

IN MEMORY OF THE JEWS OF HORAZDOVICE & PRESTICE



TRANSPORTED TO TEREZIN
ON 26TH NOVEMBER
1942



WESTMINSTER SYNAGOGUE
SATURDAY 29TH NOVEMBER
2008



RABBI DR RICHARD FEDER, WHO LATER BECAME CHIEF RABBI OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, SURVIVED TEREZIN
BUT HIS FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DID NOT.

IN HIS GRIEF AND DESOLATION HE WROTE A BOOK CONTAINING THIS DEDICATORY LETTER:



Dear Jews of Kolín and friends,

Out of love, respect and gratitude I have built you a memorial in this book. It is only a humble paper memorial, but I hope it is more telling than those of stone and more permanent than those of metal. Your names are mentioned in the following pages. When reading them, those who knew you will remember you with feelings of loyal friendship, and those who did not know you will deplore that you were murdered for no reason by evil, cruel, base, callous Germans.

You died a martyr's death and we trust that God, the Father of all peoples, opened the gates to his kingdom of eternity for you and that you were admitted with love into the great family of celestial beings. Our only hope is that, when our pilgrimage on Earth comes to an end, we can meet up with you and partake in the eternal bliss.

The Germans murdered you. They obliterated your bodies. They destroyed your ashes. Nothing remained except your names, your good names, your honest, untainted names, names that deserve to be preserved for generations to come.

I honour your memory,

Your loyal rabbi,

Dr. Richard Feder

Kolin, 30th November 1945

IN RESPONSE TO REQUESTS FOR GUIDANCE AND INSIGHT FROM VARIOUS RECIPIENT COMMUNITIES
OF THE 1,564 RESCUED CZECH SCROLLS, RABBI FEDER IMPLORED THEM TO HONOUR THE JEWS
WHO HAD NO DESCENDANTS, TO CARE ABOUT THEM AND TO CHERISH THEIR HERITAGE.

Today we fulfil this request and one of Judaism's most important commandments – *Zachor* – Remember

THE JEWS OF HORAZDOVICE



Horazdovice is a small town of fewer than 6000 inhabitants 100 km south-west of Prague. Jews are on record as being present since the Thirty Years' War (1618 to 1648). It is believed that the first Jew, Elias Stastny, came to live here in 1629 when he bought a house, by permission of the Town Hall, from a widow called Eliska Kovarova.

The population grew. In 1684 a synagogue and a school were founded and land for a cemetery was bought. The Jews lived mostly in a small ghetto on Zelena Street - now Prachenska.

The Jewish community reached its peak in 1890 with 300 Jews – 9% of the total population.

In the 19th and 20th centuries the Jews were a motivating force in the town's industry. The paper mill built by Rud Furth and Bernard Gans was later controlled by Herman Steiner, Zikmund Friedler and Josef Geschmay, who established a washing powder factory. Samuel Kohn was manufacturing matches.



ITEMS FROM THE JEWISH COMMUNITY. PHOTO: HORAZDOVICE TOWN MUSEUM

The cemetery from the early 19th century is still extant with 383 gravestones. Stones from the previous cemetery, the earliest of which dates from 1684, were placed there in 1979.



1915 WOODEN TOMBSTONE
FROM THE OLD CEMETERY.
PHOTO: HORAZDOVICE TOWN MUSEUM

THE JEWS OF PRESTICE

Prestice is a town of about six thousand inhabitants situated roughly 100km south-west of Prague and 20km south of Plzen.

The 1862 census shows 751 Jews for the Prestice district - Prestice and the surrounding villages and small towns.

By 1900 the number had decreased to 431. By 1930 it had decreased further to 300 of whom 80 were adults.

Leopold Weisel, collector and editor of Jewish legends, lived in Prestice (1804 – 1873).

Prior to 1848 Jews in the district were not allowed to buy property. The community of Prestice grew when the Jews moved from the villages and small towns. Prestice became the centre of Jewish life for the surrounding six smaller communities. In the 1880's there was a Jewish religious school, but this was closed by the school inspector in 1894.

The cemetery of Prestice was established in 1890 and in 1910 the synagogue was built.

In 1921, 185 Jews lived in these united communities with Josef Hartman as its head and Leopold Singer as the rabbi. Members of the Jewish Community were active participants in the commercial and industrial development of the town. Many were in textiles whilst in the nearby villages many of the Jews were farmers.

By 1934 the united communities, with their central seat in Prestice, had only 80 Members.

(Source: www.jewishgen.org/AustriaCzech/towns/Prestice/prestice.htm) On this site, Eugen Singer, grandson of Leopold Singer, translates from the 1934 book by Hugo Gold:

Die Juden und Judengemeinde Bohmens in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart



FIGURES FROM PRESTICE –
FAR RIGHT IS
RABBI SINGER.
FROM HUGO GOLD'S BOOK.
www.jewishgen.org

THE TOMBSTONE OF LEOPOLD SINGER.
RABBI OF PRESTICE FOR 41 YEARS-
HE WAS THEIR LAST - DIED IN 1939.

www.jewishgen.org



JEWISH LIFE IN A CZECH TOWN DURING THE OCCUPATION 1939-45



REGULATIONS ISSUED BY THE OBERLANDRAT AND THE CENTRAL OFFICE FOR JEWISH AFFAIRS IN PRAGUE PLACED INCREASING LIMITATIONS ON THE LIVES OF THE JEWS.

For example, Jews were not allowed to leave the house without the yellow star; be on the street after 8.00 p.m., or visit bars, cafes, theatres, cinemas, exhibitions, lectures, auctions, stock exchanges, swimming pools, parks or woods; they could not send their children to schools for the general public but were not allowed to organise private schools; they were not allowed to own a radio or listen to broadcasts, buy or read newspapers, own a telephone; they could only travel in the first carriage of trains and trams (where the engine was); they could not leave their district without an official permit; they were not allowed to own bonds, shares, gold and silver jewellery and, if they did, all had to be handed over by a certain date; they had to declare their money deposits and were allowed to withdraw only modest sums; they could not carry on farming, medical practice, legal practice, commercial or industrial business, publish any article in the press or publish books; they could be neither official nor private clerks; could not live in comfortable apartments and especially villas; could not own fur coats, woollen sweaters, skis and ski equipment; driving licences and vehicles, musical instruments; they could not be accepted as patients (even if seriously ill) in public hospitals or private sanatoria; they could not shop in the market but only in certain shops during the prescribed hour, could not receive full food rations or smoking materials; could not visit a barber, own dogs or pigeons; they could, however, be organised in groups for work but were not allowed to work with other workers....and so on.



WORLD WAR II MEANT THE END OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN THE TOWNS

A few synagogues were destroyed in Czechoslovakia when the Germany invaded the region beyond the Sudetenland in March 1939. In 1940, the congregations were closed down, but Jewish community administrations were used locally by the Germans to execute their stream of decrees and instructions. Deportations started in 1941 and the mass deportations of the Jews took place throughout 1942 and into January 1943. Then all that was left in these Czech towns were the half-Jews, non-Jewish partners from mixed marriages, the empty synagogue buildings and the homes of the Jews.

In 1942, a group of members of Prague's Jewish Community devised a way to bring the religious treasures from the deserted provincial communities to the comparative safety of Prague. The Nazis were persuaded to accept this plan and the result was that the Nazi-controlled Prague Jewish Community sent out the orders that implemented the plan and permitted the transport companies to carry Jewish goods. With a few exceptions, the Torah Scrolls, other liturgical treasures in gold and silver and ritual textiles were sent to Prague, along with historic archives and thousands of books.

The inventory of what had become the Central Jewish Museum expanded as a result - from under 800 to over 100,000 items. A task force of Jewish curators, art collectors, librarians, and other experts, effectively prisoners of the Nazis, set to work under Dr Josef Polak, the former director of the museum in Kosice, to sort, catalogue and identify the items that had come from over one hundred congregations in Bohemia and Moravia. It needed over forty warehouses, including deserted synagogues in Prague and elsewhere, to store all the Judaica. As the task progressed, under oppressive and intimidating conditions of fear and uncertainty, some of the Jews who were undertaking this work would suddenly be deported to the Terezin concentration camp and death.

Eventually there were very few survivors.

THE END OF THE JEWS IN HORAZDOVICE

The Jews in Horazdovice were deported from Klatovy – the assembly point for South Western Bohemia - on transport Cd to Terezin on the 26 November 1942.

A total of 121 Jews from Horazdovice and its surrounding villages were deported on that day.

The Westminster Synagogue Memorial Scrolls Committee has the transport list for the 26th November 1942 transportation with the 92 names of the Jews whose addresses were in Horazdovice.

92 people ranging in age from 3 to 84 years were transported to Terezin. 17 died in Terezin – including the 6 who were over 80 years old. 69 were transported on to Auschwitz - including the 9 children who were under the age of 15.

The names of 6 do not appear in the Terezin Memorial Book. 3 are believed to have gone to Mauthausen, 2 to Auschwitz and 1 to Dachau.

According to the Horazdovice Museum a total of 118 Jews from the town were transported to the concentration camps between 1942 and 1945 and only 7 survived

THE NAMES (AND NUMBERS) OF THE HORAZDOVICE FAMILIES THAT PERISHED:

Adler (3)	Glauber (3)	Loewy (12)	Schwarz (8)
Deutsch (2)	Kafka (4)	Loheit (3)	Singer (2)
Eisner (5)	Katz (5)	Mautner (1)	Steiner (2)
Fantl (3)	Kauders (1)	Muenz (3)	Treichlinger (7)
Fischer (2)	Klein (8)	Pisinger (1)	Weiner (4)
Fischl (2)	Kohn (2)	Raimann (1)	Weiss (1)
Fried (1)	Lederer (2)	Reich (1)	
Friedmann (1)	Loewenstamm (2)		



PHOTO: HOLOCAUST RESEARCH PROJECT

THE HORAZDOVICE SYNAGOGUE

The first Horazdovice Synagogue was built in 1684. In 1868 a new one was built on the site of the old one.



SYNAGOGUE
EXTERIOR:
UNDATED
PHOTO: JEWISH MUSEUM IN PRAGUE



SYNAGOGUE
INTERIOR
PRE-WAR.

PHOTO: JEWISH MUSEUM IN PRAGUE



SYNAGOGUE EXTERIOR
BEFORE DEMOLITION.
1980
PHOTO: JEWISH MUSEUM
IN PRAGUE



A WINDOW PANE
FROM THE DEMOLISHED
SYNAGOGUE.
PHOTO: HORAZDOVICE
TOWN MUSEUM



ARK CURTAIN.
PHOTO: JEWISH MUSEUM IN PRAGUE

THE END OF THE JEWS IN PRESTICE

The Jews of Prestice, like those from Horazdovice, were deported from the South Western Bohemian assembly point of Klatovy on transport Cd to Terezin on the 26 November 1942.

A total of 114 Jews from Prestice and its surrounding towns and villages were deported.

The Westminster Synagogue Memorial Scrolls Committee has the list for the 26th November 1942 transportation with the 38 names of the Jews whose addresses were in Prestice. They ranged in age from 5 to 90 years old.

7 of the Prestice community died in Terezin - Josef Hartmann, who was 90 years old, survived only one month after transportation. Matylda Waldsteinova died in February 1945, aged 69. The onward transportation details from Klatovy for two of the men are not included on the list. One of 29 years, however, is known to have died in Mauthausen that year. The other man died in Auschwitz within a year.

The 29 remaining Jews of Prestice were transported from Terezin to Auschwitz between January 1943 and October 1944. They all perished in Auschwitz.

THE NAMES (AND NUMBERS) OF THE PRESTICE FAMILIES THAT PERISHED:

Adler (3)	Pick (2)
Gross (1)	Roubicek (3)
Hanak (6)	Stricker (1)
Hartmann (7)	Sancer (4)
Klein (3)	Waldstein (1)
Kuranda (2)	Weigl (3)
Ornstein (2)	



PHOTO: WWW.CHGS.UMM.EDU

THE PRESTICE SYNAGOGUE

The Prestice Synagogue was built in 1910 and destroyed by the Czech authorities in 1974.

PHOTO:
POSTCARD FROM THE
FRANTISEK BANYAI COLLECTION



PHOTO:
POSTCARD FROM THE
FRANTISEK BANYAI COLLECTION



The Jewish Cemetery still exists although it has not been designated as a landmark. There has been some restoration – re-erection & cleaning of stones, clearing of vegetation and repair of the wall.



PHOTOS. CEMETERY ENTRANCE. WWW.JEWISHGEN.ORG VIEW OF THE CEMETERY AND THE RESTORED WALL. WWW.JEWISH-ROUTE.EU
A DETAILED LIST OF TOMBSTONES: WWW.TOLEDOT.ORG/JEWISHGEN.HTML

THE RESCUE OF THE CZECH SCROLLS

Under the Communist regime, the Torah Scrolls were accumulated in the abandoned Michle Synagogue in an unfashionable suburb of Prague, and here it was that Eric Estorick, a London art dealer, was shown the collection in 1963. At the behest of his friend and client, philanthropist Ralph Yablon, and Rabbi Dr Harold Reinhart, he negotiated with the Communist state authorities to bring this precious collection of 1564 Torah Scrolls to Westminster Synagogue in 1964.

Along with the Scrolls came a record of the communities from which each of the Scrolls had come, based on the card index that had been meticulously prepared at the Jewish Museum in Prague by a group of Jewish curators in the hope that the Scrolls would one day be returned to the synagogues from which they had come. In London a team of scribes spent ten months examining, recording and grading the Scrolls.

Shortly after the arrival of the Scrolls, David Brand knocked on the Synagogue door and explained that he was a wandering scribe looking for work. “Were there any Scrolls that needed repair?” “Yes”, was the reply. “1564”. And he stayed for 27 years.

Then began the process of distributing the Scrolls back into Jewish life with communities across the world. Over the next forty years over 1400 of the rescued Scrolls were entrusted to congregations and other institutions on five continents.

Strictly speaking the condition of some of the Scrolls would, in normal circumstances, have resulted in their burial. However, the circumstances of their survival and their symbolic significance as representatives of the destroyed Jewish communities of Europe led to the decision that they would remain as part of active Jewish life.



ERIC
ESTORICK



RABBI
HAROLD
REINHART



RALPH
YABLON



DAVID
BRAND

THE SCROLLS FROM HORAZDOVICE

The records of the Memorial Scrolls Trust show that 12 Memorial Scrolls were received from Horazdovice. It is possible that some of these scrolls may have come from other communities in the vicinity. 10 of these Scrolls have been distributed, the other two can be found in the Memorial Scrolls Museum on the 3rd floor of Kent House.



BRASS PLAQUE ON TORAH ROLLER

Scroll 931 (Czech. no. Cz23999) was issued on loan to Westminster Synagogue in 1968. It stands in the fourth position in our Ark and is a poignant reminder of this lost community that lives on through us.

1 Scroll went to Edmonton in Alberta Canada, 2 were sent to the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Jerusalem and the remaining 6 were sent to North America.

A number of these communities will also be holding a Memorial Service on this *Shabbat*.



SCROLL 931
WAS WRITTEN
IN 1841



THE SCROLLS FROM PRESTICE

The records of the Memorial Scrolls Trust show that 14 Memorial Scrolls were received from Prestice. As Prestice had for years been the centre of Jewish life for the 7 smaller surrounding communities, it is likely that it was a minor collection point for Jewish artefacts in the vicinity.



Scroll number 178 (Czech. no. Cz32348) was issued on loan to Westminster Synagogue on the 6th October 1964. This scroll lives in the *Or Shabbat* Ark and is used during all their services.

Eleven Scrolls went to seven different states across the USA – 2 to California, 2 to New York, 2 to Pennsylvania, 2 to Massachusetts, 1 to Florida, 1 to Illinois and 1 to Hawaii.



The two remaining scrolls went to the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Jerusalem in 1965.



SCROLL 178 WAS WRITTEN IN 1920

CZECH NUMBER PAINTED ON ROLLER ON ARRIVAL IN PRAGUE

PHOTOS: SHELLEY LADDIE

THE CZECH SCROLLS MUSEUM & THE JEWISH MUSEUM IN PRAGUE

Today the role of the Memorial Scrolls Trust is to monitor the Czech Scrolls and to assist those congregations to whom they have been entrusted in fulfilling their obligation to give the Scroll, and the Czech congregation from which it came, a distinctive and high profile role in the spiritual and educational life of their community

The Memorial Scrolls Trust opened the new Czech Scrolls Museum on the 3rd floor of Kent House in September 2008. The Museum is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10am and 4pm and at other times by prior arrangement.

The trust is entirely dependent on donations.

For enquiries please contact Julia Hollenberg at:
czechscrolls@virgin.net or call: +44 (0)20 7584 3741

Or visit the website: www.czechmemorialscrollstrust.org



PHOTOS: JEWISH MUSEUM PRAGUE



CZECH SCROLLS MUSEUM. PHOTOS: PETER DAY



The Czech Scrolls Museum has a very close working relationship with the Jewish Museum in Prague which has loaned Torah silver - finials, breastplate and yad - originally from Horazdovice. These are now on display in the new museum.

WESTMINSTER SYNAGOGUE, HORAZDOVICE & PRESTICE

Several members of Westminster Synagogue have been closely involved in the care of the Czech Scrolls ever since their arrival in 1964, and we have always been conscious of our connection, through our own scrolls, to the communities lost during the Shoah. However in 2008 the Synagogue Executive decided to mark our connection with the people whose scrolls we have been using in a more immediate way, and established a committee to take this work forward.

Today we have joined together in commemoration of the lives of the individuals taken to the camps in 1942, and this will henceforth be an annual act of commemoration. We have begun the task of researching into the history of Horazdovice and Prestice, and have plans to continue this.

The committee invites anyone who is interested in assisting in this task to come forward: there is ample scope for more detailed investigation in museums and archives, a trip to these towns has been proposed for 2009, and the educational value of the material discovered so far invites further development. If any of these aspects interests you, please do not hesitate to contact the Committee Chairman, Valery Rees (valery.rees@ficino.org) or the Synagogue Secretary (telephone 020 7584 3953 or secretary@westminstersynagogue.org)



SCROLLS ON THEIR ARRIVAL
PHOTO: MEMORIAL SCROLLS TRUST



BAROQUE CATHEDRAL WHICH
DOMINATES THE TOWN OF PRESTICE
PHOTO: WWW.TSCHECHIENREISEN.CH



HORAZDOVICE TOWN MUSEUM
SITUATED IN THE TOWN CASTLE
PHOTO: WWW.MUZEUMHD.CZ



TEREZIN
26TH NOVEMBER
1942

Westminster Synagogue, founded in 1957 is an independent community, offering a combination of traditional and progressive approaches to Judaism. We are happy to welcome visitors and new members, and take pride in our commitment to a warm and welcoming community and an educational programme of excellence.



WESTMINSTER SYNAGOGUE

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