

Nature trail "Oborou Hvězda", information board No.6 - Personalities in the History of Hvězda

([Osobnosti v historii Hvězdy](#) - informace v českém jazyce)

In the early 1530s, Emperor Ferdinand I of Habsburg established a New Game-Preserve within the territory of the Malejov Forest, with an oak alley planted towards it in the direction of Prague (which however may have been a forest aisle in the existing oak forest).

Ferdinand of Tirol (*1529-†1592), the second-born son of Ferdinand I and Anne of Bohemia, became a governor in the Kingdom of Bohemia in 1547. Archduke Ferdinand acquired further land from the Liboc ecclesiae to extend the Hvězda game-preserve in the Western flat-surface area, where a pond was established subsequently.



In June 1555 (with the date being specified from the 25th to the 28th), Ferdinand of Tirol laid down the foundation stone of the Hvězda pleasure house, which he designed himself. Simultaneously with the construction of the pleasure house, a decorative garden was being established in the slope below, which was never completed. There was a ball game hall established in the garden, designed as a *salla terena* with eleven open arcades, which was later used as a horse stable. There was a well situated in the south-western corner, an aviary was fixed nearby the pleasure house, and a separate kitchen and houses for servants were established in the former stone quarry by the pleasure house, which was later used as a gamekeeper's lodge.

Hans Tirol was the castle builder in 1555, replaced by Bonifaz Wohlmüt in 1556; the actual masonry work at the pleasure house was managed by Juan Maria del Pambio, and as of the second half of 1556, the management of the constructional work at the pleasure house was taken up by Giovanni Luchese. The carcassing of the building was nearly completed at the end of 1556, with problems regarding the roofing occurring in the subsequent years; this year also marked the beginning of the stucco decorations in the castle, completed in 1563. The stuccoes were carried out by Giovanni de Spatz and Pietro Ferrabosco from Italy. In 1557, Ferdinand of Tirol ordered his courtiers to dig the foundations and then build the game-preserve wall to replace the existing wooden fence, with Pavel of Korkyně being one of the courtiers and mentioning this event in his memoirs.

The construction of the game-preserve wall was probably completed in 1563. At first, there was only a single gate to the game-preserve, Liboc Gate, which connected it with Prague Castle. Later on (it is not known for certain whether U. Aostalli (O. Avostalis in Czech) demolished a part of the enclosure wall in 1574), a gate facing Bílá Hora was also built. In 1570, Bonifaz Wohlmüt presented a model of a new roof for the pleasure house to Maximilian II, but the construction was not realized. In the same year, Ulrico Aostalli de Salla (Oldřich Avostalis in Czech) replaced Bonifaz Wohlmüt as the castle builder.

In 1575, Maximilian II ascends on the Bohemian throne († 1576), and both he and his successor Rudolph II have water from a well at Hvězda brought to Prague Castle every day. An arched path across the radial main paths was established for this purpose, which later served as the path to the quarries.

In 1576, Jakub Špan of Španov (1539-1576, according to some sources 1530-1575) dedicates his poem named "Ferdinandopyrgum" to Archduke Ferdinand, the poem also mentioning the game-preserve description. Hanuš Christl was the first gamekeeper and pheasant-keeper to His Grace the Emperor. In 1599, he complained about low salary and low level of security to the President of the Bohemian Chamber Štěpán Jiří of Šternberk. He was appointed the game-preserve keeper for the Hvězda game-preserve before 1610.

In 1611, King Matthias could not enter Prague Castle, which was closed, and so he was accommodated in the pleasure house, treating the people welcoming him to a banquet at the game-preserve. Upon Matthias' conquest of Prague, festivities were held in the game-preserve.

In the summer of 1620, on the occasion of St. Marketa Pilgrimage, Frederick I organized festivities here, climbing himself the highest trees to chase bird nests, participating in the merry-making, dancing with the village girls; in the evening, he organized fireworks in front of the pleasure house.

In 1628, Ferdinand II arranged for the repair, or eventually for the complete reconstruction of the roof over the Hvězda pleasure house. The pleasure house probably acquired a Baroque dome with a lantern. In 1631, royal painter Jonas Falk depicted the Battle of Bílá Hora in the pleasure house. By the end of 1652, Ferdinand III welcomed German electors in the game-preserve, organizing hunting events and festivities for them to influence them for the benefit of his son during the upcoming Regensburg congress. In 1674, Falk's painting in the hall on the second floor of the pleasure house was replaced by a cycle of thirteen paintings by royal painter Filip Mazanec, mostly depicting scenes from the Thirty Years' War. At the early 18th century, the game-preserve was taken care of by game-keeper Kryštof Jan Švarz, who lived in a house behind Liboc Gate, which was built together with the enclosure wall. In 1717, when K. J. Švarz died, the supreme huntsman O. F. Popel of Lobkowitz selected Josef Grünfeld as the best of three applicants

for this position. Until then, Josef Grünfeld had served in the Emperor's estates in Poděbrady with a monthly salary of 5 golden pieces and 3 kreutzer, with a permission to feed 3 cows and 1 horse at the expense of the imperial fodder, and to open a beer room by the gate. Supreme forest-master Baltazar David Otto of Ottensfeld remained the highest superior (of the supreme huntsman). In the years 1717-1718, foreman bricklayer Jakub Ant. Canevalle inspected the game-keeper's claim and found out that nearly 1000 fathoms of the enclosure walls required repair, yet for the time being, it would be sufficient to repair 200 fathoms, and the Chamber remitted the sum of 600 golden pieces. In 1723, Canevalle built St. Marketa's Gate (Břevnov Gate) in the longitudinal axis of the game-preserve. Tomáš Stubner elaborated a budget for the repair of the pleasure house's roof and of the game-keeper's house, and the Chamber also remitted the necessary sum for this during these years. In 1722, building scrivener J. J. Dienebier found out there was a lack of young growth at Hvězda, which he tried to resolve by establishing two enclosed tree nurseries, mostly planting oaks, which were in majority in the game-preserve. The first known ground plan of the Hvězda game-preserve dates back to 1723, depicted on the plan of Fr. Ant. Leopold Kloss regarding the castle water conduit and its surroundings. According to the plan, only foliate trees were planted in the game-preserve, with oak prevailing, and an oak forest was reported to the north-east and east from the enclosure walls, which corresponds to the natural composition of the forest growths.

During the Silesian War in 1744, the Prussian army of Frederick II the Great with 80 000 men camped in the game-preserve. Frederick spent two nights in the pleasure house. He had his headquarters here during the siege of Prague in 1757 as well. Hvězda witnessed a bloody battle during the retreat of the Prussian armies from Prague after being defeated by Kolín (18 th June). The trees in the game-preserve were nearly completely cut down; the Prussians continued to cut down the local trees for six weeks.

In 1775, F. Bretschneider elaborated a detailed plan of Hvězda for the building authority, stating cultures and acreages. Unlike in the previous plan by Kloss, the typical star-line arrangement of alleys disappeared partially. The plan also depicts the game-keeper's garden with trees. The quarry is also depicted in the plan, and a dried out pond in the lower part (Ausgetrocknetes Teuchl), which is nowadays renewed.

In 1779, Emperor Joseph II visited Hvězda during his inspectional journey, and he ordered to entrust the pleasure house to the military treasury and to turn it into a gun powder storage (1780); the windows were bricked in, Baroque dome with lanterns was removed, and the pleasure house acquired its current appearance, being lower with prominent lightning conductors; the pleasure house was fortified and connected with the former kitchen, changed into a guard house, via walls lining the path. Trees around the pleasure house were cut down.

After the death of Emperor Joseph II (1790), the castle district office demanded Emperor Leopold II to return the administration of the game-preserve, which was again opened for public. Only the pleasure house itself was guarded by a military watch. In 1820, Bohemian painter Antonín Pucherna depicted an inn in the Hvězda game-preserve, with an orchard and a barn painted in the background. In 1838, painter W. Kandler depicted the view of the pleasure house with the former kitchen in the quarry from Liboc.

Prof. MUDr. Ottokar Nickerl created a coloured drawing of the lower part of the Hvězda game-preserve around 1860 with a collection point for the beetles *Lytta Vesicatoria* (the "Spanish flies"), which were used for the production of aphrodisiacs. The picture also depicts St. Sebastian Church at Liboc in the background, and the image of the pleasure house at that time. In 1867, J. E. Vogel in the position of monument conservator submitted a memorandum to save Hvězda, which was still a gun powder storage at the time, to the Bohemian Land Committee and the Central Monument Commission in Vienna.

Cornelius Schöffner, Secretary of the Artful Union in Prague, wrote about the "imperial pleasure house in the Hvězda game-preserve in Prague", and in his document, as well as in many other historical studies in this period, the origin of the pleasure house is wrongly assigned to the period of Jiří of Poděbrady and the Šternberk Family. There are lots of similar reports describing the state of the forest growths from the years 1899 to 1909 (Zapletal, Bartoš, Bohutínský, Matouš), including the growth maps. Antonín Bohutínský was a state employee from 1878 on, he was a court councillor and state forest inspector, and a forest education inspector in Bohemia. He lectured at the Prague German Technical Institute, and from 1894 on, he was a long-time central executive of the Czech Forest Union. He published a number of studies regarding forest and water economies.

After 1918, the administration of the game-preserve was taken up by the Prague Castle Administration. Providing for the most necessary repairs, it was then used by the painting department of the National Resistance Memorial. Castle gardener K. Hájek and forester Fr. Matouš carried out most urging maintenance in the game-preserve at the time, with Fr. Matouš being the last person to enjoy the renewed livery benefits.

On the 1 st August 1923, former legionary Jaroslav Němeček starts to work as the new game-preserve administrator. Before World War I, he gained valuable experience in gardening in France. Now he claimed that the last more extensive planting at Hvězda took place approximately 60 years before, with the plants currently being lank and dense. Selective cutting was initiated in the direction from Liboc Gate southwards. The necessary cutting of unkempt and air-raid woods were carried out, the existing pathways were improved, thus limiting public entrance to young growths. Tree nurseries were renewed between Prague and Bílá Hora Gates. Black pine was newly planted in bare places left after pine groves devastated by black arches (1927), and horse chestnut trees, planted once in front of the Hvězda pleasure house to mask the gun powder storage, were removed.

In 1928, Slovenian architect Josip Plečnik agreed to arrange and widen the main corridor from the pleasure house to Břevnov Gate and to further arrangements. Inspecting works were carried out in the pleasure house and sala terrena in the years 1934-35 by castle builder Karel Fiala (1862-1939), who found out a number of graves, a wall dividing the orchard from the pleasure house leading all the way down to the stream.

On the 26 th February 1937, architect Dr. O. Fierlinger presented his proposal for turning Hvězda into an orchard designed for folk entertainment to the building committee attended also by President Dr. E. Beneš. The plan assumed extensive tree cutting, establishing a forest amphitheatre, a large children's playground, summer cafés, smaller amusement centres, an open air pool in the south-western section, and a reconstruction of the former kitchen to suit the needs of tourism, with gardening arrangements of the landscape. He faced opposition of arch. Pavel Janák and of President Beneš, too, claiming that Hvězda should remain a forest, which does not require much maintenance.

The arrangement of the three corridors with paths was followed by the arrangement of the area in front of the pleasure house. (P. Janák, J. Sokol, O. Fierlinger, and further on Z. Wirth, J. Sucharda, J. Němeček). In the years 1948 to 1952, the pleasure house underwent constructional modifications according to a project of prof. arch. Pavel Janák, and the giardinetto in front of the pleasure house was restored according to his project in 1955. There was an inspection of the game-preserve focusing on professional assessment of the growth and on the suggestions regarding the renewal of the game-preserve vegetation, carried out by the Agricultural and Forest Engineering University in Prague, prof. Ing. Karel Zlatuška, doc. Ing. Dr. Bohumil Kavka, director of State Research Institutes of Horticulture, I. Píša and Ing. Zatloukal from the Lány Forest Administration. In 1983, a study named "Forest cultivation at the Hvězda game-preserve" was elaborated by Ing. Eduard Průša, CSc., as a fundamental document aiming to change the disconsolate state of the game-preserve, criticising the failure to renew the forest, the failure to remove the unauthentic and situationally unsuitable woods, and other negative aspects. In 1987, doc. Ing. Ant. Příhoda, CSc., elaborated an analysis of the forest health, claiming that the state of the forests was problematic.

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1. [Hvězda Game Preserve](#)
2. [Hvězda Game Preserve](#) *Osobnosti v historii Hvězdy - informace v českém jazyce*