

## THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS OF THE LIMES IN THE REMS-MURR-DISTRICT:



### GROSSERLACH-GRAB

If you – like a Roman legionnaire – would like to cast a glance into barbarian country from the boundary of the Imperium Romanum, you should not miss a visit to the reconstructed watchtower at Grosserlach-Grab. At a height of 536 metres the “Heidenbuckel” (“Heathen’s Hill”) marks a major survey point and the second-highest location of the entire Limes. Keys to the tower are kept at the inns “Rössle” and “Löwen” in Grab as well as at the inn “Waldblick” in Trauzenbach and can be borrowed from there.



### MURRHARDT

Located at the centre of the Swabian Forest and easy to reach by train via the Murrtaal route, the city of Murrhardt offers an excellent entry into the Swabian Forest Roman period. In Roman times, Murrhardt was the location of a cohort castle – the “Vicus Murrensis” – which today has been overbuilt with only signs as a reminder of the past. The romantic town centre with the famous Walterich Chapel, an important piece of architecture from the medieval times of the Staufer Emperors, the cloister and the charming market place with its pleasant half-timbered houses reminds one of the fact, that the town can also look back on a rich medieval history. From the town centre a trail called “Murrhardter Spaziergang” (“Murrhardt walk”) leads past the Rümelin mill on the fruit-growing nature trail up to the tower site of Heidenbühl. The tower was destroyed by a fire in Roman times and – because of its strategic importance – was quickly rebuilt by the legionnaires; today it is considered one of the most imposing watchtower ruins of the Limes.



### WELZHEIM

For the purpose of border protection the Romans built small castles at intervals. A good example of this is the small castle Rötelsee close to the city of Welzheim. The foundation and the trench are still preserved. Its structure and its floor plan are typical of many small castles along the Upper Germanic Limes.

Formerly there were two castles in Welzheim. Situated between them there was the vicus – the civilian settlement. Auxiliary troops from Britain were garrisoned in the East Castle. The West Castle, which no longer remains and which was considerably larger, harboured an equestrian unit numbering 500 men. This well-paid and well-equipped cavalry was among the most prestigious troops stationed at the Limes. Along the entire length of the Limes there were only seven such castles.



### WELZHEIM CITY MUSEUM

In the City Museum of Welzheim, Roman occupation history in Southwest Germany is explained by means of charts and pictures. Local Roman finds are on display in showcases. Among these are also the below-mentioned Roman shoes. The museum in the Pfarrstraße 8 opens from March through October on Sundays from 2pm – 5pm. Admission is free. Guided group tours are available in English, French and Flemish following a prior request to the tourist office.

For further information:  
→ [www.museumwelzheim.de](http://www.museumwelzheim.de)  
→ Tourist office, telephone +49 (0) 71 82/ 80 08 15



### KAISERSBACH

Between the „Spatzenhof“ and the “Königsseiche” (“King’s Oak”) is one of the best-preserved sections of the Limes bulwark in Baden Württemberg. At the „King’s Oak“ the Limes trench can be found, somewhat hidden in the forest. Here, and for a length of altogether 80 kilometres, the Limes runs perfectly straight over steep slopes and cliffs, completely independent of the nature of the terrain. This straight line is a masterpiece of ancient land surveying and forms a unique feature of the Limes.

### ALFDORF

Before the Limes – running straight from the north – reaches the Rems Valley, it changes direction towards the east at the Haghof. Here the Limes hiker and cyclist trail runs along the country road L1155 up to Alfdorf-Pfahlbronn precisely over the ancient Limes, so a hiker or cyclist is literally following in the traces of antiquity.

For further information:  
→ [www.alfdorf.de](http://www.alfdorf.de)



### NATURE PARK CENTRE

The state-of-the-art experience exhibition on two floors at the Nature Park Centre communicates comprehensive information, both interesting and worth knowing, about the entire Swabian-Franconian Forest nature park and about Roman history.

The Nature Park Centre at the Murrhardt market place is open throughout the year: Monday to Sunday 10am – noon and 2pm – 4pm, Thursday 10am – noon and 2pm – 6pm, closed on Wednesday afternoons.

Guided tours and excursions with the Limes Cicerones may be booked here for the Limes section from Öhringen to Aalen.

For further information:

→ [www.naturpark-sfw.de](http://www.naturpark-sfw.de)  
→ [info@naturpark-sfw.de](mailto:info@naturpark-sfw.de)  
→ Tourist info, telephone +49 (0) 7192/213 777



### CARL-SCHWEIZER-MUSEUM

The museum was founded in 1931 and exhibits archaeological material from the castle and the civilian settlement as well as the neighbouring Limes watchtowers. The remains of a giant Jupiter pillar and (among other things) a relief depicting Romulus and Remus – as legend has it, the founders of the city of Rome – are considered to be discoveries of nationwide importance.

From Good Friday through All Saints Day (November 1st) the museum is open at the following hours: Monday to Friday 11am – noon and 4pm – 5pm, Saturday 11am – noon and 3pm – 5pm, Sunday and holidays 10am – noon and 2pm – 5pm.

For further information:

→ [www.carl-schweizer-museum.de](http://www.carl-schweizer-museum.de)  
→ [info@carl-schweizer-museum.de](mailto:info@carl-schweizer-museum.de)  
→ Tourist info, telephone +49 (0) 7192/ 54 02

## SEARCHING FOR TRACES ...

### SENSATIONAL FIND OF ANCIENT ROMAN BATHS ON OBERMÜHLENWEG IN MURRHARDT

In September 2010, just after the first bulldozers began excavating a site for a new medical centre, the remains of a Roman bathhouse came to light. The digging was interrupted and the State Antiquities and Monuments Office contacted. Over weeks of excavation work under the leadership of Dr. Andreas Thiel from the State Office for the Preservation of Historical Monuments, it was possible to expose the parts of the building complex still preserved – the south side with the apsis of the former hot bath room as well as the remains of a cold-water pool and parts of the heating system – from the substratum. Of great interest for the archaeologists was the discovery of a large canal running under the adjacent building which could carry a great deal more water than would actually have been necessary for a Roman bathhouse. This points to a type of sewage system, an innovation for a military Roman baths. These thermal baths belonged originally to the fort of the XXIV cohort which was situated somewhat to the southeast on the slope above the Murr River.

Before digging was resumed, all the finds were analysed and documented down to the smallest detail. A scientific publication is being prepared as of the present time. In the meantime, in an elaborate process, two salvaged blocks, each weighing tons with the apsis and part of the wall of the baths, have been installed in the medical centre – almost at the place of excavation, only approximately two metres higher – and are on view to the interested public along with a Roman exhibition.

The finds can be viewed at the medical centre “Ärztelhaus am Römerbad”. Further information and the opening times can be obtained at the tourist information in Murrhardt, telephone +49 (0) 7192 213 777.

### FIFTEEN-MONTH EXCAVATION IN THE FORMER WEST CASTLE OF WELZHEIM

The Welzheim West Castle, comprising more than four hectare and therefore almost three times the size of the East Castle and only 500 metres from it, housed an equestrian unit of 500 men, a so-called “Ala”. The two fortresses on the Limes coexisted for about one hundred years. The site of the former West Castle is now covered by modern buildings. There is a plan to conserve a small part of the wall and to set up an information plaque in memory of the former fortress.

In a rescue excavation from 2005/2006, interesting finds from the former West Castle were secured which give new insight into the history of the largest fortress on the former Upper Germanic Limes.

The excavators found remains of a large, central cult and administration building (principia). Not only was the garrison headquarters housed here but also a large assembly hall. In a semi-circular apsis of the temple, the standards of the equestrian troops were kept. In the cellar below, money for the troops was kept. In addition to this, remains of soldiers barracks and an attic or commandant’s apartments were found and other finds salvaged such as a grillage, spades, a small decorated bronze bucket with handle, keys, cloak pins and buckles, shards from lances as well as fragments of a small statue and ceramic objects. The fact that the unexpected finds were so well preserved is thanks to the thick layer of humus of the fields and gardens, which over the centuries covered the site of the castle.

Although the remains of the walls of the Roman principia could not be salvaged, the finds will finally be exhibited in the Welzheim Museum of Local History after having been restored and assessed.

In August 2011 a sensational find was made during the building of a new family home: a bronze treasure trove dating from the second and third century with vessels and parts of parade equipment for the equestrian soldiers and their horses. Most outstanding is a superb, approximately 22 cm large, medallion showing the goddess Minerva, which was part of a horse’s bridle and so far the only find of this kind made in Baden Württemberg to date.

### THE VIRTUAL WORLD OF THE LIMES – A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME IN 3D

The virtual world of the Limes is an interesting and informative computer animation which brings back to life long ago eras along the Limes. In an interactive 3D experience, not only the restored layout of the grounds, but also life on the edge of the Roman Empire is reconstructed and made experienceable for people of today. A 3D film, an interactive flight along the Limes, games and a 2D information platform offer a wealth of information on sites, excavation finds and museums which the visitor can access at will.

The virtual reconstructions are based on laser scanning aerial photography which can penetrate vegetation and make buried objects visible in 3D. By evaluating this data, the whole impressive former aspect can be brought back to life on the computer – watchtower by watchtower, castle by castle and vicus by vicus. Street maps and satellite pictures allow history and modern life to merge.

In the future, the 3D experience will be presented as a permanent exhibition in Welzheim, Murrhardt, Mainhardt, Öhringen, Pfeldelbach and Fellbach. In addition to this, the virtual world of the Limes will be travelling with a mobile station around the Limes region and at trade fairs.

For further information:  
→ [www.limeswelten.de](http://www.limeswelten.de)



## THE LIMES TRAIL



## WITHOUT LIMITS - THE LIMES CONNECTS



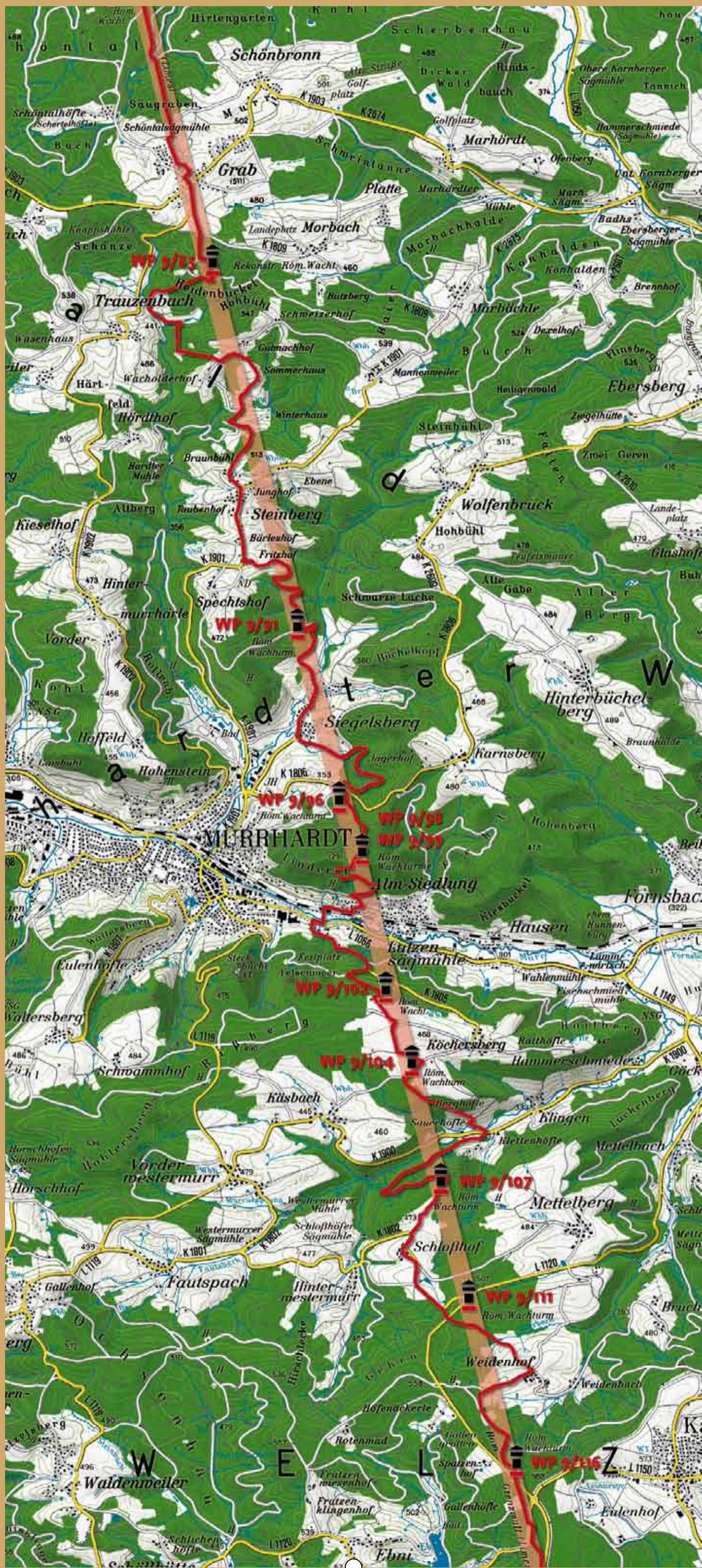
### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

### LANDRATSAMT REMS-MURR-KREIS

Alter Postplatz 10 • 71332 Waiblingen • Tel. +49 (0) 71 51 / 5 01 13 76  
→ [info@schwaebischerwald.com](mailto:info@schwaebischerwald.com) → [www.schwaebischerwald.com](http://www.schwaebischerwald.com)

This project was sponsored by the Naturpark Schwäbisch-Fränkischer Wald with the support of the Land Baden Württemberg, the GlücksSPIrale lottery and the European Union (ELER).





The Limes is Germany's largest and certainly best-known archaeological monument. The Upper Germanic Rhaetian Limes wall stretches for 550 kilometres between the rivers Rhine and Danube, comprising 120 forts and castles of various sizes and approximately 900 watchtowers. This boundary line marks the farthest extension of the two former Roman provinces Germania Superior and Rhaetia. In former times, the Limes was not only a boundary, it was also a path of communication and a link connecting the individual forts. Today the Limes connects a row of ancient sights, strung out like pearls on a string.

### THE LIMES TRAIL

The traditional Limes trail follows the route of the Limes. It combines nature and history perfectly and leads through a diverse landscape, past the remains of watchtowers. The most important of the restorations are equipped with descriptive information panels.

The Limes trail begins at the south of Grosserlach-Grab in the Rems-Murr-District at the reconstructed accessible watchtower WP 9/83 with its palisades, ramparts and ditches on the Heidenbuckel (Heathen's Hill). Parking is available directly adjacent to the watchtower. Through fields and woods the path then leads in the direction of Murrhardt, past the restored remains of the sentry tower WP 9/91 between Spechtshof and Siegersberg.

In Siegersberg – which belongs to the municipality of Murrhardt – a Limes milestone commemorates the Roman past. The restored ruin of watchtower WP 9/96 on the Heidenbühl lies on the path to Linderstebene passing the remains of two watchtowers (WP 9/98 and WP 9/99) where a remarkable number of finds have been excavated. Next, the path leads into the Murrthal (Murr Valley) offering the possibility of a side trip to Murrhardt, the former Roman border settlement "Vicus Murrensis" where the Carl Schweizer Museum devotes a large area to life on the Roman boundary wall - Limes. As witness to the Roman period, the Nature Park Centre has on display a copy of a consecration altar from the former residents of the Murr region.

The Limes trail now leads in the direction of Kaiserbach to the watchtower WP 9/116 at the Spatenhof, the highest point of the front Limes and therefore one of the main survey points.

Going past the small fort Rötelsee, the Limes trail reaches the city of Welzheim which, with its two forts, was one of the most important garrisons of the Upper Germanic Limes.

From the Eastern Fort with its elaborately reconstructed western gate, it is worth taking a side trip to downtown Welzheim. The municipal museum is located here, offering further information on the Roman past and housing the

largest exhibition of antique Roman shoes. From the Eastern Fort the path leads through the wood, past the remains of two more Roman sentry towers (WP 9/134 and WP 9/136) towards Haghof. Here, the Limes turns towards the east after running absolutely straight across hills and valleys for approximately 80 kilometres.

At the district border of the Ostalb are the restored remains of yet another watchtower (WP 12/9) called "Bemblesstein" by the locals. The Limes trail now leaves the Rems-Murr-District and soon reaches Lorch, with its own tales to tell of the Limes.

### THE LIMES – A PART OF THE WORLD CULTURAL HERITAGE

By being nominated part of the World Cultural Heritage in 2005 together with Great Britain's Hadrian's Wall, which has been on the heritage list since 1987, the Upper Germanic Rhaetian Limes in Germany may now take its place in the gallery of such important archaeological sites as the Pyramids, the Great Wall of China, or the Alhambra.

### THE LIMES – A TIME TRAVEL

Approximately 150 AD the Romans cut a lane right through the Swabian Forest and the Eastern Alb District. For about 100 years ramparts, trenches, castles, wooden palisades and stone walls marked the farthest end of the Roman Empire in woodland then devoid of humans. A comparatively short time measured against the Roman Empire's duration, but a formative one, the traces of which can still be seen in what was formerly Germania. Many pieces of evidence of the Limes remained down through the centuries, especially in the Swabian Forest and in the Eastern Alb District. The forest may have reclaimed the land, but it has preserved the Limes, its ramparts and the foundations of its castles and towers for posterity. For us today this ancient boundary is an eventful and highly interesting destination which offers incentives to families, hikers and cyclists to go travelling to a time about 2000 years in the past.



Map based on topographical map 1:50 000 © Landesamt für Geoinformation und Landentwicklung Baden-Württemberg (www.lgl-bw.de) 12/2011, Az.:28512-D/8052.

First edition January 2012; Editor: Landratsamt Rems-Murr-Kreis; Text and design: agentur arcis, Murrhardt; Photography: municipalities, agentur arcis, Heinz Kübler, Frank Kleinbach.

