



## The Great Escape: Past to Present

### The Füssen Exhibition

From 5 October 2013 until 5 January 2014, the Museum of Füssen (with the cooperation of Bavarian Film Munich) hosted a special exhibition about the filming of *The Great Escape*. Titled 'Hollywood in Füssen', the exhibition celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the now-classic war movie and the filming that took place in and around the city. Rare photos adorned the walls, along with original costumes, one of the baseballs used by Steve McQueen, and even a stand-by stunt motorcycle. The organizers even recreated a camp tower and part of an escape tunnel. An exhibition like this deserves to be a permanent part of the town's attractions.

Roland Held.



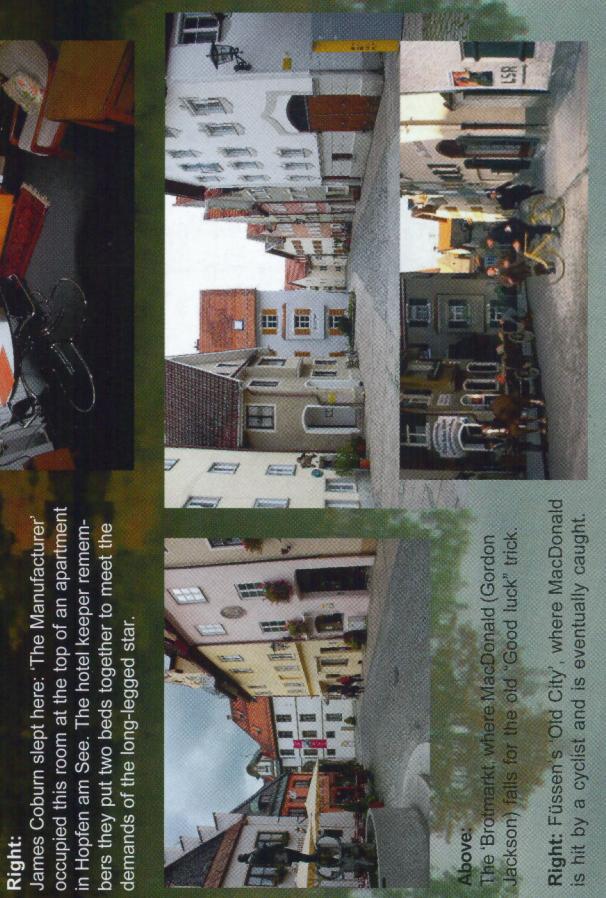
**Top:**  
The film's standby motorcycle which was ready to use should Bud Ekins' stunt go wrong. It didn't, hence this one surviving.

**Above:**  
Positioned amongst the many rare photos on display, one of the baseballs used by McQueen - see above) to kill time when in "The Cooler". McQueen presented this particular ball to the owner of the hotel where he was staying during the filming.

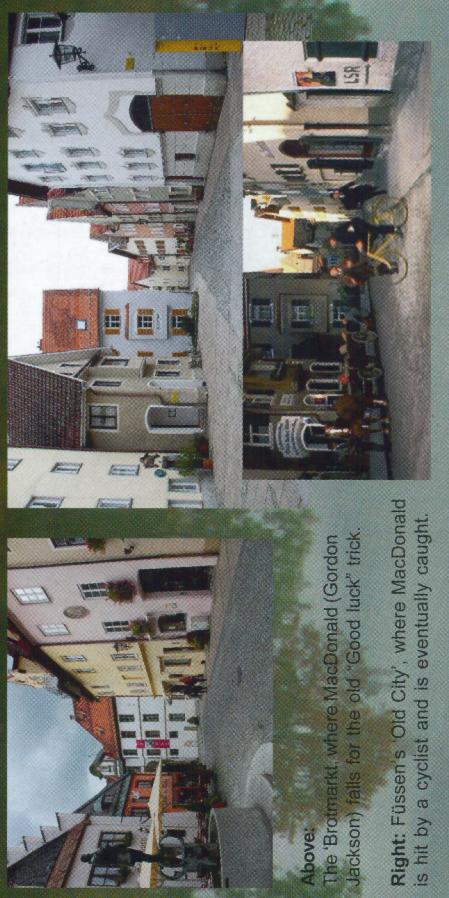
**Below:**  
The famed Schloss Neuschwanstein is also seen in the film, ironically when Hendley (James Garner) remarks that the Swiss alps are in reach. In reality, the border would still be some hours away. The park from which this photo was taken also doubled for Spain, as James Coburn, in his last scene, finally reaches the Spanish border.



The town of Spandau is where they filmed Sedgwick stealing a bicycle.



**Right:**  
James Coburn slept here. 'The Manufacturer' occupied this room at the top of an apartment in Hopfen am See. The hotel keeper remembers they put two beds together to meet the demands of the long-legged star.



**Above:**  
The Brötmarkt, where MacDonald (Gordon Jackson) falls for the old 'Good luck' trick.  
**Right:** Füssen's train station is hit by a cyclist and is eventually caught.



**Above:**  
This screen grab from the scene prior to Ashley Pitt's dramatic death clearly shows the roof of the ticket office, which can still be seen today (right), although there is a small building in front of it now.

# GREAT ESCAPISM

### Roland Schaefli visits *The Great Escape* film locations 50 years later...

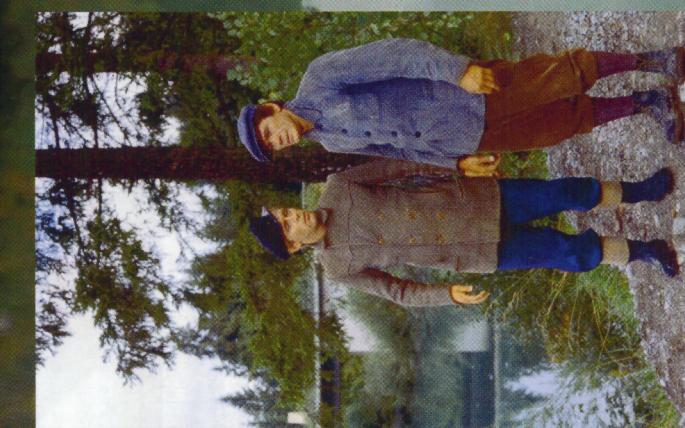
It was King Ludwig who lived at the Castle Neuschwanstein. Yet the King of Cool - Steve McQueen - proves to be more popular these days with tourists visiting the area.

It started some years ago. Visitors didn't show any interest in King Ludwig's world-famous castle. Instead, they asked for directions "to the locations of *The Great Escape*". The film was shot around here fifty years ago. But which were the exact locations? One farmer actually lives and works in one of the key sites and therefore gets to meet motorbikers from all over the world, whether he wants to or not. They drive up and down his meadow, recreating the famous climactic motorcycle chase from the film. It's right here, where the power pole now stands. Last year, one biker was even dressed up in a Wehrmacht uniform as a British magazine tried to capture the exact look of the scenes. But this farmer's most vivid memory is not that of people just trying to look like McQueen, but of the Real McCoy. As a ten-year-old, he was able to watch for weeks as the filmmakers tried to capture the jump over and over again: "The stuntman hit the barbed wire several times but since it was all balsa wood, he didn't care too much." The German movie industry needed the American dollars badly. Instead of the usual \$40 per day, the extras did their bits for \$15.

**Below:**  
Publicity pose of James Coburn at the 'Cafe Suzette' French bistro where the German officers are assassinated.



In reality, the bistro was a set built on the corner of the bridge in Füssen. Today the structure is different from the one seen in the film.



**Right:**  
Another publicity shot, this time of Willy (John Leyton) and Danny (Charles Bronson) by the river Lech at Füssen, the bridge in the background is different from the one shown in the screen-grab below, which is the same bridge as seen in the French bistro sequence above, but meant to be the Rhine in the film!



**"The German movie industry needed the American dollars badly."**

