



Austria (Sc #206, 1919); Thuringia (Sc #16N5, 1945); Switzerland (Sc #325, 1949); Azerbaijan (Sc #427, 1994)

The posthorn sounds, and villagers know the mail is near. In the 18th and 19th centuries, mail carriers on horseback would blow the horn to announce their arrival and departure. This importance of this small, coiled, valveless brass instrument is shown in its ubiquitous presence as a symbol of postal services around the world.



Czechoslovakia (Sc #1970, 1974); Belgium (Sc #B1019, 1982); Germany (Sc #B635a, 1985 & Sc #B682, 1989)

Sometimes, these mail carriers are called postilions; technically, a postilion guides a horse-drawn coach while mounted on the horse or one of a pair of horses, as in the pair of stamps on the right above. These stamps seem more active than simply the post horn itself, making them more attractive to my eye.

On Christmas Day 1871, Norway issued a set of definitives featuring a crowned posthorn. Norway has used this design continuously for over 150 years, making it the longest-running stamp design. The two stamps from Norway show how the design has evolved over time. Other countries, such as Iceland and Crete, have used the same design. The early ½-groschen stamp from Hanover may have been part of the inspiration for Friedrich Wilhelm von Hanno, the German designer of Norway's stamps.



Iceland (Sc #19, 1892 & Sc #29, 1900); Norway (Sc #19, 1872 & Sc #1752, 2014); Crete (Sc #100, 1909)



Hanover (Sc #18, 1860)

The "bull's head" above a posthorn (also known as "Cap du Bour") stamp replicates Romania's first, very rare issue, and commemorates the 75th anniversary of Romanian stamps. This posthorn looks very much like an animal horn in place of the coiled brass instrument seen elsewhere.



Romania (Sc #427, 1932)

Stylized posthorns are used as symbols of postal services around the world. Three are illustrated below. This exhibit also makes it quite clear that the posthorn was used most prevalently in central and northern Europe.



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Belgium (Sc #2055, 2005); Egypt (Sc #1913, 2004); Estonia (Sc #677, 2011)

