

A long held wish came true.

A pleasing fact is: I could not only initiate the commemorative plaque for the former Austrian Centre - but I also found many strong supporters such as the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies, also Dr. Martin Eichtinger our Austrian Ambassador, the Austrian Cultural Forum and the Future Fund of the Republic of Austria. I would like to add special thanks to Professor Charmian Brinson, Dr. Marietta Bearman and Elisabeth Kögler for their assistance.

My deceased grandparents Ludwig and Fanni Grossmann as well as two grand aunts and a grand uncle were active here at the Austrian Centre as members of Young Austria. My grandmother was waitress here at the Austrian Centre, where she fell in love with my grandfather.

Not only my grandparents, but also their friends Fritz Propst, one of the founders of Young Austria and Erich Herzl, the initiator of the Young Austria documentation wanted this commemorative plaque. Sadly all four passed away during the last few years.

Unfortunately we lost another friend a few days ago. The internationally renowned artist Wolf Suschitzky was a hundred and four years old this summer and came to our Young Austria book launch last year. He worked as a photographer at the Austrian Centre.

In my Young Austria book which appeared in German as well as in English, you can read about the Austrian Centre and many of the stories of Young Austrians such as the poet Erich Fried.

Loss of home, persecution and existential insecurity are negative experiences, which refugees are suffering again today. However, the mutual support and friendship as well as the political commitment within the Free Austrian Movement gave the Young Austrians the strength to fight against National Socialism.

Many Young Austrians returned to Austria after the war and many remained in Great Britain. For both groups not all their hopes were fulfilled, not all their wishes came true. But looking back, they have recognized that their experiences and the care and training they received in the Austrian Centre have shaped them into mature and brave people.

I think I can say that we are all glad about the unveiling of the commemorative plaque at Westbourne Terrace.

Sonja Frank, 13 October 2016
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