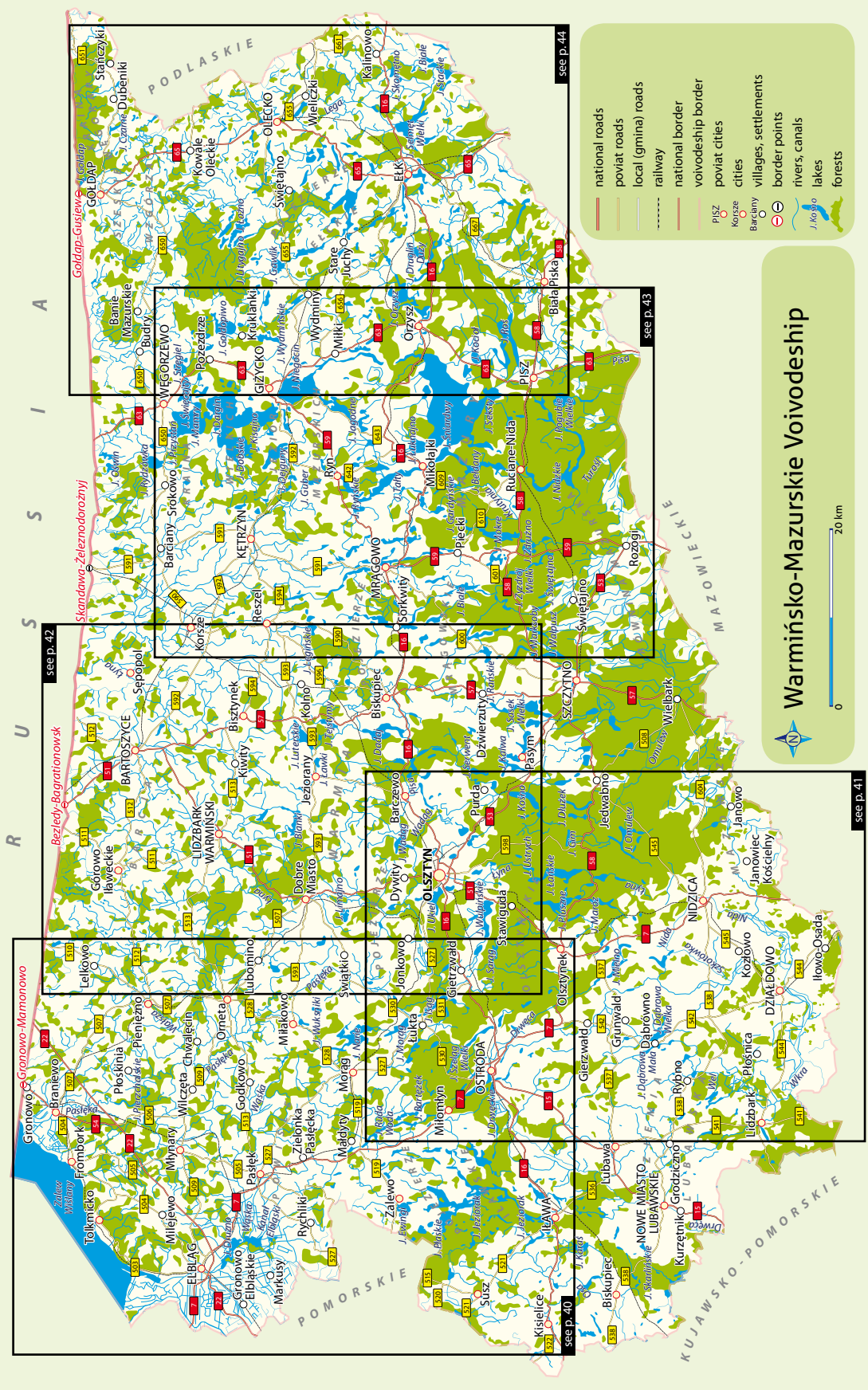




Warmia and Mazury by bike

www.mazury.travel



Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship





A land of lakes, forests, fields and gentle landscapes with moderate hills concealing sleepy villages is a perfect region for cyclists. The scenery is very diverse. It includes numerous, narrow roads lined with old trees. Riding through green, shaded tunnels is a real pleasure, especially that long and steep stretches are usually rather rare. Off-season there are few tourists in this region but in high season the place becomes quite crowded.

Amateur cyclists have a wide choice of hundreds of kilometers of bicycle trails, not only around popular health resorts, but also in the less popular calm corners of Warmia and Mazury. Everywhere there is something worth seeing – both natural attractions and monuments. There are plenty of old buildings on the trails. Among some well-known constructions there are smaller, modest but still charming buildings bearing witness to the rich history of the region. Visiting medieval castles and temples of many religions and different epochs, investigating museums and old residences of the powerful Prussian nobility as well as exploring mysterious fortifications from the period of World Wars I and II – may constitute a perfect supplement for bike tours.

The environment of the Warmia and Mazury regions is a splendid world of lakes, extensive woods, forests, mysterious swamps and peat bogs constituting a variety of habitats for many interesting animal species and rare plants. If you are lucky enough, you can see white storks, which nest in Warmia in great numbers, or the majestic silhouette of the sea eagle, or even hear the characteristic clangour of the cranes... You may find glacial boulders and other traces of glacier activity (including the main lakes) in fields and in forests.

The majority of bicycle trails are not very difficult, so no special skills are required. Even unsurfaced roads such as forest paths are appropriate for ordinary bikes. Also, there are many trails running along asphalt roads. There is a choice of short hiking trails not longer than 20 km and day-long excursions up to 60 km long. Those who want to go on a few days' expedition, may choose between several long-distance trails.

This guide shows the most interesting and characteristic trails in every part of the region. Making the perfect choice is easy due to short descriptions of each trail and its attractions. Small maps are also helpful during the trip. However, it is advisable to have exact maps of a given region as well. Once the trail has been chosen, the bicycle checked and all the indispensable things packed – one can boldly set off!



INTRODUCTION

Warmia and Mazury by bike



Local roads,
photo GEP Chroszcz





40

R1 INTERNATIONAL TRAIL

Route: Bągart – Święty Gaj – Stare Dolno – Nowe Dolno – Dzierzgonka – Wiśniewo – Krzewsk – Tropy Elbląskie – Raczki Elbląskie – Elbląg – Krasny Las – Łęcze – Kadyny – Tolkmicko – Pogrodzie – Narusa – Frombork – Stępień – Braniewo – Młoteczno – Gronowo; 85 km

The trail is part of the R1 International Trail – running from the border with Germany in Kostrzyn on the Oder to the border with Russia in Gronowo (675 km). It starts in the flat area of the Vistula Lowlands. Next, it runs across the Elbląg Upland and then crosses the Warmia Lowland. On the way, one can see numerous monuments, such as Gothic churches in Elbląg and Frombork. There are also many natural attractions including Druzno Lake, the bird wildlife reserve, and the beech forests in the Elbląg Upland Landscape Park.

The trail runs entirely along asphalt roads with mainly little or very little traffic (with some exceptions of medium and heavy traffic in Elbląg).

Level of difficulty: easy



Sanctuary in Święty Gaj,
photo J. Pruszyńska

Druzno Lake,
photo J. Pruszyńska

Places to see along the route:

- **ŚWIĘTY GAJ** – according to *The Life of St. Wojciech*, a site of worship to the Prussian gods was located near the village in the early Middle Ages. Supposedly St. Wojciech entered the area of the 'sacred grove' and celebrated a Holy Mass there. Several days earlier the Prussians had ordered the missionaries to leave the Prussian areas and then unexpectedly they attacked the missionaries as they rested. St. Wojciech died a martyr's death having been hit with a hatchet. In 1989 St. Wojciech's relics were brought from Gniezno to the local **CHURCH 1** and they have been stored there ever since. The church is of Gothic design dating back to 1399 and rebuilt after the fire which broke out in the 19th century.

- **DRUZO LAKE** – between Nowe Dolno and Raczki Elbląskie the trail runs close to the wet banks of a large lake called Druzno. This extensive water area crossed by the Elbląg Canal, is the habitat of many different bird species. The wet banks are overgrown with extensive rushes and small, hard to reach, marshy forests. The lake is shallow and it is a perfect feeding place for many species of waterfowl. A huge nature reserve comprises the whole of the Druzno Lake together with a wide strip of land along the banks – all of which amount to over 3,000 ha. Along the embankment surrounding the lake (the water-level is situated higher than the areas nearby), there is the blue hiking trail, which occasionally criss-crosses the R1 bicycle trail.

- **RACZKI ELBLĄSKIE** – a small village close to the northern bank of Druzno Lake. The trail runs close to the lowermost point in Poland which lies 1.8 m below sea level.





• **ELBLĄG** – a harbour and a riverside city which once competed with Gdańsk. Although the settlement was set up in the 1230s and gained urban rights as early as in 1246, it was completely swept away as a result of war operations in 1945. For many years after the war there were merely empty squares with very few monuments rebuilt. It was only in the 80s that the restoration of the old city began. However, the aim of the restoration was not to create an exact reconstruction of the former buildings, rather just to preserve some of the features of the previous city within the new tenement houses. The outcome is quite interesting, and the new streets with a number of shops, restaurants and cafes are really charming. Walking through the Old Town you should visit the main Gothic monuments of Elbląg.

Elbląg's **ST. NICHOLAS CATHEDRAL 2** prides itself in having one of the highest church towers in Poland (97 m). The Gothic three-aisled hall was built of brick and its interior is decorated with many precious, medieval works of art, mostly brought from other local, historical churches. Apart from the cathedral and churches in Elbląg there are the remains of the city walls and the 16th century **MARKET GATE 3**. It is possible to go up the gate tower and look at the Old Town (ul. Stary Rynek) from the top.

• **KADYNY** – a place beautifully situated at the foot of the Elbląg Upland by the Vistula Lagoon. The village is known for its original, standardized buildings and **THE FORMER PALACE OF THE GERMAN EMPEROR WILLIAM II 4**. The royal family took over the estate and its goods in 1898. In the following years both the palace and the whole village were rebuilt and developed. Nowadays, part of the residence – the former factory of majolica (fine-glazed earthenware) and palatial annexes – has been turned into a hotel. There is also the huge **BAŻYŃSKI'S OAK 5** in Kadyny. The tree, at least 700-years old, was named after Jan Bażyński, the owner of Kadyny in the 15th century and the leader of the Prussian Confederation opposing the Teutonic Knights.

• **FROMBORK** – raised above the town ashore the Vistula Lagoon, there is the Cathedral Hill. Its flattened top is surrounded by defense walls with numerous towers. The entrance runs across a wooden bridge over a dry moat and the foundations of the former barbican, then straight through a large gate made of two cylindrical, interconnected towers. Inside the walls there is a splendid, vast **GOthic CATHEDRAL 6**. This three-aisled hall building (all aisles of an equal height) was constructed between 1329–1388. It houses numerous precious works of sacral art, both from the Middle Ages and the following epochs of the 17th and 18th century. Next to the cathedral, there is the former Baroque **PALACE OF THE BISHOPS OF WARMIA**, which has been turned into **THE NICOLAUS COPERNICUS MUSEUM 7** (ul. Katedralna 8; phone: +48 552440071; e-mail: frombork@frombork.art.pl; www.frombork.art.pl). The famous astronomer spent many years in Frombork as a canon. The interior of the Copernicus Tower is arranged so as to resemble the astronomer's original office. Other places on the Cathedral Hill are also connected with astronomy and Copernicus' discoveries. Since 1973, there has been a planetarium in the

FOLLOWING THE MENNONITES

The flat regions on the western side of Drużno Lake are named the Vistula Lowlands. The name refers to a delta created by the Vistula River running into the Baltic Sea. The swamps in the delta were dried and managed by religious refugees from Holland. Persecution in their homeland made a fraction of the Protestant Anabaptists, supporters of the religious reformer Mennon Simmons, search for new, tolerant neighbours. Sixteenth-century Poland turned out to be a perfect place for them. Their knowledge concerning drainage and protection of areas of depression against floods, let the Mennonites cultivate a delta of the Vistula river. There are still numerous relics of this interesting community, including beautiful, arcaded houses with characteristic timber framing, cemeteries, and hydraulic engineering devices which can be found while wandering through the Lowlands along the Mennonites route.



St. Nicholas Cathedral in Elbląg,
photo D. Zaród





The Cathedral Hill in Frombork,
photo GEP Chroszcz

Nicolaus Copernicus Museum
in Frombork,
photo GEP Chroszcz

octagon (part of the Nicolaus Copernicus Museum in Frombork; phone: +48 552440083). In the Radziejowski Tower, lying just above the octagon, there is a Foucault pendulum showing the rotary movement of the Earth. The tower is a perfect place to enjoy the panorama of the whole of the Cathedral Hill and Frombork vicinity.

The town itself is not quite as noteworthy. It is located at the foot of the Cathedral Hill. Some of the tenement houses set around the small market and the former 14th century **ST NICHOLAS PARISH CHURCH** ⑧ were rebuilt after battles which destroyed them in 1945. A bit further on, at a crossroads running from the road towards Braniewo, there is a group of buildings which were formerly the **HOLY SPIRIT HOSPITAL** ⑨ and St Anne's Chapel founded in the Middle Ages. However, the present form of the buildings comes mainly from the 18th century. Here the section of medicine history of Nicolaus Copernicus Museum is located. What is worth seeing, apart from past treatment methods, is a very interesting gallery of sculpture and paintings as well as a splendid 15th century fresco in the hospital chapel. The polychromes present the Last Judgment (The History of Medicine Museum, The Nicolaus Copernicus Museum department in Frombork, ul. Stara 3).

• **BRANIEWO** – a town founded in 13th century by the bishops of Warmia at the Pasłęka River. It was almost completely destroyed at the end of World War II. There are a few notable monuments in the town. **THE BASILICA OF ST. CATHERINE** ⑩ prides itself on its huge size. This majestic Gothic temple was erected between 1343–1442 and rebuilt in the 1980s. Another monument is a 13th century Gothic **GATE TOWER** ⑪, which is the only remaining part of the Braniewo Bishops' castle and the city's fortifications. There also used to be a famous **SCHOOL** ⑫ in Braniewo – set up by the Jesuits in modern times. The monks were brought to Braniewo in 1563 by Stanisław

Hozjusz, the Bishop of Warmia and a famous activist of the counter-reformation. The vast edifice of the school called *Collegium Hosianum* was constructed in the 18th century. Later on it was partly rebuilt. The building of the **HOSPICE OF CONVERTS** ⑬ dates back to 1719. It is known also as the Potocki Palace from the name of its founder, the Bishop of Warmia Teodor Andrzej Potocki.

On the outskirts of the city (near the road to Nowa Pasłęka) there is a Baroque church called **THE HOLY CROSS CHURCH** ⑭ erected in the first part of the 18th century. Similarly, the equipment of the temple comes from the 18th century. The church replaced an older 17th century temple where a miraculous painting of the Holy Trinity had been worshipped. The painting was transferred to the new church at a later time.



THE R64 TRANSBOUNDARY BICYCLE TRAIL

40



Route: Nogat River – Batorowo – Nowe Batorowo – Nowakowo – Rubno Wielkie (a district in Elbląg) – Elbląg – Próchnik (a district in Elbląg) – Łęcze – Suchacz – Pęklewo – Kadyny – Lipnik – Tolkmicko – Chojnowo – Krzyżewo – Frombork – Różaniec – Nowa Pasłęka – Ułowo – Braniewo; 95 km

The so-called Lagoon ('Nadzalewowy') Bicycle Trail runs just by the bank of the Vistula Lagoon. Although the route was supposed to encircle the whole lagoon, there is no trail signposting on the Russian part of the trail. On the Polish side of the border, the trail runs through the Pomorskie voivodeship, through the Vistula Spit and then through the flat areas of the Lowlands, where it crosses the border of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodeship. This part of the trail is particularly attractive, as it runs through the Lowlands and then towards the hills and forests of the Elbląg Upland. The last part of the trail crosses the Warmia Lowland and runs towards the border of the Russian Kaliningrad Oblast.

Although the trail runs mainly along asphalt roads, there are breakstone and unsurfaced roads or paths on some stretches.

Level of difficulty: moderate, the distance between Łęcze and Frombork – very difficult.



Places to see along the route:

- **NOWAKOWO** – a town by the Elbląg River located in an area called Nowakowska Island. It is surrounded by the Vistula Lagoon, the Nogat and the Elbląg Rivers as well as the Cieplcówka and Jagiellonian Canals. It is situated predominantly in a depression below sea level. The island is protected by embankments, and all the buildings in this area, which has been inhabited since the 17th century, are raised on special artificial dwelling hills known as terps.

- **ELBLĄG** – see p. 3.

- **PRÓCHNIK – SEVERAL ARCADED HOUSES** ¹⁵ typical to the region have been preserved in this village founded in the 13th century. Constructions of this type have the first floor in a forward position above the front of the house. The floor is usually supported by wooden beams just above a wide arcade. Typically, the floors have a framework and grid construction. At present, there are two such wooden buildings from the turn of the 19th / 20th century and one dating back to the beginning of the previous century preserved in Próchnik. There is also the Gothic **CHURCH OF ST. ANTHONY** ¹⁶ in the village. Nowadays, Próchnik is a part of Elbląg.

- **ŁĘCZE** – a village founded in the 13th century and located in the picturesque area of the Elbląg Upland border. The local fields overview the Vistula Lagoon. You can also see 18th century **ARCADED HOUSES** ¹⁷ and a **BAROQUE CHURCH** ¹⁸. The trail runs through forests to the north of the village and then through deep gorges and stream valleys.

- **KADYNY** – see p. 3.



Cyclist on a trail,
photo iStockphoto.com

Łęcze – arched house,
fig. RS



THE ELBLĄG UPLAND LANDSCAPE PARK

The most interesting parts of the Elbląg Upland, in terms of the landscape, have been protected since 1985 in the form of a landscaped park taking up 13,000 ha. The Upland area is far higher than the surrounding Vistula and Warmia Lowlands. It descends gently to the southern and eastern sides. To the north and west (especially above the bank of the Vistula Lagoon) it creates a picturesque brink intersected by deep gorges and stream valleys up to 60 m deep. In the vicinity of Suchacz, Kadyny and Elbląg Pheasantry, the land's relief is so dynamic, with its steep slopes and distinct elevations, that it looks like mountains. On the other hand, the middle part of the Upland is rather monotonous. The area there is slightly undulating. Surprisingly, in the middle of the Upland near Milejowo there is the highest hill in the region, which is called Góra Srebrna. It reaches 198 m above sea level.

Most of the park is overgrown by forests, mainly beeches and oaks (e.g. in Kadyny). In the 'Kadyny Forest' reserve there are old beech-oak forest stands, whereas sea beechwoods are to be found mainly in the 'Elbląg Upland Oaks' reserve. The first reserve is easily accessible, provided you leave your bicycle in Kadyny (the park lies just next to the town). The second one borders the forest paths of bicycle trails running from Kadyny to Pagórki.

Picturesque landscape of the region, photo GEP Chroszcz



ŚWIĘTY KAMIEŃ (THE SACRED STONE)

Between Tolkmicko and Frombork there is a place where the high, afforested border of the Elbląg Upland reaches the bank of the Vistula Lagoon. This is where a huge 2 m high erratic boulder emerges from the water. It is 13 m in circumference and it lies about 30 m away from the bank. Sometimes, when the water level in the Lagoon is low enough, it is possible to make it to the stone unscathed. There is a small hole in the stone, which is believed to have served the pagan Prussian priests as a sacrificial altar. Sacrifices were supposed to guarantee the abundance of fish catch in the Lagoon. That is why the stone, which had served as an altar in the past, is called the Sacred Stone (Święty Kamień).

To get to the stone, you must follow the trail from Tolkmicko up to the fork in the road just behind the Nowy Wiek forester's lodge. There the trail goes up to the right, whereas the red 'Copernicus Hiking Trail' heads towards the stone. Several hundred meters further, you turn left onto a steep, descending forest path (it is better to get off the bike there). At the bottom, behind the railway track, you will reach the Lagoon embankment, from where the nearby Święty Kamień can already be seen.



Church of St Jacob
in Tolkmicko, fig. RS

• **TOLKMICKO** – a town and a harbour occupying a narrow strip of the flat land of Old Prussian Coast, just between the edge of the Elbląg Upland and the bank of the Vistula Lagoon (at the mouth of the Stradanka River). The history of Tolkmicko dates back to the 13th century. Founded by the Teutonic Knights, it was one of the greatest ports in the Vistula Lagoon for several centuries, which was partly due to silting of the water route leading to Elbląg. After being destroyed in 1945, the significance of the town dropped. Recently, however, thanks to some successful investments in the region, Tolkmicko has become a popular harbour for the berthing of yachts next to the still active fishing boats.

At the main square, there is the Gothic 14th century Parish **CHURCH OF ST JACOB** ¹⁹. The church has only one tower, which is located in the western façade just over the entry to the temple. It has a three-aisle interior with massive, brick columns which support the arcades between the aisles. Out of all the defense walls, only **A 14TH CENTURY TOWER** ²⁰ remains.

• **CHOJNOWO** – a small village on the north-eastern periphery of the Elbląg Upland and one of the largest villages in this area until World War II. It's worth riding along past the village buildings then diverting from the trail for a moment to see a number of beautiful **ROADSIDE SHRINES DATING BACK TO THE 18TH –20TH CENTURIES** ²¹.

• **FROMBORK** – see. p. 3.

• **BRANIEWO** – see. p. 4.



'OBRAZIK' BICYCLE TRAIL

41



Route: Lidzbark (Welski) – 'Obrazik' Reserve – Lidzbark; 19.58 km

This short trail runs mainly through the areas of the Górzno-Lidzbark Landscape Park. You will ride along forest paths, tracks and lanes by Lidzbark Lake in peace and quiet – there is no automobile traffic here and other tourists are very rarely seen.

The trail runs almost exclusively along forest roads, partly surfaced, while its initial section takes the form of an urban promenade stretching along Lidzbark Lake. Orientation on forest roads and paths may cause trouble at times.

Level of difficulty: easy to moderate.

Places to see along the route:

- **LIDZBARK LAKE** – an elongated ribbon lake covering 121 hectares. With a length of 3.5 kilometres, it is less than 500 m wide at its widest point. The first section of the trail runs by the southern shore of the lake. Its eastern end, with partially developed embankments, is situated next to Lidzbark, where a convenient promenade and a small beach can be found. The reservoir is rich in fish, and you may observe various species of water birds on its surface, such as great-crested grebes, golden eyes, mergansers, coots and mallards.
- **'KLONOWO' RESERVE** – a small forest reserve (almost 31 hectares) on the southern shore of Lidzbark Lake, near the western end of the basin. Broad-leaved forest as well as mixed forests dominated by pine trees and reaching up to 30 m in height are under protection. Some stands are almost 200 years old.
- **'OBRAZIK' RESERVE** – covers over 66 hectares of forests and moors, including the small Zdręczno lake between Piaseczno Lake and the Obrazik settlement. The area is a hilly, moraine upland. The water reservoir, located in the hollow between the hills, is gradually becoming overgrown, as a result of which a natural transitional moor has formed around it. The reserve is the perfect habitat for large, timid birds – cranes.



Nature of the region,
photo GEP Chroszcz



JAR BRYNICY (BRYNICA RAVINE) AND DĄB RZECZYPOSPOLITEJ (THE REPUBLIC'S OAK)

One of the most interesting parts of Górzno-Lidzbark Landscape Park is the Brynica River valley. A small, clear stream flows deep within a varied, hilly, moraine land. A deep valley with side ravines overgrown with various stands of trees is partially protected as 'Jar Brynicy' Reserve. West from Lidzbark, in the vicinity of the Red Trail, one can see the Green 'Dąb Rzeczypospolitej' Bicycle Trail leading to a large reserve. At the edge of the reserve, on the southern side of the valley, there is a magnificent tree, the **'Republic's Oak'** ²² (also known as the 'Jagiełło's Oak'), whose age has been estimated at as much as 500 years.

'MEMORIALS' BICYCLE TRAIL

44



Route: Elk – Mrozy Wielkie – Sordachy – Koziki – Giże – Brodowo – Laski Małe – Sypitki – Makosieje – Łoje – Laski Wielkie – Sędki – Lega – Buczki – Szeligi – Elk; 42.8 km

A long loop in the Elk area leads around the vast Selmęt Wielki Lake. Cyclists travel across large pine forests, meadows and fields used for agricultural purposes as well as through small villages. Picturesque stretches of the route lead right along the shores of the lake. On the trail there are remembrances of the recent history of the Elk Lake District: no-longer-used Evangelical



Along the trail,
photo iStockphoto.com



A military cemetery
in Makosieje, fig. RS

cemeteries remaining after the displaced German population, war cemeteries from the period of both World Wars as well as examples of old rural buildings from before 1945.

The trail leads mostly along rural back roads (predominantly asphalt); some shorter forest stretches lead along unsurfaced paths and tracks.

Level of difficulty: easy.

Places to see along the route:

- **MAKOSIEJE** – a village located on the eastern edge of Selmęt Lake; there is a comfortable descent to the water's edge, and the shore area at the end of

the village has been tidied up. Near the entrance of Sypitki village, **THERE IS A MILITARY CEMETERY FROM THE TIME OF WORLD WAR I** ²³. Soldiers of the Russian and German armies are buried here, and the whole area is cleaned and maintained. In the woods between Sypitki and Makosieje villages, an **EVANGELICAL CEMETERY ESTABLISHED AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY** ²⁴ CAN BE FOUND. It is also clean and orderly.

- **LASKI WIELKIE** – the village is located directly on the northern shore of Selmęt Wielki Lake. In the forest at the eastern side of Laski, just ahead of the entrance to the village, there is a historic, **EVANGELICAL CEMETERY, FOUNDED IN THE 19TH CENTURY** ²⁵ and in use up until the 1980s. Many tree species typical to the local cemetery have been preserved, among them, some old cedars. The cemetery area is orderly, but numerous tombstones are in ruins; family quarters have been isolated by metal fences.

- **SZELIGI** – a popular holiday resort located on a glade surrounded by forests covering the north-western shores of Selmęt Wielki Lake. You may use a protected beach and water equipment can be rented, both are popular with Elk residents. In the forest, next to the trail west of the village, there is a historic **EVANGELICAL CEMETERY FROM THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY** ²⁶, there are also sections dedicated to the army dating back to World War I, with graves of German soldiers who died in 1914. The cemetery is not easily accessible and is densely overgrown with weeds and bushes.



43



GIŻYCKO – RYN – ŚWIĘTA LIPKA TRAIL

Route: Giżycko – Wilkasy – Szczybały Giżyckie – Skop – Tros – Ryn – Knis – Salpik – Nakomiady – Owczarnia – Kwiedzina – Gierłoż – Czerniki – Karolewo – Kętrzyn – Biedaszkki – Pieckowo – Święta Lipka; 65 km

An interesting trail leading through the Land of the Great Masurian Lakes to the border with Warmia. It passes through a varied landscape where you can find many interesting monuments and historical relics. They are objects of military architecture such as: the fortifications of Giżycko's Boyen Fortress,



ramparts as well as bunkers from WW1 and WW2 – and some other relics, such as Teutonic castles and religious monuments chiefly the pilgrimage church in Święta Lipka. Along the route, there are also some less-known objects, such as roadside shrines or manors.

The trail leads by various roads, however, asphalt roads prevail, with medium and low traffic. There are some short sections of breakstone or gravel roads and even some field and forest paths.

Level of difficulty: easy to moderate.

Places to see along the route:

- **GIŻYCKO** – a town on the northern shore of Niegocin Lake was developed in a strategically crucial location – at the junction between the Mamry Lake complex and Niegocin. It was in 1340 that the Teutonic Knights erected their **CASTLE HERE 27**. Only one original residential castle wing with a Renaissance gable has survived until today. Recently, several new buildings have been erected, with their shape harking back to the former castle buildings. A luxurious hotel was opened here.

Next to the castle, an original **SWING BRIDGE 28** was built over the Łuczany Canal in 1889. The span of the bridge (100-tonnes) is pulled sideways in just 5 minutes thanks to a special manual mechanism, and only one man is enough to operate it! West of the city centre, on the inlet between Kisajno and Niegocin Lakes, the huge **FORTRESS BOYEN 29** emerges (ul. Turystyczna 1, phone: +48 87 4288393, e-mail: info@gck.gizycko.pl, www.twierdza.gizycko.pl). Visitors can walk on the ramparts and visit the small museum. The construction began in 1844. Over a period of 11 years a fortress with six bastions, earth embankments and numerous buildings was constructed. In subsequent years, it was modernized several times and has survived up until now. Despite the disastrous state of some parts, the fortress is a real treat for those interested in fortifications.

- **RYN** – a beautifully located town on a high bank above the northern end of the Ryn Lake and the small Ołów Lake on the opposite side. Passage between the two lakes was important for the Teutonic Knights; therefore a **CAS-TLE 30** was put up in this place in circa 1377. In subsequent centuries, the castle's shape was repeatedly changed through rebuilding and presently this four-wing building, dominating the other city buildings, houses a luxury hotel (some rooms can be visited with a guide from May to August) – Mazurskie Centrum Kongresowo-Wypoczynkowe (the Masurian Congress and Leisure Centre 'Zamek-Ryn', pl. Wolności 2, phone: +48 87 4297009, e-mail: hotel@zamekryn.pl, www.zamekryn.pl).



Swing bridge with Giżycko castle in the background, photo GEP Chroszcz



• **NAKOMIADY** – a small village, probably founded by the Teutonic Knights in the late fourteenth century, located some distance from tourist routes. It is assumed that a small church was established here soon after setting up the village, although an independent parish existed only since the 16th century. The small temple, with its tower added in 1932, was repeatedly rebuilt and, according to some legends had an underground connection to the nearby Teutonic Knights' castle. The castle was created at the turn of the 14th / 15th centuries. Today, a **BAROQUE PALACE** 51 built in the



2nd half of the 17th century and substantially rebuilt in 1705 stands on the foundations of the castle. The residence, with a preserved park and some restored farm buildings, is in private hands now – visitors can enter the park, use the guesthouse, visit the ceramic manufacture (Nakomiady Palace, phone: +48 661255653, e-mail: palac@nakomiady.pl, www.nakomiady.pl).

• **OWCZARNIA** – this small village surrounded by forests, north of the Nakomiady village, is known for its original **MAZURY MUSEUM** 52 (Owczarnia 1/1, phone: +48 89 7522023, e-mail: owczarnia@owczarnia.com, www.owczarnia.com). You can see the interiors of a traditional Masurian hut dating back to 19th and early 20th centuries, and get acquainted with the culture, customs and typical workings of a Masurian farm in a residential building previously in the service of the former estate.

• **GIERŁOŻ** – in the wet forests east of Kętrzyn, the trail leads to the remains of a large bunker complex from World War II the ruins of Adolf Hitler's headquarters **NAMED THE 'WOLF'S LAIR'** 53 (Ger. *Wolfsschanze*). The construction of bunkers began in 1940, in view of the Führer's plan to start a war with the USSR. In subsequent years, the headquarters grew in size and the existing shelters were strengthened in protection against the allied bombers' attack. In this way, a complex of more than 200 different buildings etc., occupying an area of about 800 hectares, was created. There were



Interiors of the cooking stoves factory in Nakomiady palace, photo GEP Chroszcz

'Wolf's Lair' headquarters in Gierłoż, photo GEP Chroszcz

three security zones there with numerous anti-aircraft shelters, smaller bunkers, and regular buildings built for various purposes, e.g.: power plants, waterworks, teleprinter centres, a heating plant, warehouses, barracks, etc. A railway line passed through the headquarters and there were two airports in the vicinity. The strongest bunkers – including Hitler's ruined shelter – impress visitors with the thickness of their reinforced concrete walls and ceilings of up to 8 m. The place is open to visitors



(Gierłoż, phone: +48 89 7410031, e-mail: wilczyszaniec@olsztyn.lasy.gov.pl, www.wilczyszaniec.olsztyn.lasy.gov.pl).

• **KĘTRZYN** – a city founded by the Teutonic Order in 1357 and established next to a wooden watchtower transformed into a **BRICK CASTLE** ³⁴ over a period of time. Its central, quadrilateral brick building has survived until today, rebuilt after the devastation brought by World War II. Today it houses the **Wojciech Kętrzyński Museum** (pl. Zamkowy 1, phone: +48 89 7523282, e-mail: mwk@muzeum.ketrzyn.pl, www.muzeum.ketrzyn.pl). On the western side of the old town it is worth visiting the magnificent **CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE** ³⁵. The brick temple with three naves was built in the Gothic style in the 2nd half of the 14th century. It was given the features of a defensive building. Two towers built according to the square plan were erected next to the temple's body and the entire church defence, incorporated into the city walls, became the walls' second most important part (after the castle). The church interior is known for its original, late-Gothic crystal vault, built after a fire in 1500, you may also observe the substantial deviation of the presbytery axis from the aisles.

• **ŚWIĘTA LIPKA** – located amidst the forests to the south-west of Kętrzyn, a small village famous for its large, Baroque pilgrimage church. The church, named **ST. MARY'S SANCTUARY** ³⁶ and dating back to the 14th century, is considered one of the most valuable monuments of this style in Poland. The former chapel was destroyed during the Reformation, but in the 17th century, construction of the new chapel began, and the building was placed in the Jesuits' custody. In 1693 the construction of a large basilica with Baroque façade and two towers was completed. A courtyard surrounded by galleries with corner chapels was added later. The church interior impresses visitors with its rich 18th century furnishings, supplemented by paintings. A great attraction is the organ, whose baroque prospectus with mobile figures was created in 1721, while the original instrument was replaced by a new organ with 40 ranks and 4,000 pipes in 1905.



Kętrzyn castle courtyard,
photo GEP Chroszcz

Sanctuary in Święta Lipka,
photo archives of UMWWM

NIDA LOOP

43



Route: Ruciane-Nida – Krzyże – Karwica – Wiartel – Ruciane-Nida; 46.90 km

A lovely trail for the forest lovers, leading through the backwoods of the Puszcza Piska (Pisk Forest), crossing tiny glades and passing through a few small villages. The route takes a circular loop around Nidzkie Lake. In many places it reaches as far as the shore, so make sure you bring your swimsuit and take a break by the water during the tour.

The trail has been marked out along asphalt and breakstone roads, as well as forest paths. It is easy to orientate yourself on this trail especially the stretch from the vicinity of the Czapla watchtower to Ruciane-Nida, leading by an asphalt road along forest thinnings.



Ruciane-Nida marina,
photo GEP Chroszcz

Gałczyński Museum
at Pranie forester's lodge,
photo GEP Chroszcz

Level of difficulty: easy.

Places to see along the route:

- **RUCIANE-NIDA** – a small town founded just after World War II, as a result of the merging of two settlements separated by woods. Ruciane was still merely a glade with a forester's lodge in the early 19th century but since 1884, when the railway was introduced to the area, it gradually evolved into a popular resort. The older Nida had existed as a pitch burners' settlement in the 16th century, but shortly before World War II only 150 inhabitants remained.

The town has actually no monuments, although you might like to visit **THE REMAINS OF THE GERMAN FORTIFICATIONS** ⁵⁷ from the turn of the 19th / 20th centuries. It is very easy to spot bunkers in the form of towers with battlements, erected next to the road bridge and rail bridge over the Nida Canal, as well as next to the Guzianka lock. An original item of interest is the **cone enucleator** built between 1890 and 1892. The old part can be visited, but only after obtaining the consent of Maskuliński Forest Inspectorate, Ruciane-Nida, ul. Rybacka 1, phone: +48 87 4241619 or +48 87 4241600.

- **PRANIE FORESTER'S LODGE** – a quiet place right on the shores of Nidzkie Lake, 6 km from Ruciane-Nida. It gained popularity thanks to the outstanding poet, Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński. He spent his holidays in a scenically located, small, brick forester's lodge over a period of three years starting from 1950, and even planned to settle in this beautiful Masurian region, but did not manage to realize his dreams before dying in December 1953. The great

NIDZKIE LAKE

Surrounded by extensive Pisz Forest, Nidzkie Lake is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful reservoirs around the Mazury Lake District. It covers 1.8 thousand hectares. Reaching 23 km in length, and 200 m to 2 km in width, it is a classic example of a ribbon lake, located in a cavernous hollow (reaching 23 m of depth) and carved by an ice sheet during the last glaciation. Typical of such lakes are also high, steep banks. The lake is even more attractive due to its numerous bays, together with as many as 13 islands, mostly located close to Nida.

Almost the entire Nidzkie Lake with an area of nearly 3,000 hectares is under protection, as it constitutes the Nidzkie Lake Landscape Reserve. Due to the obligatory zone of silence, it is always quiet on the reservoir.

Nidzkie Lake, photo GEP Chroszcz





Mazurian environment charmed the poet, facilitated his writing and was reflected in his works, such as *The Chronicles of Olsztyn series* or *Veit Stoss* and *Niobe* poems.

In 1980, the biographical **GALCZYŃSKI'S MUSEUM** ³⁸ was opened in the Lodge (Pranie Forester's Lodge, phone: +48 87 4256248, e-mail: muzeumpranie@neostrada.pl, www.lesniczowkapranie.art.pl). Numerous remembrances of the poet have been collected, including the manuscripts of poems created during his stay in the Lodge. In the summer, cultural events are organized there and are often attended by celebrities from the world of culture.

GREEN TRAIL

42



Route: Górowo Iławeckie – Wojmiany – Czyprki – Gałajny – Żywkowo – Toprząyny – Sigajny – Parężki – Kamińsk – Paustry – Górowo Iławeckie; 34 km

A bicycle trail running between Wzniesienia Górowskie (Górowo Hills) is the ideal option for those seeking rest from busy, tourist routes. This agricultural land with small villages, groves and forests unfolds the serenity and beauty of the gentle landscape. Here, man can live in harmony with nature, the symbol of which is Żywkowo, the European White Stork Centre, famous because it contains numerous nests of this beautiful bird.

The route leads almost exclusively along comfortable asphalt roads, however, with almost no traffic.

Level of difficulty: easy.



Places to see along the route:

• **GÓROWO IŁAWECKIE** – a town on the River Młynówka which was founded in the Middle Ages and received city rights in 1335. Over the centuries, it has not gained any greater importance, although its history has been intertwined with natural disasters or epidemics, often associated with wars. Severe damage to the town was brought by the Napoleonic wars, when the extremely bloody Battle of Iława Pruska took place in 1807. Once again, the town was destroyed in the winter of 1945, during fights between the Germans and the Red Army. The town soon became incorporated into Poland and its local population was replaced with Poles and Ukrainians who were resettled from south-eastern Poland under 'Operation Vistula'.

An oval urban layout of Górowo (including the market) is a reminder of the medieval foundation. The Town Hall on the main square was rebuilt several times; a 17th century clock has been preserved on its tower. Next to the market there is **A GOTHIC CHURCH FROM THE 14TH CENTURY** ³⁹; however, once you look inside it, you may notice an iconostas by the recently deceased painter Jerzy Nowosielski. At present, the temple serves as a Greek Catholic church. Out of its original decorations, a large Baroque painting on the ceiling, painted in 1660, has been preserved up to the present day. An original attraction of Górowo is **THE GAS INDUSTRY MUSEUM** ⁴⁰ (ul. Wyszyńskiego 20, phone: +48 89 7611092). This facility occupies the buildings of the former municipal gasworks dating back to 1908, which produced gas from pit coal.

Along the Green Trail,
photo iStockphoto.com





One of Żywkowo inhabitants
– a white stork,
photo GEP Chroszcz

• **ŻYWKOWO** – a tiny village of a mere 30 inhabitants, located just next to the border with Russia, famous for its white stork nesting place. During the breeding season, there are more birds here than permanent residents. It is worthwhile getting off your bicycle and taking a walk along the short Educational Stork Path. In many places you can see branches arranged in huge nests on special platforms, leaning against roof ridges or placed on the top of electricity poles. There are about 50 stork nests in Żywkowo, although not all of them are occupied every year. At the end of the breeding season there can be even as much as 200 birds in the nests! This is probably the largest colony of this species in Poland. Most nests are situated within the area owned by **THE POLISH SOCIETY FOR**

BIRD PROTECTION 41 (PTOP Education Centre, Żywkowo 7, phone: +48 89 7618207, e-mail: zywkowo@ptop.org.pl), where a special viewing tower has been erected. Storks can also be spotted in many neighbouring villages, as well as strolling among the meadows.



40

THE ELBLĄG CANAL TRAIL

Route: Elbląg – Rubno Wielkie (Elbląg's district) – Nowakowo – Kępa Rybacka – Bielnik II – Janowo – Adamowo – Wikrowo – Wiktorowo – Jegłownik – Gronowo Elbląskie – Różany – Zwierzno – Kępnowo – Brudzędy – Stare Dolno – Święty Gaj – Kwietniewo – Dymnik – Rychliki – Marwica Wielka – Jelonki – Jelenie Inclined Plane – Oleśnica Inclined Plane – Kąty Inclined Plane – Lepno – Kreki – Wielki Dwór – Jarnońtowo – Bądkki – Zalewo – Dobrzyki – Jerzwałd – Siemiany – Piotrkowo – Starzykowo – Szymbark – Ząbrowo – Kamionka – Ilawa; 130 km

An excellent trail for a few days' wandering through the land of the Elbląg Canal. The trail allows you to see the most interesting canal parts, including four inclined planes. It also leads through the former Mennonite settlements in the Vistula Lagoon and the villages of Ilawa Lake District, with their numerous historical churches and mansions. The initial section runs mostly through farmland, but in the next section cyclists encounter numerous lakes, and can traverse vast forest areas.

The trail runs primarily along asphalt back-roads with little traffic, a few short sections of the roads are slightly busier. There are also stretches running along unsurfaced roads, particularly in the forests around Jeziorak Lake and along the Elbląg Canal.

Level of difficulty: easy to moderate.

Places to see along the route:

- **ELBLĄG** – See p. 3.
- **JEGŁOWNIK** – a large village in Żuławy which boasts

several monuments. It is worth stopping at **THE CHURCH DATING BACK TO 1804** 42, built on the site of an older temple. It is a frame-structure building



A church in Jegłownik,
photo J. Pruszyńska



with a tower. The interior has retained some items from the previous church, including a Baroque altar and an organ front, as well as numerous tombstones, including some from the 17th century. There are also many old tombstones in the church cemetery. Additionally, the village houses an **INN FROM 1795** ⁴³ which has been partially preserved with original furniture.

- **ZWIERZNO** – two beautiful **ARCADED HOUSES** ⁴⁴ have been preserved in this small village in Żuławy. The buildings used to be typical rural constructions in the region. The first house dates back to 1773, the second is a bit younger – from the mid 19th century although, on the other hand, with interestingly decorated arcades. A school building is also interesting as it is located in a former community centre and stylized in a way which makes it look like an arcaded house.

- **KĘPNIEWO** – an old village in Żuławy region, probably founded in 1337. It used to be located on the Druzno Lake shore, which was a much larger area in the Middle Ages than it is now. Since the end of the 16th century, the surrounding wetlands were drained and managed by the Dutch **MENNONITES** ⁴⁵ (see box on p. 3), after whom the characteristic rural farmsteads, an arcaded house and the remains of the cemetery (with several renewed tombstones) have been preserved up until now.

- **ŚWIĘTY GAJ** – see p. 2.

- **KWIETNIEWO** – the village occupies the first range of higher hills over the Vistula Lowlands. The village's historic Gothic **CHURCH FROM THE 14TH CENTURY** ⁴⁶ bears testimony of the place's medieval origin. The church was built of field stones and bricks; it has a wooden tower (with an overhung cutwater) built on its western side in 1770. Inside there are two tombstones and an altar from the late 17th century. The Kwietniewo neighbouring areas are well-known for their valuable archaeological finds from as long ago as the Neolithic period (ca. 4500–1700 BC).

- **JELONKI** – it's worth visiting a **GOthic CHURCH** ⁴⁷ dating back to 1350–1375, standing among the village buildings with several arcaded houses. It is distinguished by a massive, 19m high square tower with its curious detail – an original 15th century door. Inside the temple you can see 18th century Baroque furnishings and a choir gallery decorated with rococo paintings.

- **JELONKI INCLINED PLANE** – the first plane of the Elbląg Canal, running alongside the trail route and established, just like the other three, at the turn of the 1850s /1860s. The length of track on which the trolley, carrying ships and boats, moves is 433 m, and the whole structure covers a 22 m difference in water levels in parts of the channel above and below the inclined plane.

- **OLEŚNICA INCLINED PLANE** – situated among the fields around Krasin; it enables crossing of the Elbląg Canal's largest level difference between the upper and lower sections, equal to as much as 24 m. The length of the



A church in Zwierzno,
photo J. Pruszyńska

Mennonite cemetery in Kępniewo,
photo J. Pruszyńska

Gothic church tower
in Kwietniewo,
photo J. Pruszyńska



THE ELBLĄG CANAL

An extraordinary, technical monument and a beautiful, attractive 83.3 km waterway, connecting Druzno and Drwęckie Lakes near Ostróda. If you count all branches of the canal, the entire waterways system is as long as 152 km. The canal design work was undertaken by a Prussian engineer Georg Jacob Steenke in 1837. Several professionals were allocated to assist him. The builders went on a few business trips, especially to Belgium and the Netherlands in order to see how channels and locks are constructed there. However, the terrain of the planned waterway was not conducive to the use of locks, and it was only when travelling to the U.S.A. in 1850 that Steenke found a solution to avoid using unprofitable (in that particular case) locks. The solution was inclined planes, powered by flowing water, using differences in the levels between particular channel sections. In 1860 four such constructions had already been completed, and in the years 1874–1881 the fifth ('Całuny') inclined plane was built. It replaced the chamber locks which had been used before, but, as opposed to the older ones, a much more efficient water turbine was adopted instead of the water wheel drive. Apart from the inclined planes, some other hydro-technical equipment of the channel are locks and security gates as well as an embankment, along which the canal was lead across Karnice Lake, where the water level is 3 m lower than in the Elbląg Canal.

A cruise along the Elbląg Canal,
photo J. Pruszyńska



Drwęckie Lake,
photo J. Pruszyńska


Windmill in Lepno,
photo J. Pruszyńska

plane's track is almost 480 m, thus it is only slightly inferior in size to the largest plane named Buczyniec. The peculiarity of this device is a local road crossing the railway track. It is sometimes necessary for passing cars to wait until the platform carrying the ship has passed. Another curiosity is a sluice with the Klepina stream flowing underneath.

- **KĄTY INCLINED PLANE** – situated near the village of the same name, a bit smaller than the other inclined planes described in this guide. It is 404 m long, and the difference in water levels between the upper and lower section of the canal is nearly 19 m.

- **BUCZYNIC INCLINED PLANE** – even though the trail passes along the motor road through the forest a few hundred meters from the plane, it's worth getting off the trail for a while in order to see this almost 500 meters long construction which is the longest of the canal's five inclined planes. The difference between the levels is 20.62 m. The inclined plane is hidden in the woods. You can visit a small museum exposition (History Chamber of

the Elbląg Canal in Buczyniec, phone: +48 89 6709228), dedicated to the history of the channel construction, and an engine room.

- **LEPNO** – a small village in the Iława Lake District; one of the few places in the region where an original **WINDMILL**  has been preserved, standing among fields, about one kilometre to the east, near the road from Kąty. By the end of the



19th century, windmills were a part of the local scenery, however most of them were destroyed later. The windmill preserved in Lepno was built of brick and it originally had a wooden swivel roof, out of which only fragments of vanes (sails) have survived.

• **JARNOŁTOWO** – a precious monument of this small village **IS A 14TH CENTURY GOTHIC CHURCH** ⁴⁹ with a stepped gable and an original, free-standing bell tower adorned with stepped gables as well. The only remains of the former property are **PARTS OF THE PARK AND THE MANOR RUINS** ⁵⁰. It should be noted that the famous philosopher Immanuel Kant used to work here as a teacher.

• **BĄDKI** – an interesting, neo-Gothic main body **OF THE MANOR HOUSE IN BĄDKI** ⁵¹ was erected in 1869. The manor has several peaks with pinnacles and a large terrace; a historic park extends around it. In the vicinity of the manor, farm buildings and a group of same-style groom houses have been preserved.

• **ZALEWO** – this small town on Ewingi Lake was set up in 1305, next to a small Teutonic Knights' castle at the end of the 13th century. The city was founded by settlers from Thuringia. To this day, no traces of the castle remain, but you can visit the **CHURCH OF ST. JOHN** ⁵² dating back to circa 1351 with a tower half a century older. The single-nave interior houses interesting gravestones from the early 17th century. Next to the church stands a low, square tower and a small section of the defence walls – all that is left of the old Zalewo fortifications.

• **DOBZYKI** – a village partially situated on fenland between Ewingi Lake and the northern end of Jeziorak Lake. Dobrzyki was founded by the German settlers as early as the 13th century. The area had long before been inhabited by the Prussians, as evidenced by two large, early medieval castles found in the area. The village houses a **GOthic church from before 1320** ⁵³. A wooden tower was built within the body of the temple in the 19th century. The church interior includes Baroque patrons' pews, galleries and an organ dating back to circa 1776.

• **JERZWAŁD** – a village by the Jeziorak Lake, especially well known to a multitude of young fans of a series of books about Pan Samochodzik's (Mr Automobile's) adventures. It was here that Zbigniew Nienacki (1929–1994), the books' author, lived and worked. He was buried in the local cemetery. Each year Jerzwałd becomes a meeting place for the writer's fans. Additionally, the governing board of the **Ilawa Lake District and Dylewo Hills Landscape Park Complex** with a small **BOTANICAL GARDEN** ⁵⁴ are located here (Jerzwałd 62, phone: +48 89 7588527, e-mail: zpk@warmia.mazury.pl, parkikrajobrazowewarmiiimazury.pl).

• **SZYMBARK** – the village boasts about **THE IMPRESSIVE RUINS OF THE POMESANIAN CHAPTER'S CASTLE** ⁵⁵. Its construction started probably in the 1370s. This huge building was the second largest castle of the Teutonic state in its glory years, second only to Malbork. In the 17th century, the castle was transformed into a powerful Finckenstein family residence; however, when the wave of Romanticism came at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, the family reconstructed the castle to a 'Gothic form'. The building fell into ruin in 1945, when it was plundered and destroyed by the Red Army. Still, there are walls with

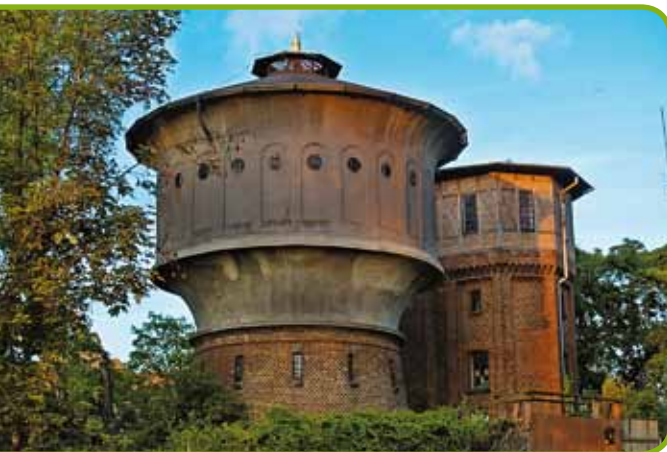


Gothic church in Jarnołtowo,
photo J. Pruszyńska

Manor house in Bądko,
photo J. Pruszyńska

Zalewo Tower,
photo J. Pruszyńska





towers, a gate tower, a bridge over the moat, and numerous farm buildings. The romantic castle remains photograph very well – they even served Volker Schlöndorff, a film director, while shooting the scenes to *The Ogre* with John Malkovich.

• **ŁAWA** – a major city and a popular resort of the Ława Lake District lying at the southern end of Jeziorak and Little Jeziorak Lakes. The name is derived from the Prussian word *llis*, meaning swamp or mud. The Teutonic Knights built a castle here in the early 14th century, soon a town was built next to it. The town's medieval origin is expressed in the form of **CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION** ⁵⁶, built of brick between 1317–1325 in a Gothic style. The church, with decorative gables, had an adjacent bell tower, and the whole church complex was incorporated within the city walls. The enormous **CITY HALL BUILDING** ⁵⁷ bears testimony of the town's prosperity at the turn of the 19th / 20th centuries. The building was erected between 1890 and 1912 and restored in 1995.

Apart from the old town, it is worth visiting **THE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE THEOLOGIST** ⁵⁸ which occupies an original, former gasworks from 1899 and was handed over to the local Ukrainian community in the 90s. Another interesting site is a **NEO-GOTHIC**

RAILWAY STATION ⁵⁹ dating back to 1900, the original **WATER TOWERS OF THE 19TH CENTURY** ⁶⁰ – two near the train station and another two in other parts of the city (in ul.1 Maja and ul. Wojska Polskiego).



40, 41



Remains of the castle in Szymbark,
photo J. Pruszyńska

Water tower in Ława,
photo J. Pruszyńska

THE GREAT OSTRÓDA LOOP

Route: Ostróda – Lubajny – Stare Jabłonki – Szydłak – Kraplewo – Brzydowo – Smykowo – Turznica – Samborowo – Rogowo – Liwa – Ostróda; 68.4 km

An excellent trail for a two-day trip. You can cover the whole distance in one day, but you may as well reach Kraplewo or Brzydowo on the first day – you can quickly return to Ostróda along a Yellow Trail from both towns. The next day, you can continue the trip from one of the above-mentioned villages. Another possibility is to shorten the route by covering the first couple of kilometres to Stare Jabłonki or Samborowo by train. In the first case, it's possible to skip an almost 11 km, not particularly interesting, section of the trail from Ostróda to Stare Jabłonki; in the second – we would miss 19 km of predominantly forest paths and roads around Drwęćie Lake.



Around 43 km of the total distance is serviced by surfaced, primarily asphalt roads. However, these are routes with very light traffic, except for a short stretch just beyond Samborowo (circa 1 km), constituting busy, national highway no. 16. The remaining part of the route goes along unsurfaced forest and field roads and paths. An especially difficult stretch, in terms of orientation, is between Stare Jabłonki and Szyldak.

Level of difficulty: medium to difficult.

Places to see along the trail:

- **OSTRÓDA** – a city located by Drwęckie Lake, with the Drwęca River flowing into it, was founded next to a castle built by the Teutonic Knights. Initially it was a wooden watchtower, established circa 1270 at a place known as a pagan Prussian settlement. In 1329 the settlement around the castle received town privileges. Its name is derived from the settlers who arrived here from Osterode am Harz, the Harz Mountains in Germany. Ostróda constituted an important national movement centre of the Mazury region – it was here that Parson Gustaw Gizewiusz protected Polishness. Since the 19th century the town has also been a popular tourist centre and fulfils the same role today, after having been rebuilt from the devastation of World War II.

Walking along the promenade next to Drwęckie Lake, we encounter a **TEUTONIC**

CASTLE ⁶¹ standing amidst the greenery on the north-western side of the Old Town. From the defense system erected for the Ostróda commanders between 1349–1370, 3 out of 4 wings of the main building have been preserved. A fire destroyed the fourth wing along with the tower in 1788. There is a **Cultural Centre and a Regional Museum** in the courtyard of the building (ul. Mickiewicza 22, phone: +48 89 6462602, e-mail: muzeum.ostroda@wp.pl, www.muzeumwostrodzie.pl). The castle was rebuilt after 1945 and is decorated with picturesque wooden galleries. Apart from the castle, it is worth seeing the **GOTHIC CHURCH OF ST. DOMINIC** ⁶² from the early 15th century, in which Parson Gizewiusz preached his sermons in the 19th century. Adjacent to the church, there is a part of the medieval city walls. On the Square of the Millennium of the Polish State, a fountain called **THE UNION OF EUROPEAN UNITY** ⁶³ draws attention. It was founded in 1907 as a fountain of the Three Emperors, who ruled the Empire German since 1871. After being dismantled in the 1960s, it was returned to its present location in 2004. Another reminder of the early twentieth century is **THE BIS-MARCK TOWER** ⁶⁴. This 10 m high building, made of stone,



Ostróda pier,
photo J. Pruszyńska



THE DIVIDED LAKE

Just before Stare Jabłonki the trail leads along the embankment of the Ostróda-Olsztyn railway line. Down to the right, the waters of Szeląg Mały Lake can be observed. Before the construction of the railway, the lake constituted merely a southern bay of the long, ribbon-type Szeląg Lake which once stretched amidst Taborskie Forests over an area of almost 16 km. However, in 1873, the said railway line was opened, and a long and wide embankment split the reservoir into Szeląg Wielki (Great Szeląg) and Szeląg Mały (Small Szeląg) Lakes. There are roads running along both sides of the embankment; below 50 m navigable tunnel passes, connecting the two lakes and forming part of the Ostróda Canal.

was dedicated to Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, who led the German unification of 1871. It was established as a first among many such buildings constructed in the region at that time.

- **SZYLDAK** – in the park on the northern side of the village situated on the busy national highway no. 7, there is a 19th century **ECCLECTIC MANOR HOUSE** ⁶⁵. Its curious shape with two towers and a glass veranda is covered with a mansard roof. In the park you can find the grave of the last pre-World War II owner of the residence, General von Niebelschütz. Behind the palace

there is a vast farmland, now occupied by a plant breeding centre.

- **KRAPLEWO** a village by a small lake situated near the picturesque Dylewo Hills (a red bike trail starting at this point leads to the Hills). When entering the village from the direction of Szyldek, **THERE IS A MANOR HOUSE DATING BACK TO THE 2ND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY** ⁶⁶ and expanded at the beginning of the last century. It once belonged to the Prussian von Wien family and now it serves as a guest house. Slightly further, on the opposite side of the road there is a **METHODIST CHURCH** ⁶⁷ dating back to 1848, built in a Neo-Gothic style with timber framing. Inside we will find items and furnishings typical of the epoch, and some galleries. Next to the temple we can see an old wooden bell tower constructed of poles.

- **CZARNE (BLACK) LAKE** – a small lake

hidden among the forests on the northern shore of Drwęckie Lake. The trail runs along the banks of the reservoir consisting of a floral reserve of almost 10 hectares. Shallow water, up to 6 m deep, houses the extremely rare Merlin's grass, creating a belt, a couple of metres wide, along the shores of the lake. Besides this, there are many other protected species of aquatic plants here.



Manor house in Kraplewo,
photo J. Pruszyńska



40, 41

THE FOUR BRIDGES TRAIL

Route: Łukta – Komorowo – Pelnik – Łęguty – Grażymy – Wynki – Łukta; 24.5 km

A restful, back-road trip among woods and along the lake shores in the eastern part of the Iława Lake District. Covering the trail loop, one crosses Pasłęk River 4 times. The river is known as the most important beaver refuge in Poland. Simple monuments in small sites on the way and the possibility to swim in the lakes are a nice diversion for your trip.

The trail leads mostly along non-asphalt roads, partly hardened and paved, partly unsurfaced. Only about 1.5 km of the trail is a very busy asphalt road from Łukta to Olsztyn through Pelnik village.

Level of difficulty: easy.



Places to see along the route:

- **ŁUKTA** – a communal village on the Łukta River (also called Łukcianka) in the north-eastern part of the Iława Lake District, well-known for its original, little Gothic church. **THE CHURCH, DEDICATED TO ST. CATHERINE** ⁶⁸ was reportedly in existence as far back as 1279, although it is known that the village itself was founded in 1340, and its name comes from the old Prussian word *lucte* (rush). The church, which still exists, is a brick building dating back to around 1407. Its construction was supported by the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Ulrich von Jungingen, who also took part in its consecration. A single-nave building was renovated in the mid-nineteenth century. It has stepped peaks with pinnacles and an interesting tower – its lower floors are made of brick. A wooden tower covered with an onion-shaped dome made of shingles was added to the top of the structure in 1816. Inside there is a late Renaissance altar and a commemorative plate from the early 17th century.

- **‘OSTOJA BOBRÓW NA RZECZE PASŁĘCE’**

RESERVE – the Pasłęka River in almost all its entirety forms a nature reserve (beaver refuge), and is protected as the main habitat of beavers in Poland. The whole reserve covers an area of over 4,249 ha. In the area of Łukta village it includes not only the river and a narrow strip of land alongside, but also a wide, almost 1 km stretch of forest on the eastern side of the river (between Pełnik and Gamerki) as well as the lakes of Isąg and Łęguty. The Pasłęka River, near the Suwałki Region, was the last place in Poland inhabited by beavers after WWII. Those aquatic/marsh mammals first appeared in Pasłęka accidentally, as refugees from a farm; they belonged to the species from Canada, unlike the European beavers from around the Black Hańcza River in the Suwałki region. Now, thanks to beaver protection in the reserve on the Pasłęka River, the beaver population has rapidly increased and are now present in many parts of Poland.

- **ŁĘGUTY** – a small village on the Łęguty lake upon the Pasłęka. Here you can see the now closed **EVANGELICAL CHURCH** ⁶⁹ of 1737–1738 and a surrounding cemetery.

- **GRAZMY** – a picturesquely situated tiny village with an imposing **NEO-BAROQUE PALACE FROM 1924** ⁷⁰, currently occupied by the Home of Social Assistance. The walls of the basements of an older mansion built in the early 16th century were used during the construction. The trail behind the village leads to the forest along a beautiful lane of lime trees, recognized in full as a natural monument.



Church in Łukta
dedicated to St. Catherine,
photo J. Pruszyńska

Beaver,
photo iStockphoto.com





Route: Nidzica – Radomin – Orłowo – Likusy – Jabłonka – Wikno – Zimna Woda – Więckowo – Módlki – Bartoszek – Nidzica; 53 km

The amber trail trekking route allows us to explore the vast forest called Puszcza Napiwodzko-Ramucka, extending up to Szczytno. Signs lead cyclists to the vicinity of some interesting natural reserves and the big Omulew Lake from which flows the Omulew River toward Narew as its tributary on the right side. The trail also includes historical relics from various periods, the most interesting of which are the monuments of Nidzica itself.

The route runs mostly on asphalt roads but also unsurfaced forest roads. Most sections of the route are very rarely frequented, and only a short section runs on a busy road from Nidzica to Wielbark.

Level of difficulty: easy to moderate.

Places to see along the route:

- **NIDZICA** – the city is located near the former border between Prussia and Mazovia. Centuries ago, it housed the Prussian tribe of Sassen. In 1268 the Teutonic Knights erected a wooden and earth fort here which, with time, was changed into a stone castle. The town was built next to a religious stronghold, and due to its frontier location it was often attacked during the many Polish-Teutonic wars in the 15th and 16th centuries. In 1656 the Tartars, allied with Poland, invaded Nidzica. Battles and destruction swept through the village during Napoleon's campaign in 1807 and during both world wars.

A testimony to the power and wealth of the Teutonic Order in the frontier areas was a **BRICK CASTLE** ⁷¹. The fort was built on a hill between 1370 and 1407. Its view is now obscured by tall trees. The main gate to the castle is located on the eastern side – first enter the courtyard in the ward (part of the castle's defense) surrounded by a defensive wall with a low cylindrical tower in the corner. Over the ward stand some corner towers erected on a square plan and a central tower with the gate to the main castle. The entrance leads into the courtyard with wood-concrete galleries reconstructed after World War II. The castle rooms are used as a hotel with a restaurant and a local cultural centre including a small **Museum of the Land of Nidzica** (Nidzicki Ośrodek Kultury, ul. Zamkowa 2, phone: +48 89 6250370, email: zameknidzica@wp.pl, www.nok.nidzica.pl).

Below the castle hill stretches the old town, where most buildings were destroyed in 1945. A **NEOCLASSICAL TOWN HALL FROM THE 19TH CENTURY** ⁷² and some tenement houses in the eastern frontage have survived to this day. Nearby stands St. Adalbert's **CHURCH FROM THE 14TH CENTURY** ⁷³, rebuilt after 1914 in the neo-Renaissance style. Once, there were defensive walls around the old town. Only two parts have survived to this day with two 14th century towers. Once, the string of fortifications also included the so-called **KLASZTOREK** ⁷⁴ (today it houses the State Archives), a Gothic building with a remnant of a tower from the 14th century.



• **JEZIORO ORŁOWO MAŁE' RESERVE** – near the trail behind the village of Orłowo, you can find Orłowo Małe Lake among forests. Reed-covered shores and the silty bottom of a rather shallow (up to 2 m) reservoir is favoured by mud turtles – very rare in our country. The animals sometimes leave the water on the south-western shore, where they can bask in the sun. There is a viewing platform from where we can spot them.

The reservoir, along with part of the surrounding forest, is a natural fauna reserve (called “Jezioro Orłowo Małe”) covering 4.5 ha. Founded in 1958, it was the first place for the protection of turtles in Poland. You can reach it by walking down the marked trail from Orłowo through some picturesque woodlands, moraine hills with numerous springs, and ponds scattered here and there.

• **OMULEW LAKE** – this large, H-shaped moraine lake is almost completely surrounded by woods, except for the north-western bank, along which stretch the villages of Wikno, Jabłonka and Natać Wielka. The lake, of over 7 km and an average width of 1 km, is part of the trail along the Omulew River.

• **KONIUSZANKA II' RESERVE** – right beside the trail where Omulew disgorge itself into a lake and crosses



ŁYNA'S SOURCES

In the woods near the village of Łyna, 3 km west of Orłowo, the Łyna River has its source. Then it flows north through the entire province of Warmia and Masuria and joins the Pregel River in Russia. The Łyna River comes from the plentiful, clean springs located in the vast valley and numerous canyons shaded by a deciduous forest. An interesting phenomenon is a strongly marked backward erosion which causes constant shifting of the well-heads towards the watershed line up the valley. The springs and the surrounding forest are protected as a nature reserve named after Prof. Roman Kobendza, and cover an area of 120 ha.

Łyna's Sources, photo archives of UMWWM

the Koniuszanka River, extends a nature reserve with an area of 64.5 ha. It covers a part of the old mixed forest with numerous trees (as many as 78), including huge oaks and 200-year-old pines. The Koniuszanka River, flowing through the reserve, is very clean and forms a short picturesque gorge between the moraine hills. The reserve is easily accessible with a hiking path of an instructive nature. A little further extends the remote Koniuszanka I Reserve with a rare phenomenon of suffosion (washing away of sediment grains by ground waters) within the sandy postglacial sandur. In the reserve, as a result of the phenomenon, the Napiwodzka Stream disappears under the ground then flows back up to the surface 2 km distant from Koniuszanka. The river is a habitat for beavers and rare birds called dippers, which like swift streams. Wild local forests are inhabited by numerous animal species.

Brick castle in Nidzica,
photo GEP Chroszcz





Route: Sępapol – Liski – Judyty – Szczurkowo – Ostre Bardo – Stopki – Długa – Sępapol; 33 km



Sunset during excursion,
photo iStockphoto.com



Ostre Bardo
– Late Gothic church,
now a Greek Catholic church,
fig. RS

A short trip through smaller villages on the Sępowska Plain. Silent, forgotten villages with small churches and residences of the Prussian nobility are places rarely visited by tourists. Low traffic makes it possible to travel smoothly all day through a quiet rural landscape.

Almost the entire route goes along asphalt roads with very little traffic, and the 3.5 km stretch between Kolonia Skitno and Judyty runs on concrete slabs arranged along the route of a former railway line.

Level of difficulty: easy.

Places to see along the route:

- **SĘPOPOL** – the city at the confluence of the Łyna and Guber Rivers was formed in a place where once existed a fortified Prussian castle, later destroyed by the Teutonic Knights. In 1351 some monks founded a town in the bend of the Łyna River, using its natural defensive qualities. The town was soon surrounded by walls and a moat connecting Łyna with Guber placing the town on an island.

In the bend of Łyna stands the **GOTHIC ARCHANGEL MICHAEL'S CHURCH** 75 built between 1360 and 1400.

It has a high square tower built in the main nave of the building and the interior is of a Gothic stellar vault. The furnishings are Baroque. Behind the church, you can see a former Gothic tower rebuilt into a residential house and a short section of the city walls.

- **LISKI** – in the former **COURT BUILDINGS** 76 of the noble Lieskewang family (hence the name of the village), who resided in the area from 1425 until the 18th century, there is now a large **stud**. For a long time during the post-war years it was the biggest stud in Poland, and the horses from Liski had numerous sporting successes.

- **JUDYTY** – in this small village stands an imposing **19th CENTURY PALACE OF THE VON KUNHEIM FAMILY** 77, which was a place of large estates, including many surrounding villages, up until WWII. Most interesting are the life-size bronze lions placed next to the palace, purchased in 1889 in Paris during the great world exhibition.

- **SZCZURKOWO** – a village founded in the 14th century; in 1945 it was crossed by the boundary between Poland and the Kaliningrad Oblast, then belonging to USSR (now Russia). In the Polish part of the village a substantially rebuilt **MANOR HOUSE FROM THE 19th CENTURY** 78 remains. Szczurkowo is primarily known for one of the largest colonies of white storks in the Warmia and Mazury.



• **OSTRE BARDO** – a small village in the vicinity of the Russian border. There is a late-Gothic **CHURCH FROM THE EARLY 16TH CENTURY** ⁷⁹ that until 1945 (for almost its entire existence) served the Lutherans. It was built with field stone and brick. It has an additional wooden tower to the west. After the expulsion of the Germans, many Ukrainians from the area of the Bieszczady Mountains settled here. Today, the temple serves as a **Greek Catholic church**.

RED TRAIL THROUGH THE AREA OF JEZIORANY

42 +



Route: Jeziorany – Kostrzewy – Krokowo – Lekity – Kalis – Ustnik – Wójtówko – Jeziorany; 18 km

The trail makes a loop on the west side of Jeziorany. It runs through the hilly areas of the Olsztyn Lakeland, mainly among the fields and meadows, crossing only a small forest. Along the way you will be expected to ride some steep inclines. The route goes partly on asphalt motorways with low and medium traffic, but for around half of the distance you will need to take un-surfaced roads.

Level of difficulty: moderate.



Places to see along the route:

• **JEZIORANY** – a small town founded in 1338 by the bishops of Warmia, who had the castle erected. The result is a two-winged Gothic fortress from the 14th century, surrounded by peripheral walls; a small ward was adjacent to the structure. In the 17th century, the bishops of Warmia ordered the construction of two new wings, turning the fortress into a Baroque mansion with Italian-style gardens. The demise of the castle came in 1783, when the building was struck by lightning; a disastrous fire destroyed the entire city on that occasion. Shortly thereafter, on the foundations of the main western wing, a new building, intended for local authorities, was erected. Today it houses the city council offices. Only the 3 m thick Gothic stone walls remain of the western ground floor, with cellars and remnants of the corner tower.

In the main market square stands **ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH** ⁸⁰. You can enter the temple through the gate of the Baroque bell tower, from the 18th century. Behind it, rising above, is the high tower of the church, built after 1345 with a 3-nave hall as its main body and a Gothic-style presbytery. The interior of the temple, with a stellar firmament, boasts a recently renovated pipe organ from the 17th century.

• **USTNIK** – a small village on Ustnik Lake was once part of a vast estate held in the hands of some powerful families from Prussia. At the beginning of the 20th century the property was divided into two parts, therefore the two neglected **MANSIONS** ⁸¹ stand in close proximity.

Trail among fields,
photo iStockphoto.com

Jeziorany – St Bartholomew's church,
fig. RS



Just behind the village extends a reserve called Ustnik, which includes Ustnik Lake and a wet pit, north of the basin, amounting to 32 ha in all. There is lush, rush vegetation and the reserve is a nesting place for many species of water birds – despite the small size of the lake, 25 species make nests here and another 25 make a stop during their flight.

• **WÓJTÓWKO** – a village on the Symsarna River, about 2 miles west of Jeziorany. There is a large **FARM** ⁸² there with numerous buildings and a small park containing a restored **MANSION FROM THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY** ⁸³.



42

THE RED BIKE TRAIL THROUGH THE AREA OF DOBRE MIASTO

Route: Knopin – Głotowo – Nowa Wieś Mała – Prasłity – Smolajny – Międzyzylesie – Barcikowo – Knopin; 34 km

The trail makes a loop around Dobrze Miasto. Varied landscapes, green forests and interesting views encourage calm and unhurried trekking. From there we will reach the route along the yellow bike trail to Głotowo or Knopin, or the blue trail through the woods east of the city.

The road leads almost exclusively through unsurfaced roads with only small parts of the ride taken on asphalt motorways. Particular caution should be exercised in the section above 0.5 km next to Smolajny, where the trail leads along national road No. 51.

Level of difficulty: moderate.

Places to see along the route:

• **GŁOTOWO** – in the village stretching along by the valley of the Kwielka River you can see a large **BAROQUE BRICK CHURCH** ⁸⁴ built between 1722 and 1726. It replaced an older and smaller church insufficient for the numerous pilgrims who visited the place, as Głotowo has been a popular pilgrimage place since the 14th century. Due to frequent visits in the early 18th century it was necessary to build a new temple (already mentioned). In the second half of the 19th century, **KALWARIA WARMIŃSKA** ⁸⁵ was built in the wooded valley to the east of the church. It resembled the topography of Jerusalem and its Stations of the Cross. The believers of the whole Diocese of Warmia participated in the work. Then a **COMPLEX OF 14 CHAPELS (STATIONS OF THE CROSS)** ⁸⁶ was erected, along with the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes and the Chapel of Prayer in Gethsemane.

• **SMOLAJNY** – the village is divided into two broad valleys with the meandering river Łyna. In the western part of the village, called the Smolajny-Estate, there is a beauti-



Church of the Holy Saviour
in Głotowo,
photo GEP Chroszcz





ful palace, a former **SUMMER RESIDENCE OF THE BISHOPS OF WARMIA** ⁸⁷. The

Baroque building was founded by Bishop Adam Grabowski, 1741–46. It replaced an older mansion, which already existed in the 15th century as an administrative centre for the bishops' wealth in this part of Warmia. Around it there is a park with beautiful old trees. The area around the tower can be entered through a gate in the annexe. The creation of the park was mainly driven by the next bishop of Warmia, a famous poet called Ignacy Krasicki, who spent much of his time in Smolajny. Currently the carefully maintained palace-park complex is owned by the Archdiocese of Warmia.

• **MIĘDZYLEŚIE** – in the eastern part of the village, by the road from Dobre Miasto to Jeziorany, a few hundred metres

from the trail a Baroque **PILGRIMAGE CHURCH** ⁸⁸ was built between 1752 and 1753. At that time, numerous pilgrims from Warmia pilgrimaged here, for at the beginning of the eighteenth century the crucifix was insulted there, and the original temple was built as an expiation for this act.



Forest path,
photo iStockphoto.com



GREEN TRAIL 'IN THE ORZYSZ SWITZERLAND'

43 +



Route: Orzysz – Grądy – Danowo – Stoczki – Ublik – Cierzpięty – Matyszczyki – Zastrużne – Wężewo – Okartowo; 33 km

A picturesque hilly land, interspersed with small lakes and green forests was the reason why, in the late 19th century, the area in the north-west of Orzysz was called 'Szwajcaria Orzyska' (Orzysz Switzerland). It is worth taking the cycling trail. On the route there is some arable land; large sections run between forests and lake shores. The trail ends in Okartowo, close to Orzysz, however, the only road connecting the village is the busy national highway no. 16.

The trail runs almost exclusively on unsurfaced roads with short sections on asphalt roads or paved roads.

Level of difficulty: moderate to difficult.

Places to see along the route:

• **FOREST LAKES** – in the forests to the north of Orzysz the trail goes close to a few smaller lakes – Kieplin (aka Kęplaste), Przylesie and Błękitne (aka Łazduny). Leaving the trail for a moment and stepping down to their banks, you can see some interesting aquatic vegetation. In many places along the mesotrophic (medium fertile) reservoirs the plants make what is called a *pło*. It is a thick layer of floating aquatic plants, such as poisonous cowbane or mud shield fern, where the remnants of other plants are deposited. Reeds



Shelter remains in Cierzpięty,
photo GEP Chroszcz

grow over time, and then there may even be trees (mostly black alder). *Pło* is very tricky, as there is some water under the layer of vegetation. Sometimes parts break off and form floating islands.

• **CIERZPIĘTY** – a village at the southern end of Lake Buwełno, founded in the late 15th century. From the former estate remains the majority of **GRANGE STRUCTURES** ⁸⁹ forming a quadrangle of buildings together with a mansion from the second half of the 19th century. Near the village, in the forests between the lakes Tyrkło and Buwełno, there are **SOME REMAINS OF SHELTERS AND FORTIFICATIONS** ⁹⁰ of the Giżycko

Field Position Fortification from WWI. On the opposite, north-western side of Cierzpięty, is a large nature reserve called 'Nietlickie Bagno'. Huge wetlands have been partially drained, but are still an excellent habitat for many rare species of animals, including numerous birds like cranes, European eagles and lesser spotted eagles. Beavers and moose also live there.

• **OKARTOWO** – a small village on both sides of the isthmus connecting Śniardwy Lake with Tyrkło Lake. Over the strait, linking the two reservoirs, there is a rail bridge and a road bridge. In the part of the village on the western side of the channel, there is a **CHURCH** ⁹¹ from the late 18th century built in place of an older temple from circa 1500. Its current shape is largely a result of reconstruction after the ravages of WWI. Its interior – the ceiling and galleries – are decorated with beautiful murals, painted during the reconstruction of the church. In the village there are also the ruins of bunkers from WWI and WWII.



42



BLUE TRAIL THROUGH THE AREA OF LIDZBARK WARMIŃSKI

Route: Lidzbark Warmiński – Koniewo – Budniki – Kotowo – Morawa – Napraty – Stoczek – Klasztorny – Kierwiny – Sarnowo – Lidzbark Warmiński; 32 km

An interesting loop of the trail leads through the gentle countryside north-east of Lidzbark Warmiński. Besides the monuments of the town itself, the biggest attraction is the beautiful post-Bernardine church and monastery in Stoczek Klasztorny. The trail traverses vast farmlands. There are only small villages on the route. The initial section runs along the valley of Łyna, then some slightly undulating plains of the Sępopolska Lowland.

The route is mainly on asphalt motorways (more than half of the length of the route), and other hardened roads, including concrete slab. The traffic is minimal except for short sections at the exit and entrance to Lidzbark Warmiński.

Level of difficulty: easy.



Places to see along the route:

- **KOTOWO** – just behind the village, the road and trail go down into the deep valley of Łyna. Steep slopes are crossed by narrow ravines of small streams. Just above the bridge on the way, you will see a small **CONCRETE DAM WITH HYDROELECTRIC POWER STATION** ⁹². It was completed in 2010 and forms a small bay on the Łyna River.
- **MORAWA** – before reaching the village, the road goes around the former landscape park from the western and southern side. The park surrounds a rundown **19TH CENTURY MANOR HOUSE** ⁹³. Behind the park, part of the grange buildings of the local estate can be seen.
- **STOCZEK KLASZTORNY** – dominating over the buildings of a village founded in the mid-14th century, there is a Baroque church. It is the major part of a **MONASTERY** ⁹⁴ which was built in place of a forest shrine erected in 1622 and dedicated to the Virgin Mary. In 1639–41 Mikołaj Szyszkowski, the bishop of Warmia, founded a church in the form of a dome covered with a large rotunda. Inside there is a copy of the painting of the Virgin Mary, called the Mother of Peace, imported from Rome from Santa Maria Maggiore Basilica. A few years later the temple was settled by the Bernardines. At the beginning of the 18th century an extended presbytery, church tower and galleries, surrounding the entire foundation with the dome corner chapels, were built. The interior retains some valuable features of late Baroque, and the whole monastery is currently under the care of the Marianists. There is a small museum chamber, dedicated to Primate Stefan Wyszyński, imprisoned there by the Stalinist authorities in the period 1953–54 (Zgromadzenie Księży Marianów [Congregation of the Marian Fathers], Stoczek Klasztorny 30, phone: +48 89 7660911, email: marianie@stoczek.pl, www.stoczek.pl).



Trail in Stoczek Klasztorny,
photo GEP Chroszcz

On a bike among forests,
photo iStockphoto.com



GREEN TRAIL

41



Route: Grunwald – Stębarsk – Mielno – Królikowo – Olsztynek – Mańki – Pęglity – Łąjsy; 39 km

A long journey from the battlefield in Grunwald lets us reach unfrequented areas, and the railway line of Ostróda – Olsztyn. The trail leads through small villages, but in the middle of the route you can stay in Olsztynek and continue your journey through large forests before reaching your destination.

The route runs mostly on asphalt roads with medium or low traffic, and some shorter sections of hardened roads or forest tracks. Sometimes, you may have some orientation problems, especially on the section between Mańki and Pęglity.

Level of difficulty: easy to moderate.





Places to see along the route:

- **GRUNWALD BATTLEFIELD** – a gently curved agricultural land between the villages of Grunwald, Stębark and Łodwigowo. On 15 July 1410 it became a battleground for the forces of the Polish-Lithuanian-Russian armies of King Jogaila (Jagiełło) and Teutonic troops led by Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen. On the 550th anniversary of the battle, 1960, the **VICTORY MONUMENT OF GRUNWALD** ⁹⁵ was placed near the road from Grunwald to Stębark. It consists of a stone obelisk with relief faces of the knights and 30 m masts with metal banners symbolizing the knights' flags of the allied armies. Do not miss the small **MUSEUM OF THE BATTLE OF GRUNWALD** ⁹⁶ (Stębark 1, phone: +48 89 6472228, 89 6472227, e-mail: info@muzeumgrunwald.pl, www.muzeumgrunwald.fbrothers.com; the museum is open only from April to September).

On the battlefield to the south-west of the monument you can see the **FOUNDATIONS OF A GOTHIC CHAPEL** ⁹⁷ built in 1411 by the Teutonic Knights. Among the ruins of the chapel and the monument there is a stone indicating the spot of the alleged death of the Great Master; a little farther away from the monument (to the south-east) rises the **JAGIEŁŁO MOUND** ⁹⁸, the most likely position of command of the Polish king in the first phase of the battle.

- **OLSZTYNEK** – a town at the crossroads of some important trade routes, founded in 1359 next to the **TEUTONIC CASTLE** ⁹⁹ and erected eight years earlier. Two modified wings of this fort remain to this day and currently house a school. Next there is a former **GOthic CHURCH FROM THE 14TH CENTURY** ¹⁰⁰, now a showroom of the Museum of Folk Architecture. Behind the temple, added to the preserved segment of city walls, there is a **Gothic house**, the birthplace of Krzysztof Celestyn Mrongowiusz, a well-known 19th century linguist, philosopher and preacher meritorious for his studies on the Kashubia region. In the Gothic house there is an exhibition dedicated to Mrongowiusz, and a branch of the **MUSEUM OF FOLK ARCHITECTURE** ¹⁰¹.

The main attraction of Olsztyniek is an **OPEN-AIR ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM** ¹⁰² (Muzeum Budownictwa Ludowego – Park Etnograficzny, ul. Leśna 23, phone: +48 89 5191542, email: bort@muzeumolsztyniek.com.pl, muzeumolsztyniek.com.pl; open from 15 April to October). It lies on the north side of the town in an area of 96 ha. The museum contains numerous artefacts of rural architecture from the whole region, both original buildings moved from various villages and copies of others.

Among them is the reconstruction of a wooden church from nearby Rychnów with recreated valuable murals. You should also see *Amalang*, a recently reconstructed early-medieval village of Prussia.

- **MAŃKI** – in a village lying on the broad, mid-forest glade rises a **STONE CHURCH FROM THE END OF THE 17TH CENTURY** ¹⁰³ and expanded in 1770.



The Grunwald battle monuments,
photo J. Pruszyńska

Open-air Ethnographic Museum
in Olsztyniek,
photo D. Zaród



This modest building has been made more attractive thanks to a wooden tower with an upper floor (overhanging floor), topped with a tented roof of shingle. Inside, parts of the Baroque furnishings have been preserved.

GREEN TRAIL THROUGH STARE JUCHY COMMUNE

44 +



Route: Stare Juchy – Zawady Elckie – Gorłówko – Stare Juchy; 15 km

An excellent trail for a short, quiet but scenic tour around the Elk Lakeland. On the trail, there are two lakes, several small forests and a small, sleepy town.

The trail runs along asphalt roads and paved road with very little traffic.

Level of difficulty: easy.

Places to see along the route:

- **STARE JUCHY** – in the village there is a **CHURCH FROM THE 16TH CENTURY** ¹⁰⁴, in which the facilities include a Renaissance altar and pulpit from the late 16th century and an organ from 1772. About half a km east of the village is the yellow walking trail; you can use it to get to the great **ERRATIC BOULDER** ¹⁰⁵. The huge stone in the Middle Ages reportedly served as a sacrificial altar of the pagan Yotvingians. Blood (called 'jucha' by the Yotvingians) running down from the slaughtered animals was the source of the town's name [Stare Juchy means 'old blood'].

- **ŁAŚMIADY LAKE** – less than a km from Stare Juchy the trail and the road to Zawady Elckie go lead towards the bay which constitutes the western edge of the large Łaśmiady Lake. The bay is sometimes referred to separately as Ułówki Lake. Łaśmiady is one of the largest reservoirs of the Elk Lakeland, with an area of 1,060 ha. It combines the features of a kettle landform lake and finger lake, reaching a significant depth of almost 44 m. Over the water, it is usually calm. The lake is included in the silent zone.



YELLOW TRAIL GOŁDAP – POPIOŁY

44 +



Route: Gołdap – Jabłońskie – Włosty – Juchnajcie – Sokoły – Rożyńsk Mały – Ziemiany – Skaliszkiejmy – Klewiny – Kruki – Żabin – Rapa – Mieduniszki Wielkie – Skaliszki – Wydutki – Popioły; 60 km

A long walking trail, also accessible to cyclists, links the areas of Gołdapia with the Land of Great Mazury Lakes. It leads through the areas rarely visited by tourists, along the Polish-Russian border, through small villages and large forests. Along the way, you can see some original attractions and enjoy the unspoiled countryside.

The trail leads along various types of roads: asphalt, cobblestone, hardened and partially unsurfaced roads.

Level of difficulty: moderate to difficult.

On a trail,
photo GEP Chroszcz

Sunset by the lake,
photo D. Zaród





Bunker remains in Gołdap,
photo GEP Chroszcz

Places to see along the route:

• **GOŁDAP** – furthest to the north-east lies a town originating only from the second half of the 16th century. The town, as the only one in the region, has the status of a spa. Gołdap boasts one of the largest markets in Masuria. In the vicinity of the great square is **ST. MARY'S CHURCH** ¹⁰⁶. The late-Gothic church from the 16th century has a high and massive tower crowned with Gothic archivolt rooftops. The history of the city and region can be learnt through visits to the **MUSEUM OF THE LAND OF GOŁDAP** ¹⁰⁷ (ul. Partyzantów 31 b, phone: +48 87 6150545, email:

bpgoldap@bpgoldap.pl, www.bpgoldap.pl), which displays the collection of a local enthusiast, Mieczysław Ratasiewicz, whose name is included in the name of the facility. The collections cover the following subjects: geological, ethnographic and military. An unusual attraction at Gołdap's is the possibility to enter the 46 m high **HISTORIC WATER TOWER FROM 1905** ¹⁰⁸ (ul. Paderewskiego 35, phone: +48 87 6151515, email: info@wieża-goldap.pl, www.wieża-goldap.pl; open from May to September).

• **PIĘKNA GÓRA [BEAUTIFUL MOUNTAIN]** – south of Gołdapia extends a picturesque land of the Szeskie Hills. The largest hill near the town is Gołdap Mountain, also known as Piękna Góra (277 m above sea level), which is located about 4 km south of Gołdapia. The trail passes by its western foothills. A number of wind turbines can be seen around it; the summit is crowned with a panoramic café with a rotating floor. Gołdap Mountain is not only an excellent vantage point, but above all, a winter sports resort. Five ski lifts were built on its slopes, including a chair lift (Piękna Góra inn and ski station, Rudziewicz, Konikowo 11, phone: +48 87 6154943, email: recepcja@zajazd-rudziewicz.pl, www.zajazd-rudziewicz.pl.)

• **RAPA** – a small village about 30 miles west of Gołdapia and just 2 km south of the border with the Russian Kaliningrad Oblast. By the road from Masurian Banie there is the amazing **PRUSSIAN TOMB OF THE VON FAHRENHEID FAMILY** ¹⁰⁹. It is not like any ordinary graves or shrines seen in local cemeteries, it is more like the Egyptian pyramids. The tomb is in the form of a high, almost 16 m, pyramid, built on a square plan with 10 m sides. The building was designed by a famous sculptor and architect of Neoclassicism, a native Dane, Bertel Thorvaldsen. Several members of the family were buried in the tomb, including the founder of this magnificent building, Friedrich von Fahrenheid.

• **MIEDUNISZKI WIELKIE** – a small town upon the Węgorapa River, 5 km west of Rapa and just 3 km south of the border with Russia. In the 19th century, the village belonged to the von Fahrenheid family, the owners of Rapa and other villages. On the edge of the park remain the neglected ruins of a **NEO-BAROQUE PALACE** ¹¹⁰, erected in the period 1920–22 by the then owners of Mieduniszki, the family of Schmidt von Altenstadt, in place of an older mansion which had burned down. The



front of the palace had a triangular tympanum above the central projection; at the back – a large terrace supported on Ionic columns. The building was neglected after WWII by the management of a state-owned farm (PGR). In 2004, fire destroyed most of the roofs, and since then the abandoned building has rapidly decayed.

- **SKALISZKI FORESTS** – a vast and wild forest between the Goldapa River to the south and east, and the Węgorapa River to the west and partly to the north. Pine forests predominate here, but mixed forests are also present. Together they cover 8,700 ha. Moose, wolves and lynxes live among the swamps and backwoods. Otters and beavers occupy the rivers. Avifauna is represented by cranes, black storks, the predatory European eagles and ospreys. The yellow trail passes through forests between Mieduniszki Wielkie and Popioły.

- **BROŻAJCKI CANAL** – a water route flowing through Skaliszki Forests and connecting Węgorapa with Gołdapia. The canal was dug in accordance with the design by John Suchodolec in 1733 and renovated a hundred years later. Today it is only available to canoes. The muddy channel, populated by beavers, is very picturesque. In some places a deep trench cuts through the small moraine hills. The trails follow the forest road along the southern part of the channel, and also past a destroyed sluice.



Węgorapa River,
photo GEP Chroszcz



'LARGE MRĄGOWO LOOP' TRAIL

43 +



Route: Mrągowo – Nikutowo – Wierzbowo – Żabieniec – Jakubowo – Nowy Probark – Probark – Czerwonki – Tymnikowo – Mrągowo; 29,4 km

A good route for a quiet bike ride, which allows you to explore Mrągowo surroundings abundant in finger lakes.

The trail runs, with shorter sections, on asphalt roads. Most of its course goes along unsurfaced roads or roads hardened with break stone, paving stone or concrete slabs. Roads with very little traffic predominate. Only in Probark you will need to cycle on the busy national highway no. 16 for about 300 m.

Level of difficulty: moderate.

Places to see along the route:

- **MRĄGOWO** – This district town boasts an extraordinary location, surrounded by numerous lakes. The main part of Mrągowo stretches along the shores of a finger lake (Czos Lake). Opposite the town, on the Four Winds Peninsula, lies a high moraine hill called the Mount of the Four Winds (180 m above sea level). Mrągowo was set up next to a Teutonic castle built in the 14th century, of which no trace has remained until today. In the 15th century the village, known as Żądzbork until 1947, gained urban rights with a typical urban setting and a market.

In the centre of Mrągowo stand numerous **OLD TENEMENT HOUSES** ¹¹¹, mainly from the 19th century. In the centre of the market rises a **CLASSICIST TOWN HALL** ¹¹² with a clock tower, now housing the **Regional Museum**



Along field paths,
photo iStockphoto.com





Mrągowo promenade,
photo D. Zaród

Czos Lake,
photo D. Zaród

(Museum of Warmia and Masuria in Olsztyn, a division in Mrągowo, ul. Ratuszowa 5, phone: +48 89 7412812, email: mradowo@muzeum.olsztyn.pl, <http://mradowo.muzeum.olsztyn.pl>). Nearby stands a one-storey house of half-timbered wall, what was called the **BOSNIANS GUARDHOUSE** ¹¹⁵, with a small exhibition devoted to the German writer Ernest Wiechert. The main city temple is a large neo-Gothic church of St. Adalbert's.

Do not miss the **AMPHITHEATRE** ¹¹⁷ at the north-eastern part of the promenade circling Czos Lake. It is here that the events known throughout Poland, the Mrągowo Country & Folk Picnic and Borderland Culture Festival, are held. The southern suburbs of Mrągowo have something for the fans of military technology:

THE MUSEUM OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT ¹¹⁵ (ul. Przemysłowa 11C, phone: +48 502540381, email: info@muzuem.mragowo.pl, www.muzeum.mragowo.pl).

- **CZOS LAKE** – A finger lake (279 ha). Mrągowo's buildings are set on its northern, north-eastern and western banks. The lake consists of two branches: the initial part of the trail runs along the western shore of the larger western branch; the last section of the route runs over the banks of the eastern branch, and then winds down towards the northern end of

the basin. This part of the lake is the deepest with a depth of more than 42 m.

- **WĄGIEL LAKE** – A small (176 hectare) lake with a varied coastline, much of which is forested. Along the eastern shore runs the boundary of the Mazury Landscape Park. The biking trail leads its way through Wierzbowo to the settlement of Żabieniec along the north-eastern part of the basin. Although the lake is part of the gully which holds Czos Lake, it is shallow, reaching a maximum of about 13 m. In Wierzbowo there are some convenient places to access the water.



43

SORKWITY FORESTS TRAIL

Route: Mrągowo – Lasowiec – Gązwa – Stama – Młynik – Bałowo – Pustniki – Stary Giełąd – Sorkwity – Bagienice Małe – Lasowiec – Mrągowo; 34,30 km

Hiking down the trail enables you to both see some interesting sights and enjoy the wildlife of the Sorkwity Forests between Sorkwity and Mrągowo. You can also relax by the large Giełądzkie Lake.



THE GĄZWA RESERVE

In the heart of the Sorkwity Forests, which are crossed by the trail, there is a peat bog reserve (204 ha). It contains a vast peat bog, overgrown by a swampy forest with patches of raised bog. There are parts of spruce forests, growing on peat, with numerous specimens of old trees. The characteristic bog vegetation is subject to protection, which includes peat-land, with black crow-berry, marsh cranberry, ordinary bog, boggy blueberry and two interesting species of insectivorous plants (sundews).

The trail runs mostly on unsurfaced roads or gravel and ballast roads, although large sections run also on asphalt roads. These are no routes of heavy traffic, except the national highway no. 16 in Sorkwity (a few hundred metres).

Level of difficulty: moderate to difficult.

Places to see along the route:

- **MRĄGOWO** – see. p. 33.
- **GIELĄD LAKE** – a large lake (444 ha) on the Mrągowo Lake-land; the trail goes almost around the entire basin. You can stop at a small beach in Młynik. The lake reaches a depth of 27 m and is crossed by the Krutynia canoe trail (its initial section). Silence zone is in effect here.
- **SORKWITY** – a large village situated on an isthmus between Gieląd and Lampackie Lakes connected by a small river. The village was founded in 1379. Sorkwity, belonged to several families of the Prussian aristocracy for centuries. The time of greatest splendour for the local estate was during the period of the von Mirbach family ownership (1804–1921).

The trail runs next to the historic **EVANGELICAL CHURCH** ¹¹⁶, built at the turn of the 16th / 17th centuries. A low whitewashed structure of a crude solid figure, with halls inside, is enriched by semi-circular windows and a low tower of a square plan. Inside there is a late-Renaissance altar, pulpit and collator benches bearing the coats of arms of the village owners.

South of the biking trail, on a short section leading along national road no. 16, extends a well-kept park by the shore of Lampackie Lake. There is a large **NEO-GOTHIC PALACE** ¹¹⁷ in the park. Built by the von Mirbach family in 1850–1856, it was modelled to represent the English style for buildings, according to the then prevailing Prussian fashion. Great interiors with a rich collection of valuable furniture and works of art were destroyed by fire in August 1914, just before the battle of Tannenberg. The new owner – baron Bernard von Paleske – rebuilt the palace which remained in the hands of his family until 1945. After the war the building served as the local state-owned farm (PGR), and was later changed into a resort. Since 1998, the new owner of the mansion has conducted a careful reconstruction.



Neo-Gothic palace in Sorkwity,
fig. RS

Evangelical church in Sorkwity,
fig. RS

THE EASTERN GREEN VELO BIKE TRAIL

The route: see "cycling kingdoms"; 395 km



Green Velo bike trail,
photo archives of UMWWM



40

CYCLING KINGDOM "OVER THE VISTULA LAGOON"

Route: Elbląg – Suchacz – Kadyny – Tolkmicko – Frombork – Nowa Pasłęka – Braniewo; 93 km

The Elbląg Canal, a unique waterway through which you can reach Ostróda (and also Iława and Stare Jabłonki if you follow its branches), starts in Elbląg, the city rich with monuments. To the west and south of Elbląg extend Żuławy Elbląskie, whose characteristic features of the landscape are numerous canals and arcades.

From the city the trail runs through the Elbląg Highland, which is challenging because of significant differences in altitude, and steep slopes. These hardships are compensated by the views of the Vistula Lagoon along which the route leads. It reaches the vicinity of Suchacz, then passes Kadyny, where the residence of Emperor Wilhelm II is located, and Tolkmicko. The next stop is Frombork, where Nicolaus Copernicus lived and worked for almost 30 years. In the port settlement Nowa Pasłęka the trail turns from the Vistula Lagoon and leads to Braniewo along Pasłęka.



See you on the trail:

- **Elbląg** – see page 3
- **Lake Druzno** – see page 2

TRUSO

An important port and commercial center at the mouth of the Vistula River (now the vicinity of the Janów village), functioning from the end of the 8th to the 11th century. Described by Wulfstan, who arrived here around 890. Used to be inhabited by Scandinavians, Prussians and Slavs. Its remains were discovered by dr Marek Jagodziński in the 1980s. You can see the finds from Truso in the Museum of Archeology and History in Elbląg.

- **Raczki Elbląskie** – see page 3
- **The Elbląg Canal** – see page 16
- **The Elbląg Upland Landscape Park** – see page 6
- **Łęczne** – see page 5
- **Suchacz** – near this place, in Świeża Bay, a great sea battle took place in 1463. About 30 ships of the Prussian Union (Elbląg and Gdańsk) defeated the Teutonic Order (44 ships), which was an important step to victory in the thirteen-year war. In Suchacz a boulder commemorating the battle was set up.
- **Kadyny** – see page 3
- **Tolkmicko** – see page 5
- **Święty Kamień** – see page 6
- **Frombork** – see page 3
- **Nowa Pasłęka** – former fishing, currently tourist village near Pasłęka estuary to the Vistula Lagoon, near the border of the Kaliningrad Oblast. Here you can find seaports and marinas. A historic Our Lady of Mercy church, built in neo-baroque style, was erected in the years 1924-26.
- **Braniewo** – see page 4
- **Pasłęka** – see page 21



The Yacht Harbour in Suchacz, photo archives of UMWWM



CYCLING KINGDOM "WARMIA AND SURROUNDINGS"

40, 42 +



Route: Pieniężno – Lelkowo – Kandyty – Górowo Iławeckie – Pieszkowo – Lidzbark Warmiński – Stoczek Klasztorny – Galiny – Bartoszyce – Sępolek; 147 km

Having passed the first city of this "kingdom" - Pieniężno - the trail crosses picturesque areas of the Górowskie Heights, leading to Górowo Iławeckie, where it is worth to visit the Gas Industry Museum. By going out of the route, you can reach the "stork village" of Żywkowo, which is located along the border with Russia.

From Górowo, Green Velo goes south, to Lidzbark Warmiński. In the area of the city cycling comfortable, because part of the route leads on old tracks. Going to Bartoszyce, the trail crosses the flat area of the Sępolska Lowland, whose axis is the valley of Łyna - the largest river in the region. It goes past a baroque shrine dedicated to the Virgin Mary in Stoczek Klasztorny and the **PALACE COMPLEX IN GALINY** ¹¹⁸ with a horse stud. Before arriving in Sępolek, the last town on this stretch, the trail runs past another horse stud in Liski.



Gothic castle in Lidzbark Warmiński,
photo archives of UMWWM

See you on the trail:

- **Pieniężno** – received the city rights before 1312. There are, you will find, among others: remains of the castle, a town hall (during reconstruction), **CHURCH OF ST. PETER AND PAUL APOSTLES** ¹¹⁹ (14th-19th century), a church from the 17th century (now a Greek Catholic church). At the seminary there is the **MISSIONARY ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM OF THE PRIESTS OF THE DIVINE WORD** ¹²⁰.
- **Górowo Iławeckie** – see page 13
- **Żywkowo** – see page 14
- **Lidzbark Warmiński** – the historical capital of Warmia (in the years 1350-1795) was granted city rights in 1308. The bishop's seat was an impressive **FOUR-WINGED CASTLE** ¹²³, erected in 1350, called the Wawel of the North (now a museum). Other monuments include: St. Peter and Paul church and High Gate (15th century), Evangelical church (1818-23, now Orthodox Church), church of the Elevation of the Cross (1789), summer palace Oranżeria Krasickiego (1711-24), the town hall (19th century). **TERMY WARMIŃSKIE** ¹²² is a contemporary attraction.
- **Stoczek Klasztorny** – see page 29
- **Galiny** – the palace was founded in 1589 as the seat of the von Eulenburg family. The present farm buildings have been erected since the 18th century. In 1921 the palace was renovated and given a neo-baroque appearance. Now the complex houses a hotel, an inn and a horse stable.
- **Bartoszyce** – the history of the town dates back to the middle of the 13th century. Historical buildings that have been preserved, among others: the **LIDZBARK GATE** ¹²³ (1468), churches St. John the Evangelist and Black Madonna of Częstochowa (14th century), St. John the Baptist church (beginning of the 15th century) and St. Bruno church (1882-83). There are **TWO INTRIGUING MEDIEVAL STATUES THERE, SO-CALLED PRUSSIAN BABY** ¹²⁴.
- **Liski** – see page 24
- **Sępól** – see page 24



43, 44

CYCLING KINGDOM "NORTHERN MAZURY"

Route: Sątoczno – Korsze – Drogosze – Barciany – Srokowo – Węgorzewo – Budry – Banie Mazurskie – Grabowo – Gołdap – Stańczyki – Żytkiejmy – Bolcie; 153 km

This part of the trail runs through areas of natural and landscape diversity, located north from the Great Masurian Lakes. Initially, the route leads through lowland areas. On the way to Węgorzewo it passes Korsze, Drogosze (with the **DÖNHOF PALACE** ¹²⁵ from 1710-1714), Barciany and Srokowo. From this last village the route was led by a separate road through increasingly numerous hills. In Węgorzewo there is a network of interesting bike trails. To the east of the city the trail follows a former track. From the vicinity of the village of Banie Mazurskie stretches heavily rippled Masuria Garbate, so between Węgorzewo and the border of the voivodship, the difference of levels between climbs and descends amounts to more than 1 km in total.

The last town of this stretch is Gołdap. Next, the route runs along the border of the Romincka Primeval Forest to the borders of Poland, Lithuania and Russia in the vicinity of the village of Bolcie (**TRIPOINT WISZTYNIEC** ¹²⁶), where the border between Warmińsko-Mazurskie and Podlaskie voivodships also runs.



See you on the route:

- **Barciany** – in the village rises a magnificent **TEUTONIC CASTLE** ¹²⁷, whose construction began around 1377. On a plan close to the square shape (55 m to 58 m) two wings were built, and in the following centuries the courtyard was surrounded by the next ones. The second monument of Barciany is the Gothic **CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY** ¹²⁸ from the end of the fourteenth century.

- **Masurian Channel** – unfinished waterway that was to planned connect the Great Masurian Lakes via the Łyna and Pregoła to the Baltic. Built with breaks between 1911-45. On the section on the Polish side of the border (about 20 km) you can admire five powerful locks: in Leśniewo (**LEŚNIEWO GÓRNE AND DOLNE** ¹²⁹), Guja (Piaski, completed), Bajory Małe and Długopole.

- **Mamerki** – there is **THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE GERMAN LAND FORCES** ¹³⁰, Europe's largest shelter complex maintained from the Second World War (29 reinforced concrete objects). Visiting them, you can also watch exhibitions about World War II, the military and the history of the region.

- **Gierłoż** – see page 10

- **Węgorzewo** – a town at the lakes of Świącąjty and Mamry. At the latter (the second largest lake in the country) the Great Masurian Lakeside Sailing Trail begins. The history of Węgorzewo dates back to the middle of the 13th century, but the city rights were granted only in 1571. The oldest monument of the city is the castle from the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which, however, did not retain the gothic character. Other notable buildings include: St. Peter and Paul church (from 1605-11) and the town hall (from the 19th century). It is also worth to visit Węgorzewo **MUSEUM OF FOLK CULTURE** ¹³¹ with its open-air museum.

- **Rapa** – see page 32

- **Gołdap** – see page 32

- **Tężnie Mazurskie** ¹³² – were established in Gołdap, the first health resort in the region. They have a length of 220 m and a height of 8 m. The brine produces microclimate with high iodine, calcium, magnesium, potassium, sodium, bromine and fluorine content. Next to the graduation tower is a pump room for mineral and curative waters.

- **Piękna Góra** – see page 32



Graduation towers in Gołdap,
photo archives of UMWWM

Railway viaducts in Stańczyki,
photo archives of UMWWM

THE ROMINCKA FOREST LANDSCAPE PARK

Covers 80% of forested land, rich in peat bogs. There is a spruce forest typical of taiga. At the turn of the 19th and 20th century, the Emperor Wilhelm II hunted in the wilderness, where he ordered the boulders to be placed in places of successful hunting. Of the eight Wilhelm Boulders located on the Polish side of the border, two are available ("Głaz dwutysięczny" and "Głaz mały").

- **Stańczyki** – a town famous for its pair of impressive **RAILWAY VIADUCTS** ¹³³, one of the highest in Poland (36.5 m). Each of the concrete structures of about 180 m length creates five arches supported by solid pillars. The viaducts overpass Błędzianki Gully and were part of the Gołdap-Żytkiejmy railway line. The northern one was erected in 1912-14 and trains ran on it from 1927 to 1944. The southern one was constructed between 1923-26, but the track was never built.









Tourist Information

Barczewo, pl. Ratuszowy 1, phone: +48 89 5148439 w. 78, www.barczewo.pl
Bartoszyce, ul. Bohaterów Warszawy 96, phone: +48 89 7629880, www.bartoszyce.pl
Biskupiec, pl. Wolności 5c, phone: +48 89 7154742, www.biskupiec.pl
Biszynek, ul. Findera 2, phone: +48 89 512040, www.biszynek.pl
Braniewo, ul. Katedralna 7, phone: +48 55 6443303, www.it.braniewo.pl
Dobre Miasto, ul. Warszawską 14, phone: +48 89 5132040, www.dobremiasto.com.pl
Działdowo, ul. Kościuski 3, phone: +48 23 6975946, www.powiatdzialdowski.pl
Elbląg, ul. Stary Rynek 25, phone: +48 55 2393377, www.turystyka.elblag.eu
Elk, ul. Wojska Polskiego 47, phone: +48 87 6217010, www.turystyka.elk.pl
Frombork, ul. Młynarska 5a, phone: +48 55 2440677, www.frombork.pl
Gietrzwałd, ul. Kościelna 1, phone: +48 89 5123290, www.it.gietrzwald.pl
Giżycko, ul. Wyzwolenia 2, phone: +48 87 4285265, www.gizycko.turystyka.pl
Goldap, pl. Zwycięstwa 16, phone: +48 87 6152090, www.uzdrowiskogoldap.pl
Gorowo Iławeckie, ul. Kościuski 26, phone: +48 89 7610048, www.gorowoilaweckie.eu
Iława, ul. Niepodległości 13, phone: +48 89 6485800, www.ilawa.pl
Iława, ul. Chodkiewicza 5, phone: +48 602 744 083, www.port-ilawa.pl
Jedwabno, ul. 1 Maja 63, phone: +48 89 6213473, www.jedwabno.pl
Jeziorany, pl. Jedności Narodowej 14/1, phone: +48 691 059 861, www.revitawarmia.org
Kętrzyn, pl. Piłsudskiego 10/1, phone: +48 89 7514765, www.it.ketrzyn.pl
Kozłowo, ul. Mazurska 3, phone: +48 89 6250825, www.kozlowo.pl
Lidzbark Warmiński, ul. Krasińskiego 1, phone: +48 89 5190052, www.lidzbarkw.eu
Lidzbark, ul. Dworcowa 2, phone: +48 23 6961505 w. 182, www.lidzbarkw.pl
Mikolajki, pl. Wolności 7, phone: +48 87 4216850, www.mikolajki.eu

Emergency numbers

999 – ambulance

112, 997 – police

998 – fire brigade

Milomłyn, ul. Twarda 12, phone: +48 89 6425822, www.milomlyn.pl
Morąg, pl. Jana Pawła II 1, phone: +48 89 7573826, www.morag.pl/lot
Mrągowo, ul. Warszawska 26, phone: +48 89 7418039, www.it.mragowo.pl
Nidzica, ul. Zamkowa 2, phone: +48 89 6250370, www.nidzica.pl
Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Rynek 23, phone: +48 56 4742344, www.it.nowemiasto.pl
Olecko, pl. Wolności 22, phone: +48 87 5204948, www.olecko.pl
Olsztyn, ul. Staromiejska 1, phone: +48 89 5353565, www.mazurytravel.com.pl
Olsztyn, pl. Jana Pawła II 1, phone: +48 89 521 03 98, www.visit.olsztyn.eu
Olsztyn, ul. Ratusz 1, phone: +48 89 5195477, www.olsztyn.pl
Orneta, pl. Wolności 26, phone: +48 55 2210209, www.orneta.pl
Orzysz, Rynek 5, phone: +48 87 4237187, www.orszysz.pl
Ostroda, pl. 1000-lecia PP 1a, phone: +48 89 6423000, www.mazury-zachodnie.pl
Piecki, ul. Zwycięstwa 6, phone: +48 89 7422270, www.piecki.com
Pieniężno, ul. Generalska 8, phone: +48 55 2374653, www.pieniezno.pl
Pisz, pl. Daszyńskiego 16, phone: +48 87 4232675 w. 205, www.pdk.pisz.pl
Reszel, Rynek 24, phone: +48 89 7553904, www.ugreszel.pl
Ruciane-Nida, ul. Dworcowa 14, phone: +48 87 4231989, www.ruciane-nida.pl
Ryn, ul. Hanki Sawickiej 1, phone: +48 87 4218061, www.miaostoryn.pl
Szczytyn, ul. Polska 12, phone: +48 89 6760999, www.turystyka.szczytno.pl
Tolkicko, ul. Świętojańska 1, phone: +48 55 2316182 w. 25, www.tolkicko.com.pl
Węgorzewo, Bulwar Loir-et-Cher 4, phone: +48 87 4274009, www.wegorzewo.pl

Region in the Internet

www.mazury.travel – Tourist Portal of Warmia and Mazury
www.szlaki.mazury.pl – Vertical portal presenting the tourist routes of Warmia and Mazury
www.turystyka.szczytno.pl – Local Tourist Organisation of the Szczytyn District
www.lotn.nidzica.pl – Local Tourist Organisation of the Nidzica District
www.gizycko.turystyka.pl – Promotion and Tourist Information Centre in Giżycko
www.it.mragowo.pl – Local Tourist Organisation „The Land of Mrągowo”
www.mazury-zachodnie.pl – Western Mazury Tourist Organisation
www.lot.ilawa.pl – Local Tourist Organisation of the Iława Lake District the Drwęca Basin
www.morag.pl/lot – Local Tourist Organisation „The Land of Undiscovered Secrets”
www.domwarminski.pl – Website of the „Warmiński’s Home” Association
www.cittaslowpolska.pl – Polish national network of Cittaslow cities
www.produktregionalny.warmia.mazury.pl – Culinary events of Warmia and Mazury
www.mazurytravel.com.pl – A website of the regional Warmia and Mazury tourist organization
www.zamkigotyckie.org.pl – The “Polish Gothic Castles” Commune Association
www.warminskizakatek.com.pl – The “Warmian Corner” Local Action Group
www.lotmp.pl – The “Southern Mazury” Local Tourist Organisation
www.lgd.mazurskiemorze.pl – The “Mazurian Sea” Local Action Group
www.kanal-elblaski-lgd.pl – The “We are connected by the Elbląg Canal” Local Action Group
www.lot.olecko.pl – The Olecko Area Local Tourist Organisation

Author: Krzysztof Bzowski

Translation: LINGUIST Translation Office, www.linguist.com.pl

Editing and proofreading: Karolina Zaremba, Aurelia Hołubowska, Marta Pożarska

Map: Małgorzata Czopik, Grzegorz Marchut

Photographs: GEP Chroszcz, Joanna Pruszyńska, Dariusz Zaród, archives of iStockphoto.com, archives of UMWWM

Cover p. 1: iStockphoto.com

Drawings: Roksana Kulska-Król and Sebastian Kularski (RS)

Graphic concept and typesetting: Magdalena Matecka, Michał Tincel

Production Manager: Agnieszka Błaszczak, Małgorzata Czopik

Print: OMIKRON, Sp. z o.o., www.omikron.net.pl

The authors and publisher of this guidebook have spared no efforts to make its contents as accurate as possible (updated as per August 2017). We would appreciate any remarks as this would help us to amend future editions. To contact us please use the publisher’s address.

Issue II, 2017

ISBN 978-83-65380-06-7

Copyright © by WARMINSKO-MAZURSKIE VOIVODESHIP PROVINCE MARSHAL’S OFFICE



**WARMIŃSKO-MAZURSKIE VOIVODESHIP
PROVINCE MARSHAL'S OFFICE
TOURISM DEPARTMENT**

10-052 Olsztyn, ul. Mariańska 3
T: +48 89 521 69 00
E: dt@warmia.mazury.pl
W: www.warmia.mazury.pl

FREE COPY