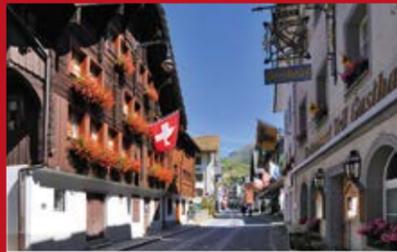




Andermatt History

People were crossing the Ursern Valley in the Stone Age, Bronze Age and in Roman times. The Disentis monastery ruled the valley from about 744 to 1410 AD. In the 11th century the Walisers colonised the valley and opened a route through the Schöllenen Gorge. The first mention of the «Stiebende Steg», now the Devil's Bridge, was in 1306. The Ursern Valley became the most important point of departure for the Alpine crossings. In 1830 the mule trail was broadened and became passable to carriages and in 1882 the Gotthard railway tunnel was opened. Within 100 years, the journey over the Gotthard dropped from a few days to a few hours.



Historic Village Centre

Due to its initial colonisation from the Graubünden Oberland and Upper Valais, the Ursern Valley has a more clearly discernible building culture today than does the rest of the canton. The well-preserved village centre is of national significance and includes an entire row of stately Rococo-style houses. As is typical for Andermatt, the traditional wooden houses are built on a masonry base. Open arcades and stone stairways are very much in evidence here. The Gotthard road in the village has natural stone paving with centrally inlaid ruts made of granite slabs and reminds one of the times when the legendary Gotthard Post-coach thundered through the village.



Village Bridge

The Post-coach era ran from 1830 to 1882 with some 60,000 to 80,000 people crossing the Gotthard each year by the end of this period. As the heart and hub of Andermatt the small area around the bridge was a beehive of activity. It was here that the Post-coaches stopped before tackling the Gotthard. The passengers were served a hot meal at the 3 Könige & Post Hotel whilst the coachman was changing the exhausted horses. We are told that on many occasions time was so limited that the coachmen had to use wine to cool their soup.



Village Fountain

The fountain on the square in front of the town hall is said to have been built in 1581 by Johann II Schmid. In earlier times the inhabitants had to fetch water from the fountain as the houses had no running water. In 1788 Giuseppe Croce built the large Rossbrunnen, an additional pool that has now disappeared. The fountain's octagonal pool bears the coat of arms of the Ursern Valley. The central pillar is topped by a stone bear and dates from the 1950's. The bear has played an important role in the history of the Ursern Valley. The oldest documented name for the valley is Ursaria. This name originated with the Romans and means Bear Valley.



Ursern Town Hall

The first record of a town hall in Ursern was in 1459. The hall built in 1583 was destroyed by fire in 1766 and rebuilt in 1767. The ground floor, now used as a shop and storage area by the Ursern power company, formerly served as a goods transfer area for the muleteers. For over 600 years the mule trains carried goods over the Gotthard Pass. Between 1820 and 1830, some 2,600 tons of goods were transported across the Gotthard each year. The Town Hall now houses the head office of the Ursern Corporation and the district court. A carved crest in the council chambers dating back to 1931 shows the coats of arms of Ursern Valley families.



Ursern Valley Museum

The Ursern Valley Museum is one of the finest patrician buildings in the valley. Built in 1786 as a residential and commercial building by Franz Dominik Nager, later the mayor, it served as headquarters for the Russian General Suworow on 24/25 September 1799. After major renovations, the Ursern Valley Museum was opened in 1991 and now hosts a range of permanent exhibitions. Themes include home life around 1780/1800, local and cultural history, tourism, military, alpine farming as well as animals, mule transport, a natural history collection, and the career of ski legend Bernhard Russi. Additional temporary exhibitions are on display in the cellar.



Andermatt Swiss Alps

The innovative Andermatt Swiss Alps project has transformed this traditional Swiss village into an attractive year-round destination. When completed it will include six 4 to 5-star hotels, around 500 holiday apartments in 42 buildings, 25 exclusive chalets, convention facilities, a swimming pool and an 18-hole golf course. The Andermatt and Sedrun ski areas will be merged and become the SkiArena Andermatt-Sedrun. The project flagship is the 5-star luxury hotel, The Chedi Andermatt. It has an exclusive spa complex as well as unique gastronomy offerings with four studio kitchens where the dishes are prepared in front of the guests.



6

Church of St. Kolumban

The church was in existence in the 1100's, whilst the present building dates back to 1300. It is the most important Romanesque church building in the county of Uri.



7

Parish Church of St. Peter and Paul

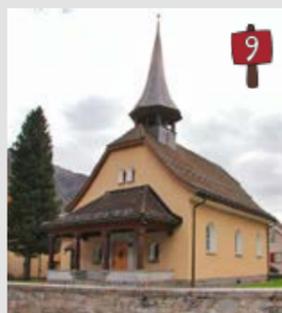
On 16 February 1601 an avalanche claimed the lives of seven parishioners near St. Kolumban and this provided the impetus for building a new church. The residents of Hospental and Realp wanted a church built in the centre of the valley. The location was set when Christoffel Christen offered to provide a site in Andermatt and to donate the pulpit. This lavishly decorated church was built there in 1602. It has a magnificent baroque interior and is the valley's most important church.



8

Mariahilf Chapel

The Mariahilf Chapel is a sign of people's faith in the power of God's protection. It was built in 1735/1736 as a protection against avalanches.



9

Ursern Valley Reformed Church

The church was built on an exposed piece of land in 1914/1915 for Protestant military personnel and their families.



10

Wendelin Chapel

The chapel was consecrated in 1656 and was used as a barn and shed from 1803. The chapel was completely restored during the 1980's.



11

Military

Due to the great military significance of the St. Gotthard region, fortifications were constructed there at the end of the 19th century. Before long Andermatt was surrounded by state-of-the-art fortifications. The Friedenskaserne barracks at the entrance to Andermatt was completed for military training in 1900. The barracks at Bühl, near the Devil's Bridge, was completed in 1901. The opening of the Gotthard Rail Tunnel resulted in the collapse of the local economy in the Ursern Valley and of traffic over the pass. The military brought new life to Andermatt as well as new employment opportunities and the Winter Military World Championships.



12

Avalanche Protection Forest

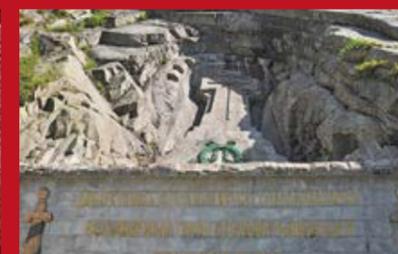
Deforestation in the Ursern Valley was well advanced by the early Middle Ages. 200 years ago, apart from the 4-hectare Gurschenwald above Andermatt, the rest of the valley was treeless. In 1397 an official order placed the forest under protection and, against the threat of severe punishment, prohibited the removal of cones, branches, shrubs or trees from the forest. This forest is vital to the survival of the village as it protects it against avalanches, rock-falls and mudslides. With the reforestation over the past 100 years, the Gurschenwald has increased from 4 to 24 hectares. There are now 146 hectares of forest in the entire valley.



13

Devil's Bridge

The first mention of the «Stiebende Steg», later called the Devil's Bridge or Hell's Bridge, was in 1306. At the same place a stone bridge, the legendary Devil's Bridge, was built in 1595. According to legend the locals asked the devil to build it. In payment they promised to give him the first soul that crossed it however they were clever and chased a male goat across the bridge. Enraged the devil took up a great stone intending to destroy his work. A woman, who realised what he intended to do, carved a cross into the stone and this caused him to miss his target. The bridge, which was replaced in 1830, collapsed in 1888. The latest Devil's Bridge was opened in 1956.



14

Russian Memorial

The large Russian Memorial near the Devil's Bridge in the Schöllenen Gorge is also known today as the Suworow Memorial and commemorates the battles fought in 1799. On 24 September 1799, General Suworow drove the French away from the Gotthard Hospice. On the following day, during a fierce battle, the French sought to halt the Russian advance by blowing up the Devil's Bridge in the Schöllenen Gorge. General Suworow had his men tie wooden beams together by using the scarves of his officers and repaired the bridge. This enabled them to cross but with heavy losses. The memorial was erected in 1898 by Russia in honour of General Suworow and the fallen soldiers.