



The Historical Hauberg in Kreuztal-Fellinghausen

The Haubergswirtschaft in Siegerland

- A historical review

The Siegen-Wittgenstein district is considered to be one of the oldest mining regions in Europe. At the same time – despite the two and a half millennia-old tradition in ore mining and iron smelting – it is one of the most scenic and ecologically intact Landscape areas in North Rhine-Westphalia.

A total of 747 km² of areas under nature conservation or landscape protection with numerous rare animal and plant species provide living evidence of this, which is important for the functioning of the natural balance. Agriculture and forestry play a decisive role in the fact that the environment in Siegen-Wittgenstein is still in a good state. Since the district of Siegen-Wittgenstein is the most wooded district in Germany with around 70% forest area, forestry in particular has always been of great importance to this region. Of course, the forests in Siegerland and Wittgenstein were used for economic purposes as well as in other regions of Germany and Europe. The high demand for wood and charcoal for iron smelting had forced a very intensive use of the Siegerland forest.

Therefore, rules have been adopted already in the 16th century, to cut only as much wood as could regrow (first sustainability rules).

For a long time now, it has also been an obligation for people living here to take into account not only the use of natural resources but also their functioning and protection, thereby creating the conditions for the continued viability of natural resources. As a result of this endeavor, the "Siegerländer Haubergswirtschaft"

developed as a highly developed special form of coppice forest management with intermediate agricultural use, which for centuries shaped the face of the forests of the Siegerland. The annual work cycles of this forest management determined the time allocation of the population.

An essential element of the Haubergswirtschaft is that this form of use is based on a common ownership of the forest, as well as cooperative administration and management. The individual forest owner (forest comrade) has only share rights and no right of personal possession on a specific forest area. The cooperative assembly, as the supreme decision-making body, deliberates and decides on all important matters of community property, in particular on its administration and management.

To this day, the Hauberg cooperatives contribute in this way to the maintenance of the Siegerland Forest, even if the work in the Hauberg has lost its former economic significance for the Siegerland. The construction of the Ruhr-Sieg Railway is particularly responsible for this. As a result, the transport and use of hard coal instead of charcoal became profitable in iron smelting. And the other products to be obtained from the Hauberg (e.g. lohe, firewood, hilling) have also gradually lost their importance.

As a result of this development, the coppiceforest areas have been converted to ever greater extent into high forests, so that of the original 34,000 hectares of coppice forest, only about 2000 hectares remain today. Today, this coppice forest remnant is used exclusively for the extraction of firewood, so that the manifold works and uses associated with the original Hauberg management threaten to be forgotten.

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– Past has a future

Out of this situation, the "Fellinghausen Forest Cooperative" in Kreuztal and the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, represented by the state enterprise Wald und Holz founded the "Historical Hauberg" project.

On a contractual basis, the "Fellinghausen Forest Cooperative" has obligated itself since 1991 to continue the historical forest management in a forest area of about 24 hectares from its forest

ownership. This is a contribution to the maintenance of tradition, which ensures that the Haubergs culture, which is unique in many respects, lives on at least in a small part of the forest area of the Siegerland,

The planned annual felling, in a 20-year cycle, can be seen from the overview plan on pages 8 and 9.

Felling plan

In the following explanations, the course of the annual events in and around the Hauberg is described as if the old Hauberg practices and rules still exist.

In the past, the Hauberg area of a forest cooperative was divided into as many equal annual felling areas as the fixed rotation time in years. This was usually between 16 and 20 years. In each year, only one of the felling areas was processed, the one that had just reached the highest age. For example, the size of the area divided in the Historical Hauberg in Fellinghausen is 24 ha and the rotation time is 20-years . Thus, the resulting felling area size is 1.2 ha per year.

For economic reasons, the work to be carried out in the Hauberg every year was carried out jointly and simultaneously, if possible. The following steps can be distinguished:

Hauberg partition in January/February

The current felling area was divided among the cooperative's shareholders according to the number of their shares. This was done by a rather complicated surveying procedure using the "Haubergrote" and taking into account the different growth conditions on the respective felling sub-areas by lot decision. The boundaries of the sub-areas assigned to the individual members of the cooperative (year) were marked by wooden piles (pins) with the Hauberg sign of the respective sharer.



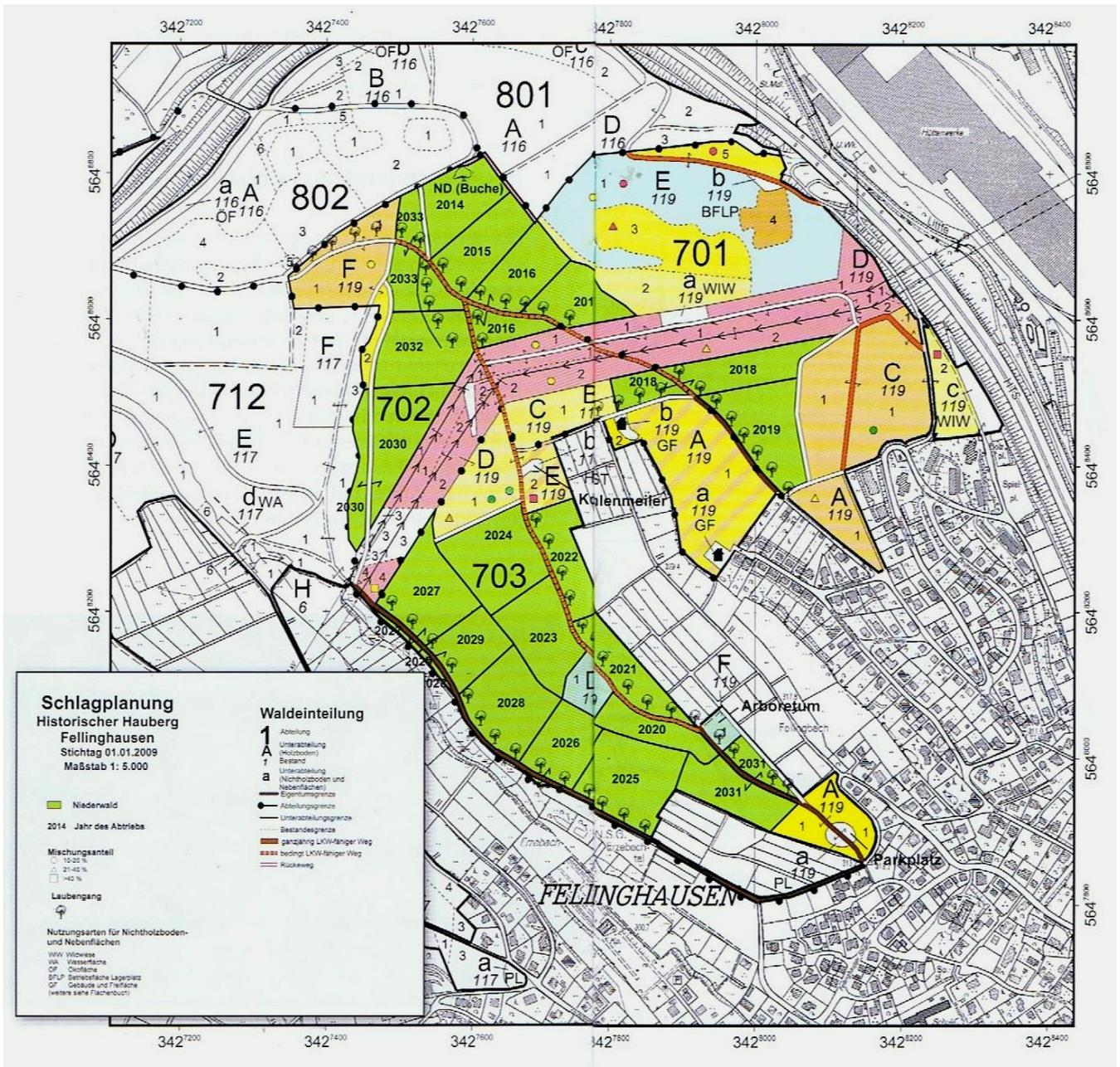
Limbing and clearing January to May

Limbing

The limbing started at the beginning of the spring. All shrubs and the branches of the trees were cut off – so far within reach – with the Knipp, a kind of bush knife.

The resulting at least finger-thick wood was bound to faggots (bundles of twigs) of approx. 1 m in length and about 25 cm in diameter and used for heating purposes in the residential house or in the communal bakery.





This is still done in the historic Hauberg in Kreuztal-Fellinghausen. The faggots obtained here are used by some baking house communities to heat the oven for the production of "Siegerländer Schanzenbrot" (a traditional type of bread).

Clearing

The "limbing" was followed by the "clearing", in which all trees – with the exception of the peelable oaks – were felled with the axe. The felling is performed in a way that the remaining stump is shaped like a cone with edges as smooth as possible.

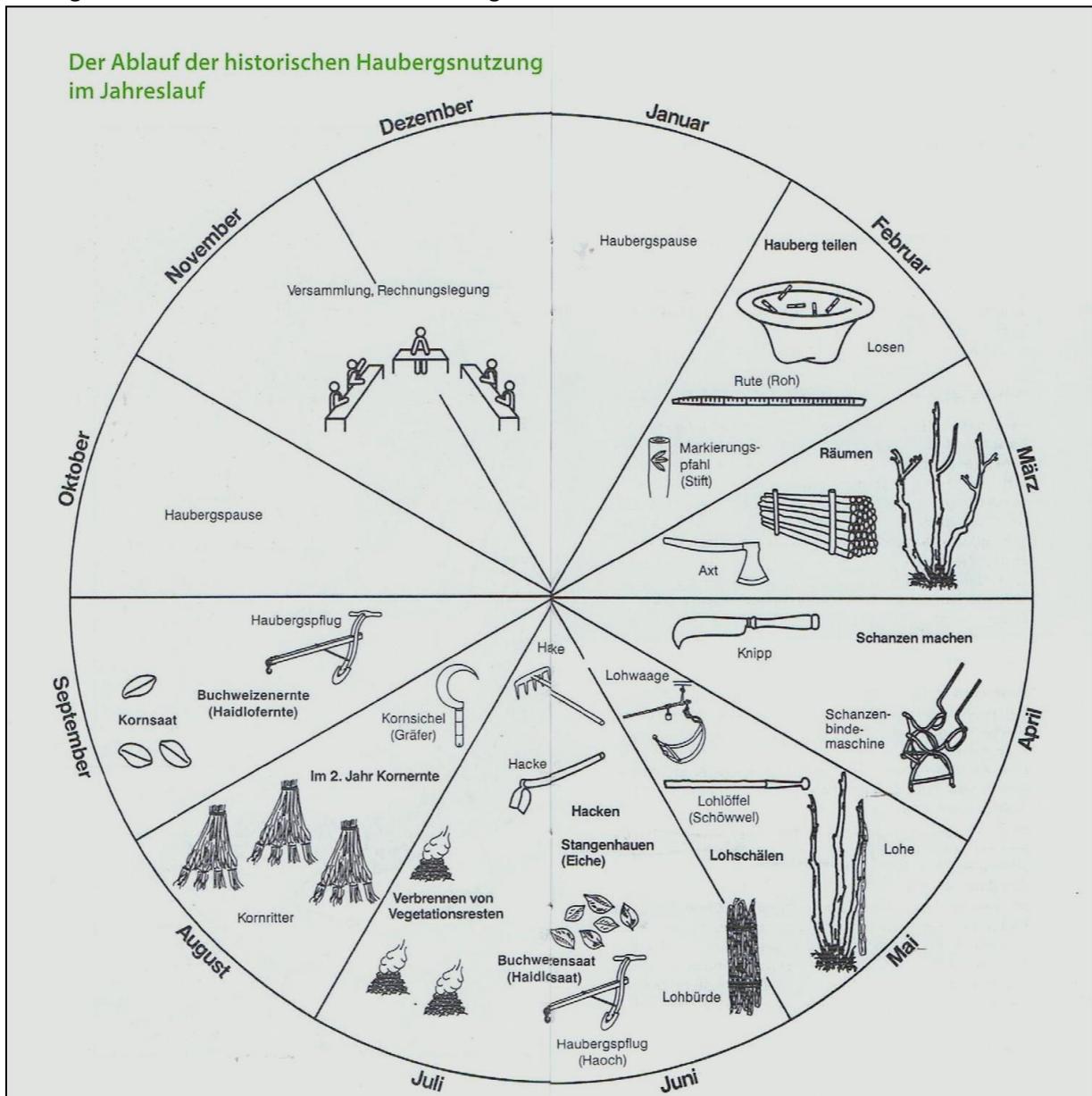
This prevents the rootstock from being affected by rot and also prevents the wood from splintering. In addition, care was taken to ensure that a loose "shield" of individual trees remained in the Hauberg to ensure the growth



of stronger wood, e.g. for construction purposes. In addition, the ageing trees should produce seeds for offspring.

The remaining branches were limbed of the felled trees using axe and knipp and bound to faggots.

The logs were used as firewood or for charring.



Barking (Lohschälen) May to June

At the beginning of a new growing season, in the months of May and June, it is briefly possible to peel the bark ("Lohe") from the remaining oaks using the so-called "Schöwwel" (a spoonlike tool). The trees were barked from bottom to top. The bark was left to dry attached to the top of the tree.

The time it took for drying was between a few days and several weeks depending on the weather. After drying, the "Lohe" was removed, bundled and sold to special tanneries ("Lohgerbereien"). These Loh- or Rotgerbereien mainly tanned the leathers for the



production of shoes and boots, as well as for saddle and bridles. This use can be traced back to the 14th century. Towards the end of the 19th century, there were 92 tanneries in Siegerland, which used "Lohe".

Today, synthetic tanning agents are used in most tanneries.

Niederhauen in June

The remaining, barked oakswere also felled and used as firewood or for charring. Because the trunks of the oaks were severely hardened by the drying process, it took special skills and physical strength to fell these trees professionally. All twigs and branches limbed of the felled trees were again bound to faggots.

burning and hoeing in June/July

After wood and "Lohe" have been harvested, the further work was focused on the intermediate agricultural use of the Hauberg. For this purpose (although not always) the superficial vegetation was burned ("sengen") in a first step. In the second step, the remnants of the vegetation that remained after the burning were removed. For this purpose, the grass sods and herbs were hoed from the ground with a so-called mountaina hoe ("Hainhacke") and piled up for drying.



After drying, the soil could be knocked off the sods. The plant remains were burned on small piles ("Brasebröh") and their ash was distributed over the entire Hauberg area as fertiliser

Intermediate agricultural use

Intermediate agricultural use began with the sowing of buckwheat or rye, and rarely oats, the only crops eligible for this use.

In order to incorporate the seed into the soil, a hook plough (Haubergshoach) drawn by animals or humans was used. The plough was designed to enable a low penetration depth into the soil and thus the best possible protection of the tree roots.



Buckwheat sowing in June



In addition to rye, buckwheat was also grown in the Hauberg. The dark brown fruits are strongly reminiscent of small beechnuts. In contrast to rye, the buckwheat is still harvested in September of the seed year.

Buckwheat harvest in September

In September, the buckwheat sown in June is harvested with the sickle. The buckwheat was used for the preparation of porridge meals or pancakes, but also for thickening a sausage broth ("Panhas").



Rye sowing in September

Following the buckwheat-harvest rye was sown on the newly ploughed Hauberg plots.

Rye harvest in August to September of the following year

The one-year-old rye was also cut with the sickle. The cutted grain was bound into sheaves. For drying, nine sheaves were arranged in a standing circle and a tenth was placed on top of it like a hat. This structure was called "Kornritter".

After drying, the ears were flailed and the grains were ground into flour.



From the rye flour a sourdough brown bread was baked, in the already mentioned community baking houses („Backesern“) using the faggots. This spicy and tasty "Schanzenbrot" is still made in some baking houses in the district of Siegen-Wittgenstein on certain days ("Backtage"). Dates and further information about the "Backtage" can be obtained from the Tourist Association Siegerland-Wittgenstein e. V.



Replanting or sowing

The ability of the oaks to bud out of the stump after the tree has been felled decreases significantly with advancing age. Without continuous replanting, therefore, there would be a long-term decline in growth and a clearing of stocks.

Replanting was done with younger but strongly pruned oaks ("Stummelpflanzen") or heist plants of one to two meters in size, but also by sowing acorns.

livestock herding ("Hude")

After four to seven years, the Hauberg areas were used for livestock herding. As a rule, sheep and pigs were allowed to graze on the Hauberg after the fourth year, cattle after the sixth year. At the earliest, however, when it could be ruled out that they could inflict any trampling- or bite damage on the regrowing trees. It was also important to ensure that livestock herding did not take place on already damaged areas and that it did not become too intensive.

The livestock herding was also carried out jointly, for which each municipality hired a livestock herder to herd the animals grazing in the Hauberg. This task was simplified by bells the grazing animals carried. Thus, the experienced herder was able to locate the animals at any time, even without visual contact.

Livestock herding in the Hauberg is no longer done in the Siegerland, as in the 20th century it was decided to breed more efficient cattle and to offer high-quality feed in order to improve the supply of milk and meat to the population. With the growing livestock, grazing of the Hauberg was no longer possible without damage. Parts of the Hauberg began to be converted into large pastures ("Weidekämpfe"), which were then managed by the forest comrades or by Hude cooperatives.

Dates for Hauberg-works

The work in the historical Hauberg in Kreuztal Fellinghausen is strongly dependent on the weather. The Waldgenossenschaft Fellinghausen can only schedule the working days a few days beforehand. The appointments can be requested at the mentioned contact addresses.

The support association and the forest cooperative Fellinghausen are happy about everyone who would like to put on their own hands and gain their own experiences and experiences in working with "Knipp", "Lohlöffel", "Hainhacke" or "Haubergspflug". Of course, this possibility also exists for groups, hiking clubs, home clubs, etc. – after prior appointment with the association.

Access to the Historical Hauberg Fellinghausen

Parking at the forest car park "Brache" at the end of Luisenstraße in Kreuztal-Fellinghausen.

Charcoal from the charcoal kiln

For more than 2000 years, the Siegerland was an Iron Land. Here could be found what was needed to extract iron: large iron ore deposits and extensive forests.

In order to melt iron from the ore rock, it had to be heated in an oven for many hours to at least 1000 degrees. A lot of charcoal was needed and wood had to be turned into coal. This was the craft of the charburner ("Köhler"). To convert wood into charcoal, it is necessary to "burn" the wood incompletely. Only the volatile components of the wood are burned, its carbon must be preserved. For this the char burner built a kiln ("Meiler").



The construction of the charcoal kiln

First, the charburner built a funnel with crosswise layered pieces of wood. In this funnel, the fire is later

ignited, which had to be carefully controlled. Around the funnel, arm-thick woods of different lengths were placed in a circular vertical manner. Due to the stronger inclination of the outer woods, the blunt, conical shape of the Meiler was created. This cone was sealed with a layer of sods and soil. The funnel was left open at the top.

To ignite the Meiler, the charburner filled the funnel with burning pieces of wood and closed it with a lid.

Then he punched holes in the outer kiln layer, at first very few directly above the ground and some in the upper part of the kiln. The circulating air ensured that the fire in the shaft did not smother. However, the air was so scarce that the fire could not spread.

By the color of the smoke rising from the air holes, the charburner could see how far the burning process had progressed. If the wood in the upper part of the kiln was done, he closed the trigger holes and opened new ones below. He kept the fire in the funnel on by adding pieces of wood.

Constant control

During the burning process, the wood and thus the kiln shrank. There was a great danger that a unwanted hole in the cover of the kiln would appear. Air entering it could fan the fire so that it might get out of control (also called "Luchs"); all work would have been in vain. Therefore, the charburner stayed close to the kiln day and night. The charburners hut ("Köhlerhütte"), which also contained a simple bed made of moss, served to protect him from rain and sun.



In order to keep the cover of the kiln tight, the charburner compacted it with a flat shovel and repaired it where necessary. From time to time, the charburner climbed his kiln to see if the wood has charred. In contrast to the wood, the finished pieces of charcoal broke under his weight. The charburner on the kiln, with an often soot-blackened face, must have looked terrifying. No wonder that many strange stories were told about the "Black Man" who lived lonely in his hut over the summer..

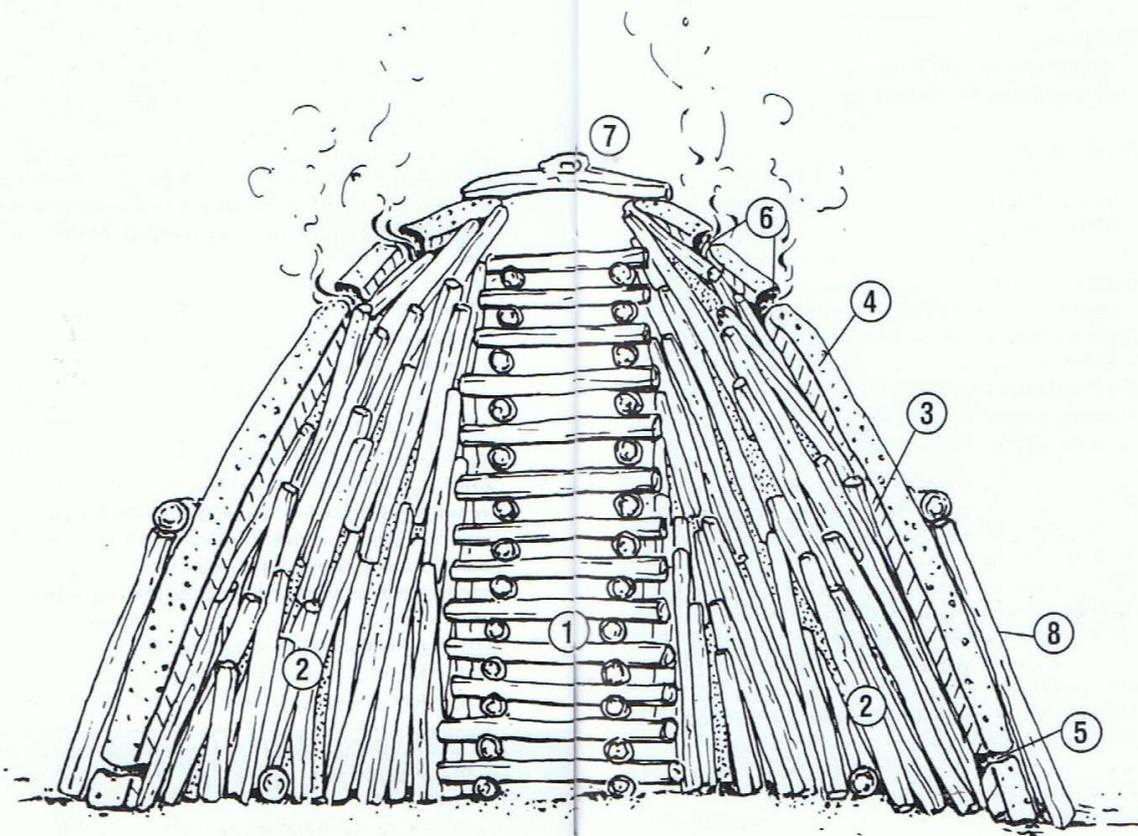
The charcoal kiln is „finished“

After about ten days, the kiln was "finished". It was pulled apart and the charred wood was extinguished with water and transported to the iron melting furnaces. The demand for charcoal was huge. To melt 1 kg of iron, ten times the amount of charcoal was needed. And for 10 kg of charcoal 50 kg of wood have to be charred.

This explains the great demand for wood in the Siegerland. It soon became so large that all the surrounding forests were cut down. From this wood shortage, the



Querschnitt eines Holzkohlenmeilers



- ① = Schacht
- ② = Geschichtetes Haubergsholz
- ③ = Rauhdach (Rasen oder Fichtenreisig)

- ④ = Erddach
- ⑤ = untere Zuglöcher
- ⑥ = obere Zuglöcher
- ⑦ = Schachtdeckel
- ⑧ = Seitliche Stützen

regulated Siegerländer Haubergswirtschaft developed in the Middle Ages.

kilns and Hauberg

Solely because of the Hauberg Regulations of 1834 and 1879 it was ensured that the forests in the Siegerland were not overexploited at the expense of future generations as it happens 2000 years before. Only as much wood was taken from the forest each year as it could grow back.

This Haubergswirtschaft, which also made it possible to make an interim agricultural use of the Hauberg, ensured the livelihood of the people of the Siegerland for centuries. In the middle of the 19th century, with the construction of the railways and the import of hard coal, everything changed for the Siegerland. The charcoal production was at its end. In connection with the "Historical Haubergswirtschaft", which has been revived on forest areas of the Waldgenossenschaft Fellinghausen on the basis of an agreement with the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, the construction and the operation of a charcoal kiln is presented every year, so that future generations can still tell what it was like when the kiln was still smoking.

In addition, charcoal burning is still carried out in Netphen-Walpersdorf. A visit to the kiln there is recommended.

Glossary

Backes

Small building with brick oven for communal baking of breads.

Brasebröh

Burning of dried grasses and herbs in many smoking fires.

Haubergrute

Wooden rod with notches for demarcation and measurement of the respective proportion areas in each year..

Heisterpflanzen

Young, usually one to two meter high deciduous trees with several branched side branches.

Hude

Use of young Hauberg areas (at least four years after clearing) as pasture for sheep, or cattle.

Jähne

Depending on the number of their shares in the Hauberg, the shareholders are assigned different sized sub-areas of an annual felling-area for processing. The sub-areas are delimited by so-called pins from adjacent sub-areas.

Jahresschlag

The forest area used in one year as Hauberg.

Kornritter

A construction of several grain sheaves for the drying of the grain.

Lohe

Bark of oaks in the Hauberg, separated from the trunk with a "Lohlöffel" and used for tanning.

Lohlöffel

Spoon-like tool for loosening the bark of young oaks (Lohe).

Luchs

Uncontrolled burning of a kiln caused by a hole in the kiln cover.

Montanregion

A region characterized by the extraction, processing and further processing of mineral resources. In the Siegerland, iron ore was mined and further processed into steel products in smelters.

Niederwald (Coppice forest)

Forest stand, which was not created from seeds, but exclusively from stump budding and root brood. As a rule, it only develops into a low tree population.

Schanzen

Bundle of twigs and branches. Used mainly as heating material for baking houses.

Schlagfläche

The oldest part of the Hauberg, which is jointly processed by all shareholders in one year. The Hauberg is divided into as many equally sized impact surfaces as they correspond to the fixed rotation time of the Hauberg (20 impact surfaces with 20 years of rotation).

Stifte

Wooden pins with notched Hauberg signs for the demarcation of the sub-areas in one year.

Umtriebszeit

The period during which a Hauberg area can grow back after it has been cleared (16 - 20 years).

Verlichtung

A thinning of Hauberg stands occur when the number of new buds from the oak and birch stumps decreases and only a scanty forest stand develops.

Publisher

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