



# INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST

Patrons Ken Livingstone  
Prof. Paul Preston

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

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## INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST

37 Reginald Road, London E7 9HS

Tel/fax: 020-8555 6674

Email: [marlenesidaway@hotmail.com](mailto:marlenesidaway@hotmail.com)

President: Jack Jones

Secretary: Marlene Sidaway

Treasurer: Peter Crome

Committee Members: Jack Edwards,  
Sam Lesser, David Marshall, Richard Baxell,  
Tish Collins, Pauline Fraser, Katie Green,  
Manus O'Riordan

Co-opted Members: Gerry Abrahams, Jim Jump,  
David Leach, Dolores Long/Hilary Jones

Once again, the Newsletter heralds a busy year ahead for the Trust. Dates for your diary: on Saturday 12 March, the Len Crome Memorial Lecture will be given by Professor Paul Preston at the Imperial War Museum, London (see back page); and there will be memorial unveilings at Ebbw Vale on 24 April and at the Ebro on 7 May. We have invited John Pilger to be guest speaker at the Jubilee Gardens Memorial Meeting on 16 July, and we hope this will be confirmed in the June newsletter. This year's Annual General Meeting will be in Dublin, with a date in October to be confirmed.

Our Treasurer, Peter Crome, has given notice that he needs to retire from office by 2006 because of work commitments, so we are seeking a replacement. Peter assures me that it is not too difficult, and he is willing to work with his successor to effect a smooth handover. We also need to review our method for electing members of the committee (hands-up at the AGM is not best procedure!), so further details about nominations for Treasurer and the rest of the committee are on page 2.

Peter has pointed out that all our events need to be self-funding. We cannot dip into our reserves in order to have a jolly time, so we will resume the practice of having a collection at events (remember Sadie?). Bob Doyle Jnr and his band have offered to do a fundraising dance on the evening of 16 July. Any other fundraising ideas/offers gratefully received.

The Moscow Archive films have been put on to CD, making the information more widely available. However, because there are many more images than was first supposed, the cost has risen enormously and we now need to find over £5,500. Although we have the money this, together with the cost of the Ebro Memorial and the general running costs of the Trust, will seriously deplete our funds. So there is a need for funding, donations, collections – anything that will help. Salud,

*Marlene Sidaway*

## Successful AGM in Wales

Our Annual General Meeting in Cardiff on 16 October was preceded by a very moving ceremony in Welsh and English at the International Brigade Memorial in Alexandra Gardens, Cathays Park.

We were honoured that Welsh First Minister, Rhodri Morgan AM, agreed to address the meeting. He and Jack Jones were introduced by Hywel Francis MP, whose book "Miners Against Fascism" has recently been re-published.

A wreath was laid on behalf of the Trust by Alun Menai Williams, the last surviving Brigader living in Wales, and the Cor Cochion Caerdydd sang "Jarama" and "The Internationale". Arnold Owen's exhibition about the Spanish Civil War was displayed in



Jack Jones (left) and Rhodri Morgan by the memorial in Cardiff.

the nearby Temple of Peace, our AGM venue, and was much admired.

Some 60 members attended the AGM itself and it was a lively meeting. The evening social was also a great success, and we were well entertained by Dave Burns and Frank

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**Right: The plaque to be unveiled in April.**



## New memorial at the Ebro

A memorial honouring British Battalion volunteers who died at the battle of the Ebro will be unveiled on Saturday 7 May on Hill 705 in the Sierra Pandols in the *Terra Alta* district of south-eastern Catalonia.

A steel plaque, funded by the International Brigade Memorial Trust, will be installed on a purpose-built memorial wall on the site of an existing civil war monument commemorating the *Quinta del Biberón* – the teenage Spanish conscripts killed at the Ebro in 1938.

The site is accessible by car from a mountain track that leads off the El Pinell de Brai road just

south of Gandesa. There are no disabled facilities.

The plaque will incorporate the names of some 90 British, Irish, Australian, Canadian and Dutch men who died in the battle or as a direct consequence in the months that followed.

Martin Green, son of George Green who was killed at the Ebro, will attend. It is hoped that British and Irish veterans of the battle will also be present. The ceremony will be followed by a commemorative lunch.

● Information for those planning to travel to the Ebro for the commemoration of the memorial is on back page.

# Brief notes

**Nominations** for IBMT Treasurer and for elections to our committee – please submit names to me by the beginning of May. Existing committee members will be asked if they wish to stand for re-election, and we will publish names in the next Newsletter. Candidates will be voted on at the next Annual General Meeting. Please bear in mind that committee members (not co-opted members) are Trustees, and as such are responsible for all financial decisions taken by the Trust and are liable for any debts sustained by the Trust.

Contact: *Marlene Sidaway, IBMT Secretary, 37 Reginald Road, London, E7 9HS; email [marlenesidaway@hotmail.com].*

**London Memorial:** There is to be a major refurbishment of Jubilee Gardens and it is not certain that our memorial will remain on its current site. However, those overseeing the refurbishment are aware of our concerns and our requirements and have said they will take these into consideration during the design and planning stages. The design team are likely to begin work in June, with on-site work taking place from May 2006 to May 2007. We will keep in contact with the planners and keep you informed. Meanwhile, the request for the memorial to be listed cannot be considered as it is under 30 years old. However, we will return to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport if we feel it is under threat.

The **Ebbw Vale Memorial** to the men and women who went to Spain from the Blaenau Gwent area will be unveiled on Sunday 24 April. Andrew Rogers of 8 Chandlers Road, Beaufort, Ebbw Vale, Gwent, has organised this and has invited guests Llew Smith MP, Hywel Francis MP, Michael Foot and Tyrone O'Sullivan of Tower Colliery. There will be a buffet lunch,

Arnold Owen's exhibition about the Spanish Civil War will be on display and the Cor Cochion Caerdydd will sing. It promises to be a very moving and important occasion, so please try to attend. Contact Andrew on 01495 307301 if you can go.

We are grateful to Joan Walley MP for finding out that **"The International Brigades"** train will be in service on the London to Norwich route from Liverpool Street, after being refitted at Willesden Station. Ms Walley was instrumental in getting the train named some years ago at Stoke-on-Trent Station at the request of Dave Goodman.

Anyone who wants a copy of the **Cardiff** Annual General Meeting minutes, please contact me (see details above).

Hugh Purcell, the author of a recent biography of **Tom Wintringham** – "The Last English Revolutionary" (Sutton Publishing, £20) is to give a lecture at the Marx Memorial Library on Monday 18 April on Wintringham's role as commander of the British Battalion. The book received a very favourable review in the *Camden New Journal* from Dan Carrier who praised it as an "enjoyable tale of the life of one of the heroes of the British left: his story is worth telling because as an individual he was interesting – and



**Joan Walley MP with the train engine named after the International Brigades (see story left).**

it works as an insightful appraisal of the politics of the mid-20th century".

For further details of other lectures at the MML in March and April ring 020-7253 1485 or see [[www.marxlibrary.net](http://www.marxlibrary.net)].

Marshall Mateer wrote to tell us that he is working on the **British Pathé Archive Schools Licence Project** which makes newsreel resources available to all schools in the UK in digital form. It is not a commercial project and is free to all schools. They are also preparing support materials for teachers to help them find their way round the vast archive and find effective ways of using it in the classroom. One event well covered in the archive (short newsreel items and longer compilations) is the Spanish Civil War (see watermarked version on the web at [www.britishpathe.com](http://www.britishpathe.com)). Marshall is currently

## Marking Holocaust Memorial Day

IBMT committee member Pauline Fraser represented the IBMT at the annual Soviet Memorial Trust Holocaust Memorial Day lecture at the Imperial War Museum, London.

Speaking without a mike in a strong, clear voice, the 94-year-old Auschwitz survivor Leon Greenman told of the gassing of his wife and young child and of the loss of many good friends at the hands of the Nazis.

Leon's book, "An Englishman in Auschwitz", is available from the Jewish Museum in Finchley, London, price £11.95. Copies of his video, "The Long March", describing the Death March from Auschwitz as the Red Army approached in 1945 are also available from the museum (tel: 020-8349 1143 or email [[enquiries@jewishmuseum.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@jewishmuseum.org.uk)]).

At a candle-lighting ceremony in Dublin, IBMT committee member Manus O'Riordan took part on behalf of the political victims of the Nazis.

Among others present was Herbert Rimmel from Germany – whose International Brigade uncle Willi Rimmel had been a close friend of George and Nan Green in Spain. Herbert spent part of his childhood in Ireland and his father Christian had been to the fore of the anti-Nazi resistance in Cologne.

## Successful AGM in Wales

*Continued from front page*

**Henessey and the Cor Cochion Caerdydd (Red Choir) all of whom gave their services free.**

We were very grateful to all our Welsh members who worked so hard to make the day a success, including Ray and Wendy Davis, Nigel Morgans, Alan Warren, Anthony Richards, and especially to Stephen Thomas and Sue Coles for making us so welcome at the Temple of Peace. Ray and Wendy are producing a guide to the memorials in South Wales which, it is hoped, will be available on the day of our Len Crome Lecture (see back page).

On Sunday 17 October, some of us joined a large crowd at the unveiling of a Blue Plaque at Pendragon House, in Caerleon, to commemorate the Basque refugee children who lived there during the war. The plaque was commissioned by the Basque Children of '37 Association: UK and there were several of the original children present, who later showed photographs and talked about their experiences over tea and biscuits in the nearby village hall.

*Marlene Sidaway*

# President's message

writing notes on La Pasionaria memorial to the Glasgow volunteers who died in Spain. He notes that in the archive there is a newsreel item of her receiving the Lenin Prize, contemporary film of Spain and of the Glasgow docklands. He seeks an accurate version of her speech to the International Brigades in Barcelona 1938, any references to newsreel of her in Spain, a photograph of her from the Civil War years or of the International Brigades at the Barcelona farewell rally. If anyone can help, contact Marshall Mateer at RBC – British Pathé Project, tel: +44 (0)1262-490 206 or +44 (0)7947-553 473; email: [rbcpathe@dial.pipex.com].

Antonio Díez's book of letters from **Manchester Brigaders** will be published in Madrid on 14 April, the anniversary of the declaration of the Spanish Republic. Hopefully there will be another launch in the Working Class Movement Library in Manchester, home of the original letters he translated. Antonio has also been busy building a website of memorials to Welsh Brigaders, linked eventually to our own. Meanwhile, look on [www.geocities.com/brigadistasdegales/index.html]

Prof Yo Kawanari has sent in a **Japanese newspaper cutting** of an article he wrote about the IBMT which included a photograph of himself beside the Memorial in Bishop's Park, Fulham, during a recent visit to London. It is good to know that knowledge of the Trust and its aims are spreading round the world.

*Marlene Sidaway*

**Once again I extend greetings to all relatives and friends of the International Brigade and not least to my fellow Brigaders – now regretfully a very small valiant band.**

**October will see us gathered for our Annual General Meeting in another great city, this time Dublin in Ireland, a country from which many brave comrades hailed. We look forward to honouring them.**

**Sadly, we remember the comrades who have passed on and salute their memory. In a**



**sense, continuing our work in the Trust is a solemn duty. We do not and will not forget and**

**we hope relatives and friends will go forward with the work of our Trust in years ahead. It is vital to maintain contact.**

**The AGM at Cardiff was indeed successful in ensuring continuing goodwill, so one way or another we need to continue our activity and look forward to this year's Len Crome Memorial Lecture in March, our commemoration rally in July and other activities.**

**We do not forget!**

**With good wishes and *salud!***

**Jack Jones**

## Obituaries

### Kenneth Sinclair-Loutit

Kenneth Sinclair-Loutit MBE died at his home in Rabat, Morocco, on 31 October 2004. Kenneth was still a medical student at Barts Hospital when he went to Spain in late August 1936.

He was in charge of the first Medical Aid Unit to arrive and their presence had great significance for the Republican Government, as the first visible sign of international support. After Spain, he worked for the World Health Organisation for many years and was the WHO Medical Adviser to UNICEF in the Far East, Africa and finally Morocco. His own account of his time in Spain is of great interest and if published, it would make a useful and very personal addition to our growing library of memoirs.

● **Catherine (Kay) Doran**, wife of Irish volunteer Gerald (Gerry) Doran, and mother of IBMT members Geraldine Abrahams and Anne O'Hara, died on 26 November 2004. Kay broke off her engagement to Gerry when he went to Spain in December 1936 without telling her he was going. They were reconciled some time after his return in July 1937 and Gerry moved to Glasgow where he and Kay married in 1940. Latterly, Kay became an enthusiastic supporter of the IBMT.

## Across the Pyrenees in the footsteps of the volunteers

With the help of IBMT members John and Maggie Comley, who live by the Pyrenees, Con Fraser and I are now finalising arrangements for a commemorative crossing of the Franco-Spanish border in the spring of 2006 along one of the paths taken by International Brigade volunteers.

The main route will go from Las Illas on the French side to Col de Lli on the border, descending to the villages of La Vajol and Agullana where we will pick up coaches to take us to the Castell de Sant Ferran, the Napoleonic fort at Figueras, described by many Brigaders in their memoirs.

The route is about 13km, with about 200m of ascent. Walking boots are essential but, provided people make their way up at their own pace, those with a wide range of fitness levels should be able to participate.

There is also a track that can be used by 4x4 vehicles which leads to a memorial on the Spanish/Catalan side of the border at Col Mannett, erected in 1981 to Luys Companys, President of the Catalan Generalitat during the



Republic, who was executed by Franco in 1940.

Those wishing to make a more challenging ascent, with even more spectacular views, will leave Amelie-les-Bains on the GR10 long-distance footpath to the Roc de France/Roc de Fraussa at 1450m, then taking the path along the ridge via Les Salines to rendezvous with the main party at Col de Lli.

We aim to make this a high-profile event, with rallies on both sides of the border to emphasise the significance of the Brigaders' crossing. Walkers could raise sponsorship, which would not only help the finances of the IBMT but also stimulate wider interest.

I have already started a list of members who wish to take part in the crossing. Via IBMT Secretary Marlene Sidaway (contact details on page 1) please let me know who else would be interested. Precise dates and some idea of cost should be available in our summer Newsletter.

*Pauline Fraser*

# News from home . . .



Bob Peters (centre) with members of *La Columna*.

## An old soldier visits La Columna

Veteran Bob Peters paid a visit to *La Columna* – the Spanish historical re-enactment society – at the Detling Military Odyssey last August and showed documents and photos of his Spanish Civil War days.

*La Columna* is now in contact with SCW living history groups in Spain, Netherlands, Canada and the US. We are trying to find a way to get them to Britain next year. Contact IBMT member Richard Thorpe for details of their 2005 programme at [thorpe.ortiz@btinternet.com] or at: Providence End, 36 Eastoft Road, Luddington, DN17 4QJ.

## Children in Leicester

Leicester played host to 50 refugee Basque children. They arrived in the town in July 1937, brought by members of the Leicester Automobile Association and they stayed at Evington Hall.

Aged between 7 and 15, the children came from the Bilbao region, then being bombed by Hitler's Condor Legion on behalf of Franco, and were supported by voluntary subscription. Many of them were adopted by local people paying 10 shillings weekly. Twelve of the boys went to school in Leicester, whilst the others had classes in Spanish in Evington Hall.

Although 10 children were returned to Bilbao, then in Franco's hands in January 1938, the rest stayed on in Leicester.

The Secretary of the Leicester Basque Children's Committee was Mary Attenborough (mother of Richard and David). She wrote: "If we were to write to the refugee mother of one of our families at Evington and say that we had decided to send her children back to Bilbao into the hands of those same people who are holding her husband prisoner, it would not be much comfort to her. . .

"It is difficult for her to realise that the same

authority who is still bombing open towns will look after her children with utmost kindness. If we can send back children to parents with homes to receive them, then we think they should go, but we will never deliver up children to their parents' enemies."

In 1984, some of these children returned to Leicester for a visit and were met by the Lord Mayor.

## A señorita's memories

In another story of Basque refugees, this time on Tyneside, Carmen Walker talked to IBMT members Pauline Fraser and Don Watson about her experiences as a *señorita* looking after the children.

From a staunchly Republican family and encouraged by her brother, she accompanied the children on the steamship *La Habana* in May 1937 when they were evacuated from Bilbao following the bombing of Guernica and other towns in the Basque region of northern Spain.

Initially she helped the children when they arrived in Southampton and later at Percy Park on Tyneside, which became home to 20 boys. Care of the children was divided between herself and a teacher. As well as looking after the boys, Carmen's duties included keeping the home clean and tidy and cooking on the cook's days off, often improvising paella out of whatever ingredients she could buy locally.

The local community was very supportive, particularly the miners, and families often called at Percy Park to take boys out to play with their own children.

On one occasion, she remembers taking some of the little ones down to the sea front. They were sitting looking out to sea at the ships going by, when one said: "Oh, Carmen, I wish I was a little bird and not a little boy."

She asked: "Why would you rather be a little bird than a little boy?"

"Oh, because if I was a little bird, I could go on that ship, and when we were passing by Bilbao, I

would fly, and I would go and see my Mummy, and fly back," he answered.

Carmen asked if he would not like to stay. He replied: "Oh no, my Mummy wouldn't like that. She wouldn't have sent me here if she wanted me to stay there."

*Excerpts from Pauline & Don's interview.*

## Roy's last letter

Leicester IBMT members Sid Sherriff and Lyn Hurst report on an exciting find while helping to organise an exhibition of Leicester working class history. The local historian who put it together had some details about Leicester Brigadier Roy Watts. He gave them a copy of Roy's last letter from Spain. Roy died on 25 September 1938.

The letter says: "I have served and been into action with the anti-aircraft artillery, infantry and transmission units. I have been in most of the territories in loyalist hands, and was taken prisoner once. Apart from a slight touch of fever and a small piece of shrapnel, which took me to hospital three times, I have so far come through it all comparatively unscratched.

"I have learnt to love this country. The beauty of it is breathtaking. It is a sickening experience to pass through these lovely Spanish towns after the Fascist shellings and bombings.

"I know that such an experience would soon stimulate those at home to oust those responsible for aiding aggression and war. Since our advances, the Fascist fury seems to know no bounds. . .

"War being what it is, one cannot make any forecast with certainty, but I expect and hope to be back in England by Christmas."



James Maley (front left) captured on newsreel.

## The projectionist's cut

One of the 500 Scottish volunteers was James Maley of Glasgow, now aged 96 and one of only three surviving Scottish Brigaders.

James was imprisoned in Spain for six months in 1937, after being captured at Jarama, where many

of his comrades fell. In a remarkable twist of fate, his mother saw a newsreel in a local cinema featuring footage of her son under fascist guard. She pursued the reel to another picture house and had the frames showing her son cut for her by the projectionist. (see sample below, with James front left)

James Maley's sons Willy and John included that information in their recent critically acclaimed play "From the Calton to Catalonia".

## Alex's unifying spirit

Alex Shearer of Glasgow came across an article he had saved from the *East End Independent* about Baillieston (Glasgow) Brigadier Willie Keegan who died at Brunete on 18 July 1938, aged 27.

According to the article, the Catholic Keegan "walked a fine line between the family traditions and his newly found political ideals". He was a member of the unemployed workers' movement and the Communist Party and was well known in the local area, "cycling off to help out families who needed money".

In 1989, a plaque at Baillieston Library commemorating Willie Keegan's sacrifice in Spain was unveiled. "There was a sense of reconciliation within the community," suggested Dougie Hay, a (former) regional councillor. "It was like Spain itself, bringing some meaning to the suffering of the past."

*Sadly, we learnt of Alex's death as we went to press.*

## Plans for Brunete museum

Ernesto Viñas and Ángel Rodríguez and Jesús Vázquez Ortega are a group of Spanish friends who have a great interest in the battle of Brunete.

They are anxious for any information we can give them, and aim to establish a permanent museum about the civil war in their area, south west of Madrid.



From left: Ernesto Viñas and Ángel Rodríguez and Jesús Vázquez Ortega

They would also be helpful in showing visitors the battle site. Contact Ernesto at Plaza Buavista 11-3"-D, 28600 Navalcarnero, Madrid, Spain. Tel: (0034) 91-811 26 02 or visit their websites: [www.terra.es/personal/chechinnet] and [http://es.geocities.com/batallabrunete].

## Activities in Israel

During a recent trip to Israel I had the pleasure of meeting Rajel Sperber who has been involved in organising two recent events commemorating the involvement of International Brigaders from Israel-Palestine in the Spanish Civil War.

The first was an exhibition at the National Library in Guivat Ram held in February to April 2003 whilst the second was a conference (with music) held at the *Instituto Cervantes* in Tel Aviv at which Rajel was one of the speakers. This was supported by the Spanish Embassy.

She told me that it was difficult to raise funding for commemorative events in a country where the focus rests so heavily on the Holocaust. Our ability in the UK to link the events in Spain in the 1930s to the Second World War and its consequences seems to be much more difficult in Israel.

Rajel was originally from Spain and works as a historian in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem where her special interest is the history of Jews in Spain. She can be contacted on: [rsperber@vms.huji.ac.il]

*Peter Crome*

## Children, war and exile

Another event organised by the association *No Jubilem La Memòria* was held in Marçà/Marsá on 6 November 2004, this time on the theme of "Children, War and Exile". In memory of all the Spanish children who had to leave Spain during the civil war, the event aimed to raise funds for children living in exile today, particularly those from Tibet in the refugee camp of Miao in India.

The programme began with the inauguration of an exhibition of photographs and posters entitled "Retreat! The Tragedy of Exile", which had been brought from France by a Catalan exile, Josep Sangenis.

Joan Maria Thomàs, Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona, then gave a presentation of a new book by Angela Jackson, recently published in Catalan, "Beyond the Battlefield: Testimony, Memory and Remembrance of a Cave Hospital in the Spanish Civil War" (Cossetània Edicions, Valls, 2004).

The programme continued with an overview of exile given by local historian, Albert Sabaté Rull, and Shirley Mangini, Professor Emeritus of



The Jarama monument before being destroyed by the Fascists. See story below.

California State University and author of "Memories of Resistance: Women's Voices from the Spanish Civil War", gave a talk on children uprooted by the Spanish civil war which was followed by a showing of a documentary film "The Lost Children of Francoism".

Both of the Spanish exiles taking part had been about 12 years old when they had crossed the border to find themselves in the terrible conditions of the French camps in 1939. Josep Sangenis and his family suffered greatly in the years that followed, but Fernando de La Torre considered himself to be amongst the most fortunate refugees. A British volunteer working in the camp, Frida Stewart, who had driven an ambulance to Spain during the war, arranged for Fernando and his parents to go to live in Cambridge with her family. Despite their sorrow at the defeat of the Republic and the years that followed of Franco's dictatorship, he had many happy memories of growing up in Cambridge and has lived in England ever since.

*Angela Jackson*

## Jarama monument

Antonio Díez found this photograph of the clenched fist monument on a Spanish website dedicated to the battle of Jarama. The monument is dedicated to all the Republicans who fell in the battle. Unfortunately, the Francoists destroyed the monument and today nothing remains there. The website is: [http://es.geocities.com/batalla\_jarama2/fotografias/index.htm]

# Can you help?

If you are not on email and can answer any of these queries, contact IBMT Secretary Marlene (see details on page 1) and she can pass your message on.

● Joe Carroll is trying to piece together the life and times of **Peter Daly**, of Enniscorthy, Co Wexford, commander of the British Battalion, who was killed on the Aragón front in 1937. Contact Joe Carroll at 60 Dingle Road, Cabra, Dublin 7; email: [seosamhocearbhaill@eircom.net].

● Thomas Barr, needs information about **James Hardman** from Glasgow who was killed at Las Rosas on 12 January 1937. Contact Tommy at [tommybarr@tb123.freemove.co.uk].

● Bob Reid, of 12 The Paddock, Claremont Court, Hamilton ML3 0RB, would like to hear from anyone with information or family connections with the battle fought in **Lopera** on the Córdoba front in 1936. He is in contact with the local archivist, José Pantoja, who is also keen to know about survivors or names of those killed in the action. There is a local monument and a display about the International Brigade in the town hall. Bob can also pass on recent photographs of the trenches and battlefield. He can also be contacted by email on [ob.reid@blueyonder.co.uk].

● Christine McGeachin, a 4th-year undergraduate at Glasgow Caledonian University, is studying **Scottish involvement** in the Spanish Civil War, especially “the impact of the SCW on the Scottish Left”. If you think you can help, contact Christine at 9 Dixon Avenue, Govanhill, Glasgow G42 8EB; tel: 0141-424 0254 / 07950-633 675 or email: [c\_mcgeachin@hotmail.com].

● **Dick O'Neill** from Belfast was also killed at Jarama and his sister (now aged 92) would like to learn more about how he died and whether there is a grave for him or any photographs. Contact her son-in-law, Gerry Hamill at [ghamill@ntlworld.com].

● William Ronald (**Ron Barber**) was in the Spanish Civil War and returned to his native Manchester where he lived all his life – he was a councillor in the early 1960s. Daughter Sheenah was only five years old when he died in 1964 and would appreciate hearing from anyone who remembers him and could share memories with

her. Contact Sheena Hanrahan, Corracunna, Mitchelstown, Co Cork, Ireland; tel: (00353) 25-86993 or email [sheenah@eircom.net].

● Scott Ripley is writing a **novel** about the Spanish Civil War and wants to ensure historical accuracy. He would be grateful for any memories or information about the International Brigade base at Albacete and the battle of Jarama. Contact him at 92 Green Street, Old Town, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 1RN.

● Michelle Webb is researching what she believes is a neglected but vital area in the history of the Labour movement and would like to hear from anyone who was a member of the **League of Youth** (we know that some of our Brigaders were). She would be grateful for any memories or comments. Her address is 6 Jackroyd Lane, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD4 6QU; tel: 01484-307 252; email: [michellewbb@ntlworld.com].

● **Rev Robert Martin Hilliard** was killed at Jarama when his daughter Deirdre was 8 years old. Her father would have been 100 last year so it is unlikely that anyone would remember him. However, if anyone does, either in Spain or before he went, contact Deirdre Davey at [ddavey@yevad42.fsnet.co.uk].

● Jeremiah Costello, a young American filmmaker at present living in Hamburg, is writing a screenplay about the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. He would also like to interview British veterans, particularly any who fought or had connections with the **Thaelman Battalion** or any relatives who remember veterans talking about them. Contact Jeremiah at [miobeeno@web.de]. Read about the film on [http://miobeeno.tripod.com/anecessaryevil/index.html].

● Hennie Corman is preparing a biography of **Mathieu Corman** (1901-1975) and hopes to locate any Brigaders who knew him. Corman went to Spain in 1936 and fought at Barcelona (Durruti). As a reporter of *Ce Soir* he was the first to write about Guernica. He was also in Teruel. A photograph by Ernest Hemingway (Teruel, 22 December 1937) shows Corman with four soldiers. After a short period in the Hospital Dos de Mayo in Barcelona, he joined the 15th Brigade. One of Corman's books is entitled “Salud camarada! Cinq mois sur les fronts d'Espagne”. Anyone with information, photographs, letters etc about Mathieu contact: Hennie Corman, Graafseweg 9, 6512 BM Nijmegen, Netherlands; tel: (0031) 24-323 7520; email: [h.corman@planet.nl].

● **Tom Picton** (1895-1938) was shot dead while a prisoner in Bilbao. He was a miner from

Treherbert in the Rhondda and a well-known boxer and footballer. His relatives are trying to find out if there is any known grave for him. Contact John Picton, New Cottages, Llanstephan, Carmarthen SA33 5JN; tel: 01267-231 235.

● Fiona Baxter-Swartz is trying to find out information on her uncle IBER **Alfred H Gold**, of East London, for her father Alfred Graham (Gold). She would like to locate his burial place. Contact Fiona at [fbaxter@rogers.com]. Our historian Jim Carmody has discovered that Alfred was killed on the 27 February 1937 by a stray bullet while at the Battalion HQ 2kms behind the actual front line at Jarama and assumes that he was buried close to the vicinity of the HQ.

● **Allan Craig** is researching the death of his eponymous father on 27 February 1937 (the same day as Alfred Gold) at Jarama, when he was aged three. Allan hopes to travel to Jarama on 27 February with his daughter, the anniversary of his father's death. Contact [allan@craiga.freemove.co.uk] or daughter Lorraine McGarry, Careers Adviser, 4th Floor, River House, Young Street, Inverness IV3 5BQ; tel: 01463-252 125.

● The great-niece of **John McLanders** wonders if there are any websites or other research areas with a record of Scottish volunteers who died in Spain. John joined the International Brigade and died in Spain but no family members have any knowledge of his burial place. If you have any information, contact Carole Kennedy (carole.kennedy@btinternet.com)

● Those planning the plaque commemorating **John Dickie / Jack Brent** need a Spanish speaker, preferably on email, to check the Spanish translation on the plaque. If anyone can help, contact IBMT Secretary Marlene Sidaway. Copies of the book about Jack Brent/George Dickie, “Good to be Alive”, can still be obtained from small specialist bookshops, including a shop called Left on the Shelf, run by Dave Cope: [www.abebooks.com/home/leftontheshelf].

● Following the success of his pupils' “Ebro 1938” booklet, IBMT member and history teacher in a Humberside comprehensive **Richard Thorpe** now intends producing a series of books covering the International Brigades, Republican refugees and Aid for Spain. He would be grateful to anyone who can respond to pupils' questions. Contact him at Richard Thorpe, North Axholme School, Wharf Road, Crowle, North Lincs; email [rthorpe@northaxholme.ngfl.myschools.net].

● International Brigader **Paddy Cochran** is looking for an IB mug (the Lou Kenton design) to replace his own one that has been broken. Does anyone have a spare?

## IBMT Newsletter

Editor: Geraldine (Gerry) Abrahams

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

Production Coordinator: Jim Jump

Email: [jimjump@mac.com]

# Books

## **A Chronicle of Small Beer: the Memoirs of Nan Green; with an introduction by Nan's son Martin and comprehensive notes appended; Trent Editions; £6.99**

"To this day, I don't know whether I was right to go." So Nan Green refers to her difficult decision to work with Medical Aid in Spain. It was July 1937. Her husband George had gone out there in the spring, driving a truck in convoy with ambulances. Wogan Phillips, one of the ambulance drivers, had been wounded and returned to England where he told Nan of the need for an organiser in the administration of Medical Aid. If she would do the job, he promised to pay for their two children to board at AS Neill's progressive school – when not under the watchful eye of George's father, the delightful Grandpa Green.

Nan was ideal for the job. She had many years' experience in secretarial work and her organisational skills were much in evidence in her Communist Party activities. (Following a split in the Independent Labour Party, she and George had joined the Communist Party after reading "The Coming Struggle for Power!" by John Strachey.) Nan's politics were evident in street work, running a CP stall and selling the *Daily Worker*, whereas George's political work was in trying to revive the Musicians' Union, with considerable success.

In Spain, Nan initially worked as assistant secretary in the administration of Huete Hospital where, by lucky chance, she was re-united with George. Later she was administrator of a hospital for convalescents at Valdeganga and then via Uclés to the headquarters of the 35th Division Medical Corps where Dr Len Crome was chief medical officer. She moved with the Medical Corps to a "fast emergency" cave hospital. Then there was a crossing of the Ebro at night, the final HQ set up in a deserted power station at Flix, and Nan's last time together with George.

On her return to England, she was involved in helping Spanish refugees, initially accompanying children to Mexico. In 1943 she became secretary of the International Brigade Association and continued in that role for many years. She worked with the British Peace Committee and went on to organise the London Peace Council. In 1952, when helping to arrange the World Peace Congress, her knowledge of Spanish led to her being hijacked to translate via English for the Chinese. That marked the first of many years in China. She also enjoyed a short but memorable stay in South Africa, addressing 27 meetings in 14 days.

Nan's vivid writing takes us with her on this journey through her life. We share her church-dominated childhood in the First World War and later the joy of music, and the poverty of the musician, with her husband George. In Spain, we meet familiar IBers like Sam Wild, Frank and Anita Ayres and others. Through her writing, we feel her love and appreciation of "the Spanish people, who were a glorious example and lesson to all".

The pages are full of memorable incidents, like when she donated blood by direct transfusion, "lying down beside a seriously-wounded man on the point of death, I watched as the colour came back to his lips, his breathing improved and he turned back towards life".

I can well recommend this journey with Nan Green's memoirs: a most

enjoyable and interesting book, rich with people and happenings in complex changing times, it makes a unique addition to the body of IB reminiscences.

*Con Fraser*

## **Guernica: The Biography of a Twentieth-Century Icon; by Gijs van Hensbergen; Bloomsbury; £20**

In January 1937 Picasso was commissioned by the Republican government to be one of the artists for the Paris International Exposition, and the bombing of the Basque town of Guernica in May gave him an immediate subject. The painting received a mixed critical response, described by Anthony Blunt as "disillusioning... a private brain storm" while Herbert Read said: "hundreds of thousands of people have seen it, as I can testify from personal observation, accepted it with the respect and wonder which all great works can inspire".

Immediately after the expo, Guernica was part of an exhibition that toured Scandinavia. In September 1938 it arrived in London and was shown at the New Burlington Gallery and the Whitechapel Art Gallery, greeted by Clement Attlee who had given his name to the British Battalion.

It was returned to Paris, then shipped to the US for a tour before being exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York where it was to remain until its final journey to Picasso's homeland after Franco's death. Before it left, Nelson Rockefeller was given permission to have an exact tapestry copy made. His widow donated it to the United Nations Security Council where it hangs to this day, though it was covered up when the US and Britain bypassed the UN to invade Iraq in 2003. Guernica's final resting place is at the Reina Sofía museum in Madrid where it will continue to attract future generations of visitors, never having lost its overpowering immediacy.

*Martin Green*

## **Irish Volunteers for Spain: a short history of the Northern Irish volunteers who fought in defence of the Republican government of Spain 1936-1939**

According to its author Raymond John Quinn, this is a "small book written simply to tell the story of Irishmen who went to fight in a foreign war based purely on conviction and ideology". Quinn dedicated the book to one of them, Jack Nalty, killed in the last hour of the last day of the last battle of the 15th Brigade on 23 September 1938 on the Ebro front. It would be impossible to fully capture the story of the Northern Irish contribution to the Spanish Civil War in such a short book, but Quinn's enthusiasm for the subject has created an accessible and well-illustrated taster which he intends to revise, enlarge and reprint later this year. The book, priced £4.99, is available from Belfast Cultural and Local History Group, 537 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 3BU or contact [quinnsean2003@yahoo.com].

*We still have copies of Steve Nugent's book about Jack Nalty, "No Coward Soul", £5.50 including p&p from IBMT Secretary Marlene Sidaway (details on page 1).*

## Trust considers plan for an anthology of Brigaders' verse

The IBMT is researching the feasibility of publishing a collection of poems written by International Brigaders during and since the Spanish Civil War.

Veterans and their families are being invited to submit poems for inclusion in the anthology.

Several British and Irish Brigaders were poets, or were inspired to write memorable poems while they were in Spain. John Cornford, Charles Donnelly, Bill Harrington, Laurie Lee, Miles Tomalin and Tom Wintringham are among the best known and their poems have appeared in anthologies of Spanish Civil War verse.

Surprisingly, however, there is no anthology comprised solely of poems by Brigaders, many of whom – not just the famous poets – used verse to express the intense emotions aroused by the war and their experiences in Spain. Others did not start to write poetry until they returned home.

All proceeds of the proposed anthology would go to the Trust, which hopes that publication of the poems will serve as a lasting memorial to the men and women who went to Spain to defend the Republic.

The project is being coordinated by IBMT committee member Jim Jump, whose late father,

Jimmy Jump, took up poetry after the war and had many poems published before his death in 1990.

Poems by Brigaders for inclusion in the anthology should be sent to Jim as soon as possible at the address below. The poems should ideally be connected, however loosely, to Spain and the 1936-9 war. Obviously there is no guarantee that everything submitted will be published, but the aim is to make the anthology as diverse and representative as possible. Write to: Jim Jump, 6 Stonells Road, London SW11 6HQ; email: [jimjump@mac.com]; tel: 020-7228 6504.

## In brief

### Kit Conway memorial

Sean Kelly and Manus O'Riordan have been in negotiation with South Tipperary County Council for a memorial plaque to be erected near the birthplace of Kit Conway, who was a Company Commander in the IB's British Battalion and was killed in action during the battle of Jarama. The plaque is expected to be erected before June.

### Dates for your diary

The Basque Children of '37 Association UK is organising the following events:

● 19 April: Wine tasting presented by Manuel Moreno 6.30-9.30pm at the William IV (upstairs) 786 Harrow Road, London NW10 5JX; BC'37A members £15; non-members £18.

● 21 May: Film "The Guernica Generation", directed by Steve Bowles, at the Imperial War Museum, London, 2pm.

● 11 June: Talk by Adrian Bell, "The Basque Children and the British Government", Marx House, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU; 2-5pm; non BC'37A members £3.

*For further details and information about the BC'37A, contact Natalia Benjamin – tel: 01865-459 744 or [n.benjamin@ntlworld.com].*

### Conference at Elche

IBMT President Jack Jones has accepted an invitation to represent the Trust at a conference at Elche in Spain on 28/29 April. The theme is the International Brigades and the *Amigos* will bring their exhibition. In addition, there will be a presentation of a short play and an address by eminent historian Gabriel Jackson.

### The Connolly Column

Michael O'Riordan's 1979 history of his fellow Irish International Brigaders, "The Connolly Column", which has been out of print for many years, is being republished by Warren and Pell. It will be both a facsimile of the first edition, but also a very much up-to-date second edition with 13 new appendices. The Dublin launch will take place in Liberty Hall on March 16, but there will also be a London launch at the Len Crome Memorial Lecture on 12 March (see panel on this page).

### Please pay up!

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# The Len Crome Memorial Lecture

by  
Prof Paul Preston

## "The crimes of Franco"

2.30pm Saturday 12 March 2005

Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1 6HZ

**Paul Preston is Professor in International History at the London School of Economics and a Patron of the IBMT. He has written numerous books on Spain and the civil war.**

**The lecture will be preceded by a tribute to Dr Len Crome, who 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. During World War II, as a captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps in Italy, Dr Crome won the Military Cross for extraordinary bravery, carrying on working despite heavy enemy fire. He was a valued President of the International Brigade Association for many years.**

**After the lecture there will be the launch of a new edition of Michael O'Riordan's "The Connolly Column" and Nan Green's memoirs "A Chronicle of Small Beer".**

**Light refreshments will be served, so for catering purposes it would be helpful if we had a rough idea of numbers. Please RSVP IBMT Secretary Marlene Sidaway, 37 Reginald Road, London E7 9HS; tel: 020-8555 6674 or email: [marlenesidaway@hotmail.com].**

**A room has also been booked in a nearby pub, the "Bar Room Bar" on the corner of Brook Drive/Kennington Road from 6pm-11pm where we can socialise and be entertained by Bob Doyle Jnr and his band.**

## Ebro Memorial travel arrangements

For IBMT members planning to attend the unveiling of the Ebro Memorial near Gandesa in the Terra Alta region of Catalonia on 7 May, there are a number of routes available:

- Ryanair fly from Stansted, Luton, Liverpool and Dublin to Reus, about an hour's drive to Gandesa, and from Glasgow, Shannon, Blackpool and Bournemouth to Gerona, north of Barcelona.
- Easyjet fly from Gatwick, Stansted, Bristol, Newcastle and Liverpool to Barcelona, a two-hour drive to Gandesa.
- There is a train from Barcelona to Mora La Nova, about 30 minutes by car to Gandesa. There are hotels and car rental outlets in Mora La Nova and sister town Mora d'Ebre. However, bus services are very limited.

Falset, about 40 minutes by car from Gandesa, has a good hotel, Hostal Sport (tel: (0034) 977-830 078), with an excellent restaurant, air-conditioning and a lift. In Gandesa, the Hotel Pique (tel: (0034) 977-420 329), is a reasonably-priced big hotel with clean but spartan rooms, a good restaurant but no lift. In Bot, the Can Josep hotel (tel: (0034) 977-428 240) has a lift, good restaurant and views to the Sierra Pandols. In Batea, the Hostal de l'Anton (tel: (0034) 977-430 010) is basic and there is no lift.

Alternatively, *Casas Rurales*, Spanish country houses, offer dinner and B&B. Mas Torrenova (tel: (0034) 977-263 004) is a farmhouse north of Corbera d'Ebre, but English is not spoken. Venta de San Juan (tel: (0034) 649-644 724) is an old mansion outside Batea, with English spoken.

- Cheap car rental: [www.sunwheels.com/car-hire-spain.html](http://www.sunwheels.com/car-hire-spain.html)
- Spanish railway timetables and fares: <http://horarios.renfe.es/hir/ingles.html>
- Terra Alta tourism and culture: [www.xtec.es/~jferre15/](http://www.xtec.es/~jferre15/)
- Gandesa information: [www.gandesa.altanet.org/](http://www.gandesa.altanet.org/)

IBMT committee member David Leach will be in the Terra Alta from the beginning of April and can provide additional advice if needed. Email [leachdj@hotmai.com]; mobile tel: (0034) 650-663 499.