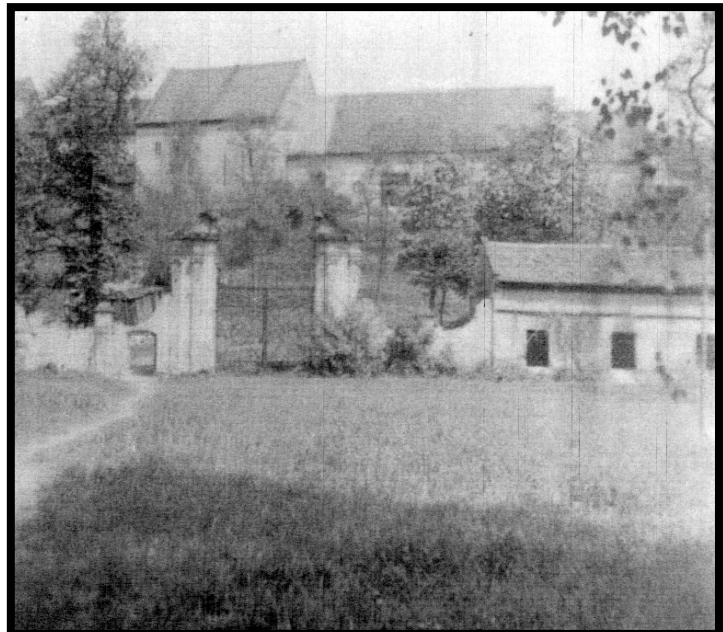


GARDEN FACILITIES, CIDER HOUSE, GARDENER'S COTTAGE

On the left side of the garden stood the cider house, which also served as a distillery. In addition to apples and pears, apricots, plums, and greengages were cultivated on the terraces in the 19th century. During roof repairs in 1999, several bottle stoppers inscribed “**Gut Steknitz**” were discovered in the rubble; whether they were for bottles of cider, wine, or spirits is something we may never ascertain. However, it is evident that the products here were also intended for sale (**photo 1**).

The photograph shows the state of the cider house in the 1960s (**photo 2**). The building was symmetrically aligned to the main axis of the garden. On the opposite side is the gardener's cottage, which was connected to the southern garden via a gate and staircase. After the war, the **gardener's cottage** was sold as a holiday cottage. An interesting feature of the cider house was the collecting spring located in the corner at the base of the lower terrace. Its function was undoubtedly important, draining excess water captured by the northern garden slope during rains, and alleviating pressure on the slope above the cider house itself. Unfortunately, the cider house is in a state of severe disrepair. Although repairs were started, construction was halted due to a lack of funding, and the clay insulation has completely given way, causing the retaining formwork to collapse. We hope to restore this building in the future.



COUNTRYSIDE HOP BUILDINGS – HOP DRYING

Numerous historical drying houses are integral to the hop-growing landscape. The initial drying of hops took place in wooden attics, later using “líška” (hop-drying frames). In the second half of the 19th century, drying houses featuring artificial drying methods using warm air – based on English models – began to appear. The Czech type of drying houses, many inspired by English styles, saw significant expansion in the 1880s, with numerous new designs and the corresponding patents being registered. The Linhart and Vltavský types were the clear frontrunners, dominating up to 80% of newly constructed drying houses. Experts found over 6,000 drying houses in the Žatec region alone, and in “hop-growing villages”, an average of 25–40 can be seen, meaning they stood near almost every other house. Interestingly, owners found it paid to build these larger or smaller drying houses even if they were only used for just under a month each year. Currently, only two such drying houses are in operation in the Czech Republic – one in Kolečovice and the other in nearby Tuchořice. In the Žatec region, you can find, for example:



Trnovany, Schöffl drying house at homestead no. 9. The southern façade of this unique two-storey hop-drying house faces the road leading to Stekník. Its current appearance is the result of successive alterations from the early 20th century. The southern wing of the homestead features a façade composed of a series of four tower-like additions, where Linhart-patent hop-drying rooms can still be found today.



Trnovany, Hassmann drying house at homestead no. 8. One of the most beautiful authentic hop-drying houses from the early 20th century can be found in the former mill complex. This drying house was created by converting an older barn, which was given an ornate neo-Gothic façade complete with characteristic turrets (actually vents used to regulate airflow in the kiln/furnace) and adjoining hop attics.

Dried hops were packed into specific packaging known as “grower’s sacks”, each with a diameter of approximately 80 cm and a height of 200–220 cm. Each sack weighed between 60 and 70 kg! Every sack was meticulously stitched and labelled with lots of vital information – from the name of the country and the year of harvest to the specific variety. In the accompanying weigh sheet, each sack was documented under its own number along with its weight.

