

# Epping Forest District Museum Education Service

## The Loughton Boys Holocaust Survivors in the Epping Forest District Education Resource Pack Part 1: Information for Teachers



## INTRODUCTION

This education resource pack was written by Rosie Whitehouse and produced by Epping Forest District Museum to accompany the special exhibition, *The Boys: Holocaust Survivors in the Epping Forest District*, held at the museum from May to Sept 2021.

The exhibition was researched and curated by Ellis Spicer, Chase-DTP Scholar at the University of Kent, and former student of King Harold Academy, Waltham Abbey, Essex.

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The pack has been developed for use at Key Stage 3 in schools in England. It will help students discover the stories of the young Holocaust survivors who came to live in Loughton, Essex as part of their journey to recovery.

The pack is divided into two parts:

Part 1 contains information for teachers including notes on the story of the boys, the historical context for this, information on teaching the Holocaust and additional resources.

Part 2 contains teaching resources including notes to accompany the PowerPoint presentations, profiles of the boys, glossary, timeline and worksheet.

These resources can be downloaded from Epping Forest District Museum's website: [eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum/learning/schools/](http://eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum/learning/schools/)

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## **1. THE STORY OF THE LOUGHTON BOYS**

### **Introduction**

From December 1945 to January 1947, Holmehurst, a house on the borders of Buckhurst Hill and Loughton became home to a small group of young survivors of the Holocaust. They became known as the 'Loughton Boys'.

The Loughton boys were part of the first group of around 300 young survivors who were brought from Prague to Britain after the war by the Central British Fund for German Jewry.

A total of 715 children eventually came to Britain. They are collectively known as 'The Boys' as despite the mix of ages in the group and the fact that 192 were girls, the majority were teenage boys.

After an initial period of rehabilitation and education in Windermere in the Lake District, the boys moved to different hostels around the country. A small group of around 30 came to live at Holmehurst, Loughton from December 1945 to January 1947. These young survivors were all boys between the ages of 16 and 21. They had endured slave labour and the Nazi concentration camp system. In most cases, they were the only surviving member of their family. We have information on 26 of the boys. Research is on-going.

### **Pre-war childhood**

The Loughton boys were Polish Jews, born in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Most enjoyed warm and happy, if not always easy, childhoods. They came from settled communities in Polish towns with strong Jewish populations, notably the industrial cities of Lodz and Piotrkow. Daily life revolved around their family and their Jewish faith.

Over 3 million Jews lived in Poland at this time, the largest population in Europe. Anti-Semitism existed in Poland before the Nazi Party's rise to power in Germany in 1933. During the 1930s, as German persecution of its Jewish population began, Poland also saw a rise in anti-Semitism and legislation restricting Jewish equal rights. Some of the boys recall this.

Moniek Goldberg, one of the Loughton boys, recalled that in 1937 'for the first time I came face to face with anti-Semitism ... every day I had to go home the long way round so as to walk with Jewish boys for safety's sake ... For a boy of 9 years who had never experienced such treatment it was very hard to take.'

### **The Second World War**

The German invasion of Poland in 1939 brought the Nazis' systematic persecution to Jewish communities there. Polish Jews were rounded up into ghettos. The first ghetto was established in Piotrkow, the hometown of some of the Loughton boys. Jewish families had to leave their homes and were forced to live in one part of the town. They could leave the ghetto for work but had to return under a curfew. Conditions were cramped and unhygienic. Many died as diseases spread or were murdered in the streets by those policing the ghettos.

Mass shootings and transports to forced labour camps were to follow. In 1942, the Final Solution was initiated – Hitler's plan to murder the entire Jewish population of Europe. Approximately 6 million Jews were murdered. For the Loughton boys, childhood was over as their families and communities were torn apart. To carry out the Final Solution a series of extermination camps were opened in occupied Poland. Tens of thousands of people were rounded up and transported on trains, carts or trucks from the ghettos straight to their deaths. Those who were younger and stronger were held back from the transports to work in the forced labour camps.

This was the moment at which many of the Loughton boys were finally separated from their families; as young boys they were selected to work in the forced labour camps. One of the Loughton boys, Jan Goldberger, recalled 'German soldiers came in and said to my father, "We want your son". My father pleaded with them to take him, that I was only a little boy. They tore me out from my father's arms and took me away. It was a moment I will never, ever forget.'

The Loughton boys were frequently moved from camp to camp over the following years. Conditions in the forced labour camps were terrible. The work was hard and dangerous, food was scarce, and conditions were appalling. Punishments were brutal. Many of the boys, most aged between 10 and 16 years old at this point, witnessed death daily and recalled moments when they came close to death themselves.

In 1944, as Soviet forces advanced into Poland, the Nazis began transporting thousands of people westwards. Many of the Loughton boys passed through Auschwitz-Birkenau and Buchenwald at this point. As the Allied armies continued their advance from east and west, the inmates of the camps were forced onto death marches or crammed into train wagons, travelling for weeks to camps deeper into German territory. Thousands died in the terrible winter conditions, already suffering the effects of years of starvation, ill-health and harsh treatment.

The destination for the Loughton boys was the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia. Some spent the final days of their captivity there. Others arrived on the final transports believing they were about to be murdered, but as the trains stopped just outside Theresienstadt they heard that they had been liberated.

### **Liberation**

The Red Cross took control of the camp on the 2 May 1945, with liberation by the Soviet troops following on 8 May 1945. Hundreds of Jewish children had survived the Holocaust in the Theresienstadt ghetto and in the final weeks of the war the Germans had forcibly moved hundreds more people here. All the inmates had to be quarantined to contain the spread of typhus. By this point, many of the Loughton boys were already close to death, suffering from malnutrition and diseases such as dysentery.

The realisation the war was over gradually sank in over the following days and weeks. The Loughton boys found it difficult to adjust. Gary Winogrodski, who had worked in Oscar Schindler's factory, recalled 'after five years of being told what to do, when and how to do it, it was quite bewildering.'

The priority after liberation was getting medical care for survivors and slowly reintroducing food. Their stomachs had shrunk from starvation so eating too much food at once could have killed them.

As the young survivors regained their health and strength, there was the difficult question of what they would do next. Their homes, families and communities in Poland had been destroyed and they had lost years of their education. Some of the boys had tried returning to their hometowns in Poland but found no welcome there. Ben Helfgott recalls a terrifying experience when he reached his hometown with a friend; they were taken to the police station by two Polish officers, who threatened to shoot them, only letting them go because they were young boys. 'We had been nearer death in a free and liberated Poland than at any time during five and half years under Nazi tyranny.'

Those European countries capable of caring for the refugees stepped in to help. Many went to France, Sweden and Switzerland on funded programmes. Other countries, ravaged by six years of war, were reluctant to take on large numbers of refugees.

Some of the boys wished to go to Palestine, but there was no opportunity to do this as the British had severely restricted immigration under terms of the Palestine Mandate.

The Central British Fund for German Jewry (CBF) stepped in to help. The CBF had been set up in 1933 to support Jewish refugees from Nazism. They brought children to Britain under the Kindertransport scheme from 1938 to 1939. They now turned their attention to the young survivors in Theresienstadt. In response to CBF lobbying, the British government agreed to offer 1,000 visas for unaccompanied child refugees under the age of 16 for a period of two years. As with the Kindertransport this was on the agreement that they would not cost the British taxpayer any money, so it was agreed the care of the boys would be funded by the CBF. A sub-committee of the CBF, The Committee for the Care of the Concentration Camp Children was appointed to oversee the care of the boys.

### **Coming to Britain**

In August 1945 around 300 children and young people began their journey from Prague to Britain in RAF Stirling bombers which had repatriated Czech servicemen. A photograph of the group was taken in Prague's Old Town Square. By June 1946 a total of 715 children had come to Britain. Some of the Loughton Boys were over the age of 16, but without documents and looking younger due to severe malnutrition, they were included on the first transport to Britain. A film showing the boys leaving Prague is available on the Imperial War Museum website:

[iwm.org.uk/history/rare-footage-of-young-holocaust-survivors-on-their-way-to-britain](http://iwm.org.uk/history/rare-footage-of-young-holocaust-survivors-on-their-way-to-britain)

Even though the British Government had initially offered 1000 visas, only 715 young people came to Britain.

The first group of boys and girls arrived in Carlisle on the 14 August 1945. They were taken to the Calgarth estate near Lake Windermere in the Lake District, which had been used to house aircraft factory workers during the war. The young survivors were given their own rooms with beds, clean bedding and towels. Here they began

the process of physical and mental rehabilitation and recovery, supported by an experienced team of adult professionals, some of whom had looked after the Kindertransport children and were themselves refugees from Nazi Germany.

Windermere was remembered as a 'paradise' by the boys. It provided a chance to be children again and begin to recover from the trauma of their experiences. There were double rations of food, but many were still afraid of starvation so hoarding supplies was common. The boys also formed intense friendships that became a replacement family as, despite the efforts of the Red Cross to trace family members, in almost all cases it was confirmed that all the relatives of the boys had perished in the Holocaust.

Over the next four months the boys enjoyed sports, education and outdoor activities. They played football and table tennis, went on trips to the surrounding countryside, were taken to the local theatre and watched films. Daily English classes were compulsory, as well as lessons in maths, history and current affairs.

Leonard Montefiore, chairman of the Committee for the Care of the Concentration Camp Children and the principal organiser of the boys' passage to Britain was determined that their ongoing care should be in groups of up to thirty in large houses, known as hostels, which were run by a variety of Jewish organisations around the UK. Here they would continue with their education and learn English under the care of staff from the CBF and other Jewish organisations.

The hostels were intended to recreate a family atmosphere and give a home to the boys so they could maintain the close friendships they had established. They were also grouped according to their religious and political orientation.

The last group to leave Windermere in December 1945 wanted to be close to London and were, like most of the boys, Zionist – committed to a Jewish homeland in Palestine. They were also determined to stay together in the friendship group they had formed. They came to Holmehurst, a house in Loughton, where they were later joined by boys who had gone to other hostels but relocated there. It is thought up to 30 boys came to Holmehurst, although we only have information on 26 so far. They became known as the Loughton boys.

The Central British Fund was determined to integrate the boys into British society as quickly as possible. Montefiore wanted them to look like English gentlemen and they were issued with suits from the high street clothing retailer Burton, identical to those given to discharged British soldiers.

Learning English was a top priority, as the Central British Fund planned to resettle the children in Canada and other dominions of the British Empire. They also intended to settle many of the young people in Palestine.

From the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, many Jews wished to leave Europe and settle in what they considered to be their traditional homeland in Palestine, an aspiration supported by the British Government in the Balfour Declaration, 1917. These Jews were called Zionists. Several of the Loughton Boys came from Zionist families.

After the end of the war, survivors in displaced person's camps were asked to register where they would like to be resettled. Nearly all the boys initially registered their desire to go to Palestine, as did many other Jewish survivors. However, in March 1939 the British Government who were in control of the Palestine Mandate at this point had, despite the Balfour Declaration, put restrictions on the number of Jews allowed to settle there. These restrictions remained in place after the war.

Many of the boys said that they opted to go to Britain as it seemed the best route that would eventually take them to Palestine.

### **Holmehurst, Loughton**

Holmehurst, a grand mansion house on Manor Road in Loughton, now part of Buckhurst Hill, was built in 1865 for the wealthy shipping magnate Theophilus Westthorp. There were 16 acres of grounds including a boating lake. The house and land were sold for housing development in 1937, but the outbreak of war in 1939 interrupted plans. During the war, Holmehurst became a safe house for Sudeten exiles and enemies of the Nazi regime. It was also the location for the signing of the Loughton Declaration in March 1940.

A plan of Holmehurst can be seen in the Essex Record Office online database: [essexarchivesonline.co.uk/result\\_details.aspx?ThisRecordsOffset=2&id=831929](http://essexarchivesonline.co.uk/result_details.aspx?ThisRecordsOffset=2&id=831929) - select image 5 of 7.

The house was bombed three times during the war. The first two bombings caused minor damage, but the attack on 13 January 1945 led to severe damage requiring a significant amount of repair before the Loughton Boys arrived. Malka Tattenbaum, one of the members of staff at the hostel, recalled 'the building, once a private mansion, was by then rather dilapidated ... but its situation in the countryside was beautiful. Thanks to the efforts of the boys and the staff it was turned into a very pleasant home.'

At Holmehurst, the Loughton boys continued their education and made plans for their future lives and careers. They were supported by hostel staff who empathised with what they had been through, but also appreciated the importance of preparing the boys for the rest of their lives. They undertook training, education and apprenticeships, but also continued to bond closely with each other over sports, games and holidays.

### **Zionism**

Holmehurst was run by the Jewish Zionist youth group, Habonim. The hostel manager was Heini Goldberg whose own mother had died in Auschwitz. He and the other staff took a close personal and practical interest in the young people. Goldberg was a committed Zionist and made this the focus of life at Holmehurst, as it also was at the other hostels. Goldberg arranged for senior leaders in the Jewish community in Palestine to visit. They talked with the boys and encouraged them to learn more and build a connection to the Jewish community in Palestine.

### **Education and recreation**

Several of the boys continued their education, attending the Jewish ORT school in Kensington. ORT was a philanthropic organization designed to assist Jewish artisans and workers by providing them with cheap credit and vocational training.



Vocational courses were a key element in helping the boys forge new lives. The ORT schools not only equipped students with new skills but above all with the confidence to imagine a future in which they could use them. It recreated a sense of belonging and reinforced their Jewish identity.

In their first year, students were given all-round engineering training and in the second they received specialised tuition in a branch of technology. Students also attended classes in general education subjects such as mathematics and history. On finishing school, they were provided with a set of tools to practice their trade.

At Holmehurst, there was also time for hobbies including trips to the theatre and stamp collecting. There was a bicycle excursion to the Isle of Wight. The boys affectionately remember playing sports including table tennis and football in the large gardens and exploring the forest. Films were enjoyed as a useful way to improve their English. When they travelled by bus into London, drivers often wouldn't take their bus fare.

### **Future lives**

The boys had all been granted two-year temporary visas to stay in Britain, with the idea they would go on to make their homes abroad, potentially in Palestine or the United States. Some eventually resettled abroad in Canada and the USA. Others went to fight in Palestine for the underground Jewish forces and then the Israeli Army during the 1947-8 wars.

Many of the boys wanted to stay in Britain, close to the friends they had made in the hostels. Eventually the government granted them permission to remain. They went on to find work, marry and have their own families. They all retained very close bonds with each other which developed into an extended family when they married and had children.

Harry Spiro, Harry Balsam and John Fox went into business together as tailors. Roman Halter trained as an architect then become an artist, his work reflecting his experiences in the camps. He designed the Holocaust memorial at the Jewish Cemetery near Waltham Abbey. Ben Helfgott become an Olympic weightlifter, captaining the British team at the 1956 and 1960 Olympic Games.

The boys formed the '45 Aid Society in 1963 to raise money for charitable causes, to support those among them who had fallen on hard times and ensure they could stay in contact through annual reunions. The next generation – the children and grandchildren of the survivors - continue the legacy, ensuring that Holocaust education continues to take place. As Ben Helfgott said at the 40th anniversary of their liberation, 'I was fortunate enough to survive, the least I can do is inform the world of what happened to my family and friends.'

## **2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

### **The Jewish Community and anti-Semitism in Poland**

Poland had disappeared from the map when it was partitioned in 1795. The state was re-established after the First World War. It had different frontiers than modern-

day Poland and extended into parts of what are now present-day Belarus, Lithuania and Ukraine.

Around 9,500,000 Jews lived in Europe in 1939. Around one third of these - 3,474,000 - lived in Poland. The Loughton Boys were all Polish Jews. The lesson plans include short profiles of the main towns that the Loughton Boys were brought up in. They can be used to introduce pupils to pre-war Jewish life.

The Jewish population was represented in all social classes in Poland. Some Jews were secular while others were extremely religious.

The majority of Polish Jews were extremely poor and not integrated into Polish society. They spoke Yiddish as their mother tongue.

The political views of Polish Jews also varied. Many were Zionists, supporting the creation of a Jewish state in what was then the Palestine Mandate, part of the British Empire. Others supported the socialist secular Bund and had no interest in Zionism.

Anti-Semitism was commonplace in inter-war Poland. The country was underdeveloped, and most of the population were extremely poor.

Nationalists wanted an ethnically pure Polish state and were antagonistic towards all minority groups, which included many Ukrainians as well as Jews and ethnic Germans.

The National Democratic Party wanted to evict the Jews from Poland. In the late 1930s they organised a boycott of Jewish shops and businesses. Universities segregated Jewish students from 1937 and they were barred from employment in parts of the state sector.

During the economic depression of the 1930s and after the death of the Polish leader, Jozef Pilsudski in 1935, the Jewish situation in Poland deteriorated as Polish nationalism grew in strength. From 1935 to 1937, 79 Jews were killed and 500 injured in anti-Semitic incidents.

Jewish children were often the victims of anti-Semitic incidents on their way to or from school. Some of the Loughton Boys recall experiencing anti-Semitism prior to the German invasion.

### **The Rise of National Socialism in Germany**

The Nazi government was extremely anti-Semitic and began introducing anti-Semitic legislation in Germany after they came to power in the 1933 general election. At this point in time, 1% of the German population was Jewish.

It is important to remember that the Nazi Party was a democratically elected government who then began to undermine democracy and the Rule of Law in Germany.

Nazi policy was to drive the Jews out of Germany and then from Austria, which was incorporated into the Third Reich after the 1938 Anschluss.

Emigration was not an easy option for most Jews. Visas were difficult to obtain as countries closed their doors to immigrants. In March 1939, a British White Paper restricted immigration with the Palestine Mandate in an attempt to appease the Arabs.

After the Nazi invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939 persecution of the Jews began immediately in the territories under the control of the German army.

Although mass killings began after the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the decision to murder the Jewish population of Europe, the 'Final Solution', was only taken in January 1942 at the Wannsee Conference.

Most of the Jews who were killed in the Holocaust lived in Poland.

### **Polish anti-Semitism during the Second World War**

Several significant events fuelled Polish anti-Semitism after the German invasion on 1 September 1939. Immediately after the German invasion the Nazis shot the educated Polish elite in many of the towns and villages, resulting in a lack of leadership for the communities that remained. This affected several of the Loughton Boys' families.

Jews were moved into ghettos. The first Nazi ghetto in occupied Europe was created in the town of Piotrkow on October 8, 1939. Some of the Loughton Boys came from Piotrkow and were moved to the ghetto from their homes.

No reprisal was taken when Poles moved into Jewish homes, took Jewish property and desecrated graveyards by using gravestones as paving. Many Poles were extremely poor and tempted to take Jewish property in order to survive in the brutal wartime conditions.

Germany and the Soviet Union had already planned to divide Poland between them in a secret clause in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939. When the Soviets took control the majority of Jews welcomed them, but the Poles regarded the Soviets as an occupying power. This turned many Poles against the Jews and reinforced the widespread belief that Jews were part of a communist conspiracy.

While there was considerable anti-Semitism in Poland both before and after the Holocaust, there were instances where Jews were hidden by Poles during the war.

### **After the Holocaust**

Although approximately 6 million Jews had been murdered in the Holocaust, among them 1.5 million children, there were hundreds of thousands of Jewish survivors. Many of them had survived the Nazi concentration camps and were now living in a desperate situation in displaced persons' camps.

Many of the survivors who tried to return to their hometowns in Poland received a hostile reception from their Polish neighbours. This was the case with many of the Loughton Boys who realised that they could not rebuild their lives there. A number of Holocaust survivors were subsequently murdered in Poland in the 1945 Krakow pogrom and the 1946 pogrom in Kielce.

### 3. TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST

#### Definition of the Holocaust

The Holocaust Educational Trust (HET) advise that for the teaching of the Holocaust to be purposeful, it must be grounded in secure historical knowledge and understanding. Students should be given a definition of the Holocaust at the start of the course. Teachers are advised to use the following definition provided by the HET:

**“The Holocaust was the murder of approximately 6m Jewish men, women and children by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during the Second World War.”**

The Holocaust was a defining moment in world history. It fundamentally changed the fabric of European society and culture, and had worldwide reverberations still felt today. The Holocaust is the only specific historical event that it is a statutory requirement to study on the National Curriculum for History in England.

#### Teaching the Holocaust through the Loughton Boys

Holocaust education can, if practised effectively, offer a study of history which goes beyond the dry actions of states and governments, engaging students' interest in the lives of ordinary people who were much like themselves.

The story of the Boys cared for in Loughton after the end of the Second World War offers a unique pathway for students to learn about the Holocaust through a local history project by discovering the experiences of young people who survived the Holocaust.

The experiences the boys went through affected their physical and mental health but the process of recovery in Britain after the war helped them to address this. As their profiles reveal their stories are ones of hope and the importance of keeping their legacy alive.

Studying the Holocaust presents students with an array of challenging questions about what it means to be a human being that do not have easy answers. This, however, is one of the strengths of Holocaust education; it encourages students to think critically about the world around them and about issues of identity, behaviour and ethics.

Studying the Holocaust has contemporary historical relevance, but care must be taken to ensure that it does not become a source of simplistic homilies. As a topic, it should enable students to engage with the complexity of the history and its legacies and equip them to draw their own conclusions.

#### Guidelines for teaching the Holocaust

##### Using the Internet

Teachers should be aware of the potential challenges of using the Internet to learn about the Holocaust and are advised to consult the resources and organisations listed in this pack to support them in this project.

Students should be discouraged from conducting research on social news sites, social networks and video sharing websites. The reliability of information on the Internet should be discussed.

### **Terminology**

Teachers are advised to consult the glossary in the Teachers' Resources Booklet before beginning to teach the story of the Loughton Boys in the classroom.

### **The Holocaust in Film and Literature**

Teachers should point out to students that depictions of the Holocaust in film and literature are often fictionalised representations. Students are, of course, not discouraged from watching films and reading books based on the Holocaust, but they should be made aware that they are not wholly accurate accounts or have been edited.

### **Appropriate Teaching Activities**

While teaching the Holocaust teachers should avoid role play/empathy activities. We cannot imagine or expect students to imagine the experiences of the Holocaust survivors.

Teachers should remember that it is not necessary to shock students; this shows disrespect to the innocent victims of the Holocaust and it de-humanises them. It also risks traumatising young people.

In keeping with the Holocaust Educational Trust guidelines, teachers should:

- Create a positive, student-centred, cross-curricular approach
- Consider the intended learning outcomes and contemporary significance, whilst avoiding ahistorical comparisons
- Avoid simple reductive answers to complex questions and issues. Adopt an approach which is rooted in the historical events of the Holocaust
- Teach the history of the Holocaust in its context; just because it happened does not mean it was inevitable. Historical context is imperative to ensure an event is not removed from its historical foundations and becomes a universal symbol of whatever people want it to be
- Encourage students to consider and assess the validity of differing interpretations of the Holocaust
- Not romanticise history. Teaching and learning about the Holocaust should not be redemptive but challenging
- Be precise with language. Define the term Holocaust being specific and avoiding an all-encompassing definition
- Avoid stereotypical descriptions, such as seeing all Germans as Nazis
- Focus on the individual experience; statistics are impersonal and difficult to grasp. The boys' stories present the opportunity to do this

- Avoid defining Jewish people solely by the Holocaust; teach about Jewish life in Europe before the war and after, up until the present day
- Make sure Jewish people and others are portrayed not just as victims but also people who were involved in resistance and rescue activities
- Ensure students are aware of the variety of Jewish cultural and religious communities across Europe
- Teach about perpetrators as well as victims. Ensure that students do not assume that the Holocaust was merely conducted by Nazis; it relied on cooperation, collaboration and the acquiescence of many different nations for its enactment. Avoid categorising contemporaries in simplistic ways or judging their behaviour with the power of hindsight
- Re-humanise all involved. The Nazis were human beings not fictional monsters. The 6 million Jewish people who died were individual men, women and children

### **Sensitive Issues and how to address them**

#### **Anti-Semitism and Holocaust Denial**

Although nearly all students react to studying the Holocaust sympathetically and with respect, there is a possibility that some will express anti-Semitic sentiments, often unintentionally. The Holocaust Educational Trust advise that teachers should deal with such occurrences as they would any other form of racism or prejudice in accordance with their school's anti-racism policy.

Teachers can also tackle anti-Semitism by dispelling casual and often unintentional anti-Semitic ideas, for example myths of supposed Jewish wealth and power. The Holocaust Educational Trust advise that the most effective way to do this is by using reasoned argument based on accurate facts and understanding while employing language carefully. A definition of the term 'anti-Semitism' can be found in the glossary.

Holocaust denial is a manifestation of anti-Semitism. Initiating a discussion on the topic is not advised as it might suggest it is worthy of debate, but in the current climate increasing numbers of students have heard the term and are asking teachers what it means. The story of the Loughton Boys is likely to raise the topic as many of the survivors give Holocaust denial as a reason they have decided to speak about their experiences.

Teachers should confront the idea of Holocaust denial by focussing attention on the testimonies of the survivors including the profiles of the Loughton Boys included in this pack; the racist motives of Holocaust deniers; and the clear historical evidence, produced in large part by the perpetrators themselves, such as photographs and prisoner lists.

If teachers want to discover more about dealing with Holocaust denial, a good resource is the Holocaust Denial on Trial website ([www.hdot.org](http://www.hdot.org)), run by historian Deborah Lipstadt.

### **Refugees**

Immigration is an issue that pupils may have heard discussed at home. It is important to point out that the story of the Loughton Boys is one of children torn from home, in circumstances beyond their control, who are forced to start a new life in a new country. The story of the Loughton Boys is a positive story showing what can be achieved when a refugee child is offered a helping hand.

### **Polish History**

Teachers should be aware that the story of the Loughton Boys raises questions about the relationship between Jews and Poles at this time.

Teachers should consult the Historical Context section which shows that while there was considerable anti-Semitism in Poland both before and after the Holocaust, many Jews were hidden by Poles. It is far too simplistic to say that one nation is good and another bad. The story of the Holocaust is complex and nuanced.

Teachers wishing to gain a deeper insight are advised to read Jan Gross' *Neighbours: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Arrow, 2003) and Timothy Snyder's *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (Vintage 2011).

### **Other Genocides**

If students bring up the subject, they should be encouraged and supported to talk about other genocides.

## **4. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **Websites**

- The story of the Central British Fund for German Jewry outlined on the website of World Jewish Relief, its successor organisation: [worldjewishrelief.org/about-us/history](http://worldjewishrelief.org/about-us/history)
- The '45 Aid Society website [45aid.org](http://45aid.org)
- The time the Loughton Boys spent in Windermere is covered by the Lake District Holocaust Project: [ldhp.org.uk](http://ldhp.org.uk)
- Holocaust Educational Trust booklet *Exploring the Holocaust: A Cross-Curricular Scheme of Work for Key Stage 3 & S2 Teachers* is available at [het.org.uk/teaching-resources](http://het.org.uk/teaching-resources)
- The Holocaust Educational Trust also offers free workshops and Continuing Professional Development courses for new and experienced teachers.
- The Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive: [vhaonline.usc.edu/login](http://vhaonline.usc.edu/login)

- British Library Sound Archive: [sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Jewish-Holocaust-survivors](https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Jewish-Holocaust-survivors)
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: [ushmm.org/](https://ushmm.org/)
- Yad Vashem [yadvashem.org/](https://yadvashem.org/)

### Speakers

Teachers can approach the '45 Aid Society [45aid.org](https://45aid.org) the charitable organisation that represents the boys and their families, to invite a member of the Loughton boys' families to talk at their school. They can also approach the Holocaust Education Trust for speakers. When doing so please be specific that you have been teaching the story of the Loughton Boys.

### Books

Tom Palmer's *After the War* (Barrington Stoke, 2020) is an excellent book, aimed at the older child / young adult audience, about the story of the boys in Windermere. Palmer worked with historians to research and write his book. More information about the book and associated learning resources can be found here [tompalmer.co.uk/after-the-war/](https://tompalmer.co.uk/after-the-war/)

The museum is working with Palmer to create a short story focussing on one of the Loughton boys which will be launched with the exhibition in 2021. Additional learning materials will be available to accompany this.

Martin Gilbert's *The Boys: Triumph Over Adversity* (Phoenix, 2003). Teachers might consider having a copy for students to consult as there are very detailed accounts from many of the Loughton Boys

### Television

*The Windermere Children*, a feature length film produced for the BBC by Wall to Wall, Warner Bros. and ZDF in 2020. It was accompanied by a documentary *The Windermere Children in Their Own Words* which features testimonies from some of the Loughton Boys.

### Visual Resources

The Roman Vishniac Collection is a very important visual resource for exploring Jewish life in Europe between the world wars. Roman Vishniac (1897–1990) was one of the foremost documentary photographers of the twentieth century, responsible for taking the most widely recognized and reproduced photographic record of Jewish life in Eastern Europe before the Second World War.

[icp.org/browse/archive/collections/roman-vishniac-collection-selections](https://icp.org/browse/archive/collections/roman-vishniac-collection-selections)

This guide was written by Rosie Whitehouse for Epping Forest District Museum in 2020.  
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