

8th - 9th Centuries

How it all began

Archaeological finds confirm that the Upstalsboom is much older than the Frisian Freedom which made it famous. The gatherings of the free Frisians took place in the high Middle Ages on a burial mound of a distinguished family dating from the late 8th to the 9th century.



In the burial mound the archaeologists found, among other relics, a Damascene sword and a so-called Millefiori glass head from the Near East. The head is evidence of the widespread trading activities of the Frisians in the early Middle Ages. The finds from the Upstalsboom are now in the Aurich Historical Museum.

11th - 14th Centuries

Frisian Freedom in the Middle Ages

Frisian Freedom was an exceptional historic feature. In the Middle Ages the Frisian coastal region - "tota Frisia" - from the Dutch IJsselmeer to the Weser estuary was free, in contrast to the rest of feudal Europe. It was made up of autonomous rural communities, which together formed a loose alliance - the so-called "Seven Sea Provinces". Their representatives met at the Upstalsboom, to guarantee justice and freedom for all Frisians.

Eala frya Fresena

Hail Ye Free Frisians

1464



The East Frisian estates since 1464

The East Frisian Cultural Council (Ostfriesische Landschaft) represents the concept of Frisian Freedom as a relevant cultural symbol of the region as the legal successor of the original estates. The coat of arms granted by the Emperor in 1678 shows a free Frisian in armour at the Upstalsboom.

Coat of arms of the Ostfriesische Landschaft (1678)

Mare Frisicum



1240

"The Frisian people are outwardly free and owe allegiance to no overlord"

This quotation dating from the year 1240 describes the particularities of Frisian freedom: no military service for a feudal lord, the right to land-ownership, political participation and personal freedom.



Artistic realization of the quotation of Bartolomaeus Anglicus by Monika Kühling, 2003

16th - 18th Centuries

The significance of the site remained in the collective consciousness

Even after the end of Frisian Freedom the highly symbolic site remained in the common remembrance of the Frisian people for over 700 years. The disputes between the traditional estates and the Counts of East Frisia resulted in a transfiguration of the site from the end of the 16th century and the myth of Frisian Freedom was born.

21st Century

A region enhances its identity

Since 2009 signs for tourists on the motorway A28 near Filsum and on the A31 near Neermoor point out Frisian Freedom as a unique phenomenon. Postcards, magnets and stickers with the ancient historic symbol can now be found world-wide.



Frisian Assembly after the war. In 1955 the "Oll-Mat" took place at the Upstalsboom



1833

The monument on the burial mound

In 1833 the Ostfriesische Landschaft erected the Upstalsboom monument on the medieval grave mound in the form of a pyramid.

1894

Over 60 years later in 1894 there followed a plaque with the inscription: "Erected on the site of the congregation of their forefathers, the Upstalsboom, by the East Frisian people in the year 1833".



In 2009 the mayors of Appingedam, Rika Pot, and the vice-mayors of Aurich, Antje Harms, renewed the partnership of the towns by signing a new document in imitation of the Buurbrief of 1327 (right)

1327

A place of identity transcending borders

In 1327 the Dutch town of Appingedam, on the other side of the River Ems, received its document of foundation, the so-called Buurbrief, a specifically Frisian town charter, at the Upstalsboom. The present town partnership between Aurich and Appingedam is based on this document.



20th Century

The place which never was a thingstead

The National Socialists had plans to transform the Upstalsboom into a Germanic centre of cult worship, where nationalistic ceremonies and parades were to be held. It never came to this because the Ostfriesische Landschaft, as the owner of the site, did not implement these plans.