



IBMT Newsletter

www.international-brigades.org.uk

Issue 34 / 1-2013

INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST

**Farewell to
last two
Brigaders
in Britain**



**Biker's journey
from Wall of
Death to Battle
of Jarama**



**Why I'm proud
of my captured
grandfather**

**Joe Gough
portrait
brings
Luton's
anti-fascist
hero back
to life**



Plus: The war that continued in Spain after 1939

International Brigade
Memorial Trust



LEN CROME Memorial Lecture

SATURDAY 2nd MARCH, 2013
The Manchester Conference
Centre and Hotel
Sackville Street
Manchester, M1 3BB

For
booking
details see
page 26

OBROS LA LA VICTORIA!
¡NO PASARÁN!

GEORGE ORWELL
HOMAGE TO CATALONIA
75 YEARS ON

Speakers

Dr. Richard Baxell
Dr. Tom Buchanan
Christopher Hall
Prof. Paul Preston

Chairperson

Prof. Mary Vincent



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International Brigade Memorial Trust

www.international-brigades.org.uk

Charity no: 1094928



IBMT mourns loss of last two volunteers in Britain

The last two known International Brigade veterans in Britain have died. They were Lou Kenton, who passed away on 17 September at the age of 104, and David Lomon, who was 94 when he died on 21 December.

The deaths leave one surviving British volunteer with whom the IBMT is in contact: Stan Hilton, who lives in a nursing home in Yarrowonga, Australia.

Lou Kenton was a life-long political activist. A veteran of the Battle of Cable Street, he went to Spain in the summer of 1937 and served as a despatch rider and ambulance driver.

Manchester-born David Lomon attended several IBMT-supported events in Britain and Spain in the last two years of his life, including one in November only weeks before his death.

He arrived in Spain, aged 19, in December 1937 and, along with other members of the British Battalion, was captured by Italian troops in Aragon in April of the following year. He spent the next six months in prisoner-of-war camps before repatriation. After the Second World War, Lomon settled in London and had a successful career in the garment industry.

Lou Kenton worked full-time for the Communist Party and then the British Czechoslovak Friendship League, leaving in 1968 when the Prague Spring was suppressed. This also prompted him to leave the party and to join Labour. He returned to working in Fleet Street and as a sideline produced commemorative ceramics for left-wing causes, including some pieces for the International Brigade Association.



Lou Kenton (left) at home with his ceramics collection and David Lomon in Madrid in November last year.

He is almost certainly unique in having been a member of the Communist and Labour parties for 40 years each.

Family and friends at his funeral in Mortlake, south-west London, on 1 October were read a message from Labour leader Ed Miliband: "I was very sorry to hear of Lou's passing. He was a remarkable man whose history probably outshone everybody who is still with us in the Labour and Communist movements. From the things I've read and the people I've met, I know he touched so many lives and the Labour Party will be poorer without him offering us his advice and guidance."

See: From the Secretary: page 9 and Obituaries: pages 15 and 17.

2013 subs now due

IBMT subscriptions for 2013 are now due. If you have not already done so, please send your payment to the Membership Secretary at the address below.

Subscription rates have been increased from 1 January 2013. See pages 4 (UK only) and 20 (UK and overseas) for the new rates. When returning your cheque, clearly state your name and address so that these can be matched with our membership records.

Also, please consider paying your subs by direct debit. The direct debit form can be downloaded at: [www.international-brigades.org.uk/join.htm].

Send cheques or completed direct debit forms to IBMT Membership Secretary, 2 Woodford Close, Radyr Way, Cardiff CF5 2PH.

● For any queries, tel: 029-2019 5412; email:

[memsec@international-brigades.org.uk].

● See overleaf: Why we've had to raise subs.

Your bigger Newsletter

The IBMT Newsletter will now be published twice rather than three times a year. But each issue will be much bigger than before.

More pages will allow us to carry longer articles and features. Increasingly members are relying on our online information service, website and Facebook page for up-to-date news and announcements.

The magazine has expanded greatly in recent years. Until 2008 each issue had just eight pages. Four more pages were then added, and in 2011 we went up to 16 pages.

During this year we also plan to revamp our website and all our online communications media, including our YouTube and Flickr sites as well as our popular Facebook page and email information service.

Remember to pay your 2013 membership subscriptions so that you carry on receiving the IBMT Newsletter.

Why we've had to raise membership subs (for the first time in 12 years)

By Jim Jump, IBMT Secretary

Our 2012 Annual General Meeting approved an increase in membership subscription rates from 1 January 2013.

These rates have remained unchanged since the IBMT was created in 2001. But our activities and running costs have both increased substantially. For example, standard second class postage rose by 85 per cent between 2001 and 2012, while our magazine doubled in size from eight to 16 pages.

In recent years we have also produced our popular "Antifascistas" travelling exhibition. More commemorative and educational events have been organised. And we have refurbished our magnificent national memorial on London's South Bank and added a plaque beside it.

Although income has also increased – thanks to more members joining (we've tripled in size over the past four years) and

"Standard second class postage rose by 85 per cent between 2001 and 2012, while our magazine doubled in size from eight to 16 pages."

growing merchandise sales – this has not been enough to offset our rising costs.

As a result, in the past two years we have for the first time spent more than we've received in income. This state of affairs cannot continue, so the AGM approved the Executive Committee's decision to increase subscription rates by £5 a year. So the annual rates for UK-based members are now: Unwaged £12.50; Individual £20; Family £25.

Non UK-based members will be notified separately of their new rates, which will reflect the additional cost of overseas postage.

I hope all members will understand why we've had to raise subscription rates. Please continue to support us in our commemorative, educational and publicity efforts to keep alive the memory and spirit of the volunteers who fought fascism and defended democracy in Spain from 1936-39.

If you have any queries about membership subscriptions email: [memsec@international-brigades.org.uk]; tel: 029-2019 5412.

WELCOME: Ed Tyhurst, a helper at Newhaven Fort, painted this eye-catching placard advertising the IBMT's "Antifascistas" exhibition, which was hosted at the fort in the run-up to the Trust's Annual General Meeting. The IBMT is in discussions with the management of Newhaven Fort – a popular Second World War visitors' centre on the South Coast – on the possibility of a permanent display about Sussex and the Spanish Civil War and the links between the civil war and the world war that immediately followed it.



Busy AGM in East Sussex

By Pauline Fraser, IBMT Trustee

The IBMT's 2012 Annual General Meeting was held in the sunny south and, for once, it did not belie its name. Trust members discovered that, among his many talents, Mike Anderson, who organised events in East Sussex, was also a magician who could conjure up fine weather. Thanks to Mike, former IBMT Treasurer and Executive Committee member, the entire weekend went off without a hitch.

A video of the "Goodbye Barcelona" musical based around the life of a young Jewish volunteer from the East End got Friday night off to a cracking start at the Leaf Hall Community Arts Centre in Eastbourne. Composers Judith Johnson and Karl Lewkowicz attended the screening, which started the weekend on the right note.

On Saturday morning members staying in Eastbourne were taken by coach to Newhaven Fort, where a short re-dedication ceremony was held at the bench in memory of the volunteers who left for Spain or returned via Newhaven. David Lomon, one of only two known Brigaders still alive, laid a wreath. The bench was first unveiled by Jack Jones in 2008 and was the last public event of the Trust that Jack presided over.

Members explored the fort, where the IBMT's "Antifascistas" exhibition was on public display, until it was time for the afternoon's AGM. Following the officers' reports and elections, a lively but friendly discussion ensued among the 50 or so members present.

In the evening it was back to the magnificent Eastbourne Centre hotel – owned by Unite the Union – for an informative and entertaining evening about the Sussex volunteers. Mike Anderson was assisted by Jon Mason and Steve Ringwood, two postgraduate students from Sussex University who have researched the local volunteers, as well as our Secretary, Jim Jump. Mike

Two new Trustees

There are two new faces on the IBMT Executive Committee that was elected at the Annual General Meeting. They are Danny Payne, who has run the high-profile Merseyside International Brigades Network for several years, and Mick Whelan, General Secretary of the train drivers' union ASLEF, a strong supporter of the trust.

At the same time the AGM recorded the Trust's sincere appreciation for the outstanding work of one of our founding Executive Committee members and Trustees, Rodney Bickerstaffe, who did not seek re-election at the AGM. He now becomes an IBMT Patron (see report on facing page).

All the other existing Trustees were re-elected, including Chair Dolores Long, Secretary Jim Jump and Treasurer Charles Jepson. The full list can be seen on page 9.

showed us some fascinating archive film of labour movement events on the South Coast from the 1930s.

Many members stayed on until Sunday and took a coach to Hastings, the "Mugsborough" of Robert Tressell's "The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists". Local historian Steve Peak guided us around the town. We saw the three houses where Tressell and his daughter lived, and Steve set the book in context of the economic conditions prevailing in Edwardian Hastings. Tressell's classic book of working-class exploitation was well known to many Brigaders in Spain.

Photos from the AGM weekend can be viewed on the IBMT's new Flickr photo-sharing site. See: [www.flickr.com/photos/ibmt] and [www.flickr.com/people/ibmt].



PATRONS: (from left) Rodney Bickerstaffe, Peter Crome, Hywel Francis, Helen Graham, Ken Livingstone, Len McCluskey, Christy Moore, Jack O'Connor, Maxine Peake and Jan Royall.

IBMT appoints new Patrons

The IBMT has strengthened its team of Patrons, expanding their number from two to 10. New appointments include leading academics, trade unionists and figures from the worlds of politics and the arts. All share an interest in and admiration for the International Brigades. The new team now comprises:

Rodney Bickerstaffe, former union leader and founding IBMT Trustee,

Professor Peter Crome, an expert in geriatric care and son of Dr Len Crome, head of medical services for the International Brigades, **Hywel Francis**, Labour MP for Aberdare and author of "Miners Against Fascism", about the South Wales miners in the International Brigades, **Professor Helen Graham**, author of several ground-breaking books on the Spanish Civil War,

Ken Livingstone, former London Mayor and existing IBMT Patron, **Len McCluskey**, General Secretary of Unite, one of Britain's most powerful trade unions, **Christy Moore**, singer-songwriter, **Jack O'Connor**, General President of SIPTU, Ireland's main public sector union, **Maxine Peake**, film and TV actor, **Baroness (Jan) Royall**, Leader of the

Opposition in the House of Lords. Paul Preston, the renowned historian of the Spanish Civil War and modern Spain, who has been an IBMT Patron for the past 12 years, takes the title of IBMT Founding Chair. This recognises his key role in



PAUL PRESTON: Becomes IBMT Founding Chair.

chairing the meeting in 2000 between the International Brigade Association and the Friends of the International Brigades that led to the creation of the IBMT.

Permanent display on Merseyside volunteers

Pictured right, Unite General Secretary Len McCluskey (centre) unveils a permanent exhibition of images of Merseyside International Brigade volunteers at the Casa Bar in Liverpool. With him are Danny Payne (left) of the IBMT, who compiled the collection of more than 50 photographs and reproductions of maps, letters, newspaper cuttings and other documents, along with Tony Nelson, a manager of the popular city centre bar in Hope Street that was set up by dockers sacked during their 1995-98 strike and lock-out.

More than 200 people packed the bar on 15 September to see the unveiling of the exhibition, which has been financed by Unite and other unions and laid out by graphic designer Simon Hawkesworth.

The display includes many rare images of the more than 200 volunteers from Merseyside. Several of them came to light after relatives of local Brigaders saw the acclaimed Merseyside and the Spanish Civil War at Liverpool's People's Centre in 2008. "People are still coming forward with new photos," said Payne. "We will add these to the Casa Bar display when possible."

Contact: [danpayne40@yahoo.co.uk].



Meeting hears call for Cambridge memorial

A campaign to create a memorial to the International Brigade volunteers from Cambridge was launched at a packed public meeting at St John's College on 5 October.

Co-hosted by Cambridge University's Communist Society and Hispanic Society, the meeting heard talks by historian Richard Baxell, IBMT Secretary Jim Jump and Dr Dacia Viejó Rose, a research fellow studying violence in the Spanish Civil War.

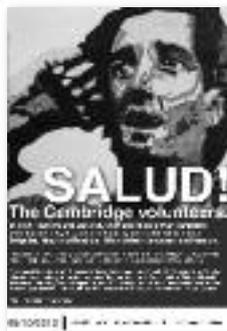
There were some 25 volunteers from Cambridge, almost all of them university undergraduates and recent graduates. However, only one volunteer, Ronald Rolph, a prominent local trade unionist, is recognised in the town, with a row of industrial units, Ronald Rolph Court, named after him.

Jump said that some sort of memorial to the local volunteers was long overdue. Supporters of

the International Brigades and the veterans themselves had always so strenuously denied the myth that the volunteers had mostly been poets and intellectuals that the significant contribution from Cambridge University had often been overlooked.

The organiser of the meeting, local IBMT member Phil Katz, said afterwards that a follow-up meeting would soon be arranged to press forward with the proposal for a memorial.

For more information about the Cambridge campaign contact Phil Katz: [philkatzzone@me.com].



Right: The poster for the public meeting in October.

Cover girl's identity is so close to home

Following notification by the IBMT of a YouTube video of the book launch of "Geordie's Story", a biography of International Brigader Jack Brent (see review on page 25), IBMT member Mike Wild from Sheffield sent off for a copy of the book. He was in for a surprise.

The son of Sam Wild, last commander of the British Battalion, and brother of IBMT Executive Committee members Hilary Jones and Dolores Long (who is the IBMT Chair), Mike was amazed to see on the cover of the book a photo of Jack Brent holding a six-month-old baby, with a portrait of Stalin on the wall behind them. Mike recognised it as a picture in his family collection.

The baby was Dolores, who was born in November 1943. In 1944 Jack Brent was staying with Sam and Bessie Wild at their council house at 57 Birch Hall Lane, Longsight, Manchester – where today there is a blue plaque



Mystery baby in the arms of Jack Brent, as featured on the book cover.

dedicated to Sam Wild. At the time Brent was having treatment at the Baguley military hospital for septic wounds in his ankle. Mike remembers watching while his granny Lizzie Berry, who had been a nurse, changed his dressings.

Born in Canada, Jack had been severely wounded at Jarama while fighting in the Abraham Lincoln Battalion. Invalided home to London, he became active in the International Brigade Association, the veterans' organisation set up by Brigaders, becoming its General Secretary for a while. He died in 1951.

Mike Wild, 73, remembers sitting and chatting with Jack. "He was a very handsome man, with big smiling brown eyes. His bed was in our front parlour, along with bikes, a piano and pictures of Marx, Lenin and Stalin on the wall. When Dr Brown, our GP, said he didn't like that man, pointing to Stalin, I proudly said: 'It's our Uncle Joe – he's winning the war!'" The photo was not taken down until 1956, when Khrushchev denounced the crimes of Stalin.

A staunch communist, Jack Brent gave Mike Wild a set of books by Jack London and a copy of "The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists", which he treasures to this day. "I remember a radio covered in green leather from Eisenhower's plane that an ex-Lincoln, who was based at Burtonwood air base, gave to Jack. We could twiddle the dials and get news and music from all over Europe."

"Geordie's Story" author John Dickie, who is Brent's nephew, and Dolores Long were delighted to be told of the connection. Neither realised the blue-eyed baby in Jack's arms is the current chair of IBMT.

The film by Isabel Cortes about the "Geordie's Story" book launch at Northampton Central Library on 4 November can be seen on the IBMT's YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/user/IBMTnews?feature=mhee].

Edinburgh event ends with musical tribute

By Gordon Munro

A good turnout on 28 October in Edinburgh, including many young people and local Spaniards, marked the commemoration of the 74th anniversary of the departure of the International Brigades from Spain.

Banners were raised and flowers in the colours of the Spanish Republic were laid at the memorial to the volunteers in East Princes Street Gardens. There were stirring speeches by local author Daniel Gray and Colin Cargill, nephew of Brigader Tom Murray, on behalf of the relatives. They were joined by IBMT Treasurer Charles Jepson, who urged vigilance in these troubled times and that no space be given to fascism. The gathering finished with everyone singing "Jarama Valley".

The evening saw the launch of the "No Pasaran: Scots in the Spanish Civil War" CD pro-



Supporters on their way through East Princes Street Gardens.

duced by local record label Greentrax (see review on page 23). Daniel Gray gave a reading from his work "Homage to Caledonia", the book that inspired Ian Green from Greentrax to put out the call to artists to record the album.

Staged in the Barioja tapas bar, where there was standing room only, the event saw fine performances from Arthur Johnstone, Christine Kydd, Alison McMorland and Geordie McIntyre, Frank Rae, Robin Laing and Gallo Rojo.

Gavin MacDougall of Luath Press, publishers of "Homage to Caledonia", played a helpful role in making the Edinburgh commemoration happen. And he was the link that brought Daniel, Ian and myself together – resulting in the CD.

● A ceremony of remembrance was also held at the La Pasionaria International Brigade memorial in Glasgow on 27 October.

Gordon Munro is a Labour councillor for Edinburgh's Leith Ward.

Homage in Benissa

British residents on Spain's Costa Blanca were among the many people who attended the annual homage to the International Brigades in Benissa, where there was an International Brigade hospital during the Spanish Civil War.

The programme for the weekend of 19-21 October included a gathering at the International Brigade memorial in the town's cemetery.

IBMT's teaching resources now online

The IBMT is offering teachers an education CD, which is available through our website [www.internationalbrigades.org.uk/education_support.htm].

The disk contains lesson plans and materials broken up into three age groups:

8-10 years:

- International Brigades,
- Basque child refugees,
- Aid for Spain movement.

11-13 years:

- International Brigades,
- Basque child refugees,
- Why did the Republic lose the war?
- Why was the Spanish Civil

War important?

- Osterley Park: Is "Dads' Army" an accurate interpretation?

14-16 years:

- Causes of the civil war,
- Taking sides,
- The war begins,
- The militia,
- Arms for Spain / Non-intervention,
- Intervention / The role of Italy and Germany,
- The war: an overview,
- Why join the International Brigades?
- International Brigades,
- Power politics in Franco's Spain,

– Consequences of the Nationalist victory.

IBMT Education Officer Richard Thorpe says that, while principally aimed at history lesson pupils, the materials for 14-16 years can also be used to support post-16 Spanish cultural lessons as a part of AS Spanish.

"This list will grow as more materials are added to it – watch out for 'Mussolini blind date'," he adds.

Copies of the CD are available from Richard Thorpe: [rthorpe@theaxholmeacademy.com].



British ex-pats at the International Brigade memorial in Benissa.

Most of the British party were members of the IBMT and the Labour International Costa Blanca North Branch.

One of them, Kevin Bruton, said: "As a Briton I'm deeply ashamed at the failure of the British government to support the legitimately elected Spanish Republic in the civil war against a military coup supported by Hitler and Mussolini."

He added: "But, also as a Briton and a Welshman I am very proud of the 2,500 Britons, including many Welsh miners who, despite their government, came to Spain to fight fascism."

For the Costa Blanca North Branch of Labour International, see [www.labintspain.org.uk].

Two more memorials in Dublin



A mural of Bob Doyle (above) and a plaque in Temple Bar (below).

Two new International Brigade memorials were unveiled in Dublin on 7 October as part of a weekend of activities organised by Anti-Fascist Action Ireland to mark the 21st anniversary of its formation.

A plaque dedicated to the memory of all Irish anti-fascist volunteers who joined the fight against Franco in Spain was unveiled at Connolly Books in Temple Bar by Independent Socialist Dublin City Councillor Ciaran Perry. The gathering of 200 people was addressed by Tom Redmond on behalf of the Communist Party of Ireland and by Manus O'Riordan, IBMT Ireland Secretary, who also read out the roll of honour of the Irish International Brigaders who had given their lives in that fight.

A mural in memory of International Brigader Bob Doyle, who died in 2009 at the age of 92,
Continued overleaf



Artist tracks down photo for portrait of anti-fascist hero

By Jim Jump

St Albans-based artist and sculptor Frank Casey has brought International Brigade volunteer James William Gough back to life with a magnificent new portrait (see the cover of this issue) of the young sheet metal worker who died during the defence of Madrid in December 1936.

Gough – known as "Joe" in Spain and "Jimmy" to his family – was one of seven British volunteers killed in fighting at Boadilla del Monte, about 10 miles west of the Spanish capital. They were part of a unit of 20 English-speakers, nearly all British, attached to the mainly German Thälmann Battalion.

Casey has painted two versions of the oil-on-canvas portrait, measuring 100cm x 80cm. One is on display at the Wardown Park Museum in Luton – where it was unveiled on 20 December.

The second version (the one featured on our cover) will be presented to the London & Eastern Region of Unite the Union later this year. Before going to Spain, Gough worked at Vauxhall Motors in Luton and was a member of the AUEW engineering workers' union – one of the unions that, via various mergers, came together to form Unite.

The union is moving into a new regional office in Finsbury, north-west London, in September, when the portrait will be formally unveiled.

Regional Secretary Peter Kavanagh told the IBMT that the union would be proud to hang the painting in a prominent position in the building. "It will fit well with the priorities we give to the ongoing fight against fascism," he added.

IBMT member Frank Casey says he resolved that there should be a memorial to Gough in response to the current negative portrayal of Luton as a centre of neo-Nazi activity, especially by the English Defence League. "I wanted to



JOE GOUGH: Photo that inspired the portrait.

highlight the fact that there is another tradition in Luton that must not be forgotten, a strong radical and anti-fascist tradition."

However, before painting the portrait Casey faced a major obstacle: no-one knew what Gough looked like. An article appeared in the *Luton Herald & Post*

on 14 September 2011 reporting Frank's plans and appealing for more information on Gough.

As a result Joe's great nephew, Terry Moore, contacted him from New Zealand and sent him the photo that is the basis of the new portrait.

Joe Gough was born on 28 January 1911, of British parents living in Quebec, Canada, who returned home to live in Luton.

He probably entered Spain in October 1936 and made his way to the International Brigades'

"I wanted to highlight the fact that there is another tradition in Luton that must not be forgotten, a strong radical and anti-fascist tradition."

newly established base in Albacete. The British Battalion had not yet been created, so he was assigned to an English-speaking "zug" (platoon) in the Thälmann Battalion.

He fought at Madrid's Casa de Campo and University City in November and December 1936 and was listed as killed in action during the fighting around Boadilla del Monte, probably on 17 December, though his body was not recovered for another three days.

It was said that he died while attempting to carry back the body of another British member of his platoon, Arnold Jeans. Both were later buried at Fuencarral Cemetery in Madrid.

Meanwhile, Casey has sent the photo of Joe Gough to TV and film scriptwriter Terry Hodgkinson, who is working on a film script about the life of Esmond Romilly – the nephew of Winston Churchill who was a member of the same platoon as Gough.

As well as the Gough portrait, Casey created the International Brigade memorial in Blantyre, South Lanarkshire, unveiled in 2009. He has also made a sculpture for rail and maritime union RMT in honour of the merchant seamen on ships trading with Republican Spain during the Spanish Civil War.



Artist Frank Casey (left) hands over postcards written by Joe Gough from France and Spain and other personal papers to John Callow, Director of the Marx Memorial Library, home of the International Brigade Memorial Archive. Casey was given the documents by the Gough family after they learned of his interest in Joe Gough.

Help preserve memorials with an annual remembrance

By Charles Jepson

In 1996 the International Brigade Association published an excellent book titled "Memorials of the Spanish Civil War". Authors Colin Williams, Bill Alexander and John Gorman identified and described the 38 memorials that existed at the time in Britain and Ireland. Today, thanks to the work and dedication of individuals, supporters of the IBMT, trade unions and local community groups, the number of memorials has risen to 114, and that number will continue to grow.

Campaigning and securing the permission to

erect a memorial is not an easy task; nor can the eventual unveiling of the memorial be seen as the end of the story. Victory comes from how well that memorial is used over the years to raise awareness about the volunteers.

Members of the Trust are currently assisting in an audit of the existing memorials in order to ascertain their current location, condition and accessibility. In some areas there are very active supporter groups looking after and making good use of the memorials. Sadly in a few areas the memorials are neglected and go ignored. At least one memorial has been lost when a building was demolished, a number

of others have been moved from their original location and one or two are in need of some attention.

To address this situation I would like to see an annual day of remembrance to be organised at as many of the memorials as possible, held in February to coincide with the annual anniversary of the Battle of Jarama.

Such an act of remembrance would serve two purposes. It would help raise the profile of the memorial, possibly attracting press coverage for the IBMT and, secondly, it would ensure that the memorial was inspected on an annual basis for damage, neglect or vandalism.

Just two or three supporters gathered by a memorial would be a most worthwhile and meaningful act, one that would attract growing support in years to come. In a number of areas our supporters already hold annual commemorations and there is no reason why they should be moved to February; these are the example we should build on in order to better preserve the memory of those we honour.

Charles Jepson is the IBMT Treasurer and is overseeing an audit of International Brigade memorials in Britain and Ireland; tel: 01254-51302, email: [clarioncc@yahoo.co.uk].



MANCHESTER: IBMT supporters and anti-fascist campaigners are being invited to a commemorative ceremony at the International Brigade memorial inside Manchester Town Hall (both pictured left) at 11.30am on Sunday 10 February for what is hoped will be the first of an annual event. There will be speeches, wreath-laying and songs from a Clarion Choir. More details on page 26.

From previous page

was unveiled by Harry Owens in North King Street, where Doyle was born in 1916.

Fife hails its 'working-class heroes'

By Malcolm Burns

Trade unionists marched through Kirkcaldy on 1 September to mark the 76th anniversary of the creation of the International Brigades.

Wreaths were laid at the memorial erected in 1987 in memory of the 46 Fife volunteers.

Fife Trades Union Council chairman Ian Waddell spoke of the need for continuing vigilance in defence of democracy.

"The ideas that divide working people in the interests of the capitalist class are still around and must never be ignored," he said.

And Councillor Willie Clarke described the volunteers as working-class heroes: "The soldiers and nurses who travelled from the towns and pit villages of Fife knew that fascism did not stop at national boundaries.

"The lesson for us today is that working people will always have to struggle for their rights and the most precious right is democracy."

Daniel Gray, author of "Homage to Caledonia", described the lives of the 549 volunteers from Scotland – a quarter of whom never returned.

"They reflected all the struggles faced by working people in Scotland at the time: unemployment, industrial victimisation, poverty. But they also reflected the determination of work-

ing people to organise and to fight for a better life," he stated.

A longer version of this report appeared in the *Morning Star* on 3 September 2012.

In brief

● The North Lanarkshire No Pasaran Memorial Committee and the North Lanarkshire Trades Union Council held a fundraising event in **Motherwell** on 26 October and raised approximately £4,000 toward the building of a memorial to the volunteers from North Lanarkshire. Contact [no.pasaran@yaho.co.uk].

● Participants came from France, Italy, Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Sweden and the UK to attend the annual commemorative weekend in **Berlin** hosted by the German organisation KFSR (Fighters and Friends of the Spanish Republic) on 8/9 September. There were lectures and discussions on keeping the spirit of Republican



At Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

Spain alive. And a visit was made to the site of the Nazi concentration camp in Sachsenhausen, an hour's drive away, with special attention to the Spanish and International Brigade fighters who were imprisoned there, including the Republican premier Largo Caballero.

● A public meeting in **Bury's** Fusiliers Museum on 21 November saw the launch of a campaign for some form of recognition for local International Brigade volunteer Joe Frillingham, who died at Teruel in January 1938. To support the campaign contact IBMT Treasurer Charles Jepson: [clarioncc@yahoo.co.uk].

● There was a memorial ceremony on 11 November in **Renton**, West Dunbartonshire, to commemorate the local International Brigaders who fought and died in Spain. Wreaths were laid by a number of local organisations and families, including GMB and Unite branches.

● Preston-based IBMT member Terry Bayes is campaigning to have the **Oldham** memorials to local International Brigaders restored to public view. At present visitors to the museum at Gallery Oldham have to ask to see a sculpture by John Fordham that was commissioned in 1980 and names six volunteers killed in Spain, along with a plaque created in 1986 by ceramics artist Jim Robison. Bayes has written to council leaders and other key figures and has had positive responses from the trades council and local Labour MP Michael Meacher. To support the campaign contact: [terrybayes@hotmail.com].



These deaths make the work of the IBMT 'even more important'

The International Brigade Memorial Trust keeps alive the memory and spirit of the men and women from Britain, Ireland and elsewhere who volunteered to defend democracy and fight fascism in Spain from 1936 to 1939

www.international-brigades.org.uk

[facebook.com/groups/7123291063](https://www.facebook.com/groups/7123291063)

twitter.com/IBMT_SCW

Charity no.

1094928

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By Jim Jump

The deaths of Lou Kenton and David Lomon in September and December respectively (see obituaries on pages 15 and 17) are a sad but inevitable development. Their departure leaves us with no known surviving volunteer in Britain out of the more than 2,500 from the British Isles who joined the International Brigades.

David remained youthful and active right up to his sudden death and was regularly a guest of honour at many commemorative events in Britain and Spain. He will be sorely missed, not least because from now on all our activities will be conducted without the inspirational presence of at least one veteran.

We received many messages of condolence from around the world in response to Lou and David's deaths, for which we are very grateful, as indeed are the Kenton and Lomon families. One of them, from David Rosenberg of *Jewish Socialist* magazine, made the point that the loss of our last two Brigaders in Britain makes the work of the IBMT "even more important" than it was before.

I hope everyone will agree with this sentiment and continue to support us. We must not let the memory and example of the volunteers fade after their passing.

Greetings for Stan

There may not be any Brigaders left in Britain, but there is still one British International Brigade veteran still alive. He is Stan Hilton, originally from Newhaven, Sussex, but who now lives in Yarrowonga, Australia, having emigrated down under in the 1960s. We keep in touch with him as best we can, and we know

that he is very proud of the fact that he went to Spain. His partner Eve died earlier last year and he has since moved to a local nursing home.

I'm sure he would welcome greetings from IBMT supporters back home. Send messages for him addressed to: Stan Hilton, Woods Point Agedcare, 75-85 Orr Street, Yarrowonga, Victoria 3730, Australia.

Sticking to our objectives

The liveliest debate at our Annual General Meeting (see report on page 4) came after it was proposed from the floor that the IBMT banner should be taken on the TUC's anti-cuts demonstration in London on 20 October. There were some tentative voices in favour, but most of those who spoke did so strongly in favour of maintaining our policy of not participating in contemporary political events – unless of course they directly relate to our objectives.

Speakers pointed out that it was one of the strengths of the IBMT that we brought together people who might disagree vehemently on many controversial topics but who were nonetheless united in their admiration for those who opposed fascism in Spain in the 1930s.

There may well be many parallels to be made between what the volunteers stood for and current political issues. But it is up to individuals to decide what these are, not the IBMT.

Cool heads are surely needed

Brought on by the global banking crisis, Spain's economic woes have added fuel to separatist sentiments in the Basque Country and Catalonia. As two of the wealthiest parts of Spain, some supporters of independence argue that their regions contribute more in taxes than the

Continued overleaf



... It was here that I met other men and women from all over Britain. They came from all walks of life and political beliefs, miners, solicitors, doctors, factory workers, dockers... you name it, they were there, there were even men who had fought in the First World War, but all who were there came for same purpose. To fight Fascism and for the Freedom of the Spanish people.

David Lomon, Speech at the University City of Madrid, 10th November 2012

La AABI wish you Salud, Peace, Solidarity and Freedom

LAST WORDS: How poignant that the New Year greetings e-card sent around the world by the Madrid-based AABI International Brigades friendship group featured the words of our Brigader David Lomon. They are an extract from a speech he made during his last visit to the Spanish capital in November last year. The card was produced and emailed before David's sudden death on 21 December.

THANKS JACK: We were grateful to receive in November a cheque for £500 from the estate of Jack Edwards (1914-2011), International Brigade veteran and IBMT Trustee. He is pictured right (crouching on left) in Spain in 1937 with a group of other international volunteers.

Jack was an enthusiastic supporter of the Trust. His last public outing was to attend the unveiling of the memorial to his fellow Merseyside volunteers at our Annual General Meeting in Liverpool in October 2010. He always lamented the fact that the Spanish Civil War is so seldom taught in schools. The legacy from his estate will help us carry on our educational and other work to remember him and all the other volunteers. We hope it will also encourage others to make donations to the Trust and, like Jack, to remember us in their wills.

Among other donations we have received in the past few months is £200 from the London & South East district council of the train drivers' union ASLEF. A big thank you goes to them and all the other individuals and groups who have made donations.



FANS: In issue number 32 we carried a photo of the banner of the "Jarama Valley Lads", who support FC United of Manchester – the football club set up by disaffected Manchester United supporters in 2005. Now comes news of another group of soccer fans who pay homage to the International Brigades. They are the Hayesbhoys Celtic Supporters' Club of Hayes, west London (<http://hayesbhoys.co.uk>), whose banner (above) is adorned with a picture of Bob Doyle. Irish-born Doyle (1916-2009) settled in west London after serving with the British Battalion in Spain.

From previous page

amount they receive back from central government. Others strongly contest these arguments – seemingly it all depends on how the calculations are made. What is undeniable, however, is that public spending all over Spain is being slashed as part of the austerity programme being imposed from Madrid. So independence-minded political parties and individuals who say their historic nations would be better off going it alone have been gifted a powerful, if perhaps questionable, argument.

The case for and against independence is highly charged and divides opinion on the left in Spain and among Basques and Catalans themselves.

To outsiders it's clear that cool heads and a desire for consensus will be much needed if the economic crisis is not to become a constitutional crisis as well. What isn't needed is the kind of intervention that came from army colonel Francisco Alaman Castro in a press interview last September. He warned that the military would intervene if Catalonia declared independence – and would be justified in doing so because of the oath that soldiers swear to uphold the Spanish constitution.

With their chilling echoes of the last time that Spanish army officers organised a full-scale military coup, his remarks provoked understandable outrage in Catalonia and the rest of Spain. Let's hope they are an isolated twitch of a dying Francoist mindset in the army.

Remembering Jack Jones

Good luck to the Jack Jones Trust (www.jackjonestrust.com), which has been set up to raise money to make a film about Jack's life and to finance film projects reflecting his values.

Such was the praise heaped on the late IBMT Life President – who was born 100 years ago on 29 March this year – that he must have

been blushing in his grave during the reception in the House of Commons on 13 November that formally launched the trust. "He was the left's Winston Churchill, the other great figure of the 20th century," *Daily Mirror* columnist Brian Reade told the gathering. "Winston Churchill had nothing on him," retorted Labour MP Tom Watson to loud cheers and applause. Not surprisingly all speakers, including Unite General Secretary Len McCluskey and IBMT Patron Rodney Bickerstaffe, stressed the importance of Jack's role as an International Brigade volunteer in the Spanish Civil War.

Royalty at war?

Was Prince Roy of Sealand an International Brigader. Who? The self-styled head of state of an abandoned wartime sea fort off the Suffolk coast (with its own flag, passport etc), who died on 9 October at the age of 91, certainly added to the gaiety of the nation. But was he also an anti-fascist hero? His real name was Roy "Paddy" Bates and his obituary in the *Daily Telegraph* records: "Aged 15 Roy left Lindisfarne College, Westcliff-on-Sea, and travelled to Spain to fight for the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War."

There is no record of a Roy Bates travelling

"One factor behind the remarkably durable fascination and respect for the International Brigades must surely be a hankering for causes offering a clear-cut political choice."

to Republican Spain among the exhaustive MI5 list of 4,000 names of potential volunteers. Nor does he appear in the official records of the International Brigades held by the IBMT, or in any other sources. In any case he would have been aged just 17 when the International Brigades left Spain, by which time an age limit of 21 was being enforced, though not always effectively.

If his claim was indeed false (and he would not have been alone in this respect), it's confirmation yet again that being an International Brigader was quite rightly seen as a badge of honour for many of Prince Roy's generation.

Mark Steel says it all

There must be many good reasons why the IBMT has developed into a thriving organisation in recent years. But one factor behind the remarkably durable fascination and respect for the International Brigades must surely be a hankering for causes offering a clear-cut political choice.

This contrasts of course with today's spin-heavy, idealism-light political scene, where differences between the main parties are often negligible at best.

Confirmation of sorts for this theory came in the column by comedian Mark Steel in *The Independent* on 3 October.

Bemoaning the lack of any ideology among current Labour politicians, Steel said that, when challenged to say what they stand for, they were reduced to making statements such as: "I believe passionately and utterly in people. I'm not one of these politicians that puts biscuits first, or gives priority to bits of coiled-up string or starfish, with me it's always people. Only this week, while in Leicester, I met three different people, and it reminded me why I believe in people. And those are the values I learned from my grandfather who fought in the Spanish Civil War."



Captured members of the British Battalion at Jarama. Third from left on the lorry is AC Williams.



Getting to know baby Rosemary after his release from Franco's prisons.

By Lisa Croft

The life of AC Williams, the grandfather I'm so proud of

My grandfather was Archibald Campbell McCaskill Williams, "AC" for short. He was a lifelong socialist, believing in equality and freedom for the ordinary person, and an International Brigade comrade in Spain, becoming a prisoner during the Battle of Jarama.

He spent his childhood in Skye and his youth in Invergordon, but spent much of his adult life away from Scotland. He returned home for the last 12 years of his life, living in Renfrewshire, and died in Glasgow Infirmary in 1972.

Many young Scots were unemployed during the 1920s and left home for work elsewhere. AC was the eldest and best educated of six sons. Aged 19, he set off for Toronto, Canada. He never saw his parents again.

After some short-lived secure employment as a bank clerk, followed by a variety of jobs as lumberjack, fur trapper and rancher, like thousands of other migrants he found himself in one of the unemployed workers' camps. Conditions of extreme poverty and brutality by camp guards led him and fellow inmates to organise and demonstrate against their situation. He joined the Canadian Communist Party and after one particular violent clash with police he was arrested, convicted as a "rabid agitator" and imprisoned. Following his sentence, he was deported in chains to the UK.

Unemployed in London and living in a hostel, he met and married Jane. They were both Communist Party members and politically active in the fight against the Blackshirts in the Jewish East End of London. With the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War they became involved in the Aid Spain movement.

Supported by his pregnant wife Jane (my grandmother), AC volunteered to join the International Brigades. He was responsible for recruiting another member, Alexander Foote, who became one of the most notorious Soviet spies of the time. They both joined a group of Brigaders who set off on 23 December 1936 for France via Dover. From Paris they went

by train to Perpignan, then to Figueras in Spain. At Albacete he became part of the no. 2 machine-gun company, and was issued with an ancient machine-gun as he'd had experience with firearms as a trapper in Canada.

In February the company was involved with the rest of the British Battalion at the Battle of Jarama, where they were defending the road from Madrid to Valencia. They were ill equipped compared with Franco's fascists, who were supported by German and Italian soldiers and armour and on the first day of the battle half of the battalion were killed or wounded. AC's machine-gun company was ambushed by Moorish soldiers, who they thought were their own side's reinforcements, having been tricked by the singing of "The Internationale". They were overpowered and captured, then marched off with their hands above their head. Two of them were shot in cold blood.

A photograph was taken of the prisoners on the back of a lorry after their capture; it was published in the *Daily Express*. The International Brigade volunteers were scorned by this right-wing paper and portrayed as misguided fools caught up in another country's war. The 27 men were imprisoned in a makeshift jail in an old factory at Talavera, where conditions were unbearable. Their heads were shaved, many became ill, food was scarce, they were covered in lice and it was bitterly cold, their overcoats having been taken from them. The British were the lucky ones; other prisoners were shot daily, with the Spaniards being treated the worst.

AC kept a notebook while in prison, including autographs of other comrades, a score sheet and commentary for a baseball game played and a copy of a telegram to send home.

After three months at Talavera they were transferred to Salamanca, put on trial and found

guilty of "aiding a rebellion". Five of them were sentenced to death and the others to 20 years. Thankfully this did not happen, as in May 1937 they were exchanged for Italian prisoners, though not before being paraded and marched through jeering crowds of fascist supporters to the French border.

AC was met at Waterloo station in London by wife Jane. While he was in prison, she had given birth to a daughter and, thinking he was dead, called her Rosemary for remembrance and Nina, the Spanish for girl.

MI5 kept a close eye on my grandparents for the rest of their lives, with their telephone bugged and letters intercepted. Their flat was also broken into and the book he had written was stolen. I recently received a copy of his MI5 file. It included a transcript of his interrogation by the fascists while in prison in Spain.

My grandfather did not talk to his children or grandchildren about his experiences in the Spanish Civil War. He was traumatised by both of his prison experiences, but mainly by the terrible events witnessed in Spain, particularly the brutality of the fascists towards the Spanish people and seeing his close comrades shot.

As a child I do remember a group of comrades visiting my grandparents' home, one wearing a black beret. They greeted one another with the clenched fist salute and talked into the night. My grandparents would often speak Spanish to one another; as children we knew that "dinero" meant they were talking about money.

AC was a popular, gregarious, charismatic and loving man. He had a gentle Highland accent with a touch of American drawl. I'm very proud of him, what he stood for and what he believed in.

By 1 April 1939, General Franco's troops entered Madrid and – as far as the rest of the world was concerned – Spain's civil war was over. The truth was somewhat different. Franco neither forgave nor forgot. In the years of repression that followed, thousands were imprisoned or executed.

At the same time a guerrilla movement sprang up, seeking to overturn the fascist regime. This was Spain's forgotten war and it lasted until the early 1950s. But, thanks to Franco's rigid censorship, few outside the country knew anything about that desperate struggle.

I first learned of this secret war when I went to live in a small Andalusian village 40 years ago. The villagers would talk of a brother or a father who had perished in the sierras or others who had been killed by “the people of the sierras” – in other words, the guerrillas.

It turned out that this particular area of Málaga province had been a hotspot during the guerrilla war. Hundreds of Civil Guards and Moorish troops had been stationed there in a bid to crush the rebel movement. Gun battles, kidnappings and murders were common occurrences, with many villages virtually under siege.

Anti-fascist guerrillas first went into action in southern Spain during the civil war. One group, known as “Los Niños de la Noche” because they often acted at night, freed 300 officers and men held in a Granada coastal fortress and escorted them to the Republican lines, all without firing a shot.

Later, while Europe was preoccupied with the Second World War, Franco's opponents feuded over how best to undermine the dictator's government. In 1945, as German forces reeled before the Allied advance, many Spaniards hoped that soon their country would be liberated too.

Thousands of ex-civil war combatants had fought in the French Resistance and communist leaders believed the same guerrilla tactics could be exported to Spain. The aim was a national rising in preparation for the arrival of the Allies once they had crushed the Germans. Mussolini had fallen, Hitler was under siege. The days of the *Generalísimo* must also be numbered. Spaniards had fought the Nazis both inside and outside their country, so the Allies would surely repay the debt.

But the Allies stopped at the Pyrenees. Winston Churchill indicated the betrayal to come when he declared: “Internal political problems

“Arms were smuggled in from North Africa – initially with the aid of American and British secret services – and Roberto enforced rigid discipline on his volunteers. Aided by collaborators in the villages, they hid out in the mountains, descending to spread propaganda, sabotage and harass the Franco forces.”

The armed struggle against fascism continued long after Franco declared victory at the end of the Spanish Civil War. For many more years there was a guerrilla movement in several regions of Spain. Here, DAVID BAIRD, author of “Between Two Fires: Guerrilla war in the Spanish sierras”, tells the story of the guerrillas in the part of Andalusia where he lives.

The war didn't end in 1939: Spain's forgotten anti-fascist fight



Leaflet given out by the guerrillas and (right) “Roberto”, the legendary guerrilla leader in Andalusia.



in Spain are a matter for the Spaniards themselves. It is not for us to meddle in them.”

Then, when a Labour government took power in the UK, Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin underlined the message: “The question of the regime in Spain is something that the Spanish people must decide.”

Despite this, the communists mounted a guerrilla campaign, mostly in rural areas all across the peninsula. While perhaps the most powerful rebel group operated in the Alicante-Valencia region, the *Agrupación de Roberto* created a major threat in Andalusia. Roberto, a legendary, charismatic figure, controlled an

army of up to 150 men in the sierras of Málaga and Granada.

He recruited fugitives from Franco's repressive regime – those who had joined any left-wing party or trade union found themselves continually harassed. Many jobs were denied to them and their families. To have fought on the losing side was an unpardonable error.

Arms were smuggled in from North Africa – initially with the aid of American and British secret services – and Roberto enforced rigid discipline on his volunteers. Aided by collaborators in the villages, they hid out in the mountains, descending to spread propaganda, sabotage and harass the Franco forces.

To raise funds they kidnapped wealthy pro-regime Spaniards, demanding large ransoms for their release. Alleged informers were killed. But the activities of the Civil Guard were equally brutal. Acting like an occupying army, they enforced curfews, tortured suspects

and – in many cases – shot prisoners “while attempting to escape”.

Rural communities lived through a brutal nightmare, menaced by both the guerrillas and the Civil Guards.

Although at first the Soviet Union aided the guerrillas, at a secret Kremlin meeting in 1948 Stalin advised communist leader Santiago Carrillo (who died on 18 September last year) to change tactics and drop the armed struggle. The message apparently never reached Roberto for he continued his hopeless campaign until his arrest in 1951.

By then the guerrillas had been decimated. Of some 10,000 guerrillas across Spain more

than half were killed or imprisoned.



“Between Two Fires: Guerrilla war in the Spanish sierras” by David Baird can be ordered from bookshops or direct from the publisher, Maroma Press (<http://maromapress.wordpress.com>) for £12.50 plus p&p.

“My dad died when he was 97 on 1 April 2000,” Mary Lang wrote in a letter to the IBMT. “He never said one word to me about Spain, although my mum knew obviously... To tell the truth I didn’t really enquire too much anyway, but I wish they were still here today because now I want to ask them loads.”

The IBMT receives many inquiries of this sort and usually it’s relatively easy to confirm whether or not someone was a member of the International Brigades.

The case of George Arthur Lang was not so routine for our researcher Jim Carmody, who had to consult MI5 files in the National Archives as well as documents in the International Brigade Memorial Archive in the Marx Memorial Library in London.

Daughter Mary added in her letter: “I have a card to him written in Spanish, which I assumed was to thank him for taking part. My son has recently had it translated and it is apparently saying that my father needed to be sent back to England as quickly as possible. I have no further information as to why or what he had been up to. I have tried to look at various websites and his name has never appeared.”



George Lang, one of the eight technicians.

She went on: “My fa-

Defeated by unions – and Spanish food

ther would have been 34 in 1936. My parents married in 1937 and lived in north London for a while and then moved to Merton in Surrey during the Second World War. I know he was in the Home Guard and he was a sheet metal worker and worked for Fairey Aviation. I would love to find out more about his time in Spain but have no idea where to look.”

The reply to a grateful Mary Lang from Jim Carmody explained all: “From notes I made at the National Archives in Kew and the Marx Memorial Library I can say that your father was recruited to go to Spain by the Communist Party in London. However, he was not in any of the fighting units of the International Brigades – he was recruited to work in the Spanish aircraft factories, teaching the Spanish aircraft workers the much more modern techniques used in the British aircraft industry. The British Communist Party recruited eight technicians, including carpenters, engineers, toolmakers and metal workers. Your father was in the first batch, which was sent to Spain some time in October 1936.”

Carmody added: “However, the efforts came to nothing as the Spanish trade unions disputed the use of foreign workers. In fact it was more of a political dispute. When the eight British workers arrived in Albacete, they had to join a Spanish trade union. In Albacete the socialist UGT general workers’ union had most of the workforce under their control. Some of the British technicians were then sent up to Barcelona to work there. Unfortunately the same dispute broke out again. The Catalan workers belonged to the mainly Anarchist-controlled CNT national labour confederation, and the British were given what they considered demeaning tasks well below their skill and knowledge.

“On top of that, the Spanish food the technicians were given used a great deal of olive oil in the cooking. This began to affect the British, as they were not used to so much oil in their food and caused them a great deal of stomach problems. So by January 1937 all except one of the technicians had left to return to Britain. The only one to remain joined the British Battalion of the International Brigades.”

According to George Lang’s M15 file (KV5/126), he was given a safe conduct by the PSUC Catalan communist party to return to England on 20 November from Barcelona. He arrived at Dover three days later along with two other technicians, George Ramage and Thomas Upchurch.

Volunteers in the Carlist Wars: International Brigades of their day?

By Nick Mansfield

Exactly 100 years before the Spanish Civil War another bloody contest was occurring between the forces of left and right in Spain, with the participation of British left-wingers. The liberal supporters of newly crowned Queen Isabel were fighting the absolutist and ultra Catholic supporters of Don Carlos, the queen’s uncle and claimant to the Spanish throne. The latter were known as Carlists and, by supporting traditional Basque peasant rights, they drew much popular support in northern Spain.

The British government supported Queen Isabel and licensed the general and radical MP for Westminster, George de Lacy Evans to raise a British Auxiliary Legion (BAL) to intervene on the liberal side. Evans raised about 10,000 men in Britain and Ireland, in about a dozen regiments, all paid for by the liberal Spanish government.

Some of the rank and file soldiers were members of the radical political unions which had helped bring about the Reform Act of 1832, and were still campaigning to widen the right to vote.

Many of their officers were serving in the British army, but others were political radicals themselves and some had already served in other progressive causes; in Bolívar’s wars of liberation in South America, the Greek revolt against the Ottoman Empire in 1827-28 and the Portuguese civil war of 1833. Some of them went on to fight for liberalism with Garibaldi in the Italian Risorgimento of the 1850s and 60s.

The BAL had mixed fortunes fighting the Carlists in the Basque Country. They took the towns of Vitoria and San Sebastián, which were



George de Lacy Evans.

already familiar to some of the ex-soldiers who had been there 20 years before fighting the French under the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular War of 1808-1814. But the Carlists were ferocious opponents and executed any British prisoners they took. When pay and supplies promised by the liberal government failed to

arrive and typhus fever decimated their ranks, the 6th and 8th battalions mutinied. These were mainly Scottish working-class political radicals. The remnants of the BAL were eventually withdrawn but the Carlists were contained and the queen’s liberal government survived.

The Carlist movement continued, with another civil war in the 1870s, and the movement was one of the first supporters of Franco’s revolt in 1936 and contributed substantially to the eventual Nationalist victory.

Given the growing interest in labour history and 19th century radical politics in the 1930s, it would be interesting to know whether, during the British recruitment of volunteers for Spain from 1936, there was any awareness of the antecedent of the British Auxiliary Legion’s activities.

Dr Nick Mansfield is a senior research fellow at the University of Central Lancashire and was Director of the People’s History Museum in Manchester for 21 years until 2010.

Some further reading: “The British Auxiliary Legion in the First Carlist Wars, 1835-1838” by Edward M Brett (Four Courts Press, 2005); “Military Radicals and the Making of Class, 1790-1860” by Nick Mansfield in Matthew McCormack and Catriona Kennedy (eds.) “Men of Arms: Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850” (Palgrave, 2012); “Radical General – Sir George de Lacy Evans” by Edward M Spiers (Manchester University Press, 1993).



IBMT member Tosh McDonald (left) on holiday in northern Spain's Basque Country in 2011 when, with two other Doncaster bikers, he joined a tour organised by the Côte Basque Chapter of the Harley Owners Group. Right, today's motorbike racetrack at Jarama, where speedway champion Clem Beckett (below) was killed in February 1937.



TOSH McDONALD, motorcycle fanatic and executive committee member of the train drivers' union ASLEF, recounts the life of Clem Beckett, speedway hero and Wall of Death performer who died in the Battle of Jarama.

When I attended an event in Sheffield Trades & Labour Club in July 2011 to celebrate the International Brigades I could hardly believe my ears when I started hearing stories and songs about Clem Beckett. I thought to myself: "Surely no one can squeeze that much into one life."

Born in Oldham in 1906, Clem became a blacksmith when he left school but, as a socialist and member of the Communist Party, he found employers hard to come by in the dark days of the 1920s.

Fortunately, he had another string to his bow. Clem happened to have a remarkable talent as a motorcyclist and became one of the founding fathers of speedway – a very popular spectator sport at the time. He began this phase of his life in 1928 at Audenshaw, when dirt-track racing was in its infancy – and he was soon the leading rider of his day. By the end of the year he held 28 records in the sport.

Success – and blacklisting

It's difficult to imagine how popular speedway was in those days. When Clem won the Golden Helmet at the Owlerton Stadium, no fewer than 15,000 spectators watched him do it. He would often hire a plane to fly to three different events in a single day and became a celebrity not only in the UK but across Europe. In 1929 alone he raced and gave displays in France, Germany, Denmark, the Balkans and Turkey.

But at the very height of his speedway fame, he earned the enmity of the promoters of the sport, the Auto-Cycle Union (ACU). Why? Because, despite his personal success, he could not stand the blatant exploitation of his fellow riders, with inexperienced youngsters being persuaded to race, often with serious or fatal results.

Clem helped to form a union to act on their behalf – the Dirt Track Riders' Association. After he began recruiting and wrote an article for the



Clem Beckett: The daredevil biker who lost his life in the fight against fascism in Spain

Daily Worker headed "Bleeding the men who risk their lives on the dirt track", the ACU suspended him. His racing days were over.

Defying the Wall of Death

Undeterred, he moved into show business, inaugurating the "Wall of Death" in Sheffield, which basically meant defying gravity by driving a bike horizontally around a circular wall. The show was an enormous success both in the UK and across the continent. In 1931 he was injured performing in front of the King and Queen of Denmark.

The following year he was a great success in the Soviet Union as part of a British Workers' Sports Federation delegation. On his return he began work at the new Ford factory in Dagenham – but he only lasted two weeks as he was one of the first to organise a union in the plant and campaigned publicly about conditions in the factory.

Clem, never the most popular man with employers, then set up a motorcycle sales and repair shop on his own account in Oldham Road in Manchester.

Sacrifice in Spain

But despite all the success, fame and wealth his dare-devil exploits won for him, Clem re-

mained loyal and committed to his working-class origins. So when Franco's fascists usurped the Spanish Republic in 1936, he offered to become part of the International Brigades. In November of that year he set off to join the anti-fascist forces, in which he was in turn a mechanic, ambulance driver and machine-gunner. He explained why he had gone in the most simple terms and honest way in a letter to his wife: "I'm sure you'll realise that I should never have been satisfied had I not assisted."

Clem died in the fighting at Arganda Bridge in the Jarama Valley on 12 February 1937, one of more than 120 members of the British Battalion to give up their lives during the Battle of Jarama.

His friend George Sinfield said: "As his section was ordered to retire, Clem kept his machine-gun trained on the advancing fascists, acting as cover to the retreat. The advance was halted but Clem lost his life."

It is ironic that today's racers compete at a big race track in Jarama, a fitting monument perhaps to a pioneer of riders' rights who lost his life fighting fascism at that very place.

Perhaps Clem's widow Leda summed up this last adventure in the most touching way when she said: "He went to Spain to face death because he loved life." He lived just 31 years.

Lou Kenton

By Jim Jump

The life of International Brigader and political activist Lou Kenton, who died on 17 September 2012 at the age of 104, was linked to many of the great causes and campaigns of the British left during the last century.

Born in east London on 1 September 1908, the eldest child of politically radical Jewish parents, he left school at the age of 14 and worked in various factory and warehouse jobs. Joining the Young Communist League, he wrote years afterwards, gave him a “totally new outlook on life”. He began reading books, writing poetry and took up cycling and sports, principally swimming, football and boxing – later claiming to have had his nose broken twice: once in the ring and on another occasion in a fight with the Blackshirts. The British Workers’ Sports Federation, an offshoot of the YCL, chose him as one of its three competitors in the 1931 Spartakiade in Berlin. The left-wing version of the Olympics, with Kenton swimming for Britain, was switched to Moscow at the last minute after it ran into political opposition in Germany.

He returned to Germany in the following year, this time in a socialist football team that played several matches in the Ruhr. But the tour was cut short during a game in Essen when shots were fired from the crowd of 30,000 spectators by Nazi sympathisers.

In 1932 he also started his first job in Fleet Street, working for the magazine publishing group Iliffe. He joined the print union Natsopa and, alarmed by the growing Blackshirt presence in London, became the editor of *The Anti-Fascist Printer*, which claimed a circulation of 10,000 among print workers.

In 1933 he married his first wife, Lilian Artner, a Jewish Austrian refugee. They lived in Holborn, where Lou became the secretary of the local Communist Party branch.

Kenton was one of the tacticians behind the successful effort to stop the police clearing a



path for the Blackshirts to march through the heart of the Jewish East End on 4 October 1936. During the Battle of Cable Street he deployed his party branch members to occupy the area around Aldgate station. Then by motorbike he sped from section to section

to relay news of police movements that were being monitored by roof-top look-outs.

Many of the demonstrators at Cable Street afterwards travelled to Spain to join the anti-fascist cause. Lou was at first rejected, but he and Lilian eventually joined the volunteers in the summer of 1937. She made the journey first and, as a trained masseuse, worked as a physiotherapist and nurse at an International Brigade hospital at Valdeganga, near Albacete. Lou rode through France on his flat-twin Douglas motorbike, arriving in Spain in July. He worked as a despatch rider, taking messages and mail to and from the various fronts. He was also reunited with Lilian for a while, working as an ambulance driver at Valdeganga.

They returned to England at the end of August 1938, though in January 1939 Lou drove through France with an ambulance donated by print workers. But by the time he reached the border Catalonia was falling. He wrote in an unpublished 1988 memoir: “Looking back on those days it was terrible: the spectacle of seeing refugees pouring over the frontier, wounded carrying wounded, mothers carrying children, some of them already dead, and the utter despair on the part of thousands of refugees who were being pursued by the advancing fascist army.”

As war broke out in 1939 he joined the crew of a whaler that sailed from South Shields to the Antarctic for six months and returned to find work in London Aircraft Production’s makeshift factory in Chiswick, west London, where he was to settle for the rest of his life. In 1939 he met

Rafa Ephgrave, a Teessider and fellow Communist Party member, whom he married in 1941 as soon as his first marriage was dissolved. They had a son and a daughter.

After the war they both threw themselves into political activism, with Lou employed full-time by the party. He was an instigator of the “Homes for Heroes” campaign launched in 1946 that saw demobbed soldiers and bombed-out families occupy prominent empty buildings in London.

Following an over-subscribed Bastille Day trip to Paris for party activists in 1949, Lou and Rafa founded Progressive Tours, the money-making holiday and travel arm of the party which, thanks to its favoured status, often provided the only means of visiting Eastern Europe during the Cold War. In 1952 Lou became the full-time secretary of the British Czechoslovak Friendship League. In his complementary role as organising secretary of the Lidice Shall Live Committee – set up to commemorate the 1942 Nazi revenge massacre at Lidice – he led the appeal that in

“Looking back on those days it was terrible: the spectacle of seeing refugees pouring over the frontier.”

1955 helped create a memorial garden overlooking the village destroyed by the Germans.

The Kentons became enthusiastic supporters of the reform process initiated by Czech Communist Party leader Alexander Dubček early in 1968. So the arrival of Soviet tanks in August of that year and the installation of a new hard-line party leadership were a devastating and lasting blow. Ties with the British Czechoslovak Friendship League were immediately severed and by the early 1970s he had finally left the party and joined Labour.

The break with the party also prompted him to return to Fleet Street, now working as a copy-reader at the *Financial Times*, where he stayed until his retirement in 1981. At the same time he developed a passion for pottery-making. He built a kiln in his garden and soon applied his new skills to creating ceramic artefacts to support union strikes and other campaigns. The first was a mug for the year-long print workers’ strike at *The Times* that started in 1978. More commissions followed for various unions and left-wing groups, including the International Brigade Association, and iconic mugs were produced for the People’s March for Jobs in 1981 and the 1984 miners’ strike. The latter is currently on display at the V&A Museum in London.

He was awarded Spanish citizenship in 2009 at a ceremony with other volunteers in the Spanish embassy in London.



Lou Kenton seated (with beret) in the snow near Teruel in January 1938.

Lou Kenton appears in a video, “No Pasaran / They Shall Not Pass” by Yoav Segal. See: [<http://vimeo.com/19145747>].

Moisès Broggi



Dr Moisès Broggi, who died on 31 December 2012 in Barcelona, aged 104, was a surgeon in the International Brigades' medical service. In this capacity he worked closely with many British volunteer doctors and nurses and formed lifelong friendships with several of them, including Alexander Tudor Hart, Reggie Saxton, Kenneth Sinclair-Loutit and Thora Silverthorne.

As a front-line surgeon during the Spanish Civil War, Broggi was instrumental in introducing many life-saving innovations, such as the installation of mobile operating rooms, and new techniques of anaesthesia.

After the civil war he was prevented from practising his vocation for many years and holding any public office. In 1966 he was named a fellow of the Royal Academy of Medicine of Barcelona, and became its president in 1980. In 2010, he attended the inauguration of the Hospital Sant Joan Despí Moisès Broggi in Barcelona that bears his name.

Adelina Kondratieva



Kondratieva (foreground) in Albacete in 1937.

Adelina Kondratieva, who died in Moscow on 14 December 2012 at the age of 95, was the last of the 3,000 Soviet military personnel, technicians and volunteers who took part in the Spanish Civil War on the side of the Spanish Republic.

Born Adelina Abramson in Buenos Aires, the daughter of Russian emigrés to Argentina, she and the rest of the family returned to Russia in 1932. Adelina travelled to Spain in 1937 and served as a translator and interpreter at the headquarters of the Republic's air force in Albacete. During the Second World War and afterwards she worked in Moscow as a Spanish and Italian translator and continued her language studies. She ended her career as Professor of Spanish at the Institute of Education.

Her family suffered during the Stalinist repression, with her father being accused in 1951 of Trotskyism. He was sentenced to five years in the gulag.

Adelina was active in the Russian association of veterans of the Spanish Civil War – being its last president at the time of her death – and was always close to the exiled Spanish Republican community in Moscow.

Adolphe Low

Victor Grossman writes: The sad news that Fritz Teppich, who died in February 2012, was the last of the German volunteers in the Spanish Civil War was not completely correct. There was another German volunteer, not so well known in Germany because he was granted French citizenship in 1945 and remained in France until his death.

Adolphe Low was born in Cottbus, south of Berlin, in 1915, but soon moved with his family to the capital, where he joined first a left-wing Jewish youth organisation and then the Communist Youth League. At 16 he was arrested for the first time for taking part in a meeting of Polish Jewish anti-fascists. Later, when his home was again raided, he was luckily absent and managed to escape to France, where he worked illegally, constantly pursued and arrested by the French authorities. On 8 September 1936 – together with 50,000 others – he heard the famous speech by Dolores Ibárruri (La Pasionaria) at the Vélodrome d'Hiver in Paris and decided to volunteer to fight in Spain.

In October, sailing in an old coal ship from Marseilles, he landed in Alicante and joined the newly formed International Brigades as a member of the Edgar André Battalion, named after the German communist leader who had been beheaded by the Nazis in Hamburg a few days before. Low fought at Madrid, Jarama, Guadalajara, Teruel and Belchite – of the 600 volunteers who had landed with him in Alicante only 20 survived.

After Spain's defeat he was imprisoned in France at Les Milles and then sent to Algeria with the Foreign Legion. When World War Two began and France was defeated he was able to escape inside France; sought by the police, he had to hide in the forests, surviving with food and clothing given by anti-fascist supporters, but then became one of the first



Low (standing) with fellow members of the Edgar André Battalion in Spain.

partisans in Creuse to form the local unit of the Francs-Tireurs et Partisans. As a lieutenant, he helped liberate the town of Guéret on 7 June 1944 and, when the war was won, a decree by President De Gaulle awarded him French citizenship.

Adolphe Low's parents and sister had been murdered in Auschwitz. He remained in France, living in Strasbourg near the Rhine border. In 2005 he was accepted into the French Legion of Honour.

On 8 May last year he and his wife Nicole were honoured at a joint French-German meeting commemorating liberation in 1945 and attended by organisations from both countries. He died on 11 November 2012, aged 97.

José María Massons Espulgas

José María Massons Espulgas, who died in Barcelona on 10 November 2012, aged 99, was a Spanish Catalan doctor who served as a surgeon in the medical services of the International Brigades.

Harry W Randall



US volunteer Harry W Randall, who died on 11 November 2012, aged 96, was chief of the Photographic Unit of the XV International Brigade – which included all the English-speaking battalions.

Though born in Washington state and raised in Portland, Oregon, Randall joined the mainly Canadian Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion on arrival in Spain in July 1937. He was later appointed to head the XV Brigade's new Photographic Unit, whose brief was to supply images for the Brigade's newspaper, *Volunteer for Liberty*, and for propaganda purposes in North America and Britain.

His work left an invaluable record of the volunteers and the Spanish Civil War itself. After the war he gave copies of many of his images to the British-based International Brigade Association, though most of his archive is in the Tamiment Library of New York University.

Having relocated to Canada after the war, he found work with the National Film Board of Canada and enlisted in the Canadian army. He returned to New York City in 1952 and for the next 30 years produced, edited, and directed medical films.

Elisabeth Tomalin

Stefany Tomalin writes: My mother Elisabeth (Obituaries, issue 33) and my father Miles Tomalin – who was a professional documentary scriptwriter – separated well before I was a teenager, though we all still “got on”. His widow and third wife was Madeleine and she accompanied him on the veterans' expedition to Spain which was televised by the BBC in one of the years shortly after Franco's death.

David Lomon

By Jim Jump

David Lomon, who died on 21 December 2012, aged 94, was the last known survivor in Britain of the more than 2,500 volunteers from the British Isles who joined the International Brigades.

His active service in the Spanish Civil War was relatively brief, and he spent nearly seven of his 10 months in Spain as a prisoner of war. But the experience left its mark on him: he retained a life-long love of Spain and he was always proud of the ideals that had prompted him to join the anti-fascist fight in a foreign land at the age of 19. In one of his last interviews, given in Madrid only seven weeks before his sudden death, he said that joining the International Brigades had been the best thing he had done in his life.

Lomon was in the Spanish capital in November 2012 to participate in events marking the 76th anniversary of the defence of Madrid in the early months of the civil war, when Franco's rebel army, backed by Hitler and Mussolini, threatened to overrun the city and achieve a swift victory over the Spanish Republic. It was during these battles that the intervention of the International Brigades – volunteers from around the world who opposed the policy of “non-intervention” sponsored by Britain and France – played a crucial role in halting the fascist advance.

Though born in Manchester (on 22 November 1918), the youngest of eight children, Lomon had been working in the garment trade in London's East End when he arrived in Spain in December 1937. Already bloodied in street clashes with the Blackshirts of the British Union of Fascists, in Spain he changed his surname Solomon to Lomon to disguise its Jewishness from potential fascist captors. He recounted years later: “I wanted to go to Spain, so I joined the Young Communist League just because, I thought, these are the people who I could use to get to Spain... I wanted to do something. I wanted to fight fascism.”

He had made his way through France by train, entering Spain after an exhausting overnight climb over the Pyrenees to avoid the French border guards and international non-intervention monitors. After less than three weeks of training as a machine-gunner at the British Battalion's base at Tarazona de la Mancha, he was rushed to the front to shore up the Republic's lines as Franco's waged a huge counter-offensive to retake the city of Teruel. Then in the spring of 1938 Lomon was taken prisoner by Italian troops as they pushed eastwards through Aragon towards the Mediterranean.

Along with over 100 other captured Britons, Lomon was imprisoned in the concentration camp of San Pedro de Cardeña, near Burgos, and afterwards at an Italian-run prisoner-of-war camp outside Palencia. There, he was sketched



Marshall Mateer

PORTRAITS: David Lomon in Spain on 7 August 1938, as sketched by Clive Branson, and on 13 October 2012 at the IBMT's Annual General Meeting at Newhaven Fort.

by another British Battalion prisoner, the artist Clive Branson. They were among a group of British prisoners repatriated in October 1938 in an exchange for Italian soldiers. Branson died in Burma in 1944 and the sketch remained unseen by Lomon until April last year, when he visited the Marx Memorial Library in London to view Branson's sketchbook, which had only recently been deposited at the library's International Brigade archive.

Seeing the Branson sketch rekindled long-forgotten memories for David. At the Palencia prison he recalled how he and fellow POWs made up their own lyrics when they sang “Jarama Valley”, the song originally penned by Glaswegian volunteer Alex McDade and then anonymously rewritten to become the unofficial song of the British Battalion. Sung to the tune of “Red River Valley”, they would sing: *There's a prison in Spain called Palencia 'Tis a place that we know all too well It was there that we gave of our manhood And spent months of misery and hell. Surrounded one day by Italians Who with guns bought by Chamberlain's gold*

“In one of his last interviews, given in Madrid only seven weeks before his sudden death, he said that joining the International Brigades had been the best thing he had done in his life.”

Blown to hell by artillery and avion That's how our brave comrades were sold.

During the Second World War Lomon served on Royal Navy minesweepers in the English Channel and the Far East. Following the war, he returned to the garment trade, working as a hand-cutter for Barnett Lawson Trimmings in London, and to family life – he had married Millie Levine in 1939 and they had two sons and a daughter. Years earlier he had left the YCL – where he had met Millie – and switched allegiances to Labour, in part out of disappointment with the Hitler-Stalin pact of August 1939.

On retirement, by which time he was the managing director at Barnett Lawson, he lived for two years in Spain before settling in Bexhill and, following Millie's death 15 years ago, relocating to Bourne End, Buckinghamshire, to be closer to one of his sons.

The final two years of his life saw him play an active part in events in Britain and Spain to commemorate the International Brigades, having made contact with the IBMT after reading an article in the April 2009 issue of *Saga Magazine* about the few remaining British veterans.

In October 2011 he joined three former comrades from France and Estonia in Madrid to mark the 75th anniversary of the formation of the International Brigades. Speaking at the inauguration of a memorial to the Brigades in the University City, he said: “The ideals of the international volunteers will never be forgotten. Even though we lost the so-called civil war, the democratic powers realised that fascism must be stopped, or they too would suffer the same fate as Spain.”

He was awarded Spanish citizenship in 2009, and in July 2012 unveiled a plaque beside the International Brigade memorial in Jubilee Gardens on London's South Bank.

David Lomon's speech in Madrid on 10 November 2012 can be seen just over halfway through this video: [www.cronicapopular.es/2012/11/acto-de-homenaje-a-las-brigadas-internacionales].



CLENCHED FIST: Arthur West, pictured (left, centre) campaigning for the Spanish Republic, was the owner of this sketch (above). Among the signatories are several Brigaders.

Mystery sketch

Can anyone shed any light on the origins of this sketch? It belonged to Arthur West, an activist in the Aid Spain movement in Nottingham and a prominent local trade unionist, who died in 1979, aged 67. The portrait is dedicated at the top to “the Liverpool Local with Red Front Saluds, Jack Coward”. Other signatures (not all are legible) include R Hale (Liverpool), William James (Liverpool), Lionel Poxon (Nottingham), George Barney (Bootle), ER Paul (Riverside, California), Harold Lloyd (Abertillery), Roland Cleveland (Hollywood, California), James Carroll (Liverpool), V Crompton (Liverpool) Alfred J Holmes (Liverpool) and Ben Richardson (Darlington).

Arthur West was a member of the Communist Party until 1961, after which he joined the Labour Party. He was an aero engine fitter and worked for most of his life at the Rolls Royce plant in Hucknall, where he was an AUEW engineering workers’ union shop steward and

the full-time union convener for many years. He also served as the President of the Nottingham Trades Council and stood for election to Parliament and the local council as a Communist and Labour candidate respectively.

Anyone with information about the sketch or about Arthur West’s involvement in Aid Spain campaigning should contact IBMT Secretary Jim Jump: [secretary@international-brigades.org.uk]; tel: 020-7228 6504.

Vegetarianism in the Brigades

Will Boisseau is studying for a PhD at Loughborough University on the connections between vegetarianism and the socialist movement. He wonders if anyone has any information at all about Leo Price, who, as far as he can tell, was the only vegetarian who fought in the International Brigades. Contact: [w.j.boisseau@lboro.ac.uk].

Plaque wording belittles heroism of volunteers

The wording of the new plaque in Jubilee Gardens on London’s South Bank (report in *IBMT Newsletter* number 33) perpetuates the myth that only Germany and Italy gave support to Franco. Without the covert support of France, and especially Britain, he might not have won.

The Non-Intervention Pact was only part of the way Britain supported the rebels. Assisting Franco back from exile and the selective action of the Royal Navy, which failed to protect British merchant ships, were some of the other ways they helped. The right-wing press and leading establishment figures expressed their support and it was obvious at the time that many felt it was all a part of their fight against communism.

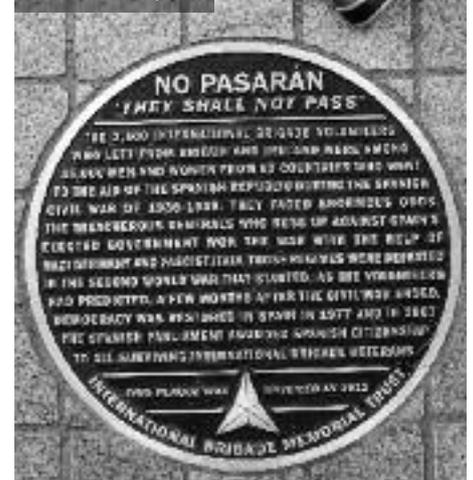
British and French volunteers had to defy their own governments and break the law when going to Spain. In effect, the wording belittles the heroism of the volunteers.

Bill Thornycroft
London SE27

The Secretary writes: The causes of the defeat of the Spanish Republic are varied and complex, and there wasn’t room to include them all in the few words available to us on the plaque. Our aim was to supplement the inscription on the adjacent national memorial. Many people know little or nothing about the International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War. So our choice of words lays emphasis on the civil war as a prelude to the Second World War – which most people are familiar with. The importance of Hitler’s and Mussolini’s support for Franco is beyond doubt. For example, without their help he could not have transported his Army of Africa to the mainland after the July 1936 coup had failed in most parts of Spain. It’s true that other factors were important in determining the

Andrew Wiatard

PLAQUE: Unveiled by Brigader David Lomon in London’s Jubilee Gardens last July.





MEMORIAL: Plaque and sculpture (right) in Amsterdam dedicated to the Dutch volunteers. Far right is Piet Laros. See letter from Henk Koelewijn.

course of the war, not least Britain's malevolent policy of non-intervention, and the IBMT regularly makes that point – see our “Antifascistas” exhibition. Our hope is that there will be many passers-by in Jubilee Gardens who, as a result of reading the inscriptions on the memorial and plaque, will want to find out more about the International Brigade volunteers and in doing be made aware of the heroism that Bill Thornycroft rightly refers to.

Leila's lovers



Your last issue (number 33) asked who were Leila Berg's International Brigade lovers mentioned in her recent obituaries. Berg (left) wrote about them in her impressionistic autobiography “Flickerbook”, on which I made some

notes a few years ago, though I don't own a copy.

She had a lover called Fred, whom I think was killed at Jarama. I wonder if he was Frederick Robertson – listed among the dead in “Antifascistas”. I know he played the harmonica. The implication is that his surname was Robson.

Then there seems to have been an Alf, to whom she sent another harmonica, who was also killed. I don't think she gives surnames in the book, or I would surely have written them down, but the dates work for Alfred Woodhouse of Mansfield and Alfred Marks of London (more likely, perhaps), who were both killed at Brunete in July 1937, as well as for Alfred Ernest Capps, killed at Teruel in January 1938. She says (page 228): “They die so fast in Spain,” which suggests Brunete.

Finally, she says: “...was supposed to be Teddy's girl” according to the Party, Teddy being Edward Harold Cross, who was killed at Gandesa in April 1938. Then she says on page 233: “I wasn't at all; I just let him kiss me because he was going to Spain, and I lent myself to him for that very short time before he left, just to make him happy.”

Later (page 236) she comments: “I have had

ten offers of marriage in as many weeks. How conventional and idiotic the Communist Party is. I sleep with a boy, and immediately he asks me to marry him. Supposing I had said yes. Where would we be?”

I wouldn't say that clears it up, but it's a start.

Lydia Syson

By email

Lydia Syson's new novel “A World Between Us”, set in the Spanish Civil War, is published by Hot Key Books.

Dutch Brigaders

I'm very impressed with the work that the IBMT is doing. My grandfather, Hendrik Koelewijn, a Dutchman, was in the International Brigades, but I don't have much information about him. Much is known about the British, French and German volunteers, but not so much about those from smaller countries. My grandfather didn't talk about the Spanish Civil War or the anti-Nazi resistance during the Second World War. That was then, he always used to say.

He used a different name in Spain, and afterwards he was very disillusioned. He was a socialist and didn't like the communists. But he kept up a good friendship with Piet Laros (“Hollander Piet”), his company commander. I met Piet a few times. He was a diehard communist, though a very warm and sociable person. He told me a lot. Just like my grandfather, after the war in Spain he joined the Dutch resistance, though they were in different units.

They were captured and my grandfather was sent in 1942 to Dachau concentration camp; Piet was sent to Buchenwald. They met each other again after the war in Exlog, the association of former political prisoners who were in the Nazi camps.

Henk Koelewijn

By email

Islington needs a memorial

I am now 91, and over the past few months my mobility has deteriorated a lot, so to my regret I think it unlikely that I shall be able to at-

tend future IBMT anniversary meetings on the South Bank. So I am taking this opportunity to thank the IBMT for arranging the past meetings and for all its other activities. It was good to see last year that a space had been made for the fine monument further away from the London Eye.

Years ago now I tried hard to get Islington to erect a memorial for the International Brigades but, although I was supported by Jeremy Corbyn, the MP for Islington North, the leader of Islington Council, Bill Alexander of the International Brigade Association and a number of other sympathisers, the plan fell through for lack of financial support.

This was especially disappointing considering that Islington has long been a particularly progressive borough and where the archives of the IBA are kept in the Marx Memorial Library in Clerkenwell. Also, Islington is a neighbour to Camden, where much of Aid for Spain was organised in 1936. One difficulty was that I was only able to find a couple of Brigaders or surviving family members living in Islington. Bill Alexander explained that his records of London Brigaders did not specify which London borough they came from.

I just hope that some day a member of your organisation may be able to achieve getting a memorial placed here to fill this strange historical gap.

Angela Sinclair-Loutit

By email

Is IBMT's Orwell event inclusive?

When it was first announced that the 2013 Len Crome Memorial Lecture was moving from London to Manchester, I viewed it as a positive innovation.

I have long felt that for the Trust to continue as a vibrant and relevant organisation it needs to reach out beyond its current constituency of Brigaders' families and the labour movement. Two of the Trust's three flagship events have until now been held in London and relocating the lecture to Manchester would make the or-

Continued overleaf



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LETTERS

From previous page

organisation appear to be less “Londoncentric”.

However, this positive move has been more than negated in my view by the decision to make the hitherto free lecture a fee-paying conference.

A fee-paying conference requiring pre-registration is likely to discourage attendance by those who are not already members of the Trust.

Given that the chair and three of the four speakers are either professors or doctors, many will also think that this is an event organised primarily for historians, experts and the already fully committed.

If we want to encourage new members and activists, the Trust needs to be accessible and inclusive. This fee-paying conference is quite the opposite.

Current IBMT members may also wonder why they are required to pay the same fee as non members.

As a former Treasurer I am aware of the Trust’s financial position. However, any short-term benefit from making the lecture a fee-paying conference will be negated in the long run by missing the opportunity to increase and broaden our membership base.

Mike Anderson

By email

The Secretary writes: Speakers at the IBMT’s annual Len Crome Memorial Lecture have always been respected academics, authors and experts in the field of Spanish Civil War history. The same is true for our 2013 event. The IBMT Executive Committee decided that this year we needed a day-long conference with a range of speakers to reflect the differing aspects and interpretations of George Orwell’s involvement in the war. All this means extra costs and puts more pressure on our already hard-pressed finances. The minimal registration fee of £10 (£5 for students) barely covers these costs and shouldn’t put anyone off attending what promises to be a very interesting conference.

Barcelona Peoples’ Olympiad



Congratulations on producing another great *IBMT Newsletter* (number 33). The comments regarding the 1936 Peoples’ Olympiad in Barcelona I found very interesting indeed. Readers might like to know that as well as the poster illustrated on page 2, three different philatelic labels

were produced to advertise the event, although surviving examples are rare, especially so on envelopes. This picture is of one of the types which does appear occasionally on eBay.

Enamel lapel badges were also available to buy at the time in 1936 and a photo of one of these, which I’m pleased to own, is also attached.

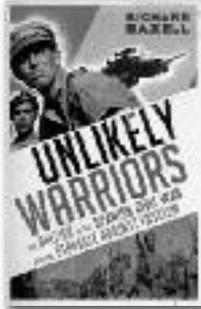
Cliff Kirkpatrick

By email

In their own words: the volunteers' story

“Unlikely Warriors. The British in the Spanish Civil War and the Struggle Against Fascism” by Richard Baxell (Aurum Press, London, 2012) £25 (hardback)*

Reviewed by Lewis Mates



The keen interest in the British response to the Spanish Civil War shows no signs of abating. The latest book taking this as its subject is Richard Baxell’s “Unlikely Warriors”, which, as the author explains, is “the first to place the Spanish Civil

War within the context of the volunteers’ lives, rather than the other way round”.

This means that the book begins with three contextualising chapters; the first discusses Brigaders’ responses to Britain in depression, to unemployment and the hated means test; the second looks at the campaigns against indigenous fascism (especially the British Union of Fascists), and the third considers the debates around the Spanish Civil War and various British responses at state and individual level to the conflict.

The final three chapters and epilogue continue the story after Franco’s victory, analysing continuing activism on the home front, the impact of the Hitler-Stalin pact and, later, the Communist Party’s controversial decision to deem the war against Hitler an imperialist war that should not be supported (a position it of course reversed after Hitler’s attack on the Soviet Union).

The other 17 chapters, however, examine the Spanish Civil War itself, offering a pacy and engaging narrative account of the involvement of

“Certain images, anecdotes and individuals particularly endure; for example, John Sommerfield’s image of a hungry dog trying to eat a dead fascist’s brain in Madrid and getting shot.”

Britons in the conflict, interspersed with chapters tackling various significant themes; those who worked in medical aid, the visits of foreign correspondents, the Independent Labour Party contingent and the May Days (1937) controversy, Brigade discipline, and the experiences of those in Nationalist prison camps.

A significant strength of the book is that it



HEMINGWAY: Members of the British Battalion arrive at London’s Victoria station in December 1938.

Imperial War Museum

also contains a chapter on those who fought for the Nationalists. This demonstrates well the similarities between the experiences on both sides; poor training, poor pay (though the Nationalist volunteers were far worse paid than the International Brigaders; they also particularly coveted the Brigaders’ superior trench coats), drink problems, fighting in units that sustained huge numbers of casualties and, for many at least, fighting for a cause they believed in.

The book’s aim is to tell the story “from the perspective of the participants themselves using, wherever possible, their own words”. In this it succeeds admirably. Its major strength is the wealth of detail it provides of the individual experiences of British fighters.

Baxell has done an excellent job in culling the published accounts of Brigaders such as Jason

Gurney and Walter Gregory, unpublished accounts, detailed interviews and correspondence of fighters, as well as, of course, major archival sources in Britain, Russia and elsewhere to richly illustrate the human side to the conflict. This helps to capture both the elevated and the base; the horror, the humour, the solidarity, the petty jealousies, the grumbling (about food, toilets, lice and so forth), the brutality, the filth, the squalor, the boredom, the confusion, the bravery and the fear.

Certain images, anecdotes and individuals particularly endure; for example, John Sommerfield’s image of a hungry dog trying to eat a dead fascist’s brain in Madrid and getting shot. In the pouring rain the blood and brains of both fascist and dog mingle and wash away. “It was as good a war picture as I could think of,” Sommerfield comments.

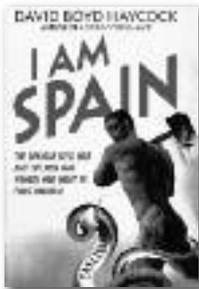
Then there is “Tom Vino”, a Brigader who cunningly replaces water with wine in his water bottle; the unnamed MP who makes an unwanted sexual advance to Esmond Romilly and Lorimer

Continued overleaf

Writers at war

"I am Spain: The Spanish Civil War and the men and women who went to fight fascism" by David Boyd Haycock (Old Street Publishing, Brecon, 2012) £25 (hardback)

Reviewed by Jim Jump



"I am Spain" – the title is from a WH Auden poem – is a retelling of the story of the Spanish Civil War through the experiences of the British and American poets, writers, intellectuals and artists who took

part in or witnessed the conflict.

Against the chronology of the war from 1936-39, author David Boyd Haycock cleverly stitches together the testimonies and stories of many of its well known English-speaking protagonists. We meet writers and journalists such as Claud Cockburn, Kitty Bowler, John Dos Passos, Martha Gellhorn, Ernest Hemingway, Stephen Spender and George Steer. And we hear about those who enlisted with the fighting units and medical services resisting Franco's uprising against the Spanish Republic. Among them are Felicia Browne, John Cornford, Bernard Knox, Laurie Lee, George Orwell, Esmond Romilly, Kenneth Sinclair-Loutit and Tom Wintringham.

The vivid prose and dramatic experiences and intrigues shared by these individuals make much of the narrative highly readable. We must hope therefore that the

paperback version in particular will reach a new readership, stimulating sufficient interest among them that they will then want to find out and read more about the Spanish Civil War and the international volunteers who joined the anti-fascist cause.

But beware. This is no scholarly study. It is not founded on new research. There are no notes or references – even, annoyingly, for the occasional unattributed quotation thrown into the text. Nor is there a bibliography of the memoirs and biographies that Haycock mined to produce his book.

There is also a peppering of factual errors. The farewell parade in Barcelona for the International Brigades was on 28 October 1938, not 15 November. The Comintern's decision to send international volunteers to Spain was taken on 16-19 September 1936, not 26 July – a crucial time difference when establishing the sequence of foreign involvement in the war and assessing Soviet motives in deciding to help the Republic. And why is the British Battalion repeatedly referred to as the "English-Speaking Battalion"?

Another weakness is that the first-hand accounts and opinions of these famous men and women are repeated without the necessary benefit of hindsight. In most cases their stories stand the test of time. But often highly contentious views, for example those held by George Orwell and John Dos Passos, are pre-



Ernest Hemingway (second from right) in Spain with Dutch film-maker Joris Ivens.

sented as fact, whereas we now know that the events in which they were embroiled were more complex and nuanced than they imagined or let on at the time.

To conclude, this is an engrossing read and a good starting point for anyone casually interested in the Spanish Civil War. But readers who want an accurate reference book or a more thoughtful analysis of the war and its key players should stick to the recognised historians in the field.

The road to China

"East Wind: China and the British Left, 1925-1976" by Tom Buchanan (Oxford University Press, 2012) £65 (hardback); "Shanghai-Madrid Axis"? Comparing British Responses to the Conflicts in Spain and China, 1936-39" by Tom Buchanan (Contemporary European History, Volume 21, Issue 04, November 2012, pp 533-552)

Reviewed by Angela Jackson



Tom Buchanan's capacity for detailed research is put to excellent use in his latest book, "East Wind", and in a fascinating article on the existence of a "Shanghai-Madrid Axis" in the period 1936-39, certain to be of particular interest to IBMT members for its numerous insights on this long-neglected subject. Both the book and the article contain references to those who went to China after having been in Spain during the civil war, including familiar names such as Nan Green and David Crook.

Buchanan gives due acknowledgement to

'Unlikely warriors' against fascism tell their own story

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Birch; the hilarious (at times) and tragic (at others) anecdotes of other Brigaders' failed or disappointing sexual adventures; the apparent disdain that Brigaders held for Ernest Hemingway. Brigadier Hugh Sloan remembered one occasion telling fellow Brigadier Jimmy Arthur to shoot Hemingway and an American colonel examining the British anti-tank guns without his permission; "Many years later Hemingway took his own life. I always had the feeling that Jimmy Arthur was the kind of morose character who might have saved him the bother."

Yet some of the most moving episodes occur in the recollections of Peter Kemp who fought for Franco, such as when Kemp was forced to shoot an Irish (Belfast) Brigade deserter (against Kemp's wishes). After trying everything he could to prevent the execution, Kemp was forced to tell the unfortunate what would hap-

pen to him and then see that it was carried out.

Kemp also relates finding a bag of post for American and Canadian International Brigaders in captured positions, including letters from girlfriends, wives and children; "It was horrible to feel that many of these men, who spoke my own language and who had come even further to fight for a cause in which they believed as deeply as I believe in ours, would never return to enjoy the love that glowed so warmly from the pages I was reading," Kemp remarked.

Throughout, Baxell's is a measured and largely balanced voice, striving to give all sides in still often rather contested debates around the International Brigades, the Communist Party and the wider conflict a fair hearing. Some debates could have been given lengthier consideration. Yet, while some readers will not agree entirely with the balance of the treatment and some of Baxell's arguments, the attempt at bal-

ance is admirable and indeed very necessary if our understanding of this conflict is to deepen.

On a more prosaic note, the hardback is attractively presented with 16 pages of photos. At £25 for a full 450 pages it is also competitively priced. These features, combined with the high quality of the research and writing and the fascinating, beautiful and dreadful human story they relate, make "Unlikely Warriors" essential reading for anyone interested in the Spanish Civil War.

Lewis Mates teaches history and politics at Durham University and is the author of "The Spanish Civil War and the British Left: Political Activism and the Popular Front" (IB Tauris, London, 2007).

"Unlikely Warriors" has been shortlisted with six other books in the Political History category of the inaugural annual Paddy Power and Total Politics Book Awards. Judges include Charles Clarke, Ann Widdecombe and Mary Beard, and winners will be announced on 6 February.

Arthur Clegg for having documented the work done by the China Campaign Committee in solidarity with the Chinese against Japanese aggression (“Aid China, 1937-1949: A memoir of a forgotten campaign”; New World Press, Beijing, 1989). In “East Wind”, Buchanan explores the wider subject of the intricate relationship between China and the British Left, giving a much-needed analysis of the period from the rise of modern Chinese nationalism to the death of Mao Tse-tung. Reactions in Britain to the wars being fought in Spain and China form part of this ground-breaking study. The failures of British foreign policy are brought into stark focus in one of the illustrations, namely the *New Leader’s* graphic depiction of warplanes in V formations labelled “Spain”, “China”, “Abyssinia” and “Czechoslovakia”, flying over Britain in 1940 and captioned with the Chinese ambassador’s comment, “the air is black with the wings of chickens coming home to roost”. Drawing on many such apposite quotations, and with a notably extensive bibliography, “East Wind” will appeal to anyone with an interest in the history of the Left, and will surely become a definitive reference work for students in years to come.

In the article, “‘Shanghai-Madrid Axis?’”, Buchanan’s focus is specifically on a comparison between the campaigns in Britain to support the Spanish Republic and those to aid

“China never became ‘China’, a ‘great cause’ like that of ‘Spain’, instantly recognisable from one emotionally charged word.”

China in the period 1936-39. For a brief time, these campaigns were at the forefront of attention among left-wing activists, particularly following the bombing of civilians in both countries in 1937. The strong links between the two causes are evident. Some former Brigaders, like Patience Darton, went on to work in China, though in her case not until the 1950s. In 1939, still raw from the defeat Spanish Republic, she had tried to go there with a group of doctors she had met in Spain, but had been unsuccessful. In this period before the outbreak of World War Two, she and others who had worked together in the Brigades believed that China offered a new front in the fight against fascism and the chance to build a better world. Buchanan’s article sets out the context for such a transference of hope.

Though the conflicts were frequently presented in similar terms as “fascist assaults” and “people’s wars”, Buchanan examines why China never became “China”, a “great cause” like that of “Spain”, instantly recognisable from one emotionally charged word. His skillful in-depth analysis of the cultural context and the involvement of key writers and intellectuals of the times give a

Continued overleaf



PERFORMERS: Among those contributing to the new album are (clockwise from top left) The Wakes, Alison McMorland and Geordie McIntyre and Dick Gaughan.

Songs for Scottish Brigaders

Compilation CD “Scots in the Spanish Civil War: No Pasaran” Greentrax Recordings CDTRAX3639; £12 plus p&p from [www.greentrax.com]

Reviewed by Jim Jump



Hot on the heels of the excellent “From Blantyre to Barcelona” comes this superb 17-track collection of songs in tribute to the more than 500 Scottish International Brigade volunteers. Every song is a gem, with more than half of them specially recorded for this new CD. The others are mainly drawn from albums that are now out of print or hard to find. These include The McCalmans’ version of “Peatbog Soldiers”, The Laggan performing “Jarama Valley/Bandiera Rossa” and the late Jim Brown’s “Salud International Brigade”.

The music ranges across the spectrum of folk music styles. Alison McMorland and Geordie McIntyre sing “Viva los Brigadistas” over a mournful bagpipe backing; Gallo Rojo, a group of Edinburgh-based Scottish and Spanish musicians, belt out a rocking “iNo Pasarán”; and Glasgow’s Celtic punk-folk band The Wakes perform their tribute to Brigader James Maley, “These Hands”.

There are familiar songs such as Ewan MacColl’s “Jamie Foyers”, sung here by Dick Gaughan, “Si Me Quieres Escribir” by Christine Kydd, and John Kidd’s rendition of John Wall’s acerbic “Owt for Nowt” – “España you bled from Bilbao to Seville / And the ghosts

of your dead, they walk the beaches still.”

Spain’s forgotten dead, in this case the more than 130 Scots who died in Spain, feature in the poem “Graves of Spain” by Mary Brooksbank (1897-1980), put to music for this CD by Eileen Penman: “Tread softly señoritas, o’er their lonely graves / Spaniards mute your voices for our dead / Stars shine steadfast, eternal vigil keep.”

Another poem, “When The Call Comes” by Alistair Findlay, was specially written for this CD. It has been recorded by Ian McCalmán and George Archibald, a member of the group Ragged Glory.

A remarkable poem also closes the album. Broadcaster Iain Anderson reads “Hasta La Vista – Madrid”, written by Aberdeen Brigader Bob Cooney in 1965 for a reunion of the volunteers in London: “It seems but yesterday / We left that war torn hill above Gandesa,” wrote Cooney at the start of a long poem that ends with a warning to Franco – still in power at the time – “We will stroll in the Puerta del Sol / And the Ramblas of Barcelona / We will cross the Ebro and drink with our friends in Mora / Friends who will be free!”

The CD comes with a 22-page booklet for which historian Daniel Gray, author of “Homage to Caledonia”, provides an introduction. There are lyrics and notes for all the songs and photos of several Brigaders. Greentrax and all those involved in this project are to be congratulated for producing such a fine album, which is an essential addition to any collection of music about the International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War.



STILLS: Images from David Leach's "Voices from a Mountain", including (top) Welsh volunteer Alun Menai Williams.

Return of 'Voices from a Mountain'

By David Leach

I thought it was time "Voices from a Mountain", my 2001 documentary about British volunteers in the Spanish Civil War, was shared publicly, particularly with my friends in the Terra Alta district of Catalonia, many of whom were unaware their vineyards and olive groves are fertilised with the old bones of young Englishmen.

The film was originally dedicated to John Rickman from Powerstock in Dorset, who was killed on the Jarama front, and Lance Rogers from Cefn Coed in South Wales, who came home safely after his personal Gethsemane at the Ebro.

I now wish to include in my dedication the more than 500 British, Irish, Australian and New Zealand volunteers from the British Battalion who died defending Spain's fragile democracy.

In particular, I want to honour Kevin Rebbечи from Melbourne, who ran away to Queensland at the age of 15 after his father tried to apprentice him to a butcher. His family never saw him again. Kevin appears in George Wheeler's memoir "To Make the People Smile Again" as they travel with Jack Jones from London to Paris and then over the Pyrenees on foot and into Spain. Kevin was wounded at the Battle of the Ebro, but almost made it home to Australia. He succumbed to typhus, dying alone in a military hospital in Vic at the age of 21 on New Year's Day 1939.

Watching "Voices from a Mountain" for the first time in five years, I think it still works. As a writer, researcher and interviewer, I learnt that it's vital to work with a great cameraman, editor and composer. After its first screening at London's Raindance documentary film festival, Channel 4 requested a viewing copy. They turned the film down. (It was later bought and broadcast by that nice Rupert Murdoch and his chums at the History Channel.) An insider told me that Channel 4 had a concern "the film might be seen as an exercise in extreme left-wing propaganda". I took that as a compliment. In fact it's an extended love letter from me to five old men, now dead, and five young men long since dead.

Here's the link: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iUllqn8v58] or go to YouTube and search "Voices from a Mountain".

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new and welcome perspective on the interconnections between the two campaigns.

Angela Jackson's latest book is "For us it was Heaven: The Passion, Grief and Fortitude of Patience Darton" (Sussex Academic Press, Eastbourne, 2012), a biography of the International Brigade nurse who lived in China from 1954-58.

'All Spain is a prison'

"The War and Its Shadow: Spain's Civil War in Europe's Long Twentieth Century" by Helen Graham (Sussex Academic Press, Eastbourne, 2012) £22.50

Reviewed by Richard Baxell



Helen Graham's latest monograph, "The War and its Shadow", is not an introductory text to the Spanish Civil War, nor is it an easy read. While only 150 pages long, the text's richness and complexity, the

scope and ambition, the intelligence and sheer breadth of knowledge contained within it make the book both thought-provoking and challenging. Important and timely too. One of the major issues currently facing the IBMT is how to explain to a contemporary audience the significance of a war which was fought in Spain over 70 years ago. This book provides detailed evidence of the enduring relevance of the Spanish Civil War and the 35 years of malevolent and vengeful dictatorship which followed.

In structure, the book comprises a number of essays, implicitly divided into three main sections. In the first, the author discusses the legacy of the First World War, which saw the mortal wounding of many European *anciens régimes* but not, as yet, their destruction. During what was essentially becoming a European civil war, nationalist movements fought to reassert what they believed to be their natural right to rule. The second section examines the notion of the volunteers (originally raised in her inaugural professorial lecture) for the Spanish Republic as "border-crossers". For

Helen Graham, many of the International Brigaders were, to use her rather elegant expression, "the stormy petrels of social change", members of a vanguard fighting for "cosmopolitan cultural modernity". The third, final section of the book is a passionate essay on contemporary Spain, the enduring legacy of Francoism and the current battles to control historical memory.

The book provides a trenchant demolition of some of the more enduring myths of the Franco dictatorship. As the author points out, the Spanish Civil War was the first battle of a war "waged predominantly on civilians" and there is no shortage of evidence that murder and rape were used deliberately as a weapon to break down resistance. As the leader of the military rebels, General Emilio Mola declared, they were determined to eliminate "without scruple or hesitation those who do not think as we do". This included not just members of the "left" and members of some imaginary "judeo-masonic conspiracy", but any representatives of progress and modernity: teachers, trade unionists, homosexuals and "modern women" too, as the accounts in chapter three of the viciousness visited on the Barayón family make only too clear.

Like Paul Preston's acclaimed "The Spanish Holocaust", Graham's "The War and its Shadow" reiterates that Franco's dictatorship was not "softer" than those of Hitler and Stalin, remarking pointedly on a persisting lack of awareness of the vast number of "extra and quasi-judicial" killings enacted by the Franco regime between 1936 and 1975. The chapter on Franco's prisons is particularly harrowing. "All Spain is a prison" wrote poet Marcos Ana, as Franco's regime set about "teaching the defeated the meaning of their defeat". As evidence of the truly repugnant nature of Franco's Spain, the author reminds us that even Heinrich Himmler was shocked by the extent of judicial murder when he visited Spain in October 1940 (though admitting that his main concern may have been the wastage of potential slave labour).

The book explains how the victimisation continued within the prisons; "the rape/sexual assault of women prisoners was systematically perpetrated with impunity by the servants of the Franco regime", and children were removed from what were considered to be "unfit" mothers.

The book concludes with a rather depressing, though no doubt accurate, assessment of

"The Spanish Civil War was the first battle of a war 'waged predominantly on civilians' and there is no shortage of evidence that murder and rape were used deliberately as a weapon to break down resistance."

Footprints of the Brigaders in Madrid

A guide to sites in Madrid associated with the International Brigades has been produced by the AABI Spanish International Brigades friendship group and can be ordered for €5 plus p&p from the AABI website (www.brigadasinternacionales.org). First published in Spanish in November last year, an English-language edition is expected to be on sale by mid-February 2013.

The 80-page guide comes with an A3 map of Madrid, indicating three walking and Metro routes taking in some 30 sites of interest in the centre of the city.

One of the routes follows that taken by the International Brigade volunteers who arrived on 8 November 1936 as Franco's forces

threatened to overwhelm the capital's defences. Singing "The Internationale" they marched from Atocha railway station along the Gran Vía and through cheering crowds – with many *madripleños* in tears – towards the front line on the western fringes of the city.

The sites listed include landmarks such as the hospitals where volunteers wounded in the battles around the capital were treated, the headquarters of the International Brigades in Velázquez Street and the Bar Miami – now a clothes shop on the Gran Vía – where John Cornford, John Sommerfield and other British volunteers are known to have spent evenings relaxing while bombs fell on the city.



HANDBOOK: An English-language version of this new guide to International Brigade sites in Madrid is scheduled for publication early this year.

Compiled by Ken O'Keefe, an English-language teacher from the US who developed an interest in the International Brigades while studying and working in Madrid for many years, the guide has been co-written by him and Severiano Montero of the AABI. They have included archive photos and anecdotes about the Brigaders and foreign correspondents, as well as extracts from their memoirs.

The aim is that this will be the first in a trilogy of guides. The other two would focus respectively on battle sites in and around the University City and on significant places near Madrid, among them, for example, the Jarama and Brunete battlefields.

the situation in contemporary Spain, which finds the conservative Partido Popular in power during a time of severe financial crisis. Attempts to recuperate historical memory are becoming increasingly difficult, as court cases are launched against those – however prominent – involved in investigating the crimes of the Franco regime. As the author explains, while there have been many positive changes in Spain since the death of Franco, "many of its most damaging effects endure within the constitutional polity". Clearly much of Spain remains in shadow and the task of dismantling the Francoist structure has some way to go.

Helen Graham talks about her book on the BBC History Extra podcast of 30 August 2012. See: [www.historyextra.com/podcasts].

Friends in high places

"Geordie's Story: The Life of Jack Brent" by John Dickie (Azlan Publications, Northampton, 2012) £5

Reviewed by Jim Jump



Spanish Civil War veteran Jack Brent, who was the Secretary of the International Brigade Association from 1941-43, was born George ("Geordie") Dickie in Ontario, Canada, in 1912. His mother was a single parent and Geordie and his brother were soon taken by their grandmother to the family's home town of Whithorn in south-



CORTÈGE: Over 300 mourners followed Jack Brent's body on its way to Golders Green Crematorium in north London following his death in 1951.

west Scotland. He grew up in great poverty, leaving school at 13 to work as a farm hand and butcher's assistant before joining the Cameron Highlanders at the age of 16.

Army life didn't suit him and he was twice sentenced to detention for breaches of discipline, the second time for 96 days for drinking on duty. In either 1931 or 1933 (there are conflicting accounts) he deserted and made his way to London, where he adopted the name of Jack Brent.

When a petition campaign was launched in 2005 to stop plans for a memorial plaque to Brent in Whithorn, his desertion from the army was prominent among the reasons given to oppose the project. The plaque was nevertheless erected in the following year – and is pictured on the back cover of this book – but is, as a recent angry exchange of letters in the *Galloway Gazette* confirmed, still a cause of controversy in the town.

This new biography by Jack's nephew, John Dickie, draws extensively on family archives as well as memoirs of fellow Brigaders to produce a

revealing and always fascinating account of his life and times.

Through a mutual friend in London in the early 1930s, Brent met Chris Maxwell, daughter of Sir Aymer Maxwell and Lady Mary Percy. She was a prominent activist in communist circles in the capital. This new biography hints strongly at a romantic liaison between the two, and the intimate tone and content of letters from Jack that are quoted in the book certainly point in that direction.

Maxwell was born at the House of Elrig, a mansion a few miles away from Whithorn, and although she and Jack were poles apart on the social spectrum, in London they were like-minded communists. After Jack's death in 1951 at the age of 39, John Dickie's family moved from Whithorn to London to share a flat with her.

Brent joined the International Brigades early in 1937. During the Battle of Jarama in February of that year he was part of the Canadian contingent of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion and was badly

Continued overleaf

Concert in Spain

● Musicians who took part in last year's IBMT commemoration in London's Jubilee Gardens are planning to perform again together, this time in Spain. They include **Ewan McLennan** and **Namara** from Britain and **Paco Marín** from Spain. The concert is provisionally scheduled for the evening of 30 April in the municipal auditorium in Logroño – Paco's home city in northern Spain. They will also be invited to perform at May Day events on the following day. Anyone interested in travelling from Britain to attend the concert, which is being sponsored by the local association for the recovery of historical memory, should contact the IBMT Secretary (details on page 9) nearer the time.

● The IBMT's **2012 Len Crome Memorial Lecture** appears in print in the latest issue (Fall 2012) of the US magazine *The Antioch Review*. The article (and lecture) by Peter N Carroll, historian of the US volunteers, is titled "The Spanish Civil War in the 21st Century: From Guernica to Human Rights". It cannot be browsed online, but copies of the current issue can be bought for \$10 plus p&p from [http://antiochcollege.org/antioch_review].

● "The Spanish Crucible: **Canadians** in the Spanish Civil War", a two-part documentary produced by CBC Radio as part of its Living Out Loud series can be accessed from: [www.cbc.ca/livingoutloud/timeline/index.html].

'Geordie's Story'

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wounded when a bullet passed through his left hip and came out to the right of his ribs. His legs were at first completely paralysed and he spent the next eight months in hospital and convalescing in Spain. Some movement was restored to his legs and he could eventually walk with two sticks, but he suffered crippling pain for the rest of his life.

As head of the IBA he was much engaged in assisting Brigaders incarcerated across Europe. Deteriorating health forced him to step down and the last years of his life before his death in 1951 were spent seeking medical treatment, including a trip to Czechoslovakia, and relief from pain. Evidence from his bank papers show that he was receiving regular payments from Chris Maxwell and fellow wealthy left-wingers Nancy Cunard and John Platt-Mills. The hearse bearing his coffin was followed to Golders Green Crematorium by over 300 Brigaders and friends of Republican Spain.

Copies of the book can be ordered from: **John Dickie, 2 Western View, Black Lion Hill, Northampton NN1 1SN, adding £2 for p&p (£7 in total); email [johndickie100@hotmail.com]. Mention the IBMT when ordering.**



EBRO COMMEMORATION: July 27 will see a sixth annual reenactment of the crossing of the Ebro (participants in last year's event are pictured left), this year with added significance as it will mark the 75th anniversary of the start of the Spanish Republic's last military offensive. The day-long event is being hosted by the Battle of the Ebro 1938 Exhibition Centre in Fayón. The centre itself (pictured above) is open daily throughout the year at: Paseo de Aragón 22 Bis, 50795 Fayón; [www.labatalladelebro.com].

20 January GLASGOW: "Scots in the Spanish Civil War" concert featuring artists from the new CD album of the same name (see review on page 23); part of annual Celtic Connections festival; 7.30pm, Mitchell Library Auditorium, 201 North Street, G3 7DN; £13; phone bookings: 0141 353 8000; online bookings: [www.celticconnections.com/Events/Pages/Event.aspx?ev=426&ty=Traditional].

10 February MANCHESTER: Commemoration of the February 1937 Battle of Jarama at Manchester Town Hall, Albert Square, M2 5DE; 11.30am-12.30pm; more information: Charles Jepson, tel: 01254-51302, email: [clarioncc@yahoo.co.uk]; further details on page 8.



15/16 February MADRID: 6th annual commemoration of Battle of Jarama; programme includes guided tour on Friday of British Battalion positions on battlefield south-east of Madrid and an evening event in Madrid featuring guest speakers and on Saturday a tour of sites linked to the French and US battalions followed by lunch at Morata de Tajuña; contact Danny Payne [danpayne40@yahoo.co.uk] or phone IBMT Secretary, tel: 020-7228 6504.

17 February TARANCÓN: Rededication of memorial to Scottish volunteers killed at Battle of Jarama in Tarancón (20 miles south east

of Madrid) at the site of a former International Brigade hospital; an earlier memorial in the town's cemetery was vandalised and is now being replaced; if interested in attending, contact Mike Arnott; email: [dundeetuc@ymail.com] or tel: 07951-443 656.

2 March MANCHESTER: IBMT's annual Len Crome Memorial Lecture, "George Orwell's Homage to Catalonia: 75 years on"; chaired by Mary Vincent, with talks by Richard Baxell, Tom Buchanan, Chris Hall and Paul Preston; 11am-5pm; Manchester Conference Centre, Weston Building, Sackville Street, M1 3BB [www.manchesterconferencecentre.co.uk]; conference fee payable with advance booking or on the day: £10 (£5 students in advance or £10 on the day); add £15 if lunch and refreshments required; pre-booking for lunch by 31 January is essential; payments to: IBMT Treasurer Charles Jepson, Aysgaard, Beardwood Brow, Blackburn BB2 7AT; contact Hilary Jones or Dolores Long for more information: [hilary.m.jones@btinternet.com] tel: 0161-224 1747; [doloreslong@fastmail.fm] tel: 0161-226 2013.

1/2 June HAMBURG: Weekend of events organised by IBMT sister group in Germany, KFSR, including harbour tour of sites of anti-fascist resistance and visit to Fuhlsbüttel concentration camp and graves of International Brigaders; for more information contact Reinhardt Silbermann: [reinhardtsilbermann@arcor.de]; tel: +49 (0)40-616 484.

6 July LONDON: Annual commemoration at the International Brigade memorial in Jubilee Gardens, SE1; assemble 12.30pm for 1pm; followed by social from 2.30pm at Camel & Artichoke, 121 Lower Marsh St, SE1 7AE; contact IBMT Secretary (see page 9) for more details; see also notice on back cover.

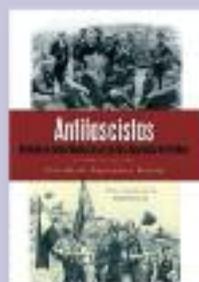
IBMT merchandise

Proceeds help fund the commemorative, educational and publicity work of the trust



CD single

Exclusively for the IBMT, Billy Bragg performs "Jarama Valley" and Maxine Peake delivers La Pasionaria's emotional farewell speech to the International Brigades with a dub backing from The Urban Roots. **£5 plus £1.99 p&p**



Antifascistas

British and Irish Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War. The story of the volunteers in words and pictures, by Richard Basell, Angela Jackson and Jim Jump (paperback). **£10 plus £2.99 p&p**



Poems from Spain

Collection of poems written by British and Irish International Brigaders. Edited by Jim Jump (paperback). **£10 plus £2.99 p&p**



Salud!

British volunteers in the Republican medical service during the Spanish Civil War, by Linda Palfreeman (paperback). **£17 plus £3.99 p&p**



IBMT badge

Solid metal badge with International Brigade medal in centre and International Brigade Memorial Trust around the edge. **£3 plus £2.99 p&p**



Earrings

Spanish Republican-coloured bead earrings. Handmade in the UK. **£5 plus £1.99 p&p**



Wristband

Stretchy rubber wristband in Spanish Republican colours and embossed with "IBMT" and "antifascistas". **£2.50 plus £2.99 p&p**



75th anniversary plate

A limited edition of 75 plates (individually numbered) made in the UK from finest bone china. Each plate (26cm diameter) has a copy of the medal given to International Brigade members along with list of major battles. **£30 plus £4.99 p&p**



70th anniversary trinket box

Made from finest bone china in the UK. On the lid is the three-pointed International Brigade star. Inside is an extract from La Pasionaria's farewell speech to the International Brigades in October 1938. **£10 plus £2.99 p&p**



British Battalion t-shirt

In red or grey and made for the IBMT by t-shirt specialists Philosophy Football from ethically sourced cotton. British Battalion banner on front and "International Brigade Memorial Trust" on sleeve.

Available in:
S (35inch chest/90cms)
M (40inch chest/100cms)
L (44inch chest/110cms)
XL (48inch chest/120cms)
XXL (52inch chest/130cms)
Fitted women's (34-36inch/70-90cms). **£25 plus £3.99 p&p**



Tom Mann Centuria t-shirt

Made for the IBMT by t-shirt specialists Philosophy Football from ethically sourced cotton. Tom Mann Centuria banner on front. "International Brigade Memorial Trust" on sleeve. Available in S, M, L, XL, XXL and fitted women's size (see above for size details). **£23 plus £3.99 p&p**



Connolly Column t-shirt

Black cotton t-shirt with design (above) in Spanish Republican colours across chest commemorating the volunteers from Ireland. Available in S, M, L, XL. **£10 plus £3.99 p&p**



75th anniversary poster

On A4 art paper and specially designed for the IBMT by leading graphic artist Martin Bedford. **£5 plus £1.99 p&p**



IBMT Orwell poster

A3 poster of George Orwell, designed by Simon Hawkesworth of Fold Design for IBMT's 2013 Len Crome Memorial Lecture. **£2 plus £2.99 p&p**

Send orders, including your name and address, a size and colour where appropriate, and a cheque payable to the IBMT to: IBMT Merchandise, 286 Brantingham Road, Manchester M21 0QU.

For multiple orders in the UK up to a value of £30 (excluding p&p) calculate total p&p by taking the highest p&p among items ordered, halving the p&p of the remaining items and adding them together. There is no p&p on orders for goods worth more than £30.

For orders outside the UK or to pay by credit card or PayPal, go to our website: www.international-brigades.org.uk/merchandise.php where there are also other items listed for sale.

This year we will
be marking the
75th anniversary of
the Battle of the Ebro



- Saturday 6 July 2013
- International Brigade Memorial Jubilee Gardens, South Bank, London SE1
- Assemble 12.30pm
- Guest performers and speakers
- Social gathering from 2.30pm in Camel & Artichoke, 121 Lower Marsh St, London SE1 7AE

Commemorate and celebrate the anti-fascist

INTERNATIONAL BRIGADES

SPAIN 1936-39



International Brigade Memorial Trust
www.international-brigades.org.uk