LUZERN ✚
ГлсевиЕ
THE CITY. THE LAKE. THE MOUNTAINS.

Lucerne in the Middle Ages

Lucerne became a town in the 12th century. The abbot of Murbach installed Lucerne's first priest in St. Peter's Chapel in 1178. On 1 August 1291 Cantons Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden established the Swiss Confederation. Lucerne was sold to the Habsburgs. The Battle of Morgarten in 1315 saw the Old Confederacy defeat the Habsburgs.

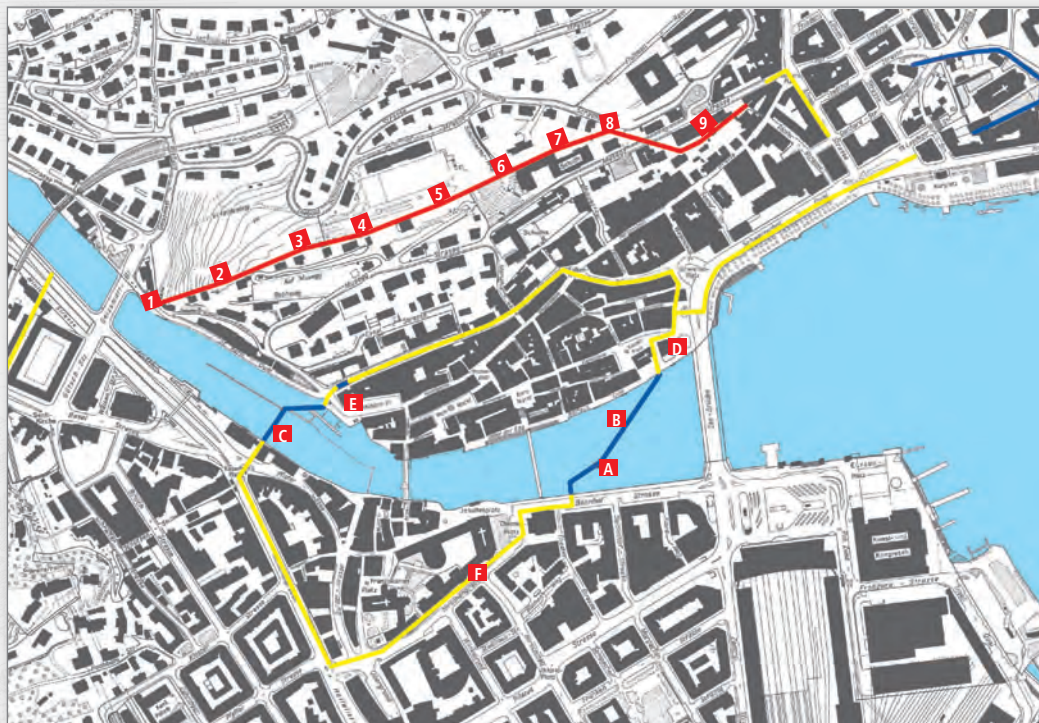Lucerne, copperplate engraving by Matthäus Merian, 1642

Lucerne joined the the Old Confederacy in 1332. In the famous Mordnacht episode of 1343, a boy overhead a plot being discussed in an alley called „Unter der Egg". On 9 July 1386, the Old Confederacy defeated the Habsburgs in the Battle of Sempach, which also claimed the life of Duke Leopold III. Lucerne grew during the 14th century to reach some 3100 inhabitants.


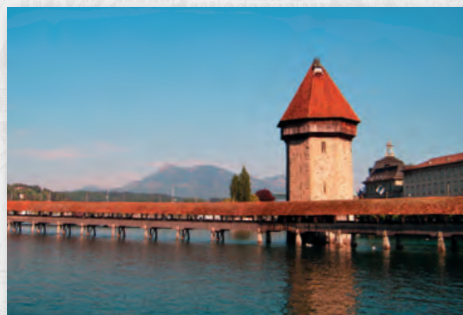Picture featuring Winkelried at the Battle of Sempach

The fortifications

Work was begun in 13th century Lucerne on erecting a fortified wall. It featured two rings of ramparts. The inner ring took the form of a wall along the Löwengraben and Hirschengraben and included the Chapel Bridge and the Spreuer Bridge. **C**
To protect the town from the north, an outer ring was built in the 14th and 15th centuries. The largest section of these fortifications was established on a hilly strip of land north of the town, called Musegg.

Late 15th century fortifications   **Musegg Wall today**   **Bridges, towers, sections of wall still in existence**

A The Water Tower

Built around 1300, i.e. before the Chapel Bridge, the octagonal Water Tower stands in the middle of the River Reuss. The tower served as a fortification and lookout post and was a cornerstone of the defences. Over the ensuing years it was used to store the town's archives and treasure, and it even saw use as a prison and torture chamber. For the past number of years Lucerne has leased the Water Tower to the Artillery Association. Over 34 metres in height, this Lucerne landmark is Switzerland's most-photographed monument.

Chapel Bridge with Water Tower

B The Chapel Bridge

The Chapel Bridge is the oldest and, at 204.70 m, the second longest roofed timber bridge in Europe. It was built around 1365 as a battlement and links the Old Town and „New Town", which are separated by the Reuss. The gables of the bridge feature triangular paintings depicting important scenes from Swiss history.

On 18 August 1993 the bridge fell victim to a blaze, which was blamed on a carelessly discarded cigarette. The conflagration destroyed a large part of the structure (which is distinguishable through the paler timber), including 78 of the 111 famous pictures. The bridge was swiftly rebuilt – with the help of a fortuitously available inventory – restored, and, on 14 April 1994, inaugurated and reopened to pedestrians.

Built in the 13th century, the Hof Bridge, which linked St. Peter's Chapel with the Hof Church (the Church of St. Leodegar), was dismantled between 1835 and 1854 to make way for embankments.

30 towers

The fortifications were originally equipped with 30 towers.

Many towers and a large part of the wall were lost as the town expanded. There now remain 13 towers. Towards the end of the 19th century there was even talk of dismantling the Chapel Bridge once the See Bridge was built. Sense prevailed, fortunately. The Spreuer Bridge was also saved for posterity.

Alongside the famous Water Tower, surviving towers include the Zur-Gilgen Tower **D**, the Frauen Tower **F** and the Mühlentor Tower, **E** plus nine further towers (1 – 9) and the Musegg Wall.

St. Peter's Chapel and Zur-Gilgen Tower

The Musegg Wall – Lucerne's town wall

870 m in length, the Musegg Wall and its nine extant towers rank amongst the town's most important monuments. The Musegg Wall and most of the extant towers are now thought to have been built between 1370 and 1420.

Bucolic scene by the Musegg Wall

The wall is some 9 m in height and 1.5 to 2 m across. The Musegg Wall originally counted ten towers and was 40 m longer to the east. This section of wall and the Weggis Gate were pulled down in 1860.

Local sandstone and lime mortar were used to build the wall. The town's inhabitants were not only required to help physically build it – a special tax was levied as well.

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The Musegg Wall and its nine towers

Lucerne's skyline is marked to a large extent by the Musegg towers. The locals even have a mnemonic to help them remember which tower is which:

**Nölli, Männli, Lueg is Land,
Be Wach mer Zyt,
Be Schirm mer s'Pulver
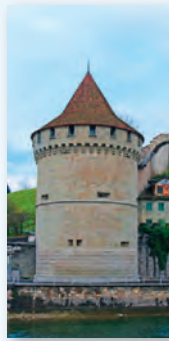Ond em Allewende s'Dächli.**

The Musegg Wall as a habitat

This monument of national significance also plays an important role in the lives of the indigenous flora and fauna. The wall is home to the country's second-largest colony of jackdaws. They, as well as alpine and common swifts, are attracted by the crannies and niches the stonework provides for roosting and nesting. Some ten pairs of goosander have made their nests in the Musegg towers. When the young fledge, the goosander families are accompanied by residents and the police as they make their way from the wall to the River Reuss. Bats use the wall as a hunting ground and temporary roosting place. Three of the hundred or more species of lichen found in Switzerland are unique to this location!

Urgent need of restoration!

Time has not been kind to the Musegg Wall: large-scale damage means that it and its towers are having to undergo major repair and restoration work. This is due to be completed by the end of 2015. The contractors are taking care to preserve the habitat of the flora and fauna.

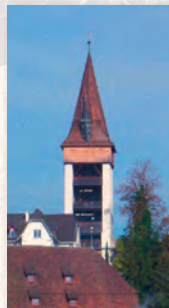Restoration work 2004-2015 – last phase

1 Nölli Tower

According to the archives, the Nölli Tower was erected between 1516 and 1519 to replace a damaged predecessor. Major building work was again required in 1528. Although the Lindentor Gate on Brüggligasse has been in existence from the time the wall was built, the opening for the road was made only in 1901. This, the only round tower to grace the Musegg Wall, is 28 m tall and leased by the Safran Guild.

2 Männli Tower

No one knows exactly when the Männli Tower was built, nor did its restoration in 2014 shed any further light. That said, it's certainly medieval in origin. It received its name from the halffigure of the armourclad warrior atop the west oriel turret, who must have been gracing the tower prior to 1440. A reinforced concrete slab was installed in 1934 to replace the original monopitch roof; this provides a vantage point for some of the best views of Lucerne.

3 Luegisland Tower

52.6 m in height, the Luegisland Tower is the tallest of the Musegg towers. It's also the oldest, having being built around 1370, and the least altered – a unique, authentic example of medieval architecture. Only the timber cap and roof structure are not original – they were replaced in the mid-15th century. Lucerne's fire wardens watched over the town from here until 1768.

4 Wacht Tower

The medieval tower replaced by the Wacht Tower was being used to store 350 hundredweight of gunpowder when it was hit by lightning on 30 July 1701: it exploded in spectacular fashion, killing five people. No time was lost in building a replacement. The town's fire wardens relocated to the Wacht from the Luegisland Tower in 1768, and it was then that the eight dormer windows were added for enhanced visibility.

5 Zyt Tower

The Zyt Tower was erected in 1403 for defensive and timekeeping purposes. At the time, it accommodated the oldest public clock in existence. The clock turret once rose alone above the battlements until 1508, when it was incorporated within the tower's newly created attic floor. The clock mechanism was replaced in 1535. It has the privilege of chiming the hour one minute before all the other clocks in the town.

6 Schirmer Tower

Roughly nine months after fire struck the Chapel Bridge, the Schirmer Tower itself was partially destroyed by fire. Dating from 1420, it was last restored in 1995. The passageway through the tower features a statue of one of the town's patron saints, St. Maurice.

7 Pulver Tower

The timber used in the construction of the Pulver Tower was harvested in the autumn/winter of 1398/99. The interior was renovated early in the 16th century. Legend has it that the lower portion of the tower incorporates the masonry of a castle. Nowadays, the tower is leased by the Wey Guild as a clubhouse.
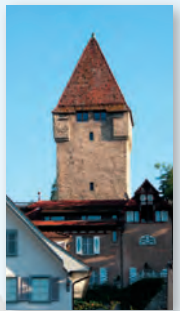
8 Allenwinden Tower

Other than the roof structure, which is dated 1540/41, the history of the Allenwinden Tower remains something of a mystery. It was used in the 19th century to dry hoses. It is now leased by two carnival associations, the Vereinigung Luzerner Maskenfreunde and the Tambourenverein.

9 Dächli Tower

The Dächli Tower was originally built as a halftower open towards the town. It received its steep-flanked pyramidal roof in 1449. The open side of the tower was closed off in 1728, while the interior dates from 1731 at the earliest. It has been leased by the Swiss Union of Master Joiners for use as a meeting place since 1936.

Opening hours and guided tours

Sections of the Musegg Wall between the Schirmer Tower and Wacht Tower, and the Männli, Wacht, Zyt and Schirmer Towers, are open to the public between 08.00 and 19.00 from Good Friday (1 April at the latest) to and including 1 November. Visitors to the wall, especially children, are asked to take great care due to steep steps and other hazards. There is no charge for visiting the wall or its towers, but a collection box for donations is located in the Schirmer Tower.

To find out more about the Musegg Wall, contact Lucerne Tourism, the organisation that oversees the preservation of the wall (Verein für die Erhaltung der Museggmauer) or visit www.luzern.com

Help us in our efforts!

You can find out more about the Musegg Wall by visiting the following website: www.museggmauer.ch

The organisation that oversees the preservation of the wall (Verein für die Erhaltung der Museggmauer) and the foundation that funds it work hard to ensure that the wall is preserved for future generations to enjoy. The latest work to repair and refurbish the wall and its towers has been successfully completed. Donations for the operation, maintenance and preservation of the Musegg Wall should be sent to PC 60-205447-7. Thank you.

Verein und **Stiftung** für die Erhaltung der **MUSEGGMAUER**