

Day Eighteen

Roman Fort Saalburg

Roman fort Saalburg - Archaeological Park

Bad Homburg v.d. Höhe

The Saalburg, in Roman times a fort with a camp village on the border of the Roman Empire with the Germanic tribal areas, was rebuilt around 1900 on the initiative of Kaiser Wilhelm II. The complex, which is unique in the world, is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Limes.

You can see the complete fortifications, buildings made of stone and wood and reconstructed ovens. Staged rooms, models and archaeological finds illustrate the living and working environment of the soldiers and the population in the village at the gates. A tour of the Saalburg gives visitors a good insight into the history, culture and way of life of the Romans.

In February 2016, the new permanent exhibition on prehistory was opened. Two new exhibition rooms in the Principia are dedicated to archaeological finds from the Stone Age, the Bronze and Iron Ages and the early Middle Ages around the Saalburg Pass in the Taunus. The presentation of the original finds is complemented by informative texts, graphics, and hands-on stations where visitors can view and understand faithful replicas of the objects.







THE COMMANDER'S RESIDENCE

In the praetorium lived the commander with his family, guests, servants and slaves. The home included private rooms, a service wing with a kitchen and latrine.

At the beginning of the 20th century only the residence's central, stone-built section was reconstructed. In 2004 followed the extension with a courtyard, three-sided colonnade and adjacent rooms.

The outer walls have been given a coat of white plaster with painted masonry seams and the suggestion of semi-circular lintels.

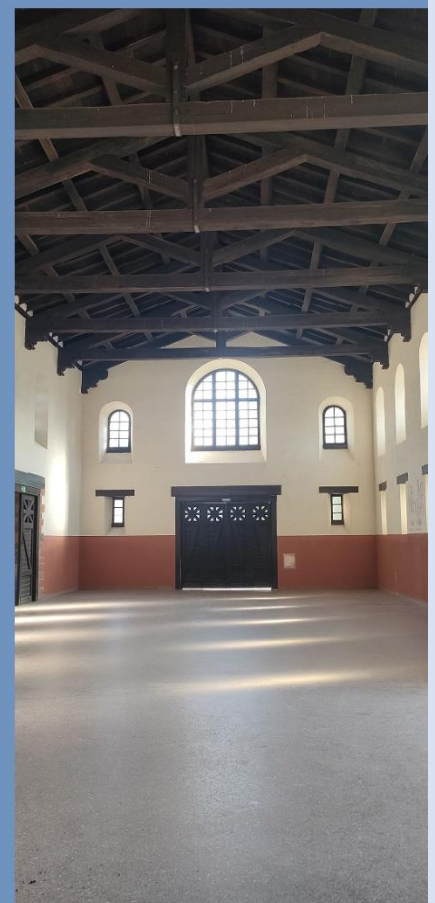
Today, the administration of Saalburg Museum is housed here.

It can be visited on weekends, during the public tours.



THE GREAT HALL

The basilica served as a formal place of assembly for ceremonial occasions, such as the annual renewal of the oath of allegiance to the emperor. Modern bronze statues of emperors Hadrian (AD 117 – 138) and Severus Alexander (AD 222 – 235) sit in front of the northern wall. On the opposite wall a sequence of images illustrates the Roman conquest of Germania with the ensuing establishment of Limes and Saalburg. In the northwest corner the wall's underlying structure is revealed: A rough fieldstone wall is covered with flat tiles to create a smooth surface for plaster. The tiles have small spacers on the back to ensure air circulation.





Artillery and projectiles

The early Hellenistic artillery was made to shoot arrows. The arrows' length varied according to the calibre of the ballistic device. Roman artillery used short, thick projectiles called catapult bolts. The wooden bolts are about 40 cm long and have three wooden fins. Their shafts often consist of several parts with the front part made of hardwood. The most common bolt heads have a square profile and are shafted with a socket or tang. A special type of bolt is the fire bolt, whose head forms a kind of cage that can be stuffed with fuel.



THE SHRINE OF THE STANDARDS

It is here that the troops kept their insignia safe. The soldiers practiced the official emperor cult and worshiped in front of the aedes. At the back, a raised ledge holds copies of military insignia and small votive offerings. A legionary eagle takes pride of place in the centre of the display. The room's painted decoration is based on Roman models. A magnificent, colourfully decorated wooden ceiling arches across. The shrine of the standards was the spiritual centre of the fort. It was protected by a bronze grille door.



Everyday Roman Pottery

The majority of the ceramic finds are wheel-thrown Roman pottery for everyday use. The fine Belgian Ware was, like Terra Sigillata, most often imported. However, the discovery of two pottery kilns shows that ceramics were also made locally. Among the potsherds, the red (Terra Rubra) and the black to grey Belgian Ware (Terra Nigra) can be clearly differentiated. Some of the vessels bear a potter's stamp. Ornamental borders, created with small wheels, often decorate the larger vessels. Among the most common forms of Belgian Ware are plates and beakers. In contrast, pitchers, grating bowls and cookware were made of rough, hardwearing pottery.



Pferdekopf von Waldgirmes, the horse's head of Waldgirmes, is the remnant of a Roman-age statue. It was found in the year 2009 on a field close to Waldgirmes in the German state of Hesse.

The Bronze Age in Bad Homburg

In April 1880 two Bronze Age hoards were discovered at Ferdinandsplatz. They lay only two metres from one another, at a depth of roughly 35 cm. Today it is impossible to separate their contents, so they are displayed here as a single find.

The individual objects are partially damaged and show traces of wear. They may have been valuables, buried in case of need, or else were intended as raw material to be melted down for reuse.



EAST GATE

Camp roads led through the four gates in the defensive walls: the VIA PRAETORIA ran north-south while the VIA PRINCIPALIS ran in an east-west direction. The gates were named after the roads. In contrast to the main gateway, the side gates have only a single carriageway.

The reconstruction of the east gate was financed by Sigmund Aschrott, a banker and industrialist from Berlin. The donor was honoured with a Latin building inscription.

Inscript im Tordurchgang:

ZU EHREN DES KAISERS / WILHELMS II. / LIESS DAS TOR MIT TÜRME / DAS DURCH DIE GEWALT
DER FEINDE ZERSTÖRT WORDEN WAR / AUS EIGENEN MITTELN WIEDER AUFBAUEN / S. ASCHROTT AUS BERLIN.

Inscription in the doorway:

IN HONOUR OF THE EMPEROR / WILHELM II / THE GATE WITH TOWERS / WHICH BY THE VIOLENCE OF ENEMIES
HAD BEEN DESTROYED / REBUILT AT HIS OWN EXPENSE / S. ASCHROTT FROM BERLIN.





Hessenpark Open Air Museum





House from Laubach

The two-storey half-timbered house rests on a quarry stone base. At its old location, it was probably a master craftsman's house. In the mid 1970's, the building was in such a state of deterioration that the municipality of Laubach was unable to preserve it, and it was therefore transferred to the Hessenpark Open-Air Museum. A Latin inscription above the door decorated with carved ornaments wishes: Peace to those entering, farewell to those leaving. A beam inscription translates as: *THE BUILDER OF THIS HOUSE, JOHANNES TRIEBERT IS HIS NAME, IS WELL KNOWN.* The raised cellar on the left was probably used as stables for small livestock. Currently, an exhibition of church steeple clocks, with over 30 exhibits by German and foreign tower clockmakers, is being shown in this building. In the past, such chronometers provided the basis for a particular kind of timekeeping that determined the rhythm of life. A thematic focus has been created in conjunction with the tower clockmaker's workshop from Groß-Umstadt in the neighbouring courtyard.

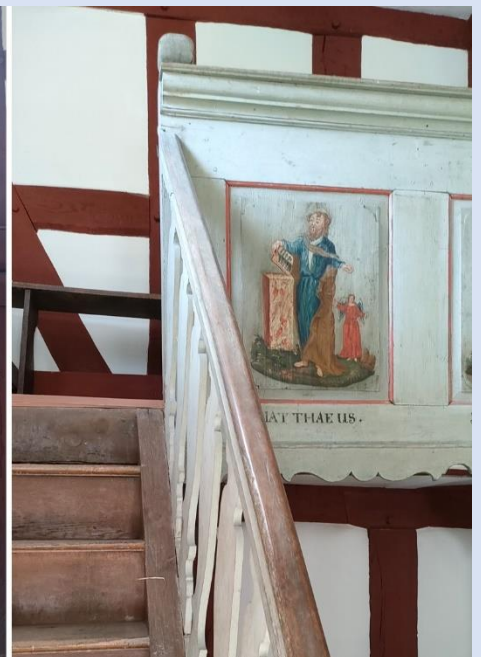






Church from Niederhörten

Niederhörten had its own chapel as early as the Middle Ages. In the period from 1656 to 1658 a two-storey timber framed building was added to a stone built choir in the western part of the building. In 1774/75 the choir was demolished, as it was dilapidated and cramped, and the hall for the congregation was extended, as a timber framed building, to the east. The building is shown as it was at the time of this renewal. The slate roof bears a hexagonal ridge turret with pointed helm, sound louvres, a tower cross and weathervane. Until 1931 the chapel, as one of ten subsidiary churches, belonged to Breidenbach parish. Holy Communion was celebrated here two or three times a year, while on the other Sundays the parishioners were to attend services in Oberhörten, Oberdieten or Breidenbach. In 1932 Niederhörten became a subsidiary community of Oberhörten, and from that time until 1971 a service was held every Sunday in Niederhörten. Between 1970 and 1973 the new church dedicated to St. Matthew was built there, as the old church had become too small.





Quince Tree