

# **Robert Kronfeld in Hungary**

**1933 and 1936**

*Robert Kronfeld, outstanding personality of gliding's heroic age and pioneer of thermal flying, was avid supporter and propagator of gliding. In the 1930s long-range glider aerotows were organized one after the other by him to show and to justify to the public the safety and reliability of gliding. Perhaps he was the first glider pilot who realized that in promoting gliding airmail might have play an important role, so nearly on all his aerotow tours airmail was carried by his glider. The first occasion when he visited Hungary was in the frame of a such aerotow gliding tour. He came to Hungary for second time during the World Scout Jamboree in 1933 to fly Rotter's Karakán. At the third occasion he was a participant of the ISTUS Conference held in Hungary.*



In 1933 Robert Kronfeld visited Hungary twice. At the first occasion he arrived by aerotow in his Austria-II glider and spent only 4 hours. At the second occasion he flew in by a motorplane and spent here 2 nights.

*The first occasion in 1933:*

## **Robert Kronfeld's 'Vierländerflug', 1933**

### **Contribution to the history of Hungarian aviation particularly of the history of Hungarian airmail**

In July, 1933, Robert Kronfeld in the frame of WIPA (Wiener Internationale Postwertzeichen Ausstellung - International Stamp Exhibition, Vienna) had flown an airmail glider flight over four countries. The countries concerned were Austria, Hungary, Italy and Switzerland. (\*)

During this tour Kronfeld was aerotowed in his KR-I 'Austria-II' two-seater glider which carried airmail. The 'Austria-II' was towed by Kronfeld's M23c



type, named 'Panhans Semmering' aeroplane piloted by Karl Henkelmann.

The route of the tour was the following:

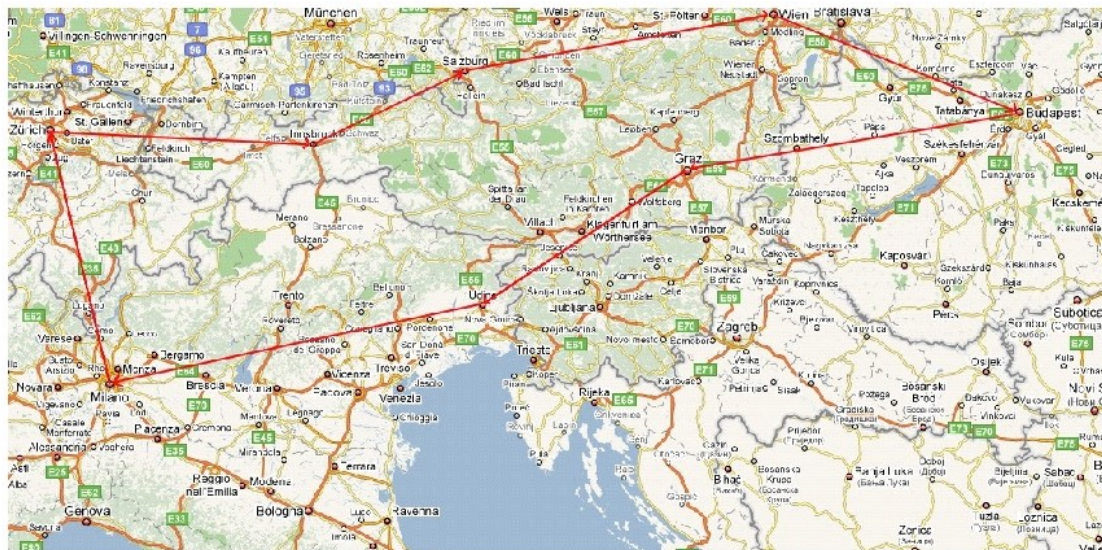
- 13 July Vienna(Aspern) - Budapest
- 13 July Budapest - Graz(Thalerhof)
- 14 July Graz(Thalerhof) - Udine
- 14 July Udine local airmail flight
- 14 July Udine - Milano
- 16 July Milano local airmail flight

(\*) The event had been organized by Dr. Nirenstein and Adolf Kosel.

- 18 July Milano - Zürich
- 18 July Zürich - Innsbruck
- 18 July Innsbruck - Salzburg
- 19 July Salzburg - Vienna



*Note:* One of the planned legs of the route was Graz - Trieste, however they landed in Udine due to unfavourable weather. Kronfeld landed wrongly on a military base and the glider was transported to the commercial airfield by a lorry.  
Route map:



From Karl Henkelmann's flight log:

U 4 L ä n d e r S e g e l f l u g p o s t - S c h l e p p f l u g 1933 (14)										
Erste Flugung im über Start- und Landungen Henkelmanns im seinem Flugbuch										
Pilot	Zweck des Fluges	Start Ort	Startort	Start Zeit	Land Ort	Landort	Land Zeit	Flugzeit	Kon- sum	Be- merk.
Henkelmann	Postfliegflug	13.02	Wien - Aspern	12.30	13.02	Budapest	13.40	130	230	
Henkelmann	Postfliegflug mit Kr 1. "Austrom. (E. W. H.)	13.02	Budapest	12.10	13.02	Thalerhof	20.17	187	300	
Henkelmann	Thalerhof Postfliegflug	14.02	Thalerhof	6.06	14.02	Widina	9.15	189	220	
Henkelmann	"	14.02	"	17.30	14.02	Widina	17.33	3	—	
"	"	14.02	"	22.50	14.02	"	22.55	5	—	
"	"	14.02	Widina	16.35	14.02	Milano	19.00	145	310	
Henkelmann	Postfliegflug	16.02	Milano	12.10	16.02	Milano	12.26	16	—	
Henkelmann	Postfliegflug	18.02	Milano	08.40	18.02	Zürich	10.17	152	230	
Henkelmann	"	18.02	Zürich	15.10	18.02	Imbsbrunn	17.35	145	220	
Henkelmann	"	18.02	Imbsbrunn	18.25	18.02	Salzburg	19.50	85	130	
Henkelmann	Postfliegflug	19.02	Salzburg	12.27	19.02	Wien	19.55	148	265	
Die angegebenen Zeiten sind Flugzeiten					Henkelmann mit dem Motor nach Wien Robert Kronfeld führte nach dem Ausbrennen, im jeweiligen Zielort, in der Regel, noch einen kleinen Segelflug mit seinem "Kr 2 "Austrom" an. - W. H.					

This was an official Austrian Airmail Flight, thus mail was accepted by every Austrian post office as well as in the participating countries and their colonies for every legs of the route. The airmail route stops had been made public and airmail was accepted for every legs. Various prereprinted postcards in three different colour - orange, violet and green - were available for different legs:



Pre-printed postcards were also showing photos of the towns concerned.

The various pre-printed postcards were the most common pieces used, but envelopes and regular postcards were accepted and carried as well

Postcard backsides with postmarked stamps:



Budapest as other cities applied arrival postmarks at the location of arrival:



The 'four country gliding airmail flight' was not unprecedented. Robert Kronfeld carried the first glider airmail in Austria in January, 1933.



During the WIPA motorplanes also carried airmail from Vienna to Budapest at 24 June, before Kronfeld's glider flight.



**LÉGI POSTA  
PAR AVION**

Feladó: MAGYAR AERO-SZÖVETSÉG  
Budapest, IX. Lónyay-utca 17.

WIPA WIEN  
24 VI 33  
FLUGPOST

1933. VI. 24.  
WIPA REPÜLÉS  
BUDAPEST-WIEN

Fr 1. ELISABETH BORN  
WIEN-Wipa  
Künstlerhaus, Stand No. 23

***The second occasion in 1933:***

**Robert Kronfeld made a short visit to the Jamboree in August, 1933, just to fly Lajos Rotter's Karakán.**

He arrived from Vienna at August 10, 1933, and landed at the site of the



Jamboree at Gödöllő on the board of a Klemm-25 aeroplane.

According to the Karakán's logbook he flew with the glider at 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of August having made altogether two aerotow launchings.

Sorszám	Kell.	Repülőter Állomás	Eg. szállás- szám	Levegőtartás idő		Megjegyzések (repülés, események)	Állás
				Óra	perc		
			13	11	40		
14	VIII. 10.	Műhely	1	1 <sup>e</sup>	38'	Rotter - Majoros vezet Lémagass: 400-on Max m: 1400 Karakán 1 <sup>e</sup> 20' Lendellő Gödöllőn.	
15	"	Gödöllő	1	-	34'	Kronfeld vezet unt. Majoros	
16	VIII. 11.	"	1	-	04'	Rotter - Majoros vezet Filmfelvétel.	
17	"	"	1	-	18'	V. Keffy - Majoros vezet	
18	VIII. 12.	"	1	-	36'	Kronfeld vezet unt. Majoros	
19	"	"	1	-	22'	Rotter - Majoros vezet	
Átvétel			19	15	12		





Kronfeld was dressed as a Scout whereas he was never a member of the Austrian Scout Association. At a later date he became a honorary member of the Scouts of Vienna, to whom he had donated a SG-38 primary in 1935.



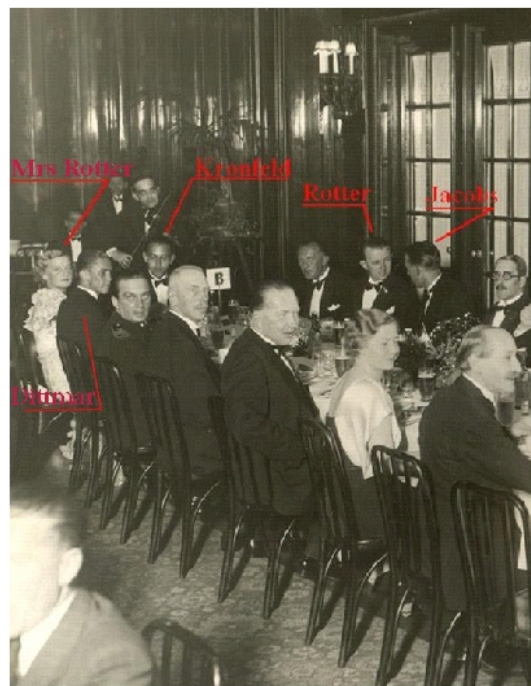
At August 12, after his second Karakán flight, Kronfeld flew back to Vienna and from there to France, where he continued his towed gliding tour the route of which involved many towns and which had only been interrupted because of his desire to fly the Karakán. During this tour his glider was towed by the same aeroplane with the same pilot who had been his partner in the four country airmail tour. Kronfeld used first time the Kr-IA Ausztria-III on one of the legs of this tour (certain sources refer to this type as K2-2).

*1936:*

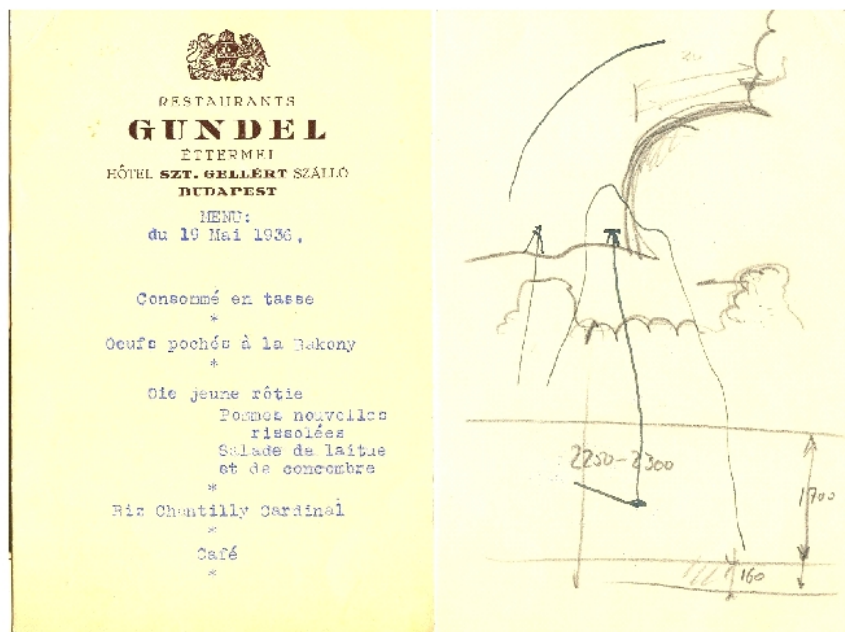
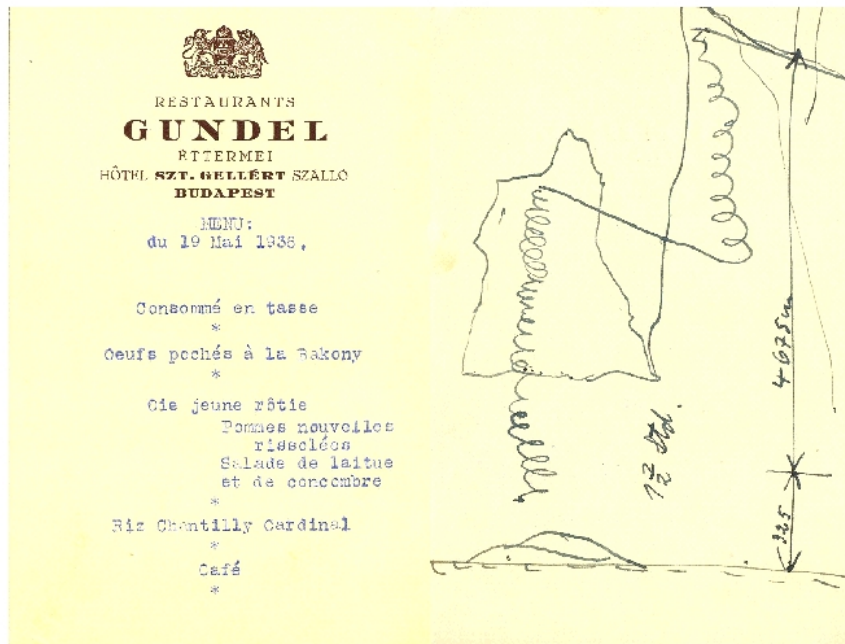
### **Robert Kronfeld participated at the ISTUS Conference held at Budapest in May ,1936.**

At this Conference participated among others Heini Dittmar, professor Walter Georgii, Wolf Hirth, Hans Jacobs, Theodor von Kármán and Lajos Rotter.

The picture shows the participants at a gala dinner in the Restaurant Vadászkürt (Hunting-Horn).



An interesting piece of souvenir survived from a discussion between professor Georgii, Robert Kronfeld and Lajos Rotter. The discussion took place in the Restaurant Gundel of the Hotel Gellért. During this discussion they made sketches on the restaurant's menu cards. It is not known who of the three made these sketches.



*Author: Gábor Fekecs*

*The original Hungarian language version of this article appeared in the 'Conference on Aviation History Proceedings, 2010' of the Hungarian Aviation Historical Society.*

*Sources:*

- The pictures of the second and third occasions (but the picture of the Klemm-25) are from the archive of the Rotter family.
- <http://phila-partner.de/Kronfeld%20Robert.htm>
- Correspondence with Bernd Diekmann.
- Simine Short: Glider Mail

*Note:*

The article's section "Robert Kronfeld's 'Vierländerflug' - 1933" has been modified on the comments of Simine Short and Bernd Diekmann.