



# INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST

Patrons Ken Livingstone  
Prof. Paul Preston

[www.international-brigades.org.uk](http://www.international-brigades.org.uk)

Charity no. 1094928

Issue 15 / September 2006

## INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST

37 Reginald Road, London E7 9HS

Tel/fax: 020-8555 6674

Email: [marlensidaway@hotmail.com]

President: Jack Jones

Secretary: Marlene Sidaway

Treasurer: Nick Moreno

Committee Members: Jack Edwards, Sam Lesser, Gerry Abrahams, Richard Baxell, Tish Collins, Pauline Fraser, Katie Green, Jim Jump, Dolores Long/Hilary Jones, Manus O'Riordan, Alan Warren

Welcome once again to the Newsletter. The last few months have been very busy with commemorations for the 70th anniversary and these will continue. There are many events taking place in Scotland, England Ireland and Wales (see pages 4 and 5) although some of them will have already taken place by the time you read this.

The Jubilee Gardens memorial day was particularly successful and we were honoured that His Excellency the Spanish Ambassador accepted our invitation to speak. New memorials have been unveiled and more are planned, as you will see from reports elsewhere in the Newsletter, and there are details of events in Spain planned for October and the spring of next year. The provisional date for the lecture next year at the Imperial War Museum, London, is Saturday 10 March, when we also hope to make it more of a conference day, with a film show in the morning, and an extended discussion after the lecture; more details next time.

During this anniversary year, I have been particularly grateful to the Brigaders who have been willing to be interviewed for television, radio and the press. I know how tiring it must be for them to be asked for the 100th time: "Why did you go?" I really appreciate their patience and good humour. I'm also grateful to the committee, who work so hard for the Trust and am inspired by their personal commitment to honour the memory of their parents or grandparents who went to Spain.

Finally, I hope as many of you as possible will be able to make the Annual General Meeting in Manchester on the weekend of 14 October. Dolores Long, Hilary Jones and many others have worked hard to plan a full and significant weekend (full details on back page) – and there is a fund-raising concert at the Library Theatre a couple of weeks later with a fantastic line-up of artists (see page 4). See you there. Salud,

*Marlene Sidaway*

Brigade veterans at the Jubilee Gardens commemoration: (from left, back row) Bob Doyle (in beret), Sam Lesser, Paddy Cochrane, Jack Jones, Jack Edwards and (seated) Lou Kenton and Penny Feiwel.



## Ambassador praises fighters for democracy

A larger than usual crowd gathered in Jubilee Gardens, London, on 15 July for the 70th anniversary commemoration of the beginning of the Spanish Civil War.

We were delighted that a representative of the Spanish government, His Excellency the Spanish Ambassador Carlos Miranda, accepted our invitation to speak and lay a wreath.

Rodney Bickerstaffe, the other guest speaker, described being present in May 2005 at the unveiling of the Ebro memorial on Hill 705 and the fact that the British Consul General in Barcelona, Geoff Cowling, had been there. He hoped that next year's memorial meeting in London would have, for the first time, a representative of the British government. Liz Shirley again led the singing, Nick

Newland and friends provided a stirring musical accompaniment, and the meeting was introduced by our President, Jack Jones.

We launched our commemorative book of Brigaders' poetry "Poems from Spain" and the special 70th anniversary china mugs and trinket boxes. Relatives of some of the poets gave readings during the buffet lunch afterwards.

Later there was a social in the Paper Moon, with music by Jim Jump (editor of "Poems from Spain") and friends, The Tontones, with much dancing and merriment – all part of the aim of bringing our members together in friendship, as well as remembering those whose comradeship helped them to fight for their ideals 70 years ago.

*Marlene Sidaway*

## The ambassador's speech in full . . .

**First and foremost I want to thank Jack Jones and the International Brigade Memorial Trust for their invitation to me to take part today in this 70th anniversary of the International Brigades.**

**On 4 July, the President of the European Parliament, Josep Borrell, made a declaration in which he referred to the 70 years that had passed since the coup d'état of General Franco on 18 July 1936 in Spain. In this declaration, Josep Borrell pointed out that with this**

**coup d'état, great hopes were dashed for democracy and necessary reforms in Spain.**

**Among other things, President Borrell emphasised that this Spanish Civil War was also the prelude to the Second World War. He underlined the fact that from 1975, Spain had started to evolve into a land of liberty and coexistence.**

**For my part, I should like to add that on 9 May, I was in Jersey to attend the commemo-**

*Continued on back page*

# Brief notes

Membership Secretary Pauline Fraser [pauline@fraser4219.freereserve.co.uk] has agreed to be the contact with the Amigos de las Brigadas Internacionales for the **70th anniversary homage** arrangements in Madrid, Zaragoza and Barcelona. The main programme is as follows:

- Saturday 7 October: Madrid, unveiling of monument to International Brigades in Morata.
- Sunday 8 October: Visit to old Madrid front-lines and ceremony in Rivas Vacia.
- Monday 9 October: Reception at Palacio de Congressos; meetings with political parties and trade unions.
- Tuesday 10 October: Zaragoza, award to Brigaders; official dinner and overnight stay.
- Wednesday 11 October: Barcelona, reception in Generalitat.
- Thursday 12 October: Visit to graves of Montjuich, laying wreath, ceremony and commemoration of International Brigades.
- Friday 13 October: Return home.

Following the Trust's enquiry regarding the possibility of preserving the **films and videos** held by members, Kay Gladstone of the film and video archive at the Imperial War Museum has suggested that members concerned about the long term preservation of films and video recordings in their possession should make a list of what they hold, giving as much information as possible for each item under the following headings:

- title or subject
- production date
- cameraman/producer
- film or video format (16mm, Std 8mm, VHS, umatic, mini-DV, etc)
- original or copy (eg of TV programme).

Films and videos have a finite life, partly dependent on how they are stored, and partly on the condition of the playback equipment. Generally, they should be kept in their original containers in dark, cool and dryish conditions, within a constant band of temperature (10-16C, 50-60F) and humidity (50-55 per cent). Note that 35mm (professional gauge) film made before 1951 is likely to be nitrate, a dangerous and inflammable substance which requires special storage and handling.

Does anyone know of a **solicitor** who would be willing to give advice to the Trust, if it was ever needed? Our membership is growing, there is a lot of interest in the Spanish Civil War and all the signs are that we will carry on developing and expanding, so it might be advisable to have some

legal advice at our disposal if we had any cause for concern. If you feel able to give this, please get in touch with me (Marlene).

The Ensemble Theatre Company's tour of "**Ay Carmela**" begins in York on 12-30 September, and goes to Darlington, Bolton, Leicester, Farnham, Tunbridge Wells, Chipping Norton, Kendal, Shepperton, Taunton and Halesworth before coming to the Shaw Theatre in London from 7-18 November, where there is to be Gala Evening on the 7th. Brigaders are cordially invited for drinks beforehand, and there will be guest speakers before the show. "Ay Carmela", starring Liz Mansfield and Rob Pickavance, then finishes its tour at Frome, Cardiff and Cheltenham. For further details ring 01784-463 889 or go to their website [www.ensemble-online.com]. Liz's father, who sadly died recently, sent us an account of collecting food for Spain when he was young.

To mark the 70th anniversary of the **Battle of Cable Street**, on Sunday 8 October at Cable Street, London E1 (Shadwell tube) from 12noon to 4pm (admission free), the Cable Street Group and Alternative Arts are planning a commemorative event in the open space beside the mural and behind St George's Town Hall. The celebration will include a procession led by the Cardboard Citizen's Samba Band, "They Shall Not Pass", a piece of street theatre, and a variety of international musical acts and a commissioned concert, "No Pasaran", by the Grand Union Orchestra. There will also be an exhibition of photography entitled "Protest & Survive". A small paperback book setting out the historical background, including interviews with some of the original participants, is available from the Cable Street Group at [cablestreet4.10.36@hotmail.co.uk] or on 020-7247 4283. The event is also commemorated by the mural on the west wall of St George's Town Hall in Cable Street.

*Socialist Worker* has produced an **online commemoration** of the Spanish Civil War, including interviews with Jack Jones, Sam Lesser, Penny Feiwei and Alun Menai Williams. See [www.socialistworker.co.uk/article.php?article\_id=9253].

Iori Williams asks if the **memorials book** could be republished, as there are so many more now than when it first came out 10 years ago. This is true, but because there are so many being dedicated now it would be difficult to keep pace with them. There is a memorials section on our website, and this is regularly updated. There is a booklet devoted to the memorials in Wales, and our Newsletters carry accounts of every new memorial here and in Spain. In this issue, see the Jimmy Moore unveiling in Portsmouth, the new

memorial at Big Pit, Blaenavon, and the rededications in Manchester and Fife. Also on this subject, there is now a bench in memory of David Marshall in the Rose Garden in West Ham Park, London E7.

The London Socialist Film Co-op is showing CM Hardt's film "**Death in El Valle**" (see last Newsletter) in a double bill with "Jeremy Hardy versus the Israeli Army" on Sunday 11 March 2007. The discussion afterwards will be led by Sam Lesser and Leila Sansour. On Sunday 13 May they are showing Donald Sutherland in "**Bethune: The Making of a Hero**", with a discussion led by Julie Allan, assistant producer and Eric Gordon, editor of the *Camden New Journal*. For more details of what is a very full and interesting programme contact Nicola Seyd, 13 Foundling Court, Brunswick Centre, London WC1N 1QE or phone 020-7278 5764. All programmes are at the Renoir Cinema, Brunswick Square, London WC1; nearest tube, Russell Square, on the second Sunday of the month at 11am.

The company hosting **our website** has improved their page of statistics for the site (how many visits, how long for, where from etc). Since January it has had nearly 11,000 unique visitors from all over the world. To view the statistics go to [www.xcalibre.co.uk/index.html], choose the control panel link at the top of page; username: IBMT; password: salud; then the "manage" link on the left under "websites"; finally, from the pull-down menu at the top of the page, choose "IBMT" and click on "new webstats".

Marshall Mateer is involved in developing the **National Education Network**. He manages, among other things, the British Pathe Archive Schools Licence of news film which is freely available to teachers in schools throughout the UK and has extensive news film of the Spanish Civil War in the archive at [www.shapesoftime.net/pages/viewpage.asp?uniqid=7274]. He is about to do a Pathe blog story on the Spanish Civil War soon and intends to include mention of the IBMT education pack. The archive which schools have full access to has of course all the films. For further information contact Marshall at [marshall.mateer@dial.pipex.com].

One of our members, Eleanor Davidson, is accredited by the **British Humanist Association** to conduct funeral ceremonies, memorials, weddings/affirmations, renewal of vows and namings. She speaks Portuguese and Spanish. See [www.redribbonceremonies.co.uk] or email [eleanor@redribbonceremonies.co.uk] or phone 0116-292 1964.

*Marlene Sidaway*

## IBMT Newsletter

Editor: Geraldine (Gerry) Abrahams

Email: [gerry@reelscoop.freereserve.co.uk]

Production: Jim Jump

Email: [jimjump@mac.com]

# President's message

In this 70th anniversary year, we welcome all the commemorative events being organised in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and of course in Spain itself. The events will keep alive the memory of those who fought for democracy in Spain so many years ago. Many of us will be travelling to Madrid, Zaragoza and Barcelona over the next few weeks to gather with friends from around the world in remembrance of that terrible war.

I am sad to report that we have lost some comrades and friends of the Trust



since our last issue. We pay tribute particularly to comrades Alun Menai Williams and Sir Alfred Sherman and to Ian Walters, sculptor of our inspiring memorial at Jubilee Gardens. Our meeting there in July this year was an especially memorable event, with stirring speeches from His Excellency the Spanish Ambassador and our good friend Rodney Bickerstaffe, the launch of the evocative poetry anthology and a very enjoyable musical evening at the Paper Moon.

We look forward to the Annual General

Meeting which will be held in Manchester on 14 October. It promises to be an eventful weekend and we hope that as many members as possible will attend.

As the years pass, it becomes more and more important to learn from history and to honour those who volunteered to make the stand against fascism in Spain. The Trust is their legacy to us and we must strive to carry on in their name and to keep their memories alive.

¡Salud y suerte!

Jack Jones

## Obituaries

### Sir Alfred Sherman



One of the most controversial of our Brigade veterans, Sir Alfred Sherman, has died, aged 86. He was only 18 and a member of the Communist Party when he volunteered for Spain in 1937, using the name

Theodore Carmel. Alfred, the son of east London Jewish immigrants from Russia, grew up in great poverty. He spoke English, Russian, French and Spanish and was an interpreter with the British Battalion. He was scheduled to go to Barcelona for a series of programmes for Radio Madrid but, before he could do so, was captured at Calaceite on 31 March 1938 and remained a prisoner until October 1938. Fellow prisoners testified that he behaved with honour and integrity under the harsh concentration camp conditions.

After serving in the Middle East with the British Army in the Second World War, Alfred went to the London School of Economics and graduated in 1950. Visits to Yugoslavia and experiencing East European communism after 1945 disillusioned him and his political views changed direction completely. Eventually he became director of the Centre for

Policy Studies, set up by Margaret Thatcher in 1974. He was knighted in 1983. Although he provoked strong feelings in many quarters, he was always keen to keep in touch with the International Brigade Association, went to Spain on the 60th anniversary homage in 1996 and was present at many of our meetings. He offered to help when we first set up the Trust and regularly came to the July memorial day in Jubilee Gardens.

*Marlene Sidaway*

*A memorial meeting will be held on Wednesday 18 October, 6 for 6.30 pm, at the Centre for Policy Studies, 57 Tufton Street, London SW1 (tube St James Park or Westminster).*

### Alan Menai Williams



Alun Menai Williams, who died on 2 July, aged 93, was born in Gilfach Goch, Wales. As a young man Alun moved to London where he joined the Royal Army Medical Corps. He took part in the Battle of Cable Street in

October 1936 against Moseley's Blackshirts. In June 1937 he successfully entered Spain on a third

attempt by swimming from the torpedoed ship: "City of Barcelona". Sent from Albacete as a temporary medic with the Thaelmanns, he was then posted to the George Washington Battalion at Brunete. The battalion suffered horrific losses and Alun was wounded in the leg while attending to the mortally wounded George Nathan. He afterwards served with the Abraham Lincoln Battalion through Belchite and Teruel. After the retreats in April 1938, Alun moved to the British Battalion for the Battle of the Ebro, returning to Britain in December 1938.

After service with the RAF Military Police in the Second World War, Alun married Maudie Goldie. They had one son, Robert, now a medical consultant in Reading. When Maudie died, Alun wrote his autobiography "From the Rhondda to the Ebro", which was published in 2004. Featured in David Leach's film "Voices from a Mountain", he returned to Spain in May 2005 for the first time in 67 years to unveil a memorial to the 93 English-speaking British Battalion volunteers who died at the Ebro, a journey filmed and broadcast on BBC Wales and shown on Catalan TV3. He spent the last three months of his life in Catalonia with his friend and translator, Ana Marti, returning to Wales in June 2006 to prepare for UK events to mark the anniversary of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.

*Alan Warren*

### Also remembered. . .

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of **Ian Walters**, the sculptor of the International Brigade memorial in London's Jubilee Gardens. Described as one of the great sculptors of his day, Ian was a committed socialist, and his work reflected his belief in peace, justice and human rights. His subjects included commemorations of the Tolpuddle Martyrs and the Wapping Strikers, as well as individuals like Harold Wilson, Tony Benn, Barbara Castle and James Callaghan, and of course his sculpture of Nelson Mandela which will probably be sited in Parliament Square. He was a great inspiration to us, and when Jubilee

Gardens is finally refurbished, the fact that our memorial will retain its prominent position owes much to his determination that it should remain an inspiration to Londoners and visitors for many years to come.

**Iris Walker** (Deval) was one of our most loyal supporters, and a former manager of Central Books. She was always a familiar figure at the Jubilee Gardens memorial day, selling books and pamphlets with her great friend, Lena Alexander.

Please remember too, **Alf Burtman** and **Katy Campbell**, both great supporters of the IBMT, who died recently.

# News from home...

## 70th anniversary events and activities in the UK, Ireland and Spain...

● **Blaenavon** was filled to overflowing with the crowd gathered to celebrate Wales's contribution to the defence of democracy during the Spanish Civil War.

Seventy years after events seminal to the history of the 20th century, a plaque made of Welsh slate was unveiled to honour the 170 men, mostly miners, who went to fight in Spain from 1936-39 and the communities who opened their hearts to refugees from Spain and supported the Aid Spain committees with money, food and clothing.

Hywel Francis MP spoke warmly of his personal lifelong friendship with those remarkable volunteers. Michael Houlihan, Director General of the National Museum Wales, described the Spanish Civil War as the testing ground for the first truly modern war.

These sentiments were echoed by the former British Consul General in Spain, Geoff Cowling, who saw the Battle of the Ebro not as the last battle of the Spanish Civil War but the first of the Second World War, with the same German planes later flying over the Battle of Britain bearing Spanish trophies clearly visible on their wings.

Kevin Williams, National Union of Mineworkers' lodge secretary of Tower Colliery, remembered his predecessor, Tom Howell Jones, killed in Spain.

Ana Marti made the long trek from Spain to pay her respects to the International Brigades and helped unveil the plaque with Mary Greening, daughter of volunteer Edwin Greening.

Marlene Sidaway of the IBMT opened the exhibition of "Wales and the Spanish Civil War", which will become a permanent part of the museum's display, and Côr Cochion contributed with songs from and about the Spanish Civil War.

During the afternoon, tributes, including one from Paul Flynn MP, were paid to Alun Menai Williams, the last Welsh miner who served in the International Brigades and who tragically died shortly before the event at which he was to have been guest of honour. Sarah Dickins introduced and showed her film following Alun during his first return to Spain after almost 70 years: a moving tribute and fitting end to the day.

IBMT member Ray Davies thanked the many people who contributed so generously to the plaque.

*Wendy Lewis*



From left: Kevin Williams, Ana Marti and Mary Greening at the unveiling of the memorial in Blaenavon to the Welsh miners in the International Brigades.

● There will be a 70th anniversary of the Spanish Civil War commemorative concert on Sunday 29 October at 7.30pm at **Manchester** Library Theatre. Tickets cost £10. Artists include Billy Bragg, Jackie Kay and the Houghton Weavers. For further information, contact the Library Theatre box office on 0161-236 7110.

● Some members have expressed anxiety about the **Liverpool** memorial now that the building in which it is housed is being redeveloped. Bob Braddock tells us that it is safe, and there are plans to rededicate it in the porch of the new People's Centre building at 50-54 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5SD sometime in November.

● There were six known volunteers from **Barnsley**: William Brent, John Hallworth, Harold Horbury, Norman Mason, Stephen Ward and Tommy Degan. It is hoped that a plaque commemorating them will be placed in/near the town hall later this year, with a public unveiling ceremony and book of remembrance.

● **Hull** City Council is planning a possible commemoration in February 2007 of the men who went to Spain from Hull and would like relatives and friends of Hull volunteers to make contact. Call Richard at Hull City Council on 07985-486 495.

● **Nottinghamshire** County Council is planning to rededicate its International Brigade memorial – and correct the information plaque with details of those local IBers missed out when the memorial was first installed 20 years ago – at a full council meeting in October or November. There will be a related meeting/seminar on the Spanish Civil War. Anyone with Nottinghamshire connections to the IB or the Aid Spain campaign or who wants further

information should contact Ross Bradshaw at [ross.bradshaw@nottscc.gov.uk] or tel: 0115- 977 4435.

● The National Library of Scotland, **Edinburgh**, is arranging an exhibition about the Spanish Civil War and the International Brigades in November. At 11am on 17 November, there will be a symposium in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Spanish Civil War, featuring presentations by Andrew Ginger (University of Stirling), Nigel Dennis (University of St Andrews) and Daniel Gray (National Library of Scotland). Also invited are two Scottish members of the International Brigades, Steve Fullarton and James Maley. A selection of library items regarding the conflict and the Brigades in particular will be on display throughout November. They include a restored copy of "The Spanish People's Fight For Liberty", a Spanish Embassy publication from 1937, signed by significant British Labour Party politicians – the majority of whom would later comprise Clement Attlee's 1945 government. The publication will be on display, alongside related NLS collection items in the George IV Bridge building throughout November. For further information contact [events@nls.uk] or [d.gray@nls.uk] or tel: 0131-623 3856.

● Jim Philp, Secretary of **Fife** Federation TUC, has sent in details of events organised in the area to commemorate the 70th anniversary. Some will have taken place by the time the Newsletter is published, but hopefully some members will be able to attend the entertainment night at the Adam Smith Theatre on 27 September, the film night showing "Land and Freedom" in the same venue on 3 October and, on 7 October, a march from Townhouse to the memorial at Kirkcaldy station

# ...and abroad

for a rededication ceremony followed by a reception at Adam Smith Theatre at noon. For further information contact Jim Philp at [fifedistrict@rmt.org.uk] or tel: 01383-414 571 or 07810-120 710.

● Mike Arnott has sent in details of events to mark the Spanish Civil War in **Dundee**, which began with a public meeting on 17 July. The next event will be on 6 February 2007, commemorating the Battle of Jarama where four Dundee Brigaders died. On Thursday 26 April, again at the memorial plaque, there will be a commemoration of the Battle of Brunete and of two local Brigaders. Sunday 9 March 2008 will mark the retreat from Aragon, and five further Brigaders will be remembered. Thursday 24 July 2008 will mark the Battle of the Ebro, remembering two more volunteers. As mentioned in a previous Newsletter, it is hoped that the Trust's 2008 Annual General Meeting will be held in Dundee on 11 October. Finally, the return of the Brigaders will be commemorated in a parade from the station to the City Square on Friday 12 December 2008. For further information about these events, contact Mike Arnott at 141 Yarrow Terrace, Dundee DD2 4DY or [dundeetuc@hotmail.com].

● Aberdeen-based playwright Mike Gibb, who has already written a number of musical plays based on subjects as diverse as the Tay Bridge Disaster, the Second World War, missionary Mary Slessor's life and the Highland Clearances, is currently working on a new piece entitled "The Road and the Miles to Jarama", based on the interwoven lives of four Dundonians who joined the International Brigades. The play will feature in the 2008 commemorations planned for **Dundee**. For further information log on to Mike's website at [www.hamepages.com].

● Cairde na h'Eireann organised a XVth International Brigade commemoration in **Glasgow** with guest speakers, music and a wreath-laying on Saturday 16 September at the La Pasionaria memorial statue on the Clyde.

● Plans are under way for a commemoration of the volunteers from the **Rutherglen** area of Glasgow to coincide with the anniversary of the Battle of Jarama. The organisers would like to hear from relatives of Rutherglen volunteers. For further information contact Bill Bonnar at 0141-583 8022. There will be information about the event in the next Newsletter.

● Audrey Canning of the Gallacher Memorial Library based at **Glasgow** Caledonian University, is currently compiling a list of materials from the collections about those from the area who volunteered to fight in Spain. More about that in our next issue.

**Bob Doyle (seated) listens to IBMT committee member Manus O'Riordan's opening remarks at the launch in Dublin at the end of June of the English-language edition of Doyle's memoir, "Brigadista" (published by Currach Press, Dublin, £9.99).**



● To mark the national day of Catalonia on 11 September, members of the Catalan community in **Dublin** held a commemorative ceremony at the International Brigade memorial plaque outside Liberty Hall. Particular tribute was paid to the late Michael O'Riordan who had been entrusted by British Battalion commander Sam Wild with carrying the national flag of Catalonia across the river Ebro at Asco during the Spanish Republic's last offensive of in July 1938.

● The 1938 Connolly Column banner has been given to Irish Labour History Museum, **Dublin**. Renovation will cost around €5,000.

● In **Belfast**, the International Brigade Commemoration Committee is holding a tribute to Michael O'Riordan on Thursday 19 October at 7.45pm at the John Hewitt bar, Donegal Street, with music by Pol MacAdaim and Mel Corry. Proceeds will go to the IBCC.

● Frank Whitnall tells us about a one-day course, entitled "They Shall Not Pass: The Spanish Civil War", being held at the West Suffolk College, **Bury St Edmunds** on 21 October from 9am to 4pm.

● Speakers at the "War without Limits" conference at **Bristol** University from 17-19 July included Paul Preston ("The War Crimes of General Franco") and Richard Baxell ("The Spanish Legacy: Experiences of British Members of the International Brigades during the Second World War"). Colin Thomas also premiered his new programme "Whose history? Whose legend? Wales and the Spanish Civil War" presented by Rob Stradling and Alun Menai Williams's TV programme "Return Journey to the Battlefields of Spain" was introduced by Sarah Dickins and Alan Warren. Thanks to Martin Hurcombe for organising the three days and the papers so well. At the final meal of the conference Bob Coale publicised the ALBA internet discussion group on the

International Brigades. For further information, go to the ALBA website at [www.alba-valb.org] and follow the link at "Dialog" to register.

● As in previous years, the Catalan-based NJLM Spanish Civil War remembrance society will be holding its annual event in **Marçà** on the weekend of 4/5 November. As this year is the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of war, the main themes will include the reasons for the conflict and the tragic events of the early days, especially in the Priorat. More details will be available soon. The NJLM has successfully applied for a grant from the Generalitat (Catalan government) to mount an itinerant photographic exhibition, "Prelude to the Last Battle: The International Brigades in the Priorat, 1938" (Preludi de l'Última Batalla: Les Brigades Internacionals al Priorat, 1938). Funding has also been awarded for a project of further research in this area.

*Angela Jackson*

● Brian Walsh tells us that proposals for a memorial at **Brunete** are currently underway. He has also been contacted by Ernesto Viñas of the "Brunete group" in Spain, and it appears that they are in the process of making a new (Spanish) website [www.colectivogadarrama.org] which should be in operation soon. They will be holding an exhibition and talks to mark the 70th anniversary of the battle in July 2007. Brian will keep us informed of further developments. He can be contacted at [brian21walsh@yahoo.co.uk].

● IBMT member Richard Thorpe (also of the La Columna historical re-enactment society) is organising a battlefield tour of **Jarama** in February. For further information and to register interest, contact Richard at [thorpe.ortiz@btinternet.com].

● An **Ebro** battlefield tour on 4-7 May 2007 is planned, using a 35-seater coach. Anyone interested should contact Alan Warren at [warren.ofbooks@virgin.net].

# Can you help?

*If you do not have an email to reply to queries, contact Marlene Sidaway (details on front page) and she will forward messages and correspondence. Much of the additional information listed here about Brigaders comes from the British International Brigade archive, via Jim Carmody, the IBMT's researcher, whose work is very much appreciated.*

● Mark Grayling is looking for information about **T Gaunt** who was killed in Aragon in March 1938. He was born on 8 November 1907 and, after spending two years in the British Army, arrived in Spain on 20 December 1937. When he volunteered his address was listed as 22 Bangthton(?) Lane, Chesterfield, and his occupation was given as labourer. Gaunt was the only Brigader from North Derbyshire to have fallen, and the Chesterfield Co-op Party is looking into the possibility of a memorial for the 70th anniversary of his death. Contact Mark on [mark.grayling@su.ntu.ac.uk] if you can help.

● Alan Smith is trying to find out more about his great uncle, **Thomas Finlay**, from Springburn, Glasgow. He was born on 31 August 1913. His next of kin at the time of enlisting was his wife and the address was 145 Gourlay Street, Springburn, Glasgow. He was an engineer/turner, a member of the National Union of Railwaymen, and a member of the YCL-CPGB. Finlay enlisted in Albacete on 16 January 1938. He was reported missing several times but survived the Aragon, Hill 666, Sierra Pandols and the Ebro. He was wounded and spent some time in hospital in November 1938. He was finally repatriated with the remaining members of the British Battalion, including two comrades from Glasgow, John Maclean and "Big" Stirling, on 7 December 1938. Alan's email address is [biffsmith@hotmail.co.uk].

● Doug Crowther would like to find out more about his father's time in Spain. Jim Carmody could find no details in the archives, so it is probable that **Douglas Crowther** changed his name when he enlisted. He was living in Manchester at that time although he was born on 15 October 1915 in Earby, West Yorkshire. He probably worked for Marconi or a similar telecommunications company, but also played professional football. In the Communist Party in the 1930s, he took a communist text with him to Spain and had every Briton he met sign it. The text survived into the 1960s but is now lost! Doug's email is [dougascrowther@hotmail.com] and his postal address is Rowanbank, 11 Galla Drive, Dalbeattie DG5 4LA.

● Sabita McGuinness asks if anyone remembers her mother **Barbara Wilby Hibbuard**, who knew and lost many friends who went to Spain. During that time she was living in the Lancaster Gate/Queen's Gate area of London, Sabita's address is 5 Meridian House, Baynes Street, Camden, London NW1 OTR.

● Jeannie Thompson would like to hear from anyone who knew **Reggie Saxton**. Lots of IBMT members remember him very well, but Reggie was Jeannie's grandfather's cousin and she remembers that he gave her a book showing a picture of the cave hospital in Falset. She admired him very much and would like to contact those who know more about him. Her email is [jeanniejonathan@aol.com] and postal address is 148 Coppice Road, Arnold, Nottingham NG5 7GZ.

● Peter Elton is hoping to bring his aunt to the Spanish Civil War commemorative concert at the Library Theatre in Manchester on Sunday 29 October (see page 4). She will be 99 in September, and was secretary of the Spanish Medical Aid Committee in Manchester. Peter would also like to find out more about his uncle **Edward (Teddy) Starr**, a volunteer who was gassed and taken prisoner in France after the defeat of the Republic. He never talked much about his experiences in Spain. Peter's email is [peter.elton@ntlworld.com].

● John Flynn is trying to find a copy of the **Granada TV series** on the Spanish Civil War, which at the moment is only for sale in the USA. Does anyone have a copy, or do you know where he could get one? Email [john\_flynn3@lineone.net].

● Manuel Moreno is trying to find out more about a family friend, **Frank Ayres**, from Doncaster. Frank, a communist and Clarion member, went to Spain as a male nurse, survived, married a Valencian silent movie star and returned to live in Britain. Both died in Spain. Manuel wonders if his name should have been listed at the commemoration at Wortley Hall, Sheffield. Frank was part of the Save the Children International Union based in Valencia. Manuel's email is [manuel@moreno-wines.co.uk].

● Lloyd Jackman is researching for his Bangor University dissertation on "**The Labour Party and the Spanish Civil War: A case study of the East Midlands**". Lloyd hopes to show the bravery of those who went out to fight fascism and of those who worked tirelessly at home in support. He wants to know how they went about it, and about the

complicating factors of the conflict that stopped a full mobilisation of the labour movement. Any help or suggestions about primary sources would be gratefully received. His email is [lloyd\_jackman\_uk@lycos.co.uk] or postal address: 21 Hyde Close, Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire MK16 ONL.

● Jo Carritt asks if anyone knows of a song called "**Black Cockerel**"? It was recorded on an LP and featured in a TV programme in Sweden which was initially banned for fear of offending Franco. Contact Marlene Sidaway (see details on page 1) if you can help. Incidentally, there is no longer an active Swedish International Brigade association although its archive is well preserved. About 500 volunteers went from Sweden, and 162 were killed in action. They fought at Jarama, Guadalajara, Brunete, Teruel and in the Ebro offensive, mainly with the Thaelmann battalion. A significant number served with guerrilla groups operating behind enemy lines.

● Sandra Thomas is researching the life of her uncle **Lance Rogers** and would appreciate any documents, photographs or information on him from people who knew him or interviewed him. Her email is [rosiethomas1138@aol.com].

● On behalf of the Old Hancastrians Association, Ted Fahey is trying to find out more about **Alan Gilchrist**, International Brigader and a former master at the school. He was commissar of the British Battalion's no. 1 company and mentioned in Bill Alexander's book "Volunteers for Liberty". After his death, his ashes were scattered in Spain by former comrades, and there was a Midlands TV programme showing this. The school is trying to put together a brief biography of Alan, but information is scarce, and they would be grateful if anyone can help with any information about Alan Gilchrist. Contact [ed@fahey.co.uk].

● Jim Carmody has found a picture of a captured **British Battalion banner** in the Nationalist propaganda film (technicolour) "Defenders of the faith" made by an American rightwinger called Palmer. It is on the Yahoo Spanish Civil War website. It shows the British Battalion banner displayed as a war trophy. The banner was presented to Dave Springhall on behalf of battalion in a ceremony in Battersea Town Hall in mid 1937. Does anyone have any information on those involved in the presentation? The web link is [www.youtube.com/watch?v=xizC1uX9eOI]. The item appears just after halfway.

## Anthony Beevor and histories of the Spanish Civil War

Anthony Beevor's "The Battle for Spain" shot to the top of the best-seller list in Spain following its original Spanish language publication last year. Now its English-language version (published by Weidenfeld & Nicholson) has topped the UK best-seller list. Well-written and making many battle scenes intelligible to the lay reader, it is nonetheless a book loaded with political prejudices against the Spanish Republic, coupled with misstatements of fact regarding the International Brigades.

For those who want a combination of both detailed narrative and balanced perspective they need only turn to "The Spanish Civil War – Reaction, Revolution and Revenge", recently published by the acclaimed historian and IBMT patron Paul Preston. While earlier versions appeared in 1986 and 1996, this is very much a new book incorporating the latest research. Indeed, this book is so up-to-date that page 1 recounts an October 2005 controversy illustrating, as Preston says, "the way in which the Spanish Civil War retains a burning relevance in contemporary Spain". Particularly moving for IBMT members are Preston's own opening words: "This book is dedicated to the memory of David Marshall and to the other men and women of the International Brigades who fought and died fighting fascism in Spain."

In a bibliographical essay that is a model in its own right, Preston also draws attention to "the remarkable little book by Helen Graham" which is simply entitled "The Spanish Civil War – A Very Short Introduction" (2005). Preston observes: "Every sentence of this concise account is packed with thought and meaning. It is provocative and illuminating in equal measure." In the blurb on the cover of Graham's book, Preston also declares: "This is far and away the best short introduction to the Spanish Civil War that I have read in any language."

*Manus O'Riordan*

*Martin Green writes:*

Anthony Beevor is a distinguished military historian and his "Battle for Spain" is an enlarged edition of his original title "The Spanish Civil War", published in 1982, including new material from documents emerging from Russian, German and other archives. It is an exhaustive account of over 500

pages. Most of the information comes from the published archives and not from testimonies of those engaged in the actual fighting.

The author is keen to demonstrate his view that the hostility of the Comintern and the Communist Party to military allies and its comrades in other left-wing factions contributed to the downfall of the Spanish Republic. This is not a view shared by those in the International Brigades who took part. The major contributory factor in the downfall of the Republic was the so called "non-intervention" policy of the Western democracies, which allowed the forces of Hitler's Nazi Germany and Mussolini's fascist Italy to secure Franco's victory.

*Text of a letter sent to The Times by IBMT Secretary Marlene Sidaway, but not published:* I'm writing in response to Anthony Beevor's article "The callous betrayal of anti-Franco forces" (24 May 2006) on behalf of the International Brigade Memorial Trust, which seeks to keep alive the memory and spirit of those who supported the elected Spanish Republican government in the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War.

Our members include the two dozen British Brigade veterans still alive and the many descendants of Brigaders, none of whose parents ever indicated that such practices as the mass killings and punishments described in the article went on, and we believe it unlikely that the strong-willed and astute men we know and respect would ever have been cowed by a directive not to talk about such atrocities.

Historical documents are usually written with a need to appease those in power at the time, and the Moscow archives are probably no exception – we have discovered many discrepancies in them, corroborated by those concerned. Is it also possible that such historical "facts" can be misinterpreted to suit the political agenda of our own time?

### Poetry anthology



The Trust still has some hardback copies of "Poems from Spain", our commemorative anthology of poems written by British and Irish International Brigaders and edited by IBMT committee member Jim Jump. The hardback edition, which is only available through the Trust, can be purchased from IBMT Secretary Marlene Sidaway (see contact details on page 1) for the cover price of £16.99 plus £1.50 p&p. All proceeds go to the Trust. The paperback edition is available through bookshops for £10.99.

### Baxell's book in paperback

Warren & Pell is publishing a paperback edition of Richard Baxell's acclaimed book "British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War: The British Battalion in the International Brigades, 1936-1939", with additional photographs and a new cover. The book will be released on 14 October at the Trust's Annual General Meeting in Manchester.

### Available in Catalan

Warren & Pell has agreed to make a donation to the Catalonia-based Spanish Civil War historical group NJLM from the sale of the book "I vaig tornar a creuar l'Ebre", the illustrated memoirs in Catalan of the Welsh International Brigader, Alun Menai Williams.

Also available from Warren & Pell is "Beyond the Battlefield" by Angela Jackson (published in Catalan as "Més enllà del camp de batalla" by Cossetània), an illustrated book based on the memories of people who worked in the cave hospital of La Bisbal de Falset.

The price for each book is €12 (€2 donation to NJLM) plus postage and packing. Contact [nojubilemlamemoria@yahoo.com].

### Pupils write history

"Volunteers for Spain" is the latest booklet by students, aged 11 to 16, from North Axholme School, a rural comprehensive in North Lincolnshire. It looks at the British end of the war, telling the story of the Basque children and the Aid Spain movement, partly through documents and partly through the memories of those involved. Copies are available from Richard Thorpe for £3.75 at: [rthorpe@northax.nlincs.yhghf.net].

### Songs of the Spanish Civil War

Côr Cochion has released its new CD, "Songs of Freedom", charting the history of the Spanish Civil War through songs of the period and includes three tracks recorded in 1938 by singers from the International Brigades during the bombardment of Barcelona. Giving a Welsh perspective on the conflict are socialist songs by TE Nicholas, who was in the forefront of the movement to support the Spanish Republican government. The CD, which contains favourites like "Valley of Jarama", "Freiheit", and Christy Moore's "Viva la Quince Brigada", costs £12 plus p&p and is available from Wendy Lewis, 172 Pandly Road, Bedwas, Caerphilly CF83 8EP or [wendy.lewis2@aladdinscave.net] or [www.creighton-griffiths.co.uk/acatalog/corcochion.html]. Profits will go to the IBMT.

# International Brigade Memorial Trust

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

Saturday 14 October 2006 at 4.30 pm in the Town Hall,  
Albert Square, Manchester

### Agenda

1. Chairman's opening remarks
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of previous AGM
4. Matters arising
5. Secretary's report
6. Membership secretary's report
7. Treasurer's report
8. Election of officers
9. Any other business
10. Date and place of next AGM
11. Chairman's closing remarks

### IBMT committee

- President: Jack Jones
- Brigaders: Sam Lesser, Jack Edwards
- Secretary: Marlene Sidaway
- Membership Secretary: Pauline Fraser
- Treasurer: Nick Moreno
- Newsletter editor: Geraldine Abrahams
- Website: Richard Baxell

- Marx Memorial Library representative: Tish Collins
- Newsletter production/publications: Jim Jump
- Katie Green
- Manchester: Dolores Long/Hilary Jones (jobshare)
- Ireland: Manus O'Riordan
- Wales: Alan Warren

The committee wishes to propose a change to rule 11 of the constitution in order to increase the number of committee members. Mick Jones and Geoff Cowling have been proposed as candidates, and any other nominations should be received by 7 October. Candidates will have an opportunity to speak from the floor before voting takes place.

### Information

For more information about the AGM contact Marlene Sidaway on 020-8555 6674 or [marlenesidaway@hotmail.com].

## 70th anniversary of the Spanish Civil War

14/15 October 2006, Manchester

### Saturday 14 October:

1.30 pm: Rededication of the memorial plaque in Manchester Town Hall to the men and women from the North West who went to fight in Spain and supported the Spanish people.  
2.15-4.15pm: Civic reception in Manchester Town Hall and an exhibition.  
4.30-5.45pm: Annual General Meeting in Manchester Town Hall.  
7-11pm: Social event with food and music at the Mechanics Institute, Manchester.

### Sunday 15 October:

11am: Visit to the People's History Museum (Pump House Museum, central Manchester).  
1pm: Meal in a Spanish restaurant; please book with Hilary Jones or Dolores Long (see below).

### Information

For more information contact Hilary Jones: 0161-224 1747 [hilary.m.jones@btinternet.com] or Dolores Long: 0161-226 2013 [dolores@long.freewire.co.uk].

## The ambassador's speech in full . . .

### From front page

rative acts for the anniversary of the liberation of the island from Nazi occupation in the Second World War and to take part in another commemoration to pay tribute to the foreign forced workers who died there during this occupation. More than 5,000 forced workers were sent to Jersey and the Channel Islands to fortify them. There were Ukrainians, Poles, French, Algerian-French and Belgians. There were also 1,500 Spaniards, Republicans exiled at the end of the Spanish Civil War and then arrested by the German occupation force and the Vichy French.

It was the first time that there had been official Spanish representation at this ceremony. I laid a wreath of flowers in memory of all those forced workers who died between 1940 and 1945 in Jersey and also in memory of 22 men and women from Jersey who died in concentration camps, far from Jersey. I also said a few words and, after honouring the memory of all those who died, I made some special dedications to the Spanish compatriots who suffered in Jersey during the German occupation and to their families. I said to them that in the 1930s and then in exile, they had fought for a democratic Spain and that, for this, they had

suffered a civil war, the German occupation of their land of refuge and had had to stay in exile after the Second World War because Franco, unlike Hitler and Mussolini, remained to lead his dictatorship in Spain.

I added, and this seems very important to me, that happily, since 1975, there is a meeting point between this Spanish exile and the parliamentary monarchy which constitutionally we now have in Spain and that this meeting point is without any doubt, democracy. I added that, finally, their sacrifices had not been in vain.

I think that today I can say the same to those who, in 1936, went from other countries to Spain to fight as volunteers, motivated by the ideal of defending democracy in Spain, to defend a Republic abandoned by other Western democracies, fearful of a Nazi Germany and a fascist Italy that, however, had no reservations in helping Franco's troops.

Over many years, Spain has suffered, very much like those who fought for liberty and sacrificed their youth, and even their lives. But all those sacrifices were not in vain. Their memory has contributed to building the democratic Spain of today, a Spain with a constitutional monarchy and parliament, a Spain with freedom of expression and with elections; a Spain that, already in 1996, with Felipe González as prime minister and democratic freedom regained, recognised the sacrifice of



Carlos Miranda, the Spanish Ambassador, addresses an appreciative audience at Jubilee Gardens.

the International Brigades who were then defending those same liberties that we in Spain are enjoying today.

Today, it only leaves me then to add my appreciation to all those who died or who were wounded or lost their freedom during this horrible civil war, to all those who, driven by a noble ideal, went to fight in Spain to defend the democratic legality at that time. Luckily, at the present time, with a different constitutional regime, that of a parliamentary monarchy, we in Spain are also benefiting from a democratic legality which allows those in our country to live and co-exist in liberty; a Spain that can go forward; a Spain in which a socialist government, like that currently headed by José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, can propose and pass courageously progressive laws in parliament.