

GWR marks Holocaust Memorial Day by illuminating statue of the 'British Schindler'

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Great Western Railway has lit up a statue of the man known as the 'British Schindler' to mark Holocaust Memorial Day.

Sir Nicholas Winton's statue at Maidenhead Station was illuminated by 669 candles to represent each of the children he helped rescue from Prague on the eve of World War Two.

Sir Nicholas, a Maidenhead resident, found homes and arranged the safe passage of the children, most of them Jewish, to the UK. The operation later became known as the Czech Kindertransport.

GWR Business Assurance Director Joe Graham said: "The theme of this year's Holocaust Memorial Day is *'Be the Light in the Darkness'*, so we thought illuminating Sir Nicholas' statue would be a poignant way of paying respect to a man to whom so many owe their lives.

"Sir Nicholas sadly passed away in 2015 but his statue at Maidenhead Station provides a permanent reminder of his heroic deeds in providing hope and shelter to those 669 children."

Lord Alf Dubs was just six years old when he boarded the Kindertransport and went on to have a successful career as an MP, continuing to this day to campaign for the rights of refugee children.

He became a close friend of Sir Nicholas' and to mark Holocaust Memorial Day has provided a moving reading of the poem 'First They Came' by Pastor Martin Niemöller.



Close friends: Lord Alf Dubs, left, with Sir Nicholas Winton in 2014 Picture: The Labour Party

Lord Dubs said: "What better way to mark Holocaust Memorial Day than to celebrate Nicky Winton, the man who saved my life and the lives of 668 other children who were brought to safety in the UK on the Kindertransport from Prague in the summer of 1939.

“Thank you GWR – I think it’s a really important thing to be doing and it will be much appreciated by many people.”

Sir Nicholas’s work went unnoticed for nearly 50 years until he was invited to appear on the TV programme *That’s Life* in 1988. He was reunited with several of the children he had rescued and became known as the ‘British Schindler’.

In 2003 he was knighted by the Queen for ‘services to humanity, in saving Jewish children from Nazi Germany occupied Czechoslovakia’.

He was later awarded the highest honour of the Czech Republic, the Order of the White Lion (1st class). He passed away in 2015, aged 106.

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust’s Head of Communications Asel Guillot said: “As we mark Holocaust Memorial Day from the safety of our homes this year, we reflect on the depths humanity can sink to, but also the ways individuals and communities resisted that darkness to ‘be the light’ before, during and after genocide – just like Sir Nicholas did in his time.

“HMD is for everyone. By learning from genocide, we can all build a better future, we can all be the light in the darkness.”

The UK Holocaust Memorial Day 2021 ceremony will be streamed online between 1900-2000. To watch the ceremony visit [here](#).

From 2000 households across the UK will be encouraged to light candles and safely put them in their windows to remember those who were murdered for who they were and stand against prejudice and hatred today.

GWR is operating a reduced timetable during the latest national lockdown and customers should follow Government guidelines, only travelling for work if essential or for other legally permitted reasons. Find out more at [gwr.com/safety](https://www.gwr.com/safety).

The train operator has been providing rail services throughout the pandemic and has worked to ensure these are as safe as possible. This includes increased cleaning regimes and the use of a virucidal spray; extra staff at key stations to offer help and guidance; and processes in place to help customers maintain a safe distance where possible, such as restricting the number of reservations available.