

Londýnský kroužek Ostraváků
Der Londoner-Ostrauerkreis
Our Ostrava Group

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2012 Ostravak Reunion

We have fixed the date of the next Ostravak Reunion . It is Sunday 4th November at 2:30 p.m. and it will be held, once again, in the Czech Embassy, London, by kind permission of H.E. Mr Michael Žantovský, the Ambassador. He will be one of two Guests of Honour. The other is Mr Jan Fischer, Formerly Prime Minister of the Czech Republic.

Please put the date in your diary.

These events involve quite a lot of effort, time and expense (£350-£400, depending on the number of people attending).

Would you be willing to:

1. Help with organising invitations, name badges, etc?
2. Help in collecting sandwiches and cakes from N London and bringing them to the location?
3. Help in setting out the sandwiches, serving tea etc?
4. Help in tidying and washing up?
5. Sponsoring all or part of the costs?

Please let Monica know.

Erratum

Fred Austin (Alfred Stiller) Barmitzvah.

Profuse apologies to everyone involved. The photograph of Fred's Bar Mitzvah in Newsletter #23 had an insert of Brian Cooper quite stupidly and erroneously labelled as Fred's son. Brian has written about Fred and the Bar Mitzvah:

When Fred Austin tried to teach French to Brian Cooper, fifty-five years ago, neither Brian nor any of his contemporaries at King Edward's Five Ways School, in Birmingham, had any idea that Fred was actually Jewish.

'Mr Austin' – né Fredi Stiller – came to England aged ten in 1939. He came from Ostrava in Czechoslovakia and was brought here by Philip Austin, a school teacher from Liverpool. When Fredi waved goodbye to his mother at Prague railway station, that was the last time they saw each other. His mother and his two sisters were eventually consumed in Treblinka.

The young Fred Austin grew up in this country with absolutely no contact with the Jewish community. He too became a teacher and, subsequently, headmaster of the prestigious Dudley Grammar School. He and his wife Margaret have four children and ten grandchildren. Their son, Ian Austin, is Member of Parliament for Dudley North and Fred, himself, was awarded an MBE.

About seven years ago, at Margaret's suggestion, they attended a 'French Evening' at the Birmingham Progressive Synagogue where they met Lia Lesser, another refugee from Czechoslovakia. One thing, as they say, led to another with the result that, some two years ago, Fred and Brian met once again at a Mosaic lecture. In recent years, Fred and Margaret had written their joint autobiography, entitled 'Czech and Mate'. It was whilst reading this book that Brian calculated that his own seventieth birthday would coincide with Fred's eighty-third – the two grandfathers each having been born in the week of Shabbat Vayeshev, albeit thirteen years apart.

Thus, on Saturday 17th December, Shabbat Vayeshev 2011, the King David Shul in Moseley was filled with both sets of family and friends. Brian celebrated his birthday with *Maftir* and Fred celebrated his belated Bar Mitzvah with an *Aliyah* (for which Brian did the *lehning*). At the end of the service, with Brian and a handful of other Old

Edwardians leading the way, *Anim Zemirot* was sung with gusto – to the tune of ‘Forty Years On’, the old school song!

In presenting the customary Bar Mitzvah *Chumash* to Fred, at *kiddush* following the service, Brian observed that – in his Holocaust education work in the Dudley area – Fred was automatically fulfilling the last of the six-hundred and thirteen *Mitzvot* in the Torah; the commandment to obliterate the name of Amalek – and his true heirs, the Nazis.

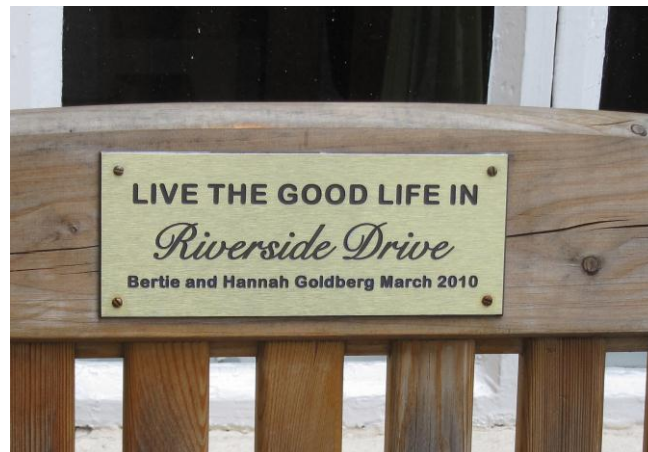
Jewish Museum in Prague (JMP) – The Ostrava Archive

Goldberg Letter Archive

The first draft of the online exhibition based on Bertie Goldberg’s remarkable archive of letters from his family in Poland and Czechoslovakia to Bertie and his brothers in England from 1939-42 is ready and will be discussed with Bertie and refined. It will be the first major example of how the JMP will use the material from our Ostrava Archive.

We expect the exhibition to be finalised in the next 2 or 3 months and that it will be launched in September, shortly before Yom Tov. It will be the 70th Anniversary of the first transports from Ostrava to Terezín.

Madeleine Isenberg sent me a photograph of a bench, dedicated by Bertie, with his and Hannah’s own personal philosophy:



Alice Anson (geb. Gross) Archive

Some of you will have heard about First Lt Otto Gross being decorated by Emperor Rudolf from one of David’s talks about Ostrava. In the late 1920’s he came to England with his family (which is why Alice also appears in David’s talk, in military uniform!). Before and during the war, he corresponded with his family in Ostrava. Remarkably, he kept copies both of his families’ letters but also his own replies, so

there is a complete correspondence. This has now been scanned and entered into the JMP data base.

Alice and Colin recently celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary. Mazal Tov to them!

Dorit Grant –Terezín material

Dorit is not from Ostrava but is a close friend of Lydia and Ruth (geb. Folkartová). Dorit was incarcerated in Terezín and has agreed to give some jewellery, money and pictures she has from Terezín to the JMP, where they will be seen by future generations.

Have you material for the Archive?

The Ostrava Archive is growing. Most of the material in electronic form has been entered into the JMP data base by our Dr Jiří Jung and it will be available to future researchers. However, the JMP is keen to acquire original materials (artefacts, letters, photographs, documents) for its permanent collection. If you have items that you would be willing to donate, please either contact Dr Frankl of the JMP directly (michal.frankl@jewishmuseum.cz), Monica or David.

Techelet Lavan –Blau-Weiss

Jitka Radkovičová recently wrote to Katya Gould:

I am engage in Jewish scouting in first Republic Czechoslovakia and I have got also information from your family, that you were member of Techelet Lavan (Blau-Weiss). I would like to ask you, if you could tell me about your memories of your Jewish scouting in Czechoslovakia and division you were member of and about your activities and any other details if you have like for example :

- If you were member of FRYDEK MISTEK division or other....
- If you can remember any history of the division and if you have any recollection of any members from your division.

Jitka attached a photograph which originated, I think, from Peter Erben:



<http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/180.html>

Katya replied:

There was no formal Blau-Weiss Group in Frydek-Mistek.

In about 1933 I met 2 brothers who were leaders of Blau-Weiss in Opava and used to send me bi-monthly newsletters. They tried to get me to start and lead a group in Frydek-Mistek. But all I did was to meet with a small group of mostly younger children and talked to them about Zionist subjects. Scouting type activities never took place.

At the Summer camp that Summer I think I was the only attendee from Frydek-Mistek. The camp was somewhere in Western Bohemia (I think we had a four hour train journey from Ostrava). The camp was concerned mainly with Zionism. There was little or no scouting type activity although we did have a nightly camp fire where we sang Hebrew songs.

The picture you sent cannot possibly come from Frydek-Mistek. There were not sufficient Jewish girls of that age group in Frydek-Mistek and I recognise nobody. I am sending a copy of the picture to David Lawson who runs a London Ostravak group. Maybe one of his members will recognise someone on the photo.

For your background information, I would mention that the Jewish Volkshule (primary school) in Frydek-Mistek closed in 1929 for lack of suitably aged Jewish pupils.

Peter originally identified a couple of people:

Top row, second from left is Eriko Davidovic; to her left is Heke Lauzeh. Both were from the Frydek troop, and perished in the camps

Jitka wrote to Katya:

Thank you very much for outstanding information you provided me with in your e mail. I did not know that in London there is an exile group from Ostrava! It would make me very happy, if there is anyone from that group who would have a memory of the Youth Jewish movement in Ostrava. Even though that Ostrava was in 30th of the last century very important centre of Zionism there are no documents or documentation of this in their archive in Ostrava - city. I also must add that Ostrava had large settlement with Jewish population and I do not know how all the statistics and information got lost without any trace. But it is possible that during the war Germans destroyed all the evidence and that is why there is none!

I am in contact with Peter Erben from Ashkelon (he is from Frydek-Mistek), but I do not know anyone else who is still alive.

Can you recognise anyone else in the photograph or provide any other information? If so, please let Monica or David know.

Ostravaks in the Dominican Republic

Madeleine Isenberg recently came across a fascinating article from Jewish News archives, <http://archive.jta.org/article/1939/02/01/2844951/1000-jews-to-start-autonomous-colony-in-dominican-republic>

1,000 Jews to Start Autonomous Colony in Dominican Republic

PARIS, Jan. 31 1939 (JTA) –

A Jewish delegation from Czechoslovakia, sponsored by the Praha Government, arrived here today to sign an agreement drafted by the Dominican Legation in Paris providing for admission of 1,000 Jews to the Dominican Republic to establish an autonomous colony. Under the terms of the agreement, the Jews, all of whom come from Morevska-Ostrava (Maerisch-Ostrau), will be settled collectively on any land they choose under official guarantee that they can set up their own administration and police within the existing Dominican laws, provided that they pay \$100 each for visas and \$200 landing money for each adult.

The 1,000 comprise 450 Czech Jews, 300 Czech Jews from territories ceded under the Munich pact and 250 Polish Jews who are stateless because their passports were not renewed by Warsaw. They include specialists in 15 different industries and also physicians, landworkers, artisans and others suitable for establishment of a collective agro-industrial settlement on undeveloped territory. The colonists are permitted by the Czech Government to take along 20,000,000 kronen of their capital in foreign currency, provided 30 per cent of the amount is deducted for the Czech treasury. They are also permitted to transfer machinery, tools and other movable goods.....

Do you have any more information about this? Do you know anyone who was involved? Please let Monica or David know.

Oskar Schindler and Ostrava

Dr Przybylová, the Ostrava City Archivist, sent us an article about Schindler and Ostrava:

Mečislav Borák about Oskar Schindler and Ostrava. It is in book OSTRAVA, příspěvky k dějinám a současnosti Ostravy a Ostravska, 21 (Ostrava 2003).

David N Crowe wrote a book "Oskar Schindler" published by Cambridge University Press which has quite a lot about Schindler's early life and his time in Ostrava.

News of Ostravaks

Altmann

Irena Chavíková recently wrote to us about her grandfather:

I found out your "Londýnský kroužek Ostraváků" and article from Ralph Altmann from Orlova. I am granddaughter from Robert Altmann, who was mentioned in the article.

I would like to contact Mr. Ralph Altmann, is it possible?

Ralph Altmann told us:

Robert was a cousin of my late father, Unfortunately I never met him when I was in Ostrava/Orlova many years ago. He was in his 90s then so I can only imagine that sadly he has passed on since then having lived a full life. His wife is Edith and as I recall they only had one son called Richard. I think he is married. Maybe Irena is his daughter who is using her married name.

Ralph and Irena are now in touch, demonstrating once again the power of our Londýnský kroužek Ostraváků!

Benedikt –Gross

In Newsletter #23 we wrote about Hanford Gross from the USA and his search for information about Frantisek Benedikt, his wife's great uncle. Pavel Vransky knew Frantisek in the RAF during the war and contacted us and we were able to pass on the information to Hanford. In March, Hanford came to Europe, visiting Prague, Ostrava and London. He met Pavel, Michal Frankl of the Jewish Museum, the Salomonovic family who, as always, were able to provide him with all sorts of valuable information, George Roden, Lydia Tischler and David. We hope to have a report from Hanford in the next Newsletter.

Beck-Roth

Anne Beck writes:

Felix and I, together with Jomi and Sue and various other family members are travelling to San Francisco for our Aunt Irma Roth's 100th Birthday on 6th April 2012. After such an eventful life, from Ostrava in 1938, carrying a 6 month old child out on foot over the mountains, she has succeeded in reaching this age in remarkably good shape and humour. I believe there are some more Ostravaks in her entourage, and I'll try to find out what I can for your lists

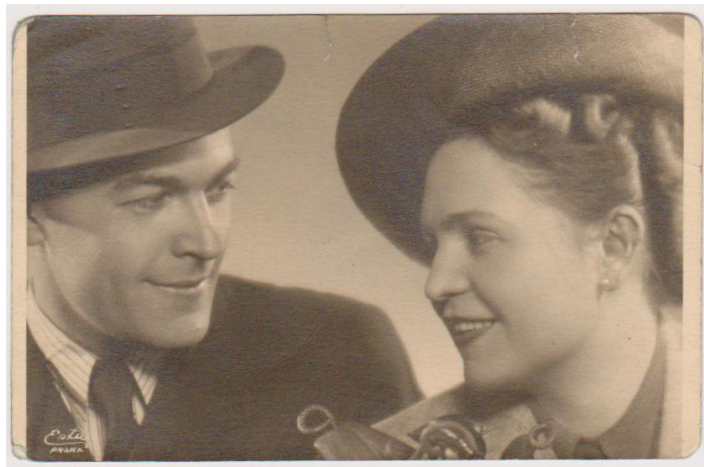
We wish Irma a hearty Mazal Tov, congratulations and very best wishes and hope to have a photograph in the next Newsletter.

Isenberg-Goldstein and Mandell

Madeleine Isenberg sent us a photograph of her Uncle and Aunt, together with a New Year greetings card for 1947 addressed to them in USA. The card was sent from M and A Švarcová

U stare elektrárny 16
(approximately, at the Old
Power Station 16)
Sl.(or St.) Ostrava
to:

Harry Mandel M. D.
408-1st Ave.
New York, NY 100



Roze (nee GOLDSTEIN) and Harry MANDELL, Prague
1938

Libuše, our incredible genealogist, came up with some family detail:

MENDEL MAURY MUDr, (not Mandell Harry)

wife Růžena (Rosa) nee Goldsteinová *1908 - in the book of marriage bans there is a record of their marriage bans dated 30.10.1936,

- groom is single, physician, born in Brno, permanent address in Moravska Ostrava,

- bride is milliner, single, born and living in Brno.

In the registry of commerce from 1928/40, there is a note that Rosa had the firm on Masaryk square No.31 and home address she had in Kazmarok (Slovakia).

However, this information does not agree with family history, summarised again by Madeleine!

"The info about my aunt and uncle as all mixed up, as we discussed. HE was the one from Brno and was not in MO. She was the one living in MO. His name was NEVER Maury, but perhaps misread, since it should have been Harry.

Here's what son Peter wrote:

"I could see how the name MENDEL could get altered to MANDEL/MANDELL later, but I don't know when. I talked to my Dad about the derivation of our surname. It was Mandel. When he came to the US he added the second "L" to assure correct pronunciation. There was never any mention of it being Mendel. While there were the marriage "banns" in MO, does it say where they actually got married? Was Libuse sure about who was living where? I think something is mixed up there. I would have thought Roze was in MO while he was in Brno! I believe he was the one born there. Dad was born and raised in Brno."

Also, their marriage date was 30 Oct 1938, not 1936.

Peter's wife, Jeanne, provided this following info:

" If it helps, there were actually two wedding ceremonies for Harry and Roze, one civil, and one religious. They were on two different days which led to much consternation as to which event to celebrate. I'm guessing they left Czechoslovakia in late 1938, (when Hitler moved in) and left Paris in May of 1940, when the Germans invaded France. I'm not sure where I got the information, but Roze apparently was educated at the Bratislava Fashion Institute, possibly in the late 1920's or early 1930's. Would be fun to see if they have any records of their graduates. Harry attended medical school in Brno. Again, it would be fun to find records of his graduation or matriculation. He studied ophthalmology, and had apparently practiced this, although I don't know if he had subspecialty training in Brno."

From daughter, Susan,

"I remember my mom telling me that she was terrified of the German soldiers that were on the train, but because she was blonde they didn't think that she was Jewish."

Jeanne added, "I remember Roze's descriptions of the SS officers mishandling their packages...effectively smashing their china."

Back to MO, since Libuse's info indicates her address in 1928, she probably had to have "graduated" prior to that.

In another newspaper interview, it mentioned that Rose was in Paris for 15 months. According to Jeanne above, they left Paris in May 1940. So going backward, one would have to calculate that they left Czechoslovakia (from MO? Prague?) a month or so after marrying on 30 Oct 1938.

Incidentally, Harry Mandell had an older brother in London, also a doctor, I think his name was Joseph Mandell, and according to my mother, at some point had a practice in Harley Street, and that even my grandfather saw him once or twice. (If I'm not mistaken, I met his myself when I was very young. I seem to recall dark horn-rimmed glasses!)

Which just shows the difficulty of finding out the "truth" of historical events, even from apparently reliable sources!

Madeleine then found some more information about Roze:

From a Newspaper Interview with Auntie Rozie, in 1951.
Roze Mandell
209 Post Street?

She was making hats since she was a child. Where the rest of the girls were sewing dresses she was making hats for all the children of the neighborhood.

She went to school in Vienna to learn the trade. This consisted of three years of schooling and three years as an apprentice. Good training and desire resulted in a hat salon in Prague. A clientele of socialites and theatrical celebrities brought her wide acclaim. She moved to Paris in 1938 (for 15 months) and opened a salon. She became known as one of the city's most outstanding until the outbreak of WWII.

From Paris, she went to Santiago, Chile, in 1939. She opened a salon for members of embassies and consulates. She was there for one year and then went to New York for a year. Then to San Francisco, CA.

She speaks six languages.

She likes San Francisco because it is a "hat" town. She retired from her business for 5 years to raise her two children. A quote from Rozi:

"I don't think any woman should consider even going shopping without wearing a hat. Well selected shoes, gloves, and a hat can add so much to a woman's appearance."

Tip to buyers – stand up and walk around in a hat before buying it.

Roze specializes in hand appliquéd feather hats – with feather birds, butterflies, and trims. These are works of art.

Do you know any more about Harry/Maury or Roze? If so, please let us know and we will pass the information on to Madeleine

Peter Erben (Eisenberg)

Last week, Peter celebrated his 91st Birthday. Mazal Tov, Bis Hundertundzwanzig!

New Ostrava Attraction

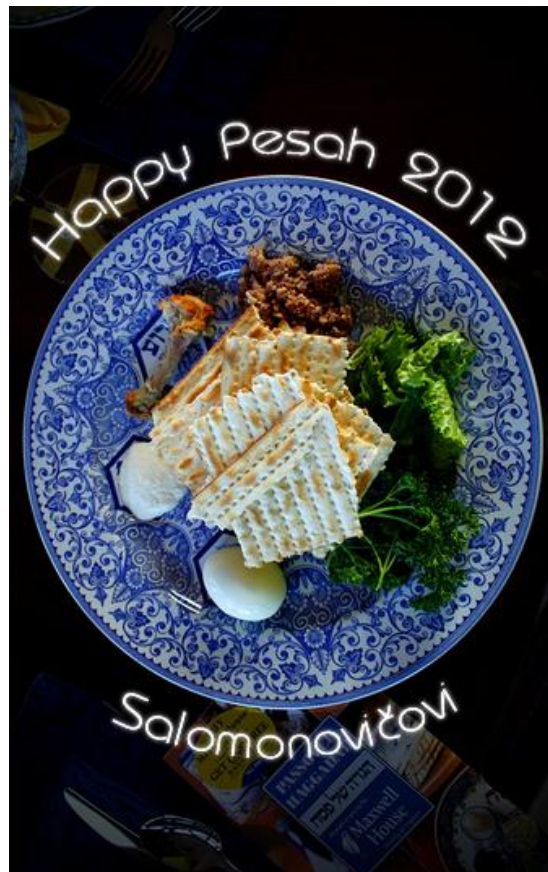
Heinz Vogel tells us about an item from Radio Prague:

A historic blast furnace in the city of Ostrava opened to visitors on Tuesday as the city's new tourist attraction. The 12-storey structure, built in 1911, was used for melting iron ore until 1998. Last year it underwent complete renovation which turned an ore lift into an elevator for visitors. The furnace is part of a large industrial complex that is gradually being adapted into a multi-purpose culture centre.

Miami Beach Holocaust Memorial

Peter Gordy sends us a link to a clip about the Miami Beach Holocaust Memorial:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_xzfn7WCRU

Pesach Greetings



The Ostrava Group, also, wish all our readers a very Happy and Healthy Pesach

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