**Are you still ticking right?**

There is no peace and quiet in the Tower Clock Museum, where giant chronometers tick, levers engage, locks click into place and a flute clock is chiming its songs.

156 steps lead you to your goal, or better said, your goal is the way up the steps. On the way to the top of the tower you pass numerous tower clocks, some of which date back to the 16th century. The path leads upwards alongside a thick old brick wall, and on closer inspection, visitors can see that the brickmakers have immortalised themselves by leaving their fingerprints in the stones. Generally, Wolfgang Vogt, founder and honorary director of the museum, who is responsible for keeping the clocks ticking, striking and swinging, accompanies visitors on their way up and down. He passionately tells about how the museum came to be, how the exhibits moved in and relates many an anecdote.

Visitors must climb 50 steps before they see the first tower clock – a model dating from 1763 made in Peterstal. The rest follow in quick succession: Step 123 – here is the largest tower clock in the collection, weighing 1,000 kg and dating from 1753. Next to it is the oldest, dating from 1562. Step 141 – here is an impressive tower clock with the longest pendulum in the German-speaking world. Through a gap, visitors can look 26 metres down into the depths. And there, at the end of the pendulum, hangs a 170 kg clapper that was originally from the local parish church of St. Stephan. This tower clock was constructed to mark the museum’s 25th anniversary. Step 156 – the destination is finally reached. The reward for the climb: a tower clock dating from 1766, originally from the Basilica in Ottobeuren and, with a bit of luck, a view over the rooftops of Mindelheim.

Back on the ground floor, two rooms await visitors with ticking giant chronometers, locking levers, engaging ratchets and a flute clock with 17 pipes that plays six different melodies. One very special attraction is a replica of an astronomical clock from Winterthur dating from 1529. The four hands indicate, among other things, the course of the sun and moon, their position in the zodiac as well as sunrise and sunset. In conjunction with the dragon hand, solar and lunar eclipses are also indicated. A special example of filigree, artistic design, technical finesse and master craftsmanship is the convent clock dating from 1750, which Brother Johannes Copistran Silbernagel, a Franciscan monk from Füssen, ordered for his monastery.

Founded almost 30 years ago, the Swabian Tower Clock Museum is the first and only museum of its kind to be publicly funded, thanks to the building – the “Kappelturm” tower and the former church of St. Silvester – and to its diverse collection. Tower clocks from five centuries are housed here.

The museum is open every Wednesday and on the last Sunday of the month from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Tours can be booked by calling 08261/6964. The Tower Clock Museum is located in the former church of St. Silvester, Hungerbachgasse 9, Mindelheim. The admission fee is 2.50 euros.

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