



# CZECHOUT

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## NOTES

The Joint Meeting with the Austrian, Hungarian & Polish Societies at the Latvian Welfare Club, 5 Clifton Villas, off Manningham Lane, Bradford BD8 7BY will be on **Saturday 21st August** when members of the Yugoslavia Study Group will also be participating in the meeting. Please contact Yvonne Wheatley (0113 2601978) for further details of this event. The next Society meeting in London will be on **Saturday 11th September** when **Bob Hill** will display *Liberation 1944-1945*.

Bob Hill reports, "Member **Jan Dobrovolný** from Pardubice is confined to bed having cracked a vertebra when he and a ladder parted company. Member **Otto Hornung** has had another fall and is in plaster." We send best wishes to Jan & Marta and Otto & Chi Chi for a speedy recovery from all members.

We congratulate Andy Taylor on the new look of the journal of the Austrian Philatelic Society, which carries on its fine record of articles etc.

***Opinions expressed in articles in Czechout are the sole responsibility of the author(s), and are not necessarily endorsed by the Editor or the Society***

## NEWS & NOTICES

### Minutes of the Meeting held Saturday 20 March 2010 at the Czech and Slovak National Club, 74 Westend Lane, London NW6 at 2.30pm

The Chairman, Mrs Yvonne Gren, welcomed 13 members and one visitor. Apologies had been received from seven members.

Yvonne gave details of one prospective new member (one who was rejoining the Society):

**David Jones** from Chichester

whose application was readily endorsed and formally accepted.

The first part of the afternoon was devoted to the **Kay Goodman Trophy**, for which there were a record eight entries. It was agreed that all members present should act as judges, rather than having two appointed judges, with Jim Hamlin and Roger Morrell acting as tellers. All the entries were of a high quality, with the results as follows:

- |     |                        |                                                                                   |
|-----|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1st | <b>Garth Taylor</b>    | <i>Routes and rates of the second issue of Czechoslovakian airmails 1922-1929</i> |
| 2nd | <b>Yvonne Wheatley</b> | <i>Allegory issue: Dove design</i>                                                |
| 3rd | <b>Yvonne Gren</b>     | <i>Terezín (Theresienstadt)</i>                                                   |

The other entries, in no particular order, were:

- |                     |                                                                               |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Rex Dixon</b>    | <i>Bohemia &amp; Moravia: Postal rates to neighbouring European countries</i> |
| <b>Bob McLeod</b>   | <i>Czechoslovakia 1938</i>                                                    |
| <b>Reg Hounsell</b> | <i>Airmail issues 1946-1949</i>                                               |
| <b>Tony Moseley</b> | <i>Cheb: Occupation to liberation and beyond</i>                              |
| <b>Ron Hollis</b>   | <i>Propaganda postcards</i>                                                   |

Yvonne Gren declared that Kay Goodman would have been delighted with the success of the competition. She then presented the rose-bowl to Garth Taylor and certificates to the top three.

This was followed by two rounds of 24-sheet displays:

- |                       |                                                                                      |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Brian Day</b>      | <i>Festivals, exhibitions, etc</i>                                                   |
| <b>Lindy Bosworth</b> | <i>Austro-Hungarian Navy [as shown recently at the Czechoslovak Salon in Munich]</i> |
| <b>Norman Hudson</b>  | <i>Alfons Mucha (1860-1939) [also shown in Munich]</i>                               |
| <b>Yvonne Gren</b>    | <i>Postal history of East Silesia: Frýštát and Karvinná</i>                          |
| <b>Jim Hamlin</b>     | <i>KLV camps in Slovakia</i>                                                         |
| <b>Bob McLeod</b>     | <i>Various stamp issues, many showing varieties</i>                                  |
| <b>Roger Morrell</b>  | <i>Censor marks of WWI used on Czechoslovak territory</i>                            |
| <b>Lindy Bosworth</b> | <i>Prague exhibition site from 1891 [as shown in Munich]</i>                         |

Yvonne thanked all members and competition entrants who had brought along such a diverse and extensive range of material, which all thoroughly enjoyed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4.10 pm.

### Regional Meeting in the North of England

Our meeting at Leeds Stamp Fair on 20 November 2010 will be the last at that venue.

From January next year we have been invited by the Austrian Philatelic Society to join their informal meeting at York Stamp Fair. The meeting takes the same form with members' displays. A number of

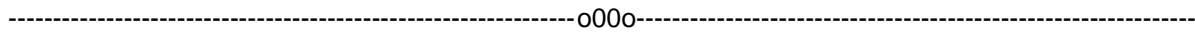
our members have dual membership with the Austrian Society so it will give us a chance to meet with them and enjoy an afternoon's philately.

This is an ideal solution for us as the attendance at our November meetings has been very low and it did not seem feasible to continue with them so this will enable us to keep a presence in the north of England.

We thank our member, Keith Brandon, Hon General Secretary of the Austrian Philatelic Society, for inviting us and for their committee for agreeing to the proposal so readily.

The date of the first joint venture will be Saturday 17 January 2011. Further details can be obtained from Yvonne Wheatley.

**A Visit to Munich 4 –7 March 2010.**



Logo of the Fair



Commemorative cancels available at the Fair

A party of 17 enthusiastic philatelists and partners under the guidance of our Party Leader Tony Hickey set out on Thursday 4 March for Munich International Stamp Fair, which was held from the Friday to Sunday. The trip was not only to acquire new material for collections but also to view the special exhibits and meet friends.

The Fair was an opportunity for a Tschechoslowakei-Salon to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the founding of the ArGe Tschechoslowakei our sister Society in Germany. Forty-eight exhibits of between one and five frames were shown of all periods of Czechoslovak philately and related material. Exhibitors were from Germany, Netherlands, Austria, Hungary, Czech Republic with Great Britain represented by Norman Hudson, Brian Day, Rex Dixon, Tony and Lindy Bosworth. Before an Opening Reception for the Tschechoslowakei Salon complete with champagne and pretzels on the Friday morning there was a chance to view some of the outstanding Czechoslovak exhibits and meet with our other European collector friends.

**Ferphilex 2010 – International Exhibition of Railway Philately was held at the same time with 86 exhibits**



including competitive entries and literature. A full programme was available including trips to museums, tram rides and a ladies programme for members of the IME (International Motivgruppe Eisenbahnwesen).

After a full day at the Fair our party was eager to enjoy the culinary and liquid delights of a Bavarian Brauhaus not far from our hotel and to swop stories of finds at the Fair. Saturday saw another day at the Fair where there were more than 60 dealers and plenty of exhibits to more than last our short stay.

Snow fell again on Saturday night as four CPSGB members ventured forth to join our sister German society members and other guests for a convivial, celebratory meal at a traditional Bavarian restaurant. Time passes too quickly with good food and company. Sunday morning dawned cold but with a brilliant blue sky and sun - perfect for a short sightseeing trip to the centre of snowy Munich before heading for home with our acquisitions.

Thank you Tony for organising another enjoyable trip to Germany and we look forward to other successful ventures to come.

Lindy Bosworth

#### Thursday, 13th May, 2010

As part of the 2010 Festival of Stamps programme, our Society hosted a commemorative Dinner at The Civil Service Club, Great Scotland Yard, London which had been efficiently organised by our Secretary, Tony Hickey. The Chairman, Yvonne Gren welcomed 32 members and their partners, in particular those who had travelled from Australia, Holland and Finland. The three-course Dinner was a sumptuous meal efficiently and courteously served and provided by Martyn Snow and his team.

After the meal was over, Tony Bosworth congratulated all those who had won awards and thanked those who had worked so hard towards the success of the Exhibition. In proposing a toast to the Chairman and the Society, Tony added that of all the Societies he is associated with, the Czechoslovak P.S. of G.B. is certainly the friendliest!

Yvonne, in expressing her warm congratulations to the award winners, commented on how lucky the Society is to have such a dedicated and hard-working Committee, each member of which beavers away quietly and largely unrecognised.



She continued by drawing attention to the work over many years done by Colin and Pat Spong in producing *Czechout* four times annually. Colin joined the Society in 1974 and has served the Society in many ways during that time. In particular he has edited *Czechout* on and off for 23 years and has indicated that he wishes to retire later this year.



In recognition of his many years' service to the Society the Committee is pleased to appoint Colin **President** and he was presented with a Presidential Certificate. In recognition of her phenomenal support both to Colin and the Society, Pat Spong was presented with rather a special Czech glass vase.

Colin responded by thanking the Committee and Members for this prestigious award and commented on how much he had enjoyed his many years association with the Society.

Finally, Yvonne reminded those present of the next meeting at Shoreham on 19th June and hoped many members and their partners would be able to attend.

### SOME MEMBERS SEEN AT THE LONDON 2010 DINNER



### Letters & e-mails to the Editor

☒ **Bob Hill**, "Sunday 4th July sees the 90th birthday of Audrey Dawson, widow of our late President Bill Dawson. Members Bob Hill and Tony Moseley have been invited to the family gathering and will do their level best to represent the Society." [*We all send our best wishes, Editor*]

☒ **Bob Hill & Tony Moseley** writes: "British Postal Museum at Blists Hill." "As reported in March *Czechout* this has opened at the Ironbridge Gorge collection of Industrial Museums. Members Tony Moseley and Bob Hill went along on Thursday 25th March 2010 to have a look, the following is their report. Easy to find, well sign-posted and easy to park, although you pay £1 for that privilege. Entrance is £15 per person, although there is a reduction for seniors and this gives you a full day's access. An overcast day, we visited all the distant attractions first and then those closer to hand. Our eventual visit to the Post Office was, well, disappointing. The structure was built in 2009 and has been aged and is fitted with a mismatch of furniture from various eras. The museum was a large room upstairs and as we had only travelled 30 minutes to get there it was 'okay' if we had travelled further it would have been disappointing with nothing exceptional that you cannot see elsewhere. Plenty of eateries on site and with people in costume staging scenes from the Victorian era it was different. It was a pity Tony Bosworth wasn't with us as we could have given them some real audience participation. Will we go again, no. Was it worth the effort, yes."

☒ **Dr Vernon K. Brown** writes: My grateful thanks to ALL the people who gave me a working explanation for the 1941 Protectorate Cover published in *CZECHOUT* [4/2009; 1/2010]. The postal rates are set out with clarity in John Hammonds' (plus Rex Dixon) Monograph - if only I had had a copy at that time.

✉ **Richard Beith** reports that “The Association of Czechoslovak Legionaries Abroad” will be marking the 70th anniversary of the re-forming of the Czechoslovak Army on British soil in 1940 with a commemorative celebration in the grounds of Cholmondeley Castle, Cheshire, at 2.00pm on Sunday 4 July 2010. Visitors are very welcome and should arrive at Beeston Lodge between 1.00 and 1.30pm. There will be a Service of Thanksgiving at the Memorial unveiled in 1940 by Jan Masaryk. The Association welcomes Associate Membership from anyone interested in Czechoslovak history or with a special affinity to the veterans. For further information please contact John Kolbert, Joint Honorary Secretary, 11 Highway Lane, Keele, Staffs ST5 5AN, t: 01782 635 537; e: [j.m.kolbert@ext.keele.ac.uk](mailto:j.m.kolbert@ext.keele.ac.uk) Richard kindly sent a copy of their latest Newsletter, any member who would like a copy please send me a stamp addressed envelope. Editor.

✉ **The British Postal Museum & Archive Summer Newsletter May 2010** contains details of a *Britain Loves Wikipedia* a national photography competition held at the Museum Store in February. This competition runs in museums and cultural institutions in the UK during February. An update of the BPMA education projects for future school sessions. *The George V and the GPO, Stamps Conflict & Creativity based on an Empire Mail exhibition* will be at the Guildhall Art Gallery 7 May – 25 July and a new book by Douglas Muir, Curator of Philately explaining how the stamps of George V came about is available priced £19.95, either from the BPMA or the exhibition. More items at the Archives went onto the Online Catalogue in March. The latest batch of records include Post 109, 900 records of publicity artwork and designs, Post 68 includes a broad range of instructions, manuals, rule books and circulars from all areas of the Post Office. The BPMA has been invited to put together a display of historical artefacts in the new reception area at Rathbone Place, the head office of Royal Mail London. Post 91: Buildings, Furniture & Fittings series have prepared for cataloguing photographic albums of head and branch post office interiors from the 1930s to the 1950s. Details of Royal Mail Archive material available for public research for the first time. Finally an update of the New Centre project at Swindon.

✉ **The British Library Philatelic Collections Newsletter Issue 16, Spring 2010:** contains details of London Festival of Stamps Diary of events from 10 March to 11 August: Presentation The British Post Office as shown on Picture Post Cards 15.00-16.00 14 July [Robert Johnson] and Presentation of Introduction to Resources of the BL 15.00-16.00 on 11 August [David Beech]; Other events; Impressions of Africa: Money, medals and stamps at the British Museum 1 April until 6 February 2011.

✉ **From: Iveta Kofronova via Rex Dixon:** Further News on the COLLECTOR Fair Prague 2010. Please have a look at news of the 13th International Trade Fair Collector which will be held in Prague on September 2 – 4th, 2010.. Thank you. If you do not want to receive our news on the Collector Fair in future, inform us about it, please. Jindrich Jirasek, Manager of the Fair, Messeleiter, vedouci veletrhu. [jirasek.jindrich@ppa.cz](mailto:jirasek.jindrich@ppa.cz) .<http://www.sberatel.info>

## FOR THE SECOND TIME OF ASKING!

### Wanted by 2010 Annual General Meeting – New Editor

The Society needs a new Editor to take over as from the next AGM. He or she will need a computer to produce the journal for publication. The editor also prepares the envelopes and pre-stamps these, and the Publication Officer arranges for the printing and posting of the journal. There is at present a plentiful supply of articles still to be published and a number of members submit articles throughout the year.

Any member who would like to take on this post, please contact the Editor who will be happy to go into further detail. The present Editor has enjoyed his time in this post but feels it is ‘time to pass on the baton’.

## Congratulations

To **Norman Hudson** who was awarded the ABPS Award of Merit for his work with the Faroes Study Circle.

To **Richard Beith** who was awarded the 'Iain T Boyle Vase' for best entry in the Social Philately Class. His entry was 32 sheets (2 frames) on: *Antonín Dvořák: 1841-1904*. This was awarded a Large Silver Gilt, at the 81st Annual Congress of the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies (ASPS), held at Perth on 16 and 17 April,



To our members who gained awards at **ANTVERPIA 2010: Tonnes Ore**, a Vermeil for *Carpatho Ukraine*; **Wim Tukker**, a Silver for *Australia – Airletters & Aerogrammes* and **Garth Taylor**, a Silver for *Study of the routes and rates of the third issue of Czechoslovakian Airmails*. **Hans van Dooremalen** entered the National Exhibition which was staged at the same time. His entry *USA- The Foreign postal card rate of 1879* won a Gold medal and special prize. Yvonne Wheatley, UK Commissioner Antverpia 2010.

To our members who gained awards at **LONDON 2010: Hans van Dooremalen** a Large Gold with special prize for *USA Postal Cards 1873-1913*; **Richard Wheatley** a Gold for *Netherlands East Indies, King Willem III*. **Rex Dixon** a Vermeil for *Deutsche Nothilfe 1924-1935 German Emergency Aid*; **Bill Hedley** a Large Vermeil for *A survey of Hungarian Postal History of 1722-1900, illustrated through postal services in Poszony*;

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Two non-members gained awards: **Milo Cernik** a Vermeil for *Postal Stationery Czechoslovakia 1918-1939 Postal usage of Double postcards*; **Milos Haptman** a Large vermeil for *Czechoslovakia 1950-1961 Multistamps Flat Plate Printing from Steel Engraving* and a Silver for *Handbooks – Flat Plate Printing from Steel Engraving 1953-1960*.

## Publications

We have received the following journals, which will be available from the Society Library. Items of interest to members are:

- The Summer 2010 issue of ***Austria*** No.170.
  - ▶ A Brief History of Austria (Editorial team); Naval and Maritime Mail (Pitts); Two Mystery Letters from Rovigno (Brandon et al.).
- The March 2010 issue of ***Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Tschechoslowakei***, Vol.41, Whole No.163. Douglas Baxter has kindly translated the list of contents for us.
  - ▶ Josef Liesler, Artist and Graphic Artist (Müller); Plate defects on the 9 Kč “Nato Summit” stamp (Ziegler); Special Registration Labels from the Czech Post Office (Müller);
- The Winter 2010 issue of ***The Czechoslovak Specialist***, Vol 72, Whole No.619. No.1.
  - ▶ The Annexation of Subcarpathian Russia to Czechoslovakia during 1918-1920 [Part 1] (Mezera); JUDr Emil Hacha 3rd Czech President (Norvath); Ilja Jefimovič Repin 1844-1930 (van Zenten); Saint Maur and Cognac (Ulrych, CZeCOT); The Hradčany captioned design: evidence for a single master die (Wilson); Masaryktown, Florida (Horvath).

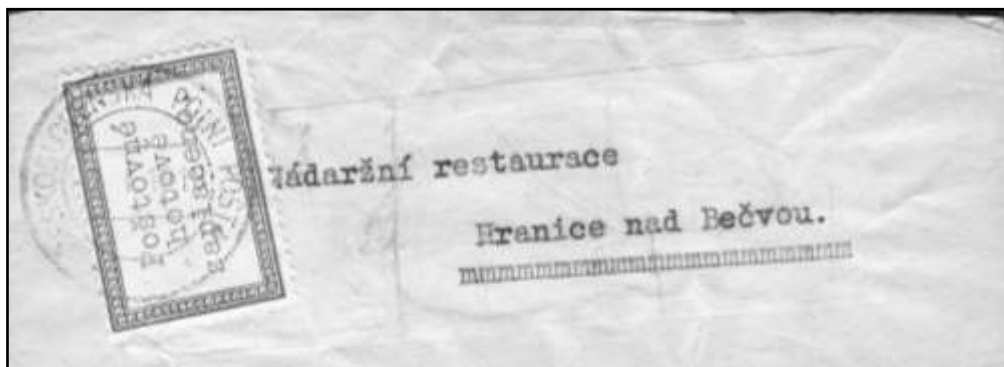
- The April 2010 issue of *Dylizans*, No 57 (Note:that edition No 55 was not issued)
  - ▶ The Gdynia American Shipping Line & The Baltic American Shipping Line (-); Fryderyk Chopin 1810-1849 (Niebrzydowski); The First Stamp depicting Pope John Paul II (Featherstone).
- No. 3, 4 & 5, 2010 issues of *Filatelie*, Vol 60. The English translation of the contents does not cover all the articles.
  - ▶ How to continue with stamp production (Beneš); The first errors on Czech Republic stamps (Beneš); Czech Scouts Post – myth, legends, questions [2] (Weissenstein). Interesting covers from the 1953 currency reform (Aksamit); Pofis Bohemia & Moravia Protectorate Supplement.
  - ▶ Is the sub-type “Round 9” also on the Parliament 1919 stamp (Beneš); Provisional TPO cancellations in early Czechoslovakia (Štěpek); Czech Scouts Post – myth, legends, questions [3] (Weissenstein).
  - ▶ Prague Castle in postage stamps design (Reichová & Sojka); Is the sub-type “Round 9” also on the Parliament 1919 stamp (Beneš); Postage or Political history (Kunc); Czech Scouts Post – myth, legends, questions [4] (Weissenstein). Less-known gutter pairs of the Hradčany issue (Folprecht).
- The 2/2010 issue of *Merkur Revue*. The English translation of the contents does not cover all the articles.
  - ▶ Inverted overprint on SO 1920 500 Hradčany stamp (Filipek); Military Airmail from the Fortress of Przemysl (Hirš); 90 years of Masaryk TGM 1920 Issue [Pt 2] (Fritz & Filipek); Ivan Schurmann, 75 years as author (Fischer); Lucas Cranach and political engraving (Fischer); Panes of the “Rimavská Sobota” 1945 issue {Part 2 – end} (Fritz); Fortresses and castles on stamps from ČSR territory [9] (Fritz). Austria-Hungary & Europe after World War I [2] (Štefek, Kunc, Kypast, Mezera, Petr & Pour)
- No. 14 March 2010 issue of *NIEUWS* (Dutch Society for Czechoslovak Philately)
  - ▶ Munich 2010 (van Dooremalen); Hradčany 80h Type IV (Trip).
- **The Stamp Lover** Vol.102 No 3. June 2010
  - ▶ Today’s Definitives and Postage Rates – Slovakia (P.Mellor).
- The June 2010 issue of *Stamps of Hungary* No.181.
  - ▶ The Mystery of the Szigethvár Provisional Part 2 (Bándi); On the question of Hungarian Field Posts in 1938 and 1939 (Benford).

### A NEW CZECH FORGERY: Forgery of Czechoslovak temporary newspaper stamp and field post cancellation

-Lubor Kunc-

I would like to make collectors familiar with a new forgery of a Czechoslovak temporary newspaper stamp of 1918/19 as well as with the forged cancellation of the Czechoslovak field post system operating in 1919 – 20. The forgery has been shown on figure. 1.

Figure 1a –  
Forgery of the  
newspaper  
wrapper of 1919





The key differences from the original stamp / cancellation are as follows:



1. **The temporary newspaper stamp – POFIS cat. no. NN4H**
  - The text “Postovne / hotove/ zaplaceno” on a genuine stamp was printed, but the forged stamp contains a text typed by a machine.
  - The (private) temporary newspaper stamp(s) of an individual newspaper were never in use at any Czechoslovak field post office.
  - There was no field post office at that time situated at the sender’s city (Prague) as well as at recipient’s destination (Hranice nad Bečvou).

Figure. 1b detailed picture of forged cancel



2. **The field post cancel – Novotný cat. no. III (1919/20 fieldpost), VD (1938 field post)**
  - diameter of original cancel is 3.3 cm, but the forged one is only 3.2 cm
  - instead of the stars in lower part of the cancel you find the unclear quadrates
  - missing number of a field post office
  - differences in letters, especially in P in the words “Polni” and “Posta”
  - the postal offices No. 10, 25 and 38 using the type of field post cancel were not operating on Jan. 2, 1919, which is the date shown on the forged cancel.

Figure . 2 – detailed picture of original cancel of 1919/20

Please be careful when buying any philatelic item of Czechoslovakia 1918 – 39 (newspaper stamp, regular and commemorative issues etc.) as well as any cover dispatched by the Czechoslovak field postal system of 1919/20 and 1938. It is important to state that the original cancels were used not only in years 1919 and 1920, but re-used during the Czechoslovak mobilization of 1938 (figure 3) !



Figure. 3. Field post cover of 1938 bearing the original cancellation of the same type

More detailed information about the forgery will be published in *Postilion*, the journal of the Postal History Society of the Czech Republic (in Czech), copies of which may be available from the author.

**REICHENBERG AND MATTERSDFORF OVERPRINTS, LET THE BUYER BEWARE !**

-Tony Moseley-

Last year, I bought a set of Reichenberg Mattersdorf overprinted airmail stamps from a dealer on the internet. On first sight it was obvious that the items were forgeries and I received a prompt refund. I mentioned this to Rex Dixon, who suggested that I put together an article for *Czechout* to highlight the differences between genuine and forged items. The stamps and covers illustrated are all from my own collection.



1. Forgery of Reichenberg Mattersdorf overprint, applied to 50h Plzen issue of Czechoslovakia. "Wir sind frei !" overprint is less sharp than the original and is not the correct colour. The 40mm Reichenberg rubber cancel is authentic. It is likely, that the "overprint" was added later, to a genuine cover, which originally had no overprint on the stamp. Address details, added in ballpoint pen ! Certainly not written at time of issue in 1938.

2. Genuine item, expertised "Sieger". Note that the letters of the overprint are much sharper and that the ink used, is the correct shade of black. The total issue number of this value was just 1,100. Image increased in size by 100% to show differences from previous example.



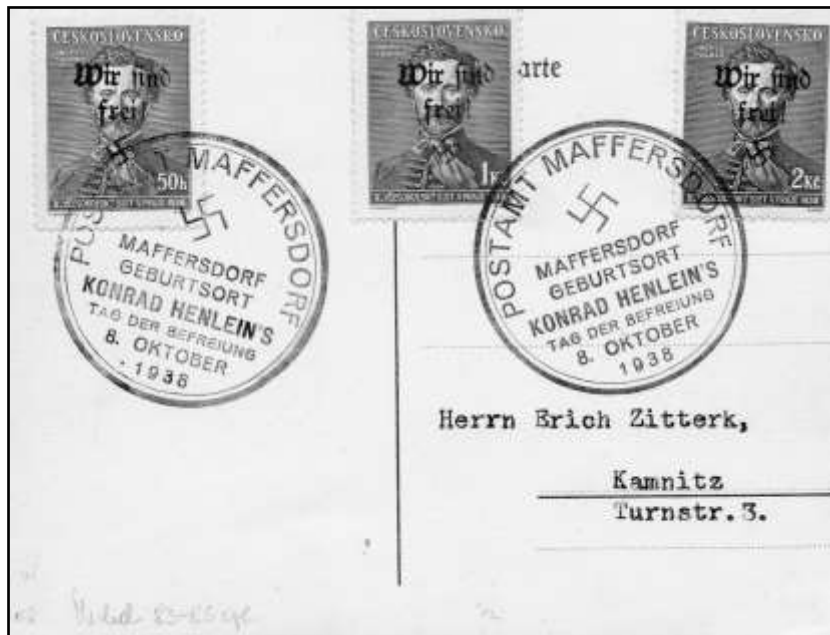
3. Forgery of the Reichenberg Mattersdorf overprint, applied to 30h national arms issue. It is interesting to note that the forged "overprint" has been crudely applied and overlaps the bottom edge of the stamp. "Wir sind frei !" is practically illegible. Address details written in ball point pen, as previous card. This would appear to be another case of a card with the genuine Reichenberg cancel, having the "overprint" added at a later date.

4. Genuine item, expertised by Dr. Hörr increased in size by 100%, to show clearly the correct overprint. Issue numbers for this stamp. Reichenberg 1,100. Mattersdorf 1,000.





5. Forged philatelic cover intended to deceive the collector. The Reichenberg Maffersdorf “overprint” is heavily inked and lacks the finesse of the genuine article. The rubber cancel is on close inspection, a fake. The lettering differs from the original item and the ink used is of a totally different shade.



6. Genuine postcard, with Reichenberg Maffersdorf overprint, applied to Fugner issue and genuine cancel, in correct ink shade, sent to Kamnitz, also in Sudetenland.

7. Genuine Reichenberg Maffersdorf overprint, applied to Arras issue, with genuine cancel. Issue numbers for this stamp are very low. Reichenberg 100 and affersdorf 50 only. Figures quoted from "Die Postwertzeichen des Sudetenlandes" by Dr. Hugo Hörr published in 1963.



8. Genuine Reichenberg Maffersdorf overprint, 10h national arms, issue number 1,000 (size increased 100%) Compare the lettering shown here, with that on the block of 4 below.

Notes – Genuine overprint

- 1) Top line 15 mm wide, distinctive "W" being broad, with third upright, boldly curved.
- 2) "i" of "frei" is almost directly below stroke of "s" in "sind"
- 3) Swastika is thin. Dimensions 3.5mm x 3.5mm
- 4) Overprint is clear and sharp

Forged examples of this overprint, which are quite different.

Notes – Forged overprint.

- 1) Top line is only 13 mm wide, the "W" is narrow and has three straight uprights.
- 2) "i" in "frei" is underneath the "i" of 'sind'.
- 3) Swastika is thicker and larger, 4.75mm x 4.75mm
- 4) Overprint is much heavier and less well defined, the black ink is significantly darker than that used on the original. Compare the fake overprint on the Fugner issue with the genuine example item shown on the previous postcard sent to Kamnitz.



There appear to be many forgeries of Sudetenland overprints available on the current market and the message to collectors must be "Let the buyer beware".

## ART ON CZECHOSLOVAK STAMPS

-Brian Hart-

From: Bernard Williams <[bernardwilliams246@btinternet.com](mailto:bernardwilliams246@btinternet.com)>

Reference Brian Hart's communication, the following may be of interest to him.

"Standing in Primaciálne Námestie in Bratislava is, arguably, the city's most beautiful palace. Primaciálne Palác was built between 1778 and 1781 to a design by Melchior Hefele for Jozef Batthyány, Primate of Hungary and Archbishop of Esztergom. In 1805, in the Hall of Mirrors, the Treaty of Pressburg was signed between Napoleon Bonaparte and Emperor Francis I following the victory of the former at the Battle of Austerlitz.

During restoration being carried out in 1903 a chance discovery in a hidden compartment revealed the presence of a set of excellently preserved 17th century tapestries depicting the tragic history of Hero and Leander from Greek mythology. The tapestries are now displayed within the Palace. Between 1974 and 1976 three pairs of stamps, each designed and engraved by Miloš Ondráček, were issued depicting details from the tapestries. Each stamp carries, at the top, the inscription "BRATISLAVSKÉ GOBELÍNY 17st" thereby describing the works as Gobelin Tapestries of the 17th century.

The Gobelin Family was a French family of dyers and cloth makers whose factory became world-famous for its tapestries. Jehan Gobelin, (d. 1476), had a factory in the Faubourg Saint-Marcel, just south-east of Paris. There he discovered a scarlet dyestuff and spared no expense in exploiting his creation. His descendants seem to have given up dyeing by the end of the 16th century; some of them bought titles of nobility and offices in the financial administration or in royal councils, as did Balthasar Gobelin, (d. 1617), seigneur de Brie-Comte-Robert from 1601. The factory, lent to King Henry IV in 1601 and only then devoted to making tapestries, was purchased for King Louis XIV in 1662 and devoted to general upholstery until its closing in 1694 as a result of the king's financial difficulties. Re-opened for tapestry in 1697, chiefly for royal use, it was temporarily closed during the Revolutionary period but was re-opened again by Napoleon.

The Bratislava tapestries, however, are not French in origin but, rather, were produced at an English factory in Mortlake. The success of Henry IV in importing Flemish weavers to Paris stirred England to imitation. In 1619 Sir Francis Crane, a prominent figure at the court of King James I, was tasked with establishing a Tapestry Works, which he built on the estate previously owned by John Dee, the Elizabethan scholar. By 1620 in excess of 50 Flemish weavers were in employment. These workers were highly skilled in depicting natural textures and effects such as flesh and water. Designed by Mortlake's chief designer, Francis Cleyn, a series illustrating the ancient Greek story of the tragic love of the priestess Hero for Leander was produced in 1625, the first set being presented to King James I.

In Greek mythology Hero and Leander were lovers living on opposite sides of the Canakkale Strait, or Hellespont, which separates Europe from Asia. Hero, the beautiful Priestess of Aphrodite at Sestos, was seen by Leander, the young Prince of Abydos, at the celebration of the festival of Aphrodite honouring the early death of Adonis. He became deeply enamoured of her but, as her position as priestess and the opposition of her parents rendered their marriage impossible, they agreed to carry on a clandestine relationship. Every night Hero placed a lamp in the top of the tower where she dwelt by the sea, and Leander, guided by it, swam across the dangerous Hellespont. One night a tempest arose and the lamp was blown out with the wind. With the roughness of the sea Leander's strength failed and he was drowned. The waves bore his body to the European shore, where Hero became aware of his death, and in her despair cast herself down from the tower into the sea and perished.

The story is preserved in Ovid, Musaeus, and elsewhere. It was also adapted by later poets, such as Christopher Marlowe in "Hero and Leander", and alluded to by Lord Byron in "The Bride of Abydos".

A complete set of the six tapestries is on display in the Lady Lever Art Gallery in Port Sunlight on the Wirral." Whilst I believe that the above is accurate, I'm always open to correction!

## VMŠEHKAD – A SYMBOL OF CZECH IDENTITY

-Dai Pring-

Given its historical importance to the Czechs, it is surprising that most visitors to Prague fail to make the short trip to Vyšehrad, a rocky headland high above the confluence of the Vlatava and Botič rivers. Here they should find peace, quiet, stunning views and much of interest. A further surprise is that the Czechoslovaks did not see fit to honour Vyšehrad philatelically until 1938.

Vyšehrad's early history is linked with many myths and legends about the origins of the Czech state under the Přemyslids, the most persistent being that of Krok. Krok was reputed to be a wise and just ruler who established a castle on Vyšehrad with the intention of it being the seat of future rulers. When he died he left three daughters, the youngest of whom, the Princess Libuše, was elected the leader of what was then the West Slavic tribe. However unrest was soon apparent amongst many of her tribesmen, who were reluctant to be ruled by a woman. Showing great political awareness, she was able to quell the unrest by choosing a humble ploughman (přemysl) to be both ruler and her consort. This was the beginning of a dynasty which would last 400 years and be responsible for founding Prague.



Přemysl and Libuše, Vyšehrad Park

Attractive though the legend is, it is not supported by archaeological investigation, though it is evident that the importance of the headland had been recognised as early as paleolithic times. Then in the fifth and sixth centuries the Slavs started penetrating Bohemia and evidence shows that by the eighth century they had consolidated their presence by setting up a network of fortified settlements.

Three of the most important settlements were in the vicinity of modern Prague. First was Levý Hradec, which was soon to be overshadowed in importance by Prague Castle and thirdly Vyšehrad. All three were built by the Přemyslids, who had emerged as the ruling dynasty but it was Prague Castle and Vyšehrad which became the seats of the Přemyslid princes for hundreds of years. By the latter half of the eleventh and the first half of the twelfth century the importance of Vyšehrad surpassed even Prague castle by becoming the main seat of the Přemyslid princes.



First was Vratislav, the first Bohemian Prince to be crowned king and then Konřad and Soběslav I. From this time the "Coronation Codex", a lavishly illuminated manuscript, survives and so provides us with the most valuable written relic of Vyšehrad.

Coronation Codex with Prince Wenceslas, Patron Saint of Bohemia

Nevertheless, within 50 years the rulers returned to Prague castle and Vyšehrad began to lose its importance until the reign of Charles IV when it flourished again. New fortified walls were built linking Vyšehrad with the New Town (Nové Město) only for most to be destroyed a century later in the two months siege and battle between the Hussite citizens of Prague and King Sigismund's Catholic Crusaders, November 1420,

After Charles's death in 1330 Vyšehrad continued to decline. Its present appearance is the result of a mid seventeenth century reconstruction when the baroque citadel was constructed. Eventually the citadel became a fortified barracks until in the nineteenth century it was levelled to the ground and a public park created. The dominant feature now is the eleventh century church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, which was rebuilt in Neo gothic style in 1885.

St Peter and St Paul



Interest in Vyšehrad, rekindled by the Romantic Movement of the nineteenth century, was spearheaded by members of the Czech Národní Obrozvení movement, who were rediscovering the myths and legends of Vyšehrad. The artistic community responded too with significant works such as Smetana's opera, "Libuše", Zeyer's cycle of poems, "Vyšehrad", and paintings by artists such as Aleš and Postl.

Soon Vyšehrad became an important symbol of Czech identity and the Stavín cemetery with its great pantheon became the last resting place of some of the Czech's most honoured figures such as composers Dvořák and Smetana, the artist Mucha, sculptors Myslebek and Šaloun and the Romantic poet Mácha.

Dvořák's Memorial  
Stavín Cemetery

This sense of identity was never more apparent when Mácha's grave was the assembly point on November 17, 1989 for the march to the demonstration, which triggered the 'Velvet Revolution'. Vyšehrad had reaffirmed its place in Czech history.



**Miniature sheet printed for the Prague Philatelic Exhibition 23 June 1938**

Designer: K. Vik  
Sheet size: 150 x 111 mm  
50h deep blue – Vyšehrad

Engraver: K. Seizinger  
Harrow perforation 12½  
1K – Hradčany Prague

### MILITARY PARCELS TO EXOTIC COUNTRIES

-Lubor Kunc ([lubor\\_kunc@aonstach.cz](mailto:lubor_kunc@aonstach.cz))-

Some time ago I was lucky to acquire the pictured slip of posting confirmation for three registered postal parcels mailed in 1943 at Czechoslovak field post in Great Britain.

This is not very common philatelic material, because the soldiers normally didn't send registered parcels, we can expect the reason for mailing them was an extraordinary importance of their content. Interesting from a philatelic point of view are also the destinations, where the parcels were sent: St. John's (Antigua), West Virginia (USA) and La Brea (Trinidad), especially the first and last destinations were not very typical for members of the Czechoslovak forces.





## THE 1944 'ČSR' OVERPRINTS ON FRENCH STAMPS

-Roy E Reader-

The last issue of *Czechout* brought up the subject of the 1944 French stamps with a Czechoslovak overprint. I am responding to this article, although I can answer only one of the questions asked: the stamps on the second cover illustrated in the article add up to the correct domestic postage rate of 1f 50. I thought, however, that it might be helpful to work through an examination of all aspects of the subject.

### The Stamps



Thirty-one stamps received this overprint consisting of a shield partitioned rather like a vertical Czechoslovak flag and accompanied by the letters 'ČSR' (for 'Československá Republika') and the words 'ZAHRAŇIČNÍ POŠTA' ('Foreign Post').

The main stamps overprinted were the basic definitives in use at the time: the four 1942 Mercury stamps from 10c to 50c and the fourteen Pétain stamps from 60c to 5f. Also overprinted were the six stamps of the Louis XIV Great Men issue of 31 July 1944. A few copies of the pair of 1942 Tricolour Legion stamps also received the overprint, as did a few copies of the 1943 Pétain National Relief Fund strip of five stamps. The

overprints were in black on all stamps but also in violet on the definitive Mercury and Pétain stamps as well as on at least one recently presented Great Men set. The Great Men set is also known further overprinted with a blue 'R.F.' (for 'République Française') or 'F.F.I.' (for 'Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur', the name of the French Home Resistance).



### Postal Validity

At the time that our stamps were being overprinted, many others were too. De Gaulle had instructed his Regional Commissioners in France to overprint all postage stamps in their regions with the letters 'R.F.' This they did in various ways. However, in the chaos and euphoria of liberation, many other stamps were also officially and unofficially overprinted at local level, these not always with the letters 'R.F.' but sometimes with crosses of Lorraine, other symbols or patriotic slogans. Some were produced for purely patriotic reasons, others for purely speculative ones. These so-called Liberation issues appeared in over 150 towns and villages in France. Most of them were accepted at post offices for courtesy cancellations at the counter and in many cases also for mail being genuinely sent through the post. Our Czechoslovak overprints were therefore not exceptional. Nor were they later exceptional in having some of their number stripped of all validity when all Pétain and Tricolour Legion stamps were demonetised from 1 November 1944. Only the Mercury and Great Men stamps among them then remained usable.

On 22 November 1944, having examined the circumstances surrounding the issuing of the various Liberation stamps, the French Post Office published a list of those that it considered to have been officially and properly issued. It listed only fifteen issues. No surprise then that our Czechoslovak overprints were not included on the list. As far as the Post Office was concerned, those stamps not

included were mere labels having lost all postal validity by being overprinted and the fact that some had got away with being used on mail without being charged postage due in no way affected their status as mere labels. The list provoked controversy as some collectors felt not without some justification that some of the stamps listed had poor credentials, while other stamps with good credentials had been omitted.

Almost a year later, on 10 October 1945, in order to avoid any future problems involving overprints, the French government passed a law forbidding the overprinting and subsequent sale and distribution of French postage stamps – but then added that this did not apply to stamps already overprinted. This was taken by some delighted collectors as implicit recognition that all the stamps overprinted up to then were in fact legal and genuine postage stamps, a perception reinforced by the fact that the law had made no reference to the Post Office's rulings of the previous November, now viewed as overridden. However, when challenged on its rulings in 1975, the Post Office replied that it could not go back over decisions reached after investigation thirty years earlier. An appeal to the Council of State was considered but found impossible because of the lapse in time. Thus the Post Office's rulings of November 1944 still stand today, although collectors often judge the various issues by their merits rather than by these rulings. Is there anything meritorious about our particular 'labels'?

### Stamps Cancelled on Cover

Did any of our overprints, whatever their status, get used on mail going through the post? Covers bearing these stamps have been seen cancelled at Vire and Paris. The few whose existence I have so far recorded are listed below. Given are the date of cancellation, the office of cancellation, the overprinted stamps involved, the correctness of the franking, and finally the destination address.

- (1) ?.?.44 (Post-Liberation Period) – Vire – 1f 50 Pétain – Correct domestic rate. [Frechin]
- (2) 8.9.44 – Paris 53 Annexe 1, (??) Murat – 3 Great Men stamps – Overfranked – to 1 Place d'Iéna, Paris – stated to have an arrival mark on the back. [Sinais Auction 21, Lot 3839]
- (3) 8.9.44 – Paris 53 Annexe 1, (??) Murat – 3 Great Men stamps – Overfranked – to 1 Place d'Iéna, Paris. [Sinais Auction 21, Lot 3839]
- (4) 13.10.44 – Paris VII Annexe 1, 37 Avenue Rapp – all 14 Pétain stamps – Overfranked – to 37 Rue Saint-Antoine, Lille, Nord. [Reader]
- (5) 13.10.44 – Paris VII Annexe 1, 37 Avenue Rapp – Great Men set – Overfranked – to 32 Rue de la Poste, Rue, Somme. [Reader]
- (6) 13.10.44 – Paris VII Annexe 1, 37 Avenue Rapp – Great Men set – Overfranked – to (125?) Rue de Montreuil, Paris. [Sinais Auction 21, Lot 3838]
- (7) 28.10.44 – Paris 45, 14 Rue du Colisée – 2x10c + 50c Mercury + unoverprinted 80c Iris – Correct domestic rate – to 15 Avenue Charles Flaquet, Paris. [Czechout]
- (8) 28.10.44 – Paris 45, 14 Rue du Colisée – 2x10c unoverprinted Mercury + 5 all probably overprinted Mercury (including at least one 10c and one 50c) – capable of making the domestic rate of 1f 50 but not the 4f rate for abroad – to 7 Chesney Court, Shirland Road, London W9. [Sinais auction 21, lot 3837]
- (9) 28.10.44 – Paris 113, Hôtel de Ville – 3x10c + 30c, 40c, 50c Mercury – Domestic rate – to Welfare Officer, Czech Armoured Brigade, Czechoslovak Forces BLA, GB. [Beith]
- (10) 28.10.44 – Paris 06 – 10c, 30c, 40c, 50c Mercury – Underfranked – to ? [Mayer]
- (11) ?.11.44 – Paris 06 - ? [Frechin]

But how many of these covers were carried though the post as opposed to being simply cancelled on request at a post office counter by an obliging counter clerk, supposing, of course that they were not simply the work of some faker's endeavours?

Obviously, not enough is known about Covers No. 1, 10 and 11 to make any judgement.

Cover No. 5 never went through the post as it was addressed to a fictitious address, there being no Rue de la Poste at Rue.

Cover No. 6 never went through the post either as it was addressed by the same hand as No. 5 to a non-existent Rue Saint-Antoine at Lille.



Cover No. 8, written in the same handwriting as No. 7, is problematic. The only copy of it I possess was taken from a photocopier on the blink. A part of the image is faded out and only four of the row of seven stamps is clear. All the stamps must have been Mercury stamps as the auctioneer's catalogue described the cover as bearing the set of overprinted Mercury stamps with no mention of stamps of other design. The clear stamps (two unoverprinted 10c, one overprinted 10c and one overprinted 50c) total 80c. The other three stamps could add up to between 30c and 1f 50 to make a total franking of between 1f 10 to 2f 30. If the three stamps contained at least one 30c and one 40c to make a complete set of the overprints, the total franking could be between 1f 50, the domestic letter rate, and 2f, not enough for the foreign letter rate of 4f. Yet this cover is addressed to a man in London! Did it get through the post underfranked or was it never genuinely carried by the post?

Cover No. 9 is also franked at the domestic rate but addressed to a Czechoslovak welfare officer in Britain. It was presumably cancelled on request at the counter of the post office concerned and then sent under separate cover to the welfare officer in Britain, assuming the man existed, by the army postal



service, perhaps in a bundle with other identical covers as the cover was marked '150 cop.', as if 150 copies of it had been produced perhaps for sale in aid of the Czechoslovak soldiers.

All that leaves only Covers No. 2, 3 and 7 not yet eliminated.

### Sources of Information

No document authorising these overprints is known to exist.

The stamps are often listed under Vire in philatelic literature as the first cover recorded with them on was cancelled at Vire. In consequence, when in the 1960s Jacques Lion was doing research for his book about the stamps produced at the Liberation, he made enquiries of the President of the Vire Philatelic Society. The latter replied that he had no knowledge of these overprints. In the absence of any other documentation, Lion listed the Mercury, Pétain and Great Men stamps in his book but stated that it was up to the collector to make up his own mind about them.

In 1970, E. Frechin, wishing to expand on the information in Lion's book, wrote in Bulletin No. 11 of the *Association des Collectionneurs des Timbres de la Libération* the following:

Here is a more substantial amount of information found in my files and coming from 2 articles having appeared in the philatelic press a long time ago already. (If my memory serves me right, it must have been the *Écho de la Timbrologie*.)

Article I: The stamps in question had apparently been issued in the VIRE (Calvados) area. The overprinting was apparently due to the initiative of the post NCO of a Czechoslovak unit fighting in the Allied ranks and the stamps thus overprinted had, it appears, been used especially by the soldiers and incidentally by the civilian population, which was at the time taking advantage of the facilities offered to the public by the army postal service.<sup>1</sup>

I saw (said the author of the article) an envelope cancelled at VIRE, a little after the Liberation, with a 1f 50 Pétain stamp.

The set, which could be quite easily seen during the months following the Liberation, has disappeared from dealers' stock books and is never offered at auction.

I own for my part: (he said)

- 1) With violet overprint, the current Mercury and Pétain sets, including the engraved 4f and 4f 50, but not the 50f.
- 2) With black overprint, the 10c, 30c and 40 c Mercury stamps and the Great Men of the 17th Century set.

Article II: The story of the French stamps overprinted C.R.S. – ZAHNANICNI POSTA 1944 is a fascinating one and more complex than our amiable correspondent imagines.

A first set on 1939 French stamps appeared without, of course, the year 1944 on it – It was used by the Czechoslovak soldiers stationed at AGDE (Hérault) for their mail, after the German troops crushed Czechoslovakia, the translation of the inscription is significant in this respect Czechoslovak Republic – Army Foreign Post.

After the complete invasion of France in June 1940, the Czech divisions stationed in France, just like the Polish ones, which we will one day talk about, were evacuated to either Britain or the Near East and re-formed in France after the German defeat. It was at this time that the first of the overprints mentioned made its appearance, an overprint that can be found in violet as well as black on the following French stamps: 513 to 515 – 517 to 519 – 521 – 521A – 521B – 522 to 524 (Pétain stamps); 546 to 549 (Mercury Postes Françaises); 612 to 617 (Famous Men).

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<sup>1</sup> 'Apparently' and 'it appears' are used in this sentence to translate the French conditional perfect indicating that the statements were not necessarily solid fact.

One of my good friends Mr Jan Dlabac of Brno (Czechoslovakia), a great friend of France, possesses even the Pétain Tricolour Legion triptych on letters, but those that travelled regularly through the post are obviously very rare....

Editor's Note: We recently saw an envelope franked with these stamps machine-cancelled at Paris 06 in November 1944. The VIRE cancellation is not therefore the only one. We have to add that there is a tinge of blue in the colour of the overprints.

I have not yet been able to identify the origin of the two articles referred to. They were not in the 1944 and 1946 issues of the *Écho de la Timbrologie*. I do not have the few 1945 issues available to check in.

Frechin most probably noted the information in the two articles correctly, but we cannot but wonder how far the information given about the origin and use of the stamps was based on real evidence rather than supposition.

Two years later, in 1972, Roger Richet, who was having his account of the Czechoslovak Field Post serialised in the *Le Monde des Philatélistes*, brought up the subject of the overprinted stamps. In the May issue he stated:

Between March 1939 and September 1939, the Czech servicemen stationed at Agde and in other similar camps used French postage stamps overprinted CRS, which we will talk about at the end of the chapter.

The end of the chapter came in the June issue of the magazine:

Two sets of French stamps were overprinted CRS, one without the date (1939) and the other with the date of 1944.

The two sets are identical with the exception that the first has no date.

The overprint consists of a shield 9 mm high surrounded in its lower part by small capital letters 'ZAHNANICI POSTA', which are followed by the date of 1944 in the second set. This inscription translates as 'Foreign Mail'.

The tripartite shield represents the three colours of the Czech flag, the whole thing with the letters CRS on top of it.

The stamps in common usage in 1939 were given this overprint (Yvert Nos 280-289, 360-76), as well as a few pictorials.

As we already said earlier, these stamps were in use in the different Czech camps between April and August 1939 for franking the mail of the servicemen stationed in them.

In 1944, when the defeat of the Germans was beginning and French territory was gradually being evacuated, Czech units were re-formed in the old camps with volunteers who had been able to get to these camps, these being either men demobilised in 1940 and having stayed where they were in France or volunteers who had come rushing there from every direction to hasten the final victory.

The 1944 stamps that were overprinted were those in use at the time: Mercury Postes Françaises (546-49), Pétain (509-521), Tricolour Legion (565-65), National Relief (576-80), Famous Men of the 17th Century (612-617).

In general the overprint is done in violet on the stamps in common use and in black on the large-sized commemoratives.

These overprinted stamps are barely known about and are very scarce – and very rare on letters having travelled through the post.

Richet too is therefore presenting the overprinted stamps of both 1939 and 1944 as having been produced by or for the Czechoslovak soldiers. But were they really?

### The 1939 Precursor

This set of stamps resembling the 1944 ones but without the '1944' seems to be particularly elusive. I have never seen an example of it even in an illustration. Has anyone else?

Richet and the author of the second article referred to by Frechin both claim that the stamps were used by soldiers at Agde Camp in the period from the time of Germany's take-over of what remained of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 until, according to Richet, the beginning of World War II the following September. However, a part of that claim must be wrong, for there were no Czechoslovak soldiers – or, come to that, any other Czechoslovaks – at Agde Camp until the Czechoslovak Army began to be formed there in the second half of that September.

Were the stamps therefore produced by the soldiers at Agde Camp *after* the second half of September 1939? Well, if they had been, the soldiers would surely have used them on some of the countless philatelic souvenirs they produced there. However, as it is, no souvenir adorned with one of these stamps has so far shown up. Were the two writers perhaps simply making assumptions about the stamps being used at Agde Camp, unaware of when the camp had actually come into Czechoslovak use?

Had the stamps been produced, as stated, *before* September 1939? If so, by whom? Obviously not by Czechoslovak soldiers in an army not yet re-formed on French soil! So what about the Czechoslovak soldiers who had escaped from disintegrating Czechoslovakia in or after March 1939 or even before then? Many of these men had indeed headed for France, sometimes after a stay in Poland, most of them having signed up for the French Foreign Legion, the only fighting unit for which they were eligible. However, the legion was based not in France but in Algeria and Algeria did not use French postage stamps, so none would have been available for purchase and overprinting. The men in Algeria would eventually be transferred to the Polish Army at Agde, but not until after the outbreak of war in September.

That leaves only four possible sources of the overprints: (a) the Czechoslovak community resident in France from earlier days, (b) the (few?) Czechoslovak refugees who had recently managed to get accepted into France, (c) the 550-600 Czechoslovak refugees from the International Brigades of the Spanish Civil War interned first at Argelès-sur-Mer and Saint-Cyprien and then from late April at Gurs, where, incidentally, there was much cultural and artistic activity (including the overprinting of postage stamps?), or (d) fraudsters producing bogus stamps for sale to unsuspecting philatelists. Take your pick.

No clear answers then. We are still left wondering how these overprinted stamps fitted into the scheme of things – and also, we might add, what precisely the inscription 'ZAHRANIČNÍ POŠTA' was trying to tell us, if anything!

One final thing to say about these stamps, however, is that, whoever produced them, they had no valid postal use whatsoever as they had been invalidated by being overprinted. Pin-perforating stamps was permitted within certain rules, but overprinting stamps was not. Contrary to the situation after the Liberation in 1944, there was at this time no major disruption allowing mail franked with overprinted stamps to be accepted by the postal service without its being charged postage due. These stamps could have been no more than philatelic novelties produced for patriotic or speculative reasons.

### Origin and Use of the 1944 Stamps

Richet and the author of the first article referred to by Frechin clearly linked the 1944 overprints to the Czechoslovak Armoured Brigade that left Britain for France at the end of August 1944. André Suarnet in his 1948 *Bleus de France* catalogue lists the stamps under the heading 'Vire' with 'Czechoslovak Legion' added underneath. Jacques Lion in his *Les Timbres de la Libération* and Pierre Mayer in his 1973 catalogue of the same title list the stamps under 'Vire' but then more cautiously add 'Overprint/Issue said to be of the Czechoslovak Expeditionary Corps'.

What factors favour the possibility of the stamps having been produced by the soldiers of the Czechoslovak Brigade? Firstly, there is the account given by the author of the first of Frechin's articles (though was this account based on eyewitness evidence or on mere assumption?). Secondly, the Czechoslovak soldiers were very philatelically minded and had already produced many commemorative date-stamps and patriotic souvenirs while in France in 1940 and in Britain in 1940-44. Lastly, soon after the Liberation a cover bearing one of the stamps was cancelled at Vire (liberated on 8 August), which was only some thirty miles from Falaise, near which the Czechoslovak Brigade spent most of September 1944.

What factors challenge the possibility of the stamps having been produced by the Czechoslovak Brigade? Firstly, the soldiers had no need of French stamps as they were required to send all their mail, even if to France, through the British army postal service, which required British stamps to be used when stamps were needed on, for example, overweight and registered mail (which did not, of course, mean that a soldier outside his camp could not illegally slip a letter into a French letter box, though early on it might not have gone far because of the disruption to the postal service caused by the liberation and because of restrictions on the carriage of mail from one region to another). Secondly, the stamps have not been seen on any genuine mail or philatelic souvenirs coming from the brigade. Thirdly, all but one of the covers recorded as bearing cancelled stamps were cancelled in Paris, nowhere near the brigade by then investing the Dunkirk pocket (though, of course, the stamps could have been brought to Paris from where the soldiers were). Finally, *if* it is felt that the 1939 forerunner was not produced by the Czechoslovak soldiers in France, then it would follow that the 1944 stamps were probably not produced by them either but by whoever produced the earlier ones.

Still, therefore no answer to the question as to who produced these and the 1939 stamps and why. The least likely to have produced them seems to be the Czechoslovak soldiers themselves. The most likely seems to be either other Czechoslovaks in France (immigrants or others) producing patriotic souvenirs, the 1944 ones getting accepted by the postal service in the post-Liberation chaos, or else speculators of any nationality creating bogus stamps for the sole purpose of selling them to unwary collectors.

Basically, Jacques Lion's words about these stamps still apply: it is up to the collector to make up his own mind about them.

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Lelégard Y. (Vire Municipal Library), Letter to author (6.5.1971) [re Vire liberation].

Thomas, N. *Foreign Volunteers of the Allied Forces 1939-45* (Osprey, Oxford, 1991).

Wellard, J. *The French Foreign Legion* (Deutsch, London, 1974) [re Foreign Legion base].

**Postscript**

Dear Colin,

You will remember that one of my covers with the Czech overprint on is addressed to 32 Rue de la Poste at Rue, although no such street of that names exists on the map of Rue today. I therefore emailed the Town Hall at Rue to ask if a Rue de la Poste existed at Rue in 1944. I have just received today – Sunday! – an email from the Tourist Office at Rue to say that there never has been a Rue de la Poste at Rue, only a Rue de la Porte de Bécray, in which the Post Office stands. At first sight that means that my cover has a fictitious address and could never have travelled through the post. However, the email from Rue goes on to say that the Rue de la Porte de Bécray is often in fact called the Rue de la Poste by the inhabitants of Rue as it is less of a mouthful to say! So that means that the address on my cover might bear a genuine, if officially inaccurate, address! I was not expecting that!

My other cover ostensibly sent on the same day by the same person is addressed to the Rue Saint-Antoine in Lille, a street that does not exist on the map of Lille today and I can find no other reference to it except on a website where someone is querying the existence of this street in Lille in the 1800s. I have therefore emailed Lille Town Hall to see if they can tell me whether the street existed in 1944, not such an easy thing to find out in a city the size of Lille!

Roy

**WHAT? WHEN? WHERE?****Re Robert Hill (RJH) and Richard Beith( RB)'s query in Czechout 1/2010 page 24**

*We have received two excellent replies from members on this query, the first by Roy Reader [printed above] and the second by Jan Verleg;*

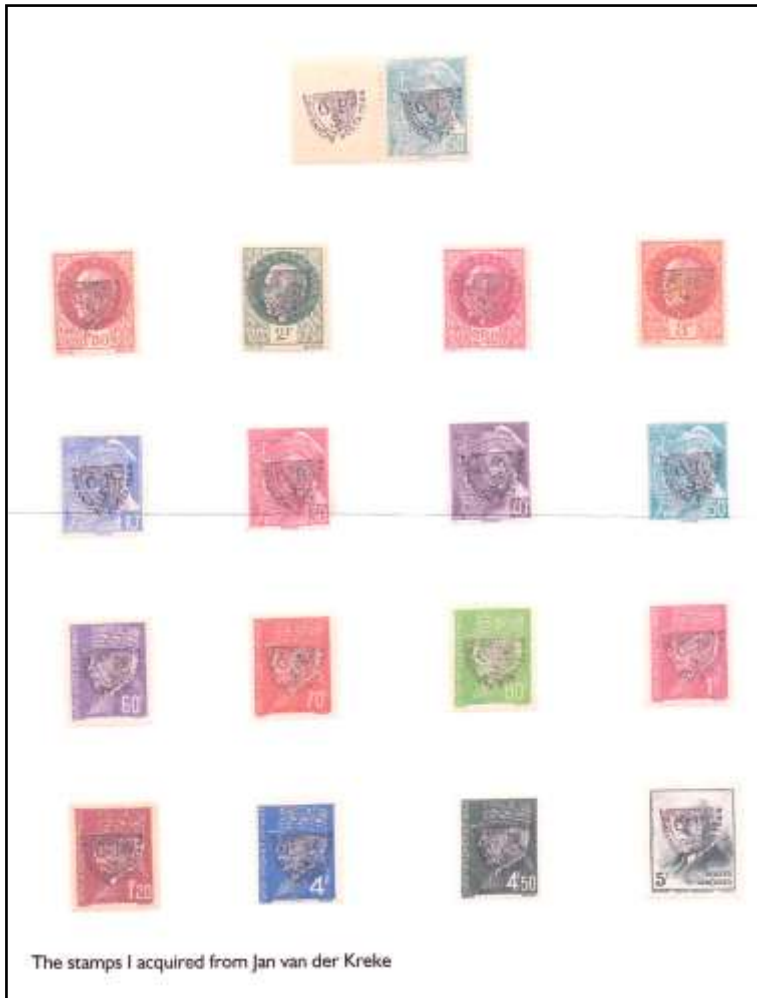
From Jan Verleg A.E.P.: Regarding Bob Hill's and Richard Beith query on the 1944 "C.S.R." overprints on French stamps; reference is made to the publication of "Le Monde des Philatélistes" titled "La Feldpost Tchèque" and published in 1978. The author was Roger Richet. In this brochure on page 17 under the heading "Les timbres de France surcharges C.R.S." some more information is given on this issue. In this publication Mr. Richet deals with the field post of the Czechoslovak Army in several periods and one of the chapters is headed as "Les Postes de campagne Tchèques en France (1940)".

In this chapter he provides us with the following information: Two series with this overprint were issued. The first one in 1939 without date and the second with the date 1944. The two series are identical with the exception of the date which does not appear in the first issue.

The first issue was used between April and August 1939 on correspondence from the Czech soldiers encamped in France. Mr. Richet is not entirely consistent when mentioning these dates as a bit earlier in the same chapter he mentions and I quote: - In between March and September 1939 Czech soldiers encamped in Agde and other camps used postage stamps with the overprint C.R.S. for their correspondence.



The second issue was again used by the Czechoslovak army units which were formed in the old camps, during the progressive withdrawal of the German Army, by Czechs who remained in France during the war. The colour of the overprint is black; however for the larger sized commemorative stamps a violet colour was used.



Unfortunately Mr. Richet does not provide us with any information on the origin of this issue. He concludes that the overprinted stamps are scarce and on covers, real rarities. In the 1970s I acquired a number of these overprinted stamps of the second issue from Mr. Jan van der Kreke who was a well known specialist on field post of the Czech legions.

He was also an expert on the Czechoslovak Legion in Russia and a member of the Czechoslovak Expert committee. He mentioned to me that the origin of this issue is rather obscure and definitively has a very speculative character. Some genuine forwarded letters exist, all postmarked Paris 45 and with the date 28-10-1944. Also a cover exists franked with an overprinted 1.50 Petain postage stamp and cancelled at Vire. That would be the reason that some collectors refer to the "VIRE" issue.

Well I am afraid the issue will remain a difficult one to solve, a mystery. Perhaps the working brigades who remained in camp Agde during the war had something to do with it. (see

the article on the working brigades in Roy Reader's supplement to monograph 5). I would imagine that when the Petain government was losing control over the camp and new Czechoslovak Army units were built from the working brigades, some clever philatelist among them "invented" this surcharge following the Czechoslovak tradition of producing philatelic rarities in turbulent times. The origin must be found in the so called "unoccupied zone" of France as only stamps of the collaborating Petain regime were used for the second issue.

As far as the first issue is concerned this is even a greater mystery as no such stamps have ever been described in philatelic literature with the exception of Mr. Richet. I could not agree more with Roy Reader when he states in Monograph 5 on page 13 "The only certain thing that can be said about these stamps is that they were a philatelic fancy with no postal validity whatsoever". Perhaps the initiator of the second issue was inspired by this overprint"

As far as postage rates are concerned the cover pictured with the large commemorative stamps is of course a philatelic inspired one and it is rather doubtful whether it has ever been posted. In appendix VA of his supplement to Monograph 5, Roy Reader states the applicable French postage rates for the periods concerned. The second cover pictured is franked with stamps totaling 1.50 Franc. From 05-01-1942 until 01-03-1945 the domestic letter rate of letters up to 20g was 1.50 Franc. Yes the letter was correctly franked and probably one of the very few genuine covers expedited by the mail. Probably slipped through as the stamps were never officially issued and had no validity to make correspondence free.

In case my assumption is correct that the origin of the overprint is to be found in camp Agde" the query of Karel Holoubek put forward in the Nov/Dec 2002 issue of the *Czechoslovak Specialist* can be answered as follows: the only stamps available to the inhabitants of camp Agde\* were at that time French stamps. They needed them for their normal correspondence.

\* as mentioned earlier the inhabitants of Camp Agde (The working brigades) started to reshape themselves into new Army units' JV

#### New Query

From Richard Beith: When did the Protectorate Postal Authorities first dispatch air mails to North America via Marseille or Lisbon and the Pan American Airways' Clipper Service? (US Post Office Foreign Air Mail Route No 18).



The illustration shows an apparent FAM 18 cover from Plzeň to Boston, Mass, posted on 31 August 1939. The franking might agree with overseas letter 2.50K + 2 x 5.50K/5g air fee = 13.50K. There are no arrival markings.

The manuscript "Yankee Clipper" refers to a specific Boeing 314 flying-boat which left Lisbon on 6 September and reached New York the next day. Air Mails carried on FAM 18 to and from the Protectorate (and the Slovak State) and the USA are relatively common during 1940 and in 1941 until the American entry into the war.

Relevant dates are 20 May 1939: First mail flight USA - Marseilles on the route New York- Horta (Azores) - Lisbon - Marseilles. 25 May 1939: First return westbound mail flight 24 June 1939. Alternative northern route opened: New York – Shediac (New Brunswick) - Botwood (Newfoundland) - Foynes (Irish Free State) - Southampton. 6 September 1939: Neutral Lisbon and Foynes become the European terminals, in accordance with the USA's neutrality legislation. October 1939: 'Northern' route discontinued on neutrality grounds (Resumed Spring 1942).

## NEW ISSUES

- Lindy Bosworth -

Unless otherwise stated, Post Printing House, Prague prints the stamps and stationery for the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic.

**Printing** RD = rotary die stamping with multicolour photogravure  
DS = die stamping from flat plates

### Czech Republic

24 March 2010

#### Gold Medals of the XXIst Winter Olympic Games



**Designer:** Zdeněk Netopil **Printing:** multi-coloured offset in sheets of 50.

**Design:** girl's hands holding a gold medal with the inscription 'Martina Sáblíková Gold Medals'. Martina was awarded two gold medals and a bronze medal at the Winter Olympic Games held in Vancouver, Canada in February 2010. She is a young speed skater and the first Czech sportswoman to be so successful in the Games.

**FDC:** printed DS in blue with commemorative Praha cancel. The cachet drawing is a stylistic speed skater (as shown on the stamp issued 10 February 2010).

14 April 2010

#### The Traveller Enrique Stanko Vráz



**Designer:** Vladimír Novák **Engraver:** Miloš Ondráček **Printing:** RD in sheets of 50.

**Design:** portrait of Vráz with a Japanese landscape and snow covered mountains in the background. Enrique Stanko Vráz (1860 – 1932) was a worldwide traveller collecting flora and fauna. Some of these collections were donated to the National Museum, Prague. Although he lived for some years in USA he moved back to Prague in the 1920s lecturing and writing about his travels. **FDC:** printed DS in black with commemorative Praha cancel. The cachet drawing shows a Japanese mask.

14 April 2010

#### Transcaucasian Carpets



**Designer and Engraver:** Václav Fajt **Printing:** DS with multicoloured offset in sheets of four.

**Designs:** 21Kč – a Kasim ushag carpet of the 19th century from the Nagorno-Karabakh area of the western Azerbaijan region. These are characterised by bright colours, a flower border and large geometric designs in the central field. **FDC:** printed DS in blue with a commemorative Praha cancel. The cachet depicts a Chndzoresk carpet.

24Kč – a Celaberd or Cheleberd carpet from the south Transcaucasian area. These are the most

well known of the Karabakh carpets. They have bright colours and a single dominant central design with a patterned border. **FDC:** printed DS in red-brown with a commemorative Praha cancel. The cachet shows a Shadda carpet curtain.

28 April 2010

## Definitive Stamp Booklet – Čtyřlístek – Fifinka

**Designer:** Jaroslav Němeček **Printing:** multicoloured offset in booklets of 10 self adhesive stamps with letter 'A' – non value indicator for standard domestic letter to 50g (at present 10Kč). **Design:** Fifinka reading a cook book with a cup of coffee and a cake in front of her. The front cover of the booklet shows the four friends of the group riding a 'bicycle plane'. **FDC:** printed multicoloured offset with commemorative Praha cancel. The cachet shows the four friends Bobik, Fifinka, Myšpulín and Pind'a with a silhouette of their house in Třeskopský and castle Bezzub in the background. The friends first appeared in a Czech comic book Čtyřlístek (four leafed clover) more than four generations ago. Further definitive stamps are to be issued of the other three characters.



Picture Postcard: issued 26 May 2010 with imprinted 'A' stamp as above. Designer: Jaroslav Němeček. Design: the village Třeskopský, where the four friends live with them being carried on the back of a flying dragon. At the left is a reproduction of the stamp. The reverse of the card has the imprinted 'A' stamp with the logo of the Czech post and a security hologram. At top left all four friends are portrayed with their 'signatures'.

**NB:** This is the first NVI stamp issued by the Czech Post and will remain valid indefinitely. This and future issues of NVI stamps will only be in booklets and not on sale as single stamps.

5 May 2010

## Exhibition 'Prague Castle and its Art on Postage Stamps'



**Designer:** Jan Kavan **Engraver:** Miloš Ondráček **Printing:** DS in sheets of four with logos of the Czech Post, Postal Museum and Prague Castle administration and text in the central margin. **Design:** a panorama of Charles' Bridge and Prague Castle from the Novotný Footbridge. **FDC:** printed DS in black with commemorative Praha cancel. The stylised cachet drawing is the heraldic lion by Vincent Makovský. The Exhibition commemorates more than 90 years of Czech stamp designs connected with Prague Castle and its collection of artefacts and will run from 12 May to 1 August 2010.

5 May 2010

## Europa : Children's Books – Karel Čapek – Dášeňka



**Designer:** Václav Kučera **Printing:** multicoloured offset in sheets of 6. **Design:** four dogs representing Dášeňka as a puppy growing to an adult. Dášeňka or The Life of a Puppy was written by Karel Čapek (1890 – 1938) and is popular with both children and adults. The story is based on a puppy born to the author's pet wire-haired terrier and is accompanied with photographs taken by his brother Josef. Karel wrote many books and was the first president of the Czech PEN Club. **FDC:** printed offset in black with commemorative Praha cancel. The cachet drawing shows a dog sitting on its haunches.

26 May 2010

## For Children – Helena Zmatlíková



**Designer:** Karel Čapek **Engraver:** Václav Fajt **Printing:** RD in sheets of 30.

**Design:** the elf Pitřýsek - an illustration from the book by Ludvík Aškenazy 'Wanderings to a Plum Aroma'. The illustrator, Helena Zmatlíková (1923 – 2005) became an apprentice dressmaker but preferred drawing. During the war she worked as a graphic artist but also illustrated jokes for newspapers and magazines. Later she illustrated books for adults before children's books. Books with her illustrations were published in a number of countries and translated into many languages. **FDC:** printed DS in black with commemorative cancel. The cachet drawing shows a small girl with a broom, an illustration from the same book as that of the stamp. A **booklet** of 8 stamps and two illustrated labels was issued.

26 May 2010

## Alfons Mucha – 150th Birth Anniversary



**Designer:** Prof Zdeněk Ziegler **Engraver:** FDC cachets only – Václav Fajt

**Printing:** multicoloured offset in booklets of 6 self adhesive stamps with NVI letters.

**Designs:** 'E' - a graphic adaptation of the Mucha poster of Sarah Bernhard as Gismonda. The red letter 'E' is a NVI for a European letter to 20g (at present 17Kč). The booklet cover shows adaptations of five other posters by Mucha with his facsimile signature and a security hologram. **FDC :** printed DS in blue with a commemorative Praha cancel. The cachet drawing is from Mucha's picture of two standing women.



'Z' – a detail from Mucha's picture Job. The red letter 'Z' is a NVI for a foreign letter to 20g to non-European countries (at present 18Kč). The booklet cover has a detail from his 1896 work 'Reverie or Day Dreaming'. The back cover shows the whole of the picture and his facsimile signature with security hologram and a reproduction of the 'Z' stamp. **FDC:** printed DS in green with a commemorative Praha cancel. The cachet drawing is a further detail from the picture Job.

The booklet stamps are valid indefinitely and can be used for postage in conjunction with other denominations.

Alfons Mucha (1860 – 1939) was a painter, graphic artist and creator of posters in the Art Nouveau style. His life's work, created over a period of seventeen years, was a cycle of large canvases with the title 'Slav Epic'. He

designed the first postage stamps and bank notes for the independent Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. He is buried in the cemetery at Vyšehrad, Prague.



## Postal Stationery

### Official Cards

**26 May 2010 – 150th Birth Anniversary of Alfons Mucha.** Designer: Prof Zdeněk Ziegler. Printing: multicoloured offset. Imprinted NVI 'A' stamp is a detail from Mucha's work – Salon des Cent: 20th Exhibition. To the left of the stamp is the Czech Post logo. The first line of the address of the recipient is a continuous microtext of the year 2010. The left hand portion has a security hologram beside a frame for the postal code of the sender. The retail price of the card is 11Kč. This is the first postcard in a series depicting Mucha's works to be issued during 2010.

### Slovak Republic

FDCs are printed by TAB. sro, Bratislava unless otherwise stated.

**27 November 2009**

**Art**



**Designers and Engravers:** František Horniak (Majerník) Rudolf Cigánik (Mudroch) **Printing:** DS in sheets of four.

**Designs:** Don Quixote (1943) by Cyprián Majerník (1909-1945). He studied art in Bratislava and then Prague. His early work was based on folklore themes. In the 1930s his style changed and became characterised by an escape from the world, less use of bright colours with subjects of tragic heroes from literature. He died a few weeks after the end of the war.

**FDC:** printed DS in black with commemorative Bratislava cancel. The cachet drawing is another portrayal of Don Quixote.



Madonna with Black Glory (1940) by Ján Mudroch (1909-1968). He studied art in Bratislava and Prague but was also involved with the renewal of the Arts Society in Slovakia, the founding of the Slovak National Gallery and became Chancellor of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, Bratislava. **FDC:** printed DS in black with commemorative Bratislava cancel. The cachet drawing is a detail from another of his works.

Both works of art are in the collections of the Slovak National Gallery.

**28 February 2010 Easter: Illuminated Letter from the Bratislava Mass Book**



**Designer:** Dušan Grečner **Engraver:** Vierošlav Ondrejčíčka – FDC cachet only.

**Printing:** Heidelberg Speedmaster. **Design:** an illuminated letter 'T' depicting a half figure of Christ standing in the grave. The Bratislava Mass Book was completed by a Bratislava priest Michael from Trnava in 1403. The book had 310 parchment sheets but only a few of the illuminated sheets are known to have survived.

**FDC:** printed DS in brown with a commemorative Bratislava cancel. The cachet drawing depicts a reliquary on a chain.

12 March 2010

Matúš Čák of Trenčín

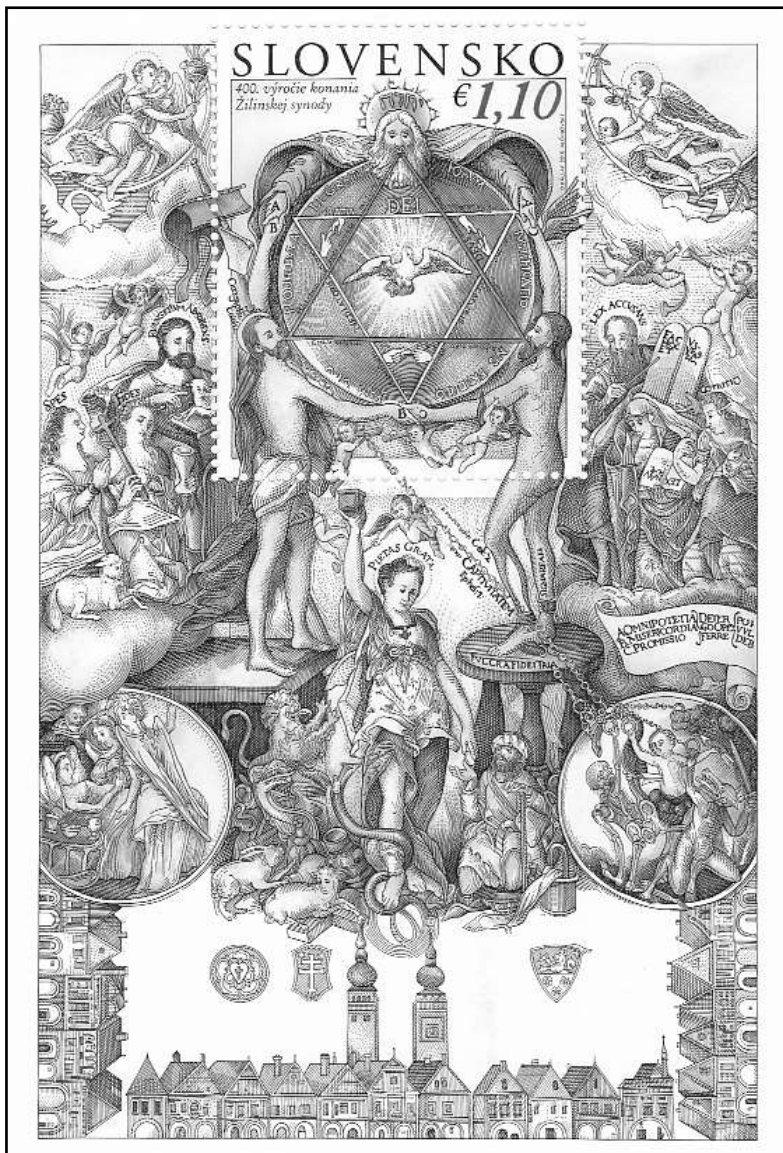


**Designer:** Adrián Ferda from a drawing by Edita Balážová **Engraving:** L'ubomír Žálec – FDC cachet only. **Printing:** Heidelberg Speedmaster  
**Design:** portrait of Matúš Čák in armour holding a sword. He was born around 1260 inheriting properties in south west Slovakia on the death of his father and an uncle. Over the final decade of the 13th century he extended his lands even seizing the King's castle at Trenčín, which he rebuilt as his stronghold. Over the years he changed allegiance between more powerful nobles to acquire more power and property. At his death in 1321 he owned more than 60 castles of which 50 are in Slovakia.

**FDC:** printed DS in blue green with a commemorative Trenčín cancel. The cachet drawing depicts a mounted soldier of the times.

30 March 2010

Anniversary of the Žilina Synod



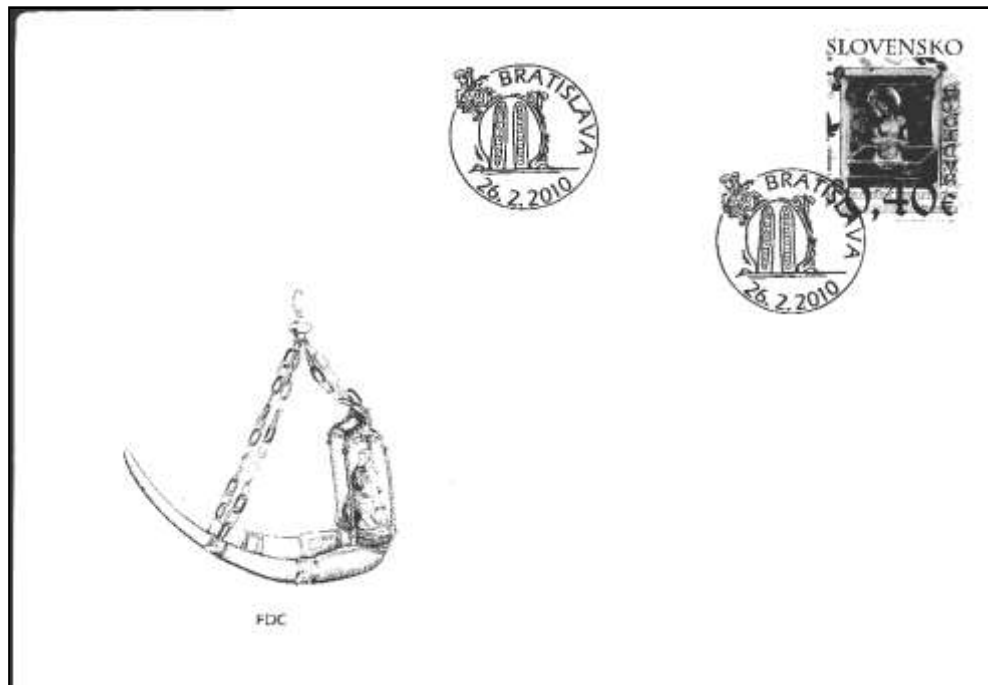
**Designer:** Dušan Kállay  
**Engraver:** Martin Činovský  
**Printing:** DS with offset in sheetlet of 1 stamp with decorative surround. **Design:** a detail, showing Man directly interceding with God, from the Evangelical altar originally in the chapel of Orava Castle but now in the Evangelical church at Necpaly. The stamp (at top of the sheetlet) is surrounded by other decorative details from the altar with a row of town houses and the twin towers of the church at Žilina.

By the beginning of the 17th century a large part of today's Slovakia was Protestant. Under the patronage of Count Georg Thurzo of Betlanovce a Synod was convened in Žilina in 1610, which created a separate church organisation for the Evangelical church. Thurzo built a wooden altar in the chapel of his castle at Orava in 1611 to commemorate the event and to represent his Evangelical faith.

**FDC:** printed in black with commemorative Bratislava cancel. The cachet drawing is a portrait of the Count with his facsimile signature.

## Postal Stationery

### Envelopes



**30 April 2010 (106COB 106/10) Fresco from church of All Saints, Lurdová.** Designer: Rudolf Cigánik. Imprinted 0.40Euro stamp based on a detail of the church fresco. The left portion of the envelope is blank for promotional use.

**30 May 2010 (107 COB 106/10) Photohighway in MG Art Gallery.** Designer of cachet: Marián Čapka. Cachet design is a film clip with various texts and logos of the event. Imprinted 0.40Euro stamp as above. Retail price: 0.57Euros.

### Postcards

**1 April 2010 (178CDV 162/10) Slovak Medallists of XXI Winter Olympic Games.** Design: Ervin Smažák and Jána Sukupa. The medallists Anastasia Kuzminová (gold and silver) and Pavol Hurajt (bronze) shown with their medals. Imprinted T2 50g stamp.

**The following cards have an imprinted 0.40Euro stamp in yellow showing a Gothic seal from Trnava with denomination in blue. Designer Adrián Ferda.**

**30 April 2010 (179CDV 179/10)** Plain card with left portion blank for promotional use.

**10 May 2010 (180CDV 179/10) 60th Anniversary of the Day of Europe.** Design: Adrián Ferda. Portraits of Robert Schuman and Milan Hodža with text and various logos. Retail price 0.50Euros.

**12 May 2010 (181CDV 179/10) 375th Anniversary of University of Trnava.** Design Adrián Ferda. Drawing of the old town of Trnava with relevant text. Retail price 0.50Euros.