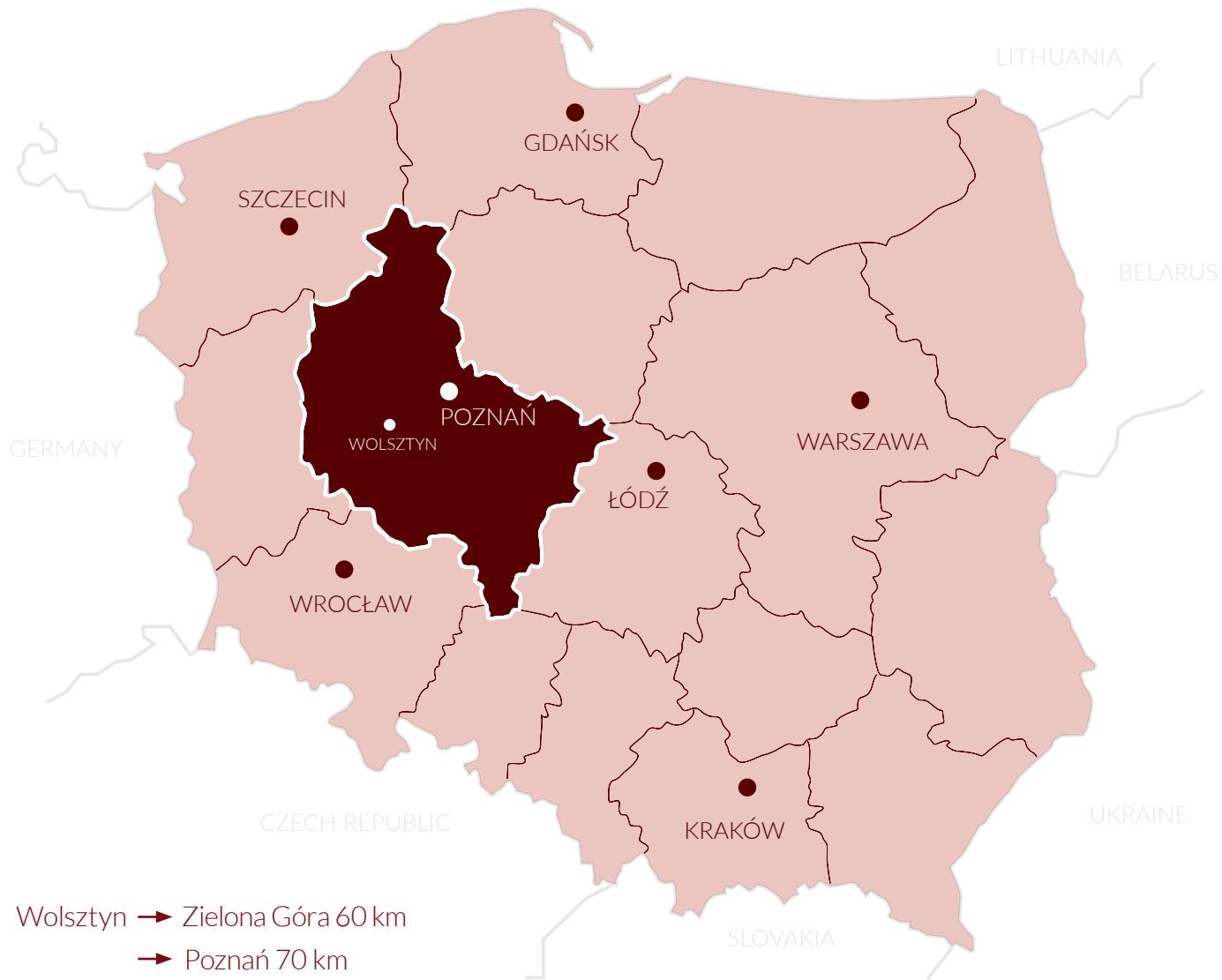




# WOLSZTYN

the commune



- Wolsztyn → Zielona Góra 60 km
- Poznań 70 km
- Wrocław 154 km
- Szczecin 240 km
- Warszawa 398 km
- Kraków 432 km

# WELCOME

Wolsztyn – a town attractive in terms of landscape and culture, clean and full of flowers, kind inhabitants and effective entrepreneurs. Wolsztyn can attract both investors and tourists.

In the region, there are small and medium-size businesses; they include construction, furniture, car and installation companies as well as producers of windows, doors and garage doors.

Tourists are particularly attracted by a steam locomotive shed, unique in whole Europe. It is still active and operates

tourist train services. In the town, there are also museums: Robert Koch Museum (a Nobel laureate), or Marcin Rożek Museum (a sculptor). Nearby, there is a post-Cistercian monastery complex in Obrą.

The two lakes that Wolsztyn is located between offer active leisure to its inhabitants and tourists. They can also use a constantly updated sports and recreation infrastructure, a swimming pool, a skate park and outdoor fitness facilities.

Welcome to Wolsztyn commune – it is worth discovering!



# LOCATION

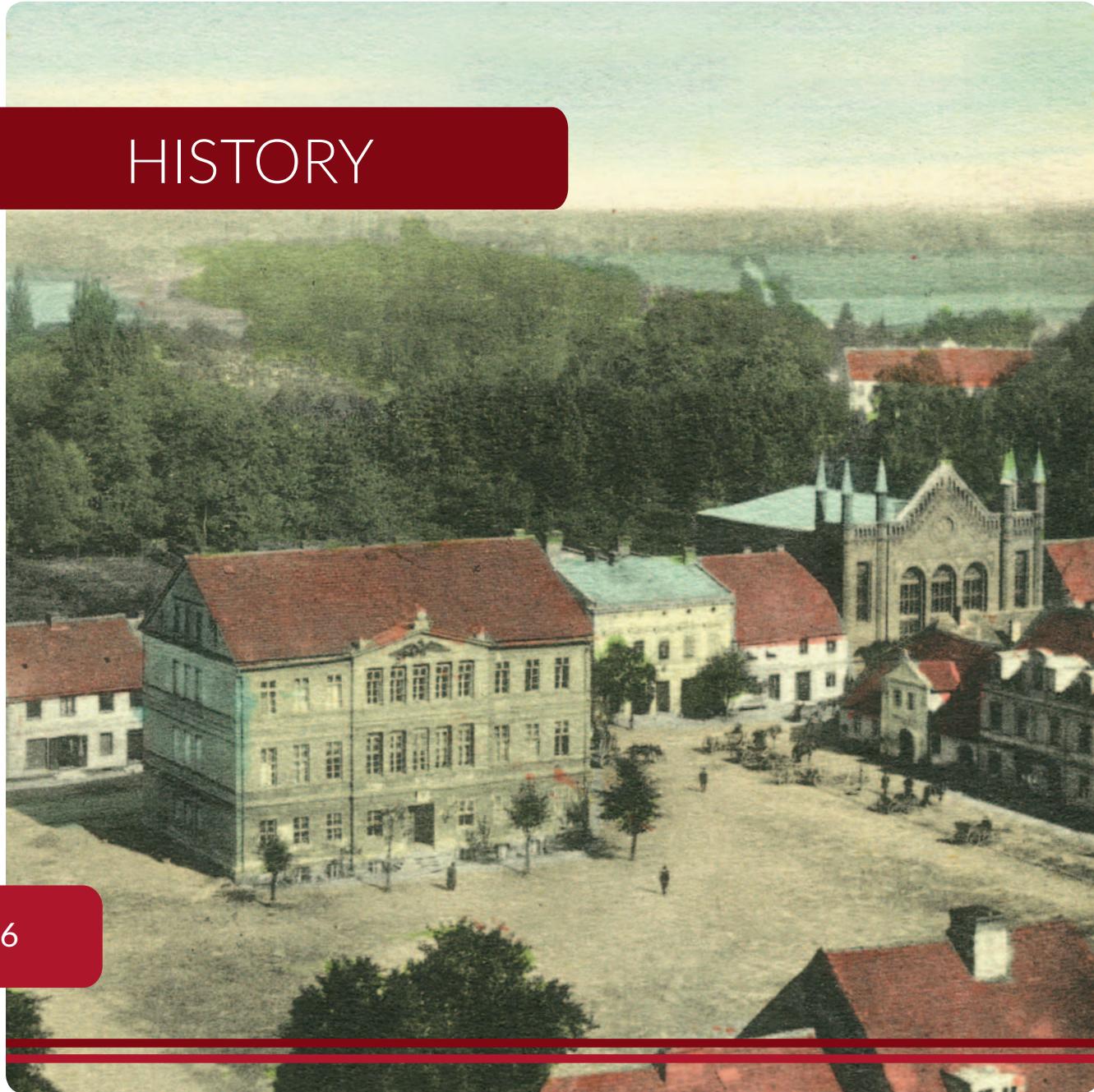


The town and commune of Wolsztyn are located in the south-western part of Wielkopolska (Greater Poland) Province 70 km far from Poznań and 60 km from Zielona Góra, neighbouring Lubuskie Province in the west. The commune has existed in its present shape since 1999 and is part of Wolsztyn County together with two neighbouring communes of Siedlec and Przemęt. It has a population of approximately 30 000. The main centre is Wolsztyn, which is both the commune and county seat.

The commune is situated on the border of Poznańskie and Lubuskie Lake Districts. Thanks to its post glacial terrain, numerous forests, lakes, and monuments as well as its sports infrastructure, the commune is considered a tourist attractive region.



# HISTORY



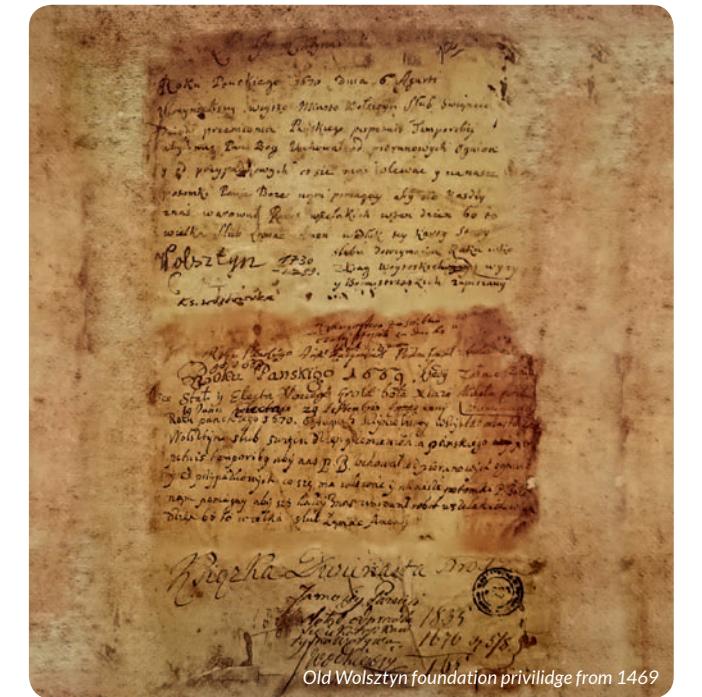
The beginnings of Wolsztyn are not exactly known. Some historians date them back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and relate them to the settlement of Komorowo. Others believe that the town was founded about 1380 between the settlements of Niałek and Komorowo and its founder was Perygryn Komorowski, the heir of Komorowo village. The town was located on the Magdeburg law and its town privileges were renewed twice in history. First time, they were renewed by Andrzej Sepieński, the owner of Wolsztyn, when he attempted to reconstruct the town after a fire in 1469. Second time, also after a fire, in 1518, when the town hall and all the documents got burnt, the Łowiecki brothers (Andrzej and Jan), the owners of Wolsztyn, received the confirmation of the previously granted town rights from king Sigismund I of Poland in 1519.

Originally, the town was probably called Olsten, because this name appears in a record from 1424, which for the first time mentions not only the mayor of the town but also the townsmen and the church. Certainly, the name derives from German, although originally different name versions were used. It settled about the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and most often was written as Wolstin, Volstyn or Wollstein. It probably derives from two German words (die Wolle – wool and der Stein – stone), which has its historic and economic justification. In the Middle Ages, Wolsztyn used to hold wool fairs and the measurement unit was the so called wool stone (Wollestein), equal to about 14 kilograms.

The new town was a centre of craft and trade for the inhabitants from the surrounding areas. Its location on the main route from Poznań to Lower Silesia and Lusatia as well as wool trade and cloth manufacture led to its rapid growth. Originally, there were only 3 markets and a weekly fair. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, there were already 11 markets, out of which the most important ones still remained the markets for wool.

As a result of religious wars and the Thirty Years' war, many Protestants from neighbouring Silesia started to arrive in Wolsztyn in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Their protector was the heiress of Wolsztyn at the time, Anna Miękicka, who in 1642 founded for them a wooden church.

For several centuries, Wolsztyn remained a privately owned town. From 1443 till the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it belonged to the Sepieński family and then it became the property of the Łowiecki family. In 1507, it was divided between the two lines of the family. Starting from 1575, one part of Wolsztyn belonged to the house of Powodowski and the other one to the Miękicki family, starting 1637. It was the family of Powodowski who eventually merged the two parts. The town remained in their possession until 1671. In the years of 1671-75, Wolsztyn was a property of the Górajski family, and after them until 1728, it belonged to the family of Niegolewski.



Old Wolsztyn foundation privilege from 1469

# HISTORY



After them, until 1890 it stayed in the hands of the Gajewski family and then, until the outbreak of the Second World War, it was the property of the family of Mycielski.

The life of Wolsztyn in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries was marked by fires and plagues, which made the town fall to decline and then recover from devastation. The town was seriously damaged in the fire of 1634, and in 1656 the army going through Wolsztyn during the Polish-Swedish War brought the plague. In 1691, another fire damaged part of the town, but this time witchcraft was to blame. Two women accused of the crime were burned at the



stake. Another disaster came in the years of 1709-10, when an epidemic of bubonic plague devastating Europe arrived in Wolsztyn. In 1728, the town faced another serious fire, which again damaged it severely.

In 1793 as a result of the Second Partition of Poland, the town with its neighbouring areas came under the Prussian rule. In 1807, it was incorporated into the Duchy of Warsaw, and eventually under the provisions of the Congress of Vienna in 1815, it became part of the Grand Duchy of Posen. Administratively, from 1793 to 1919, Wolsztyn was located in Babimost District.

According to the findings of the Prussian Indaganda, a survey of cities conducted by the Prussian authorities in 1793, Wolsztyn was a property of widowed Duchess Gajewska and had a population of 1 416 inhabitants, mainly Poles. There were 193 houses, one of them made of brick, and the streets were paved. There was a town hall, churches (Catholic and Lutheran), a chapel located next to the town owners' manor house, a school, a brewery, an inn, public baths, and 11 windmills. The inhabitants' main occupation was craft. There were 60 shoemakers, 20 tailors, 16 cloth manufacturers, 13 furriers, 9 bakers, 6 butchers, and 30 merchants trading cloth and flour. All year round there were 11 active markets and a fair every Friday.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century started tragically. On September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1810, the most serious fire in the whole history of Wolsztyn broke out. Within a few hours, the fire destroyed the town hall, the Evangelical church, the synagogue, the tower of the Catholic church, the brewery, and 164 out of 225 houses. The reconstruction of the town took three decades. It was carried out according to the site development plan made by architect Scholz in 1811. The site plan is considered the oldest preserved document showing the site arrangement of Wolsztyn. The current old town buildings, the town hall and the Evangelical church (now a Catholic church of the Lord Ascension) date back to that time.

Despite such a tragic beginning, the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought Wolsztyn prosperity. Although formally it was located in Babimost District, Wolsztyn was the seat of the most important institutions: landrat's office (governor), municipal court, lands tribunal, as well as administration and education institutions. The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought the development of industry. Many factories were opened, including a winery, sawmills, a cigar factory, a factory of agricultural machinery. In 1886, the town was connected with Zbąszyń with the first railway line (lengthened to Leszno in 1895 and to Sulechów in 1905) and with Poznań via Grodzisk Wielkopolski.

Wollstein König-Strasse

## HISTORY



Wolsztyn returned to Poland in 1919 under the resolutions of the Treaty of Versailles.

In 1920, Wolsztyn became the capital of newly formed Wolsztyn County, covering the area of 814 km<sup>2</sup>. However; this frontier county did not have much chance to develop. The town, which before the First World War was inhabited also by Germans and Jews, in the interwar period was in 90% populated by Poles. In 1938, it had 4 880 residents.

After the outbreak of World War II, Germans entered the town on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1939. The occupation lasted until the Red Army liberated the town on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 1945. The occupation period was marked with tragic events like persecution of the Polish population, arrests, mass executions, and deportations to concentration camps or forced labour. On a former farm in Komorowo, the Nazis set up a Prisoner-of-War camp – Stalag XXI C Wollstein. Originally, the prisoners detained there were only Poles. They



were later joined by English and French POWs, and after 1941 also by Soviet ones. Today, a memorial stone and a plaque issued in 1971 commemorate the 4 000 POWs who lost their lives here.

After WW II, Wolsztyn resumed the County seat within the borders of Poznań Province. In 1948, its population reached almost 5 000 residents. Due to the administration reform of 1975, when counties were closed and communes were introduced, the former Wolsztyn County was divided between the Provinces of Poznań, Leszno and Zielona Góra. The town and the commune of Wolsztyn became part of Zielona Góra Province for many years. Only after another administration reform of January 1st, 1999, was Wolsztyn County restored. It is now part of Wielkopolska (Greater Poland) Province and includes the urban-rural commune of Wolsztyn as well as the communes of Siedlec and Przemęt. It covers the area of 680 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of 56 000 inhabitants.

Today, Wolsztyn has 13 000 residents. It is both an industrial and service town with highly developed furniture, food and metal industries. It is a crucial centre of education, culture and tourism.



# WIELKOPOLSKA UPRISING\*



foto: Jerzy Hironowski

12

\* Wielkopolska (Greater Poland) Uprising of 1918-1919

Wolsztyn was liberated by the Polish insurgents, who captured the town in a daring attack on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1919. In due course, Wolsztyn became a concentration point for the insurgents before further fights for Kargowa and Babimost. Today, a statue of the Wielkopolska Insurgent, sculpted by Agnieszka Lisiak-Skórka, commemorates these events. It was erected on the market square in front of the town hall on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014, on the 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Allied-German cease-fire in Trier, which put an end to the uprising.

Two figures are particularly important for the Wolsztyn history of the uprising, lieutenants Stanisław Siuda from Błotnica and Kazimierz Zenkteler from Poznań, a commander of the insurgent divisions in the western front, e.g. in Babimost district. In a meeting with Zenkteler in already liberated Grodzisk Wielkopolski, Stanisław Siuda came up with a daring plan of liberating Wolsztyn and Rostarzewo. The decision was made to attack Wolsztyn at night on January 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>.

The insurgent divisions left Rakoniewice and were to attack Wolsztyn from three sides simultaneously. The first division was to attack from the south (omitting Rostarzewo), the second - from the north, along Berzyńskie Lake, preventing the potential retreat of the enemy. The third division, after capturing Rostarzewo, was to move to Wolsztyn from the east. The insurgents entered the town in the early morning of January 5<sup>th</sup>, from the direction of Lipowa Street.

After the fights which enabled the insurgents to capture a big part of the town (including the market square and a part of today's 5 Stycznia Street until the Evangelical church), the Germans proposed negotiations. As a result, an agreement was reached pursuant to which both the insurgents and the German army were to leave the town. Another clause of the agreement stated that the whole Babimost district would not be manned either by the Polish or German soldiers. When the terms of the agreement were announced by Kazimierz Zenkteler in the market square in the presence of about

1 000 insurgents, an argument started. The insurgents did not intend to respect the agreement terms and spontaneously attacked the western part of the town. The fights started again. The Germans, whose Grenzschutz division had entered Wolsztyn on January 1st, used cannons and machine guns. It was only the insurgents' attack from the side of Berzyńskie Lake behind the railway tracks and the upcoming insurgent troops that broke the German defence. The Germans retreated in panic to Sulechów. Starting January 8<sup>th</sup>, the Poles began taking over the administration in Wolsztyn.



foto: Jerzy Hironowski

## RENOWNED FIGURES



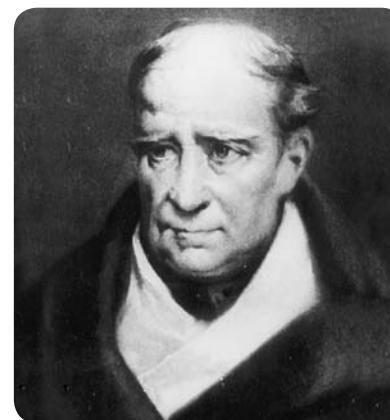
### **WOJCIECH DANKOWSKI (1760-1836)**

A composer and violinist of the classicism era, he received musical education in the Cistercian monastery in Obra, where he created his first compositions. Around 1779, he was the monastery musician. Later, on he worked for the cathedral in Gniezno and the Parish Church in Poznań. He composed mainly religious works (masses, requiems, motets, litanies), which were popular in his times.



### **JANUSZ BOGDAN FALIŃSKI (1934-2004)**

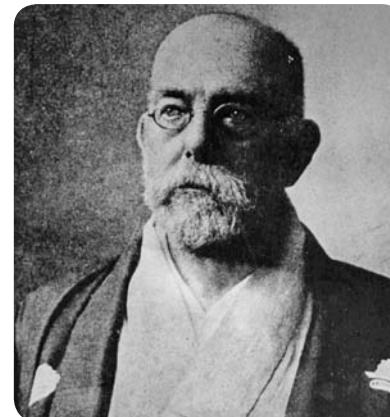
An ecologist and botanist, a professor of Warsaw University, an author of 200 scientific and popular-scientific publications, including a tourist guide to Wolsztyn County. He was a member of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Italian Academy of Forest Studies and New York Academy of Sciences.



### **JÓZEF MARIA HOEHNE-WROŃSKI (1776-1853)**

Born in Wolsztyn as the eldest son of the Czech architect, Antoni Hohne, the constructor of the parish church in Wolsztyn, he was an outstanding mathematician, physicist, philosopher, the creator of the messianic doctrine in Polish philosophy, also an economist and a lawyer. Nowadays, his memorial bust (sculpted by Józef Petruka) standing in the square which bears his name and a memorial plaque on the house in 3 Kościelna Street, where he was born, commemorate this genius scientist.

## RENOWNED FIGURES



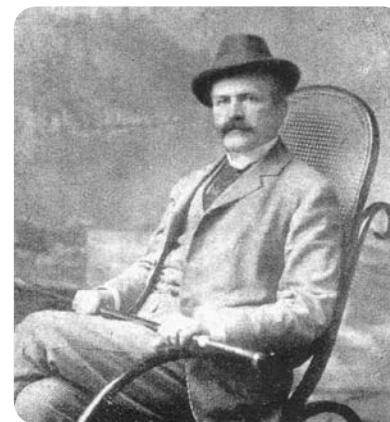
### **ROBERT KOCH (1843-1910)**

A medical doctor and microbiologist, he identified the causative agents of anthrax and tuberculosis. In 1905, he received the Nobel Prize. In the 1870s he was a County doctor in Wolsztyn. Today, there is a museum devoted to his memory located in the building where he lived and worked. Moreover, in the square in Dr Koch Street (near the church), his memorial bust has been unveiled.



### **KLEMENS MODLIŃSKI (1865-1943)**

A mayor of Wolsztyn in the interwar period, he was the only mayor staying in office for such a long time in the whole Province of Poznań. He was a true host of the town actively participating in the works of the local government as well as social organisations present in the area. Thanks to his tolerant and understanding attitude, he earned respect and admiration in all religious and political circles.



### **STEFAN MYCIELSKI (1863-1913)**

The lord of the Wolsztyn castle manor as well as the farms in Komorowo, Tłoki, Barłożnia and Berzyna, he frequently participated in the patriotic and social activity in Wolsztyn County. He financially supported the construction of the chapel at the orphanage in Wolsztyn. He was the vice president of Bank Ludowy „Unlimited Liability Partnership in Wolsztyn”. In 1911, he rebuilt the palace in Komorowo from the neo-renaissance to neo-classical style.

## RENOWNED FIGURES



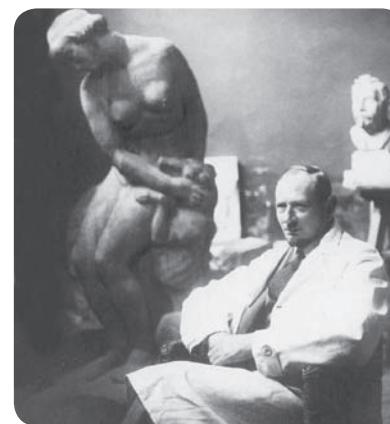
### **STANISŁAW PLATER (1784-1851)**

A geographer, historian, writer, born in Lithuania, he came to Wielkopolska (Greater Poland) in 1818. He married Antonina Gajewska and settled in Wroniawy. He carried out scientific research in the fields of geography and history, publishing „Geography of Eastern Europe”, „Atlas of the Polish History”, and „Atlas of Wars in Poland in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries”. He was interested in theatre and literature. He is the patron of the Public Library of Wolsztyn Town and Commune. His statue stands in front of the library, and the parish church holds his epitaph.



### **EDWARD PRZYMUSZAŁA (1915-1979)**

A Wolsztyn born sculptor and painter, a student of Marcin Rożek, with whom he worked. A graduate of the State University of Arts in Poznań, the author of a huge statue of a Soviet officer at the war cemetery in Wolsztyn located at 5 Stycznia Street. He created the figure of Virgin Mary in the parish church in Wolsztyn as well as commemorative plaques of Maria Curie-Skłodowska and Józef Hoene-Wroński in Wolsztyn.



### **MARCIN ROŻEK (1885-1944)**

A sculptor, painter, the author of statues of Bolesław I the Brave in Gniezno and the Sower in Luboń, he painted a lot of pictures, e.g. „Siesta”, „Piast welcoming guests”, or the cycle „Apocalypse”. He spent his childhood in Wolsztyn; in 1934 he moved to the house he had designed by himself. Today, his house is a museum dedicated to the artist's memory.

## CULTURE



fol. Jerzy Hirowski

Cultural institutions, song and dance ensembles, musical festivals, picnics... One can say that culture is doing well in the town and commune of Wolsztyn. Both the residents and tourists have plenty to choose.

**Wolsztyn Cultural Centre** - founded in 1973- is the main institution responsible for cultural activity in the commune. The workshops, ensembles and interest groups it offers attract children, the youth and adults, who can develop their artistic and cultural interests. The centre organizes numerous meetings, exhibitions, concerts, theatre performances and outdoor events, such as Wolsztyn Days, the Polish Dance Festival "Wolsztyn Dances Full Steam Ahead", or Folklore Meetings in Wolsztyn Region.

An ensemble that can boast decades of history is **the Song and Dance Ensemble "Kębłowo"** from Kębłowo village in Wolsztyn commune. It was founded in 1975 and is now the pride of the Wolsztyn Cultural Centre. The en-

semble, which includes 130 members, cultivates the local traditions and its performances are extremely popular not only in Poland but also abroad. In its repertoire, there are dances and songs from western Wielkopolska (Greater Poland), dances from the regions of Szamotuły, Silesia and Lublin as well as Polish national dances (the kujawiak, the oberek, the krakowiak, the mazurka, and the polonaise). Every year, the ensemble organizes Christmas Carol Singing for Choirs and Singing Groups, which takes place in the local St. Bartholomew's church.



fol. fotikis.pl

# CULTURAL EVENTS



## STEAM LOCOMOTIVE PARADE

Every year at the end of April and beginning of May, steam locomotives from Poland and Europe as well as train lovers from all over the world arrive in Wolsztyn. It is a unique opportunity to see fully functioning steam locomotives and to ride trains pulled by them. Although the whole event is accompanied by numerous additional activities, including for example the Light-Sound-Steam Show, the parade itself raises the most emotions when, as the organizers say, the locomotives parade like models on the catwalk.

## WOLSZTYN DAYS

This is a festival that takes place every year at the end of June. The local authorities prepare plenty of attractions for the town and commune residents as well as for tourists. There are steam locomotive parades, motorcycle parades, vintage vehicle rallies, cycling races, kayak races, sailing regattas, street runs, football and beach ball tournaments, theatre and music workshops, exhibitions and concerts.

## FOLKLORE MEETINGS IN WOLSZTYN REGION

Since 2011 at the end of June, there have been meetings of folk groups from various regions of Poland and the world. The groups cultivate and practise their local dances and customs. Their concerts, which take place in Wolsztyn and Kęłtowo, provide a great opportunity to promote the wealth of regional and foreign folklore.



foto: archiwum WDK

## INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ORGAN AND CHAMBER MUSIC

The first International Festival of Organ and Chamber Music took place in Wolsztyn in 1996. Since then, every year organists and chamber musicians from all over the world have been coming to Wolsztyn. The concerts take place in the former Evangelical church, now the Catholic church of the Lord Ascension, every Sunday in August. The recitals performed with the use of outstanding Ludwig Hartig's organs from 1832 attract particular attention.

## INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF COUNTRY MUSIC

Promotion of pure country music and environmental values is the corner stone of the musical festival "Pure Country", which has been taking place in Wolsztyn since 2010. The organizer of the festival is the Foundation "Pure Country" in cooperation with Wolsztyn authorities. The festival takes place in August. The participants include famous country musicians from Poland, Europe and the USA. The festival also promotes young generation musicians and their first achievements.

## AUTUMN PICNIC

This is a repetitive event which takes place on one of Sundays in September in the West Wielkopolska Folk Buildings Heritage Park. It provides an opportunity to remember the old traditions or show artisans' workshops, whose work can only be admired in heritage parks or in the offer of cultural events. The picnic is accompanied by concerts, games for children and sports events.



# SPORTS EVENTS



foto: fotokiks.pl



## WOLSZTYN SAILING WEEK

Every year, the Wolsztyn Sailing Week marks the beginning of a new sailing season. The regattas are held on Berzyńskie Lake for sport classes (Optimist, Europa, OKD, Finn, Hornet) and tourist classes (Omega, cabin). The sailing races are organized by the Wolsztyn Sailing Club.

## POLSKA MAN TRIATHLON

Wolsztyn became the triathlon centre in 2013. Triathlon includes competition in swimming, cycling and running. The competitions are held for 3 distances: long (3.8 km/180 km/42.2km), medium (1.9 km/90 km/ 21.2 km), and short (1.5 km/30 km/ 10 km). Apart from the competitions for adults, the offer includes the category Polska Man Mini for the youngest contestants.



## KACZMAREK ELECTRIC MTB

Picturesque routes crossing Wielkopolska (Greater Poland) and Ziemia Lubuska (Lubusz Region) are an ideal venue for cycling competitions both for amateurs and professional sports people. The idea appeared among a group of cycling friends. The patron of the event is Cezary Kaczmarek, a cycling lover and the president of the Wolszyn-based company Kaczmarek Electric, which is the main sponsor of the race. In the first race for Grand Prix Kaczmarek Electric MTB in 2010, there were 385 contestants. Today, several thousand cyclists participate in the event, which takes place at the turn of September and October.

Sports events calendar includes also the street run „Wolsztyńska dziesiątka” (in May), the International Kayaking Championships (in September), the Polish Kayaking Regattas (in September), and the Kite Competition held at the airfield in Powodowo.

Wolsztyn



at full steam!

**Wolsztyn Administration office and Tourist Information**

ul. Doktora Kocha 12a, 64-200 Wolsztyn  
[www.wolsztyn.pl](http://www.wolsztyn.pl); [fb.com/gciwolsztyn](https://fb.com/gciwolsztyn)

**Purchase of regional souvenirs:**

**Shop MASTER**, ul.5 Stycznia 39, Wolsztyn  
**Tourist Information**, ul. Doktora Kocha 12a, Wolsztyn

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