



tourism

The Grunwald Trail

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AN INVITATION for an excursion along the Grunwald Trail

On the Grunwald fields thousands of soldiers stand opposite each other. Hidden below the protective shield of their armour, under banners waving in the wind, they hold long lances. Horses impatiently tear their bridles and rattle their hooves. Soon the iron regiments will pounce at each other, to clash in a deadly battle. And so it happens every year, at the same site knights from almost the whole of Europe meet, reconstructing events which happened over six hundred years ago. It is here, on the fields between Grunwald, Stębark and Łodwigowo, where one of the biggest battles of Medieval Europe took place on 15 July 1410. The Polish and Lithuanian-Russian army, led by king Władysław Jagiełło, crushed the forces of the Teutonic Knights. On the battlefield, knights of the order were killed, together with their chief – the great Master Ulrich von Jungingen.

The Battle of Grunwald, a triumph of Polish and Lithuanian weapons, had become the symbol of power of the common monarchy. When fortune abandoned Poland and the country was torn apart by the invaders, reminiscence of the battle became the inspiration for generations remembering the past glory and the fight for national independence. Even now this date is known to almost every Pole, and the annual re-enactment of the battle enjoys great popularity and attracts thousands of spectators.

In Stębark not only the museum and the battlefield are worth visiting but it is also worthwhile heading towards other places related to the great battle with the Teutonic Knights' order. The places are connected by an automobile route meandering across a picturesque land of gentle hills, lakes and fields, interwoven with the greenery of forests, leading towards tiny old villages and cosy little towns. On the way you can visit castles of the Teutonic Knights and Medieval churches as well as admire the landscape of the lake districts around the Dylewo Hills. The route is worth crossing not only on warm July days, when enthusiastic crowds arrive at Grunwald fields. The touching views and interesting monuments can also be admired in spring when fresh greenery and a carpet of flowers covers the gentle hills and banks of the lakes, or in autumn – in the glare of the golden palette of colours of the beech woods. Even in winter, when ice binds the lake surfaces, and snow covers the battlefields, the Mazurian land around Grunwald tempts the travellers with its peace and undisturbed silence.

On the Grunwald fields,
photo archives of the UMWWM





HISTORY – how did the Teutonic Knights come to be among the forests and lakes?



1, 2. Teutonic Knights during staging,
photo GEP Chroszcz

In 1191, in distant Palestine, the hosts of the Teutonic Knights had already been occupying Akka – the mighty, coastal fortress, for three years. The third crusade was ongoing and among the Christian knights, many came from Germany. Even then the orders of the Templars and Saint John's existed, which were supposed to look after all the Teutonic Knights. However, the brothers mainly cared about their own knights arriving from France and Italy. Under such circumstances the Germans decided to help their injured and ill countrymen themselves. The association of German Teutonic Knights was supported by Emperor Henry VI Hohenstauf and in 1198 Pope Celestine III announced the establishment of the Order of the Hospital of the Blessed Virgin Mary at the German House in Jerusalem, which was supposed to look after the hospital of the same name, erected by the city dwellers of Bremen and Lübeck. However, how did the knights from distant Palestine come to be in the land later named as Warmia and Mazury?

In the following years the Teutonic Knights acquired numerous properties and endowments in southern Italy, on German lands and in Palestine itself. They became rich and influential, maybe even more powerful than the Templars and Saint John's order. However, they were aware that pressure from the Saracens in the Middle East would cause the loss of their main support, namely the properties in Palestine. In view of this threat – under

MARIENBURG

Few people know that Marienburg – as Malbork is called in German – is also the original name of a small village Feldioara in the Romanian Transylvania. Up until now, ruins of the castle rise heavenwards, built on the site which was supposed to become the capital of the Teutonic Knights' order.

the leadership of the great Master Hermann von Salza – they decided to withdraw and attempted to establish their own state in another area. Summoned by the Hungarian king they arrived in 1212 to defend Transylvania against attacks



from the fierce Kipchaks. However, King Andrew II quickly saw through their intentions and from 1225 banned the Teutonic Knights from Hungary.

At that moment the monks were offered an excellent opportunity. In 1226, Prince Conrad of Masovia asked them for help in fighting the pagan Prussian tribes, giving them, in exchange, the Chełmno Land by infeudation. Polish princes had previously tried to Christianise the Prussians, and tame their fierce intentions, leading to continuous attacks on the borderline of the Polish lands. However, these efforts did not help much. Conrad of Masovia was neither aware of the real intentions of the Teutonic Knights nor of their acting methods. The clever monks, supported by German knights and rulers, managed to obtain a papal bull from Emperor Frederick II, according to which they were able to organise the state on conquered Prussian land, completely independent of Polish princes and, in fact, only formally dependent on the emperors. This provided a basis for their actions which at the beginning focused on defeating pagan Prussian tribes. The power of the order was exposed soon after by the effective taming of the native population. Support for these actions of the west-European knighthood – and even from Poland – was provided due to the pope acknowledging the fight with the Prussians as a crusade. In just half a century the Teutonic Knights had conquered all the Prussian tribes, completing this stage of the creation of a monastic state in 1283.

Fortified castles built in successively conquered territories became the background of the order's power. The biggest castles were constructed in the western part of Prussia, particularly in the Vistula Valley – they clearly confirm the power and enormous wealth of the founders. Brick fortresses, erected in Gothic style, were not only of military importance, but also acted as centres of administration for the Teutonic Knights' extensive properties as well as centres of culture. Consequently, the achievements of civilisation promptly reached the so far underdeveloped lands. Soon, the Prussian areas, previously covered with forests and poorly populated, transformed into perfectly developed land where the Teutonic Knights brought numerous groups of settlers. They were not only Germans – many of them came from the Polish or Czech areas. The settlers, upon approval of the monks, soon started to establish towns, becoming rich due to the Baltic trade. Consequently, the income of the order grew even faster, through the collection of tributes and taxes from the growing population. The rapid change in civilisation was unprecedented, and until today it is illustrated by numerous magnificent Gothic structures which can be seen in towns and villages throughout the whole region.

The Teutonic Knights, as they organised their state on the Prussian lands, soon became competitors for their closest neighbours. Although the military



THE SASNA LANDS

Areas where the Grunwald campaign took place had once constituted lands of the Prussian tribe of Sasna, neighbouring with Galindia in the east and Pomesania in the west. In the middle of the 13th century, when the Teutonic Knights were in the process of conquering these territories, they were almost uninhabited. Destroyed by raids, following the initiative of the monks, they were again populated by settlers brought from various areas: in Galindia and on the former land of the Sasna, the settlers coming mainly from Masovia.

Teutonic Knights,
rys. iStockphoto.com





order was limited – at the turn of the 14th / 15th centuries there were only 700 monks – they supervised the powerful state organisation, which was centrally controlled and defended by a system of around 90 castles and supported by the authority of the emperor's power. The brothers-knights were almost exclusively recruited from German noblemen of the middle class. High positions were not available for local settlers – not only the last representatives of the Prussian community, but also settlers coming from the German gentry.

After the conquering of the Prussian tribes the Teutonic Knights directed their attacks towards Samogitia as the Lithuanians separated the Teutonic territories from the land of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword (ruling the areas of contemporary Latvia and Estonia) – this order was associated with the Teutonic Knights by a union. In the opposite direction, they were aiming at a direct connection of their state with the German Reich – therefore, in 1309 they insidiously occupied the Gdańsk Pomerania. A year before, Gdańsk with its entire territory, was forcefully defeated by the Brandenburg troops. Then, Władysław the Elbow-high asked the so far friendly Teutonic Knights for help. The knights of the military order eagerly



1, 2. Teutonic Knights' fortress in Malbork,
photo archives iStockphoto.com

exploited the invitation by expelling the Brandenburg troops, and destroying Gdańsk completely. In spite of Władysław the Elbow-high's protests, they did not return Pomerania, and, in the same year, the great master of the order came to the mightily constructed castle of Malbork, establishing his capital there. Soon after, the Teutonic Knights started a series of devastating raids on Kujawy and Wielkopolska. The battle fought by Elbow-high at Płowce in 1331 did not bring



explicit victory. The rebuilt Kingdom of Poland was defeated, losing Kujawy, while the Teutonic Knights gained an excellent position for further attacks, threatening the separation of Wielkopolska from the rest of the homeland. Since that moment, the hostility between Poland and the monastic state began to grow, and did not end in spite of signing the peace treaty in Kalisz by Kazimierz the Great in 1343. The monarch accepted the unfavourable treaty, aware that for the time being he was unable to break the power of the order, especially since legal action had failed, in spite of verdicts from the papal court in favour of Poland, issued four years earlier in Warsaw.

The Teutonic Knights, becoming more and more powerful, occupied the majority of the southern coast of the Baltic, hampering the economic development of the Polish land. They also remained allied to the rulers of Germany, Czech and Hungary under the House of Luxemburg, thus surrounding Poland from almost all sides. Huge conflict was therefore unavoidable, and the Lithuanians were the only natural allies of Poland as Władysław the Elbow-high had already entered into alliance with them. At last, in 1386, the union of the two countries was established, which turned out to be destructive for the Teutonic Knights. In the meantime, the two monarchies, the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, at that time ruled by Władysław Jagiełło, had to face the hostile propaganda of the order. The best of the western European knights, as well as many rulers, including the kings of France and England, believed in the Teutonic Knights' opinion that Christianisation of the Lithuanians – the last pagans of Europe – by Poland, was illusionary. The situation was even worse due to the fact that the Polish ruler was a recently baptised pagan who worshipped the ancient Lithuanian gods only a moment before, while still being called Jogaila (Lithuanian).



1. Clash of the enemy armies during battle staging, photo GEP Chroszcz
2. Staging – king Władysław Jagiełło, photo GEP Chroszcz



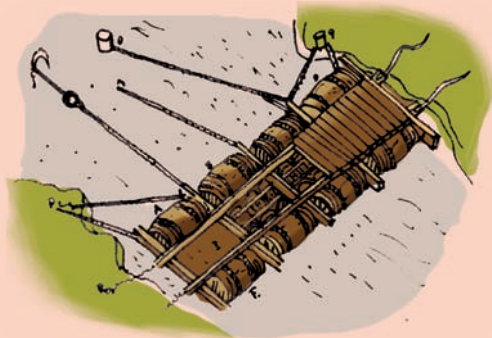
GRUNWALD – TWO BARE SWORDS FROM A LONG TIME AGO

When the two great armies met on the Grunwald fields on 15 July 1410, the dreadful life-and-death battle was unavoidable. Only several days before, the joint Polish and Lithuanian forces got through Vistula and entered the territory of the Teutonic Knights' state.

THE FLOATING BRIDGE

Evidence of the extremely efficient organisation of the Grunwald campaign in 1410 was the passage of the Polish-Lithuanian army across Vistula next to the Masovian Czerwińsk. Before the passage, in Koźnice, far from places where the Teutonic spies could get to, special boats and numerous wooden logs were prepared. They were floated down the Vistula river to the site of the passage – exactly on the day when the armies of Jagiełło and Prince Vytautas reached their destination. The construction was prepared in such a way that it could be bound together to make a broad, half a kilometre long, floating bridge within only half a day!

Floating bridge, fig. RS



Two bare swords – Grunwald's coat of arms, archive figure of Wikimedia

War with the order had already been going on for one year, but only the year 1410 was to be decisive. King Jagiełło prepared the campaign carefully. All forces available in the Kingdom were gathered. The mass movement of knights from Poland and Lithuania was supported by reinforcements of the Russian princes subordinated to Lithuania, over two-thousand Tatar troops serving Vytautas, troops sent by the vassal of the Crown, the Hospodar (prince) of Moldavia, and numerous Czech mercenaries. Cured meat was collected, the passage across Vistula was prepared secretly (see: the box). The King's plan assumed a daring march directly towards the capital of the great Master in Malbork from the Masovian Czerwińsk on Vistula, i.e. from a direction which almost completely surprised the Teutonic Knights' commanders. Ulrich von Jungingen rather expected the attack on the borderline areas of Bydgoszcz, along the Vistula towards the heart of the monastic state. The Teutonic Knights also gathered powerful forces. They won the diplomatic battle and their troops were joined by numerous reinforcements of knights

DID ONLY THE TEUTONIC KNIGHTS HAVE CANNONS?

Allegedly, in Grunwald, the monastic knights used very primitive cannons named 'bombards'. They were said to be a great surprise for the Poles as the Polish-Lithuanian army did not hold firearms. However, it is not true – Poles did not use artillery probably because their rolling stocks did not arrive on time. One year before Grunwald the Polish army used bombards for crushing the walls of the Bydgoszcz castle, which had been conquered by the Teutonic Knights before.

The Teutonic Knights' bombard, fig. RS





from the West who believed that they were embarking on a war with pagans and enemies of the Christian faith.

The Polish-Lithuanian army came to the area of Grunwald in the morning of 15 July, as did the Teutonic Knights whose troops were more quickly arranged for the battle. The troops of Jagiełło and Prince Vytautas were more numerous, so their arrangement into arrays lasted longer. The King listened to two consecutive masses...

Before the collision started, two heralds from the enemy's camp had appeared before the Polish chief commander. In the Polish tradition, false opinion was recorded that by offering two bare swords to the monarch, using offensive words, they were mocking the supposed cowardice of the Poles who were delaying the start of the battle, and they simultaneously offered to withdraw from the field to encourage the Polish-Lithuanian army to start the attack. Supposedly this move was meant to mask the hidden ditches, called 'wolves' hollows', prepared in front of the Teutonic Knights' lines. The attacking cavalry was to fall into them. Currently, historians have definitely rejected such opinions because, in reality, the Teutonic Knights came to the battlefield too late to be able to prepare an ambush, while sending swords to the opponents before the battle was the usual western knights' tradition.

At last, the moment to start battle came. On the Polish side Jagiełło, following the example of eastern Mongolian commanders whom he had met during fights with the Tatars, supervised his forces from the hill where he could see precisely what was happening on the battlefield. The great Teutonic Master, on the other hand, led the main forces, willing to take part in direct battle. At first, light Lithuanian cavalry, placed to the right of the Polish wing, set off for the battle. Troops of the Teutonic Knights, heavily-armed in steel, rushed against them. The Lithuanians were experienced in battle, but soon after they started their withdrawal which then turned into their escape. Who knows whether it was not deliberate action, based on the Tatar methods of fighting – in such a way the Lithuanian prince Vytautas had a chance to break the dangerous consolidated array of the Teutonic Knights, and pull the heavy cavalry away to the unfavourable conditions of wetland. Here, mobile, light-armoured Lithuanians could handle the immobilised enemy.

In the meantime, Polish troops set for the fight. They hit the core Teutonic Knights' forces, pushing them backwards. After the escape of the Lithuanians from the right wing, Polish troops were uncovered at this side. The great Master wanted to use this opportunity, and leading the rearguard, the best troops of the monastic knights, struck at the side. However, he did not take into account that until that moment Jagiełło had also maintained



1. Staging – on the battlefield, photo GEP Chroszcz
2. Staging Grunwald battle – the archers, photo GEP Chroszcz





Battle staging – the archers,
photo GEP Chroszcz

strong reserves, which immediately attacked as well as the Lithuanians who were returning to the battlefield. The Teutonic army had been almost surrounded and soon rushed to escape in a chaotic way. The Poles and their allies conquered the enemy's camp and chased escaping groups of survivors for a long time. On the battlefield, dead bodies of many noblemen of the order remained, including that of the great master. The defeat of the Teutonic Knights' army was almost absolute, most of the monastic brothers died and others were taken captive!

The battle on the fields of Grunwald broke the order's power. Never again did the Teutonic Knights manage to recover, although peace made in Toruń in 1411 was not very successful for Poland and Lithuania. Poland regained only the small Dobrzyń Land, lost at the beginning of the war, while Samogitia returned to Lithuania.

The Grunwald clash quickly became a legend – not only as one of the biggest battles in Medieval Europe, in which unprecedented masses of knighthood clashed. Although historians are not consistent in their assessment of the numbers of both armies, it is usually estimated that the Teutonic Knights held a maximum 21 thousand cavalry knights, most probably about 15 thousand. Together with infantry and servants, their army probably amounted to almost 30 thousand people. On the Polish side, as much as 34 thousand cavalry and infantry were supposed to have participated.

There are few Poles who have not heard of the Battle of Grunwald. Not all historic events are so deeply-rooted in the national awareness and, at the same time, so lacking in detail. Most countrymen see the event through Matejko's painting, Sienkiewicz's novel or the film produced by Aleksander Ford based on this novel.

As for the Poles' awareness, the Grunwald battle quickly became a symbol of Polish - German, or even broader: Slavic – Germanic, competition. As early as in the 16th century it was perceived as such, not only as a conflict between the Polish-Lithuanian army and the Teutonic Knights' order. When the Polish Commonwealth of nobility collapsed under the invasion of occupiers in the 18th century, and most of its lands were conquered by Prussia and Habsburg Austria, reference to Grunwald



The battle of Grunwald by Jan Matejko,
archives of Wikimedia



WHERE DOES OUR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT GRUNWALD COME FROM?

The most famous description of the battle of Grunwald was written by the great Polish chronicler, Jan Długosz, who knew the course of the battle from reports of participants – his father and Cardinal Zbigniew Oleśnicki and his companions. Historians agree that this description is the closest to the truth, especially since Długosz also used a story written one year after the battle by one of its participants, probably Deputy Chancellor of the Crown, Mikołaj Trąba. Many reports of that time, coming mostly from Germany, are burdened with propaganda. First of all, according to the Teutonic Knights' wishes, they should have proved that Jagiełło's army was supported by huge crowds of pagans: Tatars, unbaptised Lithuanians and Samogitians, and finally by Orthodox Russians whom the Catholics associated with the Schism. In such stories total fantasy appears regarding the alleged Tatar auxiliary troops amounting to as much as a horde of 30 thousand!

Chronicler Jan Długosz, fig. archives of Wikimedia

was revived again. Reminiscences of the battle according to Polish awareness were invigorated by the actions of the Prussian authorities. Since the Napoleonic wars – which for Germans culminated in 1813, as the establishment of the order of the Iron Cross (with the image of a Teutonic emblem!) – German nationalism was growing. Germans started to perceive the actions of the order many centuries ago as a mission of civilising the east, taming the barbarians and bringing western culture. As if in response, the Poles recalled the Teutonic Knights and Grunwald as a conflict within 'everlasting competition' with the Germans. The image of a Teutonic Knight symbolised a really dark character and quickly merged with the sinister image of Prussians germanising Poland. In such a very negative way were the monastic knights presented in poems by Adam Mickiewicz: *Konrad Wallenrod* and *Grażyna* as well as in a once popular piece by Juliusz Słowacki *Zawisza Czarny*, in which the bard described the Grunwald battle in a slightly fantastic style. In the same mood, one of the songs by Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz is written, telling the story of monastic troops captured in the battle, from which the quote comes: 'They will be blackened by ages, their remains will vanish, but nobody will ever defeat the memory of this day'. Later the reminiscences of the battle were recorded in the novel by Józef Ignacy Kraszewski: *The Teutonic Knights 1410*, in which, however, the writer alleviated the anti-German accents.



When Germany was unified in 1871, under the leadership of the Prussian Kingdom, German emperors eagerly referred to the Teutonic symbolism. The pressure of germanisation was increasing again. Under such circumstances the famous painting *Battle of Grunwald*, created by Matejko, was very

Zawisza the Black of Grabów, fig. RS





Part of the monument complex with a stone model displaying troops arrangement before the battle, photo GEP Chroszcz

meaningful and soon became seen as the essence of the Poles' knowledge of the events. Although critics accused the painter of not caring enough for historic reality, for example, while presenting figures in the painting, who had not actually participated in the fight, while the art experts mocked the composition of the painting for having almost no perspective, the masterpiece was aimed at supporting the spirit of the nation, not at reconstructing the historic truth. Although painters' masterpieces were created later, showing the battle in a style closer to the events centuries ago – as the painting of Grunwald by Wojciech Kossak – most of us, when we

think about the battle, perceive it through Matejko's vision. Soon after, a second masterpiece was created which has practically shaped the Polish memory of the Grunwald Battle – the novel *The Teutonic Knights* by Henryk Sienkiewicz. Under the atmosphere of germanisation, colonising actions, and finally the famous school strike in the Prussian partition at the beginning of the previous century, many painters' masterpieces and literary works were created. They identified the monastic knights living many centuries ago with a sinister figure representing the German Kaiser chasing Polish identity. It is enough to quote the famous words of *Rota* by Maria Konopnicka: 'Until the Teutonic turmoil turns into ashes and dust'.

Memories of Grunwald were recalled in manifestos and slogans of soldiers fighting against Germans for an independent Poland during the two world wars – they were also eagerly referred to by the communist authorities after the end of World War II. The culmination occurred at the great celebration of the 550th anniversary of the battle on the Grunwald battlefields – in 1960 a monument to Grunwald was unveiled, and in the same year, the film by Aleksander Ford *The Teutonic Knights*, was shown, its screenplay based on the novel by Sienkiewicz. Over several dozen years, viewers, almost equal to the size of the Polish population at that time, watched the film!

Therefore, it is not surprising that re-enactments of the battle gather thousands of viewers at Grunwald year after year. The reconstruction of the battle is no more part of the national manifesto, but it has rather become excellent entertainment for everyone – particularly for fans of the military and medieval armies.

TANNENBERG – REVENGE 500 YEARS LATER?

Over 500 years after the battle of Grunwald, Warmia and Mazury again became an arena for armed clashes. World War I began in the summer of 1914. When, on 1 August Germany declared war with Russia, it was almost certain that the East Prussian area would be the first field of battle.



The strategy of the German Empire towards Russia was based on defense. That is why only a small army was sent to the eastern battlefield, while the majority of the army was transferred to the west. German strategists anticipated that before the vast, but bovine, Russian army assembled all its powers, the parallel hit-and-run raid on both Belgium and France would bring about the defeat of these countries. Then the majority of German soldiers would be directed to the eastern battlefield to defeat Russia.

In the meantime the tsar's generals aimed, first of all, to thwart the army defending East Prussia. The forward bastion of the German Empire constituted a real danger in the form of its strategy of outflanking Russian armies stationed on Polish territory. Russian commanders realised the propagandist power of the fight with 'the new Teutonic Knights'; with the Germans germanising the Poles. After all, four years earlier the Poles had solemnly celebrated the 500th anniversary of the battle of Grunwald. The memory of those events, together with the stereotyped perception of a Prussian man endeavouring to gain Polish land as a cruel Teutonic Knight, was widespread. Therefore, the tsar's commander-in-chief Archduke Nicholas Mikolajewicz Romanow (junior) addressed the Poles with a manifesto telling them that 'the sword that discomfited the enemy in the battle of Grunwald has not grown rusty.' On the other hand, Germany also took advantage of the symbolism of the Teutonic Order and called to take revenge for the defeat from 500 years before. For the Germans it was not merely a defeat of the Teutonic Knights – as it reads on the commemorative stone tablet of 1901, which was transferred to the Grunwald fields 30 years ago – but of 'the German existence and rights.'

In mid-August two of the tsar's armies crossed the border of East Prussia where the German 8th Army was in garrison. The attack was hindered by the Great Mazurian Lakes defended by the Boyen Tower in Giżycko and fortifications built in the narrows between the lakes. Because the Russians did not want to attack the fortifications they decided to send the first army, commanded by General Rennenkampf, from the north, passing round the Mamry Lake; the second army commanded by General Samsonow would be



Russian artillery at Tannenberg, archives of Wikimedia



TANNENBERG – RUSSIAN DEFEAT – SUCCESS OF THE ALLIES?

Although the Germans considered the battle of Tannenberg their great victory, perceiving it from the perspective of the situation on both fronts in 1914, the success seems doubtful. The shift of part of the forces from the west towards East Prussia made it possible for France to defeat Germany in the battle of Marna and to push back the danger from Paris. At the crucial moment of the campaign Germany lacked reserves, which were then being transported to the east, while it turned out that the offensive against the Russians had finished before assistance arrived. Had the Germans won the battle of Tannenberg and Marna, who knows how subsequent events would have turned out?



THE SLEEPY MARSHAL

For the majority of German people Marshal Paul von Hindenburg was the hero of the battle of Tannenberg. The fact is that the real mastermind was his staff commander general Erich Ludendorff. Hindenburg's role in the operation was maliciously summed up by one of the staff officers in the following words: 'Here the Field Marshal slept before the battle, after the battle and also during the battle.'

Gen. Paul von Hindenburg – the sleeping marshal, archives of Wikimedia

sent from the south towards Ostróda and Olsztyn. After the successes of the first army – they managed to reach the line of the river Węgorapy – the German army commander General Prittwitz ordered a retreat from East Prussia to the line of the Vistula. He feared that General Samsonow could strike sideways at his own military forces. However, the German aristocratic tribes and the imperial court did not intend to give back the region which was so important to them and symbolically bound with their alleged mission of civilisation in the east. That is why General Prittwitz was dismissed and Generals Hindenburg and Ludendorff took over the command of the 8th Army. Additionally, contrary to original plans, some troops were shifted from the western front to the east. Nevertheless, they did not succeed in reaching East Prussia before the forthcoming events. At the same time there were not enough forces in France at the crucial moment of the German offensive.

In the meantime the tsar's generals incorrectly acknowledged that German armies in East Prussia had been devastated. The second Russian Army boldly attacked Olsztyn while the first Russian Army temporarily halted after reaching the north. German commanders decided to take advantage of their dominance on the strengthened line of the Great Mazurian Lakes that put the two Russian armies as much as 110 km apart. The strategy was to send only minor forces to oppose the tsar's army in the north and to strike General Samsonow with all the forces available. Thus, though the Russian army was, all in all, more numerous than the Germans, the 8th Army was both more numerous and better equipped for this particular attack.

On 26 August the German offensive began. The severest contention took place near Olsztynek. The Germans outflanking manoeuvres brought about quick results – almost 100 thousand Russian soldiers were embattled in the area of Nidzica. The attempts to break the besetment were foiled and the crestfallen General Samsonow committed suicide. On 31 August the 2nd Russian Army capitulated. The following offensive, carried out at the beginning of September, forced General Rennenkampf to retreat.

It was here that the Germans triumphantly announced their great success naming the offensive the battle of Tannenberg. Doing so they referred to Stębark village near Grunwald, where according to German historians, the campaign of 1410 took place. Thus, from then on, it was proclaimed that the Germans had achieved victory equal to the one the Slavic people achieved at Grunwald, and so they took revenge on them. The local success was so exaggerated that in the whole of Germany the campaign became a legend and General Hindenburg, appointed as marshal. General Ludendorff gained honours and immortal fame. The formersoon became an honorary citizen of 20 German cities including Toruń, and was given the title of *doctor honoris causa* by many universities. Additionally, he was elected the president of the country. After World War I ended, the construction of a huge monument commemorating the battle was begun. Inside the monument the mausoleum of Hindenburg was built. When the field marshal died in 1934, his funeral was a good opportunity for the Nazi propaganda machine to spread the fame of the battle of Tannenberg once more. Nowadays, there are hardly any traces of the monument, which was blown up in 1945 and finally destroyed four years after the war.



GRUNWALD – the annual action replay?

Even today, in the fields of Grunwald, where the lavish monument commemorating the Polish-Lithuanian victory stands, we have a chance to watch the struggle between thousands of knights. Every year in mid-July there is a great staging of the famous battle. Many members of knightly brotherhoods, both from Poland and other European countries, come to Grunwald to re-enact the battle.

In 1410, hostile armies met in the area stretching between Grunwald, Stębark, Łodwigowo, and Ulnowo villages on the gentle verge of the Dylewo Hills. Below Grunwald the fields merely ripple reaching no more than 230 m above sea level. The site of the battle is slightly lower to the north, where once were little, boggy holes and small ponds. There used to be more forests there and only one big lake, Lubień, stretches north from Ulnowo and is shaded by a strip of forest in the west.

Moving towards the battlefield we go past small villages, interconnected by narrow roads – many of which form picturesque avenues. The villages stand out from the landscape of the region. There are not many lakes in this part of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodeship. Apart from the above mentioned Lubień lake there is a small lake called Samin. Greater basins including Wielka Dąbrowa and Dąbrowa Mała are to be seen a few kilometers to the south. In the 14th century the town of Dąbrówno was founded on a narrow isthmus between the lakes. The town, together with its castle, was seized by Jagiełło in 1410, only two days before the battle of Grunwald. In such an environment the fans of medieval militaria meet every year to re-enact one of the greatest battles of medieval Europe. In the beginning it was not a big event, but every year more and more contemporary knights began arriving to Grunwald. Recently, as many as several thousand fans of historical reconstruction have assembled, out of which over two thousand people have taken part in the battle. The rest have staged activities in the hostile camps or built a village of craftsmen and organised a historical fair. The celebration of the anniversary of the battle of Grunwald has become such a big event that it now lasts 5 days. During this period one may take part in many events. The programme includes: tournaments, fighting contests using different kinds of medieval weapons, performances by musical groups – including those playing historical music, a festival of fire, medieval Holy Masses... The museum at the battlefield offers very interesting exhibitions thematically connected with the history of the monastic country and its struggle with Poland and Lithuania.



Monument on the Grunwald Fields,
photo GEP Chroszcz





1. Museum on the battlefield,
photo GEP Chroszcz
2. Celebrating the battle anniversary
(staging), photo GEP Chroszcz

Everybody can watch the re-enactment of the battle of Grunwald but not everybody can participate in it. The knights and other participants camping in the special 'Grodzisko Grunwaldzkie' (Grunwald castle) must fit in with the regulations of the event. All the equipment, clothes and armour must be appropriate for the period between 1350 and 1420. Although the knights do not need to be members of the groups belonging to the Polish Association of Knights their admittance is verified by the commanders of individual flags. Detailed regulations of the participation are to be found on www.grunwald1410.pl in the 'Regulations' section. On this website and at the information service of the Marshal's Office of Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodeship in Olsztyn (www.grunwald.warmia.mazury.pl) one can find a detailed programme of the re-enactment of the battle of Grunwald, information on how to get there, other attractions in the region, and further useful information.

It is advisable to plan the trip to Grunwald in advance. Only narrow com-

munal roads run to the fields of Grunwald, which may cause long traffic jams. If you take the A-road no. 7 from Warszawa to Gdańsk you can turn at Pawłów, 7 kilometers from Olsztyn, onto road 537. An alternative way runs from Mława through Działdowo and Dąbrówno to Samin where you have to take a side road to Grunwald. Starting from Gdańsk you may turn onto road 542 in Rychnowo and then from Frygnowo village go straight to Grunwald or turn left to Stębark. Driving from the west of Poland you may go along road 15 running from Toruń – then it is best to turn onto road 537 in Lubawa, which runs to Stębark.

Getting to Grunwald by public transport is very limited. The nearest railway station is in Olsztyn, but the most important junction is in Działdowo (35 km to the south), where trains going from Warszawa to Gdańsk make a stop. You can get to Grunwald by bus travelling from Olsztyn to Ostróda. There are very few buses from Działdowo, and you may have to change buses in Dąbrówno.

It is also advisable to book some accommodation in advance as there are not many places offering rooms close to Grunwald (information on www.grunwald1410.pl and www.grunwald.warmia.mazury.pl).



THE TRAIL AROUND GRUNWALD – how to use it.

The regions of the battlefield of 1410 may be visited following the 'Szlak Pętli Grunwaldzkiej' (Grunwald Loop) Trail, which is meant for tourists with cars. It is not recommended for cyclists – as a great part of the trail goes along very busy A-roads.

The trail is marked by brown information boards and signposts provided with easily recognisable graphics: two swords on a white background. Large information boards are located in significant towns. Each of them contains a simple map of the trail, a more detailed map of the relevant town, and some information concerning the most significant attractions of the region – translated into five languages.

The 'Szlak Pętli Grunwaldzkiej' Trail is 263 km long. We may start the trip along the trail in Grunwald and then go through Nidzica, Działdowo, Lidzbark, and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie to Lubawa; next through Ostróda to Olsztynek and back to Grunwald. This route is 216 km long. Thanks to trail junctions, we may choose one out of three shorter loops that partly overlap. One of them runs from Grunwald to Nidzica and further through Działdowo and Dąbrówno back to Grunwald (97 km). Another loop starts in Grunwald and runs to Olsztynek, then further through Ostróda to Lubawa and back to Grunwald – the last stretch situated on the highest part of the Dylewo Hills (107 km). The third loop runs from the Grunwald Fields through Dąbrówno to Działdowo, then through Lidzbark and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie to Lubawa – and finally through the Dylewo Hills back to the beginning of the trail (146 km).



The Dylewo Hills landscape,
photo J. Pruszyńska



THE GRUNWALD TRAIL – FOLLOWING THE TEUTONIC FORTRESSES

The Great Grunwald Loop (see cover)

Grunwald – Nidzica – Działdowo – Lidzbark – Nowe Miasto Lubawskie – Lubawa – Ostróda – Olsztyniek – Grunwald (216 km)



Before we set out on a journey to the sights corresponding to the march of Władysław Jagiełło's army to Grunwald, we should visit the battlefield itself.

Vast fields and low hills scattered here and there with a diversity of scarce woods and groves. You can also see a few small housing estates amongst them. Characteristic features of **VICTORY HILL (WZGÓRZE ZWYCIĘSTWA) ①** – steeple flagpoles with metal pennants – overlook the area. To reach the monument take the road from the parking lot by the road running from Stębark to Grunwald. An obelisk composed of 265 granite blocks has been placed along the paved road that leads to the hill. The blocks originally came from Kraków, taken from the Grunwald monument destroyed by the Germans during World War II. At the highest point of the hill we can see the main monument, unveiled during the 550th battle anniversary in 1960. It is an 8 metre, stone obelisk ornamented by reliefs of the faces of Jagiełło's soldiers and the previously mentioned flagpoles, located a bit further, of which the pennants are used to symbolise the banners of the Polish and Lithuanian – Ruthenian armies. The design of the monument and the hill itself was carried out by Jerzy Bandura and Witold Cęckiewicz. There is an amphitheatre further down – we can see a mock-up of the hostile armies' distribution, just before the battle. In the pavilion, under the amphitheatre, you can visit the small Museum of the Battle of Grunwald (Muzeum Bitwy pod Grunwaldem) (Stębark 1, phone: +48 89 6472215, e-mail: biuro@muzeumgrunwald.pl, www.grunwald.warmia.mazury.pl; the museum welcomes visitors from May 1st to September 30th). The exhibition



entitled 'The Great War with the Teutonic Order 1409-11' is worth visiting to learn about the history of the Prussian tribes and their subdual by the Teutonic Knights. The exhibition is complemented by a collection of medieval weaponry. The stages of the battle are presented in an interesting multimedia presentation. Battle scenes from 'Teutonic Knights' ("Krzyżacy"), a film by Aleksander Ford from the year 1960 – are shown in the screening room.

Walking along the Blue Trail we reach another hill, about 1.5 kilometres away. It is there that we can see **JAGIEŁŁO'S MOUND (KOPIEC JAGIEŁŁY) ②** – a place where Jagiełło was most probably situated during the first stage of the battle. Another interesting point of the Grunwald fields is directly accessible from the parking

space. A small road to the south, leading towards Kolonia Łodwigowo estate heads to the **RUINS OF A GOTHIC CHAPEL ③**, situated 500 km away. The construction was erected in 1411 by the Teutonic Knights who




1. Stone obelisk and the masts – the major monument on the Grunwald fields, photo GEP Chroszcz
2. The Museum of the Grunwald Battle, photo GEP Chroszcz



wanted to commemorate soldiers fallen in battle. It is said that the chapel was placed in the exact spot of the Great Master's Ulrich von Jungingen's death. Right beside it you can see a monumental rock, originally placed by the Germans in 1901 on the remnants of the chapel. In post-war times the rock was moved to its present spot after the ruins were put into order, and the German inscription was translated into Polish. You can also reach the chapel directly from the parking lot.

Nidzica

After we have finished our stroll across the battlefields, we can set out once more. We pass through **Stębark** and **Pawłowo** to national road no. 7 and then turn south. We soon reach the small town of Nidzica with its **CASTLE**  overlooking the buildings and partially hidden beneath trees.

Ages ago the Teutonic Knights defeated a Prussian tribe of Sasins here, and in 1268 founded an earth and wood fortress on their land. The fortress was later rebuilt into a brick castle, as it was strategically located on the dividing line from Mazowsze. The reconstruction of the castle into a brick, Gothic erection built on stone foundations took 37 years – from 1370 to 1407. In 1376, the still unfinished fortress resisted the attack of Lithuanian troops under the rule of Kestutis. Several years later, a meeting between the representatives of the Order (including the Great Master Konrad Wallenrod) and the Polish-Lithuanian delegation, including Skirgiełło, Ziemowit I of Mazowsze and the bishop of Płock was held in that location. Nidzica castle was frequently occupied by Polish troops over the following century. The Polish-Lithuanian army, marching towards Grunwald, easily acquired Nidzica three days prior to the battle, and Jagiełło presented the town to the duke of Mazowsze. However, the Teutonic Knights regained the fortress in the autumn of the same year. Four years later, during the Hunger War with the Order, the Polish troops were successful in conquering the fortress due to effective canon fire on their side. Then, in 1414, the Teutonic Knights recovered the town with the fortress. During the Thirteen Years' War, the fortress became a part of the Prussian Confederation, however, Nidzica was passed back into Teutonic hands after the year 1466. The Polish siege, during the last Teutonic war (in 1521), was ineffective, and although the town was seized it was still given to Albrecht Hohenzollern in 1525 as a part of the Duchy of



1, 2. At the castle in Nidzica,
photo D. Zaród





Courtyard of the castle in Nidzica,
photo GEP Chroszcz

Prussia. Nidzica suffered again in 1656 due to the alliance of Poland with the Tartars, then during the Napoleonic Wars at the beginning of the 19th century, and yet again during a World War I battle with the imperial Russian troops in what was later named the battle of Tannenberg. Nevertheless, the town experienced the hardest time during the German-Soviet battles in 1945 – it was almost completely destroyed.

Before we set out to the castle walls let us stop for a moment in the old town. The carefully planned medieval settlement is now mostly occupied by post-war blocks of flats. There remain only short sections of the old walls that previously formed a rectangle, and **TWO 14TH CENTURY TOWERS** 5. On the extended rectangular main square (presently Wolności Square) we can see the shapely structure of **THE NEOCLASSICAL TOWN HALL FROM THE 19TH CENTURY** 6 and renovated tenement houses on the eastern frontage. The main sanctuary of the old town, **THE CHURCH OF ST. ALBERT (KOŚCIÓŁ ŚW. WOJCIECHA)** 7 built by the Teutonic Knights in the 14th century, lost most of its Gothic character after the reconstruction in 1914 and gained more pseudo Renaissance features. In the southeastern corner of the old town we encounter **A SMALL CLOISTER (KLASZTOREK)** 8 (at present the building holds the National Archives), a Gothic building with the remains of a turret from the 14th century. It was added to the city fortifications many years ago.

The most interesting feature of Nidzica is the castle, positioned on a hill to the east of the old city. Its vast structure is hidden among trees and we can only appreciate the Gothic architecture when we venture closer. We enter through the main gate, first passing a low vaulted passage into the courtyard of the castle approaches. Right before us appear massive, square, corner towers and the central gate tower of the upper castle. This way we can reach the courtyard and see the concrete and wooden galleries, which were quite awkwardly reconstructed. The castle now holds a hotel with a restaurant and is the seat of the cultural centre of Nidzica as well as the Museum of the Nidzica region. Sightseeing within the castle takes place in organised groups with accompanying guides (Centre of Culture in Nidzica, ul. Zamkowa 2, phone: +48 89 6250370, e-mail: zameknidzica@wp.pl, www.nok.nidzica.pl).

In the vicinity of the town you can see **A LARGE ERRATIC BOULDER** 9. In the southern part of the town, close to the Tatar housing development, there is a granite gneiss over 2 m high and 19 m in circumference. There is a cannon ball fixed to the top of the boulder. According to the legend, this ball had been fired from the castle when under siege in 1656. The ball killed a person sitting on the boulder, who proved later to be the leader of the Tartars besieging the fortress. The Tartars are said to have been terrified by the fact and relented the siege along with attempts to conquer the town and castle.

We can take the road to the south of Nidzica to reach the small village of **Kanigowo**, with its enchantingly located **SMALL CHURCH OF THE TRIUMPH OF THE HOLY CROSS (KOŚCIÓŁEK PODWYŻSZENIA KRZYŻA ŚWIĘTEGO)** 10. The sanctuary stands under some old trees within an area surrounded by a stone parapet wall. The church was raised in the 15th



century on a rectangular plan. It was restructured in the 18th century and its shape is diversified by a small wooden turret elevated over the roof. Inside, we can find a preserved 18th century emporia – a remaining feature of the prior use of the church by Protestants.

In **Janowiec Kościelny**, 14 km to the south-east of Nidzica, we will not see just a small rustic house of worship, but an impressive **CHURCH 11** with two steeple towers on the front facade. A Neo-Gothic, three-aisle basilica with transept (transverse nave) was created between the years 1904–11 and modeled on St. Florian's church in the Warsaw district of Praga. The church was raised in place of an old wooden chapel. An interesting local legend is associated with the building of the sanctuary. It is said that in the 14th or 15th century the locals wanted to raise a new church, but decided that it was necessary to ask the pope for permission. Carefully chosen envoys marched all the way to Rome. The pope, impressed by the dedication of the people, not only let them build the sanctuary of St John the Baptist, but also presented them with a statue of Lord Jesus Christ.



The Łyna River, photo GEP Chroszcz



THE SOURCE OF THE RIVER ŁYNA

About 8 km to the north of Nidzica, in the woods of the village of Łyna, originates a river of the same name. It then flows to the north throughout the whole of the Warmian-Masurian district and has its estuary in the Pregola River of Russia. The Łyna flows from many efficient and pure sources from the vast valley as well as numerous side gorges hidden in the shade of deciduous forests. Significant backward erosion, which causes constant relocation of the wellheads, seems to be an interesting phenomenon here. The sources, as well as the surrounding forests, are protected on the landscape reserve of Professor Roman Kobendza, which encompasses an area of 120 ha. The reserve is easy to tour if you take the Yellow Trail.

photo GEP Chroszcz

VISITING THE TURTLES

Close to **Orłowo** village, almost 10 km to the north of Nidzica, the shiny surface of a small lake, Orłowo Małe, catches your eye within the coniferous forests. Rush-covered banks and a sludgy bottom of quite shallow (up to 2 m) waters are preferred by a very rare species in our country – the mud turtle. The creatures often crawl out onto the south-western bank, devoid of trees, and bask in the sun. There is a viewing pier in that area. Unfortunately, it is not very likely one will see the turtles – they tend to lead a rather secret lifestyle. The lake, along with a section of the surrounding forest, forms a wildlife reserve called 'Orłowo Małe Lake', covering an area of 4.5 ha. Originated in the year 1958, the reserve was the first place where turtles were protected. You can reach the reserve by taking a marked trail from Orłowo, passing the scenic forests on the moraine hills, with numerous wellheads as well as periodic waterholes on the way.

Działdowo

We leave busy road no. 7 in Nidzica to go 20 km towards the south-west – to the town of Działdowo. Although the town is mainly regarded for its railroad junction, it does have a few interesting monuments including a **TEUTONIC CASTLE** 12. The main market square and the adjacent streets entice visitors into taking a short walk.

In 1410, Działdowo, located near the border of Masovia with the Teutonic Order, was seized by Jagiełło's troops on the 11th of July. A year prior to these events, after the Knights declared war on Poland, the town was ravaged

by the Duke of Masovia – Janusz I of Warsaw. Działdowo, as a frontier town, often suffered from invasions at various points of time. It was founded the same way as most villages or towns in Warmia and Masuria – as a craftsmen's settlement outside the Teutonic castle, of which the construction began in 1340. It was granted town privileges in 1344. Despite the fact that Działdowo was initially in the hands of the Teutonic Order and then Prussia and Germany, the surrounding area was mostly inhabited by Poles from Mazowsze. Due to that detail the town was included in Polish territory as the only Masurian town – after the country gained independence.

The old part of Działdowo is characterised by an urban arrangement specific to settlements founded by the Teutonic Order. The streets cross at 90 degree angles and contain tenement houses developed after the great fire that took place at the end of the 18th century. The Mickiewicz Square (Plac Mickiewicza), which was the former market square, represents the centre of the town with a centrally-placed **LATE BAROQUE CITY HALL** 13 built in the year 1796. A picturesque, low structured building with ornamental attics and a small turret over a mansard roof, is supported by massive buttresses. In the near future, after renovation of the

city hall is completed, there are plans to create an interactive State of the Teutonic Order Museum (Muzeum Państwa Krzyżackiego, pl. Mickiewicza 43, tel. 23 697 76 30, e-mail: impk@dzialdowo.pl, www.muzeum.dzialdowo.pl). **THE CHURCH OF THE TRIUMPH OF THE HOLY CROSS (KOŚCIÓŁ**



1, 2. Castle in Działdowo,
photo GEP Chroszcz



PODWYŻSZENIA KRZYŻA ŚWIĘTEGO 14 is situated in the vicinity of the market square. Erected in the 14th century, the sanctuary was rebuilt many times – the last reconstruction took place in a mid-war period granting the church its Neo-Baroque character.

The Teutonic Castle stands on a low hill towards the east of the market square. The edifice once consisted of a small upper castle with a four-sided courtyard, closed by structures with two tall towers and a vast approaching castle. Today, only the foundations of the upper castle towers and walls remain, however, the whole residential part – the southern wing – has been preserved. The slender shape of the structure is accentuated by Gothic peaks with blind arcade blends. Visitors are not allowed inside, however, the upper castle courtyard is available to tourists on weekdays. The western wing, added in recent years, does not match the Gothic architecture of the remaining parts. It is presently the seat of the Town Hall.

Continuing on the route from Działdowo to Lidzbark we can, for a moment, sidetrack to **Płośnica**. In this small village, about 4 km away from the Działdowo-Lidzbark motorway, there is the **HISTORICAL CHURCH OF ST. BARBARA** 15. A low nave is preceded by the belfry with a framed structure of the square ground floor and a narrower, wooden extension. The sanctuary, which served as a Protestant church from the 16th century till the end of World War II, was constructed in 1404. It had, at that time, been rebuilt several times.

Lidzbark

Surrounded by the scenic lands of two landscape parks, Lidzbark is a small town on the River Wel. One of the **TEUTONIC CASTLES** 16 was also located here as the Knights gained those lands with the Michałowska land – received in a pledge in 1303. A later owner – Leszek of Inowrocław – did not redeem the pledge, and in the end sold the land to the Order several years later.

Lidzbark itself was founded two years before the Teutonic repossession of the Michałowska land. The new owners of the area soon began developing the castle and settlement, which was in no time granted town privileges. Lidzbark was growing so actively that a hundred years later it was surrounded by defense walls. Despite that fact, on the 9th of July 1410, the castle was easily seized by Jagiełło's troops marching towards Grunwald. The Polish garrison remained here until the first Peace of Thorn which ended the Great War with the Order. Finally, the town became a part of Poland in 1466. Annexed by Prussia during the first partition, it was returned to the restored Poland. Unfortunately, most of Lidzbark's development was destroyed at the end of World War II.

A Gothic Monastic dwelling house from the 16th century, popularly called

GÓRZNO-LIDZBARK LANDSCAPE PARK (GÓRZNIEŃSKO-LIDZBARSKI PARK KRAJOBRAZOWY)

Górzno-Lidzbark Landscape Park extends to the west of Lidzbark. Its north-eastern part lies within the Warmian-Masurian district. The park has numerous lakes, including the Lidzbarskie Lake which can be reached via a comfortable promenade from the town centre. An educational route has been set up around the lake. There are a few wildlife reserves within the forests which cover most of the park including Brynica Ravine (Jar Brynicy) situated in a deep valley of the pure Brynica River. The educational 'Brynica' trail leads to the place. Along the route, you can also see a magnificent, ca 500 years old natural monument: 'The Oak of the Republic of Poland' (Dąb Rzeczypospolitej) (aka 'Jagiełło's Oak' [Dąb Jagiełły]).



WELSKI LANDSCAPE PARK (WELSKI PARK KRAJOBRAZOWY)

Welski Landscape Park extends to the north-east of Lidzbark including the town itself. The park covers an area of 24,237 ha and is characterized by diversified late glacial reliefs, multiple ribbon lakes and moraine hills. Trekking is facilitated by marked hiking and bicycle trails. It is worth visiting the village of Jeleń to see the following facilities operating next to the park's management: the Museum of Natural History and the Ethnographic Museum hosting expositions thematically related to the area. You can take one of the educational trails in the Jeleń area of nature reserves including the wetlands of Koziany Marshes (Bagna Koziany) and Jeleńskie Marshes (Bagna Jeleńskie) (the reserves are currently in the making). We can admire the impressive valley of the Wel River following the Red Tourist Trail (that begins in Lidzbark) along its route.



St. Adalbert's Church,
photo D. Zaród

THE SMALL CASTLE (ZAMECZEK) ¹⁷ is the oldest building in Lidzbark. At present times it holds the public library (ul. Zamkowa 2). The researchers cannot agree whether this considerably rebuilt edifice was a proper part of the castle or whether it was a separate fortified facility added to the town walls. It is neither clear when exactly the castle was destroyed – most probably it occurred during the Polish – Swedish Wars in the 17th century.

THE WARMIAN-MASURIAN MUSEUM OF FIRE SERVICE (THE WARMIŃSKO-MAZURSKIE MUZEUM POŻARNICTWA) ¹⁸ (ul. Nowy Rynek 14, phone: +48 518 292 705, 798 494 095) is a much more interesting monument than the remains of the Teutonic Castle. There is a collection of numerous exhibits dedicated to the history of the fire service in Lidzbark as well as firefighting equipment from the turn of the 19th / 20th centuries including horse-drawn fire-fighting vehicles and manually-operated fire hoses.

The oldest sanctuary of Lidzbark – **ST. ADALBERT'S CHURCH (KOŚCIÓŁ ŚW. WOJCIECHA)** ¹⁹ – represents a Baroque style. It was raised in 1752 in place of a wooden church which had been damaged by fire. The characteristic design was preserved inside – with a few altars, a pulpit and an organ from the beginning of the 20th century.

The Lidzbark region is a great place for taking walks or trips by bike as well as for practicing water sports on the numerous lakes. Moreover, the River Wel is an attractive kayak route that encompasses about a hundred kilometres. The town with its surroundings is located in the area of one of the Landscape Parks, and

there is another one in the vicinity (see the box).

Nowe Miasto Lubawskie

Passing the scenic grounds of the Welski Landscape Park, we move to the town of Nowe Miasto Lubawskie. It is located by the Drwęca River along the



route of the country's main national road no. 5 running from Toruń to Ostróda. Despite considerable traffic, the easygoing atmosphere of the location made it a part of the Cittaslow international network, in 2010.

The town of Nowe Miasto was founded on the strategic site of a convenient passage over the River Drwęca. To protect the ford's location in 1320, the Teutonic Knights built a small brick fortress in place of a former earth and wood fortified settlement and also erected a Gothic church in the pre-existing settlement. Five years later, the settlement was granted a town charter. According to the plan of Chełmno Commander, who became the owner of the town, Nowe Miasto was to compete with the prosperous, nearby Lubawa, under the rule of the bishop of Chełmno. Nowe Miasto Lubawskie was soon surrounded by defended defense walls, whose fragments are still remaining today. There were three gates leading to its premises – two of them have survived. At the time of the Great War with the Teutonic Order, in July 1410, the Polish-Lithuanian Army approached the nearby Kurzętnik wishing to pass the River Drwęca. Faced with the enemy, who set up on the other side of the water, Jagiełło abandoned the plan of fording the river. Soon after the battle of Grunwald, Nowe Miasto was conquered and looted by the Polish army. However, it was returned to the Order in the first Peace of Thorn in 1411. In the 15th century Nowe Miasto Lubawskie was already a part of Poland due to the second Peace of Thorn which ended the Thirteen Years' War in 1466. It was then exchanged for Nidzica, with the Teutonic Order. It remained with Poland until the first partition when it was appropriated by the Kingdom of Prussia and after World War I, it was only returned to the restored Poland in 1920. The following World War was tragic for the local Poles – soon after the Nazis seizure of the town at the beginning of September 1939, the mass executions of Polish objectors, pointed out by numerous Nazi activists living there before the war, commenced. On the other hand, the town buildings were mostly preserved.

The 15th century castle of the Teutonic Nowe Miasto commune administrator, who remained in office only until 1343, was lost without a trace. Until now its exact location is unknown as it was entirely annihilated during the Polish-Swedish wars in the 17th century. However, at that time it was not a part of the defensive structure, but instead held the detention house of the county office. Instead, we can see other Gothic monuments which have remained after the Teutonic Knights rule. There is a precious Fara church – **THE BASILICA OF ST. THOMAS (BAZYLIKA ŚW. TOMASZA)** 20.



12. Figure of St Thomas Basilica in Nowe Miasto Lubawskie,
photo GEP Chroszcz





Kurzętnicka Gate in Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, photo GEP Chroszcz

The three-aisle gothic structure, built in the first half of the 14th century, was renovated in the 19th and 21st centuries. The interior is decorated with paintings from different time periods. Most of them were painted in the first half of the 17th century – it houses the largest polychrome collection of the period in Poland. They mostly present sacred themes, however, there is a representation of the Swedish siege of the city in 1628, located in the chancel. Several works are much older; they were accomplished in the 14th or 15th centuries. When visiting the chancel, you should pay attention to the impressive figures of the apostles: Archangel

Michael and St. John the Baptist. The sanctuary's naves are roofed with beautiful Gothic vaults while wooden barrel vaults, entirely covered by baroque representations, crown the ceiling of the chancel. Most of the altars are also Baroque, but there is a precious Gothic altar – a 15th century triptych accommodating a Baroque sculpture of the Holy Mother. It is also worth seeing the ornamental gravestone of Commander Kuno von Liebenstein. In a rich, Baroque fitting of the church, the original triumphal arcs are placed in the last bays of the aisles as well as under the chancel arch (i.e. at the entrance to the chancel). The Baroque Działyński chapel (kaplica Działyńskich) adjoins the sanctuary and includes the late Renaissance gravestone of the Chełmno voivode, Mikołaj Działyński, who died in 1604. The other large church of Nowe Miasto, which stands in the centre of the market square – a Baroque structure with a high steeple and a shapely tin dome, belonged to the Protestants. It has been preserved in excellent condition, however, at present, it serves as a **CINEMA** 21.

Two gates, and a few sections of the surrounding defense walls, have survived to this day. The Brodnicka Gate (also called Kurzętnicka), adjacent to a large section of the town walls, currently hosts the collection at **THE MUSEUM OF ZIEMIA LUBAWSKA (MUZEUM ZIEMI LUBAWSKIEJ)** 22 (ul. 19 Stycznia 17 a; sightseeing tours after prior arrangement with the Municipal Cultural Centre, phone: +48 56 4742824). The exhibition is devoted to the ethnography of the region. On the opposite side of the old town we can visit **THE LUBAWSKA GATE (BRAMA LUBAWSKA)** 23 (also called Łąkorska).

The surroundings of Nowe Miasto Lubawskie

In the vicinity of Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, just by the Drwęca River, we approach **Kurzętnik** – a former town, now a large village located at the foot of a steep hill hosting the ruins of a Teutonic castle. In the summer of 1410, the Polish-Lithuanian army arrived to the steep slope over Kurzętnik. The Teutonic troops could be seen over the other side of the river. King



Władysław Jagiełło did not want to cross the river in a risky area and in the face of the enemy. Battling at the ford of the Drwęca River, which was flowing in a deep valley in this place, could end up in defeat and huge losses. Therefore, king Jagiełło's and Prince Witold's armies turned back and set off further through Lidzbark, Działdowo and Dąbrówno to the vicinity of Grunwald. Soon after the battle, the castle in Kurzętnik was strifelessly taken over by the Poles, however, merely until the following year. In 1414, during the so called Hunger War, Kurzętnik was besieged by the Polish army. The Poles did not comply with terms of the Teutonic Knights' surrender; they burned the town as well as the castle, and even murdered local inhabitants, including priests. Later, in 1454, during the Thirteen Years' War, the Poles captured Kurzętnik again, however the Teutonic Knights' troops recaptured it and burned it once more. Nevertheless, as a result of this war, the town and the castle were regained by the Poles. The impoverished building was for the last time taken over by the Teutonic Knights temporarily in 1521. Later on, the Kurzętnik stronghold lost its military importance and fell into ruin, especially after the wars against Sweden in 17th century.

Out of the mighty stronghold, built on a steep hill 60 m high over the valley of Drwęca, we now see only sections of the upper castle and relics of the towers. The fortress was most probably raised at the turn of the 13th / 14th centuries, and the town was given civic rights in 1330 at the foot of the hill. The castle used to be **THE SEAT OF THE POMESANIA CHAPTER 24**. Its structure had to be different than multiple other Teutonic castles in the area as it had to adapt to the irregular shape of the hill. It was composed of three parts – the upper castle located at the highest point of the hill, the castle boroughs, surrounded by defense walls and the powerful residential tower, also called the chapel (*de facto* located on the lowest tier) closing the area from the north. The building materials used also differed from similar fortresses in the region – they were mostly erratic boulders gathered in the area and supplemented with bricks.

When leaving the hill it is worth going down to visit the centre of the old town, which has preserved its medieval urban arrangement under the town charter with a small rectangular main square. We can see the Gothic **CHURCH OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE 25** built circa 1300. The buttressed sanctuary, with a small turret to the west, is built of brick and one. The only church nave is covered with a wooden ceiling supported by four poles, and the fittings consist of baroque altars.

The village of **Łąki Bratiańskie** extends on the opposite side of Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, by the main road towards Lubawa. At the meeting point of the town and village, there is a long

PAGAN GROVES AND THE BLESSED VIRGIN

In the area of Lubawa and Nowe Miasto, the Blessed Virgin has long been worshipped in two small sanctuaries. Their origins go back to the period of Christianisation of pagan Prussia and are related to two legends. **Lipy** (nearby Lubawa) as well as **Łąki Bratiańskie** (nearby Nowe Miasto Lubawskie) are said to have hosted two miracles in the 18th century. Both those stories are similar.

A long time ago a pagan grove, where sacrifices to the pagan gods were made, was said to grow where the ruins of Łąki Bratiańskie sanctuary is now located. One day, a group of children saw an extraordinary, moving picture of the Blessed Virgin at the Drwęca River.

Alarmed inhabitants of Nowe Miasto found the miraculous image in the location pointed by the children and solemnly carried it to the town church. However, during the night, the image disappeared from the locked sanctuary and soon two beggars saw a small figure of the Virgin on a tree in Łąki. It was then decided that Our Lady wished her image to stay at the site of the divine revelation. A small wooden shrine was built on that occasion and probably around the year 1400 it was replaced with a stone one.

On the other hand in Lipy, the Blessed Virgin was said to have appeared among the branches of the holy linden growing in the heart of another pagan grove. The Virgin's figure was soon discovered there and it was placed in a wooden shrine built on that exact spot.

wall with a renovated gate surrounding the remains **OF THE REFORMED FRANCISCAN MONASTERY** ²⁶. Currently, not many people know about this place, however, it was one of the most renowned Marian sanctuaries in the north of Poland until the second half of the 19th century.

In the first half of the 17th century a Franciscan Reformed Monastery, founded by the charity organisation of Paweł Działyński, was built in Łąki Bratiańskie. The Marian cult was quickly very popular among the people here and in 1758, the worshipped figure of the Blessed Virgin was ornamented with papal tiaras. Within the years 1785–90 a great Baroque church was constructed here. In 1875 – under the order of the Prussian authorities – the monastery was abolished, seven years later the construction was badly damaged in a great fire and the remaining rubble was dismantled. The miraculous statue was moved to the church of St. Thomas in Nowe Miasto Lubawskie.

An entirely different type of attraction awaits tourists in **Łąkorz**. The village, located about 17 km to the west of Nowe Miasto, is situated at the edge of the Brodnicki Landscape Park (Brodnicki Park Krajobrazowy) (most of the park's territory lies within the Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodeship). Thanks to the passion of the local collector, an incredible **MUZEUM LOKALNE** ²⁷ (Local Museum) was created here (Stowarzyszenie Przyrody i Dziedzictwa Kulturowego, Łąkorz 120, phone: +48 509 980 320). The exhibits are displayed at several locations: in the house of the curator, Jan Ostrowski, in a 200 year old dwelling at the edge of the village and in a small 19th century forge. The museum also boasts a beautifully renovated windmill built in the mid 19th century with well-preserved, complete and original equipment and fittings. The collection is mostly devoted to the former methods of farming, but we can also see domestic furnishings and equipment from old rural houses.

Lubawa

We leave Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and go north along main road no. 15. A few kilometres away from the city, we cross the bridge over the Drwęca, near the village of **Bratian**. To the right of the road, in the fork of the rivers Drwęca and

Wel, upon a low hill, there can be found the remains of the once impressive **CAS- TLE OF THE TEUTONIC ORDER** ²⁸ from the first half of the 15th century.

Although hardly anything remains of the fortress, it is still worth seeing as the Teutonic army departed for Grunwald from that site, crossing the Drwęca in July 1410 and heading east. The last meeting of the most prominent Teutonic dignitaries was held in the fortress, prior to the battle. In 1343, the castle was the meeting place for the Masovian dukes and Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, who agreed on the borderline. From 1466 to the First Partition of Poland,

 Defensive walls in Lubawa,
photo GEP Chroszcz





Bratian remained within the Polish borders. By the 18th century, the castle was already in ruins and one century later it was almost completely demolished.

By proceeding along the main road, we soon reach the town of Lubawa. We leave the bypass and head for the city centre to visit the old town and the ruins of the castle of the Teutonic Order. The town is surrounded by vast fields and lies west of the Dylewo Hills. From here, tourists may depart for the highest hill and follow the road straight to Grunwald (see. Small Loop II, p. 37).

Before the surrounding lands of Lubawa became a part of the Teutonic state, a fortified Prussian settlement stood in its place. The local Prussian landlord, Surwabuno, resided here at the beginning of the 18th century. In 1216, he decided to receive baptism, thus becoming accountable to the Holy See – this was all dictated by the need to preserve his estate and status as a duke. It did not, however, prevent the Teutonic Knights from capturing Lubawa and founding a new town in the mid 13th century. In 1246 Lubawa became the property of the Bishopric of Culm. The successive bishops resided here until 1785, when the bishop seat was moved to the diocese capital in Chełmża. In the meantime, in 1260, a large-scale Prussian rebellion caused the destruction of Lubawa, which was then founded once again in 1326. At the beginning of the 14th century, on the order of the bishop, Henryk Schenka, the construction of a stone castle with town walls was undertaken in a place previously occupied by a wooden and earth fortress. The fortifications enabled the townspeople to fight off the Lithuanian duke, Kiejstut, in 1330. Following the Battle of Grunwald, the castle was manned by Polish troops, who withdrew in 1411. Ultimately, the town went to Poland as a result of the Second Peace of Toruń, ending the Thirteen Years' War in 1466. Between 1538 and 1539 Lubawa was visited four times by Nicolaus Copernicus, who came here to visit his friend Tiedemann Giese, the Bishop of Culm (Chełmno). In 1772, the town was annexed by the Kingdom of Prussia. In 1920, it was returned to Poland, but was later razed to the ground at the end of World War II.

The old town area was once surrounded by the ramparts connected to the castle fortifications. The only remains of the old circle of urban fortifications are **TWO TOWERS** ²⁹ at ul. Pod Murami and a small part of the ramparts. The Gothic towers of the 14th century were rebuilt into dwelling-houses. Lubawa is famous for its historic parish **CHURCH OF ST. ANN'S** ³⁰, located near the marketplace, and the said remains of the ramparts. The Gothic temple was founded in 1330. A 16th century reconstruction of the church and subsequent addition thereto of the Mortęscy Renaissance Chapel in 1581 did not destroy its monumental Gothic form. The church interior reveals Baroque altars,



12. St Ann's parish church in Lubawa,
photo GEP Chroszcz



especially the high altar of 1723, containing the old image of Our Lady of the Rosary, whereas the altar in Mortęscy Chapel conceals the miraculous statue of Our Lady of Linden, brought in from the nearby village of Lipy (see below). The small parish Museum of Lubawa Land stands next to the church (ul. Kościelna 5, phone: +48 89 6452650), where it exhibits a collection of sacred art. The Gothic style is also represented by **ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH 31**, located in the eastern part of the old town, next to the exit road in the direction of Stębark. Erected at the end of the 15th century, the church was rebuilt in the Renaissance style after 1580, when the Bernardines replaced the Franciscans. The church interior is decorated with an original coffered ceiling, decorated with Late Renaissance paintings. It also includes the tombstone of the bishop of Culm, Mikołaj Chrapicki – the founder of the monastery. The building adjacent to the monastery, reconstructed to a large extent, currently houses a school. A precious Gothic work of art is a 15th – century crucifix, brought by the Franciscans from the mother monastery in Saxony.

A little further north of St. John the Baptist Church, we encounter

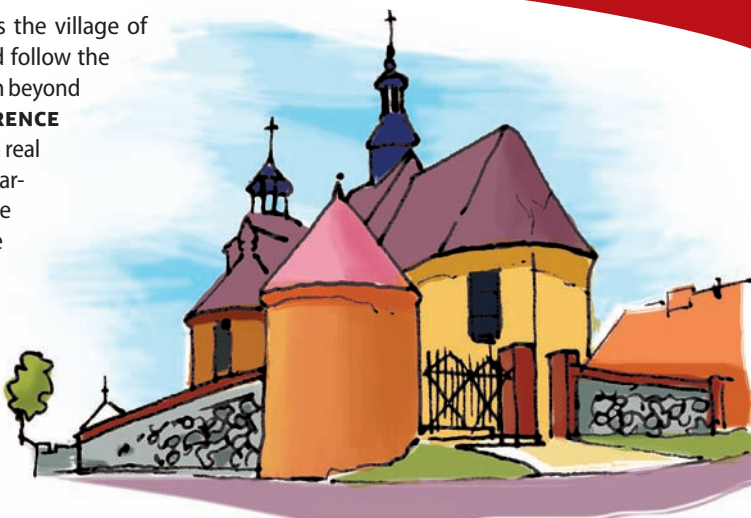
a well-preserved fragments of a **TEUTONIC ORDER'S GOTHIC CASTLE 32** which, supposedly, in its prime was second in wealth only to Malbork Castle. At the beginning of the 17th century, it was reconstructed in the Baroque style to serve as a bishop seat by Bishop Jan Zadzik. However, it was deserted in 1785. The castle was seriously damaged in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars and pulled down. The only parts that remained of the castle were the foundations, the ogival portal (a pointed or Gothic arch) of the main gate and remnants of stone and brick ramparts as well as two basteje (a type of tower) added in the 17th century. Having visited the castle ruins, tourists may go to the northern part of the city, crossing the Sandela River. They will find yet another sacred monument – the wooden **ST. BARBARA'S CHURCH 33** of 1779 – with a late Baroque interior. A modest, brick and stone church stands east of the city, immediately beyond its boundaries, in the small village of **Lipy**. Although it was erected in 1870 in the Neo-Gothic style, it gives the impression of medieval architecture. Allegedly, it was the place where the holy linden grove of pagan Prussians was located. However, at the beginning of the 13th century, following the baptism ordered by Surwabuno, the Marian cult replaced the old beliefs (see frame p.25). Soon a wooden chapel was built on this site (currently occupied by the church) and was rebuilt into a stone chapel in the first half of the 17th century. The miraculous figure of Our Lady, allegedly found in the holy grove, was transported to the parish church in Lubawa. However, each year, on the 2nd of July, the ceremonial indulgence procession, holding the statue of Our Lady, marches to the church in Lipy.



St Barbara's church in Lubawa,
photo GEP Chroszcz



Further away from Lubawa lies the village of **Rożental**. To get there, we should follow the road in the direction of Ostróda, 8 km beyond Lubawa. The wooden **ST. LAWRENCE CHURCH** ³⁴ stands in the village – a real jewel of wooden architecture and carpentry skills, founded in 1761 by the bishop of Culm, Andrzej Baier. The Baroque temple, with its varying architectural styles, features a tower and steeple over a shingle roof, many-sided chapels and smaller outhouses. It is surrounded by 19th century walls, with two cylindrical pinnacles and chapels.

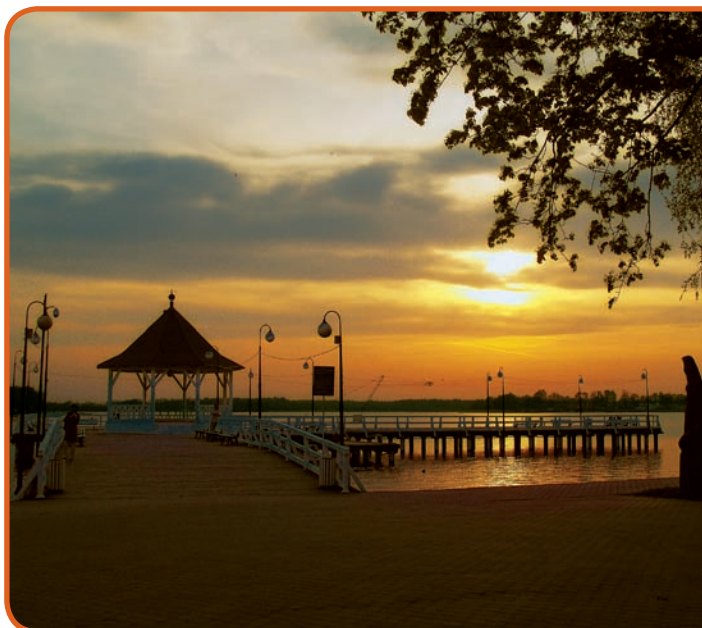


Ostróda

Going round the high moraine Dylewo Hills, we reach Ostróda. This quite large town lies on the edge of widespread forests, by the shores of Drwęca Lake. The town was strategically important because of its location along the road to the Teutonic state.

In early medieval times, the location was of decisive importance for building a Prussian castle on the island at the Drwęca's mouth, where it flows into the lake. Around 1270, the Teutonic Knights built a wooden watchtower in its place. A settlement gradually developed around the watchtower – in 1329 it received an urban charter, but in 1381, the growing settlement was set on fire by the Lithuanian forces of Duke Kiejstut. Although in 1410, Ostróda surrendered to the Polish armies, and during the Thirteen Years' War, Ostróda townsmen came out against the Teutonic Knights, from 1466, it remained within the borders of the Monastic state. It was occupied many times by various armies: Polish forces were deployed in the town between 1519 and 1521 (during the last war against the Teutonic order), then it was occupied by the Swedes in 1628, and finally by the Russian army between 1758 and 1762. In 1807, for a few weeks, the castle was the headquarters of Napoleon Bonaparte and General Józef Zajączek. Much earlier, in the mid 17th century, Ostróda became a refuge for one of the last surviving members of the Piast Dynasty, Duke

St Lawrence church in Rożental, fig. RS



Pier in Ostróda, photo J. Pruszyńska



John Christian – who was forced into exile for supporting Protestants after the Thirteen Years' War, abandoning his Lower-Silesian Duchy of Brzeg. In the 19th century Ostróda was a very important centre for the emerging national awareness of the Masuria Region inhabitants. Worth mentioning is the prominent figure of Gustaw Gizewiusz (see frame), Ostróda's pastor, who was buried in the evangelical cemetery. The town was also home to a Polish bookstore, which opened in 1855 and was converted into a printing house in 1907. It published Polish books, calendars and periodicals. Although Ostróda fell outside the borders of the Second Republic of Poland after 1918, it was returned to Poland after World War II, which left its urban buildings largely destroyed.



At the site where the Drwęca flows into Drwęckie Lake, in the northern part of the town, we can see Ostróda's most important historic building – **THE TEUTONIC ORDER CASTLE OF THE OSTRÓDA-COMMANDER** 35. It was probably built between 1349 and 1370 on a square base, with four wings, and rebuilt after the damage sustained in 1381. At the beginning of the 15th century the castle boasted three storeys and a tower, which have not survived. It was destroyed by the great fire in 1788 which also damaged the eastern wing, which was later completely demolished. This is the reason the castle courtyard is open at one side. There was a long period until the building, destroyed in 1945, was rebuilt. The reconstruction works lasted a few years, until 1996. The parts that were rebuilt were, in particular, the wooden, two-storey galleries in the courtyard. Today, the castle houses the Centre of Culture and Regional Museum (ul. Mickiewicza 22, phone: +48 89 6462602, e-mail: muzeumostroda@wp.pl, www.muzeumwostrodzie.pl). Its permanent exhibition is devoted to the

history of Ostróda and its surroundings. It is worth taking a closer look at the models of the town, showing its spatial development from the 16th century until the beginning of the 20th century.



1. Castle in Ostróda, photo J. Pruszyńska
2. Museum at the castle in Ostróda, photo J. Pruszyńska

history of Ostróda and its surroundings. It is worth taking a closer look at the models of the town, showing its spatial development from the 16th century until the beginning of the 20th century.



The Gothic **St. DOMINIC CHURCH** 36 at ul. Filtrowa was built at the beginning of the 15th century. For a long time it served the needs of Protestants and it was here that in the 19th century Gizewiusz preached his sermons and a daughter of the Duke of Brzeg, John Christian, was buried. After the damage sustained in World War II, the temple was rebuilt in the modern style. A preserved portion of the medieval city walls adjoins the church.

The other two churches of Ostróda, located at Sienkiewiczza Street south of the railway, are not medieval in origin. However, both churches are worth seeing for their refined architectural style. The oldest of the two is the **IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH** 37, built between 1856 and 1857, serving the needs of Catholics. The other church is of a Neo-Gothic design, with a steeple added in 1910. It was designed by Vincenz Statz, the designer of, among others, the new cathedral in Linz in Austria. Care was taken to match the furniture, and especially the beautiful stained glass made by George Schneider of Ratisbon, to the architectural style of the church. The oldest church artefact is a 14th-century pieta – a gift from the parish of Gietrzwałd, dated before the World War I. The other church is also Neo-Gothic in character. This church is both **EVANGELICAL-METHODIST AND EVANGELICAL-AUGSBURG** 38, serving the needs of both denominations. Built between 1907 and 1909, according to the design of Oskar Hossfeld, it stands out for its tower surmounted by a double peak. To get to the top of the tower, which offers an excellent viewpoint, one has to climb as many as 105 stairs. While climbing the stairs, tourists can admire the mechanism of the clock from 1909, and three bells. The church structure, with its transept and much smaller chancel, is a good copy of the design of regional medieval churches. The church boasts a large organ, whose perfect sound quality can be admired during frequent concerts.

After visiting the old town buildings, it is worthwhile taking a walk along the promenade by the shores of Drwęckie Lake. The harbour of **OSTRÓDA AND ELBLĄG NAVIGATION** 39 lies close to the long pier. After crossing



1. St Dominic's church in Ostróda,
photo J. Pruszyńska

2. Church of Immaculate Conception of
the Blessed Virgin in Ostróda,
photo J. Pruszyńska



GUSTAW GIZEWIUSZ

One of the few best known Polish national activists in Masuria. He was born in 1810 in Pisz. He attended middle school in Elk and studied theology in Königsberg. In 1835, he became a preacher in the evangelical church of Ostróda. He was a fierce opponent of germanisation of the Masuria region, publishing works on Polish national identity in Prussia. He fought to preserve the teaching of the Polish language in schools and published Polish books. He died in 1848 in Ostróda, where he was also buried. After the World War II, the city of Łuczany (or Lec, Lötzen in German) was renamed Giżycko in his honour.

While in Ostróda, it is worthwhile visiting the cemetery at ul. Oszyńska, known as the Polish Hill, to see Gizewiusz' monument and last resting place.



1. Sailing across Mazury,
photo GEP Chroszcz
2. Bismarck Tower,
photo J. Pruszyńska



Wooden church in Rychnowo from
1713, fig. RS

the bridge over the Drwęca, we reach the mouth of the Ostróda Canal, connecting Drwęca Lake, through Pauzeńskie Lake, to the long, ribbon lake, Szelał Wielki. A few hundred metres from the lakeshore, the canal is blocked by the **'OSTRÓDA' SLUICE** ⁴⁰ of 1870. The wooden lock-gate is operated by hand, the same as the sluice valves inside, and the sluice chamber is made of brick and concrete. By continuing our walk along the northern shores, we will reach the stone-built **BISMARCK TOWER** ⁴¹, from 1902. It was the first building of this type in East Prussia at that time, commemorating the chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, who was the architect of German unification in 1871. At the turn of the 19th / 20th centuries, it was very popular to erect such commemorative towers. The 10 m tower in Ostróda was built from erratic blocks.

We leave Ostróda and go south along national road no. 7. After driving for 15 km, we reach the small village of **Rychnowo**, with an intersection of two roads: to Gierzwałd and Działdowo. We can stop to visit **A WOODEN CHURCH, DATING BACK TO 1713** ⁴². Although very small in size, it has an extraordinary design: the central nave was built on an octagonal plan, adjoined by a low bell-tower. Entering the church, we will be surprised to discover precious Baroque polychromies. The ceiling is decorated with a painting featuring the original sin, whereas the wall-paintings show eleven apostles (without St. Peter) and Martin Luther – this last portrait is positioned behind the altar, a Late Gothic triptych from 1517. A faithful replica of the church (including wall-paintings!) can also be seen in the heritage park in Olsztynek (see next page). A magnificent **PALACE** ⁴³ is located near the church in Rychnowo. It was developed from a 19th century manor. The palace also houses a monastery. We leave Rychnowo for nearby Olsztynek by continuing to follow national road no. 7.



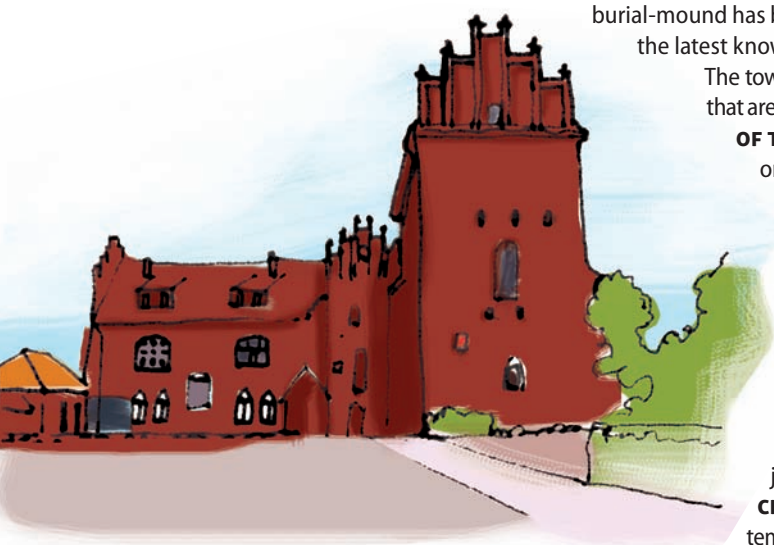
Olsztyniek

A rather small town located at the intersection of important communication routes. It is particularly famous for its large heritage park, but also boasts historic monuments from the times of the Teutonic Order. In 1351, the Teutonic Knights ordered a stone castle to be built on the former Prussian lands of Sasins. Eight years later, Olsztyniek was founded on the site. Most tourists visiting Olsztyniek go to **THE OPEN-AIR MUSEUM**  (The Museum of Folk Architecture – Ethnographic Park, ul. Leśna 23, phone: +48 89 5191542, e-mail: bort@muzeumolsztyniek.com.pl, www.muzeumolsztyniek.com.pl). The museum is to the north of the town and is open for visitors from the 15th of April until the end of October. Between 1938 and 1942, replicas of various examples of rural architecture from East Prussia were transported to Olsztyniek from the heritage park in Königsberg, which was in the process of being closed down. After the World War II, the museum was extended. In total, the museum exhibits 68 houses and other buildings, and the entire area of today's heritage park amounts to 96 ha, along with fields, meadows, small lakes and woods, wetlands, and the Jemiołówka River flowing nearby. The most precious items on display include a replica of the wooden church of Rychnowo, reconstructed in minute detail within the museum area – including the precious interior polychromies. Other tourist attractions include an impressive windmill and other farm buildings, such as a watermill, forge, oil mill and smokehouse, all of which are mainly built of wood. Dwelling-houses of framed structures with arcades are an attractive sight (the so-called Prussian wall). Of a different style is the recently reconstructed Early Medieval Prussian settlement of craftsmen, called Amalang. Another must-see is a burial-mound, a replica of an original tomb from circa 4th–3rd century B.C., which was created in the 1930s in Königsberg, and then transported to Olsztyniek. In recent years the



1, 2, 3. Open-air museum in Olsztyniek,
photo D. Zaród





Castle of the Teutonic Order in Olsztyn, fig. RS

burial-mound has been reconstructed according to the latest knowledge about such artefacts.

The town is also known for a few objects that are worth seeing. The former **CASTLE**

OF THE TEUTONIC ORDER ⁴⁵ stands

on the northern side of the market-place. It was built of brick between

1350 and 1366 on a quadrangle stone base. As a result of many

reconstructions, particularly those undertaken in the 19th

century, the original building was almost completely lost, except

for the two wings currently housing a school. The castle is adjacent

to the former **EVANGELICAL CHURCH** ⁴⁶. This 14th century Gothic

temple was reconstructed after World

War II and is no longer used for religious

purposes. Nowadays, it houses the showroom of the Museum of Folk Architecture. A modest Gothic brick house, adjacent to the preserved section of the city

walls, stands at the back of the church. It stands out for its embedded stones, collected from the surrounding fields. Olsztyn is the birthplace of Christoph

Coelestin Mrongovius (see frame). The exhibition, devoted to this prominent scientist, is currently held in his family house, which is a branch of the **MUSEUM**

OF FOLK ARCHITECTURE ⁴⁷.

On the outskirts of Olsztyn, in **Sudwa**, there was once a monstrous monument commemorating the German victory at Tannenberg, adjoined by the mausoleum of Marshal Hindenburg. It was partially blown up by



CHRISTOPH COELESTIN MRONGOVIOUS

Another – besides Gizewiusz – activist of the Polish minority in Prussia. He was born in Olsztyn in 1764 and died in Gdańsk in 1855. He was a highly valued preacher, philosopher and linguist. He fought to preserve Polish heritage in the Prussian sector and pioneered the research of Kashubian and Masurian folklore and language. He lived in Gdańsk from 1798 until his death. He was also the author of Polish language textbooks and Polish-German dictionaries. He was praised and honoured by his contemporaries, and in 1806 he was asked to take over the Department of Slavonic Languages in the famous Krzemieniecki High School in Wołyń, to which he ultimately said no. He was a member of many scientific associations, including the Society of Friends of Science in Warsaw and the Historical-Literary Society in Paris. His extensive book collection (of more than one thousand) is now kept in the Polish Academy of Science library in Gdańsk. In his honour, the town of Żądźbork (in German, *Sansburg*) was renamed to Mrągowo in 1945.

archives of Fundacja Wikimedia



the Germans in 1945, and in the post-war period, following the dismantling of its precious granite plates, it was finally demolished. The only part that remains is **A STONE LION** ⁴⁸, which once adorned the smaller monument of an infantry division that fought in the battle of August 1914. It now stands in front of Olsztynek's town hall.

THE MILITARY CEMETERY ⁴⁹ was established in the aftermath of the battle of Tannenberg in the small village of **Drwęck**, hidden in the woods at the Drwęca River, west of Olsztynek. It was in this place that the most intense battle raged on the 28th of August 1914. Almost 200 German soldiers, killed at that time, were buried in the cemetery.

We cover the distance from Olsztynek to Pawłów in a short time. In Pawłów we leave national road no. 7 and take the road leading to Stębark and Grunwald, thus concluding our trip along the Great Grunwald Loop Trail.



A stone lion in front of the town hall in Olsztynek, fig. RS

Small Loop I – to Grunwald through Dąbrówno

Grunwald – Nidzica – Działdowo – Dąbrówno – Grunwald (97 km)

The shortest variant of the Grunwald Loop Trail leads from Grunwald (see p. 16) and along the main trail, through Nidzica (see p. 17) and Działdowo (see p. 20). At this point we turn north, in the direction of Dąbrówno. Before we reach the town known from the Grunwald campaign, we can go sightseeing in **Uzdowo**.

This locality was part of the Second Republic of Poland in the interwar period. As Uzdowo was close to the border with East Prussia, it was the nearest village to Grunwald on the Polish side of the border. For that reason, the **GRUNWALD VICTORY MONUMENT** ⁵⁰ was unveiled on 12 July 1931 in Uzdowo. It was destroyed by the Nazis at the beginning of the period of occupation. A few years ago, the monument was reconstructed. The local church is a stone and brick **GOTHIC TEMPLE FROM THE 14TH CENTURY** ⁵¹ – probably built soon after the foundation of the village, around 1320. The only remaining church tower contains a historic bell from 1707, cast in the bell foundry in Gdańsk.

WHENCE A BRIDLE IN UZDOWO (BRIDLETOWN)?

The name of the town is derived from a legend about a rebellion of the local people that was ruthlessly put down by the Teutonic Knights. Reportedly – in order to avoid future rebellions – the knights were ordered to hang a horse bridle on the church tower as a symbol of the suppression of rebellious spirits, in parallel to the taming of horses. The bridle (pol. uzda) was the inspiration for naming the town Uzdowo.

Dąbrówno

We leave Uzdrawo and follow the road to Ostróda, going along the southern shores of Wielka Dąbrowa Lake. This is a sign that we are nearing the narrowest isthmus between the said reservoir and Mała Dąbrowa Lake, marking the location of the town of Dąbrówno.

The town, built by the Teutonic Knights on a strategically important site, received urban rights as early as in 1326. The castle was erected a few years earlier. On 13 July 1410, the Polish and Lithuanian-Russian armies came close to the town of Dąbrówno. The next day the combined forces stormed the town and castle, which were defended by a small number of guards and armed townsmen. The attackers quickly broke through the defences and began plundering the castle and slaughtering the defenders, and followed this by setting fire to the town and castle. The atrocities committed by Jagiełło's army caused many villages, towns and castles of the Teutonic

Order to surrender without a fight. King Jagiełło did not punish the perpetrators of the most atrocious acts, probably because he did not want to lower his army's morale in the face of oncoming decisive battle – the following day the armies departed for Grunwald, a distance of 9 km. The Teutonic Knights did not rebuild the demolished castle, but, instead, built a new one at a different spot in Dąbrówno. Throughout the 15th century the town was destroyed several times in the course of subsequent Teutonic-Polish wars. Following the liquidation of the Monastic state in Prussia, Dąbrówno became the seat of the ducal governor, remaining in the hands of Prussian baronial families – the longest-reigning dynasty was that of Finck von Finckenstein. The town had never been considered strategically important, and, as a result of the damages sustained during World War II, it lost its municipal rights.

Although Dąbrówno is currently a village, it has preserved its old urban layout from the 14th century, with its marketplace and perpendicular street plan. The **REMNANTS OF RAMPARTS WITH ONE TOWER** 52 have survived until

today (next to the Methodist church). The first castle, which once stood on the site of today's park, with its monument to the victims of the First World War, disappeared without a trace. Whereas, the new 15th century castle, connected to the city fortifications and transformed into a Baroque residence in the 17th century, now stands in ruins – the only parts that remain are remnants of walls and cellars to the side of Wielka Dąbrowa Lake. The castle survived in relatively good condition until 1945, when it was seriously damaged. The fire-damaged walls remained in place for a few dozen years until they were pulled down, following a controversial decision. Fortunately, **THE MAIN CHURCH OF OLD DĄBRÓWNO** 53 did not share the fate of the castle. The temple, currently used by Methodists, was built in the Gothic style after 1325. Following its destruction in 1410, it was rebuilt and refurbished after 1600. In the 19th century, the church was remodelled in the Neo-Gothic style,

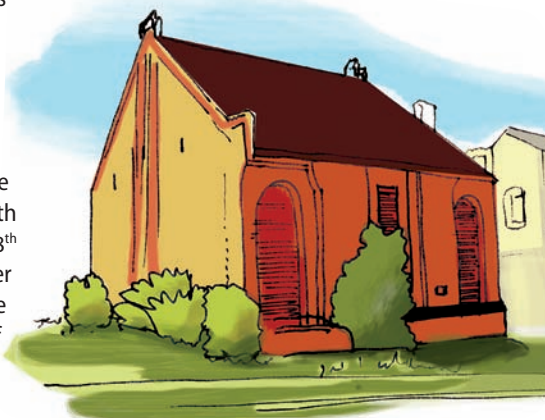


Tower in Dąbrówno, fig. RS



and adorned with blind columned arcades. It is set in charming surroundings – the entire property is shaded by old trees and encircled by a stone wall with incorporated tower of the old urban fortifications, serving as a bell-tower. The church interior is also very interesting. The wooden ceiling is covered with Baroque polychromies, depicting the biblical scene of baptism in the Jordan, figures of the prophets, the Last Supper and allegories of the virtues. The richly-adorned collator's lodge of the Finckensteins, with the empora leading to the chancel, dates back to the 18th century, while the mausoleum was added in 1697. The other remaining church in Dąbrówno is the Neo-Gothic temple of St. Jan Nepomucen and the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin Mary of 1865. A historic monument of rare occurrence in the region is a synagogue, dating back to the second half of the 19th century and featuring the remains of wall paintings. Following the devastation by the Nazis, the synagogue was used as a warehouse, and after that fell into decay. Today, the temple is taken care of by the Zmiana foundation, which is gradually restoring it to its former glory.

The isthmus between the lakes surrounding Dąbrówno widens to the east and west, immediately beyond the village. Following the road to Ostróda, we reach the village of **Samin**, where we must turn onto a side road, leading to nearby Grunwald, thus closing the loop.



Synagogue from 2nd half of the 19th century, fig. RS



Small Loop II – to the top of Dylewo Mountain

Grunwald – Olsztynek – Ostróda – Lubawa – Wygoda – Grunwald (107 km)

After visiting Grunwald, we go on a longer trip with the aim of seeing historic towns and rural churches. Travellers may take a rest from sightseeing

Sunset at Drwęckie Lake,
photo J. Pruszyńska





LANDSCAPE PARK OF THE DYLEWO HILLS

The highest elevation of the Hump of Lubawa, called the Dylewo Hills, adds to the beauty of the landscape. To protect such a special place, a landscape park was established in 1994, with a total area of more than 7,000 ha.

The varied landscape, with relative heights of up to 80 m and steep slopes, is the effect of a glacier, which passed this way during the Last Glaciation. The moraine hills are covered with woods, which take up more than a half of the park's area: beech and broadleaved forests, interspersed with midforest meadows and many cultivated fields. Riverine and alder forests grow alongside the streams and in wet hollows. The beech forest is best seen in the spring time, when the undergrowth blooms and flowers blossom: anemone, fields of kokoryczka (Soloman's seal) filling the air with an intoxicating, sweet fragrance, ficaria

(pilewort) and others. As the park area is elevated above the level of the neighbouring grounds, it has a slightly more austere climate, with a higher amount of rainfall and slightly lower average temperatures. Owing to this fact, numerous species of mountain plants grow in the park and snowfall is more abundant. The park offers great opportunities for those interested in ski tourism. It is an interesting fact that in 1986, six mouflons – wild sheep from Corsica and Sardinia – were brought to the park. The animals have easily adapted to the new environment and now their population numbers about 100, which makes them easy to spot.

The lands of the highest natural value are the reserves: 'Dylewo', protecting the ancient beech forest with trees up to 115 years old (near the village of Dylewo), 'French Lake', whose shores are overgrown with Pomeranian beech as well as a rock deposit area with boulders, near the forester's cottage, Napromek, and close to the village of Wygoda.

The park management is located in Jerzwald near Ilawa – sharing the offices with the Landscape Park of Ilawa Lake District.

Dylewo Mountain, photo J. Pruszyńska

by going to the shores of Drwęca Lake in Ostróda or breathing in the fresh air, while walking in the picturesque Dylewo Hills.

We begin our journey by paying a visit to nearby Olsztynek (see p. 33), in which the main tourist attraction is a large heritage park. Then, we head for the town of Ostróda (see. p. 29) by Drwęca Lake, to see the castle of the Teutonic Order. It is also worthwhile visiting Lubawa, because of its precious monuments (see p. 26).



Wooden church in Złotowo, fig. RS



We leave Lubawa and go east along the side road, leading to Stębark i Pawłów.

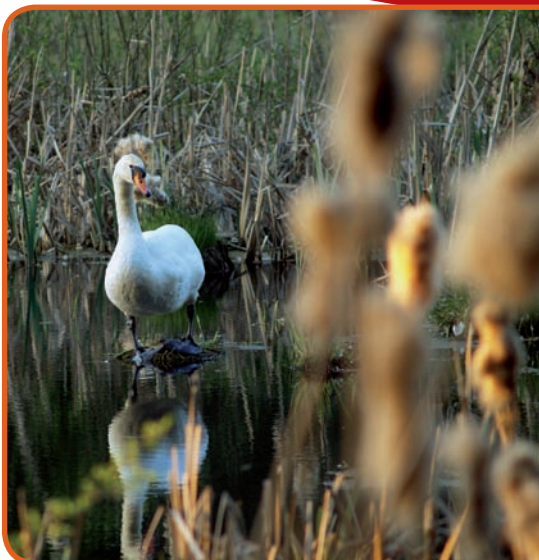
At a distance of 4 km from the town, we turn left reaching **Złotowo**. It boasts **A WOODEN CHURCH** 5A of log construction from 1725, erected on an elongated octagonal base.

Taking the road to the east, we encounter steep hills, which resemble foothills rather than lowlands. In the nearby village of **Wygoda**, located in a valley among hills and woods, there is a ski-lift on one slope. This is a sign that we are in the heart of the Dylewo Hills Landscape Park (see frame



above). The slope in front of us is Czubatka (274 m above sea level), one of the highest elevations in the area. A walk to the hill top (without a trail) will take us to the viewpoint, where we can take in the beautiful landscape. Next, we head for the village of **Glaznoty**, located 2 km north of Wygoda, which has a modest-looking **EVANGELICAL GOTHIC CHURCH** 55 from about 1400 and an impressive **NO-LONGER-EXISTING RAILWAY FLYOVER** 56, which has connected the locality of Samborowo (near Ostróda) to Turza Wielka, near Działdowo, since 1945.

To get to the highest peak of the Dylewo Hills, tourists, on the road leading to Stębark, should turn north a few km behind the village of Wygoda, and go through Klonowo, reaching the village of **Wysoka Wieś**. Dylewska Mountain (312 m above sea level) can be found to the east of Wysoka Wieś. Within the Polish Lakeland, the mountain is second in size only to the Kashubian Peak of Wieżycza. Then, we can leave Wieżycza peak with a radio transmitter and take a walk to the viewing tower, following the educational path of the Landscape Park leading to the reserve 'French Lake', containing a reservoir of the same name. The difference in height between the peak of Dylewska Mountain and the water's reflection is only 65 m.



Reserve 'French Lake',
photo J. Pruszyńska



After visiting the picturesque land of the Dylewo Hills, we head for nearby Stębark, continuously following the road to the east, from Lubawa to Pawłowa. In this way, we conclude our trip by closing the loop.

Small Loop III – through the Drwęca Valley and Dylewo Hills

Grunwald – Dąbrówno – Działdowo – Lidzbark – Nowe Miasto Lubawskie – Lubawa – Wygoda – Grunwald (146 km)

The third small loop, which tourists may choose to travel through as part of the Grunwald Loop Trail, is the longest of all the variants of trips described so far, with a starting point in Grunwald. It leads to the town located south of the battlefields, and on through the Dylewo Hills.

Leaving Grunwald behind, we go south to Dąbrówno (see p. 36), which was destroyed in 1410 by forces under the command of King Jagiello. After that, we go through Uzdowo in the direction of Działdowo (see p. 20), a small town with a castle of the Teutonic Order. Next, we go west to Lidzbark (see p. 21), whose charming surroundings include two landscape parks: Welski and Górzno-Lidzbark. Going further down the trail, we arrive at Nowe Miasto Lubawskie (see p. 22), which is famous for its several historical monuments and the nearby village of Kurzętnik, with the ruins of the beautifully located Castle of the Pomezania Chapter. A little further north, the trail leads to Lubawa (see p. 26), where we can find a few precious Gothic monuments. The next step is to visit the Dylewo Hills Landscape Park (see p. 38), located at a short distance from Grunwald, and that is where our trip ends.

NOTES

