

## The Robber's Cave of Etterzhausen – a Cave Full of Secrets

Deep in the dark forest, hidden from the eyes of the law, a few ragged figures are gathered around a blazing campfire. They are wanted for robbery and other misdeeds all across the country. Here, in this secluded cave with its sweeping view over the Naab river valley, they have found a secure shelter to take rest in while making plans for their next raid.

Such a scene comes easily to mind in the Robber's Cave of Etterzhausen. Dense beech forests surround the narrow opening, which leads into a cave seven meters high and more than 20 meters wide. Unfortunately, though, it is not documented whether robbers have ever actually taken cover here.

Nevertheless, the place is undoubtedly steeped in mystery and myths. Legend has it that the Knight of Löweneck attacked the unsuspecting Knight of Eichhofen and then confined him inside this cave. Only through the perseverance of the Knight of Eichhofen's daughter and the fortitude of his future son-in-law was he freed. He took gruesome revenge on the Knight of Löweneck.

The mysticism of the past is still vividly alive at this scenic location, even if only very few of the stories are historically recorded. The only thing that can be said with absolute certainty is that people have lived in the cave.

Throughout history, the cave has been used for various purposes. It was already known in pre-Christian times to the Celts, who presumably used it as a ritual site. The present wide entrance with steps leading into the depths of the cave is owed to the beer brewers of the 18th century. The former castle brewery Schlossbrauerei Etterzhausen stored and matured beer in the cool, deep caverns, where low temperatures prevail even on hot summer days. This was particularly important before cooling technologies were invented.

During World War Two, the cave served families from the vicinity as a refuge from air raids and other ravages of war. But whether robbers ever actually had their hideout here in all the centuries of the cave's existence, will probably remain lost in the fog of history for a very long time.