

ZELOWICE in the shadow of a lava flow

An old, disused basalt quarry can be found near the church in Żelów. The rock uncovered at the quarry turned out to be a fragment of a solidified lava flow, created as a result of volcanic activity around 27 million years ago. Intense volcanism in these times was caused by multiple cycles of Alpine orogeny. A system of mostly regular cracks, created when lava cooled down, can be observed here. They separate the rock into adjoining columns, the largest of which can be several meters tall.

The locally occurring basalt was excavated and used, among others, for the construction of roads and railways. A picturesque example of these activities are the basalt roads in Żelów which lead from the manor of count Rudolf von Stillfried-Rattonitz, through the park, and up to the historic church on the peak of Małsana Góra.

The Elevation of the Holy Cross church is a beautiful, neogothic structure built in 1867 as a burial chapel on the initiative of countess Carolina von Wimmersberg née von Mettich, wife of count Rudolf. A major point of interest are the unique epitaphs gathered in the chapel. Count Rudolf brought in many epitaphs of persons widely related to this family, and had them placed in the naves of the church. They were also coated with polychrome, creating a fantastic visual effect which can be admired to this day.



Sudetic Foreland is a land, the major element of which are longitudinally stretching forested hills, broken up by deep picturesque valleys of rivers: Olawa, Ślęza, Bystrzyca and their tributaries. The valleys are mostly occupied by croplands. The center of the Foreland is taken up by its tallest hill - the majestic Ślęza (718 m a.s.l.), also known as the "Olympus of Silesia".

The exceptional geological attributes of the region are the factor which most differentiates it from the surrounding area. These features include: a remarkable geological structure, a wide variety of rocks and minerals, a rich history of excavation reaching as far back as Roman times and numerous monuments of mining and smelting infrastructure.

Their diversity, spectacular geological processes, as well as the rich cultural heritage were the basis for the creation of the Sudetic Foreland Geopark Association in 2013. The main aim of the Association is to cultivate a local tourism brand, utilizing resources provided by the local inanimate nature, as well as having the Sudetic Foreland area entered onto the UNESCO Geoparks list.



We would like to invite you to the Sudetic Foreland Geopark. Taking a tour of the region will not only allow you to behold the treasures of inanimate nature, but also to see the magnificent work of man, which is related to and celebrates the area's geological history. Any traveller coming to Sudetic Foreland will have the chance to learn about past geological events, touch rocks which can be even 600 million years old, and admire the results of utilizing minerals and rocks in the region's architecture.



geopark.org.pl



poczta@geopark.org.pl



GeoparkPrzedgórzeSudeckie



geopark.przedgorze.sudeckie



GeoWNS



THE GEOHERITAGE of Sudetic Foreland

AREA AROUND STRZELIN



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STRZELIN the granite kingdom

The Strzelin granites were created ca. 300 million years ago, as a result of Variscan orogeny, during which all of Earth's continents joined into one, known as Pangea.

Strzelin is the city of granite. This is quite evident in the Stone Park, located opposite the train station. The Park contains exhibits of rocks native to the Strzelin area, including granites.

Granite was first excavated in the area in the 10th century. It was used for the construction of, among others, the first cathedral in Wrocław. In the 12th century, the rotunda of Saint Gotthard was built, making it one of the oldest buildings in Silesia. The stone was also used in the construction of the city's walls. Strzelin is also home to a unique antique from the Middle Ages - a stone judge's table (one of two in Lower Silesia). According to medieval law, court proceedings were public and attracted a large number of the local population.

Commercial scale excavation of granite begun between 1830-1871. In modern times the excavation site in Strzelin is an impressively large "hole in the ground", which is still being mined. It measures 650 m in length, 250 m in width, and is 120 m deep. This makes it one of the deepest granite mines in Europe.



KRZYWINA, JEGŁOWA, ROCKS ON THE BOROWA following in Goethe's footsteps

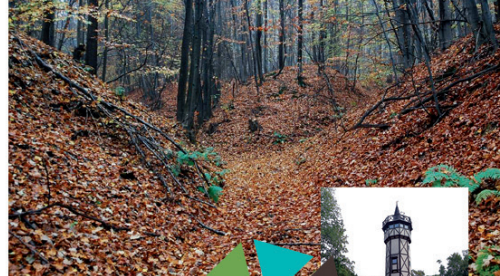
Rocks in the vicinity of Krzywna and Jegłowa have been used by man for over 2000 years. At first, they were used for the production of whetstones, in the early Middle Ages they were a highly sought after decorative mineral used in construction, as well as a polishing material used by jewelers.

Locally excavated quartzites and quartzite-sericite slates (quartz-sericite schists) were used in the construction of most of the stone buildings in the region, including the tower of the Jegłowa church, or both of the now ruined churches in Krzywna, around which a local legend has developed.

One of the oddities among the rocks found in Lower Silesia are date-quartzites. These were of great interest to the famous poet J. W. Goethe. Goethe came to Krzywna in 1790 in search of mountain crystals - a transparent variety of quartz. Now, date-quartzites and mountain crystals can be found in a heap located near the Stone of Goethe ("Skalka Goethego").

In 1854 the excavation of schists began in a larger quarry between Krzywna and Jegłowa, as they are a fine fireproof material, and were used e.g. for lining large smelting furnaces.

Quartz-sericite schists also make up the romantic Rocks on the Borowa, and the Romanowskie Rocks located in the main range of the Strzelińskie Hills. The stone in the area was affected by the heat created by the granite intrusion of the Gromnik. Because of that, when examining the stones in the present, one can find small grains of titanium-magnetite, about 2-5 mm in diameter. The presence of these minerals is often indicated as a factor causing the nearby Gromnik hill to attract lightning, as well as the origin of its name ("grom" meaning "thunder" in Polish). The minerals can even negatively influence the indications of a compass in some places.



GROMNIK HILL, PRZEWORNO tracking the Czirn's – pillagers of Sudetic Foreland

In the 15th century Gromnik was the seat of the von Czirn family – famous robber knight, who attacked and pillaged the caravans of travelling salesmen.

The location for the Czirn castle was easily decided upon, as the area was abundant in natural resources needed for construction. Gromnik Hill was built of the granite from the Gromnik intrusion. The natural rocks of the Gromnik can be found right below the peak. They occur on the slopes as loose blocks, sized from a few meters to a few centimeters. At the top of the Gromnik, granite can be found in the cellar of the ruined castle. Because of the characteristic joints in the granite, the rock can be easily divided into blocks, which makes it a good material for construction.

The fortune of the von Czirn's was not all loot. The industrious, if not exactly lawful, von Czirn brothers also ran an illegal medieval mint, making fake coins in the cellar of the Gromnik castle, as confirmed during archaeological studies. But that was not all. It is said that one of the von Czirn's made a deal with the Devil. The legend of the Devil's Bowling Alley is told to explain the existence of large set of loess ravines, found on the eastern slopes of the Gromnik.

Gromnik was not the only residence of the von Czirn's. The construction of another castle in Przeworno begun around 1447. The building, which has been rebuilt multiple times, stands to this day. Also worth seeing in Przeworno are the old grange and church buildings, constructed from local quartzites and bricks. The church holds the epitaphs of the von Czirn family, while also being the final resting place of August of Legnica, said to be the last member of the Silesian Piast dynasty.