

Museums and Info centers of the European Geoparks Network



EISENWURZEN EUROPEAN GEOPARK

GeoZentrum/GeoCentre Gams

The Nature and Geopark Styrian Eisenwurzen is located in the north of the Austrian province of Styria. The village of Gams has about 1200 inhabitants. With the construction of a new community centre the idea of a geological museum was put into practice. It is open for the public since 1999. Together with the GeoTrail, the geological bicycle circuit, the GeoWorkshop and the Kraus Cave, the GeoCentre of Gams forms one of the main attractions of the Geopark. It is open to the public from 1 April to 26 October. A guidebook in German and English is available.



Gams, Geo Centre



Geo Centre
Exhibit jet mining



Geo Centre
Detail Jet



Children's feast at
Geo Centre

Visitors consider the GeoCentre of Gams as one of the most attractive geological museums of Austria. It is in fact more than a museum. Everybody who is interested in the history of the Earth is invited to come, sit around the traditional tiled stove and tell stories about fossils and minerals, larger and more beautiful than any others....

The GeoCentre shows episodes of the geological history and reminds of the mining activities of the region. The geological record of the area dates back as much as 250 million years, into the Permian. The eldest rocks were deposited at the shore of the Tethys ocean. A time unit of the Triassic period called Anisian stage was defined upon findings in the area. It is represented by well-preserved fossils in the exhibition.

Main emphasis of the exhibition is laid on the Late Cretaceous to Early Tertiary deposits. Fossil corals, snails and bivalves, among them the peculiar rudists, a group of sessile bivalves which has also formed reefs, document former life in a warm, shallow sea. A original piece of rock shows the famous original brown layer originating from volcanoes and the impact of a meteorite some 65 millions of years ago. It marks the boundary between the Mesozoic and the Cenozoic and has been studied in detail in Gams.

While chalcedon was only locally used as flintstone, jet mining was of great importance in the 15/16th century. Jet is a special kind of coal used for jewellery and rosaries and is represented by some good specimens.

Furthermore, the exhibition commemorates Franz Kraus, one of the pioneers of speleology who has lived in the village. A cave which was named after him was the first one with electric light in the world.

Activities: Guided tours at special events and upon request, educational programmes.

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