

Londýnský kroužek Ostraváků
Der Londoner-Ostrauerkreis
Our Ostrava Group

Newsletter #19 Purim, March 2011

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We had not expected to produce another Newsletter so soon but so many exciting things have happened that we could not delay. If this level of excitement continues, we will have to go and lie down in a dark room for several days, to recover!

Ostrava Reunion

The next meeting of Ostravaks will take place on **Sunday May 15th 2011** and our Guest of Honour will be H. E. The Czech Ambassador, Mr Michael Žantovský. Make a note in your diary!

By very kind permission of the Ambassador, we will be holding this meeting **in the Czech Embassy, 26 Kensington Palace Gardens, LONDON W8 4QY**

Cordially invite you to join them on

Sunday 15th May 2011 from 2:30 to 5:00 p.m.

In the

Embassy of the Czech Republic, 28 Kensington Palace Gardens, LONDON W8 4QY

Guest of Honour: H.E. The Czech Ambassador, Mr Michael Žantovský

There will be a presentation of some recent results from the Group with an exhibition of photographs and other documents.

Afternoon Tea will be served and there will be time to meet and chat.

RSVP to David Prager, 15, Mandeville Drive, SURBITON, Surrey, KT6 5DT
00 44 20 8398 5901; email drprager@aol.com

Please let David Prager know as soon as possible if you will be joining us then, together with the number of people in your party, so that we can organise the catering properly. There will be a £5 /head charge to cover the costs of the refreshments etc. Please make your cheques payable to KSDS Cultural and Education Committee.

David Prager's email is drprager@aol.com and his telephone number is 00 44 (0) 20 8398 5901.

Long-lost members of the Huppert family re-united

The fame of our Newsletter spreads ever more widely. Andrea Pitera found it on the web and wrote to us:

Dear Mr Lawson,

I came upon your website and article about Ostrava while performing what I thought would be another fruitless search for some of my father's family. By some miracle I found Ray Heitlinger Huppert's letter. My father was Josef Huppert from Zigeunerwald, a small town outside of Bielsko-Biala. He is a cousin of the Heitlingers. Would you please forward my email address to Mr Huppert. We have searched for decades for any relatives and this is the very first time I have found any mention of a Huppert or Heitlinger. I have letters and photos that I would love to share with him and millions of questions, of course.

I would also be happy to share what I have with you. Part of my family is from Ostrava, part Bielsko, part who knows. So much was lost.
Thank you for helping to keep the memories of our families alive.
Andrea Huppert Pitera

This allowed us to put the Hupperts and Heitlingers whom we already knew in touch with Andrea and her American relatives and suddenly long separated and even forgotten family members are in touch and emails are flying to and from the UK, USA Australia and Israel. Ray Huppert from Australia sent this to David:

... before your old computer gave up his ghost it created great havoc in my life and I must admit that I love every minute of it : You gave my address to my relatives in the USA, who I knew, vaguely, that they existed there but I had no contact with them although I tried as late as 1987.

David, I am getting 2 - 4 emails per day ! My head is spinning with all that info about family and brings back pre-war memories.

I am full of emotions, as you could well imagine. I am a family man and their e-mails brought tears to my eyes.

Thank you so very much David, you brought me great joy.

Leo Wiener adds his emotion – and confusion to the family tree!:

Of course I know exactly who this is. Josef Huppert was the youngest child of my great grand father Abraham Huppert but he was not the son of my great grand mother Emilie Huppert (Wurzel) because they divorced after 10 children. I don't know why. Then Abraham married the widowed half sister of his own son-in-law Josef Heitlinger. She I believe already had two children but Josef Huppert was the only child of this second marriage. I might add all the Hupperts and Wurzels as well as my father's family have a lively history. I don't know the half of it. Really grateful to you . I am contacting Andrea now

Andrea wrote to Ray and copied us to share in the excitement:

I write through the tears. I have before me the translations of letters you wrote to my father and letters from Regina, poems from a Gina to him. Yes, Anna was my grandmother.

Henry Gelbman is still alive, he was Fella's son. He has 5 children, one in Israel, 4 here. I have one brother, Marc Allen, named for Abraham Huppert. Marc has a son and daughter, Jordon and Miriam. So you see, there are still Hupperts. There was another half-brother Arthur Bloch who came to the US before the war. He has a son and daughter here too. My father searched the world for you. He would call information in random cities around the world searching for loved ones. He died at the age of 54 back in 1969. I have always felt my father was a delayed victim of the Nazi monsters.

I have many family pictures that I will scan and send to you. I enclose a postcard I found in an antique store in Paris of the restaurant Bloch in Zigeunerwald. Quite a treasure. I had painted a picture of it from a black and white photo, then found this picture and saw that the colors I imagined were exactly the same.

So much to ask, so much to share with you. I feel I completed his greatest dream in finding you.

This is a most extraordinary day. I will send more later.

Later, she wrote:

I received a letter from Julie Blau which included photos of Henry Heitlinger (Ray/Otto's brother and Josef's son). She was partner to Henry. I will, of course, scan those too.

This gets so much more exciting every day. Klara has always been such a mystery to us.

My father spoke of her with great love and endless sadness. We, Marc and I, have never had a past history. Each tidbit that you each contribute is a priceless gift. I stare at the family tree in awe. I have a family. This is beyond the answer to my dreams.

If that is not enough excitement, Riva Kelton (part of the “new” American family) writes of a family connection to the MaHaRaL of Prague:

Rabbi Jehuda Loew Ben Bezalel (1525 - 1609) (MaHaRal of Prague) m. Perla Shmelkes-Reich (1528 Prague - 5 May 1610 Prague)
Vogele Loew (1555 – 28, Jan. 1629, Prague) m. Rabbi Isak Ha-Cohen (d.30, May 1624, Prague)
Chava Ha-Cohen (1580, Prague – 1651, Sofia on her way to Palestine) m. Rabbi Abraham Samuel Bachrach (1575 – 1615, Gernsheim)(Rabbi in Worms from 1606-1615)
Rabbi Moses Samson (Simson) Bachrach (1607, Pohorelice, Moravia (or Worms) – 1670, Worms) m. Dobrusch Phobus (b. Ungarisch-Brod, Moravia – 1662, Worms)
Rabbi Jair Chayim Bachrach (1638, Leipnik, Moravia – 1702, Worms) (the Chavas Yoir, named for responsa he wrote) m. Sarah (Dinah Sorle) Brillin
Rabbi Samson (Simson) Bachrach (b. 1658) m. Unknown
Malka Bachrach (b. 1680) m. Rabbi Zalman Shptitz (president of Beit Din in Eisenstadt)
Sari Shptitz (b. 1702) m. Jacob Knopfelmacher (b. 1700 - d. before 1739)(“the master”, chief rabbi in Mehrin)
Nissel Knopfelmacher (b. 1722) m. Rabbi Moses Knopfelmacher (b. 1718 - d. 1798, Holesov)(younger brother of her father)
Rabbi Mair (Markus) Knopfelmacher (b. 1753, Zlin & Wsetin) wife unknown
Elias Knopfelmacher (b. 1780, Police and Holesov) m. Joanna (Esther) Berger (b. 1791 - d. 1839)
Moritz Knopfelmacher (b. 1823 - d. 1899, Deutschhause) m. Rosa Knopfelmacher (cousin)
Markus Knopfelmacher (Apr 1863 – 1942, Auschwitz) m. Katherine Spitzer (11/11/1863, Olmütz . Moravia)
Friedrich Knopfelmacher (10/6/1889, Moraska Ostrava - 1970, Israel) m. Anna Pollatsschek (10/31/1895, Polna, Bohemia – 9/3/73, Nahariya)
Hanna Knopfelmacher (5/19/20, Moraska Ostrava) m. Otto Heitlinger
Eva Knopfelmacher - (later Aviva Kelton) (2/8/27, Moraska Ostrava) m. Ronald Kelton (9/30/30, Queens, NY)
Riva Kelton (b. 1967, Flushing, NY)
Rana Kelton (b. 1973, Queens)

We hope that many – indeed all – of the Huppert Heitlinger families will be able to join us on 15th May so that we, too, can meet them and try to sort out all the family connections and shed a tear or two of joy.

Madeleine Isenberg’s family

Madeleine, too, has discovered more family members:

I discovered that this relative that I barely knew anything about, also lived in MO prior to WW II. His name was variously Jenö or Jozi and I think Yosef in Hebrew, GOLDMANN. His wife was named Jutta (nee LONDON) GOLDMANN. He was born in 15 Nov 1915 she in 1918. They were killed either 1942 or 1943 in Kosov. His profession was just given as "clerk."



It is interesting how similar he looks to my father, even with the light colored eyes. My father's parents were Leopold and Gizella (nee GOLDMAN) GOLDSTEIN. She was the daughter of Yitzchak GOLDMANN and Rachel STEINER. Rachel died in childbirth with her third child -- the one after my grandmother. Subsequently, Yitzchak married her sister Rivka STEINER and had 15 more children. One of these 15 is the aforementioned person. So this "uncle" was actually 5 1/2 years younger than his nephew -- my father Henri GOLDSTEIN.

Judita Freundlichova writes:

Dear David, my best wishes peace and health necessary for happiness in all coming years. Thank you very much for the information about the Ostravaks. My father Max Silberstein who died in 1953 knew all Ostravaks and they all knew him. He was born in 1887 in Vitkovice. but the whole family perished in conc camps, only one of his sister,s son who lived in Germany, came to the Czech Rep. and then with his wife were lucky to get to Israel. In Israel I met Moše Susser twice in Nathanya, he was the step son of my faher,s brother Alfred. Alfred and 5 brothers and sisters as well as their children died in Auschwitz. I will try to get some more optimistic information about the Ostravaks. and to get some information from Vsetín too. I know a lot of names you mentioned, but I was 8 when we returned from Terezín and most of the people who surived went in 1947 and 1948 to Israel or other countries and as you know, we lived in a terrible time under the communist regime. My husband, an Ostravak too, survived thanks to Sir Winton.

Auerbach letter

Peter Auerbach received an interesting letter following the laying of *Stolpersteine* in memory of his family

December 23rd, 2010
Frýdek-Místek

Dear Sir:

Let us send you warm greetings from the Czech Republic. We learned about your visit in Ostrava from television and newspapers and that is why we decided to contact you.

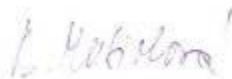
Our mother Božena Majková-Musiolová was employed as a shop-assistant at your relatives in Vítkovice for many years (she died in 1965) and we were told about her work and your family quite often. We had even had some photographs of her and your family members, but they were all lost long time ago. Our mother also had an address of Mr. Erich in London and when she died, we wrote a letter there, but it returned to us as undeliverable.

In recent days, we visited Vítkovice and saw the cubes that were built there at the house of your relatives to commemorate sad fate of its inhabitants to us as well as to the future generations. However, we are really happy to know that some members of your family have survived and have descendants. We would like to know whether you are Mr. Erich's son or grandson and whether anyone in your family can speak Czech. Me and my sister do not speak English, but children and grandchildren do.

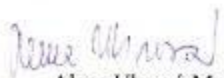
Because Christmas and New Year are approaching, we would like to wish you and your family a pleasant holiday and all the good health and in the next years.

Awaiting your reply

Yours sincerely



Božena Musiolová
Krestova 2, 70030 Ostrava-Hrabůvka



Alena Uhrová-Musiolová
Janáčkova 157, 73802 Frýdek-Místek

Memories of the Ostrava trip, by Hana Muzika Kahn

Hana was part of the group which visited Ostrava and Prague last year. Memories of that trip came up in a rather unexpected place:

On my most recent visit to Guatemala this month, where I collect oral histories, including people's experiences of the massacres in the 1980's, I found myself exchanging with them the experiences of my family during WW11 and the impact it had on me to go with our group last summer to Ostrava and to Auschwitz. I have never before discussed all this with other people, and I realized again how much the trip had meant for me, and what it means to be able to share this experience with people in parallel circumstances. Your efforts have far-reaching consequences.

Best wishes,
Hana

Ostravské Kalendarium 2010

Dr Przybylová, the Ostrava City Archivist, kindly sent me a copy of the Ostrava Annual report, and our *Stolperstein* project features in it:

27. června

- v dlažbě před domy, kde před 2. sv. válkou žili v Ostravě Židé, kteří se stali obětmi holocaustu, nechali jejich potomci umístit na své vlastní náklady mosazné destičky, tzv. Stolpersteine. U této příležitosti přicestovala do Ostravy skupina příbuzných obětí holocaustu z Velké Británie, Kanady a USA. V rámci čtyřdenní návštěvy byli přijati zástupci vedení města, židovské obce, zhlédli díla židovských autorů v Domě umění a vyslechli koncert v Rothschildově zámečku ve Vítkovicích

Stolpersteine

A number of people have told us that they might be interested in laying either *Stolpersteine* or a plaque in memory of members of their family murdered in the Holocaust. We need about 10 *Stolpersteine* or plaques before it is practical to make all the arrangements, so if you are interested, please let us know. Heinz Vogel has kindly agreed to co-ordinate this so please get in touch with him. His email is: heinz@vogel.org.uk and his telephone number is +44 (0)1932 849 405.

A Handbag

Those of you who know Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of being Ernest* will understand the scorn that can be expressed in the words "A handbag!!" will be surprised at the interest roused when Mrs Deborah Brown, who had found us through the internet, told us about a handbag she had. Inside were two ticket stubs from concerts at the Royal Albert Hall from 1947 and four coins:



Deborah now lives close to our synagogue but many years ago she had lived in a flat in North London and she had found the handbag and contents in the flat. The previous occupant of that flat had been Otto and Edith Rosenberg, from Ostrava. Deborah had only recently found the handbag once again (it had been put away in

a box and forgotten), and tried to find something about Edith (whose bag it must have been). She contacted us and the bag and contents are now in the Jewish Museum in Prague.

Edith was a sculptress and also wrote a book of “stories” or memories of the holocaust:



Cover photograph of a sculpture "Auschwitz" by the author.

About the author:

I grew up in an industrial town in Czechoslovakia. We were a happy family in spite of our differences.

Mother was interested in politics and attached to father's old established factory. Father collected art objects, loved operas and wrote poetry. My younger twin brothers and I shared his passion for the arts and travelling.

I studied the first year at the University in Vienna, the following at the Sorbonne and finished my studies in Prague, where I got my degree of Doctor of Philology. The same day I married a lawyer, my classmate of Secondary School.

I had always been rather frail. In 1932 I had to go to a sanatorium with tuberculosis and was cured only shortly before Hitler marched into Czechoslovakia.

The Gestapo immediately confiscated all our belongings, as my husband had been on their list of Nazi enemies. He escaped to England and joined the Czech army in France. The Gestapo, having threatened me with death by hanging, sent me to the concentration camp of Lodz in Poland with one of the first Jewish transports. My widowed mother volunteered to accompany me.

Having worked there in factories over three years, we were deported to Auschwitz, where my mother was gassed on arrival. I stayed there several weeks till I was sent to the concentration camp Oederan, near Dresden, to work in a munitions factory. In spring 1945 we were deported in open trucks to Dachau to be exterminated. Because of the advancing Allies the transport was diverted to the Czech camp, Terezin.

From there I was sent to a hospital in Prague. After my release I was reunited with my husband in England in August 1945.

Peter Erben

Peter Erben (geb. Eisenberg, who lives in Ashkelon, Israel, will celebrate his 90th Birthday on 29th March in Ostrava.

Happy Birthday, Peter!

Eva Erben was not even worth a bullet

Eva Löwidt met Peter Eisenberg originally in Terezín. After the war they met by chance in Prague, fell in love, married in Paris and live happily ever after in Ashkelon.

Eva escaped from a death march in 1945 and was found by a couple of German soldiers. One of them was about to shoot her when his colleague told him not to waste the bullet as Eva was going to die very soon anyway. In fact, Eva was rescued and hidden by a Czech family until the war ended.

Eva has written her remarkable life story in Hebrew and had it published. It has been translated into German, French and Italian. She has also written a different version in Czech, which was also published. For the past 18 months, Eva has been working with David to produce an English version, combining the material from the Ivrit and Czech versions, correcting the mistakes and adding much new material. It will be published by Imaginative Minds Limited as *Not even worth a bullet* and we hope it will be available for the Ostrava Reunion on 15th May.



Eva, 1939 in Prag

Arthur Blech

We found the following obituary of Arthur Blech

Blech, Arthur

June 28, 1923 - January 13, 2011

Former President Richard Nixon's tax accountant from 1969 through 1974, the President's brother, Donald Nixon's tax accountant, General Partner of a limited partnership representing Hughes Aircraft Company in the development of the Marina City Club complex, passed away at his home in Los Angeles at the age of 87. Arthur Blech was born in Ostrava, Czechoslovakia, and was able to escape one week after the Germans marched in the country in March 1939. His Mother, Father and two sisters were killed in a Concentration Camp by the Nazis.

He made his way to England and enrolled in Whittingham College in Brighton. The following year he enrolled in Leeds Technical School.

In 1945 he became a Deputy Censor in Germany for the U.S. Military.

In 1947 he was hired by Gulf Oil in Venezuela to work as a statistician.

He relocated to Fort Worth, Texas in late 1947 and obtained a business degree from Texas Christian University in 1949, while still working for Gulf Oil and St. Louis Waste Material, as a bookkeeper. He then passed the CPA exam.

He moved to Los Angeles in 1955 and set up a tax accounting practice where he was involved with many high profile clients. In addition to his accounting practice he invested in commercial real estate and published two books. The first one, Causes of

Anti Semitism- A critique of the Bible, and the second book, Towards a New Civilization.

Arthur Blech is survived by his sons Robert, Raymond, and Richard, and a daughter Jenifer.

He was buried at Westwood Village Cemetery.

Does anyone know any more about him?

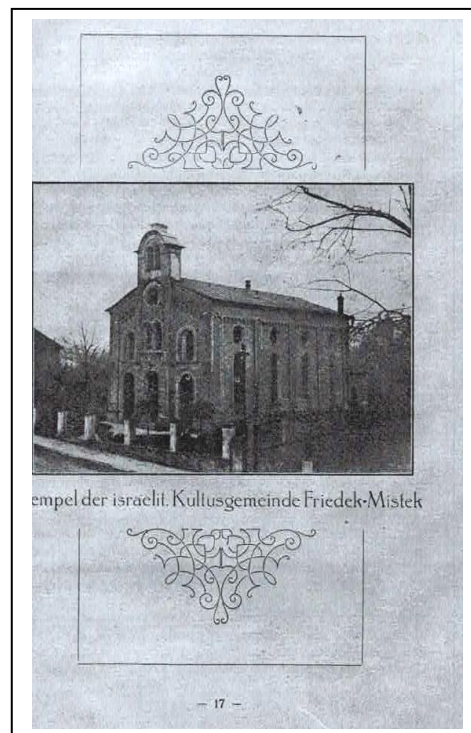
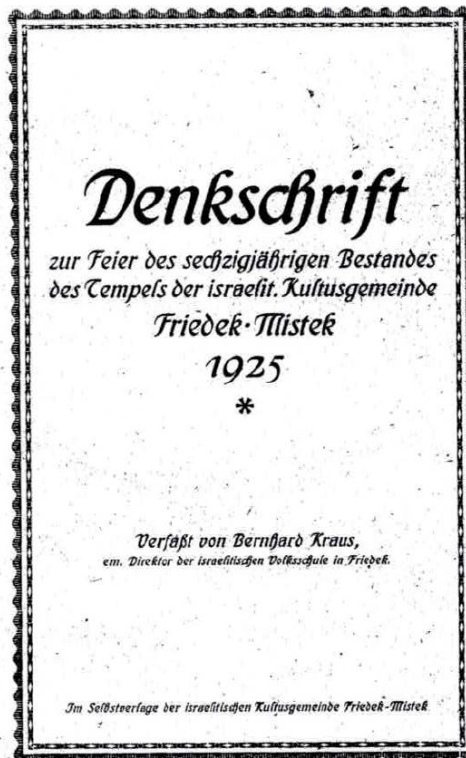
Eric Strach

We are sorry to report the passing of Eric Strach on 20th January. Guido Alis says that he was 96 and until a few months ago he was in good but frail health. We wish the family a Long Life.

Brother Rufeisen and Michael Honey

Michael Honey (geb. Honigwachs) recently heard a lecture by Brother Rufeisen, a catholic priest, in Israel. He is Oswald Rufeisen who was hidden in a convent at the end of the war and became a catholic. His life story has been written by Nehama Tec and published as *In the Lion's Den*. Oswald was related to the well-known Rufeisen family of Ostrava.

Charlottesville USA and Frydek- Mistek



The synagogue in Charlottesville, VA, has a *sefer torah* from Frydek Mistek, through the Czech Memorial Scrolls Trust. Rob Capon has sent us a great deal of information about the scroll and their researches into Frydek's Jewish community.

Digitising Czech records

Daniela Torsh has written an interesting article about the digitisation of Czech records:

In a move that will revolutionise the future of Jewish genealogy, the Czech National Archives have begun scanning their Vital Records collection of 4,000 volumes of Jewish births, deaths and marriages.

This is phase one of a project to put these records which the Czechs call *Matriky* on the internet for public access.

The *Matriky* which means "registers" in the Czech language are currently available for viewing only on microfilm in the reading room of the Prague 7 building in Holešovice which is close by the famous Prague Hradčany castle - the ancient palace of the Czech rulers.

Now for the first time the *Matriky* collection is being scanned and will be uploaded to the website of the Czech National Archives in 2011. No final release date has been announced as yet. Once the information is on the internet it will be possible to transcribe it into English from the Gothic *Kursive* script which is hard to decipher without learning how to read it.

The digitisation is the brainchild of an archivist and historian, Dr Lenka Matušiková who is in charge of all the religious records held by the National Archives. Dr Matušiková has had a long association with the Prague Jewish Community and is a Board Member and contributor to *Judaica Bohemiae* the biannual publication of the Prague Jewish Museum. She is also on the Board of the Terezín Initiative based in the former concentration camp.

Progress with our Archiving

Dr Jiří Jung has been working for about 12 months now on organising our electronic archive and entering the information into the data base of the Jewish Museum in Prague. He has completed about half of it, supported by funds from the Jewish Museum. Those funds are now exhausted, so our Group funds are now being used and we have enough to cover about another 6 months of Jiří's time. All donations to support this activity will be welcome.

Yad Vashem

Leo Wiener tells us that he has been approached by a lawyer searching for heirs to a property in Ostrava and who found Leo (who appears to be the sole remaining heir) through depositions he had made in Yad VaShem. Leo urges everyone to make such depositions about their relatives murdered by the Nazis both to ensure the record is as complete as possible and also because, like his case, people might want to trace heirs or relatives.

More Ostravaks?

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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