

▶ Memories and Archives. These will be followed by a showing of Steve Bowles' film "The Guernica Children" in the afternoon. Ten places have been reserved for members of the Association wishing to attend the symposium.

Lectures on Leah Manning

On Friday 9 March 2007 Homerton College Cambridge is hosting afternoon lectures on the life and work of Leah Manning, followed by the formal opening of the Leah Manning Room and tea. Anyone wishing to attend should contact the Association Secretary.

Oxford day school on the Basque refugee children

A day school the "Basque Refugee Children of the Spanish Civil War" is to be held at Rewley House, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford, on Saturday 28 April 2007.

Application Forms can be obtained by telephoning 01865-270368 or by getting in touch with the Association Secretary, Natalia Benjamin. Places on these day schools get filled up very quickly, so we advise you to book as soon as possible.

Because of the relatively high cost of this day school, the Association is able to fund some places, including transport to Oxford. If you would like to receive funding, please get in touch with the Association Secretary.

Personalities

For the next few editions of the Newsletter, we shall be writing short pieces about people who helped the niños vascos in various ways. Dr Ellis is the subject for this number and we turn to Amistad No 7 to an article written by an unknown niño in February 1940. If you would like to contribute, please send your manuscript to the Association Secretary.

Dr Ellis and Dr Russell

As well as working with the Basque children, Dr Ellis also worked for refugees in Hungary and Romania. During World War II, he served as wing commander in North Africa, Italy and Belgium. Soon after the war, he became professor of Child Health at Edinburgh, where he spent the rest of his career. He was described as a man of great intellectual honesty and a sense of humour. In 1964 he retired because of failing health. He died in London two years later.

It was about the middle of May 1937 when lots

of children went to the Asistencia Social building to pass the medical test in view of their evacuation to England. A lady doctor and a doctor sent by the British Health Committee were doing the job of examining them; these two persons were Dr Russell and Dr Ellis, so beloved by us later on.

Dr Ellis was in Bilbao twice while the town suffered the most terrible raids from Franco's bombers, to finish up the necessary requirements for our landing in Southampton; on one of these trips the plane in which he travelled was pursued by a rebel fighter, but a bit of luck saved him from being brought down.

Since our arrival at North Stoneham camp he has been doing his best for our welfare. Many boys have been at his house. Many have been at the pictures and other amusement places thanks to his kindness, and he took a lot too to several of London's baths. Friend of everyone without any favourite, he knew how to place his name in the heart of us all; he knew how to make himself understand in our own language, one of his great ambitions; he keeps many memories from his visits to Bilbao during the terrible days that preceded the march of the mercenary troops into the town, memories of scenes that our minds will never forget, and when he speaks about them talks with great admiration towards the people who resist the constant attacks of Hitler's "ironbirds" with so much courage; he gave all his knowledge of the medical science towards anyone who was ill, and never stopped in his task till the lad, or lassie, was on the right path of health.

Everyone of us, those who have been so unfortunate by going back to Franco's hell, as those who remain in England, will never forget his fair complexion, with a permanent smile over his lips and a cheerful spirit.

Since the day of that first meeting of Dr Russell and Dr Ellis in the rooms of the Asistencia Social at Bilbao, in the middle of children who were waiting their turn to pass the medical test, their relations have been better every day, and as in the fairytales, well, or whatever it is, they have let us know that they get married on the 18 January.

We are quite sure that the boys and girls, as for today we are more than children, that read these lines will be very glad on getting such a good news from these beloved friends.

In these lines we express our most warm congratulations for the new life they have started, and we express these congratulations not only in name of the 420 of us who remain in England at the moment, but in name of the 4,152 who landed at Southampton on that sunny day several years ago.

Did you know?

● that *niño* Raimundo Pérez Lezama, who was 14 when he came on the Habana, and was sent to Nazareth House in Southampton, was spotted while playing football for his colony by

Southampton FC? He made his debut for the club as goalkeeper on 1 June 1940 in a game against Arsenal. Raimundo only played two more games before going back to Bilbao, where he played professionally for Las Arenas Club de Gexto, Atlético Bilbao, SD Indautxu and Sestao. He also played once for Spain in 1947.

● that one of the *sacerdotes* who accompanied the *niños* to England, Bedita Larrakoetxea, and who spent two years on the Isle of Wight, was the first to translate the works of Shakespeare into Basque? From England, he went to Uruguay and Argentina, where he taught mathematics, English and physics. In 1954, he returned to his home country and seeing the dire situation of Basque as a result of the post-war cultural oppression, he resolved to immerse himself in the Basque cultural movement, and among other things, to translate the plays of William Shakespeare into the language of his ancestors.

Do you remember?



Miss Picken, Secretary of the Basque Children's Committee

Calling all 'Banana Boys'

I have just read a small paperback by Frank Norman, written in 1969, about his time in three Dr Barnardo's Homes from April 1937 until October 1946. He was born illegitimate in June 1930 and entered Cardington Abbey, Bedford in April 1937.

Throughout his years in Barnardo's Homes, he admits he was educationally backward and extremely rebellious to any form of authority. In each home there was harsh discipline, beatings and a complete absence of any affection from the staff. In August 1941 he was transferred to a home for 200 boys in Kingston-upon-Thames. Soon afterwards, he says that six Spanish boys arrived and Frank, known as "John", befriended one of them, Pedro (not his real name) Pedro was born in Santa María de Corco, near Gerona. In July 1944 they both transferred to Barnardo's Technical School in Hertfordshire, leaving to start work in October 1946

If anyone knows more about this story, please contact Tom Webb on 01973 782109