

# *Burg Katzenstein Bergfried (Katzenturm)*

## **Katzenstein Castle keep (defence tower)**

The keep, which dates back to 777 A.D., was opened once more to the public on 1 March 2009 after extensive renovations.

### **First construction phase (11<sup>th</sup> century)**

This was the base or lower area of the wall and comprised 13 courses (layers) of hewn stone, the surface of which was smoothed to form ashlar.

### **Second construction phase (12th century)**

#### **Bastion**

It is here that a dungeon which held prisoners captive in a lying down position can be found. It can only be accessed through a hole.

#### **Ground Floor**

The base or lower part of the tower of the first castle was used.

**It is here that the dungeon with its "fear hole"<sup>1</sup> can be found.**

The Hohenstaufen architectural style was used in the construction of the whole tower with rusticated (rough) blocks of stone and entry through a high round arch.

#### **First Floor**

The former entrance can be found here – 7m above the ground, it is only accessible via a ladder.

#### **Second Floor**

The living area. An unusual feature of keeps of this type is the open fire which is built into the corner of the room and has a y-flue. Scratched into the moulding is the heraldic animal of the builder, a cat which is walking, together with a lily. On the same floor is the garderobe, a privy which projects from the outer wall of the castle.

#### **Third Floor**

The sleeping area with a bed and chest.

#### **Fourth Floor**

A landing which served as a place for storage/keeping things.

#### **Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup> A "fear hole", known in German as an "Angstloch", is the 1m wide entrance to a small, dark, damp, un-ventilated room in the basement of a medieval castle. The hole in the floor was the only way into this room, which was often used as a prison. It was closed with a rock or iron grid. Prisoners' access was by means of a rope.

**Fifth floor**

The lookout platform.

From here one has a good view of the Erbishöhe (Erbis Heights [an elevation of ground]), as well as Härtsfeld Lake and Neresheim Abbey.

**Third construction phase**

The crenellated upper part of the tower dates back to 1669. Prior to this date, the tower had a wooden railing and a tented roof. The holes from the railing are still visible today.