

Historical Walk Tour 1



Tourist-Information • 82496 Oberau • Schmiedeweg 10
+49 (0) 8824 93973 • Telefax +49 (0) 8824 8890
info@oberau.de • www.oberau.de

Let's start at the house on Hauptstrasse no. 7. A commemorative plaque on the former farm house, whose façade has luckily been preserved in the last decades, reminds us of the Spiritual Councillor Joseph Aloys Daisenberger, who was born here on 30 May 1799 as son of the farmer Michael Daisenberger. Not only did J.A. Daisenberger acquire great merits for the composition of the Oberammergau Passion Play; he was also a gifted writer and historian. Daisenberger being benevolent and open-minded has been given a lasting memorial in the book "Erinnerungen", a book of memories by the Bavarian writer Ludwig Thoma, whose ancestors on his mother's side were also from Oberau.

Daisenberger's father and grandfather kept a diary from 1765 to 1797 – something quite exceptional for farmers of the 18th century – and thus created a unique document of rural life of times long past. From 1772 to 1777, the farm house was also home to the farm hand Johann Georg Prändel, who made a remarkable career after leaving Oberau to become a professor of mathematics and an honorary member of the Royal Bavarian Academy of Sciences. Both Prändel and J. A. Daisenberger can be found in the Bavarian biography of Professor Bosl listing renowned Bavarian personalities. The life of the Daisenberger family in the second half of the 18th century is the subject of the book titled "Chronik eines Bauernlebens vor 200 Jahren" [chronicle of farm life 200 years ago]. It is available in Oberau.

Opposite the Daisenberger's farm (Im Winkel 2), Oberau school children were instructed by the "last Ettal monk", Father Othmar Weis, a couple of years after the dissolution of the Ettal monastery in 1803. Weis is the author of the current text of the Oberammergau Passion Play and was a supporter of the Spiritual Councillor Daisenberger.

Following the Hauptstrasse towards the Bundesstrasse, we come across the Hotel Zur Post, an inn steeped in tradition for centuries. The owners were hunters in the service of the Ettal monastery. The estate was home to the grandmother of writer Ludwig Thoma. The model of a Loisach raft full of gypsum barrels is hanging on the wall of the guest area of the hotel, reminiscent of the once flourishing Oberau rafting company "Floßfahrende Gesellschaft", which transported the gypsum broken and baked in the village down the Rivers Loisach and Isar. Unfortunately, the only thing that reminds us of the 12 gypsum mills once driven by the Gießenbach brook in the village is a fresco on the school building (Schulstrasse 4, front facing Schmiedeweg).

In front of the Hotel Zur Post, we now turn right onto Bahnhofsplatz, go past the post office and follow the railway line (toll road) to Werdenfellerstrasse until we arrive at house no. 22.

This building was the headquarters of the customs and wood inspection authorities in Oberau until the removal of the border between the Electorate of Bavaria and the County of Werdenfels in 1802. Although the border to the County of Werdenfels was further south of the village, the customs duties were levied here at the tollgate. Here, border guards on horseback were based to look out for smugglers.

We continue our small historic walk by turning round into Werdenfelerstrasse and passing the railway crossing. After the railway crossing, we turn right towards the Loisach bridge.

Shortly before the Loisach bridge, we can see a small chapel dedicated to St Nepomuk. The Oberau "Floßfahrende Gesellschaft" erected this chapel in the 19th century only a few steps from their timber yard. The rafters did not set out on their dangerous tour before saying their prayers here once again.

We pass the Loisach bridge and choose the footpath to the right leading to Farchant. (The pathway straight ahead past the ancient farm Buchwies, which we see at the foot of the mountain Rißkopf, was used many centuries by the covered wagons of the Augsburg merchants on their way from Venice).

On our way to Farchant we arrive at a small forest after roughly 1,000 m, east of which, in the middle of the golf course, we see a field elevation in the meadow, an ancient earthwork put up in the early 18th century in defense against the Austrians. Above the meadow, there are steep rock walls, the Röhrlerwand, an important point of the former border between the Electorate of Bavaria and the County of Werdenfels, which used to be a major battleground again and again.

South of this prominent point, there was the land of the Bishop of Freising for more than 500 years, a „European small state“, which did not only have legislation and a currency of its own but also a foreign policy of its own. The "Freising" people usually stayed neutral in times of war unlike their Bavarian neighbors.

Nowadays, the earthwork, which used to extend through the whole valley, can be seen only at some places. The earthwork way runs directly on the historic building. In the War of the Spanish Succession more than 300 years ago, a bloody battle took place for many hours on 27 August 1703 between Tiroleans and Bavarians. In the end, the Bavarians surrendered to the strong superiority of the Tiroleans. The lost battle inflicted great suffering on Oberau and the whole area. A second earthwork, which is hardly visible anymore today, had already been put up in the Thirty Year's War for protection against the Swedes.