

*Dundee 28th August*

On 28th August 2017, Carmen Kilner of BCA'37 UK, with the help of the library staff, put up a display about the "*Niños de la Guerra*" in the bright surroundings of the Dundee Central Library. It will remain *in situ* for two weeks. The display covered the bombing of Guernica, the arrival and dispersal of the '*niños*', fundraising activities and the Montrose Colony, Mall Park House, where a Blue Plaque was unveiled in 2008 by Tom Borland.

Tom's mother Encarnación Beneventa Rodríguez and her sister Esther had been residents at the colony. Tom, together with his wife and daughter, was able to see material relating to Encarnación and Esther. At the Blue Plaque unveiling ceremony, Natalia Benjamin had read a letter from Benedicta González, then living in Bilbao, expressing her thanks for the warmth shown to her when she lived at Mall Park House. As a result, in 2010, Tom and his family visited Benedicta in Bilbao and had been able to give them background information about Encarnación. Sadly, she had died at only 20 years of age and Esther had emigrated to Canada in 1954 so Tom had no knowledge of his mother or her background.

Brian Devlin, who is interested in the possibility of setting up a museum about children in war, and has been helpful in setting up the display was also present.

After looking at the displays, we enjoyed a "cuppa" and biscuits before moving to the library's lecture theatre for a showing of Steve Bowles' documentary "The Guernica Children". After this, Carmen Kilner and Mike Arnott, of Dundee Trades Union Council, who has an ongoing interest in the International Brigade, answered questions. Mike was able to provide information not only about the support provided by Dundee and district, but also by areas such as Glasgow, particularly after the break-up of the 'colonies'. Much interest, of course, was shown in the relationship between the events of the evacuation of children from the Spanish Civil War and current issues of unaccompanied child refugees. Chris Law, MP for Dundee West and Dundee City Councillor Richard McCready both attended the showing of "The Guernica Children". Mr Law expressed an interest in the film, about which he had no prior knowledge. He hopes to discuss the issue of child refugees in parliament and so Carmen gave him a copy of the DVD of the documentary.

Unfortunately, time flew, and very quickly, it was time to dash for the train leaving a healthy discussion in progress!

*Carmen Coupland*

