

BULLETIN

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Introduction

At a recent meeting of the Society in London, a recommendation that a Bulletin be circulated to all members was approved. If possible, production would be on a quarterly basis and would replace the earlier data sheets. Our Vice Chairman Mr. Cyril Wackett, agreed to the compilation and printing of this project.

It is intended that the Bulletins will provide a varied selection of interesting facts relating to the postal history and postage stamps of Czechoslovakia with special emphasis on the many forgeries which exist. Information on the subjects embodied in the stamp designs will be provided together with details of items not normally catalogued by Gibbons.

Subsequent issues of the Bulletins will incorporate any queries you may raise respecting items in your collection and arrangements will be made for any doubtful stamps to be examined and an expert opinion furnished. A "Wants List" can be incorporated as it is felt that a better response can be anticipated than has been the case with the inclusion of this subject in the exchange packets.

Contributions of articles by members will be appreciated even if these happen to be brief providing that they contain matter which is of general interest to Collectors of Czechoslovakian philately.

Finally any useful suggestions as to the future character of the Bulletin will be appreciated. All matters relating to the Bulletin are to be sent to:- Mr. C.Wackett, 8, Greenway, Bishop's Stortford, Herts.

Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of Great Britain

Following upon the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Germans in September 1938, many Nationals managed to escape to other countries, eventually forming cultural and social groups and many offered their services as fighting units. A considerable number were formed into the Czechoslovak Forces in Great Britain of which several members were interested in stamp collecting. Quite an appreciable amount of philatelic material had been successfully smuggled out of Czechoslovakia and naturally meetings were arranged for the furtherance of their interests. Some publicity was derived through the medium of the philatelic press and this eventually led to the formation of the 'Czechoslovak Philatelic Society'. The President was Lt. Col. J. Broz, G.S.O., in charge of the Czech Forces, the Secretary being Mr. J. Tauber.

Meetings were held at the Czechoslovak Headquarters, 18, Grosvenor Place, London, S. W. 1. and a series of Bulletins appeared somewhat spasmodically during 1943 and 1944. Some of the data incorporated in these publications will appear in due course in this new series. Members were also permitted to receive specimens of the Czechoslovak Field postmarks employed by the Field Post Office after its establishment at Cholmondeley, Cheshire, in July, 1940. The provision of a stamped addressed envelope ensured the receipt of the many commemorative cancellations used until the departure of the Post Office to France in August, 1944.

The removal of a considerable portion of Czech Servicemen to France meant that many members of the Society had to leave Great Britain resulting in a very depleted Society, but one major event in its history has left a permanent record in Czech Philatelic history. This was the holding of an Exhibition of Czechoslovak Postage Stamps at Grosvenor Place on Monday, 8th November 1943 to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic.

The event was supported by the Czechoslovak Government which was operating in London under the Presidency of Dr. Eduard Benes, all proceeds to be devoted to the Czechoslovak Red Cross Fund. The material had been received from no less than 53 collectors of whom 34 were British collectors, and with the exception of the 4 and 10 Crown stamps on granite paper with the "Posta Ceskoslovenska 1919" overprint, every stamp issued by the Czechoslovak Government from 1919 to 1939 was on display.. The Masaryk issues of the 1 to 5K of 7th March 1925, with vertical watermark, were shown complete in mint blocks of four. A section was devoted to the Czech Legions in Siberia during the first World War, and the postmarks employed by the Czechoslovak Army Field Post from the beginning of March 1940 in France and later in Great Britain. Many famous persons contributed material as did also the Royal Philatelic Society of London.

Among the large attendance at the opening ceremony were several Ministers of the Czechoslovak Government including the Czechoslovak Ambassador, Dr. Maxmilian Lobkowicz, who opened the Exhibition. Other speakers included the President of the Czechoslovak State Council Mr. Prokop Maxa and Sir John Wilson, Bart., Keeper of the Royal Collections. Representatives of the British Army and members of the Diplomatic Corps from 16 Allied and Neutral Countries were also present.

A major event in connection with the exhibition was the issue by permission of the Czechoslovak Government of a commemorative sheet of five stamps, namely: a 10K stamp in red and blue bearing the portraits of the three founders of the Czechoslovak Republic, Dr. Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, Dr. Eduard Benes and Dr. Milan R. Stefanik; a 5K stamp in red depicting a view of Prague with the famous Charles Bridge and the Hradcany Castle; a 3K stamp in blue with a view of the harbour and castle of Bratislava; a 2K stamp in blue with a picture of the Monastery of Velehrad in memory of the Saints Cyril and Methodius and finally a 1K stamp in red with a view of the Ruthenian Monastery of Jasina. The four latter

stamps were chosen as symbolic of the four lands of Czechoslovakia, Bohemia, Moravia-Silesia, Slovakia and Ruthenia. The sheets were printed by Messrs. Waterlow and Sons Ltd., and sold for 5/-d one copy only being allowed for each visitor. A limited number of sheets were made available to the Czechoslovak Military Authorities for sale to the Czechoslovak soldiers and airmen.

Additional a specially printed Diploma was prepared for presentation to those who had contributed material for the exhibition. This incorporated a printing of the miniature sheet above an excellent drawing by E. Weiss of London portraying the Hradcany behind the Tower Bridge, the Arms of Prague and London at top and the national flags of the two countries Czechoslovakia and England at the foot. The Chairman and senior officers of the Czech Society appended their signatures and finally each Diploma was signed by Dr. Benes, a splendid souvenir of a worthwhile effort. On 9th May, 1944 members of the Exhibition Executive Committee were received by Dr. Benes when the President of the Republic was handed a cheque for £4,125.-.-d for the Czechoslovak Red Cross Fund in London. It was on that occasion that his signature was added to the Diploma.

The interests of the Society were maintained in a moderate form until the 17th October, 1953 when a well-attended meeting of Czech enthusiasts met in London and a complete revision of the Society's activities was made. The name was amended to the 'Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of Great Britain' and this title has remained to this day. A few of the original members are still with us but unfortunately several very valuable ones have passed over. The exchange packets which commenced in 1943 have decreased in quantity with the result that sendings have not been too frequent. It is hoped, however,

that with the recent influx of several new members more material may be made available so that a more speedy circulation of packets can be assured.

No additional exhibitions were made until 4th July, 1970 when a very successful event, organised by Mr. Cyril Wackett was held at Bishop's Stortford Herts. The material displayed covered many aspects of Czech philately with special emphasis on the Hradcany issues in complete sheets, and the 'Posta Ceskoslovenska 1919' overprints in large blocks and sheets. The proceedings terminated with a choice of a Chinese or English meal in Harlow New Town.

The next exhibition, arranged by Miss Yvonne King had Worthing as its venue. Here again, everything went well with many visitors viewing the wealth of material provided. Talks on their own special entries were given by Miss King and Mr. Roy Dehn and the event attracted a number of new members to the Society. A choice of meals again featured as a fitting end to an enjoyable get together. A special cover and cancellation was employed for this exhibition.

Forgeries of Czechoslovakia

The earlier stamps of Czechoslovakia attracted the attention of many forgers as is evinced from the excellent production 'Padelky Ceskoslovenskych Postovnich Znamek 1918-1939' published by Pofis in 1963. Whilst this work covers a large proportion of spurious items it does not present all the information surrounding the forgeries and it is intended to present a series of articles in this Bulletin which it is hoped will provide more detailed data. The items will not be presented chronologically but it is hoped that eventually members will be made aware of most of the details essential to determine the authenticity or otherwise of stamps they possess or may be offered in the future.

Although the Czech postal authorities have given notice to Postmasters of forgeries from time to time, there was an occasion when a circular was distributed bearing an actual copy of the forgery, this comprised the 100h value of the 1920 'Liberated Republic' issue. The circulated notice was as follows:-

Administration of Posts & Telegraphs, Brno

No.100,664/VI

Brno, 21st December 1922

Confidential

Circular No. 279

To all Post Offices of this District

Counterfeit Stamps

(Ministry decree No.81,856/XIII - 22 from 19 December 1922)

In Slovakia, in the town of Lucenec and Kosice a number of persons have been discovered and arrested who were engaged in the circulation of forged 100 heller prepaid stamps.

Because of the attempts to circulate and sell forged stamps in other places such as Olomouc and Novy Jicin, it is seriously feared that the manufacturers of forgeries were successful in circulating these in various parts of the Republic from which considerable loss was suffered by the postal authorities.

In consequence of the above we must be prepared to deal immediately and effectively with further circulation of forgeries.

Post Offices are most emphatically ordered to pay vigilant and more concentrated attention to all letter mail parcel and money order advice notes at the sending and receiving offices to ensure that only genuine adhesive stamps are used, and further to pay attention to the numbers of stamps issued to authorised vendors of postage stamps. If the number of 100h. stamps requested by any particular vendor has been less than his normal requirements or if he has ordered none at all an occasional sudden inspection of the vendor's stock is to be made and according to the amount of suspicion aroused the police or inland revenue are to be asked to take action.

At the larger offices experienced clerks are to be authorised to take any action considered necessary which may lead to the discovery of forgeries.

Where cases of the circulation of forgeries are proved the Post Office must immediately serve a summons and notify the Head Office of all details.

To simplify the observation of differences between forgeries and genuine stamps we attach a description and sample of the forgery and draw special attention to points 1 and 4 which lists the differences which can be seen easily and immediately with the naked eye.

Description

The attached 100h postage stamp is an obvious forgery, proof of which is demonstrated by the following list of differences from the genuine:-

1. The forged stamp is nearly 1mm shorter not only in the design but also in the format of the paper.
2. The colour of the forgery differs - it is of a lighter, more yellow shade.

3. The gauge of perforation is coarser than the genuine ($11\frac{1}{2}$ instead of 14 or $13\frac{3}{4}$).
4. The paper is thicker.
5. Inscription: 'Posta Ceskoslovenska' - the letters are not regular, especially the letters 'O' - on the original they are smoothly curved, whereas on the forgery they are irregularly flattened.
6. Head: The face has a different expression, the nose is more flattened, the fluttering hair on the right side is waved differently.
7. Hands: The fingers are not spaced regularly like the original the lines that form the creases in the palms are at different angles, and the links of the broken chain are not as regular as on the original.
8. Arms: The arms are wider, the forearm of the right arm is shorter, the three double lined decorations on the upper part of the arms are not copied exactly.
9. The breasts are hanging more and they lack the freshness of the original, also the lower curves are badly shaped.
10. The shading under the breasts immediately above the waist is not regular enough on the forgery and does not curve nicely around the body.
11. Skirt: The shading lines forming the folds of the cloth are of different length especially those downwards from the waist also the gradual shading of the folds which form the shape of the right raised knee are not the same as in the original.
12. The hem of the clothes on the original stamp is more wavy this is most obvious where the toes of the right foot are showing.
13. The flowing hair under the left arm is more crudely drawn, the forger did not grasp the grouping of the waves and therefore it differs a lot from the original.

- 14 The lime branch which appears to grow from the clothes above the left foot have leaves that are narrower and more oval on the original every leaf has a regular heart-like shape also on the forgery the stalks of the leaves do not show enough.
- 15 The small flower under the mountain 'Rip' has only three petals instead of four, also the one under the other mountain has a limp appearance like a faded flower, the shading of the terrain is not the same as in the original neither in the direction nor in the form of the lines.
- 16 The numbers '100' and '100' in the design are not smooth enough their edges are rough and therefore are not regular.

The forgery was printed by the bookprint process with the help of a little engraving which was done by a skilled hand, and it is necessary to have an observant eye to be able to recognise the listed variations at first sight.

Signed BARVIC

(President of the Administration of Posts, Brno)

Extract from the 'Padelky' publication respecting the foregoing forgery:

The counterfeit was discovered in 1922 in Lucenec Slovakia. It was probably produced in Hungary. The distributors were apprehended after selling about 700 counterfeits and the entire issue of 19,300 pieces was confiscated. Of all the counterfeits this is the most successful. The different perforation $11\frac{1}{2}$ is the only apparent mistake made by the counterfeiters. Postal Authorities sent descriptions of the counterfeits to all Post Offices and attached a sample of the counterfeit to each. The rest of the confiscated counterfeits were destroyed.

help!

Owing to unforeseen delays we were unable to advertise to the fullest extent the special cover which was produced for the Worthing Exhibition, and subsequently sales were not up to expectations. The American Society said that they would sell some to their members and so a consignment of 200 was sent. Only 14 covers were sold. The reason given for such a poor sale was that their members were not willing to accept the star in place of the crown over the lions head. This means that instead of covering our expenses we shall make a loss. A great deal of time and effort went into the production of this cover and it would be a pity to have so many left on our hands. I know that many of our members did not order any of these covers, so why not SEND AN ORDER NOW. If you belong to a local Philatelic Society it may be worth while inviting orders from this source also. The price, including the return postage is 15p so let's have a good response. There will be a delay in sending orders whilst awaiting the return of the remaining covers from America. A specimen cover is shown below:

Czechoslovak Philatelic
Society
of Great Britain



Stamp Exhibition
Worthing
Saturday 25 May 1974



Packets

Two packets are currently going the rounds, and a further two will be despatched shortly. There is quite a lot of work in connection with the exchange packets and perhaps those members who receive packets will take note of the following; It is imperative that any change of address is notified immediately it is known; handle the packet with care; PRINT ones name in the space where the stamp is taken; send the correct money made out to C.Wackett and not the Society Packets must be dealt with expeditiously and holiday times advised to the Packet Secretary, as soon as ever possible, to avoid lengthy delays. Finally, if you enjoy receiving packets why not make the effort and produce one or two booklets to ensure continuity.

Next Meeting

Please note that the next meeting will be held at the usual venue - The British Philatelic Association (Building of the National Liberal Club), 1, Whitehall Place, London, S. W. 1. at 2.30 p.m. on Saturday, 1st March, 1975. Only a regular few attend our meetings and it would be nice to see some new faces plus, of course some of those members who have not attended for a long time. At the last three meetings members have brought along material for either sale or exchange and this has now become a regular feature. We look forward to seeing a good turn out on 1st March.

Bulletin

At last the first edition has been published. It is to be hoped that in time it will be much improved upon. I hope to produce four editions during the year and look forward to receiving material for the next three. Mr. Dawson has kindly sent a lengthy article on Field Post which will be serialised. Any further material or suggestions will be welcomed.