

The Basque Children of '37 Association UK

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
held on Friday 16th May 2014 at 11.00
at 7 Sandy Lane, Shrivenham, Swindon
SN6 8DZ

Attendance: Secretary Natalia Benjamin (NB) and treasurer Carmen Kilner, (CK)

Also present was our Honorary Auditor, Tom Webb

Secretary's Report of Activities: Feb 2013 - May 2014

Following decisions taken at the AGM on 16 February 2013, an explanatory letter was drafted and sent to all members in March 2013 outlining the changes that we were making concerning the future of the Association.

These are the main points outlined in the letter:

- * to cease having a membership
- * to cease producing a Newsletter
- * to use the web page as the main point of communication
- * to publish information and articles directly on the web page
- * to reproduce annually a Newsletter of the above for people who wanted them
- * to reduce the sale price of BC'37A items by about 50%

As far as I am aware we have not received any comments about the changes.

In March CK, was involved in a series of exhibitions in the Basque country of the late Koke Martinez's paintings. The first one in Bilbao, was held on 7 March in the University of the Basque Country. The inauguration of the exhibition attracted a large audience. From April to June the exhibition travelled in turn to the two other campuses; San Sebastian and Vitoria-Gasteiz. CK represented the Association at these very successful events, speaking about Koke's work.

On 8 March a project "Hablémonos", was produced by Fiona Cotton at the King Edward VI Five Ways School, Birmingham, based on the story of the evacuation of the children from Bilbao during the Civil War in Spain. Using a combination of music and drama, the event involved children who were learning Spanish. During the performance, the children acted out scenes in Spanish and English, and were joined by the folk duo na-mara in music and song.

On 13 March the Fellow in Basque Studies at St Anthony's College, Oxford, interviewed NB live on Radio Euskadi about the story of the Basque children.

In June there was a television documentary by Michael Portillo on Picasso and we loaned the television company several archive photographs for this.

At the beginning of July the IBMT held its annual commemorative event in front of the monument at Jubilee Gardens, and NB laid a wreath on behalf of the Association.

On 30 September at the 9th London Spanish Film Festival, the British premiere of the film "To Say Goodbye" was shown. (It had been premiered in September 2012 at the San Sebastian Film Festival.) Directed by Matt Richards, the film tells the story of the exodus of the Basque children, using voice-overs for the testimonies of about ten of the Basque "children", as well as animation techniques.

Research has been done on three of the colonies about which we previously knew very little: Tythrop House (near Aylesbury), Burnaston House (Derby) and Booker (High Wickham). When they have been published, we will then put them on our web site. We are very grateful for this research and would encourage others to follow suit.

Committed parties were invited on specific dates in August, September and October to join a group of activists and artists who are remaking Picasso's Guernica as a banner. They are sharing the skills of making and the experiences of countering fascism and militarism. The banner is both a work of art and an act of protest. The bombing of Guernica is of special significance to the Association because it drove public opinion to persuade the British government to accept 4,000 Basque refugees.

Very recently Sonia Boue has been in touch having just discovered our web site. She is the daughter of Jose Mari Garcia Lora who together with Pepe Estruch and Luis Portillo were rescued from a French internment camp by Alec Wainman. They all helped teach the boys at the Shipton-under-Wychwood Colony. We have been able to give her photos of her father and other relevant information.

On Friday 23 November members of the Huddersfield Local History Society met with members of the BC'37A at Almondbury, near Huddersfield, to unveil a joint plaque recording the 20 Basque refugee children who were looked after by local volunteers at The Old Clergy House, Almondbury. This is the eighth plaque the association has been involved with; it was delighted to be able to express its gratitude to the people of Huddersfield. One of the *niños* who had been there, Giordano Diaz who now lives in London, was to have performed the unveiling but unfortunately due to ill health he was unable to attend, but his nephew and great nephew acted on his behalf.

NB was invited to give a paper at an international conference on Post-war Spain at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid in April.

CK was invited to assist in presenting a paper together with Universidad del País Vasco at a conference to be held in London later this year.

Since the last AGM CK, NB and Herminio Martínez have each given talks about the *niños* to local groups and the story never ceases to amaze and interest.

Treasurer's Report and Audited Accounts

Treasurer CK presented the Annual Report and Accounts for the accounting year from 1 December 2012 to 31 October 2013 (appended)

The Accounts were approved.

Election of Trustees

The meeting appointed NB and CK to continue as trustees

Election of Auditor

Tom Webb regrets that due to ill health he wished to stand down as Auditor.

Vote of thanks to Tom Webb by the Treasurer

The Association wishes to record and express its deepest gratitude to Tom for his very valuable support from the earliest days of the Association. He guided us through the financial side of running an association and initiated, organised and implemented our charitable status, with the benefits accruing from it. Throughout the years of his association with us he has been a clear head and guiding hand able to draw on his wide experiences not only with finances and auditing but also with his knowledge and expertise with various charities, including the Scouts. He has instructed the present treasurer in the ways of accounting with kindness, patience and a wicked sense of humour. His interest and passion for our association was based on his early memories of the Basque Children at Stoneham camp when he was a boy. In Tom we have always had a staunch and committed supporter who gave freely of his time and expertise without accepting any payment for his efforts. Although the onus of auditing the annual report will

shift to younger shoulders, we will of course continue to keep him informed and continue to pick his remarkable brain.
The Association owes Tom an immeasurable debt - but all we can say is -thank you!

The meeting closed at 12.30

Signed:

(Natalia Benjamin, Secretary)