

CRUZZANA

GEOPARK NATURTEJO DA MESETA MERIDIONAL-EUROPEAN AND GLOBAL GEOPARK - MONTHLY REPORT

In this issue: – Geopark is sport in Nature! – New geotouristic hiking trail – National Launch of the Educational Services Guide from the Mines Route in Castelo Branco – Geopark integrates the European Route of the Megalithic Culture ...and more!



Olá/Hola/Ciao/Bonjour/Γειά σου/Hallo/God Dag/Salut/Zdravo/Hello/Ahoj/Helo/Helló/ Hei

Geo-histories of our places and people: Nossa Senhora da Graça

The town of Nisa is composed by two parts that are favoured with complementing each other; Nossa Senhora da Graca is the section that takes us back in time. Raised in the granite plain and closed within strong walls, overlooks from here the invisible and deep valley of the Nisa Stream that weaves in notable meanders, one of which is classified as Site of Geological Significance from Naturtejo Geopark of UNESCO. Not far, 3km Northeast, in an iconic summit next to the river is found the origins of the loyal town of Nisa. Nowadays a notable archaeological complex protected as Public Interest and an unforgettable viewpoint, Nisa-a-Velha, ancient Romanized fortification, raised to municipality by D. Afonso II and razed by D. Afonso Sanches, have much to gain with a deep archaeological intervention which could rehabilitate its urban matrix. In the depths of the valley is located the bridge of Roman origin, a very well preserved one, and also the obvious Roman road that once connected the fortification to the world. Not far it should be located the dam that stored water for the great Roman mine of Conhal do Arneiro, carried over the valley, several kilometres, by the "Vala dos Mouros", a structure and a trail that could be worth to rehabilitate. The Hermitage of Nossa Senhora das Prazeres, also a property of Public Interest, stands there since the 15th century, or maybe the 16th century. Finally, the Hermitage of Nossa Senhora da Graça reminds that Nisa-a-Velha and its ruins crystalized in time, somewhere in the 14th century.

D. Dinis built the "new" town of Nisa in a more pleasant place for agriculture, abandoned the poor steep schist soils in detriment of the granite plains, with more fertile soils and plenty of water. The Stream of Nisa would be the trench of hard transposition for those who came from North and East, as the plane in which the new town was located opened itself towards South where the danger of invasion was then on about to disappear forever. The strong Walls, nowadays a National Monument, delimit a well-structured urban area, which today still breathes from the Medieval times. Notwithstanding, the streets are well traced, despite narrow, and the facades, doors and windows accumulate, sometimes, more than 5 centuries. The steps in the sidewalk and in the stoned paths break silences, at times only crossed by the sound of the White stork, which nests in the Tower of the Mother Church of Nossa Senhora da Graça. Besides this imposing church, this can be accessed through the Town Gate, flanked with towers. It's worth to range the borough, all of the streets and one at the time, slowly until we became part of it, until we arrive at the Gate of Montalvão. In the Municipality Square we'll find a group of remarkable buildings with 18th century features, which begins by the pillory in its center, rebuilt in marble in 1877, the fountain, the Mercy Church, the Town Hall and the old Hospital. Afterwards, the Embroidery and Clay Museum reminds the importance and the singularity of the Handcraft of Nisa, which brings recognition to the region, in particular the Stoned Pottery. In the end, the climbing to the tall tower that flanks the Gate of Montalvão to look far beyond the roofs, towards the amazing natural guartzite wall of the S. Miguel Mountain. It makes wanting to stay a little longer...



Olá/Hola/Ciao/Bonjour/Γειά σου/Hallo/God Dag/Salut/Zdravo/Hello/Ahoj/Helo/Helló/ Hei

The area of Nossa Senhora da Graça reaches 37,38km2 for 1590 inhabitants. This keeps some of the most remarkable monuments and landscapes of the region. The contrast between the schists bitten by the deep erosion and the almost perfect plain in the granite, where dominates the cork forest and the pasture far out of sight, diversifies the desire to go in search of the ruins, the Moorish storage pits, the bridge of Nizorro, the landscape beyond the hill. The medieval urban mesh will be the perfect spot to see emerge the small rural tourism units or quality hostels, and linked to them the small bars and restaurants with the delicious regional gastronomy and the famous local products, such as the cheese of Nisa; they'll inevitably come by. Nisa-a-Velha as an archaeological complex joins the history of the great Roman gold mine of Conhal do Arneiro, which need a major joint intervention to Nisa truly becomes a great touristic attraction with regional impact.

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ACTIVITIES OF THE MONTH





October/November - Portuguese Geoparks in exhibition in the House of Arts and Culture of Vila Velha de Ródão. After Oleiros and Penamacor, the travelling exhibition about the "Portuguese Geoparks Forum" arrives to Vila Velha de Ródão. This is an exhibition developed by the Portuguese Geoparks under the coordination of the National Committee of UNESCO, which has been travelling around Portugal, through several geopark territories: Arouca, Azores and Terras de Cavaleiros. This exhibition invites to an itinerary of innovative experiences, introducing the excellency of this heritages internationally recognized by UNESCO. The show may be seen in the Tagus House of Arts and Culture, a privileged space in Naturtejo Geopark, which shelters the emblematic Fossil Trunks of Vila Velha de Ródão



October – Naturtejo Geopark integrates the European Route of the Megalithic Culture. The European Route of the Megalithic Culture takes part in the program for Cultural Routes of the European Council and aims the appreciation of these important monuments through the thematic enhancement of activities and events, boosting them for tourism in a European scale.

In this regard, Naturtejo Geopark, recognized by UNESCO, which includes in its classified territory the municipalities of Castelo Branco, Idanha-a-Nova, Nisa, Oleiros, Penamacor, Proença-a-Nova and Vila Velha de Ródão, took part in this network representing a region with 305 megalithic monuments in its original form inventoried, some of them can be accessed and appreciated. The study of this heritage has a primary boost in the region with Francisco Tavares Proença Júnior, whose collection is impressive and can be visited in the Museum with his name in Castelo Branco. It stands out the work carried during the last years by the Municipality of Proença-a-Nova and by the High Tagus Studies Association, through the International Archaeological Fieldcamp, which have been studying, using innovative techniques, three dolmens that nowadays are connected between them by a hiking trail dedicated to Pre-History and are already available for the visitors. This association is still finishing the study for the Dolmen of Cabeço d'Ante, in Vila Velha de Ródão. In Nisa, the project MegaNisa, from which is part the municipality and the University of Évora in the study and appreciation of the megalithic heritage, whose the most known expression is the popular Dolmen of S. Gens, a national monument, and the recently raised once again Menhir of Patalou with astonishing scientific results and promises new interventions in the diversified and monumental legacy.

Due to the relevance of its megalithic legacy with more than 6000 years, which is related chronological and culturally with the Tagus Valley Rock Art, another archaeological heritage with major importance that the Municipality of Vila Velha de Ródão has been giving special attention, Naturtejo Geopark is the first Portuguese region integrating the European Route of the Megalithic Culture.

Actually this transnational project includes 20 regions from countries such as Germany, Holland, Spain, Sweden, Denmark and England, covering also other geoparks recognized by UNESCO such as the Geoparks Terra Vita (Germany), Sobrarbe (Spain) an Hondsrug (Holland).

With the inclusion in the European Route of the Megalithic Culture, the municipalities and entities linked to the research and promotion of the megalithic heritage in Naturtejo Geopark region count with new means of touristic disclosure with potential at a European scale, being possible to create structured routes and touristic products under the theme, without forgetting the panoply of other experiences that the territory has to offer. Highlight to the implementation of Day for the Megalithic Culture, in the last Sunday of April, in which is celebrated the megalithic culture and its manifestations and promises to bring several surprises for the geopark territory already in 2016.



October - New hiking trail discovers the Ponsul Fault. Idanha-a-Nova has a new geotouristic hiking trail. The "Trail of Boieco" was created to disclose the surroundings of the town of Idanha-a-Nova, 4 km along the scarp of the Ponsul Fault, one of Naturtejo Geopark geomonuments. Another geodiversity location is the great granite boulder known as "Boieco", which stands out by the unusual dimensions comparing to the existent boulder field existent in the area. In parallel with the geological landscape, between the plateau of Castelo Branco and the Plain of Idanha, also stands out the architectonical heritage and the traditional streets of Idanha-a-Nova.



2 to 4 October – Touristic Program "Tagus Rock Art" The new touristic program offered to a group of three tourists the opportunity to discover archaeological places like they were archaeologists. The nice group started by visiting the Tagus Valley Rock Art Interpretation Centre, in Vila Velha de Ródão. Afterwards they venture themselves in search of the Rock Art of Fratel guided by Carlos Neto de Carvalho, in the right bank of a turbulent Tagus River. Already with Nuno Coelho from the company Incentivos Outdoor they made a boat trip through the great Tagus River. At the end, they visited the traditional Olive Oil Pole Press, with a tasting of the best olive oils from the Tagus steep slopes. On the next morning, the group visited the megalithic Dolmen of S. Gens, a national monument and discovered the magnificent Conhal do Arneiro, the ancient Roman Gold Mine.

3 and **4** October – **1**^a Orienteering competition in the Municipality of Proença-a-Nova The Orienteering Trophy of Proença-a-Nova hosted by the Iberian Mountaineering and the Orienteering Club was organized in Proença-a-Nova. This stage that unveiled the Geopark landscapes was divided in three different legs: 1 medium distance leg in forest during Saturday morning; 1 sprint leg in the urban centre of Proença-a-Nova; and 1 medium distance leg in forest Sunday morning, in the outskirts of the Schist Village of Figueira. This is an important stage in the category counting for the ranking of the VITALIS Portuguese Cup of Pedestrian Orienteering, which involved around 250 athletes.



6 to 9 October - Naturtejo Geopark in the European Space Agency. Naturtejo Geopark was represented during the meeting EANA15 of the European Network Association of Astrobiology. The EANA15 took place in Noordwijk, in Holland, in the ESTEC complex of the European Space Agency. The theme of this international conference was "Astrobiology and the Space Travel". Scientists coming from all areas were invited to attend.

Andrea Baucon, Italian specialist and collaborator of Naturtejo Geopark, introduced an investigation work that is a guaranteed topic of conversation! Thisresearcher showed how the rovs operating in Mars could search for life traces through the study of paleo biological activity in the sedimentary record that has be seen to date in this planet. On the other hand, these vehicles are contributing through their journeys and their searches to a permanent exoichnological record, potentially to become preserved in Mars, which was introduced by Andrea Baucon to a specialized and enthusiastic audience. In this way, the implementation of the knowledge obtained in the Ichnological Park of Penha Garcia gains one more dimension and go beyond the limits of our planet.



9 October – Implementation of the European Chart for Sustainable Tourism. Took place in Penamacor the 3rd Meeting of the Permanent Forum for Sustainable Tourism. This was once again an important meeting, with the goal of establishing hierarchies for the Acting Lines identified in the municipal meetings. The more important and more feasible Acting Lines will subsequently take part in the Action Plan 2016-2020 of the Malcata European Chart for Sustainable Tourism. The Geological Heritage of this region is showing itself, for now, a potential element of touristic diversification.

9 October – Field Trip in Penha Garcia. This field trip was made by a class of students from the kindergarten of the Padres Redentoristas Social Centre from Castelo Branco. In this visit attended 23 kids followed by three adults and the monitor was Hugo Oliveira.



10 to 12 October – Spanish Tour Operators in Programs through Naturtejo Geopark. Two Spanish tour operators were present in the Geopark. Tierra de Fuego brought nine persons to stroll in search of the Vultures Trail, to cover a major part of the Great Trail between Monsanto – and Idanha-a-Velha, to climb the Gardunha Mountain and to discover the Fossils Trail. The tourism guides company ActiGeo guided the group throughout the trails. In its turn, Arawak gathered 54 tourists to cover the GeoTrail of Orvalho in the Muradal Mountain, the Fossils Trail in the Ichnological Park of Penha Garcia, the Boulders Trail in the Geomonument of Monsanto and the Invasions Trail, in the Portas de Rodão Natural Monument. The group was guided by the company Ponsulativo together with Sérgio Ribeiro, from Naturtejo. Although the bad weather and the unrelenting rain, the companies from the Geopark were tireless and the groups found an atmosphere of great friendship.



11 October – XI MTB marathon Trails of the Borderland. The XI MTB Marathon "Trails of the Borderland" invaded the roads, the tracks, and the sided walled paths of the municipality of Idanha-a-Nova, with a group of about 800 participants. The instable weather, raining during the race, made the trail more challenging. With determination the athletes covered 95 km in the Marathon and 55 km in the Half-Marathon.

During the race they experienced the air-taking landscapes and the tracks that offer a unique sensation of freedom, Roman roads and historical villages, and the pure pleasure of cycling.

The "Trails of the Borderland" has showed again to be one of the most prestigious MTB national events. Once again the participants found the perfect symbiosis between sport, culture and nature that are the foundations of Idanha-a-Nova as the MTB cathedral. The organization was under the Idanha-a-Nova Cycling Tourism Association (ACIN), together with the municipality of Idanha-a-Nova, the towns of Idanha-a-Nova and Alcafozes, with the support of Naturtejo Geopark.

Following the race, Armindo Jacinto congratulated ACIN by its fame conquered in the organization of big events and by the valuable contribution in the conservation and opening of tracks in the municipality.

Bruno Anselmo (Oledo – Idanha-a-Nova) won once again the marathon, for the third consecutive year, followed by Hugo Costa (Ponte de Lima) and Antonio Gordo (Montehermoso-Cáceres).

In the half-marathon, the winner was Gil Azoia (Alcobaça), followed by Rodrigo Henriques (Benedita) and Ricardo Franco (Sabugal).



13 October – Workshop "Fossils at your pleasure". This workshop was organized for a class of 5 years old students from the Padres Redentoristas Social Centre –from Castelo Branco. In the workshop the students could recognize in general some of the fossilization processes while observing some fossil samples. Afterwards, the children could shape fossils as they please, using for the occasion modelling paste, leaving them afterwards to dry. In the end of the activity the students could yet colour the fossils previously. In this activity energized by Carla Jacinto and Hugo Oliveira attended 24 students followed by the Kindergarten Teacher and the Educational Assistant.

13 to 17 October – Fam Trip for German Operator. Took place one more Fam Trip to German companies in Naturtejo Geopark. Jorge Ramos, commercial for the German market, followed 3 entrepreneurs to a visit through the infrastructures and touristic attractions in the territory.

14 October – Introduction to Naturtejo Geopark in the Course of Rural and Environmental Tourism. Carlos Neto de Carvalho was the invited guest of the Professor Dr. Isabel Margarida Antunes to talk during a 4 hour class about the geoparks and the touristic development in Naturtejo Geopark. The students attend de Course of Rural and Environmental Tourism in the College of Agronomy, and already had made a field trip to the Portas de Rodão Natural Monument, to experience the touristic offer in the region. New visits to the territory will be follow.



15, 16, 19, 20 and October – Introduction Sessions of the "Project Rivers" in the Primary and Secondary School José Silvestre Ribeiro and in the Professional School of Raia, in Idanha-a-Nova. The "Project Rivers" is a project of environmental education that aims the adoption and monitoring of a 500m river section.

In the Municipality of Idanha-a-Nova this project began its implementation in the School Year of 2012/2013 by the Education Service of the Idanha-a-Nova Municipality, with the support of Naturtejo Geopark. This school year were adopted 7 section of the Ponsul River, making a total of 3,5 km of river adopted by students and teachers from the municipality. The introduction sessions, at the school class, were intended to 126 students and 3 teachers of 6 classes (5°A; 5°B; 5°C; 8°A; 8°B; 10°A) from the Primary and Secondary School José Silvestre Ribeiro and to 19 students and 1 teacher from the Class of Vocational Education from the 3rd C.E.B. of the Professional School of Raia (EPRIN). The Monitors were Arlindo Cardosa and Hugo Oliveira. Until the end of the year it will take place two field trips to each adopted section. In the Primary and Secondary School José Silvestre Ribeiro this Project is included in the scope of the activities from the "Eco-Schools Project" promoted by the European Blue Flag Association.

17 October – CP Program through the Historical Villages. 38 visitors arrived by train to meet the historical villages of Naturtejo Geopark. The welcome was given in Idanha-a-Velha with regional cakes ("borrachões", milk cakes, water and juice) in the Casa da Amoreira in Idanha-a-Velha. The visit to the historical village of Idanha-a-Velha was guided by the company Geo.Life, passing through the Olive Oil Pole Press and the Cathedral. Already in Monsanto, they climbed to the Templar Castle and enjoyed the exuberant landscape. At the end of a very busy day, they strolled through Penha Garcia, passing by the castle overlooking the Ichnological Park. The visit ended with a snack in the space of tradition Frágua Bar.

18 October – Program through Naturtejo Geopark for the ID-DS Automobile Club. The ID-DS Automobile Club brought 24 associates to meet Vila Velha de Ródão. With the company Incentivos Outdoor they made a pleasant boat trip passing through the Portas de Rodão Natural Monument, one of the 16 Geomonuments from Naturtejo Geopark. Afterwards, it was time to meet the Olive Oil Interpretative Centre of Vila Velha de Ródão (Ancient Olive Oil Pole Press). Yet in this town they could learn with the Tagus Valley Rock Art Interpretation Centre. But the lunch was meant to happen in the village of Foz do Cobrão, where is located one of the best restaurants in this region, the Vale Mourão.



19 October – Meeting of the partners from the Center Region of the Mines Route in the Canteiro Museum of Alcains. Naturtejo Geopark, in partnership with the Route of Mines and Sites of Geological and Mining Relevance and with the Stonemason Museum of Alcains, hosted the first meeting of the partners from the Mines Route, belonging to the Center Region. The meeting, which had the presence of representatives from almost all the partners and from the Center Tourism of Portugal, had as goal de development of a common strategy for the promotion of this geological interpretation spaces. It should be recalled that Naturtejo Geopark with the Moedas Cave launched the Geodiversity Route of the Center Region, a project that has as its goal to disclose the geological history of this region through educational and touristic programs. This Route should be opened to new partners and it may benefit with a strong boost from the Center Tourism of Portugal.



19 October – National launch of the Guide "Educational Services and School Field Trips" from the Mines Route, in Castelo Branco Naturtejo Geopark hosted in the Superior School of Education, in Castelo Branco, the official launch of the digital publication "Educational Services and School Field Trips" from the Route of Mines and Sites of Geological and Mining Relevance of Portugal. The session was chaired by the Professor Fátima Jorge from the Superior College of Education, by the Councillor Paulo Urbano from Naturtejo Geopark and by the Engineer Carlos Caxaria from the Company of Mining Development. The launched e-book is intended for the school public, addressing al the educational activities of the several partners spread around the country for the school year of 2015/2016. The publication gathers more than 200 initiatives, available throughout the country, with logistic information, as well as information concerning the teaching levels and subjects in which the activities are framed. The guide "Educational Services and School Field Trips" includes visits to museums and interpretation centres, caves, mines, interactive exhibitions, hiking trails, documentaries visioning, accomplishment of workshops and many other activities that can be consulted in www.roteirodeminas.pt. It was also introduced the Educational Programs of Naturtejo Geopark for the school year 2015/2016 by Manuela Catana, with highlight in the new available programs, in the pedagogical tools and in the available projects and activities. This presentation counted with the collaboration of the Professor Ana Felipa Ferreira, from the Institute S. Tiago in Sobreira Formosa, which has been collaborating regularly with its students in the Geopark activities and testified how have been articulated its school practices with the several initiatives that have been developed with Naturtejo Geopark and what have been the benefits of that connection, for its students.



21 October – 2° Prize of the Project Rivers – Ponsul River 2014/2015 for students from the School Group José Silvestre Ribeiro, Idanha-a-Nova.

21 October – 2° Prize of the Project Rivers – Ponsul River 2014/2015 for students from the School Group José Silvestre Ribeiro, Idanha-a-Nova. In this day took place a visit to the Mora Fluviarium + Tree Climbing Activities in the Gameiro Park, as a reward for the 2nd place obtained by the class of 7th B from the School group José Silvestre Ribeiro, Idanha-a-Nova in the scope of the contest of trees sculpture with reusable materials, made during the school year of 2014/2015. This contest and the trip were hosted by the Municipality of Idanha-a-Nova with the support of Naturtejo Geopark. In this trip participated 14 students, followed by one professor and by the monitor Hugo Oliveira.



22 October – 3° Prize from the Project Rivers – Ponsul River 2014/2015 for students from the School Group José Silvestre Ribeiro, Idanha-a-Nova. Activities in the tree climbing circuit of the Convento Park, in Fundão, as a reward for the 3rd place obtained by the class of 7rd C from the School group José Silvestre Ribeiro, Idanha-a-Nova in the scope of the contest of trees sculpture with reusable materials, made in the school year of 2014/2015. This contest and the visit were sponsored by the Municipality of Idanha-a-Nova with the support of Naturtejo Geopark. In this activity attended 11 students followed by one teacher and by de monitors Arlindo Cardosa and Hugo Oliveira.

24 and 25 October – 8th Climbing Meeting in Portas de Almourão. As usual, was organized a meeting of climbers in Sobral Fernando, Proença a Nova. At Portas de Almourão were present 50 people dividing themselves in the three existent sections. This year we counted with the presence of a climber from Colombia who came to attend in the workshop for beginners and a climber native from Germany. Portas do Almourão gorge dug by the Ocreza river in the last two million years, and the legendary Buraca da Moura, geosites of Naturtejo Geopark, are the sceneries of the Climbing School, with 40 lanes that goes from 8 to 30 metres.

27 to 29 October – Fam Trip for German company. Once more German companies show interest in taking advantage of Naturtejo Geopark to health and welfare tourism. This time, a representative from K-Med visited the territory with Jorge Ramos. This company is particularly interested in the health equipment existent in the region. This is another bet from Naturtejo in the Internationalization of the territory for Health Tourism and sustainable use of the existing equipment.



IMPACT OF GEOPARK IN MEDIA

TV & Radio

12 October (Local Visão TV) – Penamacor is a UNESCO territory

18 October (Gesgtiona Rádio Espanhola) – Interview to Jesus Alarcón concerning Naturtejo Geopark

19 October (Rádio Cova da Beira) – Mines Route in digital publication

Newspapers & www

29 September (Magazine Passear) – UNESCO revalidates Naturtejo Geopark October (YupMag – Magazine of Rural Tourism. Frontpage) – Appalachian – the biggest hiking trail in the world

October (Raiano) – Trails of Raia invade Idanha: the Cathedral of MTB

October (Raiano) – Casqueiro "warmed" visitors with bread, cakes and traditions 1 October (Reconquista) – Proença-a-Nova: foot orienteering challenges new participants

1 October (Beira News) – Foot Orienteering Trophy takes place during the weekend in Proença-a-Nova

7 October (Diário Digital de Castelo Branco) – Naturtejo represents Portugal in the European Network of Megalithic Culture

14 October (Gazeta do Interior) – Casqueiro warmed the weekend in Idanha-a-Velha 15 October (Reconquista) – Casqueiro for all flavours

15 October (Reconquista) – Tagus House of Arts and Culture – Geoparks in exhibition

16 October (Jornal de Nisa) – Naturtejo: launch of the Mines Route

19 October (Diário Digital de Castelo Branco) – Mines Route4

19 October (Beira News) – Proença-a-Nova: pedestrian orienteering challenges new athletes

20 October (www.masviajesdigital.com) – Naturtejo Geopark Meridional Meseta was the first Portuguese Geopark

21 October (Gazeta do Interior) – Naturtejo Geopark represents Portugal in the European Route of the Megalithic Culture

21 October (Povo da Beira) – Schools can now find the mining and geological richness of the district

21 October (Povo da Beira) – Trails of Raia invade Idanha: the Cathedral of MTB 21 October (Povo da Beira) – Casqueiro "warmed" visitors with bread, cakes and traditions

SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE GEOPARK AND THE GEOSCIENCES



- BAUCON, A., NETO DE CARVALHO, C., BERNARDI, F., CARDINI, A., CAVALAZZI, B., CELANI, A., FELLETTI, F., FERRETTI, A., SCHOENLAUB, H.P. & TODARO, A. – Bioturbation beyond Earth: potential, methods and models of astroichnology. 15th EANA Astrobiology Conference, Book of Abstracts, Netherlands, 018.



PROMOTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

- RODRIGUES, J. & NETO DE CARVALHO, C. – Da areia do fundo do Oceano ao cume da Montanha quartzítica. Revista de Ciência Elementar, 3(3), 8-15.



Until April 2016





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