AUSTRIA

Edited by Andy Taylor

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Meeting Dates for 1999-2000

*October 15-17: YORKFEST99 at Lady Anne Middleton's Hotel
*November 15: Manchester: President's Display of 'covers from 1945'
*December 11: Manchester: Burgenland - Martin Brumby
*January 15: Manchester: Fiume - Brian Madely
*February 12: Manchester: Hungarian Hyperinflation - John Whiteside
*March 11: London: Joint Meeting with Ass'n of Austrian Philatelists
*April 8: Manchester: The Danube - Arthur Godden
*May 13: Manchester: Annual General Meeting
*WIPA2000 is in Vienna from 30 May - 4 June: we hope to organise a trip!

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Mr Nicholas Harty has with sadness accepted the urgent advice of his cardiac consultant, and retired from the editorship of AUSTRIA. He hopes to be able to contribute the occasional article. Recuperet in pace.

EDITORIAL 127

It is with some trepidation that I sit looking at a blank ream of paper and begin to contemplate my first Editorial. 126 editions of AUSTRIA (and 63 Bulletins) have set a standard of breadth, depth and diversity of coverage that will be difficult to follow; but I will try. My aim will be to publish each quarter a mixture of new work, new ways of looking at old topics, Philatelic Intelligence (ie informed gossip), as well as older material which is in a language, publication or location inaccessible to most of our members.

What do I believe AUSTRIA is for? **To publish articles of philatelic relevance to those interested or specialising in the philately of Austria**. I want AUSTRIA to continue as the best English-language journal meeting that need. Granted, there is at present little competition! But the journals of other societies may provide a standard of comparison. I intend that our publication will continue to be clear and readable, with illustrations wherever possible. As to the content: 4 issues a year, each of 64 pages, would require the authors to conceive of, do the research for, find and translate relevant sources, find and process the illustrations, write the text, and lay out the finished page for one A4 sheet every working day. That doesn't sound much, and many of you will have written a 10-page article in under a fortnight. But, putting it in musical notation, **||:**then there's another one to do the next fortnight, and**:||** So, I shall remorselessly harass each and every one of you, to share your expertise (large or small) with your fellow members and with the philatelic world in general.

I will deem the country "Austria" to include the Austro-Hungarian empire as ruled by KFJ up to the Hungarian Compromise of Feb 1867; the Austrian empire till its end in 1918; and the territory of the present Republic of Austria - with a certain amount of fuzziness as the non-Austrian postal administrations settled down (eg the post-WWI use of Austrian stamps in today's Czech Republic).

When a simple question is asked, the cry "But surely everybody knows that!!" is often heard. Say the ASCGB has 200 members who stay on average 15 years. That's 13 new members each year. Assume we don't have more than one major article on a topic per year. Then each topic is new to 13 people, who do not have the specialist background of the author. So we need to write and print suitable explanations, introductions, "new readers begin here" and so on.

But surely everything's been done to death already? Well, a quick brainstorming session produced the following list of philatelic topics not adequately mentioned in recent decades - will the experts please declare themselves!

Revenues	Bosnia & Herzgovina	Lloyd handstamps
Revenue printed paper	Newspaper post	Telegraph stamps
Parcel cards	Newspaper tax	Tax forms
Postal orders	Postage dues	The TPO system
Court Delivery stamps	Censorship (some aspects)	

Postal stationery (with the partial exception of the first postcard)

For whom is AUSTRIA intended? My answer is anyone who is, or wishes to become, a specialist collector of Austrian material, and anyone who wishes to widen and deepen their knowledge of such material, and the political and cultural conditions within which it was used. They will be assumed (ie long explanations will not be required or provided):

- *to have a basic knowledge of philatelic concepts and vocabulary, but not of their specific realisation within Austria.
- *to understand British English only, so all other languages will appear only where essential, and will be accompanied by an idiomatic translation.
- *to have a basic knowledge of Austrian history (such as might fit on 1 side of A4) and geography (ditto), but not of obscurities like the Sanjak of Novi Bazar
- *to know nothing about literature published in foreign languages, nor about catalogues other than Stanley Gibbons.
- *to have read nothing in the ASCGB's superb library.

Finally, I am happy to report that this year's AGM agreed to continue the publication of the physically-separate Newsletter & Auction List. This will contain urgent notices of future events, and ephemeral matters of no permanent value. I also intend to use the ASCGB's portion of my web site to publish longer versions of articles including non-philatelic additions of social or political background - more details in the next issue! As a bonus, it will allow unlimited coloured illustrations. I will be considering how best to publish "letters to the Editor", as many questions are posed and answered in the letters pages, and hitherto these have not been indexed. And I look forward to your comments!

Members Queries

Answers to the Editor please!

- *There are two particular types of cancellation listed in Klein, one having the letters **AP** in an oval (his fig 669), used in Wien 1 (Kl. 5737u), the other has **A.P.** in an oval (his fig 663) used in Görz (Kl. 1333l). What does "AP" mean? Klein suggests these marks were used to cancel on arrival stamps not cancelled when they were posted - do you agree or disagree? (Give reasons for your choice!)
- *And what was this '**AR**' used for, and where?

- *Can anyone identify this cachet? The abbreviation may be Kriegs Gefangnis Arbeits Kommando - could this be a working party of persons imprisoned during a war, rather than POWs? What might such cachets be used on?

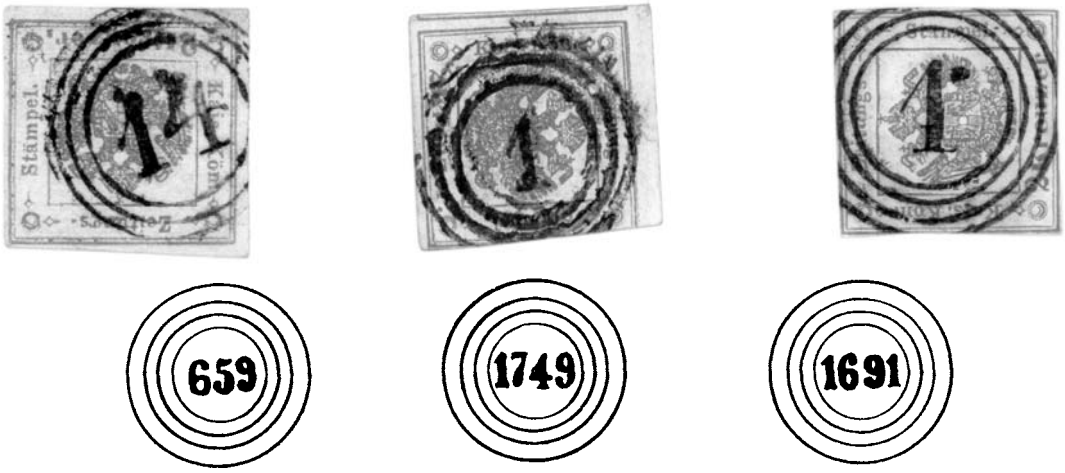
Kr. Gef. Arb. Kdo. A 1424/L
Kitzbühel, Tirol

- *__GURAHONCZ__..

(See AUSTRIA 126 p17.) This has proved more complex than I had thought! I hope to have some answers in the next issue.

❖ *One for the older members.. A member's English-speaking Austrian friend is forming a collection of items from North & South Tirol, with particular reference to the post-WWI period. He has discovered that from the end of November 1918, troops from the 2nd battalion Hon. Artillery Coy were stationed in Imst in the Tirol, followed by the 22nd Manchester Battalion from Feb to April 1919. He wishes to discuss the period with others, and to purchase material, or to obtain photocopies. The relevant FPOs and censor mark are illustrated below. FPOs FD1 and FD3 were used in Jan 1919, FPOs FD2, FD3 and FD5 in Dec 1918 & Jan 1919 and APO R7 also in Dec 1918 & Jan 1919. The H.A.C. used censor cancel 430. Does anyone have any more information?

❖ *"Everybody knows" (eg, see AUSTRIA 94 p22) that the ringed 1 cancel was used to cancel on arrival stamps not cancelled when they were posted. Is there any **real evidence** that the same applies to the ringed 2, 3 .. 101 sometimes found? Or is this another of those statements based solely on the view that if everybody can think of only this one explanation, then it must necessarily be the correct one?



(OK, I'll come clean – these three are Prussian from Hultschin: but they could occur on Austrian stamps cancelled on arrival there!)

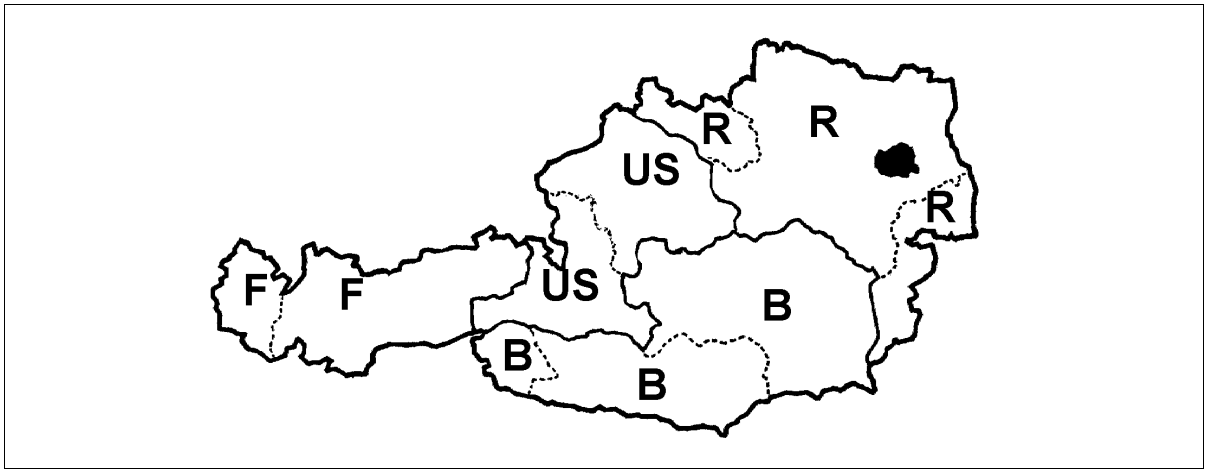
AUSTRIA IS FREE!

The signing of the Austrian State Treaty in 1955, by one who was there.

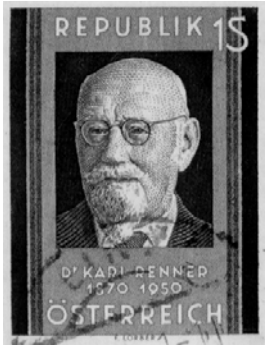
Salvatore J. Rizza (*)

Collectors of Austrian philately are not always aware of the history of the people portrayed on this country's postage stamps (unless, of course, they belong to the ASCGB). In the spring of 1955 I had the occasion to work closely with many individuals who later were honoured on commemorative postage stamps.

By the Four Power Declaration of 1 November 1943, Austria was not considered a defeated enemy country at the end of World War II. In fact, the USA had included the Austrian flag in its Over-run Countries stamp set issued in 1943. Notwithstanding this, the Russians always insisted on linking this nation's fate to that of Germany. The western allies, in their public statements, never had any objection to a free Austria, whatever misgivings they may have had in private! At the end of WWII, Austria was occupied by the victorious Powers. This map shows the four occupation sectors; the central district of Vienna was jointly run.

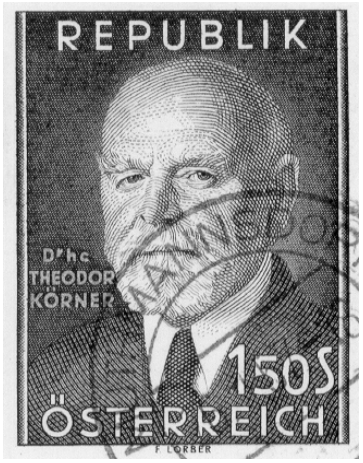


The idea that Austria should regain its independence and thereafter remain permanently neutral in foreign affairs had first surfaced in public in Jan 1947, when President Renner suggested it, and the Socialist Party formally adopted it as their policy. In 1951, Dr. Theodor Körner, then President of Austria, again proposed: "A free and independent Austria, removed from all rivalries and not tied to either side, but only devoted to the cause of peace, will be an asset for Europe and the world.".



ANK976: Renner

Dr. Leopold Figl, who served as the pro-western Federal Chancellor (head) of the Austrian Government from 1945 to 1953, had been pressing since the end of the Second World War in 1945 for the withdrawal of all the occupation armies from Austrian soil. Following the election on 22nd February 1953, he resigned, and his good friend Julius Raab took over the leadership of the Austrian Republic.



ANK1352: Figl ANK1040: Körner ANK2077: Raab

Chancellor Raab continued to seek the evacuation of the occupation forces. In November 1953, Leopold Figl was named as Foreign Minister. In the meantime, Raab's government swung sharply from a pro-western orientation to a more neutral mode, and the Chancellor pressed the Russians for Austria's freedom. In 1955, Dr Raab was invited to Moscow for negotiations, as political changes had made it expedient for the Russians to seek an agreement. The Austrian delegation, including Dr Figl and State Secretary Bruno Kreisky, flew to Moscow on 11 April 1955. Four days later Raab’s talks with Molotov and Kruschev ended in success, and the Austrians returned to Vienna.

The Big Four Ambassadors Conference opened in Divided Vienna on Monday, 2 May 1955. The United States High Commissioner for Austria, Ambassador Llewellyn E. Thompson, Jr., led the American delegation. Austria's delegation was co-chaired by Dr. Figl of the People's Party and Dr. Kreisky of the Socialist Party of Austria, as the Austrian position had to be co-ordinated between the two political parties

Since November 1952, I had been working as a civilian Shorthand Reporter with the U.S.A.'s Department of the Army, stationed in Salzburg. That Monday morning, I was reassigned to the Conference, to sit next to our American Ambassador and take down verbatim on my Stenograph shorthand machine what was said by the participants. After 20 minutes I would be relieved by one of my colleagues, & would leave the room and type up my notes. Forty minutes later I was back in the conference hall. Everything that was spoken had to be

translated into four languages, one after the other; so it sometimes was slow going.

The conference itself, as I remember it now after these many years, ran rather smoothly. The Russians attempted to get all they could from the Austrians, with the Americans and the British co-ordinating their efforts to diminish the Russian demands. The French wanted to help the Austrians by agreeing to everything that the Austrians and Russians had agreed to in Moscow, sometimes to the consternation of Ambassador Thompson. Whenever the conferees could not agree on a particular paragraph of the proposed state treaty, the ambassadors and the Austrian Foreign Minister and Dr. Kreisky would withdraw to another room, along with the translators, and there, off the record, matters would be resolved.

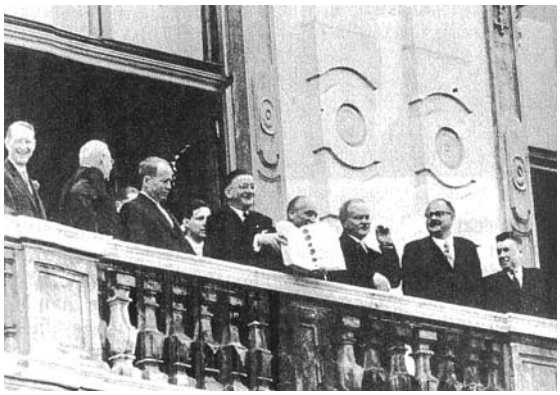
ANK2046: Kreisky

I had seen that Dr. Figl had been closely watching me work with my Stenograph machine. At the end of one of these discussions, as Dr. Figl approached, he nodded his head in a greeting - thus becoming the only person shown on a postage stamp to have ever personally and directly said "hello" to me.

The State Treaty negotiations were concluded on the 13th of May 1955. On the 14th, the foreign ministers of the Big Four (Dulles, MacMillan, Pinay, and Molotov) arrived in Vienna, and their signatures, along with Dr. Figl's and the Ambassadors, were placed on the Austrian State Treaty at the Belvedere Palace, in Vienna on Sunday, the 15th of May 1955.

ANK1353: Belvedere

The signed and sealed Treaty



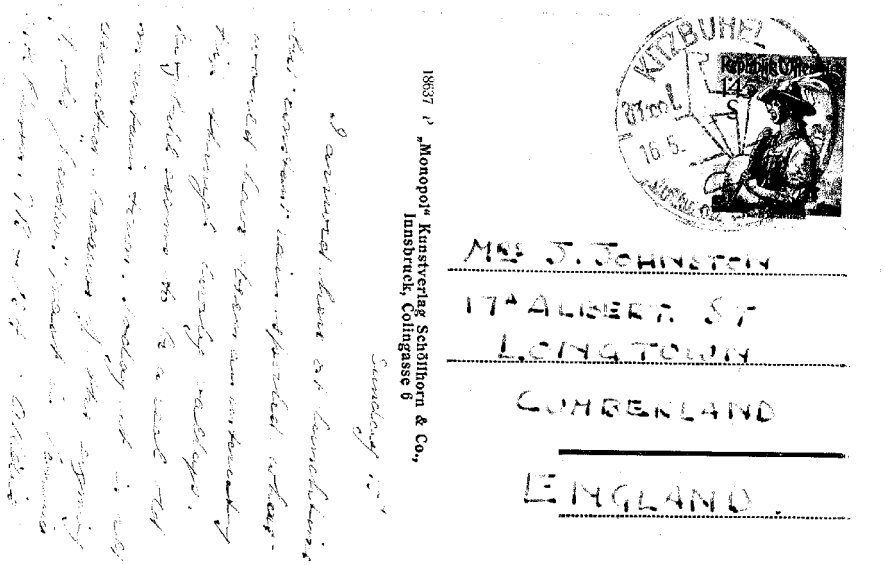
At approximately twelve noon, Dr. Leopold Figl, along with the foreign dignitaries, stepped out on the balcony from the signing room of the palace and held aloft the signed treaty. He proclaimed to the huge crowd below, "Österreich ist frei!" [Austria is Free!].

ANK1026

A special stamp (ANK 1026) was issued on that day. The overprint reads "**STAATSVERTRAG 1955**", ie "STATE TREATY 1955". The design is that of the 2Rm stamp issued in the Russian Zone on 21 Nov 1945, with the colours changed and overprinted.

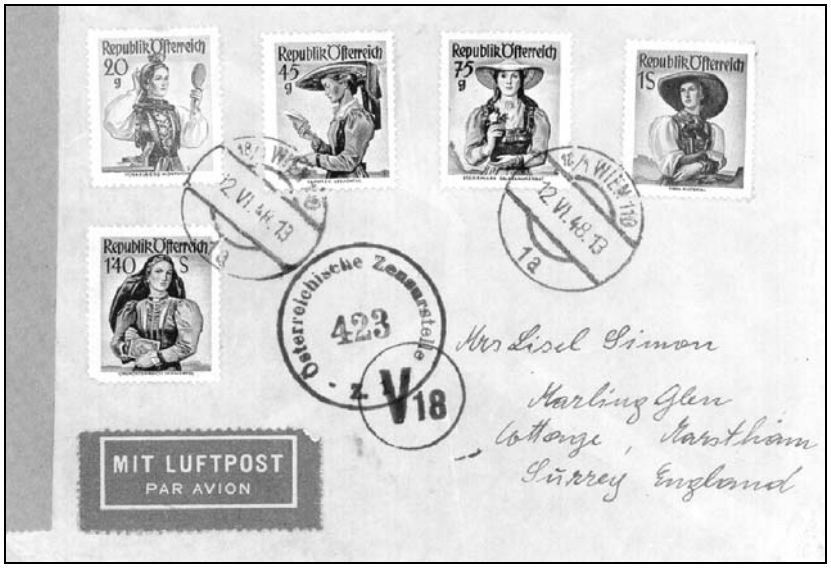
ANK734

And there was enough time to organise celebrations - this postcard was sent from Kitzbühel to England. It has a 1S45 Costumes stamp cancelled 16.5.1955 and the message "*Sunday 15th: I arrived here at lunchtime but constant rain spoiled what would have been an interesting trip through lovely country. Kitzbühel seems to be a real old mountain town.* ***Today it is all decorated because of the signing of the 'Freedom' pact in Vienna with Russia, GB and USA.*** *Adele*".



By 19 October 1955, all the members of the foreign armies had withdrawn from Austrian soil. So on the 25th the Austrian National Assembly were able to enact the "Federal Constitutional Law of 26 October 1955 on the Neutrality of Austria" concerning Austria's permanent neutrality. The 26th of October has been celebrated as Austrian Independence Day since that time. Many of the men responsible for Austria's liberation from the occupation have been shown on Austrian stamps, and their biographical details published in POAS ('People on Austrian Stamps' by J F Giblin) or in its addenda in AUSTRIA.

Dr Renner	SG 972, 1160, 1224, 1333, 1533, 1601; ANK 776-83, 939, 976, 1074, 1303, 1381, 2231	POAS page 69
Dr Theodor Körner	SG 1243, 1288, 1657; ANK 995, 1040, 1442	POAS page 46
Dr Julius Raab	SG 1918, 2279; ANK 1722, 2077	POAS Addendum 118 - AUSTRIA 64 page 44
Dr. Leopold Figl	SG1574, 1575; ANK 1352, 1353	POAS Addendum 39 - AUSTRIA 23 page 32
Dr. Bruno Kreisky	SG 2251; ANK 2046	POAS Addendum 181 - AUSTRIA 114 page 58



A typical censored cover from the post-WWII occupation period.

Note. This article was adapted by A Taylor from S J Rizza's longer version, which with many contemporary photographs is available on the ASCGB web site at http://www.demon.kitzbuhel.co.uk/austamps/sjrizza1.htm

NOTES from publications en route to the Library.

[I often retain the German words, because if the topic interests you you'll know it, and if I ignorantly mistranslate it you'll miss it! Many of the ArGe publications have such a wide range of small items that if it's your pet area you should join them.]

Die Briefmarke

This is the journal of the Verband Österreichischer Philatelistinvereine (VÖPh). Each issue normally includes dates of exhibitions etc in Austria, Switzerland & Germany; illustrated tabulation of forthcoming special cancels; new Austrian stamp issues, with illustration if available; European philatelic snippets; news of U.N. (Wien) issues; Austrian philatelic personalities; book reviews; WIPA 2000 news; reports from regional meetings; Questions & Answers; postage due discoveries; correspondence; new European stamp issues.

Issue 3/99: Vienna timed cancels (by HGW!); postal history of Hafnerberg and Altenmarkt; places of pilgrimage.

Issue 4/99: Kaiser Franz Josef; Schönbrunn; Albanian postal history; opening dates of offices in Judenberg area.

Issue 5/99: Printing of the 1850 issue; Kaiser Franz Josef part 2

Issue 6/99: Gmunden; Kaiser Franz Josef part 3 and Kaiser Karl

Issue 7/99: Stadl-Paura; Stein a d Donau; Ship Mail

Issue 8/99: Austrian State Printing Works; Albania part 2; Ship Mail part 2

Issue 9/99: Bruck a d Leitha

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Militaria Austriaca Philatelia.

Issue 179: Changes (for the worse!) in Öpost special post office system; the EURO is coming; Auction lists; 1998 Burgenland military dispositions and cancels.

Issue 180: Markersdorf; UNDOF operations; St Pölten Notgeld; 1911 Naval ship list; Albania 1916-1918.

Issue 181: The editor is retiring; Kuk FPO 34; Fieldpost Postanwiesung control stamp; ATHUM/ALBA cancels with postcode 1503.

Issue 182: Milphila2000 info; recent Austrian armed forces postcards; Fieldpost Postanwiesung control stamps; is Fieldpost worth collecting anyway?; Albanian Legion dispositions; unusual censor marks; PH of NATO; Auction lists.

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Feld & Zensurpost 1914-1918.

Issue 56: Superb colour front cover (maybe some day..); meetings & greetings; cancels handbook supplement; queries on various unusual cancels & cachets; FRANCO cancels from WW1 Bosnia; Read your Fieldpost; Jasna Gora; Postsperren; views on Flyspeck Philately; DUPLIKAT cachet.

Issue 57: Programme for their week-long annual meeting; queries; free and otherwise fieldpost in WW1; Turkey - Swiss post 1914-18; Militärpflege cards.

Issue 58: More questions (less answers!); Fieldpost Postanwiesung control stamps; Feldkirch WWI censor markings; Marine Feldpost forgeries; Albania 1916-18.

Supplement: Torpedo Boat cancels from no. 21 - 80.

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Österreich e.V.

Issue 46: Austrian Offices in order of last three characters; Date of issue of Schilling currency; postal history of Vorarlberg (9pp); private stationery part 2.6

Issue 47: Newspaper signets (19pp); private stationery part 2.7

Wiener Ganzsachen Frei- und Poststempelsammlerverein

Issue 2/99: Airmail rates to Canada 1946-48.

Czechout

Issue 1/99: Postal history of Hlucin/Hultschin; queries & answers.

Issue 2/99: Hlucin part 2; CPSGB has a web site at www.cpsgb.freeserve.co.uk

CsPSGB Monograph 12 "Military Cards of the exiled Czechoslovak Forces in France and Great Britain (1939-45)" by V J Kralicek and the late W A Page. Brings together a detailed listing of, and the background to, the Military Postal Cards provided for the Czechoslovak Forces in their exile. Many illustrations. Coloured front cover & 30pp b/w. Costs £8.25 plus non-UK postage; obtainable (as are the CsPSGB's other publications) from Richard Beith, 14 Middlecroft, Guilden Sutton, Chester, CH3 7HF tel +44(0)1244 300777.

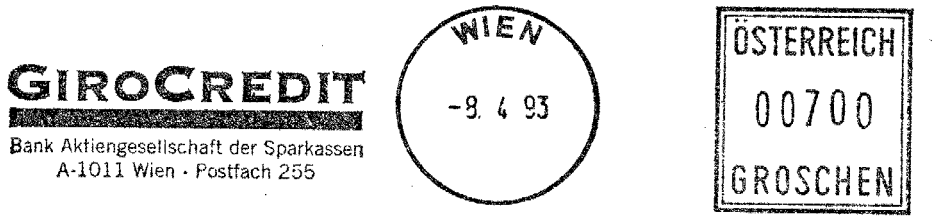
Book:

"75 Jahre Freistempel in Österreich" by Pelikan & Schneider. Meter marks from their beginning up to 1946, listed in order of introduction and by the machine which made them. The inevitable opaque unique classification system is introduced. Around 50pp.

BOOK REVIEWS

15 JAHRE FREISTEMPEL IN ÖSTERREICH

by J. Pelikan and R. K. Schneider. Published by Verlag Pollischansky, Vienna 1997. 54 pages 20cm x 27cm. Text in German.



The franking of mail by machine (metered mail) rather than by the application of an adhesive postage stamp was sanctioned for use internationally by the U.P.U. in 1920. The advantage of the system was one of speed, so that metered mail has always been attractive to large organisations in particular.

This well illustrated handbook begins its story in 1922, when machines were first accepted in Austria. This was a time of rampant inflation and many rate changes, so that the ability to respond promptly to rising tariffs provided an early boost to the system. Progress is charted through the krone and schilling eras of the First Republic, followed by the Anschluß period and the introduction of German imprints, and the early years of the Second Republic. In addition to bulk mail the introduction at the Post Office counter for individual items receives attention.

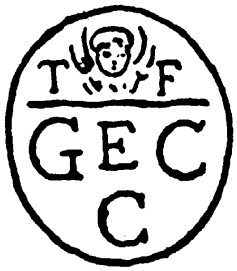
The frankings themselves generally follow an unchanging pattern from year to year: place and date of posting, the amount of postage involved with, sometimes, an advertising message or slogan. The dimensions of the figures and symbols involved are significant in this sector of philately, and a points system provides a guide to relative importance.

The book concludes with an historical survey of metered mail and the machines involved, the leaders being the U.S. based Pitney Bowes and Francotyp-Postalia on the Continent. The book is No. 320 in the ASCGB library.

THE POSTAL HISTORY OF LOMBARDY AND VENETIA AND OF LOMBARDY-VENETIA

by C. G. Teall, F.R.P.S,L., edited and published by J. F. Giblin: price £6.00 including postage.

The latest production from John Giblin takes us back to the early days of that part of Italy which came under Austrian control in 1815: Lombardy and Venetia. Although this subject has already received attention in the writer's earlier publication on the post in pre-unification Italy prior to 1850 (ASCGB library No. 316) John Giblin has now brought together the series of articles from the pen of Dr. Cecil G. Teall (1893-1983) which appeared in AUSTRIA between 1970 and 1974. These were written following a personal meeting at Philympia in 1970, and John Giblin states that it was always Dr. Teall's wish that his articles would eventually appear as a single entity. With this volume his wish has been achieved.



An Introduction provides a review of Dr. Teall's extensive activities in the world of medicine as well as his important contribution to philately. The work is divided into four sections: 1. Lombardy; 2. Republic of Venice; 3. the Napoleonic period and 4. the State of Lombardy Venetia.

The wide range of Dr. Teall's researches is highlighted by the fact that as well as 10 maps, over 130 postal markings and 14 covers are illustrated, an editor's note explaining that a few of the latter are unclear because Dr. Teall's original photographs, which were used in AUSTRIA, are no longer available.

There is just one place where a reader might face a problem and that concerns an amendment made by Dr. Teall to a paragraph in the first section dealing with the monogram marks of Milan in the 1700s. The revision in AUSTRIA identified the whereabouts of the text concerned, but this reference no longer appears.

[This refers to AUSTRIA 19 page 20 which was corrected by AUSTRIA 29 page 27. Ed.]

Those whose interests lie in the early days of pre-stamp history have been well served by John Giblin's recent productions and this further volume is no exception. It is No. 321 in the ASCGB library.

The New ASC Treasurer.

Joyce Boyer was born near Horsham, Sussex on 8 December 1942. As one of seven children any early hobby had to be able to be packed away in a small space, and this, together with the attractive 3d and 6d packets of stamps available from a local shop encouraged her to take up stamp collecting in a childish way. After grammar school Joyce joined the Civil Service and was appointed to the Inspector of Taxes in Guildford where she met Tony, although it was some years later when they started going out. After her marriage Joyce left the Inland Revenue and worked for local accountants in their personal tax departments until being made redundant in 1993. The following year Joyce and Tony moved to Lincolnshire where they both keep busy with part-time jobs and various hobbies.

The stamp collection was reactivated in the early 1960s following encouragement from an uncle and a good collection of GB was begun. About 10 years later Joyce felt the need to move away from GB and the Islands and not having a feeling for any of the Commonwealth countries decided to follow a casual remark from Tony that as they holiday in Austria it might be easy to collect those. What began as a sideline has grown into a substantial collection, initially as one of everything but now with a number of specialised areas including the postmarks of Innsbruck and the Ötztal. Joyce has recently started three thematic collections: flowers (to go with her interest in gardening and started with some excellent Austrian stamps); trains and TPOs (to go with Tony's interest in trains); and lace (which she now tries to make in her spare time).

Joyce has been a member of the Spalding and District Stamp Club since moving to the area, becoming treasurer last year, and this May she also took on the position of packet secretary. With Tony she has attended all of the ASCGB weekend meetings, having also arranged the two held in Bath.

The New ASCGB Editor

[being an update of "The New Treasurer", AUSTRIA No 94 pp4-5]

Andy Taylor, B.Sc., C. Phys., C. Eng. was born on 21 November 1943 in Aberdeen, Scotland. He dabbled in stamps in his early teens, but dropped them for Amateur Radio which was then supplanted by the academic and social excitements of obtaining a University degree in Natural Philosophy. He joined ICI in 1965 as a specialist in Instrumentation and computers, and worked in various research and production areas in N E England until being declared redundant as part of the 1999 downsizing. His other active interests include being Hon. Secretary of AMPS, the Trade Union which represents managerial and professional staff, and the Chairman of the local Lupus Group, a charity which assists those with this autoimmune disease. If he had more time, he would pursue the philatelic and political history of the use of mobile postboxes on Tramcars. His Austrian hill-walking activities tend to be assisted by the use of cable cars!

His interest in philately was rekindled when his young son was sent some UK FDCs; the son at once dedicated his life to Football while the father took over the stamps, soon discovering the superiority of Austrian ones. In 1990, when he became ASCGB's Treasurer, his main project was the geographically-arranged presentation of Austrian stamps used in Silesia. He hopes to complete this Real Soon Now; however, his interest in using the Internet to distribute philatelic and other information has been the most recent excuse for procrastination. The gory details are available at http://www.kitzbuhel.demon.co.uk/austamps/index.htm

In the Editorial of this issue he sets out the policies he intends to follow: he expects comments from the membership to produce continuous modifications!

Postablagen and Posthilfsstellen cancellations

by A Taylor

Prelude

Postablagen and Posthilfsstellen cancellations were (and still are!) used in Austria on mail deposited in mailboxes located in rural agencies which were not sufficiently busy, important, or profitable to be granted the status of Post Office. As an example of the "importance factor", the agency at Küb near Payerbach was upgraded to a summer-only, then an all-year Post Office when Kaiser Franz Josef opened a Hunting Lodge nearby, and has retained that status ever since, much to the irritation of the Postal Authorities!

These cancellations have received brief mention in previous issues of AUSTRIA. Those of Bosnia were described and illustrated in issue 22, and a note with examples appeared on page 26 of issue 117 as part of the Update of the ASCGB Cancellation Classification System. Since then, further research has been carried out, many hundreds of examples studied, and the amendments to Kühnel's catalogue exhumed and implemented. This article thus presents the ASCGB Definitive Guide to Postablagen and Posthilfsstellen cancellations, the historic background to their usage, and their classification within the ASCGB System. It supersedes the article in issue 117.

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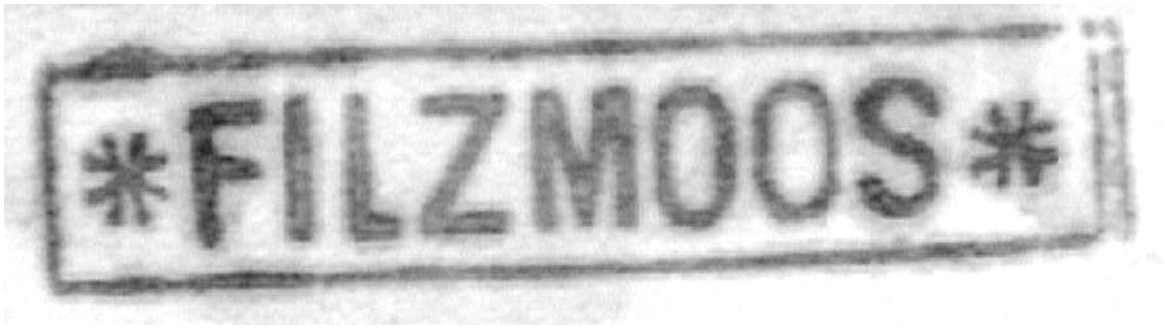
Post-WWII period	Appendix 2: Kühnel to ASCGB conversions.

Introduction

There is a distinctive group of specific cancellations used on mail deposited in collecting boxes (Postablagen, Posthilfsstellen or Poststellen). In the 19th century a need emerged to provide letter collection facilities in rural areas. Following trials, an official system of rural agencies was set up on 1 July 1900, and is still in operation, progressively integrated over the decades into the postal system. Initially, cancellations had only the name of the rural agency; later joined by the name of the Post Office to which it was attached. However, they had no date, so were (in theory!) not allowed to be used to cancel the postage stamp. Certain heavily-used agencies were "promoted" to "sub post offices" and used dated cancellers on the stamps. This article describes, illustrates and codifies all the known types of Austrian Postablagen and Posthilfsstellen cancellations.



The work of Kühnel

The most authoritative work on Postablagen is by Kühnel: "Postablagen in Österreich" (pub. 1986, revised edition 1993) - ASCGB library item 131. His type numbers and references will be quoted in the form **[Kü-1]** and **[Kü-9a-234e]**, the first meaning his Type 1 cancel, and the second the subtype '9a', office number 234, variety 'e' from that office. Appendixes 1 and 2 give 'Introduction dates for Kühnel code types' and 'Conversion from Kühnel to ASCGB codes' - these will be of use to anyone working with our system and his book! Kühnel's book supersedes the work of Lessig ('Von der Briefablage zur Posthilfsstelle' in Österreichische Postgeschichte, vol 3, 1980 by Dr R Wurth) and Sobetsky (Katalog der Österr. Postablagestempel, 1963).

The 19th Century

From the reign of Maria Theresia onwards, it was government policy that improved postal services should be made available to the populace. So, the Department of Commerce, which was responsible for the postal administration, dispatched von Gerl (the Director of Posts for Niederösterreich) in 1868 on a fact-finding trip to Prussia, Saxony and Württemberg, as these countries already had rural postal systems. In his report, von Gerl proposed the introduction of a rural post (Rural Letter Carrier Service) in Austria. His recommendations fell foul of the Treasury - not only might they have required the expenditure of money, but they were proposals for change, implying that the existing arrangements might be imperfect. It was eventually decided to proceed with the introduction of rural postal services in careful stages. On 3 October 1868 authorisation was given to the Post Direction of Niederösterreich for the experimental introduction of a rural service at five post offices only. This development of the postal provision for rural areas proceeded at a stately bureaucratic pace. After 30 years there were in the entire Empire only 1680 Rural Letter Carriers, whilst in the same period the number of post offices increased from 2406 in 1868 to 5883.

The Rural Letter Carrier (hereafter RLC) had to exercise practically all the functions of a post office, and in addition had to walk about, sometimes a considerable distance. An interesting article *Die Postlisl und ihr Dienstweg* ("Postie Lizzie's Round") in *Die Briefmarke 8/1996* describes the daily journey of a postlady in the Zillertal around 1900. Each day in the summer, her round went from Mayrhofen via various Postal Agencies to the Berlinerhütte: a walk of over 20km including an ascent of some 1500m. And, after lunch in the Hut, she made the return journey. [Evidently exhausted by her work, she died in 1950, aged 74.] Several of the Postablage cancels of the Agencies she visited are described in another article in the same issue.

As regards cancels, we must distinguish between two essential elements. The actual Rural Post canceller (Landbriefträger-Entwertungsstempel) was kept in each mailbox and served the RLC for the cancelling of the stamps on the letters posted in that mailbox. The cancelling was to be completed through an additional cancelling by means of the place - day - stamp of the responsible post office, so that as a rule a double cancelling resulted (occasionally the cancelling by the post office remained undone). As well as using the canceller in each mailbox, the RLC carried another in the postbag; however it was reserved for stamping the forms associated with registered mail and was not permissible for stamp cancelling.

The RLCs met with their Postal Service colleagues at important points and handed over letters for places which did not lie on their route. Evidently there were difficulties here with the timetable of their journeys and so they left the

post with a trustworthy inhabitant for transmission to the postman who would pass later. Thus small places where the setting up of a post office was uneconomic were connected, given permission for the sale of stamps and became established as so-called Briefablagen - Letter Agencies. All these arrangements had of course the aim of facilitating the connections with the postal service for the far-flung population of the rural areas.

These activities, so important for the post, were undertaken by private individuals on an honorary basis. The permission of the postal administration was always necessary for this, and these people were selected carefully and had to be in close contact with the population of the locality. Thus mostly merchants or landlords were offered the job. The activity at a Letter Agency was limited to the sale of stamps as well as the acceptance of outgoing ordinary post (registered etc post was excluded), and a mailbox was normally sited at the house. The managers of Letter Agencies could also strike a handstamp on letters; however the cost of the handstamp wasn't reimbursed by the Postal Administration, which is probably why extremely few handstamps were produced and used, although a few oval, circular and 2 or 3 line private cancels are found.

This has the typical appearance of the pre-1900 cancels, although the office wasn't opened until 1901, halfway up a remote mountain pass in deepest Silesia. Although it appears as [Kü-1i-6605b] which gives Freiwaldau as the postal town, the postcard from which the example was scanned was actually cancelled on 3 April 1910 at Ober Thomasdorf, which is close to where the road to the pass joins the main valley road between Freiwaldau and Wurbenthal. Our code is **B**, ie it must be illustrated! There should be an 'am' in the centre of the cancel.

Letters also entered the system from the railways, so are found with official railway cachets. All such cachets and cancels were to show the origins of the letter, so were supposed to be placed alongside the postage stamp. Cancelling of the stamp was reserved to the Post Office under whose control the Postablage came, and to which the letter was eventually brought. The system proved successful, and the Postal Administration sought to include it in the formal postal organisation and to control its development.

The 20th Century

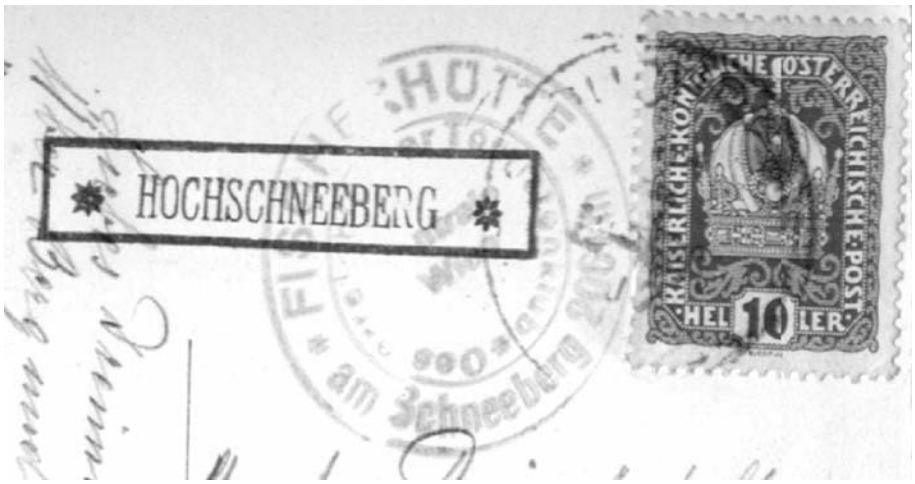
On 1 July 1900 the first Service Regulation for Postal Agencies came into force and most of the above arrangements became official. In consequence the managers were taken under contract by the Postal Directorate and paid for undertaking the Postal Agency business. The postal authorities provided the equipment necessary for the organisation, ie a sign with the inscription 'K. k. Postablage', an official mailbox, a rectangular steel handstamp with the agency name (in sanserif) flanked by 6 or 8-pointed stars and sometimes followed by the name of the Postal Town in brackets [Kü-2], and the inevitable accounting forms. Beside the sale of postage stamps, the acceptance of outgoing un-receipted post as well as the emptying of the mailboxes, and in part also the delivery of the incoming post were envisaged. In some cases this had to be picked up first from the manager of the post office or at a nearby railway station.

This is a bilingual German/Czech cancel, used 1.6.1903. Two lines of text with stars in a box [Kü-2a-6050a]. The letters are sanserif, the line is part of the text not the box, and there is no date, so our code is **gKo****. The Postal Town was Friedland bei Mistek, in Moravia.

Postage stamps were not supposed to be cancelled with the Postal Agency's stamp, as it had no date. The only exception was if the letter was not leaving the postal area of the Postal Agency, that is to say if the recipient also lived there: in this case the Agency manager had to undertake the cancellation. In later years, individual managers cancelled the stamps on all outgoing post and usually the postmark of the 'home' post office is missing from these items.

Individual Letter and Postal Agencies not taken into official status in 1900 remained in service, some of them even surviving the collapse of the Monarchy. No official references can be found to these private Letter Agencies; it is thus possible that a few of them were first set up after 1900. All stamps of these Agencies normally have 'K. k. Brief-Ablage' or 'K. k. Post Ablage' beside the placename.

From 1902, new Postal Agencies were issued with rubber handstamps, using seriffed script, but otherwise with the same layout as the steel stamps [Kü-3]. In bi-lingual areas, both languages were used, separated by a horizontal line. Both these and subsequent types remained in use for a surprisingly long time - some specimens of the earliest types were still in use until replaced by postcode versions in 1966! According to the regulations, if a canceller was lost or stolen, the replacement was to have two more stars, eg *HOCHSCHNEEBERG* would be replaced by **HOCHSCHNEEBERG**.



One line of text with stars in a box [Kü-3a-453a]. Used 25.7.1915(?). The letters are serif and there is no date so our code is **aKo****. The Postal Town was Puchberg am Schneeberg. There is also a Hut Cachet.

Two lines of text in a box [Kü-3ax-2056ax]. Used 20.6.1914. The text was originally flanked by stars, but on 7.8.1912 the Postablage was upgraded to a Summer Post Office, a standard circular canceller issued, and the de-starred cancel kept as a Hut Cachet. Note that the cachet is under the stamp. The Postal Town was Canazei di Fassa in South Tirol.

The 1903 Regulations

In 1903 an alteration to the Service Regulations made it possible to expand the activity of individual heavily-used Postal Agencies to include receipted despatches (eg registered, though excluding Cash On Delivery items). These Postal Agencies were issued with steel handstamps with date of use [Kü-5], first found in July 1905 at the Postal Agency of Schonbichl, and according to Kühnel's data still being newly issued in the late 1940s. The stamps of outgoing postal items were now generally cancelled with these new handstamps. They are rectangular, sometimes with rounded or chamfered corners, with the Postal Agency at the top, the date (occasionally including a despatch time) in the middle, and the Post Town, prefixed '**P.**' at the bottom. The date may be flanked by stars. The typeface may be with or without serifs, and the month in roman or arabic numbering. In our classification system, if the box has a central horizontal line which is broken to receive the date, it's a type **K2**; if there is no such line it's a type **K**.

Two-section box split for the date. [Kü-5b-323d]; our code **aK2je.** Going is next to its Post Town of Ellmau in Tirol; the office is now renamed Going am Wilden Kaiser and has its own postcode of 6363. Cancelled 25.8.1937 and an unreadable dispatch time. There do not appear to be stars flanking the date

Single-section box. [Kü-5e-1151h]; our code **gKje**. Kössen is in Tirol. The postcard also has a hotel cachet.

The 1914 style change

In 1914, private Postal Agencies began to introduce a changed wording of the rectangular handstamps: the name of the postal town was prefixed P. or Post [Kü-4]. By 1916 this type was in use in official Postal Agencies.

One line of text with stars in a box. [Kü-4b-1309b]. Used on a postcard in 1939. The letters are serif and there is no date so our code is **aKo****. Unternberg's Post Town is Tamsweg in Salzburg.

Around 1925, a 2-line version appeared, [Kü-6], with a horizontal line flanked by stars separating the Postal Agency above from the postal town below.

This example is [Kü-6b-1158b]. Used 20.4.1933. The letters are partly serif and there is no date so our code is **aKo****. Seekarhaus's Post Town is Obertauern bei Radstadt in Pinzgau.

Two lines of text with stars in a box. [Kü-6a-415f]. Used in 1938. The letters are partly serif and there is no date so our code is a**Ko****. There is an unreadable cancel on the stamp - presumably Schleinbach, which is in Niederösterreich in the Weinviertel, and has the postcode 2123.

Anschluß changes

All the types described above remained in use until the annexation in 1938 of Austria by Germany. This brought two changes to these Postal Agencies. They now received the name 'Posthilfsstelle' or 'Poststelle II'. Some cachets had Post replaced by über [Kü-7]. Others had the German zonal postcode 12a & 12b for Austria, introduced in spring 1944 although examples are rarely seen [Kü-8].

The (faint!) cancel is "Elixhausen / über Salzburg 2" [Kü-7b-216e]. Used 22.1.1942. It's in a 2-section box, the letters are 'Gothic', and there is no date so our code is **aK2o.**

Typical Post Zone 12 cancels look like this!

Post-WWII period

Immediately after the end of the war in 1945, the agency name reverted to Postablage. Wherever they had survived, the old Postablage cancellers of the First Republic were used, failing which the German Reichspost ones. The next step was the physical removal of the 12a or 12b post zone codes (and Nieder- or Oberdonau) from the Reichspost cancellers.

According to Lessig, the first new Austrian Postablage cancellers of the Second Republic were produced in March 1946. These were double-spaced rubber stamps without frames or central line; the first line contained the place-name preceded by 'Postablage', and the second line contained the post office name preceded by 'Post'.

They were issued to three offices only:

- ◆Postablage Ertl, Post Sankt Peter in der Au [Kü-9a-234e]
- ◆Postablage Ingolsthal, Post Friesach, Kärnten [Kü-9a-492f]
- ◆Postablage Kirnberg, Post Sankt Peter in der Au [Kü-9a-612f]

Lessig adds that in May 1946, most of the remaining Postablagen received their new cancellers, which differed from the March one by the omission of the word 'Postablage' in the first line. In April 1947 a new Postablage canceller subtype was introduced, differing essentially from the 1946 types by having a horizontal rule between the text lines, a full stop in the first line after the Postablage's name, and in the second line a 'P.' before the Post Office name.

Kühnel, however, states that from 1945 new Austrian 2-line rubber cancellers were introduced, with the post office name preceded by 'P.' or 'Post' [Kü-9]; at first they had no horizontal rule between the text lines, this being added to those issued later. He makes no particular comment on a Postablage prefix. While the three offices mentioned above do appear in his catalogue as 'Postablage X / Post Y', this type of canceller is listed as in use at these offices from 1949/51 only. Pre-war or modified wartime cancels were in use up till then. Indeed, Ingolsthal is listed as using a Postal Zone 12b canceller up to 1950! We will follow Kühnel's opinions.

Two lines of text, no box. [Kü-9b-488i]. Our code **gLo**. This example was used in 11.7.1956, and the stamp has an Ortswerbestempel of the principal town of Pongau, St Johann, its Post Town from 1892 till 1954.

'Posthilfsstelle' becomes official

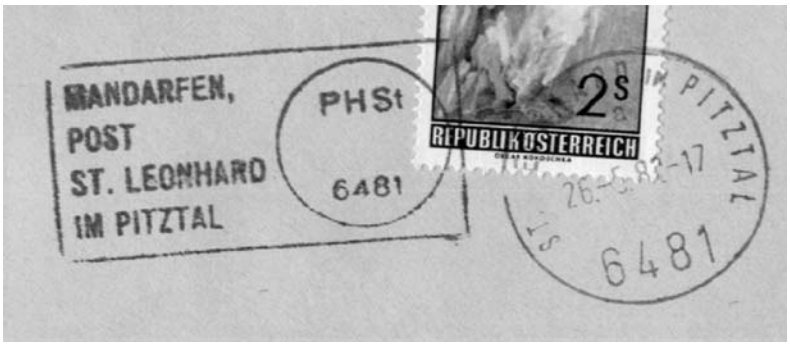
By a decree of 1957, 'Posthilfsstelle' became official. This new period saw the introduction around 1960 of a rectangular three compartment box (our code K3), [Kü-10], with the name of the agency at the top, the date including the hour in the middle and the Post Town at the bottom. This was struck on the stamp, presumably indicating that the agency had evolved into a regularly-

operating sub-post-office (to use the British term). A few of these three compartment box types do have the chamfered or rounded corners similar to the so-called railway station cancellers.

Three-section box. [Kü-10a- 1423c]. Our code gK3je. Jenbach is the terminus of the Zillertalbahn and the Achenseebahn, in the main Inn valley near Innsbruck. This example was used in 7.3.1967.

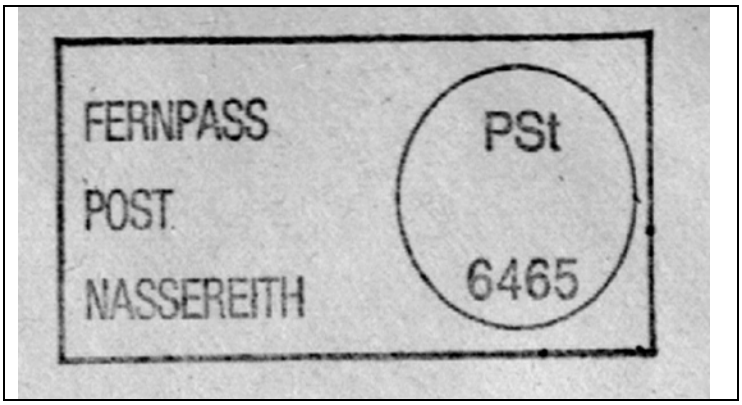
Postcodes

A major change occurred with the introduction of the Post Code system in 1966. The Post Towns duly received their four figure Postcodes but understandably this numbering did not extend to the small collecting agencies which still retained their term 'Posthilfsstellen' (abbreviated as PHSt). A new style canceller was developed to incorporate all the relevant data in one strike. This was a horizontal rectangle enclosing at the right a single circle. [Kü-11] if rubber, [Kü-12] if steel. On the left in three or four lines of sanserif capitals are the names of the Posthilfsstelle and its Post Town separated by the word POST, and in the circle 'PHSt' above the date (day, month, year, no hour) and below that the postcode number of the Post Town. On 1 March 1981 the term 'Posthilfsstelle' was simplified to 'Poststelle', abbreviated as 'PSt'.

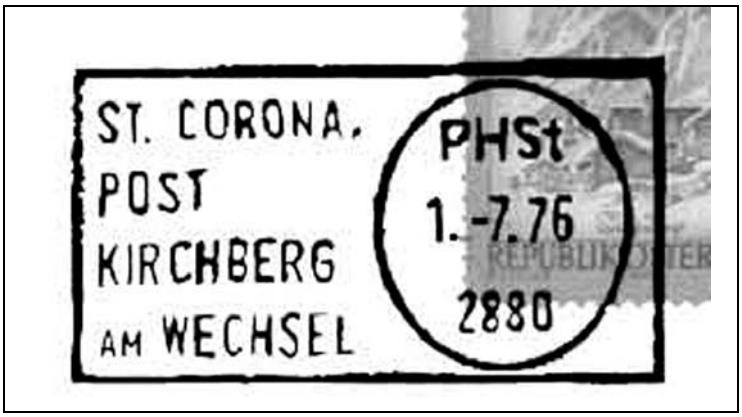


PHSt-Postcode type, our code **KEo**. [Kü-11a-689e]. Note that the violet cancel covers the stamp, contrary to regulations! This example was used in 26.5.1982.

We have classified this type as "**KE**" ie a box and circle, keeping the code in its current-period abbreviated form in line with P1, P2 and P3. They are also known without a date, which would be coded "**KEo**". (It is coincidence that all my [Kü-11] examples have no date and all the [Kü-12] have one - both types are known with and without dates.)



PHSt-Postcode type, our code **KEo**. [Kü-11b- H244a]. This example was used in 10.5.1982.



PHSt-Postcode type, our code **KE.** [Kü-12a-1028h]. Kirchberg am Wechsel is south of Neunkirchen. The canceller was issued in 1968; the office opened in 1912. This example was used in 1976.

Modern circular cancels

A further change was made in the mid-1980s to a less distinctive style more in line with the basic P2 circle in general use at all Post Offices. The single circle contains the names of the Post Town and the Poststelle as two arcs at the top, the latter prefixed with 'PSt', the date usually with no hour [hence classified as P2(e)] across the centre, and the postcode of the Post Town at the base. [Kü-13] if rubber and no date; [Kü-14] if steel with date. Some variations of this type occur, though rarely, eg putting the Poststelle name first, or no date, or in the case of a Two-Triangle-Town squeezing in the triangles as usual at the sides of the Postcode.

	P2 handstamp but without date, counter letter, or despatch indication. [Kü-13a-H244b]. Our code **P2(b)o**. This example was used on 21.7.1983.

Conventional P2 handstamp with neither counter letter nor despatch indication. [Kü-14a-980c]. Our code **P2(be).**	

	Conventional P2 handstamp with counter letter. Our code **P2(e)**. [Kü-14b-D490a]. This example was used on 11.12.1989.

Unusual arrangement within P2 handstamp, with both counter letter and despatch indication. Our code **P2**. This is a shop/petrol station in Laaerbergstrasse in Wien 10, and the illustration shows a 'first day of use' cancel.	

This final example is a roller P2 handstamp with neither counter letter nor despatch indication. Our code RP2(be)+T. [Kü-14c-457i]. It was used in 4.7.1989.

Other postal markings

Other postal markings can be found from Posthilfsstellen.

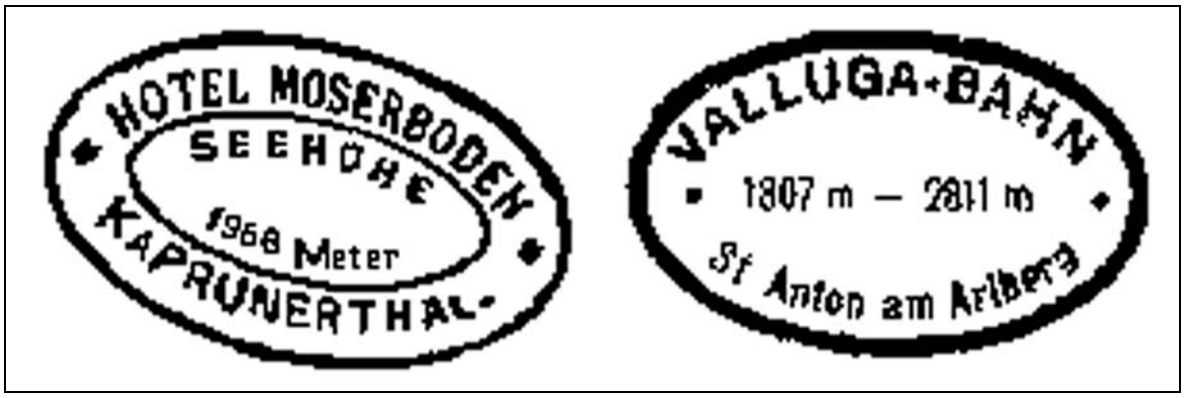
	The example on the left was used on a cancelled-to-order postcard at Allerheiligen in January 1961. It measures 22 by 12 mm, and is probably the canceller used to put the office name on documents!

PHSt. Tulfes
Post 6060 Hall in Tirol

This one was found on the back of an envelope which had a normal KE-type cancel dated 2.1.61 on the front.

Hotel & Hut cachets

Cachets such as the following can be found from almost every hotel, restaurant and mountain hut. Almost always, they have no postal function, and serve only to advertise the place of sale. The Moserboden hotel used to be in the Kaprun valley, where the dams are; the card is dated 1900 and the stamp cancelled KESSELFALL-ALPENHAUS. The Valluga-Bahn is at St Anton; the card is dated 1957.



Further Reading

- ◆Kühnel: Postablagen in Österreich (pub. 1986, revised edition 1993) - ASCGB library item 131.
- ◆Sobetzky: Katalog der Öster. Postablagestempel (pub. 1963) - ASCGB library item 35
- ◆A Lessig: Von der Briefablage zur Posthilfsstelle in Wurth: Österreichische Jahrbuch für Postgeschichte und Philatelie - ASCGB library item 232 vol 3 (1980)

Appendix 1: Introduction dates for Kühnel code types.

Kühnel type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Year	18th Cy	1900	1900	1914	1900	1925	1939
Kühnel type	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Year	1944	1945	1960	1967	1967	1983	1983

Appendix 2: conversion from Kühnel to ASCGB codes.

(All prefixed 'a' for roman type: sanserif and mixed also occur)

Type 1: Private and auxiliary cancels. Some might be better coded as 'B', ie requires an illustration!

Kü	1a	1b	1c	1d	1e	1f
ASCGB	aLo	aLo	aKo	aKo	a2Oo**	aDOo**
Kü	1g	1gb	1h	1hb	1i	1j
ASCGB	aEov**	aEov**	aDOo**	aDBj	B	2K2o

Type 2: Boxed single-line (double if bilingual) steel cancel, stars flanking name.

Kü	2a	2b	2c	2d
ASCGB	All are aKo**			

Type 3: As type 2 but rubber.

Kü	3a	3b	3c	3d	3e	3f	3g	3h	3i	3k	His 3Cs is a Czech type, so irrelevant here.
ASCGB	All are aKo**										

Type 4: As type 2 but rubber; and 'P' or 'POST' before postal town name.

Kü	4a	4b	4c	4d	4e
ASCGB	aKo**	aKo**	aKo**	aKo**	aKo
Kü	4f	4g	4h	4i	4k
ASCGB	aKo**	aKo**	aKo**	aKo**	aKo**

Type 5: Boxed dated cancels; internal dividing line if present broken by date etc.

Kü	5a	5b	5c	5d	5e	5f	5g
ASCGB	aK2j**	aK2je**	aKj**	aKj	aKje	aKj**	aKje

Type 6: Boxed double-line cancels; stars flanking dividing line; post town prefixed P. or Post

Kü	6a	6b	6c	6d	6e	6f	6g
ASCGB	aKo**	aKo**	aKo**	aKo**	aKo****	aK2o	aKo**

Type 7: Anschluß cancels; 'über' instead of 'Post'

Kü	7a	7b	7c	7d
ASCGB	aKo	aK2o	aLo	aLo

Type 8: Anschluss cancels; with post district '12a' or '12b'

Kü	8a	8b	8c	8d	8e
ASCGB	B	B	aK2o	B	aLo

Type 9: Post-war cancels

Kü	9a	9b	9c	9d
ASCGB	aLo	aLo	aLo**	aKo**

Type 10: 3-section box with date

Kü	10a	10b
ASCGB	aK3je	aK3j

Type 11: Boxed names and circle, no date

Kü	11a	11b	11c	11d
ASCGB	All are KEo			

Type 12: Boxed names and circle with date

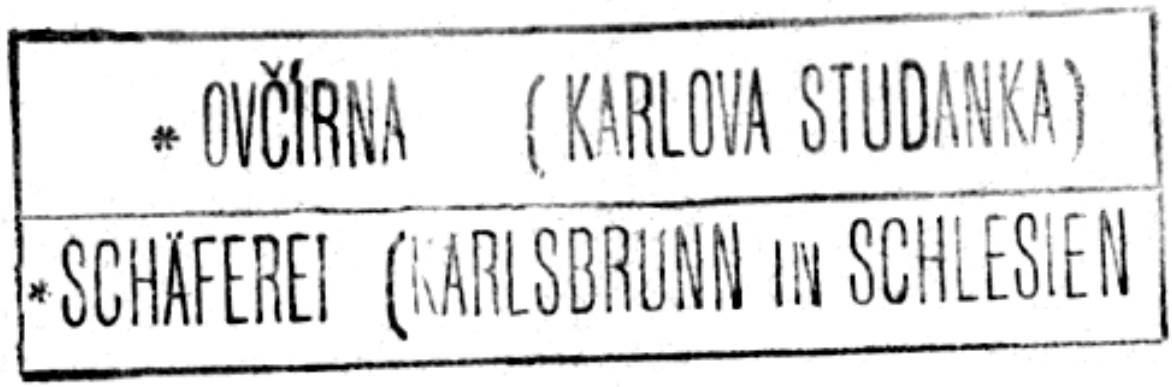
Kü	12a	12b	12c	12d	12e	12f	12g
ASCGB	All are KE						

Type 13: Postcode cancel, no date

Kü	13a
ASCGB	P2(b)o

Type 14: Postcode cancel with date

Kü	14a	14ab	14b	14ba	14c	14d
ASCGB	P2(be)	P2(b)d(e)	P2(e)	P2	RP2(e)+T	P2(e)



And as a postscript both to the Austrian Empire and to this article, the cancel shown above is from the Sudetenland area of today's Czech Republic, and was used on 4 August 1928. It is on a postcard, with the stamp cancelled at Karlova Studanka / Karlsbrünn in Schlesien.

ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRIAN PHILATELISTS

established 1960

1999-2000 PROGRAMME

All meetings, unless otherwise stated, are held in a private room at the
Sekforde Arms, 34 Sekforde Street, London EC1
(Farringdon Station) at 7.30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month
from September to May. New Members are most welcome.

Wednesday 8 September 1999
ALL MEMBERS - New Acquisitions
Competition of Four Sheets (Open Class)

Wednesday 13 October 1999
AUCTION

Friday 15 to Sunday 17 October 1999
ASCGB YORK WEEKEND

Wednesday 10 November 1999
Dennis Brooker
"From 1848 to 1908"

Wednesday 8 December 1999
ALL MEMBERS
Ten Sheet Display - "1967-1976"

Wednesday 12 January 2000
Marion Dabrowski
"Galicia"

Wednesday 9 February 2000
Hans Smith
Illyria

March 2000 - 2.30 p.m.
AAP / ASCGB JOINT MEETING
To Be Announced

Wednesday 12 April 2000
AUCTION

Wednesday 10 May 2000
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

affiliated to the Association of British Philatelic Societies

Chairman and Hon. Librarian
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Salford
Redhill
Surrey
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Vice Chairman
Gordon Rogers
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FROM THE SECRETARY

Following my call for feedback from the membership on the possible future relations with the Association of Austrian Philatelists. As well as comments from 'out-of-town' members and some of the 'regulars' who appear at the Manchester meetings, I have also taken informal soundings at meetings of both the societies. The overwhelming but not unanimous verdict is in favour of some form of 'reunion' between the bodies.

The lone voice was that of a member of both societies. Underpinning his argument against 'reunion' was an assumption that the AAP would inevitably change, and that this would be for the worse. I received his input, in the form of a long letter, before I drafted the proposal, and I hope that I have ensured his concerns will be unfounded.

It would be true to say that his thoughts played a significant part in shaping mine. He is an active member of the AAP, which he saw as a group which drew great strength from its format of meetings and social contact. This he contrasted strongly with the ASCGB, which he saw as a more serious, more learned perhaps society, perhaps even a tad elitist, and certainly not the social beastie that the AAP is. Although a member of the ASCGB, he was only able to attend those meetings which were joint ones with the AAP – held invariably at the AAP's venue and never at an ASCGB 'home ground'.

The picture he painted of the AAP struck me as accurate, but the picture he painted of the ASCGB seemed to me to be applicable only to the ASCGB face that pops through our letter boxes. The Manchester-based meetings strike me as uncannily like the AAP ones in fact, engendering the same warm social atmosphere! This is led me down the 'two ASCGB parts' road and to the three-columned table in the proposal.

The issues which will need some thought and debate in resolving are the two related ones of autonomy and funds – I believe I have built in enough autonomy and control of funds to keep the more independence-minded members satisfied – and the question of the naming of the umbrella body. For the reasons I give in the proposal, my favoured option is to go for a name which is neutral and which reflects the now almost standard format of our hobby.

Enough on a 'reunion', and some comment on a possibly even more hotly debated union – European currency union. In Britain we have yet to feel any significant impact of the move started by most of the other EU member states,

that is, the floating of the Euro. Those who bid in Austrian auctions but live in other EU states must have all dreamed of a day when bank charges would disappear from those bills. This is still a dream, of course, as the existing currencies remain in day-to-day use, with the Euro operating alongside. While in Dublin recently I picked up a leaflet in a bank outlining the changes in foreign currency conversion charges that came in with the introduction of the Euro.

Buyers in the Republic still need to go through the same kind of bank formalities as UK residents when settling Schilling invoices, but since the floating of the Euro they generally pay less for these transactions. Certainly in the forms that most use – Eurocheques and International Bankers Drafts – there have been reductions in the charges. The reductions wouldn't really be considered as very significant on, say, a 600 Schilling lot, but would be significant if buying a 10,000 Schilling group of lots.

It would be interesting to hear from members in other EU countries. Do members in Italy, for example, now have a 'competitive advantage' over UK bidders in Viennese auctions? Do Austrian bidders have an advantage in German markets?

MINUTES OF THE 51ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE AUSTRIAN STAMP CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 1999 IN MANCHESTER

Twelve members attended.

1. **Apologies for absence**
   Apologies from John Whiteside were noted.
2. **Minutes of the Previous Annual General Meeting**
   Minutes of the previous AGM, held on 9 May 1998, had been published in AUSTRIA 123. They were accepted by the meeting *nem con*.
3. **Matters arising**
   There were no matters arising.
4. **Hon President's Report**
   John Giblin reported that the year had been generally a successful one, with many interesting displays. He commented that the Coventry meeting had not produced a tremendous upsurge in interest, although two previous non-attenders had attended.
5. **Hon Secretary's Report**
   John Beech reported that it had been a quiet year, at least when compared with the previous two years. He had prepared a discussion document regarding future relations with the Association of Austrian Philatelists, as requested by the Committee, and he would table it later in the meeting.
6. **Hon Treasurer and Membership Secretary's Report**

   We had enrolled 14 new members in the 1998/99 year (though only 1 in the following 6 months) and now had 217 paying members on the books, a slignt drop over the year. However, 20 of these had not paid since 1997/98. The meeting agreed that we would try yet one more appeal, and if that failed we would have to let them go, whatever their philatelic eminence.

   We had begun the financial year with £3760 and closed with £5316; however this was not a reason for rejoicing as we had only published 3 issues of AUSTRIA, and more members than usual had paid advance subscriptions (there are future commitments of 81 person-years of subscriptions). The Auction had contributed £471 and Dalmatia £556.

The separate and separately-posted newsletter-auction list has received widespread approval as a service the membership wants: it was agreed to continue to do it. The credit-card partnership with the German Railway Society continued to be a success. It was agreed that the subscription rates should remain unchanged.

The accounts were accepted *nem con* and the Club expressed its thanks firstly to Andy Taylor for his efforts in producing the accounts and secondly to Martin Brumby for *Dalmatia* and the return it was now giving the Club.

NB: any member is welcome to a copy of the tabulated financial statement - write to the Hon Treasurer.

7. **Hon Packet Superintendent's Report**
Henry White reported that the Exchange Packet had had a successful year. There had been an increase in both the number of packets circulated and the number of members who had received them. The overall situation was a healthy one, but he cautioned that he might not be willing to continue as Packet Superintendent for more than one year.

8. **Hon Librarian's Report**
Arthur Godden reported that the library continued to function in a modest way. The demand was occasional and from a small number of members. This was disappointing as it was a particularly rich resource for members.

9. **Hon Editor's Report**
Nick Harty was not present. The meeting expressed its sympathy for his continuing difficulties with his health.

10. **Hon Auctioneer's Report**
Colin Tobitt reported that his first full year as the Auctioneer had gone smoothly. The meeting expressed its thanks for the work he had done. He reported a significant increase in the number of members bidding: as high as fifty in one auction. He intended to stick rigidly to four set dates per year.

    It was agreed that the new system of circulating the Auction List with the newsletter rather than AUSTRIA had already helped greatly in facilitating this.

11. **Election of Officers for following season**
Andy Taylor was elected to the post of Editor. Joyce Boyer was elected as Treasurer and Membership Secretary. All other posts saw the return unopposed of the incumbents and all votes were unanimous.

12. **Next Season's Programme**
The following programme was proposed:

15-17 October	York	**ASCGB Weekend in York**
13 November	Manchester	**President's Display** – John Giblin
11 December	Manchester	**Burgenland** – Martin Brumby
15 January	Manchester	**Fiume** – Brian Madely
12 February	Manchester	**Hungarian Hyperinflation** – John Whiteside
11 March	London	**Joint Meeting with Association of Austrian Philatelists**
	(Date and nature of meeting subject to confirmation)	
8 April	Manchester	**The Danube** – Arthur Godden
14 May	Manchester	**Annual General Meeting**

13. **Any Other Competent Business**

- Andy Taylor noted the increased level of enquiry regarding membership that originated via the Internet. This was largely a result of his website which promoted the ASCGB. It was agreed to offer the Index of Austrian Post Offices to 1918 electronically to members via this site.
- It was agreed by acclaim to confer Honorary Life membership on Dr. Christine Kainz and Professor Richard Zimmerl.
- John Beech tabled the 'Green Paper' on future relations with the AAP and explained the rationale behind it. It was considered inappropriate to initiate discussion of it at the AGM. As there were members of the AAP present, including the Chairman (Geoff Richardson) and the Secretary (John Beech), it was agreed following discussion to form a Working Party to review whether and how to progress the proposal, including any changes to it that were felt appropriate. The Working Party is to consist of John Beech (ASCGB and AAP); Martin Brumby (ASCGB); Andy Taylor; (ASCGB); and Colin Tobitt (ASCGB and AAP).

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 15.40 hrs.

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

John Beech

The future for the ASCGB and the AAP - some form of reunion?

The following is offered by the Secretary of both societies for further discussion. The opinions are purely his own and the contents do not represent any policy or proposal on behalf of either society.

For many members of both societies there is probably a feeling of 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it - why should we even consider any change to the status quo?'. This question must therefore be addressed.

It is not for the benefit of the members, at least not directly so, that some consideration needs to be given to the future. It is for non-members that we need to address the relevant issues. The prospect that the current two societies present to the world, both the indifferent general public and the potential new member, is currently one of a divided body of Austrian philatelic support. It is only too clear that the schism of forty years ago has not been fully healed. This does not encourage members to join. It also creates confusion among potential recruits. It is not uncommon for people to write to me from abroad asking to join the AAP, for example!

Some form of unity can only be good for our image and may result in some economies of scale (although the following proposal would not result in significant economies).

Before we lose sight of the argument of retaining the status quo, it is worth noting that the status quo is acceptable to the current membership of both societies in terms of how they each, separately, function, and it is therefore essential that any future 'reunion' retains all the current features that encourage members to stay within the societies. It is therefore useful to set down what the features of each society are. During the past few months, on reflection and as a result of the input of those concerned enough to write to me or talk with me, it seems to me that the ASCGB operates in two forms simultaneously - one that is familiar to all its members, via the letter box, and another which is familiar to that small band who meet regularly in the north of England:

AAP	ASCGB via the post box	ASCGB in Manchester
Roughly 25 members based in London and the Home counties	Thoroughly international society of approximately 250 members...	...of whom roughly 10 attend meetings in the north of England

AAP	ASCGB via the post box	ASCGB in Manchester
Meetings-driven group, active for most of the year, except the summer. Socialising before the meetings and a measure of informal bourse	'Post Office'-driven all-year group	Meetings-driven group, active for most of the year, except the summer. Socialising before the meetings and a measure of informal bourse
Subscription of £5 per year	Subscription of £15 or £20 per year depending on postal rate	No additional subscription
Packet circulated by hand	Packet circulated by post	No additional hand-circulated packet
Regular auctions: no postal bidding	Regular auctions; only postal bidding	No additional auctions
No journal or newsletter	Journal and newsletter	No additional journal or newsletter

Those that have expressed an opinion so far have generally been in favour of some move to reaffirm the obvious rapprochement between the two societies. The only words of caution have come from the AAP side. Within the AAP camp, the following concerns have been expressed:

- the AAP has its own identity, culture and 'feel' after forty years and it would be a mistake to lose that.
- there is a danger that the AAP would be swamped by the ASCGB.
- there are a few AAP-only members who would not be prepared to join the ASCGB on the grounds of cost - their interest in Austrian philately is not their main interest and, while £5 a year is reasonable for what the AAP provides. £15 is not good value if you don't want the full-blown services of a specialist society.

Consideration of both the present formats of the societies and the concerns above leads me to put forward the following scenario for consideration and, no doubt, refinement.

- The ASCGB would add a clause to its constitution allowing the existence of local groups which enjoy autonomy with regard to how they conduct themselves. Such groups would have the freedom to raise money, hold meetings. and arrange non-postal auctions and packets if they wished to. They would be allowed to elect branch officers. They would be allowed to operate local rules (See note at end).

- The AAP would then vote to become such an autonomous branch of the ASCGB. retaining all its current privileges and activities, but dissolving itself as an entirely separate entity. Any monies currently held would still be under the control of this new branch, and the branch members could decide whether to retain or centralise all or any funds. The new branch could continue to levy a subscription and operate their own accounts; an alternative would be for the core body to meet all costs.
- The Manchester-based ASCGB members would form a similar body, but autonomy would ensure that it didn't have to be a 'northern AAP' if its members didn't want it to be.
- The ASCGB would create a new category of membership, that of local member. Such members would not receive core-membership benefits such as Austria or the postally-circulated packet, but would enjoy all local benefits. Voting and attendance rights would only exist locally. Fees for this class of membership would be set at £5 initially. This would accommodate those people who are currently AAP members but not ASCGB members, and would allow their opposite numbers in the North (as yet not in membership) to be eligible to join the Manchester group.

There remains for consideration the vexed issue of the name(s) of the future body and (initially?) two branches. Perhaps surprisingly, no one has expressed strong feelings on the subject. For what they are worth, my thoughts are:

- the Austrian Stamp Club of Great Britain is by far the more established name
- the Association of Austrian Philatelists is the better name
- 'name' is not a critical issue to the outside philatelic world - we speak of 'the Czechs' or 'the Hungarians' for example rather than use the official names of the philatelic societies. Probably the local groups would become known informally as the London APS and the Manchester APS.
- if there is any degree of standardisation in the UK philatelic world, then it is with the term 'Philatelic Society'
- let us move forward as a reconciled reunited body with a new name - the Austrian Philatelic Society (possibly 'of Great Britain' but this is rather inaccurate today)

If there is a clear consensus to move in this general direction, then I would further suggest the establishment of a small joint working party to facilitate progress.

Note: The only **rules** (as opposed to practices), so far as I can see, which appear to be contradictory currently are those relating to the acceptance or not of dealers as members, but I stand to be corrected.

And finally..

A member whose name wild horses would not drag from me emailed me several queries. His first example has been identified by John Whiteside as an 1890 newspaper tax stamp with a Czech revenue cancellation, normally used only on fiscals. I include it here as it's a superb specimen.

Your answers to this one would assist him... where, he asks, is this from: he cannot find ZNIT in any list of Austrian post offices.