Holocaust Memorial Day January 2017

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) held annually is a national commemoration day in the United Kingdom dedicated to the remembrance of those who suffered in The Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. 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.

In addition to national and local events there are also events aimed especially at young people. Bushey Synagogue participated in the Northwood Holocaust Memorial Day Events programme, this year providing students from Bushey Meads, Bushey Academy, Challney Boys (Luton) and St Margaret's schools the opportunity to hear from a Holocaust survivor and participate in workshop groups facilitated by trained volunteers.

This year we heard from Jackie Young who only discovered at the age of 21 that he had been deported from Vienna, as a nine month old baby, to Terezin, a concentration camp in Czechoslovakia. Jacki showed us photographs and film footage of himself as a toddler in this camp. His birth mother was murdered in a camp near Minsk. After the Second World War he was brought to the UK on a bomber jet.

We also heard from Elfriede Starer who arrived in this country via kinder transport, a series of rescue efforts which brought refugee Jewish children to Great Britain from Nazi Germany between 1938 and 1940. She witnessed Kristallnacht (night of the broken glass) and Nazi soldiers marching through...
the town in Germany where she lived.

Josef Perl, a member of Bushey Synagogue and a survivor of seven Nazi concentration camps and a death march, told the students “to go out and make a difference. Do it for yourselves”.

This programme is not a history lesson. It is about learning lessons from the past to create a better future.

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