Birth house of Julius von Payer

Object no. 10 | U Hadích lázní 44, Teplice

The Hotel in U Hadích lázní Street carries the name of the most famous Teplice's patriot. He became famous after the Austrian polar expedition under his leadership discovered the then unknown archipelago in the far north.

Julius Payer was born in the house U Jitřenky (At the Morning Star) in Šanov on 2nd September 1841. After his studies in Krakow and Vienna he served in the army. During his military service he set up his first Alpine climbs: he reached 118 mountain tops in four years, most of them as a first man and drew his own quality maps of each of them. In 1868, his cartographic talent was noticed by his commanding officers and Payer worked professionally as a map maker afterwards. Thanks to his experience in the Alps he was recommended for a German expedition to Greenland in 1869. Upon the success of this mission he was charged with the leadership of two independent expeditions. During the second one which took place between 1872 and 1874 this polar explorer and his crew faced death several times. One month after setting sail the ship froze in icebergs. In August 1873, after another year of such sailing, Payer hit an unknown land which he called Franz Josef Land. He made maps of a substantial part of the land. He would probably have continued researching the land but the crew faced a serious lack of food so they had to set sail to return in May 1874.

Payer wrote a detailed and scientifically professional travel book about his expeditions. After returning from his last expedition he devoted himself to painting but he stayed faithful to polar landscapes. His most famous realistic paintings are called "Never back!" or "Polar catastrophe" and they witness what experiences he brought back from his voyages.

Julius Payer died on 29th August 1915 and was buried in Vienna. A mountain in east Greenland is named after him. He made the town of his birth, Teplice, immortal in the islands of Franz Josef Land where you can still find Schönau Island and Teplitz Bay.