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EDITORIAL

This year's double issue offers a varied look at new research inspired by Gregor Mendel's legacy. Jakub Treml opens with an intriguing question – whether Mendel cultivated cannabis – inviting readers to reconsider the range of his botanical experiments. T. H. Noel Ellis, who was awarded the Mendel Memorial Medal 2025 at the John Innes Centre in Norwich for his outstanding research linking Mendel's work with modern genetics, contributes the printed version of the lecture he delivered during the award ceremony.

Michaela Nekardová and Pavel Mikel offer a genetic genealogy study on Mendel's paternal lineage, while Roger J. Wood, Attila T. Szabó, and Peter Poczai analyse Festetics's "genetic laws of nature" in relation to early theories of inheritance. Pavlína Pončíková presents two contributions: one on the 1910 Mendel Monument, and another on the Paul Olexik Foundation for mental illness patients, expanding our understanding of Mendel's cultural and social impact.

Jiří Sekerák further explores the origins of genetics in his article on Graf Mittrowsky and the Moravian-Silesian Agricultural Society. The Comments section continues scholarly discussion, with Bernhard Josko engaging with Sekerák's research on Mendel's birth record.

In the Chronicle section, we pay tribute to the late Anna Matalová (1944–2024), a leading figure in the field of Mendelian studies, while further reports cover the Mendel Memorial Medal 2025, news from the Brno *Realschule*, and the launch of the First Mendel Contest alongside the founding of the US Mendel School.

We hope this issue provides readers with stimulating perspectives on Mendel's enduring influence and encourages continued inquiry into the historical and scientific foundations of genetics.

Jiří Sekerák

DID GREGOR MENDEL GROW *CANNABIS*?

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ABSTRACT – Gregor Johann Mendel is renowned for his hybridization experiments with peas, but it is almost unknown that he ordered cannabis seeds and likely planted them in his greenhouse. This paper presents the sparse evidence describing this until now obscure part of Mendel's life. By combining knowledge from botany, history, pharmacognosy, and medicine, I propose a theory that Mendel's goal might have been to breed better industrial hemp with longer fibres and/or to enhance the medicinal potential of cannabis. Given that the cannabis Mendel ordered likely had a moderate or high content of THC, he himself might have experienced its psychoactive effects. What Mendel actually did with the cannabis seeds and the outcomes of his experiments will remain a mystery. But it is sure that the varieties of cannabis strains that have resulted from years of legal and illegal plant breeding would undoubtedly be stunning for Mendel.

INTRODUCTION

When I first stumbled upon the revelation that Gregor Mendel had ordered cannabis seeds, as detailed in a publication by Matalová and Matalová,[1] I was not only surprised but also filled with enthusiasm and curiosity. Mendel and medical cannabis have long been passions of mine. My reaction was likely akin to that of William Bateson when he first encountered the work of the Moravian friar Gregor Mendel. Bateson's reading of Mendel's paper profoundly altered the course of his life, as he realized that Mendel had conducted experiments revealing the principles of inheritance more than thirty years earlier. Bateson subsequently became a fervent champion of Mendel's ground-breaking research within the English-speaking scientific community.[2]

Gregor Johann Mendel (1822–1884) is known primarily for his hybridization experiments with pea plants (*Pisum sativum*), which led him to formulate the laws of genetics. He presented his results at meetings of the Natural History Society of Brno in Moravia on February 8 and March 8, 1865. The results of his experiments were then published in Verhandlungen des naturforschenden Vereines in Brünn in 1866.[3]

In addition to his famous work, Mendel also experimented with other plant species, including hawkweeds, cucumbers, beans, carnations, and fuchsias. He may also have grown potatoes, as he was interested in the fungal disease potato blight (*Phytophthora infestans*), which was a major problem throughout Europe in the mid-19th century.[4] Additionally, Mendel kept bees at his monastery, building his own apiary, and maintaining several varieties of honeybees, with which he carried out hybridization experiments.[5] To my surprise, only that one publication mentions a connection between Gregor Mendel and cannabis.

MENDEL'S LECTURES IN THE LIGHT OF CURRENT KNOWLEDGE

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INTRODUCTION

This article is a based on the Mendel Memorial Lecture presented at the John Innes Centre in March 2025. The actual lecture is available as a recording[1] but here, the main points will be presented, with slightly different emphases. The lecture derived from work in which I have been involved, spanning the years 1990 to 2025, and included many collaborations and diverse sources of funding. There are two main threads to these studies, first the molecular nature of the genetic variants of pea which Mendel studied (Bhattacharyya et al. 1990, Hellens et al. 2010, Feng et al. 2025) and secondly the nature of Mendel's work and insights (van Dijk and Ellis 2016, 2022a, b, 2023, van Dijk et al. 2018, 2022, Ellis et al. 2019, Ellis and van Dijk 2023). In these latter studies it became apparent that a surprising amount of criticism of Mendel and Mendelian genetics still exists. This article is therefore divided into three parts: Insights, Alleles and Criticism.

MENDEL'S INSIGHTS

It is my view that Mendel was interested in the mechanism of inheritance. As translated by Abbott and Fairbanks (2016), Mendel (1866) stated his aims as *"... to determine the number of the various forms in which the progeny of hybrids appear, so that one could, with confidence, arrange these forms into the individual generations and determine their relative numerical relationships*". The number and relative frequency of different forms in subsequent generations derived from a cross is determined by the pattern of inheritance of the differences between the parents of the cross. Mendel did not need to write the word 'inheritance' here for his meaning to be clear; any more than a restaurant needs to write 'food' to explain its dinner menu. Mendel's counting the number of each form in each generation is the input data for any such analysis by geneticists or computational biologists today.

Mendel proposed that discrete determinants of alternative states segregated into the gametes, which were in turn recombined according to the laws of combination and probability. He was also interested in the long-term consequences of this mechanism and showed how to calculate the expected number and frequency of different forms in successive generations.

In his 2007 book *The Origins of Genome Architecture,* Michael Lynch argues against 'panselectionism', the idea that that almost all evolution occurs through natural selection.

THE PATERNAL Y-CHROMOSOMAL LINEAGE OF GREGOR JOHANN MENDEL: A GENETIC GENEALOGY STUDY BASED ON LIVING RELATIVES

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ABSTRACT - Uniparental genetic markers – Y-chromosomal and mitochondrial DNA – are valuable tools in both DNA-based human identification and genetic genealogy, as they enable the reconstruction and verification of direct paternal and maternal lineages. Their evidentiary value is inherently one-sided: they can reliably exclude a genetic relationship, but its confirmation requires genealogical context and, ideally, several independently verifiable living relatives. In this study, we applied these principles to the paternal lineage of Gregor Johann Mendel (1822–1884), whose skeletal remains were recently analysed and assigned to a broad Y-haplogroup and an mt-haplogroup. We identified and tested two living patrilineal descendants of Mendel's Y-chromosomal lineage, each belonging to an independently documented branch descending from their shared ancestor Andreas Mendel (c. 1689–1746). Our findings demonstrate how uniparental markers, when combined with robust genealogical reconstruction, provide a strong framework for validating historical identities and placing them within broader phylogenetic and archaeogenetic contexts. This study presents the first genetic-genealogical characterisation of Mendel's paternal lineage based on living relatives.

INTRODUCTION

In 2022, the world marked the bicentenary of one of the most influential figures in the history of biology – Gregor Johann Mendel (1822–1884). Not only did Mendel lay the foundations of genetics as a scientific discipline, he was also among the first to anchor biological research in the statistical analysis of empirical data. The importance of this anniversary was underscored by his inclusion in the UNESCO Anniversaries 2022–2023 list. Brno, the city where Mendel lived and conducted his research at the Augustinian Abbey, honoured the occasion with a series of celebratory events, including an international conference attended by leading figures of contemporary science, among them three Nobel laureates. Commemorations took place elsewhere as well. The Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, in cooperation with the National Gallery, hosted an exhibition entitled Mendel 1822–2022. Another exhibition was organised by the Japanese Mendel Society, affiliated with the University of Tokyo. Scientific journals likewise published laudatory reflections.

As a symbolic gesture marking the 200th anniversary of Mendel's birth, anthropological and genetic research was carried out on his skeletal remains, which were

* *Both authors contributed equally to this work. The research into the paternal lineage of Gregor Mendel was conceived by Pavel Mikel, who continues to lead this line of inquiry.*

FESTETICS'S 'GENETIC LAWS OF NATURE' CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO THE PREVAILING CONCEPT OF BIOLOGICAL INHERITANCE

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ABSTRACT – Faced with defending the controversial technique of close inbreeding to produce high quality wool from imported Merino sheep, the Hungarian landowner Count Imre (Emmerich) Festetics proposed four 'genetic laws of nature' which had guided his own successful breeding practice. He presented these laws to the 1819 annual meeting of the Brno (Brünn) Sheep Breeders' Society (SBS). They dealt with health and vigour, inter-generational variation, both acceptable and unacceptable, and with inbreeding accompanied by stringent selection of breeding stock. Although he referred to inbreeding in terms of consanguinity, he made no comment on the supposed physiological connection between heredity and blood, and what affected it. As a result of basing his laws strictly on empirical observation, he was able to provide valuable guidance at a practical level, just what was needed at that time.

In May 1814 the Moravian Agricultural and Natural Science Society (MAS or *Ackerbaugesellschaft*) with its headquarters in Brno (Brünn) decided to organise a specialised section to be known as the Sheep Breeders' Society (SBS or *Schafzüchtervereinigung*) (R. André 1812; Wood and Orel 2001, p. 229–233).[1] Membership was open to all friends, experts and supporters of sheep breeding, not only farmers and other agricultural experts but manufacturers and textile merchants – all who depended on wool for their livelihood. The first meeting attracted 150 participants including a 15-member committee, who drew up plans for the Society to meet annually in May to review progress in breed improvement in the previous 12 months. Centrally important to its purpose would be a frank exchange of information in open discussion about the production of the finest quality wool. Methods of trait recording, progeny testing and the matching of selected rams and ewes (including breeding in-and-in as recommended by the English breeder Robert Bakewell) would be particularly discussed. Among the early consequences of this development was a decision by the Society's Secretary, Christian Carl André (1763–1831) to arrange for his son Rudolf to spend an extended period in residence on the farm of Baron Ferdinand Geisslern (1751–1824) at Hoštice in the lush countryside to the north east of Brno. Geisslern, known as the 'Moravian Bakewell', was famous for the quality

PAUL OLEXIK FOUNDATION FOR PATIENTS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS*

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ABSTRACT – The article describes the creation of a charitable foundation for the support of the mentally ill, founded by Paul Olexik. which was intended to support persons who had properly completed treatment in the Mährische Landes-Irrenanstalt. The handling of the foundation's funds is approached with a probe into the accounting from 1907 to 1909.

The Brno physician Paul Olexik (* January 6, 1801, Klin – † October 10, 1878, Brno) is well known from the existing literature on Gregor Mendel. This man was at the origin of Mendel's interest in meteorology,[1] in later years they also collaborated in plant breeding.[2] While this area is reflected and well researched in the literature, his profession as a physician lies somewhat on the sidelines, which brings with it some controversy about the course of his career, which would also certainly deserve more attention in a standalone article.

Paul Olexik charitable activities, specifically his efforts to support mentally ill patients who have successfully undergone inpatient treatment, are still not at all documented.[3] Perhaps this is because there is apparently only a not very extensive file on the subject in the fonds of the provincial committee, which contains mainly financial statements and a few applications for support from the foundation.[4]

Olexik completed his studies in philosophy and medicine at the University of Vienna in 1826 and began his career as a secondary physician in the internal medicine department of the Vienna General Hospital, where he specialized in infectious diseases. From 1831 he worked as an expert in the control of cholera infection for Austria, Bohemia and Moravia. From 1832 he worked as a physician at the *Vereinigtes Armenversorgungs-Haus in Brünn* (United Welfare Institution for the the Poor in Brno), which was in the former convent of Dominican Sisters in Staré Brno (present University Hospital of St. Anne in Brno).

The Institution housed not only a hospital, but also a maternity hospital, a foundling hospital and, last but not least, an insane asylum *(Irrenhaus)*. In 1836, the entire facility was transformed into a General Hospital, of which the asylum, maternity hospital and insane asylum were still part.

Paul Olexik was appointed as *Hausphysic*, which was the physician who provided medical supervision over all parts of the institution, and under him were the other medical staff, which were the surgeon *(Haus-Wundarzt)* and the assistant surgeon *(chirurgischer Gehilfe)*. Olexik's superior was the hospital director, also a physician.

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GRAF MITTROWSKY AND OTHERS: FROM THE K. K. MÄHR.-SCHLES. GESELLSCHAFT ZUR BEFÖRDERUNG DES ACKERBAUES, DER NATUR- UND LANDESKUNDE TO THE BEGINNINGS OF GENETICS*

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ABSTRACT – The development of modern science in the Moravian capital, which culminated in the emergence of genetics, was inextricably linked to figures such as Johann Nepomuk and Anton Friedrich Graf Mittrowsky. These important patrons of science influenced the establishment of key scientific institutions such as the Moravian Museum and the K. k. mähr.-schles. Gesellschaft and contributed to the development of the scientific community in Brno. This community was fundamental to the scientific discoveries of the 19th century, including the work of Gregor Mendel. This text focuses on the historical context that paved the way for the emergence of genetics, demonstrating how the relationship between aristocratic patrons and the scientific elite shaped the environment that was instrumental in Mendel's groundbreaking research.

The *"Aristokratie und Naturwissenschaft"* conference took place at the National Technical Museum in Prague on 21–22 June this year. Organised by the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Theorie der Biologie* (DGGTB) in collaboration with the *Verband Biologie, Biowissenschaften und Biomedizin in Deutschland* (VBIO), the *Leibniz Institute for the Analysis of Biodiversity Change*, the *National Technical Museum*, and the *Moravian Museum*, the conference's theme inspired this paper, which expands on an original contribution prepared for that event.

The development of the scientific environment in the Moravian metropolis mirrors similar processes in other regions of the Habsburg Monarchy. To identify the key milestones that also led to the rise of genetics – arguably the most dynamic discipline within the life sciences today – it is necessary to recall those who significantly contributed to the emergence of modern science in Moravia during the late Enlightenment and the rise of liberalism.

A crucial role in the establishment and institutionalisation of modern natural sciences in Moravia was played by the noble Mittrowsky family, particularly two of its representatives:

- Johann Nepomuk Graf Mittrowsky von Mittrowitz und Nemischl (1757–1799)
- Anton Friedrich Graf Mittrowsky von Mittrowitz und Nemischl (1770–1842)

The Mittrowsky family can be traced back to southern Bohemia in the 1470s. Originally belonging to the lower class of the Bohemian nobility, their history reflects the broader political and economic developments in Bohemia during the 15th and 16th

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MENDEL MONUMENT, 1910*

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ABSTRACT – In 1910, a monument to Gregor Mendel was unveiled in the square before the Staré Brno monastery. Its centrepiece was a statue by Theodor Charlemont, which today stands within the grounds of the Augustinian monastery at Staré Brno. The project was financed through a public subscription and government subsidies, which also provided funds for landscaping the surrounding area. This article focuses on the origins, organisation and progress of the subscription, the announcement of a public competition, and its subsequent progress. Drawing on correspondence exchanged between 1908 and 1910 by the monument's creator, the Viennese sculptor Theodor Charlemont, and the architect Julius Leisching, the director of the Museum of Applied Arts in Brno, it sheds light on the details of the monument's realisation. The Gregor Mendel monument was to be part of Brno's public space for the next fifty years before eventually giving way to new transport infrastructure and finding a more peaceful home in the publicly accessible section of the monastery garden.

Although the Gregor Mendel monument, unveiled in 1910 in the square in front of the Augustinian monastery at Staré Brno, has received considerable attention in the literature on Mendel, the primary information largely derives from the works of Hugo Iltis, particularly his 1911 account of the monument's construction.[1] His work has remained the principal source on the subject. Subsequent works generally address the monument only marginally, focusing instead on the monument's unveiling or the centenary celebrations of Mendel's birth in 1922. In these accounts, the construction of the monument is seen chiefly as a triumph of the scientific community and recognition of Mendel's contribution to world science; other aspects receive only limited attention. To this day, Iltis's work has remained the definitive treatment of this subject. A valuable complement is a contemporary article by Julius Leisching,[2] which discusses more fully the challenges of the monument's execution and the personality of its creator. Based on this and the correspondence between Leisching and Theodor Charlemont, this article focuses more closely on the actual process of creating the monument and the progress of the work.

Photographs form an important part of this study and can be classified as significant sources. The prominent Brno photographer Josef Kunzfeld documented the ceremonial unveiling of the monument on 2 October 1910, copies of which are now held in the collections of many institutions. The Brno City Archive holds photographs that served as documentation for the redevelopment of Mendel Square. Their precise dating provides a basic overview of when the statue was transferred to the garden of the Staré Brno

* *This work appears through the institutional support of long-term conceptual development of research institutions provided by the Ministry of Culture (ref. MK000094862).*

COMMENTS

REMARKS ON JIŘÍ SEKERÁK'S ARTICLE "REGARDING MENDEL'S ENTRY IN THE PARISH BIRTH REGISTER" RELATED TO THE DISCUSSION ABOUT MIDWIVES

In [1] the author explores the reasons behind the two different birth dates attributed to the scholar Gregor Mendel in the literature, with a particular emphasis on the midwife's role. However, he makes an incorrect assumption, namely that the midwife Katharina Teichmann was from the village of Heinzendorf, when in fact her correct address is Groß Petersdorf No. 35. We also provide additional information regarding the residence of midwife Rosina Blaschke.

MIDWIFES IN THE PARISH GROß PETERSDORF

The relevant baptism register encompasses all baptisms from the entire parish, which includes the villages of Groß Petersdorf, Klein Petersdorf, Emaus, and Heinzendorf. Baptisms for each village are documented in separate sections. If you look beyond just the Heinzendorf section, you will also find the midwife Katharina Teichmann listed in the sections for the other villages. Typically, the midwife is recorded only by house number, without specifying the corresponding village. Therefore, we need to refer to additional sources for the precise identification of the midwives.

We can gain further insights into the origins of midwives from the duplicates of church registers. Parish priests were required to submit a copy of the church registers to the appropriate diocesan administration each year. Groß Petersdorf was part of the diocese of Olomouc, so these copies are preserved in the Olomouc archive. In addition to records of baptisms, marriages, and funerals, the priest also documented additional information about the parish. At the end of each year, there are details about "church servants," individuals who held various positions within the parish, such as teachers, churchwardens, bell ringers, gravediggers, and midwives.

At the end of the transcripts for the year 1821, the midwives are listed as follows:

1. *Katharina Teichmann, a widow and mother of 11 children, aged 70; certified, residing in Groß Petersdorf.*
2. *Elisabeth Berger, a widow and mother of 1 child, aged 70; certified, residing in Groß Petersdorf.*
3. *Juliana Kunz, wife of Johann Kunz, a cottager in Heinzendorf, certified, mother of 10 children, aged 53.*

RE: REMARKS ON…

First and foremost, I would like to thank Bernhard Josko for his highly valuable insights regarding the addresses of midwives, particularly Katharina Teichmann, based on his extensive genealogical and historical research in Groß Petersdorf and the surrounding area.

However, I want to clarify that the primary focus of my article "Regarding Mendel's Entry..." (FM 2024, 1/2) was not to explore the reasons behind the two different birth dates attributed to Gregor Mendel in the literature. This topic is discussed in more detail in my separate article "Mendel's Date of Birth: Why Would Mendel Want to Make a Mistake?" (FM 2022, 1).

As indicated by the title of my article "Regarding Mendel's Entry..." and its abstract, the main goal was to highlight Van der Pas's repeated misinterpretations of the registry entry, which have persisted in scholarly literature for over fifty years. The primary objective was to demonstrate that Mendel's records do not include any note about the place of his baptism,[1] a point I believe I successfully established. I also pointed out corrections in the original registry entry, underscoring that it was not always reliable.

That said, unlike the author of the comment, I don't consider the exact address of Mendel's midwife in Groß Petersdorf a crucial point in any disagreement with Van der Pas. The two-kilometres distance from the Mendel family home could easily be covered within a few dozen minutes, even with a newborn. This is especially relevant since the church where Johann Mendel was baptized shortly after his birth is located nearly the same distance away.

Regardless, I am deeply grateful to Bernhard Josko for his insightful commentary, which demonstrates that this topic continues to generate significant interest.

Fig. 1. A 2-kilometer route from Mendel's birthplace in Hienzendorf to St. Peter and Paul Church in Gross Petersdorf, where Mendel was baptized. The house where Mendel's midwife lived (No. 35) is located near this church. Source: Military Map, 1842–1852; © Seznam.cz, a.s., 2025; © 2nd Military Survey, Austrian State Archive.

ANNA MATALOVÁ (1944–2024)

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Anna Matalová, PhDr., Head Emeritus of the Mendelianum, passed away on December 26, 2024, eight days before her eighty-first birthday. She is widely recognised as one of the world's foremost experts on Gregor Mendel, a promoter of Mendel's work in his homeland, and as a generous mentor for countless others whose scholarly, educational, cultural, and research interests brought them into contact with her.

She was born as Anna Posádková on January 3, 1944, in Zakřany, near Brno, at a time when Moravia was under Nazi occupation. When World War II ended in May 1945, Czechoslovakia was restored as a sovereign state but subject to Soviet control. Anna's father resisted ceding the family's land to become communist property, resulting in prolonged social and economic persecution of the family. Due to this circumstance, further educational opportunities for Anna were hindered after elementary-school, and she had to search for alternatives. To provide their talented daughter the opportunity for educational continuity, her parents recommended that she leave their home at the age of 14, and she moved to Brno to live with a foster family who provided much-appreciated assistance. She pursued a demanding schedule, attending classes at a language school and evening courses at an economic school alongside her employment. She was successful, receiving state-examination attestations in German in 1961 and in English in 1962, while also studying French, Spanish, Italian, and Russian.

At the time, Lysenkoism had recently fallen, and genetics was regaining its prominence in Czechoslovakia. Two years earlier, Jaroslav Kříženecký (1896–1964) had been released from an eighteen-month prison term, imposed because of his criticism of Lysenko (Orel 1992). In 1962, Kříženecký laid the foundations for the Mendelianum to be inaugurated during a symposium in 1965 to commemorate the centennial of Mendel's presentation of his classic research. As head of the newly established Department of Genetics of the Moravian Museum, Kříženecký employed Anna as a documentarian, recognising her capabilities, dedication, and language proficiencies, which were especially beneficial to the museum because of their importance for Mendelian research and the early history of genetics. Tragically, Kříženecký passed away from cancer on December 26, 1964 – notably, sixty years to the day preceding Anna Matalová's passing. The Mendelianum was opened seven months later at the centennial symposium in August 1965.

The Prague Spring in 1968 was a brief period of increased freedoms when travel restrictions for Czechoslovak citizens were relaxed. Anna immediately took advantage of this opportunity to study at Oxford University in England. However, the Soviet invasion in August 1968 brought the Prague Spring to an abrupt and violent end, putting families of Czechoslovak citizens who were studying at Western institutions in jeopardy of persecution. Although Anna could have remained in the UK, she chose to return to Brno

MENDEL MEMORIAL MEDAL 2025

Professor T. H. Noel Ellis has been awarded the 2025 Mendel Memorial Medal for his research linking Mendel's work with modern genetics. The medal was conferred by the Moravian Museum as part of the International Mendel Day. A delegation from the Moravian Museum, consisting of Director General, Jiří Mitáček, Director of the Historical Museum, Marek Junek, and Head of the Mendelianum Centre, Jiří Sekerák, attended the medal ceremony held at the John Innes Centre to mark the 160th anniversary of the completion of Mendel's lectures.

Professor Ellis presented a lecture titled "Mendel's lectures in the light of current knowledge", based on his research*, and Professor Daniel Fairbanks of Utah Valley University, visiting the John Innes Centre, delivered a lecture on "Mendel's annotations in

Fig. 1. Welcome and introduction to the event, delivered by Professor Graham Moore, Group Leader, Fellow of the Royal Society. (Photo JS).

* *See the text of his lecture published in this issue of Folia Mendeliana.*

NEWS ABOUT BRNO REALSCHULE

PAVLÍNA PONČÍKOVÁ

The Realschule building located at 22, Jánská Street is closely associated with Gregor Mendel's discoveries, as he presented there the results of his extensive experiments with pea plants to the public for the first time in two lectures held on 8 February and 8 March 1865.

The building in the Jánská Street was built directly for the needs of the Realschule and has always been used as a school. Currently, however, its usage is significantly reduced.

After the branch of the high school from Charbulova Street left, other schools were run there only briefly, probably until they found a more stable rental option. Then, in 2023 and 2024, only a branch of a nearby preschool facility used a few rooms on the ground floor of the large building. The property is owned by the City of Brno, and the public could only speculate about the future of the listed building.

During regularly organised guided tours of "Mendel Brno"event, participants could observe the school building in the Jánská Street slowly but surely falling into disrepair over the past few years.

However, the beginning of 2025 showed that the city's intention for emptying the building may have been to offer it to another owner without contractual obligations to other users. An official report on the property exchange between the Brno City Council and the Brno Bishopric has been made public. The city exchanged one of its school buildings – the so-called German Realschule at 22, Jánská Street – for the Organ School building at 14, Smetanova Street.

This seemingly surprising news was actually the result of lengthy negotiations between the two parties. The City of Brno had been trying to acquire the Chleborád Villa, home to the former Organ School, since 1994, when negotiations with the Bishopric of Brno, the owner of the building, began. (The building was returned to the bishopric in 1990 as part of church restitution).

After years of discussions about the sale or exchange of the building, the Brno Bishopric turned its attention to the disused building of the Realschule in the Jánská Street, where Gregor Mendel worked as a teacher between 1854 and 1868.

The Brno Bishopric exchanged the Organ School building, including the adjacent garden and the small director's house, for the Realschule building in the Jánská Street. The Leoš Janáček Memorial is located in the director's house, where the world-famous composer lived from 1910 to 1928. Visitors can see the composer's original study with his piano inside.

These two buildings are associated with important personalities. One of them is the man of science Gregor Mendel. The other is the composer Leoš Janáček. The fates of these two important personalities have often intersected, and today they are among the driving forces behind the promotion of Brno, with a significant international overlap.

The municipality intends to establish a large, modern Leoš Janáček museum in the Organ School building. However, according to a statement by the town mayor Markéta

THE LAUNCH OF THE FIRST MENDEL CONTEST AND THE FOUNDING OF THE US MENDEL SCHOOL

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Students and faculty at Glendale Community College (GCC) proudly celebrated Mendel Day 2025 with a special two-part program. The event began with a campus-wide presentation titled *"Mendel's Seeds of Genetics: From Brno to the World,"* delivered by Eva Janečková, PhD, as part of the GCC Science Lecture Series. She traced the global impact of Gregor Mendel's discoveries, linking the historical roots of genetics in Brno to modern-day research and education. The year 2025 marks the 160th anniversary since Mendel first presented his groundbreaking work to the members of the Natural Science Society in 1865, making this year's celebration especially meaningful.

Following the lecture, GCC hosted the first-ever Mendel Contest – an inspiring initiative created to honor Gregor Mendel and to further celebrate Mendel Day on March 8. Organized by the newly established US Mendel School at GCC (headed by Dr. Janečková) in collaboration with the GCC Science Lecture Series (represented by Nare Garibyan), the contest offered students a unique opportunity to explore Mendel's legacy through both scientific and artistic lenses.

The vision behind the event draws inspiration from the original Mendel School within Centrum Mendelianum in Brno – institutions founded by Dr. Anna and Prof. Eva Matalová – to share Mendel's groundbreaking work with the public. This new American counterpart seeks to carry on that tradition, led by Dr. Janečková, a former lecturer at the Mendel School in Brno.

To bring this historical moment to life, the Mendel Contest encouraged students to engage with Mendel's ideas through a range of creative formats. Entries included paintings, sculptures, short stories, poems, a short film, a Mendel-themed magazine, and even custom-designed cookies shaped like Mendel's iconic yellow and green peas. Other innovative submissions included a curated Mendel Spotify playlist and hand-crafted ceramic mugs and portrait busts. All submissions can be viewed through this URL link: https://simplebooklet.com/mendelcontest#page=1

THE HEART OF THE CONTEST: STUDENTS AND THEIR STORIES

The Mendel Contest was created to make Mendel's work more accessible, inspiring, and relevant to students. Many of them shared how much they appreciated the opportunity to express their understanding of genetics in a way that felt creative and personal – it gave them a break from the usual demands of the semester (Figure 1). This year's participants came not only from the sciences but also from Business and Art departments, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the contest. Seven winners were awarded cash prizes and

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