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Pile Dwelling Museum Unteruhldingen

PRESS KIT 2026



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Pile Dwelling Museum Unteruhldingen – Pile Dwellings Reveal World Heritage

In 2011, the „Pile Dwellings around the Alps“ were declared a World Heritage Site by the UNESCO. For 103 years, the Pile Dwelling Museum („Pfahlbaumuseum“) has been bringing this lost world heritage to life. It is one of the most popular leisure destinations on Lake Constance and one of the largest open-air archaeological museums in Europe. The core of the complex is comprised of 23 faithfully reconstructed pile dwellings, where our museum guides will tell you all about the people of that time. In 2022, the first two pile dwellings from 1922 were renovated and reopened, featuring a special exhibition dedicated to the museum's beginnings. During school holidays, experimental archaeologists are teaching about rope knotting, explaining stone and bronze tools, and making fire – just like 6,000 years ago! Information panels show how a pile dwelling was built. The so-called pile dwelling cinema features exciting films. Among other things, it shows how the „Sendung mit der Maus“ („The Show with the Mouse“) team accompanied the construction of a Stone Age house. In the new exhibition hall for the World Heritage Site, „New Museum by the Lake“, opening in 2024, you will discover over 1,000 original finds, including 5,000-year-old apples, Stone Age glue, mysterious mythical creatures made of bronze and completely preserved stone axes. Furthermore, a 3D show provides information about modern pile dwelling research under the water and the life of the people of Lake Constance at that time. The Pile Dwelling Museum was recognized as a family-friendly facility in 2022.



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New Museum opens at the Pile Dwelling Museum in Unteruhldingen

The Association for Pile Dwellings and Local History is preparing the Pile Dwelling Museum, established in 1922, for the future. To expand its offerings and implement innovative concepts, a 12.4-meter-high wooden structure resembling an upside-down dugout canoe was built on the shores of Lake Constance. The impetus for the new museum building came from the UNESCO World Heritage designation of the „Pile Dwellings around the Alps“ in 2011. An architectural competition followed. The winning design by architects Ackermann and Raff (Stuttgart) was designed as a two-level, accessible hall that serves as a visitor centre and also as a modern exhibition hall, serving as both the opening and closing point of a museum visit. With its spatial arrangement, the wooden structure sets the tone for the fascination of the pile dwellings. The new building is part of the museum's master plan, which aims to better communicate the „Pile Dwellings“ World Heritage Site in the Alpine Foothills. Project work on the new building began in October 2022, and the New Museum opened on June 20, 2024. The resulting structure expands the museum's floor space by approximately 1,300 square meters. Particular emphasis was placed on using as many natural surfaces as possible during the construction of the timber structure, ensuring a positive carbon footprint. To make the construction project a reality, the Association for Pile Dwellings and Local History contributed a double-digit million euro sum of its own funds. The Pile Dwelling Museum was also pleased to receive funding from a variety of sources for the construction project: The Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM) is supporting the extension, optimizing accessibility, improving presentation standards, and energy efficiency with grants of €1,973,500 from the federal program „Investments for National Cultural Institutions in Germany“ (INK). The museum receives €300,000 in funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in Baden-Württemberg through the Ministry of Food, Rural Areas and Consumer Protection, which promotes innovative and environmentally friendly timber construction. The LBBW Foundation (www.lbbw.de) is supporting the redesign of the ARCHAEOGRAMA multimedia station, which had to be shut down during the coronavirus pandemic, with €30,000. The „Toilet for All“ project is being funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Integration with €11,340 from the state of Baden-Württemberg. The project aims to provide accessible sanitary facilities for guests with disabilities. Overall, the construction project is a major effort for the independent sponsor and museum association, but



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also a groundbreaking investment in the future, for which we would like to express our sincere thanks to all those involved.



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Event Calendar 2026

March

28.3. Season Start

April

7.-9.4. Family Tour – Family-Time Travel to the Bronze Age
10.4. Tin – Foundation of the Bronze Age, prized for weapons, tools and jewelry
Kid's Club: Tin and bronze – Small art forges in the pile dwellings

May

14.-15.5. Honey from the Stone Age – Ancient, healthy, delicious!
22.-29.5. The loom – An ingenious invention of the Neolithic period
28.5. Kid's Club: Bees & Co. – Hotels for our six-legged friends
30.5.-5.6. Bronze casting – How a technique changed the world

June

30.5.-5.6. Bronze casting – How a technique changed the world
7.6. UNESCO World Heritage Day 2026: Together for Peace and Understanding

July

27.-31.7. Family Tour – Family-Time Travel to the Bronze Age
27.7.-2.8. Plants and plant fibers – The basis of the „pile-dwelling fashion“
31.7. Kid's Club: Bowls, pots, toy rattles – Pottery like a pile dweller



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August

- 27.7.-2.8.** **Plants and plant fibers – The basis of the „pile-dwelling fashion“**
- 3.-7.8.** **Family Tour – Family-Time Travel to the Bronze Age**
- 3.-9.8.** **STONE AGE – When man became...**
- 10.-16.8.** **The logboat – THE boat of prehistoric times**
- 14.8.** **Kid's Club: The treasure of the pile dwellers 4 – Uhldi hunts Dr. Nein**
- 19.8.** **Children's Holiday: ADVENTURE Pile Dwellings!**
- 26.8.** **Children's Holiday: ADVENTURE Pile Dwellings!**

September

- 2.9.** **Children's Holiday: ADVENTURE Pile Dwellings!**
- 4.9.** **Kid's Club: Stone Age porridge and campfire punch – Good things from the pile dwelling kitchen**
- 13.9.** **Open Monument Day 2026: NETworks – Monuments & Infrastructure**

October

- 28.-29.10.** **Grandparents' Days: Back to the STONE AGE!**

Opening Hours 2026:

- 1.3.-27.3.** Saturday/Sunday 10:00 am – 05:30 pm (last entry at 5 pm).
- 28.3.-13.5.** daily 10:00 am – 05:30 pm (last entry at 5 pm).
- 14.5.-30.9.** daily 09:30 am – 06:00 pm (last entry at 5:30 pm).
- 1.10.-1.11.** daily 10:00 am – 05:30 pm (last entry at 5 pm).
- 2.11.-30.11.** Saturday/Sunday 10:00 am – 04:30 pm (last entry at 4 pm).

Inquiries and registrations: www.pfahlbauten.de or phone +49 7556 / 92890 – 0



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Event Dates 2026

10.4.: Tin – Foundation of the Bronze Age, prized for weapons, tools and jewelry

Nowadays, tin is mostly used for occasional games, such as tin figurines or the traditional New Year's tin casting. It was a different story over 3,000 years ago: at that time, tin was literally the glue that held societies in the East and West together. Without tin, there would be no bronze, the alloy that gave the „Bronze Age“ its name. Erik Häußler, an experimental archaeologist at the Unteruhldingen pile dwellings, explains how tin was processed, where it was obtained, and what Bronze Age tin casting looked like.

Tip: At Mr. Häußler's stand, visitors have the opportunity to make their own personal tin amulet.

14.-15.5.: Honey from the Stone Age – Ancient, healthy, delicious!

What do Lake Constance and a cave in eastern Spain have in common? Both bear witness to the Stone Age cultures' yearning for what is perhaps the sweetest temptation found in nature: honey. Produced entirely without machinery, with 0% refined sugar, and guaranteed 100% organic, this „liquid gold“ was already a treasure for which no effort was too great. While around 10,000 years ago people were content with searching for wild bees and their viscous stores – as depicted in a cave painting in the Cuevas de la Araña in eastern Spain – by 3000 BC at the latest, the pile dwellers on Lake Constance were able to provide the industrious insects with attractive dwellings using so-called „log hives“. This made harvesting fresh honey considerably easier. Local historian and organic beekeeper Herbert Gieß, himself the proud owner of log hives made according to Stone Age models, explains what had to be considered in this early form of beekeeping.

Tip: You can sample genuine „Stone Age honey“ at Mr. Gieß's stand.



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22.-29.5.: The loom – An ingenious invention of the Neolithic period

Some masterpieces of the human mind seem almost banal, or have become so commonplace or even antiquated that they have faded from the collective memory of society. While the deliberate creation of fire, the wheel, the printing press, or the first steam engines are integral parts of any summary of global technological history, other „marvels“ receive little to no mention—even though survival would sometimes have been impossible for human civilization without them. One such achievement is the wooden warp-weighted loom, whose origins can be traced back to the beginning of the Neolithic period over 8,000 years ago. It was this invention that allowed humankind to produce sophisticated woven items such as carpets, skirts, shirts, and other textiles in a comparatively short time for millennia. Let experimental archaeologist Gisela Michel introduce you to the marvel of the Stone Age loom, as known to the pile dwellers on Lake Constance!

Tip: At Mrs. Michel's stand, guests can try their hand at twisting with linden bast.

30.5.-5.6.: Bronze casting – How a technique changed the world

Bronze, an alloy of copper and tin, possesses a multitude of positive properties: it is easy to cast when molten, durable, recyclable through melting, has a beautiful, golden-yellow color – and is as hard as steel! The earliest finds of intentionally produced bronze objects come from present-day Iran and Afghanistan, dating back to the 4th millennium BC, from where knowledge of the alloy spread south, east, and west to the European regions. Here, too, it was quickly understood that bronze was superior to stone tools. As a result, European societies began to fundamentally change. New specializations, such as blacksmithing and mining, suddenly became important. A continent-spanning trade in precious tin, which was very rare in many places, flourished. The use of bronze enabled new technologies and economic systems. The population grew, conflicts simmered, institutions were founded... Much of what seems familiar to us today gained momentum during this time, the so-called „Bronze Age“. Experimental archaeologist and bronze smith Erik Häußler shares his knowledge of this important era in his forge and demonstrates how bronze was worked and with which tools.

Tip: Visitors to Mr. Häußler's forge have the opportunity to create their own personal metal amulet.



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7.6.: UNESCO World Heritage Day 2026: Together for Peace and Understanding

UNESCO World Heritage Day 2026 is themed „Together for Peace and Understanding“, reflecting UNESCO's core principle: to jointly preserve humanity's cultural heritage in order to promote understanding and peace between different cultures. The importance of cooperation, even in the Stone Age and the subsequent Bronze Age, is explained by „Uhldi“, one of the oldest employees of the Unteruhldingen Pile Dwelling Museum. For example, it would have been virtually impossible to transport copper, tin, or even amber thousands of kilometers to the World Heritage Site of the Central European pile dwellings had there not been people who preferred peaceful exchange to robbery. On this day, Uhldi can be found in the museum's new Discovery Trail, where he shares his immense knowledge of prehistory with the public through practical demonstrations and lively storytelling.

Participation in the event is included in the museum admission price.

27.7.-2.8.: Plants and plant fibers – The basis of the „pile-dwelling fashion“

Anyone who thinks that Neolithic fashion nearly 6,000 years ago consisted primarily of animal hides or leather garments is sorely mistaken: In fact, a large portion of the clothing available in Europe and the Near East was 100% vegan! Long, sturdy blades of grass were used to weave raincoats, and flax was spun into thread by hand using clay spindle whorls, which was then woven into skirts, hats, and shirts. But even far more unusual plant parts and fibers, such as nettles and bark, were used for Stone Age textile production. Why this was the case, what fascinating garments modern science has been able to uncover in the pile dwellings, and how these can still be made today—all this is explained by archaeologist and renowned Stone Age fashion expert Dorothee Olthof.

Tip: You can learn the ancient art of braiding at Ms. Olthof's booth.



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3.-9.8.: STONE AGE – When man became...

The „Stone Age“, the oldest and, at over 2.5 million years, also the longest epoch of humankind, is sometimes underestimated as the supposedly „most primitive“ stage of modern human culture. Stone tools are dismissed as „simple“ and „crude“, while the image of Stone Age men and women is often that of ape-like cave dwellers wrapped in animal skins. In fact, archaeological research allows us to revise this antiquated and thoroughly inaccurate image of our great-great-great-grandparents! Neither was the production of a flint arrowhead a trivial or even simple undertaking, nor did the first humans huddle shivering in musty caves: they were explorers and revolutionaries who faced the most adverse environmental conditions, populated the entire planet, and, with the beginning of the Neolithic period, learned agriculture and animal husbandry. Clothing was woven and sewn, tools and weapons were made from wood, bone, and antler, people tattooed themselves, brewed beer, and knew about the healing properties of numerous plants. Archaeologist Jean-Loup Ringot will show you the Stone Age like you've never seen it before!

Tip: At Mr. Ringot's booth, you can experience the Stone Age up close in all its facets.

10.-16.8.: The logboat – THE boat of prehistoric times

A tall, wide tree log, a few stone or bronze axes, and a strong team—that's all it took to build a boat in the pile-dwelling era! These wooden boats, also known as „logboat“ because of their material, are among the oldest watercraft known to humankind. Their existence can be reliably traced back to at least 10,000 years ago, during the Mesolithic period. They made it possible to navigate the rivers and lakes of Europe, catch fish, and transport goods safely over long distances. It's no wonder, then, that dugout canoes remained highly important in the subsequent Neolithic and Bronze Ages up to 850 BC. Numerous finds in pile-dwelling settlements in and around Lake Constance attest to this. Thanks to the fantastic preservation of wood in these prehistoric pile-dwelling villages, experimental archaeologists like Wolfgang Lohisser and Erik Häußler can still construct logboats today just as they were made over 3,000 years ago. Witness the construction of a prehistoric wooden boat over 10 meters long in the Unteruhldingen pile dwellings!

Tip: Try out the tools needed to build a logboat in the Discovery Trail.



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13.9.: Open Monument Day 2026: NETworks – Monuments & Infrastructure

This year, the Open Monument Day, celebrating its 30th anniversary on Lake Constance, is themed „NETworks – Monuments & Infrastructure“. Fittingly, the Unteruhldingen Pile Dwelling Museum is focusing on a variety of different „networks“. These include networks of the past, such as trade networks for flint, glass, and salt, as well as contemporary networks, such as the collaboration between archaeological science and interested laypeople and local historians — the so-called „citizen science“ — which has gained importance worldwide in recent years. Here, private individuals work closely with scientific institutions to document, preserve, and communicate the cultural heritage of a region. To further support this worthy cause, visitors to the Pile Dwelling Museum have the opportunity to have antiquities from the pre-Christian era discovered in their attics or during their own research identified by the museum's scientific department. Have you always wanted to know what you or your grandfather actually found? Find out for yourself — at the Unteruhldingen Pile Dwelling Museum!

Participation in the event is included in the museum admission price.



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Kid's Club „Archaeo-Kids“ 2026: „House by the Lake – EXPERIENCE history!“

Fr. 10.04. – 2-4 pm: „Tin and bronze – Small art forges in the pile dwellings“

A visitor from the Bronze Age: a blacksmith from bygone days has set up camp in the pile dwellings. Help him cast your very own pewter pendants! As a reward, you can craft a necklace just like those worn more than 3,000 years ago.

Th. 28.05. – 2-4 pm: „Bees & Co. – Hotels for our six-legged friends“

Over 6,000 years ago, people built small houses for bees to protect them from the elements. In return, the industrious insects gave them honey and wax. We, too, want to build a nice hiding place for our six-legged friends.

Fr. 31.07. – 2-4 pm: „Bowls, pots, toy rattles – Pottery like a pile dweller“

From unassuming materials like sand, clay, and straw, Stone and Bronze Age people fashioned dishes, toys, and houses. In the stilt houses, you can let your creativity run wild and try your hand at pottery – or build an entire clay wall in no time!

Fr. 14.08. – 2-4 pm: „The treasure of the pile dwellers 4 – Uhldi hunts Dr. Nein“

Darn it! No sooner has Stone Age man Uhldi found the sweets he hid from a hungry beaver last year than the treacherous sugar baron Dr. Nein steals them... Can you help Uhldi find Dr. Nein?

Fr. 04.09. – 2-4 pm: „Stone Age porridge and campfire punch – Good things from the pile dwelling kitchen“

Anyone who thinks that the pile dwellers on Lake Constance only ate fish or frogs is completely wrong: lentils, honey, bacon and even fried eggs were on the menu of these prehistoric people! We want to recreate some of their most delicious recipes around a campfire.



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You want to participate...

...and you are at least 6 years of age? Then register at <https://pfahlbauten.ticketfritz.de>. It is best to secure your spot quickly, as the number of participants is limited. Kids' Club members pay a small fee of €4.

Not a Kid's Club member?

You or your friends who want to come are not members? No problem! Non-members are also welcome. A contribution of €8.50 is required.

More information?

You will find them at: www.pfahlbauten.de



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Children's Holiday 2026: „ADVENTURE Pile Dwellings!“

Wednesday 19th of August, 26th of August and 2nd of September from 2 to 4 pm

As part of our children's holiday program, children can discover the adventurous world of the pile dwellers on Lake Constance. All participants can expect an exciting hands-on activity. Here, children can choose to make a wooden comb, a Stone Age knife, a beaded necklace, or a wooden musical instrument. Of course, they can take their creations home with them afterward.

Participation in the event costs €10. Ages 6 and up are welcome.

Space is limited. Registration is possible using the following link:

<https://pfahlbauten.ticketfritz.de>



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Grandparents' Days 2026: „House by the Lake – Back to the STONE AGE!“

This year, the ever-popular Grandparents' Days will once again take place on October 28th and 29th at the Unteruhldingen pile dwellings on Lake Constance. Grandparents and their grandchildren will have the opportunity to experience life on the water firsthand. Participants can get hands-on and familiarize themselves with the technical and artistic achievements of the pile dwellers. And the best part: all the objects they create during the event can be taken home! This year's theme for Grandparents' Days is „Back to the Stone Age“. The day begins with a guided tour of the New Museum and the open-air site. Here you'll learn how people lived in the Neolithic period over 6,000 years ago, what they ate, and how they interacted. Afterwards, you can choose between crafting a stylish leather pouch for your very own fire-making kit or a colorful beaded necklace from stone, wood, and seashells.

This event is expressly aimed at grandparents and their grandchildren (Mom and Dad deserve a break too). Participation costs €14 per person. The number of participants is limited, so secure your spot quickly!

When?

On Wednesday, October 29th and Thursday, October 30th, from 10 am to 12 pm and 2 pm to 4 pm.

Where?

The event takes place in the Stone Age Course of the Pile Dwelling Museum Unteruhldingen.

How?

Registration is available at <https://pfahlbauten.ticketfritz.de>. Further information can be found at www.pfahlbauten.de



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Family Tour – Family-Time Travel to the Bronze Age

7th to 9th of April, 27th to 31st of July, 3rd to 7th of August at 11 am and 2:30 pm

A resident of a pile dwelling will take you into his world. Discover how Bronze Age children went about their daily lives – from herding sheep and catching fish to carving wooden flutes. Travel with your family 3,000 years into the past and experience history firsthand!

The number of participants is limited, so secure your spot quickly!

Registration is available at <https://pfahlbauten.ticketfritz.de>



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Exhibition „Pile Dwelling Museum Unteruhldingen – An idea turns 100“

To mark the 100th anniversary of the pile dwellings in 2022, the exhibition „Pile Dwelling Museum Unteruhldingen – An idea is born“ opened in the pile dwellings at Lake Constance. In the exhibition, you will meet Georg Sulger, co-founder of the Uhldingen museum, who is returning to his pile dwellings. The open-air museum was founded in 1922 through his initiative and that of four other men. Sulger was an enthusiastic pile dwelling researcher and mayor of the small Lake Constance community where he lived from 1867 to 1939. Sources indicate that he gave an interview about the pile dwellings to the Reichsrundfunk in 1932. Unfortunately, the recording has been lost. But the idea arose to recreate this interview. After extensive research, an interview has been created that reflects the kind of interview one might imagine with him in the year of its founding. Wearing a crisp white shirt and Sunday hat, Marco Ricardo, alias Georg Sulger, welcomes visitors to the open-air museum in the faithfully reconstructed Stone Age houses. As a cultural educator, he reports on life in the pile dwellings using the style of the language 100 years ago. To capture the local dialect as accurately as possible, a 100-year-old woman from Uhldingen and other neighbours helped. They gave tips on how to best capture the dialect of that time. The museum was a resounding success in its first year. Over 6,000 visitors wanted to see the two Stone Age houses, and this during an economically difficult time, in the middle of the Weimar Republic. Just a few years after its opening, in 1926, the first feature film, „Nature and Love“, by UFA Studios Berlin, was shot in the pile dwellings. This led to the pile dwellings suddenly becoming known throughout Germany. The museum remains a success story to this day. Around 16 million visitors have visited the open-air complex since its founding. This makes the Pile Dwelling Museum the oldest and one of the most successful archaeological open-air museums in Europe. The project was funded by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media and the German Archaeological Association.



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Museum co-founder Georg Sulger (1867-1939)

A bright spring day, sometime between 1870 and 1875: Little Georg Sulger from the fishing village of Unteruhldingen is rowing with his father to the family's cargo sailing ship. In the bright light, he discovers strange formations on the lakebed, which he initially thinks are „heads“ protruding from the ground. In fact, they are countless rotten pile stumps – and these have haunted the young „Jörgle“ ever since. 140 years later, this site will become a World Heritage Site. In 2011, the „Pile Dwellings around the Alps“ were designated by UNESCO as a protected monument group. At the time, the young explorer, of course, had no way of knowing what exactly lay beneath the water. His father had told him they were the remains of ancient houses that had once stood not on the lake, but, strangely enough, in the lake. Georg, in any case, suspected that this must be something very special. With a little imagination, one could say today: He probably sensed that he was on the trail of a Baden Atlantis... And so he built himself a small raft, repeatedly sailed out to that mysterious pile field, and there finally found an ancient bronze lance – which his father sold for 30 marks. The proceeds from this helped Georg buy his first boat, with which he could continue to pursue his passion for research, albeit mostly secretly and after a day's work. He subsequently developed into an increasingly recognized expert, amassing a collection of pile dwelling finds that remains fascinating to this day, and in 1898 assisted Karlsruhe professor Karl Schumacher in his archaeological research on Lake Überlingen. In 1919 – at this point Georg Sulger had already been mayor of Unteruhldingen for 13 years – he finally met the young Tübingen prehistoric researcher Hans Reinerth. He had caused a stir with his excavations in the Federsee Moor in Upper Swabia and would become a pioneer in pile dwelling research in the years that followed. Together, the two set about realizing Georg Sulger's childhood dream: an open-air pile dwelling museum in the bay of Unteruhldingen. But that's a whole other story.



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Further information:



www.pfahlbauten.de



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