

Hereford's Basque Refugees

Review of the talk given for the Bartonsham History Group
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The October talk at The Barrels in Hereford turned out to be an enjoyable social evening. There were around 20 people in a small cosy room that afforded a good screen for projecting all 31 supporting photos. I was welcomed by the Bartonsham history group leader, author Bill Laws, who gave an opening talk referring to one or two articles about the Basque children refugees written over the years in the Hereford Lore magazine 'In Our Age'. Bill is the editor of the magazine and he had invited me to give this talk.

The talk encompassed the political setting in the Basque Country at that time, the organization of colonies and the dilemma of repatriation as well as the effect on the refugees during the Second World War and those that were left behind in Britain. A comparison of the Basque refugees in Britain with those of in Russia and France was also given, with reference to Koldobika's book 'The Spanish Civil War in the Basque Town of Barakaldo'.

The Hereford Berrington Convent sheltered 19 Basque children from the SS Habana who came from the Southampton reception camp under the care of my mother Josefina Suñé.

Woven throughout the talk was the life of my mother as the auxiliary helper and my father John Jones who was involved in taking food on a merchant ship to Republicans in the Eastern part of Spain. This episode mapped out their adventurous future life which ended up in the peaceful setting of rural Herefordshire.



Photo: Bill Laws, left; Sandy Green (proof reader of Koldo's book) right; myself in the middle.