

# Report and Thank Yous for the memorial to the Basque Children at Town Quay Park, Southampton. Saturday 22 October 2022

Last Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2022 in Southampton a memorial plaque and sculpture dedicated to the Basque Children who arrived there 85 years ago and the volunteers who supported them were unveiled. This was organised by BCA'37 UK and the Friends of Town Quay Park. The park is the closest park to the Port of Southampton where the *SS Habana* which had travelled from Bilbao disembarked the 4,000 passengers who were refugees from the Spanish Civil War 1936 to 1937 - the children, the teachers, the auxiliaries and the priests. (See press reports and photos from the BBC, the Daily Echo, and *el Correo Vasco*)

The two ends of the children's journey to safety are now marked by memorials. The departure point at the Santurtzi port of Bilbao and the arrival point at Town Quay port of Southampton now mark this journey.

The event on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2022 was attended by two of the children Paulina and Josefina, by their families, by the 9 families of 32 of the other 3862 children.

For this event the BCA37UK thanks the following

The Basque government who very generously assumed the costs of the manufacture of the memorial tablet and the installation of it and the sculpture and W Cornish and son who made it. *Thank you.*

Maite Pinto who donated her engravings *Habana* and *Together*. *Thank you.*

Anthony D Padgett who donated his sculpture *Picasso's Guernica Dove*. *Thank you*

The Association for the Basque Children of the UK (BCA37UK) who underwrote the unveiling ceremony. *Thank you.*

Roger Townsend and the Friends of Town Quay Park who were the Association's partner in this memorial project. *Thank you.*

The Association for the Basque Children of the UK / Euskadi (BCA37UK / E who enabled the discussions with the Basque Government. *Thank you.*

Our family guests who made the day very special. *Thank you.*

Our guests representing the people of Spain, the people of the Basque Country, the people of Southampton, the people of Eastleigh: HE Juan Pascal Marco, Sr. Ibon Mendibelzua, Lord Mayor Councillor Jacque Rayment, Mayor Councillor Adam Manning. *Thank you.*

Our guests Alan Lloyd of the IBMT and Mark Courtice of the SWVG. *Thank you.*

And finally María Tsedik who spoke on behalf of Ukrainian refugees in Southampton and those affected by war in Ukraine. *Thank you.*

The seven speakers spoke of their pride in their citizens who had supported the Basque Children and how the partnership of countries would see that Ukraine returned once more to peace. The support for the innocent victims of war particularly children, women and the elderly were remembered from the children of 1937 to those of today.

Flowers in memory of the children, the teachers, the auxiliaries and the priests were laid by family members.

The BCA37UK and the BCA37UK / E remember the children and their supporters in 1937, give our thanks to the government's of Spain and the Basque Country, the city of Southampton and the Borough of Eastleigh, and express our solidarity with all refugees today.

Simon Martinez  
Trustee BCA37UK