

## Obituary

### Dr Katya Ošancová 1920–2003



Dr Katya Ošancová

Dr Katya Ošancová (née Käthe Sgalitzer), who died earlier this year, was an outstanding Czech nutritional scientist and was well known in the UK. She was born in Prague in 1920 and was educated at the Prague Gymnasium for Girls. She was awarded a scholarship to Girton College, Cambridge, UK, and arrived there from occupied Czechoslovakia in 1939, a day before the outbreak of the Second World War and Nazi occupation. She tragically lost her parents, her brother and numerous relatives in the Holocaust.

At Cambridge she studied Natural Sciences and graduated in 1942, after which she worked for 2 years in the MRC Dunn Nutritional Laboratory in the company of E. H. Kodicek, J. Yudkin, T. Moore and J. Harris. She was one of the early members of the Nutrition Society and remained in contact with Professor Yudkin, Derek Miller and other members for many years.

In 1943 Katya married František Ošancová, an officer in the British and the Czechoslovakian Foreign Armies. They returned to Prague at the end of the war to help rebuild their country. Katya began working at the Ministry of Nutrition in Prague and in 1951 joined the Institute of Nutrition. When the Institute was closed down, she continued her scientific career at the State Institute of Health in Prague where she worked until her death.

In 1961 Katya successfully defended her PhD thesis on nutrition and obesity at the Charles University in Prague.

Although her research continued to be mainly concerned with the epidemiology of nutrition and obesity, she had a wide range of interests including health education. She was an editor of several specialized Czech journals and was a member of the editorial board of *Výživa* (the Journal of the Czechoslovak (later Czech) Society of Nutrition) for more than 50 years. She published numerous articles in the Czech Republic and abroad and was co-author of several nutritional monographs. Katya was an active contributor to many conferences and seminars over the years, a clear lecturer and generous collaborator. Her excellent English combined with her professional knowledge was invaluable in the translation work that she continued until she died.

For Katya, the decisive centre of her life was her family, her children and grandchildren. She loved her own country deeply, but maintained a deep affection for the UK, where she had many friends, and for Cambridge in particular.

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