



ERBA CIVIC MUSEUM

You can find this point of interest in Erba - Path 1 - Stage 4

INFORMATION

Location: Erba Civic Museum is located in the left wing of Villa Ceriani in Crevenna, in via Ugo Foscolo 27.

Paving: the entrance hall of the villa is paved with stone slabs, as is the portion of floor under the entrance portico; the inner courtyard of the Villa is pebbled; the garden staircase is cobbled and the pathway leading to the entrance of the Museum is pebbled. The interior of the Museum is paved with tiles.

Architectural barriers: to access Erba Civic Museum one must climb the staircase (consisting of 17 steps, followed by a landing, and a further 16 steps to the left) which links the courtyard to the garden on the back of the villa. The museum exhibition is basically displayed on one floor, with a few minor exceptions: one must walk down three steps from the Prehistory room to the cave bear room, climb three steps to return to the entrance hall from the Ammonites room, and climb a further step (please be careful!) to access the room with the finds not originating from the Larian Triangle.

Access: access to the Museum is from the upper part of the park of Villa Ceriani.

Services: parking available in the area.

Leisure and Food: cafes and a pizzeria in the area.

Other information: for opening times, browse the Municipality of Erba website http://www.comune.erba.co.it/link_e_servizi/prenotazioni_museo

DESCRIPTION

(Silvia Fasana)

Erba Civic Museum was established in 1961, and occupied some rooms of Villa Majnoni until 1977, when it was transferred to Villa Ceriani (also known as the Municipal Villa of Crevenna or Villa San Giuseppe), its current prestigious venue. In 1999 the structure underwent a radical change, with the creation of new theme tours in accordance with modern principles of state-of-the-art museology. The Museum was created as an intermediate institution between the larger museums of Como and Lecco, and constantly networks with them. It plays an important role in the area of Upper Brianza and the Larian Triangle not only for the preservation of local archaeological and palaeontological finds, but for the protection of the territory's historical and cultural heritage and the diffusion of knowledge about such heritage.

The seven rooms of the Erba Museum offer a welcome opportunity to learn about the main stages of the history and prehistory of the area.

The material from Upper Brianza and the Larian Triangle was placed in the different sections following a reverse chronological order. This choice was made to simulate the classic situation of the archaeologist when operating on an excavation area: he finds the most recent evidence first, and then, by going deeper, gradually submerges into the past. A series of objects that act as the symbols of each section are displayed in the entrance hall: the 15th century Visconti coat of arms, the Roman era altar, the Ammonite fossil from the Turati Alp representing the different geologic eras.

The first two rooms are devoted to the Modern age: here you will find a fresco by Andrea Gentilino (1490) depicting *Our Lady of the Milk between Saint Roch and Saint Sebastian*, from the former Abbey of St. Anthony in Mevate; a large map from the time of Maria Theresa of Austria, and the wooden pulpit of the parish church of S. Eufemia of Incino.

With a further step back in time you reach the room dedicated to the Middle Ages, which houses the most important piece of the collection: a Lombard *spatha* (sword) with a beautiful hilt decorated with inlaid silver (a goldsmith technique particularly widespread in the Early Middle Ages), which was found in Parravicino d'Erba in 1961. Among the main exhibits present in the Late Antiquity and Roman Age are the burial relics found in different locations in the area (Albavilla, Erba, Tavernerio, Onno, Proserpio, Valbrona, Lasnigo, Caslino d'Erba). Particularly worthy of note are the funerary urn of Caninia Optata, discovered in the sacristy walls of the church of S. Eufemia of Incino, and three

armlets, ancient bronze bracelets with snake-head terminals, from Lezza Ponte Lambro. The display cases dedicated to Prehistory and Protohistory host funerary relics from three tombs found in Canzo, dating back to the Copper Age - Bronze Age, a pile-dwelling pole found in Lake Pusiano; some arrowheads of Neo-Eneolithic appearance found in the Bova Valley; Mesolithic materials found during the excavation carried out in the 80s of the last century on Mount Cornizzolo by the "Paolo Giovio" Museum of Como; ceramic fragments, bone awls and flint arrowheads found in the excavation of the Bronze Age settlement on the north shore of Lake Segrino.

The last two rooms house palaeontological finds that represent the oldest fauna of this area, including some of the remains of the cave bear (*Ursus spelaeus*), recovered in the Buco del Piombo cave. This Mammal, which became extinct around 18.000-20.000 years ago during the last glacial advance, used to spend the long period of hibernation inside natural caves, consuming the fat reserves accumulated during the favourable season, and sometimes passing from sleep to death; it is for this reason that abundant remains of this animal are found in caves. Worthy of note, too, is the interesting collection of Ammonites, fossil marine mollusks with their characteristic planospiral shell, coming from the Turati Alp, above Albavilla. These animal remains preserved in stone are the testimony of even more remote periods, when the area around Erba was covered by the sea, before the formation of the Alps. A succession of rocky outcrops near Alp Turati is in fact very fossiliferous, and dates back to the Jurassic period (202 to 140 million years ago): it was discovered in the mid-nineteenth century and became quickly famous thanks to the large collections of Abbot Antonio Stoppani, an eminent naturalist of the time. From that moment onwards Alp Turati has been the subject of numerous studies, culminating in a series of excavations carried out by the Department of Earth Sciences of the University of Milan in the years 1998 - 2000 and promoted by Erba Museum.

Another room exhibits items not coming from the Larian Triangle, including Egyptian and Oriental Art objects.

The courtyard of the Museum hosts a number of sarcophagi with their lids, granite millstones, and of particular interest, two "*masso-avello*", i.e. a tub-shaped tomb carved into erratic boulders. These burials, most likely intended for persons of higher rank, are a peculiarity of the area from Como to Ticino, from Brianza to Valtellina. Although their date is still uncertain, as until now they have always been found desecrated and without burial relics, they are thought to be from the 5th - 7th century AD, between the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the occupation of the territory around Lake Como by the Lombards after the surrender of the Byzantines, as the fortifications of the Comacina Island testify. The two specimens preserved in Erba come from Fraino di Asso and from Magreglio, respectively.