

Zbraslavice

{rokzoom title=|Zbraslavice square|}images/stories/zbraslavice2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Little town situated in Czech-Moravian highlands between Kutná Hora and Zruč nad Sázavou (both cities). There are no accurate records of the foundation of the city. However, once upon a time one knight-errant named Zbraslav lived near and built a log house in the woods on the slope of the hill Poupil. Later, a settlement was set in along the log house. There lived all descendants of Zbraslav and also all his subordinates. Already in 12th century, there was built a Romanesque church near the fort, where a large square marketplace was set up (today's square). During a fire in 1496, the whole town was burnt including the church. Only the fort was protected. Before 1559 Zbraslavice town obtained its own urban character – black eagle wing in the red field.

Nowadays, there are 1049 inhabitants. With other 12 associated settlements (Kateřinky, Rápošov, Malá and Velká Skalice, Chotěměřice-Pančava, Borová, Utěšenovice, Radvančice, Ostrov, Hodkov, Krasoňovice, Lipina) we get 1431 inhabitants in total.

The highest point is hill Poupil (541 m.a.s.l.) which is situated almost one kilometre south from the town.

Local climate is quite harsh, however, compared to other cities, there is relatively clean and fresh air. Due to the location between woods and ponds, it is often popular summer tourist area. There are many recreational cottages and camp areas. During the summer there are up to 3000 more inhabitants in the town.

Services to the population include: post, pharmacy, library, cinema, Česká spořitelna (Czech savings bank), health care, kindergarten and primary school, hairdressers, restaurants, gas station, three pensions and a number of shops. Obviously, there are built sewers with sewage of water and there is also a municipal water supply. A relatively huge reconstruction took place

in the square; all sidewalks were rebuilt with interlocking pavement. In the town, there is also multi-purpose sports hall with a possibility to rent and football field.

Sport airport in Zbraslavice organizes sightseeing flights, training of engine-powered flying and gliding, and also provides aero-taxi.

We should also remember, that in 1902 a soccer club was established, which have continued with its activity since its establishing. Every year there are two soccer tournaments for the Cup of Carlsbad Becherovka.

Local fire brigade has functioned here since its origin in 1875. Settlements Hodkov, Ostrov, Útěšenovice and Rápošov have also their own fire brigades. They show their skills at district competitions. Zbraslavice has very good transport links (bus and train).

Sights:

Zbraslavice – Church of St. Lawrence, Statue of Virgin Mary, Statue of St. Jan Nepomuk, the Jewish cemetery, castle grounds

Hodkov - Church of St. Wenceslas, Castle, clinker, Ostrov – castle, Statue of St. Jan Nepomuk

This is what was written about Zbraslavice in regional guide published in 2000.

In the neighbourhood of Zbraslavice there are many possibilities how to spend your free time actively. There are many hiking and bicycle paths, beautiful and large forests offer a possibility of mushrooming and outing, ponds are very popular during summer season when ponds offer great chance for swimming and refreshment. In winter, there is usually enough of snow for cross-country skiing.

{rokzoom title=|The Old pond|}images/stories/zbraslavice3.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Zbraslavice school|}images/stories/zbraslavice4.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Church of St. Wenceslas in Hodkov|}images/stories/zbraslavice_hodkovn_sv_vaclav.jpg{/rokzoom}

Kutná Hora and surroundings

{rokzoom title=|Kutná Hora|}images/stories/kh2.jpg{/rokzoom}

In the Middle-Ages, Kutná Hora used to be second largest and the most important city in Czech Kingdom. No wonder that road between Kutná Hora and Prague was greatly frequented. There were built greatly dense build-up area with a number of towns and cities. Kutná Hora, formerly an important centre of silver mining, has preserved the original historical centre of the city with all the wealth of secular and religious monuments, that form the remarkable complex, which has the highest level of monument protection not only in the scale of Czech republic, but also in the global scale.

Czech king was one of the richest sovereign in medieval Europe thanks to all incomes from rich mining. In local royal court called Valachian courtyard there was established central mint. Renowned Czech (Prague) groschen had been coined there since 1300 until 1547 when its coining was stopped by Ferdinand I. Wenceslas IV often stayed in local royal court. In 1409 he issued so-called Decree of Kutná Hora, which regulated the right to vote at Prague University in favour of domestic students. During the Hussite wars there were many battles of Kutná Hora, the city and mine were damaged. 2nd half of 15th century brought redevelopment of mining, thereby increasing political and economic importance. In 1471 Ladislaus Jagiellon was elected as a Czech king here, in 1485 well known diet of Kutná Hora negotiated peace between Catholics and Calixtines. Then there appeared first signs of crisis. First shock meant miner storms 1494 -1496, which culminated with execution of 13 miners in Poděbrady. During 16th century ore pockets were gradually depleted, mining was moving to nearby hill Kaňk. In 1547 the coining of Czech groschen was ended, next decline came after the battle of White Mountain; at the Old Town Square in Prague there was executed also mayor of Kutná Hora Jan Šultys for revolt against the Habsburgs. In 1727 the royal mint was conclusively cancelled.

There were born many notabilities such are J. K. Tyl who was playwright and journalist, Mikuláš Dačický from Heslov who was Renaissance poet, printer and publisher J. H. Pospíšil, archaeologist and historian J. E. Vocel. Many others liked to spend time there, poet J. Vrchlický, journalist and poet K. Havlíček Borovský, etc.

It's also worth mentioning that Kutná Hora is one of the few our cities that are listed in UNESCO, concretely its urban conservation, whose set of medieval and baroque architecture represents more than three hundred listed buildings. Royal mining town was formed near rich pockets of silver ore at the hill above little river Vrchlice in the last third of 13th century.

{rokzoom title=|Kutná Hora|}images/stories/kh1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Kutná Hora|}images/stories/kh3.jpg{/rokzoom}

Cathedral of St. Barbora

{rokzoom title=|Cathedral of St. Barbora|}images/stories/barbora1.jpg{/rokzoom}

Probably the most popular sight and also important dominating feature in Kutná Hora is opulent cathedral dedicated to St. Barbara, patroness of miners. After Prague's St. Vitus cathedral it is probably the second most important church in the Czech Republic. Its construction lasted relatively long time: works of Petr Parléř started the construction in 1388, monumental masterpiece was lately done by Matěj Rejsek and Benedikt Ried in late Gothic in the end of 15th century and at the beginning of 16th century. From the oldest phase of the construction came a choir gallery with a ring of triangular chapel whereas Renaissance sensed compact space atrial with beautiful barrel star vault was work of B.Ried influenced by lingering Gothic. During the time of Jesuits the interior of church was baroquized, in 1886 to 1905 a huge regothization of the cathedral according to the plans of J. Mocker and L.Lábler took place. In many places in the interior there was preserved perfect late Gothic sculpture and stone decoration by M. Rejsek. Basic and decorative external system is also his work.

{rokzoom title=|Cathedral of St. Barbora|}images/stories/barbora2.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Cathedral of St. Barbora|}images/stories/barbora3.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Cathedral of St. Barbora|}images/stories/barbora4.jpg{/rokzoom}

The cathedral is national historic landmark.

Valachian courtyard

{rokzoom title=|Italian court|}images/stories/vldvur3.jpg{/rokzoom}

It was built around the year 1300 originally as a instrumental complex of mint, at the turn of the 14th and 15th century it was modified, so it could be used as a residency for the sovereign during his occasional visits of the city. Purist reconstruction between 1893 and 1898 involved demolition of original buildings and their rebuilding. Four-winged Gothic building closes the court, which was the centre of the mint. The mint grounds had its own fortification with two gates and a chapel. Other rooms were consisted of room for stamping coins preghaus, workrooms šmitny, two-storey royal palace, mint master's house, etc.

Valachian courtyard, national historic landmark, is open to the public.

{rokzoom title=|Italian court|}images/stories/vldvur2.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Italian court|}images/stories/vldvur1.jpg{/rokzoom}

Voršilek monastery

{rokzoom title=|The monastery|}images/stories/klastervorsilek.jpg{/rokzoom}

Not completely finished grounds of baroque monastery, built between 1735 and 1743 according to the plans of K. I. Diezenhofer. The grounds are supplemented by pseudo-baroque chapel Holy Heart of Jesus. The monastery is open to the public. There is exhibition of works of art from central Bohemian castles and strongholds, with unique collection of historical toys and curiosities “The world of small – Small world”.

Charnel-house and cathedral in Sedlec

{rokzoom title=|Charnel-house|}images/stories/kostnice1.jpg{/rokzoom}

Former Cistercian monastery founded in 1142 played an important role in the colonization of Central Bohemia. During its existence, it was burned and destroyed several times. It was finally reconstructed in 18th century. In the building of convent from 1709-59 there is big baroque hall decorated with frescoes, opposite the convent there is a Church of Virgin Mary – in the core early gothic (1290-1330), five-aisled basilica with a transept and gallery. Between 1700 and 1707 it was rebuilt by J.B. Santini and P.I. Bayer in style of baroque gothic. There are rare arrangement inside; paintings by L. Willmann, P. Brandl, J.K. Liška, and statues by M.V. Jackel. In 1784 the monastery and the church as well were disestablished and monastery buildings were modified into a tobacco factory (it is used as a tobacco factory till today). The church was reopened in 1806 and now it is open to the public. Opposite the monastery there is cemetery Church of all Saints with charnel house. Originally it was gothic from the time around the year 1400, adapted by J.B. Santini into baroque gothic. In the charnel house there are more than 30 000 skeletal remains of the victims of plague and wars, arranged in its present form in 1870. The charnel house is open to the public over the whole year.

{rokzoom title=|Inside the Charnel-house|}images/stories/kostnice2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Jesuit college

{rokzoom title=|Jesuit college|}images/stories/jezuikolej.jpg{/rokzoom}

It is one of the buildings which are clearly visible in the cityscape. It lies at the bay between the Little Castle and the Cathedral of St. Barbara. It is early baroque building from years 1626 to 1627, built according to the plans of Italian architect D. Orsi. It rather reminds of a facade of the castle buildings. In front of the college there is nice gallery of baroque statues from the years 1703 to 1716 all from the workhouse of F. Baugut.

Stone fountain

This rare late gothic work from 1495 can be attributed to Matěj Rejsek according to stylistic features of beautiful stone decoration. It was restored at the end of 19th century and in 1963.

{rokzoom title=|Stone fountain|}images/stories/kamkasna1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Kamenná kašna|}images/stories/kamkasna2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Stone house

Stone house is the most beautiful townhouse of Kutna Hora, from the time of pre-Hussite. There are maintained all dispositions and cellars, it has been rebuilt into its present form of late gothic between 1487 and 1515. After the year 1490 it got excellent stone decoration. Today, there is exposition of arts and handicraft. There are more houses with gothic origin.

{rokzoom title=|Stone house|}images/stories/kamdum1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Stone house|}images/stories/kamdum2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Kačina castle

{rokzoom title=|Kačina Castle|}images/stories/kacina2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Kačina castle which is the cleanest Empire building in Bohemia was built according to the plans of Ch.F. Schuricht between 1802 and 1822 for the highest burgrave of the kingdom of Bohemia,

earl Jan Rudolf Chotek, who planned it to be his own summer residence. The castle has a half-ellipse shape, middle part consists of residential rooms and lounges, side ground floor wings with colonnades contained guest quarters and ended with corner pavilions, used as a theatre and library. The castle is surrounded by nature landscaped park from 1789. Museum expositions represent development of agriculture and grocery store, the history of Chotek family and the lifestyle of Czech nobility.

{rokzoom title=|Kačina Castle|}images/stories/kacina1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Kačina Castle|}images/stories/kacina3.jpg{/rokzoom}

Kostelec nad Černými lesy (town)

Kostelec nad Černými lesy is a town situated on a promontory above one of the tributary of the creek Šembera, familiarly called Černý kostelec. It evolved from a settlement with a church at medieval stronghold. The pottery was developing since middle Ages using the nearby deposits of kaolin and red and white pottery. Stronghold at the end of the square was rebuilt after 1561 by Smiřičtí into a valuable Renaissance castle, four-winged of the building with corner towers enclosing the courtyard, Gothic-Renaissance castle chapel of St. Adalbert in the years 1568-1569 and four-winged courtyard with a tower gate of the 3rd quarter of the 16th century. The castle was owned by Lichtenstein between 1626 and 1933, and then it was rebuilt for school of forestry. Among other sights there is baroque Church of the Holy Angels from years 1735 to 1737, Renaissance Town Hall with baroque facade (today Pottery Museum), Renaissance cemetery church of St. John the Baptist from the time around the year 1600 (which was rebuilt after a fire into baroque form between 1777 and 1783) with Renaissance belfry.

{rokzoom title=|Kostelec nad Černými lesy|}images/stories/kostelec1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Kostelec nad Černými lesy|}images/stories/kostelec2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Jacob (ancient settlement with church of St. Jacob)

This ancient settlement with a church of St. Jacob of 1165 is one of the most valuable Romanian buildings in the Czech Republic. It is a single stately artistical construction of ashlar masonry with apse and the tower, which has in two tiers ternary Romanesque windows. South facade has extremely valuable plastic decoration - in the tympanum above the entrance portal is a relief bust of Christ and angels, in blind arcades that adorn the ground and first floors, reliefs of the apostles, bishops, saints, knights and donors. The decoration represents one of the oldest monumental figural sculptures in the Czech Republic. At the village green there are interesting folksy farmsteads (n.d. 26, 5 and 65)

{rokzoom title=|Church of St. Jacob|}images/stories/jakub1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Church of St. Jacob|}images/stories/jakub.jpg{/rokzoom}

Malešov

{rokzoom title=|Tvrz Malešov|}images/stories/maleov1.jpg{/rokzoom}

Malešov is an urban area in the valley of the stream Vrchlice. Until 1360 it is classified as a town. Malešov features with massive five-storey fortress from the first half of the 14th century, which stands on a rocky outcrop in the area of the farmyard, at the end of the 17th century it was adjusted to the granary. Buildings of the farmyard got Empire appearance in the years 1824-1827. In the last third of the 17th century a Baroque castle was built in the neighbourhood, which was used as the seat of the manor. The yard and the castle as well were rebuilt into Empire appearance and later on used as a school. Along the road towards Roztěž town there are remains of walls and pillars with hipped roofs of the former town fortification. In the town there is a valuable baroque church of St. Wenceslas from years 1731-1733 and in its neighbourhood there is baroque house No. 52 with volute gables and pilasters. In 1424 one battle took place at the height called Dubina u Malešova. In this battle, army led by Jan Žižka (he was already blind) defeated sections of manor unity. Plague in front of the former mill Dubina and a memorial stone near a pond Prosík remind us of the battle.

{rokzoom title=|Malešov fortress|}images/stories/maleov2.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Malešov fortress|}images/stories/maleov3.jpg{/rokzoom}

Posázaví

The times when Sázava belonged mainly to rafters and after trampers are gone. However, most of the romantic atmosphere of the old times of this river and surrounding scenery has been maintained. The history breathes at many beautiful sights such are proud mansions, ancient churches and monasteries, and we can also learn a lot from museum exhibitions. It is worth visiting any of the castle parks or hill Blaník or hill Medník.

Jílové u Prahy (town)

{rokzoom title=|Jílové u Prahy|}images/stories/jilove1.jpg{/rokzoom}

It is historical city famous for gold mining. The highlight of the city fame was during the reign of Luxembourg in the 14th century. After the devastation of mines during the Hussite Wars and the Thirty Years' War came the decline. Gold mining had been maintained with little breaks until 1968 when it was definitely cancelled. The settlement near gold mines was promoted to the royal mining town. Concurrently, a mint was established there. In the square there is early gothic church of St. Adalbert from 13th century, rebuilt into Baroque, with valuable art decoration. In front of the church there is house called Mince, former mint, today it is museum with rich exposition of the history of the region, gold mining and the history of trampers (tramping). Hall of Jílové, originally a Gothic storeyed building with three-storey tower, now has a Baroque appearance of 1724. In the city surroundings there are many old stoles.

{rokzoom title=|Jílové u Prahy|}images/stories/jilove3.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Jílové u Prahy|}images/stories/jilove2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Hradištko - Medník

{rokzoom title=|Hradištko - Medník|}images/stories/mednik2.jpg{/rokzoom}

It is recreational urban area above the confluence of the Vltava and Sázava rivers. There is romantic trail in the wild rocky terrain at which you can walk on foot upstream Sázava. From the valley of the nature trail (leads from Pikovice) can then be marked off at the top of a large Medník (417 m), the famous site of rare lily plants "Kandík Canine Tooth", but also protected yew, etc.

{rokzoom title=|Hradištko - Medník|}images/stories/mednik1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Hradištko - Medník|}images/stories/mednik3.jpg{/rokzoom}

Týnec nad Sázavou (town)

{rokzoom title=|Týnec nad Sázavou|}images/stories/tynac3.jpg{/rokzoom}

It is a city in a picturesque location mainly on the left bank of Sázava river, industrial and resort centre with many sights. In 1818 there was opened a factory for stoneware (abolished in 1866). In 30s and 20s there was opened branch plant of Jawa company. On the hill above the road in a dominant position there is one of the few Romanesque castles in Bohemia, with a castle rotunda of the early 12th century, a square stone tower of the 1st 13th century and a new Gothic palace wing. The castle burned in 1654 and started to dilapidate. Later on, all the buildings were used for the manufacture stoneware and stables. Now the whole area is reconstructed, there is a museum in the new palace wing with exposition of the local pottery. In the centre of the town a classical palatial house of former pottery manufacture was preserved.

{rokzoom title=|Týnec nad Sázavou|}images/stories/tynac1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Týnec nad Sázavou|}images/stories/tynac2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Konopiště

{rokzoom title=|Konopiště|}images/stories/konopiste2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Romantic castle, one of the most famous and the most visited historical sight in Bohemia, was originally a type of French castle. The castle was founded at the end of 13th century, since 1327 it was owned by Sternberg. Gradually it was rebuilt into a renaissance castle, after 1716 it was rebuilt into a baroque castle with a gate according to the plans of F.M. Kaňka with statues by M.B. Braun, etc. In 1887 the domain was bought by Ferdinand d'Este, future heir to the throne, and together it was rebuilt into family residence in romantic style by the architect J. Rucker. Concurrently, an English park with an area of 225 ha was created. In the castle chambers Ferdinand centered museum collections, especially set of weapons, hunting trophies and collection of St. George's museum. Castle with seven towers preserved the appearance of early Gothic castle after all renovations. In the interiors there are representative salons and rich collection of artworks.

{rokzoom title=|Konopiště|}images/stories/konopiste3.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Konopiště|}images/stories/konopiste1.jpg{/rokzoom}

Benešov

City on the old trade route between Prague and South Bohemia, reminded the early 13 century, is named after its founder Beneš, and later owned by the Catholic Sternberg. Among all

historical sights exceeds early gothic three-aisled basilica of St. Nicholas in Karlov, rebuilt between 14.-17 century, with valuable internal decorations and devices (M.B. Braun, I. Raab). High reminders of a former monastery church of the Minor from the half of 13th century, devastated in 1420 by Hussites. Piarist college with a church of St. Anna from years 1703 to 1717 by G. B. Alliprandi.

{rokzoom title=|Benešov|}images/stories/benesov1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Benešov|}images/stories/benesov2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Jemniště

{rokzoom title=|Jemniště castle|}images/stories/jemniste1.jpg{/rokzoom}

Palatial mansion on the outskirts of the village near the road from Benešov to Vlašim built in the years 1717-1725 by F.M. Kaňka for the genus of Trauttmansdorf. After a fire in 1754 it was repaired in Rococo style. The building in the shape of the letter H consists of seven buildings with large courtyard in the west and French garden in the east. The main hall vestibule of the central wing is decorated with rococo ceiling painting by F.A. Scheffler, baroque chapel fresco by V.V. Reiner and sculptures by M.B. Braun. From 1868 to 1943 Jemniště belonged to Sternbergs who complemented interiors, by 1989 the castle returned in restitution to George Sternberg. In the interior there is contemporary furniture and art collection is housed in the image gallery.

{rokzoom title=|Jemniště castle|}images/stories/jemniste2.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Jemniště castle|}images/stories/jemniste3.jpg{/rokzoom}

Vlašim

It is a centre of Podblanicko. Since 1580, the city on both sides of the river Blanice, originated from two settlements above the Gothic castle, of which has been preserved part of the north wing with a cylindrical tower. Later on, the castle was rebuilt into renaissance castle, which was during serf uprising (1626-1627) carried by rebellious dependants, who burned it and hanged captured provincial governor. Later, all the objects were reconstructed; today, there is a museum with natural history collection, collection of baroque statues of saints and exposition of hunting and sports marksmanship. During the time of Auersperg (1744-1945) an English park was founded in 1775 in the valley Blanice of 60 hectares with romantic buildings (Chinese pavilion, an old castle, etc.). There are three massive neo-Gothic entrance gates to the park from the first 19th century. Near the castle there is a late Gothic church of St. Jiljí from

1522-1523 and baroque deanery.

{rokzoom title=|Vlašim|}images/stories/vlasim2.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Vlašim|}images/stories/vlasim1.jpg{/rokzoom}

Louňovice pod Blaníkem, Velký Blaník

{rokzoom title=|Louňovice pod Blaníkem|}images/stories/lounovice3.jpg{/rokzoom}

It is a town with a baroque-renaissance castle at place of Premonstratensian convent of 12th century, destroyed by the Hussites. In the castle there is a museum with expositions dedicated to the history of Louňovicko area and Podblanicko area. At the common there is gothic church of St. Wenceslas rebuilt into baroque appearance. East of the village, there are rising wooded peaks of the Great (638 m) and Small (580 m) Blaník, separated by a seat, where is a road. From the saddle (parking) it is possible to reach the summit of the mountain, shrouded in legends of the Czech army, led by St. Wenceslas, who all sleep inside the mountain and will come to help Czech country when it is worst. Today, there is wooden view-tower in the shape of Hussite warning post from 1940, around it there are traces of Celtic fort ramparts of 3rd century BC. Knight rocks which are nearby, are hiding the alleged entrance to the underground.

{rokzoom title=|Observation - Blaník|}images/stories/lounovice1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Observation - Blaník|}images/stories/lounovice2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Zruč nad Sázavou

{rokzoom title=|Zruč nad Sázavou|}images/stories/zruc3.jpg{/rokzoom}

Domination of the town is a castle surrounded by a park on a bluff above the river, originally a Gothic castle from the 14th century, owned by Kolovrats, later on rebuilt in Renaissance style in the 16th century and damaged by fire in 1781. At the end of 19th century it was rebuilt in neo-gothic style according to the plans of J. Velrych, equipped with contemporary interiors (opened to the public). In the park there were preserved neo-gothic portions of the outer artillery fortifications, in the west of the castle there are remains of the old castle, the remains of bastions and towers of the original castle. Church of the Holy Cross is a Gothic church from 13th century, with a new ship from the Baroque period after 1781.

{rokzoom title=|Zruč nad Sázavou|}images/stories/zruc1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Zruč nad Sázavou|}images/stories/zruc2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Český Šternberk

{rokzoom title=|Český Šternberk|}images/stories/cesky_sternberk1.jpg{/rokzoom}

Český Šternberk is one of the most picturesquely located and best preserved medieval strongholds in the Czech Republic. It was a residency of the old Czech ancestry of Sternberg with hexagram (star) in blue field in their crest. Its founder was Zdeslav, son of Diviš from Divišov, living around the year 1241. During the reign of Jiří (George) of Poděbrady in 15th century the stronghold was held by George's arch enemy and leader of rebel Union Zelenohorská – Zdeněk Konopištský from Šternberk, whose strongholds were gradually conquered by the royal military. Later, the stronghold was repaired and separate fortifications with massive tower were added. Gradually, the area was expanded, so the original division was covered, and stronghold silhouette now looks more monolithically. In the first half of 18th century, so-called "Bottom castle" was built near the entrance gateway, which was used as an administrative building. Until 1712 and again between 1841 and 1949 Šternberk stronghold was held by Sternberg. After 1989 Zdeněk Sternberg received the stronghold back in restitution. Richly decorated interiors with collections of the ancestry (collection of more than 500 copperplate engravings of the Thirty Years' War) were preserved.

{rokzoom title=|Český Šternberk|}images/stories/cesky_sternberk2.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Český Šternberk|}images/stories/cesky_sternberk3.jpg{/rokzoom}

Rataje nad Sázavou

{rokzoom title=|Rataje nad Sázavou|}images/stories/rataje2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Originally Trhavá village, which was firstly mentioned in 1290, before 1338 it was fortified town called Rataje Hrazené, and today it is favourite recreational area on a rocky promontory surrounded by river. A specialty of the town was two strongholds from the 14th century – the bottom one was called Pirkštejn which was preserved almost in its original form with 15 metres high tower, gate and palace (used as rectory since 1724). The upper stronghold, preventing the entry from the east, was modified into renaissance-gothic castle with arcaded courtyard. Today there is a museum of central Posázaví (area near Sázava river). On the square there is early

baroque church of St. Martin from 1675-1691 with richly shaped western façade.

{rokzoom title=|Rataje nad Sázavou|images/stories/rataje1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Rataje nad Sázavou|images/stories/rataje3.jpg{/rokzoom}

Sázava

According to a legend about the birth of the famous monastery in Sázava, national culture sight, a hermit called Prokop, who lived in a cave at the right bank of the river, once met duke Oldřich and persuaded him to build a monastery there. He himself then became its first abbot and was lately canonized. The monastery was owned by Benedictines, using the Slavonic liturgy, following the Cyril and Metoděj tradition of Great Morava. Sázava became a far-famed centre of Slavic education. In 1097 the Slavonic liturgy in Sázava was ended, Benedictines of Latin rite. The monastery was rebuilt into Romanesque in 12th century and after 1315 into Gothic. After the fire in 1747 all the objects were restored in baroque form. In 1785 the monastery was closed and rebuilt into Neo-Renaissance castle. The recovery of the whole area had taken place with little intermissions until 1940, when it was finally finished. The most valuable part of the complex is gothic chapter hall from 14th century with remarkable wall paintings. The masonry of the ship, which is in unfinished Gothic church of St. Procopius with pillars, arcades and square tower (whose presbytery acts as its own church) looks very impressively. In the monastery garden there are uncovered foundations of a circular pre-Romanesque Rotunda of the Holy Cross with four apses from 1070. In the town Sázava, there is gothic church of St. Martin. Since 19th century, the township has been important centre of glass industry closely connected with the family of Kavalier. Today, the glassworks are specialized in the manufacture of technical glass.

{rokzoom title=|Sázava|images/stories/sazava1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Sázava monastery|images/stories/sazava2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Ondřejov

In the centre of the town, favourite resort in lower Posázaví, there is a Romanesque church of St. Simon and Jude from the first half of 13th century with prismatic tower. Later on, it was rebuilt many times, the latest is baroque rectory from 1778 and on the square there are many baroque houses (n.d. 15 from 1691). In 1898, an observatory was established by Josef Jan Frič (son of famous revolutionist J.V. Frič) at the top of Žalov above Ondřejov town. In 1928 he dedicated the observatory to the Czech state. Ondřejov town became famous centre of astronomical research in Bohemia and in 1954 it was included in ČSAV. The observatory studies the high atmosphere, solar physics, space research, etc. The largest telescope made in 1967 has a diameter of 2 m and weighs 8.7 tons. In 1998 a museum was established in the older part of the observatory, where you can see historical documents (documents about the

history of the observatory and biography of its founder, etc.) and devices. At the nearby hill Pecný (546m) there is an geodetic observatory.

{rokzoom title=|Ondřejov|}images/stories/ondrejov1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Ondřejov observatory|}images/stories/ondrejov2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Hrusice

Hrusice town is a birthplace of painter, illustrator and writer Josef Lada and also a setting for his charming fairy tales for children. Dominant monument is originally Romanesque church of St. Václav from the first half of 13th century with well-preserved original portal adapted in Baroque. Some houses on the village square have late baroque gables. There is also very famous pub U Sejků. At the place of demolished cottage of Josef Lada, there is a family house with plaque. In the house n.d. 115 at the road to Hrušov town, there is Lada memorial with drawings, illustrations and many artists' personal objects.

{rokzoom title=|Church in Hrusice|}images/stories/hrusice1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Night view on church in Hrusice|}images/stories/hrusice2.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Lada's Hrusice|}images/stories/hrusice3.jpg{/rokzoom}

Průhonice

Průhonice castle had many opportunities to appear in fairy tale movies as an impressive external scene. Originally Romanesque castle with well-preserved church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary from 1187 was expanded into gothic castle with turrets and a massive tower. Later on it was rebuilt into renaissance castle and after 1885 it was modified in a romantic Neo-Renaissance style, designed by J. Stibral. Even more famous is nearby Castle Park, which is one of the most important pieces of the European garden architecture constructed gradually after 1885 by A.E. Sylva Taroucca on an area of 240 ha. Landscaped park with a number of domestic and exotic species, specialized collections, alpine, etc. forms a harmonious entity unrelated to the surrounding landscape. The main attraction is 7,000 rhododendrons. Park is interwoven with landscaped paths or tracks with a total length of about 40 km. You can learn more about the park and its founder in memorial hall in the castle.

{rokzoom title=|Průhonice castle|}images/stories/pruhonice1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Průhonice castle|}images/stories/pruhonice2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Stvořidla

{rokzoom title=|Stvořidla|}images/stories/stvoridla1.jpg{/rokzoom}

The most beautiful part of the river Sázava is natural and landscape reservation Stvořidla, which is on its middle reaches. It spreads between Světlá nad Sázavou city and Leděč nad Sázavou town, bounded by railway stops Smrčná-Vilémovice. Huge boulders are scattered in the river and on the banks. Perceptive visitor recognizes animals and mythical creatures in those stones.

The landscape here has been created in the Quaternary, when high water carved zone deep valley in granite masses of melechovský zone. Stones were getting their shapes and form for thousands years by the water and material in the flowing water. In the past, there was even bigger amount of stones. During the first Republic stones for stairs, monuments and other stone products have been mined. Even the Master Masons Josef Podpěra from Světlá nad Sázavou has been granted a one-year permission for mining and processing granite in Stvořidla. But even before that, stone mining was directed by Leděč nad Sázavou town. For easier transport of the stone from the valley a small railway ramp was built for a short time. At the beginning of the 20th century further intervention in the untouched nature was building railway through Posázaví.

On 11th December in 1954 a railway station Stvořidla was opened. To stop further interventions in the untouched and beautiful local nature a National and landscape reserve was established. It is more than 200 hectares large area including the river bed and a narrow strip of wooded valleys on both river banks. By the flow between the boulders water is cleaned, oxidizes and so forms a natural cleaning station. Logging is banned and everything is left to Mother Nature. Forest stands are mainly made up of spruce, but also beech, hornbeam, linden, maple, alder and willow. Among many rare animals which are protected you can observe European otter. Also fishermen can enjoy a trip there, they usually fish trout and chub. Svořidla are very romantic. From spring to autumn it is overflowing with life. In spring first visitors are usually watermen, if the river has the correct water level. Only the most experienced and knowledgeable of all traps in this section will ride it out dry. Members of many tramping settlements like to go there, in summer hundreds of tourists go there as well.

{rokzoom title=|Stvořidla|}images/stories/stvoridla2.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Stvořidla|}images/stories/stvoridla3.jpg{/rokzoom}

Melechov

The highest peak of the whole czech part of Czech-Moravian highlands is hill Melechov (715,1.m above sea level). In the past it was called Oreb by the locals. At a distance of over 2 kilometers (away from Sázava river in Stvořidla) the elevation is more than 340 meters. The massif of the hill is formed by the coarse-grained granite. Melechov hill is significant spot of astronomical-geodetic network. Between 1824 – 1825 a „point Melechov“ was built there as a component of contemporary stable land register at an altitude of 708,94 meters. In 1864 Central European stage measurements took place at the place of contemporary stable land register. Point Melechov was marked by a stone with inscription: C: R: OPER: ASTR: TRIG: PRO MENS: GRAD: MED: EUROP: 1862, which means: „Imperial royal fixed point passing through the demarcated degree of central Europe in 1862“. A wooden watchtower was built above the stone. In 1930, this point became a part of Czechoslovak unitary trigonometric network. After this year there was built a seven-beam, sixteen meter high tower made of concrete. The trigonometric point was moved to its basement. The stone with the inscription that still marked the spot, was transferred to Ledec castle. It is still possible to see it before entering the town museum. Since 1937 it has served as a point of the basic trigonometric network. Point Melechov carries particular importance. It is used for further public land-surveying and mapping, international cooperation and national defense. Due to the special importance of this point and for its uniqueness and protection a protected area was established around it. But that was disrupted by treasure hunter Josef Mužík. He made a little excavation near the watchtower without any permission. He partially disrupted this local trigonometric point, however, he didn't find the treasure.

{rokzoom title=|Melechov|}images/stories/melechov1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Melechov|}images/stories/melechov2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Želivka (water basin Švihov)

{rokzoom title=|Water dam Švihov (Želivka)|}images/stories/zelivka.jpg{/rokzoom}

Water dam Želivka

river : Želivka, fluvial km 4,290

Water dam Želivka (water basin Švihov) was built between 1965-1975, 4,3 kilometres above a junction of river Želivka and Sázava. Main purpose of this work, which is integral part of water system of Želivka, is supplying the capital city Prague and the whole central Czech area with drinking-water up to 5,25 m³/s. In terms of volume of water in the storage space VD Želivka is from the perspective of the amount collected the most largest water reservoir in the Czech Republic and in Central Europe as well. Catch basin area of the river Želivka is 1178 km². Entry to 1. sanitary protection zone is prohibited, it is not allowed to operate hiking, water sports or sport fishing. The dam is direct, natural with upstream aluminum seals. It is established at the level of the alluvial gravels, its slopes are committed under the original terrain. Architecturally interesting landmark of composite object consists of two towers of supply, communication pillar

and security shaft spillway.

{rokzoom title=|Uncomplete bridget (WW the II.)|}images/stories/zelivka3.jpg{/rokzoom}

{rokzoom title=|Uncomplete bridge (WW the II.)|}images/stories/zelivka2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Lenght of the dam : 850 m

Width at crown : 7 m

The height of the dam : 58,30 m

Flooded area : 1432 ha

Lenght of back water : 38 km