



## CHANGES TO THE ASSOCIATION

### A letter from the committee March 2013

#### Dear members

In February of this year we held our AGM, and, as we outlined in our previous letter to you, we proposed several major changes to the structure and organisation of the Association. These were fully discussed with those at the meeting and were approved unanimously.

The changes will come into effect on May 22nd 2013, the end of our current membership year.

As this will be our last personal letter to you, we would like to explain those changes and how they will affect you.

This is necessarily going to be a long letter, so we will split it into sections:

1. What are we still doing?
2. What happens to the Newsletter? How can I find out what is going on?
3. What happens to the membership payments? What do I do if I pay by standing order?
4. Can I still make a donation to the Association?
5. Will there be any more AGMs?
6. Reduction to the price of our book, DVD and CD.
7. What have we achieved so far?

#### 1. What are we still doing?

We will continue with the bulk of our work which is: archiving; educating through talks and exhibitions; erecting Blue Plaques; acting as a focus of information for research and putting *niños de la guerra* in touch with others who were in the same colonies.

We will continue to **collect and archive** testimonies and materials of the period and to move these archives to the University of Southampton. There they will be readily available to *niños* and their descendants and to anyone interested in researching this subject.

Please consider donating or bequeathing your archives to us.

We will continue **educating**: through our website; giving talks and mounting exhibitions.

We will continue to act as a focus for those interested in **research** on this topic both here and abroad.

We will continue to erect **Blue Plaques** on buildings that were used as colonies.

We will continue to help those *niños* who came to Britain to make **contact** with others who were in the same colonies, and to help families find out more about their forefather's experiences.

#### 2. What happens to the Newsletter? How can I find out what is going on? Can I submit articles, photos etc for the website?

We will stop publishing the twice-yearly Newsletter- all articles and information about events will go straight onto the website.

You can find out what is going on, what is coming up and read new articles by visiting our website:  
**www.basquechildren.org**

We have been running a successful website for several years now. This has recently been updated and improved, and will now act as our main source of information. All the existing Newsletters are available on the website.

We realise that not all of you have or use a computer, so we intend to publish a Newsletter at the beginning of every year, starting from 2014, that will contain a report, and edited versions of all articles put on the web over the previous year. If you are interested in receiving it, then you should send your name and address to Natalia in January of each year, together with £5 to cover printing and p&p.

#### Can I submit articles, photos etc for the website?

Yes, please do! Send written memories, articles, photos, artefacts - anything about the colonies, *niños*, *maestras*, *señoritas*, British volunteers - anything to do with the British involvement. Send your material by email or by letter to Gerald Hoare, Natalia Benjamin or Carmen Kilner. (see addresses below).



### 3. What happens to the membership payments? What do I do if I pay by standing order?

We have stopped having a membership and subscriptions: this is the biggest change we have made to the Association.

Running the membership side was very labour intensive and time consuming. The main benefit of membership was receiving the Newsletter, which we have stopped as explained in the section above. The cost of membership essentially covered the costs of printing, packing and posting the Newsletter and other mailings.

We will continue to collect information, articles, book reviews and notification of events for the website, but we will no longer keep membership lists or send out anything by mail.

#### What do I do if I pay by standing order?

Many of you pay by standing order or by direct payment through your bank. **If there is a red sticker at the top of this letter, then this means you DO MAKE PAYMENTS through the bank, and should act as soon as possible to cancel your payment - simply ask your bank to stop the payments.**

### 4. Can I still make a donation to the Association?

Yes, please do! Some members have already kindly said that they would like to continue donating to the Association's future work. In this case, donations can be made by bank transfer, internet or standing order directly to;

#### The Co-operative Bank

Sort Code 08 - 29 - 99

Acct Name Basque Children of '37 Association UK

Acct No 65336502

Please add **your name** and **'donation'** in the section marked 'reference'.

Or, send a cheque made out to BC'37A UK to Carmen Kilner (address below).

Please note that we are closing our account with the BBVA and continuing only with the Co-operative Bank. Any monies you pay to the BBVA will not be accepted by the bank.

We will continue having charitable status and continue to submit our audited annual accounts to the Charities Commission. These can be inspected online at: **[www.charity-commission.gov.uk](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk)**. We will no longer be claiming Gift Aid, another very laborious process!

### 5. Will there be any more AGMs?

No, they are not necessary as we will no longer have a general membership; this also means there will be no committee from May 22nd 2013.

However, at the last AGM in February there was a request to continue the Annual Lunch of the Association, with the suggestion that this could be organised in different parts of the country by interested parties. Please let us know if you would like to plan one in your area. When and if these are organised, they will be advertised on the website.

### 6. Reduction to the price of our book, DVD and CD.

It has been agreed both with our auditor, Tom Webb, and at the AGM, that from the end of the current membership year, i.e. from May 22nd 2013, we will be reducing the price of our goods by approximately 50%. For example, "Recuerdos" will now be reduced to £8, the DVD "The Guernica Children" will cost £7.50 and the CD "Songs of the Basque Children" will cost £5.00.

Please note that we can only reduce the price of items that are specifically produced by the Association, i.e. "Only For Three Months" by Adrian Bell, and other items, are not reduced.

### 7. What have we achieved so far?

We set up the Association in 2002, which, it seems hard to believe, is now over ten years ago. This is perhaps a good point for us to take stock and review our progress.

When we started, we were aware that the story of the evacuation of the *niños vascos* was largely unknown. Foremost of our aims was to preserve the memory of the *niños'* experience and subsequent life in Britain for their descendants and future generations. To this end we have encouraged the collection and preservation of archival material for historical and educational purposes, and facilitated and supported research.

Another of our aims has been the erection of dedicated plaques to commemorate where the *niños'* stayed in this country. To date, eight plaques have been unveiled; the ceremony brings together not only some of the *niños* and their families, but also remembers those British people who were involved. The wording on the plaque thanks these volunteers who gave so freely of their time to look after the children.

In keeping with our aims regarding the educational aspect of the *niños'* story, we instigated an annual lecture, held in London, and were very fortunate in securing the participation of top level historians Tom Buchanan, Paul Preston, Nicholas Rankin and Richard Baxell.



Furthermore, members have presented papers at international conferences and regularly given talks at all levels, ranging from primary schools to local history societies, universities and U3A groups. Talks have also been given in Euskadi to schoolchildren who were quite unaware of the odyssey of the Basque children in 1937.

As a starting point, to help researchers in the field, we have produced a bibliography. So far three PhDs and five MA theses, and also five undergraduate dissertations have been written and copies presented to the Association.

Concerned that so little material was written in Spanish about the Basque children's coming to Britain, the Association was pleased to pay for the translation into Spanish of Adrian Bell's seminal book "Only For Three Months" which had been published in 1996. Similarly, the Association paid for Steve Bowles' film "The Guernica Children" to be dubbed into Spanish. We are confident that both those works now reach a much wider audience.

During the ten years of our existence, four books have been published by members. Two of them, edited by Natalia, "Recuerdos" and "Memorias", are bi-lingual and contain the testimonies of some seventy *niños*. Peter O'Brien wrote "A Suitable Climate" about the Hutton Hall colony and Hywel Davies' book "Fleeing Franco" is the story of the Basque children in Wales.

The Association has also been involved in several television documentaries and radio programmes, both in Britain and Spain. Interest in the topic does not wane: in the second half of 2012 alone, there were two documentaries on the radio about the *niños*.

Using archival material we have been given, we have been able to create 40 display panels of photographs and newspaper reports mostly featuring the different colonies. We have used these panel successfully for several exhibitions. Thanks to a grant from the Spanish government, half of these display panels have been digitised: we hope to digitise the remaining half.

We have produced seventeen Newsletters as well as a special edition in Spanish, consisting of a selection of forty articles.

One of our members, who is a keen philatelist, arranged for the issue of several sets of smilers (commemorative stamps); these have become collectors' items and have raised over £2,000 for the Association.

Among the social events organised by the Association, apart from the Annual Lunch after the AGM, have been visits to former colonies and the organisation of two events, both held at Southampton, to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the *niños*' arrival in Britain. These were very happy and successful events, with 250 guests present, many of them meeting up for the first time in years. We were also pleased to welcome representatives of the Basque and Spanish governments and local dignitaries from Southampton and Eastleigh. We were fortunate in securing generous grants from the Basque and Spanish governments.

A CD "Songs of the Basque Children", was produced from the songbook which was used in the late 1930s when the children went round the country putting on concerts to raise money for their upkeep.

Another CD was recently made by the na-mara duo, one of whom is the son of a *niño*, including the poignant lead song "Solo por tres meses".

So all in all, we cannot be said to have been inactive! Our mission that the story of the Basque children should become better known is becoming a reality and the Basque children are no longer "*los olvidados*" of the Spanish Civil War. While there still remain many areas which need further research, we feel that most of the objectives we set ourselves ten years ago when we founded the Association have been met and that a solid foundation for future research and knowledge of the topic has been laid.

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Natalia and Carmen remain as the two trustees and acting members of the association.

All who wish to become involved with any of the activities outlined above will be welcome to help in future on a more informal and ad hoc basis.

The changes we have outlined above will reduce the administrative costs to a minimum, allowing us to use the remaining funds to continue our work.



We have been very fortunate to have received the unstinting support and help of several members who are not on the committee, many of whom have expressed the intention to continue their work.

We would like to take this opportunity to recognise and thank them (names are in alphabetical order):

**Tony Armolea** - running the British branch of our shop  
**Adrian Bell** - formatting the Newsletter  
**Willie Black** - currently running the website together with Gerald Hoare  
**Ma Carmen Coupland** - current membership secretary  
**Bernardo Fernández** - guiding us through Spanish protocols and assisting with grant applications in the early days of the Association  
**Alfonso Guilló** - running the Spanish branch of the shop  
**Gerald Hoare** - former membership secretary and currently editing articles for the website  
**Joe Kilner** - setting up the original website and giving technical assistance  
**Cliff Kirkpatrick** - producing, organising and selling the smilers  
**Chris Woolgar** – being instrumental in setting up our archive at the University of Southampton

Very special thanks also go to our Honorary Auditor **Tom Webb** who has held out a guiding hand throughout our financial life and whose great experience of accounting and knowledge of the law relating to charities has enabled us to become both a Registered Charity and a solvent association.

We would also like to thank our Honorary President **Helvecia Hidalgo** : her meticulous and systematic recording of the whereabouts of the Basque children in Britain provided us with the details needed to establish the original membership and set up the Association.

To all these, and to **all of you** who have helped the Basque Children of '37 Association UK either with your time, effort, money or in any way, we send a big **THANK YOU** and hope that your support will continue. We are not going away, just changing how we organise things to reflect changing resources.

Please keep in touch.

**With best wishes to you all,**

**The Committee**  
**Manuel Moreno, Natalia Benjamin, Carmen Kilner,**  
**Herminio Martínez, John Kilner**

#### Names and contact details of BC'37A UK

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