

Brief information about the Museum of Prehistoric Man Steinheim an der Murr

The museum

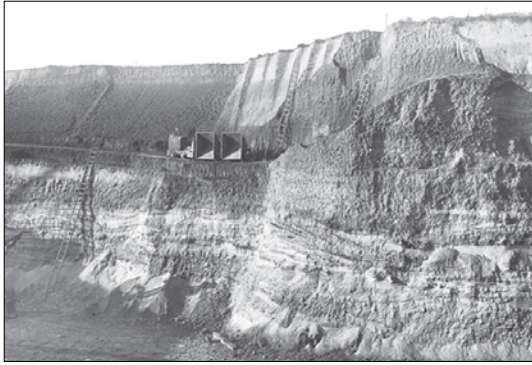
The Museum of Prehistoric Man is an institution of the town Steinheim an der Murr and a branch of the State Museum of Natural History Stuttgart. It is located in the Hans-Trautwein-Haus. The name honours Hans Trautwein, the mayor of Steinheim from 1600-1614 and 1626-1634. The building was used as a school from 1881 until 1963 and served as a library since 1965. Three years later, the Museum of Prehistoric Man was established. The museum was expanded in 1974, and again enlarged and completely redesigned in 1983. Prof. Dr. Karl Dietrich Adam and Dr. Gert Bloos from the Natural History Museum in Stuttgart designed the concept, and the Atelier for Communication Design Walter Guttenberger from Kernen im Remstal implemented it. The exhibition area is 340 square meters. It is divided over two floors. The tour through the museum begins with an introduction to the prehistory of mankind. The main part of the exhibition concerns the fossil man of Steinheim, the geology of the area, and the wildlife of Steinheim during the ice age.



Exhibition area "Ice Age Animals"

The Steinheim area of fossil discoveries

From the end of the 19th century to around the year 1965, the sand- and gravel quarries between Steinheim and Murr yielded many mammalian fossils, for example 96 bison, 45 mammoth, 45 giant deer, 25 straight-tusked elephants, 9 bears, 8 aurochs, 2 lions and 1 saber-tooth cat. Steinheim gained international attention after the discovery of the skeletons of the Steinheim steppe mammoth and the aurochs in 1910. Another highlight was the recovery of a steppe bison skeleton in 1925. Steinheim became famous worldwide after the skull of the Fossil Man came to light in the sand and gravel pit of Karl Sigrüst in 1933.



Historic photo of a sand and gravel pit in Steinheim

History of research

Visitors can see important pioneers in the history of research into the subjects of humankind and animal kingdom. The exhibition contains information about the ice age and a summary of the phylogeny of humankind ranging from the prehuman to the prehistoric man of Mauer near Heidelberg, and goes on from the Neanderthals to the appearance of modern human at the end of the ice age.



Exhibition area "Fossil Man of Steinheim"

The Fossil Man of Steinheim

The focus of this part of the exhibition is the skull of *Homo steinheimensis*, the "Fossil Man of Steinheim". It was found on July 24, 1933 in a layer of gravel and sand which is about 300 000 years old. It is the most complete skull of a prehistoric human found in Germany to date. *Homo steinheimensis* is even older than the Neanderthals, but still shares attributes with humans today. Questions are discussed regarding its age (about 25 years), sex (probably female) and placement in time (300 000 years before present). Damage to the skull gives rise to speculation about the fate of the woman. Was it a natural death? What happened after her death? Possible answers to these questions can be found in the museum.



Skull of *Homo steinheimensis* (right lateral view)



New: A life-size reconstruction of the "Fossil Man of Steinheim"
© 2017 Sculpture: Atelier Daynès, Paris, Photo: S. Entressangle, Paris.

Geology of the Steinheim region

The geology and the landscape history are shown at the second floor. The geological structure of the underground gave the premise for the large number of fossil finds. Reason for that was a lokal lowering of the earth's surface occurred in the region, beginning about 400 000 years before present, during the Holstein-Interglacial, and ending about 300 000 years later during the last or Eem-Interglacial. During this period, the rivers Murr and Bottwar deposited layers of sand and gravel in this basin, to a thickness of about 22 meters. Over more than 70 years, the commercial extraction of the sand and gravel brought the fossil findings to light.



Skeleton of the Steinheim steppe mammoth

Pleistocene wildlife of Steinheim

The two rooms on the ground floor present the wildlife of Steinheim during the Pleistocene. At the time of the deposition of the so-called "Waldelefanten"-sands (forest elephant sands) the following animals lived in the same region as the Fossil Man of Steinheim: straight-tusked elephants, Merck's rhinoceros, a forest subspecies of giant deer, aurochs, Pleistocene European wood bison and water buffalo. They are evidence of a warm, temperate climate. In the exhibition, the animals are represented by impressive fossil finds, scaled down models and life reconstructions. The wildlife of the "Steppenelefanten"-gravels ("steppe mammoth" gravels) indicates a rather cold climate. At the beginning of the penultimate ice age, the so-called Riss glaciation, the extensive woodland had given way to a steppe-like landscape. In it lived wild horses, woolly rhinoceros, steppe giant deer, steppe bison, bears and lions. Most impressive is the mounted skeleton of a Steinheim steppe mammoth with a shoulder height of 3.75 meters.



Life reconstruction of the Steinheim steppe mammoth

Opening times

Closed on Monday and Tuesday

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 1 - 5 pm

Saturday, Sunday and public holidays 12 - 5 pm

Entrance fees

Adults 2.00 €, Reduced admission 1.00 €

Groups of 15+ people: Adults 1.50 €, Reduced admission 0.75 €

By appointment:

Special guided tours for groups of up to 25 persons 40.00 €

Special guided tours for children

Registration and information:

Council Steinheim, Main Office, Phone: 07144 / 2 63 - 113

Urmensch-Museum

Kirchplatz 4, Hans-Trautwein-Haus, 71711 Steinheim an der Murr, Phone: 07144 / 212 26

www.stadt-steinheim.de

www.foerderverein-urmensch-museum.de



Lower jaw of a straight-tusked elephant



Part of a skull with horn core of a water buffalo



Skull of *Homo steinheimensis* (left lateral view)



Antler of the steppe giant deer