

Londýnský kroužek Ostraváků
Der Londoner-Ostrauerkreis
Our Ostrava Group

Number 21, New Year Edition

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New Year Greetings

We wish all our readers are Happy and Healthy New Year.

***Escape Story* - Eva Erben’s Holocaust Autobiography**

You may recall that we wrote about Eva Erben’s life story in Newsletter #19 and hoped that it would be available in time for the last Ostravak Reunion. Alas, that was not to be, but it is now about to be printed and should be available in November or December, under the title “Escape Story”. More information will be coming soon.

Eva Erben
**ESCAPE
STORY**

How a young girl survived the Holocaust



Adapted and translated by David Lawson

ADASH – Song and trip to Israel

George Löwy sent information about Tomaš Novotny and his Klezmer Group:
Prof. Tomas Novotny teaches at the Ostrava university foreign languages. Because he is a theologian, Hebrew is his favorite language which he was teaching using songs. He visited the USA a few years ago and we helped organize several

performances for his girl's choir, ADASH, which is an acronym for: Ivrit Derech Shira. His classes became so popular that he was invited all over Europe with his Czech girls to sing Hebrew songs. He also published several CD's with the songs. Recently he was invited to Israel by a music teacher who discovered him on youtube.

Attached is one song from the last concert of Adash, which was disbanded after 10 years. Also attached is a slide show of his trip to Israel; unfortunately the commentary is in Czech. I urge you to Google Adash and listen to some of the beautifully executed Hebrew songs, sung by Czech girls from Ostrava.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DoICP0ugVz4>

<https://picasaweb.google.com/105996071199209674196/IzraelVyber#5592486>

Stolperstein leaflet

Radan Solomonovic has sent us an electronic copy of a small brochure, produced by his parents, the incredible Michal and Libuše:

Hi,

Here is an overview of the project you organized. It might be an inspiration for extension (new Stolpersteine) and/or adding missing photos (individual relatives should try to dig once more in their home archives).

Cheers,

Radan



Here are the first two pages. David, or Radan, can let you have copies of the other pages, if you wish.

70th Anniversary

Miriam Friedmann Morris reminds us that the 70th Anniversary of the deportations from Prague to Łódź is in October and to Terezín is in December. One of the drawings made by Miriam's father, David, is on the website of the London Jewish Cultural Centre, for its holocaust education department:

<http://www.theholocaustexplained.org/ks3/survival-and-legacy/liberation-the-survivors/death-marches/>
<http://www.theholocaustexplained.org/ks3/life-in-nazi-occupied-europe/ghettos-case-studies/>
<http://www.theholocaustexplained.org/ks3/life-in-nazi-occupied-europe/ghettos-case-studies/life-within-the-ghetto/>

The Stamberger Reunion and the Vitkovice Synagogue

In Newsletter #16, we described how the two parts of the Auber and Stamberger families finally met during our trip to Ostrava in July last year. This was such an emotional event, that they decided to repeat it this year. Arnost Rusek writes:

Hello Stambergers,

Herewith I would like to thank you all for the three extraordinary days spent in your company.

For me it was a new and unexpected and almost unreal experience to be able to associate with relatives who share my past, my dreams and my nightmares.

Without all of you the Czech trip would pass by as just another holiday, now it turned out to be a memory of a lifetime; and here I speak even for my kids.

I **am** looking forward to the next reunion, Arnost

Tom Auber writes:

On 18th August, inspired by last year's Stolpersteine visit, 21 descendants of five of the seven children of Sef and Emile Stamberger met, with spouses, partners, friends (and a dog), for dinner in the restaurant at the Dům Kultury in Ostrava. To all of us from the Czech Republic, Poland, Sweden, the UK, the US and Israel, it was another emotional event as it was the first time many of us had met – indeed it is only 18 months since some of us learned of the others' existence. In addition to newly-discovered family members, the two daughters of a couple who had worked for Regina (née Stambergerova) and Josef Auerbach in their shop in Vitkovice in the 1930s learned of our existence through the local TV broadcast of last year's Stolpersteine visit, and gave Peter Auerbach and Peter and Tom Auber part of a tea service their parents had received as a wedding present from Regina and Josef in 1936.

On 19th August, a reception was given by the Deputy Mayor at Vitkovice Town Hall, followed by a guided tour by Lenka Kocierzová, a graphic artist and teacher of arts and aesthetics, who describes herself as "a chronicler of Vitkovice". We hadn't appreciated that Vitkovice was essentially a "model" company town, along the lines of Port Sunlight or Bourneville, built by the Rothschilds, owners of the local heavy industries (who bought the original steel works from the Archbishop of Olomouc in 1843). The tour included the site of the Vitkovice Synagogue (built 1911, burned 15 March 1939), from which the Deputy Mayor presented us with a facsimile tile – we felt the appropriate place for this would be the Kingston Synagogue. The town tour was followed by visits to the Jewish Centre in Mariánské Hory and the new Cemetery, where the graves seem generally to be in good condition. In the evening we met at a convivial Czech restaurant where presents and memories were shared and, in between the formal speeches (Henryk Jurkowski as the oldest "Stamberger"

present recorded the significance of the occasion) we were able to chat informally and get to know our many "cousins".

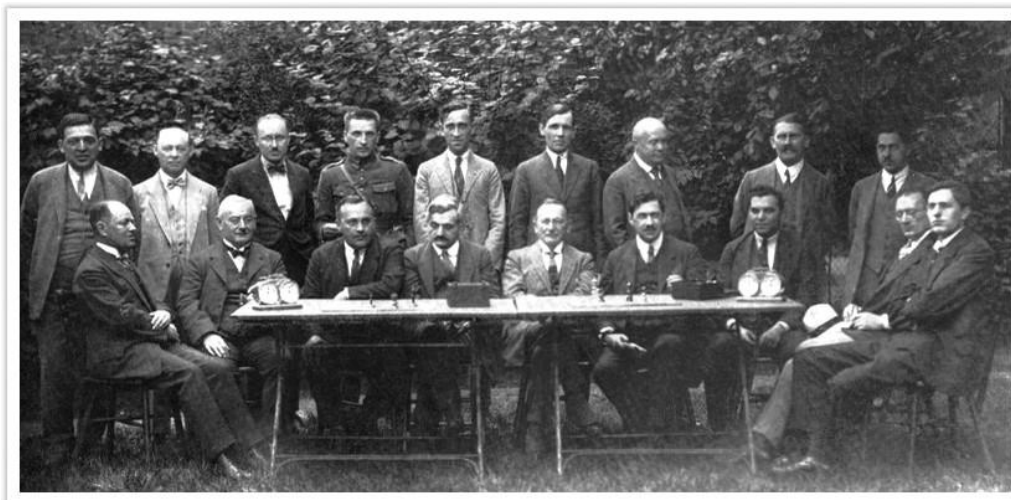
More family and friends came and went throughout the visit – well over forty in all. As Anna Jurkowska pointed out, there were more direct descendants of Emilie and Sef in Ostrava in August 2011 than were murdered by Hitler.

Many thanks to Klaudia Eibenova and Dora Assenza in Ostrava, and to Anna Jurkowska, for making all the arrangements, and to Tom Auber whose idea it was.



1923 Chess Championship in Ostrava

The World Chess Championship was held in Ostrava in 1923, organised by Josef and Michal Salomonovic's grandfather (3rd from the left, back row). Details of the match can be found on the website: www.worldchesslinks.net/1923_mahrisch_ostrau_b.jpg



Schlaraffen Club, Ostravia Branch

We have a list of members of the *Schlaraffen Club, Ostravia* branch. It is a daughter of the *Opavia* branch. Apparently, this was a mixed Jewish/non-Jewish charitable organisation, rather like the Masons or the Rotarians. The list includes:

Dr Albert Herbetschek, Anton Lustig, Heinz Siege, Treugett Sehenner, Emil Partisch, Johann Keschenni, Eugen Dupel, Dr Josef Reisz, Heinrich Wazelle, Dr Fritz Glassner, Hans Elzer, Friedrich Swoboda, August Sauer, Jakob Korner, Dr Ernst Mendl, Leo Delsen, Hans Linhardt, Alois Schwarz, Julius Katay, Hans Wagner, Laurence Wassmuth, Otto Jaescöke, Josef Hofer, Norbert Brücke, Hans Kment, Anton Klinger, Rudolf Reisz, Dr Karl Gutig, Julius Ehrend, Gustav Pfleger, Adolf Strassman, Josef Laska, Michael Eckstein, Leon Elger, Otto Hilf, Hugo Herrmann, Heinrich Edgar, Dr Julius Wechsberg, Moritz Erber, Viktor Geschmeidler, Ferdinand Thugut, Robert Jonas and Karl Stibel.

Do you know anything about the Club?

Otto Hilf is described as the Chief Secretary of the Jewish Coal and Steel Trades Union. Do you know anything about it or him? Please let us know.

News of Ostravaks

Smetana Family

In the last Newsletter, we introduced Arnon Ernst Smetana. He has sent some great family photographs:



Ernst's grandparents, Gisella and Josef Smetana



Ernst's Father Leo, his sisters Irene and Margaret Smetana



Ernst's mother Olga Smetana (Jellinek)



The Feureisen family : Adolf, Margaret (Smetana) ,Kurt and Ruth

Arie Rufeisen

The name Rufeisen will be familiar to many of you as he was one of the leaders of the Ostrava Jewish community early in the last century. Ernst Smetana introduced us to his friend in Israel, Arie Rufeisen. Arie has sent us a photograph of himself and his wife with a grandchild, and also photographs of his parents:



Arie Rufeisen with his wife and grandchild, in Israel



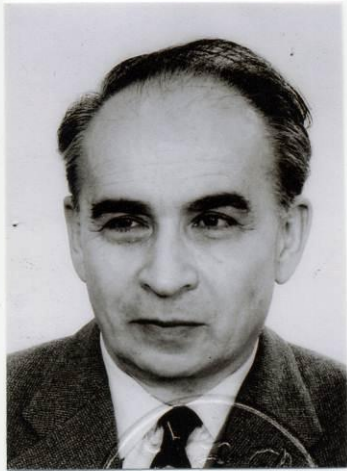
Arie Rufeisen's father



Arie Rufeisen's mother

Marie Eichler

Marie's father, Bertold David Eichler, came to England in 1939 where he married and where his children, David and Marie, were born.



Bertold Eichler



Bertold was a keen footballer and this is a photograph of the Vitkovice Jewish football team from 1924. Bertold is on the left, on the front row. Can you recognise anyone else on the team?

Bertold's father, Adolf, was a book-keeper in the Vitkovice Ironworks and died when Bertold was 5 years old. His mother, Marie Friedman, was born in Trenczin, Slovakia. Bertold's brother, Max, also worked as a book-keeper in Vitkovice to support the family after his father died. Bertold joined the steelworks later, on the technical side, and when he came to England he joined General Refractories and became its Research Director.

The Eichlers and the Rosenbergs (see the story of *The Handbag*, Newsletter #19) were friends both in Ostrava and later in London. Marie knew Otto and Edith Rosenberg well and has helped us fill out that story which we hope will be reported in more detail in our next Newsletter.

Marian Fielding (Lichtenstern and Löw families)

Marian Fielding's mother, Kate, was the daughter of JuDr Viktor Lichtenstern, whose legal practice was actually in Vienna, and Olga (geb. Löw). Olga's father was the Director of the Ostrava gasworks.

Viktor wrote frequently from Vienna to Olga in Ostrava between 1904 and 1908. Viktor was called up as an Oberleutnant during the First World War and served in Pula. Olga returned to Ostrava and Viktor wrote to her frequently. We are slowly scanning this archive of over 400 letters.



Isenberg-Goldmann-Seifter

Those of you who came to the last Ostravak gathering in the Czech Embassy will remember "Uncle Dolek's Tango", written by Dr Adolf Seifter, Madeleine Isenberg's Uncle. Madeleine has introduced us to Jeff Finger, a distant cousin through the Seifters, who lives in Israel. He has a website with some fascinating family history: <http://www.jeffster.org/genealogy>.

Madeleine said that her Goldmann family were cattle dealers and butchers. Libuše has been able to add a bit of detail to that story with a copy of an invoice, which suggests that the Goldmann's had some illustrious clients for their spice and grocery

business in Oderfurt (Privoz). The bill is to the Royal and Imperial Regional Head Team, in Mährisch Ostrau!



Barnard-Guttmann (or Goodman)

Unfortunately, Libuše cannot always work her miracles and Tony Barnard's family seems to have defeated her! He writes:

We had been told that our great grandfather David (or Davis) Goodman (or Gutmann) came from Ostrava when he was in his teens, possibly to avoid being forced into an army (or perhaps on account of anti-jewish actions?). His father's name was Isaac. David's mother went to America (probably New York). When David first came to London he worked as a barrel maker, but later he started his own business making pickles. The various 19th century census schedules would suggest that he was born in about 1846 or 1847. He seems to have arrived in England some time shortly after 1861, but we are not sure of this.

In 1871 David was lodging with the family of his first cousin Sophia Cohen. Presumably she also came from Ostrava and perhaps was already married to her husband Joseph Cohen before coming (with Joseph) to England. Joseph Cohen's father's Hebrew name was Nocham (or Nacham). From the birth certificate of Sophia's daughter Julia (born in England on 24th February 1857), it would appear that Sophia's maiden name was Coleman, but this is far from certain, as it is difficult to read the writing on our copy of the birth certificate (ordered in the nineteen eighties). I was also wondering if it might have been Solomon. Sophia's father's name was Zvi.

Julia married David (her first cousin once removed) in 1872 at the Great Synagogue, Duke's Place. David and Julia's eldest son Isaac (Ike) went to America with his young family in 1904 and, living with them in New York in 1910, there was a Joseph Solomons stated to be a cousin of Ike. So, whether or not Sophia's maiden name was Solomon, the

name Solomon (or Solomons) would be another Ostrava name (along with Goodman, Gutmann and perhaps Coleman) that could have links with my family. Ancestors who may not have left Ostrava (if there were even there) would be Isaac Gutmann (or Goodman), Zvi Coleman or Solomon (but not sure about the surname) and Nochum Cohen.

Can you throw any light on this story?

Löwy, Rosenberg and Gräzer Families

The story of Edith Rosenberg's handbag was reported in Newsletter #19. The story grows!

Edith (geb. Löwy) had twin brothers, one of whom – Bedřich- had a son, also called Bedřich. The twins were murdered by the Nazis, but Bedřich junior survived, and had a daughter, Ellen. She, in turn, married and has a daughter, Vera.

Ellen and Vera are coming to London to meet us and to give us more information about the Löwy and Rosenberg families. Watch this space – more in our next edition!

Avraham ben Yitzchak's Barmitzvah

Fred Austin (born Albert Stiller) left Ostrava and Czechoslovakia when he was 10 years old, and came to England. He never saw his mother and sisters again and never had a Bar Mitzvah. To celebrate his 83rd birthday, his friends are organising a bar-mitzvah for him. But there was a problem – what is Fred's Hebrew name, by which he can be called to the reading of the Law?

As was the custom, his birth was recorded by the Jewish Community but their records have disappeared including any record of his *brit*. The copy in the archives in Prague merely records his name as Alfred! But the Ostrava Group, ever resourceful, has its religious authority, the brother of David Prager. David reports:

I spoke with my brother in Israel, Rabbi Joseph Prager. He advises as follows.

- 1a). The first name Fred/**Alfred** in Moravian families is usually associated with the Hebrew name **Avraham** (ie Abraham).
- 1b). I understand his father, who died when Fred was very young, was Ignatz. In Moravian families this was usually associated with the Hebrew name Yitzchak (Isaac).
- 2). In Jewish law, an unused name ceases to be of binding linkage to the person. Accordingly Fred is free to have a "new" Hebrew name.
Rabbi Prager suggests Avraham ben Yitzchak.

Fred is very pleased with this suggestion and so he will be called to the reading as as *Avraham ben Yitzchak*. We wish him and all the family a hearty Mazal Tov!

Danciger-Teitelbaum

We have another new Ostravak! Sandra Danciger has discovered us and writes:

My grandfather, Abraham Teitelbaum and his wife Sarah Harnik Teitelbaum lived in Ostrava with my father, Frederick Teitelbaum, until their leaving in 1938/39 for (eventually) the USA. Paula Teitelbaum (Shuster married in USA) was studying in France at this time. My father's Hebrew name was Shlomo Menachem Mendel. Sarah Harnik was from Zaleszczyki. Her father was a member of the town council. Abraham's father's name was Ephraim.

Do you know of this family? If so, please let Monica or David know.

Lily Reiser

Lily, who is now accessible by email, writes:

“I am keenly interested to keep up with news from the neighborhood that I lived in for twenty-one years. I desire to maintain contact with the many friends from the old community.”

Condolences

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Alex Popper, Monica's beloved husband and a dear friend of all of the Ostrava Group. We send Monica and all the family our deepest sympathy

Do you know of any other Ostravaks or their families who are not already on our circulation list? If you do, please give their details to David or Monica.

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