

The Loughton Boys: Holocaust Survivors in the Epping Forest District

Lesson 2

Learning Resources produced by Epping
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Recap of Lesson 1

What jobs did the Loughton Boys' parents have?

Did any boys experience anti-Semitism in Poland before the war?

Who recalls the day war broke out?

Which boys were in a ghetto?

What happened to the boys' families in 1942?

Why were the boys not selected for extermination?

What 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?



The war was over, but the boys still had many challenges to face ...

Coming to Britain

The Central British Fund had been set up in 1933 to help Jewish refugees from Nazism.

They brought children to Britain under the Kindertransport scheme from 1938 to 1939.

Now they persuaded the British government to offer 1,000 visas for orphans under the age of 16 for a period of two years. The CBF would fund their care.

715 young people, including the Loughton boys came to Britain under this scheme.

Many of the boys were older but were encouraged to lie about their age – years of starvation made them look younger.

These photos show the first group of 300 children who left Prague in 1945, and at a reunion with members of their families in 2019



Windermere

The first group of young people flew from Prague on RAF Stirling bombers on the 14 August 1945.

They were taken to the Calgarth estate near Lake Windermere in the Lake District. This had been used to house aircraft factory workers during the war.

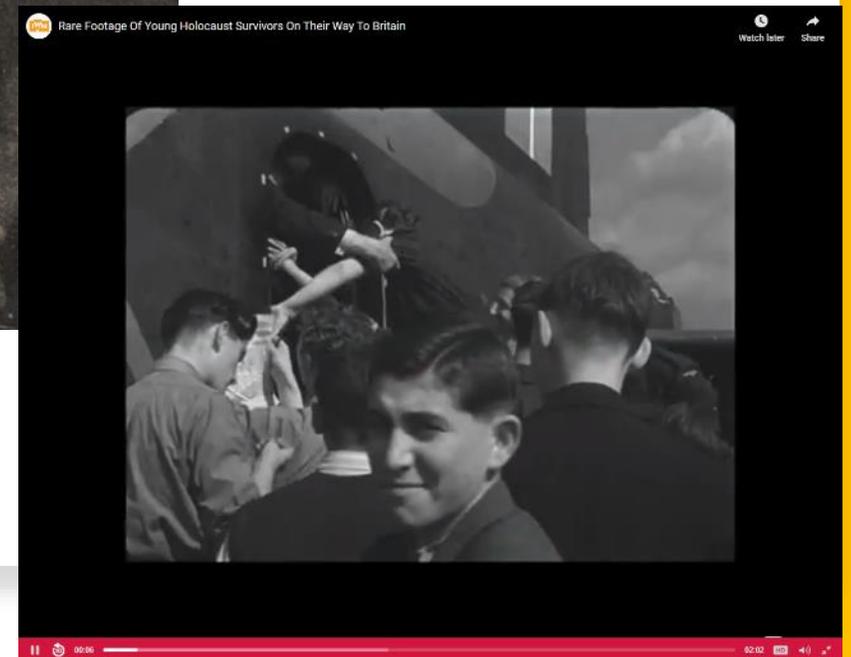
Here they began to recover supported by adults many of whom were refugees from Nazi Germany.

There were many challenges - ongoing health problems, learning English, trusting people and curbing aggression. Fear of starvation meant they still hoarded food.

Most of the boys also had to deal with receiving confirmation their family members had not survived the Holocaust.



The Imperial War Museum has a film of the boys leaving Prague. A link to the film is embedded in the screen shot below.



Coming to Loughton

Following the initial recovery period in Windermere, the boys were split into smaller groups and sent to Jewish-run hostels around the country.

The hostels tried to recreate a family atmosphere and the boys stayed in their friendship groups.

Here they would continue with their education and begin preparations for adult life.

The last group to leave Windermere in December 1945 wanted to be close to London.

They came to Holmehurst, a large house on the border of Buckhurst Hill and Loughton. The hostel manager was Heini Goldberg.



Photograph of staff and boys, taken at the Loughton Hostel, 1946

Holmehurst, Loughton

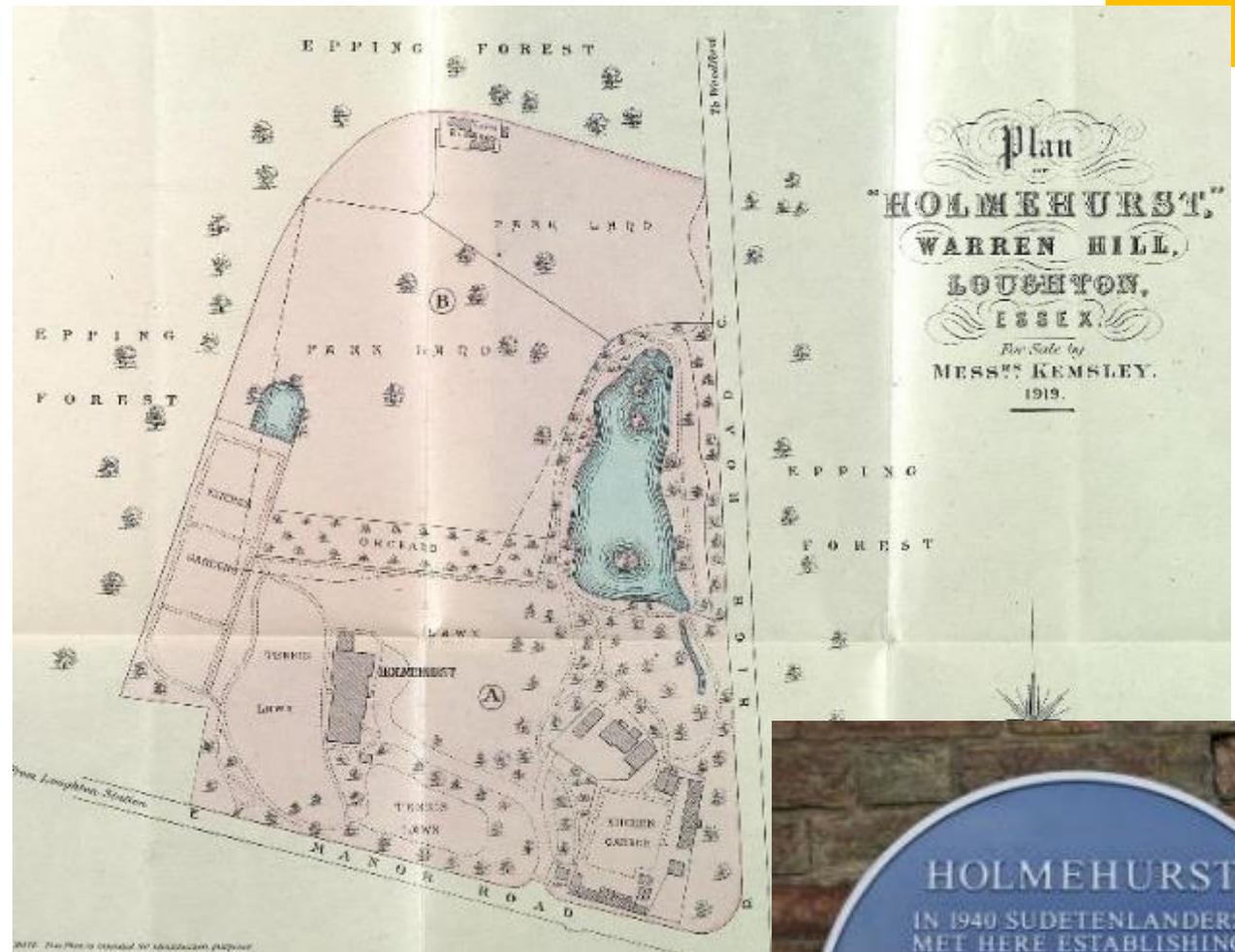
Holmehurst, a grand mansion house on Manor Road in Loughton, had been built for a wealthy businessman in 1865.

This plan of the house from 1919 shows its huge grounds, including a boating lake.

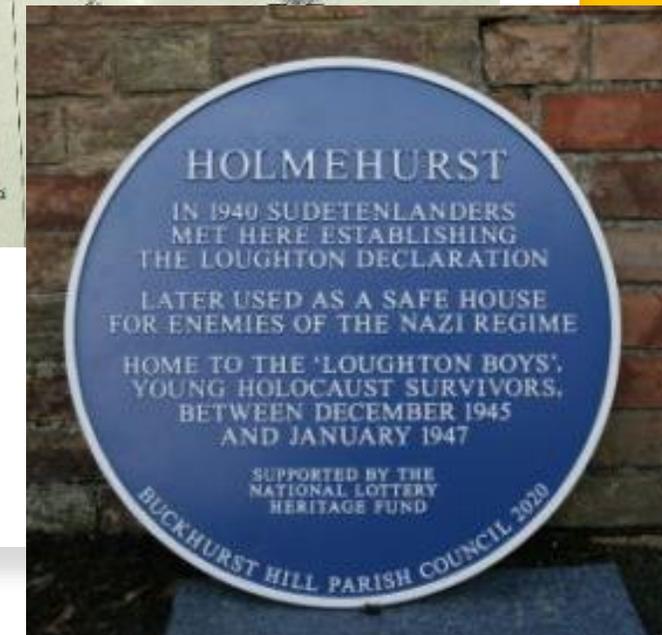
During the war, it had been a safe house for enemies of the Nazi regime but had suffered bomb damage.

The boys remember playing football, table tennis, enjoying the gardens and forest.

They also travelled to London on the bus for the cinema. Bus drivers often refused to take a fare from them.



Plan of Holmehurst from Sale Catalogue, 1919
Essex Record Office, SALE/136



The Future

The Loughton boys all had an interest in Zionism and potentially settling in Palestine. Heini Goldberg arranged talks on this.

He also prepared the boys for independence and their future lives by arranging apprenticeships, training and further education.

The boys left the hostel by January 1947. Some moved abroad. Others went to fight with the newly formed Israeli Defence Forces in Palestine.

Many wanted to stay in Britain, close to the friends they had made. The government finally granted them permission to remain here.

They went on to find work, settle, marry and have their own families. They still retained very close bonds with each other.



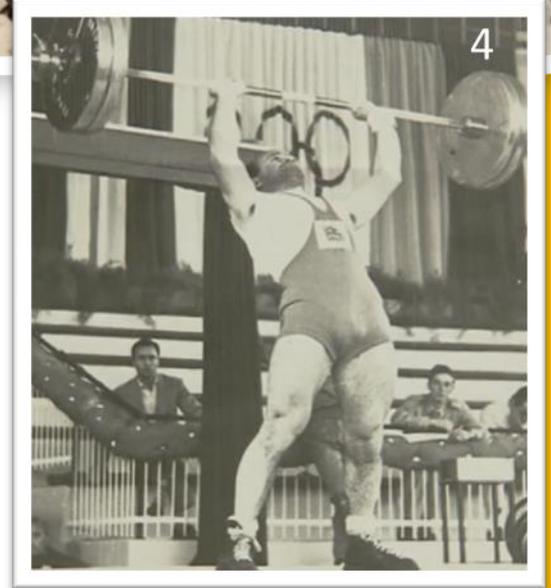
1. The ORT school - Jewish vocational school



2. Loughton Boys in Israel serving in the Israeli Defence Forces



3. Jeff Frydman and his wife. She came to the UK before World War II on a Kindertransport



4. Ben Helfgott, Olympic Weightlifter

Why is studying the Holocaust compulsory?

- Understanding how and why the Holocaust happened can help us to be better citizens
- The Holocaust is one of a number of genocides that took place in the 20th century
- *Genocide* is the murder of a race, tribe or ethnic group. The term was coined in 1944 by the Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin. He campaigned successfully for it to be recognised as an international crime
- We study the Holocaust, as it was the largest genocide to ever happen and the most widely documented. It also happened over a wide geographical area covering much of Europe
- By raising our awareness and understanding of the Holocaust and other genocides, we can be alert to the potential for such events to happen today

Countering Holocaust Denial

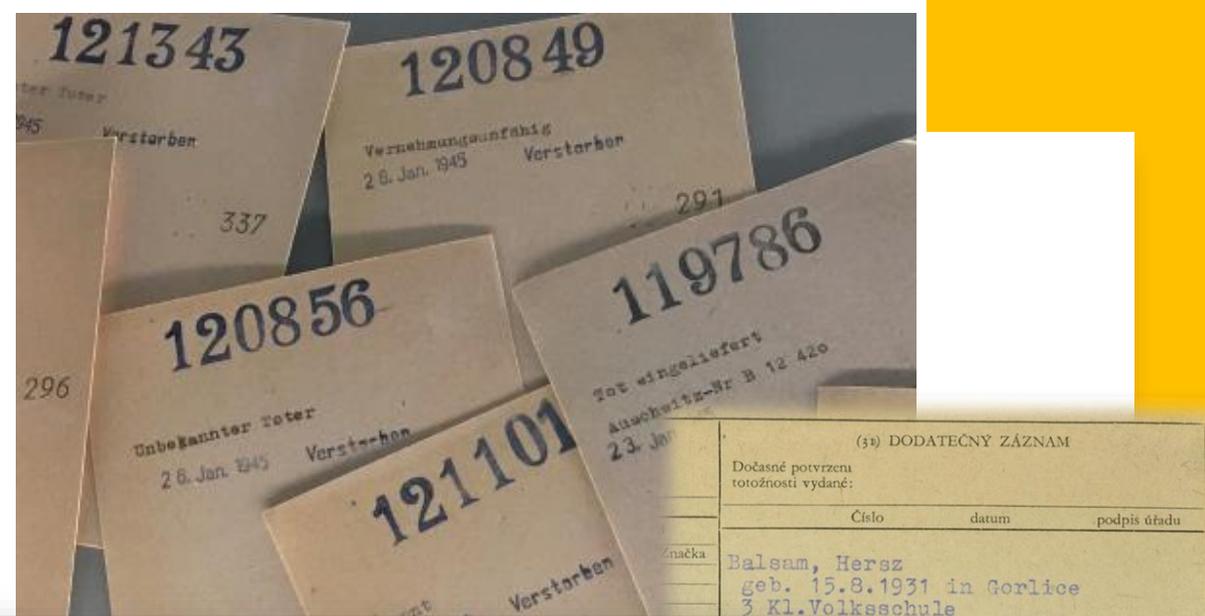
One reason many boys decided to give testimonies was to counter Holocaust denial.

The Nazis themselves created evidence for the Holocaust, making extensive records of their use of slave labourers and camp administration which are kept in archives.

These records were used when trying to trace what had happened to the Boys' families.

This record for Harry Balsam shows how he was moved from camp to camp.

It also records what happened to his family. His mother, sister and brother were gassed. Another brother was shot before resettlement.



		(53) DODATEČNY ZÁZNAM	
		Dočasně potvrzená totožnosti vydané:	
		Císlo	datum
		podpis úřadu	
značka		Balsam, Hersz	
		geb. 15.8.1931 in Gorlice	
		3 Kl.Volksschule	
	7.4.1942 - 15.8.1942	Arb.Lg.Gorlice	- 15.8.1942 Arb.Lg.Gorlice
	18.8.42 - 25.7.43	Arb.Lg.Krakau Pla	25.7.43 Arb.Lg.Krakau Pla
	25.7.43 - 15.8.43	" " " Prokoc	15.8.43 " " " Prokoc
	15.8.43 - 18.8.43	" " " Placzo	18.8.43 " " " Placzo
	20.8.43 - 10.9.43	" " " Skarzysko-K	10.9.43 " " " Skarzysko-K
	10.9.43 - 30.6.44	" " " "	30.6.44 " " " "
	1.10.44 - 3.11.44	" " " Sulejow	3.11.44 " " " Sulejow
	5.11.44 - 2.1.45	" " " Czestochowa	2.1.45 " " " Czestochowa
	6.1.45 - 25.1.45	KZ.Buchenwald	25.1.45 KZ.Buchenwald
	26.1.45 - 5.4.45	KZ.Rehmsdorf	5.4.45 KZ.Rehmsdorf
	5.4.45 - 27.4.45	KZ.Litmierzyc	27.4.45 KZ.Litmierzyc
	27.4.45 - 30.4.45	KZ. "	30.4.45 KZ. "
	zuletzt	Theresienstadt	Theresienstadt

Legacy

The story of the Loughton boys is one of incredible resilience and hope.

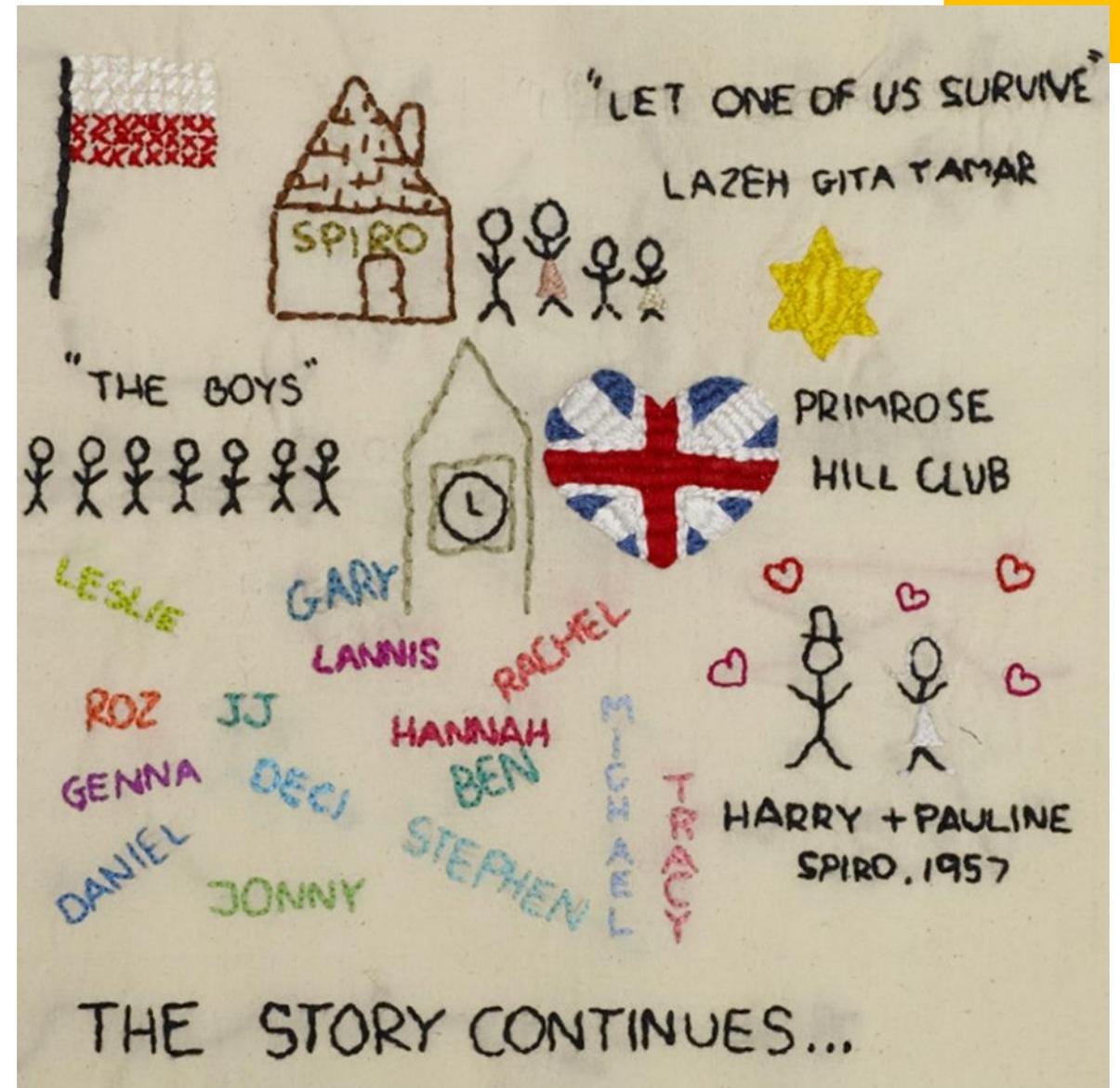
In later life they formed the '45 Aid to keep in contact, help support members in hard times, undertake charitable work, and keep awareness of the Holocaust alive through educational work.

One of their projects has been to create memory quilts. A boy, or their family, has created a patch with words and images connected to their story.

This one, for Loughton Boy Harry Spiro contains his mother's last words to him,

'Let one of us survive'

so that the memory of his family and their story can continue to be told.



Memory quilt square for Harry Spiro

Homework

Following on from your research on your boy, you can make a creative piece highlighting what you have learnt about him and the key message of his story.

You can choose any format you like – images, words, poetry to design a poster or a PowerPoint.

You may be able to find additional information on your boy by careful research on reliable internet sites.

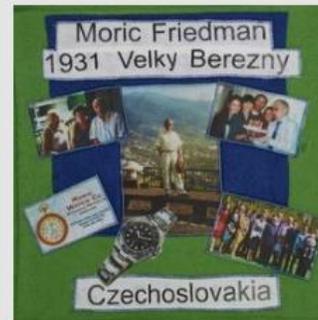
The '45 Aid Society website has images of the memory quilts for inspiration.

www.45aid.org

Select Surname

All

Moric Friedman



My father Moric Friedman was born in Velkey Berezni on 25th April 1931, which at the time was ...

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Sam Gardner



When Julia rang me and told me about the memorial quilt it was quite late in the evening ...

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Paul Gast



Paul Gast (Gastfreund) was born on November 16th 1929 in Lodz, Poland. He was ten years old when ...

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Leo Geddy



We thought about what would represent my Dad best in our square for the quilt and here are ...

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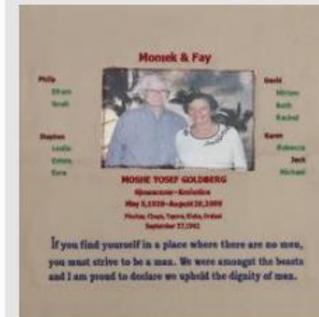
Jacob Glicksohn



Jacob Glicksohn (Glikson) was born in Czestochowa, Poland, on May 8th 1927. He used to say that because ...

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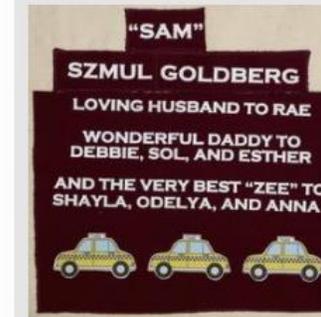
Moniek Goldberg



Moniek was born May 5th 1928. Between 1942 and 1945 he was in the following camps: Shitzke/Szyczki, Kaushina/Kruszyn, ...

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Sam Goldberg



Sam (Szmul) Goldberg was born in Bendzin, Poland, on December 25th 1929 to Zvi and Ita Goldberg. He ...

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Jan Goldberger



Our father Jan Goldberger was born in Bielsko Biala, Poland in 1927. He was liberated from Theresienstadt in ...

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