

# Silent Night Travel Guide

for Salzburg, Upper Austria, Bavaria and Tyrol



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## The Origin and Distribution of Silent Night! Holy Night!

By Renate Ebeling-Winkler

The well-known Christmas carol “Silent Night! Holy Night!” originated from the Austrian State of Salzburg.

The melody of “Silent Night” was created by Franz Xaver Gruber in Arnsdorf, north of Salzburg, while he was working as an elementary school teacher, sacristan and organist in 1818.

In order to supplement his small income, Gruber, who came from Upper Austria’s Hochburg-Ach, had also taken over the organist service in St. Nicholas Church in the neighbouring town of Oberndorf. This is where he became friends with the auxiliary priest, Joseph Mohr.

The text of “Silent Night” was written by Joseph Mohr in 1816 in the inner mountains (Inneregebirg) of the Salzburg Lungau region in Mariapfarr, where he had been working.

On 24 December 1818, the young clergyman handed the six-verse poem to his friend Gruber with the request to set it to music for the Christmas Mass for two solo voices, choir and guitar.

When “Silent Night! Heil’ge Nacht!” was performed for the first time in St. Nicholas Church in Oberndorf (which no longer exists today), Mohr played the guitar and sang the upper part, Gruber the lower part and the choir repeated the final line.

Just one year later, the lives of the two creators of the song parted ways: Mohr was subsequently and continually assigned to other Salzburg parishes for nearly twenty years, before settling in his last placement as a vicar in Wagrain where he died in 1848 as a respected local clergyman.

Gruber stayed in Arnsdorf for another decade and then asked to transfer to the school in nearby Berndorf. In 1835, he moved to Hallein where he worked as choirmaster and organist of the parish church and composed several church music works until his death in 1863.

Initially, “Silent Night” was only known among Mohr and Gruber’s friends and colleagues, who were based in the northern area of Salzburg along the Upper Austrian border.

In addition to the authors, their acquaintances also made their own handwritten transcriptions of Gruber’s first “Silent Night” sheet music from the Christmas Eve of 1818, which is considered lost today.

The organ builder Carl Mauracher provided the impetus for the interregional distribution of Silent Night from its region of origin to the world. In 1821, he had met Gruber while repairing the organ in Arnsdorf and completely rebuilt the organ in Oberndorf in 1825 after several previous repairs. When he returned home, he made the song known among the people in his hometown of Fügen in the Zillertal valley.

The Zillertal valley originally belonged to Salzburg. However, in 1816 it became part of the State of Tyrol during the post-Napoleonic period. Many of the farming families in the region relied on extra income from the craft trades and the sale of home-made products, especially at trade fairs and markets in central Germany.

Initially, the singing of native folk songs was only intended as a means of sales-promotion. This soon developed into its own entertainment industry in which folkloristic groups performed as “Tyrolean National Singers” and “Silent Night” became known as a folk song in Western, Central and Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, England and North America.

One group, the Strasser siblings, a family of glove makers from Laimach in the Zillertal valley, not only offered their goods at the Leipzig New Year’s Trade Fair but also delighted their audience with a repertoire of alpine folk songs.

After their singing performances, “Silent Night” was musically notated and recorded as one of four Tyrolean songs. It appeared in print for the first time in 1833 by the Dresden publisher Friese. This opened the door for the rapid worldwide spread of the song.

A few years later it appears as a Tyrolean Christmas carol in folk song collections and as a spiritual folk song or carol in church hymnals.

The main differences between printed versions and the surviving handwritten autographs are the use of key, namely C major instead of D major and the elimination of three of the original six verses.

The significance of Silent Night for youth and welfare work was first recognised around 1840 by the cantor Carl Gottlob Abela in Halle an der Saale, who used it in his work as a music teacher in the local Francke foundations.

Johann Hinrich Wichern, who is considered the founding father of the Diakonie (social welfare), relied on this songbook when he published his own songbook "Unsere Lieder" in 1844 for use in the social and educational institution "Rauhes Haus", which he had established just outside Hamburg.

The book with the song "Silent Night! Holy Night!" soon became a considerable success outside the "Rauhes Haus". Every social worker or missionary trained by Wichern took the book with them when they left to their new place of work.

In the emigrant port city of Hamburg, care was provided both in the waiting accommodations for emigrants and through the so-called "Schiffsschulen" (boat schooling), a socio-pedagogical mentoring operated during the long journey to their new home.

The "Silent Night" song made its way into the world in two parallel paths: through the singing performances of the Zillertal singer families in England and America ... and in the luggage of social workers and missionaries, who were sent to America and other countries.



Joseph Mohr was parish vicar in Hintersee from December 1827 to February 1837. (©SalzburgerLand Tourismus)



## Arnsdorf, Municipality of Lamprechtshausen

By Eva Neumayr

Arnsdorf was known by the name of "Armsdorf" in the 19th century. For years, Arnsdorf and the church "Maria im Mösl" were popular destinations for a pilgrimage to the Virgin Mary. It is said that even pilgrims from as far away as Rome were drawn to the small town in the north of the Flachgau region. For a long time, each newly elected Archbishop of Salzburg would first undertake a pilgrimage to Arnsdorf. The town is not only a pilgrimage site, but is where one of the most famous Christmas carols, "Silent Night", first originated. Arnsdorf also has important musical connections, from 1787, the Salzburg composer Johann Michael Haydn (1737 - 1806) would visit the presbytery in Arnsdorf, where his best friend pastor P. Werigand Rettensteiner (1751 - 1822) lived as pastor of Lamprechtshausen and Arnsdorf from 1787 to 1803. Rettensteiner was to be Haydn's first biographer. Since Rettensteiner liked to sing together with his two chaplains, he asked Haydn to compose trios, which Haydn later reworked into quartets. These male quartets became extremely popular and are the reason why Arnsdorf is considered one of the bedrocks of male choir singing. Franz Xaver Gruber arrived in Arnsdorf in 1807, just a few years after Michael Haydn. Although the two composers did not know each other personally, their musical connection is strong, especially in regards to Johann Michael Haydn's German church compositions.

### The Pilgrimage Church and School Building

The pilgrimage to Virgin Mary and the church "Maria im Mösl" may date back to around the year 800. As early as 1241, an existing chapel was added to the church. In 1520, the church was rebuilt in the late Gothic style and subsequently enlarged many times. In the 17th century, during the great plague epidemics, the number of pilgrims visiting the church grew to at least 9000 per year. The church became associated with the Michaelbeuern Abbey in 1241 who assigned its own pilgrimage priest for Arnsdorf from 1644. The influx of pilgrims petered out after the Second World War. Gruber worked and lived in the schoolhouse next to the church, which had been set up as a sacristan house in 1771. Today it is used as the Arnsdorf Volkschule (primary school) and houses the Silent Night Museum.

### Organ

The organ from the Arnsdorf church was first mentioned in 1686. Matthias Steinle created the organ and its case, which were transferred to the neighbouring parish church in Lamprechtshausen. In 1745, Andreas Mitterreiter, the electoral-Ba-

varian organ maker in Altötting, built a new organ with six stops and presumably expanded it to eight registers in 1753. The organ case was made by Josef Anton Schrökher from Laufen. Franz Xaver Gruber was not only a teacher in Arnsdorf but also a sacristan and organist. For almost 22 years, from 1807 to 1829, Gruber carried out his organ service on this instrument. The demands of playing the organ here were probably quite taxing for him. Pilgrimages to Marienkirche (St Mary's Church) were still in full bloom, three Masses were held daily, all of which required his presence as both sacristan and organist. On top of this, he provided additional organ service in the St. Nicholas church in Oberndorf. This was probably only possible with the aid of his stepson Anton Dürnberger, who was able to temporarily fill in for him in Arnsdorf. While acting as organist and organ expert in Arnsdorf, he was able to meet the Tyrolean organ builder Carl Mauracher (1789-1844), who repaired the organ in Arnsdorf in 1821. Mauracher also built a new organ in St. Nicholas in Oberndorf in 1825, perhaps at Gruber's request. Mauracher took the song "Silent Night! Holy Night!" with him when he returned to his hometown. It was from there it spread and started its worldwide journey.

### High Altar

At the centre of the impressive high altar is the Madonna and Child enthroned with a crescent moon and crowned by stars. It is presumed to have come from Michael Pacher's (1435-1498) workshop. Four figures stand between the four spiralled pillars. The two outer figures, St. Catherine left and St. Barbara right, date back to the altar erected in 1677/78 and were made by Thomas Schwanthaler (1634-1707). The two inner figures represent the parents of the Mother of God, St. Anne and St. Joachim, and are the work of Tittmoning sculptor Georg Itzfeldner (1705-1790), who renovated the altar in 1752 after the collapse of the vault and created many new figures for the church.

### In the Silent Night Museum Rauchkuchl

A "Rauchkuchl" was a kitchen in which one cooked on an open fire. The smoke was extracted either directly through the roof or through a chimney. The food, especially meat, was smoked and preserved by being stored above the stove or in the chimney. This was still widely used in the 19th century before the introduction and dissemination of the "Sparherd" (economical stove). Franz Xaver Gruber's wives may have spent much of their lives in a kitchen like this. <sup>1</sup> When



Gruber came to Arnsdorf in 1807, right after completing his teacher's examination in Ried, he was able to secure and solve his accommodation problems by marrying Elisabeth Fischinger (died 1825), the thirteen-year-old widow of his two predecessors. She already had two children from her first marriage with Anton Dürnberger. Anton (born 1800) also became a teacher and was supposed to apply for the position in Arnsdorf after Gruber left for Berndorf.<sup>2</sup> His sister Elisabeth was born in 1802. Gruber mentions both in a letter to Joseph Peterlechner written in 1819. Elisabeth Fischinger had been married to the teacher and sacristan Andreas Fuchspanger (died 1806) in her second marriage. The marriage resulted in a daughter Maria Klara who died when she was just three weeks old in June 1806, three months later her father also died. Elisabeth Fischinger had two daughters in her third marriage to Franz Xaver Gruber both of whom did not survive early childhood (Maria Theresia 1809 - 1813, Theresia died 1815).

In 1826, one year after Elisabeth Gruber died in 1825, Franz Xaver Gruber married his former pupil Maria Breitfuß (died 1841) who bore him ten children. Only four reached adulthood. Two of them, the eldest son Franz Gruber and a daughter who died very young, were born in Arnsdorf and lived in the sacristan house as toddlers. Anton Dürnberger's mother, (Elisabeth Fischinger's first mother-in-law) was a sacristan and midwife who lived long enough to bring all of the Gruber children born in Arnsdorf into the world (including those from his marriage to Maria Breitfuß). She had a close relationship with the Gruber family and seeing that she was formerly a sacristan, may have also lived with them in the sacristan house.

It was not common to have a school assistant in Arnsdorf because of the small size of the school. However, there is evidence of two assistants. Josef Peterlechner, the son of Gruber's teacher in Hochburg, according to his own account, was "an apprentice in Armsdorf from 12 September [1812] to 5 January 1814 [...]". He and Gruber's stepson, Anton Dürnberger were practically trained by Franz Xaver Gruber himself before passing their teacher's examination. A handmaid probably assisted Gruber's wife in her household duties, as a result there were up to seven mouths whose culinary well-being were provided by the Gruber family stove.

### School Room

The next room is set up as a historical classroom. According to oral tradition, the teacher's desk on display here was at least in part the desk which Franz Xaver Gruber taught from. The rest of the school furniture dates back to the 19th century; it was acquired in Lungau by Sepp Aigner (1921-1990), the founder of the Silent Night Museum and former school principal in Arnsdorf. Together with slate-pencils and slates used for writing, they give a good impression of how the lessons transpired during Franz Xaver Gruber's time in Arnsdorf and long after he had left. As part of the general renovation in 2010, the different paint layers applied to the room since the building's construction were also examined. 29 layers were revealed. In 1818 when the Christmas carol "Silent Night! Holy Night!" was created, the room was a light brown or grey colour and was later repainted darker and patterned.



From 1807 to 1829 Franz Xaver Gruber played this organ which dates back to 1745. (©Stille Nacht Gesellschaft, Kathrin Gollackner)

### The "Circularre": A Document from Franz Xaver Gruber's Hand

As a teacher, Franz Xaver Gruber had to keep a "circular book". The Silent Night Museum in Arnsdorf is grateful to have his only original manuscript, the Circularre by Franz Xaver Gruber. This consists of several "Currenden", documents, which were sent by the school board and had to be copied by the teachers into the so-called Circularbuch before the document was passed on to the next school. The first and longest part, which Gruber received on 27 June 1820 and recorded in the document up until 31 July 1820, explains in eleven paragraphs how a school should be run, how to teach and assess children and what the duties of the teacher, the catechist and various supervisors are in accordance with the Austrian constitution. Numerous entries illustrate how to manage the pupil and grade catalogues together with how certificates should be designed. The document is an exposition and compliment to the Austrian Political School Regulations (Politischen Schulverfassung)<sup>3</sup> from 1805, which is repeatedly referred to.

The document was created due to political changes: After the flight and abdication of Prince Archbishop Hieronymus Colloredo followed by Ferdinand III of Tuscany's assumption of power in 1803, the turmoil of the Napoleonic wars and the Bavarian administration from 1810, Salzburg finally became a part of Austria in 1816. From this point on, the Austrian education law was used instead of the Bavarian school law. From 1770, Empress Maria Theresa (1717-1780) reformed the Austrian school system and introduced compulsory education with the help of Johann Ignaz Felbiger (1724-1788), the Abbot of Sagan, who had previously provided services to the Prussian school system. In 1774, she signed the nationwide school ordinance "Allgemeine Schulordnung". Even Hieronymus Count Colloredo of Waldsee and Mels began to think about reforming the schools in his principality when he was appointed as Salzburg Prince-Archbishop in 1772. His chancellor, Michael Boenike had already been in contact with Abbot Felbiger during his time in Prussia. As a result, the school reform in Salz-



Silent Night Museum Arnsdorf (©SalzburgerLand Tourismus)

burg started an almost parallel process to that of Austrian reform. David Neukomm (1745-1805), father of the composer Sigismund Neukomm (1778-1858), was the first teacher in the city of Salzburg who taught according to the so-called "Normal Methods" learned in Vienna. He subsequently trained numerous other teachers and took over the Trivialschule (trivium school) in the Kaiviertel region in 1776. As early as 1777, a "Public German Secondary School" was opened and in 1790 a teacher's seminar was set up under the direction of the writer and pedagogue Franz Michael Vierthaler (1758-1827). Vierthaler published numerous influential textbooks that were also used in Bavaria. The autonomy of the Salzburg school administration was probably the reason why Franz Xaver Gruber had to be re-examined in Salzburg in 1807 before he could take up his apprenticeship in Arnsdorf, despite having successfully passed his teacher's examination in 1807.

Other Currenden in the Circular provide insight into other ordinances from the school authorities regarding a postponement of the holidays or the requirement to disclose the additional income of schoolteachers (1820), concerning school fees and the secondary income of teachers (1824) together with the selection of songs for church services and school examinations. Between 1820 and 1824 Gruber extracted the passage which praised his abilities as a teacher and criticised poor school attendance: "One has much cause to be pleased with the dean's praised use of the local clergy in the school and the skilled teacher Gruber: one just wishes that more diligent school attendance be achieved."<sup>4</sup>

A facsimile of a map sketched by Franz Xaver Gruber from the Silent Night Museum Hallein makes strong reference to Arnsdorf and is therefore on display in the museum. Charte | von der Pfarrey | Lamprechtshausen. | im königl. Baer. Landgerichte Laufen. | Entworfen | und | Sr Hochwürden und Gnaden p. Herrn Herrn. | Nicolaus | würdigsten Abbt des wohlöbl. Stiftes | Michaelbeuern, dann wirklichen Schul- | Districts Inspectoren p | in vollster Ehrfurcht gewid= | met von | Xaver Gruber. This map shows the expanse of the municipality of Lamprechtshausen and was created in the period between 1810 and 1816 for Abbot Nicholas. Nicholas III. Achatz, abbot

of the Benedictine abbey Michaelbeuern from 1803 to 1849, was responsible for Arnsdorf as the abbot of the Benedictine Abbey Michaelbeuern and as school inspector. He was Franz Xaver Gruber's immediate supervisor. The children from the following villages in the Lamprechtshausen parish went to school in Arnsdorf: Oberarnsdorf and Unterarnsdorf, Hochleiten, Niederreit, Oberreit, Püklberg, Loch, Altmann, Dichtlöd, Hauslöd, Großschmeiden and Kleinschmeiden, Loipferding. The school was also assigned villages within the Laufen / Oberndorf parish and the St. Georgen parish: Haidenöster, Gunserin, Obergönning, Mittergönning, Kirchgönning, Kematting, Steinberg, Fürth, Hub, Laken, Kendling, Gröbengraben, Ostthal, Hinterwachtberg and Vorderwachtberg, Bucharting and Knotzing.<sup>5</sup>

As a teacher, Franz Xaver Gruber was favourably appraised by his superiors – for example, in 1821, he was described as "diligent, very skilful, and caring in regards to his treatment of youth and their best performance".<sup>6</sup> Although the school's catchment area was quite big, school attendance left much to be desired. In 1821, only 17 out of 55 school children from the above mentioned localities attended school "diligently", 18 came "every now and then", the others not at all. This could have had something to do with the customary use of children as labour at that time.

### Nativity Scene

In 1681, sacristan Hanns Kraipöckh made a nativity scene for Arnsdorf.<sup>7</sup> It remains uncertain whether parts of the figures made by him are still in the nativity scene today.<sup>8</sup> The nativity scene was repaired in 1969 and 2008<sup>9</sup>; the most recent restoration showed that the nativity scene dates back to 1800. Therefore, this nativity scene would have emerged at the same time as the figures from the Oberndorf nativity scene, in front of which "Silent Night! Holy Night!" was performed for the first time on 24 December 1818.<sup>10</sup> Prince Archbishop Hieronymus Colloredo (1732 - 1812) had issued a ban on nativity scenes in 1784, which apparently had already lost its effect around 1800. From 1807 onwards, Franz Xaver Gruber, who was also a sacristan, would have set up the Arnsdorf nativity scene in the church every year during Advent and Christmas time. The nativity scene





The Silent Night District Arnsdorf with the schoolhouse and the Pilgrimage Church, which was consecrated in 1520. (©Stille Nacht Gesellschaft, Kathrin Gollackner)

consists of 36 human figures and 16 wooden animal figures dressed in clothes. The baby Jesus is made entirely of wax, as is the head of the figure of Mary. The clothing reflects different social stratifications and the traditional costumes (Tracht) in the regions surrounding Arnsdorf and Lamprechtshausen. The shepherds and the Holy Family groups were displayed in the church during Advent or Christmas Eve, the three Magi and their entourage were added on January 6.

#### The Figures of the Marriage at Cana

are displayed separately in the museum but belong to the nativity scene, which would be rearranged several times in transforming scenes, a "Wandelkrippe". The scene of the marriage at Cana was arranged according to the course of the liturgical year - about a week after the Three Kings, on the second Sunday of the year - but only if it was a year when reading the "wedding of Cana" from the Gospel of John (2:1-12) was in turn.

#### Silent Night Museum Arnsdorf

Stille-Nacht-Platz 1  
5112 Lamprechtshausen, Österreich

T +43 664 1589400 (Kustos Max Gurtner)  
E [office@stillenachtdorf.at](mailto:office@stillenachtnachtdorf.at)  
[www.stillenachtdorf.at](http://www.stillenachtdorf.at)

<sup>1</sup> The kitchen on display here was incorporated into the museum in the 1960s according to information from Dr. Hiltrud Oman

<sup>2</sup> He didn't receive the position because he failed his teaching examinations.

<sup>3</sup> The *Politische Verfassung der deutschen Schulen in den k., auch k. k. deutschen Erbstaaten* regulated the Austrian elementary school system from 1806 to 1869.

<sup>4</sup> *Circulare*, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> [Johann Andreas Seethaler], for the third celebration of the pilgrimage=church to our first lady in Armstorf near Laufen, in the year 1820. Salzburg: Dyle 1820, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> *Stand der Schüler in der Werktags Schule zu Arnsdorf am Ende September 1821* [Table], Stille-Nacht-Museum Hallein, no call number.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Josef Haunschmidt, *Wallfahrtskirche "Maria im Mösl". Geschichte. Beschreibung.* self-published, n.d., p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Hiltrud Oman, the current director of the museum, dates parts of the nativity scene back to the second half of the 17th century (mail dated 21<sup>st</sup> April 2015).

<sup>9</sup> Fa. Helming Restaurationen OG (Hof b. Salzburg).

<sup>10</sup> Today this nativity scene is located in the Innviertler Volkskundehaus in Ried im Innkreis.



## Burghausen

By Eva Gilch

### History

Burghausen is divided into two parts due to its special topographical situation: The historical centre or old town (Altstadt) on the Salzach River is towered over by a long ridgeline with its 1,051 metre-long castle. The castle sits upon a high terrace dating from the last ice age, upon which the new city developed to the north during the 20th century.

The town was first mentioned in documents in 1025. The name Burghausen means "the houses next to the castle" and indicates origins dating back to the settlement from the 8th century. A stone castle already existed in the 11th century. From the 12th century onwards the Counts of Burghausen managed the empire's possessions west and east of the Salzach River from this advantage point.

After the death of the last Burghausen Counts from the Sighardinger family in 1163/64, Henry the Lion provided direct ducal management of Burghausen Castle as Duke of Bavaria and Saxony and took control of the corresponding rights, such as Burghausen Customs. In 1180, Henry the Lion was disempowered and was succeeded by Otto Friedrich von Wittelsbach, who was appointed by Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa. In 1229, the Burghausen settlements came into the possession of the Wittelsbachs. The expansion of Burghausen into a town ensued in parallel to these developments. Important external characteristics of the town's formation followed with the adoption of municipal law, market rights and town fortifications.

After the division of Bavaria in 1255, Burghausen gained its first significant political and economic standing under the dukes of Lower Bavaria. With the possession of the castle and settlement in Burghausen, the Lower Bavarian Wittelsbachs were able to secure their southeast duchy against the ecclesiastical principality of Salzburg. The expansion of the Burghausen Castle was a strategical measure as a counterbalance and boundary bulwark to Salzburg Tittmoning. In addition, it served as a state prison and treasury and as a family residence of the Lower Bavarian dukes. The most famous resident, during the years 1475 to 1502, was Duchess Hedwig, the Polish princess and bride from the famous German "Landshut Wedding".

Burghausen's location was also attractive from an economic point of view, as the city was the first toll station in the Duchy of Bavaria from south to north along the Salzach River. This played a fundamental role in the salt trade, as there was a

constant dispute regarding transport, sales and distribution of the salt during the 13th century between the Bavarian Duke, owner of the Reichenhall Salt Mines, and the Salzburg Archbishop, owner of the salt mines in Dürrenberg near Hallein. With the salt mining in Hallein, Salzburg quickly became the largest salt producer in the Alpine region. The Bavarian Duke was also at a disadvantage when the salt was transported from Hallein on the Salzach River to Laufen and from there over the Salzburg territory to Regensburg. The privilege which Emperor Ludwig the Bavarian (Louis IV) gained from 26 April 1346 put an end to this. Ludwig the Bavarian determined that the salt - "rightly and customarily derived from" Hallein - was only allowed to be imported to Bavaria on the Salzburg waterway and could first be reloaded onto wagons in Burghausen (not in the Salzburg towns of Laufen or Tittmoning). Burghausen thereby gained an important position in the salt trade.

However, this phase of political significance and economic prosperity gradually came to an end with the War of the Succession of Landshut in 1503, the reunification of Bavaria in 1505 and the resulting loss of residential status. Burghausen was assigned a political role in the provincial administration as one of four Bavarian Revenue Offices alongside Munich, Landshut and Straubing in 1505. It was elevated to a capital and government town in 1688, despite it being the smallest of the four Bavarian Revenue Offices. Economically speaking, Burghausen's decline began in 1594 when the Bavarian Duke took over the salt trade and thus dried up the region's main source of income.

### Franz Xaver Gruber and Burghausen in 1805

In 1779, the Burghausen Revenue Office lost the Innviertel region to Austria (up until this point it had belonged to Bavaria) and as such its most economically important area with 6,000 square kilometres and 80,000 inhabitants. From this point on, the Salzach served a border river separating the Bavarian Burghausen and the Austrian Ach.

Franz Xaver Gruber, born in Hochburg in 1787, would be no longer born in Bavaria but in Austria. When he finally received permission from his father to pursue a teaching profession at the age of 18, he first completed an intensive musical education. Franz Xaver Gruber received his training in instrumental performance and organ playing from the Burghausen parish organist Georg Hartdobler in 1805. It can also be assumed that he participated in the church choir of the Burghausen

parish church St. Jakob. The affect of the Napoleonic Wars was evident in the year 1805, when Franz Xaver Gruber frequently visited Burghausen. For Burghausen, this period of time was characterised by constant troop patrols of various armies, billets, war taxes, compulsory levies, confiscations and looting. On 28 October 1805, after a brief occupation by Austrian troops, the French moved into Burghausen. The town was in a time of great need.

#### **Franz Xaver Gruber and Georg Hartdobler (1774-1851)**

Georg Hartdobler was born in 1774 in Lower Bavaria, Stubenberg near Simbach a. Inn. In 1795 he acquired Burghausen citizenship by marrying the Burghausen choirmaster's daughter Katharina Hueber and with his appointment as the second choral conductor at the Burghausen parish church St. Jakob. From 1799 to 1850 he was parish organist of St. Jakob. He also worked as a composer. Opinions conveyed by some of his important musical contemporaries bear witness to his work. Michael Haydn described him as a "masterful and excellent" organist in 1806, who also showed "the most splendid practice in the art of composition" and would soon become a "great master". Franz de Paula Grua, the royal Kapellmeister at the court orchestra in Munich and Peter de Winter attested to his "solid music setting and a lot of knowledge of composition" and said that he "only lacked the opportunity and support to spread his talent." In 1845, Georg Hartdobler received the "Honorary Medal of the Ludwigsorden for 50 honourable years of service." He died in Burghausen in 1851, at the age of 77.

Since parish musicians did not earn very much, they often sought supplementary income. Georg Hartdobler gave voice and instrumental lessons in the Latin school and probably also private lessons. He was certainly one of the best musical teachers that Franz Xaver Gruber would have been able to find within walking distance.

#### **The Memory of Frank Xaver Gruber Today**

Works by Franz Xaver Gruber and Georg Hartdobler have already been performed multiple times in Burghausen. In 2001 Hartdobler's mass "Lateinisch figurierte Messe" was performed in St. Jakob church, his former workplace. In 2012, an Alma Redemptoris mater by Franz Xaver Gruber and works by Georg Hartdobler were performed in the Maria Ach church in Wanghausen for the occasion of the Bavarian-Upper Austrian State Exhibition "Bavaria and Austria". This was the first time these works were performed in our region. Franz Xaver Gruber's sheet music was used and came from the Silent Night Museum in Hallein.

In 2008, the Burghausen City Museum (Stadtmuseum) loaned a fortepiano to the Franz Xaver Gruber memorial house in Hochburg. It is said that this fortepiano belonged to Georg Hartdobler and that Franz Xaver Gruber had also played it.

In the year 2018, the city of Burghausen has announced that they will hold a competition for music composition. The idea came from the renowned Burghausen organist Heinrich Wimmer. The Silent Night Trägergemeinde Burghausen / Upper Bavaria will contribute to the composition competition for organ solo in the 2018 Silent Night Anniversary Year. The com-



The fortepiano in the Gruber Memorial House in Hochburg-Ach, on loan from Burghausen. (©Stille Nacht Gesellschaft, Michael Neureiter)



View from Ach over the Salzach River. (©Stadt Bughausen)

position should be a piece for organ solo relating to the theme of Silent Night by Franz Xaver Gruber and Joseph Mohr with a maximum duration of 10 minutes. It should be equally suitable for concert and liturgical practice but in free form.

#### **Stadt Burghausen, Stadtarchiv**

Rathaus, Stadtplatz 112  
84489 Burghausen, Germany

T +49 8677 887 114

E [eva.gilch@burghausen.de](mailto:eva.gilch@burghausen.de)  
[www.burghausen.de](http://www.burghausen.de)



## Fügen

By Peter Mader

### History

At the beginning of the 13th century BC, more and more people were searching for copper in the Alpine region. Traces of the first settlement of today's municipality can be identified from that time. Through evidence found in urn graves (1982 - Dr Sydow, BDA Federal Monuments Office) a permanent settlement can be verified in Fügen since 1200 BC (Bronze Age). During the conquest of the Alpine region by the Romans in the years 16/15 BC, the Ziller River formed the border between the newly built provinces of Noricum (east of the Ziller) and Rätien (west of the Ziller). In the years following the collapse of the Roman Western Empire in 476 AD, the Bavarians increasingly invaded the Zillertal valley.

Fügen is first mentioned as "Fugine" in a document during the tenure of the Bishop Reginbert of Brixen (1130-1140). The name Zillertal already appeared in 889 as "Cilarestal" in a document of the King and later Emperor Arnulf of Carinthia.

The church, which was consecrated in 1497, is the most important church in the valley. However, the early gothic frescoes in the organ gallery attest to a building that dates back much earlier in the ninth century. Although Fügen had always belonged to the Diocese of Brixen in South Tyrol (now diocese of Innsbruck) and was always the seat of a deanery, it remained under the constitution of the Archbishopric Salzburg until 1803.

From the 15th century, the first major economic boom took off in the valley with the mining activity in Fügenberg and Finsinggrund. Evidence of changes from this time include the Fügen castle, the well-preserved miners' houses, the former aristocratic residence Stollenberghof and the "Museum at Widumspiste" building, first documented in 1050. The population increased by leaps and bounds with mining and smelting operations. Around the year 1800, there were almost 1,000 citizens registered as permanently living in Fügen.

During the Napoleonic Wars and the failed uprising of the Tyroleans in 1809, the national affiliation of the Zillertal repeatedly changed between Tyrol, Salzburg and Bavaria.

In the 19th century, the iron processing companies in Fügen/Kleinboden became less important due to the high production costs. The itinerant trade also collapsed. Unemployment resulted in a wave of emigration to the Inn Valley and other parts of the monarchy.

This movement away from the region could only be halted with the emergence of tourism at the beginning of the 20th century. Travel writers and the various Zillertal Natural Singer Groups, in particular the "Rainer" family from Fügen, contributed to a lively influx of guests. The construction of the Zillertal Railway reinforced this development. Fügen had already become one of the most important tourist spots in the valley.

At that time, there was greater investment in infrastructure such as the telegraph line, later telephone line, village lighting and improved roads. A hospital (Lindenhof) was built, water pipes with hydrants were installed and in 1912 construction of a new school building was completed. In January 1903, the newly founded Fügen Raiffeisen bank began operations.

These endeavours ended with the outbreak of World War I. The period after the First World War was marked by inflation and poverty. The situation did not improve until 1924 with the introduction of the Schilling as a new currency. Tourism started to be rebuilt until the outbreak of World War II when this resurgence ended.

After the end of World War II, numerous refugees were accommodated in Fügen. The times were characterised by a dreadful situation in the housing market and a lack of food supplies. At the beginning of the 1950s, however, the upswing began again. A brisk improvement in construction activity revived the economy. A serious improvement led to the opening of the ski facilities in Hochfügen in 1961/62. 12 years later (1973/74), a ski area was opened in Spieljoch. Fügen was no longer just a summer destination but also boasted the first ski resort in the Zillertal valley.

Active hotel construction started which seriously changed the village-scape. As a result, the infrastructure had to be constantly improved. The inhabitants were unable to escape these changes. More and more employees switched from agriculture and forestry to the industrial, commercial, hospitality and tourism sectors.

In the social sphere, the needs of the time were met by the construction of new schools, kindergartens and a retirement home. The construction of a spa area, belonging to the outdoor swimming pool, benefited both summer and winter tourism.



Today, Fügen is the largest town in the Zillertal valley with more than 4,000 inhabitants and is characterised by tourism and agriculture. Numerous small and medium-sized commercial enterprises as well as the established industry and strong tourism offer attractive seasonal and year-round jobs. The short distance from the district capital Schwaz and the state capital Innsbruck make Fügen a sought-after place of residence with a constantly increasing population.<sup>1</sup>

### Karl Mauracher – Organ Maker from Fügen/Kapfing

A visit to the cemetery in Fügen reveals traces of the song “Silent Night, Holy Night”. At the entrance to the western cemetery wall you can find the tombstone of Karl (also Carl) Mauracher (1789 - 1844). The text on the plate reads:

*“Here lies the honoured Mr Karl Mauracher from Fügen. Highly regarded artist in organ building. After a long illness, having partaken in the last sacraments, on the 24th of May 1844, in his 55th year of age, he gently fell asleep to pass into the better world. While here in the valley of tears, some organs from his master hand ring out the praise of God, he tunes up in heaven in the hymns of the angels, for he was a noble and virtuous man. May he rest in peace.”*

In 1818, Karl Mauracher from Fügen/Kapfing was commissioned to repair the organ in the church of St. Nicholas in Oberndorf in Salzburg, as the organ was no longer functional. Mauracher went to Oberndorf in the spring of 1819 to repair the organ. A letter from the Imperial Royal District Office shows that he carried out this work and eventually designed and built a new organ in the years 1824/1825. This letter can be found in the Museum at Widumspforte next to one of the old organ pipes from St. Nicholas Church. Karl Mauracher’s greatest merit in relation to the song “Silent Night” is probably that he brought this melody and the accompanying text to Fügen in the Zillertal. He passed it on to the Ur-Rainer singers who were members of the church choir. Over a decade later, the Strasser singers sang the song in their customised sung version in Leipzig, where it was written down for the first time and printed as one of “Four True Tyrolean Songs”.

Karl Mauracher’s residential house is still standing today in Fügen/Kapfing; unfortunately it is no longer inhabited. It is colloquially known as the “Organist’s House”. For many years, on the eastern wall of the house, there was a rather inconspicuous plaque that referred to the organ builder. At the end of the 80s a bronze plaque was added on the southern wall of the house next to the entrance. The work and life of Karl Mauracher are outlined in detail. After the house changed hands, the plaque was removed and placed in Fügen/Kapfing in the immediate vicinity of the house on its own square with a fountain and a bench. Next to a relief portrait of the organ builder is the following text:

*Around 1720, the organ builder Johann Mauracher lived here in Fügen/Kapfing (died around 1750). He was a master organ builder, carpenter and farmer. His son Andreas continued his work. His son Karl Mauracher (born 14.10.1789, died 24.5.1844 in Kapfing) built over 50 organs in Austrian states. He brought the song “Silent Night, Holy Night” to Fügen in the Zillertal.*



View of Fügen – the largest municipality in the Zillertal valley belongs to the Schwaz district in Tyrol. (©Gemeinde Fügen)

His tomb is located on the sacristy wall (today on the west side of the cemetery wall) of the Fügen parish church.

### Memorial Sites of the Rainer Singer Family

If you turn left at the main northern entrance of the cemetery in Fügen, you will find yourself in front of the memorial of the Rainer family. The members of the Ur-Rainer (Felix, Anton, Joseph, Franz and Maria Scholastika Wildauer, née Rainer) are listed on the left. A medallion in the middle depicts the singers in costume. On the right side you can read:

*Through their concert tours throughout Europe, with performances in front of the most important rulers of their time, the “Ur-Rainer” made Tyrol and the Zillertal world famous. They helped with the worldwide distribution of the Christmas carol “Silent Night”. Ludwig Rainer (1824 - 1893) brought “Silent Night” to America in 1839. He was the most famous national singer of the 19th century.*

A medallion in the lower area shows Ludwig Rainer, son of Maria Scholastika Wildauer, nee Rainer, who caused a sensation and aroused great interest with his singing troupes in Russia and America. He was a well-known ambassador of the song “Silent Night” in those distant countries for that time.

In the 1970s, the sandstone memorial was in jeopardy of disintegrating. On the initiative of Heimat- und Museumsverein Fügen and with the financial support of Wallace “Wally” Bronner, who was particularly appreciative of Ludwig Rainer’s achievements in America, the memorial was durably and faithfully restored true to the original.<sup>2</sup>

### The Ur-Rainer in Fügen Castle

Directly next to the southern entrance of the Fügen castle is a plaque commemorating Tsar Alexander I of Russia and Emperor Franz I of Austria’s visit to Count Dönhoff. The original melody of “Silent Night” is also recorded. The explanatory text reads:

*In 1802 the Dönhoff Counts gained this castle which was built in 1550 by Georg von Keutschach. Emperor Franz I of Austria*



and Tsar Alexander I of Russia visited the Dönhoff counts in this castle in 1822. On this occasion, the Rainer singers performed "Silent Night" (old title "Tyrolean song") for the Highnesses. From here, the song began to spread across the world. The original melody and text by Franz Xaver Gruber and Joseph Franz Mohr - 1818 - can be read on this panel.

Only recently, on the basis of a newspaper report from Liverpool found on the Internet (Literary and Scientific Mirror, Tuesday, November 27, 1827 - No. 387 - Vol. VIII), this narrative, often regarded a legend, could be traced back to Rainer's own authentic story. They told the newspaper journalist:

*About the year 1815 (historically correct 1822), at the time when the French lost the possession of the Tyrol, and we regained our old liberties under the restoration of our beloved government of Austria, we heard that the Emperors of Austria and Russia were to visit the Tyrol, on their way to the Congress of Verona. As the Count Dönhof knew the Monarchs were to pass through the Ziller Valley, and expected them to repose a short time at his chateau, he naturally desired to offer to his distinguished guests all the gratification within his immediate power. Knowing that we were all at home, he sent for us, and told us to practise, very thoroughly, the best of our songs. His wish was, that, during the short time of the Emperors' stay at the chateau, we should keep concealed in one of the saloons, where, at a given signal, we were to begin to sing.*

*We studied as hard as possible, under the kind guidance of the Count, and looked forward with mingled pleasure and anxiety to the day when we should not only see the two Monarchs of whom we had heard so much, but administer to their amusement by our songs.*

*At last, when their majesties had passed through the festivities prepared for them in the village, and had entered the chateau, we took our appointed stand, and at the signal agreed on, began to sing: though we were very timid and diffident as to the effect we might produce. This fear, however, soon gave way, as we noted the expression of pleasure that overspread the countenances of the royal guests, which we had been so placed as to be able to see. When we had sung two songs \*(No. 4 and No. 12 – "The Swingtime" and "Up to the Alps") Alexander sent for us, and after we had kissed his hand, he said, in broken German, „You must come and see me in Petersburgh, where I shall cause you to be taken care of, and where you shall find a good reception." We thanked him in the best manner we could, and our Emperor then asked our names. Both the Monarchs then began to talk French, and we retired to our former post.*

These were the factual accounts of the visit of the majesties in Fügen castle. However, the fact that the Rainer singers also sang "Silent Night" on this occasion and at this time of year (just before Christmas) must only have been passed on orally. At that time, Silent Night was only known as "Tyrolean song from the Zillertal".

#### **The Holzmeister Nativity Scene in Fügen Castle**

Every year, from the 1st Sunday of Advent until the 2 February

(Candlemass), one of the most beautiful nativity scene sets in the Zillertal is located in the chapel of the castle (formerly the great hall where the imperial majesty was received): the Holzmeister Nativity Scene from Fulpmes im Stubaital. This precious nativity scene has a very eventful history.

The original three-part nativity scene originated from the hand of Johann Holzmeister, the father of the world famous architect Prof. Dr. med. Clemens Holzmeister. Until 1909 the nativity scene was owned by the Holzmeister family in Fulpmes, who moved to Innsbruck/Mühlau in 1891. They no longer had space for the nativity scene in their new apartment.

Capuchin Father Raphael Huter acquired the nativity scene in 1909 for 600 crowns for the Seraphic Liebeswerk Charity's newly built St. Fidelishaus in the village Tirol near Meran in South Tyrol. During the First World War, St. Fidelishaus in the village Tirol (built in 1908 as the first children's home of the Seraphic Liebeswerk when it was still part of Tyrol) was converted into a hospital for wounded soldiers. The nativity scene and the figures were transported to the attic, cleared away, destroyed or broken.

When Capuchin Father Franz Josef Kramer came to village Tirol in 1919 as director of the Liebeswerk, he began to restore the remains of the nativity scene and put together the broken figures. In 1928, St. Fidelishaus became part of the diocese of Trento. In 1928, the nativity scene was placed in the Third Order Hall in the Capuchin Monastery Merano. To keep the nativity scene safe, in 1932 Father Franz Josef took it on an adventurous journey over the Brenner to Fügen castle, where it was acquired by the Seraphic Liebeswerk in 1926 and taken to the St. Joseph boy's home.

In 1938, Father Franz Josef took the nativity scene with him to the Capuchin monastery Kitzbühel, where it was to be placed in the monastery church. In 1940, the monastery was abolished and Father Franz Josef imprisoned for a hundred days. After his release, he managed to retrieve the nativity scene. He brought the safely packed figures to his home in Heiterwang. The nativity scene set was to be hidden in Kitzbühel so that it could be set up again in the Capuchin Church in Kitzbühel at the end of the war in 1945.

In 1947, Father Franz Josef took over the management of the St. Josef boy's home in Fügen and brought the nativity scene with him. Since then, it is set up each year in the private chapel. The nativity scene is not a unified work. The God the father group, the Holy Family in the stable, some shepherds, the circumcision, the three kings on their journey and in the adoration with Mary as well as two angels are likely to have been made by the artist Giner. Many angels and other figures of the 350-figure nativity scene set were added later.

Today, the five-part nativity scene set measures 6.5 m in width and 2 m in depth. The sisters still living in Fügen castle now take care of this famous nativity scene.

#### **"Silent Night" in the Museum at Widumspfiste**

The museum at Widumspfiste has a separate area dedicated

to “Silent Night”. A clear timeline with texts and pictures depicts the individual destinations of the carol from its genesis through its distribution in Europe to Russia and America. Karl Mauracher, the bearer of the song is also honoured there. An organ pipe from the St. Nicholas church in Oberndorf, dating back to Karl Mauracher’s time, is a special exhibit. This organ pipe was donated by the Silent Night Museum in Oberndorf.

Particularly impressive are the portrait drawings by Rietschel depicting the Rainer siblings. Two table showcases display a variety of items that are associated with the song. A letter from Albert Schweitzer from the primeval forest village Lambarene contains the text of the song “Silent Night” written in the local dialect. Stamps, records and commemorative coins provide information about the distribution and significance of the song. Also of interest is a collection of lyrics in various languages and dialects from Chinese to Arabic.

In the opposite room on the lower ground floor, a comprehensive and clear history of the Zillertal National Singer Groups is provided and presented in pictures and documents.

To the right of the museum entrance, there is an overview of the creation and distribution of the song as well as Karl Mauracher’s concisely presented curriculum vitae in words and pictures on a bronze plaque. It is accessible to all when the museum is closed and also serves as a concise introduction which provides an informative overview for anyone visiting the Silent Night section of the Museum at Widumspfiste.

**“Silent Night and the Sound of the Alps” in Fügen Castle**  
Fügen’s Baroque Castle with its excellent location in the centre of Fügen and the Silent Night memorials provide the perfect setting to retrace the musical message of peace in Silent Night with a large exhibition in the commemorative year. The centre-piece is the distribution of the song all over the world. Over four levels of the castle, the history of Silent Night and the development of tourism in the Zillertal valley will be presented to show



The large collection of Silent Night records in the Museum at Widumspfiste. (©Heimat- und Museumsverein Fügen)

the close connection between the numerous singers and groups from the region that sent the song on its incredible journey, these include the Rainer Singers, Ludwig Rainer Singing Troupes, Strasser Singers and Leo Singers.

The Silent Night Community in Fügen endeavours to do justice to its role as a “Link between Silent Night and the World”.

#### Museum at Widumspfiste

Lindenweg 2  
6263 Fügen, Österreich

T +43 5288 62201  
E [info@hmv-fuegen.at](mailto:info@hmv-fuegen.at)  
[www.hmv-fuegen.at](http://www.hmv-fuegen.at)

<sup>1</sup> Source: Dorfbuch (Village Book) Fügen, Heimat- und Museumsverein Fügen

<sup>2</sup> Bronner’s Christmas Wonderland, Frankenmuth, Michigan, USA. There is also the Bronner Silent Night Memorial Chapel which is open daily. This copy of the Silent Night Chapel in Oberndorf bei Salzburg was built in 1992 built with permission from Austria and commemorates the first public performance of the Christmas carol Silent Night, Holy Night 1818. The song is played in the chapel, translated into numerous languages, all year round in an endless loop.



## Hallein

By Anna Holzner

The old salt mining town of Hallein was granted town privileges from 1230. Its coat of arms features a salt bearer with a torch. For centuries, the salt deposits in nearby Dürrnberg were the basis of the most important and richest economic branch of the archdiocese for the prince-archbishops and Salzburg sovereigns. The population of the town was made up of civil servants, merchants and craftsmen. The majority worked in salt production and salt transport.

Hallein was not a beautiful town but an early example of an industrial town, which Franz Schubert described as "sooty and dirty" at the end of the 1820s. With the loss of Salzburg's independence and its affiliation with the Habsburg Empire, salt production declined resulting in unemployment and poverty. It was only with the arrival of new industries that the town's economic situation improved and they began to develop the dreary houses and generally beautify the town. Hallein has a well-preserved historical centre with the typical Salzach-Inn architectural style, whose protection and preservation is of great importance today.

### Church and Organ

The Hallein Decanal Parish church of St. Anthony, with remnants of its earlier Romanesque and Gothic construction, was largely rebuilt by Wolfgang Hagenauer in 1769 due to its dilapidated condition. It is a uniform hall church with dome vault. The concrete tower dates back to 1965. The original Romanesque tower was damaged in a fire in 1943 and completely collapsed in 1945. The organ has a five-piece wooden case from 1704 and is richly decorated with carved and gilded embellishments. When Gruber began his service in 1835, the organ had only 400 pipes. In 1860, the organ's condition was so bad that restoration was inevitable. Gruber approached the master organ builder Mauracher for an assessment and cost estimate as he had already made acquaintance with Mauracher's father in Arnsdorf and Oberndorf. Gruber did not live long enough to witness the completion of the organ, which was only finished in 1864 and is now equipped with 1000 pipes.

### The Gruber Grave

Gruber worked as an organist until his death. On Whitsunday 1863, he had played the organ. After 14-days in a sickbed he died on June 7 at half past four in the afternoon in the company of all his children. The funeral took place on June 10 with a large turn out from the people of Hallein. Three priests, the town band and many local clubs with their flags accompanied

him on his last journey. He was buried in the cemetery next to his residence close to the wall of the house, the commemorative plaque was later attached underneath. In the course of the long-planned relocation of the much too small cemetery in 1880, all graves except the grave of Franz Xaver Gruber were cleared. However, Gruber's grave was moved from its original location further forward. Probably in the 1920s, a burial plot was constructed from a boulder block and a rectangular grave border from stone blocks. In 1935/36, the house and square in front of it was renovated. The tomb was also redesigned, in order to give it a look worthy of the composer's reputation. The Gruber Grave Committee received numerous proposals for a new grave. Finally, for cost reasons, a simple wrought-iron cross was chosen.

### The Silent Night Museum

#### Entrance to the Gruber House

To the left of the entrance to the Gruber House, now serving as the Silent Night Museum, there are two panels. The upper one was installed by Hallein friends in 1896 to commemorate the composer of the Christmas carol. Underneath is a dedication from the Teachers of Los Angeles Calif[ornia] from 1934 whose inscription "for his message of peace and good will" provided an early testimony to the significance of the peace-promoting Silent Night song. Above the entrance is the bust of the composer, modelled by Hans Baier in 1936 on a picture of Gruber. On the right side, next to the door one can see Franz Xaver Gruber's commemorative plaque. Underneath is the memorial stone for son Franz (died 1871), whose original grave was not preserved in the old cemetery. The plaque was dedicated to him by his wife Wilhelmine and his pupil Baroness Löwenstern. Next to this are the commemorative plaques of the composer's second wife, Maria Gruber nee Breitfuß, who died in 1841, the deceased grandson Franz Xaver Gruber who died in 1926, which was donated by the Salzburg Cathedral Choir in 1932, and that of the last grandson Felix Gruber, who died in 1940 as honorary citizen of the town of Hallein.

### Foundation of the Hallein Liedertafel

At the beginning of the 19th century, choral societies cultivating men's singing and promoting sociability were established in many cities. In 1849, 24 citizens from the town of Hallein gathered to form such an association. Eldest son of the composer, Franz Gruber Jr. was also invited to join. His father, Franz Xaver Gruber, was elected director of the newly founded Liedertafel and was also one of the founding members. The flag





Items relating to the history of the song: in front the "Authentic Account", behind Autograph V by Franz Xaver Gruber. (©Stille Nacht Museum Hallein)

for the club was donated by Hallein townswomen. On 24 September 1849 the flag was presented to the club at a singing festival in Pfleggarten. The photo shows the members of the club, including the composer and his son Franz with the flag. Gruber himself composed some songs for male choir, which were sung by the Hallein Liedertafel during their performances.

#### **Mohr's Guitar**

The instrument with which Joseph Mohr had accompanied the song in Oberndorf on 24 December 1818 remained in his possession until his death in Wagrain in 1848. After his passing, his personal property was auctioned, including the guitar. A good acquaintance and admirer of Mohr bought the guitar. He spent his last years in Kuchl and had the guitar with him there. After his death, the guitar remained at the Täublwirt Tavern in Kuchl where it hung in the dining room. It was sometimes used by guests to accompany songs. Once it even was used as a "Schlaginstrument", this implies a double meaning in German both as a percussion instrument and a beating instrument in a Tavern brawl. Gruber's grandson Felix was given the guitar as a wedding present from friends from Hallein who bought the guitar for him. After Felix Gruber's death, the guitar was given to the township of Hallein along with the other remaining possessions from the estate.

#### **The "Authentic Account"**

In 1854, Father Ambros Prennsteiner, the choral inspector of the St. Peter monastery, received a letter from the Royal Prussian Court Orchestra in Berlin requesting that the original of the song "Silent Night" by Michael Haydn be found in the monastery archives. At the time, Franz Xaver Gruber's son was a choirboy at St. Peter's and a personal student of Father Ambros who asked his student if he knew the song and who had composed it. Felix named his father as composer who had

often related the story at home of how the song had been performed for the first time in Oberndorf. Father Ambros then urged Franz Xaver Gruber to write down the genesis history of the song and send it to Berlin with a copy of the original composition. In his description of the facts, known as the "Authentic Account", Gruber reports how in 1818 Mohr had come to him with the text and he had written the melody to the Christmas song at Mohr's request. The original of Gruber's letter to the Court Orchestra in Berlin as well as the attached sheet music is considered lost today. In Hallein one can find the draft of this "Authentic Account" and the assumed draft for the requested sheet of music, noted by Gruber in pencil on the back of a wedding song and referred to as Autograph II in Silent Night research.

#### **The Harmonieflöte ...**

– also known as a French accordion – is a reed instrument in terms of a harmonium, first built in 1852 by Bouton in Paris. The resounding reeds serve as the sound carrier moved by the airflow of the bellows. In front of this is a keyboard with 29 keys covered with ivory. The Harmonieflöte stands on a frame, the bellows are operated with a pedal so the instrument can be played with both hands. The accordion replaced the Harmonieflöte, this instrument is one of few surviving examples. A newspaper article from March 1863 reports about a concert by Hallein's Liedertafel with: "... the partly arranged, partly composed pieces by choir director Franz Gruber (son of F. X. Gruber) on the Harmonieflöte, a new Parisian instrument, accompanied by the masterfully executed guitar." Gruber himself could not have enjoyed the instrument for long as he died in June of that year.

#### **The Piano**

A fortepiano from the workshop of the Viennese piano maker Schrimpf & Sohn. The instrument was constructed around

1830 and, according to the certificate of Gruber's daughter-in-law Maria, the composer bought the instrument in 1833. In those days there were no piano makers in Salzburg so Gruber obtained the instrument from Vienna, which was a hub for piano making. The company Schrimpf & Sohn was not one of the top ranking piano makers but produced high quality instruments. This piano is probably the only surviving instrument from this workshop. It is not the piano from Arnsdorf on which "Silent Night" was composed in 1818. Gruber owned this instrument until his death in 1863 and it remained in the possession of the family. When Gruber's son Felix died, his wife intended to sell the piano. In 1910, a member of the Hallein Liedertafel bought it and was given the certificate with the piano's proof of origin. Despite being constantly out of tune, the grand piano was still played; it was eventually resold within the Hallein Liedertafel in 1928. Because it constantly went out of tune, it could not be used. After Gruber's grandson Felix had bequeathed the entire estate of the composer to the township, a memorial room was set up in the new city museum and the Liedertafel gave the piano to the museum.

#### Portraits of Franz Xaver Gruber and Katharina Gruber

The two oil paintings were painted in 1846 by Sebastian Stief who is considered the most important portrait painter in Salzburg in the 19th century. Stief was born in 1811 in Tengling am Waginger See and died in 1889 in Salzburg. Numerous distinguished citizens and religious dignitaries were portrayed by him. The pictures are painted in strong colours with photographic accuracy. Gruber was 59 years old at the time, a friendly, calm and sociable man, who liked to have a good beer during a cheerful get together. The second picture depicts his third wife Katharina from Böckstein (nee Rieser, widowed Wimmer). Shortly after the death of his second wife Maria in 1841, Gruber had married her friend Katharina. She was just two years younger than him. Gruber's daughter-in-law described her as a capable housewife who was a good mother to the four children. She remained in the house in Hallein until her death in 1873.

#### Gruber's Personal Estate

The display case contains small items which belonged to the composer, his glasses, the writing utensils, pocket knife, wallet, pocket watch, thermometer, telescope and wooden box. After his death, the belongings remained in the family's possession. Around 1935, grandson Felix Gruber wrote a list of his grandfather's existing estate in which the items shown are listed. After the death of Felix Gruber in 1940, the last descendant living in Hallein, these objects became the property of the town of Hallein. The descendants of Gruber were well aware of the importance and fame of the song "Silent Night" and took great care of the possessions with the intention of setting up a memorial room for the composer in Hallein. The extent of the appreciation of Gruber is evident in a letter from the Austrian National Library from 1938 requesting that the written estate be handed over.

#### Redesign

Since 1993, a museum has been housed in the Franz Xaver Gruber's former residence and workplace. The museum will be redesigned in 2017/18 in keeping with the motto: "Meeting



The "Silent Night" guitar, made around 1800 (©Keltenmuseum Hallein, Stille Nacht Museum).

the composer - Franz Xaver Gruber". From F. X. Gruber's first documented visit to Hallein in 1819 until the death of his grandson Felix Gruber in 1940, three generations of the family participated in the social life of the town and were part of its musical history. The newly designed Silent Night Museum Hallein will open on 29 September 2018.

#### Stille Nacht Museum Hallein

Gruberplatz 1  
5400 Hallein, Österreich

T +43 6245 80783

E [keltenmuseum@keltenmuseum.at](mailto:keltenmuseum@keltenmuseum.at)  
[www.keltenmuseum.at](http://www.keltenmuseum.at)





## Hintersee

By Eva Knaus-Reinecker

The local community of Hintersee in the southeast of the Salzburg Flachgau region, is one of the smallest communities in Austria with just 453 inhabitants (as of 1 January 2014). The municipality consists of the cadastral communities of Hintersee and Lämmerbach. The first written mention of the town dates back to the year 700 when the area around Hintersee belonged to Bavaria. Duke Theodebert of Bavaria made Hintersee available for the Salzburg Bishop to use as a hunting ground. The clearing started in Thalgau, the settlement came from Thalgau and Abtenau. The colonisation of Hintersee first began in the 12th century. Until then, only hunters had roamed the area.

Records in the church tithe book of Thalgau from 1584 show that the farmers from Hintersee had to deliver feed, cheese and flax to the church in Thalgau. At that time, the landlords shared the area. The farmers had to do military service in addition to rendering taxes, tithe and natural resource contributions. Furthermore, they were grouped as hunting servants or into other work.

Hintersee was under the control of the cathedral chapter from 1612 until the end of the Salzburg archdiocese in 1803. This consequently resulted in wars and changing governments. It was not until 1848 that the farmers finally gained their independence and the foundation was laid for today's community.

### Joseph Mohr in Hintersee

Joseph Mohr moved to Hintersee on 19 December 1827. He resided there for almost ten years until he moved to Wagrain on 14 February 1837. Hintersee was the first parish that Mohr managed independently. In those days, Joseph Mohr came to a poor community with only 272 inhabitants, whose population lived off agriculture, forestry and hunting. We know very little about Joseph Mohr's life and work in Hintersee as there are hardly any records. However, there are many undocumented oral stories and legends in circulation in the village of Hintersee pertaining to Mohr. He was known to be a very socially minded priest, especially concerning the children in the community. A popular story about Mohr describes how he would buy meat from poachers and give it to poor families with many children. As a result, he was reported and came into conflict with the law. He is also supposed to have been concerned about the education of schoolchildren. Another oral tradition reports that Mohr often had disputes with the sacristan and teacher Johann Niederreiter because he often arrived late and

liked to spend his time in the village tavern.

### Memorial Sites in Hintersee

A memorial plaque and a portrait of Mohr in the church, a bronze sculpture on the cemetery wall and the Joseph Mohr House pay tribute to the lengthy presence of the lyricist of "Silent Night" in Hintersee.

### Parish Church and Presbytery

In 1785, Archbishop Hieronymus Graf Colloredo had the simple parish church of Hintersee built and equipped with a small graveyard. The church was consecrated to St. Leonhard and St. George. For 150 years prior to this, Hintersee residents had to go to Faistenau to attend worship services on Sundays where there was a pastor residing from 1632.

In the church, one can find a portrait of Mohr and a commemorative plaque in honour of the most famous pastor of Hintersee. On the cemetery wall, a bust of Joseph Mohr recalls his services to the community of Hintersee.

The Hintersee presbytery, where Joseph Mohr once lived, is still inhabited today and used by clubs.

### Joseph Mohr House with Doll House Museum

The Joseph Mohr House next to the old vicarage was once the outbuilding for the Hintersee Inn. The building dates back to 1748; it was renovated in 1999 and opened as a museum and cultural centre. Since then, it houses a permanent exhibition on Joseph Mohr and a dollhouse museum. It is also used for seminars and other events. Museum records show that about 2500 guests visit the museum annually.

### Joseph Mohr Exhibition

Many original artefacts related to the life and work of Joseph Mohr are located in the museum in Wagrain. The only original objects in the Joseph Mohr exhibition are a Missal from 1827 and Prayer Books from 1745 which Joseph Mohr might have used. Two altar candelabras with a wooded core made from copper, presumably date back to the time when Joseph Mohr was working in Hintersee.

The exhibition also contains a copy of a chasuble (vestment) which he wore until his death. The original is housed in the museum in Wagrain. The copy was made for the museum in 1999 by the seamstress Maria Weissenbacher. In addition, co-



Town view of Hintersee (©Tourismusverband Fuschlseeregion, Ortsbüro Hintersee)

pies of manuscript records by Joseph Mohr are on display: an excerpt from the 1828 baptismal record and the annual report of the Hintersee pastoral care for the years 1829/30.

#### **Puppenstubenmuseum (Dollhouse Museum)**

The dollhouse museum with exhibits from the collectors Ulla and Manfred Kunert is housed in the historical Joseph Mohr House. The extensive collection was originally privately owned by the Kunert couple. The Ebner Family from the wellbeing hotel Gasthof Hintersee agreed to set up a dollhouse museum in the historic Joseph Mohr House to make the collection accessible to the public. 45 dollhouses consisting of a total of 40,000 individual pieces are exhibited. In addition to the dollhouses, one can also admire old merchant shops, teddy bears, dolls, other toys and "Meckis". In former times, dollhouses did not primarily function as toys, as they do today. They were mainly used as aids in the education of daughters from respectable families to help prepare for adult life.

#### **Joseph Mohr Walk (Themenweg)**

In 2016, the Joseph Mohr Chapel was built in honour of Joseph Mohr. The initiative was a planned joint project between the Fachhochschule (Technical College) Urstein "Innovation and Management in Tourism" and the Fachhochschule Kuchl "Timber Technology & Construction" and was implemented using wood and glass from Hintersee enterprises and those in surrounding regions. The large wall painting inside the chapel was created by artist Bernd Horak, who resides in the village. The chapel is located at the edge of the forest along the "WaldWasserZauberWegs" (Forest Water Magic Path). In the evening, the chapel is brightly lit so that it can be seen from afar. On 7 October 2016, it was inaugurated by Bishop Martin Walchhofer in the presence of Governor Wilfried Haslauer.

The Joseph Mohr Memorial Walk is a circuit route through the town centre (about 1.2 km). Along the way, stories and



The Joseph-Mohr-Chapel in Hintersee (©Tourismusverband Fuschlseeregion, Ortsbüro Hintersee)

anecdotes from the rural life of the pastor Joseph Mohr in Hintersee are told. In addition to the Joseph Mohr chapel, one can experience a walk-through stone guitar, a life-sized "Joseph Mohr" figure, a specially constructed tree xylophone, a barrel organ and a special vibrating lounge chair.

**Tourismusverband Fuschlseeregion, Hintersee**  
Lämmerbach 50  
5324 Hintersee, Österreich

T +43 6224 344  
E [hintersee@fuschlseeregion.com](mailto:hintersee@fuschlseeregion.com)  
[www.fuschlseeregion.com](http://www.fuschlseeregion.com)





## Hochburg-Ach

By Ludwig Schwanninger and Werner Sützl



The municipality of Hochburg-Ach lies about 40 km north of Salzburg in the far west of Upper Austria on the border with Bavaria. The Weilhartforst, a large forest area, surrounds Hochburg-Ach in the shape of a horseshoe sectioning off the municipality from the neighbouring Austrian communities on three sides, in the north, east and south. The Salzach River forms the border with Burghausen in neighbouring Bavaria to the west.

The municipality consists of two historically developed centres, the two parishes of Hochburg and Ach. The parish Ach with its beautiful baroque pilgrimage church Maria Ach and Wanghausen Castle was a part of Burghausen until 1779. Hochburg with its mighty late Gothic parish church lies on the eastern edge of the municipality on the high terrace over the Salzach River.

### Hochburg – Franz Xaver Gruber's Birthplace

Hochburg was first mentioned in a document in 878. King Carloman of Bavaria, a great-grandson of Charles the Great, received the Kingdom of Bavaria in 865 and enjoyed residing in his favourite Palace in Ötting. He also often stayed on his hunting manors and estate in Hochburg. On 20 September 878, a document was signed at the royal court regarding an exchange of goods between Bishop Ambricho of Regensburg and Abbot Hito of Mondsee. This is the first time where "Hohberahha" (Hochbirkenwald – high birch forest) is recorded as the place where the document was signed. In later certificates and documents, the spelling changed from Hohperch to Hobercha to Hochperc, until the name Hochburg prevailed.

The province east of the Inn and Salzach Rivers was Bavarian and remained so until 1779. In this year, the disputes resulting from the Bavarian War of Succession were supposed to have been settled through peace negotiations in the treaty of Bohemian Teschen. Austrian Emperor, Joseph II who had hoped to extend his dominion to the whole of Bavaria, was ultimately compensated with a small territorial gain, namely the land east of the Inn and Salzach Rivers, which later became known as the Innviertel region. The separation of Bavaria had serious economic consequences for the affected areas, long-standing trade connections were broken, cities lost their hinterland and new borders were created.

### Franz Xaver Gruber's Years in Hochburg

The Innviertel had only belonged to Austria for eight years

when the son of the linen weaver couple Josef and Anna Gruber was born in the Steinpointsölde house in the district of Unterweitzberg in the parish of Hochburg on 25 November 1787. He was the fifth of six children - four sons and two girls. Gruber wrote: "As the third son of a poor linen weaver of Hochburg" in his Authentic Account. His name was registered as Conrad Xavier in the baptismal book of the Hochburg parish. Franz Xaver was a common name in Bavarian regions which could have been the reason for his change of name. There are no written documents about his childhood.

The musical talents of "Weaver Franzl" became apparent when he began school. His teacher at the time, Andreas Peterlechner, recognised his promise and fostered the talent of his student. It is thanks to the musical-expertise of his teacher and Pastor Simon Dobler that the young Gruber was able to fulfil his desire to become an organist and teacher against the wishes of his father. Secretly, Peterlechner gave his pupil music lessons on the organ in the parish church. As a twelve-year-old, the "Weberbua" (weaver boy) played the organ at Sunday Mass for his teacher who had fallen ill. Thereafter, the strict father's resistance softened and he allowed his son to take music lessons with the teacher. Years later, Gruber was also allowed to begin training as a teacher with his great mentor Peterlechner, and in 1805 made his way to Burghausen and back, 6.5 km daily by foot, to perfect his organ playing with the well-known choirmaster Georg Hartdobler.

It was an arduous journey, for the region was filled with Napoleonic troops, and there were frequent attacks on the inhabitants. Burghausen became the base for an infantry regiment and had to maintain all of their needs as a result. Despite these adverse circumstances, Hartdobler took on Gruber and nurtured him. He was so enthusiastic about his student's musical talent and zeal for learning that he accepted the encumbrance. After three months of training, his student was able to play the basso continuo in figured notation on the organ.

In July 1806, Gruber passed the teaching examination in Ried im Innkreis. He applied for the position of teacher and organist in Arnsdorf in 1807.

### Reminders of Franz Xaver Gruber in Hochburg

Gruber's birthplace was demolished as early as 1927 due to its state of dilapidation, even though the decision was irrational. However, in 1975 the community was able to relocate an

old wooden house from the neighbouring municipality of Gilgenberg to Hochburg, which was very similar in age, construction, size and most importantly appearance to Gruber's birth house. It was rebuilt and refurbished in Hochburg in keeping with the original and today serves as the "Franz Xaver Gruber Memorial House".

The furnishing corresponds to the lifestyle of a small farming family at the end of the 18th or 19th century. The original loom which belonged to the Gruber family and where young Franz Xaver learned the weaving craft is located on the first floor. A fortepiano is on display as a loan from the town of Burghausen. It belonged to the choirmaster Hartdobler and is the instrument on which young Gruber received his lessons.

In 1819 Gruber's "Firmgöd" (godfather), the "Webergori", got married in Hochburg. Gruber came to Hochburg to conduct the wedding mass and composed a four-part wedding song for the bride and groom, which was not "performed" in the church but rather during the "Ehrenmahl" (marriage feast) in today's Stiftsgasthof Inn. A copy of the song is on display in the memorial house.

Equipment for flax processing and other tools used for agricultural activities are also displayed. The furnishings and other articles are on loan from farmers in Hochburg-Ach and Überackern.

A plaque from 1900 commemorates the great son of the community at the F. X. Gruber Music School, formerly the Volksschule (primary school).

### The Parish Church Maria Himmelfahrt

The Parish church, made of tufa (calcium carbonate) blocks from the quarries along the Salzach River, is located on the southern edge of the village with its mighty Gothic defence tower which stands out amongst the townscape in all directions.

Church construction began in the 12th century; from 1430 to 1470, the church was completed in its present form. Very little has been preserved from its original gothic features, as medieval fixtures were removed almost everywhere in the country during the course of the 17th century "Baroqueisation".

The Memorial Organ (Gedächtnisorgel) was installed in 1962 for F. X. Gruber's 175th birthday. It was constructed by the organ builder Pirchner from Steinach am Brenner. The design of the mechanical work with 17 stops and 2 manuals (keyboards) was developed by Prof. Hermann Kronsteiner from Linz.

Here in the parish church, the performance of the historical play "Die Suche nach der Stillen Nacht" (The Search for the Silent Night) takes place every year on the third weekend of Advent.

### The Franz Xaver Gruber Peace Walk

Since 2012, a peace walk beginning and ending at the Memorial House offers a relaxing one-hour circuit route to get in touch with the place where Gruber grew up. Five three-



The F. X. Gruber Memorial House was redesigned in 2017. Here one can also see the loom on which Gruber learnt the weaving craft. (©Franz Xaver Gruber – Gemeinschaft Hochburg-Ach)

metre-high bronze sculptures represent angel wings that carry "Silent Night" to all five continents of the earth. The artist Prof. Hubert Flörl wanted to show how the message of peace in the song was carried out into the world, contributing to harmony in the world and within each individual. At each station you will find information about the time in which the song was written and the historical circumstances that influenced Gruber's upbringing. The path ends in front of the memorial house where Gruber and Mohr present their song to the Blessed Mother and Child.

### Franz Xaver Gruber Community

Thanks to the initiative of the Franz Xaver Gruber Gemeinschaft (Community) headed by its chairman Gerhard Haring, Hochburg-Ach is once again perceived as the birthplace of Franz Xaver Gruber. Highlights include: The peace walk (Friedensweg), which is a relevant theme throughout the year irrespective of Christmas. The performances of the historical play, always on the 3rd weekend of Advent, have been sold out for the past ten years. The memorial house was renovated and redesigned thanks to countless hours and efforts in 2017. The guided tours offer a unique experience for school classes, bringing Franz Xaver Gruber's era to life. The accomplishments of the Franz Xaver Gruber Gemeinschaft were recognised in 2013 when they were presented with the "Association Prize" from the Upper Austrian Association Academy (Vereinsakademie Oberösterreich).

#### Franz Xaver Gruber Gemeinschaft

Franz-Xaver-Gruber-Straße 44  
5122 Hochburg-Ach, Österreich

T +43 7727 2652

E [gerhard.haring@fxgruber.at](mailto:gerhard.haring@fxgruber.at)  
[www.fxgruber.at](http://www.fxgruber.at)



## Laimach, Municipality of Hippach

By Elfriede Klocker

Hippach is a municipality at the back of the Zillertal, which lies between Zell am Ziller and Mayrhofen, west of the Ziller River. The municipality extends from 600 to 2,762 m above sea level with an area of 3,973 ha and approximately 1,400 inhabitants. The municipality bears the name Hippach since the municipalities of Laimach and Hippach-Schwendberg were merged in 1973. The coat of arms is emblematic of the parish church Hippach, whose striking presence dominates the townscape and is a reminder that the municipalities provided bishops for both the archdiocese of Salzburg and the diocese of Brixen.

The Strasser house "Strasserhäusl", a well-preserved completely wooden Zillertal farmhouse from the year 1714, is located in Laimach. It was the home of the national singer family, the Strasser family. At the beginning of the 19th century, numerous families from the Zillertal strove to improve their meagre income as travelling merchants; the farming population primarily journeyed in winter. Since folk music was traditionally cultivated in the Zillertal, some dealers lured the buyers to their stands with music and singing. Following this pattern, the Strasser family from Laimach ran a trade in gloves. The father Lorenz Strasser was in transit at the markets with his children Anna, Amalie, Caroline, Josef and Alexander, who performed as a singing group. Their "true Tyrolean songs" were very popular.

In 1831, the Strasser family ran a stall at the Christmas market in Leipzig where they offered soft, chamois leather gloves, household garments and under garments. On Christmas Eve, the Strasser family sang "Silent Night! Holy Night!" to a large crowd in front of the castle chapel in Pleissenburg.

On 19 January 1832, they performed in the intermission of a concert in the Leipzig Gewandhaus. On February 1, the newspaper, Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung, reported: "During the intermission, three lovely daughters and one son of the Strasser family from the Zillertal (merchants, not professional singers) were begged at length until they granted the full assembly the pleasure of performing some Tyrolean National Songs so beautifully that the hall reverberated with a storm of applause."

A year later, they were back in Leipzig and performed Silent Night at a concert on 15 December 1832 in the ballroom of the Hotel de Pologne at the request of a reader in the Leipziger Tageblatt. Now the song appeared in print: the young Dres-

den publisher August Robert Frieze published the song 1832 and other editions followed. Due to the early death of Alexander (1 September 1831 in Königsberg) and Amalie (1 May 1835 in Leipzig), the singing career of the siblings ended.

The story of the Strasser children ("Strasserkinder") was first presented in a play in 2010 and in a film documentation, both entitled "Stille Nacht".

Today the "Strasserhäusl" in Laimach, the home of the singer family, is a museum of local history and, of course, primarily records the history of the Strasser family. It is run by Rosi Kraft, enthusiastically curated, and is an insider's tip within the Silent Night Museums in the Silent Night region.



Exterior Appearance of the Strassers' House "Strasserhäusl".  
(©Gemeinde Hippach)

### Municipality of Hippach

Johann-Sponring-Straße 80  
6283 Hippach, Österreich

T +43 5282 226000

E buchhaltung@hippach-schwendau.at

www.gemeinde-hippach.at





## Mariapfarr

By Dietlinde Hlavac

### Characteristics of the Municipality

Traces of active settlement and road networks left by the Celts, Romans, Slavs and Bavarians, including milestones and several Roman tombstones in the parish church, show that the Lungau valley has always been a settlement and transit area. This resulted in its early Christianisation. The first church in the district of Althofen already existed around 750. Today's Mariapfarr is first mentioned as the town of "Lungovue" in the year 923 AD with a castle and seat of a regional count.

The name Mariapfarr is derived from the patron saint of the Virgin Mary and the ancestral name "de Pharre", which is still to be found today in the dialect as "Pfäch". The town gained importance in the Middle Ages as an administrative and economic centre with numerous civil servant families and its status as a pilgrimage site from 1225.

With the conversion to today's pilgrimage church in 1446, the old church Althofen and the Castle chapel or Örgen chapel were incorporated within the Mariapfarr parish.

Today Mariapfarr is a tourist centre with just over 2,300 inhabitants spread over 24 villages. It is considered the sunniest region in Austria.

### The Mariapfarr Parish Church

The Parish Church of Our Lady was first documented in 923 and is the mother church of the Lungau region. It was expanded into a three-nave gothic basilica in the 15th century and consecrated on 10 July 1446. A major fire on 28 September 1854 destroyed the school, presbytery, 28 houses together with parts of the church and the parish archives. Today, the interior of the church consists of the remains of the old late-Gothic high altar as well as installations and additions like the high altar, the paintings and all side altars. The panel paintings of the Gothic winged altarpiece are dated 1494 and attributed to either a Styrian master or the "master from Mondsee". The portrayal of the blond curly haired baby Jesus in the Adoration of the Magi could have inspired Joseph Mohr to write the text of the first verse of Silent Night, where he describes the lovely boy with curly hair ("holder Knabe im lockigten Haar...").

All the preserved church equipment is made of silver and gold plated with master markings dating back from the end of the 14th century until the 18th century. Many high-quality tombs-

tones corresponding to the age of the church, were saved from church fire. The late Romanesque and Gothic wall paintings are of excellent quality and are particularly precious.

On Christmas Eve, Silent Night is sung during mass, the first two verses are sung by two male voices, the 3rd and 4th verses are sung by the church choir, and the entire congregation joins in for the 5th and 6th verses.

The interior of the parish church was renovated from 2014 and was re-consecrated on 15 August 2016 by Archbishop Franz Lackner.

### Joseph Mohr (11 December 1792 to 4 December 1848)

The pastoral position in a pilgrimage church was important and Joseph Mohr, the poet of Silent Night, worked as an assistant priest under Pastor Josef Stoff from 1815 to 1817. His paternal ancestors came from Mariapfarr, from the Schargler-Keusche house in Stranach. His grandfather, Joseph Mohr, relocated to the "Haasenkeusche" house in Zankwarn in 1816, a few years before his death.

Joseph Mohr's father (born 1764), also christened Joseph Mohr in keeping with family tradition, was in the Archbishop's army. During his training in Salzburg, he met Anna Schoiber, the daughter of an official recorder of salt extraction from Hallein who had died a long time before. Schoiber bore an illegitimate son with him - Joseph Mohr, who was able to study and become a priest thanks to the generous support from the cathedral choir vicar Johann Hiernle. Mohr worked as a clergyman in many towns in the Salzburg region. His last position was as a vicar in Wagrain from 1837 to 1848, where he died in modest circumstances.

### Joseph-Mohr-Square with the "Silent Night Fountain"

Mariapfarr has spent the last few years intensively researching Joseph Mohr's origins and his stay here as assistant priest and have created a number of places in the museum and townscape that commemorate him.

A fountain in memory of the lyricist Joseph Mohr was constructed in a square behind the vicarage. It was designed by Pastor Mag. Bernhard Rohrmoser. The round fountain is framed with granite, in the middle a cross-shaped stone support holds one large and one small copper bowl with copper water jets. A granite globe is positioned between the bowls and displays the different continents in highlighted relief. The

fountain is crowned with a bronze bust of Joseph Mohr, which was constructed by the bronze caster Peter Wiener under the supervision of Pastor Rohrmoser in keeping with his design. Joseph Mohr wears his priest's cap. Far from the common sentimental-sweet depiction of him, his features are very life-like. The fountain was erected in 2011 and inaugurated on 30 October 2011.

### Die "Scharglerkeusche" in Stranach 29

The Scharglerkeusch in the district of Stranach is the name of Joseph Mohr's father's birth house. It is a small farmhouse with little land, which is known as a "Geusche or Keusche" in German. The house is over 300 years old and was very dilapidated when it was bought by the current private owner in the 1970s. Thankfully, it was saved from demolition and restored instead. Because of its bad condition, it was listed under heritage protection in 1972. It is still in its original state with the exception of the modern roof. The small privately owned farmhouse still has the original kitchen and living room on the ground floor. The rather wobbly and worn staircase leads to the upper floor, which has all the old, raw-hewn doors. Joseph Mohr got to know his grandfather when he was working as Coadjutor in Mariapfarr and probably visited his father's birthplace.

### The "Haasenskeusche" in Zankwarn

Due to financial constraints, Joseph Mohr's grandfather had to give up his little farmhouse in Stranach and moved to a smaller house, the so-called "Haasenskeusche" in the district of Zankwarn. He lived there for a few years until he died in this farmhouse in 1816. His grandson, Joseph Mohr, was granted the privilege of spiritually supporting his grandfather on his last journey. When the small house was burned down in the village fire on 24 June 1870, it was not rebuilt. The rye field, which was cultivated here for many years, attracted attention because of the poor grain growth at the undetected site of the fire. The original site of the Haasenskeusche would have been lost, if Franz Brugger, the 25-year-old wheelwright and grandfather of Maria Kainhofer, had not started constructing a new workshop on the "Haasen" property in 1911. The construction workers found the fire scarred foundations obviously belonging to the "Haasenskeusche".

### The Presbytery in Mariapfarr

The extremely spacious building complex has a courtyard in the middle, which is bordered by an arcade passage on one side. In a corner of the courtyard, there is a modern wall painting. On the wall opposite the arcade courtyard on the first floor, a wall niche is recessed and contains a statue. The beautifully crafted portal entrance to the presbytery leads to the museum of the parish, pilgrimage and Silent Night. To the left is a commemorative plaque: "In this house, JOSEPH MOHR wrote the text of the world-famous Christmas carol SILENT NIGHT HOLY NIGHT! in the year 1816." The "Kooperaten-Kammerl" is located on the first floor of the right wing.

### The Silent Night Museum

The museum is housed in the northern wing of the presbytery and consists of several rooms. In the first room is a large nativity scene set which is displayed as it would have been during Mohr's days; some of the figures are in the baroque style. It



Church and Presbytery of Mariapfarr. (©Stille Nacht Gesellschaft, Kathrin Gollackner)



Documents relating to the history of the song in Museum Mariapfarr. (©Stille Nacht Museum Mariapfarr)

depicts the Adoration of the Three Wise Men, the grotto of the Nativity, the twelve-year-old Jesus lost in the temple, the marriage at Cana and a colourful peasant market scene. Most of the figurines have wax heads and beautiful clothing. This was largely remade by women from Mariapfarr under the guidance of Maria Kainhofer, replacing the original clothes which had become completely moth-eaten. The display of the nativity is new, the nativity scene had been in Georgskapelle chapel until 1930.

On the right side of the room are showcases containing documents about the life of Joseph Mohr and wall displays with photos.

In a display cabinet in the second room is the original baptismal book with personal entries by Joseph Mohr from autumn 1815 to August 1817, next to it is the original death register with Mohr's entry of the death of his grandfather. In addition, there is simple contemporary furniture and two mass prayers





The Interior of the Parish and Pilgrimage Church with the High Altar: on the bottom of the left wing, the "Adoration of the Magi" dating back to around 1500 with the curly haired baby Jesus. (©G.A. Sevice, Rupert Mühlbacher)

with gold frames displayed in a cabinet. Two oil paintings and a photo of the Schargler-keusche farmhouse hang on the wall.

The Silent Night Museum Mariapfarr will be expanded and redesigned in 2018.

### The War Memorial

The war memorial is located on the east side of the Mariapfarr parish church. It was created by the academic painter and sculptor Pastor Josef Mühlbacher in 1924. In this relief, two striking figures stand in the foreground among the other soldiers: a clergyman with folded hands and just behind him a man holding a guitar which is only partly visible.

The clergyman is Pastor Peter Grillinger, canon of Salzburg, canon of the Augustinian Monastery of St. Bartholomew in Friesach and pastor in Mariapfarr from 1419 - 1448. Grillinger donated the famous little silver altar to his parish in 1443, which is kept in the local treasury. Another valuable donation is the Grillinger Bible from 1428 - 1430, which was made for him from 1428 - 1430 and named after him. This is now in the Munich State Library. The man with the guitar represents Joseph Mohr, whose father comes from Mariapfarr and who

wrote the text of Silent Night when he was a curate here in 1816.

The creator of this monument, Pastor Josef Mühlbacher, was born in 1868 in St. Margarethen im Lungau and created the relief in the somewhat romanticised style of his time.

### Museum Mariapfarr

Joseph-Mohr-Platz 1  
5571 Mariapfarr, Österreich

T +43 6473 20068

E [info@wallfahrtsmuseum.at](mailto:info@wallfahrtsmuseum.at)  
[www.wallfahrtsmuseum.at](http://www.wallfahrtsmuseum.at)



## Oberndorf bei Salzburg and Laufen

By Renate Ebeling-Winkler

The name Laufen, which has been in use since the 6th century, refers to the rapids that give the town its name. It is no coincidence that the well-known towns of Lauffen an der Traun, Laufen am Neckar and Lauf an der Pregnitz have a similar geographical location. When a river has a similar width to the Salzach River, it is common for the settlements on both banks to be allocated the same name and later managed as a communal unit with the formation of communal structures. The name Laufen is older than the name Oberndorf, although first settlements were documented on the right bank of the Salzach River, i.e. on the present Oberndorf area.

The municipality of Oberndorf owes its municipal independence to a much later event, the Treaty of Munich (1816). In it, the Salzach River was defined as the border between Bavaria and Austria, thereby dividing the town of Laufen.

Laufen had become the most important trans-shipment and trading centre for goods transported on the river and thus one of the most important cities in the Prince-Archbishopric of Salzburg. This development was benefitted by the town's proximity, only 20km downstream from the capital city and Residenz seat of Salzburg and its diverse demand for goods. The production site of Salzburg's leading export – salt – was located in the salt mining town of Hallein approximately 40 km upstream. In addition to this were Reichenhall salt mining shipments, which were transacted on Salzach's tributary river, the Saalach River.

The Salzach shipping was carried out on two types of vessels: the flat-bottomed wooden boats "Plätten", particularly suitable for shallow mountain rivers and the rafts (Flößen) intended as one-way vessels downstream. These rafts were only used for precious salt transportation in exceptional cases. Old illustrations and models of both are on display in the Silent Night and Local History Museum in Oberndorf. The names of the ship types vary from region to region, for example with the use of the name Zille in the Danube and pre-alpine regions. Therefore, it is not possible to conclude the respective identification in a clearly defined construction standard such as with today's Olympic boat classes. The word "Schiff" (ship) is used in many formulations, for example "Schöffleuten", which may bring a smile to some visitors from the coast. At the time, Laufen was the second largest town in Salzburg and was in a sense the homeport of the Prince Archbishop's merchant river fleet. The meander of the Salzach River at Laufen contributed

to this choice. Many places had a pronounced location advantage with a rocky river bank which was ideal for the control of a waterway and any associated customs levy. However, there were additional business opportunities in Laufen. The Nocken rock in the Laufen river bend, which was blown up in 1773, could only be navigated with the smaller Zille boats used in the middle section of the Salzach River. Depending on the water conditions, the dangerous passage required a pilot assistance who manually guided the boats with poles and ropes from the shore. The pilots' privilege brought additional prosperity to Laufen as the Oberndorf boatmen were well-versed in the flow conditions. Often the freight had to be reloaded before the bend in the Salzach River. After the Salzach bend, the goods could be further shipped with economically cheaper, larger Plätten boats on the Salzach, Inn and Danube River. Like the rafts, these ships were mostly not intended for return shipments. Instead, they usually ended up in a wood reservoir to be used for building houses and ships in the cities and villages on the Danube. Nevertheless, some were back on return journeys from the shore up the river to Laufen, as can be seen in a very precise and clearly inscribed drawing in a Passau Zechbuch from 1420. The Zechbuch is a record book and logbook of the Passau Liebfrauen- "Zech", a guild of boatmen and salt traders (Salzfertiger). Salzfertiger would probably be best described as salt freight shipping agents in today's terms.

The boatmen, raftsmen and loading day-labourers needed for the operation of the "port" were predominantly recruited from the peripheral population, around which the shipping-dependent secondary trades and crafts were established. The shipowners and the merchants, however, were based in the historical centre of Laufen. This was not only because of the town's traditional medieval structure but also due to the flood-protected location of the houses sitting on the rocky ridge. After floods caused by melting snow in the mountains and heavy rains, hydrological regulations were proposed so that the wild Salzach water way was diverted towards the suburbs to the right of the Salzach.

The wooden medieval Salzach Bridge, first mentioned in documents in the 12th century, repeatedly fell victim to flooding. The bridge was needed for long-haul traffic and as a river crossing to the Salzburg Rupertiwinkel region and Bavarian duchies. It also provided the necessary flexibility required for the two-way docking and loading on both banks of the Salzach.

### St. Nicholas Church in Old-Oberndorf

Mention of a church in Oberndorf in the area of today's Silent Night district can already be found in the 12th Century. The first pictorial depiction of St. Nicholas of Myra, the patron saint of sailors, dates back to 1569. The copper plate engraving shows a tower with a stepped gable and saddle roof. In the seventeenth century, a wall inside curiously separated the men and women from one another. The task to maintain and furnish the boatmen's church (Schifferkirche) had already been transitioned to Bavaria in 1594 with the salt export contract. In 1757, the church burned down and a new building was inaugurated in 1798 after a decade of planning and construction. The altarpieces were created by Munich court painters Ignaz Oefele and Christian Thomas Wink. The altars, picture frames, church pews and altar rails were made by Burghausen artisans. When the church was torn down around 100 years later, these church fittings were saved. Visitors can see them today in the new St. Nicholas Church.

Silent Night was not included in the Christmas liturgy in 1818 when it was premiered. It was most likely performed at the end of the mass in front of a side altar and the baroque nativity scene, which is now on display in the Folklore Museum (Volkskundemuseum) in Ried im Innkreis. We do not know whether the Christmas Mass was celebrated on the twenty-fourth of December in the evening, at midnight or on Christmas day in the morning. A lack of records make it hard to determine whether the Midnight Mass prohibition in Bavaria and Salzburg, which was in place since the 1780s, was observed or violated on Christmas Eve 1818 in the Oberndorf St. Nicholas Church.

Until 1816, Altach and Oberndorf belonged to the parish of Laufen. A Laufen clergyman came from the other side of the Salzach River three times a week to carry out the masses in St. Nicholas Church. Until the year of separation, the deceased would be taken in the opposite direction from Altach and Oberndorf to be buried in the cemetery in Laufen. The parish of the collegiate church together with St. Nicholas Church verified a transcription made by Franz Xaver Gruber of a mass conducted by the Linz cathedral organist Johann Baptist Schiedermayr that was found in the music collection of the Laufen Abbey. This transcription is now kept in the Bavarian State Library.

The division of Laufen was decided upon in the Treaty of Munich in 1816 and left the inhabitants of the two Salzach banks somewhat blindsided. Even the reorganisation of the parish was necessary. Now it paid off that the Altach and Oberndorf citizens had retained the St. Nicholas church after the fire and despite multiple floods. Initially, the new parish was uncertain as to whether Oberndorf would be called Austrian-Laufen or Imperial-Royal Laufen, however in spite of all this, the parish would continue to have at least one church available.

In 1852, the constant flooding had afflicted the church to the extent where it had to be blocked off due to the danger of it collapsing. Demolition was prevented again through some skilful reinforcements. However, the particularly catastrophic floods of 1897 and 1899 finally sealed the fate of St. Nicholas Church and as a result of the serious damage to the founda-

tions, demolition began in 1906 on the orders of the building authorities. From a structural point of view, the tower could have been saved but lack of funds led to the final demolition from 1910. Demolitions were complete by 1913. Even the tower stump, which was originally intended as a chapel, fell victim. This decision is difficult to understand today especially seeing that Silent Night had already gained popularity worldwide.

### The Auxiliary Priest, Joseph Mohr in Oberndorf

As a result of the Napoleonic wars and the alternating rulers in the province of Salzburg, the economy in the first decades of the 19th century remained blighted. The Salzach shipping industry, the main source of income of the Laufen population, was discontinued. This along with the division of the town must have hit the already poorer wage-dependent residents of the former suburbs of Altach and Oberndorf particularly hard. In 1817, the 25-year-old auxiliary priest, Joseph Mohr, was sent to this socially disadvantaged area as Coadjutor. He arrived in August 1817, after almost two years as Coadjutor in Mariapfarr and following convalescence in Salzburg on sick leave. He came to Oberndorf on his own accord in order to help the new parish priest, Joseph Keßler, set up the parish. In October, Mohr received his definitive posting to Oberndorf from the archiepiscopal consistory in Salzburg. When Mohr started his service, Kessler had already moved to his new place of work in Zederhaus. Mohr now had to adjust to Keßler's successor, Georg Heinrich Nöstler.

Mohr met the organist Franz Xaver Gruber in Oberndorf. Gruber was a full-time Arnsdorf teacher, sacristan and organist at the pilgrimage church Maria im Mösel, located just a few miles away. To improve his meagre income, Gruber had additionally taken over the organ service in Oberndorf. The meeting between 25-year-old Mohr and Gruber, who was just 5 years older, developed into a friendship to which we owe our thanks for the Christmas carol "Silent Night! Holy Night!".

### The Sacristan House

The sacristan house, plastered in a subdued pink in the north-western part of the Silent Night district (Stille Nacht Bezirk), was a residence for several families until some time ago and has been home to the Silent Night Museum in Oberndorf since November 2016. The master mason Franz Perger from Traunstein built it around 1780, after the previous building was destroyed in the 1757 Oberndorf fire. In Mohr's days, it was smaller than it is today. As with all buildings erected on the site of today's Silent Night district, the sacristan house has also been affected by the floods in the past.

In the absence of a presbytery, Mohr had to move to the damp and narrow sacristan house. Mohr could not afford a housekeeper. As a result he was asked to dine with the neighbours or went to eat in taverns. There, the musically gifted Mohr, who had been trained at St. Peter's, sang "unedifying", in other words entertaining songs with the boatmen and played the guitar. The superior parish priest Nöstler regarded the close proximity of the Coadjutor as suspicious and led to the well-known complaint about Mohr to the Salzburg Consistory. The dean responsible for the investigation and the consistory found Nöstler's complaint to be unsubstantiated.



As Coadjutor Joseph Mohr was expected to provide religious education. The Oberndorf school was located in the sacristan house where Mohr lived, which is why the sacristan house has its current form. In 1853, Oberndorf Pastor Johann Waibl had to extend the sacristan to the east and add another floor in order to improve the overcrowded classroom situation.

### The Silent Night Museum

The presbytery has since been refurnished in accordance with the most modern museum pedagogical practices and was opened as a museum in November 2016. The Museum relates the song's development and reception history by housing exhibits that impart this knowledge in a very interesting way. Articles from Mohr's time explain the subject matter; these include presentations in words, pictures and music as well as interactive media.

In addition to the broad presentation of "Silent Night" which forms the focal point of the presentation, much significance is placed on the context in which the song was created. This includes the Salzach shipping industry, which once contributed to the wealth of the prince-bishopric. Vicar Joseph Mohr was very attached to the Salzach boatmen and often sang while playing his guitar with them. It is interesting to note from the town's history, that the house is also a memorial place for the native Oberndorf philosopher Prof. Leopold Kohr – who is known for his "small is beautiful" movement. In the middle of the 20th century, Kohr significantly contributed to the popularity of the song in America.

### The Late Gothic Water Tower

The late Gothic landmark was built in 1540, based on the model in the city of Salzburg. The Laufen water supply was changed from the Salzach groundwater collected in wells to spring water. The suitable springs were found on the high northern banks. The wooden pipes ran from the Mühlbach source past the St. Nicholas church and along the shore to the old wooden bridge which crossed the Salzach River and reached the historical centre. The water pressure required to overcome the height difference was created by a water-powered pump station which transported water into a reservoir in the top of the tower, from where it could surge up into Laufen's historical centre thanks to gravity. On the south side of the tower, a marble relief created by Max Rieder in 1967 commemorates the St. Nicholas Church and its surroundings at the time of the premiere of the Christmas carol. The system in the tower provided the Oberndorf water supply until 1972. Today, the building extension next to the water tower is the headquarters of the Silent Night Association.

### The Silent Night Chapel

The Silent Night Chapel was built as a "Gruber-Mohr Memorial Chapel" on the site of the demolished St. Nicholas Church from 1930 to 1936 according to the plans of the Oberndorf architect Josef Dietzinger (Oberndorf 1883 - 1964 Oberndorf). The construction was financed with donations. The octagonal structure with shingled roof in the form of a bell cupola and surmounted by a lantern bears a striking resemblance to the decagonal St. Michael's Chapel on the southwest corner on



The Silent Night Chapel was consecrated in 1937 and is the focus of the Silent-Night-Movement. (©Stille Nacht Gesellschaft, Hermann Hermeter)

the first floor of the collegiate church Laufen. This is clearly visible from the Oberndorf bank of the Salzach River. The builders of the Silent Night Chapel may have intended this companion connection between the two chapels. The Austrian Federal Government headed by Federal Chancellor, Kurt Schuschnigg, and the Salzburg State Government with Governor, Franz Rehr, as well as high-ranking church representatives participated in the inauguration of the chapel which took place in heavy rain on 15 August 1937. Gruber's grandson, Felix sang three verses of "Silent Night" which he accompanied on the Mohr guitar.

The two round-arched windows were made by the Tyrolean Stained Glass Institute in Innsbruck. The Wiener Schubertbund paid for the Gruber window and the Ostmärkische Sängerbund for the Mohr window. In an alcove below, a plaque explains the new research regarding the year the lyrics were written in 1816. There is no authentic picture of Mohr. Therefore, the half figure of Mohr on the window is an imaginary representation. The monument to Gruber-Mohr which stands today in front of the new St. Nicholas Church was created by sculptor, Josef Mühlbacher. He is known to have modelled it from the supposed skull of Joseph Mohr, which was exhumed in Wagrain. Much to the displeasure of the Wagrain community, the skull remained in Oberndorf and was walled into the Silent Night Chapel behind the altar. The Noppinger brewery in Altach donated its carved family altar to the chapel. The altarpiece, which depicts the birth of Christ is signed "Hermann Hutter 1915", the pictures which appear below with "Max Domenig 1936". They display the adoration of the kings, the crucifixion and the flight to Egypt. In 1975, the Oberndorf painter Hannes Ploner (born 1952) painted the pictures of the song's authors, Mohr and Gruber. The remains of the wall at the foot of the chapel's hill are reminiscent of the old Nicholas church.

### Länderbrücke (also Salzach Bridge) and Embankment

Built in 1902/03 by the Kingdom of Bavaria and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Länderbrücke (country bridge)



The Silent Night chapel by night. (©SalzburgerLand Tourismus)

connecting Laufen and Oberndorf is still an impressive testimonial to the typical steel architecture of the late 19th century. It was intended as a flood-proof replacement for the wooden bridge, which lead from the western side of the Laufen spit to Altach and withstood the flood disaster of 1920. The necessary opening on the Laufen side with the former closed groups of houses in the city and Marienplatz, could not take place today due to monument protection.

The Salzach embankment, which provides a charming path from the Salzach bridge to Old-Oberndorf for visitors, was created in the wake of the flood of 1920. The construction work lasted until the 1930s. The embankment had become necessary because the grants provided by the monarchy and in the new republic of Austria were not sufficient for the relocation of all Old-Oberndorf inhabitants in the new safe village centre.

The old Hauptschule (lower secondary school) is located behind the Salzach embankment. It was created in 1940 and is another work by Josef Dietzinger, the creator of the Silent Night Chapel. The high quality building design combined the contemporary demands with elements of long established architecture, without falling into the then prevailing National Socialist blood and soil mentality. Unfortunately, some salient and still valid style elements were destroyed or negatively changed during renovations. The building contains branches

of the neighbouring Handelsakademie (a higher-level technical college) and the Bundes-Oberstufen-Realgymnasium Salzburg (upper secondary school).

#### **From the Silent Night District to Maria Bühel Nepomuk, Calvary Steps and Exedra**

The staircase next to the so-called Bruckmann House leads to the Salzach embankment. Downstream from there one reaches the Europasteg footbridge which overstretches the river. When the water levels are low, the remains of the posts of the old wooden bridge appear at its feet, which connected Laufen and the Altach. The wooden bridge was only used as a pedestrian footbridge after the two floods in 1897/1899. In 1920, it too was washed away and no longer rebuilt. At the end of 2006 it was replaced with the flood proof metal construction reserved for pedestrians and cyclists. In some ways the Europasteg footbridge can be considered a product of the cessation of border controls within the European Union brought about with the Schengen Agreement. Plans for a bridge or pier here had failed in the 1930s because of the costs of the additional border post.

When crossing the footbridge to Laufen and back one immediately realises why the Laufen clergy made vehement attempts to support a river crossing at this point. The bridge rewards visitors with an impressive view of the Nepomuk statue, the

Calvary steps (Kalvarienberg-Stiege) and the Exedra, the chapel which is open at the front. The stairway to the Pilgrimage Church of Maria Bühel was built between 1720 and 1725 during the expansion of the Pilgrimage Church of Maria Heimsuchung, which was initiated by Archbishop Franz Anton Fürst Harrach. Joseph Anton Pfaffinger from Laufen created the Nepomuk statue at the bottom of the staircase and the crucifixion group in the Exedra at the top of the staircase. The installation date of the Nepomuk figure is a good example of how Bohemian martyrs were already displayed and worshiped by the people in many places pre-empting his canonisation as a patron for the protection of bridges and water hazards.

In the Exedra, Christ is nailed to the cross beside the two thieves. At his feet are Mary and John the Apostle. Salzburg Court Architect, Sebastian Stumpfegger, was responsible for the construction of the Calvary staircase. On the connecting route between Calvary Chapel and the Pilgrimage Church is the benediction chapel ("Segenskapelle") Sogen dating from the early twentieth century. The figure of Mary with Child in the alcove dates from this period. The crucifix, however, dates back to the first half of the eighteenth century.

#### **The Pilgrimage Church (Wallfahrtskirche) for "Our Lady of the Visitation" in Maria Bühel**

The miraculous image venerated in Maria Bühel is a copy of Hans Holbein the Elder's panel painting "Mary with the Child" in the St. Jakob Basilica in Straubing. The Holbein copy from the private collection of the Laufen Monastery Dean, Georg Paris Ciurletta once adorned an ornamented column on the still undeveloped area in Maria Bühel. Due to the growing influx of pilgrims, a pilgrimage chapel was built from 1663 to 1667, which was extended twice after 1700.

The interior of the church holds a number of artistic treasures. Joseph Anton Pfaffinger (Laufen 1684 - 1758 Salzburg) is the creator of the four life-size bishop figures Rupert, Virgil, Vital and Martin. Above the high altar by Antonio Beduzzi the miraculous picture hovers held by two angels. Four baroque side altars are placed on the sides of the church. On the left side of the nave is the Leonhard altar, opposite this to the right is the Kajetan von Thiene altar; in the domed space to the left is the Franciscan altar and to the right is the Florian altar with the altarpiece by Johann Michael Rottmayr (Laufen 1654 - 1730 Vienna). In 1690, the famous Baroque painter married in Maria Bühel and painted the patronal painting of the visitation, "Maria Heimsuchung". Court builder Sebastian Stumpfegger (Salzburg 1670 - 1749 Salzburg) was also responsible for the construction of the well house, the benefice house and the sacristan house in 1722. Until the nineteenth century, a village shop in the sacristan house served the purchase wishes of the pilgrims.

Since the benefice house was only inhabited by one pilgrim chaplain in 1816, the parish administrator of the newly established St. Nicholas parish decided that it would be used as the official seat high above the lowlands of the Obern-

dorf boatmen settlement as there was no rectory in Oberndorf.

#### **The New Oberndorf Parish Church St. Nicholas**

Along with the relocation of the Oberndorf town centre to the flood-protected area on the eastern bank, between 1906 and 1910 the new St. Nicholas Church was built at its present location according to plans of the Linz cathedral architect Mathäus Schlager. How difficult it was for the Oberndorf inhabitants to accept the demolition of the old church can be seen in their prolonged rejection of the new location. This was even accompanied by death threats against the pastor. It took some skill to persuade the Oberndorf population to accept their new house of worship.

The strictly structured exterior facades incorporate classical and Romanesque elements. According to the aesthetics of the building period, both the northern and southern side doorways as well as the main entrance are vaulted with large arches. In the west gable, St. Rupert looks in the direction of Laufen, as if the Patron Saint of the Salzburg State wanted to continue his spiritual responsibility for the Rupertwinkel region which had been lost to Bavaria in 1816.

The interior of the church features many church fittings salvaged from the old St. Nicholas Church. In the altarpiece you can find the patronal painting of "Saint Nicholas kneeling before the Trinity" by the Munich court painter Christian Thomas Wink. He also painted the painting in the right side altar "St. Maximilian baptising the Heathens" while Ignaz Oefele painted the picture on the left side altar "The Wonders of St. Rupert". Oefele was the second Munich court painter to be commissioned in the 1770s for the artistic design of the Nicholas Church when it was reconstructed after the fire of 1757. On closer inspection, one may become aware that this church interior created the ambience for the first performance of "Silent Night" sung by Gruber and Mohr in 1818 - at that time still in the old Nicholas church - with guitar and choir accompaniment.

To the left of the main doorway is the monument of Gruber-Mohr by Josef Mühlbacher who uses an interesting half-relief technique to depict the friendship between the two creators of the Silent Night song.

#### **From the Silent Night District into Altach**

Those seeking an idea of how the Laufen suburbs Oberndorf and Altach looked in Mohr and Gruber's time should start at the Silent Night District, walk downstream along the embankment, past the Nepomuk statue and the abandoned Noppinger brewery. The houses built close to each other on the embankment impart an impression of the former life of the boatmen and craftsmen in Altach. Some roofs still have wooden eaves.

After about ten minutes you should reach the old jetty "Beim Wintersprunnen". There you will find the boatmen's chapel, Schifferkapelle, which is dedicated to St. Christopher. The altarpiece dates back to around 1800. The chapel was rebuilt in 1858 in the neo-Romanesque style at the expense of the





A view of Laufen: in the middle the collegiate church, behind it to the left on the Oberndorf side is the Silent-Night District with the water tower dating back to 1540. (©Stadt Laufen)

boatmen community. Even before 1660, a wooden chapel stood in this place, which was maintained by the Altach and Oberndorf boatmen from their lower Sankt-Peterbüchsen brotherhood. On St. Christopher's Day, the 24th of July, a Kirtag or feast was held in honour of the patron in the Altach region. On the following two days, Apostle James' Day and St. Anne's Day, masses were celebrated in the Schifferkapelle.

The flood marks on the side of the chapel give an indication of the immense water levels reached through Salzach flooding. A direct comparison of the interior shows what kind of natural forces the little chapel has been able to defy.

### The Laufen Collegiate Church (Stiftskirche)

The imposing collegiate church stands out amongst the Laufen townscape from afar. When approaching it, you should look out for the associated monastery. Due to the limited space on the rocky ridge, the monastery is not exactly a modest complex but cannot be compared with the imposing structures in Lambach, Melk or Admont. The Marienkirche was originally built by the citizens of the town as a parish church. They wanted to be independent from the Ducal-Bavarian Church of St. Petri (demolished in 1608) which was located next to Laufen Castle. However, the citizens accepted Salzburg influences from the Archbishop and St Peter's monastery. In essence, it probably had something to do with the baptismal and funeral privileges associated with having one's own church, as well as the ability to organise daily church services.


The Laufen inhabitants could not rely on religious support for the new construction and reconstruction of the church around 1330 to its present state. Church and Monastery construction played an important role in the monastic rules of the Cistercian Order. They had recommended or even provided an experienced master builder. A Cistercian monastery was not crea-

ted but rather what is probably the oldest surviving Gothic hall church in southern Germany.

Since the establishment of a collegiate foundation in 1726, the Laufen parish church is referred to as a collegiate and parish church or just collegiate church (Stiftskirche) for short. Until the division of the towns in 1816, secular priests acting independent of an order, also known as canons, were responsible for the tasks conducted in the entire Laufen parish, including the suburbs Oberndorf and Altach. The Laufen Monastery was never dissolved but has been obsolete since 1809 on account of it being unoccupied. In terms of its structure and the position of the clergy, it is best compared with the still existing Mattsee Abbey.

The lack of a monastery cloister meant that a ritual circuit was only made possible through various constructional measures around the Laufen collegiate church. The origins of this erroneously named "cloister" first started by roofing the burial places of patrician and noble families attached to the church wall. Over the course of the centuries this transformed into a continuous arched walkway. Due to the lack of space, a wooden structure had to be erected on the east side over the steep banks of the Salzach River so that it was possible to walk completely around the church. Among the fixed grave plates and commemorative plaques, the plaque of Johann Michael Rottmayr's parents is worth mentioning. Johann Michael's mother, Margarete Magdalena Rottmayr, was a gifted (sculpture) painter, she was her son's master from an early age and was involved in the decoration of the Laufen baroque nativity scene. Johann Michael himself was also a significant contributor in the internal design of the collegiate church.

The Michael's Chapel stands out among the numerous additions to the collegiate church - and not only because it is



presumed to have been a model for the Silent Night Chapel in Oberndorf. For a long time the building was thought to be a charnel house or an ossuary (a place where bones were kept) built near a church. This assumption was not completely absurd; the increasing population and the narrowness of the rocky crest had made the cemetery situation around the church unsatisfactory. The building had also been repeatedly used as an ossuary. However, recent research suggests that at least the lower level was originally built as a baptismal house. This is supported by the proximity to the river and the fact that the demand for founding a church was often underpinned by the indication of an already existing baptistery. In any case, the foundations of today's Michael's Chapel are older than the parish church. This is noticeable in the unexpected difference in level between the church square and the entrance to the chapel. It was not until the middle of the 15th century that the lower level was transformed into a chapel and consecrated accordingly on the initiative of some Laufen patricians. In the 1680s, the chapel, which was damaged after the fire of 1663, received the upper floor that we are familiar with today with its characteristic dome and bell tower. The somewhat unusual form of a decagon was chosen as a layout. The ten corners are only recognisable on closer inspection and the virtual addition of the area connected to the church wall. 250 years later Josef Dietzinger reduced the form by using an octagon instead of a decagon for the Silent Night Chapel.

The Gothic high altar from 1467 is no longer intact due to various modifications. Only two scenes from Jesus' childhood and four Passion scenes are still in existence compared to the eight former wing paintings. We can only surmise the full splendour of it from the Scheller tombstone on the west wall, which is an almost faithful reproduction of the altar. Furthermore, the surviving six panels reveal that the altar had three configurations: the altar with closed wings, the lent altar with the wings open and the altar shrine closed, and the feast day altar with the wings and shrine fully opened. The high altar from 1657 was similar to the altar from 1467. Only the shrine figures of Mary, Catherine and Barbara survived and have found a new place on the north wall of the church.

The Laufen nativity scene was first mentioned in documents in 1628, about 30 years before the acquisition of the baroque high altar. It is one of the oldest nativity scenes north of the Alps. The prevailing Zeitgeist (defining beliefs) over the centuries took its toll on the nativity scene. This included the ban on nativity scenes in churches, together with their neglect or sale. In 1900, large parts of the Laufen nativity scene, which at best comprised of almost 100 figures of up to 80 cm in height, were sold and shipped downstream. Today, the dolls can no longer be found. Only the "Krippenjackel", a special figure from the Laufen scene with his replaceable crying or laughing head, has survived. In the early 1980s, the Laufen Scouts discovered a box in the attic with several lost nativity figures and heads. The nativity scene has been extensively renovated with the help of the inhabitants and restored with the greatest care. It is a highlight in front of the Rupert altar during the Christmas period until Candlemass (February 2). The fact that the creators of Silent Night, Joseph Mohr and

Franz Xaver Gruber found a place for the baroque nativity scene, shows that a well-made nativity scene has always been able to deal with quality, non-time-specific amendments.

The second Laufen church, the former Capuchin Church (Kapuzinerkirche), also hosts a nativity scene exhibition during the Christmas season. This, together with the baroque nativity scene in the collegiate church and that in the Silent Night Chapel in Oberndorf, form the basis for a cross-border nativity scene tour. Wandering through the urban areas of Laufen and Oberndorf is alluring as it still offers the possibility to imagine the times when Silent Night was created. Although many houses in the charming Laufen patrician historical centre have been damaged by the ravages of time, it is perhaps more disturbing that many of these houses are not filled with life once more.

Structurally, the Salzach Halle (cultural centre) in front of the city gate is not worth mentioning. One is only able to escape the modern ambiance by diving into the world of 1816 and visiting the annual Silent Night play.

The European Union has made crossing the border between Laufen and Oberndorf barely perceivable. EU support programs for cross-border regions bring the regions of Laufen and Oberndorf, which were brutally separated in 1816, together again - and not only at Christmas time.

#### **Silent Night Museum Oberndorf**

Stille-Nacht-Platz 5  
5110 Oberndorf bei Salzburg, Österreich

T +43 6272 21660  
E [museum@oberndorf.salzburg.at](mailto:museum@oberndorf.salzburg.at)  
[www.stillenacht-oberndorf.com](http://www.stillenacht-oberndorf.com)





## Ried im Innkreis

By Sieglinde Frohmann

When Franz Xaver Gruber came to Ried in 1806, the Innviertel region was in the middle of the Napoleonic wars. It was a troubled time and the population suffered from the burdens of the war. From 1779, the once Bavarian Ried belonged to the State ob der Enns River (Upper Austria) and had about 2,200 inhabitants. The fortifications had been raised a good hundred years earlier, only the three market gates and the defensive powder tower have survived these times. The former public hospital (Bürgerspital) which was used as a normal Hauptschule (lower secondary school) from 1786 served as a "model school" for retraining the Bavarian teaching staff in the Austrian school system.

Here Franz Xaver Gruber completed almost three-months training as a teacher at "Trivialschulen" (trivium school).<sup>1</sup> The certificate issued on 22 July 1806 gives an insight into teacher education at the beginning of the 19th century:

*This Mr Konrad Xaver Gruber from Hochburg in the Innviertel region attended the lessons prescribed for trivium teachers at the local secondary school and proved in the examination to have a good knowledge of the introduction and 5 main sections of the prescribed teaching: the methods of teaching letter recognition, spelling aloud, reading, writing, arithmetic, religion, German language and spelling rules, as well as in subjects for which there was book shortage among the young people. [...] Ried, 22 July 1806. Anton Hummer, Imperial and Royal School Principal.*<sup>2</sup>

Having passed the exams in Ried, Gruber acquired the right to an Austrian employment. In order to start his first post as a teacher in Arnsdorf in Salzburg, he had to undergo a kind of 'nostrification test'. In addition to his teaching work, he took up the organ service in the nearby village Oberndorf to improve his financial circumstances.

On 24 December 1818, the auxiliary priest Joseph Mohr gave Gruber the poem, "Stille Nacht! Heil'ge Nacht!", which he had written two years earlier, with the request to set it for two solo voices, choir and guitar accompaniment. Only a few hours later, the song was performed for the first time at the Christmas Mass in front of the church nativity scene.

### The Oberndorf Nativity Scene

The pastor of St. Pantaleon, Johann Veichtlbauer, acquired the Oberndorf "Silent Night Nativity Scene" in 1926 for his folklore collection. Regarding the authenticity of this nativity scene



The town Ried im Innkreis. (©Stadt Ried i.I.)



The Silent Night Autograph by Joseph Mohr. (©Salzburger-Land Tourismus)





The Oberndorf Silent Night Nativity Scene in the Innviertler Volkskundehaus, Ried im Innkreis (Innviertler Volkskundehaus) (©SalzburgerLand Tourismus)

and the story of its acquisition, he wrote: "It is the nativity scene, in front of which the Christmas carol of all Christmas carols, 'Silent Night' was performed for the first time in 1818. Could it not be called the "nativity scene of all nativity scenes?"<sup>3</sup>

Veichtlbauer also informs us about the fate of this nativity scene and the Oberndorf Church: At the end of the last century, Oberndorf on the Salzach River was repeatedly [...] harried by bad floods. The residents of the most vulnerable districts should now to give up their previous homes and [...] build at a higher location. The majority refused [...] and an official inquiry into the condition of the church resulted in the conclusion that the church was dilapidated. So it was demolished and a new church was envisaged and then gradually built in the emerging "New Oberndorf". The old, dusty parish nativity scene wasn't transferred to this brand new building but given to the venerable school sisters of Oberndorf who kept it in the attic, unused for years and finally offered it for sale a few years ago to raise funds for a new garden fence."<sup>4</sup>

This is how this important nativity scene came into the possession of the so-called 'home priest'. In 1933, Pastor Veichtlbauer gave his extensive collection including the "Silent Night Nativity Scene" to the town of Ried im Innkreis and it ended up in the Innviertler Volkskundehaus Museum in Kirchenplatz. Until his death in 1939, Veichtlbauer managed his own collection there. He showed many visitors the nativity scene and explained its history and told them the story of the song. Every Christmas, he performed a devotional service in front of the nativity scene and sang the original version of "Silent Night, Holy Night".

The nativity scene will be restored in 2018 and displayed in a new format on 22 November 2018.



Close-up of the Oberndorf Silent Night nativity scene in the Innviertler Volkskundehaus, Ried im Innkreis. (©SalzburgerLand Tourismus)

Because the Silent Night nativity scene had been in Ried since 1933, one year later, the great-grandson of Andreas Peterlechner, Pastor Franz Peterlechner of Mörschwang, decided to give several early music manuscripts by Franz Xaver Gruber to the Innviertler Volkskundehaus Museum.

#### Museum Innviertler Volkskundehaus

Kirchenplatz 13  
4910 Ried im Innkreis, Österreich

+43 7752 901 301  
kultur@ried.gv.at  
www.ried.at

<sup>1</sup> Max Bauböck, "Stille Nacht" und Ried, in: Die Heimat. Heimatkundliche Beilage der Rieder Volkszeitung, no. 108 from 1968, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Bauböck, "Stille Nacht" (see endnote 1), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ein Gang durch das Rieder Volkskundehaus. Special edition from the newspaper, Rieder Volkszeitung, Ried i. I.: Press Association n.d. (1935), p. 13. Veichtlbauer also mentions that Franz Peterlechner published Gruber's „Authentic Account of the origin of the Christmas carol 'Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht,' " in the Innviertler Heimatkalender in 1912.

<sup>4</sup> Ein Gang durch das Rieder Volkskundehaus, S. 14



## The City of Salzburg

By Renate Ebeling-Winkler

**The Prince-Archbishop Baroque Residence City of Salzburg** had been famous for its music and theatre culture since the 17th century. The court orchestra, the court theatre, the fostering of the music in the cathedral, the Benedictine monastery of St. Peter and the Benedictine University attracted singers, choirmasters, instrumentalists and composers from different parts of the country and abroad to the Salzach city.

An example of this is Leopold Mozart from Augsburg, who studied in Salzburg, became a member of the Court Music Orchestra and its Vice-Kapellmeister, rose to court composer and gave violin and piano lessons to the cathedral choir boys in the Kapellhaus on Sigmund-Haffner-Gasse 20. The second most prominent musician during the 18th century in Salzburg was Johann Michael Haydn, also known as the Salzburg Haydn. His extensive circle of students and friends was well established in the Salzburg music scene.

The existing infrastructure in music and school education made it easier for gifted boys from the urban underclass to take up education. Joseph Mohr, the lyricist of "Silent Night" received this opportunity and began preparing for theological studies in 1803 shortly before the end of the sovereign ecclesiastical principality of Salzburg. Joseph Mohr was born on 11 December 1792 in the city of Salzburg in the area of Dompfarre (cathedral parish). He was the illegitimate son of the embroiderer Anna Schoiber from Hallein and the soldier Franz Mohr from Mariapfarr in Lungau. His birth house is unknown. For a long time it was assumed to be the building in Steingasse 9 next to the Kapuzinerberg staircase. Mohr's residence during his school years is also unknown.

### **From the Cathedral via St. Peter to the Old Benedictine University**

#### **The Salzburg Cathedral**

According to the entry in the Dompfarre baptism book, Joseph Mohr was baptised four hours after his birth in the powerful religious building erected by Santino Solari. Salzburg's last executioner, Franz Joseph Wohlmuth acted as godfather who sponsored several illegitimate children to improve his social reputation. However, he was represented by his maid Franziska Zach at the ceremony at the Romanesque font. The baptismal font was created by Master Heinrich in 1321 and once stood in the Romanesque cathedral but had to make space for the early Baroque monumental structure on the order of Archbishop Wolfdietrich von Raitenau. Mozart had been

baptised in the baptismal font 36 years before Mohr. The baptismal font rests on four lying lions from the 12th century with the outer wall of the baptismal font decorated with significant bishops and saints from Salzburg. These saints and bishops are separated by pilasters that support the round-arched scrolls. Luckily this baptismal font survived the bombing of the Salzburg Cathedral in 1944.

In the year of the cathedral's re-inauguration in 1959, Toni Schneider-Manzell engraved the scenes for the sacrament of baptism on the lid of the font. On 20 August 1815, twenty-three years after his baptism, Joseph Mohr was ordained a priest in the Virgil Oratory located in the south of Salzburg Cathedral. On 16 March 1819, the young auxiliary priest from the parish of Oberndorf was awarded the special honour of conducting the lent sermon in the Salzburg cathedral. This honour indicates that the famous accusations made by Pastor Nöstler, his superior in Oberndorf, had not been taken very seriously, at least within the Salzburg Consistory.

### **From the Cathedral to St. Peter's Cemetery**

The route to the left through the cathedral arcade to the entrance to the St. Peter's Cemetery follows the trail of Mohr's educational destinations. The Almkanal (canal) blasts water out of the tunnel, which was driven through the Festungsberg (fortress hill) in the 12th century.

Famous individuals who were either born or had died in Salzburg are buried in St Peter's Cemetery. Painters and writers through the years have tried to capture the cemetery's special atmosphere.

On the cemetery grounds, the rock wall with the arcades hiding the so-called catacombs or monk cells captivate the beholder. During the Migration Period, Maximus, the confidante of St. Severin, is said to have died there with his companions. The staircase is located in the commune crypt. Johann Michael Haydn and Nannerl Mozart are buried here. The seven freestanding crosses commemorate the bricklayer and stonemason family Stumpfegger.

### **The Benedictine Monastery, St. Peter's Abbey**

The path from the cemetery leads to the first inner courtyard of the monastery. On 26 June 1807, high school student Joseph Mohr was accepted as a soprano singer and violinist into the choir of the Benedictine Archabbey, the oldest monaste-



ry in the German-speaking area to date. Father Martin Bischofsreiter, a composition student of the Salzburg Haydn, was the prefect of the music choir in the monastery at that time. The Johann Michael Haydn Memorial in the St. Peter monastery complex across from the collegiate church, commemorates the musical work of this court musician and concertmaster, first court and cathedral organist, teacher at the Kapellhaus and organist in the Holy Trinity Church (Dreifaltigkeitskirche).

Mohr's participation in the St. Peter choir committed the fifteen-year-old to take part in 600 musical services annually. As payment, he received free first-rate music lessons, daily food and sometimes a few kreuzer as pocket money. In addition, the young professional musician sang in the choir of the Benedictine University. With both jobs, he strove to finance his attendance at the Academic Gymnasium (High School) in Salzburg. Coping with school lessons and the intensive making of music in two well-known choirs caused him internal pressure and stress, which Mohr tried to compensate with childish behaviour – in many ways similar to what had happened with the adolescent Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Two music transcriptions in the archives in St. Peter testify to Mohr's work as a musical scribe.

The 1925 draft for the four-sided Collegium Benedictinum building was designed by Peter Behrens, chief designer of the Berlin AEG Turbine Factory (an architecturally significant industrial building). Peter Behrens was the first to consistently develop the design principle at the AEG, which has become almost standard as a "corporate identity" today. The two frescoes in this last inner courtyard are by Anton Faistauer.

### The Benedictine University on Hofstallgasse

Joseph Mohr's talent for music and higher education was discovered and supported by the cathedral choir vicar Johann Nepomuk Hiernle, from Landshut in Lower Bavaria. One year before Mohr's birth, the priest, who had been ordained in Freising, obtained a job in the Salzburg Cathedral. The mentor directed and accompanied Mohr during his studies and during his first years as an auxiliary priest. Hiernle's initial modest income only allowed for small financial contributions to his protégé.

In autumn 1799, Mohr started preparatory school for the Academic High School, which until the mid-1970s was located in the Benedictine University buildings founded in 1622. Today it houses the University Library and the Catholic Theological Faculty of the University of Salzburg.

For the last decade, the University Theatre located in the old auditorium is used as a venue for music and music theatre performances. University students, high school students and members of the renowned Salzburg music institutions participated in the performances at the end of each academic year. Young talents were allowed to test their potential. These performances were intended as public final examinations for the students of all faculties who attended rhetoric seminars. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's opera "Apollo and Hyacinth", which Mozart composed when he was just 11 years old, was performed here as an intermission filler between the acts of ancient



Joseph Mohr was baptised on 11 December 1792 in the baptismal font in the Salzburg Cathedral. (©Stille Nacht Gesellschaft, Michael Neureiter)



Joseph Mohr lived in the house on Steingasse 31 in 1794. (©Stille Nacht Gesellschaft, Michael Neureiter)

and classical dramas. In 1782, Prince Archbishop Hieronymus Count Colloredo banned performances in the University Theatre due to cutbacks.

Mohr received mostly good and very good grades, which shone in his school reports. The demands in Latin were high. The high school students had to master the church and administrative language in speech and writing so that they could later follow the lectures held in Latin at the university. As a singer in the university choir, Mohr, who was inspired by the ideas of Romanticism, valued German song in worship. From 1808 to 1810, he graduated his last two years of study at the Stiftsgymnasium Kremsmünster in Upper Austria with flying colours. Once again, he earned his living as a musician in the Monastery choir. Although his biological parents were still alive, Joseph Mohr was registered as parentless in the school enrolment records in Kremsmünster and Johann Nepomuk Hiernle was listed as his foster father.



The political upheavals from 1800 influenced Mohr's educational path. The Bavarian administrative authority decreed the closure of the Salzburg Benedictine University on 24 December 1810. In its place, a Royal Bavarian Lyceum was established where Mohr pursued his philosophical studies in the manner of a preliminary-study.

From 1811 to 1814 he also studied theology at this educational institution so that he could become a priest. Efforts were made at the Lyceum to maintain the standards of the old university. The character of the educational institution was a kind of preparation schooling for study programs, as it would be known today.

### **From the Old University to the Presbytery in the Holy Trinity Church**

Joseph Mohr entered the presbytery on 7 November 1811, where he lived during his training as a priest. The path there leads today's visitors from the old university in the Renaissance inner courtyards of the Salzburg bourgeoisie, through house passageways between the houses and down to the Salzach River. You cross the Makartsteg footbridge by foot or bike, take the pedestrian crossing to the right, pass the birthplace of the mathematician Christian Doppler and the residential house of the Mozart family and make your way to Makartplatz and the Holy Trinity Church (Dreifaltigkeitskirche).

### **The Presbytery in the Dreifaltigkeitsgasse**

The presbytery was built by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach. The layout of the complex shows that the Holy Trinity Church divides the square building block in the middle, creating two inner courtyards. The presbytery is located in the north wing of the left courtyard with the statue of St. Peter as the centrepiece of the fountain by Josef Anton Pfaffinger.

Before entering the presbytery, Mohr had to ask the Ordinate to exempt him from proof of his legitimate birth. As a student he graduated in theology studies in the minimum period with above-average results. This was probably the reason why Mohr was already admitted to the priestly ordination in 1815 before he was even twenty-five-years-old.

After his second winter in Mariapfarr in Lungau, first signs of a lung disease led Mohr back to the city of Salzburg in August 1817 to convalesce. On the approval of the head of the presbytery, Mohr lodged with his benefactor Hiernle before taking up the position of auxiliary priest in Oberndorf. In 1818, the year when "Silent Night" was performed for the first time, the Holy Trinity Church and the Presbytery fell victims to the great city fire and had to be rebuilt later. The street name Priesterhausgasse (Presbytery Lane) reminds that until today priests are still trained there.

### **From the Holy Trinity Church to the St. Sebastian's Cemetery The Cemetery of St. Sebastian**

St. Sebastian's Cemetery at the end of the Linzer Gasse was converted during the years 1595 to 1600 under Archbishop Wolf Dietrich von Raitenau as a replacement for the simultaneously abandoned Cathedral Cemetery on the site of today's Residenzplatz.

Since 1600 the deceased within the Salzburg cathedral parish had been buried in the St. Sebastian cemetery. Joseph Mohr's grandmother died at 81 years of age in the area of the cathedral parish, his mother also died on Pfeifergasse 11, in the Kumpfmühl. Both women were buried in St. Sebastian cemetery. The cemetery was also intended as a setting for the jewel, the Gabriel Chapel, the mausoleum of Prince-Archbishop Wolf-Dietrich. Other prominent memorial sites and graves in the cemetery include: The Mozart-Weber family grave and the epitaph for Paracelsus.

### **From Linzer Gasse to Steingasse 31 Mohr's Residence on Steingasse Number 31**

According to the records from the 1794 census, the one and a half year old Joseph Mohr lived in the house Steingasse number 31 with his 36 year-old mother Anna Schoiber, the 64 year-old widowed grandmother Maria Schoiber, the three-year-old cousin Theresia Schoiber and seven-year-old half-sister Klara Kregg. According to Salzburg law of the time, unmarried children received their father's surname. In a survey conducted by the authorities, unmarried mothers had to provide precise information about the origin of their pregnancy and pay a fine for their atonement. The fornication records show that the unmarried Anna Schoiber had born four illegitimate children from different fathers. Joseph Mohr was her third illegitimate child.

The 1794 census could not conclude that the building at Steingasse 31 was the permanent home of the family, nor that it was Mohr's birthplace. If he had been born in Steingasse, he would have had to be baptised in the - now defunct - old Andrä church on Linzer Gasse on the right bank of the Salzach River and not in the cathedral, where the children born in the area of the cathedral parish (Dompfarre) received the sacrament of baptism.

### **"Silent night 200 years of History, its Message and Presence"**

On 29 September 2018, the Salzburg Museum will present the special exhibition "Silent Night 200 years of History, its Message and Presence", it is part of the peripheral state exhibition "200 Years of Silent Night" with a total of nine participating Silent Night communities in the State of Salzburg, Upper Austria and Tyrol.

#### **Salzburg Museum**

Mozartplatz 1  
5010 Salzburg, Österreich

T +43 662 6208080

E [office@salzburgmuseum.at](mailto:office@salzburgmuseum.at)

[www.salzburgmuseum.at](http://www.salzburgmuseum.at)



# Wagrain

By Dietlinde Hlavac

## The Market Town Wagrain

The old market town Wagrain was first mentioned in the middle of the 13th century. It was an important trading centre with a respectable castle of the Lords of Goldegg and an active iron mining industry. After the mines were abandoned in the 19th century, agriculture and the timber industry dominated employment in the town. The great fire of 1927 completely destroyed the majority of the old town centre with its picturesque old wooden houses. However, the initiatives of poet Karl Heinrich Waggerl's focus on tourism and advertising was successful in quickly driving the reconstruction of the town.

Today, the Wagrain market town is a thriving tourist destination with a striking number of tourist accommodation facilities. Prominent figures connected with Wagrain are the pastor Joseph Mohr (1792 - 1848), the teacher and writer Karl Heinrich Waggerl (1897 - 1973), the academic painter Erwin Exner (1915 - 1985) and the ski pioneer Alois Rohrmoser (1932 - 2005).

## Joseph Mohr's Grave Site

Joseph Mohr died in 1848 when he was just 56 years old. He was the Vicar of Wagrain and highly respected for his services to the social and educational policy in the town. Even in those days, Silent Night was widely sung. However, Mohr's contribution to the creation of Silent Night was unrecognised at the time of his death. Joseph Mohr's grave is located in Wagrain in the local cemetery in Kirchboden. The simple wrought-iron grave cross features a round panel with an imaginatively painted picture and the inscription "dedicated to the poet of the unforgettable Christmas carol, Vicarius Joseph Mohr".

The grave was unkept towards the end of the 19th century but was later located by an old Wagrain lady who had attended the funeral of Mohr. The grotesque and sombre story about his corpse is only briefly outlined here: the skeleton was exhumed, the sculptor and pastor Josef Mühlbacher took the skull and used Mohr's head as a template to model the group of figures in front of the parish church in Oberndorf. Although the Wagrain inhabitants made countless complaints in Oberndorf requesting the skull be returned, it was not. It was most likely walled in to the newly built Oberndorf Silent Night Chapel which is its last resting place.

## Johann Rettenegger's Grave

A simple grave near the resting place of Joseph Mohr bears the inscription: "Johann Rettenegger, clergyman, honorary

citizen and pastor of Wagrain 30.11.1875 - 29.12.1943". Johann Rettenegger was parish priest in Wagrain from 1913, he founded the Mohr Memorial Committee and was the initiator of two donation appeals for the purchase of the existing Mohr monument in Oberndorf, which Josef Mühlbacher had created.

## The Wagrain Parish Church

The parish church of St. Rupert was mentioned for the first time in 1359. In 1442 it was called the vicarage of Altenmarkt, although it had already existed since the middle of the 13th century. It has a gothic double-aisled nave with a south tower as well as a Baroque side aisle from the year 1711. The original Gothic furnishings are no longer present, nor are the baroque features which were existent in Mohr's days. A neo-Gothic reconstruction around 1890/91 and a renewed reconstruction of 1921 was followed by the removal of all neo-Gothic features between 1971 to 1976.

Between 1996 and 1998, the parish church was completely renovated with a modern extension and a comprehensive redesign of the interior, which complied with the liturgical requirements of the Second Vatican Council and merged together the evolved ensemble of medieval elements to form a unified whole. In the course of this renovation, the neo-Gothic high altar, a three-part, double-storey shrine with decoration by Paul Kronthaler 1986 was re-erected. He retrieved the old version from the company Pescoller (South Tyrol).

In the middle of the high altar there is a statue of a standing Madonna and Child, a precious gem dating from the 14th century. She holds the baby Jesus, who wears a tunic, in her right hand. The halo was only added in recent years. The Madonna is situated next to the other saints, St. Rupert and Virgil by Johann Georg Itzfeldner (1764).

The nativity relief by Jakob Adlhart (1951) is attached to the central pillar of the main nave in a recess of the gallery railing. The ribbed beam of the two-aisled Gothic vault ascends above this.

In 2006, the new Joseph Mohr Memorial Organ was inaugurated. A special feature here is the "cymbelstern" (cymbal star), which rings during the Christmas Mass when the worshipers sing "Silent Night, Holy Night" together. Notable church objects include three goblets, two precious monstrances (vessel display an object of piety) and a ciborium

(vessel which holds the Eucharist) with two covers from the 17th and 18th centuries. In the nave, there is a limestone plaque which reads: "Joseph Mohr, vicar in the parish of Wagrain from 1837 - 1848. Author of the song Silent Night".

### **The Presbytery of Wagrain with Barn (Scheune)**

The old presbytery has a brick ground floor, on which a wooden plank construction rests with small windows and marble window benches. To the left of the entrance door is the plaque which says: "In this presbytery the poet of the song " Silent Night, Holy Night ", Pastor Joseph Mohr, lived and worked from 1837 - 1848." Underneath are the opening bars of Silent Night. When possible, the pastors ran a small farm with the respective farm buildings for self-sufficiency. The old barn's foundations are made of quarry stone, the rising walls are made of round wood planks, which have been partly renovated, the roof with roof trusses is new. On the ground level of the side facing the garden are two small square windows in the plank recess, on the upper floor is a window boarded with wood. Access to the upper floor on the garden side is gained via an outdoor staircase.

### **Mohr Open Air Exhibition**

On the occasion of the "Joseph Mohr Symposium 1999", an open-air exhibition was created, in which eleven glass display boards present the most important stages in the life of the priest. His life and work are portrayed with the support of documents, photos and explanatory texts. The focus of the information displayed is Mohr's work as a pastor in Wagrain and his social commitments. The panels are located behind the cemetery along the cemetery wall on Joseph-Mohr-Weg, opposite the old presbytery.

### **The Wagrain Culture Walk (Kulturspaziergang) and the Silent Night District**

This walk, which takes one-hour, starts from the granary "Waggerl-Kasten". Numbered information boards with short descriptions of each building or site lead the visitors to: the presbytery, the parish church and further to the gravesites of Joseph Mohr and Karl Heinrich Waggerl. Passing the mural of the Wagrain painter Prof. Ernst Huber, the path guides one to the Joseph Mohr School in the direction of the Waggerl Haus.

The path continues on the Neuweg path to the herb garden and the Pflegerschlossl, which is located just after the garden. The hike then continues to the market church in the direction of Marktlinde and the local authority building with the Wagrain coat of arms. The culture walk can be extended to include a visit to the castle hill. Here you can admire what remains of the medieval castle of the Counts of Goldegg, this offers more surprises for the hikers.

### **Joseph Mohr School**

The school regulations adopted under Prince Archbishop Wolf Dietrich became law in 1594 controlling teacher training, the subjects and school attendance, which now also included the poor. The school system was coordinated by the church up until modern times even outside of the religious imperial principalities.

The first mention of a school in Wagrain was recorded in 1483. The lessons took place in the teacher's home and from 1630/31 in the newly built sacristan house. School was usually only in session from Christmas to Easter because peasant children were used as cheap or free labour on farms the rest of the year. Old school papers from 1653 are still kept here. Around 1806, the old house accommodated 216 students who were taught in two dark rooms.

Joseph Mohr strongly advocated for a new school building which was completed in just five months in 1838 and was inaugurated by Prince-Bishop Cardinal Schwarzenberg. With the increasing numbers of students, the Mohr School was too small and in 1907 a fourth class was set up in the inn, Schattauer Gasthof. The new school was built in the 1950s under the direction of Architect Schöner. The building was inaugurated under the name "Joseph Mohr School" in 1952. In 1990, a general renovation was carried out with the reconstruction.

### **The Waggerl-Museum**

The former residence of the Austrian poet, Karl Heinrich Waggerl in Kirchboden was built in 1776 as the Aignerhaus. Waggerl, who also worked as a teacher and Mayor of Wagrain, lived there until his death. His widow left the house with its entire inventory to the market town, who adapted it into a Waggerl archive and memorial with the help of the cultural association "Blaues Fenster".

### **The New Silent Night Museum in the Pflegerschlossl**

The former residence of the Pfleger, the highest prince-archbishop administrative officer and judge of the lower courts in the administrative court district, was built in 1794.

The Pflegerschlossl served as alternative quarters for the school when the new building was being constructed under Joseph Mohr in 1838. The Schlossl (little castle) used to house a bell foundry, a metalworking shop and a glazier's workshop, which is why the Pflegerschlossl is also known by the names Schlosserhaus, Veitlhaus or Glaserhaus. Until 1920, the Vienna police officer Franz Schauer owned the stately home. His daughter Elisabeth Dolezal (died 1985) sold it to the market town of Wagrain in 1982. It was adapted into a local museum founded by Alois Doppler (died 11 March 1992). In 1984, Doppler also created a species-rich herb garden on the property next to the Pflegerschlossl.

"On 3 December 2017, the new "Silent Night Museum in Pflegerschlossl" will open in Wagrain. Near the Karl Heinrich Waggerl house, the former Wagrain pastor, Joseph Mohr, who wrote the lyrics of Silent Night! is remembered. The Pflegerschlossl, an architectural jewel in Baroque style, has been sensitively restored, expanded without barriers with the addition of a modern convention centre.

The modern extension with its pergola can be seen from afar and displays the new purpose of the former prince-archbishop court building. The filigree word sculpture with the lines of one of the most famous songs in the world, the song Silent Night, reveals the focus of the small but very fine museum in the Wagrain Pflegerschlossl ...



Immediately behind the bright, modern ticket office, one reaches the heritage listed old building, which provides the backdrop with an interactive wall on the history of Wagrain. When touched, the wall provides explanations and knowledge from the first written history to the present appearance of the town as a modern tourism community. Joseph Mohr would probably not recognise the place today. When he arrived in Wagrain in 1837, it was a rather poor mountain farming village.

The first rooms on the upper floor deal with the stages of his life and work in Wagrain. Particular attention is paid to the circumstances surrounding the creation of the song, which he had performed on Christmas Eve 1818 with his friend Franz Xaver Gruber in the church in Oberndorf. The other rooms on this floor are dedicated to the song itself, its musical context and contemplate the reasons for the worldwide success of Silent Night. Visitors can listen to the melody with different instrumentation or hear different arrangements - performed by students of the Salzburg Mozarteum - while nestled in a comfortable winged chair. Those more interested in the distribution of the song only needs to select a location on an interactive globe with RFID to retrieve information, or you can test your own language skills with more than 200 translations of the title ...

Based on the quiet atmosphere of the days between Christmas and New Year's, the museum invites an interactive exploration of the value of peace and quiet in an increasingly hectic time. This break at the turn of the year, as can still be seen in domestic customs, refers to the particular phase when the old has passed but the new is yet to come.

It leads to questions about experiences in dealing with time. Interviews with people in different life situations from Wagrain explore a multitude of approaches to the perception of time. Interactive stations will carefully examine the influence of trade on our understanding of time. The former homeowner, Elisabeth Dolezal's collection of clocks highlights the precision of mechanical timekeeping with valuable originals from the 19th century. In a small film room, video projections of the sensory perception of the passing of time are presented.

The Pflegerschlossl is surrounded by a charming little park with herb garden and Kneipp therapy treading pool. The Pflegerschlossl forms part of the Wagrain cultural walk, a path which leads to various atmospheric attractions relating to the culture and history of the town." (Carola Marie Schmidt in the Silent Night Association Newsletter "Blättern der Stille Nacht Gesellschaft" 2017 p. 16)



The Pflegerschlossl is an architectural jewel in baroque style and was sensitively restored with a barrier-free design. (© Stille Nacht Museum Pflegerschlossl)



The grave of Joseph Mohr, behind the school named after him. (©Stille Nacht Gesellschaft, Kathrin Gollackner)

#### Stille Nacht Museum im Pflegerschlossl

Museumsgasse 3  
5602 Wagrain, Österreich

T +43 6413 20169  
E stillenacht@wagrain.salzburg.at  
www.stillenacht-wagrain.at

## The Authors

**Renate Ebeling-Winkler, Mag.**  
**Sieglinde Frohmann, Dr.**  
**Eva Gilch, M.A.**  
**Dietlinde Hlavac, Mag.**  
**Anna Holzner, Mag. Dr.**

**Elfriede Klocker**  
**Eva Knaus-Reinecker, Mag.**  
**Peter Mader, OSR**  
**Eva Neumayr, Mag. Dr.**  
**Ludwig Schwanninger, OSR**  
**Werner Sützl**

Schörfling, former Vice-President of the Silent Night Association  
Ried im Innkreis, Director of the Cultural Department Ried im Innkreis  
Burghausen, Director of the Stadtarchiv und Stadtmuseum Burghausen  
Grödig, Historian  
Hallein, Academic Researcher at the Celtic Museum Hallein/Archiv and Curator  
Silent Night Museum Hallein  
Hippach, Head of Department, Municipality of Hippach  
Bad Reichenhall, Museologist Bad Reichenhall Museum  
Fügen, Vice Chairman of the Heimat- und Museumsverein Fügen  
Bürmoos, Director of the Musikaliensammlung Archiv der Erzdiözese Salzburg  
Hochburg-Ach, Employee of the F. X. Gruber Gemeinschaft (Community) Hochburg-Ach  
Hochburg-Ach, Employee of the F. X. Gruber Gemeinschaft Hochburg-Ach

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for Salzburg, Upper Austria, Bavaria and Tyrol

Translated by Claire Austin

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