

Annual Report 2016



Společnost Rožmberk o.p.s.
Rozmberk Society p.b.c.



Summary

The year 2016 was a very good year putting us back on track for larger EU projects.

One of the most important events from the year was that the Czech Ministry of Agriculture finally released the EU funds for our 2012 pre-financed SZIF project. We could return the outstanding loan to the Town of Nove Hradky and use the surplus for activities. This outstanding payment and the accompanying loan had blocked our possibilities to engage in new projects since 2013; we can now engage in new projects again.

In July, we sent four blacksmiths and apprentices to the USA to participate in the international ABANA blacksmith meeting. In August, together with the Town of Nove Hradky and master blacksmith master Daniel Cerny, the Society organized an international blacksmith meeting taking place in our Smithy and Daniel's workshop. Three blacksmiths from the USA, one from Belgium, and ten from the Czech Republic participated in the event.

In September, Society director Robert Dulfer participated in the Newcastles of the World Conference in Newcastle, Ontario as representative of the Town of Nove Hradky.

I. Introduction

The Rozmberk Society (hereafter the Society) was established in 1998 as a public benefit corporation for heritage conservation combined with regional development. Our main operating area covers most of the Trebon Basin and Novohradská foothills, comprising the mostly flat, rural fishpond region in the eastern part of South Bohemia, Czech Republic.

Apart from non-profit activities, the Society also operates two visitor centres. Since 2001, the Society operates the [Peasant and Emigration Museum](#) in the former school of the protected village of Kojakovice. The museum focuses on the period 1850 – 1918, and in particular on village life and emigration to the USA. Since 2004, the Society also operates the [historic blacksmith workshop](#) (hereafter the Smithy) in Nove Hradky.

The Rozmberk Society has no permanent employees. The function of director/legal representative of the Society and board members are unpaid appointments. Employees (mostly 2 – 7 persons) are hired within the framework of grants and projects; volunteers work on the basis of needs and availability. When possible, the Society hires temporary employees from socially disadvantaged groups.

II. Events and ongoing activities

Kojakovice Peasant and Emigration Museum

The Center was open in the months June through September. About 600 visitors went through, including two groups of visitors from the USA.

Nove Hradky Blacksmith Shop and Education Center

During the summer season, the Smithy was open for public. On some occasions, apprentice blacksmiths who had worked with us earlier worked here during the summer season. They also used the Smithy outside the season for accommodation while receiving further education and experience in blacksmithing with Daniel Cerny.

On request, we provided several special demonstrations - participation events for schools, companies, and groups (including disabled people). In 2016, the Forge was also one of the two locations for an international blacksmith meeting (see below).

Traditional annual actions and events

The Forge saw the traditional Easter, Potato-day, and Devil's forging events with activities for children and adults and tasting of many types of South Bohemian sweet pies. All events were well visited (over 90 people) by locals and visitors from the region.

Due to staff problems, the Society had to cancel the traditional end-of-season Apple-pie day in Kojakovice.

Like each year, the Society organized a week-long summer camp next to the Nakolice fish pond. Over 50 children of the Jílovice basic school and other children from the surroundings attended this thematic camp.

III. Projects

Newcastles Conference meeting in Canada

The Rozmberk Society is an active partner of the Town of Nove Hradý (literally New Castle) in the association of Newcastles of the World. Having organized the 2014 Newcastles conference, Society director Robert Dulfer was part of the delegation of Nove Hradý to participate in this years Newcastles Conference in Newcastle, Ontario, Canada, in September. The Mayor of Nove Hradý was only able to participate 3 days, on the other days Robert Dulfer replaced the mayor as representative of the Town of Nove Hradý.

Some future cooperation plans and new initiatives for a joined tourism platform were established during the conference.

International Blacksmith Meetings

In July 2016, the Society managed to send four representatives to the International Blacksmith Conference of ABANA (Artisan Blacksmith Association North America) in Salt Lake City. The team was lead by master blacksmith Daniel Cerny. The other participants of our team where Josef Szylar and Kamil Janostek, both students from the Vocational Secondary School in Throve Sviny, and blacksmith Gert Bruyninx, who was also part of our team during the 2004 ABANA Conference.



ABANA meeting 2016



Novohradská Blacksmith Meeting 2016

In August, the Society was the main logistics organizer for the Nove Hradý Blacksmith Meeting, August 13-21, 2016. Blacksmithing activities were done both in the Smithy and the Forge in the Peatlands of blacksmith Daniel Cerný. Two blacksmiths and one apprentice blacksmith from the USA participated as well as one blacksmith from Belgium. The rest of the team comprised of five blacksmiths and three apprentice blacksmiths from the Czech Republic. In addition, other blacksmiths joined occasional as well.



The main organizer was the Region of South Bohemia. Support and cooperation also came from the Town of Nove Hradý and the Embassy of the United States of America.

Danube Transnational Programme proposals

Of the four applications the Society participated in, two were approved for the second round (two-step application). The application for preservation and development of historic narrow-gauge railroads by the Town of Nove Hradý was one of the approved projects. The Society was the main author for the second round, but unfortunately, the project was rejected.

Network, the second project, concerns the preservation of tangible WW I heritage and developing programs for niche tourism and education related to this topic under the brand Walk of Peace. This project was approved in 2016 and will start January 1, 2017. The budget for the Rozmberk Society will be 114 600 € over 30 months.

IV. Other activities – Memberships

LAG Ruze

Since the LAG was established, the Society has been a member of the Local Action Group [MAS Sdružení Růže](#). Society co-director Olga Cerna is active in the working group for social activities and is member of the Commission selecting projects for funding.

Newcastles of the World

The town of Nove Hradky (South Bohemia) is a member of the governing board of the Newcastles of the World Alliance. Nove Hradky major Vladimir Hokr and Society Director Robert Dulfer have been elected to the Board during the Conference in Canada. In addition, the Society is hosting and managing the [Newcastles Conferences](#) website and the [Newcastles Forum](#) website.

V. Miscellaneous

The Society has been asked to join a pilot project for renting e-scooters to visitors by electricity provider E-ON. E-On has provided two scooters free of charge for this pilot.

Our Smithy was also a starting point for an e-bike promotional tour sponsored by E-ON.



In 2016, a first step was also made in repairing the wooden fence in front of the Smithy.

Human Resources

This year, due to new rules, the Society did not receive funding from the regional labour office. Three people, including Director Robert Dulfer, were hired on short-term restricted contracts (DPP) to cover the summer season and the activities needed for preparing the project proposals.

II. Financial Year 2016

The full financial report over the year 2016 is published elsewhere on the web.

The State SZIF program this summer finally reimbursed the payments for the Active Smithy project (2012-2013). Thanks to this, the Society could pay back its loan to the Town of Nove Hradý and fully engages in finding project funding again.

Funding for our activities came from the USA Embassy in Prague, from the Town of Nove Hradý, the WSPK bank, and through services provided.

Income came also through our two visitors' centres.

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