



First we will set out from Nový Jičín to Teplice nad Bečvou.

The village of Teplice nad Bečvou is situated on the left bank of the Bečva River in a hilly terrain with a lovely view of the valley the river flows through. In beautiful weather it is possible to see the Beskydy panorama with Radhošť and Lysá hora (Bare Mountain), the Hostýn Hills as well as the Odry Hills. Part of the cadastral area of the village are Teplice nad Bečvou Spa and the Europe-known Zbrašov Aragonite Caves, whose entrance was discovered by Chromý Brothers right in the village area in 1912. The caves were open to the public in 1926.

Currently Teplice nad Bečvou Spa with their personnel and instrument equipment represent top cardiorehabilitation facilities, which specialize in modern rehabilitation of clients with starting cardiac-vascular troubles with an emphasis on the prevention of the development of cardiac and cerebral incidents.

Zbrašov Aragonite Caves are the most important phenomenon of the karst area in the surroundings of the town of Hranice. The original spaces were hollowed out by surface water going down to the riverbed of the Bečva River; later on the lime stones were considerably corroded by warm mineral water rising from the depths together with the carbonic acid gas (CO<sub>2</sub>). CO<sub>2</sub> leaks still occur in the caves and in lower located parts CO<sub>2</sub> forms deep gas lakes.

The effect of the mineral water in the so-called Teplice process of becoming a karst gave the caves their final appearance with unique decoration. The decoration consists mainly of the rich development of aragonite, a mineral which covers whole walls of the caves in the shape of little white crystals and shrubs. Also the conical dripstones created around the mineral water headsprings – the geyser stalagmites and the banded crust in the form of so-called doughnuts, called „Hranice onyx“ – are unique types of decoration. These absolutely extraordinary natural phenomena rank Zbrašov Aragonite Caves among unique caves by European standards. They are the warmest caves in our republic thanks to permanent air temperature. The visiting route is c. 300 m long.

After a tour of the caves we will set out in the direction of Lipník nad Bečvou.

Helfštýn Castle is just 4 km far from Lipník nad Bečvou. Its situation on a hill in a wooded area suggests a medieval seat concealed from civilization. It is, however, easily accessible by road leading to a car park 100 m far from the entrance gate. The current shape of the castle has the character of large fortress architecture with six gates, a number of towers and buildings, and with a system of ramparts dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Individual architectural systems had been developing since the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The style diversity and the size of the grounds were influenced by repeated reconstructions and by the extension of the area as well as by the intentional demolition in 1656. The building development was influenced also by notable owners of Helfštýn. After the founder, Friduš of Linava, they were mainly the lords of Kravaře, the lords of Pemštein and the lords of Bruntál from Vrbno. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century the castle has been presented as a tourist and listed object.

Currently the castle has become a natural cultural centre of the region and a well-known place of international meetings of art metalworkers, „Hefaiston“, with a permanent exposition. Also the constantly ongoing reconstruction work strives for Helfštýn Castle to become a world-recognized centre of art metalwork.

## *The Trip of Nový Jičín Teplice nad Bečvou Helfštýn Castle*

