BRNO CENTRAL CEMETERY

Guide
A BRIEF GUIDE TO BRNO CENTRAL CEMETERY

The guide highlights historic personalities buried in Central Cemetery of Brno and belongs to a project that can be found online on hrbitovy.brno.cz.

Brno Central Cemetery was built at the Vídeňská Street according to a project by architect Alois Prastorfer, who also is author of administrative buildings near the main entrance and near the side entrance from the Jihlavská Street. The opening ceremony took place on November 3, 1883. Now the cemetery counts among the largest in the Czech Republic. It served from the beginning as a burial place for all, regardless of religion, social status, nationality or race.

The present-day mourning hall near the main gate was built according to a project by architects Bohuslav Fuchs and Josef Polášek and it was opened on April 3, 1927. The elegant building in early constructivist style is now a protected monument. The crematorium in the upper part of the cemetery at the Jihlavská Street, which was built according to a project by architect Ernst Wiesner in functionalist style, was declared a National Cultural Monument. The first funeral ceremony took place here on April 8, 1930. The crematorium is supplemented with urn groves, scattering meadows and ash burial meadows, columbaria.

Some groups of graves have a special position. Among them mainly are the so called honorary burial grounds, where significant personalities are laid to rest. It is for example the group 25e (also referred to as the “Circle of Honour”), groups H5 and H5e (so-called Alley of Honour), and in the cemetery area we also find individual graves of honour. Also distinguished is the position of military burial grounds (groups 47, 49, 56, 66, 79), where the remains of military personnel are buried. These graves are maintained according to requirements of Geneva Conventions for military graves.

The cemetery is not only the last resting place of buried persons, but also a gallery of artistically valuable gravestones from famous sculptors or well-known stonemason’s workshops. Such gravestones are entered in the State Register of Immovable Cultural Monuments.

An integral part of the cemetery is greenery, which has been intentionally cultivated since the founding of the cemetery with the aim to change the place of grief into a place of serenity and hope.
Karel Absolon

* 16. 6. 1877 Boskovice
† 6. 10. 1960 Brno

Geologist, speleologist, archaeologist. Famous explorer of karst areas, discoverer of Punkva Caves in the Moravian Karst and of a mammoth hunters’ camp site at Dolní Věstonice.

The gravesite with a model of a limestone cave was designed by Ferdinand Dobrovolný, the gravestone is protected as a monument.

Josef (Joža) Barvič

* 13. 8. 1853 Velké Karlovice
† 3. 1. 1924 Brno

Bookseller, publisher. In 1883 he opened the first Czech publishing house and bookshop in Brno, where he assembled a stable group of cultural workers. We can find the name Barvič in all Czech literary, music and sport societies of that time, he took part in all events which helped to strengthen the Czech national awareness in the town.

The unauthorized gravestone is protected as a monument.

Ivan Blatný

* 21. 12. 1919 Brno
† 5. 8. 1990 Ipswich (UK)

Poet. He sought inspiration in nature and philosophy, lived the most part of his life in exile, but his greatest desire was to come back to his beloved native town of Brno. This dream of him came true in 1991, after his death.

Lev Blatný

* 21. 4. 1894 Brno
† 21. 6. 1930 Kvetnica (SK)

Prose writer, theatre critic, editor. He acted as a lecturer and playwright in the Brno National Theatre, and became the first chairman of the Brno Literary Group.

After their death, son and father were reunited after years apart in trachyte composition of the gravestone with urns by Milivoj Husák.

Group 25e, grave No. 2

Group 70, grave No. 126–127

Group 25e, grave No. 57
Philologist, historian, founder of Czech Slavic studies. He was the first to write down the history of Czech language and literature and set up a German-Czech dictionary. His interest in archaeology resulted in archaeological relics being regarded as a fully-fledged historical source.

The National cultural monument – a stone pyramid, designed by Leo von Klee, contains a cavity for the cast-iron sarcophagus. Remains of the scholar and the gravestone were moved here from Old Brno Cemetery in 1909.

Ice-hockey and football player. Legendary ice-hockey forward who won three bronze medals in three world championships and entered the hall of fame of the International Ice-Hockey Federation (IIHF) in 1997. He counted among the last sportsmen, who played both ice-hockey and football on the top level; in the 1960 European Football Championship he won a bronze medal.

The white marble gravestone was made by Dušan Váňa.

Technical designer and engineering industrialist of British descent. After his arrival in Brno in the 1840s he founded in the town a factory which produced machines for wool textile industry. His factory, which besides textile machines also produced cranes, boilers, fire engines or weaponry components, was one of the predecessors of the First Brno Engineering and Manufacturing Company, established in 1872.

The gravestone is protected as a monument.

Conductor, clarinettist, saxophonist. In 1948 he came to an orchestra, in which he worked as a conductor for unbelievable fifty three years and which counted among the top ten big bands worldwide.

The black granite gravestone was made by Miroslav Vochta.

* 21. 11. 1795 Leeds (UK) † 27. 11. 1873 Brno
* 22. 5. 1921 Veľké Leváre (SK) † 25. 9. 1995 Brno
* 18. 3. 1931 Kelč † 6. 1. 2015 Brno
* 17. 8. 1753 Balassagyarmat (HU) † 6. 1. 1829 Brno
Theatre and movie actress, pedagogue in the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts (JAMU). Her artistic career was mainly associated with State Theatre Brno, she also cooperated with Brno Radio. An unforgettable movie role of her became Divá Bára (Wild Barbara) from the eponymous movie.

The bronze grave sculpture was made by sculptor Nikos Armutidis.

Pianist. He gave his first public concert as an eight-year-old boy. Before Nazi occupation he went to USA, and then emigrated again after February 1948. He categorically refused to give concerts for the then political regime in Czechoslovakia and returned to his country as late as after 1990. For his brave civil attitude, musical mastery and promotion of Czech music abroad he was awarded many honours and prizes.

The gravestone was made by Václav Fiala.

Architect, town planner, professor in Brno University of Technology. He counted among the most distinctive personalities of the interwar Czechoslovak architecture and created projects for many outstanding buildings in Brno.

The gravestone with post-mortem cast of a hand of the deceased (made by Jiří Marek) was designed by his son Kamil Fuchs. The gravestone is protected as a monument.

Industrialist, entrepreneur in wool textile production, mining and banking. One of the founders of Moravian textile industry, who came from Nuremberg and lived and worked in Brno since 1780.

He is buried in a family tomb from 1851 designed by the Viennese architect Josef Fuss. The tomb – a national cultural monument – was moved from the old cemetery at what is now the Kounicova Street.
Josef Hybeš

* 29. 1. 1850 Dašice
† 19. 7. 1921 Brno

Politician, journalist. Distinctive figure of social-democratic labour movement in Austria-Hungary, Czech deputy in the Imperial Council, a man who was loved by workpeople but at the same time respected by his politic opponents. After emergence of the Czechoslovak Republic he became member of the Revolution National Assembly and senator.

The gravestone with a portrait medallion of the deceased and a sculptural group of a workman’s family was made by Rudolf Schiebl and is protected as a monument.

Josef Chytíl

* 9. 3. 1812 Kojetín
† 10. 2. 1861 Brno

Archivist, historian, writer. He published important sources on the history of Moravia, and counted among significant Czech national workers in Brno.

The sandstone gravestone with an angel sculpture and a marble portrait medallion was restored after transfer of the grave from the Old Brno Cemetery in 1909. The gravestone was made by Josef Břenek and is protected as a monument.

Leoš Janáček

* 3. 7. 1854 Hukvaldy
† 12. 8. 1928 Ostrava

Composer, pedagogue, initially a conductor of Beseda brněnská (cultural society and artistic ensemble), director of organ school and later a composition professor in the State Conservatory of Music. He applied his original musical expression in orchestral works, song cycles and mainly in operas. After years of incomprehension, still during his life, he gained recognition and today he is considered a world-famous composer with an original, modern style.

The gravesite, designed by Eduard Milén, is a cultural monument.

Vitězslava Kaprálová

* 24. 1. 1915 Brno
† 16. 6. 1940 Montpellier (FR)

Composer and conductor. She became the first Czech female conductor who gave a concert with the Czech Philharmonic, and as a guest conducted in 1938 the BBC Symphony Orchestra in her own composition “Military Sinfonietta”. The promising life path and career of the author of orchestral works, songs and vocal compositions was terminated by untimely death.
Architect, university pedagogue. Member of the interwar Czechoslovak architectonic avant garde, the first chairman in the Brno Club of Architects. His name is also associated with the Brno Exhibition Ground where he supervised the building realisation of individual pavilions. He himself designed the projects for the entrance building, cinema and the adjacent café. The gravestone with a female worshipper was designed by Hubert Kovařík in 1932.

Composer, choral conductor. He founded choral tradition in Moravia based on folk songs and folk speech, which he studied and used in his compositional work. He also composed sacred music on a high artistic level. As a member of the Augustinian order he was buried in the monastic tomb, which was designed by German Wanderley and built by Antonín Tomola. The tomb is protected as a monument.

Theatre and movie actress. In the Brno theatre he mainly portrayed caring mothers, older women and grandmothers. After being retired, she returned to the stage as the Grandma – a famous figure created by the Czech writer Božena Němcová. She also portrayed the same figure in an unforgettable way in a movie by director Moskalýk. She gave to this role everything what the Brno audience appreciated – psychological profile of the figure, wisdom, humanity and kindness.

Poet, writer, playwright, journalist. One of the most significant figures in literary life of Brno since 1910 until his tragic death. He tirelessly participated in cultural life, was an adviser to young authors and a friend to many outstanding personalities of the time. He founded a public library and became its first director.

Natural appearance of the gravesite was designed by František Kalivoda, the gravestone inspired by the so-called erratic block was created later by Jiří Marek and is a cultural monument.
Sculptor. His works were mainly intended for public spaces, most of them were inspired by music and literature. He created many memorial plaques of significant cultural personalities connected with Brno. Also important were works dedicated to persons and events of the occupation period and anti-fascist resistance.

The grave sculpture with the phrase I will return there by the Czech poet Halas, which is a marble enlargement of a sculptural work of the deceased, was created by his grandson Jiří Marek.

Scientist, pedagogue, priest. Based on his experiments with pea cross-breeding he discovered heredity – the laws of Mendelian inheritance. He gained posthumous world recognition and today he is considered one of the greatest biologists in the world. He was also engaged in meteorology, beekeeping and fruit-growing. As a member of the Augustinian order he carried out experiments in the garden of the Old Brno Monastery.

He was buried in the monastic tomb, a cultural monument, designed by German Wanderley and built by Antonín Tomola.

Writer, journalist. In his short stories from Brno he depicted social motifs with the scenery of urban periphery, dark workshops and joyless factory yards. Very meritorious was his long time work as a theatre critic who paid attention to actors, repertoire and dramaturgical issues of the Brno National Theatre and helped to raise the general level of Czech theatre in Brno.

The sandstone gravestone with a sculptui re of an allegory of Grief was created in the stonemason’s school in Hořice according to a model by Jan Štursa.

Poet, journalist. Lyric and lyric-epic poet who loved nature in all its transformations, spoke about the non-naturalness of human existence, expressed his doubts, perceived human relations warped by totalitarian society. As a journalist he wrote feuilletons for the newspaper Lidové noviny, after the war he was chief of the Culture column in the Brno daily newspaper Rovnost and editor in the Moravian literary journal Host do domu.

The gravestone with a portrait bust and a facsimile signature of the poet was created by Ladislav Martinek and Miloš Slezák.
František Pavlík

* 2. 3. 1880 Litomyšl
† 26. 11. 1939 Polička

“...and when a king would die today in Brno, his funeral would not be more magnificent than that of a humble Czech workman.” These words were spoken by priest Tomáš Šilinger at the funeral of a young carpenter, who was stabbed to death by the bayonet of an imperial soldier on the stairs of the Besední dům House during a peaceful demonstration calling for the founding of a Czech university in Brno.

The gravestone with iron casting of the sculpture “Winner” by Jan Štursa is protected as a monument.

Arne Novák

* 10. 2. 1889 Brno-Královo Pole
† 2. 10. 1905 Brno

Composer, pedagogue. He often composed his concert pieces to words of Czech poets. His works found wide response mainly at the time of Nazi occupation. He became composition professor in the Brno Conservatory of Music and later in the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts. The sandstone sculpture of Music was created by Jiří Marek, the gravestone is protected as a monument.

Vilém Petrželka

* 10. 2. 1889 Brno-Královo Pole
† 10. 1. 1967 Brno

Literary historian, university pedagogue. As a professor in the field of Czech literature he became in 1938 the last pre-war rector of the Brno university before all Czech universities were closed in February 1939. He was author of theoretical literary-historical works and studies, and collaborated with the newspaper Lidové noviny as a literary critic.

The gravestone is protected as a monument.

Antonín Procházka

* 5. 6. 1882 Vážany
† 9. 6. 1945 Brno

Painter, graphic artist. He produced his works in cubistic and neoclassical style and became one of the pioneers of modern art in the early 20th century. He also gained international recognition and the collectors are permanently interested in his works. Already in 1946 he was posthumously awarded the title National Artist.
Else Rüthel-Schaber

* 3. 8. 1899 Cologne (DE)
† 19. 7. 1938 Brno

Left-wing poetess, translator and actress, representative of a large group of emigrants, who fled from Germany after the ascension of national socialists to power in the 1930s. In 1933, she and her husband Willem Schaber settled down in Brno, where they worked as journalists. But Else became ill and died. After her death, her husband left the Czechoslovak Republic and moved to the USA.

The gravestone, bearing the motto Licht! Liebe! Leben! by Herder, was made by architect František Kalivoda.

Rudolf von Singule

* 8. 4. 1883 Pula (HR)
† 2. 5. 1945 Brno

Soldier and sailor. He served on military ships of the Austro-Hungarian Navy, since 1909 he became one of the first officers in the Austria's U-boat fleet. During the World War I he achieved great success in combat operations as a commander of U-4 submarine. He probably served as the only U-boat captain of Czech descent in the German Kriegsmarine during the World War II. In 1941–1942 he served on a school boat UD-4 in Kiel, Germany.

Jan Skácel

* 7. 2. 1922 Vnorovy
† 7. 11. 1989 Brno

Poet, writer, journalist. In his world-view he proceeded from basic values of human life, emphasized moral principles, pride, truthfulness, humble bravery. In folk songs, fairy tales and biblical stories he found refuge from the superficiality and tempo of the modern world. He worked as a literary editor in Brno Radio, editor-in-chief in the Moravian literary journal Host do domu, and after 1969 as a professional writer.

The gravestone was made by Ivan Rušler, the portrait bust was created by Miloš Vlček.

František Sušil

* 14. 6. 1804 Rousínov
† 31. 5. 1868 Bystrice pod Hostýnem

Poet, translator, theologian, collector of folk songs. He became theology professor in Brno, translated the New Testament and equipped it with commentaries. Today he is most noted for his collecting and exploratory activity in the field of folk songs, mainly for his monumental work "Moravian Folk Songs and Melodies". This work inspired many composers, for example Leoš Janáček and Antonín Dvořák.

His remains, along with the cultural monument gravestone, were moved from Brno City Cemetery in 1893.
Zora Šemberová

Dance artist, pedagogue. She danced Juliet in the world premiere of the ballet “Romeo and Juliet” by Sergei Prokofiev, connected her dance art with the Brno National Theatre, later she was employed in the Prague National Theatre. As a dance pedagogue she educated many personalities of Czech ballet and Czech dance scene. She emigrated to Australia in 1968 and joined the social life of her compatriots, acted as a pedagogue at the university in Adelaide. The gravestone was created by atelier Vochta.

* 13. 3. 1913 Vyškov
† 9. 10. 2012 Adelaide (AU)

Jaroslav Štěpánek

Violinist. After his studies at the Prague Conservatory of Music he worked in Bratislava, Moravská Ostrava and Košice. He came to Brno Radio before the World War II and worked here until retirement. As an outstanding and popular violinist he also continued his own public concert activity.

* 16. 5. 1905 Kladno-Kročehlavy
† 5. 3. 1970 Znojmo

Karel Vaněk

Politician. Before the World War I he was deputy in the Moravian Diet and deputy in the Imperial Council for the Czechoslovak social democratic party. He participated in domestic resistance during the World War I and as a member of the Moravian National Committee he headed the land administration in late October 1918. After emergence of the Czechoslovak Republic he became the first historically known Czech Mayor of Brno.

* 7. 5. 1869 Kostelec nad Černými Lesy
† 23. 2. 1924 Brno

Jindřich Blažej Wawra

Explorer, botanist, ship surgeon. He descended from a wealthy miller’s family, but he personally did no business. After his medicine studies in Vienna, between 1856 and 1879, he took part in several transoceanic cruises as a ship surgeon. During these journeys he was actively engaged in collecting of botanical and ethnographic material, and as the first Czech explorer he made photographic documentation of his discoveries. His collection is currently stored in the Náprstek Museum in Prague.

† 25. 5. 1887 Baden u Vídně (AT)
† 27. 11. 1873 Brno
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