

CRUZIANA

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

In this issue: – International Workshop on Uranium, Environment and Public Health – Naturtejo in the General Council of the Polytechnic Institute of Castelo Branco – Landgeosites tour in Oleiros – Sailing against the Indifference crosses Portas de Ródão for a better future...and more!



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

Geo-stories of our places and people: Monfortinho

“Soon from the first hills the views taken from the majestic Spanish mountains of the Central Belt are stunning: the abrupt crest of Gata mountain, imposing wall that suddenly sag to the flat land and, very far, one can guess the huge mass of Gredos mountain. The Beira Baixa borderland comes, in the whole, as a bluegrass region, lost in the isolation, scarcely populated of ancient lands and worn of old uses, recently open to new ways of transit that still did not completely erased yet the typical things and people. Here, even without get to the deep rivers delimiting it, a borderland is guessed, certainly permeable to relations, in any case a place to stop (...). Segregated from the atlantic core of national life, the region was not open too much to the Spanish influence, on the contrary it was obscurely boiling the ancestral Portuguesism. Above the uniformity of the parched plain, of the holm oak assembles and the farming practices, from one and the other side of the deeply river incisions, something spontaneous and tenacious make different those men roasted under the same sun and shaped by the same land: the language and with it everything that makes the deepest of the wish and feel”. These lands of Monfortinho are portrayed in such way by Orlando Ribeiro, in the beginning of 1940s, the best describer of the region's landscapes. Among quartzite crests separated by Ponsul Fault hundreds of years ago, the Erges riverside also open by faulting in the hard quartzite, the plains of Monfortinho and finally the residuals of Pedras Ninhas, Murrachinha and Murracha, is located the most important natural resource of the whole region: the Sacred Spring of Monfortinho. In reality, they are 14 springs surging in the bottom of the quartzite Picoto, at Erges riverbank, with abundant and warm water. The recognized importance of this hydrobioclimatic oasis has been such that already in the Bronze Age two walled settlements existed protecting the valley, here and in the neighbor Canchos de Morero. Also Romans have been here for the waters, and mainly by the existence of large amounts of gold in placers and in the reddish Cenozoic deposits whose importance for the understanding of the geological history is such that the geologist Pedro Proença e Cunha established the major episodes in the Murracha Group, including Torre and Monfortinho formation. Gold mining at Veigas de Monfortinho was attempted several times until the eighties, leaving large scars along 5 km, and about 1 ton of gold to be exploited. Thus, it is not too much to say to state that the building of the Thermal spa in 1940, and consequently all the hotels and the village of Termas de Monfortinho that came with tourism, was made up on a gold mine! However, the option to exploit the hydrogeological geosite overlaid up and came to be of utmost importance considering sustainability for the whole region, because Termas de Monfortinho corresponds to one of the most important thermal springs, together with the most modern balneotherapy, from Iberian Peninsula. With human settlement since the Paleolithic, in the highs of Pedras Ninhas, Murracha and Monte da Picota there were fortified villages during proto-history. Nowadays, in an area of 53,18km², 536 people live distributed by the villages of Monfortinho, Torre and Termas de Monfortinho.



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With the building of the road to Castelo Branco, of the spa and hotels, and with the disappearance of the mosquito responsible for malaria, between 1930-1940s, the century-aged village of Monfortinho has been losing importance for the more recent Termas de Monfortinho. Tourism is no doubt the main economic activity, with a diversified hotel and restaurant offer. The ancestral fame of the “Sacred Spring” for treatment of skin diseases due to the high silica content resulting from deep water circulation and long time of residence in the Penha Garcia's quartzite mountains, by the quality and exceptional purity of the waters, could now be used in branding for all the nature-related tourism products of the region. And the work that has been developed in latest years to diversify the tourism offer is notorious: many equipments to support a great diversity of sports were built; there are two footpaths of short and long distance for exploring the best local landscapes and connecting this to other places of nature and culture tourist interest; Vale Feitoso estate has been opening the doors to nature tourism activities, besides chasing, and possesses a great added value for guided visits dedicated to biodiversity, geodiversity and mycology, as well as birdwatching; Moreover, Fishing and Shooting Club is joining both valences and attract families during the summer; thermal animation, with several cultural activities organized by the municipality of Idanha during this season; Monfortinho airstrip is fundamental for air tourism activities that can be developed; most recently, the establishment of 200km of paths for mountain biking and a bike assistance center strength the use of signaled footpaths for different publics. Past, present and future of this region is intrinsically related with the especial quality of this water from the Sacred Spring of Monfortinho which, controlled by local geodiversity, crops out in the “perched plain” with exceptional volume and brings a superlative value to a vital resource by the multiple dimensions assumed for health, well-being, biodiversity, economic development, and that can also be used as a geothermal resource to produce energy locally.

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The Editor
Carlos Neto de Carvalho
Scientific Coordinator
Geologist

Front page: (Objectiva: Geopark Project, www.naturtejo.com/objectiva)

ACTIVITIES OF THE MONTH



6 October – Trails of Gold cross the borderland. The Gold Trails was organized by the Municipality of Idanha-a-Nova together with Naturtejo Geopark and took 62 participants, coming from different cities in Portugal and in the Spanish Extremadura, to a territory which preserves remains of gold exploitation. Walking for 5 kilometers together with Carlos Neto de Carvalho, and the Spanish geologist Alberto Rivas Hoyos that in the end 1980's worked for Mina Krystina company in a project to reopen Monfortinho gold mines, visitors explored the vast remains of Roman gold mining in both sides of Erges river, the natural boundary between Portugal and Spain in the area. Before starting, they both prepared a briefing on gold geology and gold mining techniques of the Romans. Then visitors crossed the international bridge to visit the best preserved mining areas, including the sterile piles, the channels and the ponds. The group returned by the Erges trail and in Veiga do Cravo, old gold panners together with João Gerales, geologist from Casa do Forno, explained how they have searched for gold. Some of the most enthusiastic participants experimented the ancient techniques and found some gold. Finally, they visited Termas de Monfortinho Thermal Spa that was responsible for the end of the mining period during the forties. Some of the participants even had the chance to try the health care proposals available in this spa.

7 October – Naturtejo in the General Council of the Polytechnic Institute of Castelo Branco. Daniel Proença de Carvalho (ex-minister of Social Media, President of the Administration Board of ZON Multimedia), António Trigueiros de Aragão (Administer of the Lusitana Factory; and President of the NERCAB regional association of local companies), José Pedro Salas Pires (Director of Information Services and Technologies from PT national telecommunication company), Adelina Maria Machado Martins (Regional Director of Agriculture and Fishing of the Center Region), Armindo Jacinto (president of the Administration Board of Naturtejo), António Maria Vieira Pires (president of the Administration Council of the Health Unit of Castelo Branco) and António de Melo Bernardo (director of the district center of Social Assistance of Castelo Branco), were the chosen representatives to include the external institutions of the General Council of the Polytechnic Institute of Castelo Branco.

The General Council of the most important technical university of the region is composed by 25 members, 13 representatives of teachers and researchers, four representatives of the students, one representative of the non-teaching personnel and seven external personalities with recognized merit. Among other competences the General Council proposes initiatives for the good development of the Technical Schools.

11-13 October – Casqueiro 2013 – Festival of Bread, Cookies and Traditions. Casqueiro – Festival of the Bread, Cakes and Tradition was a big success bringing thousands of visitors to the small village of Idanha-a-Velha. Flavors and traditions from this historical village, located in the same place as the former capital of the Visigoths, were covered by the national SIC Tv show “Party Portugal” broadcasting live for six hours during Sunday afternoon. This novelty enabled to widen promotion of the best products of Idanha-a-Nova, the cultural and historic heritage, tradition and people.

During the live show Armindo Jacinto, the mayor of Idanha-a-Nova and president of Naturtejo Geopark, was interviewed about the opportunities for the young entrepreneurs looking for a life project in the countryside. “We value the ideas of the young people, supporting them to invest in the region and inviting them to migrate to Idanha”. The fifth edition of the Casqueiro Festival was organized by the municipality of Idanha-a-Nova, League of Friends of Idanha-a-Velha and the Union of the Villages of Monsanto and Idanha-a-Velha with the support of Naturtejo.

This Festival followed the main aims of thematic festivals which is to strengthen the proximity trade, foster local economy and support tourism and hotels sectors. “It is very important to support local economy in these difficult times, to support farmers and families, which are having an important source of income from these festivals we are organizing”, says Armindo Jacinto.

Besides six non-stop bread ovens, Casqueiro had also more than one hundred exhibitors of local products, street and stage animation, and bread workshops for the youngest.



13 October – 840 participants in the Borderland mountain biking trails. 840 mountain bikers coming from all over the country and Spain, came to participate in the IX Marathon “Borderland Trails”, at Idanha-a-Nova. This most important event in the Portuguese mountain bike calendar is organized by the Association of Ciclotourism of Idanha-a-Nova (ACIN), together with the municipality of Idanha-a-Nova and the support of Naturtejo. It is a mountain bike marathon with a total length of 95 km with a shorter circuit of 50 km, and the success is so great that in just three days the limited number of registrations was reached.

The Borderland Trails started in front of the town hall in direction to Alcafozes village, where the breakfast was ready. Bikers followed trails surrounded by great landscape and historic-cultural interest passing by Penha Garcia, Monsanto and Idanha-a-Velha. In this last village, they passed by the Casqueiro Festival returning to Idanha-a-Nova. Among participants there were national references such as Marco Chagas. About 200 teams from Portugal and Spain were represented. During the presentation of the Borderland Trail Armindo Jacinto was there well equipped with his bike to defend Idanha-a-Nova as the Capital of Mountain Biking.

Biking, as a nature sport, is very important for the region. Idanha-a-Nova supports local associations to develop initiatives, created conditions to the visitors to bike and are partners in national and international sport events.

It is worth to mention the Mountain Bike European Championship of Seniors, Juniors and Youngsters, and the World Championship of Orienting Vets, that will be organized in 2015. These initiatives coming from an application presented by the Portuguese Federation of Orientation, together with the municipality of Idanha-a-Nova and the Évora Nucleus of Army Disabled People.

As it was already noticed in one of the latest issues of Cruziana, this year was inaugurated the first Mountain Bike Center in the district at Termas de Monfortinho, equipped for washing and small repairing of bikes, and it is intended to install other bike centers in the town of Idanha-a-Nova and in the village of Monsanto. local products, street and stage animation, and bread workshops for the youngest.

TEJO - VOGAR CONTRA A INDIFERENÇA

19. OUTUBRO. 2013

DESCIDA DE CANOA

PORTAS DE RÓDÃO > FONTE DAS VIRTUDES > ARNEIRO (NISA)

INSCRIÇÕES

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PROGRAMA

- 08:00 **CONCENTRAÇÃO**
PORTAS DE RÓDÃO - CMS
- 10:00 **PARAGEM NA FONTE DAS VIRTUDES**
DIVULGAÇÃO DOS OBJECTIVOS DA INICIATIVA
- 12:30 **CHEGADA AO ARNEIRO**
ALMOÇO-SOPA DE PEIXE DO RIO

PELOS NOSSOS RIOS, PELO NOSSO FUTURO

<https://www.facebook.com/vogar.tejo>



19 October – “Sailing against indifference” cross Portas de Ródão for a better future.

Another initiative joined both Portuguese and Spanish for the contact with nature. This time many took the kayaks from Tejo quay at Vila Velha de Ródão, crossed Portas de Ródão and stopped in the Island of the Virtues Spring to read the Charter against Indifference and enjoy the beauty of the natural heritage associated to the river in the subjects of geological heritage and biodiversity, and finally went to Arneiro for a traditional made with fish from the river.

Many ecologist and citizen movement groups were present for the need to defend Tejo river against water over exploitation due to the transfer of water from the river to the south of Spain, against aggressions from agriculture, industrial and nuclear pollution, the risks of contamination and pollution due to possible uranium mining activities, location of nuclear cemeteries, disposal of nuclear wastes at Almaraz Nuclear Plant and the operation of paper industries at Vila Velha de Ródão. This event was organized by –proTEJO Citizen Movement for Tejo, ADENEX, Ecologistas en Acción, –Amigos da Terra Sociocultural association from Santana (ATAS), Ambiente nas Zonas Uraníferas (AZU), –CerciZimbra Cooperative for the Education and Rehabilitation of Disabled Citizens of Sesimbra, Movimento Urânio em Nisa Não (MUNN), Movimento Cívico Ar Puro, EcoCartaxo and –QUERCUS National Association for Nature Conservation. This event had the support of local companies, Geopark Naturtejo da Meseta Meridional, the Citizenship Network for a new Culture of Water from Tejo/Tajo, and the municipalities of Nisa and Vila Velha de Rodão.

21-26 October – International scenography meetings at Idanha.

SCENA 2013 – International Meetings of Scenography were organized this year in Lisbon and Idanha-a-Nova. Two workshops of scenographic painting and paper costumes brought international expert names such as Anna Kontek, Jesus Acevedo, Isabel Sabino and Malgorzata Zak. The participants made field visits to Monsanto, Penha Garcia, Idanha-a-Velha and Proença-a-Velha. This was organized in collaboration with the School of Applied Arts of Castelo Branco and the Faculty of Fine Arts of Lisbon



22-26 October – Brazilian researchers in a visit by the Geopark. Professor Luiz Fernandes from the Federal University of Paraná, the tourismologist Raquel and the Master student Fernanda Reverte, from the University of São Paulo came to Naturtejo Geopark for a research visit on geoconservation and development of educational activities in geoparks. Luiz Fernandes is acquiring know-how on geoconservation in geoparks to apply in the new post-graduation course he is helping to implement in Brazil together with the University of Minho, from Portugal. They were welcomed by Carlos Neto de Carvalho in Naturtejo's Castelo Branco headquarters. During the next days they visited with Manuela Catana the Borderland Cultural Centre at Idanha-a-Nova, the scientific headquarters of Naturtejo Geopark, the new Lands of Idanha Biodiversity Interpretative Centre at Segura, Penha Garcia Ichnological Park, Monsanto inselberg, Portas de Ródão Natural Monument, the Fossils Garden from the House of Tejo's Arts and Culture, the Tejo Valley Rock Art Interpretative Center, Portas de Almourão Geomonument and the Living Science Centre of the Forest, at Proença-a-Nova. After all these examples of geoconservation applications, geotourism offer and educational tools available, together with Carlos Neto de Carvalho our friendly guests participated in an international workshop on Uranium mining awareness and mitigation to assist the deep involvement of Naturtejo Geopark with the Politechnic Institute of Castelo Branco to find scientific support for public discussions of subjects related with territorial management. Later they visited the area that constitutes the most important uranium ore body, never exploited until the present, which is located close to the town of Nisa, besides this historical town and also Amieira do Tejo. They also appreciated the outstanding views from Conhal do Arneiro Roman gold mine in S. Miguel mountain.

25-27 October – More than 80 events in the I International Holistic and Cultural Meeting. The International Holistic and Cultural Meeting under the main subject "From Spiritual in Art" was held at Borderland Cultural Centre. This meeting proposes 24 alternative therapies, 29 workshops, 6 ateliers, 12 talks, 5 concerts, 5 workshops and 2 ateliers in the Child Space and one performance, involving 58 invited people. There was a space for contact with books, with some publishers and writers presented. There were several activities for the children in nature, coordinated by educators, for free. It is worth to mention the Mantras Concert and India Music and Dance show.



26 October - International Workshop on Uranium, Environment and Public Health. The Iberian Peninsula has extensive experience in the exploration and exploitation of radioactive minerals mostly related to mining activities. Nowadays these abandoned mines don't have any environmental recovery plan and are very susceptible to major environmental problems, requiring continuous monitoring and control. The significant contamination, due to the nature of the associated chemical elements, their high mobility and radiological risk, requires the design and implementation of appropriate remediation measures.

The main source of contamination is tailings dominantly sulphide minerals and U. Oxidation promotes the mobilization of the metallic elements polluting soils, stream sediments, surface and groundwater. Large amounts of uranium enriched materials were transferred to the biosphere allowing the conversion of the insoluble U^{4+} form into U^{6+} and therefore promoting the formation of the uranyl ion (UO_2^{2+}), highly soluble in the environment.

The international workshop on the theme "Uranium, environment and public health", aimed to present and discuss several case studies addressing its importance to the environment and public health. Due to the fact that Nisa presents the largest uranium ore body never exploited in an area of great environmental condition to favor the development of nature tourism investments, Naturtejo Geopark was associated to this workshop to present the work in development for the organization of the tourism sector and to present sustainable alternatives for local development of Nisa region.

26 September- Landgeosites Tour in Orvalho. The Land Rover associates from the Club Landmania Portugal, with 36 cars and 108 participants, made the "LandGeosites Tour" organized by the Association Estreito Trails with the support of Naturtejo Geopark.

The tour was oriented by GPS and caravan, and included the passage by some of the tourist attractions of Oleiros, namely the geosites from Geopark Naturtejo da Meseta Meridional (Fraga da água d'Alta waterfalls, Mosqueiro viewpoint, Zêzere river meanders) guided by the geologist João Gerales and the schist villages. Local gastronomy was the other interest of the visit with tasting of strawberry tree fruit spirit, Roasted Kid and Callum wine in a local cellar, made with a variety of grapes only existing in Oleiros.



IMPACT OF GEOPARK IN MEDIA

Newspapers & www

September (Corumbella – Revista da Fundect) – Environmental education and conservation, geotourism and sustainability are the fundament of geoparks

October (Ensino Magazine) – IPCB General Council is now complete

10 October (Raiano) – Casqueiro is back

10 October (Raiano) – “Gold trails”

16 October (Diário de Coimbra) – Casqueiro promoted bread, cakes and tradition

16 October (Gazeta do Interior) – Scenographic meetings at Idanha

16 October (Gazeta do Interior) – Casqueiro sums one more success in Idanha-a-Velha

16 October (Gazeta do Interior) – 840 participants – Brderland Trails confirm Idanha-a-Nova as the cathedral of mountain biking

17 October (Reconquista) – Mountain bike is a brand of Idanha

17 October (Reconquista) – Casqueiro for all tastes

17 October (Reconquista) – Appalaches with trails at Oleiros

17 October (Reconquista) – Scenography projected in Idanha-a-Nova

18 October (Sol) – Regional Park in Almourão

23 October (Gazeta do Interior) – Idanha welcomes Holistic Meeting

31 October (Reconquista) – Salva a Terra with award for sustainability

31 October (Reconquista) – Historical Villages in the National Geographic

31 October (Reconquista) – Charter against indifference

Radio & Tv

30 October (Radio Condestável) – Oleiros – Land Rovers meeting joined more than 100 participants

CONTRIBUIÇÕES CIENTÍFICAS PARA O GEOPARK E AS GEOCIÊNCIAS



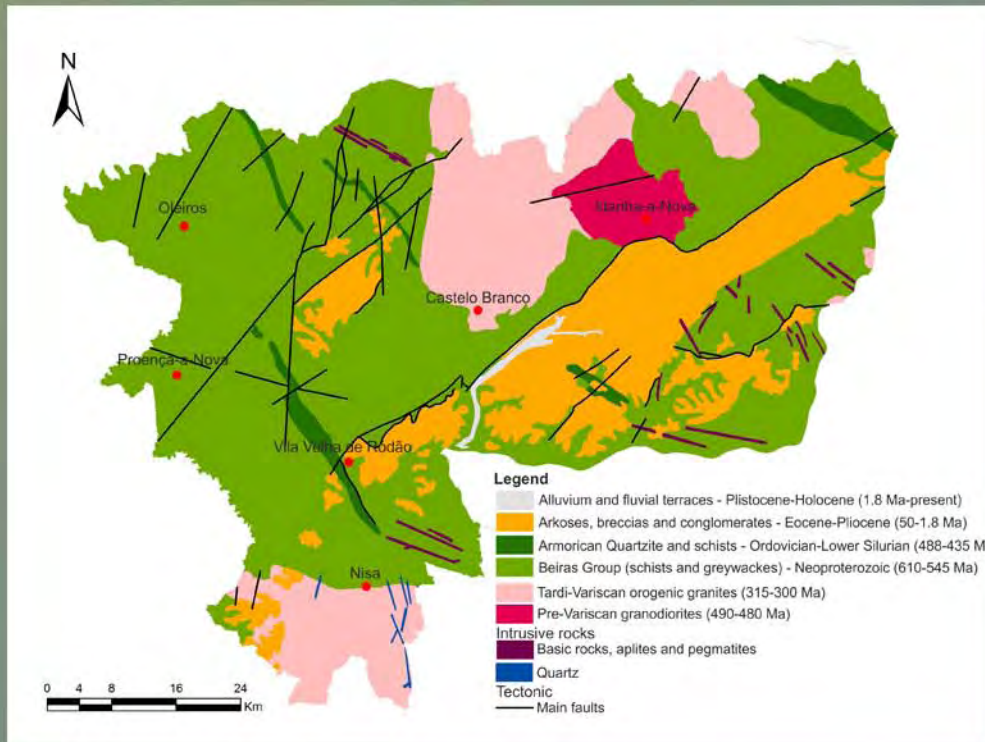
- Neto de Carvalho, C. - Turismo no Geopark Naturtejo, sob os auspícios da UNESCO, como alternativa sustentável à exploração do jazigo de urânio de Nisa. International Workshop on Uranium, Environment and Public Health, poster presentation.



PROMOTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

- Neto de Carvalho, C., Gonçalves, D. & Rodrigues, J. – Oleiros pelos trilhos mais conhecidos do mundo. *Jornal de Oleiros*, 27: p. 12.





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Geopark Naturtejo, a geopark in Portugal, is a geopark with a human face.

www.geoparknaturtejo.com