



National
Museum of
Scotland

Cold War Handling Box



Teachers' Notes

Welcome to the National Museum of Scotland

Our Cold War handling box is a free resource containing eight Cold War objects. These are a combination of original and replica items.

An associated Cold War Scotland exhibition trail and other teaching resources are available:

nms.ac.uk/schools-resources

Introduction

From the 1940s to the early-1990s there was a period of significant tension between the United States and the Soviet Union. This was known as the Cold War as the two countries did not directly fight each other. Instead, they sought global power through alliances, supporting wars in other countries and new advancements in science and technology. Some of the biggest technological developments were in nuclear weapons. The competition to have the largest and most destructive weapons was called the arms race and this could have resulted in a global catastrophe had any of these weapons been deployed.

During the Cold War, the UK supported the United States, bringing Scotland into the conflict. This handling box includes objects that showcase some of the ways in which Scotland was involved in the Cold War and what that meant for the people who lived here.

Good Handling Guide

It is important for each group to help keep the objects in good condition so that we can continue to offer high quality resources.

Please read the following points carefully, and ensure you discuss these with your group prior to the handling session.

- Check the objects at the start and the end of each session.
- No food or drink should be consumed near the objects.
- All pupils are asked to wash their hands before and after each handling session.
- Always hold objects over a table, and use both hands.
- Handle one object at a time.
- Don't touch objects with pencils, pens or other sharp objects.
- Always set objects down away from the edge of a table.
- Report any missing or broken items.

CND Flag

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was founded in 1957 and still operates today. It is a UK-wide campaign calling for an end to nuclear weapons.

During the Cold War and beyond, governments pursued the idea that having nuclear weapons would act as a deterrent to prevent other countries attacking them, as they could retaliate in kind, bringing about 'mutually assured destruction'. The UK's current nuclear deterrent, submarines armed with nuclear ballistic missiles, has been located in Scotland at Faslane Naval Base since 1969.

The CND was popular in Scotland amongst people who worried that having and maintaining nuclear weapons was more dangerous than disarming them. CND members took part in many non-violent actions including marches, camps, events and political lobbying.

The now famous symbol on this CND flag was designed by artist Gerald Holtom for an early anti-nuclear march and was adopted by the CND in 1958.



Did you know?

The symbol represents a person in despair, with arms outstretched and incorporates the semaphore letters N and D for Nuclear Disarmament.



Think

How has the meaning of this symbol shifted? Does it mean the same thing in Scotland compared to other countries?



Soviet Tourist Badge

Tourism to the Soviet Union was possible throughout much of the Cold War and by the early-1970s, around 4 million people visited annually, including children on school trips. The places tourists were allowed to visit were carefully controlled and this was managed by the Soviet state-owned Intourist, the main travel agency for foreigners.

Many tourists wanted to bring back souvenirs from their travels and the most popular were small enamel badges. These were already a common item in the Soviet Union, highlighting Soviet achievements or given as a reward for participation or good work. They were later mass produced for the tourist market in an enormous range of designs, some of which are represented here.

Later these badges were worn by members of Scottish subcultures, used to show affiliation and demonstrate their negative views of capitalism and conspicuous consumption. This marks a shift in their meaning and those wearing them did not necessarily support wider Soviet policies.



See

Look at the shape and decoration, are the badges well made? What are the designs on the badges?



Respirator

This respirator formed part of an NBC suit, offering the wearer some protection from nuclear, biological and chemical threats, including radiation. They were designed to be worn by people such as soldiers and the emergency services when the threat of an attack was high.

They could be worn for extended periods of time but would not have been very comfortable. The respirator would have been hot and it restricted the vision of the wearer. The suit could protect an individual for a number of days. However without a safe place, such as a nuclear bunker, to clean and maintain the suit in, it would ultimately cease to be effective.

Respirators and NBC suits were designed and manufactured differently in different countries giving them varied properties and appearances. This is a Soviet example. Significant training and instruction was required to use any respirator and NBC suit effectively and regular military drills were conducted in their use.



Touch

Feel the respirator, what materials is it made from?

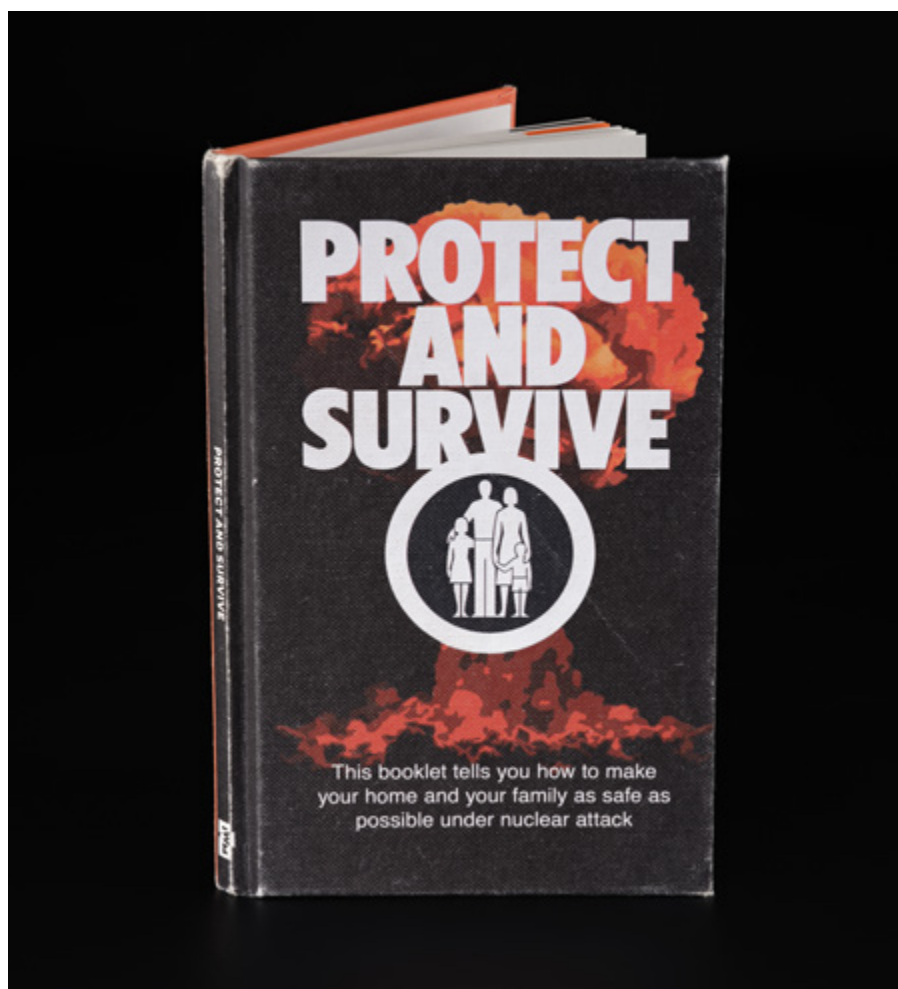


Protect and Survive Booklet

From 1952 onwards, the British government produced a number of pamphlets, posters and, later, films discussing the nuclear threat and providing advice to the general public on what to do in the event of an attack.

In the early-1970s, the *Protect and Survive* campaign was planned as a series of radio broadcasts and animated films supported by this booklet. These would be released if an attack was thought to be imminent, giving specific advice on how to prepare and what to do in the aftermath of an attack.

The campaign remained largely secret until it came to the public's attention in 1980 through newspaper articles and a documentary. This sparked enough interest to prompt the release of the *Protect and Survive* booklet. The resulting public reaction was largely negative, with the campaign becoming the subject of mockery on TV shows and satire by activists. Nonetheless, more than 80,000 copies of the booklet were sold, and by 1984, the government was contemplating adapting the existing films for new technologies. This is a later reprint of the booklet.



See

Look through the advice. What is fallout and why is it dangerous?



Think

Do you think the instructions given in the booklet are useful? What was the booklet's purpose?

American Sailor's Hat

This white canvas hat was worn by American sailors throughout the Cold War and is still part of their uniforms today.

Scotland had a strategic position in guarding the GIUK Gap, the seaways between Greenland, Iceland and the UK, and it was also close to the Soviet Union. This made it useful for intelligence gathering and the United States Navy negotiated a significant presence in the country. United States bases included a submarine base at Holy Loch and radar and monitoring stations at Inverbervie and RAF Edzell.

As a result of this presence, many American service people moved to Scotland to work at these bases. Relations between American personnel and the local community were sometimes mixed. Local businesses benefited, and the influx of Americans spurred the development of new infrastructure and entertainment venues in some regions. However, at Holy Loch, the arrival of so many newcomers put substantial strain on local schools and the housing market.



Did you know?

The cap is informally known as a Dixie Cup after a type of paper drinks cup.



Piece of the Berlin Wall

Following the Second World War, Germany and, separately, Berlin were divided into four occupation zones, each managed by one of the Allied powers. The Soviet Union established its own regime in its zone and refused to collaborate with the other Allies. The three western zones of Germany experienced rapid improvements in living standards, but these were not apparent in the Soviet zone. This prompted many people to migrate from the Soviet zone to the western zones for both political and economic reasons. Alarmed by this, the Soviet government erected a strict border between the zones in 1952. Despite increasingly stringent policing, controlling movement in Berlin proved challenging. This difficulty led to the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961.

The Berlin Wall fulfilled its function, but separated families and communities and became a physical symbol of the wider divide between the Eastern and Western Blocs. The wall finally fell in 1989, shortly before the end of the Cold War.



Think

After the wall fell, people collected and sold parts of it. Why would someone want to own a piece of the Berlin Wall?

Moscow Music Peace Festival Souvenir

The Moscow Music Peace Festival, held in August 1989, was a landmark event that symbolised the thawing of Cold War tensions. Organised jointly between the Soviet Union and the United States, the festival brought together a line-up of major rock bands including Bon Jovi, Mötley Crüe, Ozzy Osbourne, and Scorpions, alongside Russian bands. The festival drew a crowd of over 100,000 and was broadcast live in 59 countries.

The festival was significant for its role in bridging the cultural divide between Eastern and Western Blocs and it marked a moment of unity and shared purpose amidst global political upheaval. Lots of souvenir items, such as this T shirt, were made to commemorate the event.



Did you know?

The festival inspired the 1990 song *Wind of Change* by Scorpions. The song became one of the best-selling singles of all time.



Think

This wasn't the only joint cultural event of the Cold War, why do you think these occurred?

Hollow Spy Coin

During the Cold War both the United States and Soviet Union invested heavily in intelligence agencies, the CIA in the United States and the KGB in the Soviet Union. These agencies employed networks of spies, double agents, and informants. They sought to gather classified information, disrupt enemy activities, and influence political outcomes. Espionage efforts included everything from high-stakes missions to steal technological secrets and military plans to more subtle acts of propaganda.

In a period when there was less digital communication, physical items such as microfilm were used to transport information. This could be hidden in a huge range of places including inside a hollow coin like this one. Although this may seem a bit James Bond to us today, items like this were used throughout the Cold War.



Touch

How does the coin open and close?



See

Once closed, can you tell that the coin is hollow?

