

POLAR EXPLORER JULIUS PAYER

Lecture by the traveler, polar explorer, publicist, translator and writer Zdeněk Lyčka



Julius Payer (1841–1915) was born in Teplice-Šanov in a German-speaking family. He graduated from the Cadet School in Lobzów near Krakow and the Theresian Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt. He was an excellent topographer who made many dangerous first ascents in the Tyrolean Alps. In 1869–70, he took part in the German Arctic expedition to the eastern shores of Greenland led by Karl Koldewey. In 1871, together with Karl Weyprecht, he made a preliminary exploratory voyage on the sailing ship *Isbjørn* in the Barents Sea, this time in the Austro-Hungarian expedition, which was to explore the navigation possibilities of the upcoming scientific expedition to the North Pole.

A large part of the lecture will be devoted to the private Austro-Hungarian expedition to the North Pole in the years 1872–74 led by Julius Payer and Karl Weyprecht. You will find out that the expedition ship *Admiral Tegetthoff* was permanently trapped in ice four months after her departure, and drifted uncontrollably in the Arctic Ocean due to the force of winds and sea currents. In 1873, the crew discovered a new land, which they called Emperor Franz Josef Land in honor of the Austro-Hungarian monarch. After having survived the second winter, the decimated members of the expedition set off on foot, sleds and boats across the thawing sea towards the south. They escaped certain death by cold and hunger only after three months full of harsh arctic experiences. In August 1874, they were rescued by the Russian fishing schooner *Nikolai* off the coast of Novaya Zemlya. Do not hesitate and come and listen to this incredible history.

Information about the lecturer (zdenek.lycka@mzv.gov.cz, mobile +420 776 750 488):

Dr Zdeněk Lyčka (1958) studied systems engineering at the VŠB in Ostrava and modern philology with a specialization in Danish-English at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague. Before the Velvet Revolution he worked as a programmer, and in 1990 he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the years 1991–96 he worked at the Czechoslovak (Czech) Embassy in Copenhagen, in the years 1998–2002 he was Director of the Czech Centre in Stockholm and in the years 2008–13 Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Denmark. Until 2016, he was Director General of the Czech Centres. He translates Nordic and Anglo-American literature. In the summer he likes sea kayaking, in the winter cross-country skiing. In 2011, he crossed the Greenland Ice Cap on skis, and in 2020, he crossed the frozen Baikal Lake, in the footsteps of the Czechoslovak Legionnaires. He kayaked six European rivers, mostly from source to mouth (Elbe, Danube, Oder, Rhône, Rhine, Vistula and Seine). He published many travel reports, mostly in the Argo publishing house.