

Welcome to Kostelec nad Orlicí

the town in the foothills of the Orlické hory (Eagle Mountains) having been built in the valley of the river Divoká Orlice (Wild Orlice).

The town is situated about 280 metres above the sea level. It is possible to reach the town on road I/11 which is the main road from Prague to Ostrava as well as on the railway, route Prague – Hradec Králové – Letohrad.

HISTORY

The oldest written mention of the town comes from the Chronicle of Zbraslav. According to this source, Jan of Vartenberk, an honest person and excellent fighter, was injured by a stone shot from a sling on 5 January 1316 and died on the same day during conquering the church fortress near Hradec which is called Kostel (Church). However, the town itself is even older. Those days when Christianity began its expanding, there were some church services taking place on such spots which could be easily protected from any enemies. That is how a fortified stone church was built on a hillock where the town was situated. It was called a church fortress (lat. munitio ecclesiae = castellum). The settlement which came into being around this fenced spot was named Kostelec. To be differentiated from other settlements called Kostelec (according to the latest survey, there are 22 of them), it was called Kostelec by Potštejn or Kostelec by Hradec in written records from the 14th and 15th centuries (its attribute nad Orlicí was first written down in 1568). Kostelec, which was already called a little town in 1341, was part of the Potštejn rule. There were a lot of owners who gradually owned the rule, e.g. Jiří Poděbradský (one of Czech kings) bought it in 1454 and from his days the emblem of the town comes. It is a double-tailed lion with its tongue put out and two gold arrows in its paw pictured standing in a red field.

Other owners of the rule were Vilém of Pernštejn (1495 – 1556), Václav Hrzán of Harasov from 1558 and after him Adam Hrzán who confirmed eighteen town privileges in 1585. The privileges were for example the right to brew and sell beer, to sell salt in barrels as well as in small amount, to collect special fees from foreign buyers etc. Adam Hrzán unlike his predecessors did not only work in Potštejn, but also in Kostelec. The last owner of his family was Anna Kateřina Hrzánová of Harasov (married Kaplířová). She asked emperor Matyáš to confirm the current privileges and besides to guarantee three annual cattle markets with permission to collect fees from sellers and buyers which was done in 1614.

In 1629 the Potštejn rule was sold to Kašpar of Gramb, a Belgian who was an emperor lieutenant colonel in Valdštejn's army. Kašpar of Gramb bequeathed all his property to St. Kliment's Jesuit cloister in Prague. But Václav Záruba of Hustířny, Františka's of Gramb husband, claimed his inheritance at court and finally gained it. In 1667 he bought „the goods of Gramb“. His widow Magdalena Gramb moved to Vamberk where she started using developed lace-making technique which she knew from Belgium.

After Václav Záruba's death his son František Karel became the owner of Kostelec. In 1695 he was promoted and became one of Czech noblemen. His granddaughter

Alžběta (married to Count Cavriani) inherited Kostelec and Potštejn. She sold Potštejn to a Silesian businessman Count Harbuval de Chamaré. That is how five-century-lasting period of subordination and connection of Kostelec and Potštejn ended. In 1796 prince Josef Kinský of Vchynice and Tetov, the Lord of Choceň, bought Kostelec. It belonged to his descendants for almost 150 years.

During the thirty-year-lasting war over one thousand inhabitants lived in Kostelec, in 1836 there were already 2,565 inhabitants, in 1880 3,793 people, in 1900 almost five thousand inhabitants and in 1937 there were 5,639 inhabitants. Today 6,140 people live in Kostelec.

MONUMENTS

New Chateau

It was built for Count Josef Kinský in the empire style in 1829 – 1835 using designs of architect Jindřich Koch who also designed interiors with rich collections of furniture, paintings and graphic. The object has been being reconstructed for the last decade. In the 19th century a valuable English park was founded around the castle.

Old Chateau

Originally it was a fortress which was founded before 1620. After a fire in 1668 it was transformed into a chateau and after another fire in 1777 it was renewed by František Kermer, an architect from Hradec Králové.

Old Town Hall

It was set up from a town house built in 1574. One hundred years later it was rebuilt according to the Baroque style.

New Town Hall

In 1887 a new Renaissance object was built instead of two buildings which burnt out in 1863. Today it is the building of Town Hall and a branch of the Czech Savings Bank.

The natural centre of the town is František Palacký's Square where a Baroque St. Mary's Column, empire fountain from the beginning of 19th century with a figure of nymph Orlice, new gothic Column of St Trinity, both the town halls and several town buildings are found.

St. George's Church

The Dean church is a remarkable dominating feature of the town. It was built instead of an old Gothic church between 1769 and 1773 in the late Baroque style by architect František Kermer.

St. Anna's Cemetery Church

Early Baroque monument which was built in the east off the town walls by Count František Záruba in 1686 – 1691.

Jan Amos Komeský's Church

Renaissance object built in 1580 – 1586 was used as a house of prayer for Czech brothers' church.

MONUMENTS OF THE SURROUNDINGS

Chateau Častolovice

Renaissance, built in 16th century on the place of original water fortress. During the second half of 19th century and the beginning of 20th century it was rebuilt several times. Renaissance cassette ceilings with themes of antique and biblical stories are preserved in four rooms. Some valuable paintings by Holland, Italian, French and Central European masters are part of the exposition. An English park surrounding the chateau was founded during the second half of 19th century. Its area is approximately 40 hectares.

Chateau Rychnov nad Kněžnou

Baroque Chateau built in 1676 – 1690 by Count František Karel of Kolowraty. It was extended in accordance with Santini's designs before 1722. Kolowraty gallery from 16th to 17th century is also remarkable. Also District Museum of Orlické hory (Eagle Mountains) and Orlická Gallery are founded in the building of the chateau.

Chateau Doudleby nad Orlicí

Its building was begun in the second half of 16th century copying late Renaissance style. The four-winged building with some courtyard arcades is decorated in Renaissance style. The chateau was rebuilt in 17th century and the first floor was modified. The paintings on the walls come from the same time period. Ceiling paintings which demonstrate mythologic and church scenes as well as emblems have been preserved.

The chateau is surrounded by an English park founded at the beginning of 19th century.

Chateau Opočno

It is a valuable Renaissance monument which was built by Italian architects. In 18th century it was rebuilt in accordance with Baroque style.

The most remarkable part of chateau collections is a gallery with paintings by Holland, Italian and Czech artists and a famous weapon collection with some antique, African and Indian exhibits which became world unique after Spanish king's collections having been destroyed. Chateau library with 12,000 volumes is also admirable.

Near the chateau there is an English park with rare trees, ponds with artificial waterfalls, a Chinese pavilion and an artificial cave for hermits.

Castle Potštejn

Extensive fortress area of Potštejn Castle was founded at the end of 13th century. During the first half of 14th century it became a settlement of mythic, robbing knight Mikuláš of Potštejn. In 1339 the castle was obtained, destroyed and occupied by Karel IV who rebuilt it during following years. At the end of 15th century the castle was gained by the Pernštejns who rebuilt it again. During 17th century it was devastated. In 18th century a little church and St. Steps chapel were created there.

Pilgrimage Place of Homol

Countess Terezie Eleonora of Ugarte built an early Baroque St. Virgin Mary's church close to Castle Potštejn nearby the village of Lhota in 1692 – 1696. Later a

pilgrimage area with two chapels and a famous flight of 153 stairs with 16 landings were established there. The flight of stairs is lined by a balustrade decorated with some statues. The number of steps corresponds to the number of Ave Marias in the Big Rosary with three introductory Ave Marias. The landings correspond to the number of prayers. They come from the second half of 18th century and were created by the Hendrichs' workshop in Litomyšl. The pilgrimage area is a unique Central European artistic, historic and architectural monument.

CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Žofín Gallery

The empire building was founded on the place of an original spa from 1330. Its current owner Rudolf Černý, an artist, opened a local artists' exhibition there in 1996.

Town Library

Besides its common activities (lending books and magazines, information service, the Internet etc.), the library offers a small gallery and occasionally also cultural programme – concerts, theatre performances etc. Sometimes it can be used as a cinema – cafe.

SPORT AND RECREATION

Swimming Pool

After a complete reconstruction in 2002 – 2004, the swimming pool is used by good swimmers as well as beginners. The main pool is divided into two sections: the depth of the beginners' one is from 0.8 to 1.5 metres and the depth of the swimmers' part is 1.8 metres. There are also eight start blocks. The section for divers is 3.8 metres deep. In 2004 new grass was put around the pool and a paddling pool for small children was made. The swimming pool is open from June to September, 10:00am – 7:00pm every day.

Bowling Club

The largest bowling alley in the district for 40 – 60 players offers four bowling alleys, pools, darts, football. The opening hours are 4:00pm – 10:00pm from Monday to Thursday and 2:00pm – 12:00pm from Friday to Sunday (it is possible to arrange playing any other time through the phone). It is also a good place for parties, meetings etc. Information can be obtained and reservations can be made through telephone number 603 946 193, 494 323 976.

Tennis Club L.T.C.

Under Lipová stráň, at the back of Divoká Orlice weir, four tennis courts were built. They are said to be the best located and the most beautiful place in the area. There are four courts, a training wall and a petanque area. The visitors are welcome to use toilets, showers, refreshments and other facilities. At night it is played using illumination. Information can be obtained using telephone number 604 429 477.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

January

New Year's Toast

Palacký's Square

Festive Toast of town inhabitants with their representatives ended by firework

Night in the Oboroh

Culture Club Rabštejn

Folk-rock festival. Always last Saturday of January

Ball of Kostelec and Surroundings

Sokolovna – gymnastic hall

Traditional dance party of Town Hall and Culture Club Rabštejn

March

Audimafor

Culture Club Rabštejn

Alias Skeleton of Kostelec – local festival of young and original theatres

April

East Bohemian District Festival of Folk „Porta“

Culture Club Rabštejn

Competition of folk and country music with option to continue in the republic winners' finale

Kostelec Fun Fair

Palacký's Square, Tyršova street ...

24 April – St. George's Day. Swings, merry-go-rounds, shooting-galleries, market etc.

May

„Šumná Orlice“

Culture Club Rabštejn, Town Hall's Garden

Town centre, suburbs and surroundings

Cultural, social and sport activity, cycling to see architectural monuments of the town and its surroundings

Always last weekend of May

May

Children's Day

Palacký's Square, Culture Club Rabštejn, Children's House

Competitions, fun, films, theatre performances, parades, exhibitions

Always last Saturday of May

June

Beer Festival

Palacký's Square

Beer celebration, knowledge contests

All-day programme

Middle of June

September

„Motograndfathers´ meeting“

Autocamping Orlice

Every-year meeting of motorbike fans

Annual Hop

Palacký´s Square

Traditional craft, old Czech pubs, cultural and gastronomical programme

16 September – St. Ludmila´s Day, anniversary of Dean St. George Church´s consecration

Tůma´s Kostelec

St. George´s Church, Palacký´s Square, chateau park

Music festival to the honour of Baroque composer František Ignác Antonín Tůma who was born in Kostelec. His music, his contemporaries´ music, local musicians

Concerts in the church, the square and the final concert with firework in the front of New chateau

December

St. Nicolas´ Presents

Palacký´s Square

Prepared by Children´s House for small children on St. Nicolas´ Day (5 December)

PERSONALITIES

František Ignác Antonín Tůma

- **a composer** (born 2 October 1704, Kostelec nad Orlicí, died 30 January 1774, Vienna)

Kostelec organist Václav Tůma´s son. He graduated studies of philosophy in Prague and completed following education in Vienna. He was Count Kinský´s bandmaster. In 1741 he became a band principal and a private composer of empress Alžběta, Karel VI´s widow, and later a bandmaster of empress Marie Terezie. When he got old, he lived and composed in a cloister in Geras. He is the most important Czech composer of Baroque period.

Josef Ignác Pešina

- **a vet** (born 1 April 1766, Kostelec nad Orlicí, died 24 February 1808, Vienna)

He studied philosophy in Prague and medicine in Vienna where he also worked as an assistant at Institution of Anatomy. In 1801 he became the first professor of anatomy and in 1806 he started his career as the director of the institution. He started vaccination against sheep small-pox and treating cattle plague. He wrote a lot of professional publications.

Václav Roštlapil

- **an architect** (born 29 November 1856, Zlonice, died 23 November 1930, Prague)

He attended primary school in Kostelec nad Orlicí where his father Josef and mother Františka (born as Seykorová) lived. He graduated technical college in Prague and university of architecture in Vienna (1881 – 1884). Although he lived in Prague from 1890s (where he designed eg. building of Art Academy, Straka´s Academy, Institution for the Mentally Handicaped etc.), he had strong relationship with Kostelec

nad Orlicí. He designed several buildings for the Seykora family as well as for the town: villa Sklenářka, rebuilding J. A. Komenský's Church, the square fountain etc.

Augustin Ságner

- **an artist** (born 13 December 1891, Kostelec nad Orlicí, died 29 May 1946, Prague)
He studied at Kostelec Real College. In 1912 he started Academy of Art in Prague, had to interrupt his studies and fight in the World War I. He continued in 1918. He suffered from lack of money which led to his studies of teaching art. He taught in Prague, Mladá Boleslav, Duchcov. He liked coming back to his native town and looking for new topics there.

Josef Korběl

- **a diplomat** (born 20 September 1909, Letohrad, died 18 July 1977, Colorado)
He studied at Kostelec State Real College. He married to Anna Spiegelová, Kostelec native, and became father of Madeleine Albright, a diplomat and foreign minister of USA. Madeleine Albright visited Kostelec nad Orlicí and accepted the citizenship of honour. Josef Korběl was a Czechoslovak diplomat from 1934, during World War II in London. After the war he worked as an ambassador of Czechoslovakia in Yugoslavia and Albania. In 1948 he represented the republic at UN. At the end of the same year he left for USA and became a professor of political science at university of Denver.

Madeleine Albright with her family visiting Kostelec nad Orlicí