

## *The adventurous life of Franc Guzej, known as the Outlaw Guzaj*

*The history of 19th century Šentjur is known not only for the famous Anton Martin Slomšek (1800-1862), the first Slovene to be beatified; it is also known for one of the most infamous outlaws to ever roam Slovenia. In 1839, Franc Guzej, later known as the Outlaw Guzaj or the Robin Hood of Kozjansko, was born in Sv. Primož pri Šentjurju.*

*Franc was obliged to serve in the army. He also trained in Dalmatia to be one of the gendarmerie and served for some time in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Feeling homesick, Franc quit his job and returned to his hometown of Šentjur, where he looked for work.*

*He found a job as a helper on a large farm in Dobrna, where a tavern was also located. There, Ana Klančar fell in love with Franc who, unable to return her love, decided to leave. Before Franc left, the wounded Ana placed silverware and 3,000 florins in his suitcase and falsely reported the theft to the gendarmerie, all because he had rejected her love.*

*The gendarmerie captured Guzaj and wrongly sentenced him to seven years in prison. Out of anger for this grave injustice, Guzaj swore he would get his revenge against Ana Klančar. He soon escaped from prison to the vast forests of Kozjansko, where conditions forced him to become an outlaw. He formed a band of outlaws, and they began a wave of plundering and robbery that stretched across the entire Štajerska region, and all the way to Croatia. Guzaj's targets were castles, fairs and rectories. Using cunning tricks and hoaxes, he lightened the pockets of many a lord and priest, while wealthy merchants were no exception. He always shared his bounty with the poor.*

*The crafty Outlaw was chased from Krško to Vienna, but eluded the law for many years. He was a master of disguises, who could change his appearance in the blink of an eye. Even a large bounty was placed on his head. On 10 September 1880, just before he was to escape to America with his love, the young miller's daughter Barbka Amon, the gendarmerie shot and killed Guzaj in Košnica. He was buried unceremoniously in the nearby cemetery at the Church of St. Anne in Prevorje. There are countless legends about the Outlaw Guzaj. The common thread of each story is that he was cunning and merciless to his enemies and the wealthy, but kind to the poor. Many of the legends about Guzaj remind us of similar legends about Robin Hood, who also stole from the rich and gave to the poor.*