



“What I Find Interesting is the Trans-Regional Exchange”

Interview with Board Member Mayor Uwe Bruchhäuser

In 1995, the German Limes Road Association was founded with the aim of creating a tourist route for motorists along the Upper Germanic-Raetian Limes. Today, more than 25 years later, the association's members include over 90 towns, markets and municipalities as well as numerous districts and tourist communities. The members are strung together like a string of pearls along the Limes World Heritage Site.

Along the UNESCO World Heritage Sites Upper Germanic-Raetian Limes (World Heritage Site since 2005), Lower Germanic Limes (World Heritage Site since 2021) and Danube Limes (World Heritage Site since 2021), the German Limes Road and the German Limes Cycle Path run right across Germany from the Lower Rhine in North Rhine-Westphalia through Rhineland-Palatinate, Hesse, Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria to Passau on the Danube.

The association is managed by an eight-member board chaired by the Lord Mayor of the city of Aalen. In this interview, we introduce you to our board member, Mayor Uwe Bruchhäuser. He talks about the importance of transregional cooperation and the efforts to promote sustainable tourism at the unique UNESCO World Heritage Site Limes.

Dear Mayor Bruchhäuser. Thank you very much for taking the time for our interview. Would you start by briefly introducing yourself?

My name is Uwe Bruchhäuser. Since January 2019, I have been the mayor of the newly merged municipality of Bad Ems-Nassau. It consists of 28 independent municipalities with a total population of approximately 28,500. The municipality of Bad Ems-Nassau is the successor to the municipality of Nassau and is a member of the German Limes Road Association.





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What is the connection between the municipality of Bad Ems-Nassau and the Limes?

The municipality is in the fortunate position that the Upper Germanic-Raetian Limes is visible in large parts of our administrative area. In the town of Bad Ems, the course of the border fortifications can already be seen very clearly on both sides of the Lahn.

The reconstruction of a watchtower is located on the Winterberg. The Roman border is also visible in the stake ditch named after the Limes, which runs up the slope on the opposite side, with a piece of palisade. In the town area itself, there is evidence of various installations from the Roman period.



Limes Tower on the Winterberg, Photo: Mark Rammers

In addition, the municipality of Bad Ems-Nassau is home to the Limes fort of Pohl, an impressive authentic reconstruction of a small fort. The town and the municipality therefore have a very close connection to the Limes, which is visible in many places.

What excites you personally about taking on this honorary position on the board of the German Limes Road Association? What links have you developed to the Limes as a result?

The exchange with representatives of other municipalities/institutions - especially from other federal states and the very pleasant cooperation between the very different partners in the association has impressed me, so that I like to get involved. Even if I have little time as mayor, I like to go to the meetings of the association to exchange ideas and take new impulses home with me.



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How would you rate the awareness and perception in Bad Ems-Nassau for the Limes?

Until the beginning of 2023, Jürgen Eigenbrod, a very committed citizen and amateur archaeologist, who has since passed away, made efforts to research the Roman heritage in Bad Ems. He initiated excavations and research projects of the State Monument Preservation. As a result, this historical past was always very present in the town of Bad Ems.



Limes Fort Pohl, Photo: Mark Rammers

The Limes Fort Pohl is run with a high level of voluntary commitment and made accessible to the general public. Cultural events round off the offer and high visitor numbers confirm the concept.

Nevertheless, I think we need to raise awareness in the town and the municipality even more. For example, a World Heritage Centre is being considered in Bad Ems, which would not only provide information about the Great Spa Towns of

Europe, the most important spa towns in Europe, to which Bad Ems belongs with its nomination as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2021, but also about the Limes World Heritage Site.

What synergies with other towns or districts have developed as a result of Bad Ems-Nassau's membership of the German Limes Road?

I find the trans-regional exchange with the other colleagues on the board interesting.

The German Limes Road Association is constantly developing and growing. Recently, new towns and districts have joined the association due to the establishment of the new World Heritage Sites "Lower German Limes" and "Danube Limes".



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What drives the German Limes Road?

The motivator, in my opinion, is to make the locals and guests aware of the Roman heritage. To tell the exciting story of this time and to show which progressive developments already existed at that time, such as underfloor heating, thermal baths, the whole art and culture and last but not least Roman law, on which today's European legal and state system is basically based.

What is the recipe for success of the German Limes Road?

For me, the recipe for success is the networking of the various communities and towns along the Limes. The network promotes the exchange and development of new projects and ideas and makes the Limes visible in its full extent.

The topic of sustainability is one of the central tasks of our time. Sustainability is also playing an increasingly important role in tourism. In addition to the German Limes Road, the association has also been maintaining the German Limes Cycle Path for several years. Furthermore, the association also supports the German Limes Hiking Trail. Hiking on and around the Limes is becoming increasingly popular.

How do you think it is possible to fill a cultural route of this dimension (over 1000 km of route in 5 provinces) with life, create public awareness and work sustainably at the same time?

You already mentioned that there is a Limes cycling and hiking trail that the association maintains and supports. This is exactly the right way to promote sustainable tourism that is in harmony with nature. For it is the slow modes of travel in particular that allow those who have set out on the trail to really perceive





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and experience the landscapes and regions. In many places, the course of the Limes can still be guessed at, but it is also necessary to really look at it, and this is only really possible when walking or cycling. In addition, a cultural route comes alive through events, but also through audiovisual communication. More digital and less paper that only ends up in the rubbish, and the young generation has to be taken along, then it has to be exciting and full of experience. Visible places such as the Limes Tower and the Limes Fort already do a very good job, because they bring history to life in the mind, and if the whole thing is then supported with emotional mediation, e.g. augmented reality, a lasting impression is created.

Mayor Bruchhäuser, thank you very much for the interview.