

Charities Commission

Trustees Report from the International Brigade Commemoration Committee (IBCC) 2023-2024

The main income for the IBCC was donations from the Trades Unions as noted. This was spent on three main events, the Annual General Meeting, the Feile Lecture in the Shankill Road Library and an event that marked the return of the Irish and Brigaders in 1939-showing original film. Actors also took part in this event which was held in the Linen Hall Library. Expenditure included publicity, posters, leaflets also used to promote events. Hospitality and guest speakers travel and accommodation was part of the expenses. In 2023 a new plaque costing £200 was put into the Shankill Library.

1. **The IBCC held its AGM 2023** in February and evaluated the work of the past year. We agreed to organise at least three events plus a planning meetings to look at further action.
2. **Election of the committee:** It was agreed that the following people should form the committee: C. Crossey, E. Walker, D. Harte, L. Walker, P. Kelly, G. Kelly, F. Cammock, A. Murray, P. Mackle. **Officers elected:** Chairperson-Ciaran Crossey, Secretary-Ernest Walker, Treasurer: Frank Cammock.
3. **Finance Report:** Frank Cammock. Frank gave a finance report. It was stated that the Nationwide Building Society was no longer administering our type of accounts. Since then an account was opened in the Ulster Bank. It was agreed that the officers and Paul Kelly would be the signatories for the account.
4. **Guest speakers** were Neil O' Riordan-Tribute to Micheal O' Riordan and Gerry Grainger-tribute to Paddy McAlister
5. **A May Day** event which was held in the Sunflower Folk Club, where we showed the film *The Good Fight* about Lincoln Brigade, which was well received.
6. **The Féile an Phobail 2023.** This year for the Féile an Phobail the IBCC invited Ewald P Schultz from the KFSR to do a presentation about the Thälmann-Battalion. The event, held in the Shankill Road Library, was very well attended. The presentation was excellent. It was agreed to publish the talk in booklet form for next year.
7. Following this a new plaque was unveiled in the Library and the names of two more Brigaders from the Shankill area were added. Unite gave a financial contribution to this event.
8. A short memorial meeting was later held in Writers Square at the Brigade statue and a wreath was laid by Brenda O' Riordan.
9. **RETURN OF THE BRIGADERS!** A film of International Brigaders returning from fighting Fascism in Spain will be held in the Linen Hall Library later in 2023. This is part of the International Brigades Memorial Trust Commemoration of the 85 anniversary return of the British Battalion. This included Irishmen some of whom arrived in Belfast on the 12th December 1938. The film was made by Marshall Mateer, archive film courtesy of British Film Institute.
10. We also to encouraged people to attend other International Brigade events at home and abroad. Members of the IBCC attended the KFSR AGM, 2023 in Berlin.
11. In September 2023 members of the IBCC attended a memorial event on the 80th anniversary of Jim Haughey's death this was held in Lurgan. It was organised by Craigavon Trades Council. Dooley Harte gave a lecture-The Lion of Lurgan and there was a relaunch of the book about Jim.
12. We took the opportunity to remember Joe Mulheron who died suddenly this year. Joe had agreed to hold the Thälmann-Battalion event in Sandinos in Derry, he had always been supportive for the international Brigades. When Jack Jones and Bob Dole died he opened Sandinos, his café bar for a remembrance event for their family and friends in the IBMT.
13. **AOB:**
 - Affiliations to the IBMT and the Marx Memorial Library to be paid.
 - Funding request: letter to go out to the trade unions
 - It was agreed to look at the constitution to make it more relevant to our organisation.

The IBCC was formed 2006 in Belfast in the Linen Hall Library. Founder members included Michael O' Riordan, and members of Belfast Trades Council.

International Brigade Commemoration Committee Annual General Meeting 24.02.2024



THE aim of the International Brigade Commemoration Committee is to understand why the International Brigades were formed and to appreciate why Irish people wanted to support the common cause against fascism. To keep alive, the principles that the brigaders fought for and to oppose present day prejudices through education and events and to erect memorials to those who died fighting for democracy and against fascism in Spain.

VENUE

Falls Road Library-

10.30am-13.00 pm Agenda

1. Opening remarks: Ciaran Crossey
2. Minutes of the last meeting
3. Secretary's Report-Ernest Walker
4. Treasurers Report-Frank Cammock
5. Election of the committee
6. Future events:
 - a) May Day events: 25th and 26th April
 - b) Feile (August) event in the Shankill Library-guest speaker:.
 - c) International Zoom Meeting-Adam
 - d) Other actions/international meetings: KFSR, IBMT agm-2025.
7. Guest speakers:
 - * Gerry Grainger: International Brigader from the Falls-Paddy McAllister.
 - * Neil O'Riordan: tribute to Manus O'Riordan-

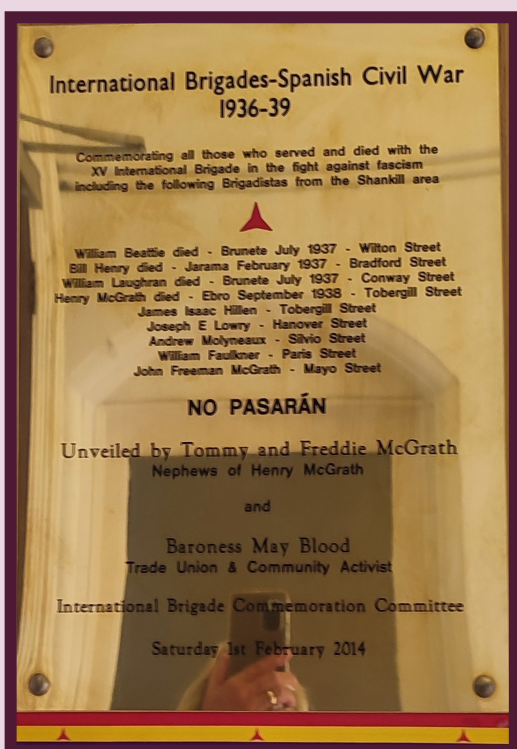


Poster made for the Feile event in August 2023

2023 Feile event in the Shankill Library



Ewald Schulz



Of special interest to people is the discovery of a two other Brigaders from the Shankill area.

William Faulkner and John Freeman McGrath. After the meeting a new plaque with their names added, was unveiled in the Shankill library

THE meeting, *Spanish Sky Spreads its Stars* organised by the International Brigade Commemoration Committee on August 11th was very successful with a packed audience. Ewald P. Schulz from Fighters and Friends of the Spanish Republic (KFSR) travelled from Berlin to give an illustrated presentation about the story of the Thälmann-Battalion and the first Germans in the armed struggle against fascism. We heard how in 1936 General Franco staged a coup against the democratic government of Spain. From the very beginning Hitler-Germany had supported the insurgents with weapons, means of transportation and troops. At the same time 1,500 German exiles from all over Europe and antifascists from Hitler Germany rushed to the aid of the Spanish Republic. The first men to arrive formed small groups of militia, which later on became the Thälmann-Battalion, the core of the XI Battalion, International Brigade. Alongside their comrades from all over the world, they took part in decisive battles and wrote their page in the history of the heroic struggle of the International Brigades in Spain. Many questions were asked by people in the audience. Ernest Walker who chaired the meeting gave thanks to Ewald, to everyone who came and especially to the Shankill Library for their help and support. Financial support is acknowledged on page 4. We hope to produce a pamphlet with the talk that Ewald did.



Following this a tribute was paid in Writers Square by Adam Murray, IBCC committee member and Brenda O' Riordan who laid a wreath in the memory of all the International Brigaders. Songs were then sung to mark the occasion.

On the 5th of December 2023 we had the unique opportunity to see the film *Brigaders Return!* which marked the 85th anniversary of the return of the International Volunteers from fighting fascism in Spain. The film had original footage of 304 members of the British Battalion arriving in London, on the 7th of December 1938. An estimated 20,000 people came out to welcome them home. The brigaders travelled home from London to various parts of Britain and Ireland. In 1938 the local Belfast Newsletter carried an article that named some of the men from the North who arrived in Belfast on the 12th and 13th of December and also named some of those who died. Michael O' Riordan wrote in his book about seven brigaders, including Peter O'Connor arrived at Westland Road station in Dublin on the 10th of December 1938. Chairperson of the IBCC Ciaran Crossey welcomed over 60 people who attended including the daughter of Joe Boyd, the son of Lord Antrim and the son of Peter O'Connor. Singing was provided by Jimmy McCoey. There was also a reading from Martin Lynch's play, *Pictures of Tomorrow*, six actors took part including the renowned actor Ian McEllhaton

A display of items relating to the IBCC and the brigaders was on show in the cabinets in the main film room of the Linen Hall Library where the event took place.

The IBCC wish to thank the British Film Institute, Marshal Mateer and the International Brigade Memorial Trust for providing this opportunity to show the film. We also want to thank Martin Lynch and the Linen Hall Library for their support

RETURN OF THE BRIGADERS!



FILM OF INTERNATIONAL BRIGADERS RETURNING FROM FIGHTING FASCISM IN SPAIN DECEMBER 1938

The event will also feature a short reading from Martin Lynch's play *Pictures of Tomorrow* named after Charlie Donnelly's poem.

Tuesday 5th December | LINEN HALL LIBRARY BELFAST
 DOORS OPEN: 5.30PM. BAR OPEN: 5.30PM - 6.45PM
 THE EVENT WILL BEGIN AT 7.00PM
 TICKETS: £5.00 WAGED £2.50 UNWAGED
 EVENTBRITE & ON THE DOOR



Organised by the International Brigades Commemoration Committee
 For further information, contact 07751951785

Left to right front: Ian McElhinney; Lynda Walker, Martin Lynch, Liz Shaw, (daughter of brigader Joe Boyd)



Playwright Martin Lynch, actors and IBCC members help with the enactment of the return of the International Brigaders; Belfast Lanyon Place station in Belfast. Photograph by Mal McCann



Below reading the play: Left to right: Mathew McElhinney, Aaron Cathcart, Liam McMullen, Ian McElhinney, Martin Lynch, Ivan Little, Marty McGuire



⇒ **Other activities**

- ⇒ **IBCC members attended the KSFR Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Berlin in August.**
- ⇒ **And also the International Brigade Memorial Trust AGM in Stockton on Tees in October.**
- ⇒ **A number of IBCC members attended a special event which was organised in Craigavon to launch a second edition of the booklet about Jim Haughey.**
- ⇒ **Dooley Harte, one of our committee members was instrumental in organising the event along with other from the Craigavon Trades Council and Jim Haughey's family.**
- ⇒ **Enquires were made about putting a plaque in Antrim.**



Joe Mulheron 1947–10.5.2023

Members of the IBCC were sorry to hear of the sudden death of their friend Joe Mulheron who has been supportive of the cause of the International Brigaders.

In 2009 he held a memorial meeting in Sandino's for family and friend of Bob Doyle and Jack Jones. In August 2023 he planned to hold an IBCC meeting with guest speaker Ewald P Shultz from Germany.

His song *Connolly Column* told the story of the men from Derry who went to support the Spanish Republic in the fight against fascism. We send condolences to his family and friends.

His songs and comradeship will live on. Salud

THE IBCC wishes to acknowledge the support of people who have bought our merchandise. We also wish to thank those who spoke at and attended the events that we organised. We want to acknowledge the help and support over the past year of the Shankill Library, the Falls Library, the Linen Hall Library, The John Hewitt Bar, Craigavon Trades Council, Pedro and Sunflower Bar, Trademark, Feile an Phobail-the Peoples' Festival, the International Brigades Memorial Trust, Marshal Mateer, Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Martin Lynch et al, Jimmy McCoe, Translink, the Belfast and District Trade Union Council, Mal McCann. Also financial support from, Martin Lynch, Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance, Unite the Union, Unite Belfast Retired Branch, Unison, SIPTU, UCU and any others that we may have missed

Events for May Day Programme 2024

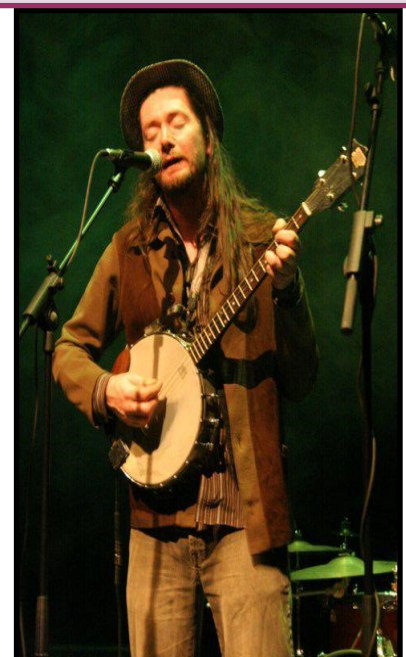


Joe Solo from Scarborough

Thursday 25th April 7.00pm-in Sandino's Derry: And Friday 26th April 7.30pm in the Black Box, Belfast. We are delighted to announce that Joe Solo and Teknopeasant (AKA Conor O'Kane) will be playing in both venues.

Gerry Murphy Assistant General secretary of the ICTU and a representative from Derry Trades Council will bring a May Day message

Peace on Earth: Observing the 87th anniversary of the bombing of the town of *Gernika* by Hitler: 26th April 1937



Teknopeasant AKA Conor O'Kane From Donegall