Military equipment found in Lihula fortress

on February 24, 1996, Lihula Museum was opened in the manor

Blankets and national costume with Lihula flower embroidery from early 20th century

Lihula national costume

opening hours:

From June to September Tue-Sat 11.00-17.00,
at other times by appointment.

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NGO Kodukant Läänemaa

Museum address QR code

The main building of Lihula Manor, built in 1840s

The cultural heritage of Lääne county is preserved

Lihula fortress, manor and MUSEUM

In early 13th century, Lihula was one of the best-known places in Lääne county with the ancient stronghold surrounded by a dense network of villages.

Excavated and conserved walls of Lihula fortress

Entrance to the fort in 1250 (reconstruction)

Fortress

In early 13th century, Lihula was one of the best-known places in Lääne county with the ancient stronghold surrounded by a dense network of villages. During the crusades, Lihula was briefly conquered by the Swedes, then by the Germans and it became the first centre of Saare-Lääne diocese. The stone fortress was jointly constructed by the bishop and the Order in 1238-1242. Bishop Heinrich I commissioned the establishment of a new centre in Vana-Pärnu in 1251. When it was destroyed by Lithuanians in 1263, the bishop decided to erect a new one in Haapsalu instead.

During the Livonian War (1558-1583), Lihula changed hands on several occasions leaving it in such ruins that it was never restored. The manor estate was built on the fort hill.

In 1990-1996, archaeological excavations were conducted on the hill and some of the walls were conserved.

Manor

In 1630, the Swedish King Gustav II Adolf sold Lihula manor with two villages to military commander Åke Tott. The first mansion including only a kitchen and a room was probably built on the outer ward already in 1630s. The second mansion – a wooden building on stone socle – including a kitchen, three chambers, two utility rooms and a cellar was completed in the south-western corner of the outer ward by 1670.

In 1684, the manor was sold and it changed ownership on several occasions between 1684-1809.

In 1810, it was auctioned to Karl von Wistinghausen and the present mansion, new stables, garner and other outbuildings were completed by 1840. In 1874, the Buxhoeveden family became the new owners, and in 1913, Hermann von Buxhoeveden sold the manor to the Estonian Manor Owners Association. They, in turn, sold it to Berend von Wetter-Rosenthal in 1916. During the early years of Estonian independence, Estonian Karl Timberg acquired the manor. In 1940, the owners were dispossessed of the estate and the last owner, Member of Parliament Ado Roosiorg was sent to a prison camp in Siberia where he also died. During the Soviet years, the manor housed the office of the local state farm and flats. On June 6, 1995, the estate was returned to the daughter of Ado Roosiorg, Madli Roosiorg-Kirchhoff.

On the next day, she gave the manor and the estate to the Medieval Lihula Foundation. Since 2009, the manor has been owned by Lihula municipality and NGO Keskaegne Lihula (Medieval Lihula).

At present, it houses Lihula Museum, Lihula Folk High School, Lihula Folk Art Society, Tourist Information Centre and the Lihula company of Defence League Lääne District.

Museum

On February 24, 1996, Lihula Museum was opened in the manor. The permanent exposition gives an overview of the history of Lihula and Western Lääne county. They also exhibit the most interesting archaeological findings from the fort hill and the surroundings as well as ethnographic items typical of Lääne county – the national costumes, rugs and sleigh blankets. There are also various temporary exhibitions all year round.

During the winter season, there are history club lectures once a month. In August, there is a traditional flower pattern (lillkiri) festival. And the manor is similarly a venue for various concerts.

Procession of Defence League Day in Lihula on June 23, 2016