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# UPPER SILESIA

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THE KINGDOM OF COAL



Erasmus+

Zespół Szkół Ogólnokształcących Nr 1 w Chorzowie

# Preface

**This ebook has been written by the students of Zespół Szkół Ogólnokształcących Nr 1 in Chorzów within Erasmus + Project (KA 2) 2015-1-ES01-KA219-016034\_2 titled “Getting to know, sharing and enjoying our cultural heritage”**

Our aim is to present our region – Upper Silesia, both its diversity and beauty and its cultural heritage.

Although it is neither a well-known nor renowned resort popular with holiday-makers, it can still boast many places well worth seeing, places reminiscent of historical events or documenting lifestyles, work and cultural heritage of many generations of its inhabitants.

We are proud to live here, so this work is presenting our view on the most important aspects of the land called Upper Silesia.

# Chapter One

*The Kingdom of Coal:  
the Black Gold of Silesia*

by **Klaudia Gądek**



**Upper Silesia** is situated in the South-Eastern part of Poland and borders with the Czech and Slovak Republics. For many centuries, it was the heart of a carbonic and metallurgical industry in Central Europe. Today, most of the mines and ironworks are closed, but some of them have opened for visitors and tourists.

The history of Silesia is really diverse and gripping: a lot of historical events took place here, which makes it a perfect location to get to know some surprising facts and curiosities, for example, about the Second World War. Nowadays, you can visit many fully-equipped war bunkers with a guide, so you will learn what soldiers' everyday life was like and how they fought and perhaps you might become aware of what they might have been feeling.

If you don't like war topics, come to one of the numerous folklore museums or if you're an adventurer, go down about three hundred meters underneath the surface of the earth and experience the life of silver and coal miners with their legend about the mysterious Treasurer! The silver mine in Tarnowskie Góry and the coal mine in Zabrze await your visit!

Upper Silesia also stands out in terms of language among the rest of regions. Our dialect is a combination of Polish, German, Czech and Slovak expressions. Until today many native habitants have spoken Silesian language and the youth try to cultivate the tradition of speaking this dialect in their everyday life.

What are the most recognizable Silesian things ?



Definitely tenement-houses, called "Familoiki" - buildings from red brick with red windowsills - typical panorama of Świętochłowice district – Lipiny or the protected historic district of Nikiszowiec. These houses were specially designed for miners and other heavy industry workers at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

For gourmets, Silesian cuisine will offer tasty dishes like potatoes with bacon, onion and garlic. Black pudding (called here “krupnioki”) is delicious. Upper Silesia is renowned for its dumplings served with rolled beef stuffed with bacon, onion and sour cucumbers with red cabbage as a side salad. Sunday without chicken broth and rolled meat with dumplings is not a Sunday at all.



Typical Silesian sweets resemble the soul of this land: coal. These are candies "Kopalnioki," which in fact means “coal candies” due to their colour – black as coal, tasting sweet of herbs, made of liquorice - their chief ingredients.

And the very thin wafers called "Oblaty", which can be served by waiters wearing traditional, colorful costumes in a few restaurants, for example in Tarnowskie Góry.



So, if you have nothing to do, pack up your things and come here.

# Chapter Two

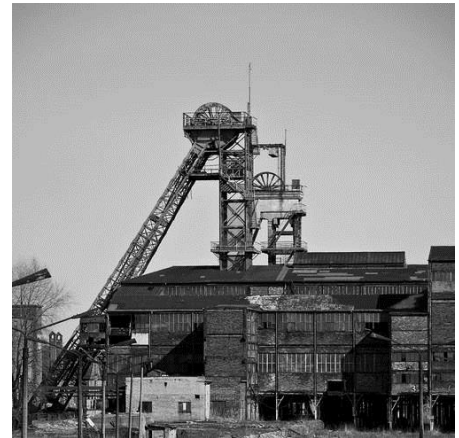
## *My Silesia*

by Nicole Mrkwa





**Silesia** is a geographical region in Central Europe: in Poland, between the Czech Republic and Germany. In Poland it is divided into the Lower and Upper Silesia. The historical capital of Lower Silesia is Wrocław. The capital of our region, Upper Silesia is Katowice. Our coat of arms dates back to ancient times to the Piast dynasty, the first ruling dynasty of Poland.



According to the project “Vademecum Silesia”, the Silesians are not liked in the western, northern and central part of Poland. To be honest, there is no place where we are much-loved. I was born in Silesia and I live here with my kin. The family on my dad’s side is made up of the entire generations of the Silesians. I found out that my father and my grandfather worked at the same coal mine (the pit), as had many generations of grandfathers, fathers and sons before them. In the traditional Silesian families the woman is the one who takes care of home and the children, and the man is the breadwinner. In my opinion, such a mock-up of family is not right, because the woman is able to work and her place is not only in the home with the kids. Every single female resident of Silesia has every right to find a job and doesn’t need to be a kept woman.

The Silesian dialect is also worth mentioning, as it makes a massive impression on every visitor. I can’t say a word in this dialect, but I can give you countless examples: trousers-galofty, realistny, needle-jegła, dress-klejd, bike-koło, this year-latoś.

I enjoy listening to my grandmother’s stories about her childhood and the rules in her home, so thanks to them I can find out many essential things and I appreciate the traditions and the cuisine. My favorite meal is the beef roll with Silesian potato dumplings and the red cabbage.



I think that the diligence of the Silesians is their biggest advantage. The dwellers are known to be efficient and effective workers of heavy industry such as engineering, mining and metallurgy. Unfortunately, currently heavy industry is in decline. A lot of motherlodes or coalmines and ironworks are closed, but, to be fair, the environment is much more salubrious.

However, you must know that the Silesians are not giving up. In fact, they have found their place in a well-developed trade. Those who want to learn more about this region should go to

the Antique Building Museum or to the Parachute Tower. These places will help you with dig deep into the history of Silesia.

What will the future be like? I have no idea, but one thing I am one hundred percent sure.

I will continue some of Silesian habits, but that's all – I have no need to learn the dialect or wear the folk costume, it's just not my cup of tea.





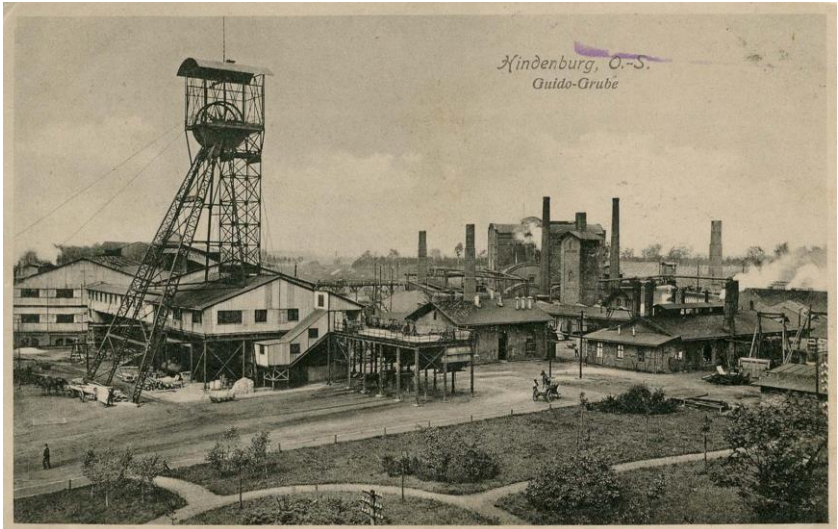
# Chapter Three

## *The mines*

by Anna Domańska and Justyna Rybińska, Kamila Danisz and Rafał Rurański, Łukasz Piowczyk and Marek Stępień

## The Guido Mine – the deep historic coal mine and museum

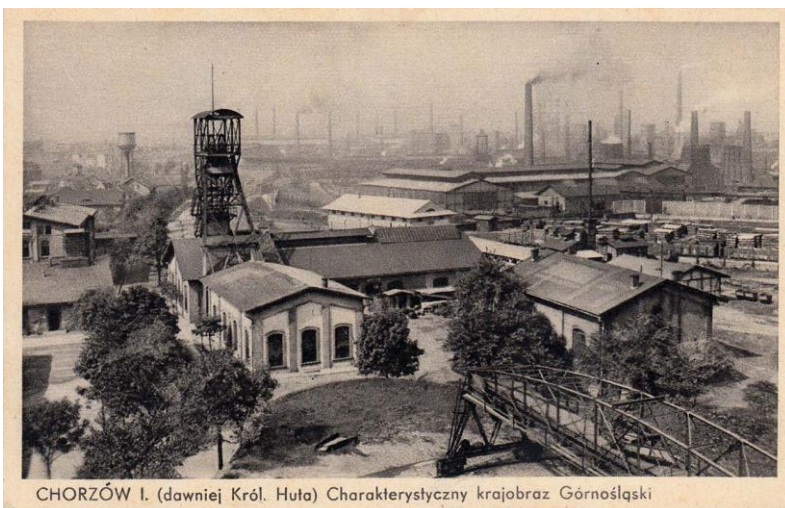
The Coalmine "Guido" in Zabrze was founded in the 1850s of the XIXth century. It was named in honour of its owner, an industrial magnate, Guido Henckel von Donnersmarck. Up to the 1880s, it boasted two highly-productive shafts "Guido" and "Kolejowy". Then, however, the mine was sold to the Prussian state. Its coal resources were worked out, so the owners of that time ceased mining in 1928. After the II World War Guido was reopened by the Polish Socialist Government and for some time it functioned as the Experimental Mine of Coal Of Stone M-300. Between the years 1982-1996 a part of mine's excavations was made available to visitors. Nevertheless, some snap decisions of local and state authorities in the neighbouring mines led to closing a tourist route. Thanks to local authorities of Zabrze, in 2007 "Guido" was reopened to tourists. The ground part of the mine comprises a building of the pit head of the shaft "Kolejowy" and steel tower with the hoisting mechanism. The elevator can take us down to two levels: either 170 or 320 metres beneath the surface of the ground. Underground, there is also a chapel of Saint Barbara – the patron saint of the Polish miners.



Today "Guido" has a new face – it is an object of our Silesian cultural heritage. A theater play, a concert underground – why not? Zone K8 invites for classy performances! On level 355 everyone will feel like a real miner. Darkness, silence, narrow corridors! You make a journey through the mine with accompanying visual effects – miners' conversation, the sounds of rats and many others. After this incredible

expedition you can recharge your batteries in the mine's pub K8. And to top it all...the greatest attraction at level 320 is an opportunity to watch catchy shows of operating big mining machines or drive an electric suspended railway, which is the only one in the world available to tourists! Level 170 shows the history of Silesian Mining, from the use of horses underground in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the modern era of mechanization. An unforgettable experience it is to see the deepest visitor mine in Europe!

## The Shaft „President”



The "Prezydent" (President) Shaft was designed by an engineer Richard Heileman in 1931. His project included: the Shaft Tower, the building of the hoisting machine and the building where coal was sorted. These objects were built in 1933. The Tower had been reinforced by a concrete structure, which distinguishes it from other shaft towers in Europe.

The Shaft Tower is 42,5 meters high, its cable wheels are 5,5m in diameter, and are placed in parallel to each other driven by the hoisting machine powered by an electric engine of 6 kV voltage and 490 rpm (rotations per minute). This allowed to extract about 500 tons of coal per hour. At first, the Shaft was called "Wielki Jacek" (The Great Jack), however, in 1937 it was named "President" in honor of the President of Poland of that time - Ignacy Mościcki.

In 2008 the Shaft was bought by the Town Council of Chorzów and was registered as a monument. In 2009

The Shaft was renovated and finally next year its unique tower was highlighted. At the same time it became one of the attractions of Industrial Monuments Route.

The Shaft challenges its visitors with 201 stairs. The observation terrace is located at the height of 34 meters where you can admire the views. The local authorities invested about 200 000 dollars in the renovation of the Mine Shaft. During its opening, a cyclist called Krystian Herba established a new record driving to the top of the shaft in 3 minutes and 5 seconds.



## The Silver Mine: the Black Trout Adit

It all began in 1490, when a simple peasant called Rybka (The Fish), discovered an ore piece



beneath his field. His discovery of a lead ore with a big admixture of silver attracted the attention of various miners, who later built a small settlement near the presumable ore location. Dynamic industrial modernisation of the settlement allowed it to develop into a city in 1526. The rich treasures hidden deep down in the tunnels of the mine enabled the citizens of Tarnowskie Góry to prosper and develop even further than before. It all changed, however, when the miners started to dig for silver even deeper and deeper. The mine itself started to flood, and no amount of horse carriages was

efficient enough to get rid of the problem. The help came from England, taking the form of steam engine, which was brought to Poland in 1788. This machine allowed Tarnowskie Góry to enter a new era of great prosperity, which lasted till 1912.

All in all, the miners dug over 20 thousand shafts, running for over 150 kilometers of sidewalks that vary from 0.6 to 4m tall.

In 1938 Tarnowskie Góry gained the permit to set up a silver mine museum, and The Black Trout Adit was the first shaft to receive the visitors. In 1957 it was opened as a boat tour, the trail being about 1800 metres long, of which 270 metres are travelled by boats.



Ever since its opening, the Silver Mine Museum has been popular with general public, now it can also boast an attraction of the museum, which is a small narrow-gauge railway line.

# Chapter Four

## *The Silesian Park*

by Mirek Mlonek and Łukasz Zalewski



## Silesian Park: the Provincial Park of Culture and Recreation

"Silesian Park" is a unique and extraordinary part of Chorzów as many call it a "green oasis" for how much it shines in the middle of the most industrialized and urban region in Poland. As you may have guessed from the name "Silesian Park" is.. well, a park, but not like any other. It is filled with both the beauty of nature and the gifts of modern technology. But let's start with what exactly our park has to offer. As you enter you are greeted by a huge sculpture of a giraffe. The park is



spread across a huge 620 hectare land which puts him on one of the higher spots on the list of the biggest suburban parks in Europe. The park is filled with nature such as many different species of trees, flowers and animals. But our park isn't only a great place to relax but also to enjoy many cultural, social and educational events as the park is

equipped with buildings such as the planetarium for the fans of astronomy or the hall known as "The Hat" which hosts many ceremonies and competitions, another great place to visit is a sculpture gallery filled with amazing art, or if you are a fan of football you can enjoy our stadium, maybe you love animals so why not take a look at the zoological garden and it's furry inhabitants, if you are into fun and entertainment you are gonna love the funfair full of exciting rides and the famous wheel. Even near the park there are quite a lot of various things to enjoy, for example the outdoor swimming pool or maybe the ropeway that can take you for



a ride around the courtyard. Our beautiful park is a dynamic location as there is always something happening there, it is very hard to cover all of the

attractions of the park but as you explore giving tourists many activities to take part in.



