



## RIDE BY THE NATIONAL CLARION CYCLING CLUB 1895. JULY 30TH TO AUGUST 19TH 2008

The National Clarion Cycling Club 1895 will be re-enacting a bicycle ride made by two members (Ted Ward and Geoff Jackson) in May 1938 to raise money for the victims of the Spanish Civil War. The proposed ride has its roots in the 1936 Barcelona Workers' Olympiad whose aim was 'giving a lead to youth to suppress fascism and war'. Jack Taylor, a Clarion member from Glasgow was picked to lead a team of five cyclists at the Olympiad. Unfortunately the Games never took place as Franco attacked the Republic the day the cyclists arrived in Barcelona. One member of the original cycle team was Geoffrey Jackson who two years later on the 7th May (1938) departed from Glasgow with a Clarion comrade Ted Ward (both members of Kinning Park (Glasgow) Section of the National Clarion Cycling Club) on a fund raising ride to Barcelona. Their aim was to collect money from sympathisers with the Spanish Republican Government, and with the money to buy food for the women and children of Spain. They hoped to raise about £70; in fact they raised over £300.

Ray Cox (killed at Boadilla in December 1936) and Roy Watts (killed on the Ebro 1938) were two Clarion Cycling Club members who died in Spain whilst serving with the International Brigades, and the new banner commissioned by the Clarion Cycling Club commemorating their memory will be taken on the ride to be displayed at the various International Brigade memorials where the group hope to stop at on

the way to raise awareness of the International Brigade Memorial Trust ([www.international-brigades.org.uk](http://www.international-brigades.org.uk)). Fourteen cyclists including Catalan and Spanish riders will be visiting a number of towns and cities from Glasgow to Portsmouth between July 30th and August 19th 2008 to publicise the 70th anniversary of the original ride and the International Brigade Memorial Trust. The ride will be accompanied by a Clarion propaganda van selling literature relating to the Spanish Civil War and the riders hope to carry fraternal greetings from the mayors of various towns en route to the mayor of Barcelona.

### The Banner.

Accompanying the cyclists will be the recently produced "Memorial Marching Banner" to commemorate the deaths of two Clarion Cycling Club members who died whilst serving with the International Brigades.



**Raymond Arthur Cox** was working as a clerk with a building contractor in Southampton at the time the fascists launched their cowardly attack on the democratically elected government of Spain. He immediately gave up his job and at his own expense travelled to Spain to offer his services to the Republican Government. Before leaving he told his widowed mother and his elder brother that he had felt the call to go and assist the Spanish people in their fight for liberty. He wrote

*"I believe that by fighting for the Spanish Government against the forces of Fascism I shall be helping to preserve peace throughout Europe, because if the Spanish Government wins the war it will mean that a European conflict will be further off"*

Activated by that ideal Roy Cox fought and died. He was an active member of the Shop Assistant's Union and a delegate to Southampton Trades' Council. He was a founder member of the Southampton Section of the National Clarion Cycling Club and Secretary of the London and Southern Counties Union of the National Clarion Cycling Clubs.

Ray (known as "Tommy" to his Club mates) was among the first to volunteer in September 1936 and was one of the first to die on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1936 when he was mortally wounded during the heroic defense of Madrid. He was aged just 22 years old.

**Roy Watts** was employed as a furniture salesman with the Co-Op, firstly in Portsmouth and then later in Leicester. As a member of the Communist Party and Shop Assistants' Union he regularly addressed open air meetings on Southsea Front. He was also chairman of the Portsmouth and District National Clarion Cycling Club and one of its most popular members. Writing to a group of friends shortly before his death he wrote:

*"I am happy and proud to place my services with the workers of Spain in their heroic fight against the bestialities of Fascism; we have nothing in common with the outlook of the Fascists who glorify death as their ideal. We love life, but because we love it we do not begrudge giving it in order to save humanity from the enemies of life. Many of our best comrades have already fallen and we do not hide the bitter pain of their loss but their deaths call not for mourning but for action"*.

Roy Watts was killed on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1938 when a fascist plane scored a direct hit on his position during the Ebro Offensive. He was 23 years old.