

# Newsletter

1 2013

## EXHIBITIONS IN THE ROBERT GUTTMANN GALLERY

### “YOU WON’T NEED TO SEE A RABBI”.

#### 500 YEARS OF HEBREW PRINTING IN BOHEMIA AND MORAVIA

On view at the Robert Guttmann Gallery until 28 February was a unique exhibition that the Jewish Museum in Prague prepared for the 500th anniversary of the first Hebrew book to be printed in Bohemia and Moravia – and in the entire region of Eastern and Central Europe (see the last Newsletter for more about the exhibition). The unique exhibits from the most important collections of manuscripts and early printed books in the Czech Republic and abroad were seen by more than 2,500 separately paying visitors, as well as by people seeing the museum’s permanent exhibitions. Two guided tours were also given. The accompanying book *Hebrew Printing in Bohemia and Moravia* received the 2012 Special Jury Prize of the Academia Publishing House.

## SYMBOLS OF EMANCIPATION. NINETEENTH-CENTURY SYNAGOGUES IN THE CZECH LANDS

The *Symbols of Emancipation. Nineteenth-Century Synagogues in the Czech Lands* exhibition has been on view at the Robert Guttmann Gallery since 21 March 2013. The curator is Arno Pařík.

The nineteenth century brought considerable changes in the status of the Jewish population in the Czech lands. The first easing of restrictions was made possible by Josef II’s reforms of 1781–88 but the turning point did not come until the revolution of 1848–49. Following the abolition of compulsory ghettos and of the Familant Law (which had limited the number of Jewish families living in particular areas of the Habsburg Monarchy), the December Constitution of 1867 granted full civic and political equality to Jews throughout Austria-Hungary.

As a result of all this social change, the Jewish community experienced its largest ever economic, cultural and population boom, and this led to the widespread construction of new synagogues. The first large synagogues began to appear in many communities and towns in the Czech lands as early as the 1850s. These were mainly built in a Neo-Romanesque style with the addition of fashionable oriental features. Building activity reached a peak in the following decade when the largest number of new synagogues were built for the needs of the rapidly expanding Jewish communities. In the last third of the nineteenth century and at the start of the twentieth, opulent Neo-Gothic and Neo-Renaissance synagogues began to appear in prominent sites on the new avenues of large towns and industrial centres. These included the New Temple in Prague (now the Spanish Synagogue) and the New Synagogue in Teplice, which at the time was the largest domed temple in Bohemia.

Only ninety of the 360 synagogues that were built in the Czech lands in the nineteenth century have been preserved to the present day. The vast majority were burned down during the Night of Broken Glass in November 1938, after the Nazi occupation in March 1939, or after the deportation of the local Jewish population to the concentration and death camps in 1942.



J. Eckert, Interior of synagogue in Vinohrady, Prague, ca. 1900

The last battles of the Second World War also took their toll. After 1945 many of the buildings were empty and dilapidated or were used for various other purposes. Work did not begin on the renovation of some of the synagogues until the 1990s.

A loose continuation of the successful exhibition “Baroque Synagogues in the Czech Lands” (2011), this show features more than two dozen synagogues with special focus on their layout, internal design and ornamentation. Information is also provided about the architects and builders of these temples. By looking at the stories behind individual buildings, the exhibition also highlights the development of Jewish communities in the Emancipation period – when the Jewish population became an important part of the economic, cultural and social life of the Czech lands – and during the period of Nazi persecution which led to the destruction of most of them. Special attention is also devoted to the renovations of some of the preserved synagogues which are currently taking place in the Czech Republic.

The exhibition is accompanied by a richly illustrated catalogue in Czech and in English which documents the past and present of sixty synagogues from the nineteenth century.

**Robert Guttmann Gallery, U Staré školy 3, Prague 1**  
**Open daily except for Saturdays and Jewish holidays, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.**

**Guided tours: 23 May and 20 June, 4.30 p.m.**

#### ***Under preparation***

*29 August 2013 – 23 February 2014: Reality and Fiction. Filming in the Terezín Ghetto, 1942–1945*

## **GALA EVENING AT THE SPANISH SYNAGOGUE**

On 24 January, the Jewish Museum, the Jewish Community in Prague and the Foundation for Holocaust Victims hosted the annual Spanish Synagogue concert to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day (27 January). The ensemble “Martinů Strings Prague” led by the outstanding violinist Jaroslav Šonský gave their first ever public performance at the concert. Special thanks go to the Foundation for Holocaust Victims and the former chairman of the Jewish Community in Prague František Bányai for helping to make the concert possible.



From the exhibition opening

Martinů Strings Prague performed works by Franz Schubert, Samuel Barber and Dmitri Shostakovich

## HOW CAN WE LIVE ON?

International Holocaust Remembrance Day was commemorated in Brno by an exhibition of children's artworks from an art competition organized by the Terezín Memorial. The show opened on 8 January at the Brno office of the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture. Its title refers to the question that most survivors asked themselves after the war. The display was accompanied by a reading of brief excerpts from Eva Roubíčková's *Terezín Diary, 1941–1945*.



Those attending the preview had the opportunity to express artistically their emotional response to the exhibition

## YOM HA-SHOAH

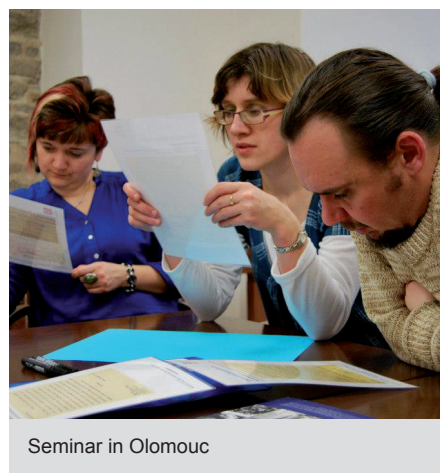
Yom Ha-Shoah – Israel's annual Holocaust Remembrance Day – commemorates the beginning of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the greatest act of Jewish resistance to the Nazis. It was established in 1951 in memory of the heroes of the anti-Nazi resistance and of all the men, women and children who faced Nazi oppression in their daily lives. This year is the 70th anniversary of the uprising. On 8 April, to mark the event, a memorial service was held in the Pinkas Synagogue, followed by a public reading of the names of Shoah victims at náměstí Míru (Peace Square) in Prague (between 2 and 5 in the afternoon), which is organized every year by the Holocaust Victims Foundation and the Terezín Initiative Institute.

## OURS OR FOREIGN? JEWS IN THE CZECH TWENTIETH CENTURY

Seminars and conferences for primary and secondary school teachers are an important part of the "Ours or Foreign? Czech Jews in the Twentieth Century" project, which the Jewish Museum is carrying out in co-operation with the Terezín Initiative Institute. Their aim is to acquaint Czech teachers with the results of the project and to facilitate the use of newly created methodological materials in the classroom.

The seminars have been accredited by the Czech Ministry of Education as an educational programme for the further education of teachers and certificates are awarded for their completion. Conceived as interactive weekend workshops that focus on all project areas – i.e., the topics of refugees, Jewish identity, the Holocaust and human behaviour, memory and anti-Semitism.

The first seminar of 2013 took place on 11–13 January in České Budějovice. This event was enriched by a discussion with Asaf Auerbach, one of the Winton children. About a month later, a similar seminar was held in Olomouc at which a talk was given by Peter Beck, a survivor of Auschwitz and the death march. Information about the life of the current Jewish community in Olomouc was later provided by its chairman Petr Papoušek. Another seminar was held in the penultimate week of March in Pilsen and was attended by the Holocaust survivor Eva Lišková, among others.



Seminar in Olomouc



These, usually one-day, conferences offer the possibility of extending knowledge about this subject matter. On 8 March the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture hosted a conference entitled "The Terezin Family Camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau and the Tradition of Remembrance." After Michal Frankl's opening presentation on the culture of remembrance in the Czech tradition, more than 30 teachers from all over the Czech Republic had the opportunity to participate in the traditional memorial ceremony at the Pinkas Synagogue. This was followed by the main item on the agenda – a discussion with survivors of the Terezin Family Camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau with a complementary lecture by Dr. Toman Brod, another survivor. At the end, the participants were acquainted with the methodological material on "Helping the Weakest", in which Alena Zina Janáčková (a teacher at the High School and Secondary Vocational School in Moravské Budějovice) shared her practical experience.

Another conference was held in the Ethnic Minorities House in Prague exactly one month later, on 8 April 2013, to mark the 70th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. The meeting was launched by Lior Invar from the Ghetto Fighters' Museum in Western Galilee, Israel – the first Holocaust museum in the world to bear the legacy of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Justyna Majewska from the Warsaw-based Museum of the History of Polish Jews then gave a talk about the public response in Poland to the uprising. After subsequent discussion on how the active resistance of Jews during the Second World War is reflected upon in contemporary society and education in Israel and Poland, the conference participants were acquainted with the methodological materials that have been prepared for the project.



Participants of the conference on the Terezin Family Camp were also able to take part in the memorial ceremony at the Pinkas Synagogue which is organized annually by the Terezin Initiative

The project "Ours or Foreign? Jews in the Czech Twentieth Century" is co-financed by the European Social Fund and the state budget of the Czech Republic as part of the Education for Competitiveness Operational Programme.



INVESTICE DO ROZVOJE VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ

Projekt CZ.1.07/1.1.00/14.0089 Tvorba výukových materiálů a zavádění výukových programů k dějinám Židů ve 20. století je spolufinancován Evropským sociálním fondem a státním rozpočtem České republiky.



## SUNDAY WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Thanks to support from the Foundation for Holocaust Victims, we can continue in 2013 with the increasingly popular Sunday workshops for children and parents, which involve visits to selected sites and exhibitions of the Jewish Museum. As part these workshops so far this year, with the help of the lion cub Aryeh, children have become acquainted with the story of Noah's Ark, have gone on the trail of the Golem and have celebrated Purim.



From this year's Sunday workshops

## DON'T LOSE FAITH IN MANKIND ... THE PROTECTORATE THROUGH THE EYES OF JEWISH CHILDREN

To commemorate the 70th anniversary of the deportation of the Jičín Jewish community, the Jewish Museum's travelling exhibition *Don't Lose Faith in Mankind... The Protectorate Through the Eyes of Jewish Children* will be on view at the Jičín Regional Museum and Gallery. Also on show there will be regional historical and liturgical objects, as well as a list of Jews living in Jičín during the Second World War. At the exhibition preview on 10 January 2013, opening remarks were given by Dr. Jan Munk, the director of the Terezín Memorial and president of the Jewish Community in Prague. The exhibition, which focuses on the lives of six Jewish children from 1938 to the present, has been seen by many visitors, including 775 pupils and students (mostly in guided tours).

## KAREL CUDLÍN: SILVER TIDE

To mark Yom Ha-Shoah, the Czech Embassy in Washington hosted Karel Cudlín's photography exhibition *Silver Tide*, which was first shown at the Jewish Museum's Robert Guttmann Gallery in 2012. Also on view, in addition to the photographs from the Prague Jewish community's Hagibor social care facility, were other photographs that document the life of the Czech Jewish community. The event was attended by the Czech ambassador Petr Gandalovič, the Minister of Public Diplomacy at the Embassy of Israel in Washington Noam Katz and the U.S. Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues Douglas Davidson, as well as 120 other diplomats, politicians, academics and cultural figures.



Ambassador of Czech Republic to the United States Petr Gandalovič giving a speech at the exhibition preview

## CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS FROM TEREZÍN ON TOUR

The travelling exhibition *A Children's Story – Children's Drawings from the Terezín Ghetto* features artworks that were produced in art classes given by the Bauhaus artist, Friedl Dicker-Brandeis, in Terezín between 1942 and 1944. Last year it circulated to Macedonia where its first stop was at the Holocaust Memorial Center for the Jews of Macedonia in Skopje to mark the first anniversary of its opening (for more information, see Newsletter 2/2012). Other stops on the tour included museums and schools in Bitola, Ohrid, Strumica, Strudza, Kočani, Prilep, Tetovo and Gostivar. The exhibition was seen by 10,000 visitors over the course of ten months.

In the first quarter of this year, the show came to two other European countries. Through the mediation of Franco Aprile, the Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic in Genoa, Italy, the first exhibition was hosted by the local Jewish Museum from 25 January 2013. It was shown on the occasion of a commemoration of Holocaust victims and was seen by 2,000 visitors. The exhibition then moved to Sweden in a tour initiated by the musician Jaroslav Šonský. In February it was seen at museums in Norrköping and Linköping and met with a very favourable response in the local press.

The exhibition will later go to Ville de Vaulx-en-Velin in France where it will be on view at a local conservatory to coincide with the premiere of the opera *Brundibar*, which will be performed by local students. By the end of 2013 it will be at the Kunsthistorisches Museum at Ambrass Castle in Innsbruck, Austria, where it will become part of the *Gegenwelten or Counter-Worlds* exhibition, which is organized in collaboration with the University of Innsbruck's Institute of Art History.

## SUPPORT FOR THE JEWISH MUSEUM FROM EUROPEAN FUNDS

In 2003, once again with support from the Adaptability Operation Programme, successful work has been done on a project that seeks to increase the competitiveness of a specific group from the Jewish Museum's collection department staff who are among employee groups that are disadvantaged in the labour market (due to age, maternity/paternity leave, etc.) Information on this project was provided in Newsletter 1/2012. So far this project has helped museum employees to improve their technical skills, including the use of computer programs, photographing in difficult light conditions, microscopy, gilding and photograph restoration. Some employees now have the opportunity to test their newly acquired skills through internships at specialist workplaces abroad, including the Jewish Museum in Berlin, the Jewish Museum in Munich and a Jerusalem-based centre specializing in parchment restoration.



European Social Fund. Prague & the EU: Investing in Your Future.

## EUROPEAN HOLOCAUST RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE (EHRI)

On 25–26 February 2013, the Jewish Museum hosted a workshop for the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure project ([www.ehri-project.eu](http://www.ehri-project.eu)) with the aim of preparing data and discussing the user interface for a research guide to Terezín archive sources. Connecting information on the Terezín ghetto that is spread across several archives in various countries, this guide will be part of the EHRI online portal and will make use of its innovative search capability. It will also give users various options of proceeding on the basis of structured data (e.g., key words, the structure of the Jewish 'self-government' in Terezín, etc.). The workshop was attended by project partners from the UK, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic. Although most of the supporting documents for the guide to the Terezín sources have already been prepared, its publication will only be possible after the EHRI portal has been launched in late 2014 and early 2015.



## CO-OPERATION WITH THE OSTRAVA GROUP IN KINGSTON SUCCESSFULLY CONTINUES

In 2010 the Jewish Museum in Prague began co-operation with a group of volunteers at Kingston Synagogue in southwest London which has a Torah scroll from pre-war Ostrava on permanent loan. The aim of this joint project is to document the fate of the Jews of Ostrava and to revive people's memory of them. It has already produced two specific results so far: the publication of an on-line collection relating to the fate of Jews from Ostrava and the preparation of an on-line exhibition based on the Goldberg family's unique correspondence in the Jewish Museum's new on-line collections catalogue (for more details, see our last newsletter).

In the first week of March, two members of the 'Ostrava' group, Tom Kolisch and Dani Kinrot, came to Prague in order to present the Jewish Museum with original materials from their family archives. Photographs, documents and personal correspondence from the period before and during the war will be digitized, catalogued and included in the museum's on-line collections catalogue.

## SOURCES SPEAK

The Jewish Museum has become involved in the book series "Persecution and Extermination of European Jews by Nazi Germany, 1933-1945", which was presented at the Goethe Institute in Prague on 15 April. At this event, Andrea Löw, a historian from the Munich Institute of Contemporary History, together with Shoah survivors, actors and project manager Susanne Heim, presented the third volume in this series, which focuses on the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in 1939–1941.

The aim of this project is to publish 16 volumes of the main sources relating to the history of the persecution and extermination of European Jews. An audio version will be prepared on the basis of this series, which will broadcast by the radio station Bayern 2 and will also be permanently available on the Internet.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

### SWORN DECLARATIONS OF PRAGUE JEWISH FAMILIES, 1748–1749 (1751). EDITION OF A SOURCE ON THE RETURN OF JEWS EXPELLED BY MARIA THERESA

The Jewish Museum in Prague has recently published a unique source on the history of Prague Jews, which supplements the series of Jewish population lists produced by the National Archives in Prague.

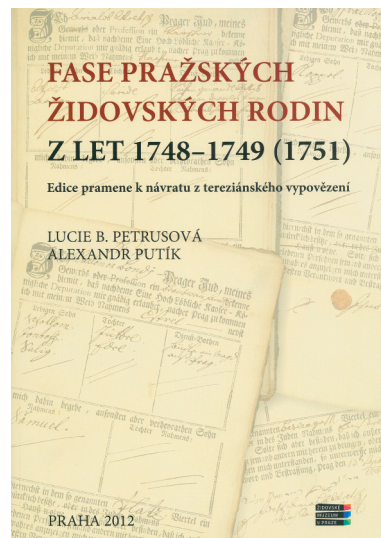
The Jews of Prague spent the difficult years of 1745-1748 in the countryside, where they had been exiled on the basis of an unsubstantiated accusation of high treason. Sworn declarations (Fassionen) were made by the heads of Jewish families after returning to Prague following the repeal of their expulsion order. Put together for the registration requirements of the Jewish self-government, these declarations are now kept in the Archives of the Jewish Museum in Prague. In total the museum has 1,473 such declarations dating from the main period of return for the Jewish community. These declarations were, in fact, a substitute for the official comprehensive list of Prague Jews – no comparable document of state provenance has been preserved for the years 1729-1794.

The introductory study provides a brief overview of the history of Jewish expulsion and return and details the structure of the declaration form. In addition to a list of family members and servants, the form also contained information about the occupation of the family head and about the ownership and location of each house. The information provided in the declarations is, above all, a key source for private and professional genealogists; in addition, it enables us to study various questions relating to historical demography, social and economic history and topography.

This edition has been put together by Lucie B. Petrusová, a specialist archivist at the museum, and Alexandr Putík, a specialist researcher at the museum's department of Jewish history and Jewish studies. It also includes an index of personal and place names, as well as a small illustrated supplement



Tom Kolisch handing over documents to the curator of the museum's collection of interviews with Shoah survivors, Pavla Neuner





## ARK OF MEMORY. THE JEWISH MUSEUM IN PRAGUE'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE TURBULENT TWENTIETH CENTURY

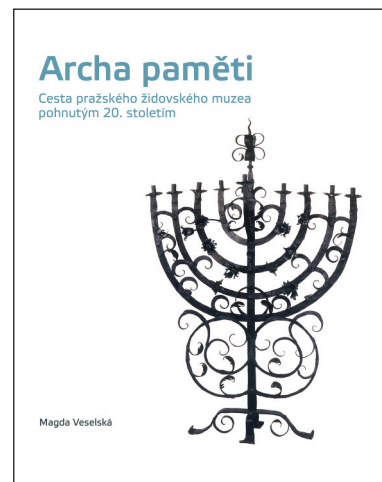
At the end of 2012, the Jewish Museum in Prague, together with the Academia publishing house, prepared another outstanding publication – a monograph on the museum's history, written by the museum's head of collections management, Magda Veselská, with an epilogue by the museum director Leo Pavlát. This is the very first book to deal systematically with the circumstances surrounding the existence of this unique institution.

The chronological story of the museum begins with the modest activities of the pre-war museum association which – thanks to the efforts of S. H. Lieben and August Stein and in spite of many difficulties – put together a unique and representative collection. Following on from this is a description of the efforts of the Prague Jewish community during the war; on the basis of an initiative from Karel Stein and under the supervision of Tobias Jakobovits and Josef Polák, the Jewish community managed to safe keep the confiscated property of Protectorate Jewish communities for the post-war period – under the cover name “museum”. The wartime museum has often been referred to in the literature as a “museum of an extinct race”, but there is no support for such a claim in the archival documents that have been preserved. This notion was a post-war interpretation, the development and establishment of which is detailed at the end of the second chapter. Of vital importance in the brief yet chaotic period immediately after the war – which is covered in chapter three – were the prudent approach and determination of the museum staff, particularly Hana Volavková, who managed to preserve the collection in its entirety and to defend the museum as a specialist institution. The history of the Jewish museum under the unfavourable circumstances of the anti-Semitic Communist regime – which is dealt with in the fourth and final chapter – was characterized by its constant struggle to defend its own existence. This book also describes the efforts of the museum staff to preserve the Jewish cultural heritage – material and spiritual – in the context of two totalitarian regimes – and deals with the museum's contacts with the Czech Jewish community. To a large extent, the museum contributed to the preservation and defining of the latter's identity throughout the twentieth century.

The text is based mainly on extant archival material, much of which has not previously been systematically examined. It is accompanied by a large number of often unique illustrations and also includes a name index and an index of institutions and organizations.

### ***Under preparation***

13 June, 6 p.m.: Presentation of the book “Archa paměti” [The Ark of Memory], Department for Education and Culture, Jewish Museum in Prague

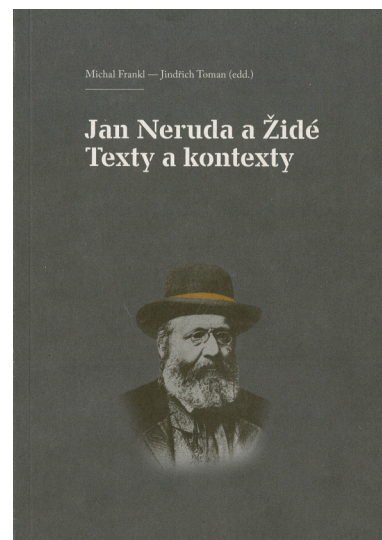


## JAN NERUDA AND THE JEWS. TEXTS AND CONTEXTS

Is it possible to consider Jan Neruda to be an anti-Semite? This question, which to this day provokes contradictory reactions, is the focus of a new collective monograph that has been prepared by the Jewish Museum in Prague and published by Akropolis.

Jan Neruda is a writer who is firmly ensconced in the Czech national pantheon. His pamphlet “For Fear of the Jews” (1869) is published on the Internet by contemporary anti-Semites, yet many literary scholars and journalists try to shield Neruda's name from accusations of anti-Semitism. In 2010, the Jewish Museum in Prague and the Institute of Czech Literature at the Czech Academy of Sciences organized a seminar at which literary scholars and historians dealing with Jewish history and anti-Semitism were able to compare their knowledge and opinions on this matter, as well as methodological approaches.

The findings from this seminar are summarized in the proceedings, “Jan Neruda and Jews. Texts and Contexts”, which are edited by Jindřich Toman from the University of Michigan and Michal Frankl for the Jewish Museum in Prague. This collection includes papers that explore Neruda's attitudes toward Jews from different perspectives and integrate them into a historical context.



The papers are based on an analysis of the above-mentioned pamphlet – a commented edition of which is included – but also provide the first ever detailed exploration of Neruda's other texts from this perspective. The collection is also richly illustrated, mostly with stereotypical depictions and caricatures of Jews from the period.

## INSPECTION AND CLEANING OF EXHIBITS IN THE KLAUSEN SYNAGOGUE

The Klausen Synagogue, which houses the permanent exhibition *Jewish Customs and Traditions*, was closed for two days in the first half of February. During this time, four hundred exhibits were carefully inspected and cleaned by museum restoration staff, damaged labels were replaced and new energy-efficient LED lighting was installed.

## THE MOST VISITED MUSEUM IN PRAGUE

According to a survey undertaken by the newspaper *Mladá fronta DNES* in the autumn of 2012, more than half of the respondents stated that the reason they wanted to live in Prague was because of the culture – and this, of course, includes museums. *Mladá fronta DNES* then contacted ten of Prague's major museums to find out how well they had done last year in terms of visitor numbers.

In first place came the Jewish Museum with about 545,000 visitors, followed by the National Technical Museum with 205,000 visitors, the Military History Institute (which oversees the Military Museum in Žižkov and the Aviation Museum in Kbely) and the Museum of Decorative Arts.

## PROMINENT VISITS

### MARCH

- **Dr. Danielle Spera**, Director of the Jewish Museum in Vienna
- Israeli pianist **Viktor Goldberg**
- **Prof. David Ruderman** from the University of Pennsylvania
- **Prof. Pan Guang** from the Academy of Social Sciences in Shanghai



After being inspected, all the exhibits were put back in clean display cases



Victor Goldberg visiting the Old Jewish Cemetery

Published by the Jewish Museum in Prague (founded in 1906),  
U Staré školy 1, 3, 110 01 Prague 1  
[www.jewishmuseum.cz](http://www.jewishmuseum.cz)  
IČO 60459263

Bank details: Commerzbank, AG, Jugoslávská 1, 120 21 Prague 2  
CZK: 10426398/6200  
EUR: 1042639, IBAN: CZ60 6200 0000 0000 1042 6398  
USD: 1042639, IBAN: CZ22 6200 0001 0700 1042 6398  
SWIFT CODE: COBACZPXXXX

When making a donation, please enter this number as a payment reference: 1382002.

This issue of the Newsletter was published on 23 April 2013, Czech Ministry of Culture: E16832

Editor: Jana Havlíková

Translation: Stephen Hattersley

Photos: Jewish Museum in Prague

Graphic design and layout: Jan Jiskra

