

1953

INTRODUCTION.

For the Austrian people the great event of the years between 1953 and 1955 was the signing of the State Treaty which finally led to the occupation forces of Russia, U.S.A., U.K. and France being removed from Austrian soil. Dr Karl Dworschak, the Director General of the Posts from 1945 to 1955, died in February 1955. On 1 April 1955, Dr Benno Schaginger was appointed as his successor.

THE HUGO WOLF ISSUE, 21 FEBRUARY 1953.



The first stamp to be issued by the Austrian Post Office in 1953 was a 1S50gr deep ultramarine value to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of the composer Hugo Wolf. This portrait stamp was designed by Professor Vinzenz Gorden, engraved by Professor Ferdinand Lorber and recess printed by the State Printing Works in an impression of 909,000 pieces (50 stamps to the sheet; comb perforated 14¼:13¾). The portrait itself was taken from a photograph of the composer in the picture archives of the Austrian National Library. The stamp was issued on 21 February 1953.

Hugo Wolf was born on 13 March 1860 at Windischgrätz. His father wished him to enter the family leather business but the boy finally got permission to enter the Conservatoire in Vienna in 1875 although he was expelled for “breach of discipline”.

Between 1881 and 1882, he was second conductor at the Salzburg theatre and in the period 1882-83 he was in Bayreuth. In 1887 his father died and the shock seemed to change his entire life. Most of his very lovely “Lieder” date from the subsequent period and it is on these 275 songs for piano and voice that his fame really rests. These songs, which were mainly settings of German poems, had won a wide recognition by 1890, and in 1895 he wrote a lyrical opera entitled: “Der Corregidor” which brought him world-wide fame. The last years of his life were darkened by syphilis-induced mental illness and he died in Vienna on 22 February 1903.

THE THEODOR KÖRNER ISSUE, 24 APRIL 1953.



Theodor Körner, Edler von Siegringen was born on 24 April 1873 at Komorn in Hungary, the son of Theodor Karl von Körner, a captain of artillery stationed there, and of the latter's wife Karoline Fousek. At the age of ten years he entered the Military High School at Mährisch-Weisskirchen and went thence to the Technical Military Academy in Vienna, receiving a commission in 1894. He was a staff captain by 1899, a lieutenant-colonel by 1914 and later became Chief of Staff on the Isonzo front. After the war he re-organised the army of the First Republic and ended his active career as Inspector General of the Army. Upon retirement in 1924 he joined the Social Democratic Party, after 1925 representing Vienna on the Federal Council. He was President of that Council when it was dissolved by Dollfuss in 1934 and spent a year in prison as a result.

From his release in 1935 to 1945 he lived quietly in Vienna and then became Mayor during the period of reconstruction. He was elected as the second President of the Second Republic on 27 May 1951.

The Austrian Post Office decided to celebrate his birthday with this 1S50gr ultramarine stamp. It was designed and engraved by Professor Ferdinand Lorber and printed in recess in an impression of one million stamps. The stamp was comb perforated 14¼:13½ and was issued on 24 April 1953. *[For a design in grey black see the issue of 11 January 1957 issued after his death in office on 4 January 1957].*

THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT ISSUE, 29 AUGUST 1953.



To commemorate the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Austrian Trade Union Movement in 1893, the Austrian Post Office did not design a special stamp. It simply took the 5S Landscape value of 1946, printed it in blue instead of the original brown-lake, and surcharged it in gold with “1s+25g” and a rather complicated design ascribed to Gusti Kopfleithner. A false-colour version of the stamp



shows the overprint legibly. The surcharged stamp was comb perforated 13½:14¼ and issued on 29 August 1953 in an impression of 450,000 pieces.

As might perhaps be expected, an overprint of this nature led to many distinct printing errors!

- 1) Coloured stroke, “gardener on the lawn” (43rd stamp in sheet).
- 2) Upper end of the 'C' in ÖSTERREICH thickened in the form of a rhomboid, “snake's head” (33rd stamp).
- 3) Two bushes instead of one, to the left next to the Gloriette (the building crowning the hill) (46th stamp).
- 4) White point underneath the staircase, “light in the door” (1st stamp).
- 5) Golden spot between W and E in BEWEGUNG (45th stamp).
- 6) retouch of the No. 2 snake's head error (33rd stamp).
- 7) Tiled corner on the stairs (24th stamp)

The inscription “**GEWERKSCHAFTS BEWEGUNG**” translates as “Trade Union Movement”. In Austria, the beginning of the labour movement and the first organisation of the workers into trade unions was almost simultaneous. In 1869 the celebrated demonstrations of the Vienna operatives won for the working classes the right of combination. By 1874 a large number of unions had been founded in various trades in Vienna, and with less success in the provinces. In the eighties, however, trade unionism suffered on account of the anarchic excesses of the Labour Party and many unions were dissolved. At the end of that decade, under the guidance of Dr Victor Adler, the Labour Party began to revive, and in 1900 the formation of federations of imperial trade unions for all the members of each particular trade in the Empire was suggested.

In 1891, it appeared from a paper on Austrian trade unionism read before the Second Congress of the Social Democratic Party, that the number and membership of the unions had greatly increased. The Austrian trade unionists aimed at centralisation and the spread of a network of unions in connection with the Centralstelle. In the course of the nineties, special unions for women appeared, and the membership grew continuously. In 1892 there were 46,606 organised workers; in 1902, 135,178; and in 1905 there were 323,099, while in 1906 there were 448,270. The provincial distribution of the trade unions corresponds to the number of workers and the proportion they bear to the total population of the province.

THE LINZ THEATRE ISSUE, 17 OCTOBER 1953.



The “Landestheater” of Linz stands on the Promenade, below the Schloss and on the site of the fortifications. This theatre was originally founded on 20 June 1792 but was burned down in 1800 when the French occupied the city. It was rebuilt in the Empire style in 1803 and the Austrian Post Office decided to issue this 1S50g deep turquoise stamp to commemorate the 150th anniversary of that second opening.

The stamp was designed by Professor Ernst Schrom and engraved by Friedrich Teubel; 800,000 stamps were recess-printed, comb perforated 13½:14¼. It was issued on 17 October 1953. The stamp depicts the facade of the theatre with two theatre masks at the left: tragedy at the top and comedy below. Across the top of the stamp runs the inscription “LINZER LANDESTHEATER

1803-1953". The actual picture of the theatre used on the stamp is stated to have been taken "from an old representation".

Linz is the capital of Upper Austria, an episcopal see and the third largest town in Austria. It is beautifully situated on both banks of the Danube, here 275 yards wide, where it leaves the mountains for the Linz basin. The Roman "Lentia", it belonged to the bishops of Passau from 823 to 1211 when it was acquired by Leopold VI of Babenburg, Duke of Austria.

THE VIENNA EVANGELICAL SCHOOL SET, 5 NOVEMBER 1953.

By a decision of the Ministerial Council of 8 September 1953, the Austrian Post Office was instructed to issue a set of surcharged stamps; the surcharge of which was to be given to the Lutheran Diocese of Vienna for the reconstruction of the Evangelical School in the Karlsplatz in Vienna. Accordingly a set of five stamps was designed; the three that showed buildings and the bible by Alfred Chmielowski (engraved by Rudolf Toth) whilst the two portrait values were designed and engraved by Professor Ferdinand Lorber. The standard frame was designed by Maria Olinowetz. The set was recess printed by the Austrian State Printing Works, comb perforated 14¼:13½, and issued on 5 November 1953.



70gr+15gr plum. The first stamp of the set depicts the historic "Bummerlhaus" in Steyr in Upper Austria. Steyr became Protestant for a short time in the middle of the 16th century and this building housed the earliest Protestant school which was then founded by the Lutheran sect of the Waldenses. However, the town was soon reclaimed by the Counter Reformation and the building with its 15th century facade and projecting upper storey, became the Löwen-Wirtshaus. [670,000 stamps printed]

1S+25gr indigo. This stamp portrays the famous astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571-1630); a native of Württemberg. His connection with Austria is that he was mathematician to the Estates of Upper Austria for a short period. [670,000]



1S50gr +40gr chocolate. Here is depicted the Lutheran Bible of 1534 (i.e. the first edition) which is the property of the Austrian National Library. [590,000]

2S40gr+60gr deep blue-green. The second portrait stamp of this set shows the architect Theophilus Eduard von Hansen, a native of Copenhagen. His connection with the theme of the set is that he was the architect of the building on the top value. [520,000]



3S+75gr slate-lilac. This top value depicts the Evangelical School in the Vienna Karlsplatz. Von Hansen constructed many of the 19th century buildings in the Karlsplatz including the Music Society Building. His Lutheran school was put to the flames by the Nazis in 1945 when they evacuated Vienna. The stamp shows the completely reconstructed school which now stands on the site of Hansen's original building. [470,000]

THE CHRISTMAS ISSUE, 30 NOVEMBER 1953.



Although it is true that two “Christmas Greetings” stamps were issued on 12 December 1937, it had never been Austrian policy to issue special stamps for Christmas. It was a very pleasant surprise when the Austrian Post Office issued as a special Christmas stamp a 1 schilling deep myrtle-green stamp on 30 November 1953 depicting a little girl looking at a decorated Christmas tree. This little girl is supposedly Sissy Klein of Vienna, who was four years old when this portrait was taken. The stamp was designed by Alfred Chmielowski, engraved by Professor Ferdinand Lorber and printed in an impression of two million by the recess process; comb perforated 14¼:13¾. There are two distinct plate errors with this issue.

- 1) a coloured spot in the 'U' of REPUBLIK in the 23rd stamp of the sheet.
- 2) a coloured stroke in the right-hand foot of the 'R' of REPUBLIK in the 33rd stamp of the sheet.

The same design, printed in blue, was reissued on 26 November 1954, also for use on Christmas greetings. The girl is now said to be “six year old Sissi Grassi”. There was then a gap of a number of years before Austria again issued a Christmas stamp in 1963 - indeed it was not until 1967 that such Christmas stamps started to appear annually.

THE STAMP DAY ISSUE, 5 DECEMBER 1953.

The last issue of 1953 was the annual “Day of the Stamp” value; the fourth in the sequence since the latter was initiated in 1949 and now again released at the end of the year. The rather uninspiring design selected for 1953 consisted of a globe standing on an open stamp album. Around the globe was a ribbon with the words (in German) “Day of the Postage Stamp 1955”, whilst a magnifying glass and a pair of stamp tweezers are placed next to the album.

This 1S+25gr chocolate stamp was designed by Alfred Chmielowski, engraved by Georg Wimmer and recess printed by the Austrian State Printing Works in sheets of 50 comb perforated 14¼:13½. The impression of 490,000 stamps was issued on 5 December 1953 when the 25 groschen surcharge was stated to be “*to promote interest for Austrian stamps and to further the aims of Austrian philately. Postage Stamp Day is important, among other reasons, for being the day on which messages of goodwill are addressed to philatelists both in other countries and overseas, whereby the international fellow-feeling among philatelists is demonstrated. If our approach to philately is guided by this idealistic concept, we shall render a good service to our hobby.*”

