



**International Brigade
Memorial Trust**

2023 Annual General Meeting
Stockton 7 October 2023

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

1/ INTRODUCTION

This report covers the period from October 2022 to September 2023.

We remember those members and supporters who have died this year, among them Isobel Crook, who died in September, widow of International Brigader David Crook. Joe Mulheron died in May. Joe was born in Belfast and made his home in Derry. He was a singer/songwriter and political activist dedicated to our cause. Dr Robert Smith died in March. His father Chris Smith fought in Spain. We also note with sadness the recent death of Dave Sherlock-Jones who for many years has stewarded our July commemoration event in Jubilee Gardens.

2/ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee has met three times: on 15 October 2022, 21 January, and 13 May 2023. The October meeting was held in person at the 2022 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 2022 AGM for a full three year term were Mike Arnott, Megan Dobney, Jim Jump and David McKnight, and Luke O’Riordan was elected for two years.

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; Luke O’Riordan Ireland Secretary; John Haywood Fundraising Coordinator; Dolores Long North West Representative; Alan Lloyd Archivist and South East Representative; Marshall Mateer Film Coordinator; Dolores Long Minute Taker; and Alex Gordon and John Haywood were appointed as the IBMT’s Auditors.

Ajmal Waqif, Executive Officer, was again appointed journal Editor. Ajmal left us for a full time post in June 2023 and our new Executive Officer and Editor is Helen Oclew-Brown. Helen took up the post in August.

Membership, Merchandise and Social Media are dealt with by the Executive Officer 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 2022 to 2023 accounts are submitted separately for your approval.

The accounts from April 2023 to end of August show income at 99% of budget, and expenditure at 88% of budget.

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.

We have a small store cupboard on the ground floor in the Library and this has been fitted out with shelving to accommodate some of the books donated by IBMT Founding Chair Paul Preston, thus freeing up some office space.

Unfortunately the office PC has died. We have a laptop and a decision as to whether to replace the PC will be taken in due course.

5/ MEMBERSHIP AND ¡NO PASARÁN!

We reported last year that membership figures did not match membership income and a Membership Strategy Working Party was established to take an in-depth look at the financial future of the organisation. An additional review by our new Executive Officer during the last few weeks has exposed further weaknesses in the data, but we are now nearing an accurate report.

We conducted a long discussion over the future of the magazine ¡No Pasarán! – an expensive product and costly to post out (but highly valued by our members). The decision was taken to go to an online version for individual members, and this has been in place for the last two editions. Members were invited to pay an additional charge of £5 per issue to receive a printed copy. Only 15 members did so and they are posted on publication along with a printed copy to affiliated organisations. At the last Executive Committee meeting it was agreed to consider merging the eNewsletter with a higher spec online magazine – possibly called “Brigadista”. The F&MC recommends keeping the current system in place for the next eight months and reviewing after that.

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

The change in magazine distribution has created some anomalies in our subscription structure – the F&MC will propose amendments at the AGM.

We decided a year ago that affiliated bodies require a renewal invoice and this is now in hand.

We are delighted to welcome a new national trade union member – public servants union PCS has affiliated to us.

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

6/ 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 monthly and is also posted on our website.

Website We continue to improve the website (redesigned last year) ironing out small glitches and anomalies.

Social media The IBMT’s social media presence continues to grow, with original content shared over Facebook and Twitter every week. In September 2023 our Facebook group had 7,156 members (7,114 in 2022) and our Twitter feed (now X) had 5,944 followers (5,701 in 2021).

Film coordinator’s report

The Brigaders Return! project has continued with further research into people depicted in the archive film and related events around the country. Over 30 locations of Brigaders returning in 1938 have been identified.

IBMT 85th Anniversary project of the Brigaders Return is underway to show the new film (which includes the BFI newsreel original) at locations around UK/Ireland including Aberdeen, Belfast, Dundee, Hull, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Oldham, Oxford, Salford, Teeside – on or close to the 7 December 2023.

Recorded IBMT Annual Commemoration – video and still. Recording on video by students of the WORLDwrite project.

Visit to CRAI Pavelló de la República (SIDBRINT) in Barcelona to update working relationship with IBMT.

‘Remembering in a Time of Lockdown’ – compilation film of the photomontages.

Research and support to members and sister organisations: eg. Thomas Worsley and Durham volunteers; IBMT archives; Early British volunteers to Spain – Sid Avner.

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>

7/ 85th ANNIVERSARY OF THE RETURN OF THE BRIGADERS

Officers are working across Britain and Ireland to ensure the return of the Brigaders is commemorated in events around the return date of 7 December 1938 and onwards. A list of events will be available at the AGM and on our website.

8/ SPANISH CITIZENSHIP FOR BRIGADER FAMILIES

The implementation of the provision in the 2022 Law of Democratic Memory granting citizenship to qualifying descendants of International Brigaders is under way. The IBMT is supporting members in their applications.

9/ TAPES OF BRIGADERS

Volunteer Mick Brunton has concluded his work to transfer 198 CDs with recordings of interviews with volunteers to a format that makes them accessible and available to members and researchers. Three of these are now on the website and others will be added in due course.

10/ IBMT ARCHIVES

Work continues to review each of the profiles currently held on the IBMT database. The aim is to include as much biographical detail as is known on each of the over 2,000 entries, along with the references for interested members and relatives to follow up on if they wish.

At the time of writing I am grappling with surnames beginning with “M”, meaning just over 1,300 volunteers have had their profiles updated, at least as such available information allows. Sadly, there are still too many volunteers where information is so scarce we are even unsure of their real names.

It is extremely difficult to be consistent as to who qualifies to be included in the database. Certainly it will include everyone who signed up to the British Battalion, regardless of whether they then

went to fight with the Mac-Paps or Lincolns. Then there are the British, and some Australians and New Zealanders, who fought with No 1 Company prior to the establishment of the British Battalion, along with Spanish Medical Aid personnel, pilots and any other British volunteers who went to Spain to assist the Republican Government in some capacity.

Please feel free to get in touch, whether it is to amend or add information to any of the profiles. This will help the IBMT to provide the most accurate and comprehensive picture of all the lives of these amazing people.

11/ LONDON SOUTHBANK COMMEMORATION

The IBMT’s annual commemoration in London Southbank’s Jubilee Gardens took place on 1 July. This was well attended on a mostly sunny and dry day and the conversations continued in a local pub. Speakers were Nancy Wallach from our sister organisation in the US (Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives), Claude Desmazure from our sister organisation in France (Amis des Combattants en Espagne Republicaine) and Peter Crome (son of Dr Len Crome) on the work of the medical staff. Musical duo Na-Mara performed and many organisations and individuals laid wreaths in tribute to the volunteers. This year we were joined by young people from WORLDbytes, part of the charity WORLDwrite, who are learning filmmaking skills. WORLDwrite has shared its initial film with our Film Coordinator and will send us the finished article when it is ready.

This event can’t take place without the tremendous support from supporters including photographer Andrew Wiard, sound technician John Kenton, and stewards Durand Darouga and Paul Coles.

The 2024 event will be held on Saturday 6 July.

12/ LEN CROME MEMORIAL CONFERENCE/ONLINE CONVERSATION

The decision has been taken to combine the two events and create The Len Crome Memorial Online Conversation. This will take place in November – chaired by IBMT historical consultant Richard Baxell, Paul Preston and Helen Graham will discuss “Spain in the European Civil War”.

13/ MEMORIALS AND COMMEMORATIONS

Last year's AGM asked the Executive to consider a memorial in the National Memorial Arboretum. This has been discussed at EC meetings and officers visited the NMA. A report on this will be discussed at the AGM.

There was a day of dedication at the Stockton memorial 23 April (it was unveiled in September 2022). The memorial is on the wall of John Christie's pub (he was a prime mover in getting the memorial there) and the day started with a basketball tournament named in honour of Otto Estensen whose daughter Elizabeth was amongst the relatives attending.

The proposed Memorial at the Spotted Dog Football Ground in Stratford, East London, is on track now, but there is still some work to be done at the ground. The Clapton Community Football Club raised lots of money selling their team's "away" shirts in order to fund the improvements to the ground and the club premises which were necessary when they took over. They then decided the remainder of the money should be used to fund a memorial to the International Brigaders from this area and it is hoped that this will be unveiled before the end of the year.

In Dover, with support from the IBMT, the South East Kent TUC is raising a plaque to local International Brigade volunteers on the RMT's offices in the town. There are hopes it will be unveiled before the end of the year.

The IBMT is providing background information and encouragement to Bilston Historical Society, which is considering seeking permission for a plaque marking the birthplace of Nan Green, a medical administrator in Spain and later secretary of the International Brigade Association.

We continue our support for the "Picasso in Sheffield" project. This aims to place a sculpture by artist Anthony Padgett in a prominent and appropriate place in the city to commemorate his support for the 1952 World Peace Conference in Sheffield, and for Republicans and the Spanish government, and against Franco the German and Italian fascist attacks on the country. A planning application is now being prepared for a site in Weston Park. Many thanks are due to the artist, Simon Martinez, Dolores Long, Sheffield Trades Union Council and a number of other individuals for their support.

14/ ANTIFASCISTAS EXHIBITION

The exhibition will have its first outing this year in October at an event in Bristol. But, excitingly, we now have the whole exhibition designed and displayed for easy access in digital form on the Education pages of our website. This is thanks to the generous sponsorship of the cost by president Marlene Sidaway.

15/ MERCHANDISE

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

We produced a pack of 20 Spanish Civil War postcards – a replica set of those published in Spain in 1937. One of the cards (Les nits son fredes) was produced as our 2022-2023 xmas card. We will repeat production of the 2020 card for xmas 2023-2024.

In conjunction with Red Molotov we have made available, in a range of colours, a t-shirt featuring a sketch of a militiawoman by Felicia Browne.

Josh Newmark, a history PhD student at Leeds University, worked with us over much of last year 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. This project is complete and the book "Remembering Spain", published by Clapton Press is now available.

We have sold out of our high quality metal badges and more will be ordered.

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

16/ FUNDRAISING

The 2023 raffle is again online. The draw will take place at the AGM in Stockton. Tickets continue to be for sale up to that point.

IBMT will have a table at the Marx Memorial Library's regular book sale on 14 October.

A sponsored bike ride in Spain was foreseen for September 2023 but has been postponed until 2024. Organisers Pedal4Progress have developed a suitable 3 day cycle route from Barcelona to La Bisbet de Falset, site of the Cave Hospital.

17/ EDUCATION

The schools project, for which we received a grant of £2,000 from the Lipman-Miliband Trust, has concluded and the resources (for teachers of 11 to 14 year olds, Key Stage 3 pupils) are now designed and digitised and available on our website. The project was supervised by Professor Peter Anderson and the project consultant was historian and secondary school teacher Alex Clifford. Our sincere thanks to both – and to the students who worked on the project.

18/ SCOTLAND

Annual Commemorations

11 February at the Albert Square memorial to the Dundee Brigaders.

16 February at the Paisley memorial to the Renfrewshire Brigaders.

24 February at the Tarancon memorial to the Scots Brigaders who fell at Jarama.

23 July at the Motherwell memorial to the North Lanarkshire Brigaders.

10 September at Knadgerhill Cemetery, Irvine, to John Smith.

16 September at the Pasionaria Memorial to the Glasgow Brigaders.

30 September at the Kirkcaldy memorial to the Fife Brigaders.

Events

6 May: Mike Arnott gave an illustrated talk 'Dundee & the Spanish Civil War' at Dundee Burns Club. Preview article on 22 April in *Dundee Courier* 'Why did 60 Dundonians fight fascism in the Spanish Civil War?'.

19 August: Aberdeen *Morning Star* Readers Event, 'Poetry in the Context of the Spanish Civil War'. Michael Arthur and Tommy Campbell (in person and via Zoom).

13 to 16 September: Play "From the Calton to Catalonia" by John and Willy Maley; Irish premiere at the Seán O'Casey Theatre, Dublin.

Publications

Our Fathers Fought Franco Willy Maley, Lisa Croft, Jennie Renton and Tam Watters. Launch Event 4 February, Townhead Village Hall. 12 February article and review in *The Sunday Post*. 27 February, 13, 20 and 27 March series of articles and reviews in *The National*. 10 June Launch

meeting, Prestonpans Labour Club, subsequently at Manchester and at Westminster.

Tartan Angels The Scottish Ambulance Unit in Madrid during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) (LSE Studies in Spanish History). Linda Palfreeman, March 2023.

Island Brigaders Liam Turbett, June 2023.

Research As well as helping Alan Lloyd with the IBMT Brigader Database, assistance was given to people researching the following Scottish brigaders; Joseph Murray, George McDermott, James Arthur.

Social Media Scotland and the Spanish Civil War Facebook Group; 2,100 members. In last year; 366 posts, 333 comments, 5,308 reactions.

19/ NORTH WEST ENGLAND

Jarama commemoration at Central Library: readings, music and poetry.

Talks given in a sixth form college and primary school.

Talks given on Clem Beckett and Oldham volunteers in libraries and history groups.

Talk given at Spanish CP in UK event in Manchester.

Talks given by Lisa Croft on her book 'Our Fathers Fought Franco' in several locations.

Assistance provided on planning for a Burnley memorial.

Memorial event at Moston Cemetery for Tommy Moore.

Attendance and stall at Kinder Trespass event.

Planning meetings for showing 'The Brigaders Return!' at three venues in the NW.

Planning meeting for possibility of a memorial for Salford Brigaders.

Grave markers for two Oldham Brigaders (Charlie Hanson and Charlie Armitage) purchased.

Meeting with Spanish Consulate in Manchester.

20/ SOUTH EAST ENGLAND

Events in the past year have been led, as usual, by the very active Oxford Group, beginning with the launch of the Charlie Hutchinson campaign, on 27 October 2022 at Oxford Town hall to raise funds for a statue in Oxford. It was a great success with

several members of Charlie's family attending. A web site dedicated to the campaign is now available – <https://www.charliememorial.com/>

A very successful fundraiser was held in the Holywell Music Room, in Oxford, on Tuesday 18 April 2023 with an evening of poetry, memoirs and music. With over 100 tickets sold for the event and more than £300 received for merchandise the surplus is likely to be well over £1,000.

They also helped to organise the 2023 Levellers Day in Burford on Saturday 20 May, and had a stall there which again sold a lot of merchandise.

Alan Lloyd gave a talk on the International Brigades, using Hampshire volunteers as an example, to students at Brockenhurst College on two occasions. On 24 March it was to the second year Spanish Group, and the following week, on 29 March it was the turn of the first year history and social science students.

Finally, we ran a stall at the lovely Burston Strike School rally on Sunday 3 September. President Marlene Sidway was a headlined speaker, who was very well received, and we managed to sell another £400 of merchandise.

21/ OUTREACH

ASLEF, the train drivers' union, invited us to have a speaker at their annual conference in Cardiff in

May. Wales Secretary David McKnight represented us and spoke at the event.

The IBMT's work was recognised by the historical memory association of the Catalan city of Lleida. The Trust received the 2022 Premi2N international award for its work bringing the story of the International Brigades and the fight against fascism in Spain to a new and wider audience. Jim Jump received the award on behalf of the IBMT.

In conjunction with the Marx Memorial Library we hosted a commemoration of the 85th anniversary of the start of the battle of the Ebro on Saturday 22 July. The event centred on the Ebro memorial plaque in the Library's memorial garden.

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!