International Brigade Memorial Trust

FEBRUARY 2002 Issue One

WELCOME

INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST. 37, Reginald Road, London, E7 9HS Tel/Fax: 020 8555 6674 e-mail: marlenesidaway@hotmail.com

Dear Comrades,
Welcome to the first LB.M.T.
Newsletter. It is planned to have
three editions each year, in
February, June and October.
Officers of the Trust are as follows:
President - Jack Jones/
Secretary - Marlene Sidaway.
Treasurer - David marshall.
Committee Members:
Richard Baxell, Rodney
Bickerstaffe, Tish Collins,
PeterCrome, Pauline Fraser,
KatieGreen,SamLesser

We are delighted that the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone has agreed to become a Patron, and to speak at the MEMORIAL MEETING in Jubilee Gardens on Saturday, 13th July. Please note the start time is now 1 pm. to make it easier for those travelling from outside London. As usual, there will be a social gathering in a nearby venue.

There are now 320 Trust members, in all parts of Britain, Ireland, and abroad. We hope members will make use of this newsletter to publicise Memorial events in their area, or to gather support for those planned in the future. There was one recently in Dundee, the Len Crome Memorial Lecture will be at the Imperial War Museum on 2 March, and Gary Font's meeting is planned in Jersey in May.

I hope this newsletter proves to be a forum for Trust members to keep in touch, share experiences and ideas, and help our aims of keeping alive the spirit and memory of the International Brigade. Salud,

Marlene Sidaway SecretaryLB.M.T.

Thanks to journalist & Brigader's daughter, Gerry Abrahams for editing the newsletter, Contact: gerry@reelscoop.freeserve.co.uk

Brigaders Return to the Cave Hospital



I/r. Mrs Rosaleen Ross, Dr Reg Saxton, Penny Feiwel, Sam Lesser, Steve Fullerton and the Mayor of Corbera

Angela Jackson, whose book based on her PhD thesis: British Women in the Spanish Civil War has just been published, will give the memorial lecture on Dr. Len Crome, a doctor in Spain, and former president of the International Brigade Association, at the Imperial War Museum on 2 March.

Much of Angela's work dealt with the nurses who had gone out to Spain, including Patience Edney. In the course of her research, she met the villagers of La Bisbal de Falset, near a cave hospital that was used particularly during the battle of the Ebro. The villagers were anxious to inaugurate a memorial to those who died there. Her account is extracted from 'The Volunteer'.

In November 4th 2001, five Brigaders travelled to Catalonia for the unveiling of two plaques on the remote mountain village of La Bisbal de Falset. During the Battle of the Ebro in 1938, many of the wounded received treatment in an improvised hospital situated in a large cave nearby. The dead were buried in a communal grave in the local cemetery, including Brigaders of various nationalities. The grave was unmarked, but a list was kept of the names of the dead. Local and international support has made it possible to honour their memory and acknowledge the role of medical staff who worked in the cave.

A plaque in the cemetery was unveiled by veteran Sam Russell. In Catalan and English, it is inscribed: 'In memory of those who died in the cave hospital of Santa Llucia and are buried here – Spaniards and International Brigaders – who fought together in defence of the Republic at the Battle of the Ebro, 1938'.

Following this moving ceremony, the large crowd of officials and visitors proceeded to the cave where Cesar Puig, a delegate from the Catalan government, unveiled the second plaque in memory of those who had served, suffered and died during the battle. One of the speakers, Dr Reggie Saxton, had returned after more than 60 years to the place where, as a young man, he had saved many lives using new techniques for the transfusion of blood.

Brief Notes

- Pauline has compiled a list of MEMORIALS. If you know of any not on the list, please let us know. It is important that the Memorials are kept in good order, and it is hoped that those living near each one will share some responsibility for them.
- Pauline has also listed original 'Friends' whose SUBSCRIPTIONS are now due. Subsequent lists will include those joining between July -October and November - February.
- Please let me know as soon as possible if you would like to go to the CROME MEMORIAL LECTURE at the Imperial War Museum on 2 March. (see back page) The Spanish Civil War Exhibition is on there until 28 April, and there is a weekend of FILMS about the S.C.W. on 20/21 April. David Leach's Voices From a Mountain is being screened 3.30pm to 4.30pm. The other films are International Brigade (1937), Spanish Earth (1937) and Espana al Dia (1938), from 10.30am to 11.40am, Guernica (1955) Volunteers for Liberty (2001) from 12 noon to 1.05pm, To Go To Meet (1973) and Dreams and Nightmares (1974)
- The I.B.BANNER has been seen by experts at the Textile Conservation Centre, University of Southampton and by the Conservation Officer at the I.W.M. Both recommend that the Banner is not used or paraded again, but displayed in a case. The I.W.M. recommended two conservationists, and the Textile C.C. gave us a quote for two options: full conservation costing between £9,900. £11,055, and a reduced conservation costing £8085. £8,910. A further £1000 will be required for specialist dyeing.

- The original banner was lost during the war, and this one was made for the Brigade by the women of Barcelona. It was suggested at A.G.M. in November that we continue to use the existing-Banner as it is and explore the possibility of having another one made. Dolly West is dealing with this. Meantime, please let me know if the Banner is needed for funerals etc. and I will do my utmost to get it to you.
- Richard Bexell reports that work on the website: www.internationalbrigade.org. is well underway. Content will include: a brief history of Spanish Civil War, the involvement of the International Brigades, and the part played by the British Battalion. Also constitution and membership details of IBMT.
- We were saddened to hear of the death of Brigader Fred Clarke of Stratford-on-Avon in November, shortly after returning from the Homage in Spain. Apparently Fred had a wonderful time there, with other Brigaders and Friends.
- For those wishing to attend the Liberation Day Ceremony in Jersey, dedicated to the slave workers who perished, tel: Gary Font (01534 629704)
- Some of you may remember Ralph Fox's widow, Anne? We heard from her nephew, Paul Gresser, that she had died recently in Torquay, in her 90's.
- Best wishes to Lena Alexander, who has recently moved to a new sheltered home. If anyone would like to write to her, I'll pass the letters on.
- Finally, some information about membership subscriptions which are: £10.00, or £5.00 concessions, Brigaders & Partners: free, and Affiliations welcome by arrangement.

A message from our President

I heartily welcome the formation of the Memorial trust and our newsletter, and I hope it will give encouragement and a feeling of increased recognition to my fellow International Brigaders. There are 3 Brigaders on the Trust committee (Dave Marshall, Sam Lesser and myself) and we will keep contact as previously, and hopefully to extend it, with the help of the Memorial Trust.



President: Jack Jones

It is a pleasure to welcome the many relatives and the wide circle of friends of the International Brigades in the Trust, made possible especially by the "Friends of the International Brigades". This ensures that we have a wide circle of members at the start and I am sure we will grow quickly as our endeavours and purpose becomes widely known. Efforts are also being made to obtain Charity Status for the Trust and if successful this will help us in raising extra funding which is badly needed, as Marlene makes clear in her report about the Banner.

Good wishes and fraternal greetings to all, Jack Jones

FRIENDS REMEMBERED



Fred Clarke in Madrid 2001

ALSO SADLY MISSED IN 2001:

Dave Goodman (9.01.2001) Maurice Levitas (20.02.01) Lance Roger (9.03.01) Andrej Gross (4.05.01) Dr. Len Crome (09.05.01) Tom Clark (27.09.01) ChrisThornycroft (13.09.01)

Fred Clarke (17.11.01) OBITUARY

Fred Clarke was born in Chiswick, London, on 12 May 1915. After leaving school at 14, he started work at the Joseph Lucas factory as a costing clerk. After a series of other jobs, Fred, a keen socialist, returned to Lucas in 1936, where he organised the shop into the Amalgamated Engineering Union.

In March 1937, he volunteered to join the International Brigades in Spain and, after training at Madrigueras, he joined the Machine Gun Corps of the British Battalion (XVth Brigade) and fought at the Battle of Brunete, sustaining injuries at Villaneuva de la Canada.

He finally left Spain in December 1937. After a brief spell on the Chrysler production line at Kew, he joined London Underground as a porter, then signalman, station master and finally group manager of three stations on the District Line.

Like so many Brigaders, Fred spent much of his retirement producing a record of his service in Spain. With the help of his family, this culminated in the production of a book in April 2001. Fred attended the 60th Homage to the International Brigaders in Spain in 1996, shortly after his wife's death, and returned in 2001 for the 65th Homage. One week after his return however, he suffered a stroke, and died on 17 November. He leaves behind a son and daughter, and four grandsons.

NEWS

65 Years on: Madrid Remembers

Extract from Pauline Fraser's report: 'Liberty's fallen' which appeared in the Morning Star on 13 November 2001



Steve Fullarton, Jack Edwards, Fred Clarke and Bernard McKenna, at the 65th Homage in Madrid 2001

British and Irish veterans of the Spanish Civil War, with relatives and friends, visited Madrid in October 2001 to take part in the 65th Homage, organised by the Spanish Friends of the International Brigades.

The party of 50 included seven volunteers from Britain and Ireland - Fred Clarke, Bob Doyle, Jack Edwards, Penny Feiwel, Steve Fullerton, Bernard McKenna and Michael O'Riordan. They joined more than 200 veterans and friends from all over the world.

A total of 45,000 volunteers fought for democracy and liberty in Spain between 1936 and 1938, and ten thousand never returned. More than 2,200 volunteered from Britain, and 526 were killed in Spain. Events in Madrid included a visit to the Jarama battlefield and the Arganda Bridge, the scene of fierce fighting between republican and fascist forces.

The veterans were also received by Spain's largest trade union, the UGT, Spain's TUC, the CCOO, the Madrid Assembly, the town council of Arganda, the international committee of the Communist Party of Spain and the Madrid branch of the Spanish Socialist Federation.

Many young volunteers assisted the veterans at the receptions, where the hospitality reflected the generosity of spirit of the Spanish people and their high regard for the volunteers for liberty.

After Madrid, some went on (via Barcelona for the unveiling of a memorial) to Bisbal de Falset, Catalonia for an event to honour British brigaders who died at the Battle of the Ebro. During the last battles of the Spanish Civil War, medical staff struggled to save lives in a cave hospital at Bisbal, among them Dr Reg Saxton, who pioneered development of a mobile blood transfusion service. Penny Feiwel, who nursed republican forces during the civil war, running the entire field hospital at age 28, was there too. Now 93, she is the sole surviving nurse from the British volunteers for Spain, & the oldest British veteran.

Volunteers from the Welsh Valleys

In June 2002, a plaque will be unveiled in Caerphilly County Borough council offices to honour the brave men who left their valley homes to defend democracy in Spain. Plaques will also be placed in Blackwood and libraries - in Caerphilly. This follows the unveiling of monuments in Cardiff's Garden of Remembrance, Neath Town Hall & park, Llanelli and Mardy bridge. The driving force behind the Cardiff & Caerphilly projects was husband and wife team Wendy Lewis and Ray Davies, (whose uncles were killed at Belchite and Jarama), and Arnold Owen, brother of volunteer, Frank Owen.



Surviving Brigaders at the unveiling of the memorial in the Peace Gardens, Cardiff, 1992. Wendy Lewis designed the bronze plaques. One panel depicts a broken olive tree blossoming, with lines translated from La Pasionaria's speech to the IB in 1938. The other has various quotes, including: "No one can be free until all are free". The inscription is: Dedicated to the Welsh Volunteers for Liberty who defended democracy in the Spanish Civil War 1936-1938.

ROUND

Dundee Pays Tribute to its Spanish Volunteers

Rob Smith, son of International Brigader Chris Smith, describes the recent commemoration for Dundee's IBs.

A commemoration for Dundee's International Brigaders was held in the City Chambers on Saturday 1 December 2001. Many of the people attending the event, organised by Mike Arnott, Secretary of Dundee Trades Council, had travelled long distances to pay tribute to Tom Clark who had died a few weeks earlier, and the hundred or so Brigaders from Dundee who went to fight in Spain.

The Depute Provost, Charles Farquhar, reminded us of the memorial in Albert Square, Dundee dedicated to the seventeen volunteers who did not return, and of their sacrifice. He welcomed Margaret Robertson, Tom Clark's sister, Steve Fullarton from Edinburgh, and Fife Regional Councillor Willie Clarke. Willie then talked about the 1920s and '30s and the rise of fascism, and described the solidarity of the factory workers in Fife during the period, and of the generosity of ordinary folk in supporting this cause, and indeed the 40 Basque children who came to stay at Norwood House in Montrose.

Rev.Erik Cramb, an industrial pastor, gave an excellent 'sermon' on the danger of losing social values, quoting Miss Jean Brodie, her dismissal of the fate of an ex-pupil who volunteered for Spain, and her admiration for Mussolini.

Steve Fullarton told various anecdotes about his journey to Spain, including the fact that he had been advised to add a little to his age. When he left Glasgow in 1936 he was 18 but when he arrived in Spain he had aged three or four years! Steve saw it as an uncivil war, with non-intervention preventing support of the legitimate government and allowing the fascist powers to escalate support for France. He told us of being wounded and evacuated from the Ebro battlefield to a cave hospital near La Bisbal de Falset, where he lost his boots. Those of us who travelled to the 65th Homage in Spain displayed memorabilia, posters and photographs, including some of La Bisbal de Falset and the cave hospital.

At the end of the proceedings, Mike Arnott read out the names of the Brigaders who did not return to Dundee, followed by a rendition of the Internationale! and then a buffet lunch.

<u>Viva la Quince Brigada</u>

On January 25, 2002, Irish folk singer Christy Moore, who wrote 'Viva la Quince Brigada', organised a "Tribute to Mick O'Riordan" with some friends. The evening raised 2,600 euros to send medical equipment and medicines to Cuba. He explains the inspiration behind the song.

Ten years before I saw the light of morning A comradeship of heroes was laid From every corner of the world came sailing The Fifteenth International Brigade. They came to stand beside the Spanish people To try to stem the rising fascist tide Franco's allies were the powerful and wealthy Frank Ryan's men came from the other side.

Viva la Quince Brigada 'No Pasaran!' the pledge that made them fight 'Adelante' was the cry around the hillside Let us all remember them tonight.

Dec 12, 2001. Michael O'Riordan gave a lecture entitled "Even the Olives are Bleeding!" in honour of Charlie Donnelly, the Irish poet killed in Jarama. Readings by actor Ronan Wilmot, and song-settings sung by Manus O'Riordan.

'Through singing this song, I've encountered a bunch of relations of the International Brigade, their children and their grandchildren. In February 1997, we were invited to a function in the Mansion House where four of the five surviving members were honoured by Dublin City Corporation, 60 years on. But, never too late, these proud gentlemen were welcomed back to Dublin after giving everything in the fight against Franco... Michael O'Riordan gave an emotional oration and recalled the deeds of his comrades both past and present. He also welcomed the families of many of the fallen comrades.... In his speech, Michael O'Riordan quotes loudly from the song 'Qunice Brigada' but never mentioned that the song was lifted entirely from his book The Connolly Column.'

INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIALS

Memorial plaque Town Hall Glebe Street Stoke-on-Trent volunteers, 3 killed Stoke-on-Trent City Council 07/09/1989

Memorial plaque Guild Hall Alfred Gelder Street Hull England. volunteers, 4 killed Hull City Council 01/04/1990

Sculpture Green, Civic Centre Castle Street Reading England 3 volunteers killed. Reading City Council 05/05/1990

Memorial plaque Peace Walk Victoria Park University Road Leicester England

Leicester volunteers killed in Spain Leicester Socialist Centre 15/02/1993

Memorial plaque SOGAT Convalescent Home Rottingdean Sussex England 4 volunteers / members of SOGAT 31/08/1986

Spanish chestnut tree Coate Water Park Swindon. Brigader Percy Williams, killed 1938 at Caspe Thamesdown Borough Council 01/11/1986

Memorial Whitworth Road Cemetery Swindon England Brigader Percy Williams.

Sculpted relief and 3 plaques County Hall West Bridgeford Nottingham Nottinghamshire County Hall 24/09/1993

Statue and plaque TGWU Transport House 16 Palace Street London members who fought. TGWU 01/06/1990

Books IBA Archive Marx Memorial Library 37A Clerkenwell Green London England IBA IBA

Statue Jubilee Gardens South Bank London, 526 who died GLC, prominent people in labour and TU movement 05/10/1985 Memorial Fulham Palace Gardens, Fulham Volunteers Hammersmith & Fulham. Hammersmith &Fulham Council, ditto Trades Council 31/08/1997

Plaque St. Thomas Peace Garden Bath Row Birmingham Volunteers. Birmingham City Council & Diocese of Birmingham 02/12/1992

Ceremonial red stole St.Luke's Church Farnborough Way North Peckham London. Brigader Douglas Eggar St.Luke's Church

Plaque Southwark Memorial Mayor's Parlour, Town Hall Peckham Road Volunteers: Southwark, Bermondsey and Camberwell Southwark Council 01/11/1986

Memorial plaque Foyer, City Hall George Street Leeds Leeds volunteers. Leeds City Council 11/11/1989

Memorial seat/ stone obelisk Peace Garden, cnr. Wharncliffe St/Doncaster Rd. Rotherham Brigader Tommy James Rotherham Comm. College; Wortley Hall 04/1985; 02/1986

Wooden memorial plaque Town Hall Middlesbrough Volunteers Cleveland County Council. Made 1939, unveiled present venue 1992

Sheltered housing Bob Elliott House Wright Street Blythe N'thumberland. Brigader Bob Elliott killed atVillanueva. Bor. of Blyth Valley 02/05/1986)

Seat in local park Bull Green Halifax. Brigader Ralph Fox, killed 03/01/1937 Ralph Fox Memorial Committee 24/04/1950; re-dedicated 1979

Plaque Former Unemployed Resource Centre College Street St.Helens. Volunteers. 01/04/1990 Memorial Hall Town Hall Corporation Street St.Helens. Brigader Bill Feeley St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council 01/11/1987

Memorial plaque set in stone Peace Garden, o/s City Hall Sheffield. Volunteers & supporters. Sheffield City Council Summer 1986

Memorial plaque MSF Office 1 Tenbury Road Westbury-onrym Bristol. 9 volunteers 1/07/1986

Memorial plaque Castle Park Bristol, 4 Bristol volunteers killed in Spain. Bristol City Council 11/12/1986

Seat in grounds of University of Kent Rutherford College University of Kent Canterbury Brigader Tony McLean. Tony McLean Memorial Fund 01/10/1982

Plaque Camden Town Hall Euston Road London. Hall Volunteers & Supporters from Camden Camden Council 29/04/1995

Tree/ two plaques Grounds of City Hall Newcastle upon Tyne. Volunteers from Tyne & Wear. Newcastle City Council, County Ass. of Trades Cls 07/1986; 03/1989

Relief stone sculpture Borough Museum City Hall Oldham d Volunteers from Oldham. Oldham Museum 1980

Memorial plaque Resource Centre Hardman Street Liverpool. Merseyside volunteers Merseyside County Council 16/11/1985

Carved wood memorial Town Hall Albert Square Manchester Manchester volunt. Manchester City Council, Manchester branch of SOGAT 12/02/1983

Waterford glass plaques ATGWU Hall Keyser Street Waterford Ireland. Volunteers. Waterford Council of Trades Unions 01/05/1994

Plaque Liberty Hall Eden Quay Dublin Ireland Irish Volunteers Irish Congress of TUs; Dublin Council of Tus 05/05/1991

Memorial Dooega Achill Island County Mayo Ireland Brigader Thomas Patten, killed 12/1936 Financed locally and from USA 28/10/1984

Plaque Morley's Bridge Kilgarvan County Kerry. Michael Lehane Killarney Repub.Graves Ass. 07/05/1989

Plaque Baillieston Public Library, Glasgow. William Keegan STUC,NUM, Glasgow & Strathclyde Councils 01/12/1989

Seat in local park Prestonpans Lothian Scotland Prestonpans LP 01/11/1986

Plaque Civic Square Prestonpans Lothian, Scotland Volunteers.Berwick/ E Lothian Labour Party; 01/04/1978

Books 15th Brigade Memorial Library, Aberdeen Unempl. Centre 54 Frederick Street Volunteers Aberdeen TC 1989 Plaque East Princes Street Gardens Edinburgh, volunteers Edinburgh City Labour Party Plaque above memorial Forth Avenue Kirkcaldy, Scotland Volunteers Kirkcaldy District Council, Friends: IBA 05/1980; 09/1986

Plaque Cunninghame House Branch Library, Irvine, Sctlnd Brigader John Smith, killed: Ebro 1938 Cunninghame District Council 01/09/1988

Statue Clyde River Bank Custom House Quay Glasgow City of Glasgow 23/02/1980

Plaque Aberdeen Trades Council HQ John Londragan House Aberdeen. 1993

Plaque Peace Gardens o/s MacManus Galleries Albert Square Dundee. IB Dundee City Council 23/02/1975

Plaque Trades Council Club Aberdeen, Volunteers from Aberdeen Aberdeen TC

Plaque Concert Hall Aberdeen.Volunteers from Aberdeen Aberdeen Council

Relief carvings in wood Central Library Aberdare Wales, Volunteers 25/08/38 Aberdare Labour Party, Trades Council 16/12/1967 Memorial stone set with plaques Alexandra Gardens Cathays Park Cardiff Wales Welsh volunteers killed in Spain Mid&S.Glam.County Councils&Cardiff City Council 01/10/1992

Welsh National Memorial plaque Miners' Library Hendrefoilan House Gower Road Swansea. 33 volunteers South Wales Miners' Federation 14/01/1976

Plaque Burry Port Wales " Since 1996

Plaque Llanelli Wales
"Since 1996

Plaque Ammonford Wales

Memorial plaque Rhondda Council Chamber Pentre Rhondda. Volunteers Rhondda Borough Council 02/09/1989

Memorial plaque Village Hall Penygroes Gwynnedd Wales George Ernest Fretwell Memorial Hall Committee, Pen y Groes 07/01/1991

Information Exchange

- Angela Wright of Chesterfield asks if anyone remembers her great uncle ERNEST ALFRED CAPPS, born 4 April 1901. He went out to Spain on 2 October 1937 and was killed at the Battle of Teruel on 20 January 1938.
- Owen Hardisty is researching Luton people who fought in Spain, in particular SIDNEY STRAY and JOHN RICHARDSON. Can anyone help?
- Any information greatly appreciated re the Hunt family living in the Miles Platting area of Manchester, active in CP and Labour party. At least one probably joined the Brigade (Mary). Her husband was Ernest Redman. Other relatives were James Hunt, Joe Ogden and the priest, Tony Quinn.. Contact: SteveHunt. gracebones@UKonline.co.uk
- Robert Illet is looking for information about a relative: F. Turnill (or George?) from Manvers St. Worksop, Notts. Killed at Teruel. E-mail <u>robertilett@genie.co.uk</u> or telephone 01909 474615.
- Michelle Bailey would like information about her aunt, Marcelle George (or Vorster or Wright) who died in 1989. She believes she was in Spain during the civil war.
- Annie Franklin, daughter of International Brigader, David Gibbons, born 1919, would like to hear from anyone who might have known her father.

INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST

Len Crome Memorial Lecture



You are invited to the Len Crome Memorial Lecture which will be delivered on Saturday 2nd March 2002 at the Imperial War Museum, London.

The Lecture will be given by Dr. Angela Jackson who will talk on:

"Beyond the Battlefield: A Cave Hospital in the Spanish Civil War"

Len Crome went to Spain with the Scottish Ambulance Unit and joined the International Brigade early in 1937. He served as Chief Medical Officer of the 35th Division and then of the 15th Army Corps. He was the Chairperson of the International Brigade Association at the time of his death

The lecture will commence at 2.30 pm and will be followed by light refreshments.

Since space is rather limited it is important that you RSVP to Marlene Sidaway, 37 Reginald Road, London E7 9HS or 0208 555 6674. You are kindly asked to bring this invitation with you.

STOP PRESS. STOP PRESS. STOP PRESS. STOP PRESS. STOP PRESS. STOP PRESS.

Sun. 24th February 2002. Leicester: The Leicester Secular Society Free Lecture Series: 'The International Brigade Memorial Trust'. Speakers: Lyn Hurst and Sid Sherriff. Lyn & Sid attended the 65th Homage in Madrid. La Columna, a re-enactment group commemorating and celebrating the international volunteers who fought in the Spanish Civil War, intends to begin living history displays in 2002. For further information, contact Richard Thorpe tel: 01724 798615 or e-mail thorpe.ortiz@btinternet.com.