

Na marmurowym szlaku im. Sylwestra Kowalczewskiego w okolicach Chęciny

The Marble trail named after Sylwester Kowalczewski in the vicinity of Chęciny

Abstract

Red marked tourist trail from Kielce to Chęciny is 18.5 km long and is named after a very prominent hiker and guide around the region Sylwester Kowalczewski. The trail runs through the Chęciński-Kielecki Sight Seeing Park, which contains a varying morphology, is covered with high forests, its sights are picturesque, interesting from the nature standpoint (specifically geologically) and it also contains valuable monuments from country's past. The trail begins in Kielce and runs thru Karczówka Chain of Hills, including Karczówka and Brusznia Ridges, to Białogon Valley, where it crosses Bobrza River, Patrol Mountain in the Zagórski Chain, then the basin of Bobrzyczka River by the Raj (Paradise) Cave, then over the Red Mountain, which includes marble extraction site in Bolechowicki Chain. The trail continues thru a unnamed valley next to Zelejów settlement in Łąki, thru Zelejowa Mountain in Zelejowski Chain leading to Chęcińska Valley to end in Chęciny, a town dating back to medieval times, attached like to the foot of the Castle Mountain and containing numerous historical monuments. On the mountain's top are the ruins of a large castle dating back to the first Polish Dynasty of Piasts. The difference of the elevations between the lowest part of the trail and the highest is 153 meters. On the trail are marble extraction sites, which are still exploited. The marble extracted there is named after the town so called (checinskie) or sometimes named as Kieleckie or Świętokrzyskie.

Typical marble rock of metamorphic origin is not found in the Świętokrzyskie Mountains. however there are hard sedimentary rocks, which after proper treatment function in a similar decorative manner as marble. This type of rock was extracted for centuries around the town of Chęciny, and it was processed to become so called technical marble. There are four types of this rock: Bolechowice and Szewce- both from the Late Devonian period, Zygmontówka formed of lithic stones from the Permian period and Różanka Selejowska found in breccia veins from the Permian and Triassic periods. The article describes lithology, tectonics and utility characteristics of these rocks extracted in four historical, still functioning and abandoned marble pits, which are present along the mentioned in the title trail. A short history of extraction activity, from the end of the XVI century to the contemporary times is presented. The role of Chęciny, as the "marble town" and works of stone sculpture masters, architects and builders are accentuated, one of them was a superb artist Kacper Fotyga.