

Another Blue Plaque Unveiled!

by Carmen Coupland

It was a cold and windy day on Sunday 12 October. IBMT members, TUC representatives and BC'37AUK members gathered at Mall Park House for the unveiling of a blue plaque, funded by trade union branches and individuals in Dundee. Mike Arnott introduced the proceedings, followed by Natalia Benjamin, who after recounting the work of the BC'37AUK, described the children's arrival in Scotland. She read a letter from Bilbao, from *niña* Bene Gonzalez, full of gratitude for the warmth she had been shown while living at the colony.

“This”, said Mike Weir MP,” was a story of help being given to people in desperate times”. Fedrerico Palomera, Spanish Consul in Edinburgh, spoke on behalf of the people of Spain and in the spirit of the law of *La recuperación de la memoria histórica*, thanked the people of Montrose for their kindness, saying, “innocence is always the first casualty of war.”

Then the Honourable Ruth Melville, Provost of Angus and Tom Boland, son of a *niña* who had been at Mall Park House, unveiled the plaque. The poignant story of Tom's mother, Encarnación Benavente, touched our hearts. She was almost 14 when she arrived in Montrose, so work was found for her in Dundee. In 1941 she married a local man. Tragedy struck on 6 September 1944: Encarna died of tuberculosis when Tom was just two years old.

After this moving event, refreshments were provided by Angus Town Council. We left knowing that the story of the *niños* lives on.