



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY TRUST

THEME VISION

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2015

KEEP THE MEMORY ALIVE

'If something happens, I would want there to be somebody who would remember that someone named D. Berger had once lived. This will make things easier for me in the difficult moments.'

David Berger, in his last letter before being murdered by Nazis in Vilnius, 1941

Last Letters from the Holocaust (ed. Walter Zwi Bacharach), Yad Vashem and Devora Publishing Company, 2004

Theme overview

HMDT is committed to putting the experiences of those who suffered in the Holocaust and genocide at the centre of HMD. Each year we identify a specific topic, relevant to survivors and those who perished, which will enable HMD activity organisers to approach their annual activities with a fresh focus, keep the interest of their existing participants and engage new audiences.

Introduction to HMD 2015 theme

27 January 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. 2015 will also be the 20th anniversary of the Genocide in Srebrenica, Bosnia. Therefore it is particularly appropriate that the theme for this major anniversary year focuses on memory.

HMD's purpose is to commemorate the Holocaust, Nazi Persecution and subsequent genocides – to remember. Those who have no direct experience to recall are asked, on HMD, to 'remember' those who were murdered and to honour the survivors.

The theme will enable survivors to be at the heart of HMD, as we will share their life stories and memories of their experiences. We will encourage activity organisers to devise programmes that share memories of life before the Holocaust and subsequent genocides, as well as opening up the memories of the atrocities and memories of the aftermath as people rebuilt their lives. By attending HMD activities, people will be creating new memories of communities joining together to mark HMD. As **Keep the memory alive** is the theme for such significant anniversaries, we will encourage ourselves and others to consider how far we have come in the UK in commemorating the past and what has been achieved.



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On HMD, we ask people to 'learn lessons from the past to create a safer, better future'. This theme will encourage us to learn from survivors whilst they are still with us and to consider our responsibilities for using and transmitting those memories.

The theme will also challenge us to consider the relationship between history and memory. Memories can be 'inaccurate' when set against historical facts, they are coloured by subjectivities of perceptions at the time, emotions after the events, or simply the passage of time. Historical 'facts' too may not always be easily established. Both are heard and learnt with subjective influences, yet both contribute to our understanding. This theme will also prompt us to enquire about the nature of memorialisation itself. What does it mean to memorialise the past, and how should we do it?

By focusing on memory, the theme will also enable us to challenge those who seek to deny the Holocaust and subsequent genocides.

Memories of survivors and other witnesses

Preserving memories, keeping diaries and passing on memories all represent forms of resistance and ways of preserving the identity of both survivors and those who were murdered. Survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust or subsequent genocides have memories which are first-hand, personal testimonies that can educate us and inform our commemorations. They can share the memories of their lives before genocide, their experiences during it and the process of rebuilding their lives afterwards.

Joan Salter is a child survivor of the Holocaust and was born Fanny Zimetbaum in Brussels on 15 February 1940 to Polish Jewish parents. She was three months old when Belgium was invaded by the Nazis.

Arn Chorn-Pond was born in 1966 in Battambang, the second largest city in Cambodia. When the Khmer Rouge took power, Arn was sent with hundreds of other children to a prison camp. He survived by entertaining soldiers with his flute-playing.

Safet Vukalić is a Bosnian Muslim and survivor of the ethnic cleansing in Prijedor, Bosnia. His father and brother were imprisoned by the Bosnian Serb army in concentration camps.

Halima Bashir was born in Darfur, in the west of Sudan. As part of the black African Zawahge tribe, she grew up in a rural village with her parents, grandmother and three siblings. Halima was training to be a doctor when the Sudanese Government's campaign to eliminate black African communities in Darfur began.



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In memory of those who died

HMD stands as a memorial to those who were murdered and attempts to give some meaning to their deaths by encouraging everyone to mark the past and attempt to create a safer future.

Imprisoned in the Warsaw Ghetto along with hundreds of thousands of Jews, and (correctly) believing that they were facing certain death, the historian Emanuel Ringelblum organised the Oneg Shabbat archive to record the details of their life and the conditions in the ghetto.

David Berger was born in 1922 in Przemysl, south-east Poland. He left his hometown when the Germans invaded in 1939 and was shot dead in Vilnius, Lithuania two years later in 1941, at just 19 years of age.

Sharing memory as a legacy

Many people who have heard survivors tell their life stories, refer to a duty to 'share the memories' and 'pass on the story'. We 'acquire' their memories as a legacy to pass on to future generations. HMD was established by the Stockholm Declaration, which states: 'The magnitude of the Holocaust, planned and carried out by the Nazis, must be forever seared in our collective memory'.

Memories are shared through a range of texts (eg memoirs, diaries, letters, autobiographies) and interviews, as well as through survivors talking in schools and other venues.

Ceija Stojka was a Romany Gypsy who was persecuted by the Nazis. She was deported with 200 members of her extended family to Auschwitz, where most of them were murdered upon arrival. In later life Ceija Stojka spent her time promoting the rights of Roma people, highlighting her experiences and what can happen when prejudice and hatred are allowed to take hold.

Eric Murangwa played for Kigali's top football team. During the Genocide in Rwanda his fellow players protected him from the killing. Today Eric runs an organisation which uses football to promote tolerance, unity and reconciliation among Rwandan youth.

Josh Whatsize is the Lead HMD Youth Champion. He is passionate about keeping the memories of survivors alive for a new generation.

How should we memorialise the past?



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Memorials can take many forms: plaques, statues, HMD and its associated events, ceremonies and gardens. Memorials erected or developed from ruins at sites where atrocities took place may serve different purposes from those created at a distance.

The Holocaust Centre was founded in 1995 by the Smith family, at their farmhouse in rural Nottinghamshire. Survivor talks, education sessions and two permanent exhibitions are housed within the Centre, which is surrounded by over an acre of beautifully landscaped memorial gardens.

The Srebrenica Memorial Centre was created in October 2000, barely five years after the Genocide that took place there. The cemetery, which now holds over 5,000 of the 8,000 victims, has since been joined by a memorial room and exhibition. In spite of local controversy, it has encouraged many survivors to return to the town, and draws in visitors and dignitaries from across the world to hear its message.

6 Million+ is an installation, containing over six million buttons, which has caught the imagination of thousands of people, inspiring a Yorkshire local authority to build the region's first permanent Holocaust memorial.

ACTIVITY ORGANISERS IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR HMD ACTIVITIES

- How are memories transmitted through the written word? Use texts written by those who were murdered and also by survivors. Think about the different purposes of the written words and the kinds of memories that are included – eg personal diaries (such as Anne Frank's Diary), letters, memoirs written after the event (eg by Primo Levi) and autobiographies (eg by Freddie Knoller)
- How are memories transmitted in other ways? Think about using visual prompts such as photos, drawings, maps or household objects. You could also consider the time when memories are transmitted, such as time of day (for example, bedtime stories), or life cycle opportunities for reminiscing (eg family gatherings at festivals). People's names can be significant in recalling past family members. Prayers and religious rituals can be powerful in passing on collective memories within faith communities.
- Memories can be acquired through artefacts and written words, as well as through people and their life stories. Use resources available from museums (see below). Think how these can be used remotely in your HMD activity, lesson or book group.



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- The named and the nameless. Your activity could consider ways of remembering named individuals, and memorialising the dead whose names and individual lives are unknown. Do we have different responsibilities towards the named and the nameless?
- Historian Deborah Lipstadt reminds us that 'how we remember and understand the past changes over time'. She proposes that how we understood and 'remembered' the Holocaust in the 1950s is different from how we might 'remember' it today. 'We have changed and the times have changed'. Your activity could include finding different kinds of texts about the same place written by children, adults, religious people, irreligious people. What do they remember and how do they remember it?
- Where are we now? Has sharing the memories over the years changed anything? Are we a better society, or better individuals, since we have started sharing the memories? We say 'never again' and 'never forget' but genocide has happened again...have we 'forgotten', do we not care or we unable to take action for some reason?

FURTHER RESOURCES

These are some selected resources relating to the theme of **Keep the memory alive**. Please visit our website for further resources relating to the Holocaust and subsequent genocides.

Museums and libraries

British Library: bl.uk

Holocaust Centre, Nottinghamshire: holocaustcentre.net

Jewish Museum London: jewishmuseum.org.uk

Jewish Museum Manchester: manchesterjewishmuseum.com

Imperial War Museum's Holocaust Exhibition: iwm.org.uk/exhibitions/iwm-london/the-holocaust-exhibition

Museum of Immigration: 19princeletstreet.org.uk

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: USHMM.org

Wiener Library: www.wienerlibrary.co.uk

Yad Vashem, Israel: yadvashem.org



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Sites of local interest

Nicholas Winton statue in Maidenhead Railway Station

6 Million+ – the Buttons Memorial (Kirklees)

Bletchley Park: bletchleypark.org.uk/content/visit

Cosmo restaurant on Finchley Road – meeting place for Jewish refugees

Commemorative White Plaques marking places where refugees lived and worked:

openplaques.org/places/gb

Useful websites

Aegis Trust: aegistrust.org

Anne Frank Trust: annefrank.org.uk

Association of Jewish Refugees: ajr.org.uk

Cambodian Society in the UK: casunik.org

Holocaust Educational Trust: het.org.uk

National Holocaust Centre and Museum: holocaustcentre.net

Keeping Memories – the Rwandan Community in the UK: ryico.org/keepm/

London Jewish Cultural Centre: theholocaustexplained.org

Oral History Society's Website: oralhistory.org.uk

SURF: survivors-fund.org.uk

Reading

Sofia Z-4515: hmd.org.uk/resources/books-for-adults/sofia-z-4515

The Oral History Reader, edited by Rob Perks and Alastair Thomson

Journals:

Oral History

History Workshop Journal

Memorial sites in the UK

Kindertransport memorial at Liverpool Street Station, London

Raoul Wallenberg statue, Great Cumberland Place, London

The Dell, Hyde Park, London

Think about your own local memorials, if you have any, and how they compare to national ones