

Austrian Airmail to 1938 1938 and the end of Austria's First Republic

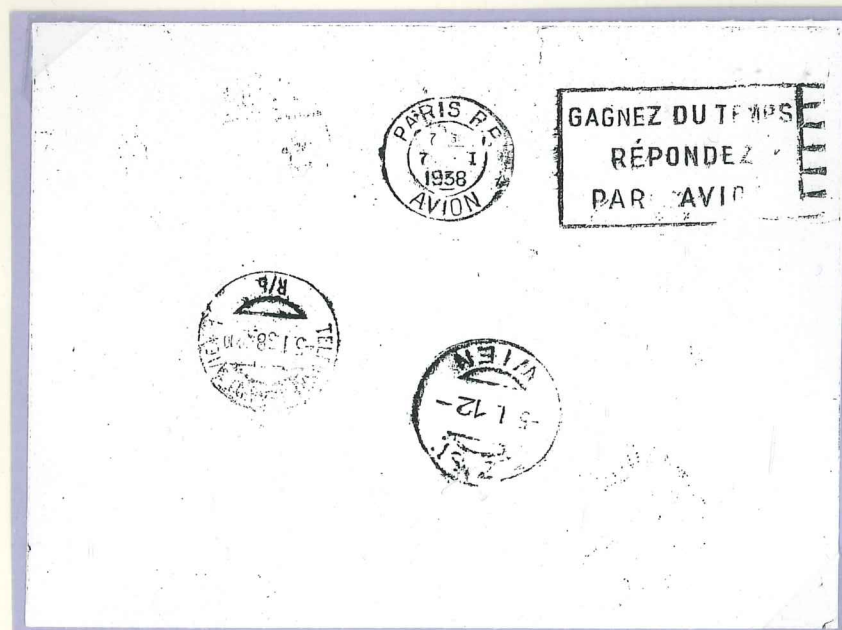
The 1937/38 Winter schedules continued as planned during the first three months of 1938. Catapult flights did not operated on the North Atlantic route during the winter months.



Above - Letter Vienna 5th January 1938 passed through the pneumatic system within Vienna (TZ ST Wien cancel on reverse). Airmail Vienna 6th January, arrived Paris 7th rail to Cherbourg, ship Europa to New York and then airmail to final destination.

Postage - Overseas letter 60g, pneumatic fee 80g, Airmail fees Europe 40g, USA 35g.

Reverse of cover confirming route in Europe.



The start of the year



Above - Letter 10th January 1938, Athens then Imperial Airways via Egypt to South Africa. Postage - Letter 60g airmail fee 270g, third weight letter, most of postage on reverse.

Below - Letter sent 26th February. Vienna - Athens (where checked and currency control mark applied) - Imperial Airways and associates to Brisbane arrival 10th March.

Postage - Letter 60g, airmail fee 260g, second weight letter.



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With the threat of occupation by Germany Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg called for a vote of confidence and a cachet to this effect was applied to some mail.



Above – Letter posted Vienna 11th March flown 12th March arrived Paris same day has the cachet 'Jeder Österreicher stimmt mit Ja!' Postage – Letter 60g, airmail fee 120g, third weight letter.

Note – the vote planned for 13th March did not take place since the Germans effectively took control on 11th March.

Monetary changes

A conversion rate of 2 Reichspfennig for 3 groschen (rounded up if necessary) was introduced and German stamps became valid for use in Austria from 4th April.

From this date normal postage rates were quoted in Reichspfennig but registration, airmail and other charges were not changed until 1st August. It was possible to pay charges in either currency or with mixed frankings until 30th October.

Political changes March/April 1938

The Germans held a referendum on 10th April asking for approval of their annexation of Austria and this was advertised by a number of different cachets applied to mail.

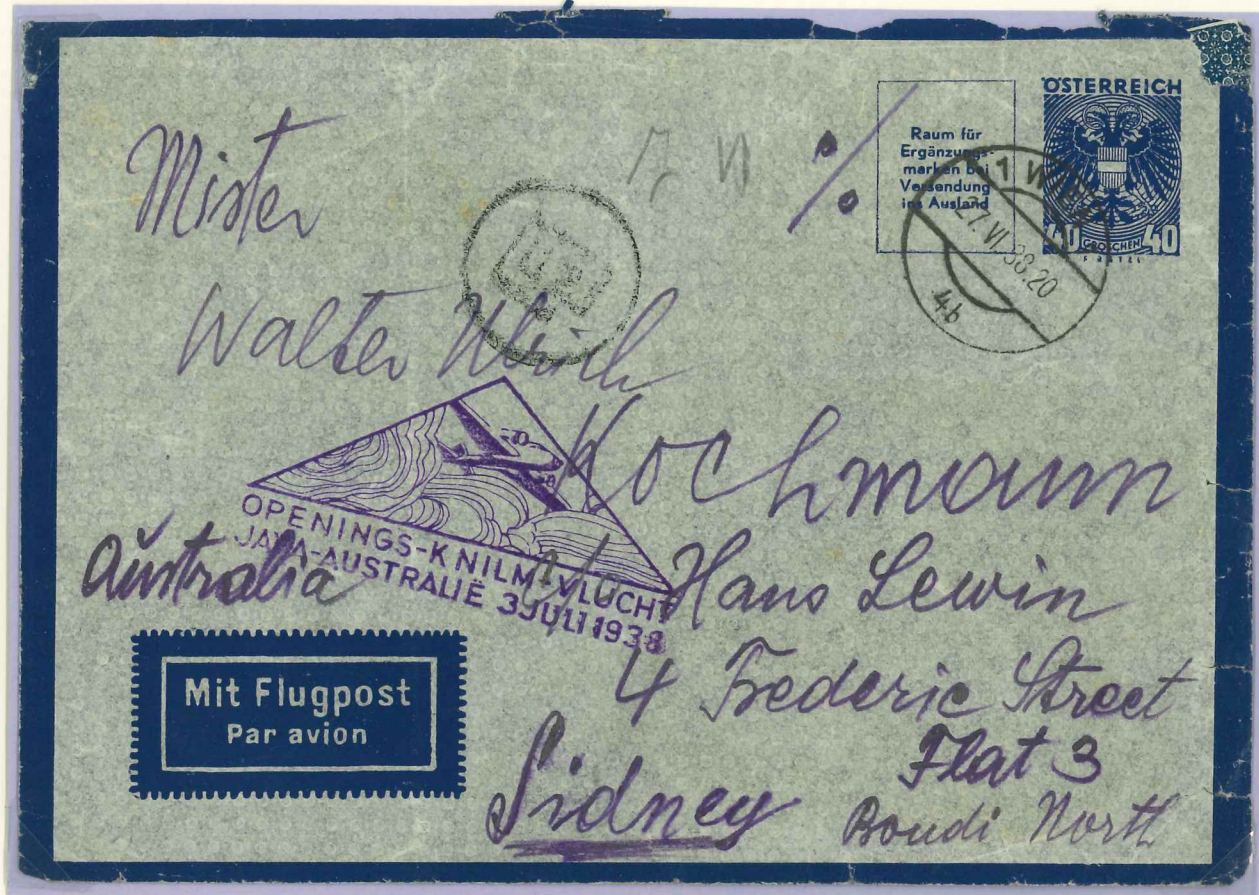


Above and below – Letters Innsbruck to Germany 10th April with the cachet 'Am 10. April dem Führer dein Ja!' Postage – 'All in' postage/air rate introduced for inland mail in April 1936, letter 40g or 26rpf – mixed franking.



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The 1938 summer schedules came into effect on Sunday 27th March. Although the airports had been taken over by the Germans for military purposes overseas schedules were operated with little disruption.



Above – Letter Vienna 27th June KLM service Athens, Batavia, first KNILM service Batavia, Keeping, Sydney 5th July. Postage – Letter 38g / 25rpf, airmail fee 130g / 87rpf paid in Austrian currency mostly on reverse

Below – Letter Vienna 10th July by Imperial Airways and Quantas, arrived Sydney 19th Postage - as above paid in Germany currency

Overseas flights



Above – Letter Vienna 3rd May, Cologne for Catapult flight to 'Bremen' (departed Cherbourg 4th) New York 9th. This was the first catapult flight of 1938. Postage – All in price printed paper/airmail to Germany 20g, registration fee 45g, catapult fee 60g.

Below – Letter Vienna 16th June, Paris, Air France, Montevideo 23rd. Postage – Letter (38g) 25rpf, airmail fee 900g, third weight letter.



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Because of military requirements flights within Europe were often delayed or cancelled with letters being forwarded to their destination by the fastest means – usually by rail. A cachet explaining this was applied to such mail.

European Flights

The 1938 winter flight plan was to operate from 2 October but with fewer flights to airports outside Greater Germany. Flights to Switzerland continued but delays in the service led to mail being sent by train for quicker delivery.



Above – Letter Vienna 7th May to Paris. Mauve cachet indicates forwarded by rail as the quickest means of delivery. Postage – Printed paper 8g, registration fee 45g, airmail fee 80g, second weight letter.

Below – Letter Vienna 23rd May to London. Returned by London 'Registered returned letter section' 25th May arrived Vienna 27th. Passed through the system without problems. Postage – Letter 38g, registration fee 45g, airmail fee 40g



Letter Vienna 8th October to Switzerland
Postage - letter 38g, airmail fee (10rpf) 15g.

The stamps on this over-franked letter have a value of 682 groschen and are from the Austrian definitive series issued in 1934. It appears to be a philatelic letter where the sender was trying to obtain a late use cancellation on stamps that would cease to be valid for postal purposes at the end of October 1938.

With Austria an established part of Greater Germany and their postage stamps ceasing to be valid after 31 October 1938 this period of Austrian Airmail flights came to an end.

