

Guide of the Municipality of Brzesko



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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am convinced that this guide will help you appreciate the history, landscape and architecture of our municipality. The guide also contains a proposed hike along the trail of St. Stanislaus bishop and martyr, one of the patron saints of Poland, as Szczepanów was his birthplace. The Municipality of Brzesko is located in Malopolska province and today has a population of a little over 36,000, but traces of human habitation can be traced back to over 3,500 years ago. Brzesko was founded between 1344 and 1352 by Komes Spycimir, the Castellan of Kraków. On 26 January 1385 the town was granted privileges, based on Magdeburg rights, by Queen Jadwiga. In 1998 Brzesko became the capital of the county again, and has become an important center of trade and industry in the region. The Brzesko region is fortunate to have been associated with a number of great people. Stanislaus the Bishop and Martyr was born here. In 1845 John the Evangelist Goetz, the founder of Okocim Brewery, came to Brzesko. Ludwik Solski, one of the greatest of Polish actors and playwrights, lived here as did Kazimierz Missona, a playwright and poet. Andrzej Munk, a famous film director was a frequent visitor. I believe that this guide will encourage you to visit some of the charming and interesting places in our municipality.



Grzegorz Wawryka
Mayor of Brzesko

BRZESKO



Market square

Brzesko Main Square

In 1321 Spycimir Leliwita, the progenitor of the distinguished Polish families of Melsztyński and Tarnowski, acquired through exchange the land by the river Uszwia (now Uszwica). Included were the towns Pomianowa, Jasień and Brzezowiec. In 1334 he also bought Poręba Spytkowska and Okocim. The acquisition of these lands by Spycimir was confirmed by Władysław the Short and Casimir the Great. Thanks to Spycimir, these villages were modern and formed a basis for the future town. Between 1334 and 1352 (the exact date is not known) Cracow Castellan Spycimir established the town of Brzeżek, now Brzesko, in the area of Wola Pomianowa. In 1385, Queen Jadwiga gave the town Magdeburg rights; this date is also the first mention of Brzesko.

The town was built from scratch by the trade route from Silesia and Cracow to Rus. It was on a slight hill on the left bank of Uszwica, which gave it its name. The newly established town was given a fairly regular shape, with a market square, which was adapted to the local conditions. The market square was surrounded by rectangular blocks of buildings divided into homes of equal surface area. The main square, along with the neighbouring blocks, created a distinctive chess-board plan sectioned by streets. This feature is still visible in the modern town.



Old tenement of Brzesko Market square

From the beginning, this town square, as in other towns, functioned as a marketplace. This was where the community life of Brzesko was centred. It occupied an area of nearly one hectare, while the entire town including the streets covered just over nine hectares. The corners of the Market square were the starting points of three main streets leading to the routes to Krakow (now Mickiewicz street), Tarnów (now Glowacki street) and Uście Solne (now Kosciuszko street), and three smaller streets (now Sobieski street, Chopin street and Asnyk street).

In the immediate vicinity of the main square, in the north-east corner on a small hill, was the wooden Gothic parish church of St. James the Greater. Later, in the first half of the 16th century, the church was given brick walls. The church was surrounded by a cemetery, and a rectory as well as utility buildings.

The market was surrounded by high-density, wooden houses, which were rather small buildings similar to rural cottages. In the central part of the square there were merchant stalls, butcheries, craft workshops and a wooden town hall. The latter was possibly built as early as the 15th century, and probably burned-down in the 18th century (its traces were found during recent archaeological research, conducted before the renovation of the mar-



Old tenement of Brzesko Market square



Statue of St. Florian



Old tenement of Brzesko Market square



Old tenement of Brzesko Market square



Old tenement of Brzesko Market square

ket). There was also a pond for watering horses and cattle, which were led for the trade fair.

An impressive Baroque statue of St. Florian, the patron saint of fire fighters, was erected in the middle of the market square on 26 November 1731. The monument was sponsored by the townspeople and was given an inscription stating: "To St. Florian we devote this town that so often suffers from fires".

At the time of the partition of Poland, in 1875, the Austrian administration planned a strategic route along the northern frontage of the market square, which was to link Lviv, Przemyśl, Tarnów, Kraków and Vienna. This was the so-called Cæsarian Route.

After numerous fires that hit Brzesko in 1854, 1863, 1876, 1880, 1885, 1890 and 1891 the wooden one-storey houses at the market were replaced by brick two-storey tenements with few distinctive stylistic features. In 1898 the market square was paved with cobblestones. After the last fire of the town, which broke on 25 July 1904, the housing by the market square was enriched with new houses, built in the spirit of historicism and Art Nouveau, which was quite fashionable at the time. The plans for reconstruction after the fire were developed



Okocim goats

in the National Department in Lviv and their implementation was supervised by the municipal builder Kazimierz Cholewicz. A major role in this endeavour was played by the mayor of Henocho Klapholz.

At the time of World War II, in 1940, Germans established a green square at the market. It was designed by Józef Gancarz an architect from Brzesko.

The latest renovation of the market square was carried out in 2010–2011 by the Municipal Office, which restored the old character and atmosphere of Brzesko agora.

Former town hall

The town hall was built between 1909 and 1910 by the Krakow architectural and construction company of Wilhelm Aptera based on the designs by architect Gabriel Niewiadomski from Krakow. Niewiadomski was also the designer, among other things, of the Seminary (1902) and the Jagiellonian University Witkowski Collegium (1913) in Krakow. The Brzesko town hall was built of bricks and stone in the spirit of Young Poland Historicism combining the features of the northern version of Romanesque Revival, Gothic Revival and Renaissance Revival. The building has a rich body adjoining an impressive tower topped with a cupola. Elements of the interior – stained glass, wooden door frames, mosaic coat of arms of Griffin – were made at the peak of Art Nouveau. Stained-glass windows and mosa-



Mosaic emblem of Brzesko



Old town hall

ics were probably designed by Jan Bukowski and made in the Krakow Stained Glass Workshop of Stanisław Gabriel Żeleński, brother of the famous physician, writer, critic and translator Tadeusz Boy Țeleński.

Church of the Holy Spirit

Behind the town hall, to the west, there is the small church of the Holy Spirit. It was founded in 1491 by a local nobleman Spytko of Melsztyn, the Castellan of Zawichost, as a part of a shelter for the poor, the ill and the elderly. The Castellan's will was executed by Gregory of Sanok, bachelor of theology, confessor of King Alexander Jagiello, a master of his band and the first provost of the shelter. In 1504 King Alexander freed the estate of the shelter of any encumbrances in favour of the ruler. The larch church was renovated around 1750 and for some time before 1801 it was in the hands of the Jewish supplier to the army Mr Brandstaetter. In 1904 it was completely destroyed in the town fire.

The inhabitants of Brzesko were planning to rebuild the church for a long time but the outbreak of World War I made it impossible to continue this work. In 1939 rev. Jan Fortuna initiated the construction of the new church, also called the "school church", but this time the work was stopped by the outbreak of World War II. It was not until 1957 that rev. Fortuna returned to the idea and a new parish house was built based on the design of Krakow architects K. Seifert and J. Kozłowski. In 1962, in the hall of the parish house, the chapel of the Holy Spirit was founded. The interior – the main altar is adorned with a mosaic of Christ Crucified designed by Ms Bogdana Ligęza-Drwal, a student of Xawery Dunikowski at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow. In a niche, on the outside of the church, there are statues of the Good Shepherd, St. Stanislaus and St. John Paul II made by folk sculptor Stanisław Borowiec from Brzesko.



Church of the Holy Spirit

Monument of the Unknown Soldier

The Monument of the Unknown Soldier is located near the main entrance to the parish cemetery. It is made of sandstone rocks in the form of a triangular pyramid topped with a metal eagle. The plaque bears an inscription: "For the unknown/ soldier who fell/ for/ the Homeland/ 1914–1920/ Brzesko 15 VII 1925". The monument was designed by Ignacy Patolski (1887–1942), professor at the old gymnasium in Brzesko, who was murdered in KL Auschwitz.



Monument of the Unknown Soldier



District Court

District Courthouse

Opposite the main entrance to the parish cemetery there is the District Courthouse. It is one of the most significant buildings of the historic town centre. It was built at the beginning of the twentieth century by a physician and mayor of Brzesko, Dr. Franciszek Bernacki, who later on transferred it to court authorities. It is a brick building constructed on the plan of the letter 'C' with two storeys

and a twelve-axis facade with the main axis marked with the neo-Baroque pediment. The building has corner extensions with tiered roofs.



Brzesko by night

Church of Virgin Mary Mother of the Church and St. James the Greater

The history of the parish in Brzesko probably dates back to the 14th century and was probably founded by Spycimir Leliwita or his sons Jan and Rafał Melsztyński. The St. James church which was built at that time was a modest wooden construction due to the fact that the town was small and poorly developed.



Tower of the Brzesko parish church

The earliest record of the church is from 1443 and refers to John the parish priest. In 1487 Spytko of Melsztyn endowed the temple. A brick church was built on the site of the older wooden version between 1529 and 1543 as a result of efforts by the parish priest Marcin of Rajbrot and the town councilors. In the years 1529 to 1532 construction was carried out under the supervision of Jan Turobińczyk from Kosice upon Szreniawa, who in 1517 adopted the Kraków type of civic law; after the termination of his services the construction was completed by an unknown mason. The church was renovated on 2 July 1544 by priest Valerian, auxiliary bishop of Kujawy. It was destroyed by fire during the Swedish invasion of 1655 and the invasion of Rakoczy in 1657, and was repeatedly rebuilt in the years 1660, 1723, 1786, 1792, 1863, 1904. After a fire in 1863 it was rebuilt in the neo-Gothic style with the addition of the burial chapel founded by Count Wit Żeleński, and designed by architect Feliks Księżarski of Krakow, who also designed the church in Choczołów, the chapel of St. Bronisława at the Kościuszko Mound in Kraków, the buildings of the Governorship in Lviv and of the Collegium Novum in Krakow. The works were performed by the construction company of Antoni Wimmer from Niepołomice. After a fire in 1904, the temple was again rebuilt in the neo-Gothic style between 1905 and 1913, probably according to the designs by Roman Bandurski from Krakow. The church was originally in the Gothic style and has neo-Gothic elements. It is made of stone and brick. It has one nave, and a narrower chancel with a semi-hexagonal termination. The chancel is adjacent to the sacristy with a vestibule, above which, on the first floor, is the former strong room. The nave of the church has four bays, and its southern wall adjoins a square tower with a vestibule on its ground floor. The interior is covered with a neo-Gothic cross-ribbed vault, made after the fire in 1904. There are lancet windows and the outside walls of the church have buttresses and a small cornice running around the whole of the church. The church has crow-stepped neo-Gothic gables simi-



*Cartouche with
Czerny-Nowina coat of arms*



Neo-gothic baptismal font



Altar of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



Main altar



Baroque crucifix



Altar of Our Lady of Brzesko

lar to those of the upper floor of the tower. It has pitched roofs and the tower has a pyramid-shaped spire flanked by four turrets. Above the entrances you will see stone cartouches with the coat of arms of the Czerny-Nowina family from the 17th century. Outside, on the east side there is a baroque garden from the 18th century.

The neo-Gothic main altar with the central figure of St. James was made in the studio of Ferynand Stuflesser in St. Ulrich-Gröden in Tyrol. The same studio was where the side altar of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (left side) was made. The second neo-Gothic altar is dedicated to the Virgin Mary (on the right), with the 17th-century image of Virgin Mary called Our Lady of the Rosary or the Brzesko Virgin Mary.

In the church there are paintings of St. Anthony painted in 1908 by Julian Krupski, "Ecce Homo" from the 17th century, "Jesus, I trust in You" from 1943 by Adolf Hyla, "St. Virgin and Child with Saint Anne" from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, a carved baroque crucifix, statues of "St. Stanislaus the Bishop and St. Adalbert" of the 18th century and the bas-relief figures of the four evangelists, a remnant of the old neo-Gothic pulpit. The windows over the main entrance door have been of stained glass since 1913, and were made at the Studio of Elijah Unger in Tarnów.



Statue of St. Stanislaus



Church of St. James the Apostle



Church of Our Lady Mother of the Church

The new church of Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of the Church was added to the north wall of the church of St. James between 1979 and 1984, and was designed by the architect Zbigniew Zjawin from Kraków. It is decorated with stained glass windows by Józef Furdyna Ph.D. from Kraków and the altar retable was made by sculptor Wincenty Kucma, a professor at the Kraków Academy of Fine Arts.

Brzesko cemeteries

The parish cemetery, known as the Old Cemetery, in Kosciuszko Street

It was established in 1801 by parish priest, the Rev. Antoni Stachlewski, on land belonging to the Holy Spirit Hospital for the Poor that was founded in the 15th century. In 1925 the cemetery was extended. There are three chapels belonging to the families Janiszewski, Damasiewicz, the Counts Sumiński and the Ożegalski, coat of arms Kościeszka. Some well-known people are buried here, for example: Stanisława Wojciechowski Sosnowski (d. 1863) a poet; the mother of actor Ludwik Solski (epitaph plate on the chapel of the Damasiewicz family);



Parish cemetery



Parish cemetery



Parish cemetery





Jewish Cemetery

sculptors Walenty Lisieński, Stanisław Rogóż, Franciszek Lisak; actor and painter Jerzy Peters; doctor, folk activist and politician Dr. Simon Bernadzikowski; architect Maria Obrot; members of the Polish Legions of the Great War and the victims of World War II. Some of the tombstones are works of such artists as: Ludwik Makolandra from Lviv; Józef Kulesza from Kraków; Wojciech Samek and Antoni Hajdecki from Bochnia; Piotr Celestyn Kulka from Tarnów; Franciszek Lisak from Brzesko.

The Jewish Cemetery in Czarnowiejska street

It is chronologically the second cemetery in Brzesko and was established before 1824. In 1902, it was extended. It has an irregular shape and an area of approximately 1.45 hectares. It is surrounded by a concrete and brick wall. In its southern section, it has a locked iron gate (the key is available in the house next door). From the gate runs an alley which is the main axis of the cemetery. You will find the most interesting remaining matzevas, vandalized tombstones and two ohels by the alley. This cemetery includes graves of some famous rabbis and their families, for example: Arie Lejbusz (d. 1846), son of Chaim Halbesztram from Nowy Sącz, a disciple of



Jewish Cemetery

the Seer of Lublin; Lejbusz's son Meszulam Zolman Joanatan (d. 1855); Lejbusz's grandson Towie Lipschitz (d. 1912); Pinkas, and his sons Baruch (d. 1907) and Ephraim (d. 1938); the grandson of Pinkas Templer. In addition, there are graves, monuments, and a mass grave erected in memory of the victims whose exhumed remains were placed there. It commemorates Jews from Rzezawa, Doły and Dębno, and those murdered in Brzesko on 18 June 1942 during a mass execution.



Jewish Cemetery

War cemeteries

War cemetery 276 in Brzesko is adjacent to the southern end of the Jewish cemetery. It was established in 1916 by an Austrian architect, Lieutenant Robert Motka, and was built by prisoners of war under the supervision of engineer Captain Karl Schöllich. It served as a mass cemetery for local and field hospitals which existed in the area from November 1914 to May 1915 as well as a burial place for soldiers who died in later years. The cemetery is surrounded by a stone wall that symbolises the invincible barricade that is the threshold to eternity. The entrance is through a gate decorated with low relief eagles that symbolise the pain resulting from a lost life. At the centre of the necropolis is a pergola-shaped monument topped with a cross, the symbol of death and suffering, the eternal destiny of man. Buried here are 507 bodies of those killed in action, including 441 Austro-Hun-



War cemetery no. 276 in Brzesko



War cemetery no. 277 in Okocim

garians, 63 Russians and 3 Germans. At the wall, on the left and right sides, there are graves of officers.

The Jewish War Cemetery No. 275 in Brzesko, also designed by Lieutenant Robert Motka, is located in the north-western part of the Jewish cemetery. In this section of the cemetery, dating back to the World War I, there are buried 21 soldiers of Austro-Hungarian Jewish origin.

On the outskirts of the park, which formerly belonged to a manor in Okocim, is War Cemetery No. 277, also designed by the same architect. In the burial place is a monument in the shape of an obelisk with an urn on top. The names of nine soldiers are to be found on the side walls.

Other war cemetery sections dating back to World War I are located in the parish cemeteries in Szczepanów (No. 273) and Jadowniki (No. 278) and in the woods in Dziekanów-Sterkowice (No. 279), all by the abovementioned Captain Robert Motek.



War cemetery no. 273 in Szczepanów



Goetz-Okocimski Palace

Urban and architectural complex in Brzesko-Okocim

The urban and architectural complex of the brewery in Brzesko-Okocim, the buildings near it, and the nearby palace and park of Goetz-Okocimski, are among the most interesting monuments in Małopolska. This complex, beautifully integrated into the landscape, was developed from 1845 until the late 1930s. What was initially a rather small brewery became one of the largest breweries in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and later in Europe. It was established in 1845 by the brewer Jan Ewangelista Goetz (1815–1893) who came from Langenenslingen in Württemberg, and whose ancestors had been brewers for centuries. In time, Goetz became a powerful industrialist and landowner, the creator of the powerful Polish branch of his family, as well as a well-known local charity activist. In 1881 Emperor Franz Joseph II, in honour of Goetz's works, awarded him a knighthood. After Goetz's death his assets were inherited by his son John Albin Goetz-Okocimski (1864–1931), who later became a well-known politician, philanthropist, patron of the arts, and from 1908 holder of the title Baron. He held, inter alia, the function of the marshal of the district, was also president of the Polish Circle in Vienna, a member of the Galician National Parliament, and from 1928–1930 a senator. Thanks to him the brewery in Okocim achieved its greatest prosperity. At the end of the 19th century he built a magnificent palace near the brewery, a summer theatre, and a housing estate for officials and workers of the brewery. John Albin's heir was his son Antoni Jan Goetz-Okocimski (1895–1962). After the start of World War II, he fled abroad in



Okocim Brewery

fear of reprisals by the Germans for being of Polish descent. He fought in the Polish Army in France and then in Great Britain. He never came back to Poland and died in exile in Nairobi, Kenya. The area of the brewery still has many historic buildings, including the “old palace” on the site of the brewery founded in 1845, the Goetz manor, an old malthouse from the year 1875, a granary for barley, the old brewhouse from 1845 (expanded further between 1875 and 1905), the new brewhouse from 1905, the new malthouse from the years 1902 to 1904, the hops warehouse from 1902, a yeast facility from 1920, a bottling plant from the turn of the century, the water treatment plant from 1910, the neo-Gothic tower with a well from the second half of the 19th century, the concierge desk



Brew house at the Okocim Brewery



Goetz-Okocimski Palace



Jan Goetz-Okocimski



Goetz-Okocimski Palace



Goetz-Okocimski Palace



Jan Albin Goetz-Okocimski

and the wall and gate from around 1912. On the eastern, southern and western sides of the brewery there are complexes of brick and wooden buildings, and villas designed for officers, employees and servants, mostly from the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century. On the square, next to the entrance to the brewery, there is the bust of Jan Albin Goetz-Okocimski placed there by the employees of the brewery in 1937 and created by master sculptor Antoni Madeyski. This sculptor, while living in Rome, was the creator of, among others, the tombs of Queen Jadwiga and King Ladislaus of Varna in the Wawel Cathedral in Krakow. Nearby, just by the forest on the west side of the brewery, there is the wooden building of the former summer theatre (now a restaurant *Zajazd Okocim*), founded by Jan Albin Goetz in 1902. It was designed in the Zakopane style, which was fashionable at the time, by architect Eugeniusz Wesołowski from Zakopane. The most impressive monument of Brzesko is the palace complex and the park around it.

The palace was built in the years 1898–1900 by the king of beer Jan Albin Goetz-Okocimski and his wife Sophia of Counts Sumiński and it is in the neo-baroque to neo-rococo style. The designers of



Former summer theatre (now the Pawilon restaurant)

the oldest part of the palace were the Viennese architects Ferdinand Fellner and Hermann Helmer. In the years 1908–1911 the palace was expanded, with the eastern part designed by Leopold Simoni, a professor at Vienna University of Technology. Inside you will find the remains of the old equipment. From the west, adjacent to the palace, is the chapel with a ceiling painting done by Tadeusz Popiel, a student of Jan Matejko. The painting depicts the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Today, the palace and the park are privately owned. The palace is surrounded by a park established in 1900. There are many common, and exotic, trees and shrubs.

In Okocim Górny it is worth seeing the church of Blessed Trinity founded by John Ewnagelista Goetz and built in the years 1884–1885 in the neo-Gothic style according to the design by Max Schweda from Vienna. The interior is decorated with epitaphs of the Goetz family. Under the chapel there is a crypt with coffins of various members of the family. Next to the church there is a cemetery with numerous tombstones of brewers and brewery officials, including the tombstone of Michał Rossknecht made by the famous sculptor Jan Szczepkowski.

In the town there is also a neo-classical mansion from the early 19th century, heavily damaged and surrounded by remnants of the old garden and park.



Church of the Holy Trinity in Okocim



MOKRZYSKA

Parish church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

5 kilometres north of Brzesko is Mokrzyska. The village was formerly known as Mokrzeszka or Mokrzeska. Its name derives from the extensive wetlands which were there in the past. Bogs and waterlogged areas may still be found there and are now part of the Bratucice Landscape Protection Area.

Mokrzeszka was established on the site of forest swamps and wetlands and was initially a royal village. The first records of the village date back to 1364, which is when king Casimir the Great sold it to the family of Czesław Turzynita. Mokrzyska received city rights, and from that moment on its owners were named “of Mokrzeska”. The records of the chronicler Jan Długosz has a description: “Mokrzeszka – a village belonging to the parish of Szczepanów, which was owned by Spytek Melsztyński, Lelywa coat of arms. There are peasant lans – farmland rented by peasants – and an inn; the village has fields and forests, for the use of which the Bishop of Cracow collects tithes. “You will find two natural monuments in the village, one in the form of a boulder and the other a pair of trees called Romeo and Juliet.



Romeo and Juliet



Glacial erratic

In Mokrzyska you will see well-preserved wooden cottages from the turn of the 19th and 20th century which exemplify the so-called Kraków type of rural construction. The village has a primary school, Municipal Sports and Recreation Centre, the dynamically operating LZS sports club and a volunteer fire department.



19th-century wooden architecture



The Podhalańczycy Band at a fair in Mokrzyska



Memorial obelisk



BUCZE

Bucze village centre

The town is located a few kilometers north of Brzesko. The first mention of Bucze comes from the 12th century. This settlement belonged to the parish in Szczepanów. In Bucze you will find the parish church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, built in years 1946 to 1947. The designer of this temple was Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz (1883–1948), one of the most outstanding Polish architects. The village has many roadside shrines and statues. At the entrance to the village is erected a cross with the figure of “Crucified Christ” and a relief of



Parish church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help

the Virgin Mary and St. John, which dates back to 1877. At the cemetery you can see the chapel with a statue of St. Stanislaus of Szczepanów made in 1884 from a single trunk of linden, also a well, which according to legend, was created by St. Stanislaus. The oldest building, dating back to the 18th century, is the chapel of



Statue from 1877

St. John of Nepomuk standing in the grove at the site of a former pond. According to available documents it was funded by the Marcinkowski family, who were the owners of the village, as a votive offering for saving their son. Also, the brick one-storey school building, which resembles a classic gentry manor, is worth your attention. It was built in 1929 thanks to donations made by the residents of Bucze, who were financially supported by Jan Albin Goetz, the owner of the Okocim Brewery. In the centre of the village there is an obelisk dedicated to the residents who died during World War II, and a cross erected in 1933 by the



Shrine of St. Stanislaus from 1884



Shrine of St. John Nepomuk



Well of St. Stanislaus

Polish Legionaries of Bucze as an offering for saving their lives from the horrors of war. There is also an impressive elm – a natural monument.

In the nearby forest of Bratucie a centuries-old oak tree named Onufry (Eng. Humphrey) can be found with a shrine to St Onuphrius hanging from it.



Onufry the oak



The primary school



An obelisk and votive cross



The Market Square

Szczepanów is located 6 km north-east of Brzesko. The town was probably established in the 10th century. According to legend St. Stanislaus, Bishop of Cracow, martyr, and one of the main patron saints of Poland, was born there on 26 July 1030. As a result of his conflict with King Bolesław the Generous, the Bishop was sentenced to dismemberment.

In the second half of the 15th century, the office of parish priest of Szczepanów was held by Jan Długosz. He built a new brick church in Szczepanów, which is still there. At the end of the 16th century a parish school was also established in the town.

In 1612 the demesne of Szczepanów became the property of the Lubomirski family. It was during this time that Szczepanów thrived. Stanisław Lubomirski managed to get town privileges for



Minor Basilica



Gothic archivolt portal



Minor Basilica

Szczepanów, brought in Italian architects, marked out a market square, renovated the parish church and built a new cemetery church. However, he died before most of his ideas were realised.

Places worth visiting in Szczepanów also include the churches of St. Mary Magdalene, St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr, the cemetery church of St. Stanislaus, the Chapel of the birth of St. Stanislaus, the bell tower at the parish cemetery, and the war cemetery no. 273 from the Great War. Recent history of Szczepanów lists, among others, two visits by famous people. It was visited by Karol Wojtyła in 1978, five months before he became Pope John Paul II. In 2003 the papal legate, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who was later to become Pope Benedict XVI, came to the celebration of the 750th anniversary of the canonisation of St. Stanislaus. Szczepanów again received its town privileges in 2011, this time these were honorary town privileges.



Church of St. Mary Magdalene, so-called Długosz's church



Interior of the church of St. Mary Magdalene



Roman baptismal font



Chapel of the Nativity



Cemetery church of St. Stanislaus



Cardinal J. Ratzinger in Szczepanów in 2003

STERKOWIEC



Bird's-eye view of Sterkowiec



War cemetery 279 in Sterkowiec

East of Szczepanów in the near vicinity are located Sterkowiec and Wokowice, two villages of the borough of Brzesko.

Sterkowiec, Starkowiecz or Styrkowiec is also known as Damianice, which is how Sterkowiec was called in medieval manuscripts. In the years 1564–1581 the settlement belonged to Jan Rupniewski, coat of arms Szreniawa. Until 1890 the settlement was part of Dębno. Already in 1894 there was a single-class community school. In 1907 the residents of the village built a new school which conducted classes until the mid 1950s. Due to the fact that Sterkowiec was situated in close proximity to a major rail route, a railway station was built there in 1928. As you drive from the train station in Sterkowiec towards Szczepanów you will find, on the border between these two villages, on the left, a road leading to the nearby forest. When you turn into the road between the buildings approximately 300 meters from the junction, you will cross the forest barrier. Following a path for another 200–300 meters you reach the Military Cemetery No. 279 in



War cemetery 279 in Serkowiec



War cemetery 279 in Serkowiec

Serkowiec. This cemetery is in the shape of a trapezoid. The entrance gate is made of steel tubes and mounted between two concrete gate posts. During fighting in the area of Serkowiec, in 1914, about 270 soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and about 400 Russian soldiers were killed. Some of them lie in the military cemetery no. 279 (108 Austrians of 55th and 95th Infantry Regiment as well as 40 Russians). Date of death: 20–21 November 1914). In the cen-



Roadside shrine



Votive cross



Cultural Centre and the primary school

tre of the cemetery you will see the main monument with a plaque on which is engraved the inscription "1915. UNS KAM DER FRIEDE EILIGER ALS EUCH!", which can be translated as "Peace came sooner to us than to you". In the cemetery there are 6 individual and 3 collective graves. In the village there are many valuable and historic chapels, crosses and roadside figures.



Bird's-eye view of Sterkowiec



19th-century manor house

Wokowice is a town located eight kilometers northeast of Brzesko. The town was created in the 15th century and you can still see the typical mediaeval settlement layout. The incorporation of the village belonging to the demesne of Radłów was probably conducted by the bishops of Kraków. The first mention of Wokowice is to be found in the "Tax Register" of 1536. It states that Wokowicze is a village of Cracow bishops and it belongs to Radłów. We get precise information about the size of the property being 4.5 lans, which could now be described as ca. 108.9 ha where 10 peasants farmed 10 equal portions of land and paid 4.5 marks fee annually, 4 scheffels of oats per a lan, 2 chickens, 2 blocks of cheese and 20 eggs. The village leader had 1.5 lan, the pond, the mill for his own use, an inn and a pen. The property also included forests. In 1782, as a result of the secularization of church property by decree of the Austrian partition authorities, the village was incorporated into the so-called "Religious Fund". Probably in the 19th century Wokowice became private property. The first known owner of the village was Stanisław Gniewiński in 1890. A well-known monument in the village is a 19th-century manor house placed, according to records, on the perimeter of the basement of the 18th-century wooden man-



Stone statue of Crucified Christ from 1847



Roadside shrine from 1896



19th-century wooden construction



Motorpump from 1912

sion. In 1945 or 1946 the manor together with the park was bought by Stanisław and Michalina Gładki, whose descendants manage and live in the manor today. On the southern edge of the park there is a stone statue of Christ erected in 1847 with the foundation of Mr and Mrs Kargul.



19th-century wooden construction



Sołtysówka and a chapel



View of Nowe estate



Settlement on Bocheniec

This picturesque settlement lies on the edge of the Carpathian foothills adjacent to the international road E-4. It is located 3 km east of Brzesko and is one of the biggest villages in Poland. Its origins date back to the turn of the 8th and 9th century. The first written mention referring to Jadowniki may be found in the chronicle of Paszek of Godyszew of 1195. The village has a rich history and some prominent figures. One of those figures was the village leader Siestrzemiłon who lived at the turn of the 14th and 15th century, and who was a favourite of the king. The local priest Mikołaj Dobrka, a peasant-bibliophile, was an associate of Jan Długosz. The northern part of the village is situated on the plain, while the southern part is characterized by a very diverse, beautiful landscape, typical of villages located in the foothills. In the southern part there is Bocheniec – the highest hill in the area with a magnificent view. On this hill, centuries ago, there was a fortified settlement from the period of the Kingdom of Vistulans and now there is the 16th century church of St. Ann. Another monument worth visiting is the parish church of St. Procopius of Sázava. The first church in Jadowniki was a small wooden structure founded by the king. The current building, which is the third one, is dedicated to St. Procopius of Sázava. It was built between 1908 and 1919 to a design

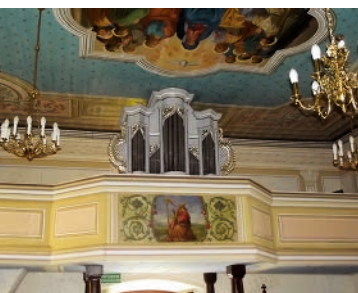


Small church of St. Anne in Jadowniki



Small church of St. Anne in Jadowniki

by Jan Sas-Zubrzycki. It is a three-nave, basilica-type of church. The aisles are covered with a beautiful starry vault creating the impression of intricately woven mesh. Inside the church, among other things, you will find an 18th century painting of the Crucifixion and a Gothic image of the Virgin Mary with Child and a Gothic crucifix.



Small church of St. Anne in Jadowniki



Small church of St. Anne in Jadowniki



Church of St. Procopius of Sázava in Jadowniki

OKOCIM



Parish Church of the Holy Trinity

If we travel along the picturesque routes with their breathtaking views of the Cracow Gate, from Jadowniki due south, we reach Okocim.

The town of Okocim lies on a low hill (Garb Okocimski, 375 m) which is at the northern edge of the Wiśnicz foothills (Pogórze Wiśnickie). Okocim used to be called Okocin, and is one of the oldest villages near Brzesko. Traces of linear pottery culture and evidence of Roman influences have been found there. The first mention of Okocim may be found in a document from King Casimir the Great dated 12 May 1344 that was issued to Komes Spycimir, who at the time was Castellan of Cracow. The development of Okocim was strongly influenced by the



Goetz-Okocimski coat of arms



The parish church portal



Parish church interior



Church cemetery



The primary school



Roadside statue of John of Nepomuk

brewer Jan Goetz, who arrived there in 1845. In that year, the three shareholders Julian Kodrębski, Józef Neumann and Jan Goetz started construction of the brewery, whose sole owner became Jan Ewangelista Goetz in 1851. The oldest monument in Górny Okocim is the parish church of the Holy Trinity that was founded by Jan Ewangelista Goetz. It was built in the years 1884–1885 based on designs by the Viennese architect Max Schwebda. The church basement includes the Goetz family crypt. Another interesting building is the primary school, built in 1895 thanks to the efforts of Jan

Goetz II. Also worth seeing is the churchyard cemetery where you will find the grave of Józef Neumann (d. 1891) the owner of Okocim and initiator of the construction of the brewery.



Community House



View of the Tatra Mountains from Okocim

PORĘBA

SPYTKOWSKA

View of Poręba Spytkowska

Poręba Spytkowska is located in the Wiśnicz foothills (Pogórze Wiśnickie) in the southern part of the borough of Brzesko. The picturesque location of Poręba Spytkowska encourages cycling and hiking. You can even see the Tatra Mountains from Królowa Góra (342 metres above sea level). Archeological research has found remains from the period of the so-called linear pottery culture. Written documents first mention Poręba Spytkowska in 1325. The village is also mentioned in a document by King Casimir the Great in 1344, in which the king confirms the Castellan of Cracow Spycimir, coat of arms Leliwa, as the owner of Poręba Spytkowska. Material evidence about the past of Poręba Spytkowska is to be found

in the parish church. The church of St. Bartholomew the Apostle dates back to the beginning of the 16th century. It is a building in the late Gothic style made of stone and brick. The most valuable remains are the Gothic crucifix from the second half of the 15th century, the



Parish church of St. Bartholomew the Apostle

late-Renaissance stone baptismal font from 1620, the painted antependium from 1685, and the 10-voice organ built by the famous organ-builder Tomasz Falla. Next to the church there is a wooden bell tower dating back to the 18th century of post-and-beam structure and an overhang bell chamber. In the bell tower there are three bells.

In the centre of Poręba Spytkowska there still is the building of the old school from the early 20th century, now housing the Public Preschool. In 2003 Community House was opened where there are now located the public library, the village common room and rural Volunteer Fire Department. There has been a Folk Group "Porębianie" since 1991. In 1990 the LKS Poręba Spytkowska sports club was founded.



18th-century wooden belfry



Primary school



Porębianie Song and Dance Ensemble



Nursery school



Winter in Poręba Spytkowska



Church of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Jasień



Church of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Jasień

Jasień is located about 2 km west of Brzesko.

The area of today's Jasień was inhabited as early as the Neolithic period (approx. 3200–1850 years BC). However, the recent history of the town dates back to the turn of the 13th and 14th century. The village had its own church already in the 14th century, which is evidenced by the first mention of the existence of the parish from 1325. The present parish church of The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was built in 1436 and was founded by Spytko of Melsztyn, Leliwa coat of arms. An interesting polychrome has recently been discovered in the church. There is also a baroque baptismal font carved in stone and a neo-Gothic main altar made in 1930 by sculptor Stanisław Rogóż from Brzesko.



*Chapel with the tombs
of the Jasień priests*

In the parish cemetery there is a brick chapel with the tombs of parish priests and vicars of Jasień, which was built in the neo-Gothic style in 1903. In the town there is a manor house from the 19th century. It was built thanks to the Baltaziński family, who at the time were the owners of the land in Jasień. Today the building houses a Children's Home. From January to May 1915 Jasień was the location of a military airfield. The airfield was for reconnaissance flights and the transport of mail and military reports to the Fortress of Przemyśl. Some of the airmen stationed there were Polish. One of them was Stefan Bastyr, the pioneer of aviation in the reborn Republic of Poland.



Roadside shrine



The Baltaziński family manor house in Jasień



Austro-Hungarian pilots at the airfield in Jasień (1915)



Roadside shrines



Saint Stanislaus bishop and martyr (painting in the Basilica in Szczepanów)

ROUTE OF ST. STANISLAUS BISHOP AND MARTYR OF SZCZEPANÓW



Minor Basilica in Szczepanów



Main altar at the Basilica

Szczepanów is located 6 km northeast of Brzesko in a picturesque area of the Sandomierz Basin surrounded by pine and oak woods growing on the slopes of the elevated area called Wysoczyzna Szczepanowska. The town is the birthplace of St. Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr the patron of Poland.

Few historical documents about the saint have survived. The most significant ones are: Krakow Chapter Annual, the Chronicle of Gall Anonim, the Chronicle of Wincenty Kadłubek, Vita Minor and Vita Maior of Vincent of Kielcza and the Chronicle of Jan Długosz.

Based on the information contained in them, and on other documents, we can roughly determine that St. Stanislaus was born in Szczepanów around 1036 and was the only son of Wielisław and Bogna. The fam-



Interior of Minor Basilica



Triptych in the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, so-called Długosz's church



*Cemetery church
of St. Stanislaus*

ily belonged to the knighthood and possibly were related to the Royal Family. Their coat of arms was a white Lorraine cross with lower bar extending only to one side and placed on red field. It is traditionally said that St. Stanislaus was born near his family home under an oak tree. There was a spring with a pond near the tree where Bogna washed her newborn son.

Stanislaus was a very talented boy so he was sent to schools in Krakow and in Leodium, which today is Liege in Belgium. After he returned to Poland, Bishop Sula-Lambert commissioned him to run the prince's office at the Wawel Castle. Thanks to his priestly ordination and education Stanislaus gained a strong position in the Krakow Chapter. After the death of Bishop Lambert, Stanislaus was elected

bishop of Krakow. The consecration took place in 1072. The choice of Stanislaus was approved by Pope Alexander II as well as by Prince Bolesław the Bold who was crowned Polish king in 1076.

A lot of credit is given to St. Stanislaus for approaching Pope Gregory VII to ask for restoring the church metropolis in Gniezno. The most famous miracle of St. Stanislaus that is commonly presented in iconography is the resurrection of Pitrowin (Piotrawina). Stanislaus acquired a village, now called Piotrawin in the municipality of Sulęcín and on the right bank of the Vistula River, from the local nobleman Piotr. After the knight's death his heirs challenged the purchase and



Chapel of the Nativity



Oak stump in the Chapel of the Nativity

*Altar in the Chapel of the Nativity**Spring well*

demanded the return of the village from the bishop. For fear of reprisals from the king, who was against Stanislaus, none of the witnesses wanted to testify in defence of the bishop. After three days of prayer and fasting, Stanislaus celebrated a mass and being dressed in pontifical robes went to the churchyard where the knight had been buried three years earlier. He asked for the opening of the knight's grave and touched the knight with his crosier thus making the miracle of resurrection. The resurrected knight

*King Bolesław the Bold**Church in Piotrawin*



Church of St. Michael at Skalka



Church of St. Michael at Skalka



Church of St. Michael at Skalka

*Wawel Castle Cathedral*

testified before the court, defending the truthfulness of Bishop Stanislaus.

In 1079 there was a conflict between Bishop Stanislaus and the king. The reason for the dispute was the king's misconduct towards his subjects, to which the Bishop strongly objected. Neither reprimands nor risk of penalty of excommunication worked. The matters reached a bloody ending when on 11 April 1079 Bishop Stanislaus left the Wawel court and took refuge in the monastery at Skalka. There, while celebrating a mass, he was murdered by the king, his body was dismembered and abandoned on the bank of the Vistula River. The event was, as the chroniclers say, accompanied by a miracle. The dismembered body was guarded by white eagles and it healed again. The body was carried with reverence to the church of St. Michael at Skalka and was buried there. The news of the murder of Bishop Stanislaus turned the whole nation against the king, who was abandoned by all and went into exile in Hungary. King Bolesław II the Bold died in oblivion in Hungary ca. 1081.

*Interior of the Cathedral**Reliquary coffin of St. Stanislaus bishop and martyr*

In 1088, the body of Bishop Stanislaus was moved in a procession from Skalka to the Wawel Castle and laid in the specially prepared sarcophagus.

From the beginning, people surrounded the tomb of Bishop Stanislaus with reverence, prayed for graces and so experienced many healings. There was also discussed the idea of canonization, but the internal and external political conditions did not allow the plans to go ahead. Only Krakow Princess Kinga and her husband Prince Boleslaw the Chaste went on with the process. Wincenty of Kielcza gathered testimonies on the life of Bishop Stanislaus from his countrymen and testimonies of people who had received the gift of healing through the intercession of the late bishop. Based on those testimonies he wrote the so called "Vita Minor" for the purposes of the canonization process. A special delegation went to Rome and presented to Pope Innocent IV these documents as evidence that the life of Stanislaus of Szczepanów, Bishop of Krakow, was that of a saint. After further in-depth research, the process was completed and the whole Church in Poland could celebrate a great and joyful moment. On 8 September 1253 Pope Innocent IV proclaimed Stanislaus, bishop and martyr, a saint. The ceremony took place in Assisi, the city of St. Francis. During the Mass a banner with the image of the new saint was brought into the basilica, the first instance of this practice. The Pope announced that the 8th May was to be a day dedicated to St. Stanislaus. People in Poland expressed their joy by organizing a big celebration at Krakow meadows. A year later, on 8 May 1254, Polish regional princes gathered to participate in the celebration of the whole nation and the Church in Poland. St. Stanislaus of Szczepanów became a new patron saint of Poland next to St. Adalbert. Pope John Paul II proclaimed him the patron saint of moral order.



Procession with relics of St. Stanislaus bishop and martyr in Szczepanów