



CZECHOUT

JOURNAL OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

VOLUME 42/2

JUNE 2024

WHOLE NUMBER 195



A strong mind in a sound body – the Sokol movement in Czechoslovakia
(see page 9).

Two more titles in our Print-on-Demand series

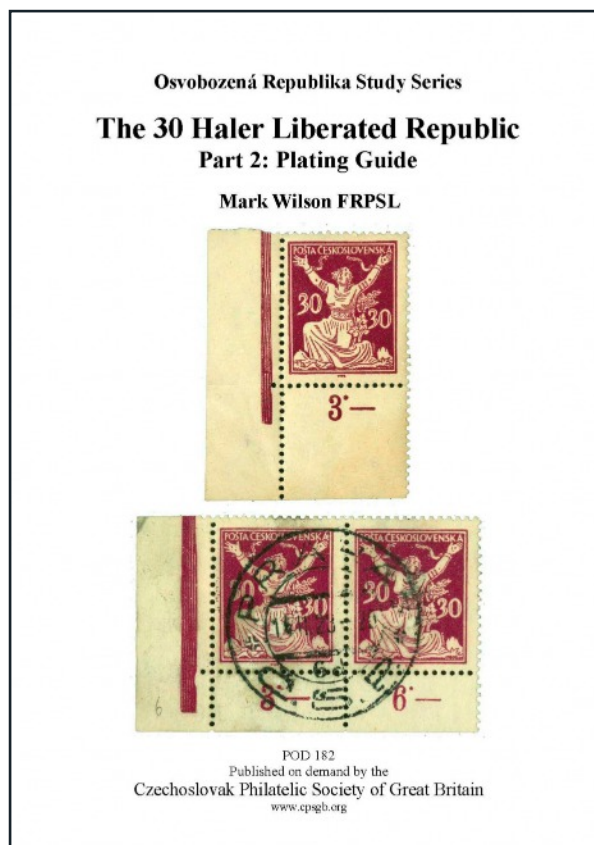
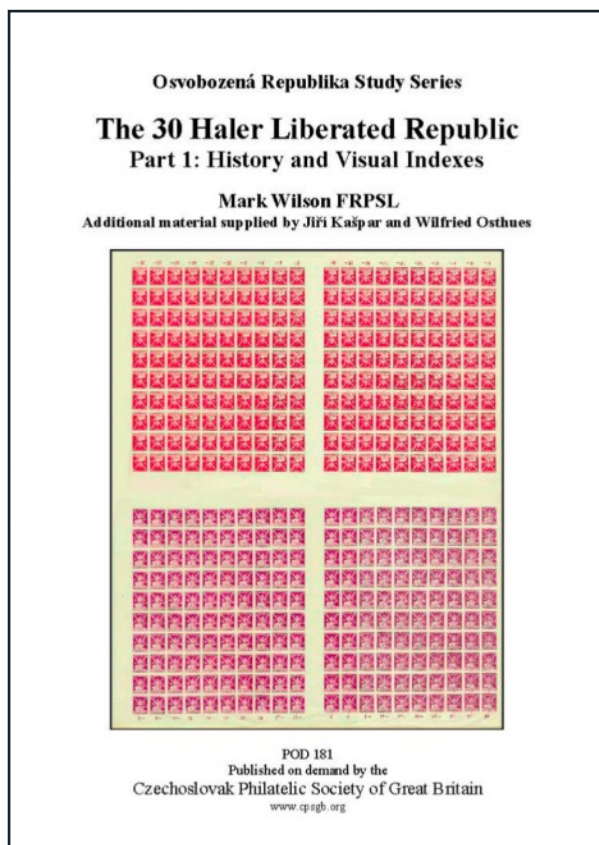
Our newest Print-on-Demand titles (POD 181 and 182) deal with the Liberated Republic 30 haler. Part 1 (24 pages) deals with the stamp's manufacture, postal history, and postal stationery. It also contains the visual indexes to the plating guides in Part 2. Part 2 (60 pages) describes in detail the many flaws found on the issue's eight plates.

The cost for these two titles is as follows (*plus* postage and packing):

POD 181 – The 30 Haler Liberated Republic Part 1: History and Visual Indexes – UK £13; Europe €15.50; USA \$16.50.

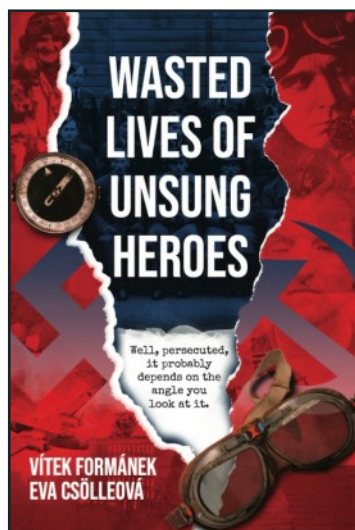
POD 182 – The 30 Haler Liberated Republic Part 2: Plating Guide – UK £25.50; Europe €30; USA \$32.

The closing date for initial orders is 30 June – orders should be sent to the treasurer, Yvonne Wheatley (treasurer@cpsgb.org).



Advertisement

Wasted Lives of Unsung Heroes: Czechoslovakian Pilots of World War II Vítek Formánek and Eva Csölleová



A gripping exploration of overlooked Czechoslovakian pilots in World War II. The book not only honours their heroism against Nazi Germany but also delves into their post-war persecution under communist Czechoslovakia and triumphant freedom with the fall of the Soviet empire. The book intricately weaves together the untold stories of these war heroes, emphasizing the courage and sacrifice that defined their existence. Initially celebrated for their contributions to the war effort, the surviving pilots faced persecution by the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. Navigating through the complexities of their lives, the book reveals the sacrifices they made and a resilience that carried them through tumultuous times. It invites readers to contemplate the profound impact of political ideologies on those who fought for freedom.

Paperback, 252 pages, published 2023 by Sastrugi Press – US\$17.95, ISBN: 978-1-64922-326-5. Also available as an Ebook – US\$7.99. Available on the Sastrugi Press website: <https://www.sastrugipress.com/books/wasted-lives-of-unsung-heroes/>.

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Calling All Members!

The cupboard isn't quite bare yet – but it's getting a little empty ... so **please** think about contributing an article to *Czechout*. It is, after all, **your** Journal. Whatever your interests or expertise, your input is always welcome.

If you are worried about how to put those interests into words, have no fear. The Editor, supported by members of the Committee, is always willing to edit/rephrase/translate as necessary until the article is to your liking. So whether it's the technicalities of the classics, the 'story behind the stamp', or simply the aspects of Czechoslovak philately that got you hooked in the first place, please get in touch.

Tony Holdsworth

Erratum

The report on the November 2023 London Meeting, which appeared on page 4 of the March edition of *Czechout*, contained an unfortunate error – two of the entries for the Kay Goodman Trophy were attributed to the wrong people:

Praga 1962 World Stamp Exhibition should have been attributed to **Wojciech Kierstan**, while *The German Occupation of the Sudetenland* was an entry by **Tony Moseley**.

Many apologies to both Wojciech and Tony.

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Founded 1953. Published quarterly. Free to members. Membership enquiries to Membership Secretary.

On-line membership: UK £12 per year. Overseas £9, €11 or US\$12.

Regular membership: UK £25 per year. Europe and the rest of the world surface mail: £31, €36, or US\$39.

Air mail to the rest of the world excluding Australasia: £35 or US\$44; Australasia air mail £37, US\$46.

Price £3.50 + postage from the Editor.

Advertisers: Contact Advertising Manager for details. **Authors:** Contact Editor for submissions.

Society Website: www.cpsgb.org; **Journal Index:** www.cpsgb.org/pages/a-topics.htm.

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Czechout is printed by Rapidity, London. 020 7689 8686. www.rapidity.com.

News & Notes

Congratulations

Bill Hedley is the recipient of the ABPS Congress Medal for 2024. It is the highest philatelic award in the UK for voluntary services to British philately. His work covers all levels of organized philately. He is the current President of the Federation of European Philatelic Associations and is still active in his local society.

At the Conference of the Society of Postal History **Keith Brandon** was awarded Fellowship status. This is only awarded to members who support the Society by attending meetings and taking part in displays and contributing articles to its journal *Postscript*.

London Meeting in February 2024

As a departure from the usual format, our meeting on 17 February began with an announcement that scans were on display for a presentation by **Alexander J. Kerr**, a member who lives in Scotland and couldn't be with us. The 16 sheets were entitled 'Prague Castle and its Treasures' and documented the first 17 sets of stamps in the series, from 1965 to 1981.

The main event, however, was a presentation by **Lindy Bosworth** on the nationalistic gymnastics movement known as Sokol. Lindy explained that this was based on a portion of a huge collection, which had been sorted and written up as a 'Covid-19 project'.



Lindy points out the finer details of the material on display.

Begun in 1862 by Miroslav Tyrš, who aimed for 'a strong mind in a sound body', with the financial backing of Jindřich Fügner, its growing popularity was seen as a threat by the Austrian authorities. The first Slet, or gathering, was held in 1882, while the second was moved to Český Brod as an alternative to an outright ban.

Although there is little philatelic material for the early period, there were plenty of colourful postcards to see, and during the interwar years the amount of postal history and stationery items produced grew steadily. By 1938 the organization had units worldwide, and the 10th Slet held to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the Czechoslovak state had the theme 'Build and Defend'. War clouds were gathering, however, and Sokol was banned once again under the Nazis.

After WWII the organization continued its stop-start story – the communists soon saw it as a threat and it was

replaced by the Spartakiada games. Other groups set up competing organizations over the years, and Lindy showed material from the Dělnická tělovýchovná jednota (DTJ – Workers Gymnastic Union), the Catholic Church's 'Orel' (eagle) organization, and the Jewish Makabi games. Many of these are still in existence.

With a wealth of illustrative material, this presentation was much appreciated by the members. In his vote of thanks at the end, **Peter Williams** pointed out that the 17th Slet is planned for this summer and details can be found at www.slet2024.cz/en/informace/vse-o-xvii-vsokolskem-sletu. In addition to details on this latest event, the website also has a history of the movement with photos from previous Slets.

See the article on page 9 of this edition of Czechout for an illustrated overview of Lindy's presentation.

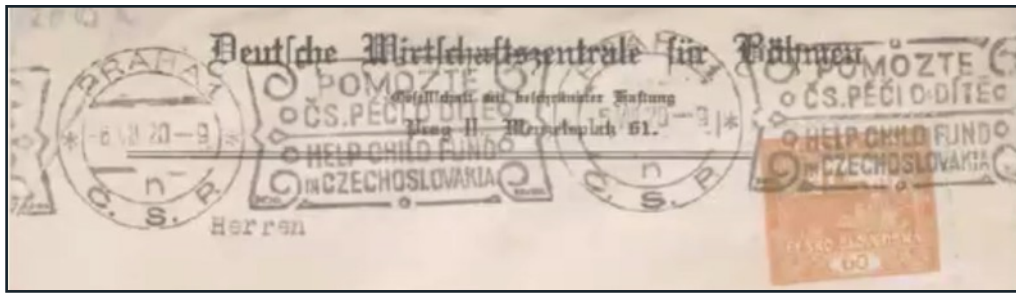
Report **Tony Holdsworth**, photograph **Roger Morrell**

March Zoom

Evidence of the popularity of the subject was reflected in the excellent turnout for **Steven Friedenthal's** zoom presentation on 'Czechoslovakia Machine Advertising Cancels: the First Republic Period', on 6 March.

After setting the scene with a run-down on his very impressive philatelic pedigree, Steven explained that in his presentation the terms 'slogan cancel' and 'advertising cancel' are used synonymously – their purpose is to provide information to the addressee, while also obliterating the stamp. In answer to the question 'why collect them?', he listed some of the many reasons: they illustrate aspects of social, political and cultural history; there is a great deal of variety; they are mostly easy to obtain and relatively inexpensive; and they provide an opportunity for research.

There are three types of advertising cancel: machine cancels, handstamps and meter marks. This presentation focused on the first of these. In the First Republic Period, three different machines were used – most of the slogans were applied by the Krag machine (over 150, plus duplicates to cover the Czech and Slovak languages),



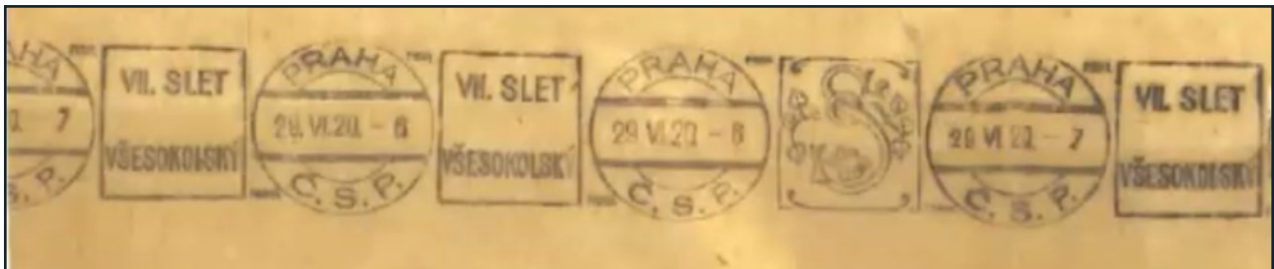
The first Czechoslovak slogan cancel in the First Republic Period ...



... and the last.

four can be attributed to the Universal machine, and one to Ascom-Haslar. The first machine cancel appeared from 1 June to 14 August 1920, to advertise the Help Czechoslovak Children Fund, and the last from 1 February to 25 March 1939, celebrating the Highway Bridge of the Republic.

The first part of the presentation focused on 1920 to 1928 and was entitled 'Building a Nation'. One early cancel, for the 7th Sokol Slet in 1920, had an interesting A – A – B configuration, where the first slogan was repeated, followed by a different text, and then going back to the original. Next came one of Steven's favourite series of cancels – for the Prague Trade Fair, from 1920, 1921 and 1922, and featuring a toy train.

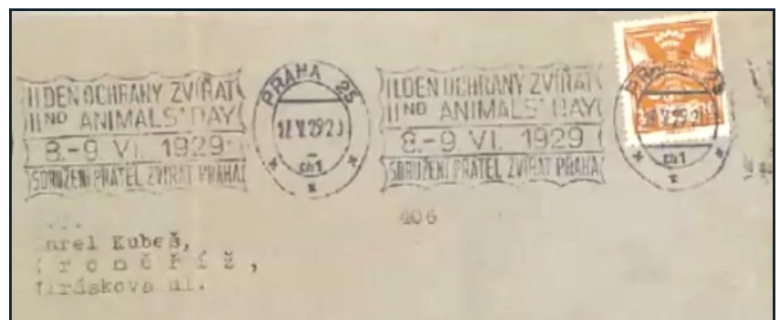


Above – the unusual slogan from the 7th Sokol Slet.

Left – the cancel for the 1920 Prague Trade Fair, featuring toy boats and trains.

Another slide showed the first cancel to be used in both Czech and Slovak versions, exhorting letter writers to 'Always include the address, the street and the house number'. A bilingual Czech and French cancel was used for the Olympic Congress in 1925 – the first advertising cancel to have a concordant stamp issue.

The years 1929 to 1935 were dubbed 'Flourishing Republic' in Steven's presentation. Another favourite from this period was a cancel to mark the 2nd Animals' Day by the Prague Friends of Animals, in 1929. Linked to the stamp issue marking the 1000th anniversary of the martyrdom of St Wenceslas, a cancel was



Slogan cancel for the Second Animal Day in 1929 – bilingual, Czech/English.

produced for the Catholic Orel (Eagles) organization, for the St Wenceslas Day of the Eagle. In many cases, Slovak versions of the cancels appear to be much rarer.

One slide illustrated the ‘Use Airmail Transport’ cancel in both Czech and Slovak – this was used in 47 offices and 20 offices respectively, but the four examples shown for each language were the only ones Steven has seen from these eight offices: Orlová, Holesov, Boskovice and Cheb 2 (Czech), and Turčiansky Svätý Martin, Kežmarok, Nitra and Komárno (Slovak).

Another slide showed four examples of the same cancel (advertising ‘Home Study’ courses) in four different colours. Masaryk’s 85th birthday was a very special occasion in Czechoslovakia, and handstamps and machine cancels to celebrate the occasion are not hard to find. One cover on display, however, carrying the special commemorative stamps, two of the commemorative handstamps, and the machine cancel, is addressed to Shanghai. It travelled to China via the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal.

One slide showed three proofs of different cancels – each was dated over a month before their official launch, but without the usual dater hubs. It’s unclear whether these were produced by the manufacturer of the slogan dies, or by the head post office itself. Another slide showed two almost identical cancels, each carrying the slogan ‘Visit the Bezruc Region, Moravian-Silesian Bezkydy, Know Their Beauty’, except that on one of them the spelling is ‘Bezkydy’ while on the other it is ‘Beskydy’.



One example was included of a bicoloured cancel – this included a red star and was identical on all four of the examples Steven has seen, so both the black and the red must have been printed at the same time. The cover also carries a bicoloured handstamp, with the same red star (advertising the 1938 finals of the Central European Cup).



One of just two bicoloured machine advertising cancels to be recorded to date.

The first cancel designed for use by the breakaway Slovak state was also shown – one example jumped the gun, as it was dated 13 March 1938, the day before the declaration of independence. Finally, examples were shown of the non-Krag cancels.

A section on analytics revealed some significant information about the use of machine cancellations in this period: the most common themes related to fairs and exhibitions; most new cancels were issued in 1935; the total number of slogans used reached a peak between 1935 and 1938; and a smaller Slovak-speaking population, together with only 40 Slovak offices using machine cancels (compared with 120 Czech offices), helps to explain the relative rarity of Slovak examples.

Finally, Steven mentioned some of the literature available on the subject, particularly his e-book, the 10th edition of which can be downloaded from the website of the Society for Czechoslovak Philately (our American sister organization: www.csphilately.net/publications/publications-for-free/cz-machine-slogan-cancels/). In answer to a member's question, Steven explained that he had been attracted to Czechoslovak stamps in the first place, and then became drawn into studying the machine cancels. He admitted that the wording from the cancels that he found most captivating was 'The Day of the Animals'.

Tony Holdsworth

Innovation at The George

On 20 April, with a fine day (and the noise of fans in the George Inn looking forward to the first of the FA Cup semi-finals quietened by closing the windows), **Ron Gillard** gave an innovative display with the full title of *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Births, Deaths and Resurrections through the histories of the Czech Lands, as commemorated through their post*. A number of members attended the meeting. They were able to discuss finds and gather socially before partaking in a good lunch and curiously gazing as Ron was assisted in linking his computer to the large screen in the room.

The innovation was a Powerpoint-type presentation. One of the advantages was that Ron could point out and explain the detail in Czech issues that illustrated his talk. How often have you looked at the design on Czech stamps and First Day Covers and wondered if there was any significance in the design or the illustrations?

Ron presented two parts. The first covered the family of possibly the most famous Czech, Good King Wenceslas. The history of his grandparents and parents, and their conversion to Christianity, were covered before moving on to Wenceslas' death and burial – in the first instance at Stará Boleslav, and subsequently in Saint Vitus Cathedral. Some of the family did appear to be rather dysfunctional, with murder being a way to advance. The tomb, door knocker, crown jewels and Mucha window were all illustrated with examples of Czech stamps and covers.



Ron at the keyboard, telling the story of Good King Wenceslas.

The second section covered Operation Anthropoid and its aftermath, with the destruction of the villages of Lidice and the less well known Ležáky. Both had stamps issued on anniversaries on several occasions after WWII so that their names and populations are remembered rather than erased from history. Again, the events were explained using stamps and miniature sheets. Ron was unsure of one feature on the miniature sheet from 2017, thinking that it may have been a door to a church. Members were able to explain that it was in fact the shot-out window of the church where seven of the Czech soldiers had taken refuge after the assassination attempt. Afterwards members were able to look at the sheets in the traditional method of our displays.

Ron's innovative display using the large screen certainly enhanced his talk as he was able to clearly show the detail in his exploration. When giving displays, often the speaker mentions significant aspects and only waves his hand in the general direction of the particular item of interest, which may leave the member seeking it out when examining the sheets later and possibly failing to find it again.

I would encourage members to consider how this method could enhance their own presentation of displays. The George Inn has the technology and I feel that we could definitely employ it to demonstrate more features of our displays.

Report **Peter Williams**, photograph **Roger Morrell**

May Zoom

Another impressive turnout (25 members and guests from across the globe) enjoyed **Les Ashton-Smith's** presentation on *Alphonse Mucha: his Life and Art*, on 1 May. He started with an explanation: he is a thematic collector with many themes in his collection, and he was drawn to Mucha by his love of art, and a visit to the Mucha Museum in Prague.

Born in Ivančice, Moravia, in 1860, Mucha was devoted to art from an early age. Les recounted how his mother had hung crayons around his neck when he was three years old to cater to his love of drawing. In his twenties he was sponsored to study in Munich and Paris, and when this ceased in 1889 he worked for publishers in Paris. In 1893 he bought a camera and photography became an important element in his creative work. He was a pioneer in the Art Nouveau movement, with its long, sinuous, organic lines, and his breakthrough came in Paris in 1894 when he was asked to contribute an illustration of Sarah Bernhardt for a magazine.

The presentation was illustrated with stamps and other material from around the world, including a great many from Czechoslovakia. This included his own designs, of course, especially the Hradčany stamp – one

example shown was franked 25 haler with two 10 haler stamps and a bisect (which stumped the audience at the end – there were faint memories of having seen one before, but not on cover like this one).

Les mentioned that the Czechoslovak coat of arms, shown on the National Arms stamps of 1929, was designed by Mucha. The Hussite priest stamp of 1920 led to some controversy, as the Bohemian Catholics objected to it – this was perhaps one reason why his design of a girl in traditional costume (used on a postal stationery card for the 1968 PRAGA stamp exhibition) was never used as a postage stamp.

From 1910 to 1928 the cycle of 20 canvases entitled ‘Slav Epic’ dominated his work – he felt it was his masterwork. He also designed jewellery and painted many murals. When the Germans marched into Czechoslovakia in 1938 he was arrested and interrogated, and in 1939 died of pneumonia. He is buried in Vyšehrad.

In conclusion, Les went through his legacy – as a pioneer of Art Nouveau and an important contributor to the national cultural identity of Czechoslovakia. As a thematic collector Les was delighted to find so much material on Mucha – but admitted that you sometimes have to look very hard!

Tony Holdsworth



A strip of Hradčany stamps used on cover in 1919, including a bisect.

A Postcard written by a relative of Josef Rössler-Ořovský?

Yvonne Wheatley

Lubor Kunc kindly wrote to me following my article *The History of Czechoslovakia 1918–1992* in the March 2024 issue of *Czechout* to give me some more information on the card illustrated in Fig. 4 on page 18, which is reproduced here.

Josef Ludvík Rössler was the name of Josef Rössler-Ořovský who was well known for his sporting achievements and his activities in the Olympic movement.. As a student, sports were prohibited so he created the pseudonym Ořovský. His name will be familiar as he produced the scout stamps issued in 1918 for use on the mail collected and delivered by the sea



The printed stationery card that appeared as Fig. 4 in the article on the history of Czechoslovakia.



Rössler-Ořovský wearing his scout uniform.

scouts for government departments. Was this a card from the family business and signed by him? Frederick Lawrence, the well-known authority on the scout stamps, was able to compare the signatures and, alas, they do not match.

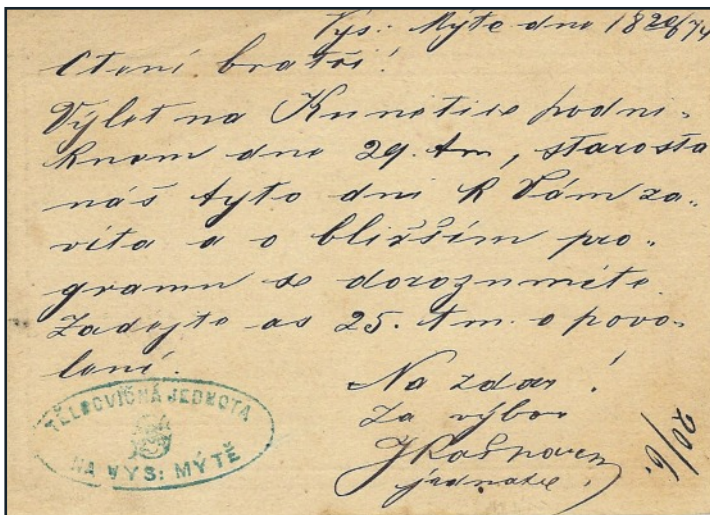
The wholesale company Milde & Rössler of 18/613 Štěpánská Street, Prague 1 was founded by Rössler-Ořovský's father. His son lived at 5/901 Jindřišská Street, Prague 1. The postcard was mailed to Budapest from 901-11. The family company traded in drugs and chemicals. This fits in with the message on the card, dated 28 February 1919: ‘since the export of drugs and chemicals to your country is not permitted your order will be delayed’. However, the card explaining the delay could not be delivered and was returned. The reason was because all the boundaries with Hungary were closed and foreign mail was suspended. This enabled the banknotes within the country to be stamped with a revenue stamp to avoid the rampant inflation experienced in Hungary. Only banknotes bearing the stamp could be used when the boundaries were opened, and thereby the currency could be controlled.

Can anyone confirm that the card is from a relative of Rössler-Ořovský?

Sokol Lindy Bosworth

An overview of the display given to members at our London meeting on 17 February 2024.

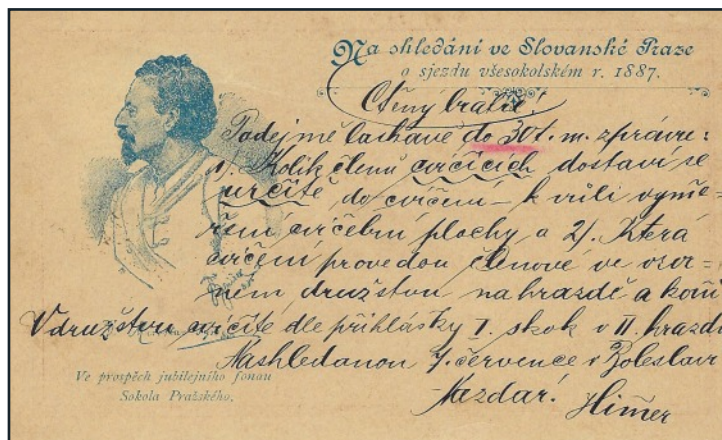
From its early beginnings in 1862 with a handful of members, this egalitarian, non-religious, physical-education movement (which is still active today) became a nationalistic focus for Czechs and Slavs in the struggle for their own identity within the Austrian Empire. The idea of Miroslav Tyrš, one of the co-founders, was to educate the body and spirit through physical activity, in a structured way. His friend and co-founder, Jindřich Fügner, provided funds for the first Sokol-designed gymnasium, which opened in 1863: initially only for men, but later on for youths. In 1869 a ladies' and girls' section opened.



Above – an official postal stationery card sent from Vysoké Myto Sokol unit (see the rubber stamp at bottom left), dated 18 June 1874, to Pardubice Sokol unit. The message begins Čtění bratři! ('Dear brothers') and ends Na zdar! ('Greetings!' or 'Good luck!') – both were typical Sokol forms of address.

Right – a Sokol card illustrating the organization's uniform. The figure carries a linden twig in his hand and the background features a flight of falcons. The image dates from around 1910 and was used for a variety of early Slets.

Below – a privately printed card by ČOS sent from Jungbunzlau/Mladá Boleslav Sokol unit on 28 March 1889 to Bakové/Bakow, arriving the following day. The message at top right reads 'Goodbye to the All Sokol Congress in Slavonic Prague 1887'. Below the portrait of Tyrš (bottom left) it reads 'For the Sokol Jubilee Funds, Prague'.



Although little philatelic material is found from the early days, the history of Sokol can be traced through ephemera and later Sokol-published items, and the many colourful postcards recording their activities. The display presented to CPSGB members included a small part of a much larger collection and was arranged to show how Sokol flourished in the early years in spite of government sanctions and later world events. *Sokol*, the newsletter edited by Tyrš, first appeared in 1871 but was banned from 1873 until 1881. After a twenty-year struggle with the authorities, *Česka obec sokolská* (ČOS – the Czech Sokol Union) was

finally permitted to function in 1889. The authorities had also banned the 2nd Slet (or 'gathering'), which was to be held in Prague in 1887 – as recorded by a printed postcard sent from the Jungbunzlau/Mladá Boleslav Sokol unit to another in Bakové/Bakow with the imprinted message 'Goodbye to the All Sokol Slet in Slavonic Prague!'

During these early years Sokol units were formed throughout the Czech lands, in other Slav lands, and even by migrants to America. The first Slet in 1882 was held in Prague, with gymnastic displays and a parade

of more than 1500 members in traditional and Sokol costumes, and with unit flags and Sokols from abroad. Slets were then to be held every five or six years (when permitted). Subsequent Slets followed an established pattern of events: a welcoming ceremony in Prague; individual, group and massed displays of gymnastic exercises; a parade of members; and a massed finale, usually based on a historic event. By 1907 (the 5th Slet), publicity labels, publicity postcards and photographic cards of Slet events were published. The event was held in the refurbished Letná Stadium (capacity some 65,500 spectators), with women performing exercises for the first time as noted by several postcards. The 50th anniversary of Sokol was celebrated at the 6th Slet, with

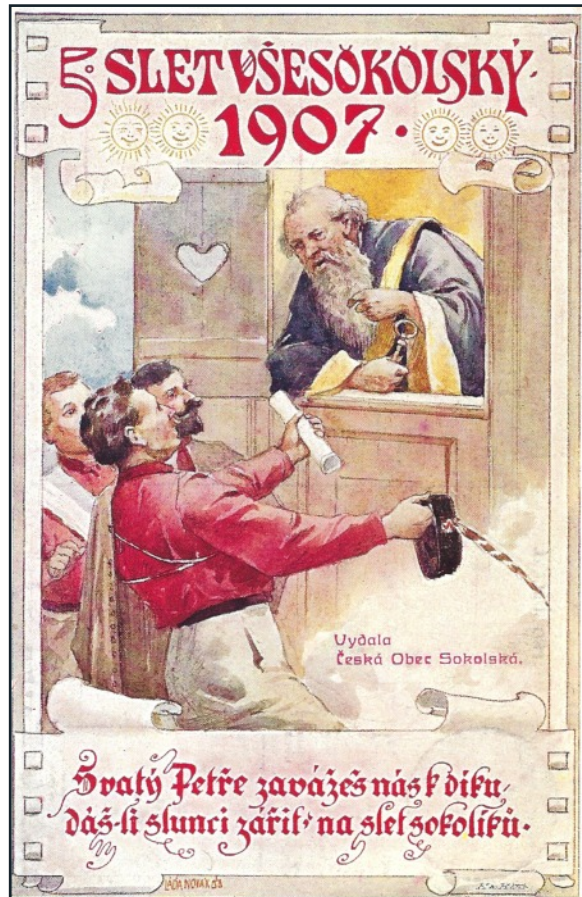


Above – a privately printed postal stationery card with a printed embossed ČOS emblem. The printed messages read ‘Sokol Greetings!’ (top) and ‘Ahead with fortitude!’ (bottom). Sent 25 May 1898 from Prague to Swolenowes/Svoleněves.



IV. Slet všesokolský v Praze 1901.
(Hold Sokolstva král. hlav. městu Praze.)

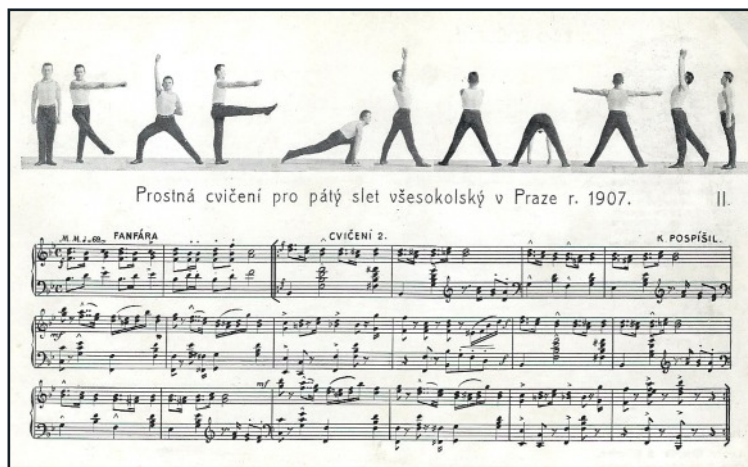
Nákl. Svazu českosl. Sokolstva. - Fot. a reprod. Husník & Häusler v Praze.
Tiskem Al. Wiesnera v Praze.



Above – a ČOS card from the 4th Slet in 1901, showing Sokols paying tribute to the royal city of Prague.

Above right – a ČOS card with the message ‘We are thankful to St Peter when the sun shines on Sokol’.

Right – illustrations for the men’s floor exercises, with the accompanying music, from the 5th Slet in 1907.





Above – a card from the 6th Slet in 1912, celebrating the theme of ‘Marathon’ – original artwork by K. V. Muttich (from a series of at least six cards illustrating the event from Ancient Greece).

Above right – the Women’s Massed Exercise Display at the Strahov Stadium in 1912.



Above – the interwar years: the marchers behind the banner are wearing Sokol uniform (London, 1915).

patriotism and ‘Marathon’ themes, illustrated by colourful cards and depictions of scenes from the enactment of the ancient Greek battle. This was the last Slet before the outbreak of World War I, when the Austrian authorities banned the movement. Sokol survived the turbulent war years, with many Czechs free to promote the movement as they were fighting with the Allies. A hand-drawn card with the Sokol falcon and a silhouette of the Prague skyline produced for the Czech legionnaires in Siberia; a wooden card sent by two Sokol members serving in an Austrian Infantry Regiment to their Sokol unit in Prague; and a London photocard of Sokol members in a demonstration march greeting the Italian entry to the war on the side of the Allies in 1915, all served to illustrate these years.



An artist’s impression of the proposed Tyršův dům, from a series of cards produced in 1922 to raise money for the project. Formerly the site of Michnův Palace, it was largely a ruin when purchased by Sokol. It opened in 1925.

movement – Tyršův dům (Tyrš’ House) – was purchased in 1920: several cards published by ČOS to raise money for the project showed the site and the finished gymnasium interior. The following years, up until 1938, were a ‘golden age’ for Sokol, with increasing membership and activities at home and abroad. The issue of the first overprinted stamps for the 8th Slet in 1926; stamps with some original artwork for the 9th Slet in 1930

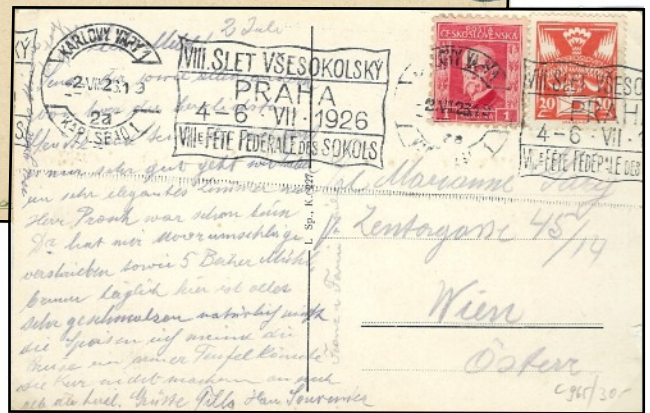
The 7th Slet, held in 1920, was a great celebration for the new republic although financial, accommodation, and food shortage problems threatened its postponement. A deputation from the Corporation of London visited Prague during June and July, recording their impressions in a book (on display at the February meeting), including an account of the Sokol movement and their attendance at some Slet events. The Corporation made monetary donations later, to the poor of Prague, with a larger amount to the starving children of Greater Prague. For the first time, a Prague roller cancel was in use during the week of the Slet. The new Czechoslovak Army gave a display and special days for gatherings of school children and young Sokol members were included. The future site in Prague for the Home of the Sokol



Above – card 10, series 3, from the 7th Slet in 1920. Original artwork by K. Stroffa, showing a falcon flying over Prague carrying banners for each participating nation in its beak. Right – two machine roller cancels from the 8th Slet in 1926. The top one carries a red Sokol imprint, almost hidden by the cancel.

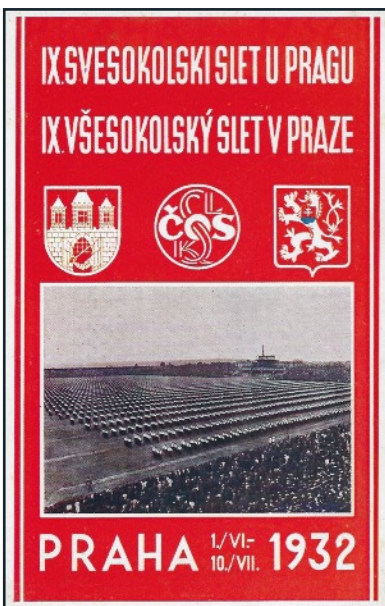


Above – a machine cancel for the 7th Slet, with the ČOS symbol.



commemorating the birth centenary of Tyrš; postal stationery cards, special cancels, publicity labels and postcards, all reflected this increased activity.

The 20th anniversary of Czechoslovakia was celebrated in 1938 with many national events, including the 10th Slet, in Prague's Strahov Stadium. Slet-associated events started at the beginning of June and ended with the massed finale – a 'Build and Defend' tableau – on 6 July. Although much philatelic material was issued,



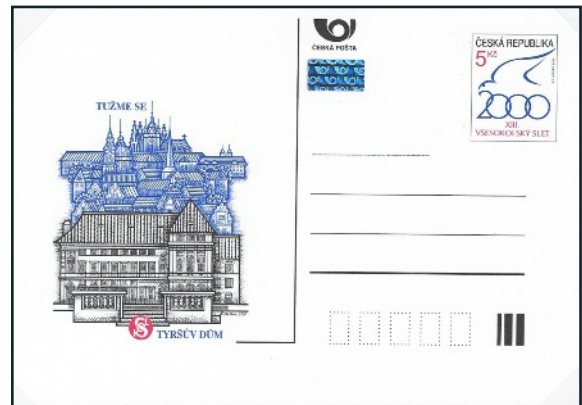
Above – a card in Czech and Slovak, with the coat of arms of Prague Old Town, the ČOS emblem, and the twin-tailed Bohemian lion. The photo shows a men's massed gym exercise (from the 9th Slet).



Left – 20 years of the Czechoslovak Republic. Young Sokol member with outstretched arms over a map of the country. Three Legionnaires from WWI (Italian, French and Russian), together with the Czechoslovak Army, ready to defend their country. Sent with a Sokol commemorative Autopošta and Slet cancel dated 26 June 1938 (below left) to České Budějovice.



Right – programme for the 1943 Sokol Exhibition in London, held at the Czechoslovak Institute from 23 October to 4 November. Far right – card designed by Štefan Kostelniček for the 11th Slet in 1948, using typical Czech folk motifs and colours, with the ČOS symbol at the centre.



Right – a modern postal stationery card issued for the 13th Slet in 2000. The Sokol motto, 'Exert yourself', appears above a panorama of Prague (in blue) and the Tyršův dům.

the uneasy political situation could be seen through the subject matter of postcards displayed. World War II and the occupation of Czechoslovakia saw Sokol banned, with its property confiscated and leaders incarcerated. Again, Sokol survived as shown by items issued for the Czechoslovak Sokol Exhibition held in London in November 1943. After the liberation of Czechoslovakia in 1945, the spirit and ideals of Sokol quickly emerged as seen by a souvenir sheet with commemorative cancel for the Tyrš Games, held in Prague in September 1945. The Sokol organizers planned for the next Slet (the 11th) to be held in 1948. Money was raised through a plethora of publicity labels, souvenir/commemorative sheets, quantities of postcards, postal stationery, stamps and commemorative cancels. One set of 12 postcards produced by ČOS was issued in 11 different languages. However, dark political clouds loomed as the new Communist government of 1948 banned the Slet. Arrangements were too far advanced, so the Slet did take place – for the last time until the 'Velvet Revolution' in 1989 changed the political situation once more. Sokol was again a banned organization between 1948 and the fall of the Communist regime.

After 1989, the Czechoslovak Sokol Organization (ČOS) had many problems including money, recruitment of young people, and changing attitudes within society. It was decided to hold Slets in Prague every six years from the 12th Slet in 1994, with a shorter programme of events to include competitions, massed displays,



Postcards advertising Slets in Bulgaria (left) and the USA.

and sporting, cultural and social events for all participants. The opening ceremony was attended by President Havel and the bells of Prague pealed over the city. The next Slet – the 17th – is to be held in 2024.

A selection of postcards and other items illustrated the activity of Sokol organizations in other countries, including Austria, France, England, Russia, Yugoslavia and the United States of America.

Finally, a brief glimpse focused on other organizations which have been based on Sokol principles. The Dělnická tělovýchovná jednota (DTJ) – Workers Gymnastic Union – was formed in Prague in 1897 as a more accessible organization for the working man than Sokol. In 1902 they held their first exhibition in Prague, and in 1921 their first Olympiad gathering took place in



Above – machine roller cancel for the 1st DĚlnická (Workers’) Olympiada at the Letna Stadium, 12–19 June 1921.
 Left – card designed by J. Čížek for the same event.

Prague with participating athletes from several European countries competing and giving displays. Choral recitals, political plays, artistic displays, and massed singing of revolutionary songs was included in the programme. Philatelic items were produced, including publicity labels, postal stationery cards and roller cancels to advertise the Olympiads. The final Olympiad in Prague was held in 1934. DTJ did not survive in Czechoslovakia after 1945.

The Catholic Church supported the ČOS, in spite of its non-religious policy. In 1896 a Catholic Trades Union established a gymnasium in Prague, followed by more in other areas of the Czech lands. These were called Catholic Sokol Gyms initially, but the name was changed to ‘Orel’ (eagle) in 1909. The first Orel Slet was held in 1912 and the organization prospered, taking root in other Catholic countries. It is still active today, with some 250 local units in the Czech Republic.



Regional Orel Slet, Plzen, 1927. The emblem is similar to that of ČOS, but in blue and with a cross.



Makabi card issued to commemorate 50th anniversary of the Zionist Organization (1897–1947). Karlovy Vary 1 cancel, 12 August 1947. Sent to Litovel (near Olomouc); inland postcard rate 1 K 20 as franked. The front of the card has the logo of the organization.

Makabi, the Jewish Gymnastic Sports Association, began as a collection of many isolated clubs. The Makabi World Union was founded at the 12th World Jewish Congress held in Karlovy Vary in 1921, with a regional Makabi Games in Prague in 1929, and a world winter event in 1936 at Banská Bystrica. Since 1932, the international Makabi Games have been held in territory that is now Israel. The Games are held every four years, in the year following an Olympic Games.

In 1921 an International Association of Red Sports and Gymnastics Associations (known as Red Sports International – RSI) was established as a Communist-supported sports association to rival existing ‘bourgeois’, social democratic organizations. It held three international Spartakiada events (1928, 1931

and 1937) after which it was dissolved during The Great Terror Campaign in Russia. After the 1948 Communist coup in Czechoslovakia, which banned the Sokol organization, the authorities introduced Spartakadia meetings similar to the Sokol Slets. They took place in Prague every five years from 1955, with the final event in 1990. Once again, postcards, postal stationery cards, stamps, and commemorative cancels were issued.

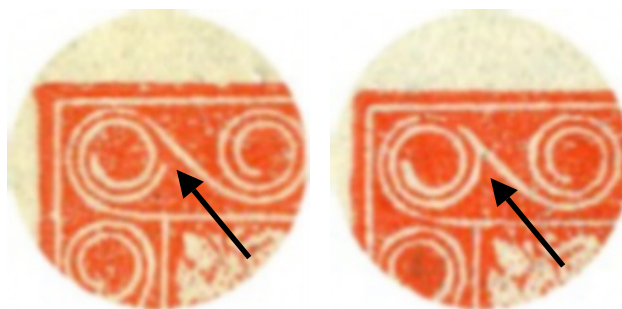
Right – postal stationery card CDV 152 number 5 (from a set of 12) issued 3 January 1965 for the 3rd Spartakiada, Prague. Uprated with additional 30 haler stamp for the foreign postcard rate of 60 haler, showing children’s exercise from the second issue of stamps to support the event. Commemorative cancel dated 24 May 1965.



Corrections in the Hradčany ‘abstract design’ Johan Sevenhuijsen

Sometimes it is possible to make new discoveries with stamps that have been in your collection for many years. That happened to me recently. I have been working for some time with Jiří Krnak (from the Czech Republic) on the postal stationery with the stamp image of the 10 and 20 haler of the Hradčany abstract design. In doing so, he also asked me to take a look at the blackprints from my collection. This led to an interesting discovery, solving an issue that has long been a mystery.

As is well known, these particular stamps of the abstract design feature the so-called spiral types and also the dove types. These are two features in the design that are present on all stamps in the negative of all values, but were corrected at a later stage on some of the plates made from them. In those corrections, the 4th spiral (counting clockwise from the bottom left) was closed. This was forgotten on some stamps, resulting in sought-after pairs of spiral types – one corrected and one uncorrected. Closing a gap in the white line above the right dove created the dove types, although this too was carried out inconsistently.



Spiral types before and after correction



Dove fault before and after correction

In principle, such a correction can be done at various stages of making the printing plate – by touching up the print of the negative on the plate, for example, before the plate is etched. But it is also possible to make those corrections when the plate is ready: then some metal has to be taken out of the plate with a needle or a small gouge to draw a white line through the raised metal. After all, this is typographic (relief) printing, where the higher-lying metal parts are printed in colour, and the lower-lying parts in the print remain white. Which technique was used in practice was hitherto unknown, but now I can show that the corrections were only made at the final stage before printing, in the etched plate.

Below are two examples that demonstrate this. Both are based on blackprints that were made as proofs of the plate before they were corrected.



Fig. 1 – a blackprint proof for the 5 haler Hradčany (left) and the blue-green stamp printed from the same plate.



Fig. 2

The first case (Fig. 1) involves a 5 haler stamp: position 41 on plate III. This has clear plate characteristics, including the T of POŠTA extended on the left. In the blackprint the 4th spiral is clearly still open – on the stamp it is closed.

The second example (Fig. 2) is a 20 haler stamp: position 13 on plate II. The features are a little less clear here, but a dot on the upper frame line between O and Š and the damage to the right frame line behind the dove's tail are clear, as is the pattern of dots in the sky. Again, the 4th spiral is open in the blackprint and closed on the stamp, but here the dove fault has also been corrected.

A pleasing third example (Fig. 3) was presented to me by Jiří Krnak. This is a 15 haler stamp: position 18 on plate I. The features are a break in the oval above the 1, a dash below the A of MUCHA, and a notch in the left framing line at the bottom. Again, the final stamp clearly has both the spiral closed and the dove fault restored.



Fig. 3

The process of producing stamps by typographic printing involves a number of steps, and correcting flaws in the design can be made at several stages:

1. The original design is reproduced 100 times and arranged in a grid following the layout of the final plate
2. A negative is made from this, carrying the image of the complete plate. Corrections at this stage are possible in principle, but as the negative is fragile they would be highly impractical. Such correction would impact all plates subsequently made from that negative.
3. The image on the negative is transferred to the metal plate, which has a layer of light-sensitive material. The exposed areas, after 'developing', become an insoluble layer that protects the plate at that location. It is possible at that stage to apply additional protection, or to remove the protective layer in certain places, to correct errors. Just the plate in question, not other plates made from the same negative, are affected by such an intervention.
4. The plate is then etched with acid, leaving the protected parts in place and dissolving the surrounding parts. This creates a typographic plate. When ink is applied to it, the image of the higher parts will be transferred to the paper – the rest remains white.
5. The first print of such a new plate is usually a proof (in black) to properly assess the result. Corrections can then be made, especially by removing metal. This leads to colour being replaced by white in the print at that point. Adding metal to make white parts print in colour is practically impossible.
6. After these possible corrections, the plate is ready to be used in the regular stamp printing process.

Correcting the two design errors discussed here involves extending white lines that were wrongly interrupted. The fact that the interruptions are still present in the blackprints, while they have been corrected on the stamps, shows conclusively that these corrections were made by removing metal after the plate was etched .

This article previously appeared in POŠTA ČESKO-SLOVENSKÁ, Spring 2024, the journal of the Vereniging voor Tsjechoslowakije-filatellie in the Netherlands, and appears here by kind permission of the author.

Czechoslovak stamps at the Strumień post office - a discovery after 105 years?

Jan Kypast

Translated by Tony Holdsworth

The town of Strumień (German *Schwarzwasser*) is located on the northern border of Těšín, Silesia, and during the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and later Poland, it was the seat of a district court.



Map of Těšín Silesia showing the region fought over by Poland and Czechoslovakia during the Seven-Day War. Strumień is marked at the top right, and the red line indicates the battle line on 25 February 1919.

During the Czechoslovak-Polish conflict in January 1919, and after the ceasefire of 1 February 1919, the town came under Czechoslovak administration. Czechoslovak stamps were delivered to the post office.



Detail from a postcard showing the post office at Strumień/Schwarzwasser.

The following information was published by Vladimír Feldmann as early as 1981 (!), but it's only now that collectors can be presented with concrete proof. Czechoslovak Hradčany stamps have been seen from the post offices of Těšín 1, Zebrzydowice, Ustroń, and now there are postage-due stamps from the post office in Strumień.

The Czechoslovak Postal Administration was apparently trying to start postal operations in the newly occupied territory and, as a proof of Czechoslovak sovereignty, to put Czechoslovak stamps into circulation. From the occupied Polish territory, Czechoslovak payroll and postage-due stamps are known from places such as Strumień, Ustroń and others.

From 'MIŠKOVEC in Czech-Slovakia' published in *Filatelie* 14/1981 on page 443.



*The money order clipping sold at auction on the Milan Černík website
(there is a link to his site at www.cpsgb.org/pages/links.htm)*

An inconspicuous clipping of a money order (in German) appeared recently at an important auction of postal history and postal stationery. Franked with a 60 heller Austrian arms stamp and a 20 heller Austrian Charles I, it was sent from the BRNO 4 post office on 22 February 1919 to the Strumień post office, where an additional 20 haler stamp of the Mucha postage-due issue was used as a delivery stamp, cancelled with the German/Polish bridge handstamp SCHWARZWASSER, BZ. BIELITZ STRUMIEN, dated 24.II.1919. The speed of the mail from Brno to Strumień was amazing – 48 hours. The following day the Czechoslovak troops had to leave the town.

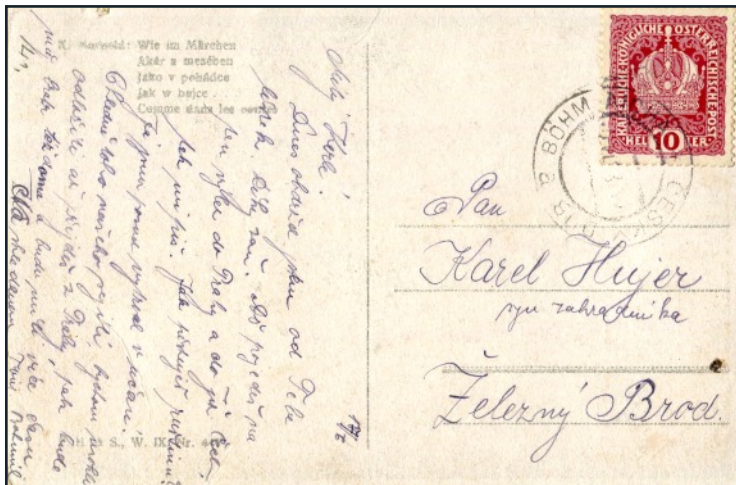
This is the first documented and published use of a Czechoslovak definitive postage-due stamp at any of the post offices from present-day Poland. Collectors of Hradčany stamps, and now of postage-due stamps, should search their collections and report any further finds. All of the surviving stamps, even if off piece, are rare and each find is worth publication.

This article has previously appeared in Merkur-Revue in December 2023 and appears in this English translation with kind permission of the author.

Karel Hujer: postcards from the realm of stars Dr. Tomáš Duchoň

By linking postal material to a historic entity, be it a place, a person or any other subject, social philately offers a uniquely personal window into the past. The virtues of the approach shine especially brightly when three conditions are met: the subject is of general interest; the subject generates a critical mass of postal material; and the postal material has been preserved. The value inherent in the conjunction of the three points is wonderfully illustrated in the person of Karel Hujer.

Karel was born in 1902 in the small town of Železný Brod, in what was then the Habsburg empire. He witnessed the approach of Halley's Comet in 1910 and remained forever enchanted by the unfolding universe, destined to become an astronomer. This fascination took him from the High School in Turnov, where he walked barefoot in order to save his shoes, to the largest telescope in the world, at the Mount Wilson Observatory in California. Along the way, he took up menial jobs, washing dishes in a London restaurant or checking resistance coils in a Chicago factory, until his lectures became popular enough to sustain his other passion, that of travelling. And travel he did – to the farthest corners of the world and back. But what is most important for us is that in doing so, he met people. He befriended the great French astronomer Nicolas Camille Flammarion, he dined with Romain Rolland in his cottage above Lake Geneva, he was the guest of Mahatma Gandhi in Wardha, and he asked Albert Einstein to write in his journal.



Two of Hujer's postcards – one addressed to him in Železný Brod (left) and the other in London.



To keep in touch with all his connections, Karel wrote letters and postcards in abundance. His scientific rigor then led him to archive these carefully. He labelled postcards with the date and place he received them and made copies of letters he was sending. That is why many still survive today. But what Karel perhaps did not realize on his frequent trips to the post office was that he was, in essence, writing his autobiography. All the postal material tracks his position in time and space and gives commentary on the tumultuous first half of the 20th century. And he had a lot to say, from the vantage point of a well-travelled man who saw his home country of Czechoslovakia rise out of the ashes of the Habsburg monarchy only to be crushed under the heel of the Third Reich and subsequently fettered by the Soviet Union. It was the latter that barred him from ever properly returning home, and in his absence he was slowly forgotten.

But we believe his story should be remembered, the way he himself wrote it. That is why we embarked on a project to catalogue and archive Karel Hujer's postcards. The collection, now spanning over 300 postcards, chronicles the journeys of this astronomer extraordinaire, and presents a distinctly personal, historical view. It is accessible at historyinpostcards.com/hujer/.

But there are still many threads of his story to be woven. Perhaps your collection includes a missing piece of the puzzle? If that's the case, please send a scan of your philatelic item to me by email, at duchon@historyinpostcards.com. Thank you in advance!

After Validity Use of Hungarian Stamps and Postal Stationery in Czechoslovakia, 1919–1920

Robert Lauer

I must say that I thoroughly enjoyed Lubor Kunc's presentation on *Czechoslovak Postal History: 1918–1919* at the society's May 2023 Zoom meeting. Lubor's detailing of how the February/March 1919 Czech monetary reform was undertaken, and how the invalidation of Austrian and Hungarian postage stamps on 28 February 1919 fit into this process, was particularly fascinating. Tony Holdsworth's precis of Lubor's presentation in the September 2023 issue of *Czechout* had me going back to take another look at Lubor's slides on the CPSGB website.

Lubor made the observation that the invalidation of the old Austrian and Hungarian stamps was not always strictly enforced and the third slide, section 7, of his presentation illustrates a Hungarian postal money order sent from Liptovský Svätý Mikuláš (Liptószentmiklós) to Košice (Kassa) in March 1919 franked with a combination of Hungarian, Hradčany and Czechoslovak postage due stamps as evidence [1]. For some reason, I have always had an interest in the use of postage when and where it should not have been used. So, this sent me searching through my own collection for examples of this phenomenon.

From my experience, examples of 'after validity' use of Hungarian postage is not particularly common. In my own collection, I have 74 items with Hungarian stamps or postal stationery used in post-independence Czechoslovakia and only three of these were used after invalidation [2]. The first of these is a postal money order for 800 K sent from Liptovská Teplá (Liptótepla) on 12 March 1919, franked with 1 K 10 in Hungarian stamps (illustrated in Fig. 1).



Fig. 1: a Hungarian postal money order cancelled Liptótepla on 12 March 1919, franked with a 1 K Parliament and a 10 fillér Károly.

In our article *The Usage of Hungarian Stamps and Postal Stationery in Early Czechoslovakia*, in the September 2016 issue of *Czechout*, Johan Sevenhuijsen and I also showed a postal money order sent from Banská Bystrica to Prague on 10 March 1919 franked with a 1 K Hungarian stamp. In each of these cases, the continued use of Hungarian stamps in early to mid-March was probably a function of a shortage of Czechoslovak stamps in these smaller post offices.

While Austrian and Hungarian postage stamps were only valid until 28 February 1919, the old postal stationery remained valid until 15 October 1919, with the old and new currencies remaining at par. The uprated Hungarian postal stationery card in Fig. 2 was sent from Harmanec (Hermánd) to Fürth, Bavaria, in Germany on 23 October 1919. The domestic postcard rate in effect from 15 May 1919 until 14 March 1920 was 15 halér, and mail to the constituent parts of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire and Germany was handled at domestic rates until the end of this rate period. Therefore, the 10 fillér indicium of this postal stationery card was indeed counted in the franking of the card, as there is no evidence of any postage due being required. In our article in the September 2016 issue of *Czechout* Johan and I showed another Hungarian 10 fillér postal stationery card uprated with a 5 halér (Design I) Hradčany sent from Nemecká Lupča (Németlipcse) to Piešťany (Pöstyén) on

9 November 1919. Again, the then current 15 haler postcard rate meant that the Hungarian 10 fillér indicium was included in the postage paid here as well. I suspect in these cases, local postal clerks were just giving their neighbours an unofficial grace period by looking the other way.



Fig. 2: a 10 fillér Hungarian postal stationery card uprated with two 3 haler Hradčany sent from Harmanec to Fürth, Bavaria on 23 October 1919.

The Hungarian postal stationery card in Fig. 3 has again been uprated with a 5 haler (Design I) Hradčany, so again the 10 fillér indicium has been counted in the franking. This card is the latest example of 'after validity' use of Hungarian postal stationery that I have seen and the only one that I know of that's late enough to have been cancelled by one of the newly issued C.S.P. cancellers. This card was sent from Lednické Rovne (Lednicróna) to Humpolec in Bohemia on 6 January 1920, almost 3 months after the indicium on the Hungarian postal stationery card was invalidated!



Figure 3: a 10 fillér Hungarian postal stationery card uprated with a 5 haler Hradčany sent from Lednické Rovne to Humpolec, Bohemia, on 6 January 1920.

Notes:

1. The other item that had Hungarian stamps used after the date of Czechoslovak independence, which Lubor showed and Tony used as an illustration in his precis of Lubor's presentation, is a Hungarian

postal money order franked with two Magyar Posta Harvester stamps sent from Dolné Strháre (Alsóesztergály) on 29 June 1919. Taped to the front of the money order is a note explaining that the transfer of funds had been delayed almost a month by ‘the military situation’ in the area. The military situation to which the note refers was the Hungarian Red Army’s Northern Offensive against the Czech forces in Slovakia, which began on 20 May 1919. By the middle of June 1919, the Hungarian Red Army had overrun the area of Slovakia indicated by the light red shading on the map below. The Hungarian Red Army established a puppet government in Prešov – the so-called ‘Slovak Soviet Republic’.



On 13 June 1919, French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau sent memoranda proposing:
 ... to invite representatives from the Hungarian Soviet Republic to participate in the peace conference if the government ordered the withdrawal of Hungarian Red Army troops from areas retaken from the Czecho-Slovak military forces in the course of the Northern Offensive. The [Béla] Kun-led government agreed to this proposal over the vigorous objections of [the] Hungarian Red Army Chief..., signing an armistice with the Czecho-Slovaks on 23 June [1919] and beginning the withdrawal stipulated in the Clemenceau memoranda on 30 June [1919]. The Slovak Soviet Republic collapsed following the Hungarian Red Army’s withdrawal from the region on 7 July [1919]. [2]

Dolné Strháre (Alsóesztergály) is right on the Hungarian-Slovak border between Rimaszombat (Rimavská Sobota) and Érsekújvár (Nové Zámky) on the map above and on 29 June 1919 would have been deep within the territory occupied by the Hungarian Red Army. On 23 July 1919, when the note taped to the front of the money order was postmarked, the Czechoslovak authorities would have reestablished control over the area, allowing the funds to be transferred. This is a wonderful piece of postal history!

2. I would be most interested in the proportion of items with after validity use of Hungarian stamps or postal stationery in the collections of other members. I can be reached at robertlauer59@gmail.com.

References:

1. Tony Holdsworth, May Zoom Meeting, *Czechout*, September 2023, Number 192 (Vol. 41/3).
2. Lubor Kunc, Czechoslovak Postal History 1918–1919 – Presentation for the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of Great Britain, 20 May 2023 (www.cpsgb.org/pages/zoom.htm).
3. Robert Lauer and Johan Sevenhuijsen, The Usage of Hungarian Stamps and Postal Stationery in Early Czechoslovakia, *Czechout*, September 2016, Number 164 (Vol. 34/3).
4. The Hungarian Soviet Republic – <https://theorangefiles.hu/the-hungarian-soviet-republic/>.

Cooperation Agreement with the Society for Czechoslovak Philately

Check out our sister organization, the Society for Czechoslovak Philately, at their website: www.csphilately.net and through their Treasurer, Marisa Galitz at mmgalitz@gmail.com. Their publication the *Specialist* and our *Czechout* have little duplication in content. In addition, under an agreement the two societies have arranged for payment of your SCP subscription to our CPSGB Treasurer without your having to worry about foreign currency or sending it to the US. So why not have more fun? Become a member of both societies!

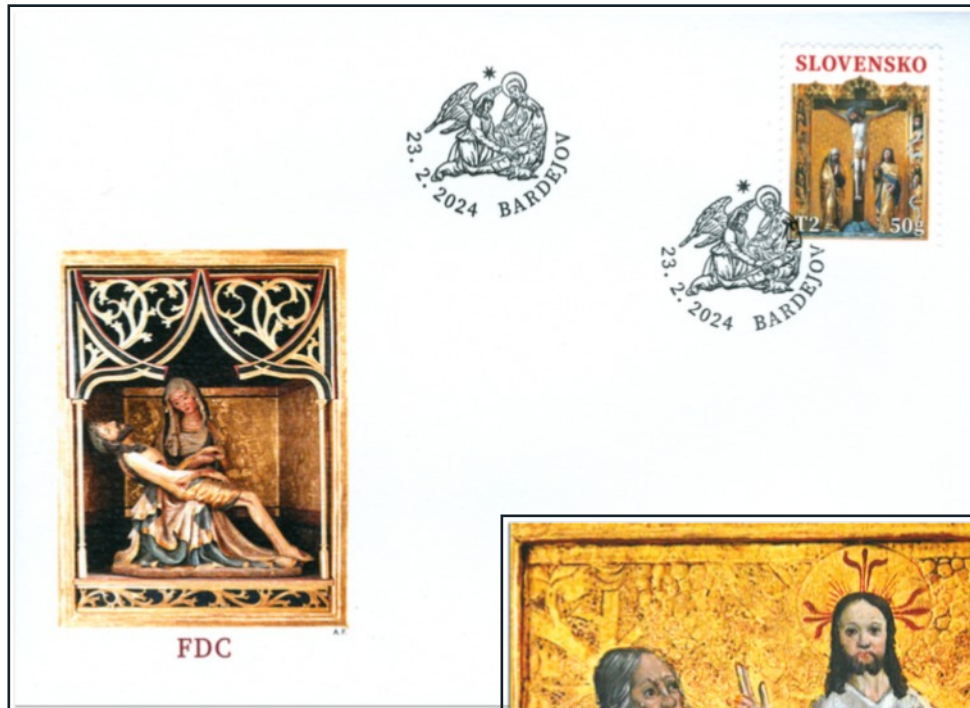


New Issues – Slovak Republic
Lindy Bosworth

Images and text adapted from
www.pofis.sk/en/catalog/products

23 February 2024

Easter 2024: The Altars of St Giles Basilica Minor, Bardejov – NVI ‘T2 50g’ (POFIS 812); Booklet (POFIS 106 ZZ 812/24); and Pictorial Postcard (POFIS 037 CPO 812/24)



Left – the First Day Cover, with a pietà from one of the altar pieces of the Basilica of St Giles.

Below – the pictorial postcard showing Christ the King being adored by Old Testament prophets.



Bardejov in the Šariš region became a royal free town in the 14th century because of its importance as a centre of trade with Poland. In 1206, a monastery had been established by Cistercian monks. A church dedicated to St Giles was under construction by the mid-14th century with three aisles and four chapels, containing eleven original Gothic winged altars which have survived. These altar pieces were gifts from the local guilds, donated between 1440 and 1510. The stamp design is from the altar of the Holy Cross dating from 1480. The pictorial postcard depicts Old Testament prophets adorning the altar cabinets. The church was altered over the centuries and rebuilt 1878 to 1898 after a disastrous fire which almost destroyed the town. In 1970 the church was declared a national cultural monument. The church was proclaimed a Basilica Minor by Pope John Paul II in 2000, the same year that Bardejov was included on the UNESCO World and Cultural Heritage List.

21 March 2024

400th anniversary of the Benedictine Abbey at Skalka, near Trenčín – NVI 'T1 100g' (POFIS 813)



The maximum card, showing the interior of the Abbey at Skalka looking towards the original cave.

The ruins of the abbey lie on the right bank of the river Váh, below the steep walls of a limestone crag. The abbey was an extension to a cave in the rock where a monk called Benedict is said to have lived as a hermit in the 11th century. The early history and structure of the abbey is uncertain, but after the Jesuits acquired it in 1644 it fell into disuse. The chapel was rebuilt and reconstructed several times. The only part in use today is the three-floor chapel with a medieval portal forming an entrance to the cave.

5 April 2024



Personalities: Anna Jurkovičová (POFIS 814)

Anna Jurkovičová (1824–1905) was the first Slovak actress to appear on stage taking the part of a female in the amateur theatre of western Slovakia. She was the daughter of a teacher, Samuel Jurkovič, who founded and organized the first amateur theatre group in Sobotište – the Slovak National Theatre of Nitra. Anička, as she was known, was well educated and saw the theatre as a means of spreading the patriotic ideas of her father. In 1841 she made her debut, acting with the students of Ľudovít Štúr, the writer, politician, newspaper editor, and founder of the common Slovak written language standard. After her marriage to Jozef Miloslav Hurban, a follower of Štúr, she supported her husband's work and cared for their nine children. Since 1998 the Anička Jurkovičová Festival has been held for amateur theatre groups and ensembles mapping the role of women in society, with a prize awarded to a female artist who significantly contributes to Slovak theatre.



New Issues – Czech Republic Lindy Bosworth

Images and text adapted from
www.postaonline.cz/eshopfilatelie/listProducts.html?request_locale=en

14 February 2024



The miniature sheet,
 with the stamps
 illustrating
 Vyšehrad (NVI 'A'),
 From Bohemia's
 Woods and Fields
 (NVI 'E'), and
 Vltava (NVI 'Z').

Bedřich Smetana's Works – NVI 'A' (POFIS 1243), NVI 'E' (POFIS 1244), NVI 'Z' (POFIS 1245)

Bedřich Smetana (1824–1884) played violin and piano from an early age – although his father was opposed to him following a musical career, he did study in Prague. His first post was as music master to the family of Count Thun, but later he set up his own music school. After some years in Sweden teaching, conducting, composing, and giving recitals, he returned to Prague to open another music school, and became conductor of the Hlahol choral society. In 1874 he became deaf but continued composing. This set of stamps refers to three of his well-known works: *Vysehrad*, a musical picture of the rock massif in Prague, which is a national symbol; *From Bohemia's Woods and Fields*, which he composed in the countryside near Trosky Castle; and *Vltava (Die Moldau)*, which depicts the river from its source, as it gathers size and strength flowing through the Czech lands. The motifs decorating the sheet margins (POFIS A1243) refer to typical folk embroidery seen in cornflower blue on men's white linen waistcoats from Litomyšl, where Smetana was born.

Karel Loprais – NVI ‘E’ (POFIS 1246), NVI ‘Z’ (POFIS 1247)



Karel Loprais (1949–2021) began working at Tatra, Kopřivnice in 1967, later becoming one of the truck company’s test drivers. In 1986 he competed in the Dakar Rally driving a Tatra B15 truck for the first time. Over the following years he competed 19 times, gaining the title six times with four second places. After his second victory in 1996 he became known as *Monsieur Dakar*. The Dakar Rally has been an annual event since 1978, although from 2009 to 2019 it was held in South America and since 2020 has been held in Saudi Arabia. The rally is an off-road endurance test for typical off-road vehicles, including motorcycles, and their drivers. Besides the Dakar Rally, Loprais participated successfully in other long distance endurance rallies (the Paris–Moscow–Beijing Rally, the *Master Rallye* and the UAE Desert Challenge), was elected Czech Motor Sport athlete of the Century in 2007, receiving the Golden Steering Wheel Award for a lifelong contribution to Czech motor sport in the same year, and in May 2011 was appointed Government Commissioner for Road Safety. He died from COVID-19 complications in 2021. The background to the miniature sheet accompanying the stamps (POFIS A1246 – see back cover) is a simplified map of the Paris–Dakar Rally, with one stamp showing the 1988 winning Tatra 815 truck and the other showing a portrait of Loprais at the wheel of a modified Puma Tatra truck.

Personalities: Jiří Šlitř (POFIS 1248)

The issue commemorates the birth centenary of Jiří Šlitř (1924–1969), a songwriter, pianist, actor, comedian, and painter. After WWII he graduated as a lawyer from Charles University but never practised, gaining the nickname *Dr Piano* when performing. He founded the Czechoslovak Dixieland Jazz Band in 1948, and toured with several theatre ensembles as a pianist. In the 1960s he influenced the Czech pop music and theatre scenes, together with his



friend and fellow

artiste Jiří Suchý, whom he met in 1957. They worked together from 1959 at the newly formed Semafor Theatre for many years. Šlitř appeared in his last film *Zločin v šantánu* (Crime in the Night Club) in 1968, and died prematurely in unexplained circumstances on 26 December 1969. The stamp was designed by his friend Jiří Suchý (born 1931) who today is the owner of the Semafor Theatre.

Valentine’s Day – NVI ‘B’ (POFIS 1249), and with labels for personalized printing (POFIS TL 1249)



Valentine’s Day is acknowledged in many countries with the giving of love-tokens. There are several saints named Valentine, but most are remembered on 14 February. The seven stamps within the issued sheet (*left*) are accompanied by eight labels for personalized printing.

13 March 2024

Mariánské Lázně – NVI ‘B’ (POFIS 1250, booklet ZSL 74)

Mariánské Lázně is the second largest of the spa towns in Bohemia, and since 2012 a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The springs were first mentioned in 1341 in documents at Tepla Abbey, and in the late 18th century one of the Abbey physicians documented the curative properties of the spring waters. By 1808, the town (then known as Marienbad) was recognized, and ten years later became a spa town. By the early 20th century some one million bottles of mineral water were exported annually together with salts from the evaporated waters. With the coming of the railway connection to Cheb in 1872, many more

visitors (including royalty) enjoyed the facilities of the spa and its surrounding area. The stamp design is a view of the Ferdinand's Spring Colonnade (named after King Ferdinand I) and the Forest Spring Colonnade. The booklet coupon shows the fountain of Rudolf's Spring, with the front of the booklet featuring the Maxim Gorky Colonnade. Today Mariánské Lázně is known as a holiday resort with sports facilities, and for its proximity to the other spa towns in the region.

Beauties of Our Country: Loket Castle (POFIS 1251)

The castle stands on a steep crag above a sharp bend in the river Ohře (*loket* means 'elbow'). It was once known as 'the impregnable castle of Bohemia' because of its location and thick walls. The first written mention of a castle dates from 1234 but an earlier fortified construction was built about 870. The castle served as a border fortress and safe haven along a merchant route from Prague through Cheb, and onto Plauen and Erfurt. During the 13th century a settlement grew up around the castle walls. Over the centuries it had several owners who added to the buildings. A fire in 1725 destroyed the castle leaving only the ground floor structure, which was eventually converted into the town prison, finally closing in 1948. The castle opened to the public in 1989, and after 1992 was returned to the town of Loket. Various buildings have been restored within the castle complex, including the Margrave's House as a museum. In 2006 the town centre and castle were used as a location for the film *Casino Royale* to represent a town in Montenegro. The stamp, showing a view of the castle from the north with the river, was issued in sheetlets of eight.



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The National Technical Museum Letná Carousel – NVI ‘B’ (POFIS 1252)

This carousel is the oldest working preserved example in Europe, dating from 1892 when it was erected in Královské Vinohrady. After two years it was moved to Letná, where it still stands today in its original twelve-sided wooden pavilion. The 21 life-sized wooden horses were stuffed with straw, covered in horse hide with saddles and bridles, and were originally driven by a horse-powered mechanism. Some of the original saddles and bridles have been preserved as museum exhibits, and the mechanism changed to electric power. The carousel was restored and re-opened in 2022 as a fully operational amusement for children and adults.

10 April 2004



The Botanical Gardens, Prague (POFIS 1253, 1254, 1255)

The Botanical Gardens, covering an area of some 50 hectares on the right bank of the river Vltava near Troja Castle and Prague Zoo, include an arboretum, greenhouses, ponds, and a large alpine garden, which are all open daily to the public. The site opened in 1898 and has been extended several times to accommodate new features. In 2003 the 130m-long Fata Morgana greenhouse opened with three different climatic areas. The Gardens are managed by the science faculty of Charles University, with a research building for botany students within the gardens. The souvenir sheet of three stamps (POFIS A1253) depicts several types of ferns to represent the diversity and colour of this plant group.



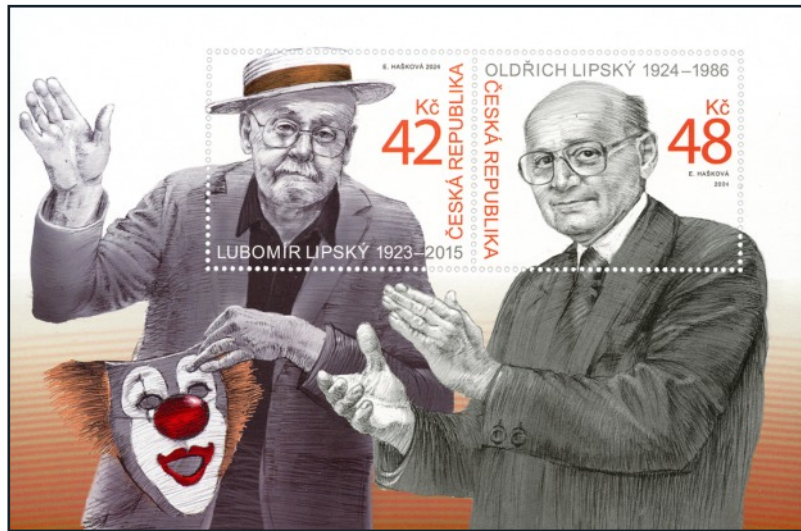
Works of Art on Postage Stamps: Jiří Rathouský (POFIS 1256)

This issue commemorates the birth centenary of the graphic designer and typographer Jiří Rathouský who died in 2003. Rathouský was one of the designers for the Czechoslovak pavilions at Expo 67 (Montreal) and Expo 70 (Osaka). The Prague Metro system used his typeface *Metron* for many years. He was a keen sportsman and designed the logo for the Prague football club Sparta Prague.

Personalities: Immanuel Kant – NVI 'E' (POFIS 1257)



Immanuel Kant (1724–1824) was born in Königsberg, (Kaliningrad), East Prussia. He studied philosophy, natural sciences, and mathematics locally before teaching in the town. In 1770 he was appointed professor of logic and metaphysics at Königsberg University but also taught ethics, physics, and anthropology. Throughout his life he wrote many books whose ideas influenced the later Romantic and Idealist thinkers of the 19th century. He is seen as the father of modern philosophy. He lived all his life in Königsberg, never married, and was known locally for his strict adherence to a daily routine.



Theatre and Film: The brothers Lubomír and Oldřich Lipský (POFIS 1258, 1259)

The Lipský brothers came from Pelhřimov, where a museum commemorates their careers. Lubomír (1923–2015) attended an acting school in Prague before appearing in various theatre roles. From 1948 until retiring in 2013 he played many roles in films and TV programmes, some of which were directed by his brother, Oldřich (1924–1986). Oldřich began his career as an actor and screen writer before directing his first film in 1946. All his films were comedies, often using the theme of Dadaism, farce, and magical realism. Both brothers were interested in the life of the circus, as referenced in the souvenir sheet margin (POFIS A1258) with Lubomír holding the mask of a clown.

Articles Elsewhere Roger Morrell

Czechoslovak Specialist (Society for Czechoslovak Philately, USA) **2023–4 Vol. 85, No. 4, Whole Number 674**

- Wilson, M., Allegory Stamps in Booklet and Coil Formats.
- Shaw, G., Assessment of Czechoslovak Perfins.
- Hanzl, A., Partitioning of Czechoslovakia (1938–1939).

Pošta Česko-Slovenská (Vereniging voor Tsjechoslowakije-filatelie, Netherlands) **No. 41, Spring 2024 (in Dutch)**

- Kareš, J., Malovík, V., Hauzrvan, M., Newspaper stamps ‘Falcon in Flight’ – part II.
- Van Dooremalen, H., Post offices in the Bohemian lands Part 5. (Goltsch-Jenikau)
- Sevenhuijsen, J., Corrections to the Hradčany stamps of 5th design. (Open vs. closed spirals, etc.)
- Sevenhuijsen, J., End of year fair – a great find. (Austrian express stamp correctly used on printed paper envelope in November 1918.)
- Van Dooremalen, H., An airplane hijacking. (Story of a 1953 self-hijacking by a young Czech pilot operating an inland flight to escape from Czechoslovakia.)
- Sevenhuijsen, J., Hradčany double cards. (Reply-paid postal stationery cards from 1919.)

Tschechoslowakei Philatelie (ArGe Tschechoslowakei, Germany) **No. 219, March 2024 (in German)**

- Rohn, D. *et al.*, Czechoslovak airmail 1920–1938, part 7. (Discourse on unusual internal and foreign covers.)
- Voss, R., Portfolio of the Czechoslovak Post: ‘Vote on the best engraving on the FDCs of Jaromír und Libuae Knotek’.
- Meeh, K.-H., Philatelic connection between Czechoslovakia and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939. (Illustrated with mail from Spain to Czechoslovakia.)

American Philatelist (American Philatelic Society) **Vol 137, No. 12, whole No. 1473, December 2023**

- Buckner, J.A., Hart, K., Why collect Czechoslovakia? (Review of history and collecting aspects.)

Austria (Journal of the Austrian Philatelic Society of GB)**No. 226, Spring 2024**

Taylor, A., The Belvedere in stamps and pictures.

Fukarek, M., Two additions to the 'Parliamentary Post Offices' article in *Austria* 222.

Van Loo, F., An analysis of the bilingual postal cancellations in the German-Czech provinces of Austria-Hungary during the period 1867–1919 – part two.

Mintert, C., Tarok, Piquet and Trappola – the parlour games of the 18th and 19th century and their taxation in Austria.

Stamps of Hungary (Hungarian Philatelic Society of GB)**No. 236, March 2024**

Bodnar, Z., The Zagyvapálfalva Postmaster Provisionals: recent discoveries and updates.

Morrell, R., The humble receipt, Part IV – The new currency.

News of Hungarian Philately (Society for Hungarian Philately, USA)**Vol. 55, No. 4, October–December 2023**

Kohalmi, Cs.L., From Pestszenterzsébet to Los Angeles: Celebrating the colourful life of Bob Morgan on the occasion of his 100th birthday.

McDermott, T.P., A 1943 Lajos Márton Christmas card to Romania.

Kohalmi, Cs.L., Lessons learned from examining Arad Occupation overprint covers with mixed frankings.

Rundbrief (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Feldpost Österreich-Ungarn, Austria)**No. 150, 2024/1 (in German)**

Gebauer, P., Emergency cancellation of field post office 355.

Kalis, K., The K.u.k. Naval Court and Naval Prison in Pola.

Anon, Garrison and Volunteer forces, 1915–2005. (Reproduction of a booklet with various short articles on these static WWI protection forces.)

Penz, G., On the cachet *K.u.k. Infanterieregiment Nr 84 Flieger-Abteilung*. (Flying division.)

Radovanović, M., 'Comité des Femmes Serbes'. (The story of the work of the Serbian wives in Paris helping Serbian POWs in Germany and Austria.)

Robisch, H., Letters tell stories... (A pilot from *Flieger Kompagnie nr 4* on the Italian Front describes shooting down an Italian plane.)

Wirtl, W., Foreign Forces in WWI – Greece. (Short description of the Balkan Front illustrated with Greek field post office cancels.)

Biersbach, A., Cultural work of prisoners of war (part three). (Illustrated field post cards from Russian POW camps and photographic postcards of camp orchestras.)

Robisch, H., 'And when one thinks there's nothing more, somehow along comes another cover'. (A Bulgarian letter from Russe to Skopje with the cachet *K.u.k. Hilfsstation für befreite Kriegsgefangene*. (K.u.k. Assistance Station for Freed POWs.)

Filatelie (POFIS, Czechoslovakia)**No. 1 /24, January 2024**

Knotek, J., My Memories of the engraver L. Jirka.

Glüselig, J., Not everyone who deals with stamps are angels.

Anon, Poll for the most beautiful FDC and commemorative cancel of 2023.

Kunc, L., Czechoslovak Soldiers 1939–1945 (part 22).

POFIS 2023, Czech Republic 2023 catalogue (pull-out 12-page supplement).

No. 2 /24, February 2024

Benes, F., Josef Fontana: In philately a name passing through three centuries.

Anon, Poll for the most beautiful Czech stamp of 2023

Česká pošta, Issue plan for Czech stamps 2024

Janík, B., Postcrossing: exchange of picture postcards with philatelic subtext.

POFIS 2024, Czech Republic – private stamp issues 2023 (pull-out 30-page supplement).

No. 3 /24, March 2024

Příkazský, M., Unusually low postage rate of 10 h in 1940.

Janík, B., How to proceed with the numbering of private stamps?

Beneš, F., Copiers attack – or how to become a counterfeiter quickly and easily (part 2).

Dražan, V., Russo-Japanese War 1904/05.

SČF, Bulletin of Collectors of Czechoslovak Letterpress Stamps (pull-out 8-page supplement).

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Publications	Members receive the quarterly journal <i>Czechout</i> which includes articles of interest on Czech and Slovak philately and helps members to keep in touch with Society affairs. The Society publishes <i>Monographs</i> and Print-on-Demand titles on wide-ranging topics containing original research.
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Karel Loprais and a map of the Paris–Dakar Rally – POFIS A1246 (see page 26).