



Birding Camps 2020

Exploration Topics

Free Time Ideas



*To use our Time to the fullest,
we can organize an entire single day off,
focusing only on affordable and creative
ways to Discover the area. There are
plenty of Exploration Opportunities
around – here are some of them. We can
have a brainstorm, pick and mix them
to create a tailor-made day off together.*



Exploration Ideas



Amber Hunt
Night Escapades
with UV light



HANDS-ON
Amber Workshop
Polish your pieces
and find inclusions
in amber processing lab



„Singing Formicarium”
Living BIOART
Experiment



Hel Seal Sanctuary
Gray Seal Reintroduction
Success Story



Shipwrecks,
bunkers and fortresses
of Hel Fortified Unit



Museum of Hope
Solidarity Museum
at Gdansk Shipyard



Shift in Perception:
Exploring Poland's
Forbidden Places

Amber Processing Workshop

... in Gdansk offers a very niche and hands-on opportunity to gain rare practical skills.

You can do an in-depth investigation of specimens that you found on the beach. You will learn how to look for inclusions and distinguish them with microscope, as well as how to use specialized machinery to examine and expose them.

Immerse yourself in Interdisciplinary Science, embracing Botany, Entomology, Geology and Palaeontology into One, using a truly practical approach.

This workshop and its employees have been featured in David Attenborough BBC Natural World series – a fragment is available to watch on our website.



„Singing Formicarium”

„, is another crazy idea.

Adjacent to the Amber Workshop, it is the core part of a BIOART project entitled „Symbiotcity of Creation”. The artist, Elvin Flamingo, has developed a living space for Leafcutter Ants that already have formed quite impressive, healthy colony, visible in futuristic glass containers and corridors.

In the entire system, very sensitive microphones and amplifiers are installed, so that we can hear the sounds used by ants to communicate with each other, normally impossible to hear with a human ear.

This way, the artist enabled insects to co-create his living project, erasing the boundary between the creator and his work.



Hel Seal Sanctuary

... is Gdansk University research and conservation unit that operates the national programme of grey seal reintroduction.

The center co-coordinates WWF Blue Patrols – a nationwide, long-term project involving Volunteers all year round to monitor marine mammal habitats along entire Polish seashore. They perform regular field observations of seals and porpoises and report any dangers as well as help with injured animal rescue operations.

The sanctuary is also a seal rehab center. It consists of the outdoor and indoor basin complex, system of laboratories and lecture rooms.

Short marine conservation courses and workshops can be arranged in advance.



An aerial photograph showing a large, rusted metal shipwreck resting on a sandy beach. The ship's hull is visible, with some internal structures exposed. The water is a mix of green and blue, and the beach is a mix of sand and low-lying vegetation. The text 'Exploring shipwrecks...' is overlaid on the top left of the image.

Exploring shipwrecks...

... without diving qualifications?
Why not?

Few bus stops away from our camp there are WWII shipwrecks accessible from the shore, as well as an abandoned lighthouse, system of numerous bunkers, cannons and towers of Hel Fortified Area – a WWII heritage site of international importance.

The Story of Hope

A visit in the Solidarity Museum in Gdansk

How would a communist Europe look like?

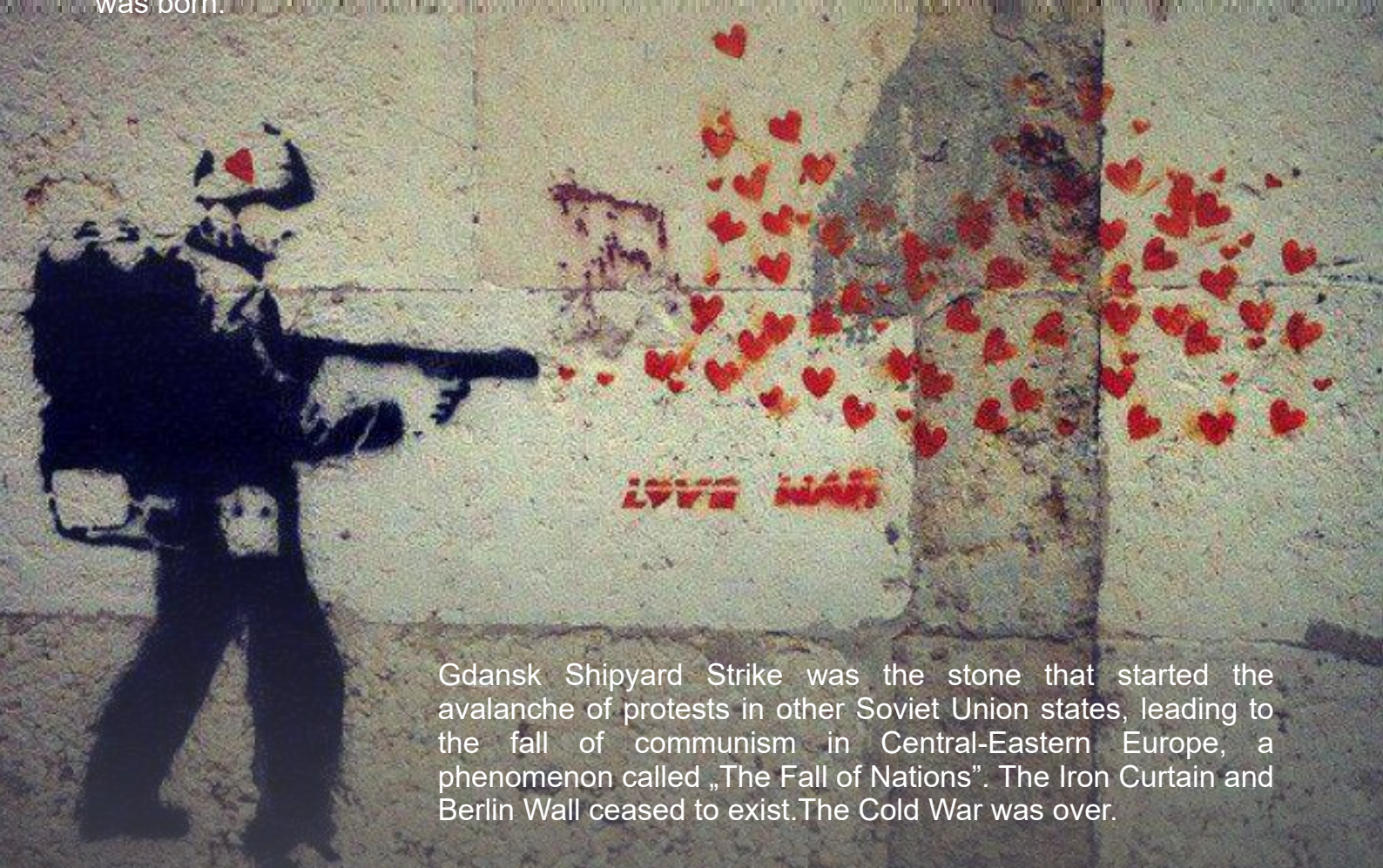
You can't understand what communism is really about unless you experience it yourself. To learn how the expansion of this political system has been stopped, you should visit Solidarity Museum at Gdansk Shipyard – the very place where spectacular fight for Freedom begun.

It all started in 1980 as a strike of the shipyard workers against unfair work and payment rules, but then more and more factories joined it, demonstrating against inhumane way of treating workers, corruption, unfair regulations and poverty. Finally the rebellion covered almost entire country. That's how Solidarity movement was born.

As a consequence, Polish authorities enforced the martial law, pushing all civil resistance initiatives underground. Tanks and armed columns of soldiers entered the streets. Many Activists were arrested.

However, extreme poverty led citizens to desperation. You cannot imprison entire country. There were more and more journalists abroad informing foreign public on the situation.

With international support, Polish Solidarity Trade Union activists made Round Table Negotiations possible, what, as a consequence, changed the political system of the country in 1990s.



Gdansk Shipyard Strike was the stone that started the avalanche of protests in other Soviet Union states, leading to the fall of communism in Central-Eastern Europe, a phenomenon called „The Fall of Nations”. The Iron Curtain and Berlin Wall ceased to exist. The Cold War was over.

Forsaken Place

A visit in Stutthof Concentration Camp

„**Gates of Death**”. This is the name of the passage that we cross to enter the area of Stutthof Concentration Camp – the first and oldest nazi concentration camp of World War II, built outside of Germany. It is located few bus stops away from our bird ringing station.

The camp stands in striking contrast to the luxurious commander's villa that we passed few minutes ago on our way here.

We pass the double fence made with barb wire. When the camp was operating, it was connected to a high voltage line. The buildings are rough barracks made of wooden planks. When we enter, I can sense a strange smell, probably of wood conserving agents... or is it still the smell of Fear?

The area is organized into blocks that now are adapted into exhibitions. I've read a lot before the visit, but there's no possibility to prepare yourself for what you will see.

One of barracks hosts a huge lump of shoes, almost reaching the ceiling. They belonged to Prisoners who died here. I come closer and spot tiny shoes of children. Many of them.

The Prisoners were primarily members of Polish elite – scientists, priests, politicians, businessmen. Their slave-labour substantially supported nazi armament factories. They slept, huddled together, often on bare ground covered with a thin layer of hay. The food ratio was smaller than the one of nazi security officer's dog.

Massive work overload, together with extreme living conditions, caused many epidemics and severe illnesses. We look into the „hospital barrack” and see the damaged stretchers and worn-off equipment, as if taken straight from a horror movie. But way more terrifying – because it was all real.



Forsaken Place

A visit in Stutthof Concentration Camp

Shivering in cold November wind, I observe the only child here – a little girl in pink overall, probably a daughter of some visitors, asking lots of questions. Strange view in such a place. I look at high, thin pines surrounding the camp and think that they were witnesses of this cursed part of history.

Finally, we enter the crematory and gas chambers, where victims were killed with Zyklon B. We see the endless registry of persons that died here. But only the identified ones. Total number, much higher, will remain unknown.

There's a monument nearby, with built-in long glass container. I come closer and see ashes and burnt pieces of human bones in it.

But how some people have survived here? Everyone deals with extreme suffering

differently. However, I think the answer lies in the modest exhibition presenting the Prisoners' artwork and letters.

There are dolls and teddy bears made by female inmates for children living in the camp. Or postcards designed and drawn for the loved ones out there.

Persons interned here were aware that they have mere chance to see their families again. Yet they wanted to comfort them, show that they care – and will care. Till the end and beyond.

I have a strange feeling when leaving the camp. The sky is still up there. The earth is still under my feet. Even the sun is shining. How, after all that we saw there, is it possible? Life goes on, but we all know that nothing will be the same any more.



Exploration Ideas – Camp II



Amber Hunt
Night Escapades
with UV light



BUTTERFLIES
up close & personal



Back to Roots
Herbalism Workshops



Dendrological Garden
Wisdom of Trees



Potato Statue
In the middle of nowhere



**Stone Circles
and land art**
Of Polish Stonehenge



Vintage Car Show
Lesson of History

If you love Insects and Macro Photography...

... you should definitely go to Koszalin Butterfly Sanctuary.

This unique place is run by local Lepidopterology Enthusiasts, who will be happy to share their passion with you and answer questions about butterfly biology, ecology and conservation.

Here you have unlimited opportunity to photograph and observe these captivating creatures. Rare and exotic species from all over the World are fluttering freely around you, creating magical Atmosphere of an Enchanted Forest from some Fantasy movie.

For sure, after the visit your dreams will be much more colorful than ever before!



Ethnobotany Workshops

In this wild area, forgotten by the Civilisation, herbalism has not only survived, but is now rediscovered as a branch complimentary to Western medicine.

In a tiny village of Dąbrowa, a local community offers very HANDS-ON workshops on Herbalism and Ethnobiology. You can learn to identify herb species, collect or grow them and have a go at making your own medicaments. There is also an opportunity to visit local apiary and taste various herbal honeys.

Instead of dumping their vibrant traditions, the community has turned them into a very strong base of sustainable development, creating a network of various „Thematic Villages”, specialized in different activities – Dąbrowa is one of them. Let's give it a go and learn whilst supporting their Initiatives!



Awaken the Botanist within ...

... in the Arboretum of Karnieszewice village.

Founded over a century ago for experimental and educational purposes, it hosts about 125 plant species. It is well-known for massive, ancient Douglas Fir trees up to 4m in perimeter, mahogany trees and several species of oak from all over the world, that create a haven for wildflowers, their pollinators and woodland birds.

It is a place where local university students have dendrology courses whilst other Visitors seek a tranquil space for relax and contemplation, developing yet another dimension in which people experience Nature.

*„Trees are not plants. They are pure Power reaching out to the Sky.”
There's some Truth in this sentence. And you will feel it here.*



Potato Statue

... in the middle of nowhere.

Yes, a potato statue, no trolling. It is located some 20 km from our bird ringing station. Probably the biggest potato monument on the Earth, reaching – together with base – 9 m height. What's more, the name of the tiny village where it is located, means „Devil's Bush“.

The statue itself is so ugly that we don't want to show it here. You have to Google it before you go.



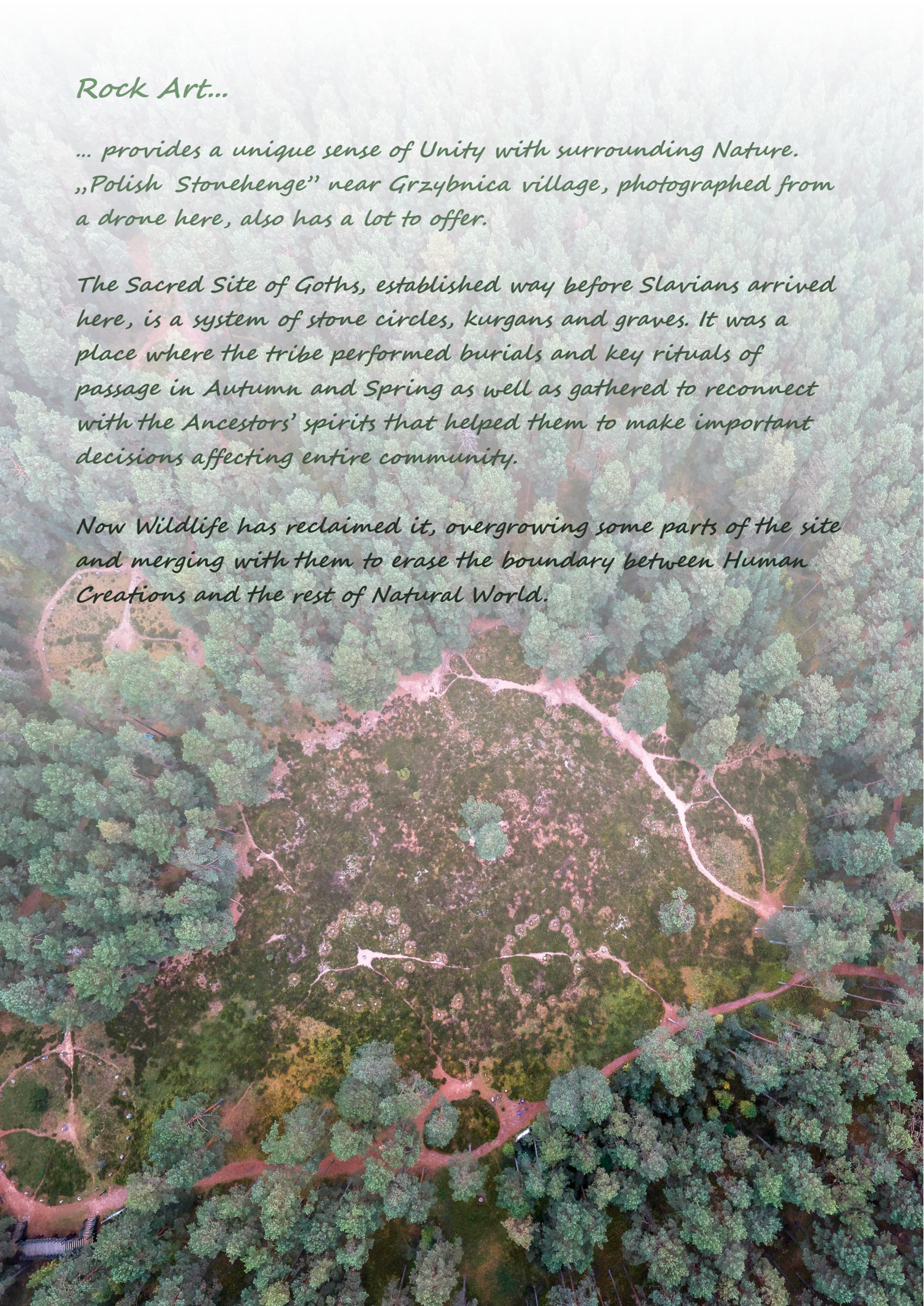
Rock Art...

... provides a unique sense of Unity with surrounding Nature.

„Polish Stonehenge” near Grzybnica village, photographed from a drone here, also has a lot to offer.

The Sacred Site of Goths, established way before Slavians arrived here, is a system of stone circles, kurgans and graves. It was a place where the tribe performed burials and key rituals of passage in Autumn and Spring as well as gathered to reconnect with the Ancestors' spirits that helped them to make important decisions affecting entire community.

Now Wildlife has reclaimed it, overgrowing some parts of the site and merging with them to erase the boundary between Human Creations and the rest of Natural World.

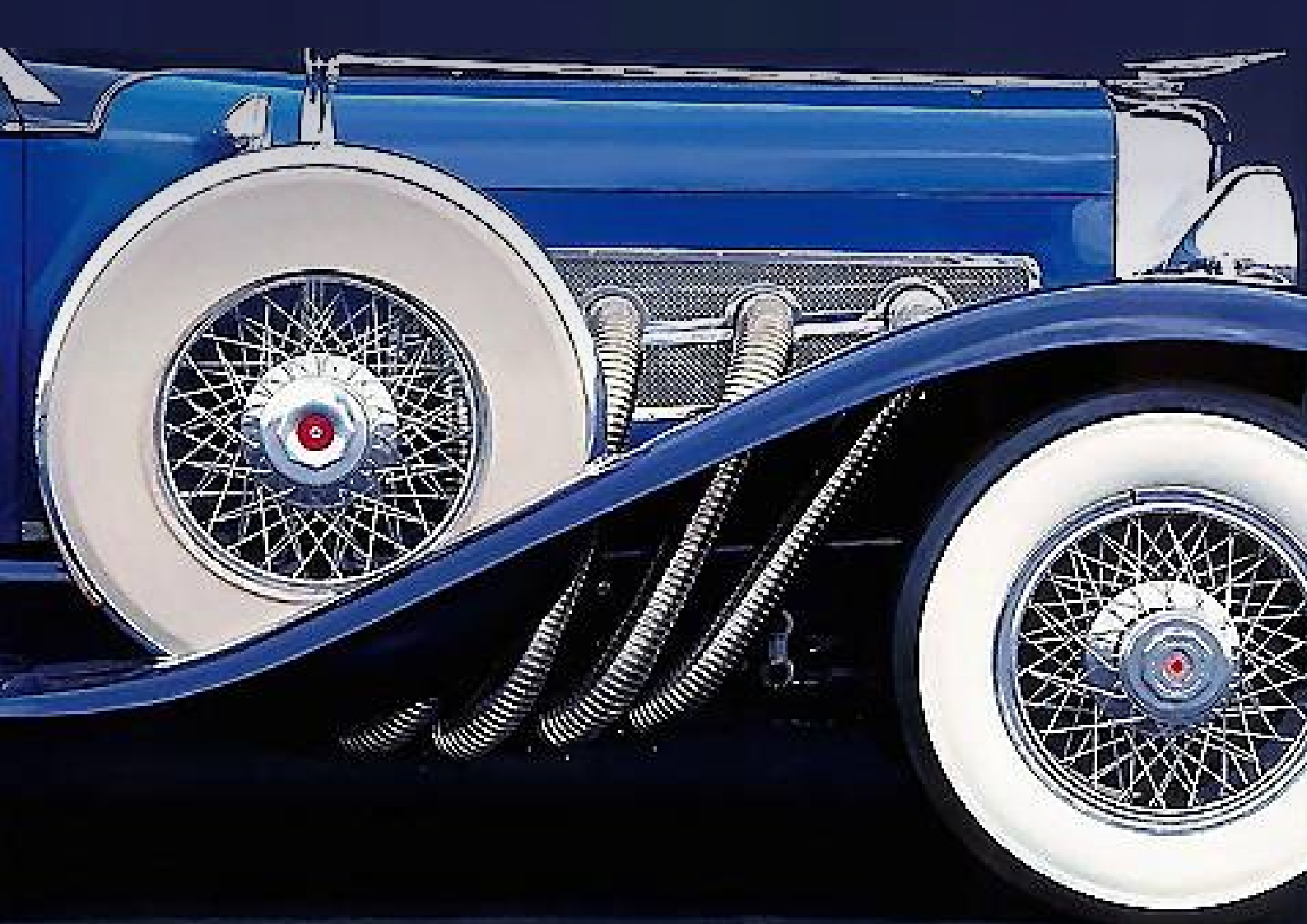


Unexpected Lesson of History

... awaits in Mścice, just at the outskirts of Koszalin.

If you want a total break from Wildlife topics and change of the subject for a while, you are welcome on a historic vehicle exhibition. It hosts tens of shining, meticulously renovated high-class vintage cars, produced up to a CENTURY ago. They specialize in Mercedes, Jaguar, Fiat, Opel, Renault and Austin-Healey brands.

You can also see the renovation workshop in action and hear the sound of engines started by the staff if you wish!



Useful Notes:

Please note that not all listed activities may be available on a particular camp due to location and season. Hel Seal Sanctuary and Hel Fortified Area are available on Camp I only. Stutthof is available on Camps III and IV. Amber Workshop, Formicarium and Solidarity Museum – on Camp I, III and IV. Camp II has a separate section in the Infosheet.

The price of entire day off lays between 25 and 50 Pounds, depending on activities.

In the unlikely case of huge numbers of birds in the nets we may be needed in the camp and may not be able to organize the day off. In this case your money will be returned.



Dear Volunteer,

Ideas described here create a kaleidoscope of experiences that you may encounter during your stay with us. We aim for something much bigger than a tourist trip. Those opportunities shift your perspective, sometimes making you smile but sometimes pushing you out of your comfort zone, so that you can learn, see and do something way different, that you have never done before...

