



IBMT Newsletter

www.international-brigades.org.uk

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INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST



NOW ON SHOW: Spanish ambassador Carles Casajuana opens the IBMT's new travelling exhibition, "Antifascistas", at the 12-Star Gallery in London in May. See page 3 for the full story, plus more pictures.

WINCHED AWAY: Glasgow's landmark International Brigade memorial is lowered onto the back of a lorry to be taken away for some much-needed restoration work.

The fibre-glass statue of La Pasionaria was safely removed from its plinth at Custom House Quay next to the Clyde on 31 March and driven to Edinburgh. The aim is that it will be returned to its permanent site close to Glasgow Bridge in mid June.

Work to the corroded base of the statue and the internal armature is being carried out by specialist statue-repairing firm Nicholas Boyes.

Created by Liverpoolian sculptor Arthur Dooley and erected in 1979, the statue depicts the Spanish Republican leader Dolores Ibárruri – who delivered the famous "You are legend" speech at the farewell parade of the International Brigades on 28 October 1938.

Inscribed on the steel plinth is a quotation by the legendary Communist deputy from Asturias: "Better to die on your feet than live for ever on your knees." The memorial also cites a death toll of 65 among International Brigaders from the Glasgow area.

The IBMT has pledged up to £1,000 towards the estimated £17,000 cost of repairs to the B-listed monument, which is being shared by Glasgow City Council and various labour movement organisations.



Concern over moves against judge in Franco crimes probe

By Jim Jump

The Association of Friends of the International Brigades (AABI) is one of many groups in Spain to be outraged by moves to discipline a leading judge who has attempted to investigate the crimes of Franco during and after the Spanish Civil War.

Judge Baltasar Garzón annoyed powerful forces on the political right in Spain when he opened an investigation which appeared to challenge the country's 1977 amnesty law. The amnesty effectively pardoned those persons

responsible for the mass murders and disappearances that took place under Franco's dictatorship.

If convicted, Garzón faces a 20-year ban from the judiciary.

Supporters of the judge point out that, according to international law, crimes against humanity cannot be absolved.

To add to the dismay felt by the Madrid-based AABI and many other Spaniards, the main charge against Garzón was brought by the Spanish fascist party, the Falange, and another extreme right-wing group.

AABI President Ángel Rojo Rincón pointed out

that Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch had both condemned the moves to discipline the judge.

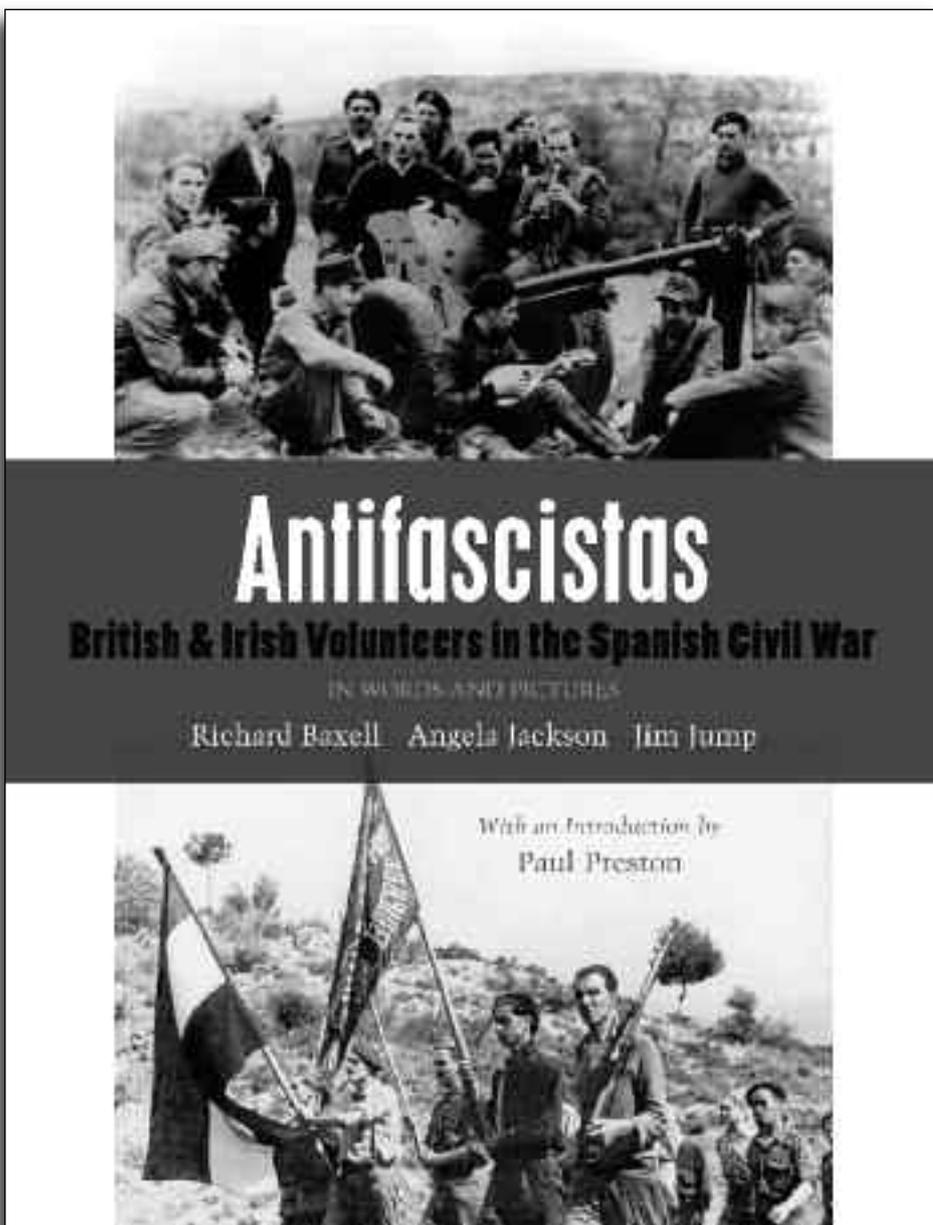
He said: "It is almost inconceivable, but nonetheless true, that Spain's Supreme Court has decided to put Garzón in the dock, thereby giving encouragement to the denunciations of far-right groups that are the political inheritors of Francoism."

He added: "The AABI, as guardians of the spirit of solidarity of the more than 35,000 volunteers of many nationalities who fought in defence of the Spanish Republic, wishes to declare our support for Baltasar Garzón. We also call on the Spanish people to show their disapproval of this latest attack on the memory of the victims of Francoism."

Judge Garzón made his name internationally when he secured the arrest of ex-Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet – who was known to be an

Continued on page 3

'You are legend': the volunteers in words and pictures



IBMT members can buy this new history of the British and Irish International Brigaders for the discounted price of £16 (£4 less than the normal retail price) plus £2 p&p. The offer lasts until the end of June this year.

Lavishly illustrated and in full colour, "Antifascistas" tells the story of the volunteers – from the 1930s, through the Spanish Civil War and Second World War to the present day.

It also features an introduction by leading Spanish Civil War historian Professor Paul Preston, plus a comprehensive list of the more than 500 volunteers from the British Isles who died in Spain.

Written by Richard Baxell, Angela Jackson and Jim Jump, "Antifascistas" accompanies the IBMT's travelling exhibition of the same name. It is published by Lawrence & Wishart in association with the IBMT and the Cañada Blanch Centre for Contemporary Spanish Studies.

This 124-page book, measuring 19 x 25cms, is on sale to the public for £20.

Inspirational history...

The chapter headings are:

- The International Brigades
- Why They Went
- Key Battles
- Medical Aid for Spain
- Art for the Cause
- Withdrawal of the British Battalion
- The Anti-Fascist Fight Continues
- Remembering the Volunteers.

● For inquiries about multiple orders, contact the IBMT Secretary; email: [secretary@international-brigades.org.uk] or tel: 020-8555 6674.

NB: This offer is available only to fully paid-up IBMT members and applies to orders received before 30 June 2010.

'Antifascistas' order form

● Cut out or copy this form and send it to: IBMT Secretary, 37 Reginald Road, London E7 9HS.

● Please send me a copy of "Antifascistas" at the discounted price of £16 plus £2 p&p (cover price in bookshops: £20). I enclose a cheque (payable to IBMT) for £18.

Name

Address

.....

Postcode

Marshall Mateer



ABOVE: The exhibition's opening at the European Commission's 12-Star Gallery in London. **RIGHT:** Spanish ambassador Carles Casajuana and Sarah Lambert, the European Commission's representative in London, are greeted by the IBMT chair, Sam Lesser (seated), holding a glass of wine provided by one of the exhibition's sponsors, leading Spanish wine importer Moreno Wines.

Marshall Mateer



New IBMT exhibition and book tell Brigaders' story

By Jim Jump

The IBMT's new travelling exhibition, "Antifascistas: British and Irish Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War", went on show in London on 4 May to an enthusiastic reception.

The exhibition was opened by Spanish ambassador Carles Casajuana, who praised it and said that Spain was grateful to the "extraordinary men and women" of the International Brigades.

The ambassador was presented with a copy of the accompanying book, "Antifascistas" (see facing page), which contains additional material not included in the exhibition.

After two weeks in London, the exhibition moves to Newcastle from 22 May to 7 June on the first leg of a tour that, during the next three months, is scheduled to take in Middlesbrough (provisionally from 9-19 June), Nottingham,

Manchester and Rotherham. It will also be at the Premier Inn for the IBMT's annual commemoration in London's Jubilee Gardens on 3 July.

The 15 display panels explain why the volunteers went to Spain and describe the battles in which they took part. Their role in the wider 20th century war against fascism is emphasised, along with the importance of remembering their example of international solidarity.

In a full-page review, the *Morning Star* arts critic described "Antifascistas" as an "outstanding exhibition". The verdict of *History Today* magazine was: "'Antifascistas' is an intelligent, informative exhibition which is well worth catching on its forthcoming tour of Britain."

See "Diary dates": page 7; read full *Morning Star* review: [www.morningstaronline.co.uk/index.php/news/content/view/full/90236].

We'll always be grateful

This is what Spanish ambassador **CARLES CASAJUANA** said when he opened the IBMT's exhibition...

The Spanish Civil War was the beginning of a European civil war which then became a world war. While most governments in Europe were still in favour of appeasement, and while the British government was trying to appease Hitler, some people in the United Kingdom and in Ireland decided that they wanted to fight against fascism. They went to Spain. They chose the right side and, in doing so, helped all the democratic forces in Europe.

The Spanish war was lost, but the final war was won. Spain was left in the hands of fascism for much longer. Nevertheless, Spain remembers those who decided to go to Spain in those difficult times to fight for democracy and we are very thankful to them. We owe them our gratitude and we will always be very pleased to participate in any event like this which honours the memory of these extraordinary men and women. We are therefore very thankful to the International Brigade Memorial Trust for all it does to keep their memory alive.

30 June deadline for subs

IBMT subscriptions for 2010 were due in January and some members have still not paid their subs. Please note that any members who do not pay by 30 June will be deemed to be lapsed. If you have not done so already, please pay your subs as soon as possible.

Contact Membership Secretary Mary Greening with all queries; tel: 029-2019 5412; email: [membsec@international-brigades.org.uk].

Concern over moves against judge Garzón

From front page

admirer of Franco—in London in 1998 for human rights violations.

In 2008, he tried to open investigations into the execution and disappearance of tens of thousands of people during the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath, but was blocked by a higher court.

Launching the country's first official inquiry

into the Franco regime, he accused it of "mass killings, torture and the systematic, general and illegal detentions of political opponents". He also ordered the exhumations of mass graves in response to petitions filed by more than a dozen associations of the families of victims of Franco.

Garzón named Franco and 34 late wartime generals or members of his government as instigators of the campaign of terror.

Estimates put the number of people killed by Franco's death squads and kangaroo courts during and after the war at between 130,000 and 200,000.

Keeping alive the memory and spirit of the men and women who volunteered to defend democracy in Spain from 1936 to 1939

International Brigade Memorial Trust

www.international-brigades.org.uk

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Annual membership rates are £15 standard; £7.50 for concessions; £20 family (single household); affiliating organisations by arrangement. Further details and membership forms are available from the Membership Secretary.

IBMT NEWSLETTER

The IBMT Newsletter is published three times a year and is sent free to all members of the IBMT.

Members living overseas can access the current issue by using a password on the IBMT website. Back numbers can be downloaded from the IBMT website on [www.international-brigades.org.uk/newsletter.htm]. For information about receiving the IBMT Newsletter on tape, contact the IBMT Secretary.

Send all items for the next issue to the editor by 31 August 2010 at the latest.

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By Marlene Sidaway

Exhibition launch

Our "Antifascistas" exhibition was launched at the 12-Star Gallery in Westminster in May and is proving a great success, with many compliments for the compilers and authors, Richard Baxell, Angela Jackson and Jim Jump. It really is a tremendous achievement for them to have condensed so much information about the International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War into a manageable travelling exhibition which tells the story so clearly, succinctly and movingly.

The same is true of their wonderful book, also called "Antifascistas", which accompanies the exhibition.

The panels have been designed with skill and imagination by Doug Pouch of Unite, making it a valuable asset for the IBMT and our work for many years to come. It will be on show at our Jubilee Gardens commemoration on 3 July. It is also booked to visit Newcastle, Middlesbrough, Nottingham, Manchester and Rotherham and, later in the year, the Marx Memorial Library in London. It will also be in Liverpool at the same time as our annual general meeting weekend on 15-17 October.

It is really important that, as the exhibition arrives in your area, Trust members do as much as possible to publicise it and try and arrange other events – lectures, films, socials etc while it is there. And, if it is not coming to your area yet, please try to find a good venue for it. Mike Arnott is co-ordinating the bookings, so contact him at [dundeetuc@hotmail.com] or ring me on 020-8555 6674.

Jubilee Gardens and annual general meeting

Please try to come to our two big events later this year: the annual commemoration at the International Brigade memorial in Jubilee Gardens, London, on 3 July and our annual general

meeting weekend in Liverpool on 15-17 October. They are also very entertaining and social occasions, so well worth the effort of making a special trip to attend.

Durham and Tolpuddle

Once again we hope that the IBMT will be represented both at the Durham Miners' Gala and the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival on 10 July and 16-18 July respectively. If you attend either of these events, please come and find us to say hello – and march behind our banner.

Paris conference

At the end of May, Pauline Fraser and I will be representing the IBMT at a conference in Paris organised by our French and German comrades to discuss closer ties with them and other International Brigade memorial groups from around the world.

Although this is desirable in principle, we would wish to maintain our autonomy. Our organisation seems to work well and we already enjoy close friendship with International Brigade groups in other countries, which hopefully will continue. There will be a full report of proceedings in the next issue.

Anti-fascist war

On 9 May, the IBMT was represented at the VE Day commemoration at the Soviet War Memorial next to the Imperial War Museum, London. We remembered all those who had lost their lives in the fight against fascism from the beginning of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 to the end of the Second World War in 1945.

We were reminded also of the many nations that combined in the struggle to defend themselves from fascist tyranny. The example of that co-operation still inspires us today, as we remember our own Brigade veterans and thank them for their inspiration.



IBMT Secretary Marlene Sidaway lays a wreath at the Soviet War Memorial in London on 9 May. See "Anti-fascist war" above.



LEFT: Palmira Sullivan speaking at the rededication.

BELOW: The plaque is now framed by a mosaic in Spanish Republican colours.



The plaque naming Bristol men killed in the Spanish Civil War, sited in the city's Castle Park, has been refurbished and rededicated.

The ceremony took place on 14 April – the anniversary of the declaration of the Spanish Republic in 1931.

In attendance were Dave Trigger and Brian Boyce, the nephew and son respectively of William Boyce,

Rededication of Bristol plaque

one of the four Bristolians named on the plaque – though the IBMT says that a fifth name has come to light since it was first erected.

The plaque was originally put up in December 1986. It now has a mosaic in the red, yellow and purple of the Spanish Republic's flag

that was created by artist Hazel Gower.

The refurbishment of the plaque marking Bristol's involvement in the war was the idea of Palmira Sullivan. She was born in Spain but has lived in Bristol for the past 30 years. Her grandfather and uncle

were killed while fighting on the Republican side during the war.

The ceremony featured a number of speakers, including Marion Mann, granddaughter of the socialist and trade union pioneer Tom Mann, and a performance by the Red Notes socialist choir.

Both the Bristol Trades Council and the IBMT provided funds to carry out the works to the plaque.

Memorial in Spain honours Irish poet Charles Donnelly

By Pauline Fraser and Brian Harding

“Body awaits the tolerance of crows”, says the last line of a poem by Charles Donnelly. The poem, “The Tolerance of Crows” was written shortly before the 22-year-old from Dungannon was killed at the Battle of Jarama in February 1937.

On 27 February, 73 years after his death, a large crowd from Ireland, Britain and Spain gathered to support the six members of Donnelly's family who had come to unveil a memorial to him in the Miralrio Park in Rivas Vaciamadrid, near Madrid.

Among the speakers was Neil Donnelly, Charlie's nephew, who said that his uncle “believed passionately in social justice”.

Justin Harman, the Irish ambassador to Spain, said that Donnelly was one of 19 Irish volunteers killed at Jarama. He added that, had Donnelly lived, he would no doubt have had a big influence on Irish life and poetry.

After the unveiling, supporters visited the battlefield site where it is thought that Donnelly was killed. The spot is marked by a simple cairn of stones.

As part of a weekend of activities, historian Richard Baxell also gave a talk on the Battle of Jarama, the terrible losses suffered by the British and Irish in particular, and the significance of the battle in the history of the Spanish Civil War.

See footage of the event at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSKPst2NhfE].

Blantyre social evening

By Stephen Smellie

Trade unionists in Blantyre organised a social evening of entertainment and education on 29 April to commemorate local International Brigade volunteers. The aim was to raise funds

Continued overleaf



LEFT: Poster for the Charles Donnelly commemoration. **RIGHT:** The plaque on the memorial. **FAR RIGHT:** The unveiling ceremony at Rivas Vaciamadrid.



Stan Hilton: a British Brigader living in Australia



The IBMT has made contact with a British International Brigade volunteer living in Yarrowonga, in the Australian state of Victoria. He is Stan Hilton (above), whose sketchy records of service in Spain contain mistaken reports of him being either missing, captured or killed. He was interviewed earlier this year by RACHEAL WILLETT of the Yarrowonga Chronicle. This is an edited version of the article.

The year was 1937 and as a young British ship steward Stan Hilton docked in Alicante, Spain, to deliver supplies. He was confronted by a country in the grip of civil war. "I went ashore and saw everything was upside down. I got talking to one fellow, an Englishman, and he had been shot in the stomach," Stan said.

"I saw people parading around and saw all these fellows that were injured and I felt pity. So I joined up," he added.

Appalled at the prospect of another European country succumbing to fascism, supporters of the Spanish Republic from around the world flocked to its aid.

"They needed help. It was the right thing to do," said Stan.

That was the day he became a member of the International Brigades.

Stan travelled with the new recruits to a training camp where he would spend the next three months under the instruction of Russian commanders provided by the USSR to help train the volunteers.

It was during training that Stan met "a couple of Scots boys", Jock and Mack, and the trio became fast friends.

Just after his 19th birthday, the trio arrived in Teruel, facing brutal, freezing conditions.

"We retreated and took position near a bridge where we knew Franco's men would try to cross when they came down the valley," Stan said.

"The bridge was rigged with dynamite and we were firing into it to try to detonate it, but of course it wouldn't work. One of the Brigade men went down there, turned and saluted, and then blew it up, killing himself too.

"Everyone said 'what a brave comrade'. I thought 'what an idiot'."

Stan saw his first dead body, frozen in the snow in Teruel, before moving on to Belchite, then Lérida.

It was during heavy fighting in Lérida he lost one of his mates, Mack.

"He had his head blown off – he was just unlucky," Stan said. "It was sad, but you didn't have time to think about it, you just moved on

"We were there when the airforce bombed the school at Barcelona: about 300 children were killed. That was it for me, I met with some fellows and went down to the docks and they got me onto a ship."

and did the job." Stan fought on with the Brigade; then he managed to make his way to Tortosa where he caught a train going on to Barcelona.

He arrived in Barcelona in March 1938, when Mussolini ordered Italian aircraft to attack, dropping bombs relentlessly over three days – thousands of civilians were killed.

"We were there when the airforce bombed the school at Barcelona: about 300 children were killed," he said. "That was it for me, I met with some fellows and went down to the docks and they got me onto a ship and the captain said he would take me to England."

Stan Hilton left the International Brigade, without warning or notice, sometime around 17 March 1938.

His sudden departure led to confusion over his whereabouts and in several records he was listed as captured or missing.

Back in England, Stan worked ashore for a while before rejoining the merchant navy. He served throughout the Second World War and for another three years after the war ended.

His three children were relocated to Australia as part of the British child migration programme and Stan spent several years battling to leave his home country and make his way down under to be reunited with them.

He arrived in Perth in 1966, reclaimed his children, and set about making a life for himself in Australia as a single father.

From previous page

for the memorial erected last year at the Blantyre Miners' Welfare Society & Social Club but also to continue to raise awareness of the contribution made to the struggle against fascism by the volunteers.

The speakers included historian Daniel Gray, author of "Homage to Caledonia", which tells the story of Scotland and the Spanish Civil War. Denis Paxton showed his short film of the unveiling of the local memorial, which includes interviews with relatives of the volunteers.

Finally, the enthusiastic audience was entertained with songs written by members of the Lanarkshire Songwriters' Group. Each of these songs reflects on the Spanish war from a Scottish perspective and it is planned to record them for a CD in the near future.

On the Brunete battlefield

By Chris Hall and Brian Harding

On 28 February, a coach-load of different nationalities was guided around the site of the Battle of Brunete. The trip was organised by Alan Warren and his Porta de la Història group in league with local Spaniards led by Ernesto Viñas of the Brunete en la Memoria association.

The tour began with a view of the battle area from the Republican start positions, where the plain below, Villanueva de la Cañada and Mosquito Ridge could be clearly seen on an unseasonably hot February day. We were then driven to Villanueva de la Cañada, which has been completely rebuilt, and shown the area roughly where the British Battalion's political commissar, George Brown, was killed during the fascist sortie

where they used civilians as a human shield. We were then driven to the ford which became Brigade HQ and where commander Copic was wounded.

Ernesto Viñas then led the able-bodied on the highlight of the tour: a walk up Mosquito Ridge.



The shell-damaged and bullet-pocked "Monk's House" (although it was used by shepherds), which was captured by Republicans as they fought their way up Mosquito Ridge before being checked and later driven back.

Here countless trenches were in evidence and he explained the maximum point of the Republican advance and showed us the bullet and shell-pocked building known as the Monk's House. Ernesto and his team explained where they had found German and Russian ammunition. During our walk a Russian Mosin Nagant bullet, along with several sardine tins, were unearthed.

The next morning, an even smaller group travelled for a two-day visit to Salamanca, where Alan Warren had arranged a visit to inspect the official military archives of the Spanish Civil War. This is a new facility within the ancient university; we were made welcome, and the helpful staff gave us every assistance to conduct research with original documents from their extensive files.

See the **Battle of Brunete website (Spanish only)**: [www.bruneteenlamemoria.com]. There are plans for a commemorative battlefield walk in the first week of July. See listing on right for 3 July.

Street name proposal

Local campaigners and historical groups are urging the council of Villanueva de la Cañada – which was at the centre of the Battle of Brunete – to rename a street to mark the 75th anniversary of the battle in 2012.

The names being proposed include those of two International Brigaders, George Brown (political commissar of the British Battalion) and Oliver Law (commander of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion). Another suggestion is Gerda Taro, the German-born war photographer. All three were killed in the battle.



DONATION: Richard Felstead, grandson of Welsh Brigader Jack "Russia" Roberts, presents a copy of his biography of his grandfather to Purificación Flores, the librarian in Villanueva de la Cañada. In July 1937, Russia was part of the 300-strong British Battalion that helped wrest the village from Francoist control. He was a Welsh miner, Communist Party local councillor and militant trade unionist. "No Other Way: Jack Russia and the Spanish Civil War", by Richard Felstead, is published by Alun Books (Port Talbot, 1981).



Part of the crowd at last year's annual commemoration at the International Brigade memorial in London. See listing below for 3 July for details of this year's event.

● **22 May to 7 June 2010:** IBMT "Antifascistas" exhibition on International Brigade volunteers from the British Isles; Newcastle City Library, Charles Avison Building, 33 New Bridge Street West, Newcastle NE1 8AX; 8.30am-8pm Mon-Thurs; 8.30am-5.30pm Fri-Sat; 11am-5pm Sun.

● **5 June 2010:** Unveiling at 3pm by Lord Provost of memorial in Perth to International Brigaders at North Inch; afterwards an event in the Norrie-Miller Suite of Perth Concert Hall, where historian Daniel Gray will speak about the Scottish contribution to the International Brigades, followed by music and buffet; details from Paul Philippou at [passionariabooks@blueyonder.co.uk] or 01738-449 168; for a map showing the memorial location: [www.alternative-perth.co.uk/map.htm].

● **25/26 June 2010:** Annual George Brown commemoration weekend (organised by Inistioge George Brown Memorial Committee), Inistioge, Co Kilkenny; programme includes gathering at International Brigade memorial and talks by, among others, historian Harry Owens, Jimmy Kelly of Unite and Palestinian ambassador to Ireland Hikmat Ajjuri; more information from Martin Gahan: [martingahan@eircom.net].

● **3 July 2010:** IBMT's annual commemoration at the International Brigade memorial, Jubilee Gardens, London SE1; assemble at 12.30pm; followed by lunch at the adjacent Premier Inn; for more information, contact IBMT Secretary Marlene Sidaway (details on page 4).

● **3 July 2010:** Annual Battle of Brunete commemoration, including walk on Mosquito Ridge and launch of a new book on the battle by Seve Montero on 2 July in Madrid; contact organiser Alan Warren at [hill705@gmail.com].

● **10-11 July 2010:** Celebration of the Osterley Park Home Guard training camp, run during the Second World War by former British Battalion commander Tom Wintringham; event to include a recreation of the camp by the La Columna and Home Guard living history

groups and an archaeological survey by the Digging Dad's Army group; email: [thorpe.ortiz@btinternet.com] for more details.

● **17 July 2010:** Commemoration at the International Brigade memorial at Nottinghamshire County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP; organised by Nottinghamshire, Mansfield & Nottingham Trades Union Council; contact Barry Donlan; tel: 01909-476 178; email: [nottstc@googlemail.com].

● **19-31 July 2010:** "Antifascistas" exhibition; Nottingham City Council House, Market Square, Nottingham NG1 2DT; contact Barry Donlan (see above) for more information.

● **6-31 August 2010:** "Antifascistas" exhibition; People's History Museum, Left Bank, Spinningfields, Manchester M3 3ER; 10am-5pm Mon-Sun; see [www.phm.org.uk].

● **6-18 September 2010:** "Antifascistas" exhibition; Old Market, Westgate, Rotherham S60 1QA; contact Joan Brown for more information: 01709-372 887.

● **24-27 September 2010:** International Brigade weekend on the Ebro battlefield organised by local historical group Comebe; takes in guided tours of visitors' centres, including newly opened "Internacionales a l'Ebre" at La Fatarella, and commemoration at the last stand of the XV Brigade near Corbera; more details from Alan Warren at [hill705@gmail.com].

● **9 October 2010:** Talk by Paul Preston, "The Crimes of Franco", at 2.30pm, Kensington & Chelsea Library, Phillimore Walk, London W8 7RX; organised by Basque Children of '37 Association: [secretary@basquechildren.org].

● **16 October 2010:** IBMT annual general meeting; 1pm at Unite offices: Jack Jones House, 143 Sefton Street, Liverpool L8 5SN; plus social at 7.30pm in Casa Bar, 29 Hope Street, L1 9BQ; full programme for weekend in next issue.

NB: Events not organised by the IBMT are the responsibility of the individuals and organisations concerned.

● Patrick Black is interested in finding out more about the anti-fascist struggles in **Sheffield and South Yorkshire** during the 1930s, along with Sheffield's involvement in the fight against Franco and fascism in Spain. This would include International Brigaders and the Aid Spain movement in the city and surrounding region. The aim is to create some form of political theatre and/or a booklet. If anyone can suggest any ideas, leads or contacts, contact: [propatrick@hotmail.com].

● TV scriptwriter Terry Hodgkinson, ("Mid-somer Murders", "The Bill", "Lovejoy") has written a script about **Esmond Romilly** and the small British group he was with, attached to the Thaelmann Battalion, in Spain in 1936. The script is based on Romilly's book "Boadilla" and is about the Battle of Boadilla where nearly all of Romilly's close friends were killed. Terry is looking for any photographs of Romilly's comrades as young men: Babs Ovenden, Lorrimer Birch, Joe Gough, Tich Adderly, Martin Messer and Jock Gillan. Also, if any IBMT members know of any film producers who may be interested in the project, they can contact Terry via IBMT Secretary Marlene Sidaway (see details on page 4).

● Cornwall-based historian James Whetter is writing a biography of the novelist and poet **Christopher Caudwell** (real name Christopher St John Sprigg), who was killed at the Battle of Jarama in February 1937. He would like to receive any information about Caudwell's participation in the Spanish Civil War, along with any illustrations that may be useful. There are also plans to organise a special commemoration of Caudwell at the Battle of Jarama anniversary event in Spain in 2013. Contact Whetter on [treisp@care4free.net]; tel: 01726-843 501 or write to him at: The Roseland Institute, Gorran, St Austell, Cornwall PL26 6NT.

● Does anyone remember or have any information about **Hilda Froom** (married name **Baruch**),

who was very active in the Aid Spain movement in Liverpool along with the rest of her family. She moved to Halifax when she was about 20 and lived there until her death last year. The IBMT wants to make contact with any of the people who, along with Hilda, were on the Ralph Fox Memorial Committee in Halifax and instrumental in placing the memorial seat and plaque in Bull Green. There are plans to have the seat placed in a more appropriate place and also to have a memorial to Hilda Baruch nearby. Contact IBMT Secretary Marlene Sidaway (see details on page 4).

● Lucy Craig's son, Liam, is researching his grandmother's past in Spain and elsewhere. She was **Thora Silverthorne**, one of the British nurses who volunteered to go to Spain during the civil war. He would love to hear from anyone who came across or worked with Thora at the time. Contact [lucycraig@blueyonder.co.uk]; tel: 020-8883 8872.

● Duncan Longstaff wonders if anyone has more information about a **commemoration at the Cenotaph** in London for fallen International Brigaders shortly after the British Battalion was repatriated in December 1938. He quotes this extract from his father's (John Longstaff's) unpublished memoir: "The next morning, with a number of Brigaders, I marched down Whitehall to the Cenotaph. Here, Sam Wild laid a wreath in memory of the British lads and the men of all nations, whom we had fought alongside, and to the memory of the Spanish men and women who, in defending Spain against international fascism, were defending Britain." Does anyone have a photo of the event? Contact: [duncanlongstaff@btinternet.com].

If you do not have access to email, contact the IBMT Secretary (details on page 4). Please share your information about Brigaders with Jim Carmody, the IBMT's researcher: [jamescarmody@yahoo.co.uk].

My tribute to the Brigaders

By David M Thomas

First of all, many thanks for your stirring work in keeping alive the memory and example of International Brigaders from all nations.

Readers might be interested to know that I have attempted to render my own homage in a historical novel which has recently been published in France ("Un plat de sang andalou", published by Quidam Editeur, August 2009); the title translates as "A Dish of Andalusian Blood".

The novel features two volunteers, one a German communist, the other the son of a London docker, who find themselves in Andalusia defending the town of Almería, threatened in February 1937 by the combined armies of Franco and Mussolini. As many will be doubtless aware,



the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda would later dedicate a poem to Almería following the bombardment of the town by the Nazi fleet on 31 May 1937, entitling it "Un plato de sangre de Almería".

The novel plays tribute also to the Polish and French members

of the XIII International Brigade, who in February 1937 valiantly held off the Italian Fascists in the Sierra Nevada, clothed only in makeshift summer uniform while temperatures dropped to minus-15 degrees celsius in the mountains.

"Un plat de sang andalou" is the first part of a trilogy of novels written in French charting the appalling fate of Spanish Republicans, many of whom would later be interned alongside members of the International Brigades in the Nazi concentration camp of Mauthausen in Austria, where they would once again set an example to the world of courage and resistance. The second novel in the trilogy, "Et toi, sans ombre déjà", on Spaniards at Mauthausen, will be published by Quidam this autumn.

A Welshman born in England in 1959, living in France and writing in French since 2001, subscriber to the IBMT, I have no family ties to the International Brigades yet feel it is vitally important to bear witness, albeit fictionally, to those outstanding men and women prepared to sacrifice everything in the fight against fascism.

"Un plat de sang andalou" has been widely and glowingly reviewed in this country, which strongly suggests that the landmark reference set by the International Brigades has lost none of its relevance to present-day France.

iAdelante!

David M Thomas lives in Limoges, France.

OBITUARY

Marguerite Bates

Marguerite Bates (née Scott), who looked after refugee Basque children who came to England during the Spanish Civil War and was the widow of International Brigader Ronald Bates, died on 3 December 2009 after a short illness.

She was born in February 1916 in New Zealand but came to England in 1922. During 1936-7 she trained as a children's nurse and her first job involved looking after the children of a family in High Wycombe.

It was at this time that she heard of the arrival of the Basque refugee children in Southampton in May 1937. She took her fort-

night's annual leave and went down to Bayden Hole camp to help look after them.

She decided that the Spanish children's needs were greater than those of her present charges, returned to her employer to work out her notice then went back to the camp as a voluntary nurse. She later transferred to the Bray Court colony when it was established, rising to deputy matron and stayed there until the colony closed.

It was at Bray that she met Ronald Bates, who came to help with the older boys when he returned from service with the International Brigades towards the end of 1938. They were married in 1940. Ronald died, aged 94, in April 2006.

How we remember the Swedish volunteers

By Patrik Helgeson

Most of the Swedes who volunteered for the International Brigades were communists and many of them were seamen. After the war, they started their organisation for Swedish volunteers. They campaigned for a monument in memory of the volunteers which was installed during the 1970s and is called “La Mano” (“The Hand”). After the installation, the labour movement, with the LO’s (Swedish TUC’s) Stockholm branch as the main organiser, held an annual rally near the monument on May Day morning.

The volunteers maintained good contacts with the Swedish labour movement but they have still not been given any official recognition by the Swedish state. The Communist Party split of 1977 did not have an important impact on the organisation, even if it did on individual members. However, at the beginning of the 1990s, the veterans’ organisation was dissolved due to an ageing membership.

A few years later, a small monument was installed in Gothenburg, the second largest city in Sweden, where many of the volunteers came from. The surviving volunteers were not satisfied with the monument’s design but the installation was a good achievement anyway. In the late 1990s, the Swedish Left Party, the seamen’s union and SAC, the anarcho-syndicalist union, began to organise a non-partisan anti-fascist rally on May Day before the start of the official demonstrations.



International Brigade memorial in Stockholm.

In 2002, our organisation, Friends of the Volunteers for Spain, was founded. Among those who took the initiative to start this organisation were Helmut Kirschey, German anti-fascist and anarcho-syndicalist who fought for the CNT-FAI in Spain but joined the Swedish Communist Party in the 1960s (nowadays, the Swedish Left Party), and Greta Segerson, widow of a communist Brigader who was involved in the Aid Spain organisation. She is 94 years old now – but still active today.

We have good relations with SAC, which was a large organisation during the 1930s. In Gothenburg, we organise the annual May Day rally, while in Stockholm the LO is still the main organiser. At the rallies, there are speakers from the Young Left (Left Party), the Syndicalist Youth League (SAC) and the Social Democratic Youth League.

Today, as far as we know, all the Swedish volunteers have passed away. The last two of them died in the autumn of 2008.

That same year, we published our history, printing 1,200 copies. Many aspects of the Spanish Civil War and the Swedish Aid Spain efforts were analysed in our book from different points of view and it also features excellent photos. There were some good reviews in the left-wing and trade union press.

Last year, there was another book: about the life of Greta Segerson and her husband Bengt Segerson, called “Masthugget, Moscow, Madrid” and written by Jonas Sjöstedt, former MEP for the Swedish Left Party.

We have very good relations with the seamen’s union, which is based in Gothenburg. In Stockholm, we have cooperated effectively with the LO branch and also with the LO archive and library. We have about 100 members at the moment.

We are planning to launch our own website, which will be an important step in linking our activities to the IBMT and sympathetic Swedish organisations too.

Uncle’s final steps

By Colleen & Sam Darby

Colleen’s uncle, Maurice Friedman, was a member of the Lincoln-Washington Battalion of the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War and died, aged 20. Very little was known about his involvement in the war except that he died near Gandesa in 1938.

From the records available, Barcelona-based Alan Warren was able to find out that Maurice was reported missing in action near Batea on 1 April and declared dead on 2 April. From these dates it is clear that he died in the “Great Retreats” through Aragón and into Catalonia. Alan found some more clues to Maurice’s whereabouts and said he could take us to the places where Maurice might have spent his last days.

We agreed an itinerary by email and off we went. Alan met us at the airport and we spent three days wandering over the Catalonian landscape looking at hills and valleys where the fighting took place more than 70 years ago. We went carefully over the route of the Great Retreats from the Algas River to Corbera d’Ebre. By comparing the terrain in photos from the war with the cur-



rent terrain and by reading accounts of that period, including Alvah Bessie’s, it is possible to put together a very creditable story covering Maurice’s last days. It is also clear that, of the hundreds that died over a very wide region in the Great Retreats, the probability of finding a location that might be his grave is very unlikely. It is very satisfying, however, to have a greater understanding of how and where he died.

This was a customised tour that Alan Warren put together focusing on Colleen’s uncle and was a highly recommended, very exciting and moving experience.

Alan Warren: [hill705@googlemail.com]; see his Porta de la Història website: [http://pdlhistoria.wordpress.com].



ABOVE: Brigade HQ near Batea in 1938 (right) and today. BELOW: Sam (left) and Colleen Darby with Alan Warren at La Fatarella.



Compendium of songs in English

Geoff Lawes is compiling an online compendium of songs in English about the Spanish Civil War on the Mudcat folk song discussion forum. So far he has collected a list of more than 40 songs, with lyrics for most of them and links to YouTube videos where a performance of the song can be heard.

He is also trying to collect information about the singing of songs during and after the war. This includes information about a number of International Brigaders who were singers.

The forum has a second purpose, says Lawes, which is to collect people's memories of the singing of all types of song related to the Spanish Civil War both during and after the war. "The thread already has topical links to recollections about Brigaders who were singers such as Sam Wild and Bob Cooney," he adds. "Relatives of several other Brigaders have said they will add to the list."

See the listing at: [<http://mudcat.org/thread.cfm?threadid=128093#reply>], where visitors can also add information about any more songs. Geoff Lawes can also be contacted direct on: [geoff@lawes223.karoo.co.uk]. To hear a selection of mainly Spanish-language Spanish Civil War songs online, go to: [<http://lacucaracha.info/scw/music/index.htm>].

New title for interview book



Max Arthur's book "The Real Band of Brothers: First-hand Accounts from the Last British Survivors of the Spanish Civil War" has been republished in paperback by Collins under the title "Fighters Against Fascism: Heroes of the Spanish Civil War", with a cover price of £8.99.

The book is based on interviews conducted in 2008 with eight surviving British and Irish International Brigaders. They are Paddy Cochrane, Jack Edwards, Penny Feiweil, Lou Kenton and Sam Lesser, plus three who have died since the book was written: Bob Doyle, Les Gibson and Jack Jones.

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Fox returns in verse

Our previous issue (*IBMT Newsletter* no. 25) reported Don Hallett's new study of Ralph Fox's life and the absence of proper recognition given to him in his home town of Halifax. Mike Freeman has written in to point out that he wrote a poem on Fox, who was a well known Marxist writer and journalist when he was killed near Córdoba in December 1936.

Called "A Word with Ralph Fox", it appeared in "Speaking English: Poems for John Lucas (ed. Andy Croft, Five Leaves Publications, Notting-



EBRO EXHIBITION: A new visitors' centre dedicated to the International Brigades and other foreign fighters in the Battle of the Ebro was opened at La Fatarella, near Gandesa, on 27 March. Backed by the Catalan government and the Comebe Battle of the Ebro commemoration society, the centre features a permanent exhibition and is part of a local network of sites of interest associated with the battle which began in July 1938. More information (in English) is available from the website: [www.batallaebre.org].

ham, 2007) and finishes with these lines, referring to the memorial bench in Bull Green which is dedicated to Fox and to the fact that zorro in Spanish means fox:

On a car-park bench you've got your local plaque,
The balance that the town's account admits.

The council thought you'd taken the wrong track
But history wrapped as heritage acquits.

You'd claimed our Chartists back for centre-scene,

Cleaning up their old bricks to build tomorrow.

(It's not just agitprop will shake the screen:

The Ritz is showing *The Return of Zorro*.)

The Fascists are back in Halifax, no arm-bands

But a shot-silk warp for every old-style weft,

So you don't need telling what your town demands:

A Popular Front (you know the rhyme), broad Left.

So welcome back, though Leninism baulks.

Zorro@socialism.westyorks

Exiled in London



Spanish readers might be interested to know that London-based writer and anthropologist Lala Isla has edited a new book recounting the experiences of Spanish exiles and immigrants living in the capital city.

Most of the 11 case studies in "Aventuras en la Nostalgia" are of refugees from the Spanish Civil War and Francoism. They include Luis Santamaría, one of the Basque children who arrived in Britain in May 1937 and who is pictured in the book standing with his son by the International Brigade memorial in central London.

Also from the Basque Country, Conchita Iraola was in Guernica when it was bombed by Franco's allies. Elvira Medrano describes the horrific persecution that her Republican parents faced in post-war Madrid.

As IBMT Patron Paul Preston says in his prologue, the stories are all microcosms of the consequences of the military coup launched by Franco and other general in July 1936 proclaiming: "It is necessary to spread terror. We have to create the impression of mastery, eliminating without scruples or hesitation all those who do not think as we do."

"Aventuras en la Nostalgia" is published by the Ministerio de Trabajo e Inmigración (Madrid, 2008).

In brief...

● Professor Emmet O'Connor has written an essay called, "Mutiny or sabotage? The Irish defection to the Abraham Lincoln Battalion in the Spanish Civil War", about the group of **Irish volunteers** who left the British Battalion early in 1937. O'Connor examines in detail the motivations and process which led to the move. See: [www.geocities.com/irelandscw/topnewMaterial.htm].

● A website on the life of the British Battalion's chief of the observers **Ivor Hickman** has been created by John Wainwright to link with his forthcoming biography of the Southampton-born volunteer, titled "The Lost Life, Love and Letters of an International Brigader in Spain". See: [<http://tinyurl.com/24vuhws>].

● One of the classic books about the Spanish Civil War, "**The Tree of Gernika: A Field Study of Modern War**", has been re-published for the first time since 1938. Written by GL Steer, the correspondent of *The Times* who reported the aerial bombing of Guernica by Franco's German and Italian allies in April 1937, it tells the story of how the Basque Country, which had been granted autonomy by the Spanish Republic, was

Blood transfusions by the light of a cigarette lighter

“British Women and the Spanish Civil War” by Angela Jackson; £19.99 (Warren & Pell, Barcelona, 2009)

Reviewed by Richard Baxell

This revised and updated paperback edition of Angela Jackson’s excellent “British Women and the Spanish Civil War” includes a new preface and several new characters and benefits from a lower price than the hardback version, originally published by Routledge in 2002. Readers fortunate enough to have seen the hardback edition will already know that it is a thoroughly researched and elegantly written study of the British women in Spain, which nevertheless manages to remain highly accessible.

Jackson’s sympathy for her subject – and subjects – is unmistakable. The book’s particular strength is that it draws heavily on memoir and interview material in order to allow the women to tell their own stories. It is also beautifully illustrated, containing numerous photographs.

She begins her study by explaining who these women were and what lay behind the decision to volunteer for service in the Span-

“What quickly become apparent is that the women came from widely diverse social and political backgrounds”

ish war. What quickly becomes apparent is that the women came from widely diverse social and political backgrounds. For some of them service offered a chance to help defend the Spanish Republic against Franco and his fascist supporters. However, for others, caring took precedence over politics. The book goes on to examine the vital role of women in the various British Aid Spain organisations, which were similarly diverse and saw women as different as the Communist speaker Isobel Brown

RIGHT: The cover features a photo of Nan Green (right) and Leah Manning having a cup of tea at the cave hospital at La Bisbal de Falset during the Battle of the Ebro.

and Conservative MP the Duchess of Atholl united in support of the Spanish Republic.

Jackson then turns to the experiences of the women in Spain itself, placing this within a wider discussion of the role of women in wartime. She shows how the women involved in medical work in Spain “found themselves working in many difficult situations”. Notions of nurses in crisply starched white uniforms are a far cry from the appalling reality of the experiences of nursing in Spain. Giving blood transfusions by the light of a cigarette lighter, whilst debilitated by lack of sleep or dysentery appears to have been a more typical experience.

After examining “the voice of empathy”, the manner in which the war was projected to women in Britain, Jackson’s final chapter



shows how the women later looked back on the Spanish Civil War. This is a poignant and fitting conclusion to the book, in which the women’s feelings towards their time in Spain, how they dealt with returning home and having to confront the defeat of the Republic are all discussed. Jackson shows clear-

ly why so many of the women continued to be involved with Spain for the rest of their lives.

Richard Baxell is the author of “British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War: The British Battalion in the International Brigades, 1936-1939”; £14.99 (Warren & Pell, Pontypool, 2006).

crushed by Franco’s rebel forces. It can be ordered direct from the Faber & Faber website at: [www.faber.co.uk/work/tree-of-gernika/9780571255139].

● The IBMT’s sister association in the US, the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives (ALBA), launched an online version of its journal, *The Volunteer*. It can be viewed at [www.albavolunteer.org]. As well as the full content of the print version, the **Online Volunteer** features a blog, plus videos, podcasts and extended articles and listings.

● Verso is currently publishing the first-ever English translation of Max Aub’s epic five-part

novel, **“The Magic Labyrinth”** about the Spanish Civil War. In the first volume, “Field of Honour”, the main protagonist, Rafael López Serrador, comes of age in a vibrant, pre-war Barcelona. Aub was born in Paris in 1903 to German parents and grew up in Spain, before escaping to France at the end of the civil war and then to Mexico, where he lived from until his death in 1972. See: [www.versobooks.com] for more details.

● There is a video on YouTube of Madrid-based Antonio Díez reading an Italian translation of a poem by British Brigadier **James R Jump**, “Shared Cigarette” (“Sigaretta Condivisa” in Italian) about the death of Cowdenbeath miner

George Jackson during the Battle of the Ebro in July 1938. The reading took place by the grave of Italian International Brigader and anti-fascist partisan Emilio Canzi in Coli during an annual homage last year to the Italian partisan guerrillas in the Apennine Mountains during the Second World War. The English version of Jump’s poem is available in the 2006 anthology “Poems from Spain: British and Irish International Brigaders on the Spanish Civil War”, which can be ordered from the IBMT. Díez has co-edited a Spanish-language version of the book, “Hablando de Leyendas: Poemas para España”, which was published last year. To see the video, go to: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6YEyCDWNik].

Veterans invited for afternoon tea at the House of Lords

Five veterans of the Spanish Civil War met Baroness Royall of Blaisdon, the Leader of the House of Lords, for afternoon tea in her offices in the Palace of Westminster on 27 January. Pictured with her from left are (seated) Jack Edwards, Sam Lesser and Paddy Cochrane and (standing) Thomas Watters and Joseph Kahn.

Jan Royall told them that she had long been an admirer of the International Brigades since studying Spanish at university and she was in awe of their “extraordinary courage”.

The veterans all told her stories about their time in Spain, with Edwards and Kahn describing the Battle of Jarama, Cochrane his service as a front-line medic, Lesser about how he fought in the defence of Madrid and at Córdoba and Watters as a volunteer with the Scottish Ambulance Unit.



Lecture highlights agonies and hardships at Jarama

By Jim Jump

The harrowing conditions endured by the newly formed British Battalion during and after the Battle of Jarama in February 1937 was the theme of this year’s Len Crome Memorial Lecture at London’s Imperial War Museum on 13 March.

Delivered by historian and IBMT committee member Richard Baxell, the lecture focused on the lack of training, poor armaments and harsh weather faced by the volunteers as they were thrown into battle to prevent the crack troops of Franco’s Army of Africa from cutting the vital main road between Madrid and Valencia.

The experiences of the battalion members were brought to life for the audience of more than

120 people as Baxell played audio clips from the Imperial War Museum’s sound archive of interviews with Brigaders conducted during the 1970s and 80s.

He also used footage of veterans Bob Cooney, Tony Gilbert and Margaret Powell speaking in a 1972 BBC television documentary, “Yesterday’s Witness: A Cause Worth Fighting For”.

Entitled “Three months in Spain: the British Battalion at Madrigreras and Jarama from January to March 1937”, the talk made it clear that the morale of the battalion was sorely tested by the horrific number of casualties in the fighting at Jarama, with at least 136 being killed out of the original 600 who went into battle.

Considerable disillusionment also set in when

the survivors were held at the front for many weeks afterwards.

At least 50 of the volunteers left the front without permission, though some would later return rather than desert.

“The battalion was clearly in a state of crisis and it makes their return to the fight in July at Brunete – rebuilt, rearmed and with morale restored – an all the more astonishing achievement,” said Baxell.

Baxell is the author of “British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War”, first published in 2004, which is regarded as the definitive account of the British Battalion of the International Brigades. He is currently writing a book on British anti-fascist fighters from 1932 to 1945.

This was the ninth consecutive Len Crome Memorial Lecture, which is organised by the IBMT and named after the young doctor from Britain who became head of the medical services of Spanish Republic’s 35th Division, comprising the International Brigades.

A collection of all nine Len Crome Memorial Lectures, titled “Looking Back at the Spanish Civil War” and including this year’s talk, is to be published this summer by Lawrence & Wishart.

CELEBRATION: Jack Jones’s portrait gazes down on participants in a celebration in words, music and film of the life of the former IBMT President, who died last year aged 96. Held at the Imperial War Museum, London, on 13 March (on the morning of the IBMT lecture later that day), the event was organised by actor Chris Tranchell (top left). Also pictured are (top row, from right): Peter Wight, Geoff Cowling, Rodney Bickerstaffe, Manus O’Riordan, Paul Preston, Mick Jones, Brigader Jack Edwards (seated); (front row from right): Brigader Sam Lesser, Rob Garcia, Paul McNamara, Naomi Wodis and Margaret Sampson.



Marshall Mateer