

Some thoughts on the registration of children, teachers and auxiliaries in Bilbao and surrounding areas during May 1937

In 2017 the Basque Children of '37 Association published for the first time lists of children (niños) who travelled on the SS 'Habana' from Santurce to Southampton. The source of these lists both in alphabetical and numerical order was taken from the magnificent work of Gregorio Arrien in his book '**Niños vascos evacuados a Gran Bretaña**' published in June 1991.

Gregorio's list was recorded in alphabetical order only – and here lies a problem! How did Gregorio manage to put together an alphabetical list of children when the original Bilbao registration list was recorded in numerical order? Back in the late 1980s and early 1990s computerisation was just coming out of its infancy and, presumably, would not have been available to him.

The original Bilbao registration list was written by hand by various people with various scripts, sometime almost illegible. This conundrum has been a question in my head for many years. For Gregorio to convert some 4,000 names from numerical to alphabetical would have taken a very long time and may be the only way he could have done it was by creating a card index system and then place them laboriously into alphabetical order. Or possibly there is, as yet, an undiscovered list in alphabetical order, but most unlikely.

In 2016 and 2017 BCA'37 only had access to Gregorio's work and it was not until 2018 that the original Bilbao list was available to us. From this point we could see that there were many errors in our published lists both in incorrect names, duplication of registration numbers and where some children had been registered twice.

Separate work by Euskal Memoria and Gaizka Garamendi has been brought together with our original lists and the Bilbao registration list. Here we can show the four lists together for the first time, highlighting all the differences in spelling, duplication, registering twice and those who did not make the voyage.

In order that the reader can easily view the names from four different sources on a page, only the paternal/maternal names have been used with the exception of the first column where the forename has been shown.

Gerald Hoare – October 2024