

**Forced Walks: Honouring Esther
... a walk in witness 2015-2016
Outline of Phase 2
Call for expressions of interest**

Forced Walks: Honouring Esther is an artist-led walking project working with the testimony of the Yiddish actor, Bundist and anti-fascist activist, Esther Brunstein. Esther survived the Lodz Ghetto, Auschwitz and Belsen, this project begins with the death march in February 1945 from a slave labour camp near Hanover to Belsen, which she survived. Inspired by Esther's story and her spirit of resistance this project is generating further historic and contemporary human rights resonances.

Walk in witness 1, Somerset, England: *exile and belonging.*

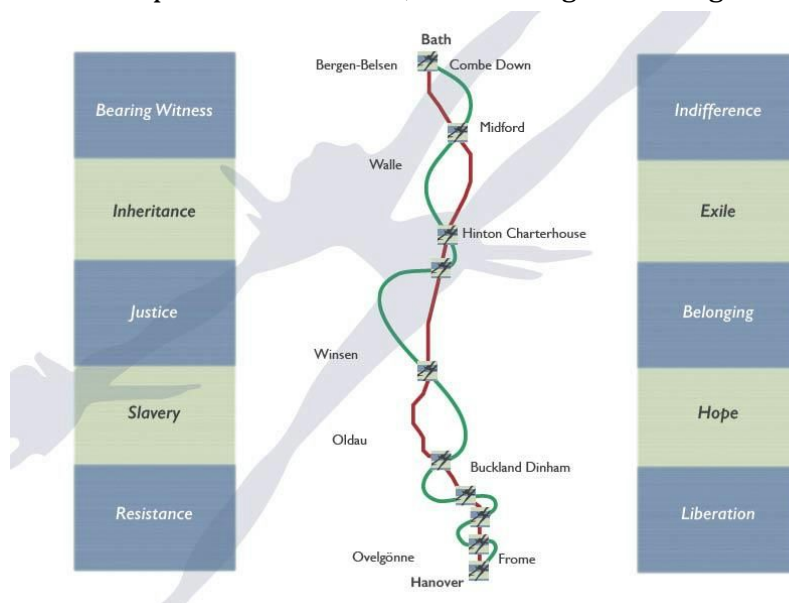
A two day walk arriving at the old Jewish Burial Ground, Bath on 15th April 2015, the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Belsen.

- The route of a Nazi Death March to Belsen transposed to Somerset, England.
- A walk as close as possible to the line of that route on public rights of way.
- Where the walk intersects that line, interventions.
- An intimate performative walk, networking human rights resonances.

Walk in witness 2, Lower Saxony, Germany: *repatriating the memory*

A two day walk to the Bergen Belsen Memorial Museum starting on 4th February 2016, the 71st anniversary of the death march.

- A performative walk-in-witness on the original death march route from slave labour camp to death camp.
- A walk with 10 stations determined by the walk in Somerset.
- At the stations, curated interventions.
- An intimate performative walk, networking human rights resonances.



Honouring Esther is led by Richard White and Lorna Brunstein, Esther's daughter. The walk in Somerset, where the artists live, determined the stations for the route, at each station walkers stopped to reflect and network responses to curated content. Walk in Witness 1 revealed stories from descendants of survivors and liberators, bore witness to the experience of others in Syria, Kurdistan, Poland and England and remembered acts of resistance. Research and planning for Walk in Witness 2 is underway.

Call for expressions of interest

We would like to make contact with socially engaged artists, human rights activists and historians, especially those based in Lower Saxony, the Celle area, interested in participating in the walk or helping the research or networking the activity.

Volunteers:

We are keen to make contact with anyone wishing to volunteer support for the project, artists, researchers, English/German translators, volunteers who can offer support with social media and the logistics for the walk.

Timeline

Research on local resonances is ongoing: we are looking to discover any physical remains or local memories that connect directly to the experience of the slave labour camp, 'Waldeslust' at Hambühren-Ovelgönne and the death marches along the road to the Bergen Belsen camp. We are interested in contacting witnesses and their descendants and particularly interested in gathering stories of the small acts of kindness that enabled survival. More broadly we are keen to meet descendants of anti-Nazi activists of the period. In exploring contemporary resonances we are keen to engage with local human rights organisations, possibly working with migrants or asylum seekers.

An appeal for funds is currently underway

A proposal is in development for a curtain raiser on this phase of the project on the mediawall at Bath Spa University during the period of Holocaust Memorial Day, January 2016.

The walk will take place over two days in early February 2016

The route is between Ovelgönne and the Bergen-Belsen Camp Memorial. The walk will be networked live via Twitter, Facebook and Social Hiking. Documentation will be gathered and distributed via the project website.

Subject to funding in place or logistics support in kind being available walkers will be asked to register, with registration closing mid January

Contact and for further information:

Email: forcedwalks@gmail.com

Web: <https://forcedwalks.wordpress.com/>

Twitter: @forcedwalks

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/forcedwalks>

Forced Walks

We walk at a time and place of our choosing in solidarity with those who had no choice.

Forced Walks is a programme of artist-led performative, socially engaged, public walks, digitally connected and mindful of those refugees, migrants, tramps, water-carriers and others who were/are forced to walk to survive. The programme seeks to reveal hidden stories of those dispossessed of land and home by war, economic and climate change and to generate contemporary and locative resonances. Honouring Esther is the first project.

<https://forcedwalks.wordpress.com/>

Honouring Esther. Germany. February 2016 “Repatriating memories”: A performative walk-in-witness on the original death march route from slave labour camp to death camp. In Germany at the same time of year, 71 years later. Interventions at the same ‘stations’ as the Somerset walk. For second and third generation survivors, liberators, perpetrators and witnesses as well as those more recently exiled and dispossessed by war and prejudice, the walk creates a space for moments of reconnection, reconciliation, reflection and solidarity.

The artists:

Richard White is a participatory media and walking arts practitioner. He is currently working on a series of experiments in walking, social media and heritage. He is an Associate Lecturer at Bath Spa University

www.walknowtracks.co.uk

Lorna Brunstein is a Second Generation Holocaust Survivor, daughter of Esther Brunstein. The notion of inherited trauma is at the core of her work, traces, fragments and memories are the starting point for an emotional archaeology.

www.lornabrunstein.wordpress.com