

## Ecomuseum of Freidano

Ethnographic Museum  
Settimo Torinese

The Rio Freidano, originally an anciently abandoned branch of the river Po, was transformed into a channel, and since 1400 is designed to provide energy for the motion of the mills and for the first settimese industries, covering a role of major importance at the beginning of the local economy. It takes origin from Bealera dell'Abbadia di Stura in Pescarito city and, after crossing the territory of Settimo, flows into the Po River after the habitated village of Brandizzo.

The project the Ecomuseum of Freidano, besides the preparation of the ethnographic museum, expects the revaluation of land in its natural, architectural and urban aspects. It affects an area of plain of about 20 hectares, which is strongly marked by the presence of human and included the current bank of the Po and the edge of the escarpment of the alluvial corridor.

The idea involves the creation of bike paths, the requalification of the area which hosts the former quarry Pedrali transformed into an equipped green area, the arrangement of the natural area called "half moon" (built and inaugurated in May 2005), the valorizing of the "Old Mill", centre of one of the buildings that use the power of the Rio Freidano.

The Ecomuseum of Freidano established and recognized by the Province and the Region, places the historical evolution of the settimese community in close relation with the characteristics and transformations of the territory, emphasizing the inevitable mutual influences: therefore, human, the creator of his own history, of the socio-economic changes, in continuous relation with the environment where they live.

The New Mill was built as far back as 1806 for replacing some old mills which were born then for the use on the banks of the Po River. Near to the mid of the nineteenth century was transformed into a modern plant according to models affirmed in all of the Europe: the cycle of processing of the grain developed along vertical paths while the machinery, operated entirely by hydraulic power and interdependent between them, made the plant completely automatic. At the beginning of last century, the application of hydraulic and electric motors replaced the power of steam, turning the New Mill in one of the most interesting producers in this area. The crisis of 1929 and the two world wars determined progressively the decline. Towards the middle of the century the property passed to the Agrarian Provincial Consortium. In 1995 it was acquired by the City of Settimo Torinese.

In the total area of New Mill there are the Ethnographic Museum and, very closely, the Visitors' Centre of the Turinese Park of Po and the Centre of Documentation and Research on methodologies and technologies applied to ecomuseums and ethnographic museums. In the spaces of the building of the former silo Mulino New there were collected, arranged and described the testimonies of historical events which have shaped the settimese land and characterized the material culture of the place. The preparation has tried to recreate the atmosphere and places of work highlighting the different characteristics of the objects and of the processing cycles. Not a traditional museum, but a "live" total where the visitor is actively involved through the use of interactive systems.

