



IBMT Newsletter

www.international-brigades.org.uk

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INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST



Photo: Andrew Ward

A new plaque for our national memorial

Keeping 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

International Brigade Memorial Trust

www.international-brigades.org.uk

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IBMT NEWSLETTER

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Editor: Jim Jump (see contact details above)

With help, our national memorial has been restored

By Jim Jump

Our well-attended commemoration on London's South Bank on 7 July (see back page) was a great success. Highlights of the event can be seen in a video by Marshall Mateer that has been posted on our new YouTube news site – see [www.youtube.com/user/IBMTnews]. Overleaf are the two poems that were read by Francesca Beard.

Many people at the commemoration commented on the fine appearance of the national memorial. With its recent relocation in Jubilee Gardens, the IBMT has taken the opportunity to repair the plinth and bronze sculpture by Ian Walters – there were some areas of oxidation and a small crack – and restore the memorial to something resembling its condition when it was unveiled in 1985.

This all cost us £2,250, but I'm pleased to say that we received a grant of £937.50 from the War Memorials Trust and successfully claimed a refund of £375 in VAT under a scheme run by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

A memorial too for Mick Jones

Everyone active in the IBMT was deeply saddened by the news of Mick Jones' death in August (see obituary on page 14). An IBMT trustee and son of the legendary Brigadier and trade union leader Jack Jones, Mick was a highly accomplished artist and designer in his own right. How fitting therefore that less than four weeks before his death he was able to witness the unveiling of the IBMT's new plaque in Jubilee Gardens. It was Mick who originally proposed the plaque and who conceived its design. Pictured on our front page, the plaque is in itself a lasting memorial to Mick.

Plans for anti-fascist Olympics in 1936

Thanks go to Rodney Bickerstaffe for reminding everyone at the Jubilee Gardens commemoration that the Spanish Republic boycotted the notorious 1936 Berlin Olympic Games that were used as a showcase for Nazism.

With the London Olympics about to start, our Rodney – he's an IBMT Trustee – said that the Spanish Republic knew exactly what fascism meant. Instead, it was organising the Peoples' Olympiad in Barcelona. The games were scheduled to run from 22-26 July 1936, but had to be cancelled after Franco and the other generals launched their coup on 18 July – receiving instant help from Nazi Germany of course.

Many athletes and helpers, drawn from trade unions and workers' associations from around the world, had already made their way to Spain and many of them joined the militias and later



OLYMPIC IMAGES: Poster (above) for the Barcelona Peoples' Olympiad. See "1936: The anti-fascist Olympics". Below: Thomas Heatherwick's Olympic Cauldron. See "Like grandfather, like grandson..."



the International Brigades to fight the fascist uprising. Among them were volunteers such as Nat Cohen from London's East End, who had cycled through France to take part in the games, and Australian-born Aileen Palmer who was working for the Olympiad as a translator. She soon joined the British Medical Unit and served in Spain until the spring of 1938.

Incidentally, the Peoples' Olympiad also features in "Pantheon", the best-selling thriller by Sam Bourne (pen-name of *Guardian* journalist Jonathan Freedland). The plot centres on British psychologist James Zennor, who in the summer of 1936 meets biologist Florence in Barcelona, where she is due to compete as a swimmer in the Olympiad. He stays in Spain to fight the fascists. Most of the action then takes place in 1940 when Florence, now James's wife, and their child mysteriously go missing.

Olympians who died in Spain

Our Ireland Secretary Manus O'Riordan has also taken up the theme of the International Brigades and the Olympics. In a letter to *History Ireland* he points out that at least two Olympians, one Irish and the other English, gave their lives fighting against fascism in Spain.

Church of Ireland minister Bob Hilliard was the bantamweight boxing champion of Ireland in 1923-24 and was the only civilian in the Irish boxing team at the 1924 Olympics in Paris, where he

lost on points against an Argentinian opponent. He was killed in the 1937 Battle of Jarama.

London Labour councillor Lewis Clive had a more successful Olympic Games in 1932, wrote O’Riordan. He won a gold medal for Britain in coxless pairs rowing. He was killed during the 1938 Battle of the Ebro.

O’Riordan’s letter was prompted by a mention in *History Ireland’s* July/August issue that Ireland’s team manager at the 1932 games, Eoin O’Duffy, subsequently sided with the fascists in the Spanish Civil War.

Like grandfather, like grandson...

Still on the Olympics, Thomas Heatherwick, who created the emblematic cluster of torches in the London Olympics Stadium this year, is the grandson of an International Brigader, Miles Tomalin.

Heatherwick is one of Britain’s most fashionable designers. As well as the Olympic Cauldron, with its 204 copper torches representing the number of countries participating in the games, his works include the new Routemaster London bus and the giant B of the Bang sculpture outside the City of Manchester Stadium.

He is the product of a artistic family. His grandfather – who died in 1983 when Thomas was 14, was a poet and graphic designer. Mother Stefany Tomalin, who has taken part in a number of IBMT events, is a founding member of the Bead Society of Great Britain and has written books on beads. Sadly Thomas’ grandmother and widow of Miles Tomalin, Elisabeth Tomalin, died earlier this year (see obituary on page 14).

Back to the Middle East!

Here we go again – another questionable invocation of the Spanish Civil War in a comment on events in the Middle East. Writing about the crisis in Syria in the *Financial Times* on 19 July, Robert Springborg, Professor of National Security Affairs at the US Naval Postgraduate School, blames the fascists’ success in Spain on Western democracies’ reluctance to back the Republicans – partly because of fears about communists within their ranks. The West’s hesitancy to support the Syrian opposition, he adds, is based on similar misguided motives, with anti-government forces seen as being infiltrated or even dominated by Islamists.

The fundamental flaw in this argument lies in the word “reluctance”. Britain was not reluctant to help the Spanish Republic. It positively refused to do so, in the full knowledge that this would lead to Franco’s victory, and it did so in the context of a wider policy of appeasing Franco’s allies – fascist Germany and Italy.

No foreign powers are being appeased by the West in Syria. Indeed, the US and UK are giving, rightly or wrongly, ample help to the rebels in Syria, including military assistance via its allies in the region, in what is seen by many experts as a proxy war against Iranian and Russian influence. The Western powers have so far not intervened militarily in Syria – presumably this is the “hesitancy” that Springborg writes about – but that was never at issue in the Spanish Civil War. No-



BODY ART: With tattoos back in fashion, it was inevitable that some with International Brigade motifs would soon appear. Pictured right (bottom) is the right leg of Pablo Villalba Eguren, 26, from Logroño in northern Spain, featuring the design of the famous 1937 “Los Internacionales” poster. Meanwhile, the IBMT Facebook site continues to be a lively forum – now with nearly 1,700 followers. One recent thread dealt with International Brigade tattoos and body painting (two examples pictured). Make sure you join the Facebook group on www.facebook.com/groups/7123291063.



one seriously called for British troops to invade Spain. What was demanded was the lifting of the arms embargo on the democratic and legitimate government of Spain.

Standing up for Jack Brent

Congratulations to IBMT members John Dickie and Jim and Francie Bainbridge for coming to the defence of George Dickie – known as Jack Brent in the International Brigades – after a furious row erupted in the *Galloway Gazette* over an IBMT-supported event to commemorate the centenary of his birth.

Several letters for and against Dickie were published in March following the event, including one from son John Dickie, who now lives in Northampton. “My father and my uncle [John Dickie] did not fight for king and country – they fought for their people and their class, and that still makes me proud,” he wrote. Other letters accused Dickie senior of being a communist deserter from the British army and said there



Jack Brent.

were many other local heroes from two world wars who were more deserving of commemoration.

A letter from the Bainbridges, of Newton Stewart, Wigtownshire, declared: “Jack Brent and many thousands of other ordinary folk were idealists,

and volunteered individually to fight Franco’s nationalists, one of the evil fascist regimes which later engulfed Europe. The British government had stood by and allowed Franco’s mercenaries, backed and encouraged by the Catholic Church, to slaughter thousands of innocents, who sought only democracy and freedom.... Left-wing shipyard workers from the Clyde and miners from Fife – as well as Whithorn “deserters” joined the worldwide influx of volunteers in defence of democracy.”

Canadian-born Dickie moved with his family to Whithorn, Dumfries & Galloway, soon after his birth. During the Battle of Jarama in February 1937 he was severely wounded and he died in Whithorn – where there is a plaque in his honour – in 1951 at the age of 39.

Who were Leila’s lovers?

There was an interesting obituary of children’s writer Leila Berg (née Goller) in *The Guardian* on 23 April. See [www.guardian.co.uk/books/2012/apr/23/leila-berg]. Berg had died six days earlier at the age of 94 and obituarist Rosemary Stones described how in 1937 Leila spent her time writing and organising aid to Spain, adding: “Two of her lovers were in the International Brigades and were killed.” This reference to the two volunteers who died in Spain was repeated in obituaries in *The Independent* and *Daily Telegraph*, again without further details. Does anyone know the identity of the two lovers?

Two poems by Francesca Beard

Francesca Beard (right) recited these poems at the IBMT's Jubilee Gardens commemoration on 7 July. She wrote "Witness as Hero" specially for the event. "Gernika" was written earlier this year to mark the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Guernica and was first read out at an IBMT-sponsored memorial event in London on 26 April that was organised by Philosophy Football. Introducing "Gernika", she said: "I will be inspired for the rest of my life by what I have learnt about the men and women who went to Spain to fight in and support the International Brigade." See: [www.francescab Beard.com].



Witness as Hero

i.
This is for you,
Who set down pints,
Gave notice,
Traded in guitar, bike, season tickets,
Five-a-side in the rain,
Friday night at the pictures with Annie, Sally,
Jane,
For Spain.

For how to clean a gun,
Hola amigo, garlic,
Earth for a pillow,
Night sweats, broken thread,
The man you called brother,
Bleeding out, warm and wet,
On a bed of rough grass and sheep droppings,
The knowledge of what it is to be human
From the point of view of an animal.

This is for you,
Who came back,
Tried to get a job with your red score sheet,
Adios amigo.
Gamy leg put you in goal,
But you're not a safe pair of hands.
Can't stand the roar of the crowd from the
stands.
See Janey on the street, pushing a pram,
But war movies don't do it for you anymore and
Though Sunday roast is still the same
You, you have changed.

This is for you, who gave your all,
Came back to find
Life goes on,
Truth's a moveable feast and
Honour, freedom, solidarity
Are words that can be used by anybody,
Passed around, bartered like currency.

This is for you, not ideal.
This is for you, witness to the real.

ii.
And on a day like other days,
Tea-warmed, toast-crumbed, hazy,
We shake open the newspaper,
Read the headlines, lazy.

And on a day like other days,
Hazy, toast-crumbed, tea-warmed,
We scroll down bbc.com,
Digest the facts and yawn.

And on a day like all the rest,
Tea-warmed, hazy, toast-crumbed,
We watch the war on breakfast news,
In comfort, safe and numb.
There was a day, another time,
Another world at war,
And in the word 'democracy',
A truth worth fighting for.

So you stood up to volunteer,
You left your ease behind,
You made your way across a sea
To stand upon a line.

You left behind your families
You left behind your homes
You left behind your safety-nets
And everything you'd known.

You went towards the furnaces
Of brutal, bloody war
You went because your open eyes
Could see, could not ignore.

And in the balances you placed
The sum of all your weight
One man can make the difference in
A tug of war with fate.

And some of you came back from Spain
And some of you could not
But everyone who went to Spain
You will not be forgot.

For everyone who hears the tale
Will hear it and be marked
And everyone who knows your tale
Will know it by their heart.

And hope, it is an ember
We breathe it into flame
And by that light remember
Your courage and your fame.

July 2012

Gernika

And somewhere,
On a folded plane of space time,
In the Autonomous Community of the Basque
Country,
In the province of Biscay,
In the town of Gernika,
On April 26th 1937,
At half past four on a Monday,
There is no single peal of the church bell.

There are no Heinkel 111s,
No Junker 52s,
No grenades,
No machine guns,
No 22 tonnes of no bombs.

Between five and six that afternoon
No fighter planes fly low, herding
No men, women and children
Back into no exploded streets.
There is no attempt by civilians
To escape from their homes,
With their lives and loves.
No pilots through no windshields view without
pity
No anguish on no faces.
No-one pulls triggers,
Pumps metal, mutilates animals.
No-one takes away no-one's future.

Previously, on Earth, Archduke Ferdinand
Remained inside the building,
Francisco Franco was not entitled,
Hitler never shared an opinion
With any other like-minded human being,
Mussolini did not put on braided uniform.
There were no gouged out hierarchies.
No-one devised signature styles of marching,
No-one recruited no-one for no torture squads,
No Luftwaffe, no special secret inner sanctums.
No-one's hands or taxes were used to make or
buy munitions,
No glass was shattered on no Kristallnacht,
No-one stood by and did nothing.
No-one threw the first stone.

And on that other curve of space time,
No-one says
This is also my fight,
This is also my war,
This is also my freedom, my duty, my world.
No-one gives up their home, their safety, their
family,
No-one does that willingly,
No-one asks for whom the bell tolls.

And somewhere,
Right now, in a market town,
In a market square,
Everyone is here,
Connected and entire,
To hold each other and say,
Thank you for your gift.
This is what it is to live
So somewhere else we will not die.
This is what it is to die
So somewhere else we live.

Pyrenees crossing follows footsteps of 75 years ago

Under the slogan “Walkers of the world, unite!”, a group of walkers from Europe and North America converged on Perpignan in south-eastern France on 2 June. The next day saw them cross the Pyrenees by foot to commemorate the International Brigade volunteers of 75 years ago.

The walkers – from Britain, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Puerto Rico, Spain and the US – stopped along the way at several memorials to remember the volunteers. Poems and extracts from memoirs were read out and the songs of the Brigaders were sung.

At a memorial on the Spanish side of the border to Lluís Companys, who was the Catalan President during the Spanish Civil War, the walkers were met by the mayors of three local villages: La Jonquera, Agullana and La Vajol. Companys was arrested by the Gestapo in Paris following the fall of France – where he had sought refuge after the fall of Catalonia – and was sent back to Spain where Franco had him executed by firing squad in 1940.

Also remembered were the three veterans who took part in a commemorative crossing in 2006, Bob Doyle, Jack Edwards and Jack Jones, and IBMT member Maggie Comley, who suggested the route. All have since died.

Across the mountains, the 25-strong group joined Spanish friends and representatives of the Catalan government to re-dedicate a plaque for the International Brigades in the Castle of Saint Ferdinand in Figueras.

Early in 1937, not long after the International Brigades were formed, the French government closed the border with Spain under the “non-intervention” pact. After the closure, volunteers were led by night along smugglers’ paths to avoid French border guards.

IBMT Trustee Pauline Fraser, who organised the event, commented: “The international composition of the 2012 contingent reflected that of the



Crossing the border in 2012 on paths used by the volunteers.

Brigaders themselves, who came from all parts of the world and were prepared to lay down their lives in the fight for freedom.”

● Two bottles of commemorative wine, made specially for the crossing by a sympathetic wine grower in French Catalonia, were auctioned at the IBMT social after the 7 July commemoration on London’s South Bank. The top bid, for £25, came from the train drivers’ union ASLEF in the form of union vice president Tosh McDonald and executive council member Marz Colombini.

A film of the Pyrenees walk, made by Marshall Mateer, can be viewed on the IBMT’s YouTube news site. Go to: [www.youtube.com/user/IBMTnews?feature=guide].

Members mark Battle of Brunete anniversary

IBMT members travelled to Brunete for the 75th anniversary march on 30 June, joining Italian and North American friends and relatives, as well as members of AABI Spanish International Brigades friendship group and local historians for a truly international commemoration.

The march held particular significance for Brian Walsh, whose uncle Eddy Walsh was fatally wounded during the battle, and for Freddy Shaw, whose father Jack Shaw (né Schuckman) was a runner for British Battalion commander Jock Cunningham and was one of only 42 members of the battalion, out of a total of 330, who survived the battle unscathed.



Participants came from Britain, Italy, Spain and North America.

Brian later visited the monastery at El Escorial where, he had found out only recently, his uncle was taken from the battlefield to the hospital that had been set up there and subsequently died. There is neither grave nor memorial for him, nor for any of those who fought and died for the Republic at Brunete. The IBMT members at the commemoration felt this was a scandal that must be rectified.

Leading the battlefield walk, AABI Secretary Seve Montero was joined by local historian Ernesto Viñas to provide information about the battle. This included aerial photographs pinpointing the position of the British Battalion before the attack on Villanueva de la Cañada.

Viñas described how within 48 hours the fascists gained control of the air and German Condor Legion Junkers, Heinkels and Messerschmitt 109s and Italian Capronis bombed and strafed the Republican forces continuously. Heavy artillery barrages also took their toll. Brunete saw the deaths of 69 members of the British Battalion, amongst whom were several of its leaders – George Nathan, Charlie Goodfellow, George Brown and Bill Meredith.

The march paused reflectively at the confluence of the now dry Aulencia river and the Guadarrama river. Jim Neugass, from the US, read a poem by his father, who served as an ambulance driver during the battle. Another poem read out was one by Scottish volunteer John Dunlop, “Brunete 12 July 1937: An Ode to my Comrades”. Pauline Fraser spoke the names of

some of the British Brigaders who had fallen and a minute’s silence followed to honour the memory of all the Brigaders killed at Brunete.

Report compiled from contributions by Pauline Fraser, Freddie Shaw and Brian Walsh.

See “Finding Uncle Arthur”: page 7.

Commemorative plaque for Labour’s Costa Blanca Branch

By Malcolm Hardy

At their annual May Day lunch in the mountain village of Tàrbena in Spain’s Costa Blanca, the local Labour International Branch members were treated to a surprise visit from Vicente Pedrero of the Federación Estatal de Foros por la Memoria, the Forum for the Historical Memory of Spain.

Word had reached the forum of the branch’s continued support for the Spanish Republican cause and the role of the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War. Contact came via Geronimo Pinet, owner of the Casa Pinet restaurant (www.casapinet-tarbena.com) where the lunch was held, who is a staunch Republican.

Vicente presented the branch with a plaque and an inscribed Spanish Republican flag.

In fact this was his second bid to make the presentation on behalf of the forum. He had

Continued overleaf

Refugees return to Sussex after 75 years



Organiser Mike Anderson hits the headlines.

IBMT activist Mike Anderson brought a forgotten episode of Sussex local history to public attention when he organised the unveiling of a plaque at a youth hostel where refugee children from Republican Spain stayed in 1937/38.

The ceremony on 16 May was attended by Miren and Moises Alonso, two of the “niños” who had stayed at The Glade, the wooden building purposely built to house 20 children at Blackboys, near Uckfield.

Erected by the Campbell-Sommaruga family at the adjacent Pounsley Farm, The Glade was one of several “colonies” where 4,000 children were housed after being evacuated from Bilbao in May 1937 during the bombing of the Basque Country by Franco and his German and Italian allies.

It was also at The Glade where Miren and Moises met and, as 10 and 11-year-olds, first fell in love. Miren Uribe-Echevarria was repatriated to Spain after the war, but Moises made his way to the US, promising to return to Spain to find Miren when he was able to do so.

He kept his promise and they eventually married and raised a family in New York. Until May this year and the 75th anniversary of their arrival in England they had not returned to Sussex.

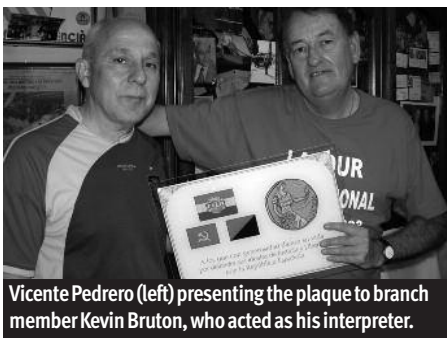
Speaking at the unveiling, Miren said: “It’s like a dream. Now I can die happy.”

Mike Anderson commented: “I wanted a plaque on the youth hostel for visitors and local people to know about this important piece of history. To have Moises and Miren taking part made it a very special event.”

He added that many volunteers in the International Brigades, along with many hundreds of people such as the Campbell-Sommaruga family, had helped the niños and other Spanish Republican refugees.



Miren and Moises Alonso unveil the plaque at The Glade.



Vicente Pedrero (left) presenting the plaque to branch member Kevin Bruton, who acted as his interpreter.

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turned up at the restaurant last year, but was delayed and arrived too late. Such was his determination, however, that he travelled from Madrid again in 2012.

Malcolm Hardy is a member of the IBMT and chair of the Costa Blanca Branch of Labour International, the constituency of the British Labour Party for members living outside the UK. The branch’s social programme has included trips to various civil war-related sites in the Tarragona, Cartagena and Alcoy areas. See [www.labintspain.org.uk].

Uniting communities in Belfast

John Quinn and Gerard Murray from Belfast have authored a report, “Not Orange or Green but Red”, describing the Spanish Civil War project being run jointly by the Belfast Cultural and Local History Group and the ex-Irish republican socialist prisoners’ group Teach Na Fáilte.

Over the past two years the project has resulted in several local initiatives, notably the unveiling of plaques to Belfast volunteers and a lecture day at which the contribution of the working-class communities in the city to the anti-fascist struggle in Spain was explained to local activists.

The key purpose of the project, say Quinn and Murray, is to highlight the shared anti-fascist heritage of the Catholic and Protestant communities in Belfast.

“Their stand knew no sectarian barriers,” says Quinn, a local historian who chairs the Belfast Cultural and Local History Group. “It transcended their political make-up and gave us a legacy that we as one community cannot

only be proud of but which can be owned by all.”

So far there have been two new plaques: one to Jim Stranney, killed at the Battle of the Ebro in August 1938, who came from a republican background, another to Liam Tumilson, from the loyalist area of East Belfast, who died at Jarama in March 1937. The plaques were unveiled last year, when a Jim Stranney Memorial Lecture was also organised.

Murray, who is the chair of Teach Na Fáilte,



says there are plans for more cross-community activities so that “the commitment and sacrifice made by the Irishmen from both communities, Catholic and Protestant, is remembered with a shared pride”.

For more information or to ask for a copy of the booklet (above), contact John Quinn [localhistorygroup@yahoo.com] or Gerard Murray [gerardmo42000@yahoo.com].

Guernica remembered...

HAMBURG: Members of the KFSR German International Brigades friendship group met in Hamburg on 18-20 May for a weekend of events. Among other things, they remembered the 75th anniversary of the notorious bombing of Guernica on 26 April 1937 by draping the city’s Nazi war memorial with a copy of Picasso’s iconic painting commissioned by the Spanish Republic for its pavilion at the Paris world fair.



LONDON: US protest singer David Rovics is pictured here in a still from a 15-minute film by Gregg McDonald of Consequential Films that was shot at a Guernica 75th anniversary night in London on 26 April. Organised by Philosophy Football



and co-sponsored by the IBMT and the Basque Children of ’37 Association (BC37A), the event also saw performances by folk duo Na-mara and poet Francesca Beard. Speakers included historian Helen Graham, *Guardian* journalist Seamus Milne and artist Peter Kennard. The evening, held at Filthy MacNasty’s pub in Islington, raised £410 that was shared between the IBMT and BC37A. To see Gregg McDonald’s film, go to: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVuz0rZ_g5E].



Torpedoed by an Italian submarine.

Anniversary of sinking

The 75th anniversary of the sinking of the *Ciudad de Barcelona*, which took the lives of more than 60 of the 500 International Brigade volunteers on board, was marked at a ceremony organised by the local town council, Memorial Democràtic, and Barcelona-based IBMT member Alan Warren at Malgrat de Mar, north of Barcelona, on 30 May. This was 75 years to the day since the passenger ship was torpedoed by an Italian submarine while on its way from Marseilles to Barcelona.

Three family members of British volunteers who survived the attack, Mark Newman and Liam Barber, sons of David Newman and Ronald Barber, and Wendy Davies, niece of Sidney Shosteck, led the party on board a boat that went to the site of the wreck, where flowers were strewn in the water.

Banner bright in Durham



IBMT members Neil Wilkinson (left) and Keith Close carry the IBMT banner through Durham during the city's annual Miners' Gala on 14 July.

Civil war archives go online

Warwick University's Modern Records Centre has launched its extensive online Spanish Civil War archive. This follows a year-long digitisation project that has made more than 4,000 documents – and over 13,000 pages – of archives freely accessible to researchers and the general public.

Much of the material comes from the TUC, but there are also more than 100 mostly revolutionary socialist or anarchist publications from other collections. The files cover topics including the International Brigades, the response of British and international trade union movement and the Aid Spain effort in Britain.

Full transcriptions are given for all documents, allowing keyword searches. Background information, such as a timeline and maps, has also been included to assist in understanding the context of the documents.

Visit www.warwick.ac.uk/go/scw.

Finding Uncle Arthur

By Carol Ellis

Uncle Arthur was my mother's elder brother. Towards the end of 1936 he went to visit his mother (my grandmother) in Lambeth, south London, to say he was going away as he had found work elsewhere and would send his address on when he was settled.

This was the last time they saw him. My mother was 15 years old at the time. The family found out afterwards that he did not want to tell his mother he was going to Spain. Later he did write to tell her he was in Spain, fighting in the Spanish Civil War to support the Republic against Franco.

My quest to find out more about Uncle Arthur began in 2009 when I was in London visiting the London Eye. While walking through Jubilee Gardens I saw a memorial and, being curious, I read the inscription and to my surprise it was in memory of those who had died in the Spanish Civil War. Until then I was unaware of the memorial's existence.

Back home I tracked down the IBMT via the internet and spoke to the then Secretary Marlene Sidaway. With help from Marlene and historian Richard Baxell I found out that Arthur Dunbar was listed as killed at Brunete in July 1937.

Spanish historian

Richard advised me to get in touch with Ernesto Viñas, a Spanish historian who gathers information about the Battle of Brunete. I spoke on the phone with Ernesto and he said he would be happy to take my family on a tour around Brunete. He added that he had a high regard for the International Brigade volunteers.

So, along with my husband Roy, my brother Tony, sister Janet and sister-in-law Cristina, we started to plan our trip.

We met Ernesto and his colleague Ángel Rodríguez in May 2009. They described what had happened during the battle, pointing out features of interest as we toured the battlefield. Fighting had raged for many days and the conditions the volunteers had had to endure seemed impossible. However, they continued to fight

“We felt so much pride at what those brave Brigaders were there to do and yet sadness for the loss of lives. We felt as if we were walking on sacred ground.”



Carol Ellis (left) lays flowers at the memorial to all those in unmarked graves in the cemetery of Colmenar Viejo where Arthur Dunbar was buried.

and stood their ground until they were ordered to move elsewhere.

That day was very emotional for us all; we felt so much pride at what those brave Brigaders were there to do and yet sadness for the loss of lives. We felt as if we were walking on sacred ground. This was truly an experience never to be forgotten.

When we gave our farewells and thanks to Ernesto, he promised to keep in touch if he found out anything more about Uncle Arthur.

We heard nothing for more than two years, then, in November 2011, Ernesto contacted us via email to say he had been carrying out research in a small town called Colmenar Viejo, about 20 miles north-west of Madrid, and had come across a register of deaths in 1937 in which an “Arthur Dor Bar” was listed. He was described as a soldier belonging to the 2nd company of the British Battalion of the 15th Brigade and had died of war wounds after arriving at the military hospital in the town. He had been buried on 15 July 1937. Ernesto concluded that this was in fact Arthur Dunbar.

With Ernesto's help we obtained a copy of the death certificate and resolved to visit Colmenar Viejo to find the cemetery where Arthur had been laid to rest.

We arranged with Ernesto to make the visit on 25 May 2012. Prior to leaving I made contact with IBMT Secretary Jim Jump, who put us in touch with Madrid-based IBMT member Justin Byrne.

To Colmenar Viejo

Justin readily offered to help in any way and we duly met him in Madrid on the morning of 25 May and together made our way to Brunete to meet up with Ernesto. From there, the hour-long drive to Colmenar Viejo was possibly the route that Uncle Arthur would also have taken.

The military hospital was housed in a school that had been temporarily requisitioned by the Republican government. We were surprised to

Continued overleaf

Finding Uncle Arthur

From previous page

be greeted at the school – now the Soledad Sainz school – by a group consisting of local historians and representatives of the AABI Spanish association of friends of the International Brigades.

We were taken on a tour of the building – the children were on a school outing that day. Next we were shown around the town cemetery and the unmarked common grave where Arthur would

have been buried. It was an enclosed open space at the back of the cemetery, where people with no family or name were laid to rest. The area had recently been concreted over and there was a solitary headstone in the centre with the inscription “In memory of all who rest in this place”.

This would have been the place that Uncle Arthur was buried, along with fellow military personnel who had been treated and died at the hospital. Emotions ran high, not just for Arthur but for all those that were laid to rest here: Spanish, British and no doubt other nationalities.

Though there are no names or dates mentioned, our feelings as a family were positive. Arthur had been laid to rest with some of the very people he had gone to Spain with to help fight in Spain’s hour of need. He was in good company.

One day it may be possible that we will see the names of all who lie there and I hope that I am still around to be able to add the name: “Arthur Edward Dunbar, born 14 July 1906, London, England; died 14 July 1937; for Spain.”

We found you at last, Uncle Arthur, and now we have closure on a chapter in our family’s history.

Christopher Caudwell: rise and fall of a Marxist theorist

By David Margolies

Christopher Caudwell’s image, rather like that of John Cornford, has a romantic aspect. He was only 29 when he died at Jarama on 12 February 1937; he too was a poet and his death was a noble sacrifice. Cornford was already a public figure on the left at the time of his death, but Caudwell was practically unknown. Yet, within six months, he was recognised as having made a significant contribution to Marxism with the publication of his most important work, “Illusion and Reality”.

Nothing in Caudwell’s background suggests that he was likely to become a Marxist, let alone a major Marxist theorist. He was born Christopher St John Sprigg on 20 October 1907 in London into a bourgeois family. He was sent to a Catholic public school but left before he was 15; he moved with his widowed father, who had taken a job on the *Yorkshire Observer*, to Bradford. Christopher became a cub reporter.

In 1925 he returned to London to work with his older brother, who edited *Airways*, the first aeronautical monthly. For a brief period he edited the journal of the Association for British Malaya, which dealt with the development of rubber and tin markets. He wrote five books on flying. In the same period, he wrote seven crime novels, which were highly successful, and edited a crime anthology; and he wrote the one work that was published in his lifetime under the pseudonym of Caudwell, a “serious” novel, “This My Hand” (1936). He continued to write poetry.

The interesting question is how he came to Marxism and communism; everything seemed against such a development. Of his crime novels only one is explicitly political (the murder of a rightwing, warmongering press baron) but they all show attitudes that are anti-colonial, anti-racist and anti-sexist. His experience of the political realities of the mid-1930s – the rise of fascism, the commercial failure of his brother’s publishing firm, the business side of colonialism and social injustice – made it clear to him that the world was in a pretty bad state. In Marxism he found a unifying theory. It not only provided the framework for understanding the changes in society but it also recognised the fundamental importance of material conditions, which suited his engineering side,



Christopher Caudwell (far right) in December 1936 with other volunteers about to set off in a fleet of ambulances for Spain. Caudwell joined the British Battalion and was killed during the Battle of Jarama along with Clem Beckett while the two of them covered the battalion’s retreat with their machine-gun.

Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center

and thus it takes its place in the Marxist project of changing the world.

In the years immediately after the Second World War Caudwell’s works were very popular in Britain and the US. His readership went well beyond the left to include liberals and even people who were not especially political. In the 1950s, however, his popularity declined. This can be partly attributed to McCarthyism.

In the British Communist Party itself, Caudwell suffered a different negative fate. In 1949-50, in *The*

his interest in how things work in practice.

Caudwell’s choice of material on which to apply his Marxism – poetry and science – is somewhat surprising, even though these areas had long been of personal interest to him. He went off to Cornwall and worked at a terrific rate, writing up to 5,000 words a day, revising a huge manuscript, most of which became “Illusion and Reality”, while much of the remainder provided the basis for the essays subsequently published as “Studies in a Dying Culture” (1938), “The Crisis in Physics” (1939) and “Further Studies in a Dying Culture” (1949).

Caudwell sees poetry as serving the needs of society, organising emotions in readers that affect their behaviour in the real world; poetry, like all art generally, contributes to our effectiveness in action, letting us see more clearly what it is that we want. Poetry, says Caudwell, is a guide to action,

“Caudwell’s choice of the material on which to apply his Marxism – poetry and science – is somewhat surprising, even though these areas had long been of personal interest to him”

Modern Quarterly, the theoretical journal of the party, there was a series of articles referred to as “The Caudwell Discussion” where he was attacked by the theoretical big guns of the party, though also defended by others. The real reason for the attack is indicated by JD Bernal’s saying that Caudwell is led astray by the influence of “Freud and the geneticists”. Caudwell was explicit that there is a dialectical relation between genetic inheritance and the environment. His view contradicted the position of the Soviet agronomist Trofim Lysenko, who claimed that genetics was reactionary nonsense. Although he was later disgraced, Stalin backed Lysenko in 1948, with the result that genetics was banned in the Soviet Union and Lysenko’s views became gospel for most communist parties. It was under this sorry policy that Caudwell was attacked.

Losing support from both right and left meant that he fell out of prominence and “Illusion and Reality”, which was never out of print for nearly 60 years, was for the first time unavailable at the turn of the century.

But today, in this period of political and economic upheaval, there is a growing awareness of the class nature of our problems. Caudwell has always been worth reading, but now he is again strikingly relevant and valuable.

David Margolies is Emeritus Professor of English at Goldsmiths College, University of London.



BUDAPEST: Mike Davis at the International Brigade memorial in Memento Park. See his letter “Misplaced memorial in Hungary”.



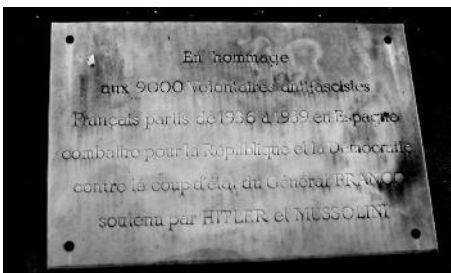
SAN FRANCISCO: Colleen and Sam Darby at the memorial to the US volunteers. See their letter “Thanks for the Paris plaque information”.

Thanks for the Paris plaque information

Thank you for your interesting and informative *IBMT Newsletter*. In one of your recent editions you printed a story headed “Plaque marks Paris recruiting centre”. I clipped it out and saved it because my uncle, Maurice Friedman, went to Spain in 1937 from San Francisco, California (he died in April 1938 near Gandesa in the Great Retreat). His route to Spain took him through Paris and he would have almost certainly been processed at this recruiting centre. When we were in Paris in May we visited the site of the plaque, which was easy to find with the address given. It is always a moving experience to find that these memories are kept alive.

I read that you are carrying out an audit of IB memorials. You probably just mean memorials in the UK but just in case you are including international ones too, here is a photo of the memorial in San Francisco that we visited last year. It is located opposite the Ferry Building on the Embarcadero. This obviously has a very personal connection for me but I think other readers will be interested to see it if they are ever in the vicinity.

Also, I wonder if readers would be interested to visit the Musée de la Résistance Nationale [www.musee-resistance.com]. It is in Champigny-sur-Marne, which is a suburb of



PLAQUE: International Brigade volunteers are remembered outside the Paris Museum of the Resistance.

Paris, and can be reached via the RER A train and the 208 bus. It is a bit out of the way but well worth the trip, with excellent exhibits of newspapers, leaflets and broadsheets produced by the resistance movement. The displays are all in French but it was not difficult to work out what they are about with the minimal French that we have.

The museum has a plaque outside which dedicates the museum to the 9,000 French anti-fascist volunteers who fought in Spain from 1936 to 1939.

Colleen & Sam Darby
By email

Misplaced memorial in Hungary

I spent a week in Budapest and Vienna in July and during the stay in Budapest went to Memento Park, a 45-minute tram and bus ride outside town, which claims to contain “the biggest statues of the darkest dictatorship”. This is basically a collection of statues and memorials from the Stalinist years.

But hey, what’s this? A memorial to the International Brigades who fought in the Spanish Civil War. At first I was cheered to see the memorial. Then I thought: what is it doing stuck in a remote field with a wide array of Stalinist/communist statues and memorials salvaged from the postwar era? This should be in the centre of the city.

Despite its location it was good to see the memorial and worth the visit.

Mike Davis
By email

Patience Darton’s husband

In your last splendid issue (Spring-Summer 2012), Richard Baxell’s review of Angela Jackson’s biography of Patience Darton explains how Patience fell in love and married an unnamed German International Brigader.

The man in question was in fact Robert Aquist, who was part of the Palestinian Jewish group of between 350-500 who came from British Palestine to fight Franco. He may have been born in Germany but the archives at the

Marx Memorial Library make it clear that he had emigrated to Palestine in the 1920s and was a Palestinian Jewish (now Israeli) citizen of the British Mandate and would have made his way to Spain with his fellow Jews using a bordeaux-coloured British-style passport that Mandate citizens were issued with.

In fact the largest group of International Brigade fighters that went to Spain – measured per head of population – were Palestinian Jews.

Martin Sugarman

Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women

Ten years of the IBMT

Just noticed that the IBMT was founded in 2002. The width and richness of your programme and participants is remarkable. And the range of all you’ve organised for us to share throughout the world is especially meaningful.

Well done and thanks.

Louanne and Chris Tranchell
By email

The Editor writes: Yes, technically we were founded on 5 October 2002, when our constitution was approved by the IBMT’s first Annual General Meeting. However, it was in 2001 that veterans in the International Brigade Association and members of the Friends of the International Brigade decided to set up a joint organisation, so maybe we’re 11 years old!

Fantastic website

I’d like to take this opportunity to thank yourself, your charity and its wonderful website [www.international-brigades.org.uk]! It has proven to be a fantastic resource for a meeting I gave to my local Socialist Workers Party branch in Gravesend, Kent, on the role of the British and Irish (of whom my grandad was one) volunteers of the 15th International Brigade. This would have been near impossible without your website’s clear and concise information.

Thank you for opening up a whole new area of history to me personally. I shall be looking into joining.

Liam Hammock
By email

MEIRIAN JUMP reviews two new novels set against the backdrop of the Spanish Civil War, both of them featuring International Brigaders.

Passionate about the war

"A World Between Us" by Lydia Syson (Hot Key Books, London, 2012) £6.99



Aimed at young adults, Lydia Syson's novel is a love story centred on the Spanish Civil War. The action begins at the Battle of Cable Street, where Felix, a nurse who has taken a wrong turning on

her way home from work, meets Nat, a young Jewish communist from the East End. They fall in love. Nat's passion for the Republican cause in Spain leads him to join the International Brigades. This leaves a deep impression on the naïve but adventurous Felix, and their paths cross again in Spain.

The novel assumes little knowledge of the civil war on the part of the reader and Syson skillfully ties many of the core themes and events of the war into the romantic plotline. There are insights into the roles of nurse, reporter and International Brigader – the three main characters of the novel – alongside atmospheric descriptions of training, battle and medical care. We learn about Britain's policy of non-intervention, as well as the part played by the press in shaping public opinion.

Syson's book shies away from stereotypical descriptions of Spain and Spaniards; no mention here of fiery tempers and flamenco. Instead some of the historically significant features of the civil war are addressed. Witnessed at first hand is the bombing of Guernica, the first time civilians in Europe were targeted in an aerial attack. The widespread use of blood transfusions at battlefield hospitals, one of the medical advances made during the war, is also explored as the narrative unfolds.

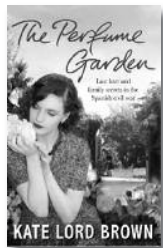
Along with the printed paperback edition, publishers Hot Key Books are bringing out an enhanced iBook (available from the Apple iBookstore) providing even more background information about the Spanish Civil War. The history of the time is brought to life with archive images, audio interviews, music and videos put together by Syson with help from historian Richard Baxell. Some of the archive content is sourced from the IBMT.

Thankfully, however, the text of the novel is never over-burdened with historical context, and the focus of the narrative stays firmly on Felix and the two men in her life. With key questions unanswered until the final chapters, the reader is kept engaged with the fate of our strong and passionate heroine.

"A World Between Us" is published on 4 October 2012.

Memory and love recovered

"The Perfume Garden" by Kate Lord Brown (Corvus, London, 2012) £14.99



Exploring ties between generations of women and tracking their lost loves and family fortunes, this is a well-researched romantic novel that reaches back to the Spanish Civil War and the harsh postwar years.

The story centres on pregnant business-woman Emma Temple. In 2001 she starts her life afresh and moves to Spain to live in the house of her recently deceased mother. As she gets to know the locals and works her way through a series of letters left by her mother, she uncovers the gripping tale of her grandmother's time as a volunteer nurse in the civil war. The narrative skips about in time, also focusing on the exploits of her great uncle, who left Cambridge University to join the International Brigades.

Author Kate Lord Brown combines an evocative, if at times verging on clichéd, description of Spain, complete with gypsies, fiestas and orange groves, with an informed and sympathetic account of the civil war. Themes such as the bombing of Guernica, the evacuation of the Basque children and the Francoist repression, particularly the abuse of women, are all addressed.

We meet familiar heroes, including Robert Capa, Gerda Taro and La Pasionaria. The *IBMT Newsletter* itself even gets a mention! Brown only drops the ball with an awkward attempt to draw comparisons between the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and the civil war, but this anachronism does not work its way into the rest of the text.

Well worth a read, the novel is particularly strong on the movement for the recovery of historical memory. Not only are bones symbolically uncovered in Temple's garden in Spain, but her unearthing of her family's history mirrors Spain's attempts to come to terms with its own recent past.

Turning point for an English revolutionary

"The Last English Revolutionary: Tom Wintringham, 1898-1949" by Hugh Purcell with Phyll Smith (Sussex Academic Press, Eastbourne, 2012) £22.50

Reviewed by Jim Jump



Ifever an unsung 20th century hero deserved a full-length biography, it must be Tom Wintringham. His was a short but outstanding life: founder member of the Communist Party who was jailed for sedition in 1925; one of the first volunteers to arrive

in Spain, where he commanded the British Battalion at the Battle of Jarama; a fine poet and journalist, whose *Daily Mirror* column on military strategy reached millions of readers; veteran of the First World War who was the instigator of the Home Guard at the start of the Second World War; and founder of the radical Common Wealth Party that attracted 100,000 votes in the 1945 general election. Remarkably, he achieved all this in a lifespan of only 51 years.

Of course Wintringham is not a complete unknown. More people now know about the man thanks to the excellent efforts of author Hugh Purcell. His 2004 biography led to radio and TV programmes and has now been enlarged, revised and updated with help from Wintringham enthusiast Phyll Smith, librarian in their common home town of Grimsby.

Wintringham's time in Spain was a turning point for him, both politically and emotionally, as this expanded biography carefully recounts. He arrived in August 1936, a few weeks after the start of the military uprising, as a trusted emissary of Communist Party General Secretary Harry Pollitt. In September 1936 he helped round up other early British volunteers in Barcelona under the banner of the Tom Mann Centuria. The resulting famous photograph taken outside the Lenin Barracks, with Tom kneeling on the left of the picture, is on the cover of the updated biography. At Jarama in February 1937 he was the commander of the newly formed British Battalion and was injured on the second day of battle – the same thing happened at Quinto in August 1937 during the Republic's Aragon offensive.

Jarama was a baptism in blood for the battalion. More than 120 volunteers died, and as many were seriously wounded. The *Daily Mail*, in time-honoured fashion, fictitiously embellished its report by claiming that those who did not want to fight

“were lined up and shot; the remainder like cattle were driven to slaughter... commanded by an Englishman called Wintringham”.

Authors Purcell and Smith speculate that Wintringham may have had a more important role in the formation of the International Brigades themselves. Even before leaving for Spain in August 1936 he was calling for an “international legion” to defend the Republic. Had this proposal filtered through to Comintern chiefs at the end of September when they urged Communist Parties around the world to send volunteers to Spain?

By the end of the war, however, Wintringham’s relations with the Communist Party had been transformed. He was expelled from the party in 1938 for his love affair with American journalist and suspected Trotskyist spy in Spain, Kitty Bowler. “I can smell ’em,” Pollitt had warned Wintringham. Tom and Kitty married in 1941, soon after Wintringham was divorced by his first wife following a series of infidelities on his part.

Though he never publicly denounced the Communist Party, his break with his former comrades was sealed in 1939 soon after the defeat of the Republic, when he opposed the Soviet-dictated line against the Second World War. It was, he declared, “disastrous, wrong, non-Marxist, contrary to the interests of the working class and of the revolution”. Instead, he threw himself into the war effort and was the driving force behind the creation of the Home Guard, headquartered at Osterley Park in west London.

But his clear political intent in creating a guerilla people’s army that would target fifth columnists and Nazi collaborators terrified the authorities. “I refuse to be Wintringhamed,” said an exasperated Winston Churchill. The War Office duly eased Wintringham and other International Brigaders out of positions of command at Osterley Park.

Wintringham had by this time befriended George Orwell, who praised him in 1940 as “a notable voice in stemming the tide of defeatism”. Indeed, in their consistently engaging biography, Purcell and Smith draw parallels between the two veterans of the war in Spain. Both were public school-educated boys who became political radicals. And, like JB Priestley, they were “revolutionary patriots”, who in different ways broke free from the powerful grip that the Communist Party held on the left in the 1930s and tried instead to define a very British form of socialism.

Updated study of the Welsh miners in Spain

Miners Against Fascism by Hywel Francis
(Lawrence & Wishart, London, 2012) £18.99

Reviewed by Jim Jump



This is the third edition of Hywel Francis’s classic study of the South Wales miners who joined the International Brigades. As a useful map in the book illustrates, all but 32 of the

Much to say in favour of the Republic



Novelist, poet and journalist Sylvia Townsend Warner (1893-1978) was a strong supporter of the Spanish Republic, writes *Jim Jump*. She visited Spain twice during the civil war, first as a volunteer with the British

Medical Unit in 1936, then in the following year as a delegate to an international congress of writers. On both occasions she was accompanied by fellow poet and writer Valentine Ackland, her companion for nearly 40 years.

“Being a lesbian and a Communist certainly didn’t endear Warner to the establishment or the literary canon-mongers,” wrote Claire Harman in her 1991 biography. However, as this new anthology* suggests, Warner’s lifelong literary and journalistic output was powerful, extensive and voluminous. It includes eight articles based on her visits to Spain. Except for one previously unpublished piece, all appeared originally in magazines such as *Left Review*, *New Statesman*, *New Yorker* and *Time and Tide*.

They range from politically-charged reportage

such as “Harvest in 1937” (“the first harvest these peasants have ever reaped for themselves”) to sketches of Spaniards—and one Swiss International Brigader who had walked to Spain—involvement in the anti-fascist fight.

Also featured is a lively portrait of Nancy Cunard, another writer who was indelibly scarred by the war in Spain. “Each of us sometimes found the other exasperating,” Warner wrote in 1968, “but we saw eye to eye about Spain.”

In a 1975 interview published posthumously in *Poetry Now Review*, Warner recalled the war and her enduring attachment to the cause of the Spanish Republic: “...the English authorities and respectables were clamping down on freelance journalists who had anything to say in favour of the Republic. I had a great deal to say. I never again saw a country I loved as much as I loved Spain. A most ungainly country to love, but it is extraordinarily beautiful. I’ve never been back—I said I wouldn’t go back till Franco was dead and the old brute is still hanging on.”

*“With the Hunted: Selected Writings” by Sylvia Townsend Warner, edited by Peter Tolhurst (Black Dog Books, Norwich, 2012) £16.99.

174 Welsh volunteers who were identified in the original 1984 edition came from the South Wales coalfield. That total from Wales has now risen to 206 volunteers, though this includes 17 who either tried to enlist in the International Brigades but were arrested on route or who were turned away for medical reasons.

Welsh miners therefore made up one of the largest contingents within the British Battalion. Thirty-three of them were killed in Spain, all but one on the battlefield or from wounds sustained in action. The exception was the boxer Tom Picton, aged 52, from Treherbert, who was executed as a prisoner-of-war in 1938.

Hywel Francis vividly tells their story, threading biographies of the volunteers into the story of the war in Spain. Fundamental to his study is the industrial and political background in the Welsh valleys, from the miners’ defeat in the pit strike of 1926-27 to the hunger marches and anti-fascist struggles of the 1930s. The important, though

not exclusive, role of the Communist Party in these developments and among the Brigaders is clearly explained.

What still strikes the reader is the determination and bravery of so many of the volunteers. They come to life in a section of the book featuring letters home. “Most of our fighting has been against German and Italian trained troops with superior arms to ourselves,” wrote Bob Condon of Aberaman in April 1937, “but we possessed something they did not, and with all their bombing of women and children and using of dum-dum and explosive bullets against us, they cannot pass or break our morale.”

There is humour too—with a kick in the tail. “Did I tell you in my last letter that we go to church twice a day?” asked Jim Brewer, of Rhymney, in a letter to his parents in May 1937. “We eat there. Last summer the chief priest fired on the people with a machine gun and killed thirty. That’s the sort of atrocity you never hear of in England (sic).”

As well as a more comprehensive list of Welsh volunteers, Hywel Francis—Labour MP for Aberavon since 2001—has added a new bibliography and a third preface, joining the 1984 and 2004 prefaces that are also reproduced. The latest preface gives three main justifications for updating the book: the emergence of new sources of information, the need to counter “historiographical and factually impressionistic issues” raised in the work of another historian of the Welsh volunteers, Robert Stradling, and the renewed interest in the sacrifices made by these men and women from Wales.



A group of Welsh volunteers in 1937.

His finest hour

“Julian Bell: From Bloomsbury to the Spanish Civil War” by Peter Stansky and William Abrahams (Stanford University Press, Palo Alto, 2011) £23.45

Reviewed by Charlie Oberndorf



In 1966, Peter Stansky and William Abrahams published “Journey to the Frontier”, which followed the lives of two young poets from families with strong intellectual and artistic backgrounds, both of whom died in the Spanish Civil War. John Cornford went to Cambridge, joined the Communist Party, wrote committed poetry and recruited for and enlisted in the International Brigades. Julian Bell went to Cambridge, wrote some good nature poetry and followed a road to Spain after a number of telling detours.

In the past four decades, new information about Bell has come to light, some of it personal details that friends were less likely to share in the mid-1960s when a sense of decorum and privacy were a strong part of British intellectual culture. Now, Stansky (Abrahams died in 1998) has expanded the sections about Bell to produce a full-scale biography of that young man.

Bell was the son of painter Vanessa Bell and nephew of Virginia Woolf. In a sense, he was a child of Bloomsbury, that group of artists that charted a new aesthetic away from Edwardian tradition. At King’s College, Cambridge, he seemed to lose his way. After a brief affair with Anthony Blunt (who later became a Soviet spy), Julian fell in love several times; in all his affairs, he wrote openly and honestly to his mother about his relationships.

Bell met with some success as a poet, producing two books, but he had trouble shaping a manuscript that would earn him a fellowship. Trying to find a new direction, he took a position in China to teach English literature, and there he fell in love with his dean’s wife.

As the 1930s progressed, so did Bell’s political commitments and, when he had to leave China because of his affair, he decided to join the International Brigades. There was enormous pressure from his family not to go. As a compromise, Julian agreed to drive an ambulance rather than enlist as a soldier.

Stansky and Abrahams do a fine job of excerpting poems, letters and essays to give a sense of Bell’s thinking. At times, we see him so closely that we don’t get a sense of his charisma.

The most personal sections of the book are the most riveting. The authors do a fine job of catching the way his affairs start as great passionate encounters, and then he rethinks them. In the background he is always concerned as to how his mother will respond to the woman in his life. The chapter on China, full of fresh information, is particularly rich, and the final chapter on Bell in Spain is strongest when capturing that particu-

lar tension many who went to Spain must have felt when deciding if they should join the fray.

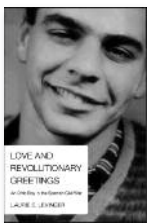
Bell seems to be at his finest when in Spain. We don’t see the same confused young man who seemed to seek out love affairs as a way to give his life direction. We find someone who becomes the hallmark of dedication. So it comes as a surprise when Stansky writes: “His death was a terrible waste.” This is very different from the end of the original book, “Journey to the Frontier”, when the two writers merge Julian’s death with the deaths all those who had fought for the Spanish Republic.

Charles Oberndorf is working on a biographical novel about US International Brigader Abe Osheroff.

Driven to war

“Love and Revolutionary Greetings: An Ohio Boy in the Spanish Civil War” by Laurie E Levinger (Resource Publications, Eugene, 2012) \$21

Reviewed by Linda Palfreman



Nineteen-year-old Sam Levinger was one of the 2,800 Americans who enlisted in the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War in an attempt to halt the sickening spread of fascism that was sweeping through Europe during the 1930s.

When civil war broke out in Spain in 1936, Levinger was an undergraduate at Ohio State University in Columbus. The following year, the committed young socialist died fighting fascism in Spain as a member of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion of volunteers from the US.

“Love and Revolutionary Greetings: An Ohio Boy in the Spanish Civil War” is Sam’s story. The moving narrative is based on the letters, poems and stories that he sent home from Spain and the letters of his mother, Elma – beautifully woven together by the author Laurie E Levinger, Sam’s niece.

As well as offering us an insight into the intense and often traumatic circumstance of the young soldier, the book reveals the conditions of political insecurity and privation to which a large part of American society was subject during the years of the Depression. They were conditions which ultimately drove this sensitive and socially committed young man to join with other men and women from all over the world in the defence of democracy in Spain.

Sam’s story, though tragic, betrays no hint of sentimentality or lyricism. He was a gifted young writer with a wry sense of humour and, whilst charged with emotion, the prose is unfussy and honest – and compelling. “Love and Revolutionary Greetings” is one of those apparently modest little books between whose covers we discover a tale of true magnitude.



● Folk duo **Na-mara** (Rob Garcia and Paul McNamara) have released an EP-CD featuring four songs inspired by the Spanish Civil War and the International Brigades. “The Bite” is

a new recording of their song based on the story of Brigader George Wheeler. “English Penny” is about nurse Penny Feiwei. “The Silver Duro” and “Only For Three Months”, another new recording, tell the story of the Spanish Basque refugee children who came to Britain in 1937, one of whom would become Rob’s father. “Songs of the Spanish Civil War” is available for £5 plus p&p from [www.na-mara.com].

● **Radio New Zealand** has made documentaries about two International Brigade volunteers available as podcasts. In the first, recorded in 1984, Tom Spiller recalls his motives for joining the fight in Spain (52 mins). In “A Nurse’s Story”, Isobel Maguire describes her experiences during the civil war (23 mins). Go to: [www.radionz.co.nz/national/documentaries/spanishcivilwar].



● Glasgow-based Celtic folk-rock band **The Wakes** have recorded “Jarama Valley” for their new album “The Stripped Back Sessions Vol. 1”. The CD can be ordered from

[www.thewakesband.com].

● Viewable online is a **Canadian documentary**, “Lost Graves of the International Brigades”, by Norm Christie featuring Canadian International Brigade volunteer Jules Paivio revisiting the battlefields of the Spanish Civil War and the San Pedro de Cardeña prison. See [http://wn.com/Battlefield_Mysteries_Spanish_Civil_War].



● “Doon Through The Years” (Fair Pley B0079X6SNO) is the latest release by Scottish political folk singer **Arthur Johnstone** and the Stars Band. The CD features a version of “Jarama Valley” in a medley with “Bandiera Rossa”.

● The out of print **“The Guardian Book of the Spanish Civil War”**, which brings together the contemporary reports by correspondents in the then *Manchester Guardian*, is now available as a PDF. IBMT member Geoff Lawes has written in to report. Originally published in 1987 and edited by Robert Haigh, the 332-page book has been posted online by the Saginaw Valley State University in Michigan. Go to [www6.svsu.edu/~jalewis2/Spain/Manchester%20Guardian%20Spanish%20Civil%20War.pdf].

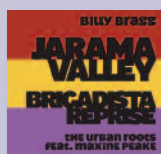
IBMT merchandise

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



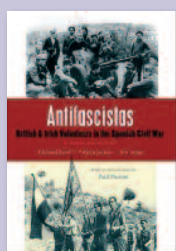
Limited edition 75th anniversary plate

A limited edition of 75 plates made in the UK from finest bone china. Each plate has a copy of the medal given to International Brigade members and all the battles are listed. Plates are individually numbered on the reverse (10½ inches or 26cms wide).
£30 plus £4.99 p&p.



Jarama Valley / Brigadista Reprise CD single

Exclusively for the IBMT, Billy Bragg performs the famous song of the British Battalion and Maxine Peake delivers La Pasionaria's emotional farewell speech to the International Brigades with a dub backing from The Urban Roots.
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Antifascistas British and Irish Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War

The story of the volunteers in words and pictures, by Richard Baxell, Angela Jackson and Jim Jump (paperback).
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Poems from Spain

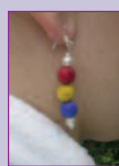
Collection of poems written by British and Irish International Brigaders. Edited by Jim Jump (paperback).
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¡Salud!
British volunteers in the Republican medical service during the Spanish Civil War
by Linda Palfreeman (paperback).
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Looking Back at the Spanish Civil War
IBMT's Len Crome Memorial Lectures 2002-2010 by expert historians on the Spanish Civil War, including Helen Graham, Paul Preston, Francisco J Romero Salvadó, Richard Baxell, Enrique Moradiellos, Angela Jackson, Ángel Viñas and Julián Casanova. Edited by Jim Jump (paperback).
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Earrings
Spanish Republican-coloured bead earrings. Handmade in the UK.
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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 speech famous farewell speech to the International Brigades in October 1938. In the colours of the Spanish Republic: red, yellow and purple.
£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 (36inch chest/90cms)
M (40inch/100cms)
L (44inch chest/110cms)
XL (48inch/120cms)
XXL (52inch/130cms)
Fitted women's (34-36inch/70-90cms).
£15 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).
£15 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



Jarama 75th anniversary poster
A3 poster specially designed for the IBMT by Simon Hawkesworth of Fold Design to mark the 75th anniversary of the British Battalion's first and most bloody battle. With first two verses of "Jarama Valley".
£5 plus £2.99 p&p



70th anniversary tankard
Made in the UK from finest bone china. On the front of the tankard is the three-pointed International Brigade star and on the reverse is a quotation from La Pasionaria's farewell speech to the International Brigades in October 1938.
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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.

Mick Jones

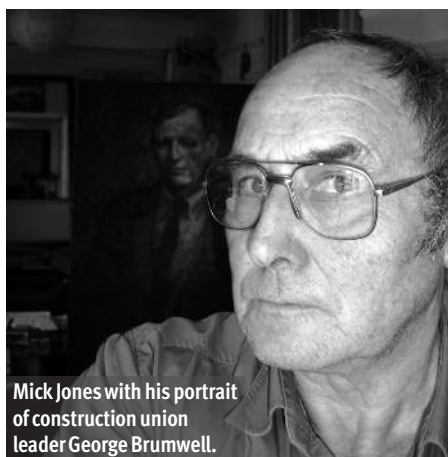
By Jim Jump

BMT trustee Mick Jones, who died on 1 August at the age of 68, was an artist and designer who deployed his considerable skills for the benefit of the IBMT. He helped design several commemorative plaques, as well as the “Antifascistas” mobile exhibition that was inaugurated in London in 2010 by Spanish ambassador Carles Casajuana.

First elected to the IBMT executive committee in 2006, he was already well known to many IBMT supporters as the son and constant companion of International Brigader Jack Jones (1913-2009), the IBMT President at the time.

Mick was part of a generation of artists, who, working collaboratively in the 1970s and 80s, created prominent murals throughout London on political, trade union and community themes. They drew inspiration from the equally politically-committed school of Mexican muralists from earlier in the 20th century. Mick indeed spent three months in Mexico City in the mid-1980s viewing the many works in and around the capital by José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera and – his favourite – David Alfaro Siqueiros.

In 1980, with Simon Barber, Mick Jones painted the Fitzrovia Community Mural in Whitfield Gardens, Tottenham Court Road. When in 2006



Mick Jones with his portrait of construction union leader George Brumwell.

Time Out compiled a list of London’s 10 best murals, the Fitzrovia mural was placed at number one. In 1985, with Anna Walker, he painted the Hackney Peace Carnival Mural in Dalston Lane, using designs left by his friend – and Anna’s husband – Ray Walker, who died suddenly at the start of the project.

After attending Birmingham School of Art and London’s Royal School of Art, Jones worked as an industrial designer and, following teacher training, as an art teacher. He gave up full-time teaching by the end of the 1970s in order to concentrate on his increasing number of commissions.

His artworks include a large triptych for the 1987 centenary of the National Union of Seamen, which now hangs in the lobby of the London

headquarters of the International Transport Workers’ Federation. In 2003/4 he produced a series of stained glass windows and murals at the London head office of the Union of Construction, Allied Trades & Technicians (UCATT). These were unveiled in September 2004 by Gordon Brown, then Chancellor of the Exchequer.

He also created the Durham Miners’ Gala Mural at the Miners’ Hall in Durham, murals for the Museum of Liverpool Life (now the Museum of Liverpool) and the Merseyside Trade Union Community & Unemployed Resource Centre, which closed in 2010, and portraits of George Brumwell and Jimmy Knapp, general secretaries respectively of UCATT and transport union RMT.

In characteristically proud and taciturn fashion, Mick told few people about his deteriorating health, having been diagnosed with cancer in June last year. He continued to pursue projects on behalf of the IBMT and his last public outing was on 7 July to see the unveiling of a new plaque beside the International Brigade memorial in London’s Jubilee Gardens. The idea for the plaque was his own and he oversaw its design and manufacture.

Colleagues say that, even at the Jubilee Gardens gathering and in obviously poor health, he was talking enthusiastically about his proposal for a memorial in Corbera, near Gandesa, overlooking the battlefield where the British Battalion saw action for the last time in Spain in September 1938.

Theo Francos

International Brigade and British-based Free French army veteran Theo Francos died on 1 July aged 97. He was born in Spain but his family emigrated to Bayonne, France, where he was working as a waiter when the Spanish Civil War began in July 1936. As a young communist he immediately crossed the border to join the fight. With the XI Brigade he took part in battles around Madrid and at Brunete and Belchite.

In June 1940, just before France fell to the Nazis, he caught a ship from the French port of St Jean de Luz to Plymouth. From there he went to Manchester and was trained with the Free French as a parachutist and saboteur. From 1941 he took part in several Allied missions behind enemy lines in Norway, Belgium, France, North Africa and Italy. In July 1942, he secretly crossed into Spain and was arrested by Civil Guards close to the Portuguese border. However, he escaped from the prison camp at Miranda de Ebro – where he had also been held prisoner at the end of the Spanish Civil War before escaping – and finally made his way to Portugal and, via Casablanca, back to England.

After the war he resumed his career as a waiter in Bayonne, married and raised a family.

Ida Hackett

Ida Hackett, who died on 23 April at the age of 97, was one of the stalwarts of the working class movement in Nottinghamshire, reports

Barry Donlan. During the Spanish Civil War she was active in “Aid for Spain” campaigns. She knew Eric Whalley, from Mansfield, who was killed in Spain, along with fellow volunteers Frank Ellis from Hucknall and Lionel Jacobs and Walter Gregory from Nottingham.

Ida was present at County Hall in 1993 when Spanish ambassador Alberto Aza, International Brigade veteran Jack Jones and county council leader Dennis Pettit unveiled the memorial to the International Brigades. She was again present – and spoke – at the local trades council’s rededication ceremony held in July 2010. *An Ida Hackett Memorial Fund has been established to create a memorial to Ida. Send donations to the Nottinghamshire, Nottingham and Mansfield Trades Council, c/o 75 Dunstan Crescent, Worksop, Notts S80 1AG.*

Viktor Lavsky

Soviet airforce general Viktor Lavsky, the last of the 800 Soviet airmen who fought for the Spanish Republic, died on 19 June, aged 97. Arriving in Spain in 1937, he took part in more than 90 missions and survived being shot down on two occasions. One in four of his fellow pilots was killed in action. Lavsky returned to Spain several times following Franco’s death. In a 2009 interview he lamented the fact that after the war the Soviet volunteers had been prohibited from talking about their experiences in Spain. Until his death he was the president of the Russian

association of veterans of the Spanish Civil War. The presidency has now been passed to former translator Adelina Kondratieva, aged 95, the last survivor of the 3,000 Soviet volunteers in Spain.

George Park

George Park, who died on 17 June 2012, aged 86, was the son of Alexander Park, of Glasgow, who was killed in Aragon on 12 March 1938. Along with his family he was a devoted member of the IBMT and regularly attended events organised by the trust. At the IBMT Annual General Meeting in Dundee in October 2009 he memorably read out a letter from his father that he received as an 11-year-old, shortly before his father was killed.

Elisabeth Tomalin

Elisabeth Tomalin, the graphic and textile designer, artist, art therapist and widow of International Brigader Miles Tomalin, died on 8 March, aged 99. Born in Dresden, Elisabeth Wallach left Germany to escape the Nazis and, via Paris, settled in London, working principally as a textile designer. In 1939 she met Miles Tomalin, a poet and graphic designer, and they married a year later. He died in 1983. During the Second World War Elisabeth worked for the Ministry of Information, helping to design the iconic posters that urged people to Dig For Victory. She afterwards became head of the Marks & Spencer textile print department and, in later life, an art therapist.



● The Eretz Israel Museum in **Tel Aviv** is hosting an exhibition **“From Here to Madrid: Volunteers from Palestine in the International Brigades in Spain, 1936-1938”**. Pictured (top) are portraits of some of the volunteers – out of about 300 that went to Spain. They include pictures of the two Palestinian Arabs who also joined the International Brigades. Closing on 30 October, the exhibition features an interview with Shmuel Segal (above) who, until his death in January, was the last surviving member of the International Brigades who came from Palestine and afterwards lived in Israel. For more information see [www.erezmuseum.org.il/e/123].

● The 2013 **Jarama anniversary weekend** will take place on 15/16 February. On the Friday there will be a guided tour of the British Battalion positions on the battlefield south-east of Madrid and an early evening event in Madrid featuring guest speakers. On Saturday battlefield sites associated with the Lincoln Battalion will be visited, followed by lunch in Morata de Tajuña. Coaches will be laid on from Madrid. Further details regarding accommodation and the final programme will be made available later this year. This event has become increasingly popular in recent years, so anyone interested in attending should advise Danny Payne at the earliest opportunity. Email: [danpayne40@yahoo.co.uk] or phone the IBMT Secretary, tel: 020-7228 6504.

● Historian David Rosenberg is organising an **“Antifascist Footprints”** tour of **London's East End**. The two-hour walk takes in the important sites of the October 1936 Battle of Cable Street. The cost is £7 (£4 unwaged); booking information from [www.eastendwalks.com].

Notice of the IBMT Annual General Meeting on Saturday 13 October 2012 from 2pm-4:30pm at Newhaven Fort, Fort Road, Newhaven, East Sussex BN9 9DS

AGM agenda

- 1/ Chair's opening remarks
- 2/ Apologies for absence
- 3/ Minutes of previous AGM
- 4/ Matters arising
- 5/ Secretary's report
- 6/ Membership Secretary's report
- 7/ Treasurer's report
- 8/ Election of officers and Executive Committee members
- 9/ Any other business (AOB)
- 10/ Date and place of next AGM
- 11/ Chair's closing remarks

- *Nominations for officers (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) and Executive Committee members (no more than 11) must be made in writing and received by the Secretary by 29 September 2012.*
- *Proposed items for AOB must be received in writing by the Secretary by 6 October 2012.*
- *Email: [secretary@international-brigades.org.uk] or write to: IBMT Secretary, 6 Stonells Road, London SW11 6HQ.*

Programme of events for AGM weekend

Friday 12 October

- Exclusive screening of a recording of the “Goodbye Barcelona” musical about the International Brigades at 7:30pm at The Leaf Hall Community Arts Centre in Eastbourne (51 Seaside, BN22 7NB); free entry; all welcome.

Saturday 13 October

- 12 noon: Rededication of International Brigade memorial bench at Newhaven Fort (Fort Road, Newhaven, East Sussex BN9 9DS).
- 2pm-4:30pm: IBMT Annual General Meeting at Newhaven Fort (see above); all IBMT members welcome.

10 September-15 October NEWHAVEN: IBMT's “Antifascistas” exhibition at Newhaven Fort, Fort Road, BN9 9DS; 10:30am-5pm; for admission charges see [www.newhavenfort.org.uk].

15 September LIVERPOOL: Inauguration of exhibition of photos of Merseyside International Brigaders at The Casa, Hope Street, L1 9BQ; unveiling at 12 noon by Len McCluskey, Unite General Secretary; contact Danny Payne [danpayne40@yahoo.co.uk].

5 October CAMBRIDGE: Public meeting to remember Cambridge volunteers; co-hosted by Cambridge Communist Party and Cambridge University Hispanic Society; 7:45pm; check listing on [www.cambridge.comunist-party.info] for venue details.

12-14 October SUSSEX COAST: Weekend of events in Eastbourne, Newhaven and Hastings

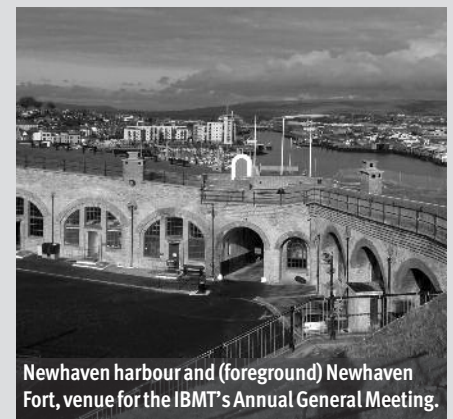
- 7:30pm: “Sussex and the Spanish Civil War” presentation at Unite the Union's Eastbourne Centre (Grand Parade, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 4DN); free entry; all welcome.

Sunday 14 October

- From 10:30am-3:30pm: coach and walking tour of sites in Hastings that feature in the life and classic novel of Robert Tressell, “The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists”; £10; advance booking strongly recommended; contact Mike Anderson: [mike.c.anderson@talktalk.net] or tel: 01435-864 978.

Transport: If you require transport between Eastbourne and Newhaven on Saturday contact Mike Anderson (see details above). If there is sufficient demand, a bus might be provided, with passengers asked to make a contribution towards the costs.

Accommodation: B&B and evening meal available at Eastbourne Centre (see address above) at a special daily rate of £55.50 per person; tel: 01323-433 900; website: [www.eastbournecentre.co.uk].



Newhaven harbour and (foreground) Newhaven Fort, venue for the IBMT's Annual General Meeting.

centred on the IBMT Annual General Meeting at Newhaven Fort; see panel above for more details.

20 October LONDON: Public lecture by historian Richard Baxell on the relationship between the International Brigade volunteers and the refugee children who arrived in Britain in May 1937 from Spain's Basque Country; 2:30pm; Kensington & Chelsea Library Lecture Theatre, Phillimore Walk, W8 7RY; contact Natalia Benjamin [secretary@basquechildren.org].

28 October EDINBURGH: Annual commemoration at International Brigade memorial in East Princes Street Gardens; 12 noon; for more information: [gordon.munro@edinburgh.gov.uk].

NB: Events not organised by the IBMT are the responsibility of the individuals and organisations concerned.



APPLAUSE: An appreciative crowd (above) heard performances from Paco Marín (far left), Ewan McLennan (left), Na-mara (bottom left). Francesca Beard (bottom). IBMT trustee and former union and pensioners' leader Rodney Bickerstaffe (below) was the main speaker at the event.



FLAGGED UP: David Lomon (above) unveils the plaque next to the International Brigade memorial. Looking on are son Irving (left) and Ramón Gandarias, Deputy Head of Mission at the Spanish Embassy. Below, David Lomon and Almudena Cros with the flag of the Spanish Republic that was presented to him.



Annual commemoration in London's Jubilee Gardens

Music, poetry and a minute's silence filled the air at London's Jubilee Gardens on 7 July at the IBMT's annual commemoration to honour the 2,500 volunteers from the British Isles who fought the fascists in the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39. One in five of them was killed in Spain.

With some 350 people in attendance, the event was marked by the unveiling of a new plaque by David Lomon, one of the last surviving British veterans of the war. It has been placed in front the existing memorial to the International Brigades.

Music was provided by BBC Radio 2 folk award winner for 2011 Ewan McLennan, Spanish singer-songwriter Paco Marín and folk duo Na-mara. They later performed at a get-together in the

Camel & Artichoke pub, along with Hull-based folk singer and musicologist of the Spanish Civil War Geoff Lawes.

A highlight in Jubilee Gardens was a new poem, "Witness as Hero", specially written for the occasion by acclaimed performance poet Francesca Beard. She also read out a poem written earlier this year to mark the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Guernica.

David Lomon was presented with an inscribed Spanish Republican flag by Almudena Cros of the Madrid-based AABI International Brigades friendship group.

The new plaque was commissioned by the IBMT to mark the relocation of the national memorial as

part of a £5 million redevelopment of Jubilee Gardens that was completed in May. The memorial itself has been repaired and restored, with funding help from the War Memorials Trust.

During the ceremony, there was a minute's silence to remember the 526 dead and wreaths were laid by, among others, representatives of the Spanish embassy, Spanish exile and refugee groups and the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women.

Watch a 17-minute film by Marshall Mateer with highlights of the event at www.youtube.com/user/IBMTnews.

See page 4: Two poems by Francesca Beard.