



IBMT Newsletter

www.international-brigades.org.uk

Issue 35 / 2-2013

INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST



**Concert in Spain remembers the
volunteers from Britain and Ireland**

Plus: 75th anniversary of the Battle of the Ebro



Gallo Rojo will perform on Saturday evening.

Notice of the International Brigade Memorial Trust's Annual General Meeting on Saturday 12 October 2013 from 2pm-4:30pm in the City of Edinburgh Council Chambers, 253 High Street, Edinburgh EH1 1YJ



AGM agenda

- 1 Chair's opening remarks
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Minutes of previous AGM
- 4 Matters arising
- 5 Executive Committee reports
 - a) Secretary
 - b) Treasurer
 - c) Membership
 - d) Newsletter, website and new media
 - e) Education
 - f) Merchandise
 - g) "Antifascistas" exhibition
 - h) Ireland
 - i) Scotland
 - j) Wales
 - k) North-West
- 6 Election of officers and Executive Committee members
- 7 Any other business
- 8 Date and place of next AGM
- 9 Chair's closing remarks

● *Nominations for officers (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) and Executive Committee members (no more than 11) must be received in writing by 28 September 2013.*

● *Proposed items for "Any other business" must be received in writing by 6 October 2013.*

● *Send nominations and agenda items to: [secretary@international-brigades.org.uk] or write to: IBMT Secretary, 6 Stonells Road, London SW11 6HQ.*

Weekend programme

Friday 11 October

● Reception for IBMT members and guests at the City of Edinburgh Council Chambers (see above) from 7pm-9pm.

Saturday 12 October

● 12.30pm: Assemble at eastern entrance to East Princes Street Gardens on Waverley Bridge to march to the International Brigade memorial for its rededication.
● 2pm-4:30pm: IBMT Annual

General Meeting at City of Edinburgh Council Chambers (see above).

● 7:30pm-late: "Spanish Songs and Stories", including Gallo Rojo, venue to be confirmed.

Sunday 13 October

● 1pm: Screening of "The Scots Who Fought Franco", venue to be confirmed.

● *For queries about the programme of events contact Mike Arnott (IBMT Scotland): [dundeetuc@hotmail.com]; tel: 07951443656.*





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Photo: Luis Brox Delgado

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NEWS

IBMT joins campaign to save Madrid memorial

An online petition campaign has been launched by the AABI International Brigades friendship group in Spain to save the memorial to the International Brigades in Madrid's University City.

By early July it had attracted 15,440 signatures from around the world.

The capital's Complutense University has been ordered by the Madrid high court to remove the memorial by the end of August. The memorial was unveiled in October 2011 in the presence of four Brigaders, including David Lomon from Britain.

The order by the Tribunal Superior de Justicia was made on 3 June, on the grounds that the monument had been erected by the university without planning permission. The university is insisting that it twice applied for the permission, but did not receive a reply from the city council, which is controlled by the right-wing Popular Party.

The IBMT donated 500 euros towards the cost of the memorial. Several other International Brigade associations also contributed to the financial appeal launched by the AABI, as did the Madrid embassies of Argentina, Canada, Cyprus, Norway, Russia, Serbia and Slovenia.

Dismay

The court's decision has been greeted with dismay by the AABI activists, who note that, though it was made on technical grounds, the original complaint was lodged by a lawyer with known far-right connections. They also point out that Franco's huge Arco de la Victoria (Victory Arch) still stands at the entrance to the University City.

In a letter to the Spanish ambassador in London, Federico Trillo, IBMT Secretary Jim Jump said the decision would be interpreted by many people as evidence that there were institutions in Spain that had still not come to terms with the country's recent history.

"For a Spanish court to be seen to be acting in a way that denigrates the memory of those who fought in Spain against European fascism and on



International Brigader David Lomon at the unveiling of the Madrid memorial on 22 October 2011.

the side of a democratic government is highly damaging to the image of Spain in the outside world," he added.

The petition form, which is hosted by @change.org, is in Spanish but this can be changed by scrolling down to the foot of the page and choosing a different language. Go to: [<http://tinyurl.com/ke3s3uu>].

A motion in the House of Commons is calling on the British government to intervene with the Spanish government about the threat to the International Brigade memorial in Madrid. By early July the motion had 53 signatures: 44 Labour MPs, three Liberal Democrats and Plaid Cymru and one Conservative, Respect and SNP. A similar-worded motion in the Scottish Parliament is supported by 22 MSPs (13 Labour, eight SNP and one Independent).

MPs call on British government to make representations

The Commons motion reads: "That this House notes the current Spanish Supreme Court's instruction to the Complutense University of Madrid to remove a very modest memorial to the International Brigades, including its British citizens, who died during the Spanish Civil War; further notes that the

campus became a key theatre of war in November 1936 and that this is the only memorial of its kind in Madrid; and calls on the government to make representations to the Spanish government to ensure that the memorial remains in place, so that future generations may be reminded of some of the more important moments in their history."

See [www.parliament.uk/edm/2013-14/204].



DUBLIN: A plaque to the memory of six local men who joined the International Brigades was unveiled on 4 May at Senan Court, Emmet Road, Inchicore, Dublin. Pictured above are family and friends of the volunteers.



Among the speakers was IBMT Ireland Secretary Manus O'Riordan. Three of those named on the plaque (above), which was erected by the Inchicore Friends of the International Brigades, died in Spain.



AMBUSH REMEMBERED:

A floral tribute (inset) stands beside the road outside the hilltop village of Calaceite (above left) marking the exact location where, 75 years ago to the day, the British Battalion was ambushed by Italian troops at dawn on 31 March 1938. A dozen Britons were killed and 140 captured. The remembrance at the site in Aragon was led by Barcelona-based Spanish Civil War battlefield tour guide Alan Warren, along with two of his tour party.



LONDON: The IBMT was invited to lay a wreath at the Soviet War Memorial at Mary Harmsworth Park, south London, on 9 May, with this year's Victory Day commemoration marking the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Stalingrad. Duncan Longstaff (pictured) laid flowers on behalf of the Trust to remember the victory over fascism in Europe.



Jack Jones centenary events in London and Liverpool

The centenary of Jack Jones's birth was remembered in Liverpool and London in March.

In London there were readings from his autobiography, "Union Man", and favourite songs were sung, including "I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night", at a celebration in words and music of the life of the International Brigade veteran and former trade union and pensioners' leader. Scripted by actor and IBMT member Chris Tranchell, the event was held on 29 March – Jones's birthday – at the headquarters of Unite, the union created by the merger of his Transport & General Workers' Union with the former engineering workers' union Amicus.

The day before saw the unveiling in Liverpool, at Garston's York Street, of a mural depicting Jack Jones's career, from the Liverpool docks to campaigning for pensioners' rights. Created by local artists Alan Murray and Nicola Taggart and funded by local Labour councillors, community and housing groups and Unite, the mural highlights his involvement in the Spanish Civil War, in which he was injured during the Battle of the Ebro in August 1938. The unveiling took place following a procession including local schoolchildren and residents.

Jack Jones was the IBMT's Life President until he died on 21 April 2009, aged 96.



MURAL: Sections (above and top) of the new mural in Liverpool depicting the life of Jack Jones.



LAUGHTER: Rodney Bickerstaffe (left) sharing memories of Jack Jones with (from left) Imogen Lucy, IBMT President Marlene Sidaway and Chris Tranchell.

Hamburg's anti-fascists honoured

By Ernest Walker

Greetings were sent from Austrian International Brigader Gert Hoffmann to the annual anti-fascist commemorative event in Hamburg over the weekend of 31 May to 2 June. Organised by the KFSR – the IBMT's sister organisation in Germany – the international gathering this year remembered the 40th anniversary of the military coup in Chile.

There was a visit to the Ernst Thälmann Memorial House to remember the leader of the KPD German Communist Party, who was arrested by the Nazis in 1933 and subsequently executed – and who gave his name to the Thälmann Battalion of the International Brigades.

A boat trip around the harbour visited sites associated with anti-Nazi resistance by Hamburg dockers. At the Duckdalben international seamen's club homage was paid to Wolff Hoffmann, seafarer and International Brigader – and brother of Gert – who died in Gross-Rossen concentration camp in 1942. The club is planning to erect a memorial to him. Among the speakers here was IBMT Treasurer Charles Jepson.

The final day started at Ohlsdorf cemetery at the graves of resistance fighters who died in the



MUSIC: From Peter Schenzer and Dirk Wilke.

anti-fascist struggle. Music was provided by Peter Schenzer and Dirk Wilke, singing "Viva la Quince Brigada", "Bella Ciao", "The Peat Bog Soldiers" and "The Internationale".

A talk was afterwards given on the Spanish Civil War in German literature, and our final destination was the Fuhlsbüttel concentration camp, where flowers were laid and historian Ingrid Schiborowski talked of the role of women during the anti-fascist war in Spain. Formal proceedings were ended by Joe Mulheron from Derry singing his song "Connolly Column".

Our thanks go to Reinhardt Silbermann of the KFSR and all the speakers and singers who provided us with an emotional roller-coaster of a weekend.



On the cover (from left): Rob Garcia and Paul McNamara; right: concert poster; centre right: Ewan McLennan; far right: Paco Marín.



Photos: Luis Brox Delgado

British volunteers are the toast of Rioja

Spanish concert pays tribute to International Brigades

By Jim Jump

British and Irish volunteers in the Spanish Civil War were remembered in a ground-breaking IBMT-sponsored concert in northern Spain.

Nearly 400 people packed the municipal auditorium in Logroño, capital of the Rioja region, on 30 April for a homage to the International Brigades by British and Spanish musicians.

They heard performances by Edinburgh-born folk-singer Ewan McLennan and the St Albans-based duo Na-mara, as well as by local Spanish singer-songwriter Paco Marín.

The idea for the concert emerged last July when Marín, McLennan and Na-mara sang at the IBMT's annual commemoration in Jubilee Gardens.

In London, Marín sang his tribute to the International Brigades, called "Brigadas Internacionales". And he was so impressed by his fellow performers that he returned to Spain determined to organise a joint concert in his home town.

In Logroño, McLennan sang, among other songs, "Jaime Foyers", the Ewan MacColl-penned lament for a Scottish shipyard worker killed at Gangesa. Rob Garcia and Paul McNamara of Na-

mara sang "The Bite", their song inspired by the south London volunteer George Wheeler.

And they played two songs about the 4,000 children who arrived in Southampton on board the *Habana* in May 1937 during Franco's bombing of the Basque region: "Only For Three Months" and "The Silver Duro". As Garcia, explained to the audience in Spain, his father was one of those children who found refuge in England.

All the musicians came together for a special version of "Jarama Valley", the song of the British Battalion in Spain, alternating verses in English and Spanish, with local civil war historian Jesús Vicente Aguirre on harmonica.

It was a fitting climax to an evening of great emotion. Describing the atmosphere in the foyer after the concert, Paul McNamara said: "I can say with confidence that it has been a very long time since I have been hugged and kissed as much... It was clear that the performance had touched many

"It has been a very long time since I have been hugged and kissed as much."

people and there was immense goodwill being shown to the performers in return."

Better known nowadays for its wines, La Rioja was the scene of brutal repression when Franco's fascists seized control at the outset of the civil war. Some 2,000 civilians – out of a population of barely 200,000 – were murdered and their bodies dumped in mass graves.

Among those summarily executed were two cousins of Cayetana Lozano Díaz, one of the adult helpers on the *Habana*, who later married an English International Brigade volunteer, James R Jump. Their son is IBMT Secretary Jim Jump and it was through his continuing links with the Rioja region that Paco Marín was invited to play in London last year. Paco is a prominent member of the local association that remembers the victims of fascism and Francoism in Rioja and which was one of the sponsors of the concert, along with the regional CCOO and UGT union federations.

Speaking on behalf of the IBMT at the start of the concert, Jim Jump contrasted the "shameful" attitude of the British government towards the Spanish Republic with the support for the Republic's fight against fascism among a majority of people in Britain. "It is that international solidarity among people that we celebrate with music tonight," he added.

Labour moves swiftly to restore information board on Notts Brigaders



Plans by leaders of Nottinghamshire County Council to reinstate an information board about the International Brigades (below) have been welcomed by the IBMT.

The board was removed from County Hall in Nottingham in 2009 after the Conservatives won that year's county council elections. But Labour regained control of the council in May this year and announced in the following month that the board would be restored on 27 July to its place in front of a plaque to the volunteers from Nottinghamshire.

Councillor Alan Rhodes described the removal of the board by the Tories as an act of vandalism. He told the IBMT: "It is my intention as leader of

the county council to keep my promise to re-site the information board that tells the story of the sacrifices of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire volunteers to the International Brigade in its rightful place in front of the memorial to them."

The memorial and information board – which was kept in storage following its removal – were unveiled in 1993 by Jack Jones and Spanish ambassador Alberto Aza.

These latest developments have renewed a political row over the memorial.

Local Tory leader Kay Cutts, who had the board replaced with a general war memorial to all of Nottinghamshire's

war dead, is reported to have said that she would be "very offended" by Labour's actions if she were the family of Lee Rigby, the British soldier murdered in Woolwich on 22 May.

Alan Rhodes replied: "To use a terrible issue like that in an argument over something like this is outrageous."

In a letter of support to Rhodes, IBMT Secretary Jim Jump said: "I'm sure most people in Nottinghamshire are proud of the fact that these local volunteers went to fight Franco, Hitler and Mussolini at a time when, let us not forget, Britain's Conservative-led government of the day was pursuing its disastrous policy of appeasing the fascist dictators."



BEN MURRAY MEMORIAL: A memorial stone and plaque to International Brigade volunteer Ben Murray (born in Enniskillen, 19 July 1895; died in Aragon, March 1938) was unveiled at Moy Bridge in Aughnacloy, Co Tyrone, by the local International Brigade memorial group, Friends of Charlie Donnelly, on 9 March.



BELFAST: There was a gathering beside the International Brigade memorial in Writers Square, Belfast, following the annual general meeting on 19 January of the locally-based International Brigade Commemoration Committee. IBCC Secretary Lynda Walker gave a short speech and laid a wreath. The guest speaker at the AGM was IBMT Ireland Secretary Manus O' Riordan, who spoke on "The Frank Ryan Enigma".



INTERNATIONAL WALL: A new mural dedicated to the men of Belfast who fought fascism in the Spanish Civil War was unveiled on 20 April on the city's International Wall on Northumberland Street, adjacent to the so-called Peace Line. Pictured here are local historian John Quinn (speaking) and Gerard Murray of the Teach na Fáilte republican socialist ex-prisoners' support group, which commissioned the mural.



Unveiling of the plaque (below) to Allan Craig and the 38 other Scots killed at the Battle of Jarama, with the memorial olive tree in the background.

Plaque to the 39 Scots who fell at Jarama

By Mike Arnott

In October 2011 Allan Craig planted an olive tree and placed a temporary plaque in the cemetery in Tarancón in memory of his father, also called Allan Craig, of Glasgow. He was wounded at the Battle of Jarama on 17 February 1937 and died in the No. 1 American Hospital in Tarancón five days later.

Research has shown that Allan's father was then buried in the local cemetery. Apparently the remains of the Republican dead were removed in the 1970s, but were subsequently reburied within its walls at the spot near where the olive tree was planted. Allan was keen to ensure that the plaque made mention not only of his father, but also all the 39 Scots who fell at Jarama.

Just over a year later, the cemetery was visited by the Crawford brothers, whose grandfather William from Glasgow had fallen at Jarama and was named on the plaque. They had arranged to meet Máximo Molina from the local Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory, who had helped Allan get permission for the olive tree and plaque the year before.

They found that the plaque had disappeared, though a photo of Allan Craig Snr and the olive tree remained. So a campaign was launched to raise money for a permanent replacement plaque. A number of individual Dundee trade unionists and the Dundee Trades Union Council

"The remains of the Republican dead were removed in the 1970s, but were subsequently reburied at the spot near where the olive tree was planted."



made contributions, as subsequently did members of the Crawford and Craig families.

Plans were then made to commission a new plaque and to take it over to Madrid to coincide with the annual Jarama commemoration in February 2013, organised by AABI, the Spanish friends of the International Brigades.

With help from AABI and from Máximo in Tarancón, arrangements were made to unveil the new plaque at an event in the cemetery on 17 February, coincidentally the 76th anniversary of Allan Craig being wounded at Jarama. A group of 25 travelled from Madrid that Sunday morning, accompanied by AABI representative Almudena Cros, arriving at noon to be met by Máximo and a number of his comrades.

I said a few words and also read Dundee activist Mary Brooksbank's poem "Graves in Spain". Mary and the three Craig brothers had been arrested together in Dundee in 1931 after a protest against the Unemployed Assistance Board. Máximo read translations of two Spanish poems, and Almudena and Allan also spoke briefly but movingly. The flowers in the photos had been left by unknown local people and the small cross and poppy was placed by the Crawford family to their grandfather.

Record attendance at annual Battle of Jarama weekend

By Pauline Fraser

There was a packed programme of events in and around Madrid to commemorate the 76th anniversary of the Battle of Jarama. A record attendance saw some 60 supporters apiece from Britain and Ireland and more from France, Spain and elsewhere.

The programme started on the evening of Thursday 14 February with the launch of the Spanish version of Laurie Levinger's book, "Love and Revolutionary Greetings", about her uncle, Lincoln Battalion volunteer Sam Levinger, who died of wounds received at the Battle of Belchite. Largely told in his own words and those of his mother, Laurie gave a moving presentation of her uncle's life and untimely death. Ken O'Keefe's English-language version of a guidebook, with accompanying map, showing places in Madrid associated with the Brigaders was also launched.

A tour of the British Battalion's positions took place on the following day, and started from the "Cookhouse". Key sites were ably explained by Seve Montero of the AABI Spanish International Brigades friendship group and IBMT Trustee Danny Payne, who led the IBMT group. Afterwards, the Irish contingent and others wishing to pay their respects to volunteer and poet Charlie Donnelly stopped off at the memorial to him.

In the evening Claire Rol-Tanguy, daughter of Henri Rol-Tanguy, International Brigader and hero of the French Resistance, and secretary of our French sister group ACER, spoke about the French and Belgian Brigaders at Jarama.

Eoin McDonald, worthy winner of the essay competition organised by the Friends of the International Brigade in Ireland, read out his essay centred on Brigadier Peter Daly from his own town of Monaghan.

Brothers Vincent and Joseph Al mudéver, from France, two of the last few Brigaders still alive, were guests of honour at the event. Vincent brought the house down at the end of

the evening with a rendition of “¡Ay Carmela!”.

Record numbers marched on the battlefield on Saturday to commemorate the Franco-Belge volunteers, after which four coachloads of supporters filled the Mesón El Cid restaurant at Morata de Tajuña to enjoy a five-course lunch. They then visited the cemetery outside Morata and Claire Rol-Tanguy laid flowers at the memorial plaque that Irish-born volunteer Bob Doyle was instrumental in getting put in place.

On Sunday, IBMT members and supporters who did not join the trip to Tarancón (see facing page) went on a guided walk of University City, including a commemoration at the memorial inaugurated there in 2011.

Rare screening of 'Defence of Madrid'

The Renoir cinema in central London was packed on 14 April – the Day of the Republic in Spain – for a rare screening of one of the most important propaganda films that was made during the Spanish Civil War.

Introduced by British Film Institute Non-Fiction Curator Ros Cranston, “Defence of Madrid” was made for British audiences with the aim of raising funds for Spanish Aid.

Over 140 people came to see this rare screening, part of the London Socialist Film Co-op's 2013 season. It was shown along with "Will the Real Terrorist Please Stand Up", a film about US hostility to Cuba.

Cranston explained that “Defence of Madrid” director Ivor Montagu and cameraman Norman McLaren went to the Spanish capital in the autumn of 1936 to make a film showing an alternative view of the war than was being depicted in the commercial newsreels.

She added: “The film was shown at trade union and Labour Party branches, and in the halls or other venues of co-operative movement and workers’ film societies. It’s estimated that the film raised £6,000 [over £1 million today] for Spanish Aid.”

Titled “The Assault on a People”, one of the 34-minute film’s three sections focuses on the newly created International Brigades and their part in the battles to prevent Franco’s troops entering the city in November and December 1936. Another section depicts the extent of the destruction inflicted on civilian targets by bombers sent by Hitler and Mussolini to help Franco. Also shown are civil defence efforts and the creation of the Spanish Republic’s Army.

In the panel discussion after the screening, IBMT Secretary Jim Jump noted that the bomb damage footage was still powerful, in spite of such images having become commonplace since the Spanish Civil War. Pointing out that the 1936-39 war in Spain was the first modern con-

flict in Europe in which more civilians were killed than combatants, he said it was easy to imagine the profound impact that the scenes of death and destruction would have had on contemporary eye-witnesses and film audiences.

See [www.socialistfilm.blogspot.com].

Holocaust centre honours Irish nurse



Cork-born Mary Elmes (pictured above, centre), a nurse in the Spanish Civil War, has been posthumously honoured as a “Righteous Among The Nations” for her work saving Jewish children from the Nazi death camps of the Second World War.

According to the *Irish Times*, the award was made in May by Yad Vashem, Israel's official memorial to Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

In February 1937 Elmes (1908-2002) joined an ambulance unit that left London – where she had studied at the London School of Economics after graduating from Trinity College, Dublin. In Spain she worked at the Quaker hospital in Almería.

She continued her work in the refugee camps of southern France where, following the fall of France to the Nazis in 1940, thousands of Jews and others were arrested by the French police and held with the Spanish Republican refugees.

Elmes and the Quakers saved as many children as possible by transferring them from the camps to children's colonies and smuggling some over the border to Spain.

After the war ended, she married a Frenchman and settled in France.

In brief

● More than 60 people attended a commemoration on 10 February at the International Brigade memorial in **Manchester** Town Hall, where wreaths were laid to the 130 volunteers from Manchester and the North West who died in Spain. The local Clarion Choir sang songs from the Spanish Civil War.

● IBMT Treasurer Charles Jepson gave a talk at Nelson Library on 31 January about the International Brigaders from **north-east Lancashire**. Twenty people attended the event and heard about the seven local volunteers, two of whom were killed in action: Freeman Drinkwater and Frank Welsby, both from Burnley. Among those in the audience were Juanita and Verna Jolly, who remembered their mother Edith, who was the treasurer of the Burnley Medical Aid for Spain Committee, and their father John Jolly, an ambulance driver in Spain.



Some of the large contingent from Ireland who took part in the annual Battle of Jarama commemorative march on 16 February, pictured here below the International Brigade memorial near Morata de Tajuña.

Differing views on Orwell's Spanish Civil War memoir at IBMT's annual lecture day

'Homage to Catalonia' praised for literary merit but criticised for narrow focus



By Jim Jump

The IBMT's annual Len Crome Memorial Lecture drew an attendance of over 180 people at the Manchester Conference Centre on 2 March. The film-maker Ken

Loach sent a message of support, describing the volunteers who served in Spain on the Republican side as the "flower of their generation".

The focus of the event was the following month's 75th anniversary of the publication of "Homage to Catalonia" by George Orwell.

Three historians took part in the proceedings, which were chaired by Professor Mary Vincent of Sheffield University. They were Richard Baxell, a specialist on the volunteers in the Spanish Civil War from Britain and Ireland, Tom Buchanan, who teaches at Oxford University and has written about the British left and the war in Spain, and Chris Hall, whose book on the Independent Labour Party volunteers has been updated and was re-published in March (see review on page 22). Both Baxell and Hall are also IBMT Trustees.

From the platform "Homage to Catalonia" was praised for its literary merits, but criticised for its historical weaknesses and political naivety. If there was a consensus, it was that Orwell's work is a brilliant eye-witness account of the reality of war and an important personal political testament, but a partial and unreliable record of the Spanish Civil War as a whole.

It remains, however, the most widely read book about the Spanish Civil War, so retains a powerful influence on public knowledge and attitudes about the war. This fact was reflected during the conference sessions in at times heated contributions from the audience about the merits and flaws of Orwell's memoir.

Impression

A paper presented to the conference by leading Spanish Civil War historian and author Professor Paul Preston noted: "Orwell's book in isolation gives the impression that the key events of the Spanish Civil War took place on the Aragon front and during the May Days of 1937 and, most misleading of all, promotes the idea that the Spanish Republic was defeated because of communist policy." Preston was unable to attend the conference at the last minute because of ill-health and his paper was read out by the IBMT Secretary, Jim Jump.

Orwell was stationed on the Arragon front as a member of the militia of the Barcelona-based POUM revolutionary communist party – often

labelled as Trotskyist. He also witnessed the fighting in Barcelona between communist-led Spanish government forces and the anarcho-sindicalist CNT and their POUM allies in May 1937. The anti-government forces were crushed, after which the POUM was banned. Many of its members were imprisoned and its leader, Andreu Nin, was murdered by Soviet secret agents.

Orwell's account of the POUM's suppression, and likewise Ken Loach's 1995 film "Land and Freedom", which is largely based on "Homage to Catalonia", fostered the belief, said Preston, "that the fight of the Brigaders and of the Spanish people was not a fight against Spanish fascism and its German and Italian allies but rather part of an internecine leftist civil war in which the central villain was the Communist Party". Yet even Orwell later acknowledged in a 1943 essay that the outcome of the war in Spain had been "settled in London, Paris, Rome, Berlin – at any rate not in Spain".

Preston argued that Orwell had failed to recog-

"Orwell's book... most misleading of all, promotes the idea that the Spanish Republic was defeated because of communist policy."

nise the imperatives that led the Spanish Republic to centralise and prioritise its war effort and to ease food shortages by disbanding the militias and, in the face of CNT opposition, liberalising agricultural production and industry.

With Hitler and Mussolini giving generous military assistance to Franco and Britain and France applying their policy of "non-intervention", thus



The event drew an audience of more than 180.

preventing the Spanish Republic from buying arms on the open market, the government's moves were supported by the Spanish communists, moderate socialists and left-republicans. And they were backed by Stalin, who, as part of his aim of securing an anti-Nazi alliance with France, wanted the Spanish Republican authorities to quash the revolutionaries who had seized local power in Catalonia following the military uprising in July 1936.

Richard Baxell's talk centred on the reactions of the members of the British Battalion of the International Brigades to these events. During the street fighting in Barcelona early in May 1937 they were at the front line in the Jarama Valley near Madrid. Almost entirely dependent for news on Communist Party sources and publications – which denigrated the POUM as "fifth columnists" and agents of Franco – most understandably took a dim view of the POUM.

Baxell also described the contacts that Orwell had in Britain and Spain with Communist Party and British Battalion representatives. Indeed, until the fighting in May, Orwell had entertained the idea of joining the International Brigades.

Praising "Homage to Catalonia" as "the single best eye-witness account both for insight and interest", Tom Buchanan spoke about its recep-



Speakers (from left) Chris Hall, Mary Vincent, Richard Baxell and Tom Buchanan.

tion by the left in Britain on publication in 1938. The book appeared in print at a time when reports in the *Daily Worker* were equating Trotskyism with Nazism. The book sold few copies and it was only during the Cold War and following publication of Orwell's critiques of Soviet communism and totalitarianism in "Animal Farm" and "1984" that his Spanish Civil War memoir became a best seller.

While recognising its limitations as a book through which to understand the complexities of the civil war, both Buchanan and Mary Vincent stressed its importance in explaining Orwell's political "epiphany" – the term used by Vincent – at the start of a political journey that led him to write "Animal Farm" and "1984".

Orwell's political naivety on his arrival in Spain in December 1936 was such that he believed that all "socialists" were part of one "happy family", said Buchanan. He hurriedly left Spain six months later to escape the suppression of the POUM and with that belief shattered.

Political journey

However, Buchanan acknowledged that Orwell's subsequent political journey was often uneven, with, for example, the author at first saying after the Spanish Civil War that any war with Germany would be an imperialist war, but changing his mind in favour of a form of "patriotic" socialism during the Second World War.

Hall's talk described Orwell's comrades in the group of ILP members who joined the POUM mili-

"Homage to Catalonia" [is] the single best eye-witness account both for insight and interest."

tia, concluding that most this contingent of up to 40 volunteers were similar in political outlook and motivation as those who joined the British Battalion – who numbered 2,500.

Among those in the audience to hear these contributions was Peter Blair, adopted son of George Orwell (whose real name was Eric Blair) and Quentin Kopp, son of Orwell's commanding officer in Spain, Georges Kopp. Both spoke briefly to say how much they were enjoying the IBMT event and to promote the work of the Orwell Society.

Named after the young GP from Blackburn who became head of the medical services of the International Brigades, the Len Crome Memorial Lecture has been held since 2002. This was the first time it was organised outside London.

The usual format is a single lecture by a guest speaker, but it was decided that this year's subject matter required more than one speaker.

Richard Baxell's talk can be viewed at the IBMT's YouTube site: www.youtube.com/user/IBMTnews; other contributions will also be added.

On the same day as the Len Crome Memorial Lecture in Manchester, the English Defence League staged a demonstration in the city centre. The IBMT sent a message of support to the anti-fascist counter-demonstration.

MASS GRAVE: Despite the exhumation of victims of Francoism by local groups campaigning for the recovery of historical memory, Spanish courts have blocked attempts to order investigations into the crimes.



Amnesty attacks Spanish authorities over 'impunity' for Franco crimes

A new report from Amnesty International has revealed that the Spanish authorities are routinely failing to investigate crimes committed during the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship.

Published on 17 June, "Time Passes, Impunity Remains" examines how the Spanish authorities have refused to investigate tens of thousands of killings and disappearances committed during the civil war (1936-1939) and under Franco's rule (1939-1975).

The report also reveals how the Spanish authorities are not cooperating with other countries, such as Argentina, that have opened their own investigations into Spain's historical abuses.

Estebán Beltrán, Director of Amnesty International Spain, said the attitude of the judicial authorities was a "slap in the face" for all the relatives of those who were abused and disappeared at the time.

He added: "We have seen a tendency for these cases to be closed without further investigation, but the situation has worsened recently after the Supreme Court ruled that it was not for Spanish judges to prosecute these crimes. The only avenue of judicial investigation available in Spain seems to be shut down."

The Spanish judiciary is refusing to conduct

investigations, and complaints filed by the victims are being closed.

In November 2008, the Spanish High Court said it didn't have jurisdiction to hear the criminal complaint brought in 2006 for killings and 114,266 enforced disappearances committed in Spain between 1936 and 1951, favouring regional courts taking on the cases instead.

Since then, Amnesty International has found that at least 38 of the 47 cases referred to regional courts have been closed.

On 27 February 2012, the Spanish Supreme Court ruled that it was impossible to investigate crimes committed during the civil war and under Franco's rule saying, amongst other things, that they are covered by the Amnesty Law and they are subject to a statute of limitations.

Spain has also obstructed victims from testifying before the Argentinean judge responsible for a case ongoing in that country since 2010 and the Spanish Attorney-General's Office is failing to cooperate with the case.

Amnesty International urged authorities in Spain, in particular the Attorney General's Office, to investigate and prosecute crimes or offences under international law and to assist fully with any request for cooperation it receives from foreign courts that decide to investigate these crimes.

MOURNING: Members of the "proactive" campaign group London Antifascists pay tribute to Clement Meric, the 18-year-old French anti-fascist and gay activist who was beaten to death in Paris on 5 June in clashes with a far-right gang. This vigil was held four days later at the International Brigade Memorial in London's Jubilee Gardens.





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

www.international-brigades.org.uk

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FROM THE SECRETARY

Much consensus in Manchester, but same old myths persist

By Jim Jump

Our 2013 Len Crome Memorial Lecture on 2 March was a great success (see report on pages 8/9). This year's topic, George Orwell and the Spanish Civil War, remains controversial among many of us interested in the Spanish Civil War, so it was refreshing that participants from the podium and the floor with conflicting opinions were able to make their case in a respectful and often consensual atmosphere.

One thing that clearly emerged was the gripe that often wildly off-target conclusions are drawn by people who have read "Homage to Catalonia" – and sometimes little else about the Spanish Civil War. Specifically there is the notion that the defeat of the Spanish Republic can be blamed on the communists and the Soviet Union. By extension of course, the communist-led International Brigades are tarnished. This myth has become firmly embedded in popular perceptions of the war. Yet, as was pointed out in Manchester, Orwell himself accepted that "the outcome of the Spanish war had been settled in London, Paris, Rome and Berlin".

Typical examples of this tendency appeared soon after our conference in two weekly left-of-centre publications. Reviewing Paul Preston's "The Spanish Holocaust" in *Tribune* on 22 March, former Labour MEP Glyn Ford said the communists in Spain "set the revolution on the path of eating itself by assassinating the POUM's 'Trotskyists' rather than focusing on Franco and the Falange". Then in the *New Statesman* on 12 April Orwell biographer DJ Taylor – who surely should know better – said that Orwell "had taken a bullet through the throat from the communist and republican civil guard". Not true. He received the wound on the Aragon front from a fascist sniper's bullet while serving with the POUM militia.

Historian Adrian Smith wrote in the same issue of the magazine that Orwell disliked the indiscipline of the militia and "was sympathetic to those republicans, not least members of the International Brigade" who were critical of their military inertia at the front.

Opening and unveiling

It's good news that a Catalan production of "Goodbye Barcelona" will open in September at the Teatre del Raval in Barcelona. The IBMT-supported musical by Judith Johnson and Karl Lewkovicz tells the story of East End International Brigade volunteer Sammy and his mother, Rebecca, who follows him to Spain. A powerful fusion of politics, love, heroics and tragedy, it was premiered at London's Arcola Theatre on 24 November 2011 at the start of a five-week run.

How fitting that the musical will now be seen in Barcelona, where its climax takes place against the backdrop of the final parade of the Interna-

tional Brigades in the city on 28 October 1938. And the date of the opening night at the 150-seater theatre, 24 September, is also significant. This was the day, 75 years ago in 1938, when the British Battalion was last in action. In fact the Spanish government's announcement of the withdrawal of all International Brigade units had been made three days earlier, but the battalion fought on, during which time 23 volunteers lost their lives. This tragic end – which is alluded to in "Goodbye Barcelona" – will be remembered this year when a memorial to the battalion's last stand will be unveiled in Corbera (see page 26).

Thatcher and the International Brigades

Margaret Thatcher's opinions about the International Brigades are unknown and will probably now remain so following her death in April. Many of us, however, could have a good guess at what they might have been. A pointer would be her friendships with Chilean dictator General Pinochet, an admirer of General Franco, and US President Ronald Reagan, who infamously said the American International Brigade volunteers had fought on the "wrong side" during the Spanish Civil War.

Many Brigade veterans had strong views on Thatcher and her government. Several supported, for example, the miners during their strike of 1984/5. But it's worth recalling that not all were hostile. One of the Prime Minister's chief speech-writers and advisers was journalist and political analyst Sir Alfred Sherman, a former member of the British Battalion in Spain. Though he changed from being a young communist to an enthusiastic Thatcherite, Sir Alfred remained proud of his service in the International Brigades, saying that volunteering to fight fascism in Spain had been the right thing to do at the time. Indeed he attended International Brigade commemorations late into his life and, at his own request, the British Battalion banner was displayed at his funeral.

How different, however, was the attitude to Thatcher of another Brigader, James R Jump (I declare an interest – he was my father). The Thatcher era was scarred by several high-profile transport disasters, not least the sinking of the cross-Channel ferry, the *Herald of Free Enterprise*, and the King's Cross fire in London. Survivors recovering in hospital were, to the consternation of many of them, visited by the Prime Minister herself. So Jump designed and printed a small plastic card, similar to an organ-donor card, to be carried in a wallet or purse firmly requesting that, in the event of being injured in a disaster, the bearer did not want to be visited by Margaret Thatcher. Via the weekly newspaper *Tribune*, the card became a best seller and received a fair bit of press coverage.

As well as the miners, another of Margaret



THREE BRIGADERS: It was good to see that the 50th anniversary of the Franco regime's notorious torture and execution on 20 April 1963 of communist Spanish Republican Julián Grimau was remembered in the *Morning Star*. As a follow-up to the original article, this letter (left), including a photo of International Brigade veterans Bob Doyle and Tony Gilbert, appeared in the paper on 2 May. A follow-up letter, from Ken Keable, identified a third Brigader, John "Boscoe" Jones, walking immediately behind Gilbert.

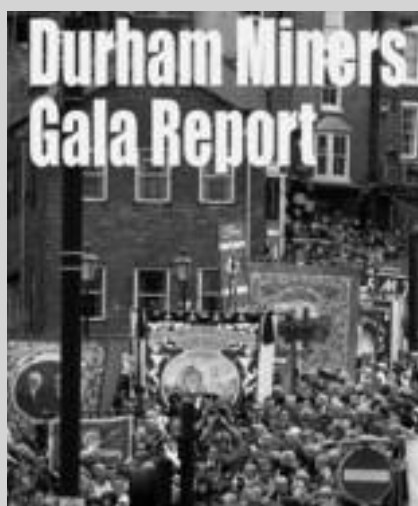


GOING POP: The Spanish Civil War has inspired many songs, and continues to do so. The Mudcat Café folk music chatroom lists more than 100 English-language songs, from the well-known to the obscure and ephemeral. An unlikely source for a new addition to the canon is American teenage heartthrob Dylan Reynolds (above), who in May released "Spanish Civil War". Seemingly devoid of any politics or much sense – "If I was a soldier / In the Spanish Civil War / Flying through the sky / On my BA64 / Dropping my bombs / And running for the door" (the BA64 was an armoured vehicle, not an airplane), we must at least hope that the love-song will be a hit and prompt a new generation to want to find out more about the war in Spain. See: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZl5JK6llrE] and [http://mudcat.org/thread.cfm?threadid=128093].

ON THE COVER: Nice to see that the IBMT banner features on the cover of the report of the 2012 Durham Miners' Gala (the first banner in the foreground). Produced by the Durham Miners' Association (who generously hosted our 2010 Annual General Meeting), the report is on sale for £2.95 plus £1 p&p and can be ordered from [http://durhamminers.org].



ON TV: The IBMT t-shirt depicting the British Battalion's original banner has sold so well that it can often be spotted being worn in public. But this must surely be the first time it has appeared on television. The wearer is journalist Jairo Morga Manzanara and he is pictured here on the TV Rioja sports programme "Minuto 90 y Tantos" on 29 April discussing pelota – a game like squash, only played with a hard ball and bare hands – which is popular in northern Spain. The t-shirt is available in red or grey and costs £15 plus p&p. See the inside back cover for ordering details.



Thatcher's targets was the Greater London Council. Her determination to do away with the GLC was widely seen as a vindictive move to silence one of her most effective political opponents, council leader "Red Ken" Livingstone. Meanwhile the International Brigade Memorial Appeal had been launched early in 1984 to raise money for a national memorial to the volunteers, to be unveiled in time for the 50th anniversary of the start of the war in Spain in July 1986. The GLC donated a splendid site in Jubilee Gardens, next to County Hall itself. In the end it became a race to complete the project before legislation abolishing the GLC came into effect in March 1986, and in October 1985 the impressive memorial created by Ian Walters was unveiled by Michael Foot. In lasting gratitude, Ken was made one of our Patrons when the IBMT was founded more than 10 years ago. By then of course he was again the Mayor of London.

Well done Max and Marlene

Congratulations to historian Max Arthur, who was awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours List. Max wrote the "The Real Band of Brothers". Published in 2009, it contains a chapter each on eight of the International Brigade volunteers who were alive then (and is still on sale via our website). He is the author of several best-selling books on modern military history and was responsible for David Lomon, our last British-based Brigader, who died last December, getting in touch with the IBMT. David read an article by Max in the April 2009 issue of *Saga Magazine* about Penny Feiwei and other surviving veterans and immediately contacted the Trust to say that he too had been a volunteer. From then on he was an inspiring presence at many commemorative events in Britain and Spain.

And congratulations too to our President, Marlene Sidaway, a fine professional actor as well as an invaluable asset to the Trust. Her latest eye-catching stage appearance was at London's Royal Court Theatre in a benefit for Stop the War, marking the 10th anniversary of the start of the Iraq War. She joined a star-studded line-up, including Lynsey Baxter, Stella Duffy, Brian Eno, Joe Gaminara, Shappi Khorsandi, Jane Lapotaire, Roger Lloyd Pack, Kika Markham and Timothy West. There were 10 10-minute pieces of specially commissioned drama, music, poetry and comedy, each introduced by prominent anti-war campaigners including Tony Benn, IBMT Patron Ken Livingstone, Jeremy Corbyn MP and Ken Loach. Marlene, meanwhile, writes on page 14.

Fans singing out

Following our football thread, thanks to María Fernández Irísarri and Stuart Walsh for pointing out the YouTube video of Celtic FC supporters singing "Viva la Quinta Brigada" before their Champions League game against Juventus on 12 February in Glasgow. The song was written by IBMT Patron Christy Moore in tribute to the Irish volunteers of the International Brigades. See: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqKai5-JxVg&feature=youtu.be].

Grace Petrie sang "Valley of Jarama" and two of her own songs, "Tell Me a Story" and "They Shall Not Pass".



Below, the view from behind the International Brigade memorial.



The Catalans UK choir sang two songs of the Battle of the Ebro, "¡Ay Carmela!" and "Si Me Quieres Escribir", plus two traditional Catalan tunes.



Speakers (from left): Jim Jump (IBMT Secretary), Marlene Sidaway (IBMT President), John Kenton, Irving Lomon and Rodney Bickerstaffe (who paid tribute to Brigaders Lou Kenton and David Lomon and to IBMT Trustee Mick Jones), Almudena Cros (AABI Spanish International Brigades friendship group), Professor Paul Preston, Jordi Palou-Loverdos (Memorial Democràtic of Catalonia) and Mick Whelan (General Secretary of ASLEF).

Photos: Guy Smallman



Singing "The Internationale".

Battle of the Ebro anniversary remembered at Jubilee Gardens

Over 250 supporters of the International Brigades met in London's Jubilee Gardens on 6 July for the annual commemoration of the 2,500 volunteers from the British Isles.

Coinciding with the 75th anniversary of the start of the Battle of the Ebro in July 1938, in which most of the fighting took place in Catalonia, the 2013 ceremony had a strong Catalan flavour.

There were songs from the London-based Catalans UK choir, and one of the main speakers was Jordi Palou-Loverdos, Director of Memorial Democràtic, the official agency in Catalonia that preserves the memory of the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship.

More than 90 members of the British Battalion were killed during the Battle of the Ebro. They were among 526 British and Irish volunteers who died in Spain.

Wreaths were laid at the memorial cre-

ated by sculptor Ian Walters by representatives of the Catalan Delegation in London as well as by Spanish exile and refugee groups and the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women.

For the IBMT, a wreath was laid by Ben Crome, grandson of Len Crome, the Blackburn GP who became the head of medical services of the International Brigades.

Another guest speaker was Mick Whelan, General Secretary of the train drivers' union ASLEF. He spoke about the example set by the volunteers in the on-going fight against racism, fascism and injustice.

After the formal ceremony on the South Bank, there was a social in the nearby Camel & Artichoke pub. There, a group of actors presented a centenary tribute to Jack and Evelyn Jones and to Michael Foot, the former Labour leader who unveiled the Jubilee Gardens memorial in 1985.

Stan Hilton: Last man standing

By David Leach

Stan Hilton was 19 when he jumped ship in the Spanish port of Alicante and joined the fight against fascism.

Of the 2,500 British, Irish and Commonwealth men and women who served in Spain, Stan is literally the last man standing. He is now 95 and lives in Yarrowonga, a small town in Victoria, Australia.

Stan was no left-wing activist, nor Cambridge poet. A ship's steward from Sussex, he was a tough young man, an orphan who grew up in care homes and took to swimming and boxing. Not to mention ducking and diving.

"I liked mucking about," he recalls over a glass of red wine at home in Yarrowonga. "I didn't like being ordered around."

On the cargo ship *Oakworth* heading for Spain, Stan attracted the attention of the ship's second officer. "He used to call me the 'Brighton Bastard'. The man was a bully," he says. "So I hit him."

His mates suggested it would be wise for Stan to "scarper". When the ship docked at Alicante, Stan went over the side and promptly enlisted in the International Brigade. It was 22 November 1937.

"The Spanish people needed help," he says. "It was the right thing to do."

After 75 years, Stan's memories of the war are understandably sketchy. Early on, he had a run-

"The Spanish people needed help. It was the right thing to do."

in with a Russian instructor. "Bloke had a sword. Pushed me around," he says. "So I hit him too."

Did the sunshine and high blue Yarrowonga sky remind Stan of Spain?

"No," he says. "I arrived in winter. It was freezing. I was always bloody cold."

Stan saw action with the British Battalion that winter in deep snow on the Aragon front. Then in the spring of 1938, rebel forces broke through towards the Mediterranean. In the chaos that followed, Stan says: "It was every man for himself."

Cut off and lost, he took shelter in a remote hut with two comrades. "I went outside for some reason," he says. "I heard shots. When I got back, my mates were dead. I ran into the woods and hid."

Joining a small group of hungry and exhausted soldiers, Stan retreated through southern Catalonia to the River Ebro. A wide, swift-flowing natural barrier, its far bank promised safety and respite. If they stayed put, the men faced capture

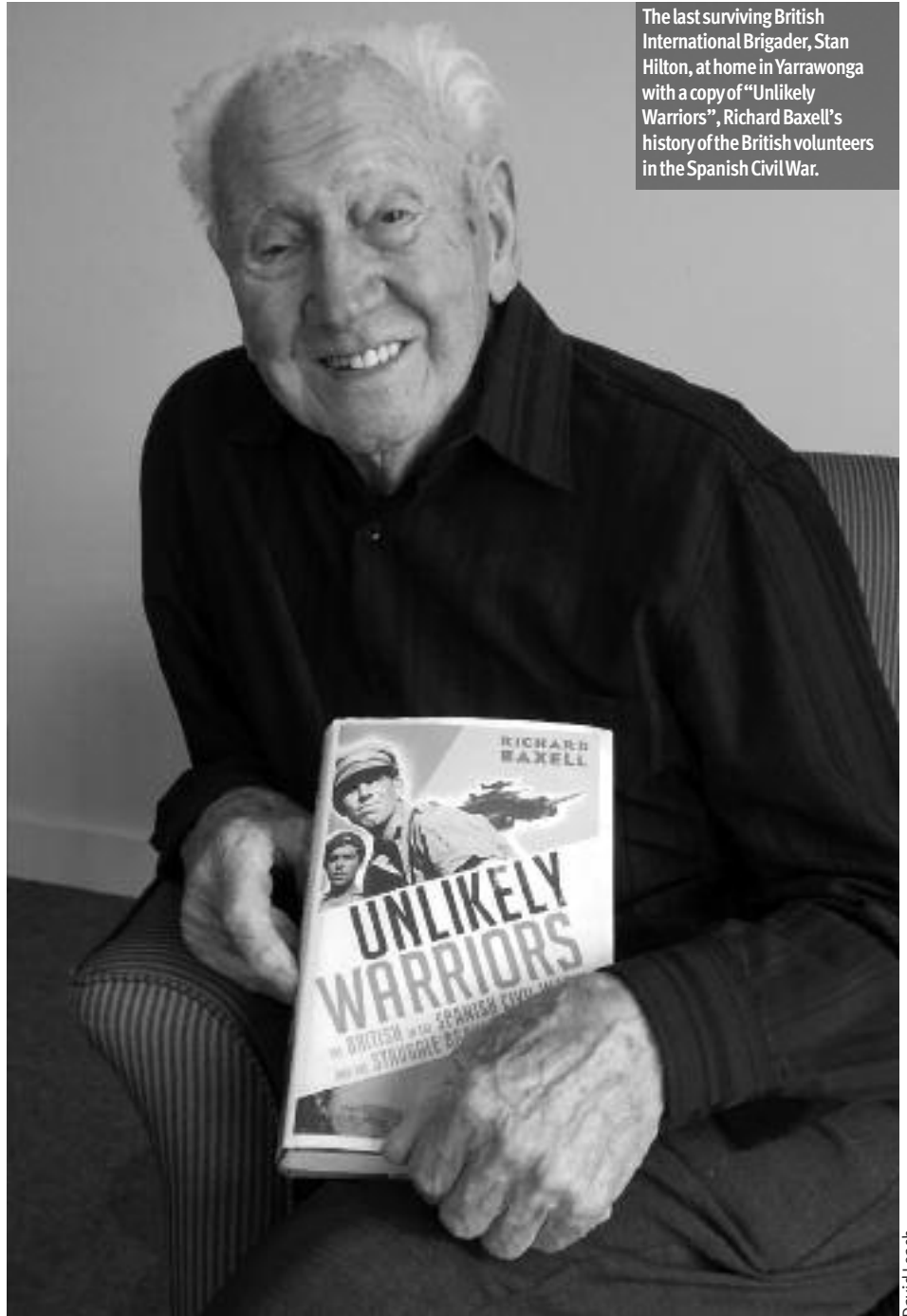
and execution. Stan volunteered to swim across and retrieve a rowing boat.

"I was a strong swimmer," Stan says. "But the current swept me downstream. When I came out of the river, I was on my own."

For Stan the war was over. He made his way north to the docks in Barcelona and stowed away on a ship bound for England. He got home safely, although the ship – the *Lake Lugano*, with a cargo of medical supplies – was later sunk by Italian aircraft off Catalonia.

In the Second World War, Stan served in the merchant navy. In peacetime, he moved with his young family to Australia.

The last surviving British International Brigader, Stan Hilton, at home in Yarrowonga with a copy of "Unlikely Warriors", Richard Baxell's history of the British volunteers in the Spanish Civil War.



David Leach

Stan puts down his wine glass and looks into the distance, his blue eyes as clear as a teenager's. "You know," he says, "I haven't been sensible in my life."

To survive two wars and reach the age of 95, trim and fit and with faculties intact, suggests – to the contrary – that he has been very sensible indeed.

David Leach is a broadcaster, writer and former IBMT Trustee, now based in Melbourne. His acclaimed film, "Voices From a Mountain", about British volunteers at the Battle of the Ebro, can be viewed at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUllqn8v58] or go to YouTube and search "Voices From a Mountain".

A letter to David Lomon

By Cliff Kirkpatrick

The obituary of David Lomon by Jim Jump in the last newsletter (1-2013) was very moving. I had the honour of meeting and speaking with David on several occasions over a 12-month period. These included the 2011 and 2012

annual Jubilee Gardens memorial gatherings as well as at the 75th anniversary trip in Spain in October 2011 and the Jarama event in February 2012.

Each time I had a conversation with David my admiration increased as he was such a caring and genuinely likeable person. The last time I saw David was at Jubilee Gardens on 7 July 2012, when he was finally presented with his personalised Republican flag. On that occasion I had taken a book along to show him as it had in it a picture of the front of an envelope that had been addressed to him when he was a prisoner at Palencia shortly before his release as part of a prisoner-exchange deal.

The envelope was posted in Bethnal Green on 11 August 1938 and is illustrated in the book "The Postal History of the International Brigades in Spain 1936-1939" by

Ronald G Shelley. The envelope formed part of the extensive Shelley collection of International Brigades philatelic material, which was subsequently bequeathed to the British Library, where it is now housed. The collection is well worth seeing.

I have seen the original at the British Library, but regrettably there were no notes recording how Shelley acquired it. Nor was there any information as to who the sender was as the back of the envelope, where the sender's details normally appear, had been cut away. David Lomon himself was absolutely thrilled to see the illustration in the book. He remembered receiving the letter while at Palencia and was able to confirm that it had been sent by his mother.

After being put in touch with the IBMT in 2009 David immersed himself in promoting the Trust and became extremely active. It was patently obvious that he enjoyed what he was doing. Equally, from the time he became a member he enriched the lives of other IBMT members who came into contact with him and he will be missed. As Robert Elms said in his BBC London tribute broadcast on the day of David Lomon's funeral, and a recording of it was played at the funeral: "His passing is the end of an era."



Giving a little bit more goes a long way for us



IBMT President MARLENE SIDAWAY urges fellow members to consider giving a little bit extra to help the Trust carry on its good work.

To take over the position of President of the IBMT after Jack Jones was an awesome prospect – Jack was our founding President, and his help with fundraising and his sound, practical advice helped to start the Trust on the successful road on which it continues to this day.

From the beginning, the strength of the organisation has been our membership base and so many of you have helped to expand our numbers by organising events which increase public awareness of our cause and keep alive the memory and spirit of those who volunteered to defend democracy in Spain.

We started the process of merging the members of the International Brigade Association – the veterans' organisation – and the Friends of International Brigades in 2000, soon after the death of Bill Alexander, the IBA Secretary. Now, 13 years later, our organisation has changed completely; technology and modern communication networks have vastly improved the way we can get our message across to a wider public – and we must continue to ensure that we are always abreast of new technology.

However, these improvements do not come without cost. The improved newsletter, the website, our archives, as well as the memorials, lectures and new books about Spain that we have funded have all taken a toll on our finances. For a secure future, however, it is vital that our funding keeps ahead of our expenditure.

I would therefore ask you all to consider ways in which you could help – by gift aiding a regular amount or a one-off donation, a legacy, however big or small, or simply putting extra money into the box when you buy our merchandise. Many already do give us donations and these often make the difference when we want to fund a new project.

Thanks of course must go to members of our Executive Committee, past and present, who have given up their time and skills to make the IBMT the vibrant organisation it is today. They have always been totally united – often despite the many shades of left politics they represent – in their determination to remember all who supported the "Last Great Cause" that was the Spanish Republic.

But the IBMT will only survive and be able to carry on the good fight with the help of all of its members. So please continue to pay your annual subscriptions, buy our merchandise and, if you can, consider donating a little bit more.

Donations should be sent to: Charles Jepson, IBMT Treasurer, Aysgaard, Beardwood Brow, Blackburn BB2 7AT; email: [clarioncc@yahoo.co.uk].

IBMT appeal for permanent display at Newhaven Fort

The IBMT has launched an appeal for donations to fund a permanent exhibition on the International Brigades at Newhaven Fort in Sussex.

Newhaven Fort (www.newhavenfort.org.uk) is a mainly Second World War fortification maintained as a museum by Lewes District Council under the supervision of English Heritage. Open from March to November each year, it is visited annually by, among others, some 7,000 school students from Sussex and south London.

The IBMT has been offered free of charge a large, well-lit room for the exhibition, which would underline the links between the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War, as well as those with Sussex.

The IBMT has calculated that the cost of mounting the exhibition, which would also feature audio recordings and contemporary video footage, will come to nearly £5,500.

Contributors will be acknowledged in the permanent display, which, if sufficient funds are raised, is expected to be finished by March 2014.

Send your donation to the IBMT Treasurer (see left), indicating that it is for the Newhaven Fort appeal.

In search of my shadowy uncle Donald

By Dr Katharine Campbell

“We found the youth, Donald, near the door. He was a well-educated, pleasant boy, with a fresh face. He was rather thin and overgrown and did not look a day over eighteen. He was just such a son as must be the pride and joy of many an English, suburban, middle-class home.” This is how the journalist Kate Mangan described my uncle, Donald Gabriel Hutchison, as he was then, when she and the writer and International Brigade volunteer Hugh Slater found him in San Carlos, a former monastery in Madrid that was used as a hospital in the Spanish Civil War. It was December 1936, and Donald had been wounded in the right wrist while fighting in the defence of Madrid.

Born in 1915, he was indeed the beloved son of just such a suburban mother, and although our family has some details of his life, there are gaps about which we know almost nothing, which is why I am telling Donald's story, as much as I know, in the hope that it may jog the memory of some of those reading this article and produce more detail.

Despite a personable and good-natured aspect to his character, which impressed both Mangan, and International Brigader Esmond Romilly (in his book, “Boadilla”, Donald is known as “Dan”), he had a feisty and uncompromising side. This meant that he had had to leave Peterhouse College, Cambridge, prematurely, even though he was an exceptional student.

In 1933, he was arrested during a demonstration outside the German embassy, probably in an anti-fascist protest since Hitler had come to power in that year, for obstructing and assaulting one policeman and assaulting another. Although he pleaded not guilty, he went to Wormwood Scrubs. I do not know for how long he was in prison.

Two journeys to Spain

He was a librarian in Hampstead Public Library for a year, during which time he applied to Cambridge, where he went in 1935. He joined the University Aero Club and qualified on the Gypsy Moth. However, he did not have sufficient flying hours to enter the Spanish war as a pilot, so, until the ammunition ran out, he flew in Spain as a machine-gunner. He transferred to the Fifth Regiment and then briefly to the Thälmann Battalion, when he sustained his wrist injury.

Although the injury was not serious at first, the wound became infected and subsequently life-threatening. He was evacuated to Alicante by the Scottish Ambulance Unit and then to Paris, where he recovered. He then returned to England, but went back to Spain in July 1937 and was assigned to the communications company of the British Battalion (enlistment no. 1176), before being finally repatriated to England in May 1938.

While Donald was fighting in the Spanish Civil



Donald Hutchison (Douglas) with Polish-born wife Anita in the 1940s (left) and (above) in Switzerland around 1980.

War, his half-brother, my father, Air Commodore Sholto Douglas (later Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Lord Douglas of Kirtleside), was Director of Staff Duties at the Air Ministry and was watching the conflict with interest and concern. He wrote afterwards: “It came out later what the Italians and Germans were up to, i.e. using it as an air weapon testing ground.” He and his colleagues were especially affected by both the bombing of Guernica and the Battle of the Ebro.

A name change and RAF exit

Nothing further is documented of Donald until December 1942, when he went to see JF Roxburgh, his former headmaster at Stowe School, Buckinghamshire, for a reference. By this time, he had changed his surname to his father's, Douglas, while retaining his mother's as a fore-name, and had developed a slight stammer.

Roxburgh relates that Donald told him that he had joined the RAF as an air-gunner at the beginning of the Second World War, but was forced by the Air Ministry to leave after three months and was prevented from enlisting in any capacity thereafter for “no apparent reason”, although his

“While Donald was fighting in the Spanish Civil War, his half-brother, Air Commodore Sholto Douglas (later Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Lord Douglas of Kirtleside), was Director of Staff Duties at the Air Ministry and was following the conflict with interest and concern.”

Communist Party membership may have contributed. Then he served as a steward on a cargo vessel, and is listed in the Registry of Shipping and Seamen for this period. The records at Stowe School show that subsequently he went to teach at Stancliffe Hall, a preparatory school in Derbyshire, and was recorded as being on the teaching staff in 1943, perhaps because Roxburgh recommended him for the post.

Arrested in Berlin

The next we hear of Donald is in Berlin in August 1946. He was arrested for travelling to Berlin without authorisation, and had been living in Warsaw while working as the Reuters correspondent. At that time, my father was in Germany as Commander-in-Chief, British Forces of Occupation, and Military Governor of the British Zone. Apparently, when Donald was arrested, he told the military police that his half-brother was their boss! This would not have gone down well with my father, who would never be seen favouring his own brother. In 1963, in answer to questions concerning his forthcoming book, “Years of Command”, my father tantalisingly refers to the “Berlin incident when Gabriel (Donald's middle and childhood name) was clapped into gaol”.

I know nothing more of what happened to Donald for nearly a decade, but his niece and my cousin, Erica, who met him when she was a teenager in the 1950s, told me that, although Donald's right arm looked normal, his hand was disfigured badly and he had had to learn to write with his left hand.

Some time after the Second World War, Donald settled in Geneva, where he worked as an interpreter for the United Nations and died in 1981. I am fascinated by this story of my shadowy uncle, whom I never met and whose life was intertwined with my father's in such an intriguing way. So I would be most grateful if anyone can add any detail.

If anyone knows anything more about the life of Donald Hutchison in Spain or Donald Douglas in later life, contact: Katharine Campbell: [katharine@quiet.myzen.co.uk].

Killed in the final action

CATHERINE TURNELL looks at the life of Leicester volunteer Roy Watts, one of the last Britons to die in Spain.



Roy Watts (left) arrived in Spain on Valentine's Day 1938. He had already had a taste of the military, having spent four years as a volunteer with the Royal Naval Reserve. He was a

member of the Young Communist League and the National Union of Distributive & Allied Workers.

That October, a letter arrived safely from Roy, who before Spain had been a Co-op salesman, to Roland V Walton, a member of the board at Leicester Co-operative Society and chairman of the Leicester Co-operative Political Party. It had taken a month to arrive in the city.

"I have served and been into action with the anti-aircraft artillery, infantry and transmission units," revealed Roy. "I have been in most of the territory in loyalist hands, and was taken prisoner once. Apart from a slight touch of fever and a small piece of shrapnel, which took me to hospital three times, I have so far come through it all comparatively unscratched.

"I have learnt to love this country," he went on. "The beauty of it is breathtaking. It is a sickening experience to pass through these lovely Spanish towns after the Fascist shellings and bombings. I know that such an experience would soon stimulate those at home to oust those responsible for aiding aggression and war. Since our advances, the Fascist fury seems to know no bounds."

Curiously, despite the fact Roy was so many miles from Leicester, a little piece of home had made it to him, he revealed.

"I had the good luck to secure a copy of the *Leicester Mercury* the other day and I noticed that a Leicester Fascist had challenged you to a debate... War being what it is, one cannot make any forecast with certainty, but I expect and hope to be back in England by Christmas."

Death at the Ebro

In September 1938 the 24-year-old was with the British Battalion amid the whirling chaos

that was the Battle of the Ebro, in the hill range of the Sierra Caballs. But the firepower of the rebels proved too strong. Roy Watts's last moments came crouched in a hillside fox-hole as the shells exploded all around.

Seven months of fighting Franco's forces came to an abrupt and devastating end when in the skies above a Nationalist air force bomber released its cargo, sending him and his cowering comrade into oblivion.

Cut to pieces

When the decision to withdraw the International Brigades came on 21 September, the political commissar Peter Kerrigan described his shock at this terrible outcome of the battalion's last action up to 24 September – 23 British fighters had been killed.

"I could give dozens of individual acts of heroism but what is the use?" he said. "The list of citations which I enclose, tells in brief official terms of the acts of deathless glory which were played out against a background of the cutting to pieces of our very bravest."

A letter with the awful news of Roy's death was dispatched to the Watts' family home at 21 Daneshill Road, in the city's Newfoundpool. Another had been sent to Roy's friend W Duncan, of Mere Road, and had arrived on 5 October 1938.

A young woman's grief

An hour after that letter was received a meeting of the city's Young Communist League at the beautiful Secular Hall building in Humberside Gate was taking place. The chairman of the group, a Mr A Hall, took solemnly to the stage. He shared the news that a comrade had been killed fighting the fascists in Spain.

Also in the hall that evening was a young woman called Phyllis Rowe. She lived with her family at 92 Earl Howe Street in the city. She too had recently received communication from Roy – and word of his planned return and intention to renew old friendships.

The *Leicester Mercury* reported: "When the message was read Miss Rowe was greatly distressed and taken home by fellow members of the Young Communist League.

"Her father, Mr George Rowe, told the *Leicester Mercury* today that before leaving for Spain Mr Watts kept company with his daughter, and their engagement was expected to be announced on his return home."

Catherine Turnell is a feature writer at the *Leicester Mercury*. Her great uncle, George Turnell (sic), of Worksop, was killed in January 1938 at Teruel. This is part of a longer piece about the Leicester volunteers that appeared in the newspaper on 20 April 2013.

Here are two previously unpublished accounts of the Battle of the Ebro, the last great battle of the Spanish Civil War.

Nathan Clark's piece reflects the early optimism of the Spanish Republic's last military offensive that began on 24 July 1938.

However, the advance was soon checked – and the reality of the ensuing fierce fighting is described by John Longstaff.

The British Battalion was withdrawn on 24 September. By November the Republic's army had been defeated in what was the longest and bloodiest battle of the civil war.

Among the dead were some 90 British, Irish and Commonwealth members of the British Battalion.

On 21 September the Spanish Republic had announced the withdrawal of all International Brigade units in the vain hope that Hitler and Mussolini would be forced to withdraw their troops and aeroplanes. In the same month came the Munich Agreement between Britain, France, Germany and Italy when Spain's fellow democracy Czechoslovakia was sacrificed to appease the fascist powers.

Barcelona fell to Franco in January 1939 and at the end of March he marched triumphantly into Madrid. Five months later Britain abandoned appeasement and declared war on Germany. Not for nothing has the Battle of the Ebro been called the first battle of the Second World War.

The illustrations by Lazslo Acs first appeared in "La ofensiva del Ebro" by J.R. Jump (Harrap, London, 1975).



Memorial to the Leicester volunteers in the city's Victoria Park.



4am: the great advance begins

This is part of a much longer despatch by NATHAN CLARK, written in August 1938 while at the Ebro front. He had gone there from Barcelona, having been a driver in a convoy of aid lorries taken through France. Before that, Clark – a member of the Clarks Shoes family – served for several months as a driver and head of transport at the International Brigade hospital in Huete.



Four o'clock is zero hour, and the boats push off. The fascist guards hear us and turn on a machine-gun sweeping the river. The bullets splash in the water, and land in the sand of our bank with a "plop". The light comes up

rapidly and they see what is happening. Other machine-gun teams are roused and eight or 10 begin blazing away furiously, but, in their panic, their aim is bad; so far our casualties are nil. Now our anti-tanks come into action. They fire high velocity 3-inch shells direct at their objective and, if one of them lands near you, that's just too bad. With the growing light they can see the machine-gun emplacements and the shells are landing all round them. That cascade of brick, concrete and sand was a machine gun nest – it's twisted iron and dead fascists now.

"The home wires must be red hot over there; the avions won't be long now," someone remarks.

The first lot are over; several fall and lie still as they run for cover, but move steadily up the hill, from rock to rock, giving as good as they get.

The boats are back again and a fresh load goes

across; the fascists must feel a bit like King Canute, except that he knew what he was in for, and they are totally unprepared for such an invasion.

The engineers begin their operations, and work with speed and skill, only possible with the fiercest discipline and organisation under such trying conditions.

There is a distant drone; everyone strains eyes to see where they are coming from. Those Germans certainly don't waste time – five Junkers in formation, then three and another three. The men in the boats blaze away hopefully with their automatic rifles. Suddenly bright flashes and white puffs appear all round them, the anti-aircraft have come into action. They twist, turn, bank, and fly off into fascist country – and reappear much higher. They begin to drop stuff; one lands half a mile upstream and the waves set the boats rolling. Another drops inland somewhere; another on the far bank, but the anti-aircraft are keeping them too high for accuracy, so we don't pay much attention.

By this time the anti-tanks have accounted for a third of the machine-gun nests, hand grenades of our advance column for a few more, and the rest have retreated in haste to positions further back; panic seems to reign on the other side!

In what seems an incredibly short time, a temporary pontoon bridge spans the river. Tonight it will be replaced by a steel and timber one, but it will serve to take the first tanks and trucks. The tanks lurch on first, and the great cork floats sink deep into the water; the trucks and artillery follow. The great advance has begun; everything has gone off better than we dared hope.



Failed attack on Hill 666

This is an extract from "Any Bread Mister", autobiography of JOHN LONGSTAFF, who was a labourer from Middlesbrough before going to Spain.



Just after midnight the battalion's soldiers climbed over their own defence line. The section leaders and platoon commanders with their men were in extended line of order... only our sick and slightly wounded comrades remained to

occupy our positions. I had listened for any noise. It was amazing; four companies of men with rifles and fixed bayonets had climbed over that parapet. Had the fascists heard us?

I was looking at a large rock fortification which was now only about 60 feet away. I was with Paul, an English officer. No orders were given; all instructions had been given prior to climbing over our defences. All section, platoon and company commanders had spent some considerable time informing their men what was to be done and when.

Then it happened, machine-guns from the enemy fort blasted us, away on our left we could hear men running on the rocky terrain, sparks were flying as the bullets hit the rocks near us, Paul and myself dived right under a rock wall; all that the entire enemy occupants needed to do was to throw a grenade over on to us. Silence again prevailed along our front. Were we going? I could see no movement. I listened. Was somebody moving backwards? Or forwards? No 2 Company's objective was the third line of the enemy's defences, which meant going through No 1 and 3 Company's positions, but only if they captured the first and second defence system. Paul the officer was crawling towards me giving only hand signs. What was the score, I wondered? Then again all hell was let loose. Flares went up from the enemy's first line. Grenades were exploding, men were running, somebody was moaning, enemy or comrade I didn't know. We started to crawl away, explosions went off about 15 feet away, the enemy in the stone fortress had thrown grenades, but not towards us. We crawled right back to the foot of that fortress. More running sounds were heard, the enemy was putting up flares and bullets were hitting the rocks. The attack had failed, we could hear our lads clambering back over our own positions. It was now getting lighter, the officer and myself, again without speaking a word ran back to our position, which was only 25 to 30 yards away. I was over in a flash and so was he.

As daybreak came, we prepared for a possible counter-attack; the lighter it became, the safer it would be. Lads started to light fags and settle down. Some had been detailed as sentries, I just sat and slept with a blanket over me. I had no idea of the casualties of the battalion.



● Dr Jeffrey Sherwin is interested in tracking down an original copy of this poster (above) that was published by the Co-op in 1937. Anyone who knows where there might be a copy should contact [js@jsherwin.co.uk].

● Five Leaves Publications is trying to make contact with the family of Brigader **Walter Gregory** so they can republish his memoir, "Shallow Grave". If anyone can help, contact Ross Bradshaw at Five Leaves: [www.five-leaves.co.uk]; tel: 0115 969 3597; Broadway Business Centre, 32a Stoney Street, Nottingham NG1 1LL.

● The IBMT's researcher, Jim Carmody, is looking for information on **John Claude George Howarth**, from Clifford Street in Manchester, who was aged 24 in 1937. He was living in Stoke Newington in north London when he joined the International Brigades and was in Spain in February 1937, when he was slightly wounded at the Battle of Jarama. He returned to London in late April or early May 1937. There is no record of his return to Spain, but his name appears on a list of British volunteers missing or killed in action during the Aragon retreats in March and April 1938. The roll of honour in Bill Alexander's "British Volunteers for Liberty" gives July 1938 and the Ebro as the date and location of the death of "J Howarth" of Manchester. This is an error; he probably died in March 1938. If anyone has further information, contact: [jamescarmody@yahoo.co.uk].

● Anthony Sparrowhawk is completing a biography of the American volunteer **Oliver Law**, a commander of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion. He would like to hear from anyone with information about Law's life. "I think I have unearthed most of which can be found but you never know!" he writes. Contact: [tsparrowhawk@gmail.com].

Tell them how grateful young Spaniards are

I am 21 and from Madrid. I study international relations at university. In my degree they tend to teach us that governments and countries just want power, which is true; that the stronger will abuse the weaker, which is true. But they forget to show how against all odds people will bond together and stand up for justice, for what they believe in. This feeling of brotherhood is what countries should promote.

I don't know how many International Brigaders are still alive, but please forward them this message. I am eternally grateful for what they did for my country and for my people. I and many of my friends have the Spanish Republican flag hanging in our bedrooms. All of

government says. I know I am young, but these men and women not only fought for my grandmother and her family, they fought for me and they fought for generations to come, living in a land free of totalitarianism.

I saw a History Channel documentary that interviewed some of these soldiers and a nurse. I cried at the end, seeing how they returned to Spain for the anniversary of the war.

I am not so much moved by the fact that these volunteers came to Spain to destroy the fascists. I am moved and overwhelmed by their unconditional love for others, people whom they did not know, but they felt some responsibility for their fate. That is what being human is about. These people were the first and last to show such a commitment on that scale.

Thank you so much, International Brigaders, thank you. You will never be forgotten. Some of my friends do not know enough English to write to you, but I speak on behalf of them as well.

¡Viva la República!

María Domínguez

By email

Disappointing review of a book marred only by some oral sources

I found the review of Richard Baxell's splendid new book, "Unlikely Warriors" (issue 1-2013) disappointing. To suggest, as the reviewer does, that there was some sort of equivalence between Franco's volunteers, either fascists or religious fundamentalist united in their hatred of democracy and freedom, and the International Brigaders is preposterous.

Of course the people involved generally held strong beliefs. Those who went to fight on Franco's side fervently supported the restoration of a monarchist theocratic state and a military rebellion to put down a recently elected Republican government committed to democratic reforms designed to undermine the power of the Church and the big landowners, while demagogically invoking a nonexistent red peril. The International Brigaders (communists, socialists, trade unionists and liberal democrats) strongly believed in peace and democracy and the right of peoples to freely elect governments of their choice. Above all else they were anti-fascists because they could see what was happening right across Europe where democratic rights and workers' freedoms were being attacked and denied in many countries. As Communist Party leader Harry Pollitt said at the time of Munich: "The appetite of the fascist tiger grows with each fresh kill. Can we be so blind as not to see that our turn will come unless we make a stand now?"

Moved to tears

This letter was sent in to acknowledge receipt of some IBMT merchandise...

Thank you for my order which arrived safely this week.

I wanted to let you know that some years ago I heard two volunteers interviewed on the Jeremy Kyle Radio 2 show, which was the most moving thing I have ever heard. I think one of the gentlemen was from London and the other from Merseyside. Kyle played what sounded like a crackly old 78rpm record, and the Merseysider sang along. Unforgettable. I wept.

Tony Taylor

By email

these men and women are in my heart, they are Spanish. They will never be forgotten, they are heroes—even the fascists know they were heroes, good men.

I am now in Australia, homesick of course, and I can only imagine the immense strength and altruism it takes to leave your country and go to another to defend their people, their freedom and progress, no matter what your own

"I know I am young, but these men and women not only fought for my grandmother and her family, they fought for me and they fought for generations to come."

Contradicting John Sommerfield's version of events

I write with reference to the review of Richard Baxell's "Unlikely Warriors: The British in the Spanish Civil War" (issue 1-2013).

It concerns me that accounts of events by John Sommerfield, for example, are still reproduced without question, based on his colourful writing style. There are accounts, published and unpublished, which are more truthful.

I enclose an extract [see box on right] of a letter from my father, Jan Kurzke, to Bill McGuire on 5 May 1965. Bill and my parents were hoping a publisher could be found for their accounts of their time in Spain before and during the civil war.

My father, a German refugee, went to Spain via Paris, Marseilles and Alicante with the first batch of International Brigaders, including the English group, and was with them until Boadilla, where he and Bernard Knox were wounded and my father was rescued by John Cornford. His manuscript is a most detailed account of those early weeks. There is even an incident involving a dog – run over rather than feasting on fascist brains – which had to be shot.

Bernard Knox vouched for its accuracy and described my parents' manuscripts as fascinating and valuable and offered to contribute the introduction if a publisher could be found.

While the manuscript of my mother, Kate Mangin, has been extensively mined by researchers, my father's is largely ignored in the belief that everything has been said, and better, already.

Charlotte Kurzke
Southery, Norfolk

'He was a nice enough chap...'

Recalling the fighting in Madrid's University City in November and December 1936 in which he and John Sommerfield took part, Jan Kurzke wrote in 1965...

We [John Sommerfield and I] went to Spain together with 20 other English boys.

Now Sommerfield had to go back to England because his mother threatened Harry Pollitt [General Secretary of the Communist Party] to go to the newspapers and say her son was pressed to go to Spain (he was the only son).

So he was only at the front for a few weeks. Understand, I don't want to knock him, he was a nice enough chap. We all felt sorry for him.

Now to his story. We never had [Anarchist leader Buenaventura] Durruti's men with us. We were the Battalion Edgar André, French, Belgian and some English. We never saw the Durruti [Column], though they were on our right one night and disappeared after Durruti was killed, leaving a gap of half a mile.

We never approached the University City at night, because it changed hands every few days, and one couldn't be sure who had possession of it.

John Sommerfield says "Fredo" came with his head done up! His name was Alfredo and he was our number one. Our captain was a man called Blanche (dead). Capt Dumont took over after him and we were called "Battalion Dumont".

On the first morning, Alfredo was shot through the head looking around some build-

ings towards Casa Velásquez. I gave him a cigarette and he was taken away and we never saw him again, though I think his wound was not mortal.

Sommerfield says we sat about and sang. We did not, because a soldier was dying on the floor, covered by a blanket. We were having breakfast, coffee and bread.

Sommerfield says sharpshooters were called for. What for? Three of us had been killed and the rest of us – 18 men – had three machine-guns to handle.

He further says he found an officer's tunic and put it on. A brave man. We had no such uniform and I doubt if you could have lived long walking about in a fascist coat.

We did not find decent bottles of wine, garlic, onions etc. There was, however, a great barrel of red wine in the cellar. As we thought it might be poisoned, we did not drink it, until someone tried it and lived.

Sommerfield [says he] found oil and tools for our guns. Great Scott! We had the old English machine-gun (I can't remember the name) and American Remington 33(?) rifles. The other side used Mausers.

And Sommerfield went home; he wrote a small book (I never read it) and lectured to get money for the cause. Now there is something like poetic – or is it literary? – licence. Great painting and great books have been written from imagination. I do not believe that reality is more real, but by God you have to do it bloody better than this. After all Sommerfield wanted to be a writer and here was his opportunity...

If Baxell's book has a weakness it is a tendency to use often quite long quotes from volunteers critical of the conduct of the campaign. This would be more acceptable if these criticisms were better contextualised and subject to more scrutiny. Writing "oral history" involves more than selecting and repeating quotes from participants – it is more helpful to the readers' understanding of events if authors use their wider reading and expertise to assess and analyse contentious views and quotes.

The extensive use of Jason Gurney quotes is perhaps the clearest case in point. Gurney was a grouse with an axe to grind. In his book, "Crusade in Spain", he describes most British communists in leadership positions in the civil war as humourless, unimaginative and verging on fools or charlatans. And he makes outrageous claims. For example, Steve Nelson, the American shipyard worker and Communist Party leader who became a battalion political commissar (described by Gurney as "humourless and uncertain of his role"), is accused of "being responsible for the mysterious disappear-

ances... and secret trials of International Brigaders" who did not conform. Not a scintilla of evidence was offered and the publishers later agreed that the references to Nelson were "highly defamatory" and that the book contained "two inaccurate and prejudicial statements" relating to Nelson's activities in Spain.

Other International Brigaders have challenged aspects of Gurney's version of events. Bill Alexander, a commander of the British Battalion and the author of the seminal work, "British Volunteers for Liberty", describes Gurney's book as "a highly fanciful account of his period in Spain".

Tom Sibley
By email

The work of Sim

The sketch ("Can you help?", issue 1-2013) is by José Luis Rey Vila (born Cádiz 1900, died Paris 1983), known as "Sim". A collection of his dynamic portraits was published as "Estampas de la Revolución Española 19 Julio de 1936"



SKETCH: Signed by International Brigaders and others.

(Oficinas de Propaganda CNT FAI, 1937). Whilst this particular sketch does not appear in the collection, it has his unmistakable style and his signature, "Sim XXXVI", can just be made out.

Ian Burns
Toronto (by email)



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OBITUARIES



Annette O'Riordan

Annette O'Riordan (née Hennessy) died in Dublin on 4 May, the day after her 60th birthday. She was an active and popular IBMT member as well as daughter-in-

law of Irish Brigadier Michael O'Riordan and wife of the IBMT's Ireland Secretary Manus O'Riordan.

Annette was the chief organiser of the Trust's Annual General Meeting in Dublin in October 2005, when Irish President Mary McAleese greeted veterans Bob Doyle, Jack Edwards, Jack Jones and Michael O'Riordan at her official residence in the city.

In 2004 she edited the memorial booklet for the unveiling of the International Brigade memorial in Waterford and in the June of the following year designed the memorial in Burncourt, Co Tipperary, to Kit Conway, who was killed at Jarama in February 1937. She was also the designer of the brochure for the event.

She regularly attended meetings in Britain, Ireland and Spain and made many friends in all these countries. Her last major IBMT event was the Trust's AGM in Newhaven last year. Her cheerful and gregarious presence belied the illness that she battled mostly in private for three years.



Dolly West-Shaer

Dolly West-Shaer, who died on 1 July, aged 82, was the daughter of Brigadier Frank West and a key figure in the International Brigade community.

She was the Secretary of the Friends of the International Brigades, which was set up following a visit to Spain by Brigaders and families in 1996. The group was wound up when, at Dolly's behest, members of the FIB and those of the International Brigade Association, representing Brigade veterans, agreed to establish the International Brigade Memorial Trust in 2001. Dolly attended the meeting in London of activists of both organisations that decided on the merger and was thus a founder member of the IBMT.

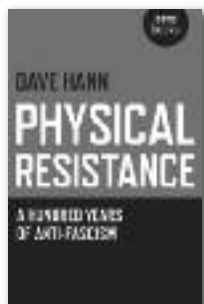
She was also one of the instigators of the memorial to the volunteers from Hammersmith and Fulham that was inaugurated by Hammersmith & Fulham Borough Council and the local trades council in south-west London's Fulham Palace Gardens in 1997. Dolly herself worked as a senior lecturer at Hammersmith & West London College for many years, and remained politically active until her sudden death.

At the IBMT's 2010 commemoration in Jubilee Gardens, London, she recalled how as a seven-year-old she had waited eagerly with her mother at Victoria Station in December 1938 to welcome her father home with the rest of the British Battalion. They waited in vain. Frank (who died in 1987) had been taken prisoner in Spain and was not released until the following year, a separation of three long years for father and daughter.

Brigaders' key role in inspiring the anti-fascist movement

"Physical Resistance: A Hundred Years of Anti-Fascism" by Dave Hann (Zero Books, Winchester, 2013) £18.99*

Reviewed by Sarah Abbot



Although "Physical Resistance" is a history of the anti-fascist movement in Britain from 1924 to 2010, it includes a substantial chapter on the Spanish Civil War, and testimony from International Brigaders runs throughout much of the

book. Howard "Andy" Andrews, Lou Kenton, Bernard McKenna and Alun Menai Williams are four of the 20 anti-fascists interviewed by author Dave Hann between 2005 and early 2009.

The words of the participants in anti-fascism, from the communists who disrupted Oswald Mosley's open air meetings in the 1930s to the anarchists involved in blocking English Defence League marches today, are at the heart of the book. The book was completed following the death of Dave Hann in September 2009 (see IBMT Newsletter 25, New Year 2010). Its editor, Louise Purbrick, calls "Physical Resistance" an activist's history: it is written by an anti-fascist about anti-fascists.

Dave Hann pieced together a history encompassing almost 100 years, using numerous left-wing pamphlets, national and local newspaper reports as well as academic texts. But it is the anti-fascists themselves who tell the story of well-known victories, such as the Battle of Cable Street, alongside small acts of bravery that never merited a headline but without which there would have been no victories.

For example, Benny Rothman, a young north Manchester communist, arrived at a Mosley meeting in Belle Vue straight from work, still in his mechanics overalls, to be given the task of leafletting it. Before he began, he observed the actions of Evelyn Taylor**. She "...stood up on the balcony opposite and started barracking Mosley... So they sent some women Blackshirt stewards to get her out but she hit out at them and knocked them down. Then they sent the men over to sort her out and it was absolute mayhem."

It was then that Benny Rothman threw his leaflets into the crowd. Dave Hann's skill as histo-

Continued overleaf

"A Short History of the Spanish Civil War" by Julián Casanova (IB Tauris, London, 2012) £12.99

Reviewed by Alan Lloyd



Any book about the Spanish Civil War that is accompanied by glowing testimonies from Paul Preston and Helen Graham is unlikely to disappoint, and that is certainly the case with this latest addition to the IB Tauris

Short History Series. As someone who, sadly, speaks no Spanish, it is also refreshing to read a lucid history of the civil war written by a Spaniard, and one with such a great pedigree. Described by Helen Graham as "one of Spain's leading historians", Julián Casanova is Professor of History at the University of Zaragoza.

Casanova begins by looking at the roots of the conflict, and Spain's progression from a monarchy to a republic. He points out that Spain was the only country in Europe where this process led to a civil war – notwithstanding that all the other countries, with the exception of the Irish Republic, ended up with some form of authoritarian dictatorship.

The author also avoids simply trailing through a chronology of the war and associated events, but rather tackles the main themes that emerged, beginning with what he describes in one chapter heading as "An International War on Spanish Soil".

Casanova outlines the ideologies and motives of the main characters and how the war was fought by both sides, one side claiming to be waging a religious crusade and the other expressing their anti-clerical hatred. Whilst



BARRICADE: A still from Ivor Montagu and Norman McLaren's 1937 film "Defence of Madrid".

Lucid guide through war's main themes

clearly sympathetic to the Republican cause, he does not attempt to dress up the failures of the Republic, but rather examines the reasons for them.

There are also chapters on the "The New Order", and "An Uncivil Peace", which discuss the horrors of the Franco victory and the reasons why he was allowed to prevail.

As well as being very readable and thought-provoking, the book is very well referenced and includes a comprehensive index. The author's approach in writing what can best be described as a series of linked mini essays works extremely well. This is highly recommended even if you think there cannot be anything new to read in another short history of the Spanish Civil War.

ATLAS: Publishers Ediciones Dau and authors Victor Hurtado and José Luis Martín Ramos have announced the publication of a 78-page atlas (in Spanish and measuring 11 x 9 inches) of maps of battles involving the International Brigades.

Barcelona-based battlefield tour guide Alan Warren has written to point out some factual and typographical errors, such as the start of the Battle of the Ebro being moved a month forward to June 1938 and the fighting around Belchite pushed back a month to October 1937. He says he has spoken to the publishers and hopes a new



edition of "Las Brigadas Internacionales" will make the appropriate corrections to what is otherwise an attractively produced and informative book.

The book also includes brief notes on various famous or important international volunteers,

including some "strange choices", such as WH Auden and Willy Brandt – both of whom visited Spain during the civil war but were not International Brigaders. The atlas is priced at €28.80. See: [\[www.edicionsdau.com/es/t%C3%ADtulos_205/3266922\]](http://www.edicionsdau.com/es/t%C3%ADtulos_205/3266922).

Inspirational Brigaders

From previous page

rian lay in the understanding that everyday experiences, like arriving at a meeting in the wrong clothes to be persuaded to distribute leaflets, were part and parcel of momentous historical occasions. This holds true for his account of the Spanish Civil War. The formation of the International Brigades, the training and manoeuvres of the British Battalion, through to their withdrawal from Spain, are told through the personal experience of the Brigaders.

Small details reveal the humanity and dignity of the fight against fascism. Bernard McKenna recalled the effect of Mussolini's North African campaign in his decision to go to Spain. "I was appalled and horrified by the suffering of the Abyssinian people." Alun Menai Williams remembered his concern for his mother as he made up his mind to join the International Brigades. Bob Doyle told of the heat of the rifle he used in the defence of Belchite and the "terrific noise" of the fascist advance. Lou Kenton spoke of witnessing "a sight one could never forget" as Catalans fled into France as the war ended – "mothers carrying children who were already dead".

The actions of International Brigaders stand out within the narrative of "Physical Resistance". This is not only because of their extraordinary commitment and exceptional courage but because their fight in Spain, unlike the daily round of anti-fascist activities that took place in local streets and local meetings, was outside everyday life. However, Hann asserts the place of the Spanish Civil War in the history of the anti-fascist movement in Britain.

International Brigaders were, of course, part of this movement both before and after their journeys in Spain. In 1935, Alun Menai Williams was busy in London running around with his "mate Billy and his band of communists, anarchists and other assorted hopefuls" who "would heckle and disrupt Blackshirt meetings wherever they found them". Two decades later, Bob Doyle, in the first car he ever owned, a Ford Popular, used it to rescue young West Indians from being assaulted by racist gangs in Notting Hill.

There are many more such examples of the continuous commitment of anti-fascists to the fight, often the physical fight, against prejudice, racism and nationalism. And, it is this long view established by "Physical Resistance" which makes it possible to see how the struggles of past, and especially the Spanish Civil War, have informed, even inspired, those of the present.

•To order a copy for £15 (price includes a donation to anti-fascist prisoners) contact: [physicalresistance@riseup.net].

**Evelyn Taylor was the wife of George Brown, who was killed at the Battle of Brunete in July 1937. She later married International Brigader Jack Jones, who became leader of the Transport & General Workers' Union (and later the IBMT's Life President).

Sarah Abbott is a member of Brighton Anti-Fascists.

Visionary doctor

"Norman Bethune in Spain: Commitment, Crisis and Conspiracy" by David Lethbridge (Sussex Academic Press, Eastbourne, 2013) £25

Reviewed by Linda Palfreeman



Whilst much has been written about remarkable Canadian surgeon Norman Bethune, previous works have centred on Bethune's early medical successes at home in his native Canada and his heroic achievements later as a military medical officer in China. As its title suggests, "Norman Bethune in Spain" focuses uniquely on Bethune's accomplishments in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. In this exciting and compassionate new account, David Lethbridge reveals hitherto unfamiliar aspects of Bethune's life and work that afford us new and valuable insights into the brilliant but volatile, erratic and sometimes self-destructive behaviour of this great man – the man behind the legendary hero that he was later to become.

Eminent thoracic surgeon and committed communist, Norman Bethune challenged the Canadian medical establishment and provoked

"The pioneering mobile blood transfusion service is recognised as Bethune's single greatest achievement in Spain."

the antagonism of his peers by proposing radical reforms of the health services and advocating free access to medical care for those who could not afford it. When civil war erupted in Spain in the summer of 1936, it soon became clear that the Republic would be unable to cope with the vast number of wounded, both military and civilian, and the Spanish government made a worldwide plea for help. Norman Bethune was one of those who responded to that call. He was convinced of the imperious need to confront fascism in Spain and acutely aware that the outcome would have lasting repercussions for the future of Europe and America.

At the invitation of the Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, Bethune went out to Spain at the end of October 1936, initially with the responsibility of coordinating medical aid sent from Canada to the Republic. However, the visionary surgeon soon had other plans in mind.

With funds from the CASD, he set about creating a blood transfusion service in Madrid, developing it into what would become known as the Servicio Hispano-Canadiense de Transfusión de Sangre.

Whilst the pioneering mobile blood transfusion service is recognised as Bethune's single greatest achievement in Spain, Lethbridge also reveals the extent to which Bethune and his team contributed to the scientific advancement of blood transfusion and to the development of techniques for the extraction, storage and preservation of blood, including experimental work on the use of blood from human cadavers.

In exploring the nature of Bethune's relationships with his colleagues at the Blood Transfusion Institute, and in particular with secret Party member, Henning Sorensen, Lethbridge unravels the details of the conspiracy that led to Bethune's eventual removal from Spain – a conspiracy based largely on groundless suspicions and personal jealousies, motivated to some extent by Bethune's romantic involvement with Swedish journalist Kasja Rothman.

The singular events described in this particular episode of Norman Bethune's life are brought sharply into focus by the author, within the coherent framework of their wider historical and political context, providing not only a piece of groundbreaking historical research but also a compelling read.

Linda Palfreeman is the author of "¡Salud! British Volunteers in the Republican Medical Service during the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939" (Sussex Academic Press, Eastbourne, 2012). Her latest book, "Aristocrats, Adventurers and Ambulances: British Ambulance Units in the Spanish Civil War" is scheduled to be published later this year.

Orwell's comrades

"In Spain with Orwell: George Orwell and the Independent Labour Party Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939" by Christopher Hall (Tippermuir Books, Perth, 2013) £12.50

Reviewed by Richard Baxell



At this year's Len Crome Memorial Lecture in Manchester, a large audience listened to four speakers discuss the significance of George Orwell's famous account of his time fighting in Spain, "Homage to Catalonia".

His colourful description of Barcelona in the winter of 1936, with "the working class in the saddle", his candid account of the brutal realities of warfare and, above all, his eye-witness account of the infamous in-fighting in Barcelona in May 1937, have combined to make Orwell's

Continued on page 24

Battlefield tours that served Franco's propaganda purposes

By Dave McCall

Amongst many other Spanish Civil War commemorations this year, it may be interesting to note that July 2013 marks the 75th anniversary of one of the most bizarre.

In December 2005, Professor Sandie Holguín from the University of Oklahoma published a unique piece of research in the *American Historical Review* (see <http://ahr.oxfordjournals.org/content/110/5/1399.extract>). It was based on documents discovered in the Mandeville Special Collections Library in San Diego. They included brochures published by the National Spanish

State Tourist Board, which Franco had felt confident enough to establish early in 1938.

The brochure carries a map of northern Spain and a row of photographs depicting soldiers of Franco's army, the bombed ruins of Spanish towns and, incongruously, the mountains and beaches of the Cantabrian coast. It begins: "National Spain invites you to visit the War Route of the North (San Sebastián, Bilbao, Santander, Gijón, Oviedo, and the Iron Ring). See history in the making among Spanish scenery of unsurpassed beauty."

Franco purchased school buses from the Chrysler Corporation, trained a team of guides and, on 1 July 1938, while the war still raged, and before the Ebro campaign had even begun, the first of the tours took place. The cost was £8 for a nine-day tour, including three meals a day, accommodation in first-class hotels and incidental expenses.

Franco used the tours as a straightforward propaganda tool, to tell the Nationalists' version of events, and also as a visible sign to the outside world that he was winning the war. Scripts used by guides helped him to redefine the identity of Spain that fitted the images that the fascists wanted to portray – and particularly the image of the Nationalists' insurrection as a "Holy Crusade".

Holguín tells us: "The tours ran every other day from July through October, and the following year the tour season

began in May." By December 1938, a second route had been introduced, in Andalusia. At the end of the war, two more routes were added, one in Aragon, the other in Madrid. Tourists arrived in large numbers – from Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal – even some Australians. It is thought that there were around 42 tours in 1938 and 88 tours each year between 1939 and 1945. Estimates of participants vary between a minimum of 6,670 and a maximum of 20,010.

I came across the report two years ago and was fascinated by it. It struck me that the tale needed some wider circulation and also that it would make an unusual subject for a historical novel. And therefore "The Assassin's Mark" was born. It's a Christie-esque thriller set on one of the tour buses in September 1938, during the same week in which the Sudeten crisis was developing. British journalist, Telford – covering the journey on behalf of *Reynold's News*, the weekly paper of the Co-operative Party – finds himself travelling with a conflicted assortment of unsympathetic fellow-travellers.

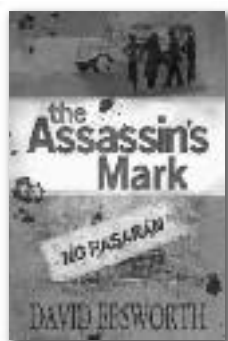
As the book's blurb says: "Driven by his passion for peace and haunted by his father's ghost, Telford attempts to uncover the hidden truths beneath the conflict... But Jack must contend first with his own gullibility, the tragic death of a fellow-passenger, capture by Republican *guerrilleros*, a final showdown at Spain's most holy shrine and the possibility that he has been badly betrayed."

Apart from the fictional aspects, the novel also gave me an opportunity to describe the bitter struggle of the Republican armies of the North and the way in which the Nationalists managed, for so many years, to mask the truth of war crimes like the bombing of Guernica.

Dave McCall, a former regional secretary of the Transport & General Workers' Union, writes historical novels under the pen name David Ebsworth. "The Assassin's Mark" was published in March 2013.

Right: Brochure for Franco's battlefield tourism initiative.

Below: Dave MacCall's new novel (under his David Ebsworth pen-name) based on fictional events on one of the battlefield tours.



Ragbag rebels and troops

"Franco's International Brigades: Adventurers, Fascists and Christian Crusaders in the Spanish Civil War" by Christopher Othen (Hurst & Company, London, 2013) £15.99

Reviewed by Tom Sibley



Morocco, a Spanish dependency, where Franco commanded the Army

of Africa (some 80,000 troops) before the outbreak of the civil war. This was supplemented by the crack German Condor Legion (30,000 strong) and several divisions of the Italian regular army (70,000 men under arms) and some 8,000 army regulars from Portugal.

The main concentration of the book, however, is on the 3,000 volunteers from many parts of the world, including Ireland. These consisted of a ragbag of religious fundamentalists (mainly Catholic), virulent anti-communists, fascist activists, social misfits and upper class adventurers. Many fitted most, if not all, of these categories. Christopher Othen reminds us that foreign soldiers

made up only 2.2 per cent of the Republican army, but at least 13.2 per cent of Franco's rebel forces.

The author sketches the story of the ill-fated Irish pro-fascist brigade. Led by General Eoin O'Duffy, a vain-glorious ex-IRA member turned fascist party leader (of the National Corporate Party), and spurred on by the Catholic hierarchy informed by fierce anti-communism, the 600-strong force stumbled from one military disaster to the next during the Battle of Jarama. After three months the Irish Brigade was withdrawn from Spain in March 1937 on the recommendation of the commander of Franco's Foreign Legion.

The book's tone is generally sober and non-partisan except when it comes to the communists. Othen is no fan of Franco and observes that

the foreign volunteers who fought on his side were "men whose ideas of a modern Europe did not involve democracy". However, the book is marred by the usual anti-communist canards. Thus, for Othen, the International Brigades were Stalin's army rather than volunteers recruited mainly by national communist parties across some 30 countries. And the Popular Front government in Spain was, in the author's opinion, Stalin's creation, and not the result of internal Spanish political developments over decades.

Tom Sibley's biography of International Brigader and Communist Party Industrial Organiser Bert Ramelson (co-written with Roger Seifert), "Revolutionary Communist at Work", is published by Lawrence & Wishart (London, 2011).

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account many British people's first introduction to the Spanish Civil War.

It has also ensured that the story of the POUM (a relatively small anti-Stalinist Marxist party based mainly in Catalonia), and the support they received from their British comrades in the Independent Labour Party, has not been forgotten. However, had George Orwell not served with the POUM militia in Spain, it is questionable whether many people in Britain would have heard of the ILP volunteers. There were only 40 or so in all, the majority of whom only served in Spain for a few months. Moreover, Orwell aside, almost nothing has been written by former members of the ILP group.

Acutely conscious of this lack, IBMT Executive Committee member and historian Chris Hall has spent a considerable amount of time researching into and writing about the men and women in the ILP group. His latest publication, "In Spain with Orwell", has just been published by Tippermuir Books. Readers should note, however, that this is not actually a fresh study, but a new edition of his earlier work, "Not Just Orwell", first published by Warren & Pell in 2009. This, sadly, seems to have virtually disappeared from sale. It is fortunate that Tippermuir have stepped in and published this new updated edition, which adds new biographical details of many of the ILP contingent in Spain.

For those who have not read "Not Just Orwell", Chris Hall examines the role of the Independent Labour Party in British politics, before turning to Spain; first the POUM and then the civil war itself, where he discusses "the organisation, actions and individual members of the ILP contingent in Spain". The book concludes with three essentially biographical chapters on the ILP volunteers. Clearly sympathetic to the ILP volunteers, the author attempts to redress what he sees as the

"Had George Orwell not served with the POUM militia in Spain, it is questionable whether many people in Britain would have heard of the ILP volunteers."

overshadowing of their role by accounts of the British volunteers in the International Brigades and the long-standing antipathy between the two groups of veterans.

Fortunately, many of these arguments are not as fraught as they once were and both the IBMT's Manchester event on Orwell and Chris Hall's work on the ILP are further steps forward. Times have clearly changed and it is surely significant that a study of the ILP group in Spain has been written by a Trustee of the IBMT and dedicated "to all

British and Irish anti-fascist volunteers who served in the Spanish Civil War".

Richard Baxell's latest book is "Unlikely Warriors: The British in the Spanish Civil War and the Struggle Against Fascism" (Aurum Press, London, 2012, £25). He is an IBMT Trustee.

Aspects of the past

"The Spanish Civil War: Exhuming a Buried Past" edited by Anindya Raychaudhuri (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2013) £90

Reviewed by Layla Renshaw



This is a broad interdisciplinary collection, with contributions from the fields of history, literature, media, and visual culture, and there is much of interest to those researching both the Spanish Civil War and its enduring legacy.

For those with a particular interest in the International Brigades, there are two intriguing chapters. The first, by John D Mehta, is a delicate and personal enquiry into Gilbert Taylor, a Welshman who died in Spain in the spring of 1938. Mehta's article is an example of detective work, revealing that some Brigaders left complicated personal and political lives behind them when they went to fight. The second is David Convery's account of the testimony and memoirs of British and Irish prisoners of war incarcerated in a Francoist prison in Burgos. This chapter provides moving insights into the experiences of repression and resistance recalled by former inmates.

For those interested in the British literary response, Patricia Rae's analysis of elegies to the war dead and Edward Quipp's piece on the poetry of Auden both reveal the extent to which British understandings of Spain were conditioned by World War I, which functioned as a point of contrast and comparison for many Brigaders. Julián Casanova's chapter on the murder and subsequent beatification of Spanish clerics is detailed and informative, but also powerfully written, reflecting the divisions at the heart of Spanish culture that persist to the present day.

The contributions are of a uniformly high quality, well-written and well-edited, and are exemplary in their clarity and concision. The chapters may even be too concise, in that most have a narrow focus on a single case study, episode or place, with little contextualising information to guide the more general reader, and many chapters assume some background knowledge.

The book succeeds in its aim to be interdisciplinary, but it does lack a really cohesive theme or direction. And the subject coverage is neither systematic nor accessible enough to function as a general guide or handbook. The introduction is

snappily written and historically perceptive, but makes little thematic connection between the chapters. A conclusion could have helped to draw out the common themes and to dig deeper into the current state of memory work on Spain, but, nevertheless, this book showcases the best of that work very well.

Layla Renshaw is Principal Lecturer in Forensic Science at the School of Life Sciences of Kingston University, Surrey.

War and football

"In and Out of the Lion's Den: Poverty, War and Football" by Julie Ryan (published by Julie Ryan: [http://inandoutofthelionsden.wordpress.com], 2013) £9.99

Reviewed by Jim Jump



Written by his daughter, this is the story of John Shepherd, who played football for Millwall, Brighton & Hove Albion and Gillingham. His was a life also touched by the Spanish Civil War.

The aspiring young footballer from Notting

Hill met and fell in love with Esther González at the 7th Feathers Youth Club in North Kensington. And in 1955 he married into a family who had been refugees from the Spanish Civil War.

Esther's father, José, fought in the Spanish Republic's army, eventually crossing the border into France as Catalonia fell to Franco's fascist forces in February 1939. After spending time in French concentration camps and forced work groups, he was eventually deported to Algeria, where he was later able to join the British Pioneer Corps and then settled as a refugee in London.

This book is both an evocation of football in the 1950s – when the players would travel to the ground on the same trains and buses as the fans – as well as a portrayal of two families, in England and in Spain, afflicted by but eventually overcoming poverty and war.

John and Esther honeymooned in Spain. In 1959 Esther's mother Marcelina and younger sister Rosita visited José's parents in Villajoyosa, near Alicante. José never returned to Spain until after Franco's death, but was "disillusioned and confused". As Julie Ryan puts it: "Franco's death had come too late", something that was true for many Republicans who suffered decades of exile.

Ryan is clearly proud of the family's Spanish heritage and the impact of the Spanish Civil War on it. One of the last photos in this finely written family history is one of her and son Nathan in 2011 at the memorial at Argelès-sur-mer, the notorious camp in southern France where defeated Spaniards were interned in sub-human conditions following the fall of the Republic.



Left: The IBMT has revamped its website. It has been redesigned and reformatoed so it can be more easily browsed on smart-phones. And there are links to our Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr sites. Among the new features is a blog. Updated regularly and packed full of information, the site can be visited here: [\[www.international-brigades.org.uk\]](http://www.international-brigades.org.uk).



Right: Portals of the IBMT's YouTube (above) and Flickr sites.

New YouTube and Flickr sites add to IBMT's online presence

By Marshall Mateer

Thousands of viewers in Britain and Ireland and our friends in Australia, Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the US are now regular users of the IBMTnews channels on YouTube and Flickr. People from all over the world are also having a look and a listen – from Singapore to Puerto Rico and from Brazil to Moldova – a truly global linkup.

We launched IBMT on YouTube in July last year

with my film about the 75th anniversary crossing of the Pyrenees: the climb over the mountains, the singing, the speeches, the rain and the rededication of the International Brigade memorial in Figueras. Since then we have developed the service, making photographs, videos and reports of major IBMT events accessible to all.

Making high quality materials freely available for people to re-use is one of the main aims of both channels. The videos can be embedded into blogs and other websites and used in schools. Most of

the photographs have Creative Commons licences, meaning they can be downloaded and re-used for non-commercial use and by International Brigade communities all over the world. Behind the scenes we work with the guest performers, speakers and organisations including, as part of this year's Len Crome Memorial Lecture coverage, the Orwell Society and ALBA, one of our sister organisations in the US.

The IBMTnews channels on YouTube and Flickr are part of the wider IBMT online strategy, working between the immediacy of the Trust's presence on Facebook and Twitter on the one hand and the main IBMT website on the other.

We are always looking for new ways to use the channels, for example the interactive notes on some of the Flickr images such as the George Orwell poster for our 2013 Len Crome Memorial Lecture. We've now begun adding archive film on YouTube, starting with the video of the event in April 2012 to mark the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Guernica. There's lots more to come from materials we've gathered over recent years.

Next up, with some new developments, will be the annual commemoration in Jubilee Gardens and a video report from the Ebro 75th anniversary events in September.

See IBMTnews on YouTube: [\[www.youtube.com/user/IBMTnews\]](http://www.youtube.com/user/IBMTnews) and on Flickr: [\[www.flickr.com/photos/ibmt/\]](http://www.flickr.com/photos/ibmt/).

Marshall Mateer is the IBMT Film Coordinator. Contact him (feedback and questions welcome) at: IBMTnewsfilms@gmail.com.



The International Brigade archive Cedobi, based in Albacete at the University of Castilla-La Mancha, has placed part of its extensive photo collection on its Flickr site (above). See: [\[www.flickr.com/photos/iea_cedobi/\]](http://www.flickr.com/photos/iea_cedobi/).

Also on view in Flickr are some highlights from the collection in the Tamiment Library of New York of materials related to the US volunteers in Spain. See: [\[www.flickr.com/photos/tamiment/sets/72157612317392595/\]](http://www.flickr.com/photos/tamiment/sets/72157612317392595/).

Two 75th anniversaries to be remembered at the Ebro battlefield and in London

Events are planned this autumn to commemorate two key 75th anniversaries.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Battle of the Ebro, including the British Battalion's last stand on 24 September 1938 after the Spanish Republic announced the withdrawal of all foreign volunteers from its army.

Then on 7 December, there will be the 75th anniversary of the return of the volunteers from Spain, arriving in Newhaven and London on that same day in 1938.

The IBMT is organising a trip to the Ebro battlefield from 20-27 September, including guided tours by historians and other experts. On Tuesday 24 September a memorial commemorating the withdrawal of the British Battalion will be unveiled in Corbera. The plaque on the memorial stone will be in English, Catalan and Spanish and will include a map showing the final position of the battalion.

All places on the organised trip have been taken, but some events – such as the unveiling – will be open to the public.

The 75th anniversary of the return of the British Battalion will be commemorated at the Rich Mix arts centre located on East London's Bethnal Green Road on Saturday 7 December.

There will be comedy from Mark Steel, music from Thee Faction and DJ Pandit G, a recitation of La Pasionaria's famous farewell speech to the International Brigades by Maxine Peake, songs from the Strawberry Thieves Choir and "living theatre" from La Columna.

Speakers will include historian and IBMT Trustee Richard Baxell, BBC economics correspondent Paul Mason, author Daniel Trilling, activist Salma Yaqoob and Olga Abasolo of Spain's Los Indignados movement.

The event is being organised by Philosophy Football in association with the IBMT. Tickets will go on sale this autumn (see advert on our back cover).

For more details about the trip to the Ebro battlefield contact Duncan Longstaff: [duncanlongstaff@btinternet.com].



The plaque (above) to be unveiled on 24 September in Corbera and (below) the scene at London's Victoria Station on 7 December 1938 when the volunteers returned from Spain.



POSTER: "¡No Pasarán!" is described as a new musical that tells "a story of love, friendship and selflessness and the heroism of the Spanish people on both sides and of the volunteers of the International Brigades who went to Spain to fight fascism". See listing for 15-19 October.

2 August BELFAST: "From Belfast to the Ebro" talk hosted by International Brigade Commemoration Committee on the 75th anniversary of the Battle of the Ebro; Ciaran Crossey, IBCC chair, will explore the contribution of the International Brigaders from the Belfast area; Shankill Library, 298-300 Shankill Rd, BT13 2BN; 12 noon-2.30pm; further information from IBCC secretary: 07751951785; web: [http://irelandscw.com].

24 September- December BARCELONA: Catalan production of the musical "Goodbye Barcelona" at the Teatre del Raval, at least until December; première night it 26 September; it is hoped to have subtitles; for more information see: [www.teatredelraval.com] or contact: [contact@goodbyebarcelona.com].

24 September GANDESA: Commemoration of 75th anniversary of the final day of action by the British Battalion in the Battle of the Ebro; see above for more information, or contact Duncan Longstaff: [duncanlongstaff@btinternet.com].

5 October MANCHESTER: Day-long event to celebrate centenary of birth of Jack Jones (IBMT's Life President) organised by People's History Museum, Left Bank, M3 3ER (www.phm.org.uk; tel: 0161 838 9190); speakers include IBMT Chair

Dolores Long and historian and IBMT Trustee Richard Baxell.

12 October EDINBURGH: IBMT's Annual General Meeting (AGM) to be held at 2pm; plus associated events over the weekend; see notice on inside front cover for more information.

15-19 October BOURNEMOUTH: Première of "¡No Pasarán!" musical by Roy Gaynor and Doug Gould; 7.30pm-10.30pm (plus 2pm matinée on 19th) at the De La Salle Theatre, St Catherine's Road, Southbourne BH6 4AH; tickets from £11; more information and booking: [www.nopasaran-musical.com].

7 December LONDON: Gala evening to mark the 75th anniversary of the return of the British Battalion from Spain; from 7pm at Rich Mix arts centre, 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, E1 6LA (www.richmix.org.uk); organised by Philosophy Football in association with IBMT; tickets to go on sale from September from [www.philosophyfootball.com] or by post from PO Box 105, West Wickham, Kent BR4 9EZ; more information on back cover.

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

IBMT merchandise

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



CD single

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



IBMT badge

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



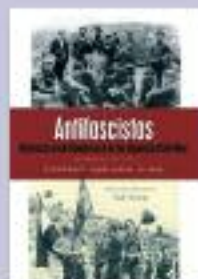
British Battalion t-shirt

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



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



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). £10 plus £2.99 p&p



Earrings

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



Wristband

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



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



Poems from Spain

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



75th anniversary plate

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



Salud!

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



70th anniversary trinket box

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



Connolly Column t-shirt

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

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.

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