

Linking the Past with the Present

The Historic Brandlhof Dairy Farm at Radlbrunn

As a valuable example of the architectural style based on clay bricks, once prevalent in the Weinviertel region of Lower Austria, Brandlhof was first mentioned in a document as early as in 1209. The ensemble was carefully rebuilt and revitalised on the occasion of the Lower Austrian State Exhibition of 2005. A multitude of events is scheduled for this summer and autumn to attract culture buffs to Radlbrunn:

The thick walls, the long buildings, the expansive roofs, and the seclusion from the outside world remind us of a stately home, although these features are based on rural tradition. What seems to be cold and cool is in fact protecting and preserving. These are the facets and features that manifest themselves in the many interesting architectural details of this former dairy farm. Located in the middle of the village of Radlbrunn, Brandlhof, together with the surrounding buildings, which include the parish church and the parsonage, form an ensemble of historic and interesting buildings that have shaped the history of this village.

A Turbulent History

In 1202, the Babenberg Duke Leopold VI "the Glorious" of Austria founded the monastery of Lilienfeld. The rigid rules of the Cistercian order met both his religious zeal and his ambitions as a sovereign, because the monks from the mother monastery at Heiligenkreuz were actively engaged in the cultivation of the land. The charter of foundation of 1209 lists large tracts of land, including, amongst others, plots north of the river Danube that were given to the monastery by the Duke, like Grafenberg, Roseldorf, and "19 Mansen und 1 Hof" [19 buildings and 1 farm complex] at Raedigenbrunnen, now Radlbrunn.

In a later document, the above-mentioned farm complex was referred to as a "Mageria", meaning dairy farm. During the Middle Ages, the imposing complex, once the centre of the Lilienfeld-owned land around Radlbrunn, was managed by a "Meier". This term is based on the Latin "major domus", and means manager. Therefore, this job with all its prestige is reflected in the prevalence of the family name "Meier" in the area. A study conducted in Upper Austria in the middle of the 19th century revealed that 8 per cent of all family names were either Meier or a combination with Meier, e. g. Hintermeier, Obermeier, Mittermeier, etc.

The large Brandlhof complex, which is even mentioned as a place of interest in the Dehio art guide, is not situated on the high street of the village of Radlbrunn. About 800 years ago, the central plot was occupied by a large dairy farm, which, as mentioned above, had been owned by the far away monastery of Lilienfeld from the 13th century onward. It is assumed that this large complex covered all the area of what now is Brandlhof and the neighbouring farm, house number 25 (Dienstlhof). As early as in the 15th century, the imposing complex was split into the two entities of today.

Secret Underground Passages

In 1590, when the sovereign conducted a census of the buildings for tax purposes, all 65 houses of the village were owned by the monastery of Lilienfeld. The Thirty Years' War had a dramatic impact on the village, which was ransacked and burned down by mercenaries in 1620. Various sources assume that underground passages were built to provide shelter during that difficult

time. At many occasions, e.g. when the Brandlhof was refurbished, and in 1988, when water pipes were laid in the village, such underground passages were discovered. These passages are also referred to as "underground stables", and there is quite some speculation about them. There is a complete listing of owners of the Brandlhof, reaching back as far as 1648. The Brandlhof is a rather unique building, because it is not a traditional type of building or the planning of a single architect. It is an entity that has grown through numerous building phases.

Valuable Cultural Heritage

When the historic complex was sold to the community of Ziersdorf in 2002, the previous owners Maria and Franz Brandl suffered many sleepless nights, knowing that Brandlhof had continually been in the family since the 18th century. The resulting respect for the historic building made it clear that the new owners would maintain this valuable cultural heritage. The cautious changes performed in consultation with the Austrian Federal Office for the Care of Monuments and with the help of the Brandl family led to quite a few surprises, like the discovery of an underground passage in the former pigpen, or the joy of reactivating the old baking oven, which was fired up in March 2005 after a hiatus of almost 40 years.

The historic walls of the Brandlhof connect the past with the present. The stables of what once was a dairy farm are being adapted to house an exhibition about the history of the building and of the Brandl family. The former living quarters are being converted into a pub to pamper visitors with snacks and wine from the region. Brandlhof is slated to become a centre for folk art in the Weinviertel region, to present music, handicraft and local culture. Moreover, the Brandlhof will be utilised by Museumsmanagement Niederösterreich as a picturesque venue for events.

Brandlhof is open to the public free of charge.

Opening hours:

Groups by appointment; the yard and pub are open Fri-Su/public holidays 10.00 a.m.-19.00 p.m.

Please contact:

VOLKSKULTUR NIEDERÖSTERREICH – Brandlhof

3710 Radlbrunn 24

Tel.: +43 (2956) 81222, +43 (664) 8208595

brandlhof@volkskulturnoe.at

www.volkskulturnoe.at/brandlhof

Our Top-Events 2007:

20.May **May devotions, afterwards musical sundowner**

7. June **Feast of Corpus Christi in Radlbrunn**

7. October **Handwerksmarkt**

4. November **Literature in the Brandlhof**

8.-9. December **Advent in the Brandlhof**

Every 1st Sunday (May to September) **Musician regulars' table**

- Documentation of the Brandlhof History
- Cosy pub with regional food and wines
- Workshops and cultural events