

GROVE OF FLIGHT

Installation & Inauguration, October 2017

Genesis / Idea

Alpine Peace Crossing (APC) is dedicated to all people on the run and the same idea of founding applies to the *Grove of Flight*. 49 trees and two large natural stones were installed as a spiritual place of hope in the Krimml Achental as a joint cultural project of APC with the Hohe Tauern National Park (NPHT).

As a location for the grove a uniquely beautiful alpine meadow in Krimml Achental was selected at 1,750 m above sea level with a clear view to the south to the glaciated end of the valley and - to the northwest - to the particularly beautiful Windbach waterfall.

The number 7 is a lucky number in many cultures and religions. Therefore, the grove of the escape consists of $7 \times 7 = 49$ trees. As native and for the wetland location most suitable tree species white birch (*betula pendula*), moor birch (*betula pubescens*) and rowanberry (*sorbus aucuparia*) were selected. All trees are dedicated to people whose fate is inextricably linked with the former camp Givat Avoda in Saalfelden or with the Jewish Exodus 1947 across the Krimml Tauern Pass, as well as those who founded APC - and thus to revive this escape route - as well contributed significantly to the development of APC's assistance programs. In the heart of the grove two large natural stones are placed to honour personalities who have shown exemplary commitment to the cause of peace ("Peace-Stone Windbachfall ") and, who are - based on their own experiences or their commitment to the topic of escape - a role model for all, especially for the youth ("Flight Stone Krimml Glacier "). The prism in the center reflects the symbolic meaning of the grove (in three languages).

There are a large number of people - 371 today - to which this recognition applies: 344 personalities in the 49 trees, and 27 personalities in the two stones. The group trees with the relatively largest number of selected individuals is the "APC Tree" (57), followed by the "Art and Culture Tree" (35), the "CSR Tree" (34), the "NGO Tree" (29), the "Refugee Tree" (23) and the "Tree of Media, Film & Communication" (23). Other group trees: "Eyewitness Tree" (22), "Tree of Bricha + APC / Israel" (20), "Tree of Religions" (13), "Tree of Science" (12), "Tree of Politics" (12), "Tree of Human Rights" (10), "Mayor Tree" (7), "Tree of Sports" (5) and the Ambassador Tree" (5).



Impressions from the escape route: Ascending the Krimml Tauern Pass (2.634m) through the Achental (Austria); descent into the Ahrntal (South Tyrol)

Installation

Many people participated in the implementation of the project:

- Judith Forthuber (APC Board) assumed overall responsibility for organization, logistics and coordination, together with our APC member Hans Lerch;
- on the part of the NPHT, the project was supported at the highest level by Dep.-Gov. Astrid Rössler and NPV Director Wolfgang Urban;
- in many detailed plans for the grove, Ferdinand Lainer and Ariane Schweiger from the NPHT creatively collaborated;
- the creation and implementation of ecological principles in the installation of the grove are the merit of Susanne Popp (State Environmental Advocate Salzburg) and Oliver Stöhr (REVITAL Integrative Raumplanung, ecological building supervision);
- advice and delivery of trees: Rudolf Murauer (Murauer Forstpflanzen);
- the design and manufacture of the prism: Günter Berger (Design am Berg);
- planting and installation of natural stones: Helmut Leiter (landowner, who provided his alpine meadow for the grove).



September 27: planting and installation



Hans Lerch and Judith Forthuber

Inauguration

Over one hundred participants, media, schools and members of the Austrian Armed Forces (under the direction of Brigadier Heinz Hufler, as a special sign of solidarity with Alpine Peace Crossing and the basic idea of the grove) gather at 11:15 am on 17 October solemn inauguration of the grove of escape.

Wilfried Rohm receives the guests with a piece by Johann Sebastian Bach and creates a contemplative atmosphere.

October 17, 2017 - Program

Welcome: Erich Czerny

Greetings: Marko Feingold

Reading: Daniel Keberle from „Die Bricha“, by Asher Ben-Natan

Grove of Flight - Planning and Dedication: Ernst Löschner and Judith Forthuber

Opening Speech: Astrid Rössler

Inter-Religious Inauguration: Franz Lackner, Olivier Dantine, Alexander Lerner, Geshe Tenzin Dargye

Facilitation: Petra Navara



Marko and Hanna Feingold in company of Archbishop Franz Lackner towards the Grove of Flight



How many times have I dreamed of this day!

Would the installation of trees and natural stones still be possible and finished on time? Would early snowfall thwart the venture? Today we have more than 100 people witnessing and contributing to this special ceremony with the solemn inter-religious inauguration. What a dream day today! The Gods are with us and we are all very grateful for that.

The *Grove of Flight* is infused with symbolism: The numbers seven and two stand for luck and harmony. So we raised the lucky number seven squared and planted 7x7 trees. The unity of number two (as in the Taijitu circle of Ying and Yang) is exaggerated by the form of the "*mensa*" for the natural stones, a sign of hospitality for refugees. The grove is a symbol of life and growth, to bring happiness to all who pass through it.

70 years ago, there were desperate people here, but they had a clear goal and people who helped them to achieve it, but most of all, their own determination. The memory of it is to make those who are still waiting for the happiness of a new home, or the happiness of a healthy return to their old homeland.

Many of the 371 honorees to whom a tree or natural stone is dedicated in the *Grove of Flight* are here today. Now, by calling your names together with Judith, I would like to thank you once again for everything that you contributed to the aims of APC. Guy Shachar is here from Israel today, and he will convey this thanks to all Jewish friends. From the sons of Aba Gefen (who was the former Commander of the Bricha in Salzburg - tree # 2 is dedicated to it) we got a wonderful "testimonial" in the name of her father, which we like to read, as well as that of Paulinka Kreisberg-Wiesenthal. She sent it in memory and in the name of her father Simon Wiesenthal a few days ago.

Finally, allow me to name those great personalities who have also expressed their solidarity with the creation and assistance of APC. These are the following dedicatees of the "*Peace-Stone Windbachfall*": Daniel Barenboim, James Earl "Jimmy" Carter, Cecily Corti, Paul Chaim Eisenberg, Heinz Fischer, David Grossman, Patricia Kahane, Helmut Kohl, Bruno Kreisky, Giorgio Napolitano, Johannes Poigenfürst, Christoph Schönborn, Franz Vranitzky, Anton Zeilinger and Jean Ziegler.

The "*Flight Stone Krimml Glacier*" is dedicated to: Ute Bock, Friedrich & Gertraud Cerha, Tenzin Gyatso (14th Dalai Lama), Ruth Klüger, Elfriede Jelinek, Nadja Lorenz, Ari Rath, Rudolf Sarközi, Alexander Van der Bellen, Simon Wiesenthal and Leon Zelman.

Unfortunately, five of these personalities are no longer with us. All others we asked for a "testimonial". We will gladly share their feedback with you as we invite you to write your thoughts and wishes in the "Hain Book" in the Prism of the grove.

The selection of all honored people is for me also a sign of their attachment to my personal credo that it always depends on the individual human being, if something should change in our lives. The last syllable in the well-known Tibetan-Nepalese mantra *Om Mani Padme Hum* means

"Do something!"

Ernst Löschner

Distinguished Speakers



(seated from left): Marko Feingold (President of the Jewish Community Salzburg); Astrid Rössler (Deputy Govenour Salzburg); Ernst Löschner (Founder and Chairman of APC; Initiator oft he Grove of Flight); (standing from left): Erich Cerny (Mayor of Krimml); Franz Lackner (Archbishop of the Diocese of Salzburg); Olivier Dantine (Superintendent of the Diocese of Salzburg and Tyrol); Tenzin Dargye (Geshe oft he Tibet Centre Austria); Christian Walch (r.k. Pastor in Krimml); Alexander Lerner (Cantor of the Jewish Community Vienna)



Touching Words

Erich Cerny Mayor of Krimml

Erich Cerny welcomes all honoured and distinguished guests and declares the ceremony to be started by quoting the barber's speech in Charly Chaplins Film „The Great Dictator“ (1940):

„I don't want to be an Emperor, that's not my business. I don't want to rule or conquer anyone. I should like to help everyone if possible: Jew, gentile, black man, white. We all want to help one another, human beings are like that. We want to live by each other's happiness, not by each other's misery. We don't want to hate and despise one another. In this world there is room for everyone and the good Earth is rich and can provide for everyone. The way of life can be free and beautiful. But we have lost the way.

Greed has poisoned men's souls,
has barricaded the world with hate;
has goose-stepped us into misery and bloodshed.
We have developed speed, but we have shut ourselves in;
machinery that gives abundance has left us in want.
Our knowledge has made us cynical,
our cleverness hard and unkind.
We think too much and feel too little.
More than machinery we need humanity,
more than cleverness we need kindness and gentleness.

Without these qualities life will be violent and all will be lost.“



Touching Words

Marko Feingold President of the Jewish Community, Salzburg

Interviewed by Petra Navara

Mr. Feingold, you have enabled many people to flee their miserable camp life and build a new existence in another country. What can we learn from the story of this escape?

Salzburg was virtually the hub for this exodus from Europe. But without papers ...?! You have to imagine, no one had papers. Without papers you are nobody, you have no rights. A huge problem! Luckily the authorities in Italy have considered me as Italian. With my connections I was able to bring tens of thousands to Italy. The Jews were then all „returning Italians"! Not just over the Krimml Tauern Pass. Previously, it was relatively easy across the Brenner. Cigarettes and sardines helped, there was big need of anything. But we always trembled. And people who have to flee today? They are shaking too!

What does it do to you when you see what efforts are being made to commemorate the 1947 escape?

At that time we had other worries. We did not think about whether 50 or 60 or 70 years later someone would think about it. We just wanted to do the right thing. But Ernst Löschner and Alpine Peace Crossing have made our work official.

The *Grove of Flight* is like a late confirmation that we have acted correctly, because the grove should also encourage. Today's celebration is very emotional for me, 70 years ago I would never have thought that I would once experience this beautiful day here in the Krimml Achental.



Touching Words

Franz Lackner Archbishop of the Diocese of Salzburg

As a young Franciscan, even before ordination, I remember the historic visit of Pope John Paul II in June 1988 in Austria. His encounter with survivors of the concentration camp in Mauthausen moved me. It was not a speech - rather prayer.

From this I would like to recite some passages:

Are the questions of conscience strong enough - the remorse that has remained to us? You people who have experienced terrible torments - which are worthy of the lamentations of Jeremiah! Which is your last word? Your word after so many years separating our generation from the suffering at Auschwitz and many other places?

People of yesteryear - and today, if the system of extermination camps still continues somewhere in the world today, tell us, what can our century convey to the successors?

Tell us, did not we forget your hell with too much haste? Do we not erase the traces of the old crimes in our memory and consciousness?

Tell us, in what direction should our country and humanity go to Auschwitz? Is the direction in which we move away from the terrible experiences of that time right?

Tell us, how should man be and how the generation of the people who live here from the traces of the great defeat of humanity?

"If there is a God, would not he have to ask forgiveness?" (Inscription of a prisoner in Auschwitz before his departure for destruction). At the thought of the unspeakable suffering of this people and its history, what do we respond to today? Is our life a bit reminiscent of this experience? I am overcome by a feeling of anxiety at the thought of this *Grove of Flight*. Are we as human beings today ready to listen to those who suffer in a concrete life situations? This grove, this place of rest, this place of remembrance, may help us to fight against oblivion. Only with the memory of the past we keep the compass needle for the being in a clear orientation. So we can move away from the past and yet have places of remembrance. These trees of the grove, a piece of refuge on the long road to the unknown.

Touching Words

Astrid Rössler Deputy Govenour of Salzburg

You have to go up a good bit here to understand the contrast this place can show. The alpine landscape, which presents itself today so lovely and sunny, could at that time - as flight route - have a completely different, threatening face, if the people here in ice and snow in inhospitable conditions crossed the Tauern Pass.

The escape has many faces, it can save lives through helpers, through humanity and courage and make a new start possible. But in a harsh climate, with cold and headwind, but even more so in very inhospitable conditions in society, further suffering can be inflicted on the run.

And when we open this *Grove of Flight* here in the national park, this special place also makes us aware how much rescue depends on the initiative of individual people. It takes courage and empathy to act to help people save their lives and lead them to safety, into a new life.

And the small trees are even better off than the larger ones, as children are hit the hardest amongst the many millions of refugees worldwide. And it is precisely here that we have a responsibility to open the way for the next generation, to save them and to safeguard their chances for a future worth living.

May all who go through this grove not so much see the escape as the salvation, the way to freedom, the way to a happy life. I wish this to all of you who today lovingly regard these trees as a sign of remembrance and compassion.





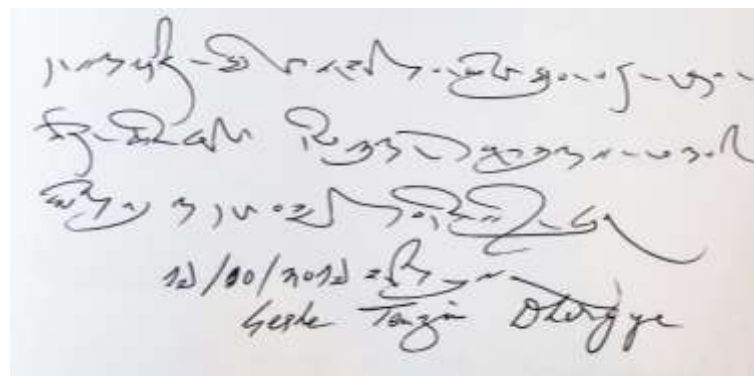
Touching Words

Tenzin Dargye Geshe of the Tibet Centre Austria

Alpine Peace Crossing has already honored the Tibetan people 5 years ago when you chose "The Tibetan Refugees" as main theme for the 6th Krimml Peace Dialogue. Today I am honored to be with you again as I may express not only for me, but also on behalf of His Holiness Genzin Gyatso (the 14th Dalai Lama), our appreciation that we were chosen among the dedicatees of the "Grove of Flight", here in this beautiful Alpine valley with its glaciers which remind me of my own upbringing in the mountains of Tibet.

The refugees who were on this spot here 70 years ago had already gone through immense suffering. They were heading for a very uncertain future, they were afraid that they might be turned back. But they were convinced that they were on the right track. They wanted to create a better world for themselves and their children.

It is a huge tragedy that there are millions of refugees in the world today. I shall now sing a prayer in my Tibetan language, hoping that it may be heard, and praying that the suffering of all refugees may end, not some day but soon.



(Tibetan Inscription in the Book of the Grove)

Touching Words

Olivier Dantine Superintendent Diocese Salzburg/Tirol

Stationen auf dem Weg zur Freiheit

Act

Not the arbitrary but the right to do and dare
not hovering in the possible, taking the real brave,
not in the flight of thought, but in fact freedom is.
Step out of anxious hesitation into the storm of action
born only of God's command and faith,
and freedom will rejoice your spirit.

Are we still usable?

We have been silent witnesses of evil deeds, (...) we have become mellow or perhaps even cynical due to unbearable conflicts - are we still usable? Not geniuses, not cynics, not shamans, not sophisticated tacticians, but we will need simple, simple, just people. Will our inner resilience against what we have been forced become strong enough, and our sincerity to ourselves merciless enough, that we find our way back to simplicity and straightness?

(Quotes from the work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran theologian, distinguished representative of the Confessing Church, since 1933 active in the resistance against National Socialism. Being one of the last Nazi opponents who were associated with the assassination attempt of July 20, 1944, he was executed in April 1945 at the age of 39 in the concentration camp of Flossenbürg by Hitler's direct orders.)





Touching Words

Alexander Lerner Cantor of the Jewish Community, Vienna

Last weekend we celebrated our Feast of Tabernacles. Sukkot - a festival of remembrance as the people of Israel wandered through barren deserts.

It must have been a similar situation when 1947 homeless people moved through this valley. Similar to the desert migration, they did not know their destination. But the hope and trust in God have certainly accompanied them.

Moses led his people safely through the desert. In 1947 it was Marko Feingold who hoped to lead unsettled and frightened people with great perseverance and trust in God into a better future and encouraged them, repeatedly. Over long distances, there was no rest area, no shelter, only the steady forward in the steep terrain. And the great hope to reach a good goal. Out of the country where you were unwanted.

We can hardly imagine what these people suffered at that time.

Why are people in a country undesirable? Is there not enough room for everyone? Not enough food?

Let's think about our overflowing supermarkets, the posh restaurants, where masses of food are being destroyed because they are no longer 1A, every day.

During the 8-day of our Sukkot Festival we remember how the Israelites sat in huts in the desert. We leave our well-equipped apartments, take only a few things. Reduced to the bare minimum, we can feel contentment and deep gratitude to the Eternal.

This satisfaction is the cornerstone of peace. In a country where people are satisfied with themselves and their lives, there will be no jealousy. Peace comes from renouncing what you do not really need.

If all people behave accordingly, there will be room and food for everyone.

Touching Words

Judith Forthuber Member of the APC-Board

As the entire installation to the *Grove of Flight* was completed on September 27, I was incredibly happy. It was a beautiful autumn day, as everyone would like a day in the mountains.

The trees were planted, the explanatory board set up and mounted, the two natural stones brought here from the slope and placed.

When I was commissioned more than 1 year ago by the board of Alpine Peace Crossing with the organization, logistics and coordination of the project, Ernst Löschner's vision of a memorial site on the historic path from the Krimml Achental to the Ahrntal in South Tyrol had become a concern to me. Petra Navara, our facilitator, had correctly predicted: "Looking at the result, one would never imagine the difficulties in its creation".

During the installation we did not use any machines in the sense of the protected nature in the national park. The trees and all necessary material for planting and for the explanatory board were carried here by the person, who provided APC with the areal. Helmut Leiter himself transported the two stones with a light device over the stream bed. All planting holes were dug by hand, the excess genetic material carried away with the disc. In this way - as stipulated in the conditions of the national park law exception approval - no land damage incurred.

Thanks to the good cooperation and support of my project partners, we can solemnly hand over the *Grove of Flight* to its purpose today.

At the same time I dedicate Marko Feingold my contribution to the emergence of the *Grove of Flight*: With a deep bow and great respect for your work of humanity and hope, in response to inhumanity and suffering.

I am convinced that – in future - the *Grove of Flight* will also be a comforting place of encounter.



Touching Words

Asher Ben-Natan, read by Daniel Keberle

As a Viennese Jew, Asher Ben-Natan had fled National Socialism and returned after the war in order to enable the homeless and displaced people to travel to Eretz Israel with the Jewish escape aid organization Bricha. In his book "The Bricha - An escapee remembers" he describes their sufferings, their routes, their hope for a new home, whose co-founder they would be themselves. The author found addressed all these aspects of an escape in a poem by Nathan Altermann, which he quotes.

The Silver Platter

And the land grows still, the red eye of the sky slowly dimming over
smoking frontiers
As the nation arises, Torn at heart but breathing, To receive its miracle,
the only miracle
As the ceremony draws near, it will rise, standing erect in the
moonlight in terror and joy
When across from it will step out a youth and a lass and slowly march
toward the nation
Dressed in battle gear, dirty, Shoes heavy with grime, they ascend the
path quietly
To change garb, to wipe their brow
They have not yet found time. Still bone weary from days and from
nights in the field
Full of endless fatigue and unrested,
Yet the dew of their youth. Is still seen on their head
Thus they stand at attention, giving no sign of life or death
Then a nation in tears and amazement
will ask: "Who are you?"
And they will answer quietly, "We Are the silver platter on which the
Jewish state was given."
Thus they will say and fall back in shadows
And the rest will be told In the chronicles of Israel.



The Grove of Flight

Testimonials



The "Bricha" (Flight) movement, which was so dear to our father, was all about people helping each other to reach safety and a new homeland. We see the "Grove of Flight" not only as a commemoration of the historical events, but also as a guide for creating a future in which people help those less fortunate, giving shelter, a place to rest, and a sense of peacefulness that is so present in the beautiful scenery of the Krimmler Achental.

Meir and Yehuda Gefen

As you know, my father dedicated his life to moral redemption, to Nazism of justice, while at the same time giving the victims the dignity and self-esteem that was trampled on for years and worse.

Perhaps less well known is that every person threatened, regardless of whether he was a Jew or a non-Jew, was attached to my father's heart, regardless of which minority he belonged to. From his own bitter experience, he knew what it meant to lose everything, to flee, to try and save his life.

I am sure that he - an eternal optimist - would have appreciated the memorial to this exodus and the bravery of those who made it possible at that time, as a shining example of the victory over evil.

Paulinka Kreisberg - Wiesenthal

Blessings of four Religions



Speakers

Astrid Rössler: Deputy Provincial Governor of Salzburg. She held the opening speech at the 8th Alpine Peace Crossing in June 2014 and supported the project of the "Peace Pyramids" along the escape route with the National Park Hohe Tauern as the responsible at the government level.

Marko Feingold: President of the Jewish Community Salzburg. In 1947 he discovered the escape route over the Krimml Tauern Pass for 5000 Jewish men, women and children. First honorary member of APC. Since 2007, he has participated every year as an honorary guest at all APC events (now aged 104 years).

Daniel Keberle: Austrian actor. As a member of the People's Committee he supported with a personal quote the "Appeal for a Human Refugee Policy" initiated by Alpine Peace Crossing (Petition "Against Inhumanity"). APC member.

Franz Lackner: Archbishop of Salzburg and Primas Germaniae; his predecessor, Archbishop Alois Kothgasser, was a member of the Honorary Committee in 2007 at the founding of Alpine Peace Crossing.

Olivier Dantine: Superintendent (bishop) of the Diocese of Salzburg and Tyrol. As a member of the People's Committee he supported the Appeal for a Human Refugee Policy initiated in 2013 by Alpine Peace Crossing (Petition "Against Inhumanity") with a personal quote.

Alexander Lerner: Kantor of the Jewish Community Vienna that which stands in close connection with Alpine Peace Crossing ever since and contributing substantially to significant events like the inauguration of the memorial in Saalfelden at the former camp Givat Avoda.

Geshe Tenzin Dargye: Buddhist dignitary and monk, former student of HH the Dalai Lama who participated in an interreligious dialogue organized by APC jointly with the University of Salzburg (May 2012). Geshe-la was honorary guest at the 6th APC in June 2012 with a focus on "Tibetan Refugees".

Erich Czerny: Mayor of Krimml. Since 2007 closely linked to Alpine Peace Crossing as former board member and strong supporter of the objectives of APC.

Wilfried Rohm: APC member and director for youth projects, e.g. the 2nd exchange of Alpine Peace Crossing in 2014 with an Israeli school.

Judith Forthuber: Member of the Board of APC. She has played a decisive role in the creation and development of the "Grove of Flight".

Ernst Löschner: former bank director, founder (2007) and since then Chairman of the Board of Alpine Peace Crossing - Charity for Social and Refugee Aid. Initiator of the Grove of Flight.

Ernst Löschner



Impressum

Pictures: Moritz Nachtschatt & David Innerhofer

Editing: Petra Navara

November 2017

