



Gösting Castle Society – Chronicle

1925

After the castle's proprietor, **Count Moritz Attems**, authorises restoration works and allows a preservation order to be put on the castle, the society's constituent general meeting is held on **3 March 1925**. The renowned historian **Fritz Popelka** holds a lecture in honour of the newly founded society. The first executive board consists of chairman **Emmerich Gordon**, the society's founder (and director of the Moserhof children's home for boys in Graz), secretary **Konrad Schwach**, the author of the first comprehensive Gösting castle guide, advisors **Fritz Popelka** and **Hans Pirchegger**, both historians, federal archaeologist **Walter Schmidt**, ethnology professor **Viktor von Geramb**, state curator **Walter von Semetkowski**, and castle expert **Robert Baravalle**. In the same year, trees and bushes in the inner courtyard are cut and giant heaps of debris are ransacked for stones usable for a future reconstructing the donjon. The first section of the castle to be rebuilt is the southern door in the upper castle's pentagonal tower.

1926

Reconstruction of the donjon begins and the inner courtyard is cleared from trees and undergrowth. A large container is installed between the donjon and the bailey to collect rainwater, which is urgently needed for construction purposes. The association for the preservation of German castles and palaces pays an official visit to Gösting Castle – the German association's attention was caught by the Gösting Castle Society's successful activities and unique policy of engaging volunteers in helping with the castle preservation. The tour is guided by the renowned castle expert **Bodo von Ehart**. On occasion of this event the Styrian government holds a festive reception and agrees to grant the Gösting Castle Society a yearly subsidy.

1927

After thorough investigation, an old cistern is discovered in the inner courtyard; it is later emptied and cleared. Reconstruction work on the donjon proceeds successfully and wooden bars are installed on the tower's first rebuilt level.

1928

After some fragments of the cistern's curb were found at its bottom while cleaning and emptying it, the **Traungau** fraternity pays for the fragments' reconstruction. The missing parts are modelled after the originals and made of the locally well-known Aflenz sandstone. Volunteers and soldiers help to improve the path up to the castle in order to make the ruins accessible to vehicles – a necessary measure in order to facilitate construction work on the castle. Meanwhile, the donjon is already rebuilt up to the third level.

1929

Carpenters **Absenger** build a wooden staircase inside the donjon. On 26 May, the donjon's platform is placed in concrete by about 60 young volunteers under the supervision of **Otto Strohschneider**, the future headmaster of the technical school of construction in Graz. In the course of a festive event, the donjon is reopened to the public on 14 September after the wide battlements are completed. More than 2000 people attend this remarkable festivity.

1930

A part of the inner circular wall, which had been destroyed by a collapse of the donjon in 1874, is partly rebuilt in order to establish a terrace. The society issues three individual charity stamps to acquire additional funds for the restoration. Loose wall parts of the chapel are demolished, rebuilt and aligned; new window embrasures (made by masonry company **Grein**) are installed in the chapel's raw window openings. Building contractors **Althaller** spend 571 man-hours on bricklaying works in the chapel. In addition to this, a lightning protection system is installed on the donjon.

1931

A number of volunteers build a dry stonewall in the area of today's tavern terrace.

1932

The few remnants of the castle's inner gate are restored and a small room above the gate is equipped with a new pent roof and a wooden floor. This project is financed by the Graz men's choir. At the same time, the restoration of the Romanesque twin chapel begins and in the course of cleaning debris from the chapel, a late Gothic sand stone relief of *St. George* is found. A collapsed part of the inner circular wall is rebuilt and used as a foundation for a future terrace.

1933

The upper castle's northern gate, close to the pentagonal tower, is reconstructed. Extensive safety work is done and necessary bricklaying takes place.

1934

Various restoring activities take place inside the chapel and along the great hall's southern wall. The reconstruction works around the pentagonal tower's northern gate are completed.

1936

The society completes complicated safety and repair works on several of the castle's walls and finishes cleaning the great hall's basement area.

1937

The previous years' restoration projects, which affected the entire castle area, are brought to completion as the western closing wall near the so-called "donkey's stable" is finally fully erected. By having accomplished this enormous amount of work over the past couple of years, the Gösting Castle Society chalks up great success. Its efforts are appreciated and acknowledged by the foundation of several similar associations in various locations throughout Styria, which dedicate themselves to the preservation of other ruined castles.

1939

All projected construction on the castle has to be cancelled due to the outbreak of World War II. Building material is now only available via ration coupons for vital interests and as the conservation of a ruined castle is not considered essential either for the people or for the state, no coupons can be obtained for this purpose.

1945

The castle was occupied by the Volkssturm during World War II and is from now on until the end of the war used as an observation point; none of the society's belongings can be salvaged afterwards. In addition to this, several valuable finds and pieces of equipment are lost during this period of time. An explosion and the ensuing fire destroy the so-called "Lurchenheim" (the present castle tavern) where World War II Volkssturm panzerfausts and ammunition were still stored. This disaster destroys the volunteers' quarters, their tools, memorabilia and numerous finds. Fortunately, the quarter's barrel vault withstands destruction. Only after the Russian occupation forces leave Graz, access to the castle, which has meanwhile become a heap of rubble, is possible again. In July, in spite of all the problems, **Victor Kangler** and his wife **Elisabeth**, the new tavern's tenants, begin clearing and cleaning the barrel vault area and establishing the room as a proper tavern.

1946

No activities were possible during wartime, but now restoration works on the castle begin again under the guidance of the society's new interim chairman **Anton de Oppido**.

1947

The society continues to clean up the considerable damage caused by the tragedy of the last few years. The extensive costs for materials and workers can no longer be covered by the society alone, hence the deputy chairman and owner of the castle, **Heinrich Attems**, absorbs some of the expenses and provides timber.

1949

In October, the federal police headquarters in Graz approve the reinstatement of the “Götting Castle Preservation Society” after it had been banned – like many other formerly existing private organisations – due to alleged connections to the Nazi regime. As these allegations proved to be false, the Götting Society is able to start its activities anew. **Emmerich Gordon** again functions as the society’s chairman.

1950

Emmerich Gordon, the society’s founder and first chairman is awarded honorary chairmanship at the organisation’s general assembly on 22 February as the society’s 25-year anniversary is celebrated. The members of the reinstated board are sculptor **Hanns Neuböck** as chairman, **Heinrich Attems** as deputy chairman, **Alexander Körmöczy** as secretary and **Anton de Oppido** as treasurer. As the improved general situation after the war puts the society in the position of again being able to perform repairs, two massive donjon doors, which had been destroyed by acts of vandalism, are restored. In addition to this, the castle’s stolen lightning protection system can be replaced. The yearly membership fee amounts to ATS 4,--.

1951

As **Emmerich Gordon** moves to the castle of Riegersburg in south-eastern Styria and **Hanns Neuböck** resigns because of ill health and work overload, **Anton de Oppido**, a national bank supervisor who was the society’s provisional leader during the war (and has been its treasurer since 1928), becomes the new chairman. In the fall, members of the Styrian Castle Society clean the entire castle area, thereby reviving the tradition of voluntary labour stints. About half of its former members (from the time prior to World War II) join the Götting Castle Society again and the chairman encourages current members to recruit new like-minded people who are willing to support the society’s cause.

1952

During the society’s assembly in December, chairman **de Oppido** gives a report on a big new project: a new roof over the chapel will be installed. Federal State Secretary **Udo Illig** supports the society with a generous subsidy, which will be used to buy, cut and store appropriate wood for the new roof.

1953

Preparatory work for the roofing is in progress and the carpentry company **Prix** will be commissioned with executing the job.

1954

A topping out ceremony on 19 September, attended by a great number of locals, marks the completion of the chapel's new shingle roof cladding with larch shingles from Lungau (a district in the federal state of Salzburg) and the installation of a new additional lightning protection system on the chapel. The overall costs for cladding and necessary masonry and tinsmith work amount to ATS 73.145,--. The state of Styria and the City of Graz generously sponsor these construction works. A decision on starting preliminary works for a new roof on the pentagonal tower is made by the board. Currently, the society has 165 members.

1955

The Society spends ATS 23.950,-- on a massive door, which makes it finally possible to safely close and lock the entrance to the donjon and the upper chapel. In addition to this, the donjon's battlements are overhauled and the horizontal safety barriers between them are replaced. The Castle Society celebrates its 30-year anniversary in the "Heimatsaal", the Styrian ethnological museum's well-known auditorium. The society's founder and now honorary chairman **Emmerich Gordon** gives a slide lecture illustrating the society's activities from 1925 to 1954. This year the number of members rises up to 206 persons.

1956

The cistern beneath the donjon's northern corridor, holding about 20.000 litres of water, is rebuilt and sealed up; additionally, an archway is built and repair work is done in the chapel, the bailey and the outer ward. The investment for these projects comes to a total of ATS 14.228,--. Unfortunately, the massive wooden donjon door installed the year before is broken and considerably damaged by vandals. The Baroque grilles, removed from the windows above the tavern after World War I, are reinstalled in their original places. The current number of members: 211.

1957

The circular wall's collapsed protruding south-western corner in front of the pentagonal tower is built up again to its full height and the western connecting wall's still existing part is restored. The stones required for these renovations are taken from an abandoned old hut, called "Flößerkeusche", which was torn down for this purpose. Larch wood shutters are mounted on the windows above the tavern and measures for a more efficient rainwater collection are taken, which helps to avoid water shortage during construction works. The lightning protector, damaged by a bolt, needs repair. All the masonry is executed thoroughly and competently by the Graz construction company **Hans Samuda**, which has been in charge of any essential renovations in the castle for several years. This year, the society has 212 members.

1958

A massive wood-beamed subceiling is mounted in the twin-chapel and finally separates the two chapels (St. George's and St. Anne's chapel) properly again after a very long time. The two chapels are now again available for individual purposes. This project is financed by the castle's owner count **Heinrich Attems**. His financial contribution keeps the society's total expenses down to only ATS 2.530, -- in this year. The number of members increases to 222.

1959

This year, in order to prevent vandalism, the **Samuda** construction company transforms the old castle kitchen (which today houses the "Burgstüberl") into a staffroom for the tavern tenant **Viktor Kangler**. The restored area is also covered with a monopitch roof. The Gösting Castle Society takes care of the well-known and close by scenic viewpoint called Jungfernsprung. This legendary location (made famous by the old tale of "Anna von Gösting") was originally made accessible by a Gösting embellishment club about 30 years earlier.

1960

On occasion of the Gösting Castle Society's 35th anniversary, an interesting article written by chairman **Anton de Oppido** is published in the 9th newsletter of the Styrian Castle Organisation. This report discusses Gösting Castle and its history, the society and its foundation as well as its remarkable accomplishments in restoring the castle since 1925. During the 35-year anniversary celebrations **Otto Strohschneider** and **Fritz Popelka** are given honorary memberships. **Richard Guseck-Glankirchen** is elected deputy chairman. The current membership fee is ATS 20,-- and the number of members decreases to 207.

1961

The northern walls are stabilised and constructions on the new staff facility are completed, so **Viktor Kangler** can move in. In addition to this, the lower tavern terrace's paving is finished. From now on, the activities report, hitherto regularly published in the newsletter of the Styrian Castle Society, does unfortunately no longer contain a tabulation of the Gösting society's current expenses. This will cause difficulties in reconstructing the future activities of the Gösting Castle Society.

1962

In the course of the general assembly on 15 May, **Richard Guseck-Glankirchen** is elected as the new chairman. **Anton de Oppido's** work is honoured in a review as he becomes honorary chairman and donates his collection of historic Gösting castle photographs to the castle society. Unfortunately, **Anton de Oppido** deceases after a serious traffic accident later this year – **Reiner Puschnig** will later incorrectly claim in his book "Burg Gösting" that **Richard Guseck-Glankirchen** became chairman because of **Anton de Oppido's** death.

1965

Graz-based building contractors **Herzog** begin the restoration and rebuilding of the pentagonal tower. From now on, all further construction and restoration work will be done by this company until it goes out of business in 1992. An old Baroque bell, crafted in 1763 by bell founder **Martin Feltl** in Graz is mounted in the apse's belfry and is from now on regularly tolled.

1966

The chapel's broken south-eastern upper corner is repaired and a large Baroque window at the northern side of the lower chapel is walled up, while a Romanesque double-arched window, located diagonally above it, is uncovered. The tavern's chimney has to be demolished and rebuilt 30 cm higher than before. In the fall, the tavern terrace's supporting dry stone wall, erected in 1930, partially collapses.

1967

The part of the inner curtain wall between the old great hall and the chapel's section of what came to be the tavern's terrace, which had skidded down in the fall of 1966, is rebuilt. Additionally, the pentagonal tower's restoration is completed and its walls are raised to the level of the curtain wall. These constructions are meant to ensure the possibility of adding a protective pavilion roof in the future. In addition to this, the high free-standing northern wall of the so-called squires' quarters is reconnected with the pentagonal tower. In order to finish this year's projects, the workers use a 26 m high material chute.

1968

This year, a proper massive wood-beamed ceiling is installed in the upper chapel, which recreates the original Romanesque appearance of the room. Access to St. Anne's chapel is facilitated by the installation of wooden stairs. The cistern is cleaned again.

1969

This year's most important event: **Hubert** and **Anna Michalatsch** take over the tavern from its former tenants, the merited **Kangler** family, who had been running it since the end of World War II. The donjon balcony's northern wall is restored.

1970

Preparatory measures are taken for the restoration of the great hall's inner wall: clearing woodland and excavating remnants of the northern curtain wall's fundamentals, which were originally erected on bedrock.

1971

On 24 July, it is finally possible to hold a service in the now almost entirely restored upper chapel for the first time since the end of the 18th century. The service is very well attended. In order to statically secure the great hall's courtyard wall, which was fortunately not destroyed by a damaging blast in 1843, several retaining walls are built with the help of

16 m high scaffolds. A big gap in the eastern part of the great hall's wall has to be closed and new toilet facilities are to be installed in a partially preserved barrel vault. A precious copper coin, the so-called "Raitpfennig" (formerly used as an accounting tool), is found in the castle debris. This precious find will from now on been used as a model for minting memorabilia coins. In addition to this, an ancient clay lid is discovered in trial excavations. The Gösting Castle Society issues a publication called "Burg Gösting" – a small, yet very informative book about Gösting castle and its background, which was written by **Reiner Puschig**, a senior archive keeper in the Styrian state archives.

1972

This year sees a continuation of the works on the great hall's retaining walls, on closing a large gap in the hall's eastern part, on the installation of new toilets beneath a partially surviving barrel vault and on restoring the lower wall of the squires' quarters. Chairman **Richard Guseck-Glankirchen** writes a six-page report about the Gösting Castle Society's situation and its work on the castle in the years 1965-1972, which was published in the Austrian castle organisation's magazine "Burgen und Schlösser in Österreich" ("Castles and Palaces in Austria").

1973

On the initiative of chairman **Richard Guseck-Glankirchen** the Gösting Castle Society buys 13 1:200 scale models of various Austrian castles from the renowned Viennese model builder **Leonhard Völkl**. As an effort to clear the society's debts, more than 5.000(!) letters asking for financial support are sent out, which unfortunately also causes enormous expenses in shipping and handling. **Joseph Krass** designs the society's catchy new logo.

1974

Continuing construction on the inner and outer curtain walls, roof repairs and closing the chapel's windows are essential tasks this year. The tavern becomes increasingly popular among castle visitors and the **Michalatsch** family runs the business successfully. Visits to other castles and a vivid exchange with numerous castle associations as well as with several historic institutions keep the castle society's life active.

1975

In November and December the pent roofs of the inner castle gate, the "Burgstüberl" and the donjon's northern balcony are tiled with three layers of eternit panels. The Feldbach masonry company **Harmtodt** restores the broken inner part of the upper chapel apsis' Romanesque double-arched window using Aflenz sandstone. All the upper chapel's windows are glazed with hexagonal leaded crown glass and the Late-Gothic relief of St. George is restored and mounted on the northern wall inside the upper chapel.

1976

Sturdy iron racks are built for displaying all the castle models which were acquired by the 21Gösting Castle Society in 1973. The society also purchases four new castle models crafted by **Leonhard Völkl**. A massive iron railing door for the inner castle gate is ordered from the vocational blacksmith school in Mureck (southern Styria). Thanks to sponsors **Liselotte Rantzau** of Oberthal Castle and the **Styrian Artillery Alliance**, the Gösting Castle Society is endowed with two small cannons, which were cast based on a 1519 original.

1977

In honour of the society's 50-year anniversary, the Graz minting company **Schwertner** produces 10.000 restrike mints of the old accounting coin, the "Raitpfennig".

1978

Sections of the inner curtain wall between the inner gate and the upper castle, which had completely vanished over time, are partially reconstructed. At the same time, the barbican in front of the inner gate and the pentagonal tower's northern Romanesque outer courtyard wall are restored. The number of members increases to 360.

1979/80

Urgently necessary additional works on the pentagonal tower's northern wall and on the inner curtain wall, west of the castle gate, are conducted: certain wall parts have to be removed and are newly erected. Numerous other smaller repairs have to be done on the walls throughout the castle. These works are realised by **Herzog** contractors.

1981

A considerable quantity of wall stones (white marble tiles from the church of Straßengel and unused pieces of Aflenz sandstone and Gaisberg marble from the restoration of the Graz cathedral) is brought up to the castle this year and stored in the outer courtyard. A massive iron railing door, ordered in 1976, is finally completed in Mureck, plated with zinc and installed in the inner castle gate. In addition to this, the apse's square quarry stone base is secured.

1982

The partially collapsed arch of the small aisle leading to the upper chapel is reconstructed and some of the Straßengel marble tiles are laid there. Additionally, 71 handmade lime wood coats of arms are mounted in the upper chapel for decoration. The coats of arms had been ordered and purchased by the Gösting Castle Society and were crafted by the Fürstenfeld whittler **Franz Zierer** and coloured by **Elisabeth Germann**, a renowned restorer from Graz. The society also purchases three more castle models built by **L. Völkl**. This year, the number of members increases to 391.

1984

Parts of the western wall near the so-called “donkey’s stable”, which had skidded down in recent years, are reconstructed and rebuilt to the height of the parapet.

1985

The regrettable death of the legendary “Mister Burgverein”, chairman **Richard Guseck-Glankirchen**, means a great loss to the society. The future state curator **Friedrich Bouvier** is elected new chairman.

1986

On 26 July, a memorial for former chairman **Guseck-Glankirchen** is held in the castle. The donjon displays black flags.

1987

In a spectacular venture, the donjon’s wide battlements are restored with the aid of hanging scaffolds.

1989

The current state of the outer curtain wall close to the “donkey’s stable” and next to the “Mostschankhütte” (a former cider bar) is alarmingly poor. A restoration of this area is strongly envisaged.

1990

The skidded-down outer layers of two parts of the outer circular wall are reconstructed. At the same time, the great hall’s courtyard wall is restored.

1991

The construction company **Herzog** builds a stair-like path on the upper part of the traditional (inner) route to the castle.

1992

Construction work on the stairs of the inner path, which started a year earlier, is completed.

1993

Hugo Frisch, a deserving longtime member of the Gösting Castle Society’s executive board is awarded honorary membership during a ceremony in the castle’s tavern attended by the following members of the executive board: **Bouvier, Attems, Herzog, Mühlböck, Szakmáry, Blaser, Stiger**, as well as the tavern’s landlady **Anna Michalatsch**. On 5 June, St. George’s chapel catches fire due to negligence. Although the road to the castle

is blocked by parking cars, the Graz fire brigade is able to fight this dangerous situation and put out the fire just in time to prevent any serious damage.

1994

Executive board member **Stiger** initiates an extemporary repair of the old and perforated chapel roof which dates back to 1954. Carpenters **Prix** complete this assignment, using about 75 m² of firwood shingles.

1995

On the occasion of its 70-year anniversary, the society again starts intensive work in the castle's inner areas after a break of several years. Carpenters **Prix** are commissioned to protect various insecure locations by installing wooden railings. Executive board member **Stiger** organises several full-day clean-ups and rearranging activities during which a large number of volunteers helps to clear out and clean the entire castle area as well as the donjon. These activities are urgently needed in preparation for the anniversary celebrations in honour of the Gösting Castle Society's remarkable jubilee this year. The actual festivities take place on 30 June and are attended by the abbot of the *Cistercian Rein Abbey*, **Robert Beigl**. Thanks to the efficient clear-out, the society's castle models can now be displayed in a panelled room on one of the donjon's upper levels.

1996

The articles of association are changed and a new position (managing chairman) is established in the society's board in order to lessen the chairman's workload and to intensify the society's activities. **Sepp Stiger**, a radiographer and longtime member of the castle society, is elected for this position at the general assembly. He was in charge of preparing and organising the events for the Gösting Castle Society's 70-year anniversary last year. Thanks to **Stiger's** commitment and efforts, voluntary labour stints are reintroduced this year and the working hours are registered in a time book. The first of these events takes place on 28 September. Thanks to systematic wood clearing, the castle's imposing structure can now again be seen from the town below. In the course of the activities, old wall stones are retrieved from the piles of rubble and placed along the inner side of the circular wall. Several precious spolia, also found during this process, are displayed in the small castle museum. For the first time ever, a crawler-mounted loader is used during these labour stints. While clearing away the rubble, the actual level of the original path to the castle is partially revealed.

1997

Carpenters **Prix** are commissioned to tile the chapel's roof with a triple layer of larch shingles, because in spite of the 1994 repairs, the old double roofing, completed in 1954, had become leaky and damaged. The shingles are produced in the state of Salzburg. In the course of these repairs, several other necessary works are completed: renewing the lightning protection system, constructing a new chimney for the tavern, repairing the chapel's rooftop cross and reinstalling a zinc sphere (designed by secretary **H. Szakmáry**) just below it. The expenses for renewing the chapel's roof (including all additional repair works) by far exceed ATS 1 million, a big part of which is provided by the Styrian govern-

ment's revitalisation fund. On 3 October, a renaissance fair takes place on the castle, featuring the "**Deutschlandsberger Ritter**" (knights of Deutschlandsberg), a group showing mediaeval martial arts, and an ensemble called **Londhed**, performing music from the Middle Ages. In spite of the very bad weather, a large number of visitors, including several well-known local politicians attend the castle society's celebrations. The festivities are meant to be the starting point of a new tradition, as the society intends to organise similar events and various cultural activities on the castle in the future. In order to effectively support these activities and to assist visitors who are unable to climb the steep road, the society plans to offer a shuttle bus service from Gösting up to the castle for such occasions.

1998

This year, 43 voluntary labour stints take place on the castle, amounting to 1855 working hours. An additional 1437 unpaid hours are spent mapping the chapel and repairing old weapons which used to be on display in the former castle museum a long time ago (a harquebus and a muzzle-loading gun, both of which are restored by board member **Absenger**). A small mechanical digger is used to facilitate the labour stints. With some delay and under extreme conditions, the challenging roof tiling and restoration works are finished this year. The task is carefully completed and has a beautiful and satisfying outcome.

1999

In spite of persistent rumours that castle owner **Heinrich Attems** sold Gösting castle to **Hubert Auer**, a well-known baker in Graz, the society organises another voluntary daylong labour stint on 10 April. The entire castle is cleaned and the systematic clearing of the surrounding woodland is continued. It is only thanks to the board's own research in the course of the first half year that the society learns the truth about the actual property situation: the castle and a large area around it were indeed sold to the industrial baker **Hubert Auer** in November 1998. The board had not at all been informed about this transaction and was thus taken by surprise, even though the former owner and deputy chairman **Attems** would have been obliged to first and foremost inform his colleagues in the society's board about the sudden change in ownership. It would have also been his duty to ensure the society's proper legal position for the future. Because of the transaction, the society's activities on the castle have to be stopped completely, as any further work is no longer allowed for legal reasons. The society tries to find common ground with the new castle proprietor – this is not an easy task as there had only been oral agreements with the former owner in the past. The society's objective is to enable a thriving future cooperation between the society and owner **Auer** built on a legally secured base in agreement with the society's statutes. Despite all odds, the castle's preservation and revitalisation continues to be at the society's utmost concern – it remains to be hoped that the society will be able to resume its traditional and statutory activities on the castle. An article written by chairman **Bouvier** titled "Burgverein Gösting" and a reference to board member **Absenger's** paper about the castle (see year 2000) are published in the 20th issue of the Styrian Castle Society's newsletter (a jubilee edition).

2000

During the general assembly, which is also the society's 75-year anniversary celebration, chairman **Bouvier** resigns from his function – an inappropriate point in time considering the castle society's current, very tense situation. Managing chairman **Stiger** is unanimously elected as the new chairman. His task of leading the society as a working association for this unique castle's sake is a very difficult endeavour. He has to do this in spite of the serious issues arising from the castle's sale and caused by its new owner. A much-noticed article by board member **Absenger** ("Gösting castle, observations of its architectural heritage") is published in the city of Graz' Historic Yearbook.

2001

The new owner, **Hubert Auer**, seems to be interested in working together with the castle society, which raises hope among the board members for a good future relationship. Unfortunately, however, it becomes increasingly clear that **Auer**, in fact, opposes the castle society for no apparent reason and refuses any cooperation. Count **Attems**, the former castle owner and deputy chairman, passes away in the summer.

2002

In hopes of settling things with owner **Auer** and expecting to be able to sign a new contract soon, the society continues to refrain from all its activities on the castle. Lengthy correspondence with **Auer's** lawyers does not reveal any clear statement from **Auer's** part and leaves the society in the dark. The current Styrian Castle Society's newsletter publishes the following note concerning the Gösting Castle Society: "There are rumours that count **Heinrich Attems** sold the castle and the surrounding forest to **Hubert Auer** without timely notice to the Gösting Castle Society. **Attems** explained to the society that the castle was sold together with the entire property by mistake (!). The Gösting Castle Society was taken aback, because, had there been the chance, it might have purchased the castle itself."

2003/04

Auer continues to ensure that he wants to cooperate with the society, however, even though several board members keep trying to encourage the owner to work together and achieve a satisfying result for both parties, **Auer** shows no interest – on the contrary, he seems to be working against the society. The lawyers' correspondence turns out to be unsuccessful and disappointing, not leading to any acceptable results for the society. **Auer** basically expels the castle society from the castle! As working on the castle is thus not possible any longer, the society turns its attention to other, equally important tasks: construction research, the scientific analysis of spolia and an evaluation of hundreds of broken earthenware and metal fragments as well as pieces of stove tiles, which were all found in the building rubble.

2005

Membership declines as, due to the unpleasant circumstances, many members leave the society and several elderly members pass away (current number of members: 201; all-time peak: 391 in 1982). Not even the chairman's yearly newsletter containing detailed, first-hand information about the society's situation can motivate the members to contribute

to the cause. The city of Graz (represented by mayor **Siegfried Nagl**) offers its help in establishing contact to the castle's owner, but does not keep this promise. On a positive note, chairman **Stiger** designs and orders a special issue postal stamp for the society, which shows its logo and highlights the society's 80-year history. This stamp is available through the castle society. The chairman also creates a detailed topography of all the coats of arms displayed in the upper chapel, which requires extensive photographic work and takes a lot of time. This comprehensive compilation does not only make it possible to locate each coat of arms on the chapel's walls, but also ensures the heraldry's future preservation.

2006

As the society plans to publish a new, detailed book about Gösting Castle, a couple of members begin to engage in preliminary works on this project. The new book will draw on a booklet about the castle written by **Reiner Puschnig** and published by the Gösting Castle Society in 1971. Several notable researchers have already announced their cooperation or stated their interest in writing scientific papers, which will be incorporated into the new book. During the annual general assembly, Professor **Bernhard Hubmann** holds a well-received lecture on the geological history of Gösting Castle and its surrounding area. **Bernhard Hebert** publishes a paper about ancient fortifications and findings around Gösting Castle before the castle itself even existed. Both this text and **Hubmann's** lecture will be included in the new book. This year marks the beginning of working on the renovation of the society's town office in 2 Hartiggasse in the centre of Graz. Board members mount a brand new official sign next to the building's main entrance marking the society's town home. The Styrian Castle Society's newsletter, which, for this one time, is translated into Slovenian, publishes a paper by board members **Stiger** and **Szakmáry** ("Gösting Castle Ruins"). The Gösting Society also publishes an essay: a paper discussing **Johanna Kraschitzer's** and **Karl Peitler's** evaluation of old findings (earthenware shards and pottery) and historic coins discovered in the castle.

2007

The chairman and some other board members continue to work on the society's town office, renovating the room, which has hitherto been in a very poor state. The goal of these efforts is to establish a useful office and a proper home for the society's belongings while keeping the costs as low as possible. In order to allow easier access for persons wishing to use the society's literature in the future, there are plans to digitalise and catalogue the society's small but remarkable library after finishing the room's renovation. In August, deputy chairman **Moravi** presents his impressive and extensive scientific paper about spolia found on Gösting castle.

2008

A structural survey using photogrammetry allows the creation of a map depicting the age of various parts of the castle. The Technical University of Graz helps creating informative drawings of some of the castle's important areas. Sadly, the number of members decreases to only 150 as some persons resign for unknown reasons and due to the passing of several elderly members. Unfortunately, too many members refuse to pay their membership fee, even though the society stresses that any contribution by the members does definitely not support the castle's owner!

2009

Renovation work on the town office continues, but as only a few board members are willing to help, this strenuous project takes a very long time. In order to become publicly better known and to be up to date, this year's goal is the creation of the society's own website. This platform will give the public an opportunity to obtain comprehensive and reliable information about the Gösting Castle Society, the castle itself, its situation and its environment. Public funding helps to keep financial strains on the society's budget (caused by last year's costly structural photogrammetric survey) low.

2010

The society's website is in the works, but due to the original webmaster being inefficient, its launch date has to be postponed several times. Eventually, the society's secretary manages to find a competent new webmaster, who redesigns the website, changes it according to the society's ideas and quickly puts it online. The results of all these efforts can be seen on www.bvg-graz.at. The Gösting Castle Society can now be reached by e-mail (kanzlei@bvg-graz.at) and via a contact form on the website. Because of an interruption due to a board member's illness, the town office renovation progresses slowly. This year's main activities include building research and photographic and preparatory work for the society's planned book. Several visits to the castle show that the site's condition has deteriorated: the castle hill becomes increasingly overgrown and the owner consistently ignores the large number of wall damages. If it were not for the tavern's tenant, **Angelika Michalatsch**, who takes care of the castle's inner area, the premises would probably not be accessible anymore. Disregarding all these serious issues, the owner, **Hubert Auer**, makes positive statements to the press about the castle's condition, which are actually very far from reality.

2011

This year, the society puts its focus on finishing the town office's renovation. Despite several pending tasks in the office such as organising and storing the society's possessions and renewing the old and insufficient electrical wiring, the renovations can be completed in autumn. This was only possible thanks to the devoted efforts of the chairman and some other board members. The result of their hard work is a comfortable room, of which the society can be proud. It will from now on be used as an efficient and useful town office, giving the society a proper location for all its internal activities. Further preparatory tasks for the projected new book about the castle, especially editorial work, are under way. Meanwhile, the state of the castle worsens: the apse's foundation, which almost cannot be accessed anymore because of uncontrolled growth, has partially broken away due to washouts. No obvious repair measures have been taken by the castle's owner **Hubert Auer** since he bought the property in 1998. He did, however, clear a considerable amount of woodland in the middle part of Ruinenweg in order to plant a vineyard. Local newspapers publish interviews with him in which he talks about his completely unrealistic ideas of how to "use" a castle, which, unfortunately, ignore all historical implications. Sadly, uninformed readers might misinterpret these statements as useful contributions to much needed conservation work. Luckily, tenant **Angelika Michalatsch** continues to make sure that the typical pleasant hospitality is upheld in her tavern despite all the problems. As the chapel and the donjon are frequently opened to the public and visitors are hardly supervised, vandalism unfortunately increases. On a positive note, the society can register a number of new members.

2012

The completion of the remaining tasks in the town office is delayed by unexpected inconsistencies emerging from problems concerning the Gösting Castle Society's position in connection to the tenancy agreement between the Styrian Castle Society and the landlord (**lig**). The Gösting Castle Society seeks to clarify the situation as quickly as possible. The castle's state has still not improved as the owner **Auer** does not take any preservation measures. Meanwhile, **Auer's** construction activities for the projected vineyard cause serious problems for the neighbouring residents. The society faces a sad loss, as the cross above the altar of St. Anne's chapel is torn down and stolen by unknown individuals who also vandalise the sanctuary. The chapel bell's clapper has fallen down and is found in the attic. Four of the chapel's 71 coats of arms have fallen off the walls, and two of them are put back up this year. There is only little progress with the new book, as not all contributors submit their texts as promised. The society owns six extensive albums (the society's "soul") which are bound in new premium leather covers. Various newspaper articles discuss the castle and its sad situation. There are, however, also several positive publications: the new Graz guide and the "Styrian magazine for art and culture" feature favourable pieces about Gösting castle, deputy chairman **Moravi** writes a scientific article ("Construction of stone castles in the High Middle Ages") for a book called "Castles in the Alpine Region". Furthermore, chairman **Stiger** gives a radio interview and secretary **Szakmáry** (in his function as an official "GrazGuide") informs many interested visitors on guided tours through the castle. Trying to sell the society's own postcards to some of the newsstands in central Graz proves to be more difficult than expected. On the occasion of the 600-year jubilee of the Styrian government, a document dating from 1412 is presented, which underlines Gösting castle's importance as it designates its then owner as important enough to be included in an exclusive circle of politicians who were called to an assembly in 1412. The society is very happy to welcome 30 new members this year.

2013

As numerous phone calls and other inquiries prove, the society's website successfully reaches out to the public and informs its local and international visitors about current goings-on. As treasurer **Kugi** and deputy secretary **Absenger** resign from their positions due to personal reasons, **Karl-Heinz Geher** and **Dominika Stiger** are elected as new treasurer and deputy secretary, respectively, at the general assembly on 22 June. The issues with the Styrian Castle Society originating last year are still unresolved. **Gernot Obersteiner**, a senior archivist at the Styrian Provincial Archives, is able to determine 3 March 1925 as the Gösting Castle Society's actual founding date; thus, the incorrect date (3 May 1950) hitherto on file with the Central Austrian Register of Associations can finally be rectified. Thanks to the efforts of a few board members, about 20 new members can be admitted this year. Preparations for the projected book about the castle are a major part of this year's activities. The only contributions to urgently necessary conservation measures in the castle made by **H. Auer** this year are highly inappropriate: He contracts companies, which do not have any historical expertise and use large construction site equipment and building machines such as a truck-mounted crane. They also apply wrong building material in the wrong places. The results are accordingly poor and inexpert. The Federal Monuments Office issues a building freeze immediately after the news about **Auer's** unprofessional restoration measures surface. It is, however, alarming to see that it takes two weeks (and thus far too long) for this building freeze to be executed by the Graz city administration!

2014

Treasurer **Kugi** officially hands over his duties to his successor **Geher**. The overdue town office agreement between the Styrian Castle Society and the Gösting Castle Society can still not be achieved. Three projects can be successfully completed this year: the chapel bell's missing clapper is reinstalled by a specialised company, the two remaining dislocated coats of arms are repositioned on the chapel wall and a new crucifix, hand-carved and coloured by **Erwin Kugi**, is mounted above the altar, replacing the old cross which was stolen in 2012. Gösting's parson, **Karl Niederer**, consecrates the crucifix in a short, but beautiful ceremony in the chapel. The society members present at the celebration are sad that **Kugi** is absent due to health reasons. The chairman, the secretary and his deputy spend a lot of time gathering and organising information for the society's planned book about Gösting Castle. In the course of these preparations, chairman **Stiger** consults a graphic design agency where he gains an interesting insight into possible options concerning the book's design and publishing. The chairman invests a lot of time and effort in updating the website's contents, which will go online in the beginning of the next year.

2015

The few board members who still contribute to the society's activities have several meetings, discussing the progress of the society's new book. Chairman **Stiger** is in talks with various authors who have promised to write articles for the book and reminds them to deliver in due time. He accomplishes a noble goal: with great care, and spending hundreds of hours on the project, he digitalises 166 old glass slides, which had been stored in the society's town office, and thus makes them accessible through modern technology. These precious photographs provide valuable information about the castle's history during the society's early days. Furthermore, **Stiger** designs a new personalised postal stamp featuring the "Raitpfennig" (an old accounting coin found in the ruins) to honour the society's **90 year anniversary**. In addition to this, he creates a new postcard, which shows a unique aerial view of the entire castle. For reasons still unknown to the society, the relationship to the castle's owner **H. Auer** is as tense as ever. Unfortunately, too many castle society members and visitors to Gösting Castle continue to show no interest whatsoever in the castle's fate. The society is grateful to the tavern's tenant **Angelika Michalatsch** who still manages the inner courtyard's upkeep, tries to maintain order and has many damages repaired – all of this without any financial or other form of support by the owner. At the end of the year, **Erwin Kugi**, the society's former long-time treasurer and creator of St. Anne's chapel's new carved crucifix, passes away after a long sickness.

2016

The work on the new book about Gösting Castle is progressing: after several promptings by the chairman, all promised papers finally arrive and several informative discussions take place. Three board members do extensive research on old documents concerning Gösting Castle at the Styrian Provincial Archives and at the private archives of Professor **K. A. Kubinzky**, a renowned Styrian historian. Unfortunately, the Gösting Castle Society has to accept the owner's continuing obvious lack of interest in properly maintaining the building. The castle complex's state of preservation is constantly deteriorating. In addition to this, numerous members of the castle society and most of the (many) visitors to the castle only show an upsettingly small amount of interest in the castle's history and future. A safe for the collection of donations, once installed into the walls of the inner castle gate by the late legendary chairman **R. Guseck**, has, over time, sadly become unusable due to its old age

and harsh weather conditions. After the very sudden and completely inexplicable resignation of treasurer **Geher** the society was suddenly put in the difficult position of having to find a new treasurer. Luckily, **Gerald Bogner** volunteered for the position following an appeal in this year's newsletter. The ongoing negotiations with the Styrian Castle Society – concerning an urgently needed organisational agreement between the two societies – can still not be brought to a conclusion because the Styrian Castle Society's president is unwilling to settle and sign the document. The two board members **G. Blaser** (deputy treasurer) and **G. Lechner** (adviser) resign.

2017

An article is published in the Gösting parish newspaper in May, reporting about Gösting Castle and the Castle Society, which hopefully reaches a large number of locals. Unfortunately, talks between the Gösting Castle Society and the Styrian Castle Association continue to be unsuccessful due to a lack of interest by the Styrian Castle Association's responsible board members. The Gösting Castle Society's website is continuously kept up to date by the webmaster and the deputy secretary. Thanks to the secretary's and chairman's great efforts, it is possible to attract several new members. Progress on the new book about Gösting Castle is slow, but steady. On 17 June, a general assembly is held (required by law to take place every four years) – this time in Café Polanz; unfortunately, the event is poorly attended. A new board is elected for the next term of four years, consisting of **Sepp Stiger** as chairman, **Jürgen Moravi** as deputy chairman, **Heribert Szakmáry** as secretary, **Dominika Stiger** as deputy secretary, **Gerald Boger** as treasurer, **Franz Unterasinger** as juridical advisor, and **Gerhard Prix** as additional advisor (**Herzog**, **Blaser**, and **Lechner** retire at their own request). The weekly newspaper "Der Grazer" publishes an article on 17 December reporting on a possible purchase of Gösting Castle by the city of Graz.

2018

Starting in March, there are talks between the Gösting Castle Society and the City of Graz about the usefulness and urgency of a share deal by public funds. These attempts are severely complicated by the castle owner's withdrawn and secret way of live, making efforts to get in touch with him almost impossible. Without any prior notification, the Styrian Castle Association relocates its centre of activity and office to its castle of *Altkainach* in Bärnbach (Western Styria), thus leaving the hitherto shared office in Graz to the Gösting Society. This causes considerable organisational and financial issues for the Gösting Castle Society; however, on a positive note, the necessary renovation of the insufficient electrical installation in the Gösting Society's town office can now finally be completed satisfactorily. In Gösting Castle, the repair of the already dangerously bent flag on the donjon is tackled so that it can be mounted again in spring. It will continue to serve as a landmark visible from afar. The name plate under founding chairman **E. Gordon's** stone relief in the donjon, which was stolen some time ago, is replaced and parts of the marble border around it are repaired. Plans are made to replace the former rain deflector shields in the apse tower. Up until 1999, these shields had been mounted in the tower's windows in order to reduce the harm done to the building by rain and other severe weather conditions. Unfortunately, the many visitors to the castle continue to show a lack of interest in the castle's fate and the Gösting Castle Society's work. For the first time, the Castle Society sends a calendar to all its members along with the annual newsletter. The calendar (for 2019) features a selection of beautiful photographs of the castle and is very well received by the members.

2019

On 26 March, the required board meeting takes place in the town office and current problems of the castle association and the castle are discussed and, if possible, clarified – once more without vice-chairman **Moravi** present. On 27 March, the newly constructed replacement of the donjon's old metal flag is mounted and once again serves as a landmark visible from afar. A massive halt of the association's activities and the routines on the castle is caused by a very serious illness of the tavern's landlady **Angelika Michalatsch**. Her state forces the castle and the tavern to be temporarily closed. Due to this unfortunate fact, the replacement of the rain deflector shields in the apse tower, which has already been in progress, must be put on hold. After some time, and thanks to the support of the landlady's brother **Ewald Michalatsch** the castle tavern can be re-opened to the numerous castle visitors' delight. Unfortunately, the great lack of interest in the fate and existence of the castle as well as in the Gösting Castle Society's work, which is displayed by visitors, the castle owner, and public institutions and officials in Graz, remains unchanged. In accordance with his availability, the Society's chairman continues to work on the New Castle Book. In November, members and other interested persons receive the Society's annual newsletter and, additionally, a new calendar with representative photos of the castle. Unfortunately, the new Graz City Councillor for Culture, **Günter Riegler**, does not respond in any way to this friendly and informative mailing from the association.

2020

This year is marked by extremely sad incidents for both the Castle Society and the castle itself. After a long battle with a severe illness, landlady **Angelika Michalatsch** passes away in September. Her tragic death unfortunately also leads to the final closing of the castle tavern. The funeral takes place on 11 September in the parish church of Gösting and is attended by a large crowd despite this year's difficult situation resulting from the Corona pandemic. As expected, the castle's owner **H. Auer** immediately closes off the entire castle area, much to the dismay of the many hikers and visitors. In addition to this, he demands that the **Michalatsch** family vacate the tavern area and remove the cats which had been living in the castle premises and were cared for by **Angelika**. Encouraged by the local press, the city of Graz this year finally initiates discussions about the future of the castle, but as already feared, the castle's owner cancels these attempts both times. Shortly before the new year, a considerable piece of the inner ring wall above the tavern's upper outside seating area breaks away and falls onto the pathway leading to the castle's lower chapel as well as onto the inner castle path. Fortunately, no one is injured. The barriers put in place by the owner to keep visitors out of the castle are intensified after this incident. It has to be emphasised again that, for many years, the Castle Society has repeatedly and strongly pointed out the urgent need for a qualified and comprehensive renovation of the masonry work throughout the castle. Unfortunately, these warnings were never taken seriously enough by the owner or relevant entities. Due to these tragic developments, the future and destiny of the castle and its society are clearly at stakes.