

A DRAGON SKULL

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Legend has it that Klagenfurt am Wörthersee in Austria was founded after two brave men had slain the abominable *Lindwurm*. This beast was a winged dragon living in the moors adjoining the lake, the staple diet of which is said to have been virgins, but which did not spurn the fat bull on a chain that the men had mounted on a strong tower.

The feat is commemorated by a grandiose nine-ton Renaissance monument in the city center. Although it represents a dragon, the statue can be regarded as the first paleontological reconstruction. The head of the statue is modeled on the skull of woolly rhinoceros.

In 1335, the cranium of a woolly rhinoceros (*Coelodonta antiquitatis*) from the ice-age was found in a gravel pit near Klagenfurt. It was instantly interpreted as the skull of a dragon, or *Lindwurm*. This fossil, which is still on exhibition at the *Landesmuseum für Kärnten* in Klagenfurt, served as a model for the head of the Dragon Fountain statue.

On 22 January 1968, Austria issued a two-schilling stamp depicting the Dragon Fountain in Klagenfurt as part of its historic buildings definitive series.

On 11 July 1997, the *Lindwurm* appeared again on the second stamp issued in the Austrian Myths & Legends definitive series. The image of the dragon was also used on a 1933 cinderella poster stamp that commemorated ten years of the publication *Werbuseg*, a magazine for poster stamp collectors.



Stylized *Lindwurm*
Austria, 2013, Sc#2459



Lindwurm Poster Stamp
Austria, 1933



Lindwurm Fountain
Austria, 1968, Sc#696



Lindwurm Legend
Austria, 1997, Sc#1731

On 12 September 2013, Austria issued a set of three coil stamps showing stylized landmarks. The lowest denomination has a stylized representation of the Dragon Fountain in Klagenfurt.

Finally, on 1 March 2015, Austrian Post issued a new series of self-adhesive definitive stamps titled "Impressions of Austria" featuring various landmarks. The stamps were designed by Eva Tiess, a young graduate of the Vienna Academy of Advertising. The 150-cent denomination, issued in booklet panes of four, depicts the head of the Dragon Fountain.



Woolly Rhino Skull
Tibet, 3.5 MYA



Lindwurm Fountain
Austria, 2015, Sc#2548