



**International Brigade
Memorial Trust**

2022 Annual General Meeting
Manchester 15 October 2022

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

1/ INTRODUCTION

This report covers the period from October 2021 to September 2022.

The death of *Manus O’Riordan* was not noted in last year’s Annual Report – he died in September last year, after the production of the report. However, tributes were paid to Manus at the 2021 AGM.

2/ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee has met three times: on 9 October 2021, 15 January, and 14 May 2022. The October meeting was held in person at the 2021 AGM in Southampton, whilst the January and May meetings were hybrid – with some members in the Marx Memorial Library and some online.

Executive Committee members elected at the 2021 AGM (for a full three year term) were James Bentley, Alan Lloyd, and Dolores Long.

The President’s role is ongoing and is carried out by Marlene Sidaway. The following other roles were agreed by the EC: Jim Jump Chair; Megan Dobney Secretary; Paul Coles Treasurer; Mike Arnott Scotland Secretary; David McKnight Wales Secretary; John Haywood Fundraising Coordinator; Dolores Long North West Representative; Ajmal Waqif Editor; Alan Lloyd South East Representative; Marshall Mateer Film Coordinator; Dolores Long Minute Taker; and Alex Gordon and John Haywood were appointed as the IBMT’s Auditors.

The sudden death of Manus O’Riordan led to the Trustees deciding to leave the role of Ireland Secretary vacant.

Membership, Merchandise and Social Media are dealt with by Executive Officer Ajmal Waqif with the support of the Finance & Management Committee.

The Finance & Management Committee (comprising the President, Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Executive Officer) has met many times during the year dealing with the day to day interests of the organisation.

3/ TREASURER’S REPORT

The accounts are submitted separately for your approval.

We are now up-to-date with reimbursement of Gift Aid by HMRC which has proved a welcome addition to our income.

The F&MC has received a Treasurer’s report at each meeting.

4/ IBMT OFFICE

The IBMT continues to rent a room at its registered office at Marx House, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU.

This is the third year with our Executive Officer, Ajmal Waqif, in place and again, at his annual appraisal we thanked him for his excellent work.

5/ MEMBERSHIP

The Trustees established a Membership Strategy Working Party in May to take an in-depth look at the financial future of the organisation. The group (Megan Dobney, Jonathan Havard, Alan Lloyd, David McKnight, Ajmal Waqif) has met online several times and initially hoped to be able to present a comprehensive strategy and proposals for the future at the AGM.

However, a review of membership figures resulted in a thorough cleansing of our database and a much more rigorous approach to those whose membership has lapsed. This took some time and has exposed a lower than expected membership number, at the same time continuing to show inconsistencies between the membership numbers and subscription income.

There will be a presentation on the initial findings and proposals from the working party at the AGM.

The "Friends of the IBMT" scheme, launched in 2018, was restructured this year and members who sign up by direct debit to pay at least £50 a year will receive, in their first year, a variation of the 'Voluntarios Internacionales de la Libertad' logo mug with the additional words 'Friend of the International Brigade Memorial Trust'.

We have local groups affiliated to us in Aberdeen, Belfast, Cardiff, Hull, Manchester/North West, Oxford, North West, and Sussex.

6/ ¡NO PASARÁN!

Three issues of the IBMT magazine *¡No Pasarán!* have been published. All have been edited by Ajmal Waqif with the constant support of former editor Jim Jump.

7/ COMMUNICATIONS

eNewsletter The IBMT eNewsletter continues to keep members informed of IBMT activities and events linked to the International Brigades and Spanish Civil War. It is published more or less every three weeks and is posted on our website.

Website In late August our redesigned website was launched with better facilities for merchandise, donations, and membership. An interactive map of memorials is now on the website – a great resource that brings up information on each memorial.

Page views of the IBMT website averaged 1,086 per month (36 per day).

Social media The IBMT's social media presence continues to grow, with original content shared over Facebook and Twitter every week. In September 2021 our Facebook group had 7,114 members (7,099 in 2021) and our Twitter feed had 5,701 followers (5,508 in 2021).

Film coordinator's report

'The Brigaders Return – an annotated version', research into and creating an annotated version of the 1938 film – first showing IBMT AGM in Manchester. Thanks to BFI.

'Remembering Manus', a film for Manus O'Riordan: <https://youtu.be/VvyM5z61rI4>

'Sam Lesser – the IBMT days', a film for the Sam Lesser book launch: <https://youtu.be/Bywj1YxnCTE>

Compilation film of the photomontages.

'Remembering in a Time of Lockdown' – a response to the Covid restrictions, begun March 2020 completed with the Annual IBMT commemoration.

'Remembering Jarama', slide show (and film version) for Manchester Annual Commemoration.

Support to members and sister organisations: Sam Wild projects and IWM audio collections. North West Film Archive; NE volunteers (Tony Fox); 'Stories from the Spanish Civil War' film production group.

Research into early volunteers: 'Remembering Sid Avner'. 'Thomas Worsley'.

Management and development of the three on-line IBMT channels: Flickr, You Tube, Pinterest and the IBMT website video pages.

IBMT You Tube.

<https://www.youtube.com/IBMTnews>

IBMT Flickr <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ibmt/>

IBMT Pinterest

https://www.pinterest.co.uk/IBMT_SCW/

IBMT website: <http://www.international-brigades.org.uk/video-page>

8/ TAPES OF BRIGADERS

Our volunteer worker Mick Brunton is close to concluding his work to transfer 198 CDs with recordings of interviews with volunteers to a format that will make them accessible and available to members and researchers. We will then be seeking funding to format them for

inclusion on our website adding a further valuable resource to the site.

9/ LONDON SOUTHBANK COMMEMORATION

The IBMT's annual commemoration in London Southbank's Jubilee Gardens took place on 2 July. This was the first one since 2019 without Covid-19 restrictions and was well attended on a mostly sunny and dry day. Speakers were Liz Estensen (actor, and daughter of Brigadier Otto Estensen), Neil O'Riordan, who with his brother Luke paid tribute to his father Manus O'Riordan), Carmen Kilner (secretary of the Basque Children's Association), and Alex Gordon (president of rail union RMT). Musical duo Na-Mara performed and many organisations and individuals laid wreaths in tribute to the volunteers.

10/ LEN CROME MEMORIAL CONFERENCE

The 2020 conference on *Scotland and the Spanish Civil War* was postponed to 2022, and took place in Edinburgh.

Attendees heard Fraser Raeburn, Maximo Molina, and Mike Arnott, and the conference was chaired by IBMT president Marlene Sidaway.

11/ MEMORIALS AND COMMEMORATIONS

An olive tree was planted in Doncaster in memory of local brigaders. We are in touch with the Council regarding an interpretation board.

We are working with the Basque Children's Association to place a plaque on 'Hogar Español' in Bayswater, commemorating the work of exiled prime minister Juan Negrin.

The North West Group is making progress on a plaque in Burnley for local brigaders.

Wakefield Trade Union Council has agreed to sponsor a plaque to commemorate the 4/5 volunteers from the area.

Officers are also in touch with members in Stockton regarding their memorial and with Clapton Community Football Club for a memorial at their ground in Stratford, East London.

12/ ANTIFASCISTAS EXHIBITION

In the aftermath of the Covid pandemic the exhibition has been little used this year.

13/ MERCHANDISE

Good relations have continued with both Red Molotov and Past Pixels for partnership production of merchandise. This helps us not having to hold stock in our small office and also lifts some of the burden of distribution from the office.

IBMT Patron Paul Preston donated hundreds of books from the LSE's Canada Blanch Centre – these are now on sale on our website. Titles missing from the Marx Memorial Library's collection of Spanish Civil War books were donated to the Library.

A set of 20 postcards, published in Spain in 1937, were donated to the IBMT by Peter Harrison's family. These have now been produced as a boxed set in partnership with Past Pixels. One of the images will be published shortly as a Christmas card.

In conjunction with Red Molotov we have made available, in a range of colours, a new version of the popular British Battalion t-shirt.

New tote bags have also been produced.

Josh Newmark, a history PhD student at Leeds University, worked with us over the summer to compile a manuscript of notable articles from our magazine. He was funded by the White Rose College of the Arts & Humanities scheme, run by universities in Yorkshire. We are now seeking a publisher.

The Trade Union Football & Alcohol Committee has continued to support the IBMT, with a donation from sales of their Marina Ginesta t-shirt featuring the iconic image showing Marina holding a rifle on a Barcelona rooftop.

Affiliated IB groups are reminded that merchandise can be bought at a 10% discount.

14/ FUNDRAISING

After reviewing the set-up costs of the raffle, the F&MC and Fundraising Officer agreed the 2022 raffle would be online. The draw will take place at the AGM in Manchester. Tickets continue to be for sale up to that point.

15/ EDUCATION

The schools project, for which we received a grant from the Lipman-Miliband Trust is moving to a conclusion. History undergraduates at Leeds University are creating online teaching and learning aids for Key Stage 3 pupils. The project is under the supervision of Professor Peter Anderson and the project consultant is historian and secondary school teacher Alex Clifford.

The final stage of the project will be to digitise and design the teaching materials and make them available on the IBMT website. There will be a drive to alert teachers to their availability and to advise them on how the war in Spain and its impact on Britain can be taught in schools within the national curriculum.

16/ IRELAND

The position of Ireland Secretary has been vacant this year.

17/ SCOTLAND

Commemorations have been held in Dundee, Glasgow and Motherwell.

Mike Arnott organised the Len Crome Memorial Conference in March 2022 (report above).

18/ WALES

The Stanbrook plaque was, at long last, unveiled in May in Cardiff by Mark Drakeford, First Minister of Wales. The plaque was donated to the IBMT and Cardiff City Council in April 2015 by Alicante's historical memory association in memory of the captain and crew of the Stanbrook, which was the last ship to leave Republican Spain with refugees in March 1938.

A 'purple plaque' to Thora Silverthorne was unveiled in May in Abertillery, with her daughter Lucy Craig, and IBMT Wales secretary David McKnight speaking.

On 16 July the IBMT, jointly with IB Cymru, organised a Wales commemoration of the country's volunteers.

19/ NORTH WEST ENGLAND

Well attended Jarama commemoration at Central Library Manchester 12 February.

'The Nurse Who Became a Spy: Madge Addy's War Against Fascism' by Chris Hall. Chris has given several talks to local groups to promote his book.

'Clem Beckett: Motorcycle Legend and War Hero' by Robert Hargreaves. Robert has given several talks on Clem Beckett and Oldham Brigaders to promote his book.

Lisa Croft's talk on 'The Spanish Civil War, Wigan and the North West' due to be given at the Wigan Diggers Festival postponed due to Queen's funeral. Future date for the talk to be arranged.

Several young students working on dissertations on the NW Brigaders have been in contact.

Lewis Ashworth, a student at University of Central Lancashire, graduated with a first-class degree and won the prize for best overall dissertation for his dissertation on 'Pendle and the Spanish Civil War'.

The NW group has worked closely with UNISON to organise the IBMT AGM weekend of events.

Ongoing projects:

- Commemorative plaque in Burnley nearing completion

- Possibility of plaque in NW for the Basque Children being explored

- Plaque for Oldham Brigaders (currently placed in Oldham Parish Church) to be moved to Oldham Heritage Centre when renovations to the Heritage Centre are completed

- Plans for a fund-raising concert in 2023 being explored.

20/ SOUTH EAST ENGLAND

Oxford – John Heywood

OIBMC sponsored Alice Roth's new film about her great uncle Gilbert, an IB volunteer by donating £100 to the project. Alice provided her and her cameraman's service free for our 'Comrades Come Rally' held in Oxford in March 2022. The film of that event can be seen on the IBMT website.

Oxford IBM Committee (OIBMC) hosted a fundraiser in April to support the Didcot Red Kites plans to attend the Solidarity Festival at Malgrat, near Barcelona in May. £764.20 was raised.

OIBMC joined the Oxford Trades Council May Day gathering and march in Oxford and several members attended the Reading IB group's May

Day Rally, and were also instrumental in organising this year's Levellers Day held at Burford on 21 May.

Colin Carritt, OIMBC's chairman, gave a zoom presentation on Oxfordshire and the Spanish Civil War to the Thames Valley U3A last year and John Haywood made a similar but live presentation to the Great Thame U3A in June. Fees for all our talks are donated to the OIBMC.

OIBMC are working with Daniel Poole to organise a launch of the fundraising campaign for a statue in Oxford to Charlie Hutchinson, the only black member of the British battalion. He was born in Whitney, Oxon but spent most of his non active service (1936 to 1945!) in London – mainly Bermondsey. The launch will be on 27 October at Oxford Town Hall/Museum, and many of his family will be present. Roger McKenzie will write an article about him for the Morning Star as part of Black history month.

We are planning to organise a poetry and music night next Spring, hopefully at the Oxford Music Room where we had the Comrades Come Rally event in 2020 – just before Covid lockdown. Professor Valentine Cunningham will select the poems and act as compere for the evening. We have the same actors lined up for this but have yet to recruit the musicians.

We are again central to organising the Levellers Day for 20 May 2023 and also plan to take part in the Oxford Trades Council March to commemorate May Day.

Sussex – Pauline Fraser

Our ad hoc group continues to research and publish information on our website, on the lives of the 27 Brigaders with a Sussex connection that we have been able to track down. Family members have proved invaluable in this regard. Our website address is: <https://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/sussexbrigaders/> and the entire contents of the website have been translated into Spanish by two of our Spanish supporters. Plans for a memorial to the Sussex Brigaders are ongoing.

We are particularly proud to have found that nurse Margaret Finley, the only woman volunteer of the 27, had a family connection to Sussex and we are indebted to Alan Lloyd for letting us reproduce the article he wrote about her, which appeared in the Spring 2012 edition of the IBMT Newsletter.

We also have a section on Wider Sussex Solidarity with Spain, in particular the support for the

Basque child refugees and publicise relevant local events.

The video of the September 2021 commemorative walk, which stopped at seven of the addresses in Brighton and Hove that volunteers gave when they were enrolled into the Brigades, and at the two Basque children's colonies in Hove, has been uploaded to YouTube and a link can be found on the IBMT website.

Hampshire – Alan Lloyd

The main event this year was the publication of my long promised book about the men and women connected to Hampshire who went to Spain, and the events that took place in the county to support them and the Spanish people. It is titled Hampshire Heroes: Volunteer Fighters in the Spanish Civil War and available from Clapton Press <https://theclaptonpress.com/hampshire-heroes-alan-lloyd/>

Simon Martinez and the BC37UK association have been very busy rearranging the unveiling of a new memorial to the arrival of the Basque children in Southampton. It was to have taken place on the day of the Queen's funeral, and they now report that the guest list looks very good for the 22 October. They have confirmations from the Ambassador to the UK of Spain, the Mayor of Southampton and the Mayor of Eastleigh, and are awaiting a response from the Basque Government. Now they have the special guests they are looking to drum up public support. Tickets will be publicised via the BCA37UK website and Facebook and Twitter. The memorial will be located in the Town Quay area, within sight of the berth into which the Habana docked.

21/ OUTREACH

We have continued to work with the Marx Memorial Library on a series of online discussions and events. During London Book Fair Week in April we co-sponsored the launches of 'Brigadistes' by Jordi Marti-Rueda, and 'I Saw Democracy Murdered: the memoir of Sam Russell, journalist', and in May the launch of 'The Fighter Fell in Love' by James R Jump.

IBMT Founding Chair Professor Paul Preston and Patron Professor Helen Graham participated in an online conversation in March, chaired by IBMT Historical Consultant Richard Baxell. The conversation centred on the British policy of 'non-intervention' to Munich. It was extremely well

attended and is available to view on our website.

We were delighted to receive the usual invitation from our affiliate ASLEF to their conference and this year we were able to attend in person. Marlene Sidaway, Alan Lloyd, Beth Richards and Megan Dobney staffed a merchandise and information stall. Dolores Long and Megan Dobney also ran a stall at the 125th anniversary conference of affiliate TSSA.

Marlene Sidaway and Ajmal Waqif attended the Durham Miners' Gala in July, carrying the IBMT banner on the parade and staffing a stall for the rest of the day.

In February Jim Jump gave a talk at the online Tolpuddle Radical History School run by the South West TUC, in April to Stubbington University of the Third Age, and in August he spoke to the International Brigade Commemoration Committee in Belfast, and gave the Madge Davison Memorial Lecture – also in Belfast.

The Picasso in Sheffield project (to place a sculpture of Picasso as a boy in Sheffield) continues with some strong political support and a less enthusiastic response from Council officers.

The Catalonia social collective in Lleida has awarded the IBMT. This will be presented in November 2022.

Our friends in Pedal4Progress are discussing a fundraising bike ride in 2023 for the IBMT – over the Pyrenees to Barcelona.

22/ THANKS

The Executive Committee places on record its gratitude for the support given to the Trust over this past year by all members and affiliated organisations, especially those who have attended, taken part or organised IBMT activities or who have made donations to help fund our work. In all our collective efforts our aim remains to ensure the long-term viability of the IBMT in order to help keep alive the inspiring story of the volunteers as a supreme example of international solidarity and anti-fascism.

¡No pasarán! They shall not pass!