment, and she told of the happy times as well. She told of one boy at the colony whose mischievous behaviour left much to be desired. He was "a very naughty boy", she said with a waspish grin. And there, in his 70s, dressed in his neat and respectable Sunday best, was that very same "naughty boy".

Colin Carritt

The recently formed Basque Children of '37 Association has just published its first newsletter. The association was set up in November 2002 to keep alive for their descendants the memory of the experiences of the niños when they came as exiles to Britain. Details from the Secretary, Natalia Benjamin, at 8 Hermes Road, Oxford OX2 7PU. E-mail [n.benjamin@ntl-world.com].

Return to the Ebro

Eight Brigaders from all parts of Britain and Ireland, accompanied by family and friends from the International Brigade Memorial Trust, commemorated the 65th anniversary of the Battle of the Ebro, the last battle in which the International Brigades took part.

They joined more than 40 comrades from across Europe and North America. Some came in wheelchairs, and many on sticks: the youngest surviving volunteers are now in their late 80s. On 4 July, a ferry took relays of Brigaders across the Ebro at Miravet. As they made the crossing, they threw red carnations into the river to honour the memory of their fallen comrades. Banners and flowers were laid out to the Republican memorial in Flix in a moving and colourful tribute to the Brigades. Voices were lifted in rousing choruses of ¡Ay Carmela!, Jarama and other Republican songs, ending with the Internationale.

The following day, the volunteers for liberty made the journey up to the old town of Corbera on the hill above the new town. It stands in ruins, just as it was left after the fighting. Under a blazing sun, they listened to speeches in honour of the French volunteers of the International Brigade, and about the part surviving volunteers and Spanish Republicans played in the French resistance to Nazi occupation in World War Two. The British Brigaders who made the journey to the Ebro commemoration were Ron Bates, Bob Doyle, Jack Edwards, Sol Frankel, Steve Fullarton, David Marshall, Bernard McKenna, and Michael O'Riordan.

Pauline Fraser



Above: Crossing the Ebro at Miravet.

Below, IBers in Corbera, from left to right: Steve Fullarton, David Marshall, Ron Bates, Bob Doyle, Jack Edwards and Sol Frankel.



65th anniversary of the farewell to the International Brigades

Angela Jackson writes from Spain...

On behalf of our association, No Jubilem La Memoria, I am writing to tell you about the events that are being organised in Catalonia to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the farewell to the International Brigade. The provisional programme is included below. A more detailed programme will be published later.

Rather than a "homage", with all that the term has come to imply, the main focus will be on the recovery and preservation of the memory of what happened in this part of Catalonia during the war, and on education. The commemoration will include an exhibition of photographs, some of which have never been on public display before, a tour of local sites related to the Brigades and a conference. We plan to offer a choice of seminars in Spanish and English, and written translations whenever possible. Should any Brigaders be able to attend, we hope that they would agree to take part in short seminars, talking in particular to young people and answering their questions with an interpreter if necessary. It is hoped that all those attending will wear badges, giving their names and an indication of their particular interests so that contact with others can more easily be made. The programme will also include the inaugura-

tion of a new memorial by the Marçà town council to the Brigaders who fought in the Battle of the Ebro.

Regrettably, we cannot offer to pay for Brigaders' flights, but with sufficient notice of arrival times, they can be met at the airport and brought here by car. There are direct trains from Barcelona to Montblanc and Marçà for others who would like to attend (under two hours journey). Information will be given on request regarding hotel and hostel accommodation. Please contact us either through the web page of No Jubilem la Memoria [www.nojubilemlamemoria.org] or by e-mail [info@nojubilemlamemoria.org]. We are now collecting testimonies, photographs and other material relating to this project. Offers of help in locating such material, sponsorship or donations towards the event would be gratefully received.

Commemorative events will be held this year in three locations that featured along the route taken by the International Brigades when they were recalled from the front in October 1938. The mustering of the Brigades in Marçà actually took place on 16 October 1938, but as many people in the village will be working to harvest their grapes in October the commemoration will take place during the first weekend of November to allow them to attend.

Montblanc/Les Masies, 25-26 October 2003

- Exhibition of photographs and related material.
- Re-enactment of the speech to Brigaders by Prime Minister Juan Negrín promising them Spanish citizenship after the war.
- Guest speakers.
- Inauguration of a commemorative plaque.

Barcelona, 28 October 2003

- The Catalan Friends of the International Brigades (Asociació d' Amics de les Brigades Internacionals de Catalunya) will be holding a commemoration at the International Brigade memorial in Barcelona.

Marçà, 1-2 November 2003

- Exhibition of photographs and related material, for example video interviews.
- Conference with guest lecturers and seminars.
- Book presentations.
- Tour of local historic sites relating to the Brigades, to include the memorial site of John Cookson near the village.
- Presentation organised by the town hall of Marçà of a new memorial in the village dedicated to the International Brigades, especially those who died during the Battle of the Ebro.

Can you help?

David Mindline

● Angela Wright, of 2 Medlock Close, Walton, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S42 7ND, is trying to find out more information about David Mindline who came from Muswell Hill and joined the International Brigades on 2 October 1937. Angela thinks he may have been a friend of her great uncle, Ernest (known as Alfred) Capps, as they were both members of the Sign Writers' Union. E-mail Angela at [m-a-wright@btinternet.com] or tel: 01246-568 848.

British medical staff in Spain

● José Francisco Tinao Martín-Peña is carrying out a study about the actions of British physicians and nurses in the International Brigade. If you have any information José would be very grateful. Contact him at C/Segovia, 59 5thA, 28005 Madrid. E-mail [jftinao@yahoo.es] or tel: +34-91-366 4786.

Jack Coward

● Bill Rigby is writing a memoir for his grandchildren and would appreciate any information on Jack Coward for whom he remembers canvassing in the 1950 General Election. He also travelled with Jack's daughter en route to the World Festival of Youth in 1951. Contact Bill at 16432 North Picatinny Way, Fountain Hills, AZ 85268, USA or e-mail [billrigby@cox.net].

Robert Grierson

● Stuart Hyslop, an executive council member of the RMT rail and maritime union, would like to find out more about Robert Grierson, who was believed killed at Aragon in March 1938. He was born in Annan (Dumfries) and Stuart would be grateful for any information about him or other men from Dumfries who went to Spain. Contact Stuart at [s.hyslop@unisonfree.net].

Owen Kane

● Ann Kane is trying to unearth any information in relation to her uncle who left Middlesbrough in 1936 to fight in Spain. His name was Owen Kane, or O'Kane, born 20 May 1909 to a father of the same name and a mother Annie, née McGuirk, of Stockton Street, Middlesbrough. There is no mention of Owen in the local memorials but they may not be complete, or he may have joined from another location. Ann's father's last wish was to discover what happened to Owen, his dare-

devil twin brother. If you can help Ann, she can be reached by e-mail: [anniekane@ozemail.com.au].

Petition to Welsh Assembly

● Councillor RT Davies is organising a petition to the National Assembly for Wales and hopes the assembly will erect a memorial naming all the Welsh men and women who made the supreme sacrifice while defending freedom and democracy in Spain. If you would like copies of the petition to collect signatures, please contact Ray at 172 Pandy Road, Bedwas, Caerphilly CF83 8EP. Tel. 029-2088 9514.

Channel Island IBers

● Gary Font is looking for information on Channel Islanders who may have fought in Spain with the International Brigades. Gary can be contacted at 23 Fairfield Avenue, La Pouquelaye, St Helier JE2 3FT Jersey, Channel Islands or at e-mail: [font.vespa@virgin.net].

Alex Hall

● Further to Mike Sheaff's search for volunteers from Plymouth, and specifically information about Alex Hall... Our last Newsletter prompted Mike to write to his local paper, and this brought a response from two of Alex Hall's relations, and then a visit to the home of his younger step-brother produced more information. It appears that Alex Hall came to London to work, and from there was recruited to go to Spain. His mother was understandably distraught at the news of his death, and never got over it. There was a story that during a visit to London years later, she met someone connected with the Brigade and had "something of a row". Mike has passed this information on, in case it might jog anyone's memory.

Six Songs for Democracy

● Carol Marshall, and many others, are interested in purchasing CDs or cassette tapes made from the old 78 record album of Six Songs for Democracy. If anyone knows a source for this, please contact Carol at: [cyclingscorpio@aol.com].

Aid Spain

● In issue five of the Newsletter, Pauline Fraser asked for anyone with recollections of those

who helped with the Aid Spain movement to contact her. Please note that Pauline has changed her e-mail address. She can now be contacted at: [pauline@fraser4219.freemove.co.uk].

Gerald Doran

● Gerry Abrahams would love to hear from anyone who may remember her father, Gerry Doran, who left Dublin in December 1936 with Frank Ryan and many other Irish comrades, to fight in Spain. He was with the battalions that fought at Lopera on Christmas Day 1936. E-mail: [gerry@reelscoop.freemove.co.uk].

Frank Russell

● Richard Marks is trying to find out more information about his grandfather, Frank Russell, a Canadian volunteer. Richard is also trying to find more links with Canadians and the Mac-Paps in particular. If you can help at all, his e-mail is [richard.marks@gov.ab.ca].

George Stamper/Hugh Taylor

● Heather (no second name) would like information about her grandfather, George Edward Stamper, and his uncle Hugh Taylor both from Scotland. Her e-mail address is [templ4r@aol.com].

Finally...

● Those people who do not have access to e-mails, or fail to make e-mail contact, please contact Marlene and she will pass it on.

Cuban spirit

The same theatre company which staged the acclaimed production of "¡Ay Carmela!" two years ago is now putting on a play which is an "evocation of the Cuban spirit in a time of change". "Two Sisters and a Piano", by Nilo Cruz and performed by Out of the Box Productions, is currently touring the UK and Ireland and will run at the Riverside Studios, Crisp Road, London W6 from 16-26 October.

More details from: [www.outofthebox-productions.org].

Remembering



Arnold Owen beside the plaque (inset below) to his brother.

Brother helps to keep memories alive in the valleys



Of the 200 volunteers from Wales, the majority came from the valleys. Thirty-four were killed fighting alongside the Spanish people for freedom and democracy. Many Brigaders who went from the valleys saw the fight in Spain against fascism as a continuation of their fight against what they saw as the “fascist” state in Britain that had locked

many of them up, and had used the army to repress the miners.

Arnold Owen, now 85, is the younger brother of volunteer Frank Owen. Although he had a young family, he volunteered to fight in Spain and, at the age of 34, was killed in July 1937 at Brunete, where many Welsh volunteers lost their lives. Arnold has devoted much of his spare time over the past 10 years to publicising the heroic part these volunteers played in the war in Spain by taking a travelling exhibition to many towns and villages in South Wales. He has also made it his job to see that each volunteer is commemorated appropriately in their particular village and valley.

There are now 12 memorials existing in Wales, all of which have been erected in recent years. However, a plaque to Harry Dobson, unveiled in Tonypanyd Library in 1938, is so far untraceable. Arnold hopes to get another four memorials erected this year.

See “Petition for Welsh Assembly” on facing page.

An Ode to My Comrades

Beside the road a Yanqui youth
Lies on a stretcher
Body twisting in torment
Shot through with bursts of machine gun fire

The sanitarios strive tenderly
To staunch his pain
I stand there
Looking at him

Every cell in my body on full charge
Desperately trying to pass healing currents
From my strength to his

I cannot stay beside him for the battle calls me
To my own meeting in the morning of life

Soon steel pods of death fly through the skies
Pregnant with deadly seed
Bursting around me on the ground
In instant fatal flowers
Blossoming life away from my comrades
French and Scot, Yanqui, German, Spaniard, Slav, Finn and Rus
Greek, Welsh and English, Arab, Jew and Turk,
Black man, Red man, Paleface
We were all there

Stricken I lie with the legs of my comrade stretched over mine
His face a motionless grey mask

The Frenchman still squats, back comfortable against the bank
of earth

Speaking not a word
His head has vanished and some blood messes his collar.

Thirty-eight years later I returned to them
Where they lay still and still, forgotten
Under the soil and the sun
Where my blood mingled with theirs
And with their bones fed the dry pale grasses
And small bushes through the years

Like a Mexican warrior of old
I broke off one of the plants
Chewing the stem and swallowing the bitter juice

Then the gods of war and hate
Roared at us once more
With rolls of thunder
Crashing from the battlements of the sky
But all that fell were token tears of gentle drops
To moisten and mingle with my own dry ones

My comrades lie there on a hillside
Forgotten by all but me
With no memorial but dry pale grasses
And small bushes

But now I have raised a monument to them
More lasting than bronze
And higher than the pyramid

This is it.

John Dunlop



INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST

Notice of
Annual General Meeting

to be held on **Saturday 11 October 2003 in Glasgow City Chambers**



2pm: Rededication of La Pasionaria memorial (left). This moving tribute will include speeches by Cllr Charles Gordon and Jack Jones, followed by a reading of John Dunlop's poem and Dolores Ibaruri's farewell speech. The solemnity will be marked by a piper. The event will close, as it began, with rousing music. Brigaders will then be taken by minibus to Glasgow City Chambers. Members and guests will walk there with guides (10 minutes).

3.30pm – 4.15pm: Civic reception at Glasgow City Chambers. Brigaders and members will be welcomed by representatives of the Lord Provost, and served canapés and wine.

4.30 – 5.45pm: Annual General Meeting. The AGM will be held in the Satinwood Suite, City Chambers, George Square, Glasgow.

Agenda

- 1) Chairman's opening remarks
- 2) Apologies for absence
- 3) Minutes of previous AGM
- 4) Matters arising
- 5) Secretary's report

- 6) Treasurer's report
- 7) Election of officers
- 8) Any other business
- 9) Date and place of next AGM
- 10) Chairman's closing remarks.

6pm – 7pm: Film: "Voices from a Mountain", David Leach's acclaimed film will be open to a wider audience.

NOTE: An exhibition of Scottish volunteers' experiences will be on display at the City Chambers, courtesy of the archivists at Glasgow Caledonian University.

7.30pm till late: An evening of music, fine food, dance and camaraderie. This social event will be held at the Trades Hall, a five minute walk from the City Chambers. Taxis will be provided to take Brigaders back to Jury's Inn Hotel.

We are very grateful for the generosity of Glasgow City Council, the trade unions and other organisations that have supported us in making the day in Glasgow as memorable as possible. Their contributions will be fully acknowledged.

65 years ago: La Pasionaria's historic speech to the International Brigades

This year's Annual General Meeting in Glasgow is timely. It will be 65 years almost to the day since Dolores Ibaruri, "La Pasionaria", made her legendary farewell speech to the International Brigades as they prepared to leave the battlefields of Spain.

As the IBMT joins with friends and supporters in re-dedicating the famous La Pasionaria memorial that stands over the Clyde, a testament to those who left these shores to join their comrades in the fight against fascism in Spain, it is fitting that La Pasionaria's farewell address will be read by Dolores Long, the daughter of Sam Wild, the last commander of the British Battalion in Spain.

"Comrades of the International Brigades! Political reasons, reasons of state, the good of that same cause for which you offered your blood with limitless generosity, send some of you back to your countries and some to forced exile. You can go with pride. You are history. You are legend. You are the heroic example of the solidarity and the universality of democracy... We will not forget you; and, when the olive tree of peace puts forth its leaves, entwined with the laurels of the Spanish Republic's victory, come back!"

"¡Comaradas de las Brigadas Internacionales! Razones políticas, razones de estado, la salud de esa misma causa por la cual vosotros ofrecisteis vuestra sangre con generosidad sin límites, os hacen volver a vuestra patria a unos, a la forzada emigración a otros. Podéis marchar orgullosos. Sois la historia, sois la leyenda, sois el ejemplo heroico de la solidaridad y de la universalidad de la democracia... No os olvidaremos; y cuando el olivo de la paz florezca, entrelazado con los laureles de la victoria de la República Española, ¡volved!"