



# 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: Sam Lesser, David Marshall, Richard Baxell, Tish Collins, Pauline Fraser, Katie Green

Co-opted Members: Gerry Abrahams, Jim Jump, David Leach, Dolores Long, Manus O'Riordan

Welcome once again to our newsletter, issue nine, and thanks to all of you who've expressed your appreciation of the newsletter and of recent events. It's very good to get feed-back and know that we are doing something right. In this issue we have reports of the unveiling of the Waterford Memorial, and of the gathering in Jubilee Gardens in July where we unfurled our glorious new banner.

It was an honour to welcome Ana Pérez from the Spanish Amigos and Moe Fishman, veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Their presence highlighted the truly international make-up of the Brigades, and the need to be united against fascism and injustice wherever we live. Liz Shirley's lovely voice led us in "Jarama" which meant that for once we all started together – and in tune! And Connie Fraser read her very moving poem Brigader's Reunion dedicated to her late husband, Harry (see page 6).

I also have copies of Ana's speech. Contact me at the above address if you'd like one.

On the back page you will find details of the AGM. in Cardiff on 16 October. It promises to be a memorable and enjoyable day, as well as giving everyone an opportunity to have their say about the organisation of the Trust. Please make every effort to attend.

The Len Crome Memorial Lecture will be given by our patron, Professor Paul Preston on 12 March 2005 in the cinema at the Imperial War Museum – subject to be announced in next newsletter.

Don't forget the IBMT badge, a popular addition to our fund-raising: £2.50 including postage and packing, from me at above address.

We are looking into the possibility of listing some of our memorials. This will help us to keep them in good order and access funds if they need refurbishment. Anyone can suggest a listing, so please get in touch if you want details for your local IB memorial. Salud,

*Marlene Sidaway*

## Honouring the Waterford Brigaders

9 July saw a unique historic occasion in the Irish city of Waterford when the newly-elected Mayor, Seamus Ryan, presided over the unveiling of a memorial to the 11 Waterford men who fought in the ranks of the International Brigades, including his own late uncle, Jarama and Brunete veteran Peter O'Connor.

The monument, carved from Spanish granite by the internationally-renowned sculptor Michael Warren, has been placed in a prominent city centre location, and the whole project was brought to fruition as a result of a 30,000 euro fundraising venture on the part of relatives and friends of Waterford International Brigaders, with Seamus Ryan himself as Honorary Secretary.

Following a mayoral reception, over 400 peo-



From left: Mayor Seamus Ryan, Michael O'Riordan, Jack Jones and Moe Fishman at the unveiling of the Waterford memorial.

ple attended the unveiling ceremony jointly performed by veterans Michael O'Riordan, author of "The Connolly Column", and Jack

*Continued on page 2*

### Brigaders in front of the new banner at Jubilee Gardens.



## An international occasion

More people than ever attended this year's ceremony at the national memorial in Jubilee Gardens, South Bank, London, on 17 July to honour Britain's International Brigaders.

It was a truly international occasion. Ana Pérez, who leads the Spanish *Amigos* (friends) of the International Brigades, and Moe Fishman, an outstanding veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion from the United States were the invited speakers. Singer Lizzie Shirley led veterans and friends in a stirring rendering of "Jarama", and Connie Fraser, widow of Brigader Harry, read her powerful and moving poem "Brigaders' Reunion".

Ana Pérez paid tribute to the undying solidarity of the Brigaders of all countries who selflessly volunteered to go to the aid of the Spanish people

when the elected government was threatened by Franco's fascist forces. That spirit is still alive today, now that the people are engaged in recovering the memory of Republican Spain. She warned of the danger of 'revisionist' historians, who attempt to equate both sides.

Moe Fishman said he was pleased to come to London to take part in the commemoration for the first time and praised the fine memorial statue to the British Brigaders. There were no such monuments in his country, but he looked forward to the day when there would be. He took the opportunity to thank the tens of thousands of British people who had demonstrated and protested against the illegal, immoral war against Iraq.

*Pauline Fraser*

# Brief notes

**The London Socialist Film Co-op** is showing Julia Newman's film "Into the Fire" about American women in the Spanish Civil War, preceded by Luís Buñuel's "Land without Bread" at the Renoir Cinema, Brunswick Square, London WC1 at 11am on Sunday 14 November. There will be a discussion afterwards led by our President, Jack Jones. Non members £6 (concessions £4); members £5 (£3). Membership details from LSFC, 13 Foundling Court, Brunswick Centre, London WC1N 1QE.

"**Spain In My Heart**" has received great reviews like "This wonderful CD is an inspiring reminder of the importance of the struggle in Spain... a fitting tribute to humankind". Our own Jim Jump wrote: "As the son of a British IB veteran and a Spanish Republican refugee, I grew up with the pain of betrayal, defeat and exile. Songs helped to sustain us through the long dark years of Franco dictatorship. Your record captures the emotion, joy and beauty of many of those songs, as well as some new ones, and keeps alive the spirit which took thousands of volunteers from around the world to fight for justice and freedom in Spain." There are 17 new recordings of old and new songs including "Jarama", sung by Arlo Guthrie and Pete Seeger and "Viva la Quinta Brigada" by Shay Black and Aoife Clancy. Contact Heather Bridger at Appleseed Recordings, PO Box 2593, West Chester, PA19380, USA [www.appleseedrec.com] or try Tower Records or Borders branches over here. Also available online at [www.amazon.co.uk].

**The Amigos (Friends of the International Brigades)** arranged the wonderful *Homenaje* in Spain in 1996, and since then have organised and given advice to travellers wishing to visit the historical sights of the Spanish Civil War. However, it is increasingly difficult for them to deal with the many requests they receive, so you are urged to try and organise your own visits and try and find other sources of advice and help. Manuel Requeña, of the Centro de Estudios y Documentación de las Brigadas Internacionales,

Campus Universitario, 02071 Albacete says his department would be willing to help. Email: [cedobi@uclm.es]; website: [www.brigadasinternacionales.uclm.es].

**Rob Adams** has been travelling extensively in Spain recently, and has sent back many precise details of his journey, including hotels, transport, costs, archives, local newspaper offices etc. His journeys this month have included Miranda del Ebro in Burgos, Ávila and Segovia.

**The Working Class Movement Library** in Manchester has a considerable Spanish Civil War and IB collection and would be pleased to receive additions to their archives. Their website is [www.wcml.org.uk] or write to Alain Kahan, Librarian, Working Class Movement Library, 51 The Crescent, Salford M5 4WX. If you have any memorabilia, letters, photos etc, particularly connected to the North West, please contact them.

**The Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory** is trying to put pressure on the Spanish government to help fund the process of finding and examining the mass graves from the civil war, exhuming the bodies and identifying them in order to hand them over to their families for burial. A press cutting from a local English language newspaper, sent by a friend in Alicante says: "Time is running out for the generation who experienced the civil war, but younger family members are also taking up the gauntlet as they do not want the truth about the civil war to die with their grandparents." Simon Manfield, as mentioned in the last newsletter, volunteered to be a documentary illustrator for the association. His drawings are still on display at the Imperial War Museum North, Manchester, and it is hoped we can also show some at our lecture at the London Imperial war Museum next March.

**The Basque Children of '37 Association** has now been in existence for two years. Details from the Secretary, Natalia Benjamin, 8 Hernes Road, Oxford OX2 7PU or Membership Secretary,

Carmen Kilner, email: [membershipsecretary@spanishrefugees-basquechildren.org]. Website: [www.spanish-refugees-basquechildren.org].

**Dodgy websites:** If, during the course of research, you find obvious mistakes in the facts about the Spanish Civil War, please either challenge it yourself, or contact our historian, Richard Baxell: [r.baxell@blueyonder.co.uk].

**Spotlight on Wales:** With our Annual General Meeting and social being held in Cardiff, as well as the re-publication of Hywel Francis's book "Miners against Fascism", focus has naturally been on the many volunteers from Wales. We said in the last Newsletter that Alun Menai Williams was the last surviving Welsh Brigader, which prompted Bob Peters to write and ask: "What happened to me?" Bob was born and bred in Penarth, South Wales, but emigrated to Canada as a young boy. He went to Spain in February 1937 and joined the British Battalion. At that time there were not enough Canadians to form their own battalion but he had expected to join the MacPaps later. He was wounded at Brunete, but after recovering in hospital became a despatch rider for the duration of the war. After that he was unable to return to Canada, and came to England – although his heart is still obviously in Wales! Alun Williams is the last Brigader still *living* in Wales. He was in the Medical Corps, and remembers his time in Spain "...as one of the finest times of my life. I never found such friendship and solidarity and comradeship...nothing compared with the experience of fighting with men who were in a battle not because they had been enlisted but because of the power of their convictions." More on the Welsh Brigaders can be found in Wendy Davies' pamphlet, especially published for the AGM and in Hywel Francis's book "Miners Against Fascism" (Warren & Pell).

**Songs:** Andy Sinclair has found an excellent Russian website containing interactive links to songs from the Spanish Civil War including versions of "The Internationale", "¡A las

## Honouring the Waterford Brigaders

### *Continued from front page*

Jones, President of the IBMT, in the presence of Moe Fishman, Secretary of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Liam Cahill, a cousin of Mossie Quinlan who was killed at Jarama, spoke on behalf of the families of Waterford Brigaders, and piper Tom Casey, a son-in-law of Peter O'Connor, played "The Minstrel Boy" as a lament in honour of those heroes. Dolores Wild movingly read *La Pasionaria's* farewell speech to the International

Brigades, and Jimmy Kelly led all present in a powerful rendition of "The Internationale".

Relatives of Waterford International Brigaders present included Terry Quinlan, only surviving brother of Mossie Quinlan, the children of Frank Edwards and Peter O'Connor, and relatives of Jackie Lemon. Relatives of other International Brigaders – Peter Daly, George Green, Maurice Levitas, Joe Monks, Gerry Doran, Eugene Downing, Terry Flanagan, Sam Wild, Jack Jones and Michael

O'Riordan – were also present for an occasion that was both moving and inspiring.

The unveiling ceremony was widely reported on national and local television, radio and press. A wide range of photos from the ceremony, plus a detailed report, is also available on the website [http://irishcitizenarmy.tripod.com/waterford.html]. We also gratefully acknowledge "Waterford Today" for the photo by John Power that is reproduced here (on page 1).

*Manus O'Riordan*

*Details of "You Are History, You Are Legend", a commemorative booklet edited by Annette O'Riordan, are on page 7.*

# President's message

Barricadas!" and "Jarama": [<http://sovmusic.km.ru/english/inter.htm>].

**Remembering William Jackson:** Elizabeth Pettit has been an enthusiastic member of the Trust for some time, and recently placed some of her father's memorabilia in the archive at Albacete. Her father, William Jackson, died when she was young, so she never learned from him about the Spanish Civil War, but her brother Bill was able to tell her their father's story, and this inspired her to join the Trust and visit Spain. Young William (Bill) remembered very clearly the pride he felt when he said goodbye to his father as he set off for Spain. At 14, he was just old enough to understand, with the help of his politically minded father, what the SCW was all about. William was 41 when he volunteered, and not in the best of health, having been wounded twice during World War I. After fighting at Jarama, he was wounded once again at Brunete and after a spell in hospital was sent back to the UK, a very sick man, in August 1938. Many members in Scotland will remember "Young Bill" who was at the Annual General Meeting in Glasgow last year, and will be saddened to hear of his death in April, after suffering a long illness during which Elizabeth was his devoted carer.

**Letters from the front:** Antonio Díaz's book of letters home from Manchester Brigaders, which he has translated into Spanish, is almost ready for publication, but he is still looking for photographs of those who sent them. The letters are in the Working Class Movement Library, in Manchester, so if you have donated letters, and have photos to accompany them, please contact Antonio: [[antdiaz@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:antdiaz@yahoo.co.uk)]. He is specifically looking for photographs of the following:

- Ralph Cantor, killed July '37 Brunete
  - Jud Coleman, died 2002
  - Sidney Silvert, died 1979
  - Monty Rosenfield, killed in Italy 1944
  - Albert MacIntosh, killed 1945
  - Leonard (Lol) Jordan, killed July '37 Brunete
  - Thomas Moore, killed January '38 Teruel
  - Joe Fillingham, killed January '38 Teruel.
- Antonio found the WCML very helpful and supportive and "a must for anyone interested in any topic related to the working-class history". He is also pleased to report that the Oldham memorial, which he had difficult locating, is on public display now at Gallery Oldham, Oldham Cultural Quarter, Greaves Street, Oldham OL1 1AL.

*Marlene Sidaway*

**It was gratifying to see so many people turn out for the summer's two main events, the unveiling of the new memorial at Waterford in Ireland, dedicated to the 11 men who went from that city to fight in Spain, and the annual ceremony at Jubilee Gardens, London, in honour of the 2,100 men and women who left these shores to fight at the side of their Spanish comrades in the struggle against fascism. I was personally delighted at the attendance of American veteran Moe Fishman who**



**spoke passionately at both events, and Amigos president Ana Pérez who gave a moving and inspirational speech at Jubilee Gardens.**

**October will see us gathered in another city for our Annual General Meeting, this time Cardiff in Wales, a country from which so many brave comrades hailed, and we look forward to honouring them at the memorial in Alexandra Gardens.**

**And so our work goes on. I salute all who make a contribution to our cause, and value the strength of their support in carrying the message forward to the next generation.**

**¡Salud y suerte!**

**Jack Jones**

## Obituary



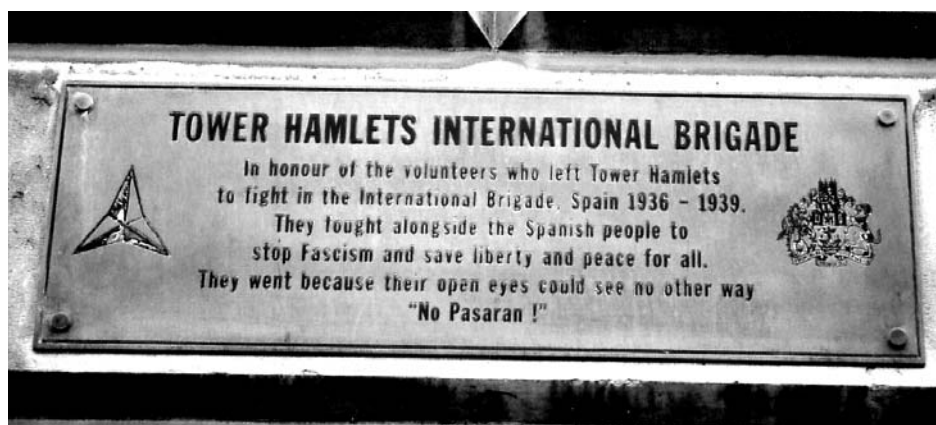
### John Taylor

John Taylor, born Jan Theilenger in Mikulov, Czechoslovakia, on 25 October 1916, left home to fight in Spain in 1936 and fought in many of the major battles: Jarama, Brunete, the Ebro and at Barcelona. He was given leave to go to Paris at some stage, whence he returned to Czechoslovakia to visit his family, who later disappeared, probably to Auschwitz.

He returned to Paris on his brother's passport, fooling the Germans on the train. He recrossed the Pyrenees, but ended up in a French prisoner of war camp at the end of the war. After being released by the French he made his way to England where he was interned in Sutton Park, Birmingham. Thanks to his linguistic skills he was recruited into the Commandos with whom he saw considerable action and served with distinction during World War II before being wounded very badly by a phosphorus grenade.

After the end of war he settled in Bedfordshire.

**Susie Taylor**



**A memorial plaque to London's Tower Hamlets volunteers on the front wall of the Old Town Hall (near Shadwell station) was recently re-furbished by two comrades who wished to remain anonymous. We heartily thank them. On the side of the building there is a huge mural depicting the battle itself. Were any of our other members there too? See page 4: "...and Cable Street".**

# News from home . . .



**Charlie and Jean Matthews.**

## Brigader who came back from the dead

At the age of 85, Charlie Matthews is one of the youngest surviving International Brigaders from Britain.

As a young man Charlie, who grew up in west London, now lives with his wife Jean, in Cornwall, joined the Labour League of Youth but was expelled for demonstrating against the fascists at Hammersmith Town Hall. He then joined the Young Communist League and took part in the Battle of Cable Street, where he was punched unconscious by a police inspector.

Having seen fascism in action on the streets of London, and experienced at first hand the response of the forces of law and order, Charlie was keen to help fight fascism in Spain. He left Victoria Station on his own on a weekend ticket in February 1938, under strict instructions to talk to no one. He travelled by train to Corbières, near Perpignan, where he joined other volunteers. After a meal, they were taken by coach into the foothills of the Pyrenees where they were issued with rope-soled slippers (*alpargatas*). They set off under cover of darkness, so they could dodge the French border guards and cross the border into Spain.

After 17 hours they arrived at the fortress of

Figueras where conditions were poor and many volunteers became lousy. After a couple of days there, Charlie was taken down the coast by train and then inland to Albacete, International Brigade headquarters. After a few days there, they were taken to Tarazona for training, and issued with Russian rifles before being sent to the Aragon front, where the battalion had just come out of “a bit of a bust-up”, as Charlie euphemistically put it.

They moved on to Chebola Valley for more training before crossing the Ebro on 25 July and moving close to Gandesa. This was difficult and dangerous as they were Stukker-bombed along the Gandesa Road for days on end, diving into ditches when they heard the bombers coming.

On 23 September, the day the Brigaders were told that they were to be withdrawn Charlie Matthews, with other volunteers, was taken prisoner. Immediately after their capture, they were lined up, hands tied behind their backs. They thought they were going to be shot.

Instead, they were taken to prisons in Zaragoza, Burgos, and San Pedro de Cardeñas. San Pedro was a terrible place. There was not enough food, and everyone was in rags and tatters. There was a group of seven English-speaking prisoners, either British or Irish, amongst whom were George Wheeler and Frank West. To while away the time, Charlie drew pictures of mouth-watering dishes, such as sausage-and-mash, on the prison walls. The prisoners were finally taken to San Sebastián, a civil prison, where they awaited a prisoner exchange. Charlie was repatriated in February 1939.

During his time in Spain, Charlie was reported killed in action, and it was three months before he arrived home and the family were reunited. He still has a copy of “Challenge” magazine, which referred in its obituary – to the van-boy who fought fascists.

*Taken from Pauline Fraser’s interview with Charlie and Jean Matthews at their home on 16 August 2004.*

## Remembering . . . . . . Eugene Downing

Irish Brigader Eugene Downing, who died last year, wrote many books, articles and essays about the time he and other Irishmen spent in Spain. His book “La Niña Bonita / agus An Roisín Dubh” is the first and only Irish language book ever published on the subject, and a documentary produced by Arkhive@Esras for TG4’s Cogar series will be broadcast on 17 October.

In 1938, aged 25, Eugene joined International Brigaders from all over Europe and the Americas, fighting at the Battle of the Ebro and was wounded in the unsuccessful assault on Gandesa. “The morning before we came across the river, we took 5,000 prisoners and walked more than 20 miles. Franco got the bad news: “El enemigo ha pasado el Ebro”. He started to strengthen the defensive line; he had the war equipment for this. “Suddenly, a bullet went straight through my left leg!” He was brought to the town of Corbera and then taken back to the hospital in Mataro, but his wound had become infected and a below-the-knee amputation was necessary.

He joked: “I can truthfully say that I have one foot in the grave.”

## . . . and Cable Street

Brigader Charles Matthews (see Pauline’s interview on this page) reckons he must be one of the few who remember Bloody Sunday at Gardner’s Corner and Cable Street in 1936. Alun Menai Williams was there, as was Sol Frankel, who remembers digging up paving stones for the barricades, and Lou Kenton.

Lou was in the Printers’ Anti-Fascist Movement and on the organising committee rallying support

## Ana Pérez at Jubilee Gardens

In her speech at the Jubilee Gardens gathering in July, Ana Pérez, President of the *Asociación de Amigos de las Brigadas Internacionales*, said how happy she was to accept our invitation to speak on behalf of the *Amigos*, as for them it meant a recognition of their activities from 1995 onwards. During this time their main purpose has been to recover the memory and bring back to the present what the International Brigades meant for the Spaniards, both during the Spanish Civil War and after it.

The Spanish Republic had been deserted by the Western democratic governments, but received the support of thousands of men and women in all the countries of the world and the Interbrigadistas were the vanguard of all that great movement of solidarity. They did not hesitate to leave family, job, friends, homeland to come and fight in Spain, giving their youth and risking their lives in defence of liberty. Almost a third of the volunteers sacrificed their lives in Spain, and many others were wounded. Even after their withdrawal at the end of 1938, the Brigaders continued fighting side

by side with the Spanish Republican army in order to protect the retreat of the Spanish people towards France and many shared their fate in the concentration camps of France, Austria and Germany.

These are things you do not forget, said Ana, they are things passed down from generation to generation and become part of the Spanish people’s collective memory.

Now the restoring of historical memory is highly topical in Spain and it is important that the truth be told about the civil war and the Franco regime – over which either a complete silence or a historical falseness has reigned – and the Spanish people are still in need of the witness and testimony of the Brigaders, in order to write a true history of which both are part.

Ana concluded: “They had Spain in their hearts in 1936 – and for many years since then – and they too will always be in the hearts of the Spanish people.”

*Edited by Marlene Sidaway; full text available from Marlene (address on front page).*



**Lou Kenton.**

for resistance to the proposed march. That day, his job was to patrol “the frontier” of this resistance on his motorbike. The route of Mosley’s march was changed on police advice, but Lou was able to get the protesters into the most effective positions. When

it was known that the Blackshirts would march up Cable Street, crowds rushed to build barricades and that was when the fight really started. Lou thinks this was probably the first time the cry “No pasarán” was heard in Britain.

Three weeks later, he travelled to Spain on the same motorbike. When he arrived at the hospital which was his base, he found the ambulance which the printers had raised money to send. Clearly the battle of Cable Street, and the many instances of opposition to Sir Oswald Mosley and his Blackshirts in London and elsewhere influenced many of those who volunteered to go to Spain.

## From Glasgow to Spain

“From the Calton to Catalonia”, a play about the experiences of a group of Scots during the Spanish Civil War, written by John and Willy Maley, is being presented once again by Kayos Theatre Company, this time in Glasgow. The play’s action flits between a prison cell in Spain and the East End of the city.

Glasgow’s contribution to the International Brigades is astonishing. Of 2,100 British volunteers, 500 were from Scotland, half of those from Glasgow. One of them was James Maley, the playwright’s father, now at 96 one of the few surviving Brigaders. The starting point for the play was his own imprisonment in Spain for six months in 1937, after being captured at Jarama, where many of his comrades fell.

The play is based on a true story in which James’ mother saw newsreel footage in a local cinema of her son under fascist guard. She pursued the reel to another picture house and had the frames cut for her by the projectionist. The rest of the play is fiction, but fiction based on the fact of a courageous contribution by citizens steeped in commitment and radicalism to a crucial cause to which the world was slow to respond.

“From the Calton to Catalonia”: 1-4 December, 8pm, at the Tramway, 25 Albert Drive, Glasgow; box office: 0141-422 2023.

## Berlin meeting condemns rise in neo-fascism

The Sommertreffen, the annual gathering of the German International Brigade solidarity organisation Kampfer und Freunde, KFSR, (Fighters and Friends of the Spanish Republic 1936-1939) took place in Berlin from 27 to 29 August. The weekend’s events included the organisation’s annual general meeting, a discussion of anti-fascist work in Europe and an exchange of ideas on how groups supporting the International Brigaders across the continent could best work together.

Four International Brigaders attended the events: Kurt-Julius Goldstein, Erich Teppich and Kurt Lohberger from Germany and Albert Santer from Luxembourg. Tario Rubio, a veteran of the Spanish Republican forces, attended from Barcelona.

Kurt Goldstein, former secretary of the International Federation of Resistance Fighters and still actively leading the Auschwitz Survivors’ Group, said that in the 1950s and 60s few would have thought that we would still be discussing the threat of fascism in the 21st century. But in the new century, commemorations take place for Rudolf Hess. How long, he asked, would it be before Hitler was also commemorated? Never had there been such a dangerous time for international fascism, he told the meeting.

Erich Teppich echoed these words and reminded those present that in 1936 the Soviet Union existed. In the present day there was no such balance.

Tario Rubio said he was very pleased that there were so many memorials outside Spain to commemorate the International Brigades. However, there was precious little to commemorate those Brigaders and Republican soldiers who had been in concentration camps. In particular he drew attention to the complete lack of memorials at the site of the more than 300 concentration camps which Franco created during the repression which followed the Spanish Civil War.

Ana Pérez represented the Spanish *Amigos* at the



**From left to right: Kurt-Julius Goldstein, Albert Santer, Kurt Lohberger and Erich Teppich.**

Sommertreffen, and representatives of International Brigade veterans and supporters’ organisations from Sweden, Holland, France, Luxembourg, the Czech Republic and Britain also attended.

The meeting passed a resolution drafted by the KFSR calling on the Bundestag to stop honouring the memory of Nazi Wehrmacht officers, such as pilot Werner Molders, who had fought with the Condor Legion on the Ebro and had taken part in bombing raids on Britain, France and the Soviet Union. Molders and others have been memorialised in place names, and, despite a Bundestag decision in 1998 to put a stop to this practice, it still continues, while attempts are made to remove memorials to International Brigaders and anti-fascist fighters such as Hans Kahle (see below).

**Pauline Fraser**

● Harald Wittstock alerted us to the fact that a memorial stone to Hans Kahle, in Karstadt in the former German Democratic Republic is under threat. A school named after Hans Kahle has also been re-named. We were happy to send a letter of support in the campaign to save the memorial to a man who was highly praised and respected for his fight against fascism in his own country, in Spain, and in Britain during World War II as part of the Free German Movement.

● The Canadian Mackenzie-Papineau Memorial Fund recently unveiled an additional plaque at their memorial in Ottawa in the presence of the ambassadors of Finland and Ukraine. The Mac-Paps are also working on developing and expanding their website, which is [www.macpabattalion.ca].

● Professor Yo Kawanari of Sagahihara, Japan, has been studying the Spanish Civil War since 1975. He met Nan Green and Bill Alexander during his researches and recently visited our archives in the Marx Memorial Library to present his book about six British volunteers who graduated from Cambridge. Professor Kawanari also plans to write articles about the civil war for Japanese newspapers.

● Anyone looking for further information about events in/ around Marça, Catalonia, should contact: [nojubilem lamemoria@yahoo.com].

● The Ebro Memorial project has been postponed and will probably now happen around April or May; full details in the next Newsletter.

● American veteran Milt Wolff is currently organising his manuscripts (with Heather Bridger’s help) and trying to find a Spanish publisher for his memoirs. Can anyone help?

# Can you help?

● **Our archives:** we have a great deal of information about Brigaders on our archives and, with the recent acquisition of those from Moscow, we will have more – but if any of you have information about individuals mentioned, please get in touch, and help Jim (Carmody) keep the archives up-to-date. Email [jamescarmody@yahoo.co.uk].

● **Michael Ferguson:** Michael Morton is searching for information about his grandfather, Brigader Michael Ferguson, a miner, originally from Scotland, and a member of the Communist Party, who walked to Derbyshire looking for work and settled in Chesterfield in 1922. He moved to Bolsover and Mansfield before settling

in Kirkby in Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, having been blacklisted for his CP activities. Michael Ferguson died in 1959, and it is only recently, on the death of his widow, that his involvement in Spain has come to light. We can't find anything about him in our archives – but perhaps some of our Brigaders might remember him or perhaps some of our members were comrades in his later life? Michael Morton would be grateful for any information. Contact him at 19 Bruce Street, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 2EL or phone 01793-512823.

● **Carlisle volunteers:** Valantin Sagasti of 14 Mosside Road, Ayr KA8 9ET has enquired about volunteers from Carlisle. He believed there were six but our historian, Jim Carmody, could only find details of five: William Joseph Fennelly, William Lomas, Alec Torrance, John Wilson and Peter Robinson; also two others: Hugh Slater, originally from Carlisle, and Patterson Pullar who may have been born there. If anyone has more information, please let us know.

● **Aberdeen volunteers:** Mike Mackay has enquired about volunteers from Aberdeen. Of course we pointed him in the direction of the John Londragan House, the Trades Council headquarters, which houses one of the two identical memorial plaques – the other is in the Aberdeen Concert Hall. There were 18 volunteers from Aberdeen, five of whom did not return. Jim Carmody points out that it is very likely there were other volunteers perhaps born and bred in Aberdeen, but who had moved away by 1936 and listed a different address when joining up. Mike's address is 12 Buckie Walk, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen AB22 8DF.

● **William John Dickson:** Elaine Brown hopes to find out more about her great uncle, William John Dickson, from Musselburgh & Prestonpans, a labourer and member of the Communist Party, attached to the anti-tank battery of the XV British Battalion. He was killed at Brunete in July 1937. His death, and that of his comrade Jack Black was remembered by another comrade, Bill Cranston, in "Voices from the Spanish Civil War". If anyone has more information, photos etc, please get in touch with the IBMT.

● **Willie Keegan:** Alex Shearer has sent in a query about Willie Keegan of Baillieston, Glasgow, who was killed at Brunete, aged 27. In the 12-year-old newspaper cutting which Alex sent there is a plea to help find the missing banner that commemorated Willie's sacrifice. Has it turned up during the past 12 years?

● **Welsh Brigaders:** Wendy Lewis is producing a booklet to accompany our Annual General Meeting events in Cardiff and would like to hear

from Brigaders or their families from Wales who have memorabilia or other contributions which could be included. Email: [wendy.lewis2@aladdinscave.net] or write to: 172 Pandly Road, Bedwas, Caerphilly CF83 8EP; tel: 029-208 89514.

● **No Pasarán!** is an historical and educational group dedicated to the memories of those men from Derry, Donegal and Tyrone who with other volunteers from all over Ireland went to Spain in defence of the Republic from 1936 to 1938. The project would like to hear from anyone from the north west of Ireland who had a family member, a brother, an uncle or a grandfather etc who took part in the international resistance to share their stories and information, to pay tribute and to honour their memories. No Pasarán! also welcomes anyone who would like to assist. From the north west there were names such as Thomas Traynor (via Toronto), John Murphy (via London), Eamon McGrotty, George Gorman, Jack Flynn, James Donald, James Campbell, Hugh O'Donnell (a stoker), Paddy O'Daire, Paddy Roe McLaughlin, Paddy Glacken, Phil Boyle and Hugh Bonar. Contact: [xvbrigade@yahoo.ie].

● **Harry Carass:** John Carass has pointed out that as he was born in 1944, it is impossible that his father Harry Carass could have been killed in Spain, as listed on our roll of honour. Apparently Harry was imprisoned in Barcelona, but escaped and made his way back to England in a Swedish ship, arriving a year later and after many ports of call. Jim Carmody, our historian, was delighted to have the mystery of Henry (Harry) Carass cleared up. He has been trying to solve the mystery for years! However, John would like to find out more about his father, if anyone remembers him either in Spain or later. He was a clerk from Allerton, Leeds, joined the battalion at Albacete on 11 February 1937 and four days later was fighting at Jarama. After that point all trace of him in Spain is lost. Contact John on [j.carass@ntlworld.com] [xvbrigade@yahoo.ie].

● **Book exchange:** If you have any books about the Spanish Civil War you don't need, send the list to Chris Hall, who may be able to find a good home for them. If you are looking for a book, let him know and we'll put an appeal in the Newsletter. Both books requested in issue 8 were found. Contact [christoff\_hall@yahoo.com] or by post: 286 Brantingham Road, Manchester M21 0QU. Chris has had a request for a DVD or VHS copy of the Spanish film "Libertarias", and someone else asked if any Trust members could get a discount on Richard Baxell's book on the British Battalion. Why not ask your library to stock it, and then it will be available to many more people!

## Brigaders' Reunion

These frail old men are young and strong today,  
Bearing the banner upright as they stand  
Steadied with sticks or helped by caring hands  
Protective as the stone arms round their dead.

Yet once these same legs climbed the Pyrenees  
By smugglers' paths in sheltering of night,  
With spirits high and blistered urban feet  
They came to aid the Spanish people's fight.  
So long ago and yet so close at hand,  
The weary blur of battle on strange ground,  
The heat and cold, the hunger and the thirst,  
Persistence when the odds were all against.

Now a new speaker tells the old brave tale,  
Putting some sort of pattern to the whole,  
The song that always follows sounds again  
Ragged at first – "Jarama" – then the pain  
And pride swell out to fill their shrinking world...  
And we who were not there join in, aware  
Their fading eyes show what we cannot hear,  
The ageless guilt that all survivors feel  
That they live on when friends and comrades fell.  
For them – and us – and brothers not yet born,  
We raise clenched fists and shout "¡No pasarán!"

**Connie Fraser**

*To Harry / 1998*

## IBMT Newsletter

**Editor:** Geraldine (Gerry) Abrahams  
*Email:* [gerry@reelscoop.freeserve.co.uk]  
**Production Coordinator:** Jim Jump  
*Email:* [jimjump@mac.com]

# Books

## An exhaustive account of the British Battalion

**“British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War: the British Battalion in the International Brigades 1936-1939” by Richard Baxell, Routledge, London and New York, 2004, 221 pages, £65 hardback.**

Richard Baxell’s book is a wonderful example of how exhaustive research can be presented in a clear and interesting manner. It is essential reading for all those who would like to know more about the British in the International Brigades, whatever their level of studies. Maps and tables make basic information easily accessible and the well-chosen quotations in the text offer many insights into the attitudes and feelings of the volunteers.

The wealth of new information now available about the Brigades, including material from recently opened archives in Moscow, has brought a resurgence of interest amongst historians. Dr Baxell draws on these sources and, whilst valuing the contributions made by earlier authors such as Bill Rust and Bill Alexander who had themselves been members of the battalion, also engages with controversial issues that are currently being re-examined. He challenges some of the theories that have appeared in recent publications, examining their largely critical perspective on the role of the Brigades and Brigaders as individuals with scrupulous care.

The book’s brief introductory outline on the events leading to the outbreak of war in Spain is followed by two chapters on the background of the British volunteers, explaining who they were and why they went. The fascinating exploration of what motivated the volunteers shows how they were drawn together in the fight against fascism, although their previous experiences of campaigning in Britain had varied from protests to gain the right to ramble in the Peak District to violent clashes with the Blackshirts of the British Union of Fascists.

Subsequent chapters cover the part played by the British Battalion in the main campaigns of the war. Military disasters are reviewed in detail and events that have since become legendary are thoroughly examined, such as the capture of the British Machine Gun Company at Jarama. However, amidst the strategy and tactics of the battles, the author never loses sight of the human beings involved, and readers are kept vividly aware of the tremendous stresses and difficulties that individuals were facing in the chaos of war. The faces in the photographs bear expressions of seasoned determination and weariness more often than youthful smiles.

A further chapter gives a harrowing account of the experiences of the members of the battalion who were taken prisoner. Those who were fortunate enough not to be shot had grim memories of the unsanitary conditions, lack of food and beatings during the months they spent as captives. Richard Baxell also gives a moving description of their efforts to develop strategies to make life bearable and their valiant escape attempts. Amongst the men who were repatriated in prisoner exchanges there were some who returned to fight again in Spain, despite knowing they faced certain execution if captured again.

In the final chapter, “British volunteers for liberty or Comintern army?”, Dr Baxell examines this contentious question in detail, considering the relationship of the Communist Party with the volunteers as symbiotic rather than parasitic. He also reviews the evidence regarding the treatment of deserters, retaining a clear sense of the context in which difficult decisions had to be taken.

Reference is also made to international rivalries amongst the men and in particular the relationship between the Spanish and the International Brigaders. Given the ever-increasing numbers of Spaniards in the battalions of the International Brigades, needed as replacements for casualties, and the reluctance of many of the British to speak foreign languages, problems of communication must have been very commonplace. One volunteer, Joe Monks, is cited as having justified this lack of enthusiasm to learn Spanish by claiming there was “a superstition that anybody that started to study Spanish grammar got killed”. But later he was prepared to concede that this was probably “just an excuse for not doing it”. The tensions and comradeship in the interactions taking place at grass-roots level between Brigaders and Spanish soldiers and civil-

ians must surely be a subject worthy of more extensive research in the future.

A copy of the data base that was created during the research process has now been placed in the International Brigade Archives at the Marx Memorial Library in London.

**Angela Jackson**

*This edited review was first carried in the “The Volunteer”, journal of the veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and has been reproduced with the permission of Angela Jackson, author of “British Women and the Spanish Civil War”.*

## Bob Doyle in Spanish

**“Memorias de un Rebelde sin Pausa” by Bob Doyle, Asociación de Amigos de las Brigadas Internacionales, Madrid, 2002, 187 pages, €12 paperback.**

For most readers it will come as a disappointment that Bob Doyle’s autobiography has yet to be published in its original English, even though the Spanish translation has been in print since 2002.

Doyle’s memoirs chronicle a life of poverty in Dublin and exploitation as child labour in Wicklow (while officially in care), as well as post-war activities as a trade union activist in the British newspaper industry.

Spain, however, remains central to his narrative, not least his record of cruelties and savage beatings experienced in the Spanish fascist concentration camp of San Pedro de Cardena. His account of his capture along with Frank Ryan in March 1938 is both vivid and poignant. Ryan’s courageous behaviour as an officer in the face of an assault by an Italian fascist officer is dramatically recounted, as well as the restraining influence of Doyle himself and Jackie Lemon of Waterford in saving him from further beatings. And then there is the heart-wrenching description of the conversation between Ryan and Doyle as they are being marched off as prisoners, when Ryan simply informs his comrade: “They published my book today”. Some book launch!

**Manus O’Riordan**

## In brief...

● **“You Are History, You Are Legend” edited by Annette O’Riordan, Relatives and Friends of Waterford International Brigaders, Waterford, 2004, 31 pages, €10 paperback.** This is a commemorative booklet issued in a limited edition of 1,000 copies in conjunction with the unveiling of the Waterford International Brigade monument in July. It is an anthology of accounts of the 11 Waterford volunteers from the very outset of the Spanish anti-fascist war to the XVth Brigade’s final battle and is extensively illustrated with historical photos, some being published for the very first time. It is available for €10, inclusive of postage, from Seán Kelly, 3 Breffni Close, Lismore Lawn, Waterford City, Ireland.

● Andy Croft is the author of **“Comrade Heart – A life of Randall Swinger”**, the extraordinary story of the English poet, godson of the Archbishop of Canterbury, communist, librettist, publisher, propagandist and war hero. Swindler wrote the first play about the war in Spain (performed at the Unity Theatre in October 1936) as well as part of the text (with Auden) of Benjamin Britten’s “Ballad of Heroes”, written to mark the return of the British Battalion in 1939. He also published and co-edited Nancy Cunard’s famous questionnaire about the civil-war. “Comrade Heart” is published by Manchester University Press, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9NR. Tel: 0161 275 2310.

● Warren & Pell has an ever-growing list of re-publications about the Spanish Civil War – **“Britons in Spain”** by William Rust, **“The Book of the XVth Brigade”** and **“Miners Against Fascism”** by Hywel Francis. Others are planned. Contact Alan Warren at: The Old Bible Christian Chapel, High Street, Abersychan, Pontypool, Torfaen NP4 7AG or [warren.ofbooks@virgin.net]. Website: [www.warrenandpellpublishin.co.uk].

# International Brigade Memorial Trust

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

Saturday 16 October 2004

at 3pm, Temple of Peace, Cathays Park, Cardiff\*

### Agenda

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

\* Directions and accommodation guidance available from Marlene Sidaway (IBMT Secretary) at 37 Reginald Road, London E7 9HS; tel: 020-8555 6674; email: [marlenesidaway@hotmail.com].

\*\* Please let Marlene know if you intend to come, and if you would like to stand for election to the committee or office.

### Annual accounts

The annual accounts of the Trust will be presented for approval at the Annual General Meeting. They have already been approved by the Committee, subject to independent scrutiny by a chartered accountant and submitted to the Charity Commissioners. In summary, the accounts are healthy with an accumulated surplus of £13,580 being carried forward. The surplus for 2004 will not be so great because of exceptional items of expenditure, the largest of which is the replacement for the banner. I am not proposing that there should be any increase in subscriptions for the next year. I would be happy to answer any questions about the accounts at the AGM or at other times.

**Peter Crome, Treasurer**

*Geraldine Abrahams writes: We were very grateful to receive £2,600 in cash donations from over a dozen trade unions and companies for the AGM in Glasgow, as well as donations in kind of wine, food and facilities.*

### Accommodation

Most of us are staying at the Angel Hotel in Castle Street. Rates, including breakfast, are £150 for two nights for two people all in, or £92 per room for

one night, singles £75 per night. To book tel: 029-2064 9201 (Monday-Friday 9am-6pm) or 029-2064 9200. Quote the IBMT. Otherwise contact the Cardiff Visitor Centre, tel: 029-2022 7281 which has lists of hotels large and small, as well as B&B accommodation.

### Timetable for Saturday 16 October

- 1.30pm: Assemble at the International Brigades Memorial, Alexandra Gardens, Cathays Park, Cardiff; speakers: First Minister for Wales Rhodri Morgan AM, Hywel Francis MP and IBMT President Jack Jones. Wreath laying will be followed by Cor Cochion Caerdydd singing "Jarama".
- 2pm: Light refreshments in the Temple of Peace.
- 3pm: Annual General Meeting.
- 5pm: Video showing of "Into the Fire: American Women in the Spanish Civil War".
- 7pm-11pm: Social evening in the Temple of Peace, with buffet and bar; £6 (including first drink, others all £1); entertainment by: Dave Burns, Frank Hennessey and Cor Cochion Caerdydd. In order to help the caterers, please let IBMT Secretary Marlene Sidaway know if you intend to come.

### Sunday 17 October

At Pendragon House, Cross Street, Caerleon, a blue plaque will be unveiled to commemorate the Basque refugee children who stayed there. The ceremony will take place at noon and it is hoped that some people might stay on after the AGM to attend. Caerleon is about 18 miles from Cardiff. Details from Natalia Benjamin of the Basque Children of '37 Association on 01865-459 744.

### Schools competition

To mark the occasion of our AGM in Cardiff, the Welsh Centre for International Affairs is holding a competition for schools and colleges with a first prize of £150, second prize £100 and third prize £50.

Students are asked to research the role of the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War and do one of the following:

- 1) Write an essay on the involvement of Wales in the war.
- 2) Write several diary entries as if you were a Welsh member of the International Brigade, describing events and emotions.
- 3) Many people who went on to be famous in other fields were involved in the International Brigade. Research one of these and write about their involvement and the impact it had on their lives.

Full details and rules can be obtained from Stephen Thomas, CEWC-Cymru, Temple of Peace, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3AP.

### In brief

● The statue of Dolores Ibarruri, *La Pasionaria*, situated at Custom House Quay in Glasgow and rededicated at last year's Annual General Meeting, is one of Historic Scotland's new list of buildings in the city considered important enough to be preserved for their special historical or architectural interest. The memorial, created in 1974 by Liverpoolian sculptor Arthur Dooley, is Glasgow's tribute to the 2,100 British volunteers who went to Spain to fight fascism. The statue bears the famous quotation: "Better to die on your feet than live forever on your knees." IBMT Secretary Marlene Sidaway has meanwhile received

information from the Friends of War Memorials who can help with the process if we want to consider having other memorials listed. Contact Marlene for more information (see front page for details).

● Owen Hardisty, an active member of the University of the Third Age, Luton branch, wrote an article for their newsletter about William James (Joe) Gough who left Luton on 15 October 1936 to go to Spain. Joe joined the Thaelmann Battalion along with a group of fellow Britons, which saw action at Cerro de los Angeles, Casa de Campo, and at Boadilla, where the battalion suffered appalling losses, and Joe was killed. His is just one of hundreds of stories

of ordinary, committed men who volunteered for Spain. These stories need to be told to a wider audience, so that their names and deeds will live on. A photocopy of the article is available from Marlene Sidaway (see front page for details).

● The anti-fascist "Searchlight" magazine is carrying a story in this month's (September) issue: "You are history, you are legend: Irish International Brigaders remembered" by Ken Keable.

● The Marx Memorial Library in London is organising a series of autumn lectures on Mondays and an introduction to socialist films on Tuesdays. For details tel: 020-7253 1485.