



**“In this simple way
The people of Padrão
Celebrate with reason
The schist and the olive tree.**

**With the schist and the olive tree
The ancestors of this village
Had home and candle light
subsistence, bed and chair.”**

64

CRUZIANA

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

In this issue: - Tourism, companies and products recognized – Celebrating the International Mountain Day in Oleiros – Geopark Naturtejo webpage among the best of the European Geoparks Network – A new walking trail in Medelim with geotourist potential... and more!



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

In a really difficult period in which the taxes increase, the budget is cut, the revenue is reduced, the unemployment grows, the pessimism is general, rights are lost and even civilization retrogresses, invading every day and every moment the European reality, we didn't want to end the year without showing the optimistic attitude and work that have always characterized the Naturtejo Geopark people. A geotourist destiny builds itself, not only through the offer, equipment and services, but also through the heritage valorization, the innovation in the ideas and actions, the certification of products, the integrated training, the community involvement and the identity construction. When we talk about geoparks as a tourist destiny based on their geological heritage, we can't discard the biotic element of nature, not even the human factor, their ancestral knowledge and practices which justify other tourist segments equally or even more important in a geopark. Being tourism an industry that is reinvented in many different forms depending on the trends, the geological heritage will always be the distinguishing foundation of the territories classified as geoparks. In this innovative organization of the tourist destination around the geological heritage, to the scale of its territory, according with the environmental sustainability and social responsibility premises of the European Geoparks Network, the geoparks can be considered pioneers in several aspects.

From the Naturtejo Geopark stand point, this month we contribute with some examples of what is the recognition of the traditional products' potential, the heritage valorization through the signalization and interpretation and the dynamical business, small and medium-enterprises (SME's), for the building, support, dissemination and promotion of a strong local economy of a society that intends to be adaptable to changes and, at last, of a tourism destiny under construction, but with deeping roots and with ability to assert.

Considering this. The Queijo Amarelo da Beira Baixa "Sabores da Idanha" cheese was awarded with the gold medal at the World Cheese Awards 2011, in England. This cheese with Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) is produced by the Cooperativa de Produtores de Queijos da Beira Baixa cooperative, which by the first time participated in a foreign contest. This award testifies the originality and the quality of the cheese, taking into account that is a worldwide contest in which competed more than 2500 cheeses that were subject to a panel of around 200 international tasters. The cooperative brings together 20 producers of the municipality of Idanha-a-Nova and from Alcains (Castelo Branco), which produce 100 tons of this precious yellow cheese per year. Also remarkable is the fact that during this Christmas period of festivities, the gastronomic heritage of the Geopark territory has been in evidence in the television prime time, particularly the secular Portuguese culinary treasure with Arabic origin, the roasted kid of Oleiros, in the documentary "Practices and Flavors, from Memories to the Future" presented by RTP1 on December 24th, or the knowledge and flavors of Idanha-a-Nova, opening the documentary series "Travel to the Centre of my Land" in the Kings Day.



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

The tourist promotion of Vila Velha de Ródão Municipality won the Tourist Information/Visitor prize, as part of the APOM 2011 Awards, which were delivered on Monday, December 12th, in the auditorium "BES Arte e Finança", in Lisbon, in a ceremony, presided by the Secretary of State of Culture, Francisco José Viegas. The Ródão autarchy, aware of the importance of the image of the municipality and the information available to the visitor, has been adopted a strategy of standardization of content so that they can be useful, clear and objective for whom accessing any tourist spot in Ródão. Based on a strategy of tourist intervention, the municipality has been producing promotion material of the major touristic attractions of the municipality. Various media communication are available in the Ródão municipality, such as vertical signs, thematic panels, reading/interpretative bilingual (both Portuguese and English) tables, among others. The Portuguese Association of Museology (APOM) assigns, since 1997, these awards to "encourage the preservation and dissemination spirit of the museums heritage", distinguishing a total of twenty categories, highlighting the Best Portuguese Museum and better exposure. The Francisco Tavares Proença Júnior Museum, located in Castelo Branco, also received the APOM Award 2011, but in the category "Innovation and Creativity" related with the centenary commemorative program of the Museum. This award recognizes how this museum got together around itself the local and regional partners (local authorities, associations, educational institutions, business men, citizens) to perform the Centenary commemorations that started April 17th, 2010 with the presence of the Minister of Culture and ended April 17th, 2011.

No less important is the inclusion of 14 SME's from the Geopark territory in the SME's Excellence. It is a business qualification status created by the IAPMEI, in partnership with the Tourism of Portugal organization and several banks. Excellence SME's are the subset of SME Leader, that fulfill additionally the following criteria:

a) They belong to the first 2 rating levels (AAA or AA), based on the Report and Accounts of 2010;

b) Fulfill the following financial criteria, supported in the financial statements for 2010:

- i) Financial autonomy (Own Cap./active) $\geq 35\%$;
- ii) Increase of turnover compared with 2009 $\geq 5\%$;
- iii) Return on Equity (Liquids Res. /Own Cap.) $\geq 10\%$
- iv) Return on Assets (Liquids Res. /Net Assets) $\geq 3\%$



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SME Excellence status was assigned this year to 1368 enterprises, which in various activity sectors, stand out the best economical/financial performance and management. These are enterprises that present financial strength ratios and profitability above the national average, which are known to maintain high standards in a competitive context particularly demanding and who are able to overcome the crisis with growth, results consolidation, and active contributions in wealth creation and regional employment. Two of the Excellence SME's are associated to Naturtejo, Municipal Corporation.

Not bad, not bad at all...

The Editor

Carlos Neto de Carvalho
Scientific Coordinator
Geologist

ACTIVITIES OF THE MONTH



December - Geopark Naturtejo Webpage among the best. A recent study presented in Minho University shows that Naturtejo Geopark website is one of the best webpages provided by European Geoparks. The master's thesis "Analysis of the accessibility and quality of the information about European Geoparks in the Web", by Dulce Ramos Castro under the supervision of Professor Diamantino Pereira, aims to "contribute to a better efficient dissemination strategy of Geoparks". The researcher was based on 7 criteria and 67 indicators of research to evaluate the attractiveness and the interest for potential tourists from 38 webpages of the 42 Geoparks belonging to European Geoparks Network, until September 2011. In this evaluation from 0 to 5, Naturtejo Geopark gets a rate of 3.6, together with the Parco Naturale Adamello Brenta, English Riviera and Fforest Fawr geoparks. This study stands out North West Highlands Geopark webpage as the most complete, with 3.8. The Naturtejo Geopark site occupies the first place in the number of occurrences and research through other words, and it is constantly suggested when performing a search on any other Geopark. According to the author, this webpage is directed towards the aims which were proposed to: actualized, accessible, easy to use and organized. However, the new version of the page of Naturtejo Geopark which is available online since July, following to this study, is still be tested and will be translated into English and Spanish. On this page, graphic design and ease of use, the general contents and the Geotourism contents had increased and also the scientific information improved and has been reinforced. "The search tools on the Internet are now the main sources of information for potential visitors seeking tourist destinations." The interesting results of this study suggest that "Geoparks must invest much more in quality of information which is provided". There is often a neglect of self-promotion of Geoparks and a "lack of response by the responsible entities", where such information is requested. As the author rightly states in her thesis, a webpage "is the extension of the Geopark, and shows its services as well as its products."



December 4th - Manchester Metropolitan University students in the Fossils Trail of Penha Garcia and the Boulders Trail of Monsanto.

December 4th – Manchester Metropolitan University students in the Fossils Trail of Penha Garcia and the Boulders Trail of Monsanto. Researchers from the University of Manchester returned to the Idanha-a-Nova municipality. This time they were accompanied by 8 students of Tourism and Management degree and their Prof. Steve Rhoden, from the Manchester Metropolitan University and a tour operator from the same city. Armindo Jacinto, Manuela Catana and the Tourism technicians from Idanha-a-Nova showed the natural and historical heritage of Penha Garcia and Monsanto to this students group which participate in a research project. The students came to collect data about Tourism in the Municipality of Idanha-a-Nova, through interviews, surveys and field visits.

December 5th – Shopping website distributes products from de Geopark through the Iberian Peninsula. Naturtejo Geopark had joined to a Shopping website able of generating between 10 to 15 million euro per year. The platform has already been implemented by the Association of Hoteliers and Resorts in the Algarve, and since this month is available for the Geopark Naturtejo territory. This shopping platform was presented and discussed during a workshop which occurred at Centro Cultural Raiano (Idanha-a-Nova), with the members of Naturtejo and local staff. This platform ensures that producers receive, within eight days, the value of products sold and their customers (hotels, private institutions of social solidarity or canteens) can pay to the platform in 140 days without rates. This platform eliminates the normal distribution channels and "connects the producers and their customers through a fair price for the products, and where the marketing channel is controlled by the consumer and the producer," explains Pedro Viegas responsible for the system. The platform works associated with Caixa Geral de Depósitos (Portuguese national bank), Espírito Santo Bank and Portugal Telecom. To achieve access to the central shopping, producers and consumers will have to register themselves at the platform. Is in that space that the products will be cataloging. Pedro Viegas confirmed that "since it came into operation in Algarve, in June 2009, the shopping website has already generated nine million euros of business."

December 6th – Spanish's visiting Castelo Branco. The travel agency "Grupo Pérez Cubero", from Córdoba, visited the Castelo Branco city with Fátima Rodrigues. The 32 interested visitors visited the castle and the downtown, the Cathedral, the Francisco Tavares Proença Júnior Museum and the romantic Bishop Palace Garden.



December 11th – Celebration the International Mountains Day in Oleiros: 5000 years of Landscape enjoyment.

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The International Mountains Day in Oleiros municipality, with the Geopark Naturtejo collaboration, was signed with a celebration to the mysterious mountains of Oleiros, where the Jesuit António de Andrade was born, “climber of the Himalaya and discoverer of Tibet”, in 1581. This year theme was “Among landscapes rich in antiquities and the richness of the deep Earth” and started in the Oleiros Tourism Office with an interesting introduction to the “Archeology in the Oleiros Mountains”, by Dr. João Caninas, from the Associação de Estudos do Alto Tejo. This lecture was complemented with a guided visit to one of the interest sites of Rock Art in the Oleiros mountains, which testifies the ancient occupation of the region, whose recent discoveries in the Serra Vermelha date back about 5000 years. Also there was a tribute moment in the António de Andrade Monument, in a time which the tv channel RTP transmit a documentary about the journey of this Jesuit, spread at the national level the arrival of the “first European to the roof of the world”. The Oleiros mountains also hold the “Wolfram Memories”, that had been explored in the Fragas do Cavalo Mines, and where have been made a visit to the deeply marked landscape by the heaps and abandoned mine tunnels and shafts. In this context was launched the brochure “Geomining heritage of Oleiros”, a tool that presents to the visitors and tourists a new potentiality of the municipality, which is currently the subject of extensive study by the Naturtejo Geopark team, in a close collaboration with the municipality of Oleiros and the local community. The reality of the tungsten times in the region, in the first half of the XX century is fading, but the “Black Gold Fever”, in which all this region was involved, is part of the Universal History and it can't be forgotten and should be valued. With this aim, we note the play “Tungsten” by the ESTE – Estação Teatral on the scene at the Cine Teatro Avenida in Castelo Branco in the past December 8th and 9th which accurately portrays and in a compelling way the life of miners, in these times.

The lunch “Flavors of the Mountains” in the restaurant Maria Pinha gave to taste some of the flavors from Oleiros, including the memorable chestnut soup, the cheese, the traditional maranho and the papas de carolo sweet, as well as the historic Calum wine.

The Christmas at the Mountain was marked by a Classic Christmas concert played by the Albicastrense Typical Orchestra, who filled of people the Oleiros Church. The church from the XVI century, monument with national importance, was full by a crowd blazed with the traditional Portuguese Christmas carols and from the World. In the churchyard the participants contemplated an example of the notable autochthone forest from Portugal, the Ash Tree from the churchyard, a Live Monument of Oleiros, which is part of the Monumental Trees Route proposed recently, in the International Year of Forests, at the Living Science Center of Forest in Proença-a-Nova in cooperation with the Naturtejo Geopark.

December 14th – Conference of knowledge and technology transfer.

The Instituto Politécnico de Castelo Branco (IPCB) polytechnic institute organized in the auditorium of the School of Education, a conference about knowledge and technology transfer. It was the first conference to broach this issue and had as main objective, to discuss the contribution of knowledge to the economic activities, in a perspective of higher intervention and approximation of the IPCB to the thematic, where its knowledge offered can be an added value to the value creation.

To opening the conference there was a lecture made by PhD Prof. Manuel Mira Godinho, from the Instituto Superior de Economia e Gestão of the UTL, where was discussed the integration between higher education institutes and the respective communities: situation and challenge.

This was followed by three panels, which were chosen thematics to this first edition, addressed to the tourism and leisure areas, with the participation of António Martins, representing the Centre of Portugal Tourism, and Armindo Jacinto, as the president of the Naturtejo Geopark; fashion and design and information technologies. To these panels were invited three external personalities, with interventions in each of the thematics.



December 18th – Inauguration of the new pedestrian trail “Balcony Route”. The Medelim village and the council of Idanha-a-Nova inaugurated the seventh pedestrian trail of this municipality, concerning the valorisation of the local heritage, establishing a network of pedestrian trails in the Naturtejo Geopark. The Balcony Route is a circular trail with 18 km that was established around the Medelim village, which is characterized by a granite architecture where stills prevails the balcony, which gives access to the second floor of the houses. They are more than 200 buildings with balcony, a kind of granite construction so characteristic in the Beira Interior and Norte region of the country. This extensive trail cross the Castelo Branco plains, with a privileged setting of the residual reliefs of Monsanto and Penha Garcia. The Tourism Office of Idanha-a-Nova planned the inaugural trail for about 50 participants, in the majority were local people. Armindo Jacinto and the President of Medelim were the hosts.

December 19th – Workshop in Sertã “Tourism in low-density areas in the Centre region”. “A Geography of hope” was the slogan of the workshop on the Economic Recovery Programme of Endogenous Resources (PROVERE), held on December 19th, at Sertã, which pursuit to analyse the role of networks and partnerships in tourism sectors of low density territories of the Centre region and, in particular, spread the contest for funding of business projects. Besides the initial assessment of the implementation of the PROVERE, since its formal recognition in 2009, and the presentation of the main data related with the announcement of the applications to the Incentives for Innovation Systems, also was presented two cases of partnership in the Centre region which are good practices in the organization of local and regional stakeholders, both public and private, around a territory, its features and a development strategy: the ADXTUR-Agency to the Tourism Development of the Schist Villages and the Intermunicipal Company – NATURTEJO, through its President, Armindo Jacinto.

December 27th-30th – Christmas holidays in the Geopark. 5 tourists took advantage of the special program of “accommodation in the Geopark” to enjoy a relaxing Christmas vacations at the Hotel Tryp Colina do Castelo , 4 stars watching Castelo Branco.



IMPACT OF GEOPARK IN MEDIA

Newspapers & www

December (Oleiros Magazine - cover) – Oleiros Mountains, a richness to find
December (Alto Tejo) – Science Museum discusses Geopark
December 6th (Povo da Beira) – International Mountains Day
December 7th (Reconquista) – International Mountains Day
December 7th (Reconquista) – Naturtejo in Alcains: to know the granite
December 10th (Diário As Beiras) – International Mountains Day celebrated in Oleiros
December 14th (Gazeta do Interior) – The mountains and Christmas, together in a single day
December 15th (Reconquista) – Mountains Day reminds ancient times
December 20th (Povo da Beira) – Visit to the pre-historic rock art in the Oleiros Mountains
December 20th (Povo da Beira) – “Scents of the Earth” mycological walk enchants nature lovers
December 22th (Reconquista) – Açafa on line already on the e-mails
December 22th (Reconquista) – “Scents of the Earth” bring foreigners
December 27th (Povo da Beira) – International Mountains Day celebrated with several activities

Radio

December 2nd (Rádio Condestável) – Oleiros – International Mountains Day
December 16th (Rádio Condestável) – International Mountains Day was marked
December 23th (Rádio Condestável) – Sertã – workshop: tourism in low-density areas in the Centre region

SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE GEOPARK AND THE GEOSCIENCES



Sequeira, A.J.D. – Microfósseis do Grupo das Beiras (Monfortinho-Salvaterra do Extremo, Beira Baixa, Portugal Central). *Comunicações Geológicas*, 98: 55-60.

Neto de Carvalho, C. – Pegadas de vertebrados nos eolianitos do Plistocénico Superior do Sudoeste Alentejano, Portugal. *Comunicações Geológicas*, 98: 99-108.

Cardoso, J.L., Guerra, A. & Fabião, C. – Alguns aspectos da mineração romana na Estremadura e Alto Alentejo. In: J.L. Cardoso & M. Almagro-Gorbea (eds.), *Lucius Cornelius Bocchus – Escritor Lusitano da Idade de Prata da Literatura Latina*. Academia Portuguesa de História, Real Academia de la Historia: 169-188.

Ramos, D.M.C. – Análise da acessibilidade e qualidade da informação acerca dos geoparques europeus na Web. Tese de Mestrado, Universidade do Minho, 67pp.

PROMOTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC



Exhibition until June of 2012



Leaflet about Geomining Heritage of Oleiros

Geotourist Calendar | 2012

www.naturtejo.com

Fragas do Cavalo Mines, Oleiros

January							February							March						
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February
13 – Global Geoparks Network Anniversary

March
31 – Tree and Forest Day
22 – World Water Day

April
18 – International Day for Monuments and Sites
22 – Earth Day/Portuguese Day for Geoheritage

May
8 – Sun Day
18 – International Museum Day
22 – International Day for Biodiversity
24 – European day for Parks

June
1 – Children's Day
4 – European Geoparks Network Anniversary
5 – World Environment Day
21 – Renewable Energy Day

July
16 – Naturtejo Geopark Anniversary
28 – World Nature Conservation Day

September
16 – International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
27 – World Tourism Day

October
1 – National Water Day
4 – World Animal Day

November
23 – International Day of the Autochthonous Forest
24 – World Science Day

December
11 – International Mountain Day

PROMOTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC





Newsletter
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*O Geopark Naturtejo da Meseta Meridional deseja-lhe
Um Feliz Natal e um Próspero Ano Novo*



Morfologias Graníticas da Serra da Gardunha

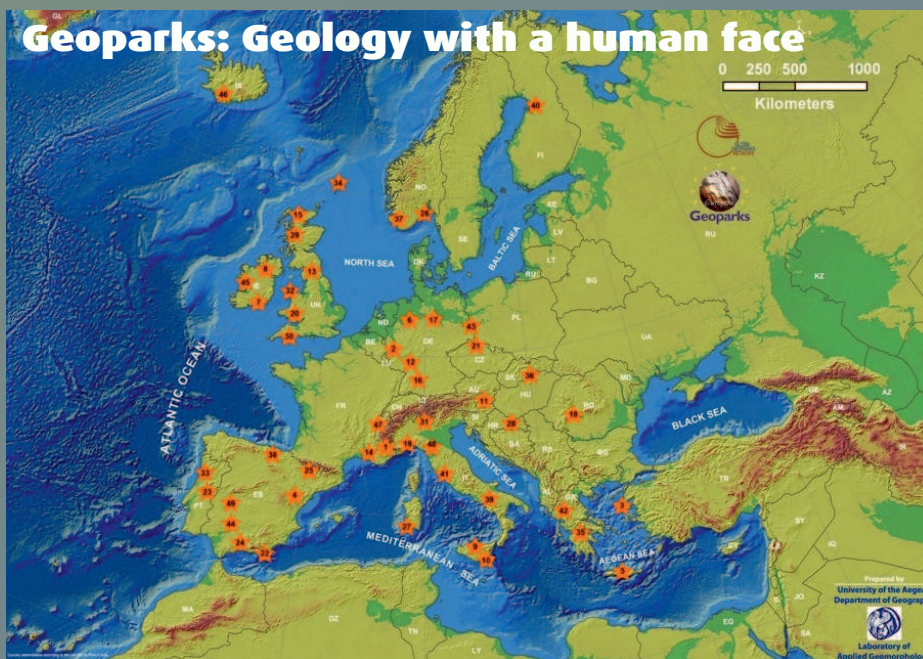
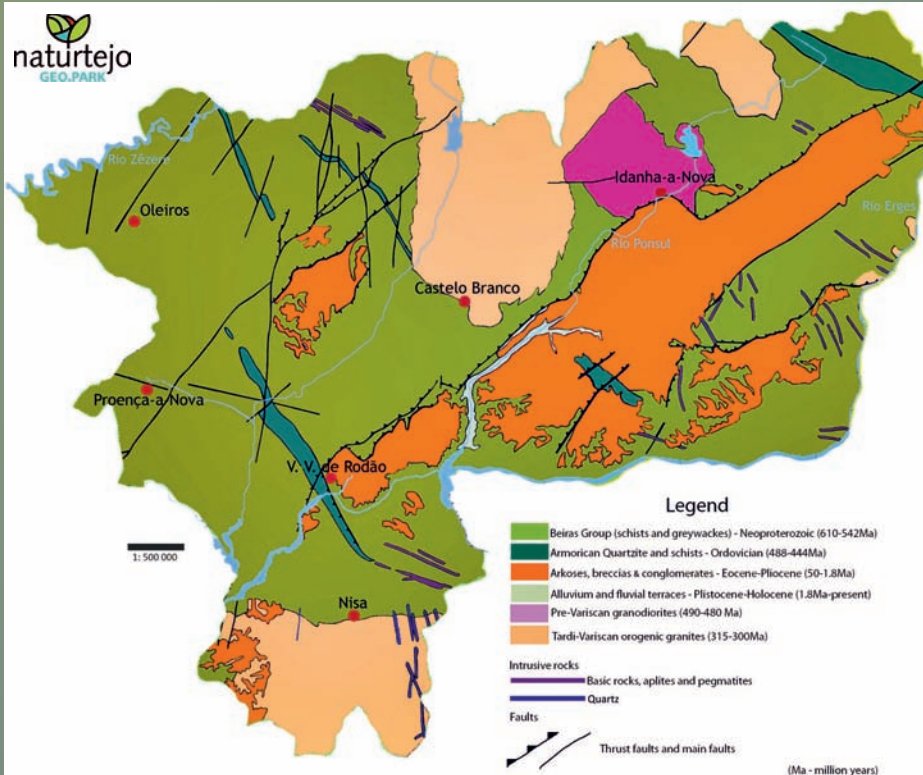
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Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



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