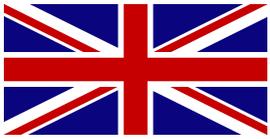


Felsenmeer Informationszentrum

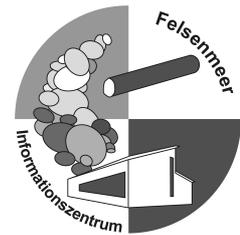


The Felsenmeer

Once upon a time there were two giants who lived on two hills; one on the Felsberg, the other on the Hohenstein. One day they had a quarrel and began throwing boulders at each other. The giant from Hohenstein had the advantage of many more stones to throw, and soon the giant from the Felsberg was buried in a sea of rocks. Today that spot is known as the Felsenmeer. This is just legend, of course, but there really is a sea of rocks in Germany's Odenwald region between Reichenbach and Beedenkirchen. The real reason is there has everything to do with geology and nature and nothing with giants.

At the Felsenmeer Information Centre

... you can receive information on the geology and the genesis of the Felsenmeer.



The Felsenmeer at the Felsberg in Lautertal is the result of geological processes, which have built up this unique natural monument in a time period of about 320-340 million years. It started with a collision of continents, in an area of which today's Odenwald is also a part of. At the "boundary" the rock melted and rose as magma. It congealed for about 330 million years in the mountains above, to a granite-like stone, the Melaquarzdiorit.

Over the next million years, the surface of the Felsberg eroded leaving the largest stones on the surface. Intermittently, the mountain broke up and was left structured of large gulfs and big blocks.

The decomposition of the stones in the *Tertiary time* (about 65 million years ago) was partially caused by the infiltration of water. As a result there are rounded blocks called "wool sacks" environed of weathered stones, called the "Grus".

The last Ice Ace (about 117.000 til 11.700 years ago) dominated a climate in our region, like Siberia is today. By the changes in the freeze and thaw cycles, the bottom also moved. The "Grus"

was washed away and the blocks were transported down to the valley. Over a very long period the Felsenmeer was built up in this way!

You will find more Information in our brochure "**Geotop, 2002**"
... into the Stone Process around the Felsberg

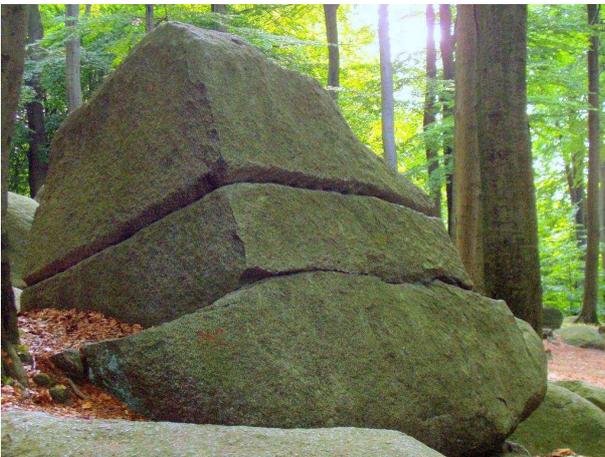
The Information Centre will also help you to find out more about the stone quarrying activities that have taken place in this area since Roman times.

The high tonnage of huge stones of the Felsenmeer were essential for the historical, economic and cultural development of the valley of the Lauter since time immemorial and was always of

considerable importance. During the Roman times, an extensive and almost constant 200 years of the “stone industry” developed. More than 300 processed stone blocks can still be found in the Felsberg forest. These were rejected pieces, with defects or damage, which occurred during their working. Today they are numbered and several work pieces are still intact.



The Riesensäule, or Giant Column, was made by Roman masons in the 4th century. It is 30.8 feet long and weighs 27.5 tons.



Signs of Roman masonry can be seen on this boulder, known as the Pyramid.

In the year 1879 the art of working stone in Reichenbach was revived. Five Bohemian stonemasons went through Lautertal and discovered the “blue stone” and began working with it. More stonemasons followed from Italy, the Fichtelgebirge and the Bavarian Forest. In the beginning the large stone blocks found scattered over the Odenwald, as used by the Romans, were not of a high enough quality for the modern manufacturing methods, and the quarries were prosecuted including those at the Felsberg.

Consequently a thriving stone industry developed. As many as 14 quarries were active at the same time, employing as many as 70% of the adult male population. The stones were used as building material, as boundary markers and as kerb stones. After the introduction of stone-grinding machines, the production of grave-stones predominated. Foreign competition, altering demand and changing funerary customs have since led to the closure of nearly all such businesses.

Further information you can find in

Felsenmeer Informationszentrum

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