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## Forsale

All goods are available from Tony Armolea: 85 Summerleaze Road, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 8ER; tel: 01628 781525; email: [sales@basquechildren.org]. Please note that 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.

### Commemorative envelope

● Franked envelope with special stamps marking the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the Basque children, £6.

### Books

- "Recuerdos" edited by Natalia Benjamin, £16.10.
- "Only for Three Months" by Adrian Bell, £11.10.
- "Leah Manning" by Ron Bill & Stan Newens, £5.

The following book can be ordered via the IBMT: [www.international-brigades.org.uk].

- "Poems of War and Peace/Poemas de Guerra y de Paz", by James R Jump (International Brigader who married one of the *señoritas* on the *Habana*), edited by Jim Jump, £12.

### CDs & DVDs

- "The Guernica Children", Steve Bowles' documentary film, now available in a bilingual English/Spanish edition, £15.
- "Songs of the Basque Children", songs from the book used by the *niños* when performing, plus the reissue of the original 1938 Parlophone recording, £9.50.
- Southampton anniversary event, £4.50.
- Danzaris at Southampton, £4.
- 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.

## Obituaries

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

- Luís Arroyo
- Palmiro Ruíz
- Marguerite Bates
- José Bartolomé
- Rafaela Murga Munilla

# The forgotten colonies

by Natalia Benjamin

There were over one hundred colonies lived in by the Basque children. The "official" lists and names of the colonies and their location in Gregorio Arrien's book, "*Niños Vascos en Gran Bretaña*", and in Dorothy Legarretta's "The Guernica Generation" are woefully incomplete and, in some cases, wrong. Difficulties arise when the colony is called after either the name of the house, if it has one, or the name of a town, which may not be that near (as in the case of Elford Hall near Lichfield and Avoncroft Agricultural College in Evesham which are usually just called "Birmingham"). There is no consistency. So I have been trying to establish a more definitive list, and at the same time find a photograph of each colony with the proper house name and its address.

In the course of my investigations, I have "discovered" four colonies that are not mentioned in the published lists, although from minutes of the Basque Children's Committee meetings, from newspaper reports and from testimonies of surviving *niños* themselves, there is clear evidence that they did indeed exist and were lived in by *niños*.

From late June until 13 October, 170-172 West Hill, Putney, was home to 40 Basque children, prior to their relocation three and a half miles away to more permanent accommodation at The Grange, 121 Kingston Hill. This discovery was made as a result of copies of documents given to the Association by Luís Calvete, whose parents had come to Britain in 1917 and who were both very active in helping with the Basque children who had arrived in 1937. His father helped organise and even took part on the guitar, in several of the concerts put on by the *niños*. His diary recorded visits to the children in Putney before they moved to Kingston Hill. One of the *niños* who now lives in San Sebastián remembers that his sisters were in Putney before going to Kingston Hill.

Then an additional colony in Wales came to light when I read the proof of Hywell Davies' book on the *niños* in Wales. The colony at Brechfa had not been very successful and some boys had rioted; they were due to move to Margate in October. But they weather became cold and the boys could not continue to live in huts and so they spent the month of September 1937 in Bronwydd, a sham castle built round an earlier house in the gothic revival style. It was not far from Brechfa, near the village of Newcastle Emlyn. José Armolea, one of the *niños* who was there, recalls that it was dark and gloomy, with crows flying around day and night.

Another "new" colony was at Ambleside in the Lake District. It was reported in the local paper, the "Westmorland Gazette" of 23

October 1937 that 25 children were being transferred to Fairfield Guest House in Ambleside from Brampton, accompanied by their teacher, Virginia Martínez del Castillo. The house had been acquired for the purpose by the Cumberland and Westmorland branch of the BCC. *Niña* Agustina Cabrera today recalls going to Ambleside to a house near a bridge that is a famous landmark. The house was part of Charlotte Mason Training College and the Basque children were in an annexe. Later it became part of the campus of the Universities of Lancaster and Cumbria.

The final "new" colony for me was a house in the village of Newton Green, near Sudbury, Suffolk. A local doctor, Grace Griffiths had offered it to the NJCSR. When the children had to vacate Bray Court, they were allotted to other colonies, and there was a list of these attached to one of the minutes of the BCC. The names of all the colonies the children were relocating to were familiar to me, except for one, which said "c/o Dr Grace Griffiths, Newton Green, Sudbury, Suffolk". I was intrigued, so I rang up a local historian who was able to verify that there had indeed been children staying at Dr Griffiths' house, Brooke House. I subsequently verified this information not only by reading about it in the Minutes of the Basque Children's Committee Sub Committee but also by talking to José Osa and Iñigo Segurola who had been there. I also corresponded with Dr Griffiths' daughter who sent me a photograph of the boys who had stayed there.

There were about 10 boys in Dr Griffiths' colony and they were employed at a nearby farm, Rogers Farm, first painting beehives and then picking mushrooms. They stayed for just over a year. Marcelo Segurola had come over on the *Habana* and had been at Bray Court. He was sent to Newton Green. His parents came over to England to fetch him at the end of July 1939 to take him with the family to Argentina. But they were trapped in Britain as all civilian shipping had been stopped. As Dr Griffiths was very busy, the Segurolas acted as house parents to the children that were there. Dr Griffiths had come originally to the area to be a locum for two weeks at the local TB hospital in Nayland, and ended up staying for 50 years! She went twice to Spain during the war to help in the hospitals there. She is described as being far from pretty, with "bottle specs and protruding teeth", but as one of the most beautiful people the writer had ever known, exuding love and care, so it would have been typical of her to want to help the Basques. She and her family lived in a small cottage at Arger Fen, Assington, while their larger house, Brooke House, in Newton Green was used by *niños*.

● I would be pleased to hear from anyone who was at the above-mentioned colonies.