

# Holocaust Memorial Day 2025

## For a Better Future



HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL  
DAY 27/1

## Redditch Holocaust Memorial Day Service

Sunday 26th January 2025

### 11am - 11.30am

Service at Holocaust Memorial Marker,  
Church Green, Town Centre

Holocaust Memorial Day exists to help us to honour the memory of all victims of genocide and atrocity in the world and to strive to ensure that we do not allow such things to occur again.



Please scan the QR or visit  
[www.redditchbc.gov.uk/HMD2025](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/HMD2025)  
for a digital version of this  
programme including readings.

  
Redditch  
Borough Council  
Working together for our communities

# Redditch Communities Together, For a Better Future

## Sunday 26th January 2025

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1. Welcome and Introduction from Cllr Bill Hartnett
  2. Lighting of the candle by Cllr Bill Hartnett
  3. Placing of the white roses
  4. 'The Bosnian War', read by the Mayor, Cllr Juma Begum
  5. 'Never Shall I Forget', read by Chris Bloore MP
  6. 'First They Came', read by Gibu Jacob
  7. 'Completion', read by Danuta Zolanko
  8. 'Belsen Silence', read by Rev James
  9. **All: Act of Commitment led by Cllr Bill Hartnett**  
*We remember with sorrow but pride the victims of the Holocaust and all who have suffered a similar fate in the ensuing years. We honour the memory of those who risked their lives to save others. We pay tribute to those who have survived and have undergone many struggles and much privation. We strive alongside those who have rebuilt their lives and their communities. We seek to become aware of and to fight against ideas and attitudes in ourselves and in our society that could lead us to be part of a movement of genocide. We commit ourselves and our society not to ignore violence in our world nor to block our ears, nor avert our eyes, from inhumane acts. We will speak and act to protect the innocent, whatever their race, sexuality, faith, culture, or creed. We acclaim our hope and our pledge - Never again.*
  10. Thank you from Cllr Bill Hartnett
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## The significance of placing white roses

The white rose has been a symbol of Nazi resistance since the 1940s.

A group of University students established the White Rose Group in 1942, motivated by their opposition to the Nazis. They campaigned by spreading anti-Nazi leaflets and graffiti, attempting to undermine Hitler's government. Captured by the Gestapo in 1943, the members were later executed.

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## The Aims of the Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) (27 January) is a national commemoration day dedicated to the remembrance of those who suffered in The Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. It was first held in January 2001 and has been on the same date every year since. The chosen date is the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp by the Soviet Union in 1945, the date also chosen for the International Holocaust Remembrance Day and some other national Holocaust Memorial Days.

### Holocaust Memorial Day aims to:

- Recognise that the Holocaust was a tragically defining episode of the 20th Century, a crisis for European civilisation and a universal catastrophe for humanity.
- Provide a national mark of respect for all victims of Nazi persecution and demonstrate understanding with all those who still suffer its consequences.
- Raise awareness and understanding of the events of the Holocaust as a continuing issue of fundamental importance for all humanity.
- Ensure that the horrendous crimes, racism and victimisation committed during the Holocaust are neither forgotten nor repeated, whether in Europe or elsewhere in the world.
- Restate the continuing need for vigilance in light of the troubling repetition of human tragedies in the world today.
- Reflect on more recent atrocities that raise similar issues.
- Provide a national focus for educating subsequent generations about the Holocaust and the continued relevance of the lessons that are learnt from it.
- Provide an opportunity to examine our nation's past and learn for the future.
- Promote a democratic and tolerant society, free of the evils of prejudice, racism and other forms of bigotry.
- Support the view that all citizens - without distinction - should participate freely and fully in the economic, social and public life of the nation.
- Highlight the values of a tolerant and diverse society based upon the notions of universal dignity and equal rights and responsibilities for all its citizens.
- Assert a continuing commitment to oppose racism, anti-Semitism, victimisation and genocide.
- Support our shared aspirations with both our European partners and the wider international community centred on the ideals of peace, justice and community for all.

## 'The Bosnian War'

2025 marks 30 years since the Bosnian war resulted in the death of around one hundred thousand people, and the displacement of over 2 million men, women and children. A campaign of war crimes, 'ethnic cleansing' and genocide was perpetrated by Bosnian Serb troops, including the atrocities at Srebrenica.

In July 1995, a genocidal massacre took place in the Bosnian town of Srebrenica. Around 8,000 Bosnian Muslims were murdered by Serbian forces.

The victims were mostly men, ranging from teenagers to the elderly, however, there were instances of the murder of young children and women.

On 12 July, Bosnian men and boys over the age of 12 were forcibly separated from women and younger children, who were deported on trucks and buses.

The violence and killings culminated in a massacre that began on 13 July and lasted at least 72 hours, when around 8,000 Bosnian men and boys were murdered in and around Srebrenica. Many were killed in the act of trying to escape. Their bodies were bulldozed into mass graves and concealed.

The massacre at Srebrenica was one of the most horrific events of the war in the former Balkan States. It remains the single largest mass murder in Europe since World War Two.



Srebrenica Memorial  
© Kathleen Franklin

## **'Never Shall I Forget' by Elie Wiesel**

Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, that turned my life into one long night seven times sealed.

Never shall I forget that smoke.

Never shall I forget the small faces of the children whose bodies I saw transformed into smoke under a silent sky.

Never shall I forget those flames that consumed my faith for ever.

Never shall I forget the nocturnal silence that deprived me for all eternity of the desire to live.

Never shall I forget those moments that murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to ashes.

Never shall I forget those things, even were I condemned to live as long as God Himself.

Never.

*Never Shall I Forget from Night by Elie Wiesel. Copyright © 1958 by Les Editions de Minuit. Translation copyright © 2006 by Marion Wiesel.*

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## **'First They Came' by Pastor Martin Niemoller**

First they came for the Communists

And I did not speak out

Because I was not a Communist

Then they came for the Socialists

And I did not speak out

Because I was not a Socialist

Then they came for the trade unionists

And I did not speak out

Because I was not a trade unionist

Then they came for the Jews

And I did not speak out

Because I was not a Jew

Then they came for me

And there was no one left

To speak out for me.

## 'Completion' by Vera Schaufeld MBE

A lifetime ago  
on Klatovy station  
sitting on a swing,  
hearing the old joke  
"Your Aunty Rudolph and Uncle Else are coming".

Small uncle and tall aunt arriving  
bringing amazing gifts from distant Berlin,  
a round doll's house with street lights at it's centre,  
a huge rocking horse with thick mane and proud tail,  
a red car to sit in, to pedal and drive.

Sitting on a sad train full of children,  
parents last seen shut-off behind barriers.  
suddenly in the corridor, Uncle Rudolph, Aunt Else,  
riding through Germany from border to border,  
magically familiar, laughing and joking,  
their presence here the best gift of all.

Yesterday  
making a long postponed phone call,  
giving names, dates of birth, last known address.

Hearing  
2nd March 1943  
Uncle Rudolph, Aunt Else  
Deported to Auschwitz.

No-one left to remember them.  
Just me  
finally able to mourn

## 'Belsen Silence' by Iolo Lewis

This poem was written by Iolo Lewis who served in the British 11th Armoured Division, which liberated the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in April 1945.

Long gone the sound of battle from this foreign dell,  
As we tread again the Belsen grass,  
Remembering comrades, young men all,  
Who died to reach this awful Hell,  
Hallowed now for Eternity,  
As the clouds from memory swiftly pass.

Listen then, can't you hear,  
The silence here around,  
Telling us of terror,  
And ancient bestial fear;  
How real is this silence,

That permeates from underground?  
Only fifty years ago, but now,  
Forever, the silence condemns,  
For here there lie, anonymous,  
'Neath the soil, as we reverently bow,  
Remnants of a living dead,  
Whose silence still transmits, transcends.

Listen to the silence still,  
And lift your head on high,  
Are you waiting for a question,  
Or an answer, and a void to fill?  
Quicken then the pulse, breathe deeper still,  
Answer the silence to question, why?



# HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 27/1

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## Acknowledgements

Thank you to members of the Holocaust Committee, Schools, Redditch Library, and members of the community who have got involved and supported the delivery of this year's Holocaust Memorial Event.

Today's events are free of charge, but donations will be very welcome and will go towards the work of the National Holocaust Centre and Museum.

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For more information about the running of this event please contact the Events Team on 01527 534030 or [events@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:events@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)