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Żuławy Wiślane

LANDSCAPE NOT ONLY FOR A CONNOISEUR







Welcome!

The beauty of Żuławy in the Vistula Delta is unique as it is hidden in the countryside. Every element and detail is important and necessary to create the harmony and cohesion. Willows and poplars drink water from fields and ditches, lime trees decorate cemeteries and parks. Fields and meadows are cut into rectangular shapes by roads and ditches to facilitate cultivation.

Draw and rotary bridges give ships the right-of-way in traffic. Houses are situated on sandy hillocks to protect against floods. Wheat, which will be used for next year's sowing, is dried in a room above the arcades at the entrance to the house. Sluices and storm locks protect canals and rivers against sudden rises in water levels. Pump stations working day and night regulate water fluctuations on polders.

Żuławy is a united work of man, his creativity, and the queen of Polish rivers - the Vistula River. The region is well repaid for wise management, efficient technology, and a high level of agriculture. There is no other region with such a unique landscape, nature, historical and cultural heritage.



A medieval chapel in Gnojewo



Raczki Elbląskie - the lowest point in Poland



The neighbourhood of Jazowo



The mouth of the Szkarpane River



Location

Żuławy in the Vistula Delta, also called Vistula Żuławy, is a classical river delta. Its natural border is mostly outlined by a contour line 10 m above sea level and by a short southern section at the Vistula gorge near Biała Góra. The area is said to be about 1750 km² without Druzno Lake and the Wiślany Bay. About 450km² of this area is a depression. Raczek Elbląskie situated 1,8 m below sea level is recognized as the lowest point in Poland.

In the centre of Żuławy there are two towns: Nowy Dwór Gdański, which is called the capital of Żuławy, and is the head office of Nowodworski Region and Nowy Staw. A few big cities are situated at the edge of Żuławy. The biggest of them is Tricity: Gdańsk, Sopot and Gdynia. There are also other cities partly located in Żuławy such as Elbląg, Tczew and Malbork.



The neighbourhood of Marzęcino

Close to everywhere

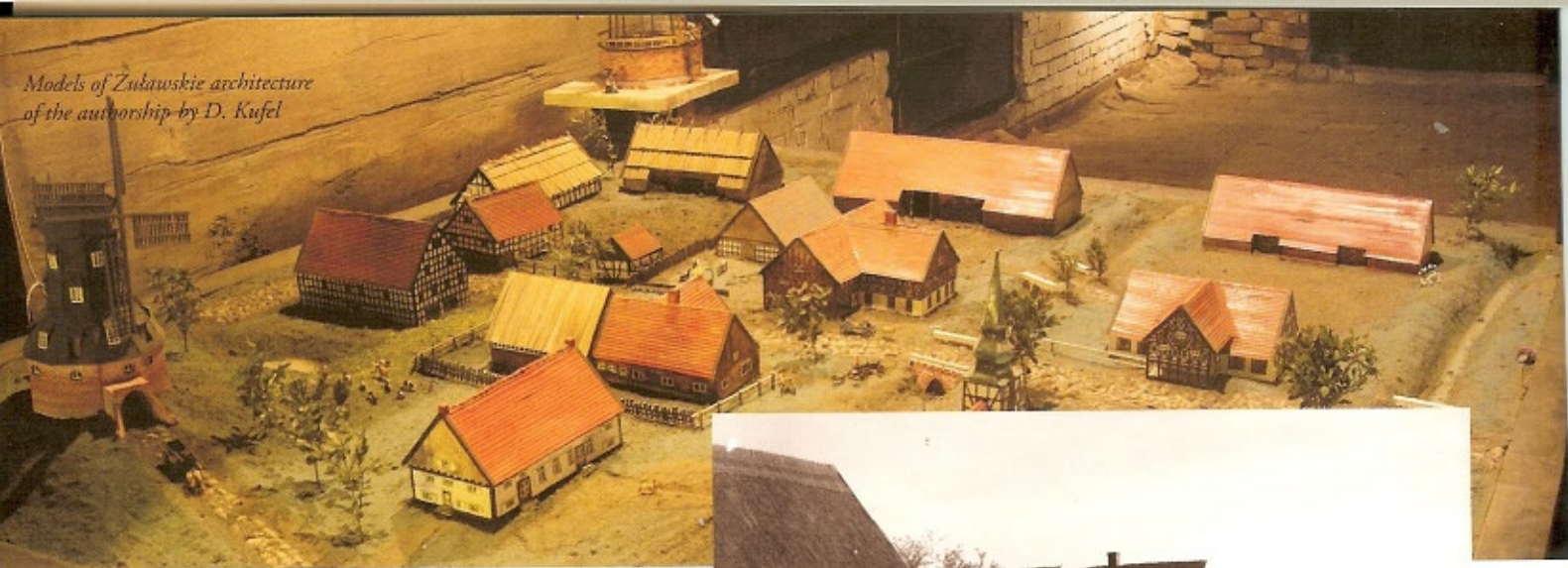
It is very easy to get to Żuławy. The capital of Żuławy – the town of Nowy Dwór Gdański – is situated 40 km from the centre of Gdańsk. A motorway Nr 7 leads from Warsaw to Gdańsk through Nowy Dwór Gdański. At the west edge of Żuławy a highway A1 is being built. Both roads will be connected soon by a south-eastern ring road of Gdańsk. The whole transport infrastructure of Tricity (the airport in Rębiechowo, the rail junction Gdańsk – Gdynia, sea and river ports) is easily accessible. Moreover, tourist attractions near Gdańsk, such as Sopot, Malbork, Frombork or even Kaliningrad (Russia) which are situated in neighbouring regions but with different landscapes, can be reached in a very short time.



The flow of the Vistula River near Kieźmark



Models of Żuławskie architecture
of the authorship by D. Kufel



Multicultural history

As far as the geological measure of time is concerned Żuławy is a very young area of land which started to form in the VI millennium BC. The oldest traces of men came from the time of the Early Stone Age. Neolithic amber workshops found in places called Niedźwiedzica and Wybicko seem to be a real archaeological sensation. Most explorers believe that the mystery of Truso, a great port and a trade centre has been revealed. People learned about its existence from a IXth century report. The settlement was found on the eastern outskirts of Żuławy, in the place called Janów.



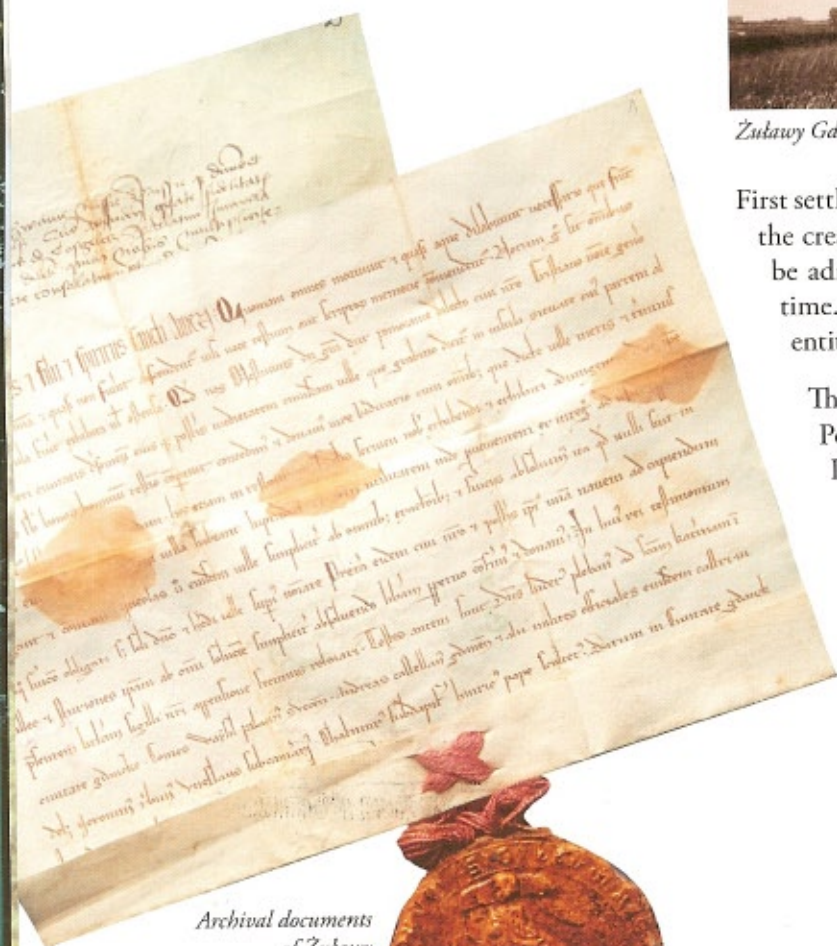
Żuławy Elbąskie – during the interwar period



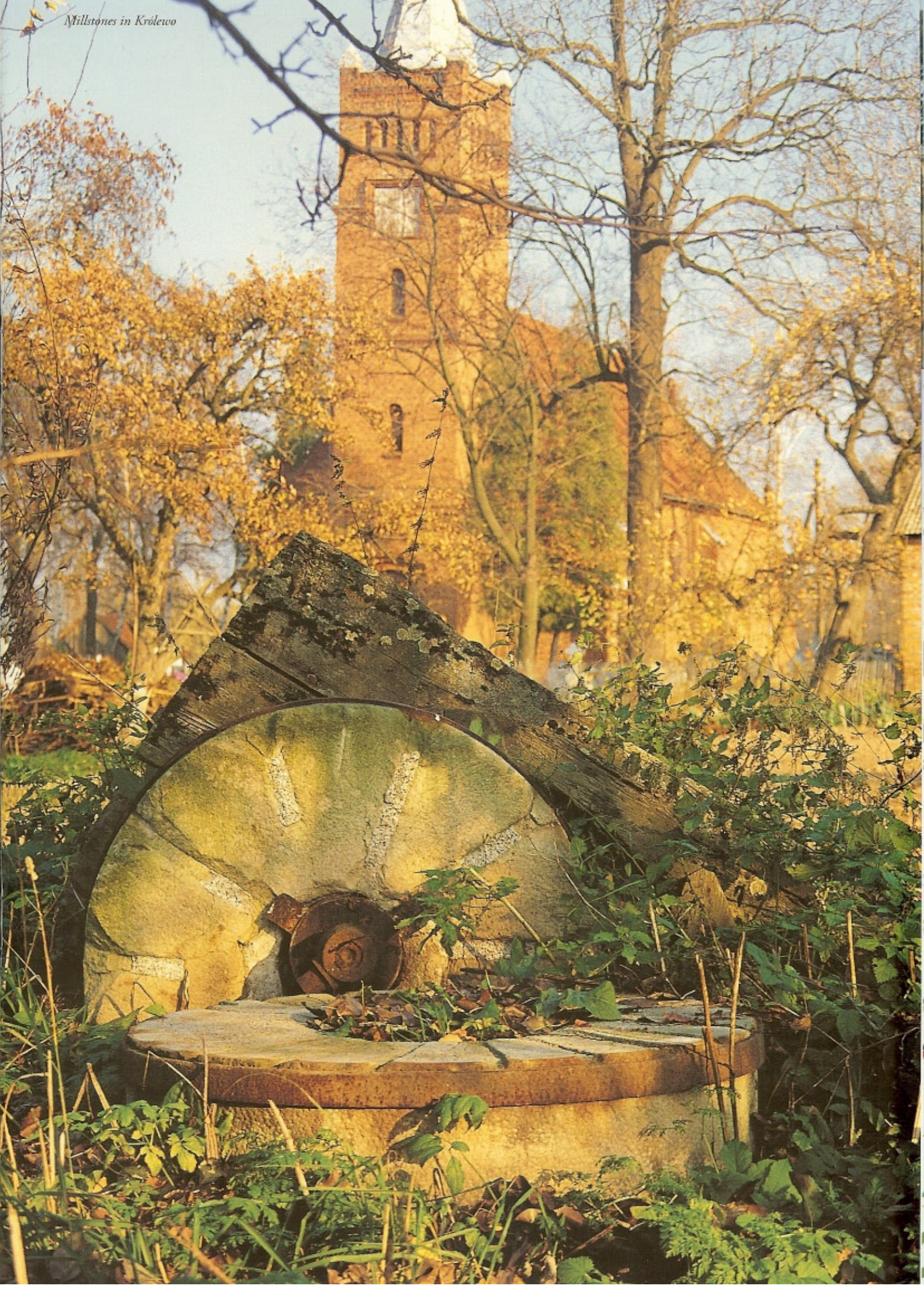
Żuławy Gdańskie - the beginning of the XXth century

First settlers appeared in the delta of the Vistula River and initiated the creation of a complicated hydrographical system. It can still be admired as it has been improved and developed for a long time. Both banks of the Vistula were joined by one political entity, the state of the Teutonic Knights.

The history of Żuławy is connected with a lot of cultures: Pomeranian, Prussian, Teutonic, Dutch, Swedish, German, Polish and quite recently Ukrainian as well. As a result a unique melting – pot was created. Among these varied traditions the role of the Mennonite culture should be emphasized. Mennonites came from the Netherlands in the middle of the XVIth century. At this time Żuławy, after the second treaty of Toruń, was under the rule of Polish kings again.



Archival documents
of Żuławy



The inside of a historic house of Zephyr





Delfts on a house wall of Żuławy

Polish – Sweden wars in the XVIIth century and other war conflicts in the first half of the XVIIIth century slowed the economic development but fortunately it was never stopped. After the partitions of Poland Żuławy was under Prussian rule. A very interesting episode is the fact that interned participants of the November Uprising stayed in Żuławy for some time. In the second half of the XIXth century, which was a time of heavy flooding, a hydrographical network was finally shaped. Then in 1895 the Vistula River was regulated by being given a direct channel to the Baltic Sea, and all its tributaries were regulated by sluices.

During the interwar period the biggest part of Żuławy belonged to Free City Gdańsk. It was the time when a drainage system was started on a large scale. This process was finished only after the Second World War.

The most recent history of the region started with a disaster. The embankments were broken and pump stations were destroyed by the retreating German army which caused the greatest calamity in the history of the region. However, people living there did their best and drained the flooded areas. At the same time new settlers arrived from other parts of the country.

It is commonly believed that the full potential of Żuławy hasn't been fully realized so far.



Nowy Dwór Gdański – the beginning of the XXth century



Żuławy Gdańskie a hundred years ago



Nowy Dwór Gdański – during the interwar



The Tuga River in Nowy Dwór Gdański at the beginning of XX century



Cultural heritage

There is probably no other place in Poland which is so full of monuments as Żuławy. The most valuable ones, dating from the Middle Ages, are villages which were built around a square site. The architecture of the houses built here was on a really high level. Brick or wooden houses, supported by delicately ornamented columns make the architecture of the region unique. There are also other very interesting objects such as Dutch pens, situated on specially raised hillocks. One can also find many sacred monuments here. One can admire Gothic brick churches and their ruins as well as former Mennonite cemeteries which make an unforgettable impression. Other structures which are also worth seeing are canals, sluices, flood banks and drawbridges and rotary bridges. It is a pity that windmills have almost completely disappeared from the countryside. Maybe one day some of them will be reconstructed.



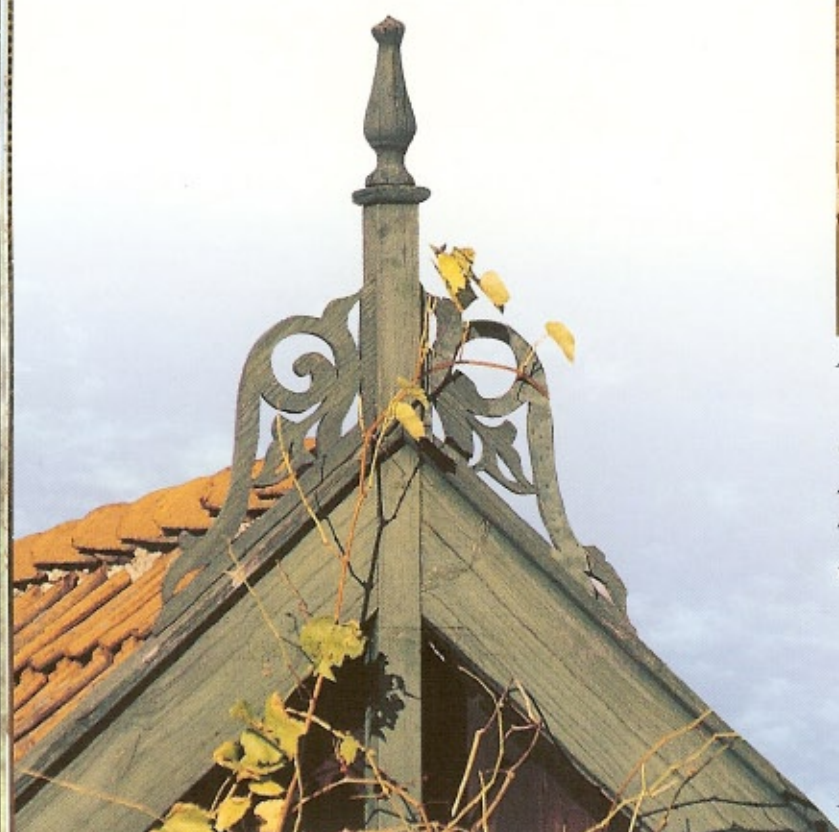
A door from Orłowo



A door from Myszewo

Sightseeing

The most interesting route for sightseeing is the Mennonite Trail. It connects objects associated with the history of settlement in Żuławy on the route from Gdańsk to Elbląg.

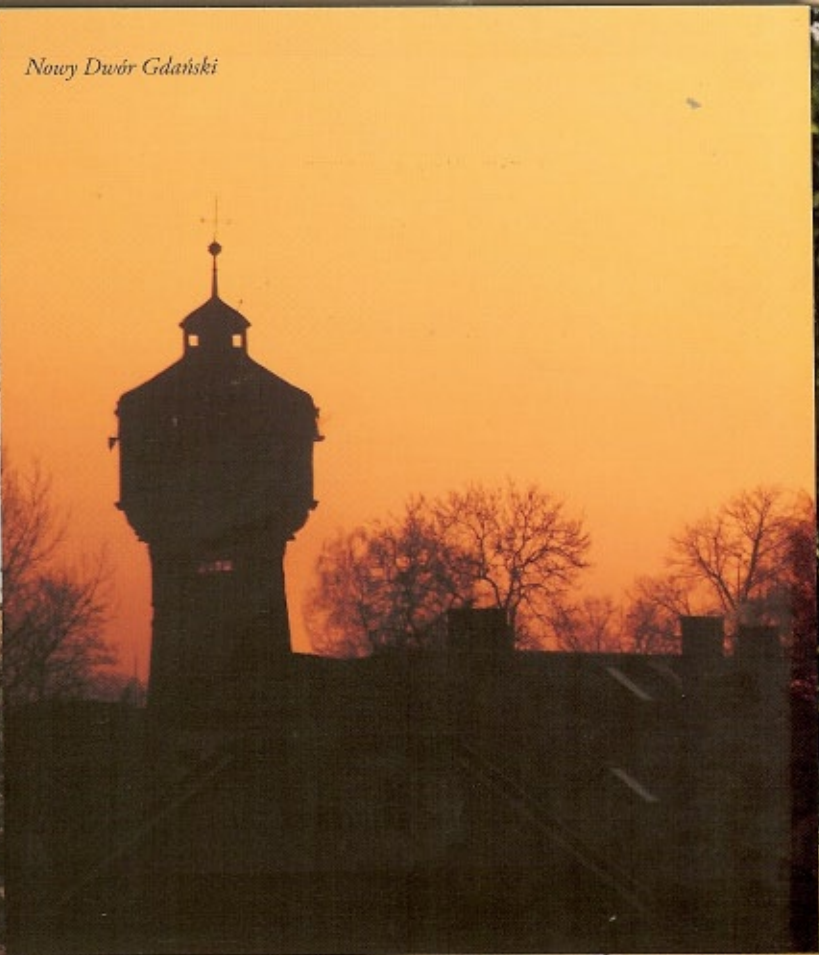


A top of a house of Żuławy

Stalewo



Nowy Dwór Gdański



Palczewo



Milocin



A tile from a stove of Żukawy



The exhibition "On Polish Polders"

Museum of Żuławy

This museum is full of everyday objects and tools which belonged to former inhabitants of this area. It is also an archive of places which no longer exist. The permanent exhibition "On Polish Polders" is devoted to Mennonites. It tells us a story about problems and dilemmas of immigrants, about the ways they tried to adapt to their new home but also to keep their identity and find happiness and fulfilment. Carefully restored gravestones are also worth mentioning. Each headstone, often 2.5 m high, is a work of art decorated with symbols and inscriptions connected with life and death.

What did this thrifty and well – organized town look like during the interwar years? The model shows Tiegendorf – now Nowy Dwór Gdański – a place which boasted a swimming pool, community centre, Youth Palace together with a sports stadium, a city park, secondary schools and industry exporting its products...



Collection of headstones in Cyganek



Fragments of the last draining windmill

Last draining windmill

This windmill in Poland could not be saved but we can learn about its appearance and history from archival photographs and drawings. Unfortunately its reconstruction must wait.

Skansen Museum

Situated 3 km from Nowy Dwór Gdański, was excavated and is situated next to the road to Stegna, near a Gothic church, which is today a Greek – Catholic Orthodox Church. As a result 70 gravestones from the XVIIth and XVIIIth century can be admired there. It is one of the biggest exhibitions of this kind in Poland – The Museum of Żuławy in an open area.



Epitaph on a church wall in Koszwaty



*A Mennonite cemetery
in Satwiec*

Mennonites

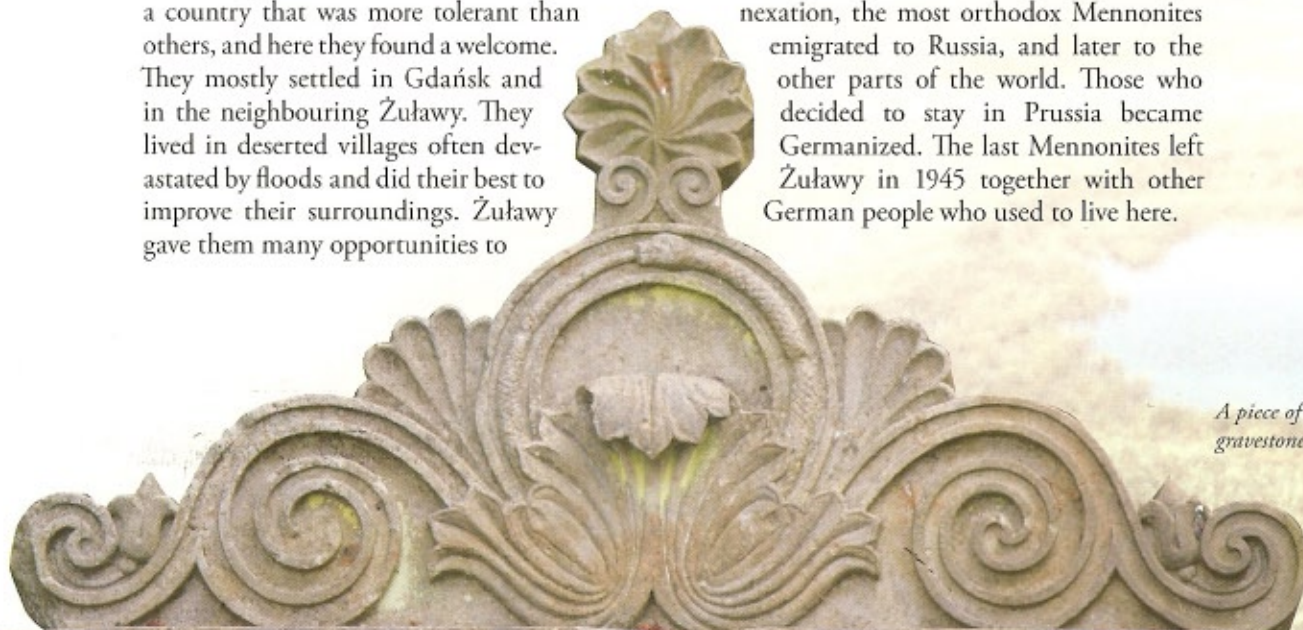
Mennonites are a movement that arose in the Reformation. They are pacifist Anabaptist Christians, and were named after Menno Simons, a Catholic priest from Friesland. Early in the 16th century he preached and wrote, explaining the basic beliefs of the Mennonite faith. These included emphasizing the authority of the Bible, following the example of Christ, baptizing people after they had chosen to be believers, practising love toward others, and refusing to bear arms in war.

Mennonites were persecuted for their beliefs, and many were killed. Some fled to Poland, a country that was more tolerant than others, and here they found a welcome. They mostly settled in Gdańsk and in the neighbouring Żuławy. They lived in deserted villages often devastated by floods and did their best to improve their surroundings. Żuławy gave them many opportunities to

settle and make a living. Their faith prohibited them from swearing oaths or holding a public office in which they might have to impose the death penalty. They also refused to bear arms in war or live in luxury. Instead, they believed in helping the poor. They had a modest lifestyle and were sometimes misunderstood.

At the end of XVIIIth century, when Poland was partitioned among Austria, Prussia and Russia, many orthodox Mennonites emigrated to Russia, hoping for greater freedom. Later, many of them moved to other countries, especially in North America. In times of the Prussian Annexation, the most orthodox Mennonites emigrated to Russia, and later to the other parts of the world. Those who decided to stay in Prussia became Germanized. The last Mennonites left Żuławy in 1945 together with other German people who used to live here.

*A piece of Mennonite
gravestone*





Druzno Lake

A Gift of Nature

Although the landscape of the area seems to be monotonous, the Vistula Delta is very interesting as far as nature is concerned. About 70 % of all kinds of birds which have their nesting sites in Poland can be found here. This is made possible by the variety of water reservoirs. Druzno Lake is really unusual even on a European scale. Together with its surroundings, it shows the processes which have been shaping the Vistula Delta during the last thousand years. The remains of natural forests situated in the fork of the Vistula and Nogat Rivers are protected as reserves as part of the wooded Landscape Park. The Vistula Spit is situated in the north of Żuławy alongside beautiful seaside beaches. What is more, in recent years beavers and water ferns have appeared again in the clean rivers of Żuławy.



The neighbourhood of Ostonki



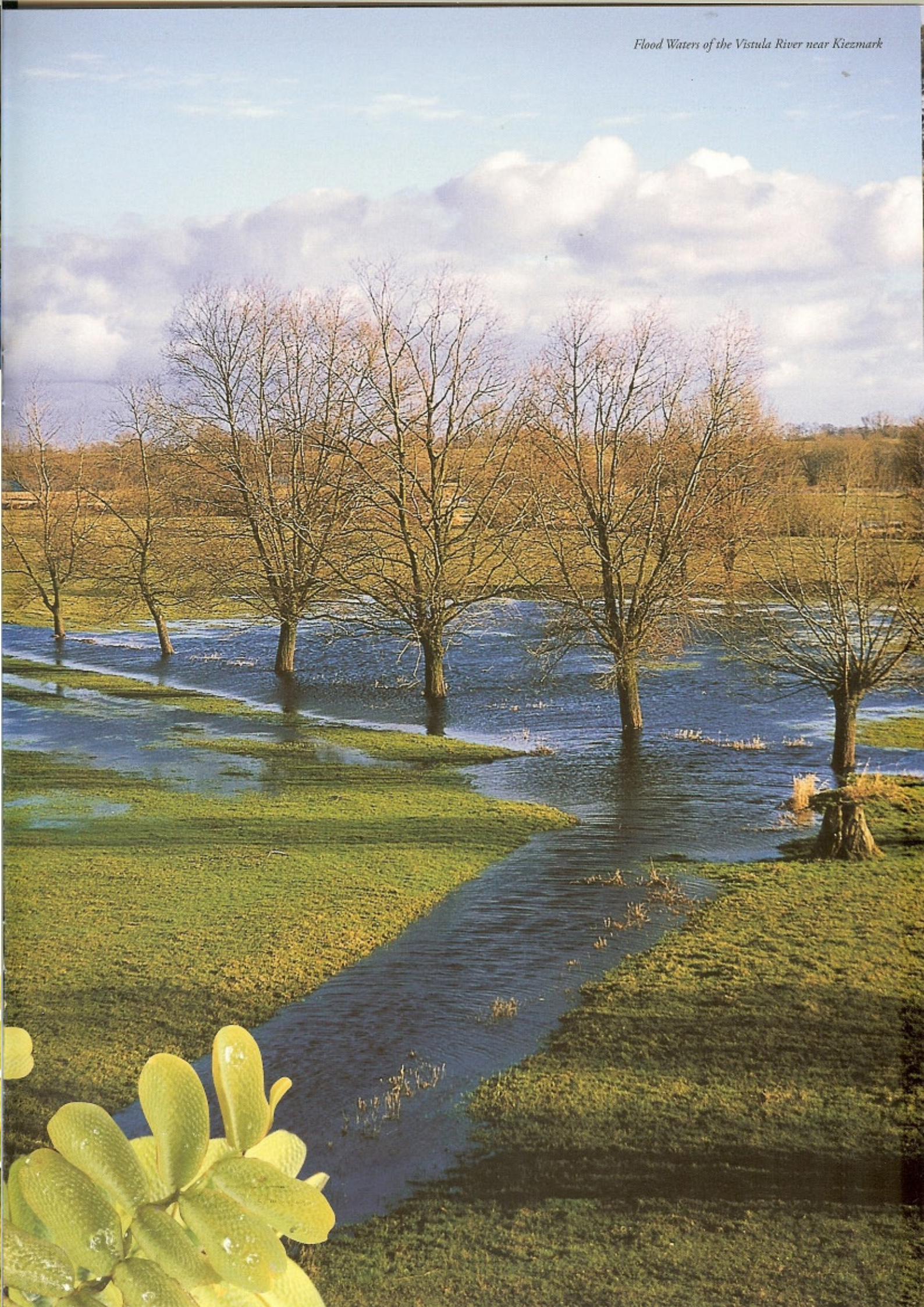
On the Wislany Bay



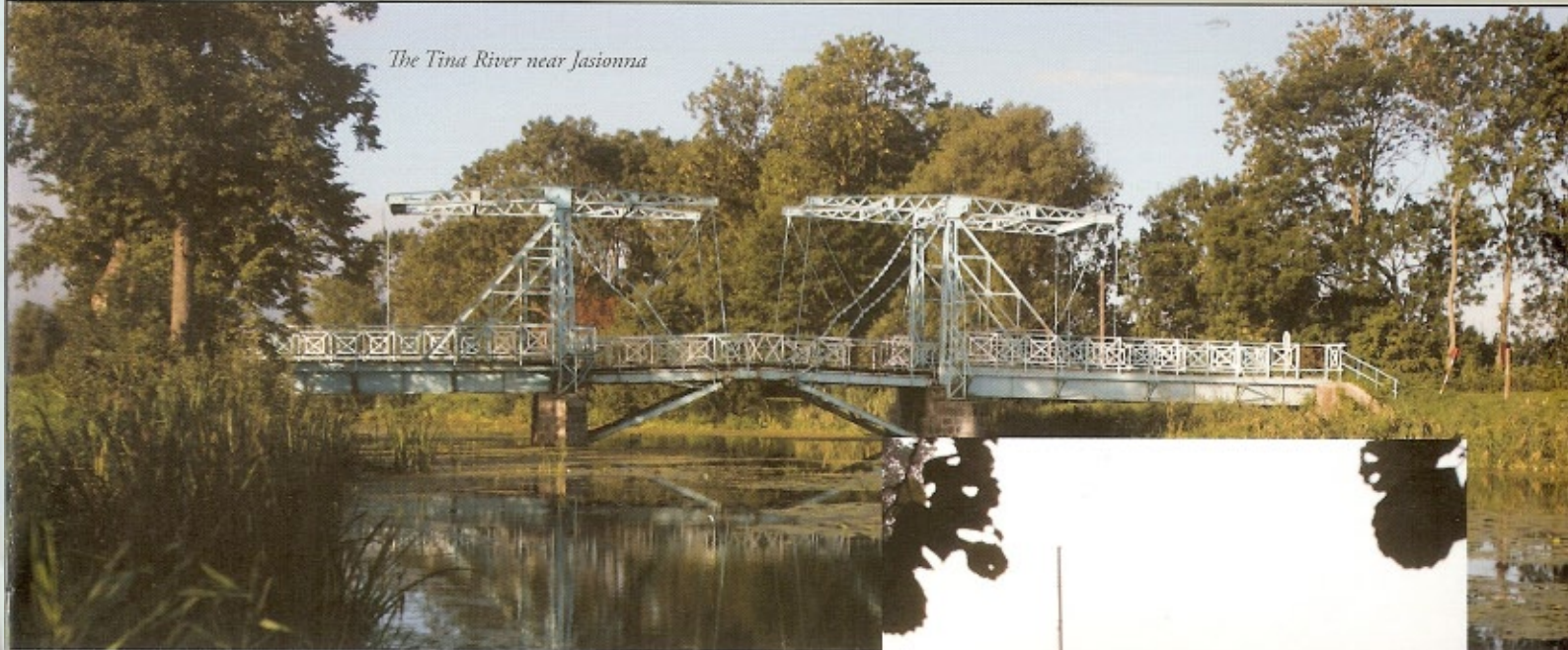
Oxbow lake of the Szkarpatwa River

(Salvinia natans) a water fern









Water routes

As far as tourism and promotion are concerned, nobody has ever taken advantage of the attractive location of the Vistula Delta water routes, which are connected with the inland water system of Western and Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, a fully developed system of water routes is one of the most attractive features of Żuławy. From the tourist and shipping point of view the most useful seem to be the sections of European water routes E-40 and E – 70 together with waterways such as the Martwa Wisła, the Wisła Śmiała, the Motława, the Nogat, the Szkarpa, the Wisła Królewiecka, the Tuga, the Święta, the Elbląg, the Jagiełoński Canal, the Elbląski Canal and the Vistula Bay which is connected with them.

The Ebląski Canal is a unique and interesting structure. Moving along the canal through one of the slipways can be very impressive. While travelling along the sections of the canal, a length of 9,6 km, which consists of five successive slipways, a ship is transported on a special platform moving on rails. In this way the ships cover the distance of 2300 meters of a dry, grassy land up to a height of 100 meters.

Holidays on water

You can spend your whole holiday on water routes of Żuławy. It takes a few hours a day to get to another lake port. The rest of your time you can spend hiking, riding a bike and admiring seaside areas.



Rotary Bridge in Szkarpa



Rybina



The sluice Gdańska Głowa (a Head of Gdańsk) in Żuławy

A narrow – gauge train

A fast line of narrow – gauge trains used to go from Gdańsk through Nowy Dwór Gdański to Elbląg. The railroad, which used to be 75 cm wide, stretched out over the whole area of Żuławy and extended as far as Krynica Morska. Today you can use only the route from Nowy Dwór Gdański to the Mierzeja Spis – to Sztutowo, Stegna, Jantar and Mikoszewo. A trip in open carriages can be a wonderful attraction for tourists especially during summer time.

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|---|---|
|  water |  lake ports |
|  forests |  beaches |
|  depressed areas |  slipways |
|  main roads |  lighthouses |
|  second-rate roads |  windmills |
|  local roads |  arcaded houses |
|  trains |  museums |
|  narrow-gauge trains |  ruins |
|  tourist routes |  castles |
|  drawbridges |  places of the national memory |
|  ferries |  historic pumping station |
|  sluices |  historic churches |
|  fisheries |  churches |
| |  historic cemeteries |

0 10 km

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Organizacja Turystyczna | prot.pomorskie.info

Regionalny Zarząd Dróg Wodnych | www.rzgw.gda.pl

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Województwo Pomorskie | www.woj-pomorskie.pl

Województwo Warmińsko-Mazurskie | www.warmia.mazury.pl



ZATOKA GDAŃSKA



ZALEW WIŚLANY

Krynica Morska

Tolkicko

Elbląg

Nowy Dwór Gdański

Gronowo Elb.

Malbork

Sztum

Dzierżgoń

Stary Targ

Stare Pole

Markusy

Pas

