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Epping Forest District Museum
Education Service

The Loughton Boys
Holocaust Survivors in the Epping Forest District

Education Resource Pack
Part 2: Lesson Plans and Resources

HERITAGE FUND

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.

The exhibition and teaching resource pack were created with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Our thanks also go to the Holocaust Educational Trust and the '45 Aid Society for their assistance in producing this pack.

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, as part of their journey to recovery.

There is an option to have these lessons delivered as a workshop by the Education Officers at Epping Forest District Museum, Waltham Abbey. This workshop can be delivered at the museum, in school or via Zoom. For more information, contact the Education Officer on 01992 564994 or email museum@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

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 including the PowerPoints can be downloaded from Epping Forest District Museum's website:
eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum/learning/schools/

Contents

Part 2: Lesson Plans and Resources

1. OVERVIEW OF LESSON CONTENT

The content of the lesson, and especially some of the information in the profiles of the boys contains potentially sensitive and upsetting material. Care should be taken to prepare students for this, and teachers should make decisions about what is appropriate for students based on individual circumstances.

Time should be allowed at the beginning and end of each lesson to address questions and concerns of the students, either as a class or individually.

Lesson One
This lesson introduces the story of the Loughton Boys. It should be used in conjunction with PowerPoint 1 which can be downloaded from
eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum/learning/schools/

This lesson and the associated homework activity aim to

- Engage students with international history in a local context through the story of the Loughton boys
- Develop their knowledge and understanding of Polish Jewish history in the early 20th century
- Develop their historical skills by researching the story of the boys through historical source material

Lesson Two
This lesson takes the work students have done on the boys and brings it into the wider context of Holocaust Education. It should be taught in conjunction with PowerPoint 2 which can be downloaded from
eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum/learning/schools/

This lesson and the associated homework activity aim to

- Clarify students' understanding of the Holocaust and why it is compulsory
- Consider how elements of the boys' stories help us understand the Holocaust

Extension Exercises
These can be used to help students understand

- How and why the Holocaust and other genocides happened through studying the Ten steps to Genocide
- To assess what students already know and what misconceptions they have about what happened during the Holocaust

Follow Up
These lessons can be delivered as a workshop by the Education Officers at Epping Forest District Museum, Waltham Abbey. This workshop can be delivered at the museum, in school or via Zoom. For more information, contact the Education Officer on 01992 564994 or email museum@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

2. LESSON ONE

This lesson is based on the slides in PowerPoint 1 which can be downloaded from eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum/learning/schools/

This introduces the story of the boys and sets it in a wider historical context. It will be useful for the teacher to read the historical notes in Part 1: Information for Teachers beforehand.

Detailed notes based on the contents Part 1 are included for each slide to assist teachers in leading discussion. Teacher discretion and expertise to pitch these resources at their students by adapting them where necessary is encouraged.

Key points and associated images are summarised for students on the slides.

Slide 1: Hook
This slide contains a seemingly random mix of images. The students can have a few minutes to discuss what they think the images show and how they might be linked together.

Explain: the images are all connected in some way with the story of The Boys, the young Holocaust survivors who came to England in 1945 as part of their recovery and to establish new lives. This group of 715 young people are collectively known as The Boys, even though there were 192 girls in the group. A group of 30 boys came to stay at a hostel in Loughton from December 1945 to January 1947. We know the names of 26 of these so far and they have become known as the Loughton Boys.

- ***Picture 1. The Star of David***

This image establishes the focus of the story – the Holocaust. Shortly after the invasion of Poland in September 1939, local German authorities began introducing mandatory wearing of badges. By the end of 1939, all Jews in the newly acquired Polish territories were required to wear badges like this to identify themselves as Jews.

- ***Picture 2. A transport train arriving at the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia***

This photograph captures the moment when the liberation of the camps was announced. Henry Brown, one of the Loughton boys is the boy in the centre of the photograph, sitting on the side of the carriage waving his hand in the air. At this point these boys, many just in their teens, had survived over 5 years of the most appalling experiences. They had been transported for weeks on freight trains to what would have been their deaths in Nazi concentration and extermination camps.

- ***Picture 3. This photograph shows the boys and staff at Holmehurst, Loughton***

The first group of 300 young Holocaust survivors were flown from Prague to Windermere in the Lake District where they spent the first few months building up their health and filling in the gaps in their education after over 5 years in the camps. After this initial period, the boys went in smaller groups to live in different hostels around the UK. One of these hostels was in Loughton and the young people who came here are known as the Loughton Boys.

- ***Picture 4. Photograph of Holmehurst today.***

The house was a grand mansion, built in 1865. It had huge grounds including a boating lake. It had been used for a variety of purposes during the war, including being used as a safe house for enemies of the Nazi regime. It had suffered some bomb damage in the war, but as a place where the boys could recover with the forest around them, it was a perfect location. The house is now a private home again.

- ***Picture 5. Map***

This map shows where Holmehurst is situated, on Manor Road, the border of Loughton and Buckhurst Hill. The boating lake can be seen.

- ***Picture 6. Table tennis bat***

A table tennis bat links to one of the pastimes the boy recall enjoying at Holmehurst. They also played football and enjoyed exploring the forest.

- ***Picture 7. Film poster***

Another popular pastime was going to the cinema where they recall watching films, which they also said helped them improve their English!

- ***Picture 8. Olympic weightlifter, Sir Ben Helfgott***

Ben was one of the Loughton Boys. He describes himself as a walking skeleton when he first arrived in the UK but ten years later, he represented Great Britain at the 1956 and 1960 Olympic Games and 1958 Commonwealth Games. He was captain of the British weightlifting team on all these occasions. Ben has been knighted for his services to Holocaust Education and received a Pride of Britain Award in 2020.

- ***Picture 9. Judge Robert Rinder***

Robert Rinder is both a criminal barrister and television personality, best known for his appearances on Strictly Come Dancing and his reality courtroom series. He is also the grandson of one of the boys, Morris Malenicky. Morris and Ben Helfgott were from the same town in Poland and went through many experiences in the camps together. Their bond of friendship continued through their life. The '45 Aid Society was established by the Boys to maintain these friendships, undertake charitable work and promote Holocaust Education. Robert Rinder and his mother Angela Cohen are part of the second and third generation – the descendants of the boys who keep their stories alive through the work of the society today.

Slide 2: Title

The exhibition about the Loughton boys held at Epping Forest District Museum in 2021 was researched by a local student, Ellis Spicer, a former student at King Harold Academy in Waltham Abbey, who went on to study history at university.

It is worth emphasising to students that this is a local history story. It shows how major historical events like the Holocaust which might seem far removed both geographically and historically from our lives are in fact present in our local history.

We will go on to discover more about the stories of the boys who came to Loughton, but before we do this, we need to ask some key questions which will clarify our understanding of some important terms and concepts. Most importantly we need to establish an historical context; this is a story about the Polish Jewish community and how the Holocaust impacted on it. It is also a story of a group of boys, who between the ages of 9 to 20 years old, went through some of the most appalling experiences, but survived and went on to build their lives again here in our local area.

Slide 3: What was the Holocaust?
Students may already have done introductory work on this so you may just wish to recap their understanding.

For this project, we use the Holocaust Educational Trust's definition included on the slide. Historians use the term 'Holocaust' specifically to describe the murder of Europe's Jews during the Second World War as only Jews were targeting for mass extermination.

Ensure students understand that this is not intended to ignore or belittle the suffering of others but rather to emphasise the varying experiences of the different groups including Sinti and Roma, people with disabilities, Soviet prisoners of war and Polish elites who were also victims of Nazi mass murder and persecution. Using 'Holocaust' as a catch-all term for Nazi persecution can obscure the varying experiences of the different victim groups.

Slide 4: Holocaust Survivors: The Loughton Boys
A brief summary of the Loughton Boys is given.

Ask students to consider how this photograph of the boys, taken after they have come to Britain, compares with images we usually see of Holocaust survivors? The boy standing on the bike is Henry Brown who we last saw in the photograph of the train carriage outside Theresienstadt, waving his hand.

Popular culture often portrays survivors as victims broken by their experiences, not as people with agency. The boys in the image are strong, proud and self-assertive.

This story of the Holocaust, while it contains many appalling episodes, is ultimately one of hope and agency. The Loughton boys, while all affected in many ways by the terrible experiences they went through, went on to recover from their experiences and lead positive, successful lives. They also want to bear witness to what happened, so the Holocaust and their families are not forgotten.

Slide 5: Where were the Loughton Boys from?
They were all Polish Jews, born in the late 1920s and early 1930s. They enjoyed a warm and happy, if not always easy, childhood. Daily life revolved around their family and their Jewish faith. Many of them came from the same towns and were childhood friends.

At this time Poland had the largest Jewish population in Europe, of over 3 million people. The boys came from Polish towns with large, vibrant Jewish communities who had lived there for generations.

Anti-Semitism existed in Poland before the German invasion of Poland in 1939 and many of the boys recall increasing incidents of anti-Semitism taking place during their childhood.

These pre-Second World War images show some of the towns that the Loughton Boys came from:

1. Lodz – Poland's second city in 1939 - was a major industrial city, a centre for manufacture of cloth, clothes and shoes. Jews made up a third of the population, numbering some 223,000 on the eve of the war. Lodz was a multi-ethnic society where anti-Jewish violence was an occasional, but not predominant phenomenon. The Jewish community was diverse and included all social classes, political views and religious orientation. Lodz was a centre of Jewish literary, theatrical, and artistic activity. Many of the factories were owned by Jewish families but most of the Jewish population was poor.

2. Piotrkow Trybunalski – This historic city, usually referred to as Piotrkow, is one of the oldest in Poland. It was the home of the first ghetto to be created in Poland and many of the Boys worked in its factories. The town was home to five of the Loughton Boys and two more were imprisoned in the ghetto. The BBC programmes *Who Do You Think You Are*, and *My Family, The Holocaust and Me*, featuring Robert Rinder focus on Piotrkow as his grandfather, one of the Boys, came from here.

3. Czestochowa – Another lively town, where most Jews worked in trade and commerce. Home to one of the Loughton Boys, Czestochowa played a role in many of the Boys lives as a large number passed through the HASAG labour camp and from there were deported to the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany. It illustrates the importance of slave labour in their survival but is also significant as it was during this period that many close friendships among the Boys were formed.

There was also little-known underground resistance movement in the Czestochowa ghetto that maintained close contact with the Jewish Fighting Organisation in the Warsaw ghetto. The group fought back against the Germans during the deportations and liquidation of the ghetto.

4. Gorlice – This commercial city in south eastern Poland was home to three of the Loughton Boys. The image shows a Zionist youth group illustrating that Jews were active in pre-war political movements.

Slide 6: The German Invasion of Poland
After the Nazi occupation of western Poland in 1939 the systematic persecution of Jews that had been taking place in Germany since the Nazi's rise to power in 1933 began there. Jews were moved from their homes into ghettos.

The first ghetto was established in Piotrkow, the hometown of some of the Loughton boys. Jews 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.

The towns where many of the boys lived were the centre of armament production. After the German invasion of Poland in 1939 these factories were taken over by German companies. Employees became slave labourers, were integrated into the Nazi economy and played a key part in the German war effort. The boys worked in these factories and this became key reason for their survival.

These photographs were taken by Willi Georg, a German Army signalman who visited the Warsaw ghetto on his commanding officer's order in the summer of 1941. These images are taken from the Imperial War Museum website where more of Georg's images and **useful notes about interpreting them as historical evidence** can be seen iwm.org.uk/history/daily-life-in-the-warsaw-ghetto

Slide 7: The Final Solution
Nazi policy towards the Jews evolved over time. The decision to murder all Jews in Nazi controlled territory was made in January 1942.

The Final Solution was the point at which most of the boys were separated from the rest of their family members forever. Those that were considered useful for work were selected for the forced labour camps – young men and boys. Others were transported straight to their deaths in the extermination camps.

The image shows the memorial at the railway station in the city of Lodz from which the Jews from the ghetto were deported to concentration and extermination camps. The size of each stone represents the number of people deported who died in these camps.

Slide 8: The Concentration Camps
The work carried out in the forced labour camps was brutal, as was the camp system itself; the regularity with which people were moved from camp to camp took an additional toll.

This is the record for Harry Balsam, showing the number of different camps he passed through and the relatively short periods of time in each, especially towards the end. Note that Arb-Lg stands for Arbeitlager (Work Camp) and KZ stands for Konzentrationslager (Concentration Camp). Zuletzt Theresienstadt means last / final Theresienstadt.
Note Harry's age – he left the Gorlice work camp on what would have been his 11th birthday.

Slide 9: Liberation
As Allied armies advanced on Germany, the mass movement of camp inmates further into German territory began. Thousands were forced on death marches or crammed onto trains in freight wagons. Many did not survive. The final destination for many was Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia. On 8 May 1945 Theresienstadt was liberated.

This photograph captures the moment some of the boys arrived in a transport Theresienstadt and heard it had been liberated. It was taken by one of the partisans fighting with the Soviet Red Army. Some of the boys later saw the photograph in a chemist's shop window in a neighbouring town and asked for a copy. One of the boys who eventually came to Loughton, Henry Brown, can be seen on the left

waving his hand. The boy on the right waving his cap in the air is Ike Alterman, another one of the boys who went to a different hostel. The Nazi guards had fled the ghetto leaving the Red Cross to take over and care for the survivors who, despite appearances in this image, were in many cases close to death.

Slide 10: After the war
The end of the war was not the end of the hardships the boys would suffer. Many were in such poor health they were still close to death.

They had lost their families and homes. They were unable to return to Poland as they were not welcome there. Ben Helfgott, one of the Loughton Boys, recalls a terrifying experience when he went back to 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.'

It was believed that around 5000 Jewish children had survived the war. Those countries capable of caring for them, including France, Switzerland and Sweden agreed to take 1000 Jewish orphans each. Other countries were reluctant to take large numbers of refugees as they were recovering from the impact of a long and hard war.

The Central British Fund for German Jewry persuaded the British government to also take 1000 orphans, a story that we will explore more in lesson 2.

Slide 11: Homework
Before then, students can research the profile of one of the Loughton Boys to find more about their individual experience before and during the war, and what happened to them after it.

It is believed that 30 boys were cared for in the Loughton hostel but so far research has only provided information for 26 of the boys. It should be explained to students that this is an ongoing local history project, in which they can play a part by asking elderly relatives and neighbours if they remember the period and the Loughton Boys.

Lesson 1: Homework

Students can choose a boy to research, or teachers may prefer to allocate profiles to individual students. If the class has more than 26 students some names can be duplicated. Good profiles to duplicate are Ben Helfgott, Roman Halter, Chaim Aizon and Koppel Kendall.

Each pupil should be given a copy of the following which can be found in section 5 at the end of the pack:

- A copy of the boy's profile
- A copy of the profile worksheet
- They may also find the glossary and timeline useful for reference

Teachers should note that some of these profiles are incomplete and that discovering the story of the boys who were cared for in Loughton is work in progress.

Reasons for the lack of information may include the early death of the person in question or reluctance to talk about their experiences. Most oral testimonies were only given from the 1990s onwards, reflecting interest in the Holocaust in society and of survivors themselves who often say they were keen to get on with life and only had time to reflect on their experiences after retirement.

Words in bold in the profiles are explained in the glossary. Students should be advised to consult this in order to answer the questions.

3. LESSON 2

This lesson is based on the slides in PowerPoint 2 which can be downloaded from eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum/learning/schools/

This lesson continues the story of the boys after they came to Britain and helps students draw conclusions about the importance of this local history story for Holocaust education.

Students can use what they have learnt about their boy from their homework research to link their story to a recap of what was covered in lesson 1.

They can also add to the discussion on each slide in lesson 2 using the knowledge they have gained from researching their boy's profile.

Boys whose story includes a particularly relevant example to discuss with that slide are mentioned in the notes, so you make sure the student who has studied that boy contributes to the discussion at that point.

Slide 1: Title

Slide 2: Recap of lesson 1 and homework activity
Start by giving students time to share some of their research on individual boys' experiences up until the end of the war and ask any questions they may have.

Students could start by sharing anything they found particularly interesting from a historical or personal point of view.

The following questions can help draw together their findings around certain themes such as:

- What sort of occupations did the Loughton Boys' parents have? They reveal the families were from all different levels of society
- Which boys mention incidents of anti-Semitism in Poland before the war? Do any refer to the boycott of Jewish shops and businesses before 1939?
- Which boys have recollections of the day war breaks out? (Ben Helfgott/Chaim Aizon/Harry Balsam/Roman Halter/Gary Winogradski)
- How many of the boys were excluded from school?

- Which boys recall having to wear a yellow badge?
- Which boys recall being in a ghetto? Who remembers things that happened in the ghetto? (Getting food for their families – Harry Spiro) (Work as labourers – Chaim Aizon/Ben Helfgott/Harry Spiro)
- As the Final Solution was enacted, what happened to the boys' families? Whose families were deported to the extermination camps and murdered? What happened to other family members? (Ben Helfgott's mother and little sister were shot)
- Why were the boys not selected to be murdered?
- What work did they do as slave / forced labourers? What else do they recall of their experiences in the forced labour camps?
- What are their recollections of the final days of the war, and the moment of liberation?

Finally, discuss what issues the boys now faced even though the war was over, and why finding a new home was so challenging – everything from their health to ongoing anti-Semitism, the loss of their families and homes, to the practicalities of other countries being able to accept refugees after the war should all be considered. The story of the boys was very much the exception rather than the rule for the post-war experiences of child survivors.

The following slides continue the story but as students have now researched their own boy, they should be able to continue adding to the discussion with more personal examples.

Slide 3: Coming to Britain
The Central British Fund for German Jewry (CBF) persuaded the British Government to grant 1000 temporary two-year visas for child refugees.

715 children were identified. They were to become known as the Boys, even though some were older and there were girls in the group.

This photo of the first 300 children to fly to Britain – which included the Loughton boys - was taken in the Old Town Square in Prague. The original photo was recreated in 2019 by the descendants of the Boys and some of the survivors themselves.

In the profiles do any of the boys recall how they were chosen to come to Britain, or what they remember of the journey? Did any lie about their age to be included?

Slide 4: Windermere
The CBF was able to negotiate the use of RAF Stirling bombers to bring the young people to Britain. The planes had been repatriating Czech pilots after the war. The footage from the Imperial War Museum, embedded in the image on the slide is worth viewing.
iwm.org.uk/history/rare-footage-of-young-holocaust-survivors-on-their-way-to-britain

The boys look relatively fit and healthy, and excited to be going on this journey, but they had been built up and there were many physical and mental scars that remained.

One of the RAF pilots recalls giving chocolate to some of the children on the flight but regretted it when they were sick!

The Boys arrived at the Calgarth estate in Windermere on 14 August 1945. An aircraft factory which had accommodation huts for workers on site, this proved the ideal place for the boys to begin their recuperation. Having their own beds with sheets and clean clothes was overwhelming. The peace and beauty of the lakes, along with the support of the staff helped them begin to build their lives and childhoods again, and deal with ongoing challenges such as receiving confirmation their families had not survived.

In the profiles do any of the boys recall their feelings and emotions at arriving in Windermere and what effect it had on them? What was most important to them – food, education, trying to find surviving family?

Slide 5: Coming to Loughton
Over three months from September to December 1945 the boys were moved from Windermere in smaller groups to hostels around the UK. They stayed in friendship groups, or with those who had similar interests, but kept in contact with the wider group.

The hostels, with a smaller family atmosphere would help prepare and support the boys as they moved towards independent adult lives.

The last group to leave Windermere came to Loughton to stay at Holmehurst, a large house on the border of Loughton and Buckhurst Hill.

Slide 6: Holmehurst, Loughton
As in Windermere, Holmehurst provided space, peace and beautiful natural surroundings to help the boys recover. It had once been a very grand mansion. The house still stands today on the corner of Manor Road and the Epping New Road. It is set back behind gates and a large fence. A blue plaque has now been placed on it commemorating its important part in history although this is not visible from the road.

In the profiles, what do the boys remember about Holmehurst, the staff, the education and opportunities they had? Do any have memories of the local area – Epping Forest, meeting local people?

Slide 7: The Future
As well as undertaking education and training to prepare for future careers while at Holmehurst, the boys also considered where they would live as their initial two-year visas to stay in Britain were coming to an end.

Image 1: Some studied at the ORT school in South Kensington – a Jewish school that provided vocational training.

Image 2: The boys who came to Loughton all had an interest in Zionism – the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The British Government who were in control of the Palestine Mandate restricted immigration so it had not been

possible for the boys to go there legally after they arrived in Britain. When the opportunity arose later, some did make the journey illegally and fought in the newly formed Israeli Defence Forces.

Image 3: Other boys were resettled in different countries, but many chose to stay in Britain, and were finally granted the right to remain. Staying with the friends who had become their new family was very important to them. They also went on to marry and have their own families.

Image 4: some went on to pursue careers in business, sometimes in partnership with each other. The most extraordinary story must be that of Ben Helfgott who went from being what he described as a 'walking skeleton' to Olympic weightlifter.

The fact that all found successful jobs illustrates what can happen when you give a refugee child a helping hand. Just because someone has been torn from their home and survived terrible experiences does not mean that they cannot contribute to the society in which they make a new home.

Slide 8: Bearing witness
What do the boys themselves say about the importance of Holocaust education? What have they done to make sure their story is remembered and told?

Many of the boys have now given written testaments or recorded oral history accounts as evidence of what they experienced. Jacob Glicksohn, a Loughton boy was one of the first to write down his testament.

The boys have recorded the deaths of their families at the Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem where a database of victims' names is held.

9. Why is studying the Holocaust compulsory?
The Holocaust is the only compulsory subject of study in the National Curriculum for History at Key Stage 3 in England. Ask the students to for their ideas, then discuss the reasons revealed on the slide.

Slide 10: Countering Holocaust Denial
Holocaust Denial is an important reason to study the Holocaust and has motivated some of the boys to speak about their experiences.

While the Nazis tried to cover up their crimes in the extermination camps, they did keep detailed records of those who lived in the ghettos and were taken into slave labour, as well as lists of people sent on death marches.

The top image shows card indexes from Buchenwald concentration camp. Note: the cards only give numbers not names.

These records were used by the Red Cross when trying to trace the relatives of the boys. In most cases, as in this example for Harry Balsam, the evidence showed they had not survived

Slide 11: Legacy
The story of the boys is important in many ways. Discuss with students what they think they have learnt through studying the story of the boys – both in terms of historical knowledge, and on a personal level.

- It is a local history story that sheds light on one of the most significant historical events of the 20th century
- It highlights another aspect of the Holocaust through the experience of Polish Jews to broaden our awareness and understanding
- It is a story of the Holocaust that focuses on resilience and hope
- The legacy of the boys and their families enables us to continue learning about the Holocaust

The '45 Aid Society is an organisation set up by the boys to further the cause of Holocaust education, engage in charitable works and provide a way the second and third generation – people like Robert Rinder, the grandson of one of the boys - can keep the memory and work of the boys alive.

One of the projects the '45 Aid Society has undertaken are memory quilts. Survivors or their family members have made a patch, embroidered with images connected with their family and their life to serve as a lasting memorial.

Slide 12: Homework

For a final piece of homework, students can prepare a poster or PowerPoint slide about their boy to reflect elements of their story and what they have learned about them. This can form a display in school, or as part of an assembly.

Examples of many of the quilts can be seen on the '45 Aid Society website 45aid.org/memory-quilt/

Students work can be displayed in school, used as part of an assembly on Holocaust Memorial Day, or on the 8 May, the anniversary of their liberation.

You may also like to contact the museum as there may be opportunities to highlight students' work as part of our commemorations of Holocaust Memorial Day, or other events in the district. Contact the Education Officer on 01992 564994 or email museum@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

4. RESOURCES FOR LESSON 1

4.1 Glossary

Aktion
Nazi term for an operation in which members of a Jewish community were forcibly assembled and then either deported to an extermination camp or shot locally.

Aryan
Term originally applied to speakers of Indo-European languages. The Nazis used it to describe people of white European origin, especially northern Europeans.

Anti-Semitism
Anti-Semitism means discrimination or prejudice against Jews. It is considered a form of racism. Someone who holds these views is called an anti-Semite. These ideas were not new in 1933 and had been held by people for centuries.

Auschwitz-Birkenau
Concentration and extermination camp in the Polish town of Oswiecim. After 1 September 1939 Poland had ceased to exist and the area was occupied by at first the Germans and the Soviets and then after the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 by Germany alone. Do not refer to camps located on Polish soil as Polish as they were established by the German occupation authorities.

Auschwitz was created as a concentration camp for political prisoners in 1940 and became an extermination camp in early 1942. It eventually consisted of three main sections: Auschwitz I, the concentration camp; Auschwitz II (Birkenau), an extermination and slave labour camp and Auschwitz III (Monowitz), a slave labour camp. Auschwitz had numerous sub-camps. More than 1.1 million people lost their lives in Auschwitz-Birkenau, including about 1 million Jews, 75,000 Poles, 21,000 Sinti and Roma and 15,000 Soviet prisoners of war. The sheer number of prisoners who passed through Auschwitz and the number of survivors from the camp, who included the famous Italian writer Primo Levi, has made Auschwitz the best known of the concentration and extermination camps.

Central British Fund
The Central British Fund (CBF) was set up in the UK in 1933 after Hitler came to power to help Jewish refugees from Germany. The Central British Fund is now known as World Jewish Relief and operates as an international humanitarian agency helping both Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

Concentration camp
Prison camp in which inmates were forced to undertake hard labour. The first Nazi camps were created in March 1933, among the best known of which is Dachau. From 1936 onwards, camps such as Buchenwald (1937) were established, usually linked to economic enterprises run by the SS. The concentration camp system was integrated into the German economy and the war effort and the camps were managed by German businesses. Work undertaken by prisoners directly contributed to the German war effect through the production of munitions, clothes and shoes. They were known in German as Konzentrationslager, KZ or KL.

In the 1930s most inmates were political opponents or so-called 'a-socials' (such as gay men, beggars and habitual criminals) and from 1938 onwards, Jews. In Germany, the concentration camps had a limited role in the Holocaust. The fact that prisoners were moved from camps further east as the war drew to a close gave the impression that they had been part of the extermination camp network.

Death march
Name given to the forcible movement of prisoners (especially Jews) from the concentration and labour camps in the east to camps in Germany and Austria, from the autumn of 1944 onwards. Marches sometimes includes up to tens of thousands of prisoners and thousands died from cold, hunger and shootings by the guards. The weak were left to die on the way. Marches could last for weeks.

Extermination camp
Nazi camp purpose-built for the mass murder of Jews. Four camps were created in Poland between 1941 and 1942, which existed solely for the murder of Jews: Belzec, Chelmno, Sobibor and Treblinka. Almost every person brought to these camps was murdered immediately by poison gas.

Final Solution
The 'Final Solution' was the name given by the Nazis to their plan to murder all European Jews. The 'Final Solution' resulted in the murder of 90% of Poland's Jews and two thirds of Europe's Jewish population. It is important to remember that 'Final Solution' was only Nazi policy from January 1942.

Genocide
Term first coined during the Second World by lawyer Raphael Lemkin to describe the deliberate and systematic destruction of a religious, racial, national or cultural group.

Gestapo
Nazi secret police force created in 1933. The Gestapo was created by Hermann Göring in 1933. From April 1934, Hitler passed its administration to (SS) national leader Heinrich Himmler and from September 1939 it was considered to be a sister organisation to the SS. The Gestapo played a key role in the Nazi plan to exterminate the Jews of Europe.

Ghetto
Section of a town or a city where Jews were forced to live. Ghettos had existed in many parts of Europe in the medieval or in the early modern period. They were revived by the Germans following the invasion of Poland: the first Nazi ghetto was created in Piotrkow Tybunalski, in Poland, in October 1939. More ghettos were established during 1940 although widespread ghettoization only began in 1941.

Many ghettos, though not all, were 'closed' i.e.: surrounded by walls with exit forbidden. In most cases the area designated as the ghetto was a poor, cramped and rundown quarter. Life in the ghettos was characterised by overcrowding, hunger, disease and exploitation for slave labour in factories. Some ghettos were turned into concentration camps as the war progressed. Survivors often refer to these as work camps.

All, except the ghetto of Thereseinstadt, in Czechoslovakia (now Czech Republic), were eventually liquidated, with the Jews deported to extermination camps or shot.

Holocaust
Literal translation is 'complete burnt sacrifice' (Greek). Term most commonly used to describe the mass murder of approximately 6 million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators. Although certain other groups were victims of Nazi persecution and genocide, only Jews were targeted for complete destruction. Thus, when used by historians, the term refers specifically to the murder of Europe's Jews rather than to Nazi persecution in general.

Jewish Badge
A distinctive sign, usually a Star of David, which Jews were forced to wear in most countries under Nazi control, beginning in Poland in 1939. Depending on the country, it took the form of an armband or a badge.

Kindertransport
Literally 'children's transport' (German). A programme by which the British government granted the admission of almost 10,000 mostly Jewish child refugees from Central Europe from November 1938 onwards until the outbreak of war curtailed the operation. The children were, due to immigration restrictions, unaccompanied. It was welfare agencies and not the British government that paid and organised for the children's transportation and care.

Labour camp
Forced labour camps, known by the acronym ZAL, started emerging from 1938 initially in the German Reich and later mainly in eastern and southern Europe. To begin with, forced labour of Jews was not of primary economic significance, but was characterised by pointless activities meant to humiliate and humble the victims. The rising demand of manpower in the defence industry and other war-relevant economic sectors in the course of the Second World War made the economic utilisation of Jewish labour more important.
From 1942 this form of exploitation did not override the fundamental objective of the National Socialists – the elimination of Jews – but meant at best a timely postponement of their murder. These camps were often more deadly than concentration camps and often turned into concentration camps.

ORT
Now known as World ORT, the organisation was founded in Russia in 1880 to provide professional education and training for young Jewish people. Today, it promotes education and training in communities worldwide.

Red Army
The Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, frequently shortened to Red Army, was the army and the air force of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Selection
Name given to the process of choosing victims for death camps and ghettos by separating them from those considered fit for work. Those who were usually deemed unfit for work were children, old people, the sick and disabled and women.

Shoah
Literally 'catastrophe' (Hebrew). A term for the Holocaust preferred by many Jews.

SS
The Schutzstaffel, a Nazi Party organisation created as 'Hitler's bodyguard'. Founded in 1925, it was originally composed of volunteers and grew to become a 'state within a state' that controlled the concentration camps and racial policy, ran its own businesses and had its own armed forces. Heinrich Himmler was head of the SS.

Testament
A testament is a formal written or spoken statement. Holocaust testimonies have been collected by recognised institutions like the British Library, the US Shoah Foundation, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Yad Vashem. Holocaust survivors began to give testimonies immediately after the end of the second world war to local committees set up by survivors. Most Holocaust survivors did not give testimonies until the 1990s when official organisations began to collect their testimonies.

Theresienstadt
Garrison town in northern Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic), which was transformed into a Jewish ghetto in late 1941. It is also known by its Czech name Terezin. It served as a transit camp for Auschwitz-Birkenau and as a 'model ghetto' designed to deceive public opinion and the international community, notably the International Red Cross who inspected the ghetto in June 1944. It was part of the Nazis elaborate schemes to hide the plan to eradicate the Jewish population of occupied Europe. Approximately 35,000 Jews died in Terezin and more than 80,000 were deported onwards to extermination camps. It had multiple functions and is often described by survivors as a concentration camp but the term ghetto is the best definition of its role.

Yiddish
Language used by Jews in central and eastern Europe at its most prevalent before the Holocaust. It was originally a German dialect with words from Hebrew and several modern languages, and still has some 200,000 speakers, mainly in the US, Israel, and Russia. Many words from Yiddish have been adopted into the English language such as glitch, chutzpah and nosh.

Zionist
Zionism is the name given to the national movement of the Jewish people. Zionists believe that Judaism is not just a religion, but also a nationality and that Jews should have their own state in their ancestral homeland, Israel.

4.2 TIMELINE

1933	
30 January	Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany, leading to a coalition of Nazis and conservatives
Spring	The Central British Fund for German Jewry is established
1 April	First officially organised boycott of Jewish shops in Germany
7 April	Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service removes Jews and socialists from government employment in Germany
1935	
15 September	Nuremberg Laws issued
1938	
13 March	Anschluss with Austria. Anti-Semitic violence follows
9 – 10 November	Kristallnacht pogrom carried out across Germany
November	Kinderstransport begins
1939	
30 January	In a speech in the Reichstag Hitler prophesies "the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe".
15 March	German occupation of Prague
23 August	Nazi-Soviet Pact
1 September	German invasion of Poland begins
8 October	First Nazi ghetto created in Piotrkow Trybunalski, Poland
November	Jews in the General Government region of Poland forced to wear Star of David armbands
1940	
14 June	First transport of Polish political prisoners to Auschwitz
Summer	Polish plan to deport Jews to Madagascar developed and then abandoned
14 November	Warsaw Ghetto sealed
1941	
March - April	Ghettos created in many cities in the General Government area in Poland (eg: Krakow and Lublin)
22 June	German invasion of the USSR, almost immediately followed by murders of Jews and communists by the Einsatzgruppen and other German police units. Anti-Semitic violence by local collaborators in some parts of Ukraine and the Baltic states
1 September	Decree ordering German Jews to wear the Judenstern, the yellow star
15 October	Deportation of Jews from Germany and Austria to ghettos in the east, among them Lodz and Minsk
8 December	Gassing of deportees begins at the Chelmno extermination camp. Chelmno is a camp where the Nazis experiment with tools of mass murder.
1942	
20 January	Wannsee Conference
15 February	First gassing of a Jewish transport in Auschwitz
17 March	First transport to Belzec
22 July	Beginning of the 'Great Aktion' in the Warsaw Ghetto, marking the start of the deportations to Treblinka where over 700,000 Jews are murdered in five months

1943	
19 April – 16 May	Warsaw Ghetto Uprising
3 – 4 November	42,000 Jews shot in two days in Majdanek and other camps in the Lublin region
1944	
19 March	German invasion of Hungary, following attempts by the Hungarian leader Miklos Horthy to leave the war
15 May	Systematic deportation of Jews from Hungary to Auschwitz-Birkenau begins
July - August	The Lodz ghetto is liquidated
Autumn	Death marches begin
1945	
27 January	Auschwitz - Birkenau liberated by Red Army
15 April	Liberation of Bergen-Belsen
29 April	Dachau liberated by the American Army
30 April	Hitler commits suicide
4 May	Theresienstadt liberated
7 May	Germany surrenders to the Allies
14 August	The Loughton boys arrive in the Lake District
1948	
14 May	Establishment of the state of Israel

4.3 PROFILE WORKSHEET

Use this sheet to help guide you as you make notes on the profile of the Loughton boy you are researching. You can write the answers to each section in your book or on a separate sheet.

Read the profile through first, then have a go at starting to answer the questions as you read through it again.

There are lots of questions, but don't worry if you can't find information to answer each one – we don't have all the information on each boy as the research on them is ongoing.

Name of Student:
Class:

1. What is the name of the boy whose story you are researching?

2. Have they had any other names and if so, why do you think that they changed their name?

3. Where was he born?

4. What is his date of birth?

5. Has he ever used other dates of birth and if so, why do you think he did that?

6. What were the names of his parents and what did they do?

7. Did he have any siblings? Give names and ages if possible. Did any survive the Holocaust?

8. Briefly describe his family life before the Second World War.

9. Did he spend time in a ghetto? If so, which one(s) and how did he describe ghetto life?

10. Was he in a concentration or labour camp? If so, list the camps he was in and the kind of forced slave labour he did there.

11. Does he describe surviving a selection in the ghetto or the concentration camps? If so, give a summary here.

12. Did he endure a death march? If so, give a summary of what he remembers about it.

13. Where was he liberated and by whom?

14. What happened to him immediately after the liberation?

15. Who organised for him to be brought to England?

16. When did he arrive in England and where was he taken on arrival?

18. What does he remember about time he spent in Loughton. Give details if you can?

19. Did he go to a local school? Did he receive any training or other education? If so, where?

20. Did he stay in the UK after he left Loughton? If not, where did he go?

21. Did he join the army? If so, what army did he join and what was his experience?

22. What did he do for a living?

23. Did he marry and have children?

24. Did he give a formal testimony to any organisation? If not, why do you think he did not? If the answer is 'yes' what reason did he give for making a testimony?

25. Did he write his memoirs into a book?

26. What aspects of his life after the Holocaust do you find interesting?

27. All Holocaust survivors had unique experiences and reacted to those experiences in different ways. If something strikes you about the life of the person you have been researching, make a note of it now.

4.4 PROFILES OF THE BOYS

It is thought that 30 boys came to Holmehurst, the hostel in Loughton.
There are profiles for 26 of them.

Chaim Aizon	Jerzy Herzberg
Harry Balsam	Moniek Hirschfeld
Henry Brown	David Hirschfeld
Zvi Dagan	Isadore Light
Harry Fox	Perez Lev
John Fox	Kopel Kendall
Jeff Frydman	Benny Newton
Paul Gast	Jimmy Rosenblatt
Jacob Glicksohn	Issac Pomerance
Moniek Goldberg	Michael Preston
Jan Goldberger	Harry Spiro
Roman Halter	Nathan Wald
Ben Helfgott	Gary Winogrodski

Chaim Aizon
Other names used: Khaim Eizen, Chaim Ajzen
Place of Birth: Bialobrzegi Poland
Date of Birth: 1929

Aizon was born in a small town called Bialobrzegi, a pretty market town 60km south of Warsaw in central Poland. His father Lejzar was a mechanic at a local electrical company and his mother, Kiela, ran a restaurant. He had sisters were Bluma (b. 1923), Rachel (b. 1927), Hinda (b. 1931), Chaja (b. 1932), Dvora (b. 1934), Tzipora (b. 1936) and Shiedel (b. 1938).

Sixty percent of the people who lived in Bialobrzegi were Jewish and the majority were very religious. The town was a centre of Jewish religious learning.

He was thirteen when the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939 and the town was bombed. Not long after Jewish children were excluded from school, Jews were forced to wear a **yellow badge** and to live in a **ghetto**. It was the first step in isolating them from the rest of the population.

Aizon was forced to work on a farm that was overseen by the **SS**. He was badly beaten by the Polish farm manager. Aizon managed to escape and return to the ghetto. In order to not get caught as the Germans were looking for him, he volunteered to work putting up electricity poles.

One day in October 1942 many of the Jews of Bialobrzegi were forcibly rounded up and taken to the Treblinka **extermination camp**, Aizon's family were among them. He saw the train that was taking them and heard the people on board crying out for help while he was at work putting up the electricity poles. His entire family were murdered at Treblinka. He registered the deaths of his extended family, all 37, of them at the Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem, which keeps a database of the names of the victims.

A month later he was sent to work at Skarzysko-Kamienna **labour camp**, which was a munitions camp, with a hundred other young boys. The camp was one of hundreds of slave labour camps scattered across occupied Poland. It reflected the German policy of exploiting the workforce of occupied and annexed countries to advance the war effort. It is thought that 25,000 Jews passed through the camp, which was operational between August 1942 and August 1944. Among those who were sent to the camp was Aizon's friend Kopel Kendall who was also cared for in the Loughton hostel.

When the boys arrived in Skarzysko they were ordered to dig a mass grave, believing they were to be killed and buried in it. Aizon was taken with another boy to work in the factory but all the others they had arrived with were never seen again. Although Aizon was very sick with typhus he continued to work. In 1943, he was in a group of prisoners transferred to the Buchenwald **concentration camp** in Germany. From there he was sent to work again as a slave labourer in Schlieben, a sub-camp of Buchenwald, making anti-tank rockets. There were little regulations or safety when it came to handling explosives and Aizon survived a major explosion at the camp. The

prisoners were forced to rebuild the camp. It was very hard work with hardly any food.

In March 1945, he was among a group of prisoners taken by train to the ghetto of Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia). Aizon spent two weeks on the train without food. Many people died on the way. He was liberated at Theresienstadt by the **Red Army**. He weighted just 28 kilos.

Aizon then decided to return to his hometown to see if anyone in his family had survived. He was greeted with hostility by Polish people he knew, so he returned to Theresienstadt where he met his old friend Koppel Kendall who told him that a list was being drawn up of boys being taken to Britain.

Aizon was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Aizon arrived in Britain in August 1945. He spoke Polish, **Yiddish**, and some German but not a word of English. After time recuperating in Windermere, he was moved to Holmehurst, the hostel in Loughton.

Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received an education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes. Azion attended that **ORT** Marine school, where he trained to join the merchant navy.

Aison was one of many the boys who lived in the Loughton hostel who volunteered to fight alongside the Jewish forces that would one day turn into the Israeli Defence Forces. This was against British law at the time, so he left the country secretly and travelled to Paris where he met with the Jewish underground. They sent him to Marseille where with other boys from Loughton he was trained to use firearms. They then went to fight in Palestine.

After the end of hostilities in Israel and the declaration of the state of Israel, Aizon remained in Israel. He fought in Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War. He married and had a family. He lived in Ramat Gan in Israel until his death.

Harry Balsam
Name at Birth: Hersch Balsam
Place of Birth: Gorlice Poland
Date of Birth: 15 August 1929

Balsam's parents were Mozes, a miller, and Adela. They were an orthodox family. He had an older brother Daniel (1923), sister Gittel (1925), and two more brothers, Sanek (1928) and Joseph (1930).

He grew up in the southern Polish town of Gorlice. Balsam remembered that just before Jewish holidays the children always had new clothes and the family lived comfortably. He first experienced **anti-Semitism** in Poland just before the war began.

In 1939 when the Germans invaded Poland the family fled east. They were trying to board a train when they were separated from his father and older brother. Balsam returned home with his mother and other siblings. His father sent news that they were in the part of Poland that had been occupied by the Soviet Union.

Balsam, like all other Jewish children were no longer allowed to go to school and the synagogues were all closed.

In 1940 the Jews of Gorlice were rounded up into a **ghetto**. Balsam was just ten years old, but he was forced to shovel snow to clear the roads. Jews were only allowed out of the ghetto for work. Then they had to wear a **yellow badge** identifying them as Jewish.

Nevertheless, many children sneaked out of the ghetto to find food for their families. Balsam was outside the ghetto searching for food with his brother Sanek, when Sanek was shot through the head in front of him by a German **Gestapo** officer. The same officer told Balsam to run away. He believes that a Polish boy from the same class at school told the German he was a Jew. Poles who informed on Jews were rewarded with a kilo of sugar. He says that the boy may not have known him so did not say that he was Jewish.

In August 1942, he was separated from his mother during a **selection**. He was selected to dig mass graves for those who had been shot in the **aktion**. He had no idea where his family had gone. He would discover later that his mother and sister Gittel and younger Joseph were murdered in the Belzec **extermination camp** in occupied Poland. He was twelve-years old and left alone in the ghetto.

Balsam was deported to Krakow-Plaszow **concentration camp** by train in a cattle truck when he was fourteen-years old. Conditions at the camp were unusually cruel but Balsam was fortunate as he was selected to work for the commandant. It was in this camp that Balsam met Yitzak Pomerance and they became good friends. Pomerance was also in the hostel in Loughton.

In 1943, Balsam was moved from Plaszow and taken by train in cattle trucks to the Skarzysko-Kamienna **labour camp** which made ammunitions. Balsam believed he was being taken to the **Auschwitz-Birkenau** concentration camp. Skarzysko was a slave labour camp run by the German armaments company Hasag of Leipzig. The camp was one of hundreds of slave labour camps scattered across occupied

Poland. It reflected the German policy of exploiting the workforce of occupied and annexed countries to advance the war effort. It is thought that 25,000 Jews passed through the camp, which was operational between August 1942 and August 1944. Skarzysko was a brutal place and the work was not only dangerous as it involved handling chemicals, but the camp was dirty, and food was scarce.

After six months Balsam was moved to Sulejow, a small village, to dig anti-aircraft ditches as Soviet forces moved westwards. He was then taken to the Czestochowa labour camp again in cattle wagons. The camp was another ammunitions factory. Balsam remained there until late December 1944 when he was then taken to the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany. They travelled again crammed into in cattle trucks. The journey took about five days and people died on the way. They were given no food or water.

In Buchenwald they were given a stripped prison uniform. Until this point, they had worn their own clothes. Everyday despite the freezing winter weather they were made to stand for hours at a time for roll call with only the thin uniform to keep them warm.

He was then taken to a labour camp in Rhemsdorf, also in Germany, where he survived bombing raids by the Allied forces who were trying to destroy the oil refinery where he was forced to work. He was in the camp with Harry Spiro who was later in the Loughton hostel. He was then taken in April 1944 to another labour camp in Troglitz also in Germany.

In late April, approximately 3,500 prisoners were taken in open wagons to Marienbad were the train bombed by Russian aircraft and about 1000 people were killed. The surviving prisoners, nearly all men, were then forced to walk on a **death march** to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia). The journey took three weeks and when they arrived there were only 600 people left alive. Balsam was helped to stay alive by his friend Pomerance. Spiro was also on the march.

Balsam was liberated in the Theresienstatdt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia), on 8 May 1945 by the **Red Army**. Balsam was very ill with typhoid when the Russians arrived and said that if they had not come when they did, he would have died. He was warned by Russian soldiers not to eat too much or it would kill him. After such a long period of starvation it was not possible to return to a normal diet.

Balsam was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Balsam arrived in the UK in August 1945. He said that at this point he wanted to start a new life in Palestine.

He spoke Polish, **Yiddish**, and some German but not a word of English. After recuperating in Windermere he moved briefly to Manchester and then to Holmehurst, the hostel in Loughton.

Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

While at the hostel, Balsam discovered that his father and Daniel had survived the war in Siberia, Russia where they worked in a goldmine and chopped down trees, and they were in a displaced persons camp in Germany. In 1947, the **CBF**, who cared for the child Holocaust survivors, arranged and paid for him to visit them. His father and Daniel later settled in Israel. Balsam was the only boy in the hostel whose father survived the war.

He also discovered he had cousins in London. The cousins asked him to move in with them but by this point he felt the Boys were his family and he declined the offer.

After Loughton, Balsam went to the hostel in Belsize Park in 1947. He went into the menswear business with two of the other boys from the hostel – Harry Spiro and Johnny Fox.

He gave a detailed **testament** to the US Shoah Foundation. **Shoah** is another name for the Holocaust.

He married Pauline and the couple had two sons. He lived in north London until his death in 2003.

Henry Brown
Name at Birth: Chil Brauner
Place of Birth: Piotrkow Trybunalski Poland
Date of Birth: 2 June 1924

Brown's parents were Moszek and Rifka. He had four brothers: Herschel (b. 1932), Leo, Yakov (b. 1935) and Michulk (b.1934).

Jews had lived in Piotrkow for hundreds of years and the town was a centre for wood and glass manufacturing and textile production. Piotrkow was also well known for its Hebrew and **Yiddish** book publishing. There were many Jewish political, social, economic, cultural, and religious organizations.

Persecution of the Jews began immediately the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939. Jewish children were excluded from school and Jews were ordered to wear a **yellow badge.** Jews were then forced to relocate in a **ghetto**. Brown was in the Piotrkow ghetto.

Eventually up to 28,000 Jews were squeezed into the ghetto which was in a part of the town where only 6,000 people had previously lived. In October 1942, 22,000 Jews were herded onto the main square and a **selection** took place. In the course of the next few days, Jews were marched in columns to the railway station and loaded on to freight trains without food or water, 150 people in one cattle car. There were all taken to the Treblinka **extermination camp**. Brown registered the deaths of three of his brothers at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Israel stating that they had been gassed there in 1942.

Brown remained in Piotrkow from April 1942 to July 1942. The ghetto was then turned into a **labour camp**. As the **Red Army** moved westwards in 1944, he was taken to the Buchenwald **concentration camp** in Germany where he remained until April 1945.

He was then transferred to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia) by train in open topped wagons. The journey took weeks and there was no food or water and many died. Brown was liberated in Thereseinstadt by Czech partisans fighting with the Red Army, the moment that the train arrived on 8 May 1945. You can see him in the picture holding his hand up.

Brown was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Brown arrived in Britain in August 1945. He spoke Polish, **Yiddish**, and some German but not a word of English. He spent a few months of recuperation in Windermere and was then moved to Holmehurst, the hostel in Loughton. The photograph shows Brown in the middle, with four other Loughton boys.

Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

Brown went to the USA where he married Judith and had three children: Beth Gitlen, David Brown and Joseph Brauner.

Before his death, he gave a **testament** to the US Shoah Foundation. **Shoah** is another name for the Holocaust.

Zvi Dagan
Name at Birth: Hersh Mlynarski
Place of Birth: Piotrkow Trybunalski Poland
Date of Birth: 15 August 1930

Dagan was born in Piotrkow, Poland, but soon after the family moved to the large industrial city of Lodz, which was close to Piotrkow. Dagan's parents were Zlata and Abram, who owned a cardboard factory with Dagan's uncle, Wolf Witorz in Lodz. The family, which included his brother Yaacov, lived in an apartment in Lodz at 59 Sredmieska Street. Dagan attended elementary school and the Jewish religious school on a Sunday.

When the war broke out in September 1939, Dagan's father was called up into the Polish army, so his mother took the family to her parents' house in their hometown of Piotrkow. It is important to note his father served in the Polish army as it shows that Jews were an integrated part of Polish society even though **anti-Semitism** was present in Poland in the 1930s. The family decided to stay in Piotrkow as the Germans had confiscated their factory in Lodz.

Jews had lived in Piotrkow for hundreds of years and the town was a centre for wood and glass manufacturing and textile production, Piotrkow was also well known for its Hebrew and **Yiddish** book publishing. There were three Yiddish weeklies and numerous Jewish political, social, economic, cultural, and religious organizations.

Piotrkow was the first town in Poland where the Jews were put in a **ghetto** and the family soon found themselves living in impoverished conditions. Eventually, up to 28,000 Jews were squeezed into a part of town where only 6,000 people previously lived. Dagan's father returned home from the army after the defeat and became a labourer in the Hortensia glass factory. Dagan and his brother Yaacov sold cigarettes on the black market. Dagan was then hired to work in a glass factory alongside his father.

When the ghetto was liquidated in October 1942, Dagan was separated from his mother and grandparents. Some 22,000 Jews were herded onto the main square in order to undergo a **selection**. In the course of the next few days, Jews were marched in columns to the railway station and loaded on to freight trains, 150 people in one cattle car. All the Jews who boarded the trains were taken to the Treblinka **extermination camp.** Dagan's mother and grandparents were among those who were gassed there.

Dagan, his father and his brother continued to work in the glass factory. A few days after the selection the Germans held an **aktion** in which members of a Jewish community were forcibly assembled and then either deported to an extermination camp or shot locally. Jews who had hidden were rounded up and despite the fact he had a work permit Dagan was taken to the synagogue, where other Jews were already being held. They were given no food and drink. Dagan was sure he would be killed until suddenly the children his age were called back to work. A few days later the Jews who remained in the synagogue were made to dig a mass grave and were shot.

Dagan's brother was deported to the Skarzysko-Kamienna **labour camp** and his father to a camp he does not know the name of. Skarzysko was a slave labour camp run by the German armaments company Hasag of Leipzig. The camp was one of hundreds of slave labour camps scattered across occupied Poland. It reflected the German policy of exploiting the workforce of occupied and annexed countries to advance the war effort. It is thought that 25,000 Jews passed through the camp, which was operational between August 1942 and August 1944.

Alone in the ghetto, Dagan continued to work in the glass factory, and then the Bugaj wood factory, also in Piotrkow. Then in November 1944, the prisoners were put into cattle trucks on a train and transported to the Buchenwald **concentration camp** in Germany. There they were stripped naked and given prison camp clothes and clogs. They just had a thin blanket under which they could sleep. Dagan was transferred to the Schlieben ammunitions factory near Leipzig, which was a sub-camp of Buchenwald. The transport replaced a group of Jews who had been killed in an explosion at the plant. Dagan's story highlights the dangers of working in the ammunition's factories. Conditions in the camp were terrible and prisoners prayed it would be bombed, as they believed it was a better option than the dire conditions, they were living in.

In April 1945 Dagan was again put on a cattle trucks and this time taken to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia). It was a journey that should have taken a few hours but took two weeks due to the chaos of the war. There was no food and water and on the journey. Dagan witnessed cannibalism. When the train stopped, they were allowed to get off and eat the weeds growing beside the train tracks. He was liberated by the **Red Army** in Theresienstadt. He then discovered from the Red Cross his father had been murdered on a **death march** on 1 May 1945 in Austria.

Dagan was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Dagan arrived in Britain in August 1945. His main concern was food. He was always worried about whether there would be something to eat. After a few weeks in Windermere in the Lake District, he was moved to a hostel in Ascot. While living in Ascot, Dagan discovered he had family in USA and Israel and that his Uncle Wolf had survived the war and was in Germany. He also learned that his brother had contracted dysentery in Skarzysko-Kamienna and been shot in 1943 in Poland.

Dagan was then moved to Holmehurst, the hostel in Loughton. Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

Dagan studied at the **ORT** school in South Kensington, London. He later moved to the hostel in London' Belsize Park.

In his **testament**, he recounts how he and other boys from Loughton demonstrated against British policy in Palestine in Trafalgar Square. Dagan left for Israel in September 1949.

He worked as a tool designer in the Israel military and served in the army. Dagan married and had two daughters, six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Today, he lives in Askelon, Israel, where he was previously the director of a large machine-tool factory. He spoke very little about his experiences and only began to tell his story when he was prompted by his grandchildren's questions.

He gave a testament in Hebrew to the US Shoah Foundation. **Shoah** is another name for the Holocaust.

Harry Fox
Name at Birth: Chaim Fuks
Place of Birth: Tuszyn Poland
Date of Birth: 15 July 1930

Tuszyn is a small market town in western Poland not far from Lodz and the Fuks family had lived there for generations. Fox's parents were Joseph Fuks, a tailor, and Rachel. He was the second eldest in the family and had a brother Jo and a sister Rhoda (b. 1932). He was brought up in a religious household.

Fox loved the forests that surrounded the town and spent a lot of time there with his family in the summer months. He recalled the food on Friday evenings when his mother prepared fish or chicken for the Sabbath.

Fox recalled that he experienced **anti-Semitism** at school in Poland. He went to the Polish school in the morning and spent the afternoon at the Jewish religious school. Life was turned upside down by the German invasion in September 1939. He remembered that the Germans arrived on motorbikes and gave out sweets to all the children.

In December 1939 the family were woken in the middle of the night and given thirty minutes to leave the town, as were all the Jews. The Germans said that they could only take what they could carry with them. The family were taken to the nearby town of Piotrkow, where they were put in the **ghetto**. The ghetto was the first to be created in Poland. Eventually, up to 28,000 Jews were squeezed into a part of town where only 6,000 people previously lived.

When they initially arrived at the ghetto, Harry's father was able to continue with his tailoring profession and his mother opened a small shop. Rumours soon started that there was to be relocation, and that those people who had jobs that were important to the war effort would be able to remain in the ghetto along with their families. Harry's father was able to get a job for himself and Harry's brother, but because Harry was only 12 years old he was not able to get him employed. Harry did however eventually manage to obtain false papers and got a job in the Hortensia glass factory making medicine bottles. His father and brother Jo also worked in the factory. Fox says that he had very little idea of news from outside the ghetto.

In October 1942 the ghetto was liquidated and the only people who managed to survive were those with work permits. Some 22,000 Jews were herded onto the main square in order to undergo a **selection**. In the course of the next few days, Jews were marched in columns to the railway station and loaded onto the freight trains, 150 people in one cattle car. They were taken to the Treblinka **extermination camp**. Among them were Fox's mother and sister who were gassed there on arrival. His mother was thirty-five years old and his sister was just ten-years old. He later registered their deaths at Yad Vashem, the Israeli Holocaust memorial that keeps a database of victims.

After the liquidation of the ghetto the factory became a **labour camp**. Fox says that he thought only of food and survival. While in the glass factory he said that some

Poles helped him to survive. He heard rumours of gas chambers, but he did not believe them.

At the end of 1944 he was taken by train in cattle cars to a labour camp in Czestochowa and from there to the Buchenwald **concentration camp** in Germany. He was still with his father and brother when they were moved to Nordhausen labour camp, where he made B1 and B2 rockets in the Dora factory. They slept in a former garage in cages that were locked at night.

His father died of dysentery shortly before the liberation in 1945. Fox endured a **death march** to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia) during which he was separated from his brother where he was liberated by the **Red Army** on 8 May 1945.

Fox was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Just before he was due to leave for the UK for recuperation, his brother arrived in the former ghetto looking for him. After much haggling with the authorities the two boys were permitted to travel to Britain together.

The brothers arrived in Britain in August 1945. They spent some months in Windermere in the Lake District before being moved to Holmehurst, the hostel in Loughton. Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

Fox attended the **ORT** school in South Kensington in London where he learned a trade. He then lived with his brother in a hostel in London's Belsize Park.

Fox married twice and had four children. He gave a **testament** about his experiences and was active in Holocaust education in the UK. He loved tennis and singing and was a keen Arsenal fan.

John Fox
Name at Birth: Jo Fuks
Place of Birth: Tuszyn Poland
Date of Birth: 2 February 1928

Tuszyn is a small town in western Poland not far from Lodz and the Fuks family had lived there for generations. Fox's parents were Joseph Fuks, a tailor, and Rachel. He was the eldest in the family and had a younger brother Chaim (Harry) and sister Rhoda (b. 1932). He was brought up in a religious household.

Fox recalled that he experienced **anti-Semitism** at school in Poland. He went to the Polish school in the morning and spent the afternoon at the Jewish religious school. Life was turned upside down by the German invasion in September 1939.

In December 1939 the family were woken in the middle of the night and given thirty minutes to leave the town, as were all the Jews. The Germans said that they could only take what they could carry with them. The family were taken to the nearby town of Piotrkow, where they were put in the **ghetto**. The ghetto was the first to be created in Poland. Eventually, up to 28,000 Jews were squeezed into a part of town where only 6,000 people previously lived.

Fox worked in the Hortensia glass factory with his father and brother making medicine bottles while in the ghetto.

In October 1942 the ghetto was liquidated and the only people who managed to survive were those with work permits. Some 22,000 Jews were herded onto the main square in order to undergo a **selection**. In the course of the next few days, Jews were marched in columns to the railway station and loaded onto the awaiting freight trains, 150 people in one cattle car. They were taken to the Treblinka **extermination camp**. Among them were Fox's mother and sister who were gassed there on arrival. His mother was thirty-five years old and his sister was just ten-years old.

After the liquidation of the ghetto the factory became a **labour camp**.

At the end of 1944 he was taken in cattle cars to another labour camp in Czestochowa and from there to the Buchenwald **concentration camp** in Germany. He was still with his father and brother when they were moved to Nordhausen labour camp, where he made B1 and B2 rockets in the Dora factory. They slept in a former garage in cages that were locked at night.

His father died shortly before the liberation in 1945 of dysentery. Fox was also sick with dysentery and almost died before the end of the war. He was separated from his brother in the closing days of the war.

After the liberation he went back to Poland to see if anyone else had survived. He was then told that his brother had survived and was in the former Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czeckia). When he arrived, they had already made a list of 300 children to come to the UK. His brother refused to go unless Fox was included. Eventually it was agreed that he could go with his brother as they were about to leave for the UK.

The brothers were among the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

The brothers arrived in the UK in August 1945. Fox says that he was sick for months after arriving in the UK. They spent some months in Windermere before being moved together to Holmehurst, the hostel in Loughton. Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

He attended the **ORT** school in South Kensington in London.

Fox married and had three children. He emigrated to the USA with his wife and first child in 1956. He worked as a tailor in Philadelphia and became a leading trade unionist.

He gave a testimony in 1981.

Jeff Frydman
Name at Birth: Gershon Frydman
Place of Birth: Lodz Poland
Date of Birth: 15 September 1927 (year not confirmed)

Friedman's parents were Abraham and Frania. He had three sisters Adela (b. 1925), Hela (b. 1929) and Hanah (b. 1930) and two brothers Smul (b. 1929) and Moses. (b. 1932).

On 8 September 1939 the Germans occupied Lodz, which was then annexed to the German Reich and renamed *Litzmannstadt.*

Persecution of the Jews began immediately. All Jewish-owned enterprises were taken over by Germans. Jews could no longer use public transport or leave the city without special permission. They were not allowed to own cars, radios and various other items. Synagogue services were outlawed, and Jews were required to keep their shops open on Jewish holidays.

In November they were ordered to wear a **yellow badge** whenever they left their home making them conspicuous among the general population and ideal victims for German soldiers looking for targets to abuse.

In December 1940, the family were deported to Izbica by the Russian border and put to work for the German Army. In the summer of 1940, the family ran away and reached Krakow where they stayed until late summer 1941. At this point they were ordered into the Krakow **ghetto**. The family decided to flee to Szydlowiec. Three months later German forces surrounded the town and a **selection** made of the Jewish population. Frydman's family were taken to the Treblinka **extermination camp**, where they were gassed immediately.

Frydman was taken with his older sister Adela to Skarzysko-Kamienna as slave labourers. This was one of hundreds of slave labour camps across occupied Poland. German policy was to exploit the workforce of occupied and annexed countries to advance the war effort. Up to 25,000 Jews passed through the camp between August 1942 and August 1944. Sanitary conditions were terrible. There was hardly any food and prisoners were unable to wash for weeks on end. Adela escaped and went to the ghetto in Krakow. A week later Frydman escaped and joined his sister in the ghetto.

In March 1943 when the ghetto was liquidated, Frydman and his sister were both taken to Auschwitz-Birkenau **concentration camp**. There was a selection at the ramp when they arrived. Frydman was selected to work. His number was 108068. His sister Adela aged 17 was gassed. Frydman was set to work building a gas chamber then sent to nearby Jaworzno to work in a coal mine.

In January 1945, as Soviet forces advanced westwards across Poland, Frydman survived a **death march** to Blechammer, the largest of the sub-camps of Auschwitz concentration camp. It lasted three days and nights and there was no food or water. He was then moved on by train to Goss Rosen concentration camp also in occupied Poland. He was then taken to Leitmeritz concentration camp in

Czechoslovakia, a hub for many death marches. Thousands of prisoners arrived there, conditions were terrible and disease was rife. Frydman was moved on to the Theresienstadt ghetto where he was eventually liberated by the **Red Army** on the 8 May 1945.

Frydman was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Frydman arrived in the UK in August 1945. He did not speak a word of English. After a few months of recuperation in Windermere, he was moved to Holmehurst, the hostel in Loughton. Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also regained their health and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes. Frydman trained to be an electrician at the **ORT** school.

Frydman had relatives in the UK but did not want to live with them preferring to stay with his friends. Records show that while at Loughton he was hoping to go to Palestine, then part of the British empire. All the hotels had different religious and political orientations and the hostel in Loughton was **Zionist.**

Many of the boys who lived in the Loughton hostel volunteered to fight alongside the Jewish forces that would one day turn into the Israeli defence forces. One of them was Frydman. He left the country after the declaration of the state of Israel and travelled to Paris where he met with the Jewish underground. They sent him to Marseille where with other boys from Loughton he was trained to use firearms. They then went to fight in Israel.

After the end of hostilities in Israel, Frydman returned to the UK. In London, he shared a room with Issac Pomerance. Frydman went to the USA in 1952. In 1958 he married Edith Buxbaum who had come to England from Germany on a Kindertransport in 1939. He lived in Florida. Frydman did not speak about his experiences and died in 2015.

Paul Gast
Name at Birth: Israel Gasfreund
Place of Birth: Lodz Poland
Date of Birth: 16 November 1926

This picture of Gast, the boy on the right, was taken shortly after his arrival in Britain.

Gast's family owned a textile factory in Lodz. His parents were Schlama and Mina. He was brought up in a non-religious household and was an only child.

Lodz was an industrial hub and was Poland's second largest city in the 1930s. It was a centre of textile manufacturing. It had a population of 665,000 of which about 233,000 were Jews.

On September 8, 1939, the Germans occupied Lodz, which was then annexed to the Reich and renamed *Litzmannstadt.* Persecution of Jews began immediately. All Jewish-owned enterprises were taken over by Germans. Jews could no longer use public transport or leave the city without special permission. They were not allowed to own cars, radios and various other items. Synagogue services were outlawed, and Jews were required to keep their shops open on Jewish holidays.

In November, limits were placed on how much money Jews could take out of the bank and Jews were ordered to wear a **yellow badge** whenever they left their homes. This mark made Jews conspicuous and visible among the general population, making them ideal victims for German soldiers looking for targets to abuse.

Gast's father was murdered immediately after the German invasion in 1939. The Germans shot leading members of the community, both Polish and Jewish, in the park to spread terror among the community.

In 1940 a ghetto was created in **Lodz**. Gast was here with his mother and grandparents from the spring of 1940. The whole extended family lived in one room. Conditions were terrible and his grandparents starved to death in 1941. His uncle also starved to death. He and his mother went to work. She worked as a bookkeeper in the rations department. Gast says he had heard rumours that people were murdered when they were taken from the ghetto and intially he persuaded his mother and uncle to hide and not report for the trains that were to deport them. They were frightened of being shot so decided not to listen to him and to report to the station.

Gast was sent to the Auschwitz-Birkenau **concentration camp** with his mother and uncle in August 1944. When they get off the train they were separated, and a **selection** took place. His mother was gassed and he was sent to work.

In November 1944 Gast was transferred to the Braunschweig concentration camp in Germany and in early 1945 to Wattenstedt and then Ravensbruck concentration camps also in Germany. The journey took 16 days. Gast liberated by the American army at Ludwigslust. Gast said that this was the worst of the camps he was in. He says it was beyond imagination what he saw there.

After the liberation he went back to his hometown Lodz to look for his mother. He went with a survivor friend who would also come to the UK. He had a hostile reception from Poles. It prompted the two boys to leave Poland.

Gast went to Czechoslovakia as wanted to go to Palestine. He discovered that some child Holocaust survivors were being chosen to come to Britain. Gast decided to try to join the transport for the educational opportunities.

Gast was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Gast arrived in the UK in August 1945 and gave his date of birth as 1930. After the first few months at Windermere he moved to Holmehurst, the hostel in Loughton. Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens.

The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

Gast also spent time at the hostel in Belsize Park. He went to school in London and became an accountant.

Gast went to USA in 1952. He had an aunt and uncle in New York, and he was longing to be with what was left of his family. Gast fought on the front line in the Korean War for two years.

Gast married and had a family. He lived in Oklahoma, New Jersey and Florida. His life in Oklahoma was without a Jewish community but he wanted his daughter to know that she was Jewish so decided to move back to the east coast to New Jersey in order to send his daughter to a Jewish school. He feels that this is very important.

He did not talk about his experiences for many years as he did not want to be different from everyone else. He gave a **testament** in 1993 and then began to talk about the Holocaust in the late 1980s. He hoped that talking would prevent it ever happening to anyone again in the world – not just to Jews. Gast was the sole survivor of his family.

Jacob Glicksohn
Name at Birth: Jakub Glikson
Place of Birth: Czestochowa Poland
Date of Birth: 8 May 1928

Glicksohn is second from the right in this photograph. He is wearing the new suit bought for the boys to help them fit in to English society after they came to Britain in 1945.

Glicksohn was born in Czestochowa in southern Poland. His father Josek was a cobbler and was 29 years older than his wife, Chaja Sura. He had two children from his first marriage. He died before the outbreak of the war.

After the German invasion of Poland in September 1939, the family were imprisoned in the Czestochowa **ghetto.** Glicksohn worked in the Hasag armaments factory as a forced labourer.

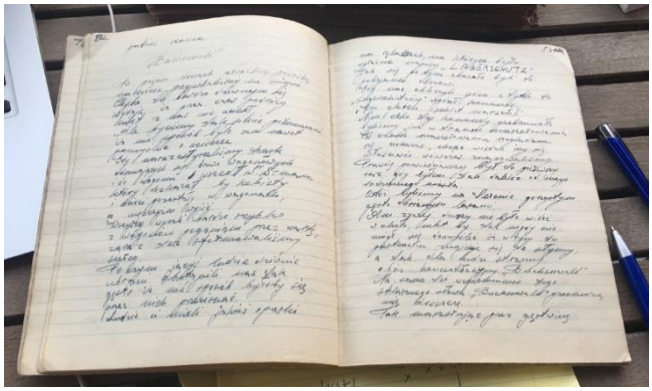
Glicksohn's older brother, Shalom David, was stopped by the Nazis. He was so frightened that he stuttered when they questioned him and was immediately sent to the Treblinka **extermination camp** where he was gassed. Glicksohn's mother and sister Brama also died in Treblinka after a **selection** during which Glicksohn went into hiding. A total of 40,000 Jews from Czestochowa were murdered in Treblinka.

Glickson had two other brothers, one older called Mendel and one younger called Manuel. Glickson and Manuel were separated in 1943. In 1944 Glicksohn and Mendel were sent to the Buchenwald **concentration camp**. They endured a journey in open top train wagons to the Thereseinstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia). The journey took a week, and many died as there was no food or water. On this journey he was separated from his brother Mendel. While on the train, Glicksohn recalled having a dream in which his father told him his forthcoming birthday would be his best ever. Glicksohn was liberated when the train arrived in Theresienstadt by the Red Army. It was his eighteenth birthday, the 8 May 1945.

Glicksohn was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. He lied about his age to join the transport as they were supposed to be 16 and under. This was not difficult as he had no papers to prove his age. The CBF had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Glicksohn arrived in Britain in August 1945. After spending a few months recuperating in the Lake District he was moved to a hostel in Loughton. Glicksohn and his fellow teenage survivors in Loughton were given a Polish-English dictionary and a copy of the newspaper the *Jewish Chronicle*.

The boys were also encouraged to take up a hobby. Glicksohn chose stamp collecting – a choice that would change his life. One day, to improve his English, he translated a small ad in the *Jewish Chronicle* from Margaret Raphael, a young wealthy Jewish lady in Burma (now Myanmar) who was looking for someone she could exchange stamps with. The letters led to a long-distance love affair and an invitation to Rangoon.



While recuperating in Loughton Glicksohn wrote an account of what had happened to him in Polish. He was one of the first of the group to write his story down. It is one of the earliest **testaments** written by a boy.

The boys forged lifelong friendships and when they had children, they became an extended family that stayed in touch through the '45 Aid Society, founded in 1963. This was not just a social organization but a way of supporting members who had fallen on hard times.

The society also publishes an annual journal, which played a key role in Glicksohn's life. Although Jacob looked for his older brother after the war, he did not know that Manuel had changed his name to Mendel in memory of their youngest brother who was 7 years old when he was murdered by the Nazis. Nor did Manuel know that his brother had changed the spelling of his name from Jakub Glikson to Jacob Glicksohn.

In 1968 a member of the '45 Aid Society was reading a copy of the journal in a bar in São Paulo, Brazil. Mendel Glikson happened to be sitting at the bar and started looking at the journal. He pointed out a picture saying that if his brother had survived, he would have looked like that. The owner of the journal was happy to tell Glikson it was his long-lost brother. The brothers were reunited a year later in Brazil.

Glicksohn married and had a family. They moved to Israel in 1970. Their first family home was on Habanim Street (Boys Street in Hebrew). Glicksohn chose the apartment without seeing it, as he felt the address of the apartment – number 8 for May 8 when he was liberated - was a lucky sign. Glicksohn died at the age of 59. His daughter recalls that after his death, one of the Boys arrived from London with an envelope full of cash for her widowed mother.

Moniek Goldberg
Place of Birth: Glowaczow Poland
Date of Birth: 5 May 1928

Goldberg grew up in Glowaczow, a small town in east central Poland, south of the capital Warsaw. His parents were Pincus and Chaja. Goldberg had three sisters, Rivka (b. 1931), Faigel (b. 1929) and Devora (b. 1935).

When he was 9 years old the family moved to nearby Kozienice. His father was a tailor and travelled to markets in the region to sell his shirts and underwear. It was a religious family and Goldberg attended a Jewish school. Jews had lived in Kozienice for over five hundred years. He experienced **anti-Semitism** as a child.

Persecution of the Jews began immediately after the German invasion of Poland in September 1939. The family were imprisoned the Kozienice **ghetto** which was set up in the late autumn of 1940. The ghetto was liquidated in September 1942 and his parents and three sisters were murdered at the Treblinka **extermination camp**. They were among 8,000 Jews from Kozenice and its surrounding area to be murdered there.

Five months earlier Goldberg had been taken as a slave labourer and sent to the Szyczki **labour camp**. On Yom Kippur 1942 he witnessed a mass shooting of Jews who had refused to work on this most important of religious holidays. He was one of a workforce ordered to bury the bodies. He was 14 years old.

Goldberg then spent time in a labour camp in Kruszyn and another that produced munitions in Pionki, also in occupied Poland. In July 1944 he was transferred to the Auschwitz-Birkenau **concentration camp**, where he worked in the sub-camp of Buna. He was transferred on a **death march** in January 1945 to the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany. He spent the last months of the war in a camp at Krawinkel. He was then put in a train with open top wagons to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia) were he was liberated there by the **Red Army**. He was 17 years old.

Goldberg made his way to Prague, the Czech capital, where he fell ill and spent six weeks recovering. During this time, he heard about the transport of child Holocaust survivors being taken to the UK and applied to join the group.

He was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Goldberg arrived in Britain in August 1945. He did not speak a word of English. He spent some months in Windermere in the Lake District before he was moved to Holmehurst, the hostel in Loughton.

Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes. After the Loughton hostel closed, he moved the hostel in Belsize Park, London.

Goldberg was the sole survivor of his family which included almost 80 cousins. He wrote later that he was very upset after he arrived in the UK when people had asked him if the Holocaust had really happened. He said that as he grew older he understood that it was impossible to believe the tragedy that had befallen the Jewish people and that he could not understand it himself in terms of numbers but only by thinking of the Jewish children in his class at school who had all been murdered and what their lives might have been.

He registered the death of his family at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial, which keeps a database of victims.

Goldberg emigrated to Canada in 1948 and built a career in retail. He married Fay and had a family. The couple lived in Michigan and Florida. Goldberg ran a factory in Costa Rica. He died in 2009.

Jan Goldberger
Place of Birth: BielskoBiala Poland
Date of Birth: 4 August 1927

Goldberger grew up in the southern industrial Polish city of Bielsko-Biala which was on the Czech-German border. Jews had lived in the city since the Middle Ages and made up approximately 15% of the population. It was a very modern town with trams.

Goldberger's parents were Zygmunt and Berta. He thinks that his father was in business as he travelled a lot. His mother had a knitting machine and made money selling clothes. He had a sister Rut (b. 1929), who was the youngest, and two older brothers Bernard (b. 1925) and Ernest (b. 1923). His maternal grandparents also lived with the family in their tiny basement apartment. The family were poor but happy.

Goldberger remembers the Passover seder and his mother's baking for Jewish festivals which filled the house with a wonderful smell. On Friday night his mother would take one of the chickens she kept to make chicken soup for dinner. The family were not particularly religious. Goldberger remembered happy trips to the forest picking berries and mushrooms.

Goldberger spoke German at home and his father had been in the Austro-Hungarian army. Goldberger spoke Polish at school and **Yiddish** with grandparents. He also studied Hebrew at the Jewish school. He recalls a serious outbreak of **anti-Semitic** violence in his hometown in 1938 and the boycott of Jewish shops by Poles.

When war broke out the family fled eastwards towards Lublin and were immediately separated from his grandparents. They did not want to return home when the Germans caught up with them because of their anti-Semitic neighbours. A Jewish family offered them a room in an outhouse in a small village called Topola, near Kielce, in central Poland.

The family stayed there for two years until the summer of 1941 when they were put in Skalbmierz **ghetto**. His father told him and his brothers to run away but when they returned to Skalbmierz there were no Jews left. His father returned shortly after. His mother and sister were taken in the **aktion** but he does not know where to. He never saw them again.

Goldberger was then taken to be a slave labourer. He never saw his father or brothers again. He was in Krakow-Plaszow **concentration camp** where he was forced to build a new railway line; the Biezanow concentration camp; the Skarsko-Kamienna **labour camp**, which was a munitions factory; the Sulejow concentration camp, where he dug anti-tank trenches and the labour camp in Czestochowa.

He was transferred to the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany at the end of October 1944 and sent to the sub-camp of Schlieben until April 1945. He was with friend Koppel Kendall during his time in the camps. Kendall was also in the Loughton hostel.

Goldberger was transferred by train to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia). The journey took two weeks during which he was not given anything to eat or drink. He was liberated by the **Red Army** at Theresienstadt on 8 May 1945.

Goldberger was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Goldberger arrived in Britain in August 1945. He spoke Polish, Yiddish, German and some Hebrew but he did not speak a word of English. After leaving Windermere he was moved to a hostel in Bedford then to Holmehurst, the hostel in Loughton.

Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

Goldberger then lived at the Belsize Park hostel in London.

He married Sara and the couple had three children. He was the sole survivor of his family. He gave a **testament** to the US Shoah Foundation in 1998. **Shoah** is another name for the Holocaust. Goldberger also registered the deaths of his family at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial that keeps a database of victims.

Roman Halter
Name at Birth: Reuven Halter
Place of Birth: Chodecz Poland
Date of Birth: 7 July 1927

Chodecz is a small town in western Poland and had a population of about 800 Jews, who were about a quarter of the population in 1939. Halter was one of only four survivors of the Jewish community in his hometown. The Halter family were one of the few well-off families who lived in Chodecz. Most of Poland's Jewish population before the war were extremely poor.

Halter's father was a timber merchant, 50 years old when Halter was born. His mother was 20 years younger. Halter's uncle had died in Palestine, which made his father sceptical about leaving Poland. Halter was the youngest of seven children. He had half brothers and sisters called Iccio, Szalamek, Sala, Peccio and Ruzia and a full sister called Zosia (b 1921). Halter recalls a happy colourful childhood.

Halter had been called Reuven but when he arrived in the Polish school his name was changed by the teacher to a Polish one. He remembers **anti-Semitism** in Poland before the war. His mother was a **Zionist** and tried to get visas to take the family to Palestine but Jewish immigration into Palestine was severely limited by the British who controlled the Palestine Mandate.

After the German invasion of Poland, Chodecz was incorporated into the German Reich and the Germans wanted the town to be free of Jews. His oldest brother Szalamek was killed by the Germans in 1939. The Halters were evicted from their house and resettled in three small rooms on the edge of the town. Jews were not allowed to walk on the pavements, Jewish children were excluded from school and Jews were forced to wear a **yellow badge**.

In 1940, the family were taken by train to the Lodz **ghetto** which had been created in the industrial city of Lodz, 50km south of Halter's hometown. They were not told where they were going. There was widespread starvation and the ghetto was riddled with disease. Halter's father was sent to an old people's home as he was sixty. He died in 1942.

Not long after in a **selection** he and his mother were taken out of the ghetto but as they were leaving his mother told him to jump from the cart. His mother, his half-sister Sala and her two children were murdered in the Chelmno **extermination camp**, the first of its kind in occupied Poland. About 55,000 Jews from the Lodz ghetto were murdered there between January and May 1942. Halter recalled how Sala always painted him a card with a strawberry on for his birthday. He was very fond of her two children who he loved to play.

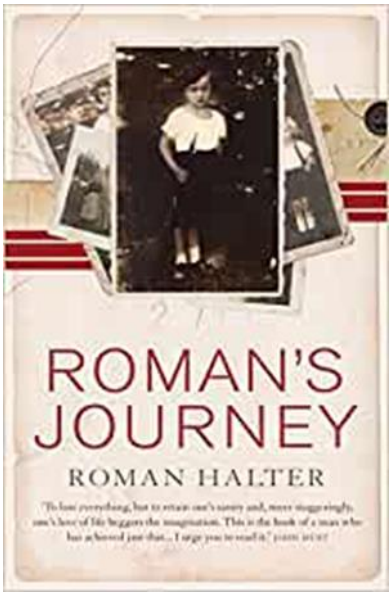
Halter was now totally alone but fortunately was taken in by another family. He was deported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau **concentration camp** in 1944. A skilled metal worker, he was then sent to the Stutthof concentration camp near Gdansk in northern Poland and from there to Dresden in Germany. In Dresden he worked at Bernsdorf and Co armaments factory. He was on a **death march** to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia), but escaped on the way

from Dresden. He was hidden by a family of Germans who were later honoured for their actions by the Yad Vashem memorial in Israel.

Halter returned home to Chodecz after the war but found that none of his family had survived. He said without the Jews, their shops and businesses Chodecz was no longer his hometown. He then made his way to Czechoslovakia and ended up in the former Theresienstadt ghetto that was now a displaced person's camp.

He became one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Halter arrived in Britain in August 1945. After a short time in Windermere he was moved to Holmehurst, the hostel in Loughton. Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.



He attended the **ORT** school and later trained as an architect.

He became an artist and his work hangs in the Imperial War Museum. He used paintings and stained glass to depict scenes of the Holocaust. He also designed the memorial at the Jewish cemetery in Epping Forest. He married a fellow survivor and had a family. He wrote a book about his life. Halter died in 2012.

Ben Helfgott
Name at Birth: Ber Helfgot
Place of Birth: Pabiance Poland
Date of Birth: 22 November 1929

Helfgott's parents were Moishe and Sara. He had two sisters Mala and Lucia. He grew up in Piotrkow. The town had a population of about 50,000 of which 15,000 were Jewish. The family were not particularly religious and the Jews who lived in Piotrkow came from a wide spectrum of Jewish religious, political and cultural life. Jews had lived in Piotrkow for hundreds of years.

A centre for wood and glass manufacturing and textile production, Piotrkow was also well known for its Hebrew and **Yiddish** book publishing. There were numerous Jewish political, social, economic, cultural, and religious organisations.

Helfgott's mother was an ardent **Zionist** and in 1935 the family obtained permits to leave for the Palestine Mandate, at this time part of the British Empire. In the late 1930s there was unrest in Palestine and a series of Arab riots so Helfgott's father decided against leaving Poland.

Helfgott recalls **anti-Semitism** and that there was a boycott of Jewish shops by local Poles. He also recalls that people were very concerned about political developments in Germany. He remembers the day the Germans invaded Poland on 1 September 1939 as warm and sunny. It was a Friday and he was getting ready to leave his grandfather's house to go home to start preparing for the start of the new school term the following Monday.

The persecution of the Jews began immediately. Jewish children were excluded from school and Jews were made to wear a **yellow badge**. In November 1939 the Helfgott family were forced to move into the Piotrkow **ghetto**, the first of its kind set up in Poland. Eventually, up to 28,000 Jews were squeezed into a part of town where only 6,000 people previously lived. Helfgott also witnessed a terrible bombing raid that killed hundreds of people.

In 1942, Helfgott was the only member of his family who had a job and he worked in the Hortensia glass factory. His father had a permit to travel out of the ghetto to trade rabbit skins.

The family were hidden by Poles during the October 1942 **selection** when about 22,000 Jews were herded onto the main square. Those who did not have work permits were over the next few days marched in columns to the railway station and loaded onto freight trains, 150 people to one cattle car. They were taken to the Treblinka **extermination camp**, where they were gassed on arrival.

A few days later Helfgott's mother and little sister Lucia, who had gone onto hiding were caught. They were taken to the synagogue and shot in a mass killing in the nearby forest along with all those who had tried to hide during the selection. The

Hortensia glass factory then became a **labour camp**. Helfgott also worked in the wood factory as a slave labourer.

In December 1944, Helfgott was transferred with his father to the Buchenwald **concentration camp** in Germany. He was then moved without his father to the sub-camp of Schliben. His sister Mala and a cousin were sent to the Ravensbruck concentration camp also in Germany.

He was then taken to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia). He was liberated by the **Red Army** on 8 May 1945. Helfgott learned that his father had tried to run away from a **death march** to Theresienstadt and had been shot. Helfgott was devastated. His father was 38 years old.

Helfgott was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Helfgott arrived in Britain in August 1945 and after a few months in Windermere he was moved to Holmehurst, the hostel in Loughton in Essex. He did not speak a word of English. Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

While in the Loughton hostel, Helfgott went to Plaistow Grammar School and then later to Southampton University. He left university after a year to go into business. Helfgott became an Olympic weightlifting champion representing Great Britain at the Olympics in 1956 and 1960, and at the 1958 Commonwealth Games.

He married and had three sons. Helfgott gave a number of **testaments** and registered the death of his family members at Yad Vashem, the Israeli Holocaust memorial which keeps a database of victims. Helfgott has spoken widely about his experiences and was knighted in 2018.

Jerzy Herszberg
Place of Birth: Poznan Poland
Date of Birth: 18 May 1929

Herzberg is pictured holding the Union Jack after he arrived in Britain.

Herszberg's uncle had a large textile company in Lodz that employed 15,000 people. The family arrived in Lodz before the outbreak of the war in September 1939. The reason why is not clear.

Lodz, an industrial centre, was Poland's second largest city in the 1930s. It was a hub of textile manufacturing and had a population of 665,000 of which about 233,000 were Jews.

On September 8, 1939, the Germans occupied Lodz, which was then annexed to the Reich and renamed *Litzmannstadt.* Persecution of Jews began immediately. All Jewish-owned enterprises were taken over by Germans. Jews could no longer use public transportation or leave the city without special permission. They were not allowed to own cars, radios and various other items. Synagogue services were outlawed, and Jews were required to keep their shops open on Jewish holidays.

In November, limits were placed on how much money Jews could take out of the bank and Jews were ordered to wear a **yellow badge** whenever they left their homes. This mark made Jews conspicuous and visible among the general population, making them ideal victims for German soldiers looking for targets to abuse.

When a **ghetto** was established in the city in April 1940, the Herszberg family were forced to live there. Herszberg spent four years in the Lodz ghetto. He had one sister who died during this time. He was deported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau **concentration camp** when he was 15 years old in July 1944. There was a **selection** at the ramp when the train arrived, and he was chosen to work.

Herszberg was then taken to be a slave labourer in the German city of Braunsschweig in a car factory and was then in the Watenstedt **labour camp** that supplied workers for the steel plant. He was then moved in March 1945 to the Ravensbruck concentration camp and in April 1945 was in the Ludwiglust labour camp.

Herszberg was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Herszberg arrived in Britain in August 1945, giving his date of birth as 1930. He spent some months in Windermere before he went to Holmehurst, the Loughton hostel in 1946 and then moved to the hostel in Belsize Park, London in 1947.

Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes. Herszberg spent his summer holidays helping out at a hostel for the younger children in Lingfield in Surrey.

When Herszberg arrived in the UK he did not speak a word of English but went on to study at King's College London, where he graduated with a Maths degree. He studied for a Ph.D and became a Reader of Mathematics at Birkbeck University. He was a close friend of Paul Gast, who was also in the Loughton hostel and whom he had met in the camps.

He lived in London and did not marry or have children. Herzberg died in 2013. He did not give a **testament**.

Moniek Hirschfeld
Place of Birth: Brusick Poland
Date of Birth: 28 March 1927

Hirschfeld grew up in the southern Polish town of Gorlice in the south east of the country. Jews made up about half of the population. Hirschfeld's parents were Mordechai and Rivka. He had two older brothers Abraham and David and an older sister Sabrina. The family were not particularly religious.

His father had been in the Polish army during the First World War and had been injured. This shows how integrated Jews were into society before the Holocaust. He was disabled and died in the early days of the Second World War, after the German invasion in September 1939. The family were held in the Bobowa **ghetto** which was set up in October 1942.

One day all the Jews were called to the marketplace and a **selection** took place. He and his brothers were taken to the Krakow-Plaszow **concentration camp** where they worked building a new railway. One day his brother Abraham ran away. He was caught and killed. Moniek also ran away from the camp with his brother David and a cousin and they returned to the family house to retrieve some valuables that had been buried and some clothes. He then returned to the camp despite the fact it was a brutal place where people were shot and riddled with typhus – a dangerous disease that could kill. This is an indication of how dangerous it was for Jews in occupied Poland.

From Plaszow the two surviving brothers were moved to another camp at Jerusolinska before being moved to the Skarzysko-Kamienna **labour camp**. This camp was an armaments factory and he and his brother David worked on electrical currents. The camp was run by the German armaments company Hasag of Leipzig. The camp was one of hundreds of slave labour camps scattered across occupied Poland. It reflected the German policy of exploiting the workforce of occupied and annexed countries to advance the war effort. It is thought that 25,000 Jews passed through the camp, which was operational between August 1942 and August 1944.

They were then sent to another labour camp at an arms factory in Czestochowa. From there they were taken by train in cattle cars to Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany. After a few weeks in February 1945, they were moved to a camp at Nordhausen from where they were taken to make B1 and B2 rockets in Dora.

Hirschfeld endured a **death march** to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia)and was liberated there on 8 May 1945 by the **Red Army**.

Hirschfeld was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Hirschfeld arrived in the UK in August 1945 with his brother David. After some months in Windermere they were moved to Holmehurst, the hostel in Loughton and then to one in Belsize Park in London.

Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

The brothers both attended the **ORT** school. David studied metalwork. Hirschfeld was in the ORT Marine School.

Hirschfeld worked as a sailor in the merchant marine and then became a pastry chef. He liked to collect crystal and had a big collection of vases. He never married and died in Brighton in 2013.

David Hirschfeld
Place of Birth: Brusick Poland
Date of Birth: 20 August 1929

Hirschfeld grew up in the southern Polish town of Gorlice in the south east of the country. Jews made up about half of the population. Hirschfeld's parents were Mordechai and Rivka. He had two brothers Abraham and Moniek and an older sister Sabrina. The family were not particularly religious.

His father had been in the Polish army during the First World War and had been injured. This shows just how integrated Jews were into society before the Holocaust. He was disabled and died in the early days of the Second World War after the German invasion in September 1939. The family were held in the Bobowa **ghetto** which was set up in October 1942.

One day all the Jews were called to the marketplace and a **selection** took place. Hirschfeld and his brothers were taken to the Krakow-Plaszow **concentration camp** where they worked building a new railway. One day his brother Abraham ran away. He was caught and killed. He and his brother Moniek also ran away from the camp with a cousin and they returned to the family house to retrieve some valuables that had been buried and some clothes. They returned to the camp despite the fact it was a brutal place where people were shot and it was riddled with typhus – a disease that killed.

From Plaszow the brothers were moved to another camp at Jerusolinska before being moved to the Skarzysko-Kamienna **labour camp**. This camp was an armaments factory and he and his brother Moniek worked on electrical currents. He recalls seeing workers whose skin had turned yellow from handling deadly explosives. The camp was run by the German armaments company Hasag of Leipzig. The camp was one of hundreds of slave labour camps scattered across occupied Poland. It reflected the German policy of exploiting the workforce of occupied and annexed countries to advance the war effort. It is thought that 25,000 Jews passed through the camp, which was operational between August 1942 and August 1944.

They were then sent to another labour camp at an arms factory in Czestochowa. From there the brothers were taken in cattle cars to Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany. After a few weeks he was moved to a camp in February 1945 at Nordhausen and from there they were taken to make B1 and B2 rockets in Dora.

Hirschfeld endured a **death march** to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia). He was liberated there on 8 May 1945 by the **Red Army**.

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Hirschfeld arrived in the UK in August 1945 with his brother Moniek. After some months in Windermere they were moved to Holmehurst hostel in Loughton and then to one in Belsize Park in London.

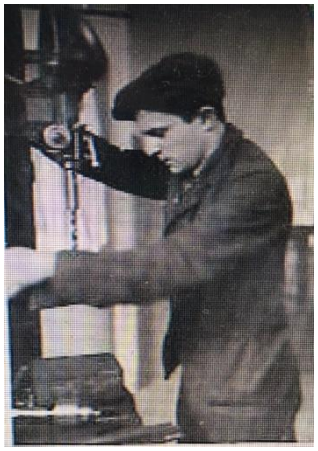
Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

They both attended the **ORT** school. Hirschfeld studied metalwork. Moniek was in the ORT Marine School.

Many of the boys who lived in the Loughton hostel volunteered to fight alongside the Jewish forces that would one day turn into the Israeli Defence Forces. One of them was Hirschfeld. This was at the time against British law, so he left the country secretly without telling his brother Moniek and travelled to Paris where he met with the Jewish underground. They sent him to Marseille where with other boys from Loughton he was trained to use firearms. They then went to fight in Palestine.

After the end of hostilities in Israel and the declaration of the state of Israel, Hirschfeld stayed in Israel and lived in Tel Aviv. He married twice. He had two sons with his first wife who sadly died young from cancer. He loved to play tennis and ping-pong and liked to make toys. He died in 2019.

Isadore Light
Name at Birth: Is Licht
Place of Birth: Lodz Poland
Date of Birth: 4 January 1930



Light's parents were Leib and Mariam. He had three sisters Bella, Esther and Gittle and a brother Yehoshua. Light was brought up in the industrial city of Lodz, which was Poland's second largest city in the 1930s. It was a centre of textile manufacturing. It had a population of 665,000 of which about 233,000 were Jews.

On September 8, 1939, the Germans occupied Lodz, which was then annexed to the Reich and renamed *Litzmannstadt*. Persecution of Jews began immediately. All Jewish-owned enterprises were taken over by Germans. Jews could no longer use public transport or leave the city without special permission. They were not allowed to own cars, radios and various other items. Synagogue services were outlawed, and Jews were required to keep their shops open on Jewish holidays.

In November, limits were placed on how much money Jews could take out of the bank and they were ordered to wear a **yellow badge** whenever they left their homes. This mark made Jews conspicuous and visible among the general population, making them ideal victims for German soldiers looking for targets to abuse. A **ghetto** was established in the Lodz in April 1940. Light and his family were confined to the ghetto, where his father died of starvation.

Light was transported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau **concentration camp** in 1944. On arrival there was a **selection**. He was chosen to work. Those who were not were gassed immediately. He was transferred to the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany and then taken to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia) which was liberated by the Red Army on 8 May 1945.

Light was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Light arrived in Britain in August 1945. After a few months in Windermere in the Lake District, he was moved to Holmehurst, the hostel in Loughton. Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens.

The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

Light then went to the **ORT** school in South Kensington to learn a trade. He is pictured above at the school. He later emigrated to Canada and lived in Toronto. Light married Marylyn and had a family. He gave a **testament** to the US Shoah archive. **Shoah** is another name for the Holocaust. He died in 2010

Perez Lev
Name at Birth: Perez Levkovitch
Place of Birth: Fabienza Poland
Date of Birth: 9 September 1927

Lev's parents were Alter and Rosa Levkovitz. He had a brother and sister. The family had a factory that produced soaps and oils. His father was killed in an accident in 1934.

Lev was imprisoned with his family in the Lodz **ghetto**. It was a vast **labour camp** and young children who did not have a work permit were rounded up by the Germans in 1942. They were taken to their deaths but Lev was able to escape the **aktion** by hiding. He then worked as a slave labourer in a nail factory.

In 1944, the ghetto was liquidated, and Lev was deported by train with his mother and sister to the Auschwitz-Birkenau **concentration camp.** They were rounded up into cattle cars. On arrival they were separated during a **selection** and Lev feared that they had been murdered. Lev was taken to be trained as a bricklayer. He endured a **death march** to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in the winter of 1944-45. He was very sick and almost died on the death march on which prisoners were given no food or water.

After the liberation he went back to Lodz where he was reunited with his brother Yechiel. His brother had been deported on a separate train heading for Auschwitz which had been bombed and he had managed to escape. His brother wanted him to stay in Lodz but Lev could not cope with the memories of what had happened there. He left for Prague, the Czech capital, where he heard that in the former Theresienstadt ghetto a group of children were being taken to Britain.

Lev was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Lev arrived in Britain in August 1945. "The instructors told me that we mustn't steal the bread as you will have plenty. Until today we respect bread," he says. His daughter says he always has bread, a sweet and a bottle of water in his pocket. He always sleeps with the window open and never goes alone in an elevator she adds. After Windermere Lev was moved to a hostel in Bedford and then to Loughton. "I spent the two best years of my life in England," he says. "England gave me back my life, my normal life after suffering for six years."

"If I had not had the two years in England, I do not know what I would have done. What position I would have had in life. The Loughton boys were something special to

me. When I say that word 'the Loughton boys', I can't imagine how I would have been without it. They were helping us every moment." He played a lot of table tennis he recalls.

Holmehurst, the hostel in Loughton was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

Lev dreamt that he would discover that his mother and sister had also survived the war. Then in 1947 he was shocked to learn that his mother and sister Ester were indeed alive and well in Sweden. He remembers that all the boys were crying when he discovered the news - tears of joy mixed with sadness for their own lost families.

The **CBF**, the organisation who cared for the children, paid for him to visit his family in Sweden for two weeks. Lev wanted to go back to England but his mother insisted that they stay together. The family remained in Sweden for two more years. They then went to live in Israel in 1949.

In 1951, Lev joined the Israeli air force in which he served for 25 years. Today he lives in the southern Israeli town of Beer Sheva and he takes care of widows and elderly people. He keeps busy and spends time talking about the Holocaust and about his life in army camps and schools.

"The Holocaust is always with me - deep inside me," he says. There are days when he does not want to talk to anyone, and he asks himself why he remained alive. When he thinks of the Loughton boys it gives him strength to carry on and he sings, "Loughton Boys. Loughton Boys!' like a ditty, which cheers him up.

Lev married Yocheved and had a son and a daughter. He wrote an account of his life in Hebrew.

Kopel Kendall
Name at Birth Kopel Kandelcukier
Place of Birth: Bialobrzegi Poland
Date of Birth: 7 March 1928

Kendall's father Szmuel was an ironmonger and his mother Dvora, a housewife. He grew up in a religious family. He had two sisters Chaya (b. 1924) and Ester (b. 1929) and an older adopted brother, who was a **Zionist**. He said that he had a happy childhood. Kendall had lots of friends and they often went to the forest to play and pick mushrooms. He went to the Polish school in the morning and a Jewish religious school in the afternoon.

Sixty percent of the people who lived in Bialobrzegi were Jewish and the majority were very religious. The town was a centre of Jewish religious learning. The family lived behind his father's shop in a three-room apartment. His older sister was very clever and studied in Holland but had returned home for the summer and was trapped in Poland when the war broke out in September 1939.

Everything changed when Germany invaded Poland on 8 September 1939. The leading people in both the Polish and Jewish community were arrested. Kendall's father was among them. He was never seen again. Jewish children were excluded from school and Jews were forced to wear a **yellow badge.**

A small part of the town was turned into a **ghetto**. Food was scarce and conditions worsened as more and more Jews were brought into the ghetto form the surrounding area. Kendall had to look after his mother and two sisters. He would slip out of the ghetto to search for food.

When the ghetto was liquidated in 1942, there was a **selection**. His mother and two sisters were taken to the Treblinka **extermination camp** where they were murdered immediately. A friendly Jewish policeman dragged Kendall into a column of Jews who had been selected to work. He worked on powerlines and in the police station until the remaining Jews were all sent to Skarżysko-Kamienna, a forced **labour camp** and was told to say that he was -years old and a carpenter to secure himself a job. The camp produced armaments for the German army.

There he almost died of typhus but was helped by a nurse who hid him. Kendall then managed to get a kitchen job and the few scraps he could find saved his life.

In 1941 he was sent to the Buchenwald **concentration camp** in Germany where he worked in a quarry along with Benny Newton who would also later end up in the Loughton hostel. It was in Buchenwald that they were first given prison outfits and wooden clogs. Kendall was then moved to a labour camp at Schlieben which also produced armaments. Kendall's skin turned yellow from exposure to dangerous chemicals. It was in Schlieben that he met another of the Loughton boys, Ben Helfgott. Kendall was then sent on a train in open wagons to what was for him an unknown destination. He was with Jan Goldberger who also ended up at Loughton.

The train finally arrived in the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia) where he was liberated by the **Red Army** on the 8 May 1945.

Kendall returned home with his friend Chaim Aizon, another Loughton boy, to see if his family had survived. The two boys received a hostile reception from the Poles in their hometown and decided to return to Theresienstadt.

Kendall was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Kendall arrived in Britain in August 1945. During his time in Windermere he was taken with some of the other boys to the town of Kendall where they were all given new suits by the Jewish tailoring company Burton. This was the reason he decided to change his name to Kendall. When he arrived in the UK Kendall did not speak a word of English although he was fluent in Polish and **Yiddish** and spoke some German and Czech.

After Windermere Kendall was moved to Holmehurst, the hostel in Loughton. Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

Kendall then attended Walthamstow Polytechnic.

Kendall married Vivienne in 1956. The couple had three children and six grandchildren. He had a successful life as a tailor with his own shop. In 1989 he was attacked by a man with an axe who tried to steal a leather coat from his workshop. Kendall fought him off but eventually told him to take the coat. The shop was also damaged in an IRA bombing in 1993.

He gave a **testament** to the US Shoah Foundation. **Shoah** is another name for the Holocaust. Kendall died in 2009.

Benny Newton
Name at Birth: Benek Najszteter
Place of Birth: Skarzysko-Kamienna Poland
Date of Birth: 22 December 1930

Newton's parents were called Icek, a shoemaker, and Jochevet Najszteter. He had a sister called Gittel. He was brought up in the town of Skarzysko in southern central Poland. The town was a centre of the armaments industry.

When the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939, they took control of the armaments factories to support the war effort. A **ghetto** was set up in the town in 1941 and many Jews from surrounding areas were crowded into it. The ghetto was liquidated in October 1942 at which point there was a **selection**. Those who were not chosen to work were taken to the Treblinka **extermination camp** where they were gassed. Newtons parents were murdered at this point but exactly where is not clear.

Newton was taken to work in the Skarzysko-Kamienna **labour camp**, an ammunitions factory. It is estimated that between 25,00-30,000 Jews were taken to work there as slave labourers and up to 18,000 died in the camp. Sanitary conditions were terrible. There was hardly any food and prisoners were unable to wash for weeks on end. The camp was run by the German armaments company Hasag of Leipzig and was one of hundreds of slave labour camps scattered across occupied Poland. It reflected the German policy of exploiting the workforce of occupied and annexed countries to advance the war effort. It is thought that 25,000 Jews passed through the camp, which was operational between August 1942 and August 1944.

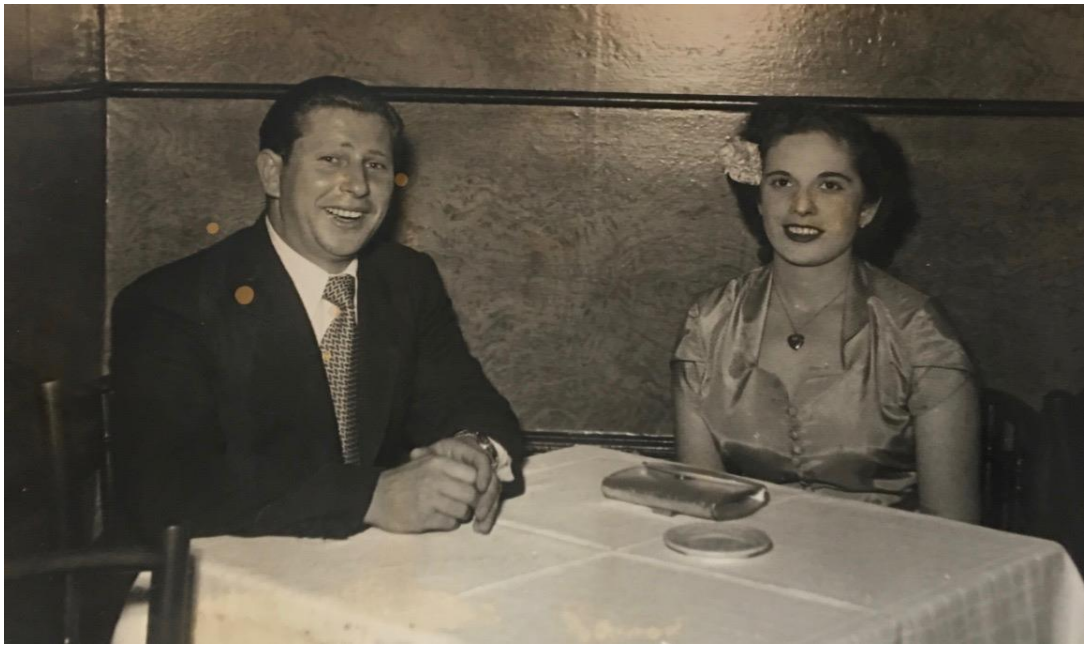
As the camp was closed down in the face of the advance of the **Red Army** across Poland, Newton was sent to the Buchenwald **concentration camp** in Germany where he worked in a quarry. Kopel Kendall was among the boys he knew there who would later end up in the Loughton hostel. It was in Buchenwald that they were first given prison outfits and wooden clogs.

In the last weeks of the war Newton was sent on a train in open wagons to what was for him an unknown destination. The journey took weeks and there was no food or water. Many people died of starvation and disease. The train finally arrived in the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia) where he was liberated by the **Red Army** on the 8 May 1945.

Newton was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District for three months to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Newton arrived in Britain in August 1945. He did not speak a word of English. After a few months in Windermere, he was moved to Holmehurst hostel in Loughton.

Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.



Newton and his wife Sala.

Newton went on the study drama at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. He acted in the **Yiddish** theatre in the East End of London. In 1951, Newton married a fellow Holocaust survivor Sala Hochszpeigel, from Lodz, who also arrived in Windermere in 1945. After arriving in the UK she trained as a nurse. The couple had two daughters.

Newton died in Israel in 1991, where his widow still lives.

Jimmy Rosenblatt
Name at Birth: Zelig Rozenblatt
Place of Birth: Warsaw, Poland
Date of Birth: 25 December 1927

Rosenblatt's parents were Yankel and Sala. Little is known about his early life.

After the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939, persecution of the Jewish population began immediately. Jewish children were excluded from school and Jews were made to wear a **yellow badge**. Jews were rounded up and imprisoned in **ghettos**, the largest of which was in the Polish capital Warsaw. Rosenblatt may well have spent time in the Warsaw ghetto.

Rosenblatt was taken to work as slave labourer at the Skarzysko-Kamienna **labour camp**, an ammunitions factory south of Warsaw. It is estimated that between 25,00-30,000 Jews were taken to work there as slave labourers and up to 18,000 died in the camp. Sanitary conditions were terrible. There was hardly any food and prisoners were unable to wash for weeks on end. The camp was run by the German armaments company Hasag of Leipzig, one of hundreds of slave labour camps scattered across occupied Poland. It reflected the German policy of exploiting the workforce of occupied and annexed countries to advance the war effort. It is thought that 25,000 Jews passed through the camp, which was operational between August 1942 and August 1944.

As the camp was closed down in the face of the advance of the **Red Army** across Poland, Rosenblatt was then moved to the Czestochowa labour camp, which was also an ammunition factory.

From there, in August 1944, he was taken by train in cattle cars to the Buchenwald **concentration camp**. Many of the boys who were in the Loughton hostel had been in the camp together and worked in its array of sub-camps.

In the last weeks of the war, Rosenblatt was sent on a train in open wagons to what was for him an unknown destination. The journey took weeks and there was no food or water. Many people died of starvation and disease. The train finally arrived in the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia) where he was liberated by the **Red Army** on the 8 May 1945.

Rosenblatt was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District for three months to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Rosenblatt arrived in Britain in August 1945. He did not speak a word of English. After a few months in Windermere he was moved to Holmehurst hostel in Loughton. Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a

basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

Rosenblatt was a friend of Benny Newton and the two men acted together in the **Yiddish** theatre in London's East End.

The hostel in Loughton was run by a Jewish youth organisation Habonim. In order to care for the child Holocaust survivors, the **CBF**, the organisation that looked after them relied on the help of the entire British Jewish community as the government provided no financial help.

Many of the boys who lived in the Loughton hostel volunteered to fight alongside the Jewish forces that would one day turn into the Israeli Defence Forces. One of them was Rosenblatt. This was at the time against British law, so he left the country secretly and travelled to Paris where he met with the Jewish underground. They sent him to Marseille where with other boys from Loughton he was trained to use firearms. They then went to fight in Palestine.

After the declaration of the state of Israel and the end of hostilities in Israel, Rosenblatt returned to Britain where he became a businessman. He did not give a **testament** and died in 1974.

Issac Pomerance
Name at Birth: Isaak Pomeranc
Place of Birth: Dzialoszyce Poland
Date of Birth: 2 March 1928

Dzialoszyce is a small town thirty miles north of Krakow in southern Poland. Jews had lived in the town for generations. In 1939, 7,000 of the 10,000 people who lived there were Jewish.

The German army entered the town on 7 September 1939. Soon after Jews were forced to wear a **yellow badge**. Pomerance was then imprisoned in the Dzialoszyce **ghetto**.

He was taken to the Krakow-Plazsow **concentration camp** in 1941. Most of the Jews who remained in the ghetto were murdered in the Belzec **extermination camp** in 1942 or shot in the cemetery.

Pomerance was then taken to the Skarzysko-Kamienna **labour camp** which was an ammunitions factory. Skarzyko-Kamienna was a slave labour camp run by the German armaments company Hasag of Leipzig, one of hundreds of slave labour camps scattered across occupied Poland. It reflected the German policy of exploiting the workforce of occupied and annexed countries to advance the war effort. It is thought that 25,000 Jews passed through the camp, which was operational between August 1942 and August 1944.

He was then moved to the Czestochowa labour camp, also run by Hasag, as the **Red Army** moved westwards across Poland. Pomerance was then taken to the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany and sent to a sub-camp called Rhemsdorf.

In late April, approximately 3,500 prisoners were being moved in open wagons when at Marienbad the train was bombed by Soviet aircraft and about 1000 people were killed. The surviving prisoners, nearly all men, were then forced to walk on a **death march** to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia). The journey took three weeks and when they arrived there were only 600 people left alive. Pomerance helped his friend Harry Balsam, who was also on the death march to stay alive. Balsam was also in the Loughton hostel. Friendship was a key to survival during the Holocaust.

The friends were liberated in the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia) by the **Red Army** on 8 May 1945.

They were part of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Pomerance arrived in Britain in August 1945, giving his date of birth as 1930. After a short time in Windermere, he was moved to Holmehurst hostel in Loughton and Belsize Park in London.

Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

Many of the boys who lived in the Loughton hostel volunteered to fight alongside theJewish forces that would one day turn into the Israeli Defence Forces. One of them was Pomerance, whose only surviving brother was living in Palestine. This was at the time against British law, so he left the country secretly and travelled to Paris where he met with the Jewish underground. They sent him to Marseille where with other boys from Loughton he was trained to use firearms. They then went to fight in Palestine. Pomernace served in the Israeli air force.

After the declaration of the state of Israel and the end of hostilities in Israel, Pomerance returned to the UK. He was the best friend of Jeff Frydman and they shared lodgings together in London.

He died in 1983. No Jews live in Dzialosyce today.

Michael Preston
Name at Birth: Moniek/Moshe Reichkind
Place of Birth: Lodz Poland
Date of Birth: 30 June 1930

Preston was brought up in the industrial city of Lodz, Poland's second largest city in the 1930s. A centre of textile manufacturing, it had a population of 665,000 of which about 233,000 were Jews.

On 8 September 1939 the Germans occupied Lodz which was then annexed to the Third Reich and renamed *Litzmannstadt.* Persecution of Jews began immediately. All Jewish-owned enterprises were taken over by Germans. Jews could no longer use public transport or leave the city without special permission. They were not allowed to own cars, radios and various other items. Synagogue services were outlawed, and Jews were required to keep their shops open on Jewish holidays.

In November, limits were placed on how much money Jews could take out of the bank and Jews were ordered to wear a **yellow badge** whenever they left their homes. This mark made Jews conspicuous and visible among the general population, making them ideal victims for German soldiers looking for targets to abuse.

A **ghetto** was established in the city in April 1940. Preston was imprisoned in the Lodz ghetto with his family. Preston's father died in the ghetto. Preston was taken to Auschwitz-Birkenau **concentration camp** on 21 August 1944 where there was a **selection** on arrival. He was chosen to work but his mother and sister were murdered immediately. He said that he was born in 1927 when he arrived in Auschwitz. If you lied about your age you had a better chance of being chosen to work at the selection on the ramp when the train was unloaded.

He was moved to the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany in January 1945. He was liberated at the Theresienstadt ghetto Czechoslovakia (now Czechia) on 8 May 1945 by the **Red Army**.

Preston was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Preston arrived in Britain in August 1945. After some months in Windermere, he was moved to Holmehurst hostel in Loughton. Like many of the children who came to Britain Preston suffered from tuberculosis, a life-threatening disease. caught in the terrible living conditions in the concentration camps and ghettos.

Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a

basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

While at the hostel in Loughton Preston attended the Plaistow Grammar School and later became an accountant. Preston changed his name in 1952 after receiving British citizenship. He lived in north London. Preston died in 2019

Harry Spiro
Name at Birth: Chaim Spiro
Place of Birth: Piotrkow Trybunalski Poland
Date of Birth: 21 November 1929

Spiro grew up in Piotrkow. Jews had lived in the city for hundreds of years. A centre for wood and glass manufacturing, and textile production, Piotrkow was also well known for its Hebrew and **Yiddish** book publishing. There were three Yiddish weeklies and numerous Jewish political, social, economic, cultural, and religious organizations.

Spiro's parents were Lisa, a tailor, and Tamn, who had a business selling milk. He had a younger sister Gita and was brought up in a religious household.

His family was very poor, and they lived in one room in a tenement building. He nevertheless remembers a happy childhood. He went to a Polish school in the morning and a Jewish religious school in the afternoon.

Spiro was 9 years old when the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939. He remembers that the **SS** patrolled the streets with dogs to instil fear in the population. The leaders of the local community - both Jewish and non-Jewish doctors, lawyers, teachers – were shot. It was a deliberate move to undermine the local leadership and frighten the people and happened across the country.Within weeks Jewish children were all excluded from school and all Jews over the age of 8 had to wear a **yellow badge** with the word Jew on it.

In October 1939 a **ghetto** was established in Piotrkow, the first to be set up by the Nazis in Poland. Spiro was imprisoned in the ghetto. If Jews were found outside the ghetto without permission, they would be shot. Life in the ghetto was very difficult and food was short, especially as more and more people were brought there. Eventually, up to 28,000 Jews were squeezed into a part of town where only 6,000 people previously lived. Disease was an issue. Spiro began to sneak out of the ghetto to get food for his family. He remembers that it was a very frightening thing to do. The Germans would shoot children if they were caught doing this.

Spiro then heard that Jews were being taken on to work at the local Hortensia glass factory. By saying that he was older than he was he secured himself a job and it helped the family to survive.

In October 1942, there was an announcement that everyone in the ghetto had to stay inside their homes except for those working in the factories. Although he wanted to stay at home, his mother forced him to go after a big argument. She pushed him out of the house against his will saying, "Let one of us survive!" He did not understand what she was saying and was deeply upset by his mother's behaviour.

Nevertheless, he went to work and was immediately put in a **labour camp**. Within three days the ghetto was cleared, and some 22,000 Jews were herded onto the main square in order to undergo a **selection**. In the course of the next few days, Jews were marched in columns to the railway station and loaded onto freight trains, 150 people to one car. All of them, including Spiro's mother, father and sister, were taken to Treblinka **extermination camp**, where they were gassed immediately. On the way to the camp his mother threw a letter off the train to him which he was given by a Polish man. It was later taken from him by a prison guard.

Spiro once again escaped death when he was rounded up with Jews who had hidden, and he was imprisoned in the synagogue even though he had a work permit. When the German production manager saw that 21 of his best workers were being held in the synagogue, he asked for the boys to be released. All those who remained in the synagogue were shot.

Spiro was then taken to the Czestochowa **labour camp**, from where he was transferred to the Buchenwald **concentration camp** in Germany by train in cattle cars. There he was assigned a number and his name was no longer used. He remembers hours of roll call in the freezing cold. He was then in the Remsdorf, a satellite camp of Buchenwald, where he saw people starve to death. He then endured a **death march** to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia). He was so sick he does not remember how he arrived in the ghetto.

Spiro was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Spiro arrived in Britain in August 1945, giving his date of birth as 1930. After a few months in Windermere, he was placed at Holmehurst hostel in Loughton. Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

Spiro later worked in menswear and married Pauline with whom he had three children. In retirement he began to talk about his experiences for the Holocaust Education Trust and is active in Holocaust education. He has given several **testaments**.

Nathan Wald
Place of Birth: Grudziadz Poland
Date of Birth: 08.12.1930/1927

Little is known of the life of Nathan Wald.

His parents were Fela and Dawid. Grudziadz is a city in northern Poland. Most of its population were German as before the First World War it had been part of German East Prussia. German forces entered the town on 3 September 1939.

German records show that Wald had been in the Buchenwald **concentration camp** near Weimar in Germany before he was taken to the Theresienstadt **ghetto** in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia). The Germans kept detailed records of the people they ordered into **ghettos** and detained in concentration camps.

Wald was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Wald arrived in Britain in August 1945. He would have spoken Polish, Yiddish and German but not a word of English. After some months in Windermere he was moved to Holmehurst hostel in Loughton.

Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

Wald attended the Plaistow Grammar School while at the hostel in Loughton. A fellow pupil found him quiet and introverted.

Wald went on to live in Finchley, London. He left for the USA sailing on the *Queen Elizabeth* from Southampton to New York on 14 April 1954. He went into business but died at the aged of 41. A number of the child Holocaust survivors who arrived in Britain after the war died prematurely.

Gary Winogradski
Name at Birth: Salomon Rafael
Place of Birth: Piotrkow Trybunalski Poland
Date of Birth: 17 March 1929

Winogradski'a parents were Chaim and Hanna. Winogradski was the couple's eldest child. He had two sisters Esther and Ruth. Jews had lived in Piotrkow for hundreds of years. A centre for wood and glass manufacturing and textile production, Piotrkow was also well known for its Hebrew and **Yiddish** book publishing. There were three Yiddish weeklies and numerous Jewish political, social, economic, cultural, and religious organizations.

The family owned an apartment block on the main street in Piotrkow, where they also lived. His father was a French polisher and ran a business employing a number of people. The family also owned a sawmill.

Winogradski remembers a happy middle-class childhood and family holidays taken in the Polish lake district. In the summer he played football and he loved to go tobogganing in the winter.

On 1 September 1939, the family were sitting down to lunch when they heard rifle shots and planes flying overhead. The German invasion had begun.

All the Jews of Piotrkow were then imprisoned in a **ghetto**, the first one to be created in Poland. Conditions inside the ghetto were very bad and worsened as more and more Jews were brought in from the surrounding area. Eventually up to 28,000 Jews were squeezed into a part of town where only 6,000 people lived previously. There was little food and there was an epidemic of typhus – a disease that could kill. Winogradski's father died in the winter of 1941.

Winogradski would take off the armband with a **yellow badge** on that he had been ordered to wear and sneak out of the ghetto to find food. Poles who had been employed by his father helped him. His mother heard that teenage boys were being hired to work in the Hortensia glass factory and dressed him up to look older than he was and sent him off to apply for a job.
He worked in the factory with a number of other boys who would eventually end up in the Loughton hostel.

In October 1942 some 22,000 Jews were herded onto the main square in order to undergo a **selection**. In the course of the next few days, Jews were marched in columns to the railway station and loaded onto the awaiting freight trains, 150 to one car. They were all taken to the Treblinka **extermination camp** where they were gassed on arrival.

A few days later, he and 20 other boys who had work permits were stopped on their way to work and imprisoned in the synagogue with other Jews who had evaded deportation. They were eventually released when the German manager of the factory realised that he was about to lose some of his best workers. All the Jews who

remained in the synagogue were murdered. In 1943 Winogradski's mother and sisters were taken away and he never saw them again. He did not know what happened to them.

As the Soviet army advanced westwards across Poland in November 1944, he was moved to a **labour camp** in Czestochowa and then by train in cattle trucks to the Buchenwald **concentration camp** in Germany. This was the first time he was given a prison outfit and clogs. He recalled being made to stand for hours at roll call in the freezing cold.

Winogradski was then taken by train in open top wagons to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia (now Czechia). The journey took weeks and there was no food or water. Many people died on the way. The moment the train arrived in Theresienstadt he was liberated by Czech partisans fighting with the **Red Army**. It was the 8 May 1945. He described the liberation as 'bewildering" as after 5 years there was no-one to tell him what to do now.

Winogradski was one of the first group of 300 young people brought to Britain by the Central Fund for German Jewry. This organisation had persuaded the British government to offer 1000 visas, valid for two years, to Jewish orphan refugees. Around 715 young people were eventually brought to Britain under this scheme. The CBF was responsible for arranging and funding all their care. The Boys, as the group became known, were brought to Windermere in the Lake District to begin their recovery. They were then placed in different hostels around the UK.

Winogradski arrived in Britain in August 1945, giving his date of birth as 1930. He spoke Polish, Yiddish and some German but did not speak a word of English. He spent some months in Windermere recuperating. He was in then cared for in Holmehurst hostel in Loughton, and then Belsize Park, London.

Holmehurst was a large mansion house surrounded by extensive gardens. The time spent in Holmehurst was crucial for many of the boys. It was here that they began their new lives after the Holocaust. They learned to speak English and received a basic education. They also recuperated and lived as teenagers. Their memories are of playing table tennis, going to the cinema, playing football and riding bikes.

Winogradski trained to become a diamond cutter. In 1951 he met Shelia. The couple married in 1954 and had a daughter. He wrote the outline of his story down for the author and historian Martin Gilbert but never gave a formal **testament** as he said, "I still find it very painful and disturbing after all these years to talk about it."

Winogradski died in 2007.

5. EXTENSION EXERCISES

5.1 The Holocaust: Myths and Misconceptions

Although representations of the Holocaust are widespread in popular culture and students may already have awareness from books and films, there is widespread misunderstanding of what happened in the Holocaust.

Many of the students may have encountered books and films that misrepresent the Holocaust. The Holocaust Education Trust says a notable example is *The Boy in the Stripped Pyjamas*. (for more information see: https://www.tes.com/news/there-are-right-and-wrong-ways-teach-about-holocaust)

As student of history, students need to establish an understanding based on facts and use historical skills to examine the interpretation of different sources of evidence.

Here are a series of statements about the Holocaust. Students can take turns to read a statement, then teachers can lead discussion with the rest of the class to indicate if they think this statement is true or not..

The Holocaust was only perpetrated by Germans = False

Although Nazi Germany initiated and organised the Holocaust, the perpetrators included many non-Germans. They included governments who murdered Jews themselves (Romania, Croatia) or willingly handed them over to the Nazis (France, Slovakia), as well as individuals who served in German killing units or acted on their own initiative.

There were local people in every country who denounced Jews, just as there were people in every country who saved Jewish lives. It is not possible to divide countries into 'good' and 'bad'.

Hitler alone was responsible for the Holocaust = False

Hitler was indeed ultimately responsible, but he gave no written order for it to be carried out.

Hitler presided over a chaotic system of government in which rival individuals and institutions competed for influence. Officials sought to advance their careers by interpreting his wishes.

German officials across occupied Europe were actively involved in the decision-making process, which led to the Holocaust. Similarly, its perpetration involved not only the SS, but also many other agencies that knowingly made the murders possible, such as the civil service and the Reichsbahn (German railways).

Not all those agencies were in Germany or indeed German. The French police assisted in the round up of Jews, for example.

If perpetrators had refused to participate, they would have been shot or sent to a concentration camp = False

Historians and German prosecutors have failed to find a single case of someone being shot or arrested for refusing to take part in the killing of the Jews.

By contrast, there are well-documented examples of commanders offering their men the choice not to take part. Those who did not wish to participate were typically reassigned to other duties.

Refusal might well have had implications for career advancement, but that raises very different moral questions to the belief that people were compelled to become murders on pain of death.

Most Jews were murdered in the concentration camps = False
Most Jews were murdered in purpose-built extermination camps. Besides Auschwitz-Birkenau these included Belzec, Chelmno, Sobibor and Treblinka. These were radically different to concentration camps where many Jewish people died of hunger and disease. Those who could not work were often shot in these camps.

The confusion between concentration and extermination camps has primarily arisen because Auschwitz was both an extermination camp and a concentration camp, meaning descriptions differ depending on the context. In addition, as German forces retreated in 1944-45, surviving Jewish prisoners from Auschwitz and other concentration camps on Polish soil were evacuated to concentration camps like Bergen-Belsen and Buchenwald in Germany, where many died from starvation. This led to the misconception that, when these camps were liberated in 1945, that they had always been central to the Holocaust.

About 40% of the 6 million Jews murdered in the Holocaust were killed in mass shootings, the majority of these atrocities were carried out after the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941.

Most Germans knew nothing about the Holocaust = False
The Nazis certainly went to some lengths to conceal the evidence of their crimes, but the Holocaust has been termed an 'open secret' and most citizens were aware of some aspects of it, especially the mass deportation of German Jews. It is also worth remembering that many German Jews left Germany when Hitler came to power in 1933 seeking protection from other European countries, even emigrating to the USA and South America.

Mass shootings in the Soviet Union were witnessed by ordinary soldiers, who in turn commented on them in letters home and whilst on leave. News of this was sent to the Allies and published in newspapers in Britain and the United States but it did not make headline news. British politicians stood in silence in the House of Commons when news reached London of mass shooting in the Soviet Union in the autumn of 1941.

Jewish people did not resist = False
There were many obstacles to Jewish resistance to the Nazis. Not only did an opponent with overwhelming force confront the Jews, but the starvation and the exhaustion which characterised life in the ghettos in Eastern Europe limited the ability to resist.

It is important to understand that the decision to eradicate the Jewish people known by the Nazis as the 'Final Solution' was not taken until 1942. Until this point the policy was to drive the Jews out of Germany and Austria. There were also plans to resettle

the Jewish population elsewhere either in the east in lands that the Nazis planned to conquer or in Madagascar.

Once the 'Final Solution' was had begun the Jews did not know in advance that the Nazis intended to murder them, and people believed that resistance in ghettos and concentration camps would make the situation worse as reprisals would be taken. Although, as the war ended Polish Jews were aware of the existence of gas chambers, those Jews brought from France, Italy, Greece and Hungary had little idea what awaited them.

Nonetheless, as the Holocaust developed, armed Jewish resistance increasingly emerged in the form of ghetto revolts and partisan groups. Although the most famous act of resistance was the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising there were numerous underground resistance movements. As a more personal form of resistance, many Jews practised what has been termed 'spiritual resistance' through activities such as preserving cultural life by practising Judaism in secret, organising children's education and recording Nazi crimes.

There were even armed uprisings in three death camps – Auschwitz, Sobibor and Treblinka.

The images we have of the murder of Jews in the Holocaust were taken by the Nazis. Would they have wanted to take images of Jews resisting?

5.2 The Ten Steps to Genocide

The Ten Steps to Genocide have been identified as a way of recognising when such an atrocity is in danger of happening again. These steps have been identified as taking place in genocides, but not necessarily in this order, or one after the other; usually several steps occur simultaneously.

Discuss with students what they think each step entails, and clarify their ideas using the definitions given below. See if they can put this in the context of the Holocaust and what they have learnt about the story of the Loughton Boys.

1. Classification - The differences between people are not respected. There's a division of 'us' and 'them', which can be carried out using stereotypes, or excluding people who are perceived to be different.
Example: This is evident in pre-war anti-Semitism in both Germany and Poland where Jews were excluded from certain jobs. Do the students recall any of the boys mentioning examples of where they were excluded, or treated differently, or stereotyped because of their Jewish background?

2. Symbolisation - This is a visual manifestation of hatred.
Example: Jews in Nazi Europe were forced to wear yellow badges to show that they were 'different'.

3. Discrimination - The dominant group denies civil rights or even citizenship to identified groups.

Example: Students will have seen how the Loughton boys were excluded from school after the German invasion of Poland in 1939. Do they recall other, worse incidents of anti-Semitism after the German invasion?

4. Dehumanisation - Those perceived as 'different' are treated with no form of human rights or personal dignity. Anti-Jewish propaganda illustrates this.
Example: The Nazis often referred to Jews as vermin. Forcing Jewish families from their homes to live in ghettos, in overcrowded, unhygienic conditions was a way of dehumanising them

5. Organisation - Genocides are always planned. Regimes of hatred often train those who go on to carry out the destruction of a people.
Example: Most of the families of the Loughton Boys were murdered in or after 1942. In January 1942 a decision was made by leading Nazis at the Wannsee Conference that they would carry out the murder of all European Jews. They gave this policy a name – the 'Final Solution'

6. Polarisation - Propaganda begins to be spread by hate groups.
Example: The Nazis disseminated messages of hate about Jewish people in magazines, newspapers and especially in the cinema.

7. Preparation - Perpetrators plan the genocide.
Example: Extermination camps are built where the victims will be murdered and the Nazis experiment with the most efficient way to gas them and disposed of the bodies.

8. Persecution - Victims are identified because of their ethnicity or religion and death lists are drawn up.
Example: During the Holocaust Jews were segregated into ghettos, deported or starved and property is often expropriated. Genocidal massacres begin.

9. Extermination - The hate group murders their identified victims in a deliberate and systematic campaign of violence.
Example: Many of the Loughton Boys came from or spent time in Lodz. Many of the Jews who lived in the Lodz ghetto were murdered in mobile gas vans in the nearby Chelmno concentration camp. There the Nazis experimented with how to carry out mass murder of dispose of the bodies of their victims.

10. Denial - The Nazis tried to conceal their crimes.
Example: The extermination camps of Belzec and Sobibor were destroyed by the Nazis and no evidence of their existence remained.
Students will have seen that Holocaust denial is one of the reasons some of the Loughton boys gave testaments, in order to prove what had happened to them. Students will see that many of the Loughton boys also registered the murder of their families as evidence for what happened.

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