

AUSTRIA

Edited by Andy Taylor

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Meeting Dates for 1999-2000

December 11: Manchester: Burgenland - Martin Brumby.

January 15: Manchester: Fiume - Brian Madeley.

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 trip: 1st - 5th June?

YORKFEST2000: York, from 13th to 15th October.

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Editorial 128

It is interesting to consider how the designs of a country's postage stamps often reflect the political imperatives of the time of their issue. Within the Austrian catalogues, the Costumes series of 1934-36 was intended to illustrate a happy society of contented industrial and agricultural workers, somewhat at variance with the reality of polarisation into armed factions which led to internment, Wollersdorf, and ultimately the Anschluß! The circumstances of the 1867 issue are inextricably mingled with the Hungarian Ausgleich, and the denomination of the Russian Zone 1945 overprints and issues in Pfennig and Reichsmark was surely intended to rub home a political message. It is as interesting to see which anniversaries are **not** marked by a commemorative issue as which are.

The results of the 1999 Austrian general election may presage a move to the right, or may only indicate a dissatisfaction with the existing governance of the country or with Europe. I do not know which it might be, and I suspect neither do those who are filling the UK newspapers with their opinions. I do believe that "those who do not learn from History are condemned to repeat it" (attributed to Marx; whether Karl or Groucho I cannot say) and I look forward with interest to the stamp designs for the year 2000.

Of course, there may not **be** any stamps.. I read with disbelief the notion that one would, via the Internet, pay electronically for a security-coded label to stick on ones mail instead of a conventional adhesive purchased at a Post Office. I would suspect that the stamp-free mail system will join the cash-free society and the paperless toilet as one of mankind's more fanciful notions. Virtual Reality is all very well so long as you can clearly distinguish it from Real Reality.

Talking of the real world, my old Austrian friend Herr Druckfehlerteufel has changed his habitual Yorkshire abode: the last issue was **Number 127 for Autumn 1999** despite what it said at the top of all the pages! The quality of some of the illustrations has also been criticised; while many were electronically cleaned-up from scruffy originals, an improved process will be sought.

YORKFEST1999

The weekend meeting this year was held in York, and many of the brief notes supplied by those who presented displays are in the succeeding pages. It was agreed to repeat the event in York again on 13-15 October 2000; the following venue for 2001 will probably be Canterbury, repeated if deemed a success.

WIENFEST2000

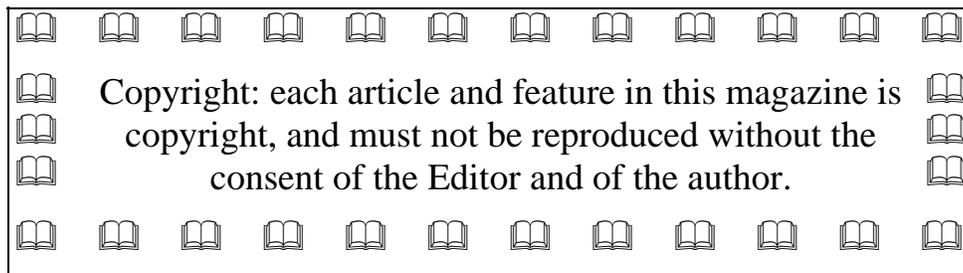
You should by now have received the first announcement of the intended trip to Vienna for WIPA2000. It is likely to follow the same general pattern as the 1998 excursion, mixing philatelic, cultural, and social events. Early application is recommended; some events may be limited in the number who can attend.

Magazine and Newsletter schedule

I have set myself the following publication date targets for 2000...

Jan	Newsletter 1/00 with Auction 58 (closing date 24/3)
Feb	Austria 129
Mar	
Apr	Newsletter 2/00 with Auction 59 (closing date 30/6)
May	Austria 130
Jun	
Jul	Newsletter 3/00 with Auction 60 (closing date 29/9)
Aug	Austria 131
Sep	
Oct	Newsletter 4/00 with Auction 61 (closing date 22/12)
Nov	Austria 132
Dec	

Items for inclusion will be more welcome if they reach me by the middle of the previous month. Those requiring research, translation, complicated illustrations and so on may take just a little longer.



New issues from Austria: 1999

By Nick Harty

INTRODUCTION.

This, the second instalment of the 1999 issues by the Austrian Postal and Telegraphic Administration, is listed below, as usual with the proviso of the P.T.T. “that modifications and additions may prove necessary”.

Part 2.1 Definitive Issues [second half of the year]

The eighth design, a 20 schilling value, was issued on 13th August 1999 [FDC. 27th.] in the new definitive series “Austrian Myths and Legends”. It features St. Notburga, greeting a tired farm worker. The stamp was designed by Adolf Tuma, engraved by Prof. Werner Pfeiler, and printed in both recess [black] and photogravure [chamois and dull green] by the State Printing Works Vienna comb perforated 13¾x14. The legend of St. Notburga goes back to 1265. She was the daughter of a hatmaker and was born in Rattenburg in Tirol, the holy district of Tirol. She became the patron saint of the Tirol and of “leisure at the end of the working day”.

The ninth design of this new definitive series is a 32 schilling value which was issued on 29th October 1999 [FDC 12th November]. The design shows a scene from the legend of the discovery of the Erzberg (mountain of iron ore). The stamp was designed by Adolf Tuma, engraved by Prof. Werner Pfeiler, and printed in both recess [black] and photogravure [reddish ochre and olive] by the State Printing Works Vienna; comb perforated 13¾x14. The 32 schilling value is the rate for registered letters.

Part 2.2 Normal commemorative Stamps [second half of the year].

This 7 schilling commemorative stamp was issued on the 14th May 1999 [FDC 28th] on the centenary of the birth of Karl Jenschke designer of the Steyr Baby model 50 and 55 - Austria's answer to the German Volkswagen. The stamp was designed by Prof. Johannes Kral and printed in photogravure [grey-brown, scarlet, grey-black and black] in an impression of 2.8 million by the State Printing Works Vienna; comb perforated 14¾x13½.

A second commemorative stamp was also issued on 14th May 1999 [FDC 28th], an 8 schilling value in the series Altes Kunsthandwerk - a carved relief in marble of Saint Martin on horseback in the Parish Church of Peuerbach, Upper Austria. The stamp was designed and engraved by Prof. Werner Pfeiler, printed

in both recess [carmine-brown] and photogravure [bright cobalt blue and bright orange] in an impression of 2.3 million; comb perforated $13\frac{3}{4} \times 13\frac{3}{4}$.

A pair of stamps were issued on 21st May 1990 [FDC 4th June] commemorating two musicians from the same family: Johann Strauß the father whose portrait is featured on the 8 schilling value and Johann Strauß his son whose portrait is on the 7 schilling value. The occasion is the 150th anniversary of the death of Johann Strauß the father and the centenary of the death of his son. Both stamps were designed and engraved by Prof. Otto Stefferl and printed in both recess [black] and photogravure [8 schilling value - light violet, violet and gold; 7 schilling value - light violet, lilac-pink and gold] at the State Printing Works Vienna; comb perforated $13\frac{3}{4} \times 13\frac{3}{4}$. The impression for the 8 schilling value was 2.4 million while the 7 schilling value had an impression of 2.9 million.

The new Man Roland 700 offset printing press was used for the first time for the 7 schilling value to commemorate the 125th anniversary of professional charitable service in Austria issued on 21st May 1999 [FDC 4th June]. The stamp was designed by Prof. Otto Stefferl and printed in photogravure [magenta, cyan, yellow, black and silver] by the State Printing Works Vienna in an impression of 2.8 million; comb perforated $13\frac{3}{4} \times 13\frac{3}{4}$. [Details of the new press on page 10]

Three commemorative stamps were issued on 4th June 1999 [FDC 18th]. A 7 schilling value to commemorate 150 years of a national police force in Austria. The stamp design shows rural policemen in traditional uniforms of the period of their formation and was designed by Auguste Böcskor engraved by Maria Laurent and printed in both recess [black] and photogravure [ultramarine, yellow, crimson and gold] by the State Printing Works Vienna in an impression of 2.8 million; comb perforated $13\frac{3}{4} \times 13\frac{3}{4}$.

The second stamp is the now annual issue for Europa 1999. This year's theme concentrates on maintaining Nature's natural resources and shows the animal world of the national park Donauauen. The stamp was designed by Adolf Tuma, engraved by Prof. Wolfgang Seidel and printed in both recess [violet-black] and photogravure [turquoise-blue, yellow, crimson-lilac and glimmer-blue] by the State Printing Works Vienna in an impression of 2.9 million; comb perforated $13\frac{3}{4} \times 13\frac{3}{4}$.

The third stamp was issued as a miniature sheet for the ninth of the ten year series Briefmarke and Philatelie and features K and I. [This was the design shown with its separation negative and colour proofs to the ASCGB party when they visited the State Printing Works December 1998] The stamp was designed and engraved by Prof. Otto Stefferl, printed in both recess [black] and photogravure [orange-red, brown-violet, grey-ultramarine, yellow, blue, silver and gold] by the State Printing Works Vienna in an impression of 3.8 million; comb perforated $13\frac{1}{2} \times 13\frac{1}{2}$.

A 6.50 schilling commemorative stamp was issued on 3rd September 1999 [FDC 17th] to mark the centenary of the Graz Opera. The stamp which shows the steel fire curtain was designed by Marianne Siegl, engraved by Gerhart Schmir, and printed in both recess [crimson] and photogravure [pale-brown, ochre-brown, orange-brown, lilac-brown, pink-lilac, crimson, ochre-yellow and gold] by the State Printing Works Vienna in an impression of 2.3 million; comb perforated 13¾x13¾.

A 7 schilling value was issued on 3rd September 1999 [FDC 17th] to commemorate the International Year of the Aged. The design shows a retired couple sitting on a bench and was designed by Adolf Tuma, printed in photogravure [ultramarine, straw-yellow, purple red-lilac, yellow-orange and black] by the State Printing Works Vienna in an impression of 2.8 million; comb perforated 13¾x13¾.

A 9 schilling value was also issued on 3rd September 1999 [FDC 17th] in the series Ancient Arts and Crafts and shows a wooden sculpture of St. Anne with Mary and the child Jesus. The stamp was designed and engraved by Prof. Werner Pfeiler, printed in both recess [black] and photogravure [turquoise-blue, chrome-yellow and crimson] by the State Printing Works Vienna in an impression of 2.3 million; comb perforated 13¾x13¾. The statue is at the Parish Church of St. George at Pürgg in Styria.

The third stamp in the series Welcome to Vienna WIPA 2000 was issued on 3rd September [FDC 17th] as a miniature sheet of four 32 schilling commemorative stamps (the current rate for registration) each with a surcharge of 16 schillings for philatelic funds. The stamp shows mail being delivered to an aircraft for onward carriage. The stamp was designed by Hannes Margreiter, engraved by Prof Wolfgang Seidel and printed in both recess [black] and photogravure [grey-black, ultramarine, pink, reddish-ochre, chamois and black-brown] by the State Printing Works Vienna in an impression of 1.5 million; comb perforated 14x13¾.

A 6.50 schilling value was issued on the occasion of the 14th. Austrian Trades Union Congress on 8th October 1999 [FDC 15th] The allegorical stamp design was produced by Caroline Pflug and was printed by photogravure [red, light-grey, dark-grey and black] by the State Printing Works Vienna in an impression of 2.4 million; comb perforated 13¾x13¾.

The 25th design in the series Modern Art in Austria was issued on 8th October 1999 [FDC 22nd]. The stamp is a 7 schilling value and is the work Caffe Girardi - a portrait of the artist's "lokal" run by the Podreka family in FriedrichstraÙ. The stamp was designed by the artist Prof. Wolfgang Herzig, engraved by Prof. Wolfgang Seidel and printed in both recess [black] and photogravure [yellow, purple red-lilac, ultramarine-grey and yellow-brown] at the State Printing Works Vienna in an impression 2.9 million; comb perforated

13¾x13¾. The design is also released as an official maximum card - No 18. [60,000 issued]

An 8 schilling value commemorative was issued on 8th October 1999 [FDC 22nd] in the series National Customs and Folklore Treasures; the stamp shows the Pumpkin Festival in Lower Austria. The stamp was designed by Maria Schulz, engraved by Prof. Wolfgang Seidel and printed in both recess [black] and photogravure [grey-black, turquoise-blue, yellow, purple and red-lilac] by the State Printing Works Vienna in an impression of 2.4 million; comb perforated 13¾x13¾.

A 7 schilling value stamp was issued on 29th October 1999 [FDC 12th November] to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the National Institute of Geology. The stamp shows an elevation of the Institute building with three fossils in the foreground. The stamp was designed by Marianne Siegl, engraved by Prof. Wolfgang Seidel and printed in both recess [black] and photogravure [red-brown, scarlet, chamois and dark blue-grey] in an impression of 2.8 million; comb perforated 13¾x13¾.

A 7 schilling value was issued in the series National Customs and Folklore Treasures on 29th October 1999 [FDC 12th November] and portrays The Pummerin - the Big Bell of St. Stephen's Cathedral. The stamp, designed by Maria Schultz, was engraved by Prof. Wolfgang Seidel and printed in both recess [black] and photogravure [grey-black, turquoise-blue, yellow and crimson-pink] in an impression of 2.9 million; comb perforated 13¾x13¾.

The final issue for 1999 is the annual Christmas stamp and is a 7 schilling value issued on 5th November 1999 [FDC 26th]. The design is taken from a picture of the Nativity on the high altar of the Parish Church at Pinkafeld in Burgenland. The stamp was designed by Prof. Sepp Buchner, engraved by Prof. Wolfgang Seidel and printed in both recess [dark crimson-brown] and photogravure [greenish-yellow, ultramarine, purple red-lilac, yellow-brown and gold] by the State Printing Works Vienna in an impression of 13 million; comb perforated 13¾x13¾.

Part 2.3. Printed Postal Stationery [second half of year]

An Inland postcard (6.50 schilling) was issued on the 4th June 1999 [FDC 18th June] in the series Plant and animal protection of endangered species. It was designed by Mag. Brigitte Heiden and printed in five colour offset at the State Printing Works Vienna in an impression of 2 million.

Another Inland postcard (6.50 schilling) was issued on 8th October 1999 [FDC 22nd] to commemorate the centenary of the founding of the Animal Protection Society. It was designed by Hannes Margreiter and printed in five colour offset at the State Printing Works Vienna in an impression of 3 million.

This Christmas is the 50th anniversary of the Christkindl post office which is outside Steyr in Upper Austria. It opened for the first time on 15th December 1950 in a room hired from the local pub. and closed on 6th January 1951. [For details refer to AUSTRIA 121 pp. 32-33 - Autumn 1997] Both cancellers are designed by Prof. Sepp Buchner; the designs being modelled on figures from the Crib in the Parish Church of Pinkafeld. Front cover of November edition of *The Briefmarke*.

A new First Day cachet came into use on 27th August 1999 and was used for the first time on the definitive 20 schilling stamp (St. Notburga). This is the fifth cachet to be used since its introduction on the 1st June 1948.

A new state of the art offset multicolour printing press was installed at the State Printing Works this Spring. One of its first commissions was to print the commemorative stamp "125 anniversary of professional charitable services" issued on 21st May 1999. The press is a MAN Roland 700, it has the fantastic performance of being able to print 15,000 sheets per hour [740mm x 1049mm]. This is 250 sheets per minute or 4 sheets per second. Its operation is controlled by computers which monitor colour and quantity of the inks and also the register of each process. Besides printing securities, bank savings books, stamps for UNPA and vignettes it also prints the Philatelic Journal "*Die Briefmarke*". The Editor, Richard Zimmerl, is extremely proud that it is printed on the same press as the stamps it writes about.

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Profile of the Auctioneer - Colin Tobitt



I was born in North London in March 1942, but by the time I was ready to commence my education the family had moved to S.E. London. Being a practical minded boy I attended a technical school and on leaving served a six-year apprenticeship as a compositor in a firm of fine colour printers. After several years as a journeyman I sadly recognised the demise of my craft, due to the move away from the art of letterpress in favour of other printing methods together with the introduction of computer technology.

Remaining in this changing trade did not appeal anymore, it was time to take up the second string to my bow, that of carpentry and building. I worked with a local jobbing builder for several years and I became self-employed 25 years ago.

My interest in stamps began when I was 10 years old, with encouragement from my Grandfather. I started with an all world collection that later rationalised to a commonwealth and GB collection, this was later sold. The hobby lay dormant for a number of years.

I came in contact with Austria during the 1960's when together with nine friends we travelled overland in a 'soft top' Landrover. I found the country had a distinct beauty, which I soon discovered was manifested in its stamps. I appreciated the design and fine art work, due to my previous involvement with colour printing. Once again I became interested in stamp collecting and accumulated a large Austrian collection. I have now also diversified into other areas of Austrian philately, which my family tells me is threatening to take over our entire house!

NOTES from publications en route to the Library.

Die Briefmarke

Issue 10/99: Eilzustellung (Express Post) was discontinued from 1st October; the A1500-3 Field Post Offices (see also the next section.); the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Militaria Austriaca Philatelia; Thematics: fire brigades & freemasons; yet more Postservicestellen (Postablagen!) closures.

Issue 11/99: 'Die Briefmarke' is now printed on the stamp-printing presses!; Christmas in stamps and cancels; cancels on the railway from Wien to Pinkafeld; second *Licht ins Dunkel* balloon post; review of "Postal History of Burgenland" series; the New Ferchenbauer (priceless!).

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Militaria Austriaca Philatelia.

Item 180A: *Auslandseinsätze der Exekutive im Dienste des Friedens* - the deployment and postal history of Austrian Civilian Police in support of United Nations operations since 1964 in Cyprus, Namibia, Irak etc; and also in Bosnia, East Slavonia and Kosovo. By Dr Harald Gass. 120pp A4 with maps and illustrations. To purchase your own copy write to the Editor.

Issue 183: Recent & future events; auction lists; the A1500-3 Field Post Offices.

Wiener Ganzsachen Frei- und Poststempelsammlerverein

Issue 3/99: Venetian packet card forerunner; meter marks (cont).

Czechout

Issue 3/99: Book reviews; Hlucin (cont); Prague pneumatic mail.

1017? 2010? 6370? 2671? 5330? 6352? 5035? 5754? 5532? 6166? 6060?

Austrian Postcodes and your Computer

Our member John Anthony has produced a 100-page book with the Austrian Postcodes arranged in alphabetical, numerical, and regional orders. It is free, and particularly suitable for those who cannot access the somewhat complex Austrian Post internet site. Copies are obtainable from him directly: write to John Anthony, Managing Director, Commercial Software Management Limited, Devereaux House, Church Hill, Coleshill, Birmingham, B46 3AA

5360? 4801? 6458? 6450? 6422? 6410? 2650? 6074? 1300? 6294? 3390?

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I write in tribute to Nicholas Harty, stressing how grateful the Society has been for all his editorial work in the past. His work, both as Assistant Editor since 1992 and as Editor since 1993, has been a major contribution to the life of the ASCGB and he has overcome (until now) health problems to provide such devoted service. We do, indeed, look forward to his further contributions in later editions.

John F Giblin, F.R.P.S.L., President of the ASCGB.

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Dear Editor,

The bottom stamp in Mr Krulla's letter (Austria 126 p.20) seems to be a forgery, as it has a different perforation from the original. The upper stamp looks OK.

That the 1906 Bosnia Landscapes designs were taken from the book by Renner is well known in the [german - Ed] literature. The book is not too difficult to find.

Dr O Pongratz-Lippit

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Dear Editor,

First may I congratulate AUSTRIA on its new editor and tender my condolences on the consequent loss of an important writer of Letters To The Editor. I note a reduction in the quality of the illustrations. I hope this is just teething troubles with a change of technique. [No, it's my aged scanner, and my policy decision to avoid collages! Ed] Finally, there seems to be no great problem with the ZNIT cancellation, just confusion between Austria and AustrALia. This should have been settled much earlier, perhaps about early April.

John R Batts

And on the same theme..

Bei der letzten Frage auf Seite 44 bin ich nicht ganz sicher, ob es sich hier nicht um einen verführten Faschingsschertz handelt...

Dipl Ing H Rainer

..C'est un poisson d'avril?

M. A. Rillen

Help Wanted!

Austrian TPOs in Hungary?

Mervyn Benford of the Hungarian Philatelic Society seeks information on TPOs on Austrian railway lines that extended into Hungary, which seem to have been exceptional. There are certainly more Hungarian routes with a terminus in Austria than vice versa.

Those in Burgenland are listed in great detail in a 73 page article by Bruckner in "*Postgeschichte des Burgenlandes anlässlich 70 Jahre Burgenland - 20 Jahre Briefmarkensammlervereine Pinkafeld*". There are a few in *Klein vol II*. And *Pillauer* gives details of Bosnian routes with Hungarian termini, which used Hungarian-looking cancels. One would have thought that there would be more links from Styria into Hungary (or rather, into Croatia), also more from Moravia and Austrian Silesia into Slovakia and from Bukowina into Transylvania.

Can any of the ASCGB railway and/or TPO experts assist here? Perhaps the railway timetables list the TPOs?

Disinfected Mail

The Disinfected Mail Study Circle's field of research includes the disinfection and quarantine of mail from military hospitals, of which by far the most numerous and varied are Austrian, of the First World War period. Their chairman, Denis Vandervelde, writes to say that it is high time an authoritative listing of types and locations of cachet was published. Meyer's great work *Disinfected Mail*, long out of print, listed only disinfection cachets, and only for the years 1915-17. And even within these limitations, he seems to have made some mistakes. There is no mention of the scarce bi-lingual types (German & Magyar). Meyer also does not note the existence of dangerous fakes, though in fairness these may have been perpetrated since the publication of his book in 1962.

The Study Circle would like to include cachets of Quarantine stations and epidemic-disease hospitals, so are asking for a volunteer who can read German, as many locations need an interpretation of the messages. If successful, the results could be published jointly. Denis Vandervelde would make copies of his material, and such research as is already done, available to the volunteer. Please would anyone who can assist write to him at 25 Sinclair Grove, London, NW11 9JH.

We understand that *Pratique*, the journal of the Disinfected Mail S.C., has published several authoritative articles on Austrian disinfection of mail in the 17th and 18th centuries, identifying hitherto unrecorded cachets and seals. Enquiries about membership should be made to Denis Vandervelde.

Answers (!) to Members Queries

- ❖ The cancellation **AP** means "Avis de paiement"; **AR** is Avis de Réception. What **these** mean is described in a separate article!
- ❖ The cachet Kriegs Gefangnis Arbeits Kommando was used to claim free postage on mail sent from a WWI working party of POWs (ie captured soldiers) - typically from the guards to their families.
- ❖ Cancels with numbers in concentric rings were used in the 20th century in around 12 offices in Vienna for mail which arrived uncanceled. They are described in the (extremely rare!) journal "Die Postmarke", Issue 1 of 1st Jan 1947. The 19th century usage is described by Klein in Die Briefmarke, issues 78 and 80 (12/64 and 3/65).
- ❖ The "ZNIT" cancel, submitted in good faith, is LINZ upside down. See also the Letters page.....
- ❖ The standard and the specialised Netto catalogues use the same numbering system.
- ❖ The Story of Gurahonz will appear in the next issue!

More Members' Queries

- ❖ There is a single-circle cancellation "Johann-Adolfhütte" (Klein 1968) from the district of Judenburg in Styria. The Hut opened on 8 May 1870. Does anyone know where exactly the Hut was, and if it has been rebuilt, renamed, or demolished?
- ❖ A member wishes to exchange or purchase Netto 42 & 43, ie the 1867 violet and 1880 green Newspaper stamps, in order to study various aspects of these stamps including design, paper, color, etc. Replies to editor please.
- ❖ Does anyone have any covers or postcards sent by **airmail** from Austria to **Australia in 1946 or January 1947**? Particularly useful would be ones with a clear date, weight and rate! Legible photocopies to editor please.
- ❖ A member has a Semlin local official entire, addressed to the Military Court and dated 16 Feb 1829. It bears a red circular 4-line postmark in German, translated as "Semlin / Main post / and Salt office". If there was a Salt Office, then presumably there was a Salt Tax - does anyone have any details of it?

WIPA 2000

Wiener Internationale Postwertzeichen Ausstellung Vienna International Postal Stamp Exhibition

Programme highlights:

	Tues 30 May	Opening Ceremonies
	Wed 31 May	Youth day
➔	Thurs 1 June	150th Anniversary of Austrian Stamps
➔	Fri 2 June	United Nations day
➔	Sat 3 June	International day
➔	Sun 4 June	Former Crown Lands day; Religious Philately day

The ASCGB Expedition is planned for these days!

Next year, from 30th May to 4th June, the Austria Centre Vienna will host the World Philatelic Exhibition **WIPA 2000**, making Vienna once more the centre of interest for philatelists. The celebration of WIPA 2000 is also linked to an Austrian jubilee: the 150th anniversary of the Austrian Postage Stamp. In Vienna, philatelic Exhibitions have a tradition dating back to the year 1881 in which the first International Philatelic Exhibition was organised. Further Exhibitions took place in 1933, 1965 and finally in 1981.

Continuing the tradition, WIPA 2000 will be the absolute highlight in this series, featuring more than 2000 displays, around 350 exhibitors, and 150 stands on a total of around 13,000 square metres. The Austria Centre Vienna will feature:

- Philatelic adventure world for all visitors: Original inspirations, such as the mail van shown on the 2nd WIPA-stamp, will be on display, along with examples of modern Austrian works of art copied on stamps.
- Exhibition and fair area with numerous international dealer and International Postal Administration stands.
- A competitive exhibition under FIP auspices and under the patronage of the FEPA. Numerous symposiums and expert meetings will be held during this exhibition, for example about the prevention of falsification of postage stamps. A literature corner invites the visitor to sit down and browse.
- The youth centre lures with High Tech: Internet applications, video etc, tempting young people to create their own stamps on the PC. Furthermore a drawing and painting competition will be organised enabling the design of a

special WIPA Youth-stamp.

- The official representatives of the former Austrian Crown-Lands will arrange a display on the theme "History of the Monarchy and its successor states".

The WIPA 2000 mini-sheets, published in limited editions and chosen as 1997's "most beautiful stamp of the year", are selling fast. Every philatelist should seize the opportunity to complete and enrich his collection. WIPA 2000 will be the second largest World Exhibition ever held in Central Europe. The organisers expect over 100,000 visitors - in particular many younger stamp fans.

The rarities exhibited at WIPA 2000 will make the heart of every collector beat faster. The Organising Committee has been able to get some exquisite pieces to Vienna. The Mauritius and the 3-Skilling-Yellow will be among the rarities to be admired. The Postal Authority of the UNPA are exhibiting rare pieces from Geneva. The firm of Bolaffi are showing their most valuable objects, amongst others the first stamp that ever reached Italy and the first real Italian stamp.

Young people are a very important target for philately, as the future of this important leisure-time occupation depends on them. A Youth Promotion is being carried out under the theme "Exhibit and win" in order to motivate more young people to visit the exhibition in Vienna. The aim of WIPA 2000 is to promote Youth-philately; there will be an interesting side-programme, which is made especially for children and youth, as for example a post office for youngsters, a pop group, a computer-room, autographs from sportsmen and women, etc.

WIPA 2000 also offers all kinds of diversion to those who do not fully share their partner's enthusiasm for stamps. They can visit the porcelain and quilt exhibitions, listen to music and join the many other entertainments available on site. Visitors will appreciate the numerous relaxing zones and the fine selection of food and drinks offered at the exhibition. The visitor will be attracted not only by the exhibition, but also by the special flair of this city. Vienna lives by its cultural offerings, ranging from the New Year's Concert to the concertina-player at the Heurigen, which allow everybody to choose according to their own taste.

On January 21st 2000 the definitive stamp "Basilisk" will be issued. It shows the ugly beast of the fairy tale, which is said to have lived in ancient times in the well of a bakers shop in the Schönlaterngasse in Vienna. The stamp will also be produced as a Souvenir-block for everyone who buys an entry ticket for WIPA 2000 - but note that this block is not included in the annual subscription to the Austrian Post.

[WIPA can also be visited on the Internet, on Web page www.wipa.at - the information above is adapted from the Press Releases there. Ed]

YORKFEST DISPLAYS - brief writeups

[Some of the Yorkfest displays appear in this issue as longer articles; and I hope these brief writeups will appear in the future in longer versions too! Ed.]

Parcel Cards 1893-1904

John Whiteside

The display began with one earlier item of 1885, sending a matinee (teagown?) from a dressmaker in Vienna to HM the Queen of Serbia - has there ever been another queen called Natalie? The other 8 sheets of the first frame were internal parcel post cards with tax and postage in kreuzer up to the end of 1899 and in heller from 1st Jan 1900. The last card showed a Troppau Fahrpost postmark of 1902. The second frame contained 9 sheets of cards for foreign parcels. An attempt was made to explain the charges by using the UPU recommendations for parcel charges for up to 5kg. set out from 1881.

Inflation Foreign Postcard Rates

John Whiteside

The display showed the rates for postcards to foreign countries from 15th Jan 1920 to 28th Feb 1925. It should be noted that throughout that period cards to Germany were carried at internal rates. From 1st May 1922, there were two rates, one the full rate, the other a reduced rate to certain countries. This is sometimes described very misleadingly as the rate to all neighbouring countries, which leads to confusion. It applied to Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Roumania and Italy, but not to Switzerland and a card was shown, paid at the reduced rate and charged 25c. Swiss postage-due on arrival. Unfortunately, one rate was missing, as JW does not have the 280k. reduced rate of 18th Sept to 31st Oct 1922... and he would welcome offers if anyone can provide him with an example!

Liechtenstein

John May

The display gave an introduction to Liechtenstein, a principality created in 1719 by Emperor Charles VI, which was served by the Austrian Post Office until the end of The Great War. After a short period of postal independence an agreement was concluded with the Swiss Post Office. Austrian links remain strong with stamp printing contracts frequently awarded to the Austrian State Printing Works, Vienna and the rail service operated by Österreichischen Bundesbahnen.

Wien combined town and registration cancellers

H G White

Henry White had sent in a display tracing the development and use of combined town and registration cancellers used on mail from WIEN. This started with one of the earliest such marks, "V.WIEN RECOM." in 1824 with two more elaborate versions in the pre-stamp era and went on to the CDS types found on all five Classic stamp issues. Later developments were "empty" ovals into

which the serial number of the letter was written and half-framed "RCMDT". These cancellers became obsolete with the introduction of the UPU labels in 1883, of which Austria chose the familiar Black on Yellow version.

Time-Zone cancels

H G White

Henry White provided a second display of the Time-Zone cancels of WIEN with their specific shapes, as described in "Austria" 104. Where, initially, they were used as despatch cancellers for local mail in Vienna he started with the six shapes used on piece on all of the first six stamp issues. The second usage ie as arrival cancels on any mail coming into Vienna, was shown on covers, when the later versions (double frames or 'added year' in the date) could be seen. The two recently discovered uncatalogued varieties reported in AUSTRIA 123 concluded the display. Sadly, despite this report having been translated and included by Prof. Zimmerl in 'Die Briefmarke', so far no corroboration of these marks has been forthcoming.

Kinderdorf Balloonpost

T. James Hooper.

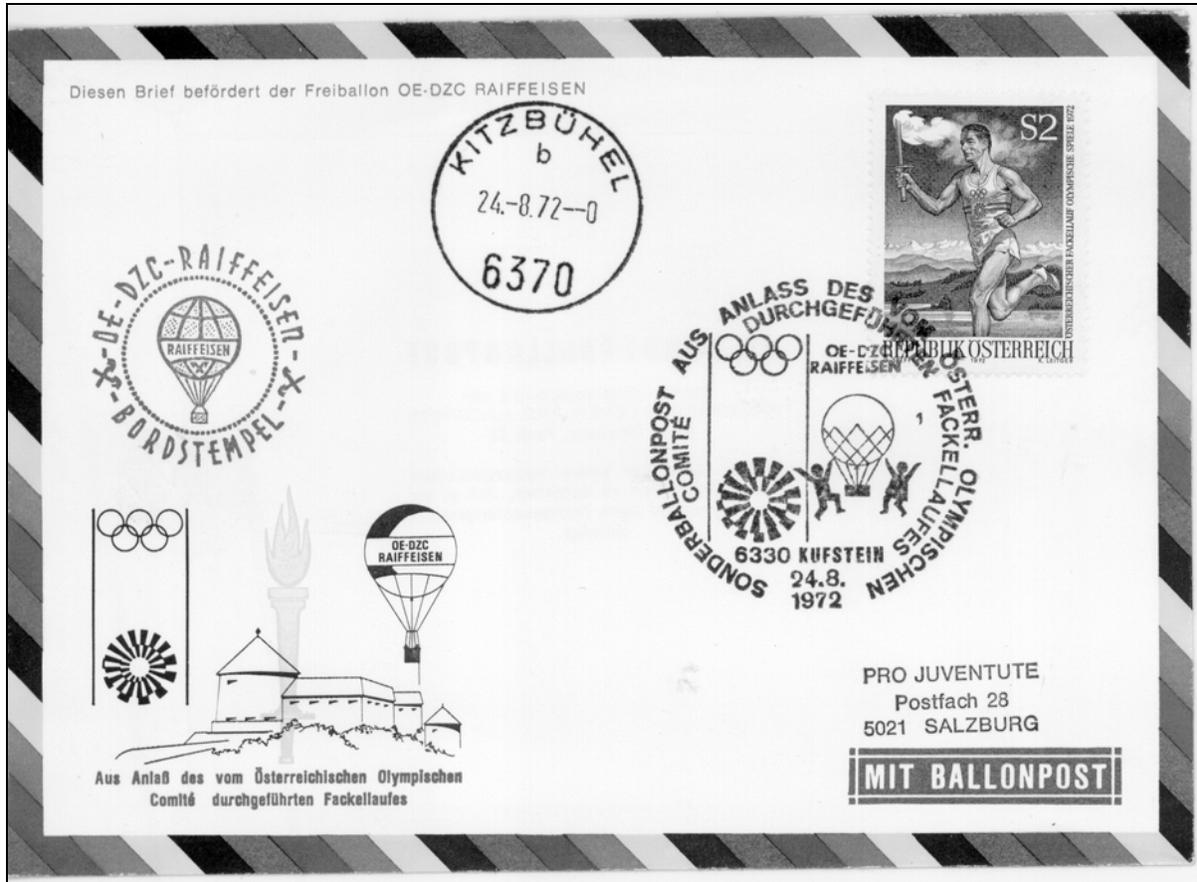
After World War II with all the chaos in Europe and Austria, a small group of people interested in youth welfare met in Salzburg. As a result, in autumn 1947 they founded the "Österreichische Pro Juventute Kinderdorf-Vereinigung" (Austrian "For the Youth" Children Village Society), with its headquarters in Salzburg. The aim of the Society was to form Children's Villages all over Austria; the idea was based on the Pestalozzi Villages in Switzerland and followed much the same lines.

It was the idea of the Society to obtain funds through the sale of special cacheted postcards and envelopes, imprinted with stamps, and transported by means of balloon. The Society obtained an agreement with the Austrian postal administration to allow the flights to carry the mail with full cooperation of the postal authorities.

30 different balloons have been used between the first flight in 1948 and 1990. Two regular flights have been held most years, plus the occasional special flight in between. The display showed eighteen sheets with the different envelopes, cards and cachets used for the eight flights flown by the HB-BIS HELVETIA. These were Flights No 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, and 14. This balloon was also used for two special flights not shown in this display.

Of special note is a cover with a "too late" cachet and sent by normal post. This flight had been delayed from the 28/10/48 - 2/11/48 and the date 28/10/48 was removed from the cancel of the "too late" cover. Also shown were cards which advertised these flights and subscription rates for joining the collection of these letters/cards etc. From flight 4, balloon letter could be used for normal postage, before this flight surplus cards and letters could not be used up. Flight 5 showed

a nice air mail flown cover commemorating the first Zeppelin flight over Austria. Flight 6 showed the postal stationary envelope used by the Pro Juventute organisation and paper, unused. These were used on the flights. Flight 9 showed a special cachet for a height record of 6,500 Metres for free balloon.



A typical "Balloon Cover" from the Editor's accumulation.

Postablagen Cancellations

Andy Taylor

See Austria 127 pages 17 - 34!

Galicia

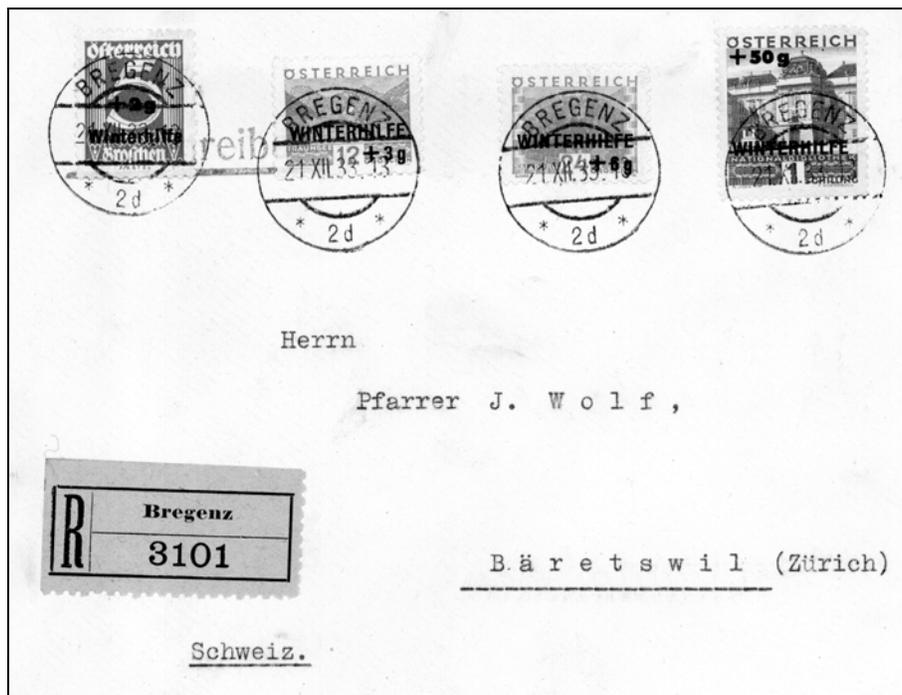
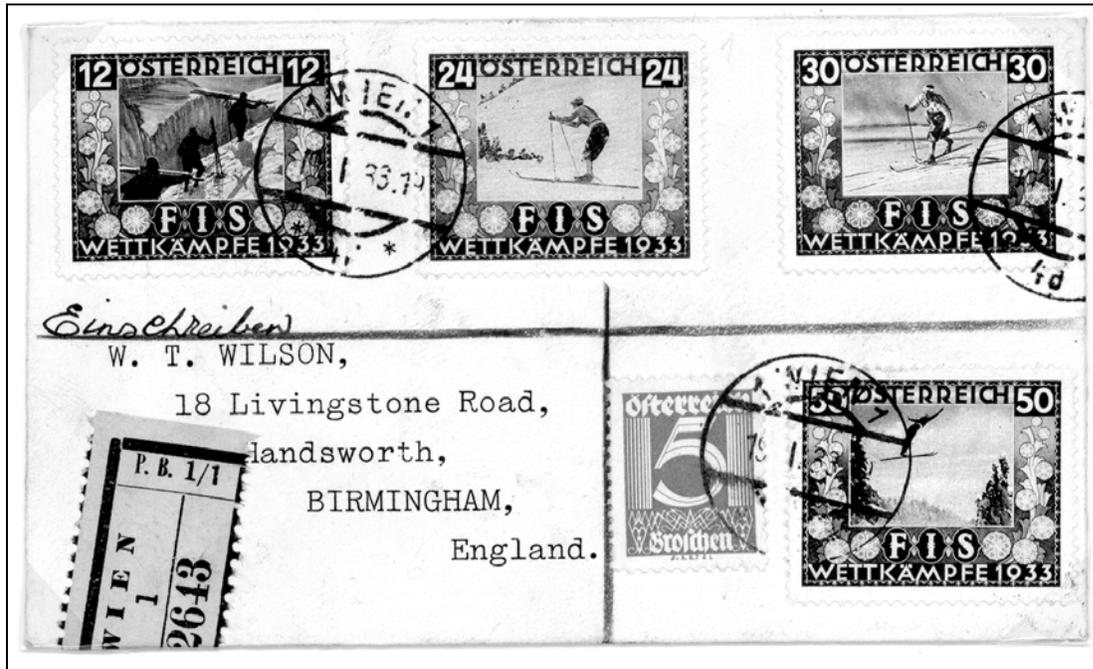
A Berrisford

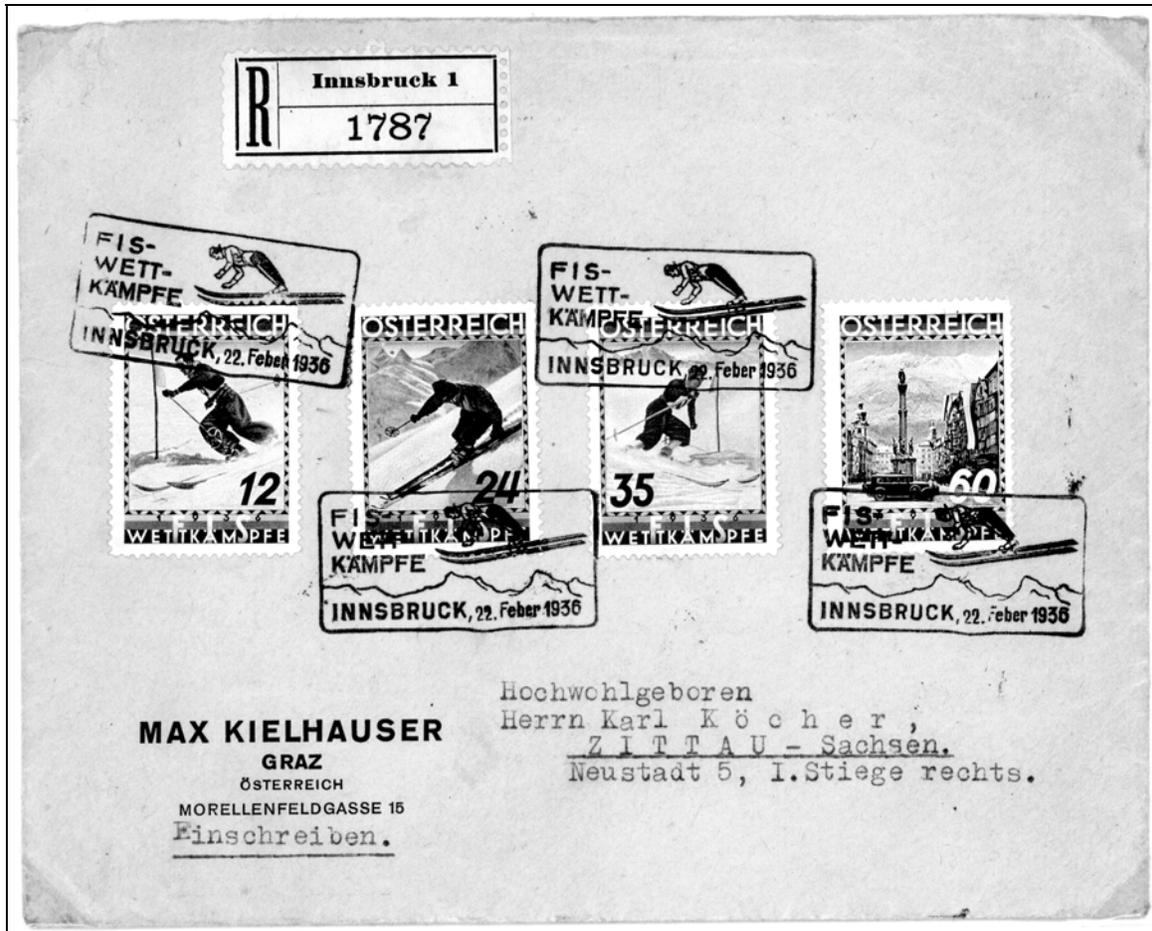
This display featured Galicia TPOs and Galicia/Bukowina Postablagen.

Registered Covers

G Richardson

The display showed 36 covers, from 1920 to 1965, to internal and foreign destinations. Many had special cancellations, or were the first day of issue of a definitive or commemorative stamp. One particularly unusual cover combined the above with a "Nachnahme" (COD) demand for the payment of two years subscription to a philatelic magazine (ASCGB Hon Treasurer please note!)





Back of the Book

G Frost

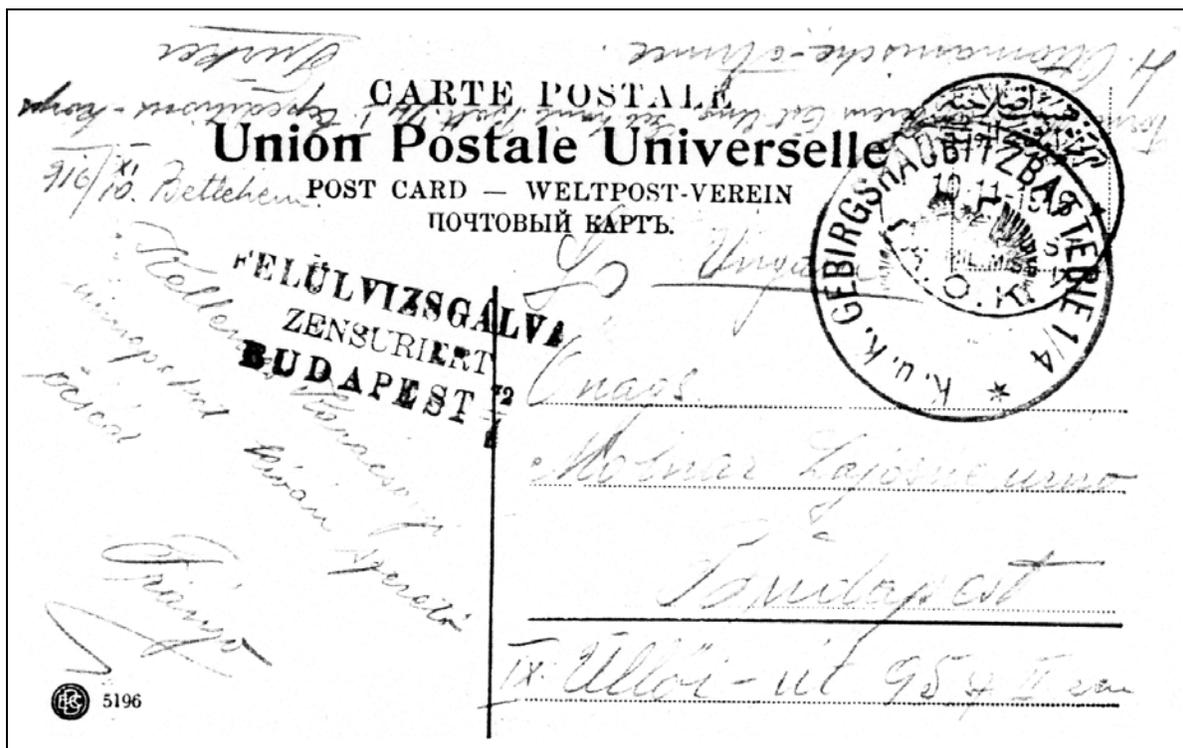
This display showed us a wide selection of rarely-seen material, including propaganda labels, Italy occupation local issues, proof and trials, 1921 emergency special delivery stamp, private designs for Austrian prisoner of war stamps, DDSG package control stamps, Galician court stamps, and the Vienna private telegraph company 1870



Austrians in Turkey

G Frost

The display included a wide range of material from the (mostly artillery) troops sent to help Turkey in 1914-16 - and from the reciprocal assistance of Turkish troops sent to help repel the Russians in Galicia in 1916.



The Definitive Issues 1890-1896

G A Rogers

Introduction

Thirteen stamps were issued on 1st September, 1890 and were valid for postage until 30.9.1900 excepting the 20, 24, 30 and 50 Kreuzer values which were valid until 31.8.1891 and the 1 and 2 Gulden values valid until 31.1.1896, these 6 stamps being replaced by either new designs or new colours (Gulden values) which were valid until 30.9.1900. In addition to postal use they were to be used for the collection of taxes and their use with money letters and packets with valuables was also extended. Since the 1883 issue did not contain sufficient values for these purposes (and time was short) the new values were issued first.

Technical Details

Paper: The paper was unwatermarked, and incorporated fine brown-black threads (granite paper) as a protection against forgery. There are four sub-varieties. The first stamps issued had the design visible on the reverse side and was rough to the touch. In 1896 a smoother, whiter paper which was not transparent was introduced for the Kreuzer values. In 1899 a softer and smoother pure white paper was introduced for the Kreuzer values and is identical to the paper used for the Heller values of 1899. In 1899 a rougher non transparent white paper was introduced for the Gulden values in the new colours again identical to that used for the Krone values of the 1899 issue.

Colours: The colours were of the coal tar type and all values had a number of shades. The number recognised was given at the start of each value's display.

Perforation: The issue had to be produced rapidly and all the machines to hand (harrow, line and comb) were used to perforate this issue causing a very wide variety of perforations. Thus it was chiefly in 1890-91 that the rarer line perforations were employed. Space did not allow for all to be displayed.

Cancellations: During this period the number of post offices in Austria increased from 4700 in 1890 to 6700 in 1900 and the variety of cancellations from 10,000 to 12,000. The low values are commonly on letters or postcards. The values above 50 Kreuzer rarely occur on letters except on high value money letters. Loose examples of used high values are usually from order forms, telegrams and packet cards which all receive normal postal cancellations. Cancellation dates vary from 1.10.90 to 24.3.00 supporting the fact that the 1883 issue continued to be sold whilst the new issue was in circulation and that they were still being used when the currency changed to Heller/Krone.

Bisects: These were officially allowed: see next page!

*Use of Bisected Stamps 1st - 7th January 1900**G A Rogers*

On 1st January 1900, Austria changed its currency from Kreuzer-Gulden to Heller-Krone. At the same time postal tariffs were re-organised, with some rates remaining at the equivalent amount and some slightly increased. To smooth the transition the Post Office allowed its customers to use up their stocks of old currency stamps for a limited period on the basis of 1 Kreuzer = 2 Heller. At first insufficient quantities of the new value stamps were available, which meant that Post Offices were without 1 Heller stamps. As an interim measure some Post Offices bisected 1 Kreuzer stamps to make two "1 Heller" stamps. This enabled them to meet the requirement of inland printed matter of 3 Heller (1½ Kreuzer); foreign printed matter and inland postcards at 5 Heller (2½ Kreuzer); and a foreign letter and the registration fee both at 25 Heller (12½ Kreuzer). This practise was not approved by the Postal Administration but the shortage only lasted a week, and postcards cancelled in this period are considered by expert philatelists to be official additional frankings.

The illustration shows a 1 Kreuzer bisect on a 2 Kreuzer Correspondenz-Karte cover addressed to Prinz Max von Hohenhohe cancelled on the first day of the 20th Century.



Revenues

John Whiteside

The display consisted primarily of complete documents, though there were some sheets of stamps to give some idea of the range of adhesives used. With two exceptions, where topics are covered in some detail, an attempt was made to give an overview of the types of documents that exist and what sorts of items were taxed from 1748 to 1918 in those parts of the Austrian Empire administered from Vienna. There were a few examples from Hungarian parts in one section.

The first 10 frames presented a review of the stamped paper used prior to the issue of adhesive stamps in 1854. After this period, the collection of taxes was sold off to "Farmers" of the revenue. In 1748, however, three issues were made for the Czech lands of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, each consisting of 3 values, examples of which were shown in the first frame. The second frame shows examples of the second all-Austria Patent of 1762, which lasted until 1802. This provided for 4 taxes; three were shown.

In 1803, there was a huge change, with the number of taxes being increased to 14, from 3 kreuzer to 100 gulden. The main stamped paper used was supplied from stock from Vienna and is notable for the fact that there is a different watermark design for each value. Stamped paper could also be made at the various provincial stamp offices and this is of a completely different design. Up to 1809, the latter type seems to be uncommon.

The year 1809 saw Austria take on Napoleon again, with rather disastrous consequences, which affected the stamped paper considerably. On 1st September, French Occupation Stamped paper was issued in several provinces, but after a treaty of 14th October, Austria regained control of much of the Empire, save the southern part (Carinthia, Carniola, etc) which became the Kingdom of Illyria. The French Occupation paper was used there with a Control mark, then French-type paper was issued and finally when control reverted to Austria in 1814, French paper was used with Austrian controls for a while.

The chaos that ensued in 1809 meant that from 1810, stamped paper had to have an extra circular Control mark. The stock paper from Vienna now is little used, indeed a lot of it was restamped, so the distinctive watermarks are very useful, and paper stamped at the provincial offices is the norm. Four frames presented a brief review of this fascinating period.

The next Patent was that of 1818, lasting until 1835. The paper is stamped at the provincial offices, but occurs with and without a circular control stamp. A frame of this was shown. The final change is that of 1836. Paper was mainly supplied from Vienna, with changes in types and tax scales in 1840 and 1850. Two frames were shown, one of lower values showing re-engraved types of 1840 and the other of the gulden values. To conclude the stamped paper section, a few

examples of the provincial office papers of 1836 were shown, which are not at all easy to find.

Austria's first adhesive revenue stamps were issued on 1st Nov 1854 and were used until the currency change of 1st Nov 1858. Three frames of their use were shown. The next 5 frames showed Bills of Exchange. The first batch with the first issue employed adhesive stamps, but from the 1860s forms with special imprinted designs were used. The ad valorem tax scales changed several times and a small selection was presented of the various types used up to 1918.

The next 4 frames presented a selection of the Revenue stamps used from 1866 to 1918. Not all sets were shown and most were incomplete, but they provided a showing of some rather splendid stamps. The final two frames of this group showed examples of the new currency issues of 1898 and 1910 used on documents, those in the second frame being mixed frankings with a revenue of another country.

The final group of 6 frames in the first round was a study of Protokolls. These appear to be records of the outcome of a court case. The cases are not criminal, but civil, and most involve judgements on claims for debt. There are 2 basic taxes, 12kr for Bagatellensache, or cases involving up to 50 gulden, and 36kr for cases involving larger sums or cases not directly involving money. These taxes are levied on a sheet of legal paper, which is 4 sides of approximately foolscap. If the Protokoll requires more than 4 sides, the appropriate tax level is levied on each further 4 sides.

In addition, most Protokolls show further taxes. The commonest is that for a money transfer (or receipt) on payment of the claim. For the 12kr items, these charges are 7kr, 13kr and 19kr and for the 36kr, they are 19kr, 32kr, 63kr, 94kr, 1.25fl., and so on. Other taxes may occur occasionally - 25kr apparently as a fine for settling late, 50kr for a Vergleich or agreement, and 1fl. or 2.50fl. for lodging an appeal. If the case is lost, costs are usually awarded and there is an extra tax on these of 50kr or 1fl.

The last 2 frames showed these items used in Moson County in north-west Hungary, firstly showing the use of Austrian revenues to 1868 and ending with a few of the first Hungarian issue. Some of the items shown were used at places transferred from Hungary to the Burgenland province of Austria in 1921.

=====

The second round commenced with 3 frames of Newspaper tax stamps, firstly of the tax marks on papers from 1810 to 1849, then a few items of the interim period to 1858. One is of particular note, being the title page of an 1854 edition of "Punch" sold in Milan and correctly bearing the 2kr green tax stamp paying the tax on a foreign paper. Finally there was a small selection of items used after 1858 until the tax was abolished on 1st Jan 1900.

The next frame showed examples of the splendidly-named Zahlungs-Befehl, or payment orders made by a court. The next frame was of Wechsel-Protests, which are the proceedings needed to recover the money from a Bill of Exchange which has not been honoured when presented for payment. The final frame was of licences for music, or music and dancing issued at villages in Moravia. Taxes and charges were quite heavy and appeared to go to the Parish Poor Fund.

The next group of 6 frames was a study in some detail of the duties on Money Transfers from the currency change of 1st Nov 1858 to 1918. The tax scale of 1850, in C.M. currency, was changed to one in the new O.W. currency, then rapidly changed again because of the disastrous Italian Wars of 1859 and the loss of Lombardy. The value of the new gulden declined by about one-sixth, from 2/- to 1/8d sterling and remained thus until the new gold standard krone was introduced in the 1890s.

These taxes, which increase with the amount transferred, are found on loan agreements, mortgages, cessions (which are the transfer of responsibility of such agreements) and similar items. They are also found on receipts, but only if these are needed as a matter of official record, such as ones issued by local government agencies, church councils, or Savings Banks for annual interest paid on deposits.

The other 3 groups of 6 frames showed a range of other taxes on documents of all kinds. These reflect the power of the adhesive stamp to enable taxes to be levied on anything. One of the sayings of the army was "if it stops still, paint it", but in Franz Josef's Austria it seems to have been "if it's on paper, tax it"!

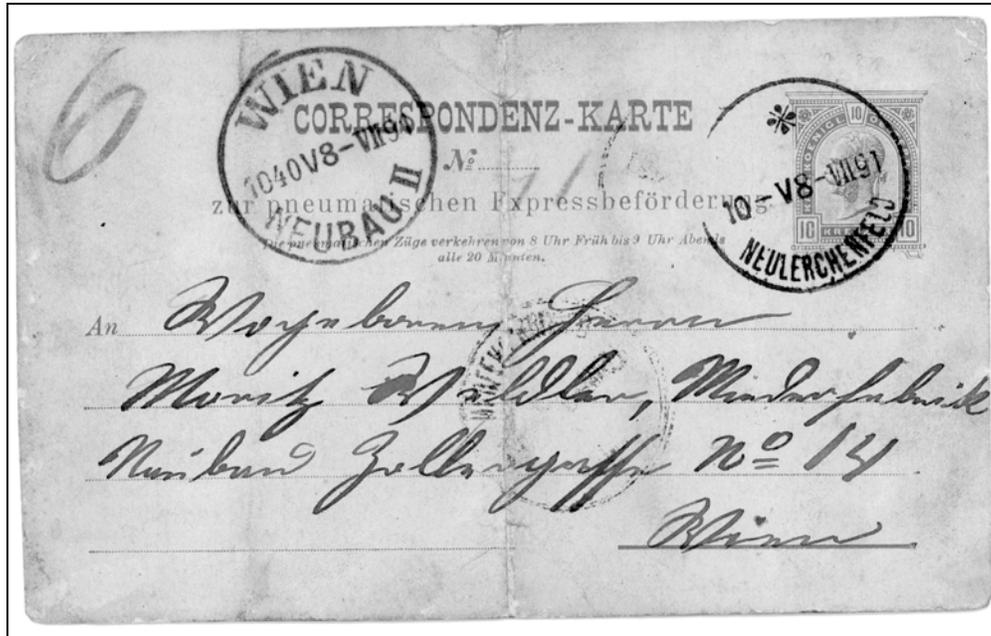
The items were shown roughly in ascending order of tax. Larger sections are on the tax on School Reports, Vollmachts, or Powers of Attorney and Kaufvertrags, or sales contracts, almost always for land sales. The units of land measurement are worthy of note - a Joch consists of 1,600 square Klafters and a Klafter may best be translated as a fathom, or just over 6 feet. The Joch was equal to about 1.35 acres. Another rather perplexing group are "Stiftsbrief", which are religious documents appealing to the Bishopric, apparently about changing the use of an endowment. These do employ some of the higher values though. A frame each of Births, Marriages and Deaths were shown, then one of invoice duty, which unlike the money transfer tax shown before is small (1kr or 5kr) and is levied on any invoice or statement presented for payment. Finally, a frame of Fishing permits!

A number of taxable items were not shown, but the range of items displayed certainly provided something of a feel for the Austrian Empire in its last years.

Vienna Pneumatic Post

John May

The display illustrated the letters and cards which went 'down the tube', starting with dedicated stationery until the end of the second world war. Unfortunately, the postal authorities often did not meticulously record transfers as on the first British Sunday acceptance of air mail for Austria.



Postal rates for airmail from Austria to Great Britain, 1946 - 1949

H.O.Pollak

The surcharges for foreign airmail from Austria during the first few years after World War II are considerably more complicated than one would naturally believe. There are a number of problems for the student! The airmail rates from Austria appear to have been separately determined, and were different, for each country of destination. The rates also changed frequently, official documentation is complete beginning only in 1949, and only partial evidence exists until then. There are a number of questions on which we have to proceed empirically, by looking at covers and seeing what we can learn. Unfortunately there are many destination countries from which you would be lucky to see one cover, never mind a sufficient number to allow inferences with any degree of assurance.

I have seen many hundreds of covers from Austria to the United States of America, and can estimate the dates of undocumented changes in the airmail surcharges to the USA to within a couple of days. As was noted in **AUSTRIA 125** p50, an article on this study has appeared in the newsletter of the cancellation and postal stationery collectors of Austria (ie the *Wiener Ganzsachen Frei- und Poststempelsammlerverein*). An articles on the rates from Austria to Canada has also recently appeared, and a study of the rates to Argentina is in process. Admittedly, the rates to overseas destinations were more complicated than to European countries, both because the rates changed more frequently, and because weight classes for the air surcharge went in intervals of 5 grams, while the regular postage changed every 20 grams. To European destinations both scales were in 20 gram intervals.

The purpose of this article is to write down what is known, what is empirically likely, and what appears to be unknown about rates from Austria to Great Britain. I am asking for help from all of you in filling in gaps, producing contrary or supporting evidence, and (I can dream, can't I?) by offering me covers for trade or purchase that would help to complete the story. I should be most grateful for any and all assistance.

Before we can hope to make inferences about airmail surcharges, we need to remind ourselves regarding the basic foreign letter rates from Austria to most countries except some immediate neighbours. Foreign mail was first permitted after World War 2 on January 2, 1946. There were two exceptions: for a brief period in the autumn of 1945, mail between Austria and Czechoslovakia was allowed; and mail to Germany and Japan was not permitted until later. The rate

was 50 groschen per 20 grams for letters (30 groschen for postcards). The basic letter rate was increased to 60 groschen (35 groschen for postcards) on June 24, 1946, but without official permission of the occupying powers, who demanded that this increase be rescinded - which it was on July 25, 1946. The rate returned once again to 60/35 on January 1, 1947. On September 1, 1947, it went up to 100 groschen (1 schilling) for letters and 60 groschen for postcards, and there it stayed through 1949. Letters weighing more than 20 grams were not allowed until June 24, 1946. After that time, and through 1949, the basic rates for additional 20 gram intervals equalled, as it turned out, the postcard rates.

Airmail was first permitted on March 25, 1946. The airmail surcharge for a letter to Great Britain was 120 groschen, and there is no evidence that this changed any time during 1946. (But it did change to other destinations!) In early 1947, the surcharge went down to 80 groschen. No official documentation is known to have survived, but a little article in the *Wiener Kurier* from January 16, 1947 says that foreign airmail surcharges were reduced on January 15, 1947. Of course we don't know that a change to all destinations took place at the same time, but that seems to be a plausible conjecture.

How long did the 80 groschen airmail surcharge remain in effect? We know that there were airmail surcharge changes on May 3, 1948, but I don't know that the rate to Great Britain changed at that time. My best guess at this moment would be that the airmail surcharge to Great Britain was decreased to 40 groschen only on September 7, 1948, a date on which there were again extensive rate changes. I certainly have covers with the 80 groschen airmail surcharge between May and September of 1948.

There is even more uncertainty about the airmail surcharge for postcards. We know that at the beginning, as of March 25, 1946, it was 120 groschen, the same as for a minimum weight letter. We know that by August 1947, it was one-quarter the minimum surcharge for letters, as it remained for all European destinations through 1948. On the basis of postcards to other countries, but, I must be quick to admit, NOT to Great Britain, I would guess that the postcard surcharge remained at the minimum letter surcharge until January 15, 1947, and that on that date it changed to one-quarter the minimum letter surcharge for European destinations. If anyone has airmail postcards from Austria to Great Britain, or other European countries, from 1946 or the first half of 1947, they should help to settle the issue. Please look!

In summary, an airmail letter or postcard from Austria to Great Britain with a weight not exceeding 20 grams may well have cost the following - to the extent my theorising is correct. Each change was caused either by a change in the general foreign rate, or by a change in the airmail surcharge.

Period	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
January 2, 1946 - March 24, 1946	50			30		
March 25, 1946 - June 24, 1946	50	120	170	30	120	150
June 24, 1946 - July 25, 1946	60	120	180	35	120	155
July 25, 1946 - December 31, 1946	50	120	170	30	120	150
January 1, 1947 - January 14, 1947	60	120	180	35	120	155
January 15, 1947 - August 31, 1947	60	80	140	35	20	55
September 1, 1947 - September 6, 1948	100	80	180	60	20	80
September 7, 1948 into 1949	100	40	140	60	10	70

(1) is Basic Foreign Letter Rate for up to 20 grams

(2) is the GB Airmail Letter surcharge

(3) is (1) + (2), ie the total cost of a GB airmail letter

(4) is Basic Foreign Postcard Rate

(5) is the GB Airmail Postcard surcharge

(6) is (4) + (5), ie the total cost of a GB airmail postcard

[All rates are given in groschen. The currency reform of 10 December 1947 did not affect these rates.]

I should, of course, be delighted to receive confirmatory or indeed contradictory evidence to these conjectures. Most critical would be further evidence on whether the reduction from 180 to 140 did take place around January 15, 1947, and whether exactly the same change took place again on September 7, 1948. I should also like to hear of airmail covers whose weight exceeded 20 grams, airmail postcards, and printed matter sent by airmail.

As a by-product of my studies, there are several cautions I should like to pass on:

- ◆ Communication from the centre of Vienna to other post offices was pretty bad in 1946, and a rate change may not have become known for some time
- ◆ Collectors and dealers sometimes overfranked covers to please the recipients. There was even a rule of the censorship authorities that a letter that was grossly overfranked was to be rejected - but I have never seen that enforced. Certainly first day covers, covers with lots of semi-postals, and first flight covers cannot be expected to be franked exactly correctly, and cannot be used by themselves as evidence for airmail surcharges.

- ◆ Large correspondences sometimes show an old and higher rate continuing to be paid by the sender for months after it was no longer correct. People simply didn't know that the rate had gone down!
- ◆ I have found the best covers for my studies to be “Gebühr bezahlt” or “taxe perçue” (as the text ought to be on foreign mail) covers, on which the postal clerk wrote the amount collected and if possible the weight. Next best are metered mail, since these are almost always at the correct rate. Next best are covers from government offices, lawyers, movers, and other businesses, or covers that may be dirty and look as non-philatelic as possible.

The information which has survived and been recorded so far has been published by Dr. Christine Kainz in 1984 and 1991. The articles may be found in volumes 7 and 14 of Dr. Rüdiger Wurth's series on Austrian Postal History "*Österreichische Postgeschichte*" (ASCGB Library item 232/7 & 14). She cites three rather primitively produced communications to the post offices which are in part undated and also have undated manuscript corrections. My apologies if I have misinterpreted any of her text. I am also grateful to the combined efforts of the libraries of Columbia University and Yale University in letting me see the Wiener Kurier.

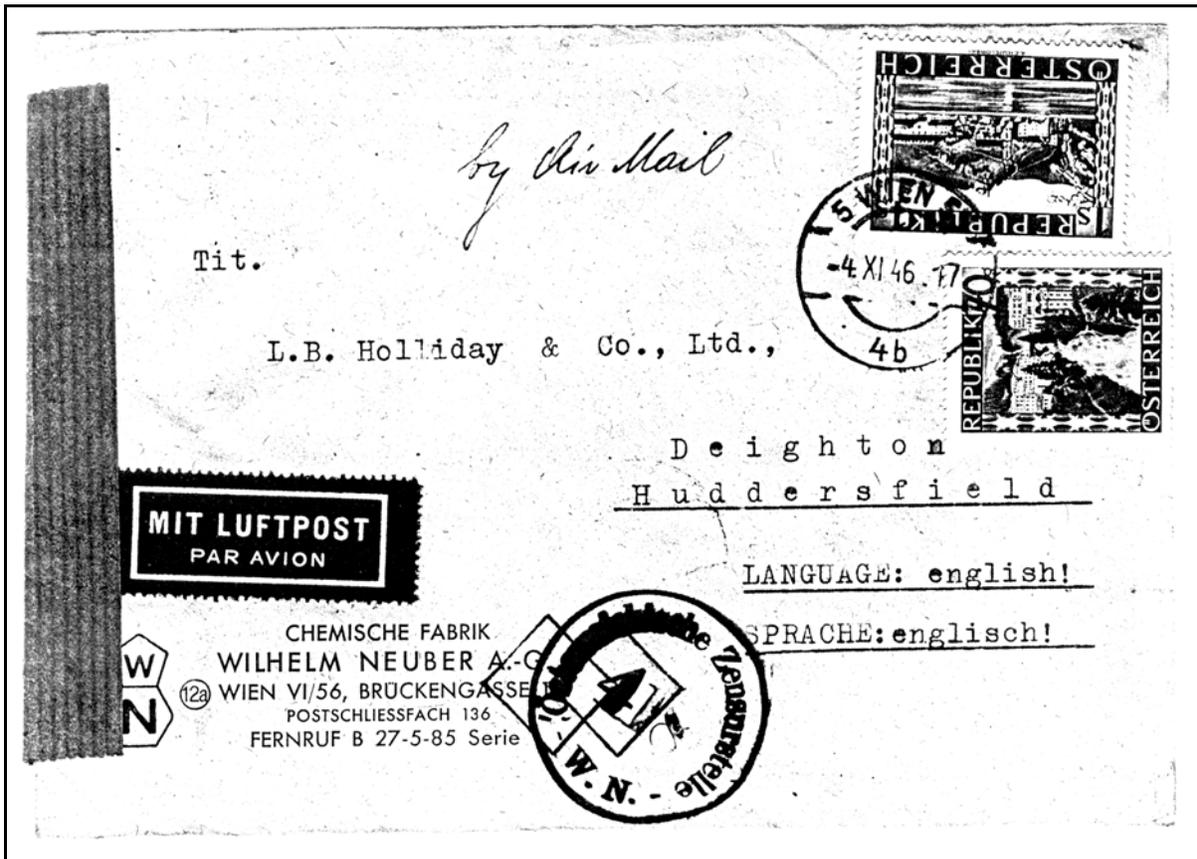
The illustrations which follow show:

- ◆ A letter dated 11 May 1946 carrying $60+60+50=170$ groschen
- ◆ A letter dated 4 November 1946 carrying $100+70=170$ groschen
- ◆ A letter dated 3 February 1947 carrying $70+70=140$ groschen
- ◆ A letter dated 23 July 1948 carrying $90+90=180$ groschen
- ◆ A postcard dated 21 August 1947 carrying 35 groschen on the address side and $10+20$ on the picture side = 55 groschen
- ◆ A letter dated 23 August 1947 carrying $70+70=140$ groschen

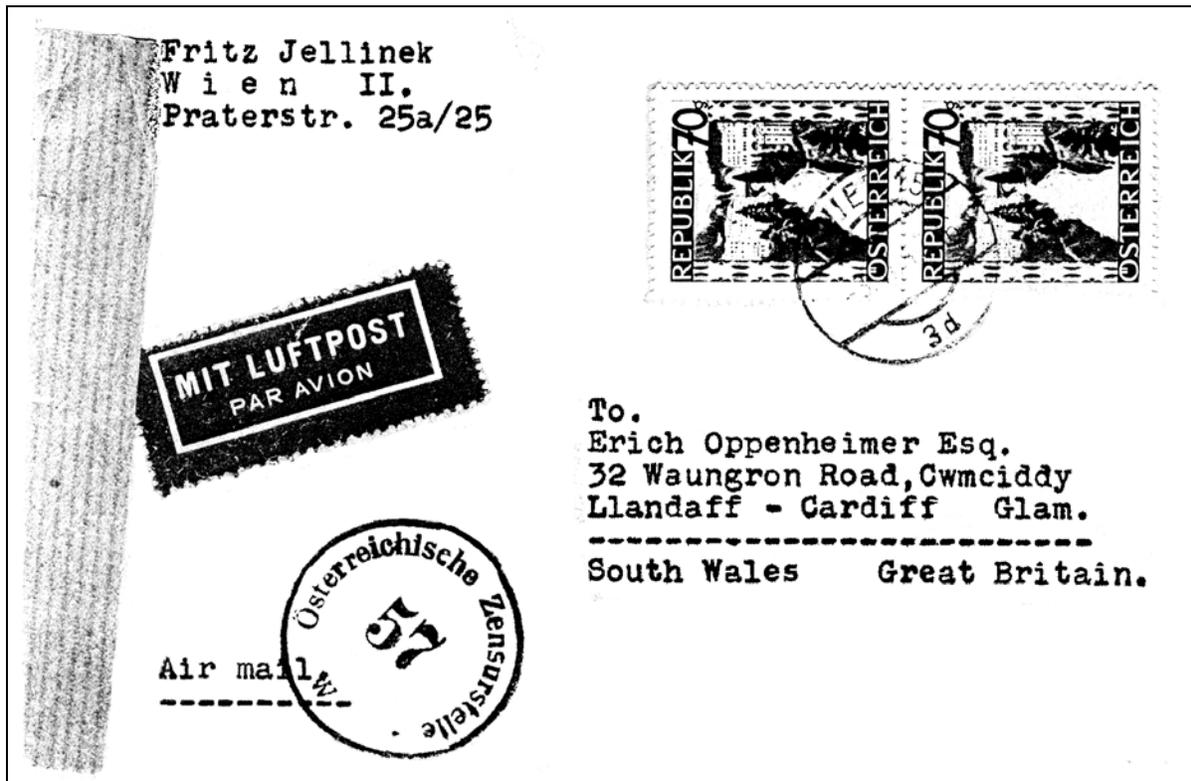
One final note: In the interest of further extensions of this effort, I should be most interested in hearing about Austrian airmail covers, especially from 1946 and 1947, to just about any country except the USA.



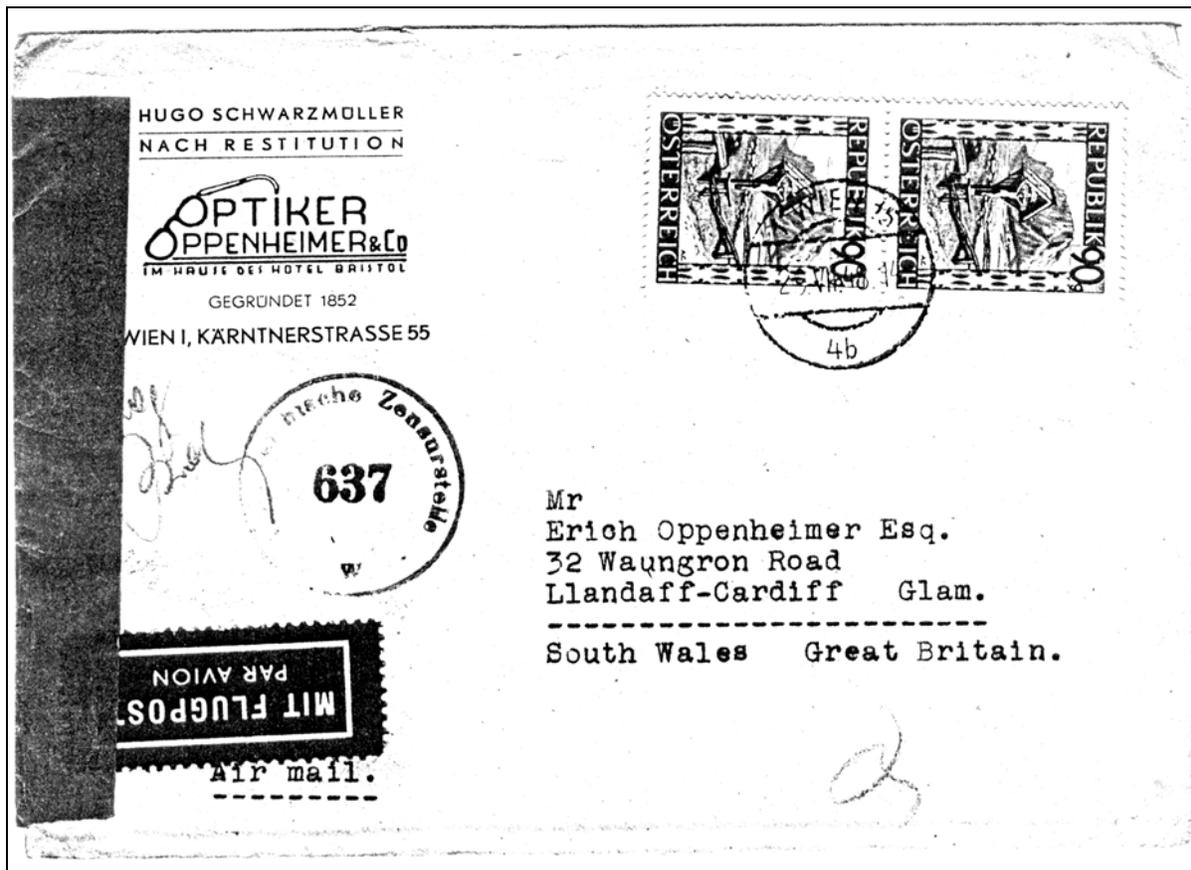
11 May 1946: 60+60+50=170 groschen



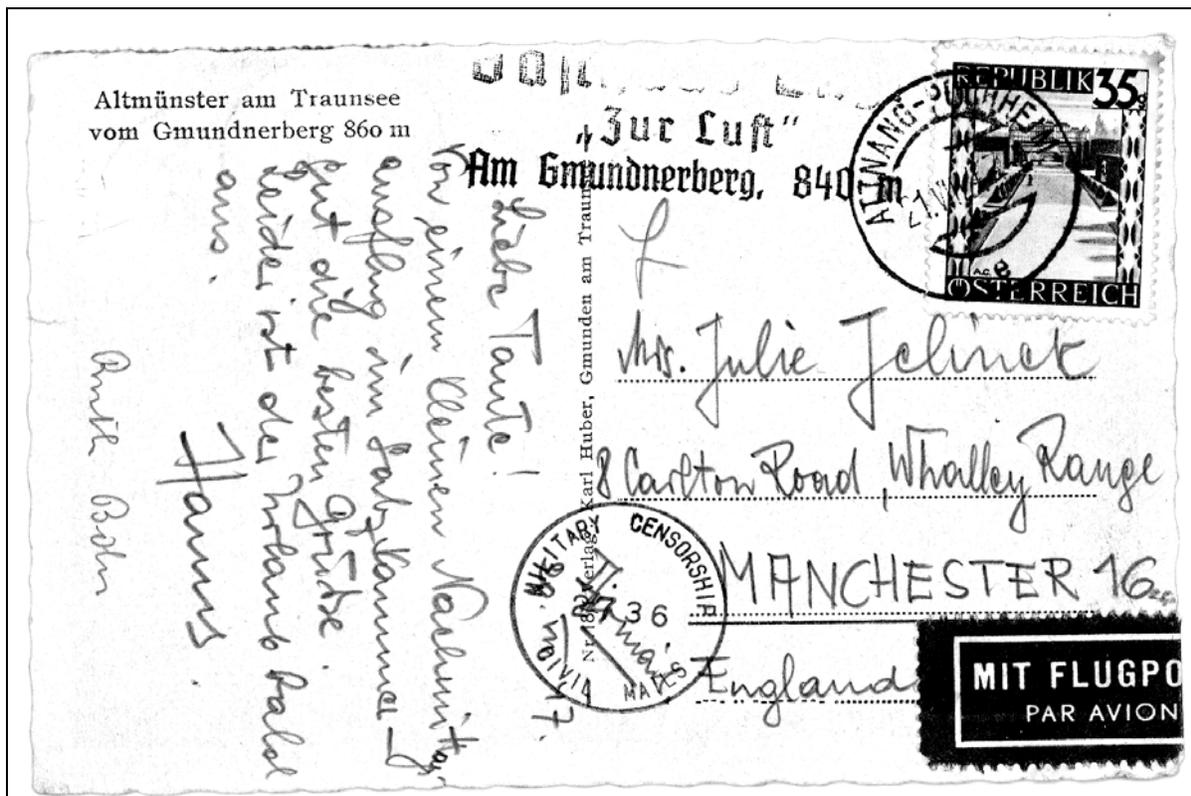
4 November 1946: 100+70=170 groschen



3 February 1947: 70+70=140 groschen



23 July 1948: 90+90=180 groschen

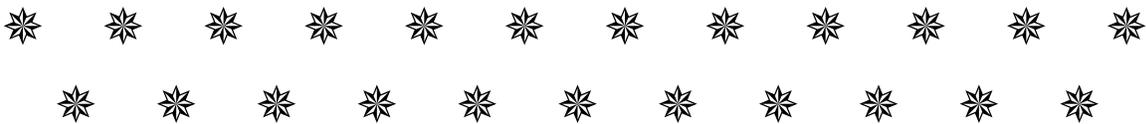


Postcard; 21 August 1947:
 35 groschen on this side and 10+20 on the other = 55 groschen





23 August 1947: 70+70=140 groschen



At Yorkfest99, Colin Tobitt won the "competition", which was "4 sheets on Cinderella". As is now customary, each participant interpreted the theme in their own way, and if the voters liked it they voted for it! Colin will choose the subject for next time and set the rules.



The ASCGB has almost run out of the green binders for 'Austria'. Please will anyone who might want some **write to Geoff Richardson** by 1st February 2000 and say so; then we can see if a bulk order is justified. Geoff's address is 40 Montfort Rise, Lodge Lane, Salfords, Redhill, RH1 5DU.

The Siege of Peremyshl

A mystery explained?

P Cybaniak

As a Ukraine collector I have always been fascinated by the two Russian sieges of what Ukrainians regard as their town of Peremyshl. An interest kindled by Keith Tranmer when I came across his very first book on Austro-Hungarian Military Post 1914 - 1918 published in 1958, whilst browsing through the Leeds Philatelic Society's Library. His final book on the Postal History of Peremyshl 1914 - 1918 published in 1990 I can recommend to all collectors.

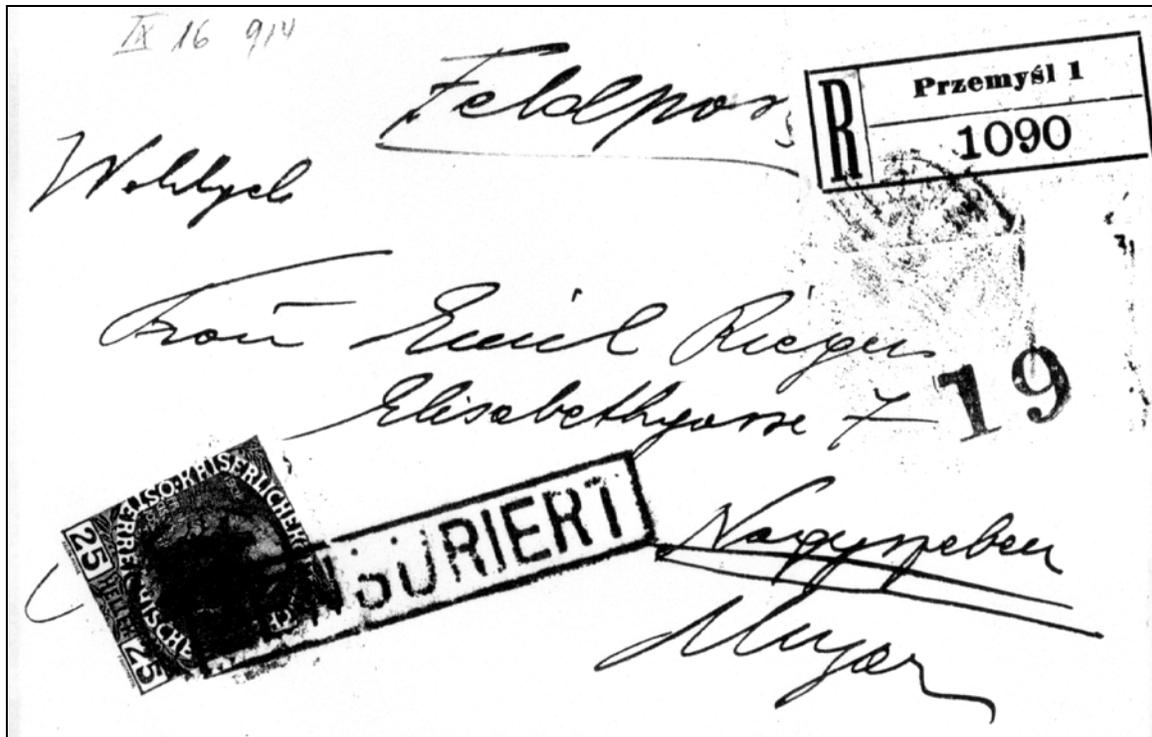
Peremyshl was a garrison town protected by a ring of forts 36 miles in circumference. Peremyshl not only had bridges over the river San, but also guarded the route to passes through the Carpathian mountains, that led to the heart of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Russians laid siege to Peremyshl twice: the first lasted from 18.9.1914 till 10.10.1914 and was unsuccessful; the second lasted from 7.11.1914 till 22.3.1915 when the Austro-Hungarian Army garrison surrendered, all being taken into captivity to Russia. However the Austro-Hungarian Army together with the German Army recaptured the town and entered it in triumph on 3.6.1915.

After reading the books of Keith Tranmer I became determined to build up a collection of the siege post of Peremyshl. So I borrowed all likely books from the Austrian Stamp Club library remotely connected with Peremyshl. Amongst the books was the classic work ZIVILPOST - ZENSUR IN ÖSTERREICH - UNGARN 1914- 1918 by HORST THIELK published in 1989. On page 135 of the book, so beautifully illustrated on every other page, were the two worst illustrations in the book: two Censor Labels of Peremyshl. They looked like 10th generation photo-copies, dark and dismal, with a note from the Author that he had never even seen these Censor Labels but had seen them mentioned in "Die Postzensur" by a Herr Wolter.

So there was the MYSTERY - why? and did they really exist?

As I tried to build up a Peremyshl Siege Post collection I discovered to my horror and dismay that as it was virtually all Air Flights and Balloon Flights, prices ranged from £50 - £100 per decent item. I was devastated as I only had a budget of £3 per item! However I was determined to build up a collection, so I turned to postcard dealers and over the years I have built up a collection of around 30 postcards issued in 1915 - 1916 by various publishers that show the history of the two sieges. (Cost of the collection - less than £100!) These I exhibited at our YORKFEST 99 weekend meeting (if anyone wants a photo-copy please write).

By now readers will have gathered that I come from Yorkshire and our legendary tightness with money is clearly apparent! However in a moment of weakness I succumbed to an illustration and description of a cover in a recent Austrian Auction. It was amongst a sale of expensive Peremyshl siege post items (flights).



The catalogue description stated that it was backstamped NAGYSZEBEN 20.9.1914, and I could see on the front of the cover there was a military censor handstamp that I did not have, the number 19 looked interesting, there appeared to be a small circular handstamp cancel on the stamp, and at the top left there was a pencil date of 16.9.1914.

I knew the first siege started on the 18.9.1914, so I concluded that this must have been one of the last postal items out of Peremyshl prior to the first siege.. it could even be the very LAST postal item out before the siege! And the price was right: the estimate was £15 - £20! I sent in a bid at bottom estimate with the comforting thought that if I was unsuccessful with my bid at least I would get a catalogue to the next auction for nothing and it had only cost me a stamp.

I was successful, and the item duly arrived, and I began to examine the cover, to my surprise and amazement there on the back of the cover was the most beautiful example of one of the two Mystery Peremyshl Censor Labels!!! (See next page.)

My conclusion is the cover was posted, by a doctor, Emil Rieger, from Fortress Hospital no.8, at the civilian post office 'Peremyshl 1' on the 16.9.1914 where it was duly censored. It was sent registered (25h), to obtain the priority of



forwarding that all registered mail received. The 25h stamp was cancelled by the post office number (often wrongly called 'control handstamp') of the Peremyshl 1 post office, as the cover had been posted without a Unit Handstamp as 'Fieldpost' to obtain the free post concession (10h).

In Peremyshl there was great alarm, Lemberg (Lviv) had fallen on the third of September, Czernowitz (Chernivtsi) on the 15th September, Austrian losses were at 350,000 men, and

now on the 16th September, the date of the letter, the passes of the Carpathian mountains were being attacked and the encirclement of Peremyshl had begun. For most, if not all of the soldiers in Peremyshl, it would be their first ever time in battle.

So for the last few weeks before the first siege, covers posted and duly censored, were recensored again by the Censorship Inspector (in this case no.19) They were expert in their work and covers were resealed with hardly a trace of opening, except of course this one, who had to reseat with the square cut seal of the civilian post office Peremyshl 1.

Is this the answer to the mystery - "A rare Censorship Inspectors mistake"?



Impoverished Yorkshire collector seeks early Lemberg cancels..

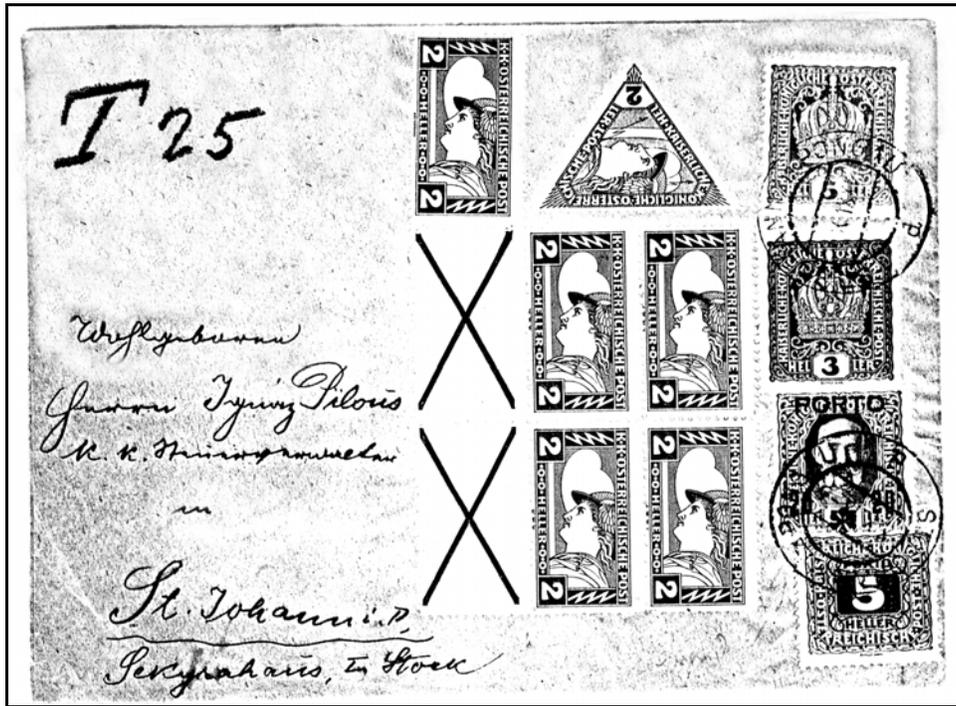
Postage Dues since 1900: an overview

by Colin Tobitt

Postage Dues are a system used by the Postal Authorities to obtain income from items used in the postal system, and to reclaim monies from errors of insufficient postage due to stamps being invalid or mail being underfranked. [*Their other uses such as the collection of charges for sundry services were not covered in Colin's display - Ed.*] They are an area of philately greatly overlooked by collectors, probably caused by dealers overpricing items, and by the difficulties faced in trying to understand the system of their usage. (Sometimes, the Postal Clerks had the same trouble..) True, the tables at the back of the Michel catalogue give some basic information, and there are the 373 pages of the comprehensive and exhaustive work "*100 Jahre Österreichische Portomarken*" by Bernadini & Pfalz. But the topic still languishes in undeserved obscurity, particularly amongst UK philatelists.

Aspects of particular interest included the treatment of "past their validity date" stamps (between the wars, many stamps had surprisingly short lives). After WWII, two sets of Dues were issued, one for use in the Soviet Sectors and the other in the American, British & French sectors - the Soviet set, like the definitives, display a figure but no currency; they were in fact Pfennig and Reichsmark, the German currency, which was retained in the Soviet Zone for political reasons. And the 1949 series of Dues were issued in 6 types, with different gums, papers, and fluorescence.

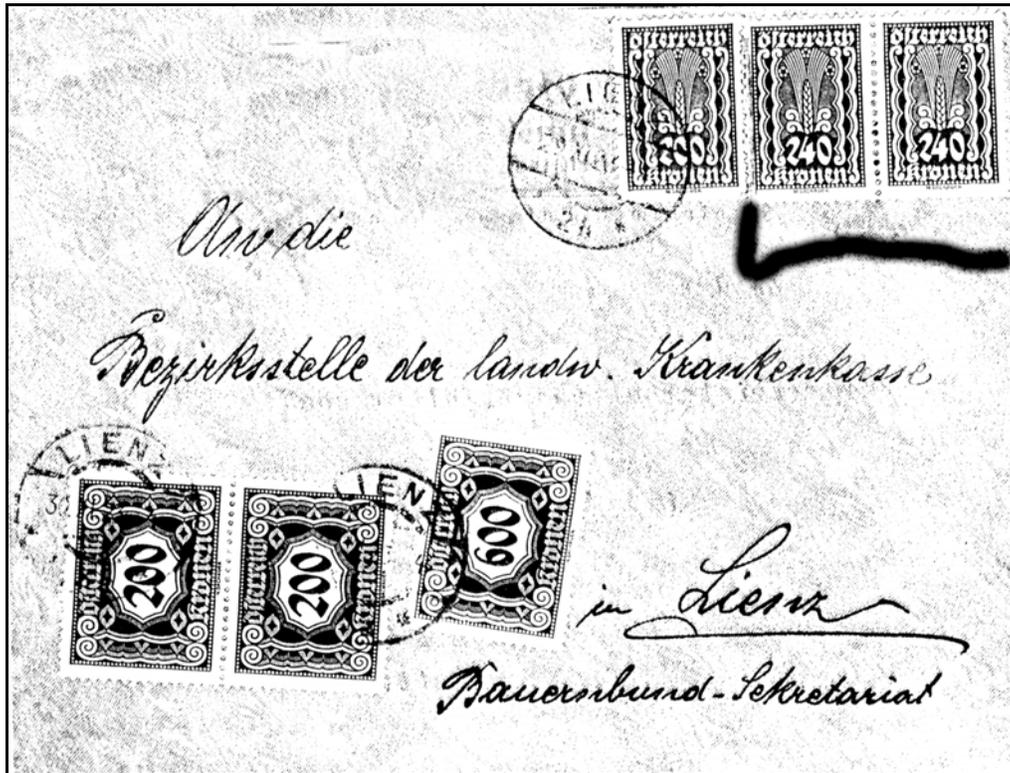
Simplistically speaking, inland Postage Due was charged at "deficiency plus fee" up till 15-1-1907, then at "double deficiency with a minimum charge". However there is a discrepancy between the Michel catalogue and the Bernadini & Pfalz work in the rates charged for underpaid internal mail after WWII. Michel's 1998 tables state "double the deficiency, with a minimum charge" for the period up to 1994, while Bernadini & Pfalz show a system change in 1957 to "deficiency plus a standard fee". Specifically: up till 30.6.1957, double deficiency with a minimum of 20 Groschen raised to 30g on 1.6.1949 and 40g on 1.9.1951. From 1.7.1957, the charge was deficiency plus fee; "business reply" items enjoyed special rates, while for other items the fee was 1 Schilling (50g for postcards till 1.1.1967), raised to 2 Sch from 1.3.1981, 3 Sch from 1.2.1984, 4 Sch from 1.1.1992, 5 Sch from 1.1.1994 and possibly even more thereafter. The examples below support the Bernadini & Pfalz statements.



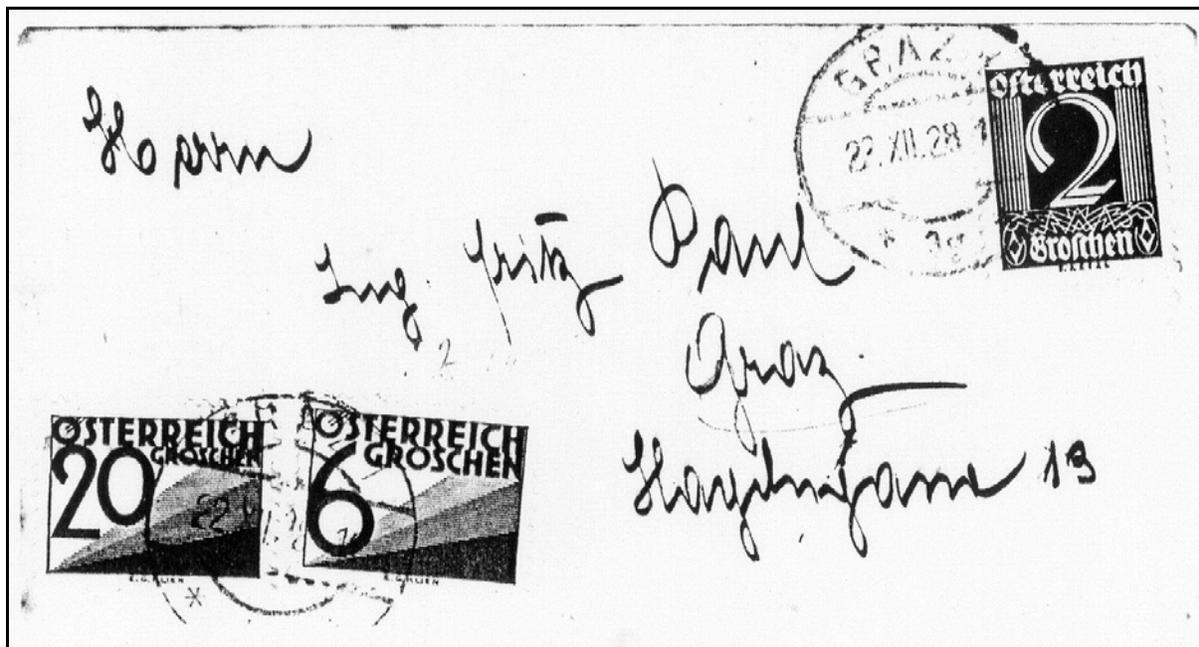
This cover was posted in 1918 at St Johann in Pongau, carrying 8 Heller in 'normal' stamps plus six 2 Heller "Newspaper Express" stamps. It was not permitted to use so many, so they were disallowed, and "double deficiency" charged, ie 24 Heller, but rounded up to the next 5 Heller value as prescribed.



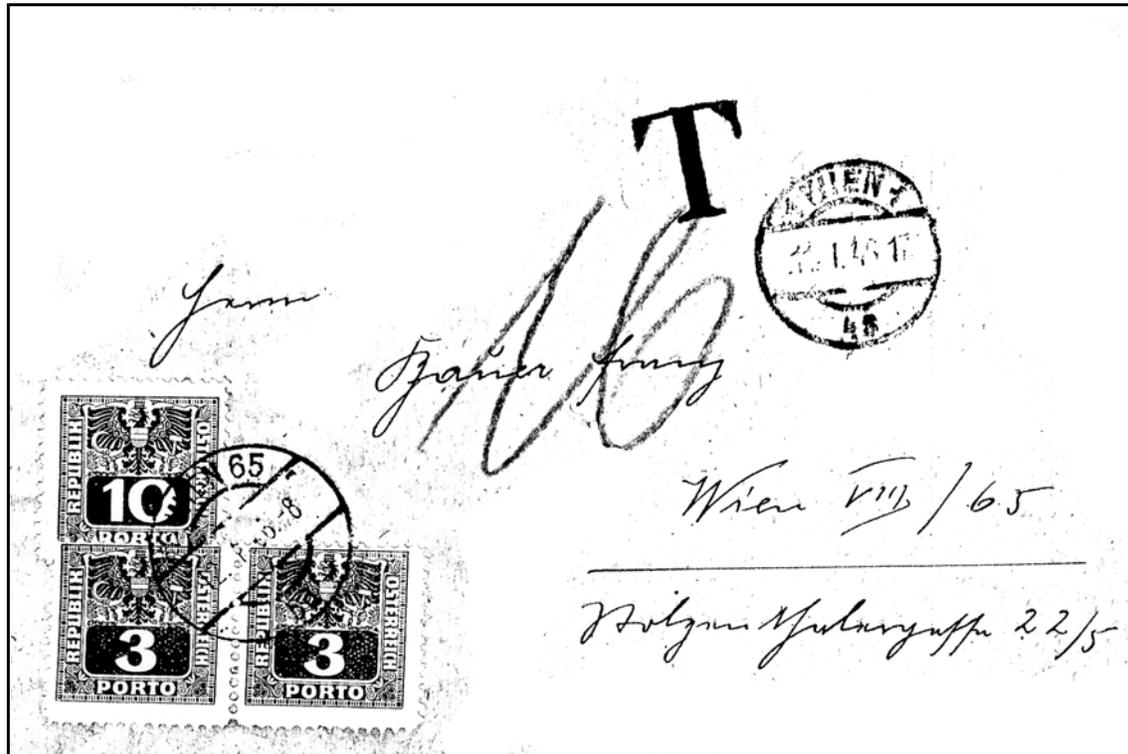
Posted 1922; rate was 100 Kronen; 75 Kr paid; 25 Kr deficit; 50 Kr due. However the minimum charge at that date was 80 Kr, which the small rural office has made up with a combination including a bisected 50 Kr!



Inflation period 11 local rate cover, posted 29-11-1923. The 240 Kr stamps were only valid till 1-10-1922, so were crayoned as not allowable. A manuscript "T" was applied, but no amount stated, as "double the deficiency" (ie 960Kr) was less than the minimum charge at that date of 1000Kr.



This 1928 cover was franked at the printed matter rate of 2gr, but was classified as a letter: so it should have carried 15gr; was 13gr deficient; and was charged twice that, ie 26gr.



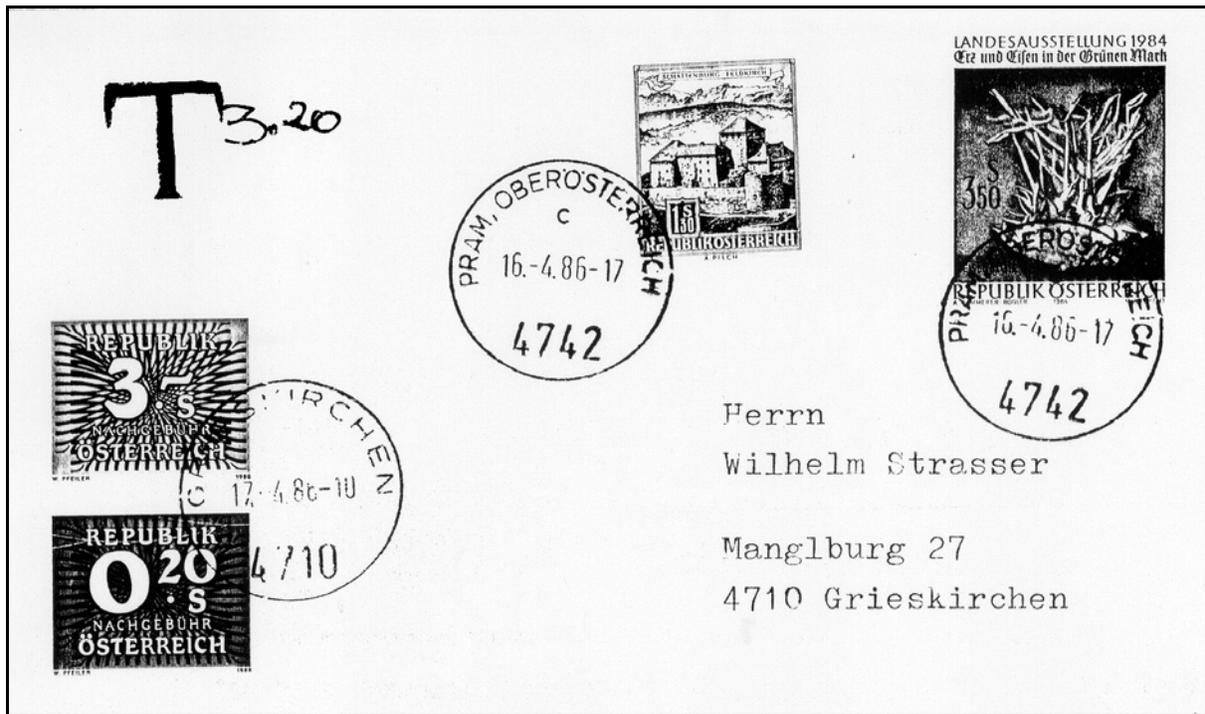
This cover was posted in the Russian Zone of Vienna on 12-1-1946, without stamps, and should have carried the local rate of 8 pfennig. It thus has a blue manuscript **16** to charge double-deficiency, and appropriate dues to collect it.



This cover was posted on 12-12-1947 from Vienna to Salzburg, carrying 40gr from the Landscape set. Unfortunately these were invalidated by the currency revaluation on 9-12-1947, so the recipient had to pay double the deficiency.



Letter posted 6.6.1966 when rate was 150gr; carries 100gr so deficiency is 50gr plus fee of 100gr, ie 150gr total.



This final cover was posted on 16-4-1986 carrying 4Sch80. The letter rate was 5Sch, so it was taxed at "deficiency plus fee" ie 20gr + 3Sch.

Postablagen in the Ötz valley

J Boyer

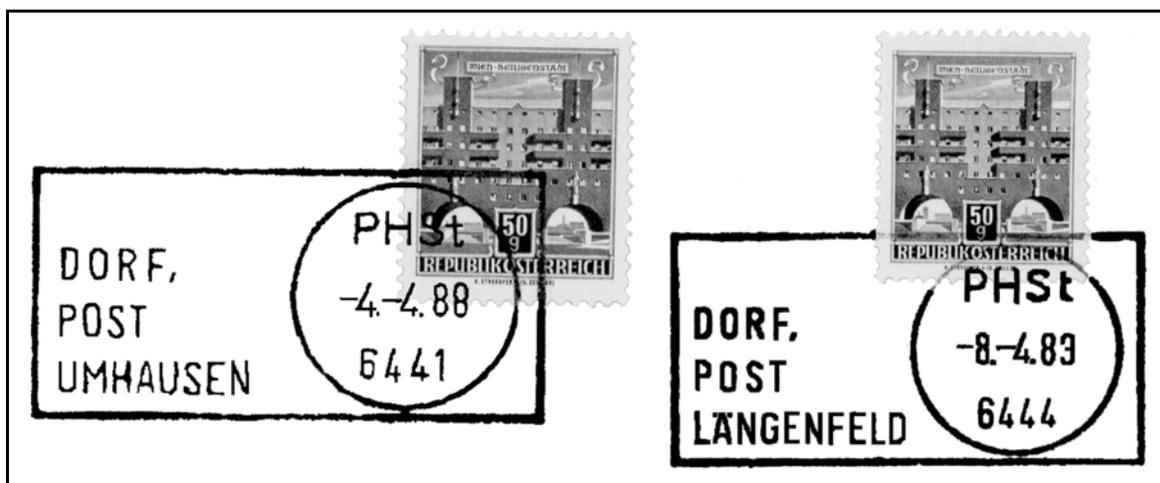
Although the Ötz Valley is some 60km long, it has never been well served with Post Offices - there are only 8 full offices today and these include Obergurgl and Vent, each at the end of a side valley (and both claiming to be the highest village in Austria!) There is an article on the history and cancellations of the Ötztal offices, with a map, in AUSTRIA 122 pp8-15.

In order to enable mail to be collected from the many small hamlets in the valley and the various mountain huts, mainly above Vent, a system of post boxes (in German 'Postablage') was established. Items collected from these boxes received a different type of cancellation indicating from where it was collected, with a further cancel being made at the point where the letter entered the postal system. Later only one cancellation was used which included both items of information.

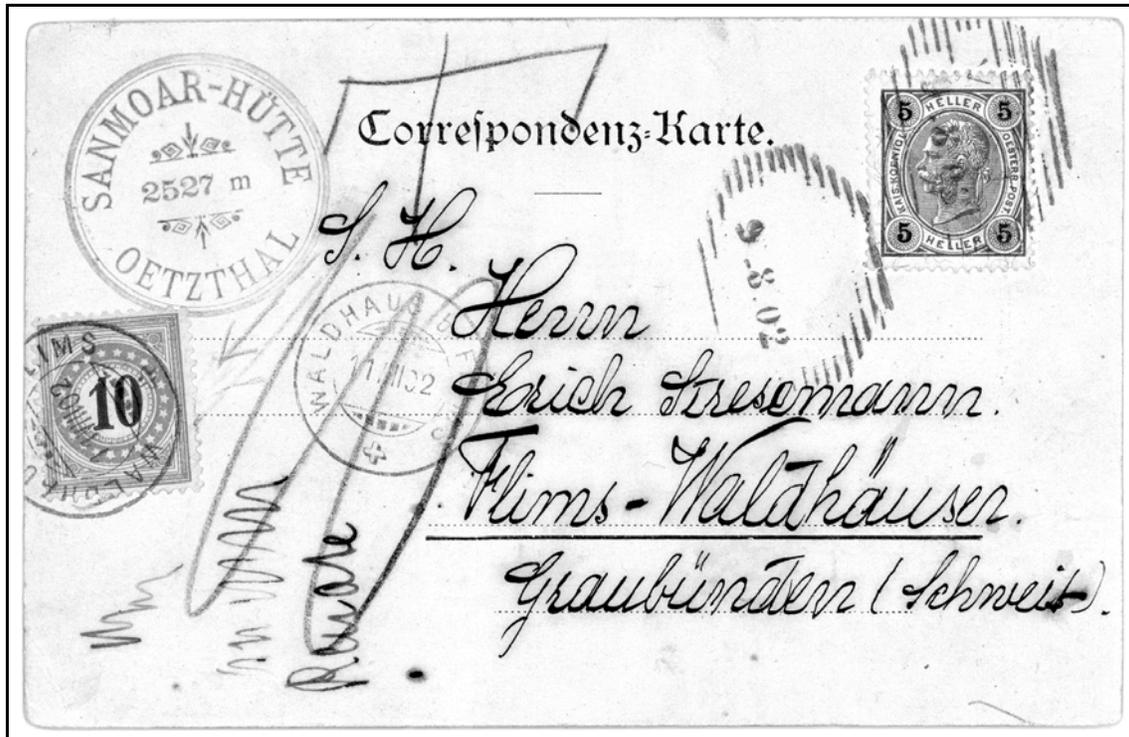
I have discovered the names of 26 Postablagen in the Ötz Valley; some of them were only open for a few years but 8 were still operating in 1981. However several of these have since closed, and my attempts during our last three holidays to obtain recent cancellations has resulted in only two: Tumpen and Gries (in Sulztal).

All of the Postablagen have had a number of changes in cancellation and some have also changed the main post office through which mail enters the postal system. The display showed as many different styles as available, beginning with the earliest, and with at least one from each office for which I have examples.

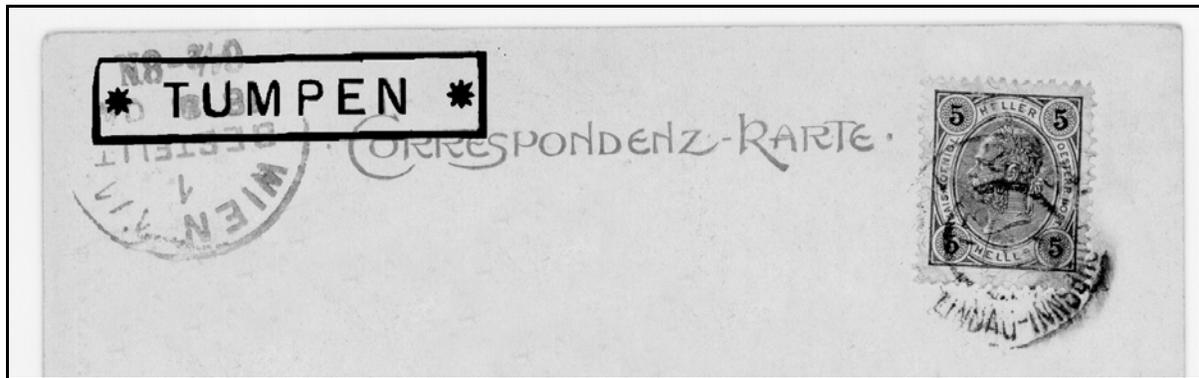
The office at DORF changed its affiliation from Umhausen to Längenfeld in 1980: the illustration shows "last and first" cancels.



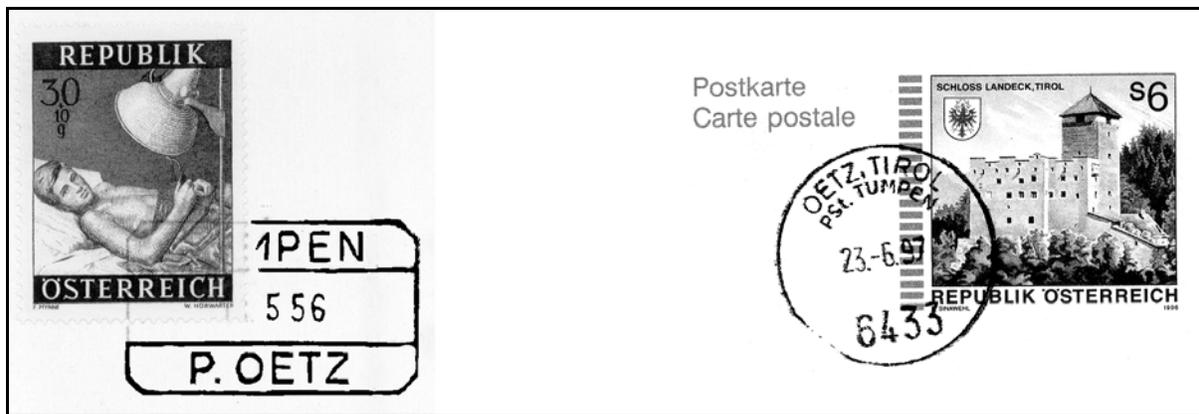
The name of the Samoarhütte appears to have changed its spelling over the years. More recently the hut has been rebuilt and its name changed to the Martin Busch Hütte. The Postablage, which was only open in the summer months, was established in 1911 and closed in 1938. The first of the cards below show the round 'I was here' hut stamp, with the cancellation of Vent dated 9 August 1902 on the stamp. It was also posted to Switzerland with 5 Heller instead of 10, so acquired a Swiss Postage Due stamp! On the second the 'I was here' hut stamp is quite different. The boxed Postablage cancellation, with the name between stars, was stamped near the address but clear of the stamp, which was cancelled with the Vent postmark.



The cancellation of TUMPEN has appeared in many forms since it opened in 1899! The first example is the earliest version, used in 1904.



The second is a 3-line box cancel from 1956, and the third (the current postcoded type) is dated 1997.



Finally, another last-first cancellation, from ZWIESELSTEIN where the valleys Gurgltal and Ventertal meet to become Ötztal, and thus the rivers Gurgler Ache and Venter Ache meet to become the Ötztaler Ache.

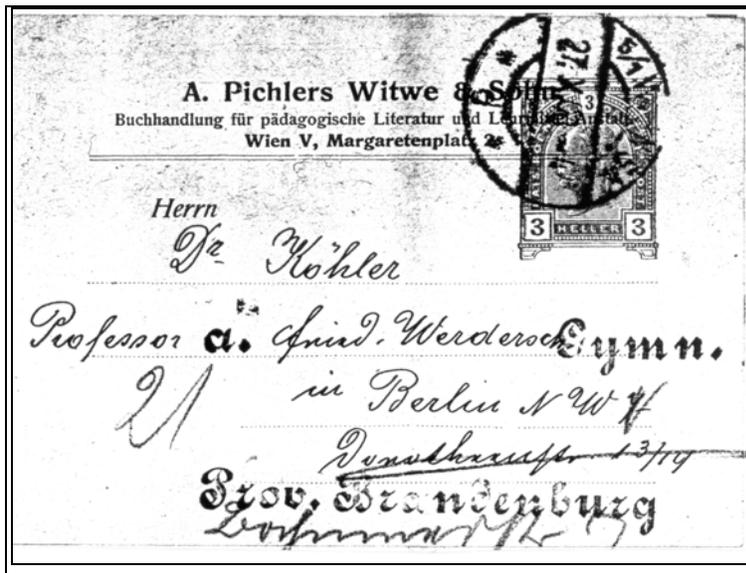


Privately produced Postal Stationery 1903-1916

by P Watkins

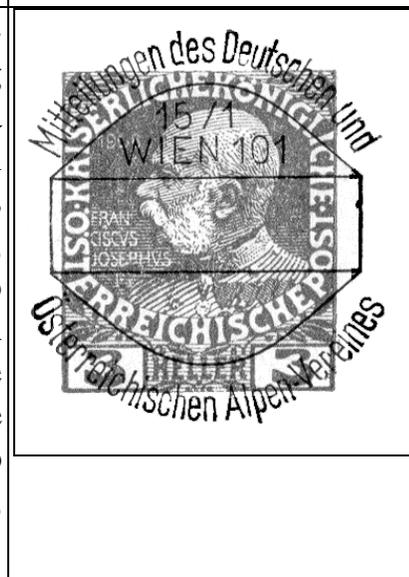
The Austrian Post Office issued little variety of postal stationery, in comparison with the British or French postal authorities. For the sake of convenience, many companies, particularly those based in Vienna, had their own stationery manufactured and stamped with the imprint currently in use by the Post Office. It was advantageous because:

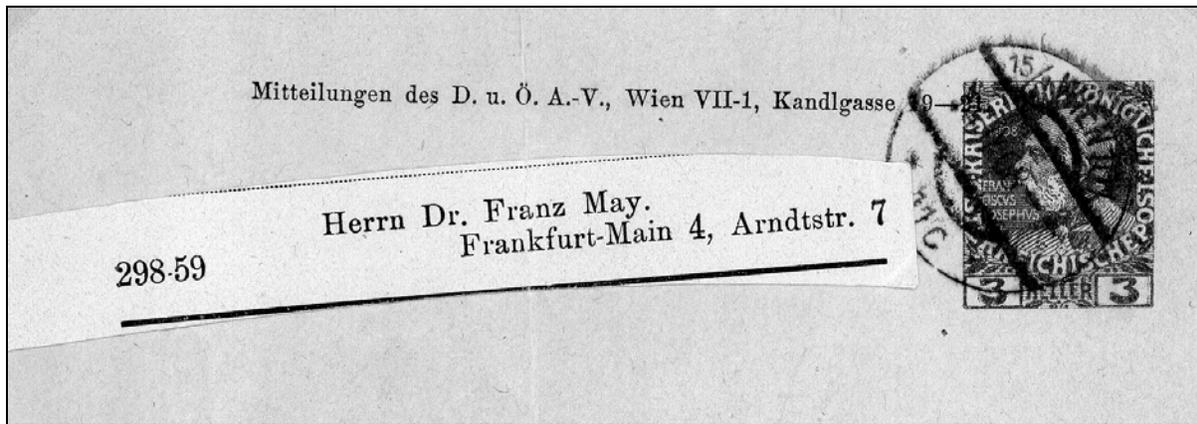
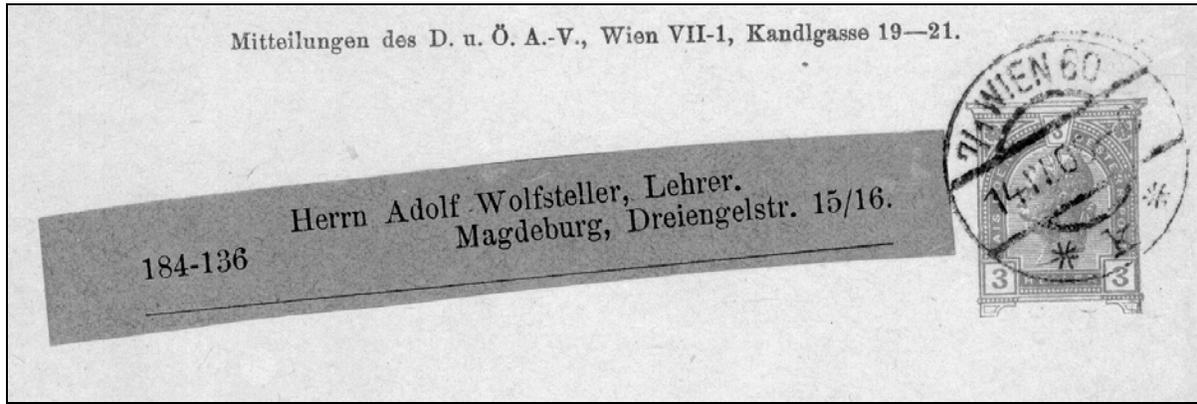
- it speeded up the dispatch of mail - no time was wasted in affixing stamps;
- it simplified dispatch office accountancy;
- it enabled the company to advertise on its envelopes or cards;
- it prevented loss through the pilfering of postage stamps;
- it was possible to precancel bulk postings, saving the time of P.O. staff and further speeding the delivery process.



Two distinct stamp designs were in use during the period 1903-16: the "Torbogen" and jubilee issues - the former used only on stationery. There is a fascinating range of material stamped at the 3 heller printed matter rate - unusual among the examples shown was this stamped label for Pichlers Witwe & Sohn.

The Deutschen u. Österreichischen Alpenvereines was a unique case: with a huge mailing of news letters to members throughout Austria and Germany it took advantage of this option from 1903, producing stamped journal wrappers to which the address labels could be gummed; there were bulk posting arrangements at the two Offices nearest its headquarters: 60 (Neubau) and 101 (Westbahnhof). By 1909 the wrappers were being pre-cancelled by hand at 101 and in the next year there was an agreement for the club to use wrappers with a printed precancellation, which continued until 1918





For the small proportion of DÖAV members living in foreign countries, a 5h wrapper was printed (an example to Brussels was shown) - naturally, these are far less common than the 3h wrappers.

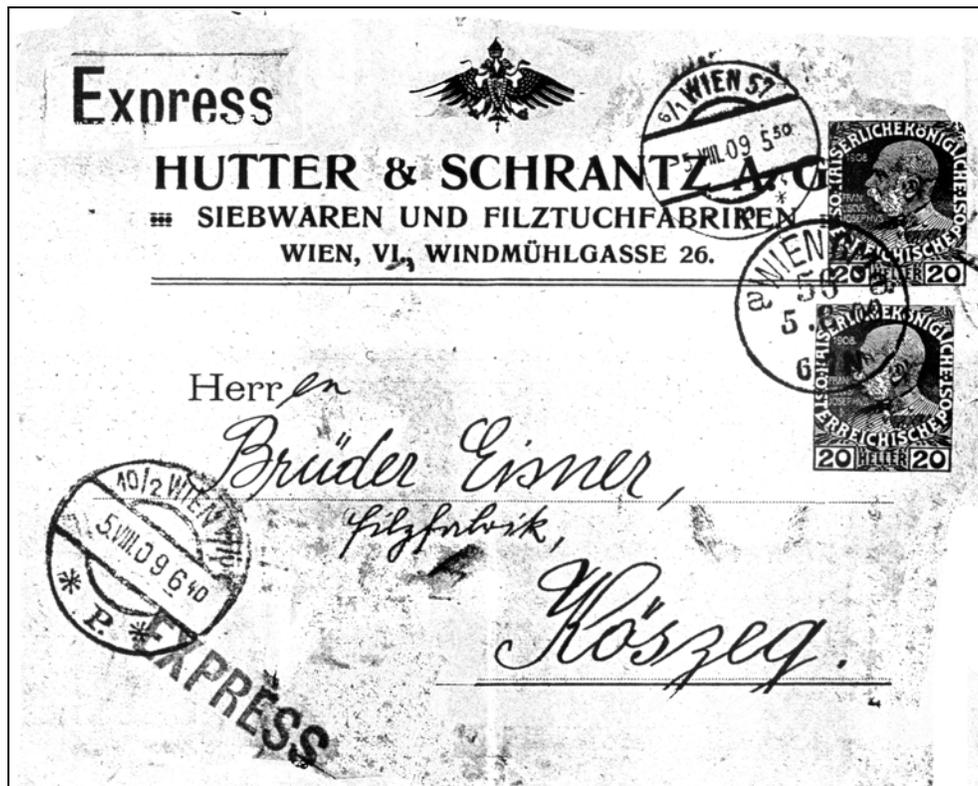


The 1908 Jubilee design is found on envelopes franked at 5h, 10h & 25h; less commonly, paired imprints created particular rates, such as this Österreichische Länderbank envelope stamped at the 35h registered rate.

The 3h imprint was redrawn for use on stationery, to show Kaiser Franz Josef rather than Josef II - this was created for official stationery and used for private stamping, also.



More unusually, the Hutter & Schrantz envelope shows the same process with a 20h imprint, printed in a pair to create a 40h pneumatic rate franking, as there was no single stamp of that value.



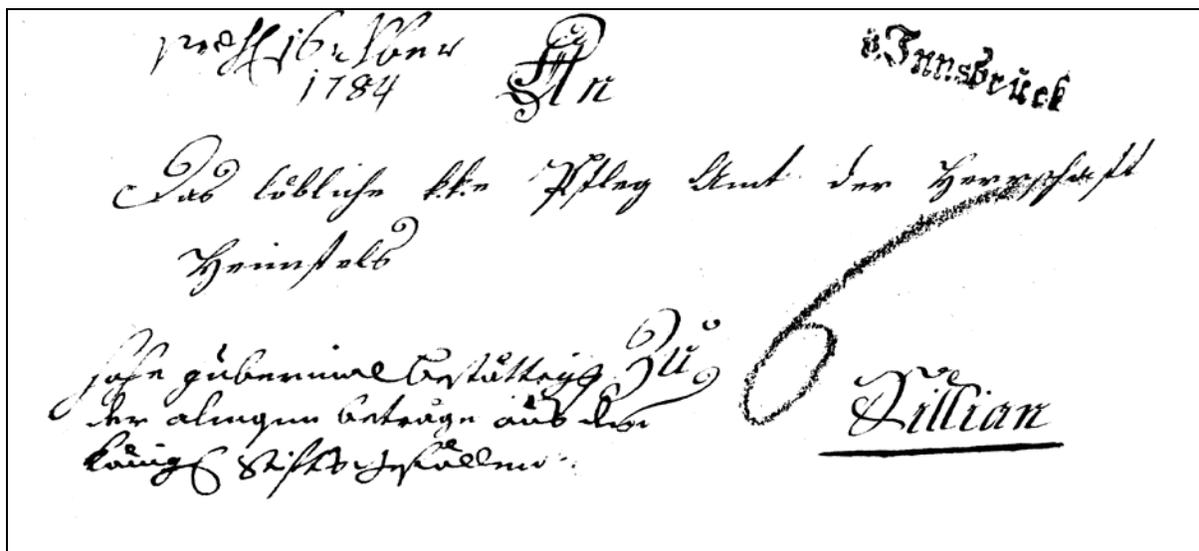
Pre-stamp cancellations from Innsbruck

by J Boyer

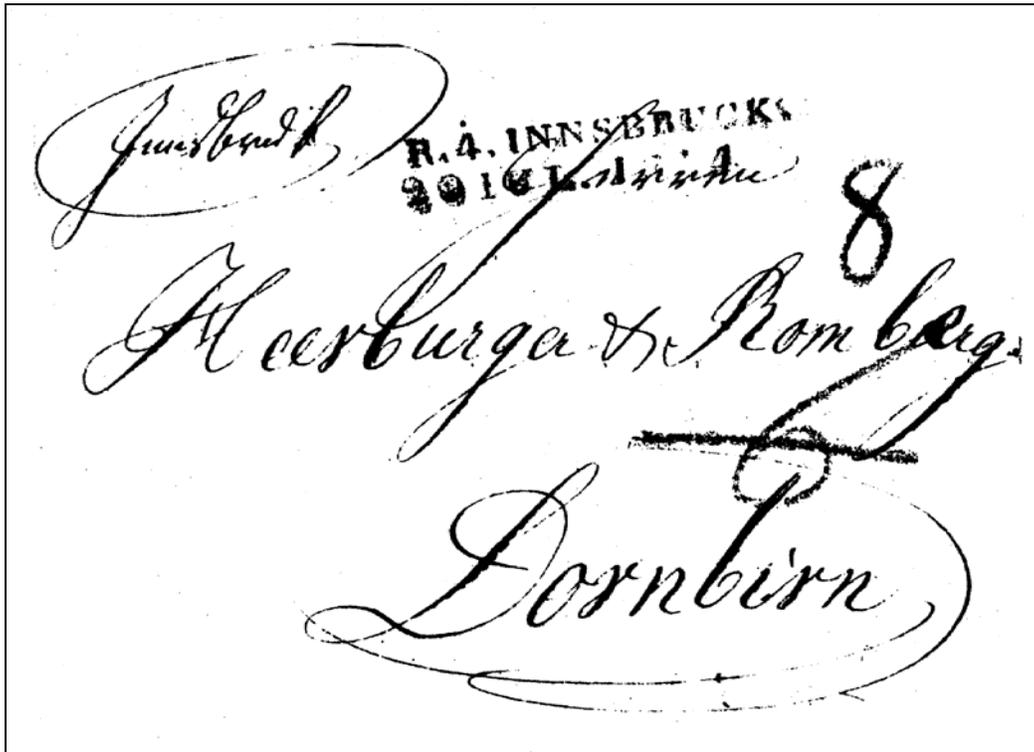
Amongst the many rarely-used treasures of the ASCGB Library is 'Nordtiroler und Voralberger Poststempel 1770-1850' by Dr. August Zoppelli (No. 214). Although it is written in German, most of the first part may be passed over if your interest is only in the various cancellations since these are all listed and illustrated in the second part. Details of some postal routes are also given and these are not always as you would expect, for example the route from Innsbruck to Imst did not follow the River Inn Valley but went from Innsbruck to Telfs then over the Mieming Plateau to Nassereit before turning south through the Fern Pass to Imst.

The information given includes the relevant numbers from Müller (*Handbook of the pre-stamp postmarks of Austria*), but has the advantage that where Müller says 'three varieties' Zoppelli depicts them all, so that the different sizes can be seen. The cancellations are split into three sections: 1770-1806, the Bavarian period 1806-1814, and 1814-1850. **Recom.** and other similar marks are also included.

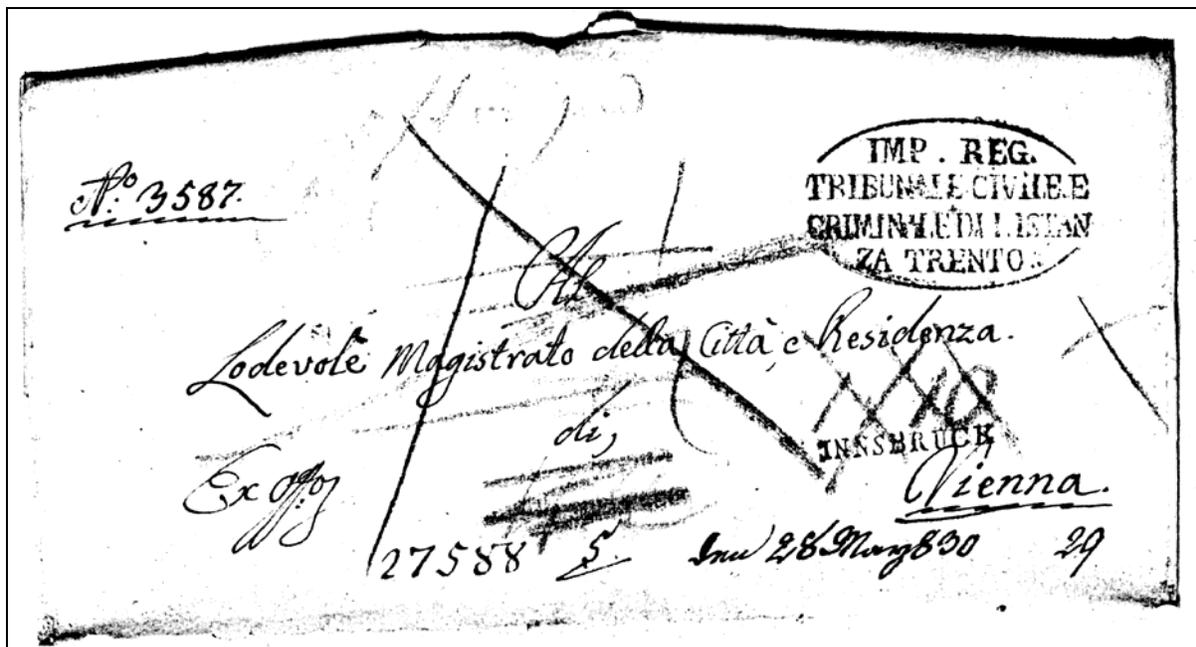
Having seen this book, I became aware of the great variety of early Innsbruck cancellations and was therefore able to appear less ignorant when offered some during my 1999 Austrian holiday. A number of the items I acquired then made up my Yorkfest display of pre-stamp cancellations.



The cancellation on this cover is in red, and was used between 1781 & 1785. It is the first cancellation listed by Zoppelli, his **1a**, the corresponding Müller number being **570B**. The cover is dated 1784; the rate marking is in orange pencil.

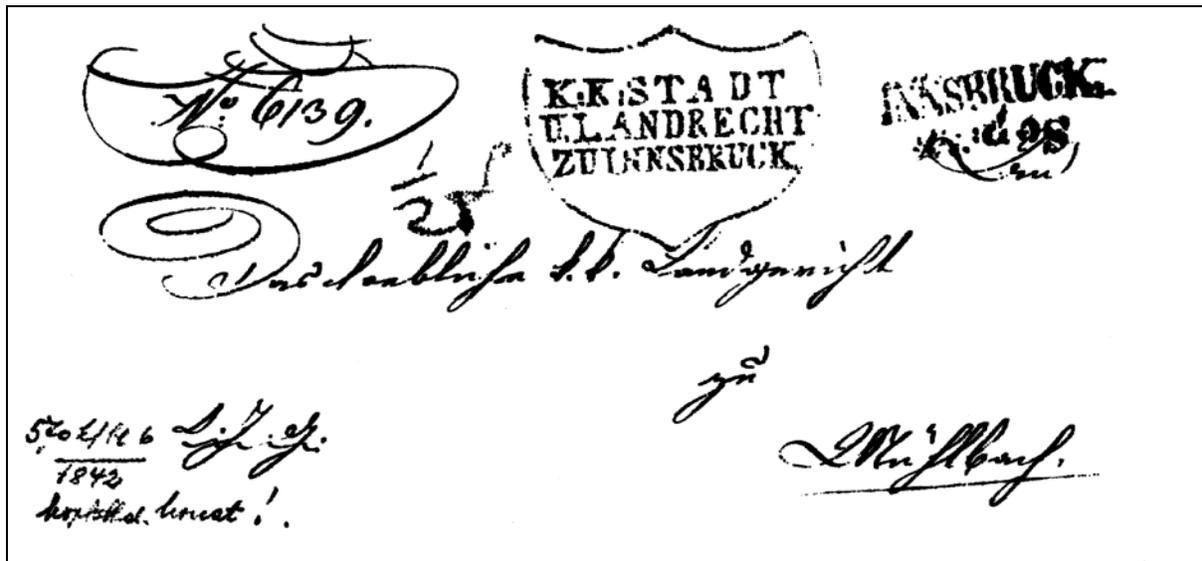


This letter has the **R4 INNSBRUCK** cancel in black, dated 20 July 1814, from the Bavarian period. This is Zoppelli's **6f**, Müller's **570d**. The rate marking is in orange pencil.



The cancellation on this letter is in black, and measures 27.5mm long and 3mm high. This was introduced in a red version in 1821 with black being used from about 1836 and blue in the 1840s. It is Zoppelli's **29c**, Müller's **570g**.

The document is dated 8 May 1830 and is from the Director of the Imperial Tribunal for Civil and Criminal Petitions for Trento and is being sent to the Praiseworthy Magistrate for the City, at his Residence in Vienna. The letter would have travelled over the Brenner Pass from Trento to Innsbruck, where it received the cancellation, and then on to Vienna. Although marked "**Exoffoy**", postage was originally charged at **42**, crossed out and replaced by **1/10**, but this was also cross-hatched through. A possible arrival mark of **20 / 5**, in red, appears on the reverse.



On this, the cancellation is in blue, and in the date of 23 September 1842 the month is upside down! The rate markings are in orange pencil. The author has another example of this cancellation, Zoppelli's **29j**, Müller's **570k** dated 20 September 1842, but on it the month is the right way up!



FROM THE SECRETARY

Perhaps the most difficult position to be in as Secretary is having to gauge the opinion of the membership in the absence of much feedback! I refer of course to the discussion document in the last issue of *Austria*.

The design parameters for a possible 'way ahead' centred particularly on the objective of retaining virtually everything that characterised the two existing bodies, the ASCGB and the AAP, with the possible exception of either name. If the objective was virtually no change at the level of normal membership activity, perhaps I should have predicted such limited response. The question I face as a result is whether to read acquiescence, apathy or even apoplectic rage into the general silence. The temptation will be to choose acquiescence, at least at this stage. If there are any strong views, in support of the ideas in the discussion document or against them, please make them known to me so that I can vector them into the working party's discussions.

One heartfelt cry has been made by one member. While he accepts that 'Austrian Philatelic Society' is both neutral and entirely consistent with usage by all other national societies, he argues strongly for the retention of 'Of Great Britain'. I have much sympathy with identifying the country the society is based in, but personally (and I do not speak other than personally) take issue with the choice of 'Great Britain' rather than 'the United Kingdom'. My argument is not on the basis of political correctness, as the member suggested it might be, but on the grounds of appropriacy. Surely we would be puzzled by the 'Austrian Philatelic Society of Bavaria' or the 'Austrian Philatelic Society of Holland'. 'Germany' and the 'Netherlands' are certainly more appropriate choices in these two examples. To defend 'Great Britain' in the title is to make a specific point of excluding Northern Ireland – to what end? – and to perpetuate the stunningly inaccurate geography of Stanley Gibbons, who for reasons best known to himself claimed that Northern Ireland was somehow part of Great Britain, an error perpetuated to the present day.

But to turn to matters less rantable... Some of you may know that for some years I have been working on a book on the ships of the Austro-Hungarian Navy in the First World War. This project grew out of the lack of any comprehensive work still in print in English – there are several books in German which, cumulatively, give a detailed picture, and the definitive René Greger book from Ian Allan has long been out of print. Like so many similar projects, the final ten per cent has defeated me for some time. I have come to realise that, while the detail I am adding is subject to a law of diminishing returns, I can't bring myself to declare the work actually 'finished'. As I receive a number of requests for information during the year, I have decided that the

best of all worlds (or is it the least bad solution?) is to publish what I have written on the Internet, and update it as I gather more information. At first information will be textual but I will be adding pictures of individual ships as I find the time to scan systematically the photos and post cards that I have gathered over the years. The web address will be available in the next issue of *Austria*, but anyone wanting to have a look at the site while it is being developed should e-mail me at John@Beech.net .

Sometimes I wonder whether I'm becoming too attached to the Kriegsmarine as a subject. The other day I was wandering through Coventry Market, and for several seconds I believed I had found a source of Austro-Hungarian Navy surplus clothing that had lain hidden in some warehouse for over eighty years! Staring me in the face was a sign advertising 'POLA FLEECES'. Left over from the trips to Franz Josef Land no doubt.



And your Editor has also had a little feedback from members!

- On grounds of euphony, "Austrian Philatelic Society [of the] United Kingdom" must be deprecated as it would have the ugly acronym APSUK!
- There are at least two members who are concerned about the geographical entity appended to the title.
- According to the Reports presented to the last AGM, 28% of our paying membership are in foreign lands. We should have regard to their needs and sensibilities, particularly as the potential for membership growth is much greater overseas.
- And in particular, since we are (as far as is known) the only English-speaking Austrian philatelic society in the world, we should adopt a structure which allows, nay encourages, the formation of self-supporting local groups anywhere in the world.

AR and AP cancellations

By H A Smith

Two interesting queries were raised in 'Austria' 127: the use respectively of the AP and AR markings on Austrian postage stamps of the late 19th - early 20th century, both of which were provided for under the Universal Postal Union Convention of 1876 but which, as far as Austria is concerned I have tended to associate with the Austrian post offices in the Levant. I do not pretend to be an expert on late 19th - early 20th century postal practice, so my comments - and two illustrations of items in my own collection - are initially put forward for any more knowledgeable reader to shoot down.

AR

To take the AR marking first, since it is the one we know more about, I cannot do better than quote W.S.E. Stevens' elegant description on page 264 of 'Austrian Post Offices Abroad' (Part 4):

The initials are for "Accusé de Reception", and this abbreviation was in general use for letters sent with acknowledgement of delivery, throughout the U.P.U. This marking, believed introduced in the 1880s was always applied by the Austrian P.O.s as a canceller on the stamp franking the acknowledgement of receipt which had to be returned to the sender. It is therefore invariably met on 1 piastre stamps of the various issues current between the 1880s and 1914.

He adds '(price from 2/6)' which today I would change to £2.50 for the cancel on a loose stamp.

In fact the official term in English is 'advice of delivery' and it is still available as a little known service from all UK post offices today, for use by those who really want to make sure that a registered letter is delivered to an addressee outside the country. No doubt a similar facility still exists in Austria since many Austrian legal documents require delivery 'by registered post *with advice of delivery*'. The addressee signs a special form or card which the post office then returns to the sender. As Stevens mentions, the charge at the Levant offices for this service was 1 piastre (equal to 10 heller, or 2½d. at the time); as the registration fee was also 1 piastre, the total charge on top of the normal postage was therefore 2 piastres.



I would add two points in particular to Stevens' explanation. Firstly, I have never encountered this marking from any office but Constantinople I (as shown above). It may well be that, like the 'Porto' marking for postage due, the canceller was distributed to all the Levant offices, but actually used by few, if any, of them other than the head office in Constantinople. Secondly, there was, of course, nothing new about this 'advice of delivery': all Austrian post offices, at home and abroad, had been offering this service since the beginning of the 19th century, and had been charging twice the registration fee for the privilege. The certificate returned to the sender - a collectible item in itself - was known as a *Retour-recepisse* (subsequently *Rückschein*) and registered letters requiring an acknowledgement were usually marked 'Recepisse', in ink, by the despatching post office (the *Rückschein* in its day actually accompanying the letter).

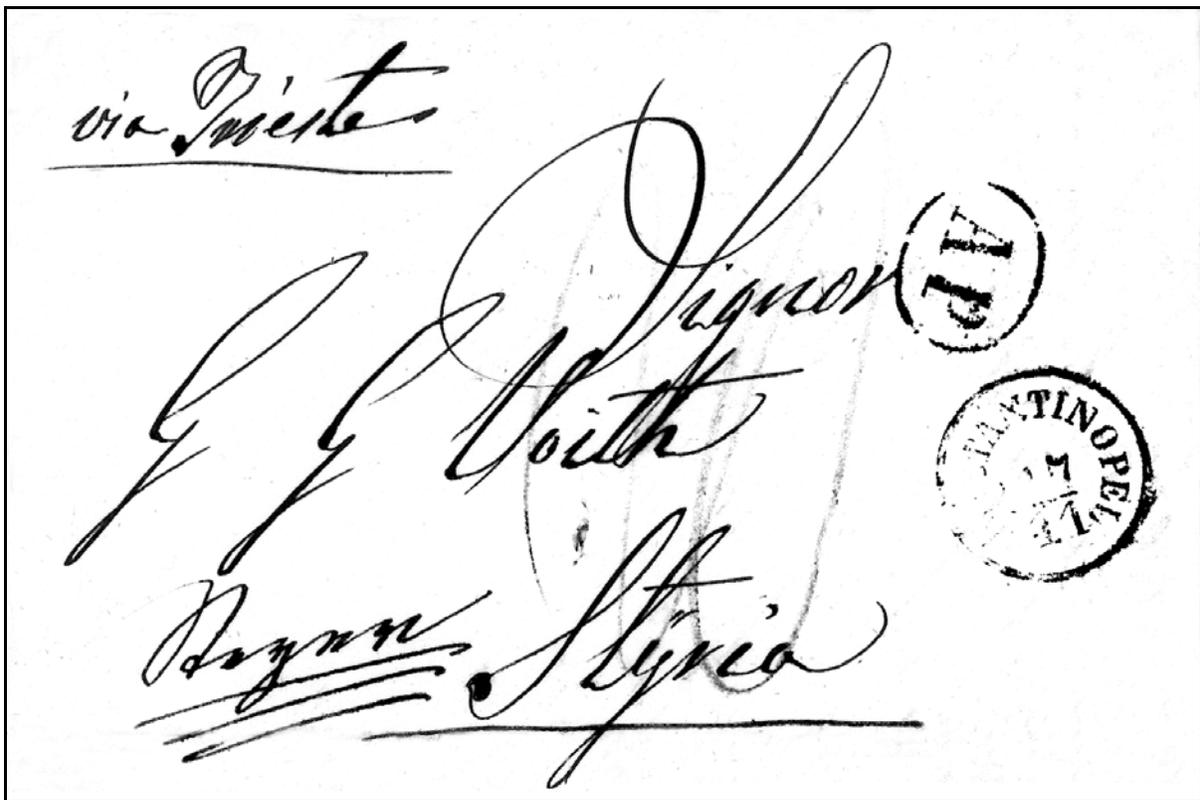
AP

This is altogether a more complex point, the more so since, as far as I am aware, no one has really investigated this obscure marking and, moreover, I feel that its use on postal adhesives is something of a red herring.

Under the UPU rules, the letters stood for 'Avis de paiement' and it had the rather obscure function of indicating that a COD packet had been paid for by the recipient (a card was presumably returned to the sender, rather faster than the

payment, telling him that the cash was on its way - or not as the case may be). Not surprisingly, the service was unadopted by most UPU member states (although Sweden, for example, actually had special 'AP' adhesives), and I have so far been unable to discover whether it was ever available in Austria.

All that is by the way. My own 'AP' cover was posted in Constantinople on 17.11.1866, almost exactly 10 years before the UPU was created. It is addressed to Steyer, via Trieste, as instructed by the sender, which meant that it travelled by sea. On arrival, the ship had to moor off the small port of Muggia to undergo quarantine (1866 was a very late date for this procedure) at the quarantine station of St Bartholomew. Here, the mail was slit by a special punch with a dozen or so small blades (known as a 'rastel') for gas fumigation (against the smallpox), before continuing its journey north for the 20 miles or so to Trieste for sorting. From Trieste, my cover was probably put on the train to Vienna and then routed via Graz (transit mark on the reverse, 25.11) to Steyer, its destination, arriving 26.11.66.



The mid-1860s saw the Austrian post in turmoil. Amongst other changes, there had been two radical simplifications in postal rates and, in the Levant, adhesive stamps, the old 'Lombardy Venetia' issues, had now been distributed to all Austrian post offices and postal agencies, while improvements in communications on the one hand and increased literacy on the other were leading to much larger volumes of mail. At the same time, although all letters

within Austria had to be prepaid with adhesives, foreign mail to 'Treaty states' could still be sent unfranked without penalty, the recipient paying postage on receipt, although by now legally unfranked letters passing through the Austrian domestic post offices must have been the exception.

Hence my theory (a long shot if there ever was one): postal directorates must have been getting worried that 'legally' unfranked mail of the above kind was being wrongly penalised with a postage due tax by postal officials who were either overworked or simply unaware of the regulations. So, it was decided to identify these unfranked letters with a special stamp as it entered the country; could 'AP' (or 'A.P.')

stand for '*Auslands-Post*', or 'foreign mail'. Klein illustrates two types of handstamp, 'AP' (no stops) which he attributes to Gorizia (Görz) and 'A.P.' which he assigns to Vienna. Although Gorizia was a District Head Office and close to the (new) Italian border, foreign mail from Italy would be routed through Milan and Vienna, and Gorizia was unlikely to have been given its own 'AP' stamp. Graz was an important sorting office and could well have had an AP stamp; but the ink on the transit mark is not the same as on the 'AP'. A far more likely office to use it would have been Trieste (the home of odd markings) and it may be that the cover Klein saw was addressed to Görz, but travelled via Trieste, where the AP was applied. Vienna would undoubtedly have possessed such a mark since in the new age of the railway virtually all international post was sorted, or at least redirected, in the capital.

This leaves two important questions: 1. Why was the AP stamp's life so short, and 2. Why was it evidently resuscitated in the 1890s-1900s? The best in both cases is a wild guess:

1. The AP mark was probably unauthorised under the now strict terms of the Austrian-German postal convention and, while it might have made things a little easier for Austrian postmasters handling mail to domestic destinations, it would really have no significance in the destination countries for Levant mail transiting Austria under the complex postal accountancy systems that then still applied to international mails. After all, in 1863 Austria and the German states were planning to almost merge their postal systems (which did not, of course, materialise beyond a common design for the 1863/64 stamp issues) and the last thing Prussia would have wanted was another, unnecessary complication in postal sorting.

2. If we knew for certain that Austria introduced an *avis de paiement* system for COD parcels, it would only be natural for Trieste and/or Vienna to take the old AP stamp out from the back of a drawer and put it to a new use, with coincidentally the right letters. But I have never seen this usage on a card or

cover. Nor is it mentioned in any of the literature on Austrian philately. On the other hand, we know that towards the end of the century the Austrian postal service was faced with a problem of uncanceled adhesives and their potential reuse to defraud the posts. At the same time, an increasing irritation right from the 1860s was the number of letters passing through the sorting offices with uncanceled stamps and a variety of obliterations were brought into use, both in Vienna and Trieste at this period (concentric circles etc.) to cancel such rogue mail. One can imagine that, in time-honoured fashion, harassed clerks reached for any non-standard obliterator that would look genuine but not be mistaken for a 'proper' postmark. What better than the old AP handstamps?

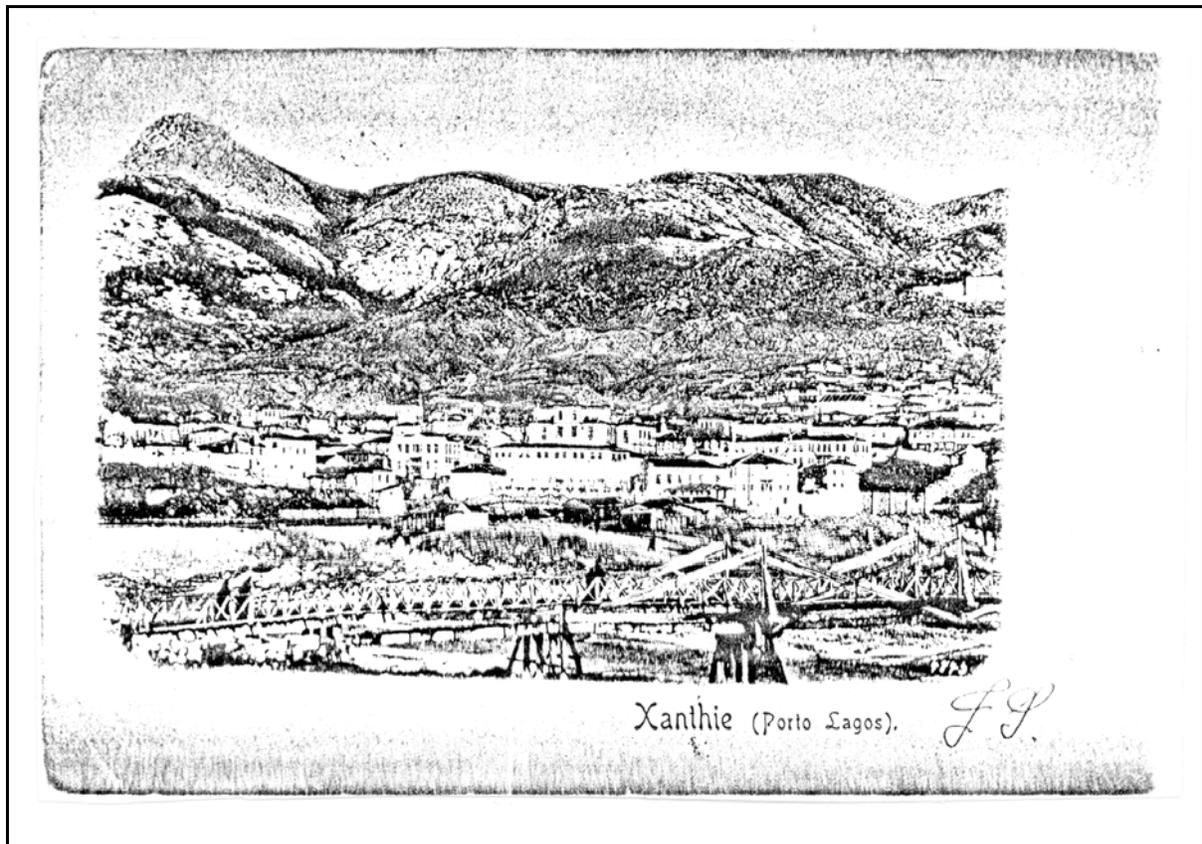
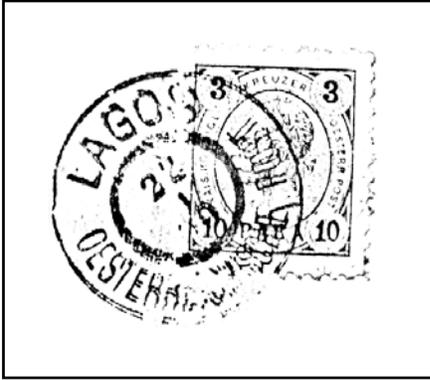
Finally, for the record, it should perhaps be mentioned that 'AP' is not a known disinfection marking.

This is of course all conjecture but at least it leaves the field open for those who may want to do some genuine research into the subject.

A Xantian rarity

By O Tabacaru

I have in my collection a viewcard of the port of Xantie (Porto Lagos) in Thrace. It bears a Levant stamp 3Kr/10para with the double circle cancel "**LAGOS / OESTERREICHISCHE POST**", rated as the most elusive of the three types. This was used on 22.01.1900 and the card was addressed to Germany, arriving in Karlsruhe on 27.01.1900. If the catalogues are correct, this would be the first entire postal item ever known with this cancel, as only loose stamps are mentioned (and not too many of them!). Can anybody help with information, not just philatelic, about this item?



And finally..

Seasonal and millennial greetings to you all!

