

# Welcome to old sawmills once and today!

## DIE TEICHMÜHLE STEINWIESEN

## THE POND-MILL AT STEINWIESEN

Come to the “Teichmühle” / Pond-Mill (Teich = pond, Mühle = mill) run by hydropower since 1507. The tradition of saw mills dates back more than 900 years. Of known 154 saw mills in the area only very few have left. The today still working Pond-Mill is likewise Museum and operating workshop.



### Location

District of Kronach in the nature reserve Franconian Forest (Frankenwald) on the river “Rodach”, 14 km east of district-capital Kronach, 300 meters north of the market town Steinwiesen, directly at the state road leading to the barrier lake “Ködeltalsperre”.

### Sightseeing and guided tours

Open on May 1st and then every sunday from 2 pm to 5 pm until end of October - or by previous arrangement.

Phone: +49 9261 91912, E-Mail: [info@bernhardtlang.de](mailto:info@bernhardtlang.de)

Entrance fee: Adults 2 EUR, Children 0.50 EUR

## **I. Proprietors and organizations in charge**

Proprietors/shareholders (of twelfth-part contingents - so-called sawing days):  
District Kronach 10.5 shares, market town Steinwiesen 1 share, Mr. Kuhnlein a half share.

Chief of the mill: District-chief Oswald Marr

Sawmillers: Bernhard Schlee, Bernhardt Lang, Werner Badum, Felix Neder

Guided tours: Mill Association Rodachtal

Leaseholder: Mill Association Rodachtal

## **II. Historical data**

1122 First mention of mills in the Franconian Forest in a document of the Prince-Bishop of Bamberg.

1507 First documented mention of the mill “beim Hader gelegen” in Steinwiesen, supposedly the predecessor of the Pond-Mill.

1605 Interests payed by boards: annually five dozen boards have to be delivered to the Prince Bishop’s treasure chamber in Bamberg.

1742 Many saw mills are active in the district of Kronach - before invention of the steam engine in 1769. Until then it was an important industry in the area.

1820 Only 120 saw mills left.

1861 First installation of stake-appliances for the regulation of the water storage level.

1862 Again 154 saw mills in the Franconian Forest.

1870 Since almost one third of all trees in the Franconian Forest have been destroyed by a heavy storm three steam-mills are established to cope with the bulk of wood. This was the beginning of the die-out of the old saw mills.

1881 After a burn-down a new building was erected for the Pond-Mill.

1922 After another destructive fire the dwelling house for the saw miller was newly built.

1951-1960 Modernization of mill, ditch and weir, installation of a historical iron frame, originally constructed in 1900.

1982 The district Kronach acquires the majority of sawing days.

1984 Renovation of the mill by the district Kronach with financial support of the local company Martin Beierschoder Ltd.

1987 Founding of the Saw Mill Association Rodachtal. First guided tours.

2000 Connection to the electricity network and installation of an electric engine.

2001-2003 General overhauling after floodwater caused damages.

2004 Besides guided tours, the Mill Association Rodachtal also takes charge of the Pond-Mill's sawing business.

2005 Construction of a new weir.

2006 - 2013 Adoption of a new museum concept.

2007 500-year-anniversary celebration of the Pond Mill.

### **III. The Pond-Mill - a Mill Syndicate**

Like most other mills in the Franconian Forest once used to be, the Pond-Mill is still an "Interessentenmühle" - a mill run by a mill syndicate. The proprietors of the Pond-Mill are a community of interests, called "Mühlverband" - mill syndicate. Every year the syndicate members will elect the "Mühlvogt", the chief clerk of the mill, who has to take care of all financial affairs and also has representative obligations.

### **IV. The wood for the mill is obtained by the forestry district**

The mill syndicate is obtaining a certain amount of round timber from the forestry district of Bavaria state, the so-called "mill- or concession wood". The forestry offices provide the mill wood at the average price what was realized in the wood-auctions of the previous year. So it should be guaranteed that the saw mill can also operate in financial hard times. The Pond-Mill is entitled to obtain 421 cubic meters wood annually.

### **V. How the Pond-Mill works**

#### **1. The function of the water wheel**

Height: 3.96 m

Width: 0.82 m

Average water amount: 1.000 liters/sec



The water for the mill is supplied by the mill stream. By a weir the water-level is adjusted. The “Rechen”, the screen, is guarding the mill-wheel against damage, the so-called “Schütze”, a sliding panel, is regulating the water amount to the mill-wheel. The water hits the mill-wheel at its deepest point and makes it run. The power of the running wheel is transferred through main shaft by a transmission to the iron frame saw, where a number of saw blades are mounted. By other transmissions the circular saw, the chain and the grinding wheel for sharpening the saw blades are moved. Maximum performance of the machinery is about 7 HP.

## 2. Sawing of wood

The trunk wood comes to the Pond-Mill via the mill stream and has to be arranged by help of so-called “Blöcherhaken”, clamp-hooks, before it is pulled out of the water by a iron chain to a slope before the saw. The trunk wood will be pulled into the saw blades by two rollers. After the iron frame the sawn boards are kept together by a kind of pliers. Then the remaining bark is removed by the circular saw. The finished boards are piled up behind the mill.

## VI. Working- and living conditions

### 1. The working conditions

The real job in the mill was that of the “Schneidmüller”, the saw miller. He was employed and paid by the “Mühlvogt”, the chief clerk of the mill, on behalf of the mill syndicate. Of course, the money he could earn depended mainly on the water-power available. The saw mill was not necessarily running all the year round. Due to water shortage or icing the frame saw often could not work for months. No sawing - no money! On the other hand, in times of sufficient water supply, the saw miller’s working day lasted 12, 14 or even more hours. The mill was running day and night and the saw miller’s wife often had to stand in for her husband at night. Their working conditions often resembled slavery jobs. The saw miller was paid according piece-work rate and earned 60 to 80 “Pfennig” for five dozen boards, later on one Mark, but including piling of the boards. He could make a little extra income be the weir tax the raftsmen had to pay when passing through and by

selling saw dust and other saw mill waste. And he got the firewood he needed for free.



## 2. The living conditions

The dwelling of a saw miller was very simple, as it is to be seen in the Pond Mill. A kitchen which also served as the living room is the biggest room. A small bedroom for the saw miller and his wife and probably the youngest child completes the luck. A steep ladder leads to the garret with two tiny rooms, separated only by wooden planking. The other children slept here on straw bags directly under the tiled roof, which was neither sealed nor thermal insulated. So sometimes there could be snow on the blankets in the morning. A cellar lies under the saw miller's bed room, also accessible from outside. Today a modern toilet is set up there. In former times the saw miller and his family had to use a pit latrine somewhere outside. No bathroom was provided. In the cellar there was the stable, where chicken and perhaps a goat or a pig were kept. In cold winter days the chicken had their place on the drying stand in the kitchen over the stove. Beside the stable the potatoes could be stored. The saw miller and his wife sometimes earned as pay for working on the farmers' fields, since no fields of its own pertained to the saw mill.



## 3. The use today

The saw mill is working on one or two days a week. Since 2003 the mill association is also undertaking the task of the saw miller. So the old tradition of the mill is furthermore preserved.

## 4. The Mill Association / Mühlenverein Rodachtal e.V.

The Rodach valley Mill Association (Mühlenverein Rodachtal e.V.) was founded in 1987. Several members serve as guides of the museum or as saw millers. The association currently counts more than 50 members.

*2015 Translated by Mr. Walter Schinzel-Lang M.A.  
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