



# Visit to Zdanice Czech Republic 2008

## European Conservation Action Network (EUCAN)

The European Conservation Action Network was established in 2007 by The Kingcombe Trust, a charity based at The Kingcombe Centre in west Dorset, dedicated to conservation and environmental education (Reg. Charity no. 1054758), in association with the Dorset Branch of Butterfly Conservation.

The project is funded through the Leonardo da Vinci section of the European Union Lifelong Learning Programme and has partners in France, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland.

Further information can be obtained from [www.kingcombecentre.org.uk](http://www.kingcombecentre.org.uk) or from Nigel Spring (tel: 0044.1963.23559; email: [nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk) ).

## The outward Journey

We travelled to the Czech Republic by minibus camping for 3 nights on the way, which was a lovely way of experiencing some other Countries on a whistle stop tour! After crossing the channel from Dover to Calais and driving through France we reached our first campsite in Berrnisart Belgium, all very weary the friendly campsite owner ordered us in Pizza! We set up camp and settled in for the night.

A long drive ahead of us today through Belgium and into Germany, lovely scenery as we drive along the river main spotting several birds of prey on the way; the Common Buzzard, Honey Buzzard, and Kestrel . We eventually arrive at a lovely campsite situated right on the river Main Near Wurzburg.

After a particularly stormy wet night quite scary in the tent rain lashing down! We awoke to blue skies. Drove further through Germany and into Austria following the beautiful river Danube. Very pretty landscapes with Bavarian style cottages perched on the hilltops. After a bit of language confusion we manage to find our campsite in Krems, the pitch was a bit of a squeeze but we managed to cram all the tents in overlooking the Danube very picturesque.



## Arrival in Zdanice

The last leg of the journey we drive through Austria and cross the border into the Czech Republic. The landscape changes quite dramatically the first town we come to looks very industrialised. We drive further into the Countryside with rolling hills and fields filled with Sunflowers. We arrive in a town called Kyiov and meet with our Czech volunteer co-ordinators David Novotny and Zuzka Veverkova, who are very warm and welcoming, and offer to take us to lunch at a nearby restaurant.

In the evening we went to a local festival in Milotice, where there was traditional Czech singing and dancing, a theatre production (in Czech!) and a group of Maori dancers who had come all the way from New Zealand to perform at the festival which was a great evening.



## Accommodation

*Zdanice Football Club accommodation -*



We arrived at our accommodation (the local Football Club) early afternoon to find comfortable rooms with a swimming pool, fantastic!!

The rooms were clean and comfortable, very welcome after 3 nights in the tent!

## Introductions

The next day we were lucky enough to be invited to the Town Hall to meet the Mayor Mr Miroslav Prochazka, he gave a warming speech (via translator!) welcoming us to the town and thanking us for the work we were doing.

After an Exchange of gifts and photo opportunity we were ready to set to work!



## Work on site



Work on the site progressed very well. Some of us using loppers and bow saws for lopping down the acacia and rosehip bushes with particularly nasty spikes! The chainsaw team were tasked with taking out the larger silver birch trees, and the brushcutters took out the more stubborn scrub.

We learn that a TV crew from a local Czech television channel are keen to come up to the site to film some of the work going on which was a fantastic opportunity to publicise the work we are doing and to get the local community involved.

Our Hungarian butterfly expert Yanos Toth took groups of us on a butterfly walk through the meadow, we manage to see various species including -

- Scarce Swallowtail
- Brimstone
- Great banded Grayling
- Dryad
- Queen of Spain Fritillary
- Mountain Alcon Blue



Whilst working in the valley we also came across a number of other creatures, several Praying Mantis in the long grasses also -

- Green tree frog
- Sand Lizard / Green Lizard
- Grass Snake
- Giant Carabid beetle



## Bird Watching at the lakes

Zdanice also has a wide range of bird species which we were lucky enough to see whilst on a nature walk with our local expert Karel. We visited a beautiful set of lakes and spotted -



- Bee eaters
- Red backed shrike
- Golden Orioles
- House Martins
- Common Heron
- Night Heron
- Red crested Pochard



## Local Cuisine

We make our regular meal stop for lunch and dinner each day at a small village restaurant run by a friendly couple called Honza and Marketa. Everyday Marketa provides home cooked meals, which usually consist of various meat, potatoes and dumplings, traditional Czech food is very filling!



## Histopedal Festival

The mayor kindly invited us to the annual 'Histopedal' festival held in the town.

Every year a number of the locals dress up in old fashioned traditional costume and ride around the park on very old cycles, the most popular being the penny farthing.

It was great seeing the locals all riding through the park the onlookers clapping and cheering! The hospitality of the local people was fantastic.



## The Journey Home

We boarded our first train at Brno station heading for Prague, from there it was on to Berlin. Berlin train station was something rather spectacular, the building was an architectural splendour. We were all very excited about spending the night on the sleeper train!!

We boarded the train with 6 of us to a cabin it was a very exciting journey, as we left Berlin darkness fell and a magnificent firework display was going on outside the train window. We were awoken by the guards call early in the morning as we arrived in Brussels.

We had a little time in Brussels station to try and spend the last of our Euro's before boarding the luxurious Eurostar and hurtling back to London St Pancras, all reminiscing of the fantastic adventure we had in the Czech Republic. I would highly recommend the experience to anyone!

