



British Government Award

An award to recognise those British citizens who risked their lives to help Jews during the Holocaust.

While this is not a definitive list of all British Holocaust heroes – it covers all those of whom we are currently aware. This information has been sourced primarily from the following: *'The Righteous: Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust'* (Sir Martin Gilbert CBE, Black Swan, 2003); *'Foley: The Spy Who Saved 10,000 Jews'* (Michael Smith, Politico's, 2004); *'Red Princess - A Revolutionary'* (Sofka Zinovieff, Granta, 2007). More detail on the nature and extent of the actions undertaken by these individuals can be obtained from Yad Vashem (Israel's Holocaust Memorial Authority - <http://www.yadvashem.org/>) and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum - <http://www.ushmm.org/>.

Albert Bedane (1893–1980)



He hid Dutch Jewess, Mary Richardson for nearly two years in his own home on occupied Jersey. He also hid escaped French POWs and Russian forced workers. He was recognised as 'Righteous Among the Nations' by Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Memorial authority in 2000.

Ida (1901-1986) and Louise (1904-1991) Cook



Sisters they lived at number 24 Morella Road, Wandsworth, South London, for more than 60 years, from shortly after the First World War ended until the very last years of the Cold War. Before the war they rescued 29, mostly Jews from Germany and Austria under the cover of their interest in opera. They also rented a flat in London to shelter Jews and Ida lectured to raise money to support refugees. They were recognised as 'Righteous Among the Nations' by Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Memorial authority in 1964.

Sergeant Charles Coward (1905-1976)

He was captured near Calais in 1940, and in 1943 was sent to the prisoner of war camp at Monowitz (known as Auschwitz III). While at Monowitz, he endeavoured to help the Jews imprisoned there and also managed to send coded messages to the British authorities, with details of the numbers of Jewish transports. On one occasion he swapped clothes with an inmate and spent the night in the Jewish camp, where he witnessed first hand the terrible conditions. Coward is believed to have saved 400 Jewish prisoners. He was recognised as 'Righteous Among the Nations' by Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Memorial authority in 1965. In 2003 Coward was commemorated with the mounting of a blue plaque at his home at 133 Chichester Road, Edmonton, London, where he lived from 1945 until his death.

Major Frank Foley (1884-1958)



Frank Foley was a British spy, under the cover of 'passport officer', based in Berlin during the 1930s who risked his life by helping persecuted Jews leave Nazi Germany, saving thousands from certain death. Based in the British embassy, Frank Foley entered concentration camps such as Sachsenhausen and presented visas to camp authorities so Jews could be free to travel. He also hid Jews in his home and used his position to help them obtain false papers, forged passports and visas. By issuing these visas, Foley was not only breaking British law but also risking his life because as a spy he would have no diplomatic immunity from the Nazi regime. After the war, he settled in Stourbridge in the West Midlands. It is estimated that he saved 10,000 people.

In 2005 a statue of Foley was unveiled in Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset, the town of his birth – at an event attended by his nephew, Bill Kelley. In 2004 a plaque at the British Embassy in Berlin was unveiled to acknowledge the work of Frank Foley and other British Diplomats (such as Robert Smallbones) who worked to save Jews during the Holocaust. Plaques remembering his work also exist in Stourbridge and at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). The plaque at the FCO was unveiled by the Foreign Secretary, Rt Hon David Miliband on 20 November 2008. That month, Ian Austin MP, Minister for the West Midlands and Lynda Waltho MP, Assistant Minister for the West Midlands hosted the inaugural Frank Foley Memorial Lecture in Stourbridge. In an event co-organised with the Holocaust Educational Trust, the author Michael Smith (who wrote *Foley: The Spy Who Saved 10,000 Jews*) and the Holocaust Survivor Zigi Shipper delivered speeches remembering the contribution of British Holocaust heroes. He was recognised as 'Righteous Among the Nations' by Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Memorial authority in 1999.

Jane Haining (1897-1944)



A Scottish missionary from the village of Dunscore she was a school matron at a Jewish orphanage in Budapest. She cared for 400 Jewish girls in occupied Hungary and insisted on staying when the Nazis occupied Budapest. She was imprisoned on charges of espionage and helping Jews and sent to Auschwitz where she eventually died. To mark Holocaust Memorial Day in 2009, Russell Brown MP (the Member for Dumfries and Galloway – the constituency in which her home village of Dunscore lies) laid a wreath at the memorial to Jane Haining with pupils from Dunscore Primary School, including a pupil related to Haining. A stained glass window at Queen’s Park Church in Glasgow (where she worshipped whilst living in the city) is dedicated to her. Each autumn the Church of Scotland remembers Jane Haining with an annual lecture dedicated to her memory. She was also recognised as ‘Righteous Among the Nations’ by Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust Memorial authority in 1994.

June Ravenhall



June Ravenhall was a British woman who moved to Holland before the war. During the occupation of Holland, Ravenhall hid a Jewish child, Louis Velleman, in her home. Ravenhall, a mother of three, also put herself and her family at an additional risk, as Louis had tuberculosis. Originally from Stretton-on-Dunsmore in Warwickshire – and her son Ron is now a Councillor in nearby Rugby. She was recognised as ‘Righteous Among the Nations’ by Yad Vashem, Israel’s

Holocaust Memorial authority in 2007.

Sofka Skipworth (unknown-1994)



Imprisoned by Germans in an Internment camp in Vittel, France, she tried to help groups of Polish Jews in the camp by giving them smuggled Red Cross parcels. Aware of the fate they faced, she wrote down all the names of the Jewish prisoners on cigarette paper, rolled them into capsules and sent them to the British authorities. She also saved a newborn Jewish baby, who had been overlooked by the camp authorities. In the majority of cases Jewish babies were murdered on arrival. He was sedated, put in a Red Cross box and Sofka cut the wire in the perimeter fence and passed the infant over to the Resistance in the middle of the night. She grew up in Chelsea, London but spent the latter years of her life living in Cornwall. She was recognised as ‘Righteous Among the Nations’ by Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust Memorial authority in 1998.

Robert Smallbones

Robert was the British Consul General in Frankfurt in the lead up to WWII. He used his influence to grant visas to Jews who did not necessarily meet the criteria to be accepted as refugees in Britain. By doing so he was able to save the lives of many Jews who would not have otherwise been able to escape Nazi Germany. His granddaughter, Sandra Wellington, collected various recollections relating to his work.

Princess Alice of Greece (1885-1969)



The mother of the HRH Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, married into the Greek royal family. During the Nazi occupation of Greece, which lasted from the end of 1943 to the end of October 1945, she hid three Jewish women, Rachel, Tilda and Michelle Cohen in the palace. Princess Alice personally ensured they had everything they needed and visited them often.

Whilst many of these British heroes have been recognised locally or by Yad Vashem in Israel – they have never received a national honour for their brave deeds.

Sister Agnes (Clare) Walsh (1896-1993)

Sister Agnes was born Clare Walsh in Hull in 1896 and entered the Daughters of Charity in 1916, working first in Ireland and then in Palestine. Following a fall she was sent to St Vincent de Paul Convent in Cadouin in Dordogne, France, to recuperate and when war broke out found herself in occupied territory.

In December 1943, during manhunts for Jews in the area, Pierre Cremieux asked the nuns to hide his wife, seven-year-old son and two four-month-old twins.

Sister Agnes pleaded with her superior, Sister Granier, to shelter the family until liberation. The testimony of the family led to her recognition by Yad Vashem in 1990 at 94. She died in 1993 in Mill Hill, London.