

Edinburgh to host National Holocaust Memorial Day 2003

Edinburgh - the home of the Grand Lodge of Scotland - hosts Holocaust Memorial Day.

26th July 2002

The City of Edinburgh is to host the 2003 National Holocaust Memorial Day on Monday 27th January, Home Secretary David Blunkett announced today.

Holocaust Memorial Day, first commemorated in 2001, will mark the 58th anniversary of the liberation of the former Nazi extermination camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau. The day, supported by a national event and a series of local and regional activities organised across Britain, offers the opportunity to remember all victims of the Holocaust and more recent atrocities, and reflect on the contemporary lessons to be learned.

For 2003, Holocaust Memorial Day will focus on the theme of children, reflecting on the experiences of children as victims and witnesses of the Holocaust and the role that education can play in tackling prejudice and hatred.

Mr Blunkett said:

"It is appropriate that the third Holocaust Memorial Day should be held in Edinburgh, a city known for its diversity and strong sense of community.

"Holocaust Memorial Day is a very important day for the whole nation. It enables us - both as individuals and as a society - to reflect on the Holocaust and its contemporary relevance for us.

"With its theme of 'children', the 2003 event reminds us of our responsibility to educate - particularly our young people - about the Holocaust and other more recent atrocities that remind us of what can happen if we do not continue to be vigilant in preventing the spread of racism and intolerance."

Scottish Secretary Helen Liddell said:

"The Scottish ceremonies for Holocaust Memorial Day held in Edinburgh in 2001 and in Glasgow in 2002 were deeply moving and very impressive. It is a great honour for Scotland and Edinburgh to have been chosen to host the UK Holocaust Memorial Day in January 2003. We must ensure that the horrendous crimes, racism and victimisation during the Holocaust and other more recent genocides are neither forgotten or repeated. Holocaust Memorial Day is a vital focus for seeing the contemporary relevance of the Holocaust. All of us must remember and learn lessons for the future."

Deputy First Minister of the Scottish Executive Jim Wallace said:

"Scottish Ministers are delighted that the City of Edinburgh has agreed to host the UK Event for Holocaust Memorial Day 2003 and that the UK event is to take place in Scotland next year. We look forward to co-operating with the City of Edinburgh Council in relation to the necessary arrangements."

Lord Provost of Edinburgh Eric Milligan welcomed the announcement of Edinburgh as host and said:

"On behalf of the people of Edinburgh, I am extremely proud that the city is to be the host of the first UK Holocaust Memorial Day to be held in Scotland.

The Memorial Day will be an opportunity for members of the community to join together to remember those who suffered, and I am confident it will be a fitting tribute that will enable everyone to reflect on the past, as well as look forward with hope for the future."

The ceremony will be the culmination of a day of events to be organised around the country set up to reflect the UK's commitment to oppose racism, victimisation and genocide.

Although the stated aims of Holocaust Memorial Day are to:

- Remember all victims of the Holocaust and Nazi persecution – Jews, Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), East European civilians, Russian prisoners of war, trade unionists, Communists, political opponents, disabled people, Jehovah's Witnesses, gay men and lesbians and Black Germans.

Notice that Freemasons are omitted from this official list of victims.

No Freemasons were invited to participate in these commemorative events nor was the Grand Lodge of Scotland approached for advice or comment regarding Freemasonry and the Holocaust.