



Newsletter

Basque Children of '37 Association UK



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News

Asociation Annual Lecture Nick Rankin: 'George Steer, the War in the Basque country and the Basque refugee children'

by Pauline Fraser

The third annual Basque Children of '37 UK lecture took place in London on October 15th at the Lecture Theatre of the Kensington and Chelsea Public Library.

Author of *Telegram from Guernica*, which is an account of George Steer's own intense "Boy's Own" style life, Nick Rankin's brief for the lecture was to focus on Steer's part in telling the world that a horrific war crime had been committed by the fascist powers against the defenceless little market town of Guernica.

Since writing *Telegram from Guernica*, which has been published in 2003, Nick Rankin has learnt more about how George Steer got the news of the horror of Guernica out to an incredulous world. His account had us gripping the edge of our chairs: Nick Rankin the author showed that he could also deliver an engrossing lecture leavened by shafts of wit.

George Steer was a man who took risks, perhaps even more so during his time in Spain, as he was still mourning the tragic loss of his first wife and child. As a journalist, he risked his reputation by producing a report for *The Times* – when he was not even an accredited journalist with that paper – that ran counter to the received information from other sources. He sent a telegram directly to the MP Philip Noel-Baker, asking him to use it to alert Lloyd George

and Anthony Eden. It was these actions that led to a debate in Parliament and so out to a stunned world.

The sheer daring, confidence and conviction of the 27-year-old reporter is stunning, especially so in today's world, when that independence and desire to get the truth out to the world seems to often to have been lost by a profession that has been mired in scandal or docilely embedded with imperialist armies hell-bent on inflicting war on innocent civilians.

George Steer's life was cut tragically short at the age of 35 in a road accident in India at the end of December 1944 while serving with the armed forces, having swapped his mighty pen for the sword that he felt he must now take up when the whole world faced the fascist threat. His son by his second marriage, George Steer junior, who could barely remember his father, was in the audience, and this added poignancy to the occasion.

Nick Rankin explained how ministers in the Basque Republican Government were desperate to get the children evacuated before the fall of Bilbao. However, I felt that Nick Rankin did some disservice to Leah Manning, the Labour MP and educator, who fought tirelessly to bring some of the children to Britain, when he described her as "a busybody".

We are, naturally, accustomed to focus on the 4,000 children who were evacuated to Britain in July 1937 aboard the *Habana*, but we learnt, during the lecture how extensive the evacuation of the children actually was.

The Basque Government wanted 150,000 children to be evacuated, but in the event, the total was much less: some 33,000. France, as the nearest neighbour, took 20,000 and Belgium 5,000, with the remainder, apart from the 4,000 taken to Britain, going to the Soviet Union and Mexico. It took thirty ships making seventy trips between

them to complete the evacuation.

There was some discussion with the audience about the treatment of *niños* who were evacuated to the Soviet Union. Members of the audience pointed out what good care was taken of the children, and how many of them benefited from a first-class education and went on to train for careers in many fields where they played a leading part.

Some other recently-published books were referred to, notably *Franco's Friends* by Peter Day, and James Cable's *The Royal Navy and the Siege of Bilbao*.

Nick Rankin's gripping lecture formed the basis for a stimulating and informative afternoon.



Nick Rankin, author of *Telegram from Guernica*

From the Editor

I apologise for the lateness of this Newsletter. It was in fact nearly ready by the end of December, but then the preparation for our magnificent event commemorating the 75th anniversary of the *niños*' arrival took over. Pressure of work from that meant that I had no time to think of anything else. Please do write giving me your impressions of the 12 May event. We would like to know what you thought of it. If we have enough copy, we will make a special edition of the Newsletter about it. I would very much like to receive copies

of photos you took for the archives. We are having a DVD made of the whole event and this will be available to buy.

In the meantime, Carmen and I are recovering! I wish you all a good summer. Let's hope we have some better weather.
Agur

Natalia Benjamin

Natalia

Spanish Civil War Project

by Helen Ford

The Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick is currently engaged in a project to digitize the files relating to the Spanish Civil War held within the archives of the TUC. This amounts to nearly 50 files and encompasses letters, reports, committee minutes, pamphlets, memoranda and propaganda material produced by members of the British and Spanish governments; political groups; international, British and Spanish trade unions; pressure groups, aid organisations, and other interested parties. The papers add up to over 11,000 items so far.

The results of the scanning will be made available on the internet and will be a fully searchable resource, comprising both images and texts of all the items within the files. For instance, it will be possible to find all the letters written by Juan Negrín or Wilfrid Roberts within the collection.

The files cover the Spanish political situation in the lead up to the war, the Spanish Rebellion, Spanish refugees and the International Solidarity Fund for the Relief of Workers in Spain, Medical Aid and Spanish seamen in British ports. Details of all the files can be seen on the website along with more information about the project: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/news/scw/files>.

We are using optical character recognition (OCR) software to "read" the images and convert them into text files. Unfortunately OCR does not recognise handwriting and can struggle to accurately read 1930s printed or typescript text. We therefore have to go through and correct every OCR text file to ensure that it is an accurate

transcription of the original document.

On top of this, there is the copyright issue. Before we can publish this material on the internet we need to try to locate the copyright owners. This is a huge task because according to UK copyright law, individual intellectual ownership of a "literary work" doesn't expire until 70 years after the creators' death. Many of the archives being digitised are therefore still in copyright. We are asking for the help of members of the public to identify current copyright owners (for example, descendants of individual authors). Lists of the individuals and organizations who wrote or issued the documents in the TUC files are now online so please contact us if you think that you may be the current copyright owner.

We are aiming to complete the project in spring of 2012

Letter from the Spanish Consul in Edinburgh

The following letter written by the Spanish Consul in Edinburgh appeared in the September 2011 edition of *Carta de España*

Desde el inicio de mi carera en el año 1973, como responsable entre otras cosas, de los Asuntos Consulares en la Embajada de España en El Cairo, hasta hoy, y especialmente durante todos mis distintos destinos de Cónsul General, en Houston, Nador, Larache, Teután y ahora Edinburgo, he sido asiduo lector de esa prestigiosa e histórica publicación.

Mas de una vez, he remitido breves sueltos comunicando alguna noticia de interés merecedora de ser recogida en sus páginas tan seguidas por nuestra siempre ingente emigración española en el exterior.

Procedo a seguir con esta costumbre desde este detino al que me incorporé hace un año, adjuntándoles una fotografía del acto de la entrega de su nuevo pasaporte español a Dr Carmen Coupland Dueñas, que ha recuperado la nacionalidad española de origen en base a lo previsto en la Disposición Adicional 7ª de la Ley de la Memoria Histórica, 52/2007. Carmen es hija de una de las "niñas de la guerra" que procedentes del País Vasco, (su nombre figura en la interesante obra *Niños vascos evacuados a Gran Bretaña, 1937-1940*, de Gregorio Arrien), pasaron a vivir durante nuestra Guerra Civil en el Reino Unido, donde muchos terminaron integrándose desde un punto de vista familiar, social y profesional.

Carmen es en la actualidad la Secretaria para Socios de la "Asociación británica de Niños de la Guerra", ("The Basque Children of 1937 Association UK"), de reconocido prestigio por sus múltiples iniciativas en todo lo que tiene que ver con el recuerdo de la Historia de España y sus lazos en el Reino Unido.

Con mi agradecimiento, les envío un cordial saludo.

Javier Jiménez-Urgate, Consul General de España en Edinburgo.



Dr Carmen Coupland Dueñas with the Spanish Consul, Javier Jiménez-Urgate

News

Recepción anual del ejecutivo vasco para residentes vascos en el extranjero

Varios cientos de personas, incluso Herminio Martínez con un grupo de vascos que trabajan y residen en el extranjero, fueron invitados el 26 de diciembre a una recepción oficial en Lehendakari para la entrega del premio de Cooperación al Desarrollo. El acto se celebró en la sede de la Presidencia vasca de Vitoria. El Lehendakari Patxi López dijo que estaba convencido que "el fin de ETA" podía provocar todo un cambio para Euskadi. La recepción tuvo un importante componente de reconocimiento a la trayectoria de los cooperantes y las organizaciones no gubernamentales vascas. "Sois los mejores embajadores de Euskadi en el exterior; sois el mejor cuerpo diplomático que puede tener un país", enfatizó el Lehendakari. Dos meses después de que la banda anunciase el cese definitivo de su actividad, el Lehendakari destacó que "con el fin de ETA, no sólo hemos salido de una etapa negra de nuestra historia, sino que hemos liberado energías para dar un salto adelante en nuestra proyección internacional."



Herminio Martínez with Patxi López

IMSERSO – El 25 aniversario del Programa de Vacaciones para Personas Mayores

El objetivo de Programa de Vacaciones gestionado por el Imsero es de facilitar a las personas mayores unos días de vacaciones a precios asequibles. Además, el programa tiene también el objetivo de estimular la creación y el mantenimiento de empleo en el sector turístico, hotelero y afines en temporada baja.

El Programa se inició en la temporada 1985/1986 con 16,000 plazas y dos puntos de destino: Palma de Mallorca y Benidorm. Con los años este Programa se ha consolidado como un logro del Estado de Bienestar. De hecho, el programa de Vacaciones cuenta con un índice de satisfacción de los usuarios y usuarias del 92%, y una intención expresa de volver a viajar con él del 97% de quienes ya lo han hecho. A este alto

nivel de aceptación responde al aumento en la evolución de las plazas. .

Cuatro años después de su inicio, el Programa se extendió a las personas mayores españolas residentes en Europa, al principio 2,500 plazas para residentes en Bélgica, Holanda y Francia. Hoy participan los residentes en 15 países europeos, Iberoamérica, Norteamérica, Norte de América y Australia.

En la actualidad este Programa sostiene más de 105,000 puestos de trabajo, cuenta con más de 1,000,000 de plazas y se extiende por toda España. Se fueron incorporando zonas de destino y nuevas modalidades de viaje. Ya no solo son turnos de vacaciones, sino que coincidiendo con las nuevas necesidades y demandas de las personas mayores, el programa ofrece viajes culturales; turismo de naturaleza e intercambios internacionales con Portugal y Andorra.

La Ministra de Sanidad, Política Social e Igualdad, Leire Pajín, presidió en Benidorm, el acto conmemorativo del 25 aniversario del Programa de Vacaciones para personas mayores gestionado por el Imsero.

En esta conmemoración, la ministra destacó en su intervención que, a 25 años de su puesta en marcha, "las cifras avalan la retabilidad económica y social del programa de vacaciones, ya que es un yacimiento de empleo sólido, que ha generado más de 105,000 empleos la pasada temporada. Es también rentable

por su coste zero, pues hasta el último euro invertido por el estado se recupera de forma indirecta; y es asimismo rentable por su capacidad de apoyar la economía local."

Entre las principales líneas de actuación del Ministerio de la Sanidad, Política Social e Igualdad se encuentra la de llevar a cabo programas de envejecimiento activo y saludable que proporcionen a las personas mayores una mejor calidad de vida. Este programa "ha contribuido a crear un ocio en igualdad para hombres y mujeres" precisó la ministra Pajín "ya que la mayoría de éstas no se jubilan nunca de las tareas domésticas, a pesar de que compartan su vida con un hombre jubilado y ellas mismas sean trabajadoras jubiladas."

"Goodbye Barcelona"

by Pauline Fraser

"Goodbye Barcelona", which was supported by the IBMT, opened to a full house for its grand Gala Night at the Arcola Theatre on 24 November last year. The Arcola adjoins Ridley Road market, in London's East End, scene of many past battles against the fascists.

Script by Judith Johnson, with lyrics and music by Karl Lewkovicz, the musical had been in the making for some six years. Karl invited members of the IBMT

to come to performances, and give their comments, as the musical took shape over time.

To use the story of the International Brigaders as the theme for a musical was daring and ambitious, but the final production was a vindication. Karl and Judith assembled a superb cast of performers, all gifted actors and singers. The songs were a delight to the ear and the production was pacy. "Goodbye Barcelona" received rave reviews in both newspapers and specialist magazines.

Brigade veteran David Lomon, 93, was guest of honour. He was delighted with the performance, which to some extent mirrors his own story: the young hero is a Jewish East Ender who cut his teeth at Cable Street and sees fighting fascism on the streets of London and Madrid as one and the same battle.

After the performance, there was a Q & A session with historians Prof. Paul Preston and Richard Baxell.

Sadly, "Goodbye Barcelona" ended its run at the Arcola on December 23. It deserves to be performed more widely around the country. It would whet the appetite of those new to the history of the International Brigades, while providing them with top-class entertainment.

Spanish edition of 'Only for Three Months'

A translation (by Toni Fernández) of Adrian Bell's book *Only for Three Months* has been published in Spain by Plataforma Editorial. The book was launched at Elkar's bookshop in Bilbao in December. The following day Adrian and Herminio Martínez had a round of interviews with various Basque newspapers and the local Bilbao radio station.



Donation of Painting by Koke Martínez to Kezka Dantza Taldea

On 14 November 2011 an event was held at the Casa de la Cultura Portalea of Eibar to mark the donation of a painting by Koke Martínez (Jose María Martínez) to Kezka Dantza Taldea. Carmen Kilner was there to represent the Basque Children of '37 Association UK and to say a few words about Koke.

Born in Cabredo, Navarra, in 1926, Koke was one of the 4.000 Basque children who was evacuated to Great Britain in 1937 and spent all his life in Britain. He held his first exhibition at the age of 20 in the Archer Galley at Notting Hill Gate

The painting that was donated was called "Balletomania en repos", painted in 1923, when Koke would go to the studios of the Royal Ballet Company in London to watch his friend and fellow exile, Pirmin Trecu, practise.



Below is a report to the Juan Luis Vives Trust by the Principal of Croydon School of Art where both Koke and Careles Martínez studied.

Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture by Jose Martinez & Caereles Martinez held at the "Archer Gallery", London, in November 1946

These two gifted young artists have been holding their first important exhibition of work at the Archer Gallery, London, during the month of November 1940.

Their work would certainly shock many of the die-hards even of their own country but let us hope that the shock would be useful to jerk them into an awareness of what is happening not only on the political field but also in matters of Art and Culture.(...)

The young people of today are showing very much more initiative and resource than their immediate contemporaries for they have lived through a war and at a rate which the normal individual does not dare to contemplate. These two young Basque artists have actually lived through two wars and have known only war conditions for the greater part of their lives.

They are fearless in their approach, they disregard convention of the narrower degree and state boldly and with conviction just what they feel and know to be concerned with the fundamentals of present-day endeavour and thought. (...)

Caereles and Coque are young but their future is assured; let us hope they will go on from one success to another and win regard and renown not only for themselves but also for the others of their race who were roughly uprooted from normal life and thrust into the life of a strange society.

F.Hinchliffe
Principal
Croydon School of Arts and Crafts

(from Bulletin No 3, (1946) of the Juan Luis Vives Scholarship Trust)

Talks given

“Hear voices from a far distance”* The news, *niños vascos* and *brigadistas* in south east London

by Andy Brockman

This article is a summary of a talk given at the Marx Memorial Library on 12 December 2012 as part of their programme marking the 75th anniversary of the start of the Spanish Civil War.

As in 1937, issues of intervention in foreign civil conflicts and the response of government and civil society to refugees are still very much alive and often driven by intimate coverage of conflicts in real time on the 24 hour news media. Comparing those responses in 1937 and the response to foreign disasters and civil war today, we can say that the Spanish Civil War was the first conflict to receive the kind of intimate, almost real time, picture led reporting which is commonplace today. Equally, media coverage shaped and arguably often drove, political and popular responses to conflict in something also very close to real time, a factor which remains in play to the discomfort of politicians and civil servants trying to manage both long term policy and short term crisis.

In the first half of 1937 the carefully-framed government policy which came under pressure from media informed public opinion was non-intervention and the short term crisis was the fallout from the bombing of Guernika by the Condor Legion on 25 April and the imminent fall of Bilbao as the front collapsed under the pressure of General Mola's offensive.

In April and May 1937 a new combination of the visual and written media, utilising new technologies such as the international telephone and radio link, airmail, and the 35mm compact camera in the hands of the first generation of front line photojournalists like Robert Capa and Gerda Taro, responded to events in a way which reached a global audience with an previously impossible immediacy. The coverage of this new style of journalism was of immediately recognisable victims of a new concept :

total war, including women and children. This had the effect of both humanising previously abstract foreign entanglements, while telling the audience about them so they were able “to do something.”

This immediacy provoked and guided both a short term humanitarian response – exemplified by the treatment of the *niños vascos* and at the same time re-wrote the script for the popular governmental and cultural responses to war and disaster. To anyone with any political awareness, a less heart-warming feeling might also have been invoked: the victims in the pages of *Picture Post* or on newsreels were people “like us,” living in cities “like ours”- for Madrid and Guernica, read London and Coventry.

I have been examining how the community in south-east London received news from Spain and how it responded to it through political activism, volunteering for service in Spain and by accommodating 20 Basque children, including the three Trecu siblings, Pirmin, Elisabete and Lore, and by humanitarian activism the two Uribe brothers Iñaki and Koldo, at the Shornells Conference Centre, owned by the Woolwich Arsenal Cooperative Society.

From the local press, it is clear that there was an existing network of activists informed by speakers, discussions, film and slide shows, promoted by the Trades Unions and Communist Party of Great Britain amongst others, as well as the efforts of non-interventionists and Franco sympathisers. However, there is an increase in the amount of coverage after the bombing of Guernika and responses which reference that event.

By early May Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden was being forced to respond in Cabinet to public opinion driven by news from Guernika and mistakenly to discount the press campaign and talk of 4,000 child refugees as designed to generate money for Basque Children's Committee. Evidence at local level from Woolwich, shows the popular effort to help the Spanish people and Basque children in particular, was driven by inescapable evidence of injustice and need, disseminated by the mass media.

A persuasively similar modern equivalent is Michael Buerk's famous BBC News reports on the Ethiopian Famine which first aired on 23 October 1984. By 7 December 1984 the song “Do they know it's Christmas,” had been released by Band Aid and the public was energised into supporting a famine relief effort which continues to this day through the various branded “Aid” streams such

as Live Aid and its off shoots such as Comic Relief.

It is appropriate to end with Picasso's “Guernica,” the mighty cultural statement about one event which has become an iconic image of war and the cruelty of war. Commissioned to do a painting for the Spanish pavillion at the Paris Exposition, Picasso first read about the events in Guernica in *L'Humanité* on 29 April. On 1 May he began a new canvas which was ready for public viewing on 11 July. Often forgotten at the top of the painting is a single light bulb - symbolic both of the technology which brought about the conflagration that April afternoon, but perhaps also of the technology which ensured the event would be illuminated while the ashes were still hot and not be forgotten or kept secret and shrouded by lies.

*The title is from a line in the poem “Badajoz to Dorset August 1936” by Valentine Ackland.

More Talks given

Herminio Martinez gave a talk on 15 August 2011 for the BBC World Service on “Child Evacuees of the Spanish Civil War”. It has subsequently been broadcast several times.

Carmen Kilner gave a series of talks in the Basque Country during the autumn about the Basque children and her mother and her mother's experiences as a *maestra*. On 13 October at the Ikastola Arizmendi at Arrasate, on 14 October at the Ikastola Arizmendi at Eskoriatza, on 28 October in the Instituto at Elgoibar and on 30 November at the Department of Modern Languages, State University of New York, Oswego, New York State.

Natalia Benjamin gave two talks in Oxford at the end of June, the first one to the refugee group in the Synagogue and the second to the University of the Third Age Botley group.

Peter O'Brien gave talks on 23 and 24 May to the Middlesbrough U3A history group and the Normanby Local History Group on the Basque children at Hutton Hall.

Features

The following three articles were all originally published in 1937

The War In Spain – A Basque boy tells his story

As part of their school work, the children housed in Street, Somerset, were asked to write essays on the war in Spain. The teacher has not taken the view that it is desirable to repress what is in their minds and emotions. Here is one of the essays. The author is Pablo Uribe, a boy of fifteen, a native of Bilbao. He belonged to the Anarchist Party.

The droning of aeroplane engines overhead, shrieking of warning sirens, bombs explode...the murderous aviators destroy the life of a loyal town. There is crying in the streets. Women run with their children clasped to their breasts. Like wild beasts, mothers crouch to defend the lives of their young. 'The black birds have come to exterminate us.'

Unfeeling tools of a worthless master, where is your conscience that you can do this to us? Do you not understand our parents' anguish when they see us running like sheep from one place to another, maddened with pain, not knowing where to flee? If we run to the bomb-proof shelters, we find them crowded to their entrances, and the bombs burst and kill us. If we throw ourselves to the ground, you swoop down and machine-gun us. Why do you make us civilians the target of your wrath? What satisfaction do you find in our sufferings?

The droning ceases. Once again the hoarse siren tells us that the black birds are gone. The daily air raid is over. Left are the bodies of age-worn men, little children, harmless women, all victims of the tragic flight. We cannot believe the stillness. Our ears still ring with the sound of bombs, and we think that somewhere in the distance another harmless town is suffering as we did. (from *The New Leader*, 20 August 1937)

To The Basque Children Who Are Returning

from a Basque boy who remains

This is to my friends who with me escaped the barbarism and murder of international Fascism, from Franco, the greatest of all monsters. The day on which you go is a sad day in

our calendar. You are going to be "repatriated"; but what sort of a country is that to which you are returning? Certainly it will not be a flourishing and prosperous province of Vizcaya. No! Unfortunately that is not what you will find. Instead you will find Fascist regimentation, a regime based on war and exploitation, and mourning in your homes.

This must lead you to think: why have we got to see his? Who forces us to go and see? These are the questions I have asked myself. And this is the answer that has forced itself on me.

Franco, the man who represents crime and treason. He is the man who is ruining the future of our country. He is the man who wanted to destroy our lives. He has killed our mothers and our brothers, and is trying to kill Spain herself. But he, let us be certain of this, will not kill our magnificent Republic, and he will not conquer the fighting spirit of our freedom-loving people.

Do not go back with the idea that you will have to be slaves of Fascism. Do not let the spectre of doubt cloud your minds. Perhaps in the not so distant future our flag will fly again in the whole of Spain, and the army of the people will carry it in triumph through the streets of Bilbao.

Do not forget you are going to the home of your enemies, of the enemies of the workers, and an enemy of the world, and of God himself. That is why you must hate him.

Do not believe his nonsensical talk, his lies which have long been exposed, nor his lying papers. Forever keep in your mind the vision of the people that rose in arms to defend itself against Fascism and of your flag which is the flag of Freedom and Humanity.

Always despise and hate Fascism and oppression and those who represent it in Spain. – Salud!

(from *The New Leader*, 24 December 1937)

Dances of the Basques

by Howard Fane (who has recently returned from the Basque Country)

In a Hampshire meadow, golden with buttercups, 4,000 Basque children have been in camp, playing and dancing in the happy care-free manner of children the world over. But these kiddies are different, for they come from a race for whom dancing is a craze, and has been for centuries. As long ago as 1659 it was said of the Basque that "a child knows how to dance before it can call its father

or nurse by name," and this is as true today as ever.

There are two main types of dances in the Basque country although there are many varieties of them – the recreational dances such as the *quadrille*, *farandole*, *aurreku*, *fandango* and *sauts*, and those of a ritual nature. The former are of comparatively recent origin, though certainly charming, graceful and picturesque.

I remember one delightful spring afternoon, the hot sun beating down on the golden tanned skins of the dancers, watching the *aurreku* in a small Guipuzcoan village. Several young men entered the circle of spectators, and their leader, or *aurreku* as he is called, sent four of them to pick the maidens of their choice from among the crowd. In a minute or two they returned each with a laughing, chattering Basque lass, before whom they danced with amazing dexterity.

Meanwhile the *atzesku* or young man who brings up the rear, and one or two others, did likewise. In a few seconds, the arena was a revolving stage of twisting, whirling couples in colourful draperies.. This scene is followed by the *aurreku* and *atzesku* taking it in turns to direct the complicated movements of the long chains.

Stranger and more interesting are the ritual dances which are only performed by a privileged few who are trained from childhood to execute the peculiar and complicated steps. Their origin is to be found in the ritual of the spring festival. The fact is that the early churches adapted them as religious dances. Of these, the sword dances of the coastal provinces of Guipuzcoa and Vizcaya performed by men only, are especially quaint to watch.

The dancers, dressed in their white shirt and trousers, sashes and espadrilles, create a vivid picture as they twist and swirl to the music of the instrument each of them plays. Preceded by a standard bearer, the men march into the arena. And at the end of the procession, seven drop on one knee, while the eighth whirls the standard round, sweeping it low over the heads of the others. These movements are then followed by the *zortziko*, the *ezpata* and *jokuo*, danced with swords..

These are perhaps the most interesting and principal dances of the Basques, but there are an infinite variety of others to attract and fascinate. One has only to see the solemnity with which many of the dances are performed to realize what a deep meaning lay behind their origin.

(from *The Carlisle Journal*, 2 July 1937)

Interview with Josefina Alvarez Savery

by James Petrie

'My father's last words to me were, "Speak English – don't waste your time".'

Josefina Savery's comfortable front room looks out on the shower swept hills of nearby Newport. The house has been her home since 1965 and Wales is where she has lived for almost 75 of her 88 years.

Petite and elegantly dressed, Josefina sits next to the gas fire. Around her, an enormous Spanish dictionary and copies of *The Guardian* offer clues to her past. However, it is her accent, a blend of Welsh with Spanish, that belies her remarkable story. Josefina was one of 4000 child refugees of the Spanish Civil War who arrived in Britain nearly 75 years ago clinging on to their parents' reassurances that their stay here would only be for 3 months. She never returned to live in Spain and she never saw her father again. The story of the children says much about the generosity of those volunteers who welcomed the children..

One of four children, brought up in Bilbao in the industrial Basque region of northern Spain, Josefina's happy childhood came to an abrupt halt on April 26th 1937 as she witnessed first hand the terrifying impact of Franco's attack on the town of Guernica. "When Guernica was bombed we could see the ambulances coming through to the hospitals. Of course they said it was the Reds who had done it...". Despite Josefina's mother being a practising Catholic, the fact that her parents were both teachers, and therefore suspiciously liberal, meant they would be vulnerable to accusations of being "Reds" themselves. Word had already travelled fast as to how mercilessly the right wing forces were dealing with those who did not share their vision of a Spain united under the flag of dictatorship.

The savagery of Guernica persuaded Josefina's parents to make the heart-breaking decision to evacuate her to England with her younger brother, Gerardo. Josefina is convinced that her parents made the right decision. "I was lucky. I would never have wanted to live in Spain under Franco".. "My father said, "I'd rather send you there than anywhere else because it's a tolerant country." But not everyone shared this tolerance, Stanley Baldwin's government requiring

a great deal of persuasion to allow 4000 children to come to England and refusing to be responsible for them financially.

On May 21st 1937 the *SS Habana* left Bilbao for Southampton. The crossing itself was a horrible experience. Josefina was fortunate enough to be allocated a bunk, ownership of which she promptly lost when she left it to get some bread and chorizo for her brother and she spent most of the time being sea sick.

On arrival at Southampton and without a word of English, Josefina and her fellow refugees were taken to the 30 acres and 500 bell tents awaiting them in North Stoneham. Gradually, the children were sent away in groups all over the country to a variety of houses. Josefina and her brother were delighted that they were going to stay together and go to Wales. "Somebody said to us, "Oh you're lucky, you're going to Wales," and the treatment we had in Wales, well it was incredible."

The children found a definite sense of kindred spirit amongst the Welsh, where a significant Spanish community already existed through the exchange of coal for iron ore between Cardiff and Bilbao. Left wing beliefs forged in the coalfields of South Wales also ensured a furious sense of outrage at Franco's brutal suppression of a democratically elected Spanish government and at the non-interventionist stance of the British political leadership. It was an outrage that provided Josefina and her fellow refugees, who came to Cambria House in Caerleon, with a very warm welcome. "It was wonderful. There were concerts and the boys had a football team, which was very good indeed."

Heeding the words of her father, Josefina picked up English quickly and one of the teachers, Miss Ward, took her to London for the day... This teacher was not the only one to recognise the potential in the young Josefina. Christopher Hill, a lecturer at Cardiff University and member of the Communist Party. Hill not only introduced Josefina to *The Guardian*, the reading of which became a life-long habit, but also suggested when she was 15 that she went to an English public school, Badminton College, as a boarder. "We were all treated the same. There were other refugees there, a German refugee became my best friend, and there were daughters of some very rich people indeed but no one was treated differently. It was a very liberal education. We had lessons on "The Progress of Civilization", which was so much more interesting than classes on people killing each other."

News of her parents began to reach Josefina. Her mother had reached Catalunya by boat, later joining the refugee exodus as it made its way over the Pyrenees and into France. Her father, meanwhile, had been identified as a Republican sympathizer, captured and taken to Santander. "From there he was taken to Gijon and, as far as we know, he was shot. He was actually tried and he was found not guilty. They used to do that, let them go and then just shoot them as they went out, which is why they can claim he tried to escape."

She became a teacher in Newport, after having won a scholarship to study English at Birmingham University, where she met Granville from South Wales who shared her passion for languages. After he returned from service in Burma, they married and settled for more than 60 years, not far from Cambria House.

Most of the children eventually returned to Spain. Around 250 remained, some still meeting up today to preserve the memory of those life-changing events and to reminisce. Many talk of a sense of being neither Spanish nor British, of not really belonging in either culture. Despite annual visits to her remaining family in Bilbao, Josefina remains adamant that she would never have wanted to live in a Franco-led Spain. "On one occasion we were walking through Bilbao when Granville put his arm round my shoulder to point something out. This policeman suddenly pointed at us and yelled, "*Moralidad!*". Well, he was my husband! No, I couldn't have stood that."

The rain starts to sweep down heavily on the steep hills outside her window, hills that share more than a passing resemblance to those that flank Bilbao. The spirit of the 15 year old girl who wrote passionate entreaties against bull fighting and who railed against the utter stupidity of war in the *Cambria House Journal* remains undiminished as she discusses recent events in Spain. Does she have any regrets at the way things turned out in the end? She pauses and smiles at the suggestion: "No, I have no regrets. I've been very happy here. I met my husband, had my children, grandchildren. I was very lucky. It's true, everybody said, when we were put on the boat, "It's only for three months", but, well, I suppose it just ended up being for a bit longer than that, that's all....."

James Petrie is a member of the Basque Children of '37 Association

BASQUE REFUGEE CHILDREN AT BURNASTON, DERBY June 1937 – January 1938

by Anne E Owen

On 21st May, 1937 the Mayor of Derby called a public meeting in the Guildhall, at which Derby decided to "adopt" 50 of the Basque refugee children who were already on their way to Southampton. A Committee for the Care of the Spanish Children was immediately appointed and an appeal for funds was launched. The Mayor at that time, Mrs Petty, Derby's first woman mayor, had helped with the Belgians who came to Derby in 1914 so was already experienced in working with refugees, and the M.P. for Derby, Philip Noel-Baker, was involved in the establishment in London of the National Committee for Spanish Relief. Moved by the sufferings of the civilian population in Spain, the people of Derby and district responded readily and donations soon began to arrive.

Burnaston House, an early 19th century residence some three miles out of Derby, had for some 30 years been the home of a boys' preparatory school. It had recently been purchased by Derby Corporation for the establishment of an airport. The house was standing empty so it was quickly secured by the Mayor's Committee to accommodate the Basque children. Gifts of furniture and equipment poured in, corporation workmen redecorated the rooms, the last head of the boys' school, Captain Houldsworth, was appointed Warden, with his wife as Matron, and voluntary organisations, including Toc H and the Girls' Life Brigade, busied themselves with moving furniture and making beds.

Travelling by train from their camp at Eastleigh, the children arrived in Derby on 17th June, were welcomed at the station by members of the Mayor's Committee and driven out to Burnaston by coach. There were 30 girls and 19 boys, aged from 7 to 11, and two young Spanish women, teacher Maria Cruz Fernández and helper Maria Teresa González. The children seemed to settle down quickly, enjoying the green countryside and the lovely grounds in which they could play.

Gradually a programme of education and entertainment was put in place, with the old stables converted to classrooms

and with dormitories, dining room, and playroom in the house. Volunteers came to help with teaching and recreational activities as well as with sewing and administration. Car-owners took the children for outings in the surrounding countryside. Groups were taken to the local swimming baths and on other occasional visits, such as tours of the Co-op bakery and the workshops at the Technical College. Concerts and film shows were held at Burnaston and at least twice there were visits to the theatre. A football match against a local boys' school was reported in the local paper, but there were surely others. Scouts from Burton-on-Trent came to camp in the grounds and played with the refugees, and in August they arranged a Sports Day to which members of the public were invited.

The Warden sent the names of the children at Burnaston to the authorities in the Bilbao area and from the end of July, some of them began to hear from home. The language barrier made it difficult to establish contacts with English children but a local boy remembers that he and his friend, aged 8, used to go to the fence at Burnaston House and the children would come to meet them. He still remembers the tune and a garbled version of the words of a song (perhaps a Basque folk song) that the refugees sang to them. A 10-year old Derby girl, whose mother was Spanish, used to meet the children at social gatherings, probably organised in association with the local Catholic church, where they played games and taught each other dances, such as the Lambeth Walk and *La Raspa*. Some of the children spoke only Basque, so even for her, communication was difficult. When visiting her own relatives near Bilbao in 1949, she was able to renew contact with some of the Burnaston children and also managed to trace the mother of one boy who, having lost touch with home, had stayed in England. A wonderful reunion took place.

Various occasions were celebrated in style. On November 5th, the children were introduced to Bonfire Night, with their own guy and a bonfire in the grounds. In December, Maria Teresa's 21st birthday was marked by a special meal in the dining room, with cheers from the children and the presentation of a basket of artificial flowers made by themselves. The Committee provided a cake with 21 candles. Christmas was a memorable one, with decorations, presents from a bran tub and many official visitors, including the Mayor and leading members of the Mayor's Committee. Songs were sung and the Mayor gave each of the children sweets and an English shilling to take home as a souvenir of their stay. They had a traditional Christmas dinner, games with the visiting scouts, a film show each evening and a trip to the pantomime on Boxing Day.

In January 1938, groups of 18 and 21 children went home. They were seen off at the station by Derby friends and by the Mayor's Committee, escorted by the Warden to London and handed over to the National Committee for their rail and ferry journey back to Spain. Burnaston House was vacated, as work on the construction of Derby Airport had already begun and the house was required. The last few girls were moved to Evington Hall, Leicester and some were placed by the National Committee at other centres in Hull and Walsall. One or two, who were not going home, settled with foster families in Derby.

Burnaston became the home of Derby Airport, forerunner of today's East Midland airport. In the 1990s, the site became the Toyota factory and the house was demolished. The memory of this episode in local and international history had almost been lost but, thanks to the campaign by the Basque Children of '37 Association, it is now firmly on record.

Anne E. Owen is a member of the Etwell and Burnaston Local History Society



Basque children arriving at Derby's Friargate Station on 17 June 1937

BOOK REVIEW

“We Saw Spain Die” by Paul Preston

Reviewed by Tom Webb

Paul Preston is today's leading historian on the Spanish Civil War, the events leading up to it and the aftermath. In this book he looks at the events through the eyes of the numerous professional war correspondents and major writers who were witnesses at the time. He examines their motives in reporting (and sometimes not reporting) and the way in which individual journalists publicised what they had seen.

Preston tells us why, when and where each correspondent was in Spain and quotes extensively from reports filed by individual writers. We learn of the personal risks endured, both physical and professional, the restrictions of censorship and political interference.. In the early days of the war, atrocities in Catalonia brought newspapermen flocking from around the world. At that stage, the Republican Government was virtually without a framework of law and order. The consequent terrorism, violence and destruction of property was witnessed by the foreign correspondents, whose reports made a significant impact on the world wide public and political opinion.

As the war developed, so did the systems of censorship change on both sides. Foreign correspondents were active in both the Nationalist and Republican zones and we can read of widely differing experiences of censorship. It was much more restrictive in the Nationalist areas where some thirty foreign journalists were expelled from Spain and several imprisoned for evading the censorship.

In the Republican areas, war correspondents enjoyed a greater freedom of movement and a high proportion of journalists supported the Republican cause. With a majority of the Press in democratic countries being owned by right wing groups some reporters experienced problems in getting their articles published as written.

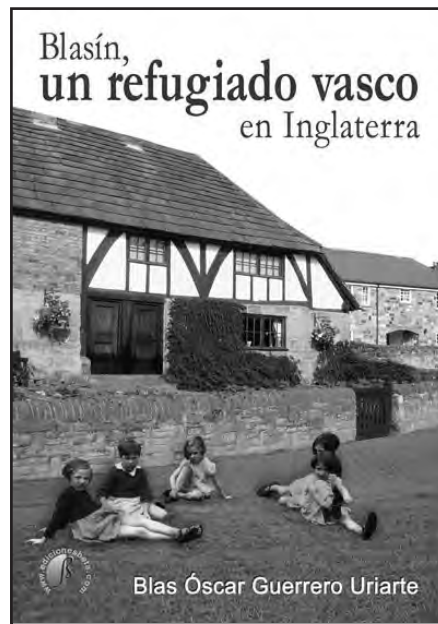
After the Government left Madrid for Valencia many journalists also left, believing that Franco's forces would soon be occupying the capital and that foreign war correspondents would be at risk. This did not happen so that those who remained suffered the same levels of hardship as the residents..The lack of food and heating, together with daily

bombing and shelling meant that being a foreign war correspondent during the Spanish Civil War gave journalists a new status.

NEW BOOK

“Blasín un refugiado vasco en Inglaterra” by Blas Óscar Guerrero Uriarte

(Ediciones Beta III Milenio SL, 2012)



Todas las guerras son condenables, specialment las civiles..Esta biografía novelada comienza en la Guerra Civil Española cuando el gobierno vasco envió a 4,000 niños a Inglaterra, entre ellos Blasín y sus hermanos, Pedro, Marcelino y Ascensión. Los tres meses se convirtieron en mucho más. Aquí se narran sus peripecias en una Inglaterra que les recibió con cariño.

Obituaries

We very much regret to announce the deaths of the following:

- Emilio Frías
- Mauri Nawara (Antolín)
- Tirso Martínez
- Antonio Montero
- Josefa (Pepi) Martínez
- Wenceslau (Benny) Cabrera
- Luis Ruiz
- Merche Jarero
- Asten Belón
- Luis Lavilla

Walter Leonard (“León”) talks to Jim Firth

(from notes in the Marx Memorial library)

I was brought up in Germany and when I had finished school, went to college to study Hotel Management. At the end of my studies, in 1934, I went to Spain to improve my Spanish. I first worked in a hotel on the Costa Brava, then I went into partnership at a hotel in Tossa with an English couple. The hotel occasionally entertained visitors from England such as the poets Auden and Stephen Spender, and it was used as a guest home for some members of the International Brigades and nurses. It was there that I met Poppy and Chloë Vulliamy.

In 1937, Poppy returned to England to be in charge of some of the Basque refugee boys who were still at the camp in North Stoneham and who hadn't been allotted to a specific colony. In May 1938, she recommended that I should take over from her and be in charge of the colony at Faringdon, Oxfordshire. It was the home of Lord Faringdon, a Labour peer, and he made available to the Basque boys one of the gatehouses of his country retreat, Buscot Park, at Eaton Hastings, near Faringdon.

He provided us with completely free accomodation, and supplied eggs, milk and other food free of charge from the estate. Near the main house there was a swimming pool and the children were allowed to use it when there were no house guests. Lord Faringdon was very ecology conscious and didn't allow hunting on his estate, so he was none too pleased when the boys raided birds' nests for the eggs.

Some of the older boys worked on the estate, fruit picking, painting or on the chicken farm. There was a cook who was an anarchist and in the evenings he gave the boys political lectures, telling them that Lord Faringdon had plenty of money without having to make the boys work on the farm. So the next morning, some of the boys refused to get up to work! I had to make peace with Lord Faringdon, or rather the foreman and the cook was subsequently sacked for being a bad influence on the boys!

A Spanish señorita, Rosa, and her 8 year old daughter who had previously been at the Walsall colony, was sent to replace the cook. She was rather unhappy at first. Then she fell in love with one of the older Spanish boys, but not before she had written to a friend in Bir-

mingham asking her to come and rescue her from "this horrible place, where there are all men". So this friend did come and visit her. She was called Peggy Gibbins and she later became my wife!

Early in 1939 we had to leave Buscot Park as the gatehouse was needed for other refugees. We then went to St Michael's Home in nearby Shipton-under-Wychwood until October 1939.

Peggy and her parents lived in a large house in Birmingham with a swimming pool, and Peggy would invite many of the children home for the weekends. The Gibbins took a special interest in the large colony at Aldridge Lodge, Walsall. Peggy gave the girls sewing lessons and took them on trips, for example, to Cadbury's at Bourneville. From the beginning of the war, the Gibbins' house became an open house for all the Spaniards in the area and they would come most Sundays and at Christmas. Football matches were organised between Spanish teams from the Midlands against teams from London.

I lived for some time as a lodger in the house, but in May 1940 I was interned as an "enemy alien". I later joined the Pioneer Corps. Peggy and I were married in 1942 when I was stationed outside Stratford, and eventually I transferred to the Royal Navy. I always kept up close contacts with many of the "children" who remained in Britain. During the war, I found work for some at my father-in-law's crane factory in Birmingham, and others worked at my brother-in-law's farm near St Neots, Huntingdon.



Walter ('Leon') Leonard

Only For Three Months (*Solo Por Tres Meses*)

(Music: J. Tejedor, Words: P McNamara)

Na-mara (Rob García and Paul McNamara) have released their third album, *The Bite*, which contains the song: *Only for Three Months*. This recounts the story of Rob's father and uncle who were evacuated from Bilbao in May 1937 after the criminal bombing in Guernica.

It was nineteen thirty seven, upon the twenty first of May,
That we boarded the Habana and from home we sailed away,
"Solo por tres meses", we heard our mothers say
And to England we were taken
And it's there for many years we were destined to stay

How well do I remember those childhood days before the war
They were filled with peaceful pleasures, we thought they'd last forever more
But Mola's troops pressed harder, and loud the guns did roar
And in silence we retreated
Into the city, where we crowded on every floor

Proud Bilbao was surrounded, blockaded from the sea
And with air raid sirens howling, to the refuge we would flee
As desperation mounted, rumours came to be
That a ship would sail for England
And through the night, our mothers queued to set us free

At the station we assembled, and with tears said our goodbyes
And the rain it was our comfort for the bombers they could not fly
And Franco's ships stayed silent, when *Fearless* they did espy
And to the stormy Bay of Biscay Basque children in their thousands sailed by

When we landed at Southampton, the Sally Army band did play
Our *exilio inglés*, it began that very day
But when we heard that Bilbao had fallen, tears we could not stay
Forlorn and broken hearted,
It was clear, that in England we'd make our way.

It was nineteen thirty seven, upon the twenty first of May
That we boarded the Habana, and from home we sailed away,
"Solo por tres meses", we heard our mothers say
And to England we were taken
And it's there, for many years we were destined to stay

Lyrics for 'Only For Three Months' reproduced with kind permission.

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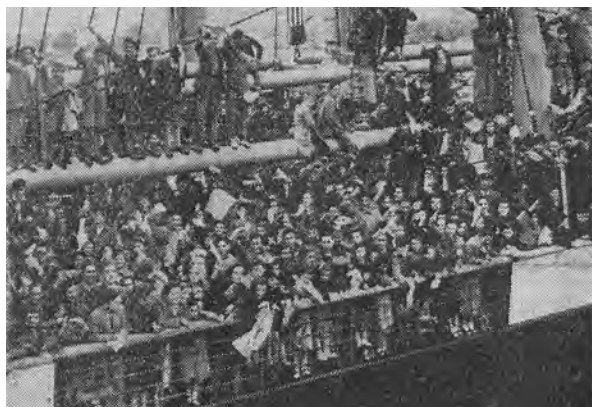


Boys from Poppy Vulliamy's colony on Lord Faringdon's estate. They lived in the gate houses (background) and a number of garages put up to provide dormitories.

Can You help? The Brighton Colony

Does anyone have any information about the Brighton colony? It was called Girton House. What was the building like? Do you have any photographs? How did the *niños* get on with the local people? What sort of activities were there for the *niños*? What schooling did they have? Who was there? Do you know how long it existed? Who owned the property?

A new member unfortunately has no photographs or momentos of his stay in the Brighton colony and would be delighted if we could help him. If you have any information at all, do please let Natalia know.



Basque Children of '37 Association UK

- Honorary President: Helvecia García Aldasoro
- Chair: Manuel Moreno
- Secretary: Natalia Benjamin, 8 Hernes Road, Oxford, OX2 7PU; tel: 01865 459 744
email: secretary@basquechildren.org
- Membership Secretary: M^a Carmen Coupland; tel: 0131 2266078;
email: membership@basquechildren.org
- Treasurer: Carmen Kilner; email: treasurer@basquechildren.org
- Other committee members: John Kilner and Herminio Martínez

How to support the Association

Niños and their spouses/partners and widow/ers are honorary members. Annual subscriptions (which are renewable in May) for other family members and supporters of the Association's aims are:

- £10 for individuals
- £25 for institutions

Contact Membership Secretary M^a Carmen Coupland for membership application form. These may also be found on the website.

Our aims

1. To reunite the *niños* of the Spanish Civil War who were exiled in Great Britain in 1937 and who did not return to Spain or who returned later, that is, those who had the common experience of being evacuated.
2. To preserve for descendants and future generations, through the collection of oral and written testimonies, the memory of the *niños*' experience of the period and their subsequent life in Britain.
3. To place the experience of the exile within its rightful historical context, so the *niños* should not be "los olvidados".
4. To provide a forum for discussion and to promote dialogue between *niños*, researchers and interested persons.
5. To encourage the collection and preservation of archives (photographs, letters, documents, films, songs, posters, oral testimonies, artwork etc.) to be used for educational and historical purposes, eventually to be deposited in the Special Collections Division of the Hartley Library at the University of Southampton.
6. To locate commemorative plaques and to ensure their preservation and maintenance; to organise the setting-up of other dedicated plaques to commemorate the experience.
7. To liaise and collaborate with related societies of *niños vascos* in other countries.
8. To facilitate and support research into the history of the evacuation of the *niños vascos* who were sent to Britain.
9. To inform members about new developments in the knowledge of the period through publications, bibliographies, web pages etc.
10. To advance the education of the public, students and academics in the subject of the exile of 1937.

Newsletter

- The BC '37AUK Newsletter is published twice a year and is sent free to all members. Back numbers can be downloaded from BC '37AUK website: www.basquechildren.org
- Editor: Natalia Benjamin

For Sale

All goods are available from Tony Armolea: 85 Summerlease Road, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 8ER. Tel: 01628 781525; email: sales@basquechildren.org. We have opened a branch of the shop in Spain, and if you live there you can order more easily from: tienda@basquechildren.org. Prices include p&p.

Books



- "Recuerdos" edited by Natalia Benjamin, £17.50



- "Leah Manning" by Ron Bill & Stan Newens, £8.00

- "Only for Three Months" by Adrian Bell, £13.50

CDs & DVDs



- "The Guernica Children", Steve Bowles' documentary film, now available in a bilingual English/Spanish edition, £15.
- Southampton anniversary event, 2007 £5.00.



- "Songs of the Basque Children", songs from the book used when the *niños* were performing, plus the reissue of the original 1938 Parlophone recording, £10.00.

- Danzaris at Southampton, 2007 £5.00
- Montrose blue plaque, £6.50.
- CD-EP "Solo Por Tres Meses", written and performed by Na-Mara, a duo composed of musician Roberto García (son of *niño* Fausto García) and Paul McNamara, £6.



- *Los Niños*: Education Pack The pack is free, but p&p will be £5.00

The general public remembers the Basque children

1. In 1937, 4,000 Spanish children, refugees from the Spanish Civil War stayed at a camp in Chestnut Avenue, Eastleigh. My sister and I, aged ten, volunteered to help out. There were big triangular shaped tents, sleeping eight, with the feet facing the middle. We helped fill the paillasses with straw, and when the children actually arrived, it was very exciting. We were all up there and apparently Gracie Fields visited them, though we didn't see her. They were supposed to be in quarantine when they first came, but the older ones used to nip out and come through the woods. We communicated in sign language. I remember taking a necklace to give to a little girl. It was quite something for Eastleigh to have all these foreign children. Eventually they were officially allowed to wander round and would march down the road singing *La Cucaracha*. We learned to sing along too. They were moved to Rownhams all of a sudden, so we went to try and find them, although we hadn't a clue where Rownhams was. We were walking along, where Asda is now when we were stopped by a policeman. He asked what we were doing. And we replied: "Going to Rownhams to see the Spanish children". He said: "You better get off home!" So we did as we were told. (by Norah Gough, 2011)

2. I was so interested to read the article about Pepe Estruch in your Newsletter. It reminded me of how he taught me to swim in one lesson. I suppose I was about 13 years old and I'd been trying to learn for years at school, with no success. He came to see us in Ipswich and took me to the swimming pool. He got me sitting on the bottom and doing various things like that, and I enjoyed myself. Next time I went to the pool I just found I could swim! He'd given me the confidence that I'd lacked. It was that special quality he had. (by Lydia Vulliamy, daughter of Chloë Vulliamy, 17.4.08)

3. One day in 1937, in Colwyn Bay, North Wales, I remember seeing a group of olive skinned somberly dressed children walking towards the beach. It was such a saddening sight that I enquired who they were. "They are Spanish orphans from the Civil War", I was told. Years later, I tried to find out more about

the children, but little seemed to be known locally. However, a Mrs Williams remembered that her parents had been on the committee which had supervised Roof Tree, the name of the colony where the children had stayed. She recalled playing in the garden while her parents attended meetings, and when the colony was dispersed, her parents had one of the *maestras* to stay with them as she had nowhere to go. Her name was Consuelo Vargas and she stayed for two years. At last she left to rejoin her father who was in Venezuela, having fled Spain for political reasons. We never heard any more about her.

(by Glenys Thomas)

4. In 1937 I was attending the then Mitcham Secondary School for Boys and one day, two new boys arrived from Nazi Germany. Although my family was not Jewish, it was anti-fascist to the core and I soon became a friend of both of them. Not long after I met them, they came into contact with the Basque refugees and introduced me to the children who were lodged in an old mansion located in Oaks Park, Carshalton. About 1938, if I recall correctly, they were relocated in an old house in Culvers Avenue. I became very good friends with them and learned their *jota* dance music by heart. They used to call me *el pianista* because I would trot out the melodies for the girls to dance to at the performances they used to give to raise money for their keep. The two big melodies were: *Ya va la niña por agua a la fuente* and *De los cuatro muleros* (which was updated to *De los cuatro generales* after the four Republican generals who defended Madrid for so long against Franco.)

I remember the teachers that came over with the children, Mari-Cruz and Amparo. I also remember that my mother took care of another girl by the name of Amelia after she broke her leg.

When I was demobilised from Italy at the end of the Italian campaign of 1943-45, I discovered that one or two children still lived at the Culvers, but that some had returned home, following the disgusting attitude of the British government which had given way to Franco's repeated demands for their return. Most of their parents, it was subsequently learned, would have preferred their children to stay in England until the Franco government's intentions had been clarified. The dreams that had sustained my family and myself that, with the end of Mussolini and Hitler, the Allies would then proceed to free the Spanish people tragically came to naught.

So I would like to know whether anybody

remembers me, *el pianista*, and would like to make contact with any of the "children" who may have stayed on.

(by Roy Quinton, 02.11.09)

Forthcoming Events

21 April The Basque Refugee Children in Britain, 1937-1939. A Day School to be held at Rewley House, Oxford University Department for Continuing Education, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford

12-13 May Celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the arrival in Britain of the *niños*, to be held at Southampton University

7 July IMBT Memorial Day. 12.00pm at the monument in Jubilee Gardens, London, SE1 8NY
Tube: Waterloo, Southwalk.

20 Oct BC'37A UK Annual Lecture at 2.30pm given by Richard Baxell. Title tba. At the Kensington and Chelsea Library Lecture Theatre, Phillimore Walk, London W8 7RY.

Tube: High Street Kensington.

Odds and Ends

Up to 20 December 2011, 4 *niños* have recovered their Spanish nationality, 22 children of *niños* and 28 grandchildren of *niños* asked for Spanish nationality.

(Source: Registro Civil, Spanish Consulate, London)

Marcelino Guerrero, a *niño* who was at the Street colony, carried the torch at the 1948 London Olympics.

The Today Programme

On 14 December there was a short feature about the *niños* on the Today Programme at 8.55, when John Humphreys talked to Juanita Vaquer and Herminio Martínez about their experiences.

Membership Renewal

A few subscriptions are still outstanding from May. The rate is £10 for individuals and £25 for institutions. *Niños*, *niñas* and their spouses are exempt from the subscription fee. Would anyone who has not paid the subscription for the year 2012-2013 please send a cheque to the Membership Secretary, Ma Carmen Coupland. Thank you.