

# Newsletter

1 2015

## EXHIBITIONS IN THE ROBERT GUTTMANN GALLERY

### **The Orient in Bohemia? Jewish refugees during the First World War (28 August 2014 – 1 February 2015)**

Our recent exhibition on the fate of refugees during the First World War came to an end on the first day of February. This show at the Robert Guttman Gallery commemorated the centenary of the outbreak of this conflict. Its focus was on the lives of Jewish



Arranged photograph from the barack camp in Německý Brod (Deutschbrod, now Havlíčkův Brod), 1915–1917. © JMP

refugees in the Bohemian lands against the backdrop of the state's refugee policy, the emergence of refugee camps and the activities of aid organizations. On view were photographs that capture the life of refugees, refugee housing and camps, many of which have not been previously shown in the Czech Republic. The exhibition also featured narrated excerpts from period chronicles and newspapers.

### **Shattered Hopes: Postwar Czechoslovakia as a Crossroads of Jewish Life (25 February – 23 August 2015)**

The defeat of Hitler's Germany and the end of the Second World War in Europe also brought an end to the genocide of people who had been designated as Jews or Jewish "Mischlinge" on the basis of laws that were in force in territories under the control of Nazi Germany and its allies. Survivors from Czechoslovakia gradually returned home to start a new life.

This new exhibition draws attention to little-known aspects of the post-war history of Czechoslovakia, focusing on the return of concentration camp survivors and the migration of tens of thousands of Jewish refugees across the country. It follows on thematically from the previous exhibition, *The Orient in Bohemia? Jewish Refugees during the First World War*, which described the twentieth century as an era of refugees.



The exhibition curator Martin Šmok with the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Michaela Marksová-Tominová and the Jewish Museum director Leo Pavlát at the opening show

Among the items on display are unique documents and photographs that show the revival of religious life in Bohemia immediately after the Second World War. There are also video recordings of interviews with people who recollect this era.

The opening show took place on the 25th of February 2015 and was introduced by the exhibition curator and documentary film-maker Martin Šmok (USC Shoah Foundation).

Jewish Museum in Prague – Robert Guttmann Gallery, U Staré školy 3, Prague 1  
Open daily (apart from Saturdays and Jewish holidays), 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.



Celebrating Hanukkah in Prague, December 1945

## Under preparation

*Auschwitz Album*  
(18 May – 20 September 2015)

*This exhibition will show copies of all of the nearly 200 photographs from the 1944 'Auschwitz Album', a unique document that records the systematic liquidation of Europe's Jews. Although most of the people in the photographs are citizens of pre-war Czechoslovakia from Sub-Carpathia, this album has not previously been shown in the Czech Republic. The exhibition will be on view at the House of Photography, a specialized gallery that is part of the Prague City Gallery. This newly reconstructed two-level exhibition venue is an ideal place for an exhibition of this type. Located in the centre of Prague, it was designed by the famous architect Friedrich Lehmann and dates from 1937. The exhibition partner is the Jewish Museum in Prague, which will provide new prints from negatives taken in 1947 and will be financially contributing to the realization of the show.*

*House of Photography, Revoluční 5, Prague 1*



Photograph from the Auschwitz Album

## SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES

### Seminar on refugees in modern history and in history teaching (16–17 January 2015)

The aim of this two-day seminar was to familiarize teachers at Czech schools with the topic of refugee issues in the twentieth and present centuries by focusing on the example of Jewish refugees. The seminar came about as a response to the fact that the topic of migration and refugees almost has no role in the current Czech curricula and educational practice. The immediate impetus for holding the seminar was the possibility of tying in with the Jewish Museum's exhibition at the Robert Guttman Gallery, *The Orient in Bohemia? Jewish Refugees during the First World War*, the focus of which was on the Czech people's first major encounter – now almost forgotten – with refugees.



Teachers at the exhibition *The Orient in Bohemia? Jewish Refugees during the First World War*

In conjunction with a visit to this exhibition, the seminar involved a combination of lectures and discussions with experts, as well as a presentation and testing of methodological materials and a meeting with refugees and people working for refugee aid organizations.

In addition to exploring specific waves of Jewish refugees to the Czech lands – including Jews fleeing Germany and Austria in the 1930s and refugees after the Second World War – the seminar also addressed the topic in general with regard to the definition of a refugee, their status in nation states, international conventions on refugee protection and national asylum law.

Due to unprecedented interest from teachers, the Jewish Museum in Prague is planning a second seminar on refugees and migration (provisionally for April). These seminars are being held with the kind support of the Heinrich Böll Foundation.



### The Holocaust topic in the Czech media – a seminar for journalists (9 March 2015)

A seminar for journalists was held on the 9th of March by the Jewish Museum in partnership with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and the USC Shoah Foundation. Those taking part in the seminar reflected on the way the Holocaust (Shoah) is presented in the Czech media and discussed how specialist memorial and educational institutions can contribute to a better understanding of this topic in a historical and current context, and help improve the way it is dealt with by journalists. The seminar was introduced by the Jewish Museum director Leo Pavlát and included

a paper by the deputy director Michal Frankl on historical anniversaries. The *Lidové noviny* journalist Judita Matyášová gave a practical demonstration of specific journalistic work. Martin Šmok (USC Shoah Foundation) spoke about how anti-Jewish stereotypes can be maintained by journalists. The well-attended seminar ended with a discussion between journalists and representatives of memory institutions.



### Archival traces of Jewish history and the Holocaust in the Czech Republic

Joint workshop of the EHRI, Yerusha and the “Frontier of Memory” project for archivists (30–31 March 2015)

The aim of this workshop was to evaluate the state of archival research and documentation of Jewish history and of the Holocaust in the Czech Republic and to encourage deeper co-operation with ongoing international projects. It brought together in discussion professionals from Czech regional and central archives, archives focusing on Jewish history and the Shoah, and the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure, as well as historians from the Czech Republic and abroad. The workshop also sought to inform Czech archivists about the best ways of co-operation and to increase their awareness of international research infrastructures.

The workshop was part of three inter-connected archival research projects that are being implemented by the Jewish Museum in Prague:

- **European Holocaust Research Infrastructure** (EHRI), a project for putting together an extensive online portal with information on Holocaust-related collections in Europe ([www.ehri-project.eu](http://www.ehri-project.eu))
- **Yerusha**, a project supported by the Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe, which focuses on Judaica research in archival collections ([www.yerusha.eu](http://www.yerusha.eu))
- **Frontier of Memory**, a project supported by the Claims Conference, which focuses on documenting the names and fate of Holocaust victims from the Sudetenland ([www.claimscon.org](http://www.claimscon.org))

The workshop held in co-operation with, and on the premises of, the National Archives presented – among other things – the results of the EHRI project and the plans to build an online portal of archival sources relating to Jewish history as part of the Yerusha project. Czech archivists at the workshop drew attention to the types of sources that contribute to a knowledge of Jewish history and the Holocaust, and became acquainted with innovative digital projects and digital community archives. Neal Guthrie (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum) showcased the World Memory Project, a crowd-sourcing initiative that involves transcribing the names of Holocaust victims from archival records. A special panel was devoted to the documentation of the names of Holocaust victims with a particular focus on the border regions. The workshop showed that there was a further need to develop co-operation between archivists and specialized research institutions and infrastructures, and to support digital technologies and their knowledge in the field of archives.



Journalist Judita Matyášová addressing the seminar participants



## WHAT'S NEW AT THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE

### TLV24

The first show to be held this year at the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture was an exhibition of photography by Pavlína Schultz, which opened on the 20th of January. Together with the architect Daniel Ziss, Pavlína Schultz is the co-author of TLV24 – a photography project that seeks to capture the everyday life of the city of Tel Aviv and its inhabitants. This exhibition focuses on several Tel Aviv locations, showing how they transform during the day, what role they play in the life of the city, what kind of atmosphere they have, and what makes them specific to Tel Aviv.



From the exhibition of photography by Pavlína Schulz

### And There Was Fire in the Centre of the Earth

A key event in February was the screening of the documentary *And There Was Fire in the Centre of the Earth* (shown on the 17th of February). This film by the Austrian director and writer Bernhard Hetzenauer focuses on the psychologist Vera Kohn, who managed to escape from Prague to Ecuador in 1939, where she made it as an actress (at first in Czech, later in Spanish). Despite proving a success on the stage, in her private life she suffered from schizophrenia. Exploring the depths of her soul led to an interest in psychology, a subject that later became her profession. As a psychotherapist, however, she still had to deal with the trauma of the horrors she had escaped from, and had to confront the psychological scarring caused by the Holocaust – on both the victims and perpetrators, their friends and families. The film was presented by Natascha Grilj, the director of the Austrian Cultural Forum in Prague.



A still from the documentary film *And There Was Fire in the Centre of the Earth*

## In memoriam Jiří Fiedler

On the 16th of March, the Jewish Museum held a memorial evening to commemorate what would have been the 80th birthday of the acclaimed translator and expert on Jewish monuments, Jiří Fiedler, whose violent death last year affected us all very deeply. The main protagonists of the event were the translator Dušan Karpatský and the Jewish Museum director Leo Pavlát, who were his close friends from the pre-Velvet Revolution years. Excerpts from Jiří's private correspondence were read out by the actress and politician Táňa Fischerová, and recollections were exchanged by the guests during the course of the evening. Far from a sombre occasion, the atmosphere of this memorial event was more a reflection of the extraordinarily generous, incredibly witty and imaginative personality of Jiří Fiedler. His death was not only a tragic loss for his loved ones, but also an irreplaceable loss for the field of research into the Jewish monuments of Bohemia and Moravia.



Jiří Fiedler

## Our Twentieth Century – big and small history through the eyes of witnesses

The “Our Twentieth Century” series, moderated by Petr Sokol, has met with great visitor interest. This is a series of monthly programmes in which a different pair of Holocaust survivors and witnesses recollect the years before, during and after the Second World War. The series provides the general public with the opportunity of personal encounters with people who faced Nazi persecution and who also suffered under Communism as a result of their Jewish origin, or who have lived the difficult life of emigrants. Their recollections are recorded and later posted on the [Jewish Museum's YouTube channel](#).

In the first months of 2015, the series presented Eva Keulemansová-Smolková, Helga Hošková, Edita Kosinová, Doris Grozdanovičová, Eva Štichová and Dagmar Lieblová.



Eva Štichová and Dagmar Lieblová with the moderator Petr Sokol

## Invitation to the next meeting in the "Our Twentieth Century" series

Wednesday 29 April, 6 p.m.

A meeting with **Michaela Vidláková and Pavel Werner.**

Jewish Museum in Prague – Department for Education and Culture  
Maiselova 15, Prague 1, 3rd floor. (Tel. 222 325 172)  
Free entry.

## Exhibitions at the Department for Education and Culture

### Memory, Remembering, Commemoration...

(11 March – 14 April)

The work of participants of the Terezín Memorial's 16th art competition.

Jewish Museum in Prague – Department for Education and Culture  
Maiselova 15, Prague 1, 3rd floor. (Tel. 222 325 172)  
Open: MON–THU 2–4 p.m., FRI 10 a.m.–12 p.m., during evening events and by appointment

## VOLUNTEERS FOR THE MUSEUM

For a number of years we have been running a volunteer programme in which people offer to help out in our various departments – for example at the Department for Education and Culture (organizing events), the Archives and the Collections Department. In March 2015, volunteers began to provide assistance for our exhibitions – specifically at the Pinkas Synagogue, where they show visitors around and help them to find the names of victims of the Shoah from Bohemia and Moravia on the walls.



Volunteers help out at the Pinkas Synagogue exhibition (8 March 2015)

## BRINGING TOGETHER ARCHIVAL FRAGMENTS

### Presentation of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure in Berlin

At the end of the war, facing imminent defeat, the Nazis destroyed a number of papers and documents on the extermination of Europe's Jews. In the Terezín (Theresienstadt) ghetto, for example, records of deportations to death camps were liquidated and the ashes of more than thirty thousand people who perished there were disposed of. All records of the victims' deaths were supposed to be destroyed. In Terezín, however, a number of prisoners gathered evidence of their persecution, as well as of the activities of fellow inmates. One such initiative was the preservation of deportation lists, which the Nazis had intended to keep secret. In Prague immediately after the liberation, for example, a "documentation operation" was organized for the purpose of collecting documents and testimonies from survivors. Soon after, however, these documents were split up: some remained at the Jewish Museum in Prague, but most were shipped to Palestine and are now kept in Israeli archives – mainly at Yad Vashem but also, in part, at Beit Terezín at Kibbutz Givat Haim Ichud. An important collection of documents was put together in the Terezín Memorial and at the National Archives in Prague; other materials are scattered across archives throughout the world. As such, researchers or students who wish to write a paper on, for example, health care in the Terezín ghetto, propaganda, the role of religious life or the lectures that were given at Terezín, have to visit several archives in various countries where the keeping of records is subject to various rules. The extant materials in Holocaust archives are usually highly fragmentary.

The aim of the **European Holocaust Research Infrastructure** (EHRI) is to combine and provide access to information about the widely dispersed Holocaust archive materials. After more than four years of work, twenty institutions from thirteen countries in the European Union and Israel have developed an extensive online portal with a database of Holocaust-related archival material. This project is based on the innovative use of digital humanities and supports new methodological approaches to Holocaust research. The EHRI portal (<https://portal.ehri-project.eu/>) offers access to information on Holocaust-related material held in 1,828 archives in 51 different countries. It contains 152,673 descriptions of archival items, including fonds, collections, individual files and documents. It is likely that the EHRI portal will change the way researchers look for Holocaust-related information and prepare for visits to archives or for research into digitized materials accessible online. Research users also have an opportunity to annotate descriptions of archival materials, thus helping to enhance the database.



Presentation of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure in Berlin



On the 26th of March 2015, the results of the EHRI project were presented at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities in the presence of representatives of the European Commission, education ministries and experts. Michal Frankl (head of the Jewish Museum in Prague's Department for Jewish Studies and History of Antisemitism) took part in the presentation, which was also attended by other museum staff who had contributed to the project implementation.

At the event, Robert-Jan Smits (European Commission Director-General for Research and Innovation) announced the European Commission's decision to finance the next phase of the EHRI project as part of the Horizon 2020 research programme. The European Commission will provide eight million euros to develop the project and to extend it to other countries, particularly in Eastern Europe. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum will also be an EHRI partner. In addition to supporting Holocaust research, the European Commission also considers the EHRI to be a model for other digital humanities projects – thanks to its innovative approach towards integrating and providing access to digital data, and in view of its social impact.

In the second phase of the EHRI project, the Jewish Museum will be directing the sub-project "New Perspectives on Digital Archives" which, together with other partners, will involve developing new methods and tools for presenting digital archive data and providing access to specialist documents on the EHRI portal.

### The Terezín Research Guide

As part of the EHRI project, the Jewish Museum in Prague – in collaboration with other institutions (including the Terezín Memorial in the Czech Republic) – has created a detailed research guide, which brings together in an online format materials that are scattered across several archives. This guide to Terezín archive sources (<https://portal.ehri-project.eu/guides/Terezin>) provides access in a single location to an extensive database of 22,488 descriptions of archival items from Yad Vashem, Beit Terezín, the Jewish Museum in Prague and the Terezín Memorial. The Terezín Research Guide is an example of the possibilities that the tools for digital humanities can provide to archivists and researchers.

The data is connected through a set of keywords and can be accessed through the narrative research guide. For example, a search using the keyword "Escapes" produces a list of 25 archival items relating to attempts by prisoners to escape from the ghetto – from data kept at the Jewish Museum in Prague, the Terezín Memorial and Beit Terezín. The detailed cataloguing of sites inside the Terezín ghetto enables researchers not only to search on the basis of individual barracks, houses or other buildings, but also to view these documents on a map. In this way, for example, it is possible to show about 800 archival descriptions from all four archives that relate to the Magdeburg barracks, which housed the Jewish "self-government". As the EHRI staff team has linked the relevant data to records from the database of Terezín prisoners, it is also possible to do a structured search based on prisoner names (in accordance with personal data protection, however, only for the names of prisoners who were murdered). Relating to the name Jacob Edelstein – the first "Jewish Elder" in Terezín – for example, there are a total of 109 files in all the archives. The archival material can also be accessed through a structured overview of the "Jewish Council of Elders" – the Jewish leadership of the ghetto who were subject to the authority of the Nazis and had to carry out their orders. A total of 108 documents and files, for example, can be found when searching the Freizeitgestaltung (Leisure Activities) department, which organized cultural life in the ghetto with the consent of the Nazis. The Terezín Research Guide is intended not only for professional researchers who are familiar with the history of the Terezín ghetto, but also for general users. This is why it also provides a brief summary of the history of the ghetto, a time line and sample documents. Hopefully, the guide will arouse new interest in the Terezín ghetto and will finally result in its history being presented in a fresh, comprehensive way.



## THE GISI FLEISCHMANN STORY AT THE SVĚTOZOR CINEMA

The Světozor Cinema in Prague showed the Czech premiere of the documentary *Gisi* on the 20th of January 2015. This film tells the story of a remarkable woman who believed that she could have stopped the Holocaust if only she had managed to raise enough funds. Gisi Fleischmann was the head of a group in Bratislava that sought to bring an end to the transports to the Auschwitz death camp. She would have remained forgotten if it were not for the dozens of letters she sent out around the world in an effort to raise two million dollars – the exact sum demanded by the Nazi authorities as a ransom for their promise to rescue some of Europe’s Jewry. The premiere was jointly organized by the Jewish Museum in Prague, the Embassy of the State of Israel and the Jewish Community of Prague to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

## OPEN DAY AT THE PINKAS SYNAGOGUE AND THE ROBERT GUTTMANN GALLERY

The Jewish Museum in Prague and the Terezín Initiative paid tribute to the memory of the Jews from Bohemia and Moravia who were incarcerated in the Terezín Family Camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau and murdered in the gas chambers on the night of 8-9 March 1944 – the largest single murder of Czechoslovak citizens during the Second World War. In total, there were 3,792 victims from the Terezín Family Camp. The commemorative event started with a memorial ceremony that was held by the Terezín Initiative at the Pinkas Synagogue Memorial to the Victims of the Shoah from Bohemia and Moravia. The synagogue opened its doors free of charge at eleven in the morning. Three guided tours were held during the day. Free admission was also provided to the new exhibition at the Robert Guttmann Gallery *Shattered Hopes: Postwar Czechoslovakia as a Crossroads of Jewish Life*.



Gisi Fleischmann (photo from the family archive)



Museum director Leo Pavlát speaking at the memorial ceremony on 8 March 2015

## GALA CONCERT IN THE SPANISH SYNAGOGUE

### International Holocaust Remembrance Day

A gala concert was held at the Spanish Synagogue in Prague to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day on the 27th of January 2015. The M. Nostitz Quartet performed works by Haydn, Zikmund Schul, Josef Suk and Ernest Bloch. The opening

speeches were given by Michal Borges (chairman of the board of the Foundation for Holocaust Victims) and Leo Pavlát (director of the Jewish Museum in Prague). The concert took place with support from the Foundation for Holocaust Victims.



### INTERVIEWS WITH HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS LIVING IN THE USA

As we mentioned in the last newsletter (4/2014), the Jewish Museum's Shoah History Department recorded interviews last November with Holocaust survivors and witnesses who are now living in the USA. This was done in collaboration with the Jewish Museum's Archives and as part of an oral history project. At present, the oral history collection has about 1,300 testimonies, which are of great interest to the broader research community.



Peter Demetz, 2015



Rebecca Fried and Robert B. Fried, 2015

We are continuing to record interviews with survivors from the former Czechoslovakia. Testimonies were added to our oral history collection in February and March 2015 – namely from Peter Demetz, Rebecca Fried, Paul Graf Loewner and George Wolf. We would like to thank all the survivors for telling their stories and for providing photographs.

Our thanks also go to the other survivors, now resident in the USA (New York City), for providing original documents. George Sachs kindly donated documents and photographs of the Sachs and Koretz families, which are now part of the collection of



personal papers that is kept in the Jewish Museum's Archives. Marion Feigl provided other valuable documents from the estate of her father Hugo Feigl, which contain information about his relationship with the painter Oskar Kokoschka; this material will also be added to our archival collection. Amira Kohn-Trattner donated an album of photographs from the 1930s, as well as documents and various items, including photographs – mostly from Prague – that relate to the period before and shortly after the Second World War.

Rebecca Fried's grandson **Robert B. Fried**, who was present during the recording of her interview, has generously offered to give the Jewish Museum a regular sponsorship donation, which will greatly support the further recording of testimonies from Holocaust survivors and witnesses who are originally from Bohemia and Moravia. We would very much like to thank Mr. Fried for the interest he has shown and for his generous contribution. For more information, see the Jewish Museum's website.



Paul Graf Loewner, 2015



George Wolf, 2015

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

At the end of 2014 the Jewish Museum in Prague, in collaboration with the Czech Association of Museums and Galleries and the Czech Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), published a peer-reviewed collection of papers, entitled *Acquisition and De-acquisition Activities of Museums and Galleries*. This publication, edited by Dana Veselská, includes summaries of papers that were given at a seminar of the same name on the 20th anniversary of the Jewish Museum's regaining of its independence. It contains eight papers that deal with a broad range of issues relating to the acquisition and de-acquisition activities of museums and galleries. There is an extensive paper on the acquisition and de-acquisition activity of the Jewish Museum in Prague in the past twenty years (1994-2014), which was written by several of its employees from the Collections Department. The publication has a print run of 300 copies in Czech and each chapter concludes with an English summary. It is available via the [e-shop on the Jewish Museum's website](#).





## NEW ACQUISITIONS

### Finds from Třešť near Jihlava

Last year, the Jewish Museum Library was contacted by Mrs. V. Brodinová from Třešť near Jihlava, who had found a large number of Hebrew books and documents while renovating her home. The town of Třešť used to be an important Jewish centre, and its former ghetto, synagogue and Jewish cemetery have all been preserved. The found items belong to the original owner of the house, Gustav Strauss (1906–1944), who was deported from Třešť to the Terezín ghetto in 1942 and sent to Auschwitz in 1944, where he perished. The items in question are 214 books, mostly of a liturgical nature, which had been hidden under the floor. They also include some of Gustav Strauss's personal effects and private correspondence. Mrs. Brodinová has kindly donated all of these items to the Jewish Museum in Prague, for which we are very grateful. The items were sent to the museum in January 2015, where they will be documented and considered for inclusion in its collections.



The section of the house in Třešť where the books were found under the floor



Books found in Třešť

### A set of coins from the Lodz ghetto

At the end of 2014, the Jewish Museum managed to acquire a set of six coins that had been used as currency in the Lodz (Litzmannstadt) ghetto during the Second World War. As was the case in Terezín, Jews were not allowed to use the regular currency in the Lodz ghetto. Special coins, made of aluminium and magnesium alloy, were minted for this purpose. The set in question contains four 10-Mark coins and two 5-Mark coins. The front side of the coins depicts a Star of David with the word "Getto" and the year 1943; the reverse shows the nominal value. Because of the poor durability of the material used for making the coins and due to the liquidation of the ghetto inhabitants, only a few of the original coins have been preserved. This set of coins comes from

a renowned private collection in France and was acquired at an auction held by the specialist auction house Tradart in Brussels on the 18th of December 2014.



### RESTORATION WORKSHOPS

The Jewish Museum’s restoration workshops are currently finishing preparations for the new permanent exhibition at the Maisel Synagogue. The paper restoration workshop is focusing mainly on the preparation of 22 facsimiles of paper documents and book bindings (for manuscripts and printed books). Some of the facsimiles that were on display in the previous exhibition have been repaired and treated for reuse. In addition, the workshop staff have overseen the production of two extraordinarily difficult facsimiles (manuscripts on parchment) by external colleagues. The textile restoration workshop has undertaken conservation treatments on three synagogue textiles – removing, cleaning, treating and returning their components (fringes and lining). In



terms of overall weight, work and handling, the most difficult item to conserve was the Torah curtain of Meir Tausk, which was made in 1673 by Berl, son of Isaac Hayyat (“the tailor”). The textile restoration workshop staff have also overseen the restoration of two mantles by external colleagues. The metal restoration workshop has restored and conserved 17 collection pieces for the new exhibition at the Maisel Synagogue. Most of these items are made of silver, with a few exceptions – such as the emblem of the Prague Jewish Butchers’ Guild in the form of a large tin key. This item was made in 1620 and was supplemented and altered later on; it was frequently handled over the course of time,

which left numerous indelible traces in the soft material. As a result of being widely used and displayed, there were traces of wax, paint and impurities on the surface of the object, which had to be removed very carefully in order to prevent mechanical damage.

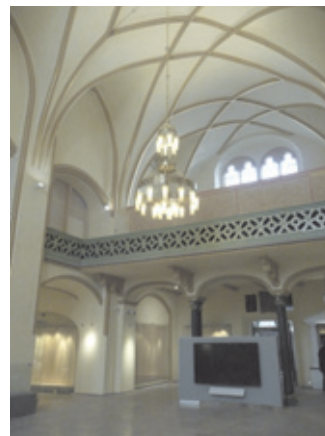


### MAISEL SYNAGOGUE – PREPARATIONS FOR THE NEW EXHIBITION

The transformation of the Maisel Synagogue exhibition, **Jews in the Bohemian Lands, 10th-18th Centuries** – the first of our permanent exhibitions to be completely overhauled – is nearing completion. The synagogue building and its surrounding area underwent a successful refurbishment project during the last year. The building approval process was successfully completed on the 19th of March. The building control and local authority officers were very satisfied with the results, praising the internal and external works, as well as the new layout of the front garden, the toilet facilities, the new look of the display cases and the use of modern audio-visual elements.

Work is currently underway to install the new exhibition, which has been under preparation since 2011 (exhibition scenario by Iveta Cermanová and Alexandr Putík, architectural design by Hynek Fetterle). This show will explore the pre-modern Jewish history of the Bohemian lands on the basis of the latest research results and new trends in museum display. Its main objective is to convey, in a clear and easy-to-understand yet engaging way, the inner life of Jewish communities in the Bohemian lands and to show the diversity of their relationship with the wider society.

The main role of providing information and mediating between the past and the present-day viewer is to be played by objects from the collections of the Jewish Museum in Prague. Placed within the proper historical and cultural context, these objects will be supplemented



The reconstructed Maisel Synagogue prior to installation of the exhibition items



by items from the collections of other institutions in the Czech Republic and abroad. The exhibits will be displayed in new air-conditioned display cases with modern lighting.

The exhibition will combine new audio-visual elements. Touch screens will enable visitors to look through valuable Hebrew manuscripts, printed books and historical maps of Jewish settlements, and to search a database for information about prominent Jewish figures. There will also be an eye-catching projection of images of historic synagogues in Bohemia and Moravia.

The main audio-visual exhibit is a several-minute virtual tour of the Prague Jewish Town from before the ghetto clearance period, as based on Langweil's model of Prague. This unique tour has been put together by the Jewish Museum in Prague, the City of Prague Museum and the Czech Technical University in Prague (ČVUT).

#### **JEWISH MUSEUM STATISTICS FOR 2014**

- The Museum was visited by 579,690 people.
- The three temporary exhibitions at the Robert Guttmann Gallery were seen by 29,329 people.
- Thirteen travelling exhibitions were installed at 65 schools and museums in the Czech Republic and at three institutions abroad (in Germany, Slovakia and Belgium).
- 98 collection pieces were conserved or restored.
- 3,233 collection pieces were digitized.
- More than 6,000 images of archival materials and books were digitized by the Photography Department.
- Approx. 1,000 persons have been added to the Museum's genealogy database as part of research into Prague Jewish families. In total, there are now 14,100 persons (out of an anticipated total of 20,000) in the database.
- The Museum's Archives received 162 research visits (76 people undertook research here and 1,044 archival items were made available for study).
- 1,216 volumes were added to the Museum Library (mostly donations or replacements).
- The Museum Library added 2,433 records while cataloguing books, magazines, articles and essays. By the end of the year, the Library's electronic catalogue contained more than 55,800 records.
- The Museum Library and Multimedia Centre received 1,062 research visits. In total, 3,007 documents were borrowed from the Library.
- Twenty people (mostly students) became involved in the Museum's volunteer programme.
- 8,500 school pupils and students took part in the Museum's cultural and educational programmes.
- 923 students from Germany, the USA, the UK, Hong Kong, Canada and Israel took part in the Museum's programmes and seminars in Prague.
- 129 evening events at the Museum's Department for Education and Culture in Prague and Brno were attended by 3,615 people.
- 243 concerts were held at the Spanish Synagogue in Prague.
- The Museum collaborated with 152 local and 109 foreign political, administrative, cultural, academic and educational institutions.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Museum Archives reopened

The Archives of the Jewish Museum in Prague, including the study room, have reopened to the public following a renovation. The study room is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., 1–5 p.m.

### Part of the Visual Arts Depository still closed

Due to reconstruction work, the Jewish Museum's Visual Arts Collection has been closed since 15 September 2014. For the time being, the paintings, drawings, prints and sculptures cannot be made available for study or loan purposes. The depository will probably reopen by the end of April 2015. We apologize for any inconvenience caused.

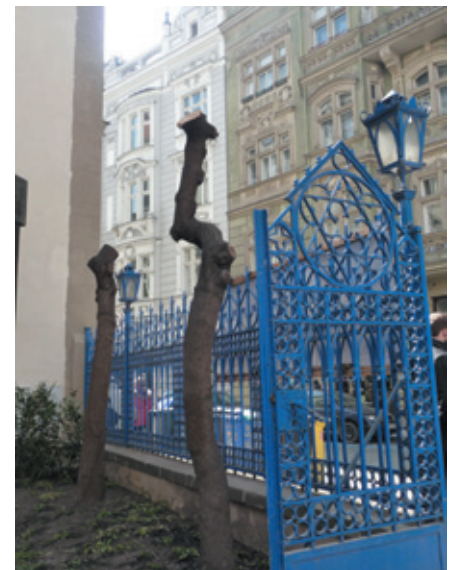
### Tasty morsels for visitors to the Information and Reservation Centre

Visitors and passers-by can now enjoy freshly squeezed fruit juices, sweet and savoury snacks and a whole range of kosher food in the newly opened Flavours Fresh Bar at the Jewish Museum's Information and Reservation Centre (Maiselova 15). Members of the Prague Jewish Community are entitled to a 10% discount on every purchase after showing their membership card.



### Maple trees near the Maisel Synagogue pruned

Maple trees in front of the Maisel Synagogue were pruned on 23–27 February 2015 – a preventative measure that was approved by the Environmental Protection Department of the Prague 1 borough. In total, four Norway maples exhibiting signs of a lack of vitality were pruned.



## PROMINENT VISITS

On the 2nd of March 2015, the Jewish Museum's new exhibition *Shattered Hopes: Postwar Czechoslovakia as a Crossroads of Jewish Life* was visited by the Israeli Ambassador to the Czech Republic, Gary Koren.

On the 11th of March 2015, the Jewish Museum's director Leo Pavlát was visited by the new Spanish Ambassador to the Czech Republic, Pedro Calvo-Sotelo, who was accompanied by the Spanish Cultural Attaché Pabla Rupérez.

On the 13th of March 2015, Dr. Ivana Dubá from Switzerland – a member of the Jewish Museum's Society of Friends and a long-term major sponsor – visited the Jewish Museum and was informed about its most recent projects. Her yearly contributions make it possible, for example, to restore specific items in our collections.



Dr. Dubá at the exhibition *Shattered Hopes: Postwar Czechoslovakia as a Crossroads of Jewish Life* in the Robert Guttman Gallery



Visiting the Jewish Museum's Collections Department

Published by the Jewish Museum in Prague, U Staré školy 1, 110 01 Praha 1  
[www.jewishmuseum.cz](http://www.jewishmuseum.cz)

Identification No: 60459263

Bank accounts: Commerzbank, AG, Jugoslávská 1, 120 21 Prague 2

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USD: 1042639, IBAN: CZ22 6200 0001 0700 1042 6398

SWIFT CODE: COBACZPXXXX

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symbol (identification code) 1382002.

Czech Ministry of Culture: E16832

Editor: Kateřina Honskusová, Jiří Tejkal

Translation: Stephen Hattersley

Photos: Jewish Museum in Prague

Graphic design: Jan Jiskra

Layout: Vladimír Vašek

