



Walk through the ancient district of Eich
The cradle of the Luxembourg iron and steel industry

Luxembourg

the city

bonjour!



The cradle of the Luxembourg iron and steel industry

Dommeldange-Eich-Beggen-Weimerskirch Circuit

Of all the regions of Luxembourg, the townships of Dommeldange and Eich between them can claim to have the oldest metalworking tradition. 400 years ago there was a flourishing ironworks here, which served as the model for all future iron and steel factories built in Luxembourg. On 18 November 1609, Jean de Ryaville, an immigrant ironworks proprietor, obtained permission to build a blast furnace, a foundry to treat iron ore and a power hammer workshop, all located at the entrance to the Grünewald. By 1 August 1845, even before the iron ore works had ceased production, Auguste Metz, the founder of the Eich steel industry, had built a coke and charcoal blast furnace. In 1847 a second blast furnace was lit in Eich, to be joined in 1858 by a third which was purely coke fired. During this period, the annual production of pig iron was already 14,500 tonnes. The Eich foundry disappeared when the Metzebau was demolished in 1982. For some time the Eich site had already lost its economic interest given that the railway line did not serve Mühlenbach, but instead followed the Alzette valley. The railway line was the main reason behind the construction of a new ironworks near Dommeldange station. In 1866 this ironworks produced 34,205 tonnes of pig iron. Maximum production was reached in 1913, with 115,342 tonnes. The Dommeldange iron and steel factory comprised a steel foundry, several workshops, a rolling mill and an ironworks.



[1] Dommeldange station



[2] Luxembourg Foundry



[3] Park Laval



Guided tours on request

Luxembourg City Tourist Office

Tel. (+352) 47 96 27 09, Fax: (+352) 47 48 18
guides@lcto.lu | www.lcto.lu

Impressum

Publisher: Luxembourg City Tourist Office

Text: Pit Ludwig

(Syndicat d'Initiative Eich-Dommeldange-Weimerskirch)

Concept: Syndicat d'Initiative Eich-Dommeldange-Weimerskirch

Logo: Annette Weimers-Prbst

Photos: Denise Heywang, Pol Aschmann (Photothèque de la
Ville de Luxembourg), Pit Ludwig, Editions Guy Binsfeld

Realization: Editions Guy Binsfeld

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[4] "Kueleschapp"



[5] Superb view over Be...

This circuit of the old sites of the Luxembourg iron and steel industry begins at the large car park near **[1] Dommeldange station**. This starting point can be reached by train on the northern Luxembourg-Ettelbruck line, by Luxembourg City bus numbers 25, 10, 11, or 19 and by the RGTR bus Luxembourg-Echternach.

Cross the level crossing and follow the Alzette in the Eich-Weimerskirch direction. Take the first turning to the left.

After about 100m, on the right is an historic building which was once part of the old **[2] Luxembourg Foundry**. Since its renovation, the building has become the new headquarters of the Luxembourg scouting association “Guiden a Scouten”.

Cross the road and walk through the **[3] Park Laval**, named after the industrialist and politician Auguste Laval (1843-1915). With its marked paths, areas wooded with old trees and a playground, the park is an ideal leisure zone for Weimerskirch and Eich. A foot-bridge crosses into the township of Eich and the Place Dargent.

From the Place Dargent walk in the direction of Mühlenbach where the Eecher Schmelz foundry used to be. The buildings themselves disappeared in 1980, the only remaining structure being the **[4] “Kueleschapp”** (coal depot). When the ARBED steel company was founded in 1911, Eich became part of the Burbach-Eich-Dudelange Incorporated Steel Company. Since 2002, a large



Beggen, Walferdange and Steinsel



[6] Château de Beggen (Beggen castle)

residential area with 220 low cost houses built by the Fonds du Logement has occupied the site of the old foundry. Here, take the steps which climb up to the Rue Emile Metz. On the way you will pass the “ale Kueleschapp” (old coal depot) which belongs to the City of Luxembourg. This historical building was supposed to be converted into a children’s crèche, but the project never came to fruition because of the nearby heavy traffic.

Follow the Rue Emile Metz towards the Rue d’Eich. Here are buildings of great architectural value, such as Auguste Metz’s house or the old Eich municipal office which today serves as the Eich day care centre. There is also the birthplace of the steel industrialist Emile Mayrisch as well as the Villa of Félix Chomé. Other important institutions on the Rue d’Eich are the medical centre of the Norbert Metz Foundation and the Eich clinic which is part of the Luxembourg Centre Hospitalier group.

Follow the Rue d’Eich towards Dommeldange, and then take the Montée Pilate on the left towards Beggen. Pass the cave dedicated to the Holy Virgin which became a place of pilgrimage during the Second World War and in the post war years because of a miracle healing which had apparently occurred there. From here is a [5] [superb view over Beggen, Walferdange and Steinsel](#). About two kilometres further on, take the cycle path down into Beggen. Cross the main road by the school and over a bridge to join the Rue Henri Dunant turning right towards Dommeldange. Shortly thereafter you arrive at the [6] [Château de Beggen](#) as it



[7] Dommeldange Foundry

is commonly referred to, built by Emile Metz. Today it is home to the Russian Embassy. The Rue des Hauts-Fourneaux offers a view of the old [7] **Dommeldange Foundry**. On this site there are still several warehouses which are rented out to businesses. The largest one is home to MecanARBED. Some buildings, identifiable by their red brick frontage, are classified by the National Sites and Monuments Service. Several chimneys recall the once flourishing foundry. For many years after the steel factory closed, the CASA (Continental Alloys S.A.) company continued to use the site and was the subject of criticism in the press regarding problems of environmental pollution.

Take the first road on the left, Rue Nicolas Hein where the Foyer Alzheimer, the “Uelzecht-Lycée” and the Dommeldange school and sports complex are to be found. Having reached the Rue du Château turn left towards the [8] **Château Collart** built by the steel proprietor Charles Joseph Collart, who also owned the foundry by the Grünewald. Today the Château houses the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China.

Going along the Rue Jacques de Deventer, enter the wonderful [9] **Park Collart** where you can rest on one of the park benches and catch your breath. The green open spaces with trees, ponds and waterfalls are impressive. Leave the park by the gate and head towards the Route d’Echternach. The water that feeds the ponds comes from the Grünewald, and forms a small river in the Rue du Château which then feeds into the Alzette. The resulting



[8] Château Collart (Collart castle)

hydraulic power in Dommeldange led to the construction of six water mills over a distance of one kilometre. The first one was near the riding school (by the Alvisse Parc Hotel) and the sixth was located where there are now houses 20 and 20B on the Rue du Château. With one exception they were all used as grain mills.

From the Route d'Echternach, it is possible to take a shortcut (making a shorter circuit of 8 km) by continuing along the road which leads directly to Dommeldange station, the starting point of the itinerary.

To complete the full circuit (10,5 km), cross the Route d'Echternach and follow the forest path. At a bend in the path take a right turn that follows on into the Rue Schetzel, leading to Weimerskirch. This fork in the path used to be a favourite place for outdoor festivities in the forest.

The Rue Schetzel and the Fond Saint-Martin were once full of small traders and pedlars known as [10] “Jéiner”. The pedlar trade no longer exists in Weimerskirch, but at the beginning of the 20th century there were still many traders and their families living there, making a living from bartering china, metal ware, haberdashery or fruit in exchange for scrap metal, rags or bones. These rag and bone men were nicknamed “bei de Lakerten”. They had their own special secret language known as “Lakerten” language, sometimes called “Laker Schmus” or more commonly “Jéinesch”. There are still a few remaining inhabitants of Wei-



[9] Park Collart



[10] “Jéiner”

merskirch who can speak the language. The linguist Joseph Tockert immortalised Weimerskirch “Jéinesch” in his book and in some editions of the Cahiers Luxembourgeois.

At the end of the Rue du Soleil is the [11] “Mäertesbur” wash house which is located in the heart of Weimerskirch. Saint Martin (Mäerten) is the patron saint of the parish of Weimerskirch. The old “Mäertesbur” consisted of several tubs where people washed their laundry. To protect it from vandalism, the entrance used to be barricaded by an iron grid. At the end of 2000 the building was demolished and replaced by a new ‘Bur’, now used as a storage depot by the City of Luxembourg road maintenance service.

The parish of Weimerskirch is more than 1200 years old. Evidence of its origins can be found in the “vita” of the Saint-Maximin Abbey in Trier written in the second half of the 8th century. Around 723 the anonymous author notes: Karl Martel, the concierge, stricken by illness, gave three fiefs to the Saint-Maximin Abbey in Trier, one of which was VIDMAR ECCLESIA, later to become WIMARIECCLESIA. Between 893 and 1051, this church is regularly listed as belonging to the Saint-Maximin Abbey. It probably refers to a private church as was customary for the Franks. The fact that the [12] church is mentioned in this document suggests that it must have existed before 723. Many of the architectural features of the current construction date between 1866 and 1876. It is worthwhile paying a visit to the Weimerskirch cemetery where there are graves of several well known people.



[11] “Mäertesbur”

On the return route, the itinerary follows the Rue des Sources. The old station [13] “Charlys Gare” once stood near the bridge that crosses the Route d’Echternach. Charly (named after the former director of transport Charles Rischard) was the train that used to run along the narrow gauge track between Luxembourg and Echternach. In 1901, the laying of the track began in Dommeldange and Charly was in service from 20 April 1904 until 13 June 1954. The red- brick fronted Dommeldange station, classified as an historical monument, was destroyed in an arson attack, an act of vandalism that coincided with the construction of the new road.

The Rue des Hauts-Fourneaux and the Rue du Château have been improved, with the planting of trees and the creation of a pretty village square complete with benches and a well. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the local residents’ association, the well was officially inaugurated by the Mayor Lydie Polfer and christened [14] “Haupeschbur”.

Next to the “Haupeschbur” is also situated the church of Dommeldange. The Saint-Hubert Chapel, built in 1777, was replaced by the existing building in 1891. In 1898 Dommeldange was given its own independent church administration and a resident vicar. The chapel was restored in 1949 and in 1951 enriched by the acquisition of a crucifixion group by the artist Hans Lechner. From 1970-72 the church was renovated in accordance with liturgical provisions of the Second Vatican Council. In 1984-85



[12] Church in Weimerskirch



[13] Charlys

further renovation was necessary as a result of weather damage. Archbishop Jean Hengen consecrated the altar on 14th July 1985. In the course of the most recent renovation work in 2001, the wonderful frescoes by the painter Brucher were restored. It is not an accident that the Dommeldange chapel is one of the most beautiful in the city of Luxembourg.

100m further on, the road rejoins the starting point next to Dommeldange station.



Gare before destruction



[14] "Haupeschorbur"



Luxembourg

city tourist office

Place Guillaume II
P.O. Box 181
L-2011 Luxembourg
Tel. (+352) 22 28 09
Fax (+352) 46 70 70
touristinfo@lcto.lu
www.lcto.lu

