

Londýnský kroužek Ostraváků Der Londoner-Ostrauerkreis Our Ostrava Group

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Number 8 Chanukah 2008

Chanukah Greetings

We, the Kingston Ostrava Group, wish you all a very Happy Chanukah. Among many greetings we have received to pass are those from:

Miriam and Edgar Rose: Yehuda Bacon



and Mischa and Liba Salomonovic



The Great 2009 Ostravak Gathering

After the great success of our meeting last year, we are organizing another this year on **Sunday 8th March** from 2:30 p.m. to about 5:00 p.m. and we hope to see you – and your family - in the synagogue then.

We have invited H.E. Mr Jan Winkler, the Czech Ambassador once again to join us, but unfortunately he thinks he will be out of the country at that time. However, if he is, he will be represented at the meeting by the Cultural Attaché, Ms Klára von Kriegsheim Kadlecová.

We hope that Evelyn McGilloway (geb. Rix) will be able to join us from the USA, with her husband, Jim. Evelyn has had a distinguished career as an international concert pianist and we hope that she will play one or two pieces for us during the afternoon.

There will be a short presentation of some of our recent findings and an exhibition of photographs and documents. There will, of course, be time to meet and chat about old

times and old friends, and we will serve tea and some refreshments, to keep everyone's strength up.

To help us plan the catering, please let David Prager (tel: 00 44 (0) 20 8398 5901 email: drprager@aol.com) know how many will be in your party.

If you would like to make a contribution towards the costs of the afternoon, please let us know. All such contributions will be gratefully received.

Velké Dílo – Our Magnum Opus

With your help, we have collected an amazing amount of fascinating material and, I am delighted to say, we continue to find more and more remarkable information and documents. We have explained that it was our ultimate intention to write, or have written, *The Ostrava Story*. First, we have to ensure that our whole archive is preserved and is available for future researchers and the Jewish Museum in Prague (JMP) will look after it all for us. Early in the New Year we will discuss with them how best to do that.

We wish to deposit the archive, which comprises hard copy printed material together with electronic files including messages and images, with them. Because of the Data Protection Act, I need to have your consent that the information you have provided may be included in the transfer to the Jewish Museum in Prague.

If for any reason you prefer your family data not to be transferred with the archive, then this will be deleted and/or where practicable returned to you. If there is some intermediary action that can feasibly be taken, such as elimination of your email address or any other current personal data, then we can certainly look at that. On balance it would clearly be easier not to edit material, and in any event we very much hope that you will give your consent to the transfer of this material, together with other family histories that we have assembled. Each story adds importance and significance to the others.

I look forward to hearing from you

If you have any more material (either originals or copies) that could and should be preserved in this way and made available to future researchers, please let me have it to include in the archive which will be sent to the JMP.

We also hope to organise, translate and cross-reference all the material in our archive, so that it will be more useful and readily accessible for future use and, to help us do that, we hoped to employ an archivist in Ostrava part time. Unfortunately, the organisation which we hoped would provide the funding has turned us down. If we cannot find alternative sources of funding, then this work on the archive will not happen and that would be a great shame.

If you are able and willing to contribute to the costs of employing such a part-time archivist in Ostrava, please let me know.

If we are able to raise sufficient support, we would employ the part-time archivist for another few months to help fill in some of the many gaps in our archive, which would be a great help

in preparing for us to write *The Ostrava Story* which is our (or at least my) great ambition. But, as always, it depends on some funding.....

There are examples of similar books having been written (and well worth reading!), for example *Konin* by Theo Richmond (ISBN: [009940981X](#)) and *Microcosm*, (the story of Wroclaw) by Davies and Moorhouse (ISBN 0-224-06243-3)

Ostrava Talks

In November Heinz Vogel and David gave a talk to Kingston Rotary Club. They were quite entranced by the story of how our *sefer torah* came from Ostrava to Kingston and the parallel, and equally dramatic, story of how Heinz and his family made the same journey.

We also gave a talk in the synagogue to some 30 people including a few Ostravaks, entitled *Nice Nazis, 3 Ambassadors, a Degenerate Artist, a Brass Chanukiah and A Magic Doll*

On 12th January, we will be giving a talk to the Hampstead group of AJR (The Association of Jewish Refugees) and to the Hendon Group of AJR in March. Also in March, David will be giving a presentation to the *Limmud* Day in Brighton; *Steel and Schnapps, Sausages and Soldiers, Scrolls and Survival – The Story of Ostrava*.

On 18th January, we will be talking to Leicester Progressive Synagogue members. They, also, have an Ostrava *sefer* and we hope that they will join us in our further researches.

Recent Findings

Brian Fisher

Brian's mother, Eliska, was born in Ostrava. Her parents (Jindrich Wasserberger and Irena née Pollak) ran a café in Nesselroth Passage. Eliska was an active member of SOKOL and liked hiking and skiing. She married Jiri Adler in Ostrava but subsequently divorced him. Eliska escaped to England, via Poland, and married Otto Fischer (Brian's father) in London.

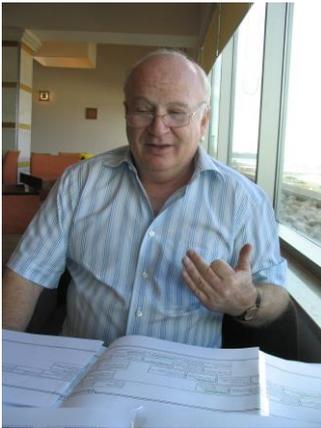
Stella Alexander

Stella's mother, Kathe, was the grand- daughter of Bernard and Charlotte Krieger. Stella's grandmother, Ida Krieger, married Elias Rothfeld in 1913. He was a lawyer and they moved to Kraslice where they had two children, Walter and, 4 years later, Kathe. Kathe was studying at Pittmans in London when the war broke out and she remained here. Her parents were able to join her.

She met Peter Rozsa in the Czech Club in London and they married. Jobs were hard so they emigrated to Ecuador where Peter (a qualified lawyer) got a job as a milkman and later they ran a café.

Their daughter, Stella, returned to London where she married and lives happily ever after with Anton, her husband.

Daniel Wechsberg



Daniel, the great-grandson of Albert Wechsberg the Ostrava Banker is related to Stella through the Krieger family. He and I spent a lovely morning recently in Tel Aviv (where he has a printing business) going through family trees and swapping stories of Ostrava.

Daniel told me that, after the collapse of the Bank, part of the family started a security business in Ostrava, Fiedler & Co, Wach- und Schlessgesellschaft, with branches in Karlsbad, Kosice and Bucharest. [Do you know anything about it?](#)

Herbert Lester

Liese Tschiasny's father, Max, was a teacher in the German Girls' Gymnasium in Ostrava. Her mother was Anna Haller. Liese left Ostrava for Palestine in 1939. During the war, Otto Hornung was posted to Palestine and made contact once again with Liese, with whom he had been friendly in Ostrava.



Otto and Barbara Hornung, 1943

Liese and her husband Herbert (Lester) introduced Otto to his first wife, Barbara

Liese and Herbert came to England where, unfortunately, Liese died two years ago. Herbert lives just north of London and we hope to see him early in the New Year

Naomi Finkelstein

We met Naomi Finkelstein who lives in Israel but whose husband works on a project in London. She is the daughter of Leo Brodavka, born in Ostrava in 1923. His father, Karel, ran a bar in Ostrava. [\(Does anyone know anything about it?\)](#) Leo's mother was Olga Rosenzweig and they married in Frydek in 1921. Naomi says that the Brodavka family came originally from Krakow.

Leo was friendly with Ruth and Lydia Foplkartová and I am pleased to say that Naomi and Lydia have been in contact to restore the family connections.

Roy Seger

Roy Seger's mother, Edith Bettina Gottlieberová, came to London before the war and married Eric Seger who was born in Liberec. He was a friend of Otto Rix (Lueftschtz). Edith's father, Wilhelm, was a bank official in Ostrava and her mother, Auguste Leschner, had family connections in Frydek Mistek.

Eric has a very striking portrait of his mother, painted by Salomon Salomonowitz who was the uncle of Michal Salomonovic. Michal and Libuše are well know to most of us as the source of the most fantastic stream of genealogical and historical information about Ostrava and its Jewish community.



Edith in 1931

Arctic Roll

The Jewish Genealogical Society has discovered that the *Arctic Roll* was invented by Dr Ernest Velden, a Czech lawyer who fled to England from the Nazis. (For those of you who did not grow up in 1950's England and who do not know the *arctic Roll*, it was (still is) a dessert consisting of a cylinder of ice-cream surrounded by sponge cake. Delicious!) J. Gen. Soc. Has already found several Velden family members who lived in Ostrava and who were murdered by the Nazis, but they are not certain if Ernst came from there, but I have anyway adopted him!

TAROC - Card game.

Daniel Wechsberg tells me that Ostravak Jews, who were avid card-players, did not play Bridge or Whist or Rummy but an even more complicated game, TAROC. Do you know anything about it? Can you tell me the rules?

Any more Ostravaks?

Please pass the word about our group to any other Ostravaks that you know and let us know about them, as well. And please let us have any more news of yourself and your family.

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