

Londýnský kroužek Ostraváků
Der Londoner-Ostrauerkreis
Our Ostrava Group

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6th Ostrava Reunion

On 4th November, about 60 of us gathered in the Czech Embassy in Kensington Palace Gardens, at the invitation of H.E. Mr Michael Žantovský, the Ambassador, for the 6th reunion. Unfortunately, neither of our two Guests of Honour were able to attend. Mr. Fischer now has new priorities and was busy in Prague, and the Ambassador had to go to the USA, although hurricane Sandy actually prevented him going! So Mr Antonín Hradilek, the Deputy Head of Mission, welcomed us to the Embassy and Jana Příkladová made sure all the arrangements worked smoothly.

David gave a brief summary of recent activities and progress, most of which is reported later in this Newsletter, and there was much chatting, looking at photos and drinking of tea. The highlight of the afternoon was the first live public performance for 75 years of Uncle Dolek's Tango, played by Evelyn McGilloway (geb. Rix) on the Embassy's

grand piano. Madeleine Isenberg had discovered the score and words of the tango (<http://home.roadrunner.com/~jmisen/DolekSeifter.html>) and Evelyn kindly agreed to play it for us.

	
<p>Antonín Hradilek</p>	
	
<p>George Tyrell and Lydia Tishler</p>	<p>George Roden and Libuše Salomonovičová</p>
	
<p>Paul Rice and Josef Salomonovič</p>	

Uncle Dolek's Tango.

Nimm deine Fiedel, spiel mir mein Liedel, Jozsikam Du Zigeuner.
Bei deinem Spielen kannst Du fühlen dass ich so überglücklich bin.
In Deinen Tönen liegt so viel Sehnen, Jozsikam Du Zigeuner.
Ganz neues Leben kannst Du geben.
Ich geb' mein Alles dafür.
Wer kann mein kleines Lied versteh'n,
die kleine Melodie sie soll mir nur ihr Herz erfleh'n, den ich liebe nur sie.
Die ganze Welt gehört jetzt mir, das Glück ist bei mir Gast.
Ach, bitte, bitte, sag mir doch dass Du lieb mich auch hast.
Mein Herz es singe, mein Lied erklinge,
In schönsten Harmonien nür für Dich allein.
Jetzt könnt ihr wohl mein Lied versteh'n,
dass es nur für mich gibt die süsse kleine Melodie,
den ich bin so verdreht.

In conformity with the words, Evelyn played it with a gypsy lilt and a rather plaintive air. It was great! David Prager recorded the performance, with great skill and has produced an MP3 file of it. Please contact David Lawson or Prager if you would like a copy of it.

Pavel Seifter is a second cousin of "Uncle Dolek" (Adolph Seifter) as well as being a former Czech Ambassador to the UK. He wrote to us:

It was a very good event indeed and I was pleased to see the full embassy room. It is amazing how much more you are still able to dig out after six years, and you are still carrying on. My congratulations again. I really enjoyed listening to Dolek's tango and was amused seeing even the Rabbi moving and tapping in rhythm and carried away by the tune. One could imagine the fullness of the social and cultural life in prewar Ostrava. While visiting Ostrava two years ago I felt that at last there is life in the place again. What a pity that Ostrava was not elected to be Europe's City of Culture. The opportunity went instead to Pilsen which I believe did not need it and also did not deserve it as much. Anyway, your contribution helps Ostrava to build and rebuild its identity. But of course mainly it means so much to all those who hold their family and community history and memory dear. Thank you once more.

Best regards

Pavel

Ralph Altmann, who obviously has a correct set of priorities, came to the reunion before he went on to a wedding! He later wrote:

A belated thank you for the wonderful afternoon you organised last Sunday, you're a star!

It was wonderful to meet so many people with a common ancestry, I wish we had had more time to chat. I particularly enjoyed meeting Radan and Libusa, such charming people. They are extending their net to Orlova anyway, so I'll see what else I can dig up that you don't already have.

Pavel Reisz complimented me on being the only other person correctly dressed at the meeting. He certainly is amazing and very dapper! The wedding was also fantastic, I missed the chupa but made the reception and dinner. You just can't be everywhere.

Best wishes

Ralph

Our wonderful genealogist, Libuše, wrote a report of her visit to the reunion, for the Brno Jewish Community magazine. Dr Jan Bettelheim very kindly translated it for us:

In the first November days I hurried from Ostrava through the streets of London with Christmas decorations towards the Czech Embassy in expectation of a pleasant afternoon.

This was a 6th annual meeting of old Ostravaks and their offspring from all waves of emigration.

The strong ties originate from the the pre war Ostrava Torah bought years ago by philanthropist Yablon and donated to the Synagogue in Kingston near London. On entering the cultural hall the participants were treated to a history of the pre war Ostrava kehila, around walls of the hall were exhibition panels on these themes.

Mr Antony Hradilek from the embassy introduced the meeting and was then followed by Dr. David Lawson who has been coordinating the group of Ostravaks in Kingston for many years. He delivered a talk about the new members of this voluntary association since last year and in particular about a transfer of documentation to the Jewish Museum in Prague, publications by compatriots, the film documentary about Karl Reisz with participation of his brother Pavel, who was sitting in the front row.

Then followed an unofficial part with a traditional English Tea and refreshment facilitating friendly exchanges about the past and present. I wished such a meeting to all members of Synagogues. I was leaving with an impression that I was leaving a family occasion.

News of Ostravaks

Erich Brauner, Shosh Dub and Dani Kinrot

We have now confirmed that Erich Brauner is, indeed, the viola player in the drawing by David Friedmann of the Krafft Quartet (see Newsletter #27):



Krafft Quartet by David Friedmann

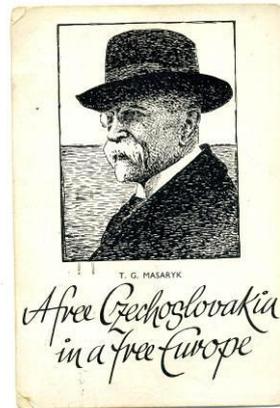
We have now also made contact with Erich's niece, Shoshannah Dub in Israel, who has some family documents which she will share with the Jewish Museum in Prague in due course; and with Dani Kinrot, Erich's nephew who lives in the UK and who was at the reunion. So, slowly, we are piecing together the story behind the drawing.

Tom Kolisch

Tom was also at our reunion. His mother was Emilie Morgenstern and her parents were David Morgenstern and Jeanetta Altensteinová, from Ostrava. Did you know any of them?

Tom has a fascinating collection of family documents and photographs which he plans to lend to the Jewish Museum in Prague, so the family story can be clarified and recorded.

Among his documents is a postcard, dated December 1939, addressed to his father. It was produced by an organisation called "The Czechoslovak in England"



Karel Reisz

Paul Rice, Karel's elder brother, reports:

On Monday 24th September 2012 the Ostrava film festival OKO (the Eye) gave the first showing before an invited audience of a new 70 minutes film about Ostrava-born Karel Reisz. It included a brief history of his film-making career and was called "This filming world" (a skit on the name of the only film which Karel produced called "This sporting life", all other he directed.). It started with reference to his editorship of the first text book on "Film editing", then with excerpts from his early work as Director, his activities as programme manager of the National Film Theatre and then as director of subsequently acknowledged cinema classics such as "Saturday Night and Sunday Morning" and "The French lieutenant's woman". The event was also attended by Walter Wassaly who was chief Camera man of some of Karel's and other famous directors' films. Karel's three sons were interviewed at length about their memories of their father's life and achievements and Karel's brother Paul also attended and contributed information about Karel's youth and then thanked the producers for their great work. The film is recorded partly in Czech and partly in English and two correspondingly subtitled DVD version are now available from www.karelreisz.cz.

It is a much smaller world than you imagine: Harry Mandel and Petr Brod

In Newsletter #27, we mentioned Petr Brod as the moderator of the seminar in Prague arranged by the Jewish Museum to launch the on-line Ostrava catalogue and the Goldberg Exhibition, and also the story of Harry Mandell.

It was with some surprise that we heard that Petr's Uncle by marriage was a brother of Harry! Petr's father was Leo Brod. His sister, Anna, married Hans Demetz but later divorced and married Josef Mandell. Leo and Josef escaped

from Czechoslovakia to England but Anna and her and Leo's mother, Mathilde, died in Terezín.

Ruth Folkartová

Lydia Tishler (geb. Folkartová) recognised her sister, Ruth, in a school photograph from 1933, on display at the reunion.



I have just spotted Ruth in the school photo from 1933 she is sitting in the third row on the right handside of the isle and second from the isle. She was in the same class as Zippa Loewinger.

Hanna Adar

Her son writes:

She is quite weak and needs medical supervision. She will be 97 years old on 11/10/12. Please don't send emails as she cannot reply to them now but write to Benny at benny_ad@yifat.org.il.

Dr Guido Prager (1905-79)

David Prager writes about his father:

My parents were from Moravia; my father moved to Vienna to study medicine and my dad was born in Vienna. After studying Economics (Vienna and Mannheim), he started work in Vienna in the 1920s. However, his love of theatre, opera and operetta propelled him to the job in Ostrava, a thriving and prestigious theatre centre, with significant Jewish ethnocentricity. Dad's boss there (maybe a season or just a production?) was none other than the famous Viennese and later Hollywood producer Otto Preminger. The details remain a mystery.

There was an apparently widespread feeling in the family that my dad's job as secretary general of the German theatre was not an appropriate job for a bright son of the family and far too louche!

Anyway, from the mid 1930s, I understand the German theatre gravitated towards the growing trend/influence/control of German fascism and my dad became uncomfortable there and moved to work at his uncle's distillery in Austerlitz, from which he decided to flee in mid-March 1939 to a cousin in Hungary, amazingly the same day as the Nazis invaded Cz after which he would have been trapped. He came to the UK via Italy, France where he was interned in the Camp des Milles but later joined the French army in Sept 1939 on the outbreak of war and escaped from France in May 1940 to N Africa where he joined the British army in 1943.



Opening of the Camp des Milles Museum, 2012.

David and Robert Prager, with the photograph of Dr Guido Prager

Amit Belek

Peter Erben (geb. Eisenberg) and Eva have a new great-grandson, their 11th great-grandchild!, born in Cambridge, England.



Bob Kingsley (geb. Robert Kohn)

Unfortunately I have to give you the sad news that Bobby passed away on Thursday as a result of deteriorating complications after his stroke 7 years ago. He started to decline in march after several falls and apparently just gave up on trying to regain his full strength. He fortunately had a very peaceful end in a wonderful care home near here. Our son, grandson, daughter in law were present he passed and he suffered no pain;
Bernice Kingsley.

Yad VaShem photos.

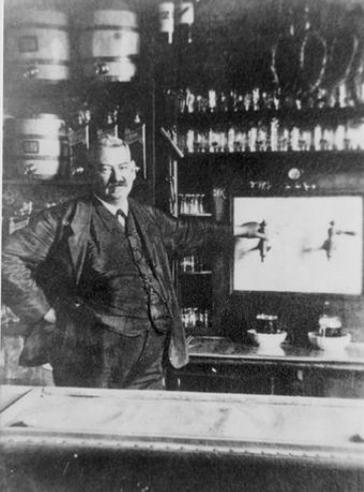
Madeleine Isenberg writes:

I never ceased to be amazed that whenever I'm looking for something Holocaust related, somehow I find things that also relate to MO. So on this page are a few photos of people who were associated with MO. Just do a "Find" on "Ostrava" and you'll see the few there and you can click on the photos.

http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/downloads/names_2010.asp

David searched the photo archive on the website with the words "Ostrau" and also "Ostrava". They, remarkably, produce different sets of photographs! There are not many of them, but they are very interesting. Here are a few:



	<p>Name: Ostrava-Přívov, Czechoslovakia, David Kassler in his pub. Belongs to collection: Yad Vashem Photo Archive Additional Information: David Kassler was the grandfather of Peter Erben, submitter of the photograph. Origin: Peter Erben , Ashkelon Places: OSTRAVA,CZECHOSLOVAKIA CZECHOSLOVAKIA</p>
<p>Ilse Stiller - Heinz Alt - Honze Mfeies</p> 	<p>Name: Ostrava, Czechoslovakia, A play at the Zidorsko'skola school. Belongs to collection: Yad Vashem Photo Archive Additional Information: On stage are Ilse Stiller, Honze Mfeies and Heinz Alt. Presented was "Velbloud uдемjehly" - "The Camel that went through the Needle's Eye," by the author Frantz Langer. Origin: Peter Erben , Ashkelon Places: OSTRAVA,CZECHOSLOVAKIA CZECHOSLOVAKIA</p>

Stolpersteine

Two years ago, we organised 27 *Stolpersteine* (small brass plaques, laid in the pavement outside the houses from which Jews were deported or sent to their deaths by the Nazis) to be laid in Ostrava, in memory of the loved ones of some of our Ostravaks.



George Roden (Rosenstein) outside the house with the *Stolpersteine*

We have had enquiries about laying some more *Stolpersteine*. If you are interested, please contact Heinz Vogel who will once again be co-ordinating the collection of names and details. His email is heinz@vogel.org.uk and his telephone number is +44 (0)1227 76 33 43. We need about a dozen *Stolpersteine* to make it economically sensible to make all the necessary arrangements. Each stone will cost about GBP100.

The City authorities in Ostrava and the Salomonovič family have promised their support to help make this possible, and we are very grateful to them.

Genealogy

Leo Wiener has found the following two sites which might be of interest for those searching for Ostravaks:

- National Archives (Czech Republic), Czech Genealogy Guide and Badatelna.cz.
- Google --CAST Czech and Slovak Things which gives a huge amount of info on Czech Refugees

Leah Patak suggests:

- <http://jewishwebindex.com/Czech.htm>

and Petr Brod tells of websites being organised by Randy Schoenberg:

- You can see at <http://www.geni.com/projects/Jewish-Communities-in-Bohemia-and-Moravia-Czech-Republic/12452> that we are just now starting to put together projects tying together the families from all of the towns in Bohemia and Moravia. Ostrava was a "new" Jewish community created after 1848 and the records at <http://www.badatelna.cz/fond/1073> don't seem to go back to far (there is an index from 1875, but the birth record book starts in 1909, marriages and deaths only in 1924). So all of the families from Ostrava came from other places.

We have many of them already on [geni.com](http://www.geni.com), and you can find them with a google search "ostrava site:geni.com"

United Kingdom and Czech Jews during World War II

Kristýna Pípalová has written a thesis with this title submitted to the University of Ostrava for a bachelor's degree, supervised by ThDr. Tomáš Novotný.

This thesis deals with the destination of Czechoslovak (especially Czech) Jews connected with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland during the period of the Second World War. In this work, the reader can find information about how Jews resisted actively Nazi injustices, what possibilities they had to save their own lives or at least their children's lives and what was happening after their arrival in the United Kingdom. David has a copy.

Terezín Collection on line

The Jewish Museum in Prague (JMP) has just announced its Terezín collection is available on-line. It is pleasing to see that the work of the Ostrava Group with the JMP in getting the Ostrava data base and the Goldberg archive available on line on the JMP website (Do look at them, they are very impressive!) has encouraged more material to be made available in this way.



For Immediate Release
Prague, November 22, 2012



ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS ON THE TEREZÍN GHETTO NOW ON-LINE

For the 71st anniversary of the Terezín Ghetto's founding the Jewish Museum in Prague is making public on-line it's so-called Terezín collection.

One of the primary locations during the Second World War where European Jews suffered and died was Terezín in northern Bohemia. Of the 150,000 interned there over 1941–45 about 30,000 died of hunger, catastrophic hygienic conditions, overcrowding, and disease. Another 90,000 were deported to the ghettos and extermination camps in the East. Only around 4,000 returned.

The Nazis had many of the original documents from the Ghetto's commandant and the Jewish "self-administration" destroyed at the end of the war. Several individuals and groups, however, took it upon themselves to save as many of these documents as possible, and some survivors continued this activity on their own even after 1945. As a result, the archival material on the Terezín Ghetto is presently found in a number of archives around the world.

One of the most important archival collections on the Ghetto's history is now being made public by the Jewish Museum in Prague on the occasion of the 71st anniversary of the first transport to Terezín. The Terezín Archival Collection comprises such items as sections of the original proceedings of the Jewish Council of Elders in Terezín, documentation on setting up the structure for how the Ghetto would function, on the education of children, or on the cultural life of inmates. Of particular note are the postwar testimonies and individual or family materials that survivors or family members of those interned in Terezín have collected.

The digitization project was made possible by financial support since 2009 from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. With this support, more than 100,000 pages of archival materials were analyzed, newly catalogued, and had metadata structures created for it.

The documents are published on a newly created on-line catalogue for the Jewish Museum's collections. The URL is: <http://collections.jewishmuseum.cz/>. In the framework of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure the archive is currently connected with other Terezín archival collections and it will be incorporated into a joint virtual guide.

For more information and photos, please contact:

Jana Havlíková

T +420 222 749 281; M +420 603 867 285

E: jana.havlikova@jewishmuseum.cz

W: www.jewishmuseum.cz

Ostrava

Tom Kolisch has a book of Ostrava photographs from 1959:

Does it bring back memories?



<p>Heinz Vogel sent an extract from a recent speech by the Mayor of Ostrava</p>	<p>Ostrava mayor calls on Brussels for help</p> <hr/> <p>The mayor of Ostrava, one of the most polluted cities in the country, has called on the EU's environment commissioner for help in resolving the situation. Mayor Petr Kaynar says the town is prepared to invest in a long-term strategy to improve the environment, particularly the quality of air, but would like the problem to be addressed on a broader scale. The mayor says that according to several independent studies most of the air pollution plaguing the town originates in neighbouring Poland. Health statistics show that the air pollution in the eastern part of the country, particularly Ostrava, has resulted in a growing incidence of asthma and allergy problems.</p>
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Appeal for Funds

In our last Newsletter, we appealed for funding to enable Dr Jiří Jung to continue with his work of organising our material and entering it into the data base of the Jewish Museum.

Thanks to a number of donations and a small excess of income over expenditure from the reunion, we are over half way towards our target.

Further contributions will be most welcome.

Please make cheques payable to Kingston Surbiton and District Synagogue Trust or make a direct payment to:

KSDS Cultural and Education Committee, Account Number 70853909
Barclays Bank plc
2, Kingston Business Centre
6 Clarence Street
KINGSTON UPON THAMES
Surrey KT1 1NY
UK
Sort Code 20-46-76

IBAN: IBANGB56BARC20467670853909
BIC or SWIFT: BARCGB22

Routing Code (For US only) 026002574

The History of Ostrava and its Jewish Community

Appeal for a co-author

Many articles, monographs, and even books have been written about specific aspects of the history of Ostrava but there has been nothing, especially in English, that deals with the whole picture of what makes Ostrava so important.

Libuše Salomonovičová and David intend to fill that gap with a semi-popular but reasonably rigorous history in English of:

- The growth of Ostrava into an industrial powerhouse from nothing;
- The inflow of Jews (and others)
- The "golden Age" –ca. 1880-1930, with family histories
- The Holocaust
- What happened to the survivors and the worldwide diaspora of Ostrava Jewish families - Virtual Jewish Ostrava

We and Libuše have a great deal of information about Ostrava and, particularly, Jewish families from Ostrava. There are, however, still significant gaps in our knowledge.

In order properly to write this integrated history, we need help. Specifically, a historian specialising in 18-20th Century central Europe and especially Czech lands, with good command of English, Czech and German. He/she should be able and willing to work with us over probably a two to three year period both to fill in at

least some of the many gaps in our knowledge and as an author to write this important history.

We will also need some funding which we have not yet received.

In the first instance, please contact David if you are interested.

We wish all our readers a Happy Chanukah!

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