



**Jihočeský kraj**  
The Tourism Support Grant Programme 2020

*The guide*  
to the sights and legends of Vodňany

school in Protivín. *The Memorial Hall of František Herites* (1851 – 1929) introduces a Vodňany native, a pharmacist, a writer of the novels set in the small town, a literary editor, for the certain time also a mayor of the town and especially a leader of the cultural events in Vodňany. The furniture and the things from the Herites family estate create the atmosphere of the town household of the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Remarkable is also the large family library, where are hidden lots of foreign-language publications, but especially the presents from their literary friends with the personal dedications. *The Memorial Hall of Julius Zeyer* (1841 – 1901) gets to know the 19<sup>th</sup> century Czech literature important personality. This writer lived in Vodňany in 1887 – 1899 predominantly in the baroque house “U čápů” and he was a friend of F. Herites and a poet O. Mokřý (1854 – 1899). Enchanted by this small town and his surroundings he made a lot of his friends visit it (Z. Braunerová, A. Chittussi, F. Bílek, A. Heyduk) and he wrote here many of his books. Exhibited collection of ceramics, china, glass and textile introduces Zeyer as a passionate collector and traveller. Neo-Renaissance furniture from the 80s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century tells us not only about the taste of the owner but also about the need of the men's household of that time. *In the room of dr. Žahour* there are shown the portraits and personal things of Vodňany personalities (J. Zrzavý, O. Mokřý, B. Žahour, V. Kopista...) and a part of a library of M. Havel Gelastus Vodňanský from the 16<sup>th</sup> century.



## The Town Museum and Gallery

In 1895, supported especially by the writers J. Zeyer, F. Herites and O. Mokřý, there was organized the ethnographic exhibition collecting the first items of the future museum collection. Its installation was realized 10 years later in the Town Hall. The first custodian of the *new museum* was a teacher Haštal Mostecký, who took the main credit for development of the museum between two wars. Since 1959 the museum has used the premises of *the former synagogue*. From the 1<sup>st</sup> May until the end of September it is possible to visit the exposition called *The Fishing Tradition in Vodňany* about the local fish farming, fishing and miller's trade. It was created in cooperation with The Secondary Fisheries School. All the year round *in the Town Hall* there is opened the *Town Gallery*, founded in 1967. Dr. B. Žahour gave to his birth town 157 paintings by 95 Czech painters of the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (O. Blažiček, V. Brožík, O. Bubeníček, A. Kalvoda, F. Kaván, K. V. Mašek, J. Panuška, J. Ullmann, J. Úprka, F. Ženíšek ...). His act inspired a lot of other donors and thanks to them there came to being the valuable collection of works of art, which has been supported by the goal-directed purchases since 1992 made by the Foundation of Zdeněk Novák and Marie Nováková. The largest collection of the drawings is on the show in *the Hall of Mikoláš Aleš* (1852 – 1913). They are the designs and sketches for the decoration of the Decanal church in Vodňany and the

## The former royal town of Vodňany

You are in the town surrounded by the ponds, situated on the river Blanice in the heart of south-

ern Bohemia. Fish farming tradition and opportunities for sports fishing in the picturesque landscape with loads of historical sights are the main reasons to visit this town and its surroundings. The name of the town is derived from its position in a wetland area by the lower reaches of the river. The original name Vodna meant a place where there was water in every season. By derivation, the name Vodňany was created, meaning a group of people living in Vodna. That's why Vodňany was once called Aquilicia Bohemorum, Bohemian Venice.

The ground plan of the town and archaeological sources date the origins of the town to the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, so there is a possible link with the wave of colonization during the reign of King Přemysl Otakar II (1233 – 1278). The oldest known written record of Vodňany is dated to 1318 when a certain valter from Vodňany is mentioned as being a notified of summons to appear in court. The second preserved reference from 1327 mentions Vodňany as a place where toll is paid. The most important medieval document is the privilege of King John of Luxembourg from 1335/1336, which is still preserved in the town archives.

In the medieval mining of precious metals in the nearby Svobodné Mountains and panning for gold on a golden field who is holding a shield with the Czech lion and is surrounded by mining tools, which was preserved on a seal from 1562. Visitors can see it in this form on the building of the town hall, on the fountain in the middle of the Square of Liberty and on the eastern side of the decanal church. The modern town flag in green and gold, which has been used for the ceremonies since 1996, was created according to the historical crest.

In the town and annexed villages there live about 7000 inhabitants. Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2003 Vodňany, as the town with widespread competence, has been in charge of the present Vodňany region. It's the member of the Blanice-Otava region which contributes to the rise of tourism in the region.

## The legends

### The clever ones from Vodňany

In 1646 there were met the emperor Ferdinand III (1637 – 1657) through the muddy town. On the basis of the townspeople complaints about the lack of money for square cobblestones he decided to help them with money for useful thing. When visiting the town for the second time he founded out, ro his amazement, that new cobblestones were only in the streets (in front of the burghers' houses) leading to the square which was still full of mud. Those ones then required a new contribution, because as it was said: "The emperor himself can see that he didn't give enough money". In this way Ferdinand III paid for the cobblestones twice.



## The carp in the cage

Under the reign of Maria Theresia (1740 – 1780) Vodňany towns-folk became a laughing stock and they were said to breed a carp in the cage on the church tower. In 1734 after great fire the tower was restored and in memory of a dean Antonín Jan Vokoun it was decorated by his initials and fish with a year. It was probably the laughing stock for the then windings. This sight hasn't been preserved. Now there is the town crest on the east side of the tower, on the south side there is the Czech royal crest and on the west side there can be seen the personal crest of a dean Vokoun – 2 perches in the golden field with blue stripe. It commemorates the credits of the crest holder for the restoration of the church and for the casting of the biggest bell of Vodňany.



## The town walls and a bridge over the millrace canal

### with St. John of Nepomuk statue.

Moated fortifications have survived all around the inner town. In the present form with 4 preserved prismatic bastions they come from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, built on older foundations. 3 medieval town gates (of Bavorov, Písek, Týn) and one modern one (New) were demolished in about 1840. A medieval technical relic with economic and defensive importance is the millrace along the north edge of the town core. Nearby the former Gate of Písek the canal is spanned by the low stone bridge with crucifix and the statue of St. John of Nepomuk (about 1730). This picturesque quiet place is called Vodňany Venice.

### The Decanal Church of the Birth of Virgin Mary

The decanal church was established concurrently with the town. There was built a new pres-btery in the style of high Gothic in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century by Mr. Jáklik and his son Václav. In the 80s of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the northern nave with an organ gallery and entrance hall was adjusted. The church was extensively damaged by fire in 1722, then it was restored. Apparently at this time the church tower was decorated by fire in 1722, then it was restored. Vodňany, coats of arms of the Czech kingdom and of at that time a dean A. Vokoun. It was thoroughly re-Gothicized in 1894 – 1897 by R. Seckh according to the designs of J. Mockner. At the same time the interior was decorated by the mural frescos, the gables on the west front were decorated with graffiti and the windows in presbytery with window paintings after the designs of Mikoláš Aleš. It was furnished with pseudo-Gothic furnishings. On the vault over the high altar there are painted 4 carps of Vodňany. Aleš' s original sketches together with the individual items of the original movable charactrs can be found and seen in the collection of the Town Museum and Gallery. In the 64-meter high tower there hang 6 bells, the largest one

## The silver statues in the underground tunnel

The altar in Vodňany church was decorated by 12 silver statues of Apostles long ago. In the war times they were hidden in the secret place. It is said that from the corner house at the end of former Hrnčířská (Heritesova) Street there leads the underground tunnel to the villages of Píražák where there are the statues hidden in the abandoned gallery. The present Heritesova Street has 2 ends and at each end there are 2 houses. The right house hasn't been revealed yet.



## The bird man

At Fucík, who won his nickname Kudlíčka. It is said that he made Jewish prayer room where he frightened to death the praying Jews. One of his attempts finished as landing on the window of the then wings and he was flying with the help of air bladders full of match gas. His primary has neither been confirmed nor refuted. "The bird man" was buried in the cemetery in Bílá Hůrka in 1804 and 50 years later the Jews of Vodňany built their synagogue which has been preserved until these days.

### The oldest and the youngest statues

In Vodňany there are only 5 statues on the built up area of 307 ha. The oldest and also the most favourite one is the Statue of St. John of Nepomuk on the bridge over the millrace in the Mlýnská Street. Its creating was inspired by the dean of Vodňany Antonín Jan Vokoun in about 1730. The statue of St. patron of good reputation was partly financed from the penalties for mutual insults among the townsfolk. Statuary and building work was done by Mr. Vojtěch Větrovský with his journeyman. The statue was restored in 2007. On the contrary the youngest statue in Vodňany called "The butterfly on the flower" was created by the academic sculptor Miroslav Hudeček from Kácany near Prague in 1977 and it was situated in front of the newly built school in the Bavorovská Street. His wife Olga Hudečková, a ceramist, decorated the foyer of the school. On the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening the school Mr. and Mrs. Hudeček received the honorary citizenship from the representatives of the town.

### The Fountain in the Square of Liberty

It was adapted in 1928 according to the design of J. Kvasnička, the author of the allegorical statue of Liberty. Below the statue, on the middle column, there can be seen both the municipal coat of arms and symbols of the activities done in the town – fish farming, agriculture and industry.

### The former synagogue

The plain building in the classicist style. Since its completion 1860 to the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war former synagogue there is the building of the former Jewish school from 1868. The cemetery of the Jews of Vodňany, founded in 1839, can be found near the village of Píražák.

ments in 1959 it has been used as the exhibition area of the Town Museum. Behind the it served for the diving services of the local Jewish religious community. After the improve-

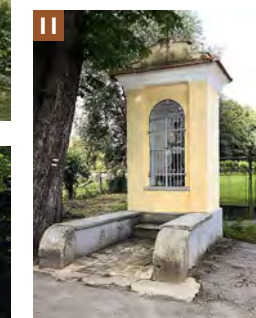
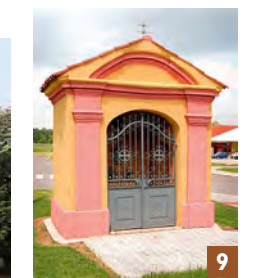
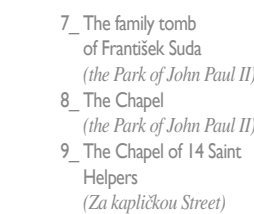
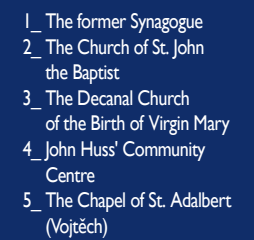
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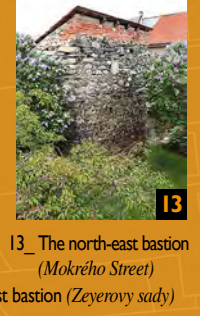




10\_ The Chapel of Virgin Mary (Zátiší, at the Secondary Fisheries School)  
11\_ The Chapel of St. John of Nepomuk (Rechle)



12\_ The north moat wall (Barviřská Street)



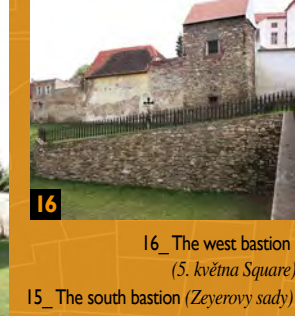
13\_ The north-east bastion (Mokrého Street)



14\_ The south-east bastion (Zeyerovy sady)



15\_ The south bastion (Zeyerovy sady)



16\_ The west bastion (5. května Square)



17\_ Petr Chelčický (Zeyerovy sady), by František Bílek 1914



18\_ The allegorical Statue of Liberty or Republic – the Fountain (the Square of Liberty), by Josef Kvasnička 1928



19\_ St. John of Nepomuk – bridge (Mlýnská Street), about 1730



20\_ The Butterfly on the Flower – the area of the basic school (Bavorovská Street), by Miroslav Hudeček 1977



21\_ Jan Žižka of Trocnov (Žižka Square), by Josef Kvasnička 1928



## LEGEND

- 1 – 5\_ Churches and prayer rooms
- 6 – 11\_ Small religious sights
- 12 – 16\_ Bastions
- 17 – 21\_ Statues
- 22 – 35\_ Important buildings – sights – monuments
- XX\*\_ The more distant objects which are out of the map

## The memorial plaques:

- 36\_ PhMr. František Herites (1851 – 1929), a pharmacist and a writer (The Square of Liberty No 1)
- 37\_ Váša Příhoda (1900 – 1960), a world-famous violinist (The Square of Liberty No 8)
- 38\_ Dr. Otakar Mokřý (1854 – 1899), a notary and a poet (The Square of Liberty No 194)
- 39\_ Josef Kajetán Tyl (1808 – 1856), an actor and a playwright (The Square of Liberty No 23)
- 40\_ The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WWII (The Square of Liberty No 24)
- 41\_ Master Jan Kampanus (about 1570 – 1622), a writer and a rector of the Prague University (Alešova Street No 50, the building of the basic school)
- 42\_ Julius Zeyer (1841 – 1901), a writer, a playwright and a poet (Jan Zrzavý (1890 – 1977), painter (Zeyerovy sady No 43)
- 43\_ Dr. Antonín Majer (1826 – 1880), a technical expert and a founder of technical schools in Bohemia (Majerova Street No 164)
- 44\_ František Zemlička (about 1897 – 1945), a member of the partisan army Šumava II (Kampanova Street No 330, railway station)
- 45\_ Mons. Tomáš Beránek (1897 – 1954), dean of Vodňany, a political prisoner (Alešova Street No 44, deanery)
- 46\_ Arnošt Brok (1874 – 1942) and his family, victims of the Holocaust (Na Váše Street No 207)

## Monuments and memorials:

- 47\_ The memorial to the casualties of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> WW (Zeyerovy sady, park)
- 48\_ The memorial to the casualties of the communistic despotism (Zeyerovy sady, park)
- 49\_ To Dr. Ing. Theodor Mokřý (1857 – 1945), an expert of forestry and fishing (Zátiší, the Secondary Fisheries School)
- 50\_ To the millers in the Blanice valley for the help in need (Mlýnská Street)
- 51\_ Memorial stone by the Tree of the Third Millennium (Elektrárnská Street, by the bus station)
- 52\_ The tomb of a writer František Herites and his wife Marie (the Park of John Paul II)
- 53\_ The tomb of the Mokřý family (the Park of John Paul II)
- 54\_ The tomb of violinist Váša Příhoda (1900 – 1965) (cemetery by the Chapel of St. Adalbert)
- 55\_ The fountain of 25 years of Aarwangen – Vodňany friendship (Na Váše Street No 207)
- 56\_ The benches in honour and memory of Václav Havel (1936 – 2011), the first president of the Czech Republic (Bavorovská Street)

## Significant trees:

- 57\_ Oak tree (between the railway and the road near the campsite Pražák) – 25 meters high, the girth of the trunk 532 cm, the age of 260 years, the given data come from 2001 when it was proclaimed protected. It was called after the famous Vodňany writer František Herites – The Oak of Herites.
- 58\_ Lime tree (at the chapel next to the building of the Secondary Fisheries School) – 23 m high, the girth of the trunk 527 cm, the age of 261 years, the given data come from 2001 when it was proclaimed protected.
- 59\_ Lime of Freedom I (grounds of the Bavorovská Basic School) – planted by pupils of the school on March 21, 1990.
- 60\_ Lime of Freedom II (in the small park by the senior citizens' home) – planted by representatives of the town on March 30, 1990.
- 61\_ Lime of Freedom III (originally in Husova Street, in 2012 moved to Radomilická Street) – planted by the members of the Club of Friends of Dřemlín pond from Železný Brod in November 1990.
- 62\_ Tree of Earth Day I (park in Holečkova Street) – copper beech, 1<sup>st</sup> solitary tree planted by members of CA Krajina on the occasion of the Earth Day on April 22, 1998. The tradition continues every year.
- 63\_ Lime of Partnership (park by the Culture Centre) – planted on the occasion of signing a partnership agreement between the town of Vodňany and Wartberg ob der Aist (Austria) on June 23, 2001.
- 64\_ Tree of the Third Millennium (Elektrárnská Street) – the Japanese cherry (it has been replaced by the lime tree) was planted in 2001 as an act of gratitude of the physically handicapped to the town – by the bus station at the memorial stone.
- 65\_ Oak for protection against floods (beneath the dam of Příbramovský pond) – planted by the members of the Club of Friends of Dřemlín pond from Železný Brod and fishermen from Vodňany on November 5, 2004. The oak was planted in the place where the dam was damaged during the floods in 2002. Members of the club contributed to the repair works.
- 66\_ Lime of the Czech-Polish Friendship (John Paul II Park) – planted by the representatives of the town of Vodňany and of the town of Sieraków on April 30, 2005.
- 67\_ Lime of Friendship between Slovenia and the Czech Republic (park by the Culture Centre) – on the occasion of the 87<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the constitution of an independent Czechoslovak state planted by the ambassador of the Slovenian Republic and the mayor of Vodňany on October 27, 2005.
- 68\_ The Tree of the Republic (the Park of John Paul II). The linden tree was planted on October 26, 2018 in order to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of Czechoslovakia.