

# DAS BURSCHENSCHAFTSDENKMAL

STEHT FÜR EINHEIT  
UND FREIHEIT IN  
DEUTSCHLAND



## History

The students' society monument was built between 1900 and 1902 after the projects of the Dresden architect Wilhelm Kreis and under responsibility of the Eisenacher master mason Gustav Stein. The 33 metre (108 feet) high monument which is dedicated to the students fallen in the anti-Napoleonic wars of liberation was opened on the 22nd May 1902. At the inauguration celebration there was an imposing cortege with 2000 persons and 100 flags of the students' societies stretching from the marketplace to the monument.



In two successively following dictatorships the monument itself became dilapidated and decayed. Above all, to the GDR regime the monument was always a “thorn in the eye” because it had remained a quiet memorial for German unity. Thus, there were different plans for it, from rebuilding up to destruction by blasting. The glass windows and the interior decoration were destroyed intentionally, the apertures were bricked up, the ceiling painting fell victim to the humidity and the interior resembled a stalactite cave.

After the reunification of Germany, the badly damaged monument was returned as the possession of the German students' society after difficult negotiations. The restoration work, which

lasted 15 years, was concluded in 2006 with the reconstruction of the ceiling painting. On time for the 105-th birthday the perfect example of historical Art Nouveau could be re-inaugurated as a unity of architecture, painting and window art in Spring, 2007. Thus, a saved cultural asset is again shining on the Göpelskuppe. It is a reminder of the liberation movement of the academic youth in the 19th century, which grew from Wartburg and Jena.



One enters the interior of the students' society monument by a heavy iron door, which is designed from the description of the Walhalla gate in the Germanic legend, and is engraved with the inscription

“Dem geeinten Vaterlande”.

Once it was intended as a memorial hall and hall of the fallen soldiers, lightened meagerly by the narrow, bluish Art Nouveau windows. Above the entrance the dedication of the monument is engraved inside in stone: To all those who shared the thought of national unity after the wars of liberation, remained loyal and fought for it. The inscriptions in the nine columns remind us of the idealists and main founders of the students' society: The pioneers Fichte, Arndt and Jahn, as well as the most important supporters who were the professors Oken, Fries and Luden of Jena and the students Riemann, Horn and Scheidler as essential founders.

## Exhibition

The newly arranged exhibit in the students' society monument deals with the history of the German students' society, which is closely knitted with the history of the monument. On nine colour charts, one experiences the Ideals of the old students' society in Jena and can pursue the development of the movement of the students' society throughout German history. The Wartburg decisions of 1817 are picked out as a central theme and their direct influence on the constitution of the Paul's

church (1848), the Weimar republic and the basic law of the Federal Republic of Germany and on the constitution of Austria is explained.



A complementary video dissertation describes the history of the students' society monument. In the second segment the reconstruction of the ceiling painting carried out in 2006 is covered. The exhibit illustrates a part of German history, which sometimes seems to fall into oblivion, again enabling the visitor to experience the hard fight for the development of the democratic fundamental rights in Germany.



The ceiling painting

The ceiling painting was originally done in 1902 by professor Otto Gussmann who taught at the academy of visual arts in Dresden. After the total loss during the

GDR period, the painter from Gräfenhain, Gert Weber reconstructed the fight scene in the vaulted dome in 2006. Enclosed by pairs of eagles on golden ornament a Germanic myth is shown: Ragnarök, the twilight of the gods, the fight of the Ger-



manic gods of Asen against the powers of the darkness, the final battle between good and evil which results in the end of the world. Coincidentally it is a picture of the future: The destruction is followed by the cleansing and the victory of light, as well as the rebirth of the world.

## The view



The students' society monument on the Göpelskuppe has been a popular destination for over 100 years. Lying opposite the Wartburg, the balconies offer an overwhelming panoramic view of the Thuringian forest, the Hörselberge, Eisenach and the grandest view toward the Wartburg. The ascent is rewarded with a long-lasting memory. The nearby Berghotel invites one to the next stop.

## The Berghotel

Soon after the completion of the students' society monument, the wish grew for a house as a Centre of life of the students' society linked with a public restaurant.

Already in 1913, the foundation stone was laid, but due to war, revolution and inflation, the construction could only be finished in 1922 and opened in 1923. With the renovations in 1931, the Berghotel got new guest rooms in the attic and the open terrace has been covered with a transparent canopy. Today the Berghotel is, after the latest restoration and reopening in 1998, a modern 4-star hotel, which attracts guests with its comfortable rooms and an excellent kitchen.



## The monuments preservation association

The monuments preservation association Eisenach e.V. is a charitable and tax advantaged community, where friends and sponsors work for the preservation of the students' society monument. The statutory purpose of the association is to raise the financial means for the improvement and care of the students' society monument. Financial means of the association are: Donations, entrance fees and membership fees. Anybody can become a member of the association, provided they have completed their 18th year, with no discrimination with regard to origin or gender. Since the retransfer after the reunion of Germany, the monuments preservation association has been able to protect the architectural substance with support of the federal state of Thuringia, the German-students society and many generous donors and has improved the infrastructure on the area of the Göpelskuppe. As another step the ceiling painting was restored in 2006. With it there was the rare opportunity to show the harmony of thoughts of the academic youth at the end of the 19th century relating to the outstanding architecture and their artistic arrangement and to be able to preserve them for future generations. The now restored monument has to be kept and maintained for the future.

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Weitere Informationen:

[www.denkmalerhaltungsverein.de](http://www.denkmalerhaltungsverein.de)

oder im Sekretariat

Löberstraße 14

99817 Eisenach

Öffnungszeiten:

Nov. - Feb. 11:00 - 16:00

März- Okt. 10:00 - 18:00

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