



Discovering
Monte Barro Park



A park to experience

Texts by:

Barbara Rossato and Federico Bonifacio

with contributions by: Mauro Villa (Park director),
Massimo Pirovano (MEAB director),
Lanfredo Castelletti (MAB director),
Roberta M.Ceriani (CFA coordinator),
Aster s.r.l.

Photos by:

Federico Bonifacio

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Regione Lombardia



Cover: Monte Barro

Welcome to Monte Barro

The aim of this publication is to help you discover the characteristics of Monte Barro Park and what this protected area where Nature, Culture and History blend so magnificently can offer you.

In this Park you can walk along easy footpaths enjoying stunning views, find out about the historical period of the Goths by visiting the remains of one of their settlements and the Barro Archaeological Museum, learn about the customs and traditions of the peasant of Brianza by visiting the Ethnographic Museum, get more in-depth information on naturalistic aspects and the local fauna by visiting the Park Teaching Centre and the Costa Perla ornithological Station, get to know the activities of the Native Flora Centre of Lombardy for the protection of the flora and plant biodiversity, admire the unfinished and recently restored Church of San Michele, now the venue for various performances and cultural events. You can ... well, I will let you discover the rest by leafing through this publication and following the footpaths on Monte Barro where magnificent views will open up before you.

I hope that you will be able to enjoy all of this and that you will love and respect this Park which is our duty to protect so that those who come after us will also be able to enjoy all this beauty.

The President
Federico Bonifacio
Galbiate, April 2015





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HEADQUARTERS

Via Bertarelli no. 11
23851 Galbiate (LC)
Tel. (39) 0341.542.266
Fax (39) 0341.0-216

www.parcobarro.it
info@parcobarro.it





1 - GENERAL OVERVIEW

1A - THE PARK IDENTITY CARD

Date of birth:

Regional Park – 1983
Nature Park – 2002
Site of Community Importance (SCI) - 2003
Special Protection Area (SPA) - 2003

Management body:

Municipalities of Galbiate, Garlate, Lecco, Malgrate, Oggiono, Pescate and Valmadrera, the Lario Orientale Valle San Martino Mountain Community and the Province of Lecco.

Surface area: 665 hectares

Altitude: from 200 to 922 m
above sea level

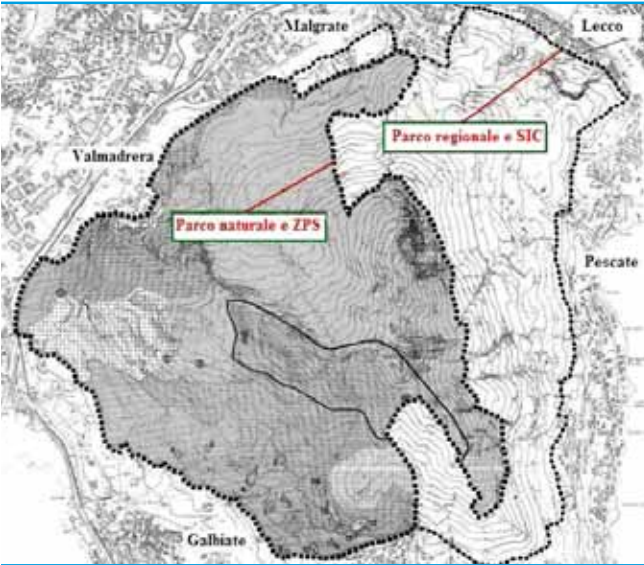
Sign-posted footpaths: 44 km.

Species of mushrooms counted: around 600

Species of plants counted: around 1200

Species of animals counted: around 1000

1B - THE PARK



In 1983, the Regional Law 86/83 defined the “Protected areas master plan” in the Lombardy Region and ratified the establishment of Monte Barro Park as Regional Park. The Park was enthusiastically promoted by local institutions which had joined forces to form the “Consortium for the protection of Monte Barro” since 1974.

In 1988, the regional Park management Consortium was founded and, on 16th March 1991, the Territorial Coordination Plan (PTC)

for Monte Barro regional Park was approved an essential regulatory instrument for the protected area.

The PTC fixed three nature reserve areas, namely:

- the “Riserva della vetta” (Summit reserve) of floristic interest,
- the “Riserva del Faè” (Beech tree reserve) of forestry interest,
- the “Riserva del roccolo di Costa Perla” (Costa Perla bird snare reserve) of ornithological interest.

The other zones defined by the PTC are:

- a silvopastoral protection area,
- an agricultural area,
- an area of regeneration of deteriorated areas,
- a natural and archaeological park,
- a series of residential settlements of historical and environmental interest.

Later, in 2002, Monte Barro Nature Park was established under the Regional Law 28/02.

*Regional Park
and SCI border
Nature Park
and SPA border*

The area subjected to this protection is approximately 2/3 of the Regional Park. The perimeter of the Nature Park includes the western, southern and northern sectors of Monte Barro. The three nature reserves are within the Nature Park area, although they are not nature reserves anymore, since the protection of a Nature Park is more restrictive than that of the existing regional Park.

In 2000, following the issue of the European “Habitat” and “Birds” directives, aiming to protect biodiversity and avifauna, Monte Barro was recognised as a:

- Site of Community Importance (SCI) for the protection of flora, fauna and habitat.
- Special Protection Area (SPA) for the protection of the avifauna. The regulations for protection in the SPA are stricter and suspension of hunting is in force in it.

The borders of the SCI and SPA correspond respectively to those of the Regional Park and the Nature Park.

All the SPA and SCI sites form the NATURA 2000 NETWORK, areas where the European Community has recently confirmed the importance of halting the loss of existing biodiversity. Protection of biodiversity is the mission of the Lombardy Native Flora Centre (CFA) established in 2000 in Monte Barro Park.

The CFA, run by the Park, is supported not only by the Lombardy Region government, but also by universities, foundations and research institutions, private firms and nurseries.

*Seed analysis
at the Native Flo-
ra Centre
laboratory*



Monte Barro Park:

- is the governing body of the Park
- manages the SCI (Site of Community Importance)
- manages the SPA (Special Protection Area)
- manages the CFA (Native Flora Centre)
- owns and manages MEAB (Museo Archeologico dell'Alta Brianza)
- owns and manages MAB (Museo Archeologico del Barro)
- owns and manages the Costa Perla Ornithological Station.

1C - MONTE BARRO

Monte Barro is a Dolomitic calcareous outcrop with an altitude of 922 metres a.s.l., located at the southern limit of the Prealps in Lombardy and surrounded by the lakes of Annone, Garlate and the eastern branch of

Lake Como towards the town of Lecco.

An isolated mountain (the geographer Giuseppe Nangeroni defined it as *the fourth "orphan" mountain in Lombardy*) of modest size, but rich in places of naturalistic, historical and cultural interest.

During the maximum glacial expansion, the top of the mountain remained outside the ice sheet and this strongly affected both the morphological features and the flora of the mountain. In fact morainic and fluvioglacial deposits and erratic (boulders) from the mountains in Valtellina, can

now be found and observed along the slopes of Monte Barro.

Visitors walking along the footpaths of Monte Barro are able to note the high biodiversity of its environments, from sub-Mediterranean woodland to beech woods, from arid meadows to cliffs and calcareous springs (Petrifying springs with tufa formation), and certainly will be enchanted by the number of plant species to be found.

Indeed, Monte Barro is the protected area with the highest plant diversity in Lombardy: around 1200 different plants have been documented in only 665 hectares,).



Monte Barro
from Lecco

Raising awareness of the importance of biodiversity and ensuring its preservation are the missions of the Native Flora Centre of Lombardy (CFA), recognised by the Lombardy Regional Government and enthusiastically promoted by Monte Barro Park.

The location of Monte Barro along one of the main bird migration routes also makes this area very important for the study of avifauna. The Costa Perla experimental ornithological station was recognised by the Lombardy Region in 1992 and is housed in a former *roccolo* or bird snare owned by the Park and now converted into a scientific lab where birds are captured to analyse their migration patterns. Monte Barro grasslands, the habitat with the highest plant richness, also host a variegated fauna, including a high number of species of insects



The Costa Perla Ornithological Station

Trail signage and information panels

and spiders, some of which extremely rare. Finally in the streams of the Park, crayfish can be observed, while uncommon mollusc and crustacean species have been found in the sub-surface waters.

Between 1986 and 1977, archaeological excavations were carried out on Monte Barro, bringing to light the largest Goth settlement in Italy at the site of Piani di Barra.

The paths on Monte Barro are suitably marked by CAI-type signposts and are maintained by a number of volunteering associations who carry out their valuable work in the Park. Additionally wooden information plaques provide useful details, maps and curiosities in several places around Monte Barro.



1D - GEOLOGICAL AND GEOMORPHOLOGICAL FEATURES

Monte Barro, is a Dolomitic calcareous outcrop at the southern edge of the Prealps in Lombardy. Its geological structure and composition greatly affects the mountain's morphology, vegetation and water courses. Indeed, it must be remembered that limestone has such composition and characteristics that it tends to dissolve by the action of rain, made acid by the carbon dioxide from the air,.

A karstic landscape with furrowed fields (ma non si dice limestone pavements?) and sinkholes, characterises Monte Barro, and are particularly visible at Pian Sciresa, as a proof of a constant erosive action.

During the Ice Ages, the Adda Glacier flowing down from the Stelvio

Pass, invaded Valtellina and merged with the Spluga and Valchiavenna glacier, to further continue southwards with a thickness of over 1,500 m and a length of approximately 200 km. When it shrank, it left deposits and debris transported on its long journey, including rocks and boulders of all sizes, in particular granite, gneiss and serpentine rocks, mostly originating in the Valmalenco and the Valmasino areas. Many of these erratic boulders can be found nowadays on Monte Barro; moreover, the fact that they lie only at altitudes



Pian Sciresa

below 850 m a.s.l. (the summit is at 922 m a.s.l.) suggests that the top of the mountain emerged from the ice even during the maximum expansion of the last Glaciation, known as the Würm glaciation, which took place around 20,000 years ago.

Before the advent of the Glaciation theory in the second half of the 19th century, for thousands of years, erratic boulders have been explained by imaginative folk tales: then the presence of these rocks appeared unexplainable and mysterious, since their lithologic characteristics clearly indicated their origin far away in the Alps with no relation with

the surrounding rocks and soil.

Today, the remaining erratic boulders, are considered authentic monuments from the Ice Age, and are protected by a Regional law; however for thousands of years they have been chiselled, used and reused as building material to make tombs, sacrificial altars, stelae, milestones along roads, paving, architraves, door posts, capitals or tools for everyday use like millstones to grind cereals or pulses.

Indeed, it was certainly more convenient to use these rocks that were on hand rather than going and getting them from the quarries in Valtellina.

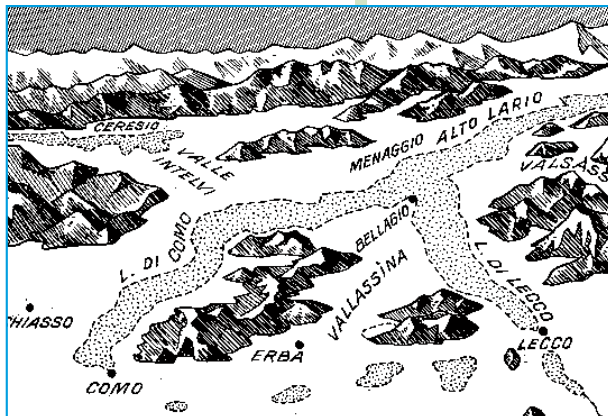
Some of these blocks have curious cavities known as “coppelle” or “scodelle” (cupels or bowls) of differing sizes and shapes. Many conjectures have been put forward as to their origin: some speculate that they are formed by a natural action connected with erosion phenomena (similar to the genesis of the so-called “giant’s cauldrons”), others that they are artificial, that is the result of human action for various purposes.

Many examples of such cavities, with differing characteristics, may be seen on Monte Barro. For example, at Piani di Barra you can see the “Masso delle coppelle”, a serpentine block on the surface of which there are a number of regular cavities with diameters of about 5 cm. Along the path in the Valle della Pila there is a small erratic block of gneiss known as the “Sasso della Pila” (mortar) due to the presence of a regular bowl-shaped cavity that is certainly artificial. A cavity of this kind could be used very well to grind cereals, using a wooden pestle.



Erratic boulder

The Como Lake area during the maximum of the Quaternary glaciations (according to G. Nangeroni



The “Masso delle coppelle”, a serpentine erratic boulder



The rock composition (and therefore that of the soil) has significantly influenced the vegetation on Monte Barro, since there are species that love alkaline soil on the calcareous land formed by the rocky material of the mountain, while in the vicinity of the soils of morainic origin plants preferring acid soils have flourished.

The “Sasso della Pila”, an erratic boulder near the top of Monte Barro

Fossils representing and indicating traces of past life can be observed in the calcareous rocks: in one of his publications, the 19th century geologist Antonio Stoppani described the abundance of fossils found on Monte Barro, related in particular to the fauna of the Triassic era.



1E - VEGETATION AND FLORA

The terms vegetation and flora are sometimes used as synonyms, although they have quite different meanings – meanings that it is advisable to know, in order to better understand the scenery and the high level of biodiversity that distinguish Monte Barro.

The term “vegetation” refers to the type of plant life found in a given territory. On the contrary, the term “flora” indicates the list of individual



*Beech forest
in “Val Faèe”*



*Birches
at “Praa
della Corna”*



Garland flower

plant species present in a given place, forming its vegetation.

The vegetation on Monte Barro is extremely variegated, with numerous typologies concentrated within the smaller regional parks. In fact, sub-Mediterranean and mesophilic woodland, arid and carbonate rock meadows, and feather grass stands can be observed. Each of these environments, which will be described below, is determined by specific climatic and soil conditions, and has specific vegetation and floristic characteristics.

These two important aspects of Monte Barro were examined with scientific precision by Prof. Giovanni Fornaciari in his book *Flora e vegetazione del Monte Barro* (1986).

The Park has dedicated a *Sentiero botanico* (Botanic trail) to him near the Eremo, where the first alpine botanical garden in Italy was created in 1881 and called *Daphnea* in homage to the Garland flower (*Daphne cneorum*), a species once very common in that area.

Laburnum



The **sub-Mediterranean woods** form the typical woodland vegetation on the sunniest and driest slopes of Monte Barro. This vegetation, in fact, grows on limestone soils that are arid and often superficial. As far as the tree layer is concerned, the flora present is composed above all of downy oak (*Quercus pubescens*) and hop hornbeam (*Ostrya carpinifolia*), alongside which the flowering ash (*Fraxinus ornus*), the laburnum (*Laburnum anagyroides*) and the whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*), with its characteristic leaves with white undersides, can also be found. Shrubs include the snowy mespilus (*Amelanchier ovalis*), particularly attractive in spring when its flowers turn it white, and the smoke tree (*Cotynus coggygia*), very easy to recognise in autumn when its leaves turn completely red. Finally, the understorey includes both species typical of hay meadows and calcareous grasslands, and species more closely connected with the Mediterranean basin.

Among these, the sowbread (*Cyclamen purpurascens*), the burning bush (*Dictamus albus*) with its intense lemon scent and the Christmas rose (*Helleborus niger*) which shows its large white flowers in winter, are worth mention.



Burning bush



Christmas rose



Monumental
beech
at the Eremo

Mesophillic woods are the vegetation typical of areas with intermediate ecological characteristics; they have deep soil layers rich in nutrients and are particularly biodiverse. Trees include sessile oaks (*Quercus petraea*), sweet chestnuts (*Castanea sativa*) and majestic beeches (*Fagus sylvatica*), the latter particularly abundant in the Val Faèe which takes its name from this tree and in the vicinity of the Eremo with monumental specimens, some of them as tall as 30 metres. The large-leaved lime (*Tilia platyphyllos*) and the small-leaved lime (*Tilia cordata*) are also common.

Shrubs that can be observed are hazel (*Corylus avellana*), hawthorn (*Crateagus monogyna*), wild privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*) and fly honeysuckle (*Lonicera xilosteum*).

In the undergrowth, many large-leaved species adapted to live in the shade of the dense tree cover can be observed, such as goatsbeard spiraea (*Aruncus dioicus*), sticky clary (*Salvia glutinosa*), with its sticky yellow flowers, and purple lettuce (*Prenanthes purpurea*), with its tiny purple flowers. The ground layer is also characterised by early flowering species such as liver leaf (*Hepatica nobilis*), lesser periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) and primrose (*Primula vulgaris*).

At higher altitudes, you can find meadowland, in particular dry meadows and grasslands on calcareous substrate.

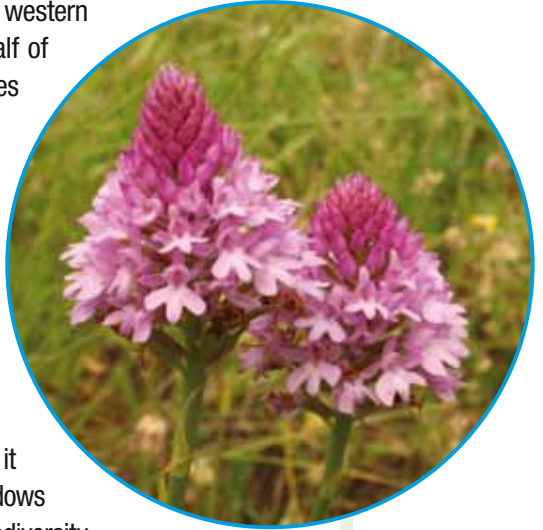


Liver leaf
(*Hepatica*)

Primrose and
Lesser periwinkle

The **dry meadows** are areas along the western and southern slopes of the upper half of Monte Barro and, as their name indicates that the vegetation in these areas is not irrigated or fertilised. They are found above all on the steepest slopes and on surface soil layers, where woodland grows with difficulty.

This is an environment with a history closely linked to human activity; from ancient times humans initially cleared the woodland from a large part of Monte Barro and then kept it cleared to use it as pasture or to produce hay. Dry meadows are characterised by an exceptional biodiversity (25-40 species per sq. m) and by spectacularly beautiful plant species. Their “enemy” is the woodland which, now that periodic mowing is no longer performed by farmers, tends to take root and



Pyramidal orchid

*Downy
elecampane*



advance progressively reducing the size of the meadows. Survival of these environments is therefore entrusted to human action.

The flora present, as it has been said, is very rich. In spring, marvelous orchids, such as the early purple orchid (*Orchis mascula*) and the pyramidal orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*), colour these meadows. Alongside these, you can see downy elecampane (*Inula hirta*) with its lovely yellow flowers, grass iris (*Iris graminea*), which takes its Italian name from the plum-like scent of its flowers, kidney vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*) and meadow clary (*Salvia pratensis*), as well as less conspicuous species like upright brome (*Bromus erectus*).

Grasslands on calcareous substrates are found along slopes with average sunlight, on limestone (high pH values, that is low acidity) and moderately dry soil. These are very particular environments, characterised by the presence of heterogeneous, discontinuous and

Grass iris



stony grounds, creating a multitude of micro-environments, and allowing the growth of plants with different needs in a small-sized area.

This type of environment has very rapid dynamics, where “accidental deaths” caused by difficult and changing survival conditions set free spaces that can welcome ever-changing species, according to the micro-environmental conditions that are created.

In these environments, herbaceous species include first and foremost grasses which form the backbone of meadowland, like blue moor grass (*Sesleria varia*), dwarf sedge (*Carex humilis*) and Monte Baldo sedge (*Carex baldensis*). On the contrary, more spectacular species are Einsele’s columbine (*Aquilegia einseleana*), endemic yellow oxeye (*Telekia speciosissima*), alpine pasque flower (*Pulsatilla alpina*), which can be distinguished from the symbol of the Park, the mountain pasque flower, by its white flowers, naked-stalked globe daises (*Globularia nudicaulis*), trumpet gentian (*Gentiana clusii*) and the splendid and rare wild peony (*Paeonia officinalis*).



Trumpet
gentian



Common
peony



*Alpine Pasque
flower*

The shrub layer, characterised by the presence of small bushes is made up of rock buckthorn (*Rhamnus saxatilis*), shrubby milkwort (*Polygala chamaebuxus*) and the unmistakable winter-flowering heather (*Erica carnea*).

Feather grass praires grow on the crests and on the slopes of Monte Barro where there is intense sunlight; in such places, the severe environmental conditions are also accentuated by the stony and arid ground with rocky outcrops. The discontinuous vegetation is full of helio-xerophilous species, those adapted

to living in an extremely bright and dry environment.

The flora is dominated by the presence of feather grass (*Stipa pennata*), which takes its name from its white feathery inflorescences. Other xerophilous grasses can be found, such as upright brome (*Bromus erectus*), rock false-brome (*Brachypodium rupestre*) and

*Naked-stalked
globe-daisies*



crested hair-grass (*Koeleria macrantha*). Then there are prostrate-trailing species like Froelich's thyme (*Thymus froelichianus*), wall germander (*Teucrium chamaedrys*) and heart-leaved globe daisy (*Globularia cordifolia*).

Finally the pretty purple asperula (*Asperula purpurea*) and various species of pinks including Sequier's pink (*Dianthus seguieri*) can be found.



*Sequier's
Pink*



*Feather-
grass prairie*



*Einsele's
Columbine*

BIODIVERSITY AND ENDEMISM

Monte Barro Park is one of the protected areas in Lombardy with the greatest floristic diversity.

Biodiversity (bio means “life”) can be observed in particular on the crags, in the arid meadows and in the carbonated rock meadows. In these environments there may be as many as 50 species in just one square metre; moreover, in several cases, they are plant species at the limits of their possibility of survival because, for example, alpine species typical of high altitudes are found at lower altitudes, or they may be species on the edge of their distributional range (that is the geographical area in which the species lives). This specific biodiversity is also determined by the fact that, despite its limited size, Monte Barro includes widely different environments from the point of view both of climate and soil type.

Glaciations and climatic variations connected with them have played a significant role in creating this diversity. In particular, the ice sheet, which also covers Monte Barro up to an altitude of 850 metres, caused the fragmentation of the existing areas, causing geographical and reproductive isolation with consequent birth of new species (speciation).

Some of these species - known as “endemic species” - still have a very limited distributional range and can therefore only be found in certain places.

Botanist Giovanni Fornaciari identified 33 endemic species on Monte Barro: they should be considered the most valuable part of the park's flora and deserve special care to prevent their disappearance (extinction). This is the case of the endemic alpine Einsele's columbine (*Aquilegia einseleana*) and of two species endemic to Insubria (found only in the Prealps in Lombardy), the Lombardy primrose (*Primula glaucescens*) and the tufted horned rampion (*Physoplexis comosa*). All these species lives on cliffs and in stony areas.

*Lombardy
primrose*





THE MOUNTAIN PASQUE FLOWER: SYMBOL OF THE PARK

The mountain pasque flower (*Pulsatilla montana*), the flower chosen as the symbol of Monte Barro Park deserves a special mention.

It is a purple coloured anemone that lives in dry and very sunny meadows.

It is an exceptionally beautiful flower that can be seen flowering on Monte Barro as early as the winter months (February-March).

It is easy to recognise due to the fact that its stem, flowers and leaves are thickly covered by a dense white fluff, to defend itself from predation by animals that might feed on it, and from the sun, the heat of which could lead to excessive evaporation of the water in the plant, causing it to wither.

The pasque flower usually has six dark purple petals surrounding very numerous yellow stamens and dark pistils. Once wilted, the flowers are replaced by characteristic infructescences, formed by the seeds, with their feathery tails that favour wind dispersion at great distance.



*Mountain
Pasque
flower*



1F - MUSHROOMS

Monte Barro has a varied vegetation (meadows and also woodland with abundant presence of beech, birch, white beech and hop horn-beam, ash, chestnut, oak, hazel, cornel, nettle tree, Scot's pine and other conifers too, such as black pine, larch, etc.) and this variety of trees associated with other smaller-size species creates an ideal environment with many possibilities for symbiosis and consequent good growth of many species of mushrooms; over 300 species have been counted on Monte Barro.

Mushrooms are not plants and do not contain chlorophyll, and therefore, since they are unable to directly carry out carbon synthesis, they live on organic material that has already been processed: all mushrooms are in fact heterotrophic, that is, like animals, they obtain their nourishment from the outside environment; they play an important ecological role because they are able to decompose the organic material present in the ground and form a very important link in the ecosystem, since they permit the closing of the material's cycle making it once again available to plants.

*Honey
Mushrooms*



The “Gruppo micologico Monte Barro” (Monte Barro Mycological Group) operating on Monte Barro is affiliated to the “Federazione micologica lombarda” (Lombardy Mycological Federation) which organises exhibitions, study days and has published the book “Funghi del Monte Barro” (mushrooms of Monte Barro) edited by Monte Barro Park.

Besides recommending to anyone wishing to gather mushrooms that they should gather only those which they are certain are edible, they should respect poisonous or unknown species too, by not picking them and not destroying them and by respecting the undergrowth, the trees and the whole natural environment they enter.



Bolete



*Butterfly
on Heather
flowers*

1G - FAUNA

The variety of environments favours not only the development of different vegetations, but also permits the presence of a highly variegated fauna, adapted to the various habitats found in the park.

The meadow environments, of which the particular and valuable floristic biodiversity has already been discussed in detail, are very important ecosystems from the point of view of fauna too.

Arid and carbonate rock meadows have been and are still being studied with regard to their entomofauna; in particular, many species of spiders and insects have been identified that are new to Lombardy and in some cases to Italy.

This research has led to the census of no less than 56 species of butterfly, some of them very rare. An example is the *Maculinea arion*, a light blue butterfly with distinctive black spots which loves meadow areas especially those with thymes.

Another aspect of fauna of considerable importance for the Park is the observation and the study of bats and a number of bat boxes have been installed in the woods in specific environments along the slopes of Monte Barro. Bat boxes should not be confused with nesting boxes for birds, also installed in various areas of the Park. To adapt them to the two types of animals, the former have an elongated slit towards the bottom, while the latter have an entrance hole in the middle of the central wall.

Monte Barro, located along the axis of Lake Como, is in a strategic position for the migration of birds and, due to the very abundant entomofauna of the meadows and the presence of woodland, has become a resting and feeding place for birds during their long journey.

Migratory and non-migratory birds are studied in the Costa Perla Experimental Ornithological Station, which captures, rings and takes a census of the birds.

Raptors such as kestrels can be found on Monte Barro and it is also



Bat box

easy to recognise black kites, with their distinctive forked tails, which nest on the crags on the summit of Monte Barro.

A characteristic bird found in the meadow areas is the migratory nightjar. Its colouring is speckled brownish grey, making it practically invisible when, during the day, it remains motionless on branches or on the ground. It feeds on nocturnal insects.

In the aquatic environments of Monte Barro, as far as invertebrates are concerned, crayfish living in small springs and streams are worth mentioning.

Crayfish are freshwater crustaceans that are becoming increasingly rare due to the deterioration of the environment, water pollution and competition with exotic species somewhat inadvisably imported.

Springs and streams are also hospitable places for amphibious salamanders, which use such environments to lay their dark coloured larvae and which, after metamorphosing, leave them to live on dry land. Adults are easy to recognise due to their typical black colouring with yellow spots.

In areas with more stagnant water, on the contrary, you can see the spawn or tadpoles of frogs, amphibians that as adults may also live far from aquatic environments, but to which they are forced to migrate for reproduction and laying of spawn.

European robin



*Fire
salamander*



To encourage the reproduction of amphibians, the Park has created a number of ponds on its land.

Some reptiles, including colubers, Aesculapian snakes and asps, recognisable by their characteristically triangular heads, as well as green lizards, very fast-moving saurians with splendid bright green colouring, enhanced in males during the mating period with light blue colouring near their throats find their ideal habitat on the sunniest slopes.

In the woodland areas, small and agile rodents, such as field voles, dormouse and squirrels can be found, while in the meadows and clearing in the undergrowth it is possible to see hares.

Small carnivores, such as weasels, some of the smallest mammals in Europe, martens and foxes also live in the Park.

*Endemic
crayfish*



2 - FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND THE PARK

Monte Barro is easily accessible along numerous paths that connect it to the main settlements located around the bottom of its slopes. Various trails leave Galbiate, Valmadrera, Pescate and Malgrate leading to the main places of interest within the Park.

Some indications are given below referring to subsequent pages with more detailed information.

Please see the map on the last page and use the reference numbers to locate the various places.

For footpaths, please see the related leaflet.

2A - HISTORICAL BUILDINGS AND SETTLEMENTS

If you would like to discover and savour the beauty of the historical buildings and settlements you can stop along your way at Villa Bertarelli (Ref. no. 1 on the map), the headquarters of the Park, located in Galbiate in Via Bertarelli. After admiring the villa and its splendid gardens, you can continue up to Camporeso (Ref. no. 2 on the map) to visit the medieval village where the Museo Archeologico dell'Alta Brianza (MEAB) is located.

You can then go on to the Eremo (Ref. no. 4 on the map), an imposing building, which through the ages has undergone numerous structural changes according to the use that was made of it. Here you can also see the Church of Santa Maria.

Reachable from:

Villa Bertarelli: in Galbiate.

Camporeso: continuing along the asphalt road beyond Villa Bertarelli.

Monte Barro Eremo: from Galbiate



*The Camporeso
medieval
hamlet*



*Villa Bertarelli
and its garden*



along the asphalt road or following path no. 302 or path no. 307 departing from “Due Case”. From Valmadrera following paths no. 308 – 309 (depending on the starting place) and the subsequent stretch of asphalt road. From Lecco and Malgrate, respectively following paths no. 304 and no. 306 through Pian Sciresa and then path no. 301 up to “Culcinera”, then continuing along the asphalt road. Lastly, you can visit San Michele (Ref. no. 6 on the map) to see the

*The Eremo
with St. Mary's
Church*



unfinished church dedicated to the Archangel Michael, recently restored by the Park.

Reachable from:

Galbiate following the asphalt road ending at San Michele;

Pescate following path no. 312;

Lecco following the first stretch of path no. 304 and then along the dirt road.

2B - ARCHAEOLOGY

If you are seeking itineraries related to *archaeology* you can go to the Archaeology Park located at Piani di Barra (Ref. no. 3 on the map), to see the remains of the Goth period settlement dating from the end of the 5th - beginning of the 6th centuries AD, brought to light during the excavation campaigns that began in 1986.

Reachable from:

Galbiate following path no. 301;

Camporeso following paths no. 303 and 301;

Sala al Barro following paths no. 311 and 306;

Valmadrera following paths no. 309 and 306;

Malgrate following path no. 306.

You can see more by visiting the Anti-quarium (Ref. no. 4 on the map), at the Eremo where, in the Museo Archeologico del Barro(MAB) there are the most significant finds brought to light during excavations.

Following path no. 307 (Sentiero delle Torri - Path of the Towers) you can see what still remains of the ancient fortified walls built on the mountain at an altitude of around 700 metres.



The unfinished church of St. Michael

The "Grande edificio" ruin, at the "Piani di Barra" Archaeological Park



2C – ETHNOGRAPHY

*The MEAB
room showing
the work
in the fields*



If you are interested in understanding the daily life of the poorer classes in Brianza and in the Lecco area in the 19th and 20th centuries, you can stop off in Camporeso (Ref. no. 2 on the map) where there is the Museo Archeologico dell'Alta Brianza (MEAB).

The museum displays its exhibits in various realistic settings: a room for raising silk worms, a kitchen, a cowshed, a cellar, a portico devoted to transport, a room showing work in the fields and another displaying Pan pipes. The museum also organises meetings, conferences and educational workshops, offering itself as a place where people can share, discuss and learn about the anthropological aspects of culture.

2D - ORNITHOLOGY

Those of you who are enthusiastic ornithologists and visitors who wish to discover the current activities for the study of migrations or those from the past linked to hunting, can go to Costa Perla where the ornithological observatory (Ref. no. 5 on the map) has been set up.

It is a former bird snare converted to an experimental observatory, where migratory birds and those resident in the area are captured and ringed, in order to study their ecology and above all their migration routes.

Near the observatory there is a branch of the Museo Archeologico dell'Alta Brianza devoted to bird catching and traditional bird hunting methods.

Reachable from:

Galbiate following the asphalt road that climbs to the Eremo, then taking the road to the observatory (after Fogliaro) which offers extensive parking facilities;

Galbiate following path no. 302 up to the side road to the observatory;

Galbiate following path no. 307.

For guided tours of Villa Bertarelli, the Costa Perla ornithological Station and for the opening hours of the Ethnographic and Archaeological Museums, visit our website www.parco-barro.it - Tel. 0341-542266

2E - NATURE TRAILS

There are numerous paths (about 44 Km. of signposted paths) available to naturalists where they can observe the main environments present on Monte Barro.

These are some of them:

* Valle del Faè (valley of beech trees), above the area of Malgrate and Valmadrera, has many woods with beech and linden trees; historical reserve of the Park of forestry interest, it is on the side of Monte Barro exposed to the north and this characteristic makes it very interesting



A bird ready to be freed after having been ringed

from the point of view both of climate and vegetation. The path will allow you to savour the beauty of the beech trees and ancient springs in this unique wood.



*Botany
lesson in
"Val Faèe"*

Val Faèe can be reached from Malgrate along path no. 306. From the Pian Sciresa Mountain Hut you can continue along path no. 306 (lower Faèe) or climb up along path no. 301 (Middle path - upper Faèe).

From Culcinera near the Eremo along the middle Path no. 301 (upper Faèe).

From Valmadrera along path no. 308 which crosses path no. 306 (lower Faèe) and path no. 301 (upper Faèe).

* The impervious and rocky area of crags and arid meadows in the upper part of the mountain that offers magnificent panoramic views is full of plants of considerable importance and rare beauty. Endemic species that have survived the Ice Ages and adapted to this "harsh" environment can be found.

It can be reached by following paths no. 302, 304 and 305.

* The summit area of Monte Barro corresponds to the original mountaintop reserve where a large cross has been erected.

The summit can be reached by following paths no. 302, 304 and 305.

* The lower area with sub-Mediterranean woodland, for example along path no. 301 leading from Fogliaro to Piani di Barra, where very fascinating environments with different tree species and a very varied undergrowth follow one after another.



*An old spring
in “Val Faèè”*

Along the paths, limestone outcrops can be seen with fossils of bivalve molluscs and the typical morphological shapes linked to the erosion of limestone (karstification).

* Botany enthusiasts can follow the “Fornaciari” trail along which plants characteristic of the various environments of Monte Barro are grouped.

It can be reached from the area of the Eremo.

*A view from
Monte Barro:
the town of
Lecco, Como
Lake and
Mount Grigna*



*Monte Barro
summit,
at 922
meters of
altitude*



* To obtain more detailed information on floristic biodiversity, a visit to the CFA (Native Flora Centre) in Galbiate at Villa Bertarelli is recommended. You can admire the gardens of the villa and stroll through the underground tunnels where there are panels illustrating the evolution of the plants in prehistoric times and giving information for better understanding of present-day biodiversity.

*The “Fornaciari”
botany trail near
the Eremo*



2F - VISITOR AND TEACHING CENTRE

The people who want to understand the peculiarities of the Park and its many sites and habitats can visit the Park Visitor Centre at the Eremo (Ref. no. 4 on the map). At this exhibition centre, which shares its entrance with that of the archaeological museum (MAB), there is an educational workshop with scientific instruments that permit you to find more detailed information on the various options offered to schoolchildren. At the Mountain Hut in Pescate (Ref. no. 7 on the



The teaching centre of the Park at the Eremo

map) there is a small Park visitor Centre equipped for projections and educational natural activity.



A lesson at the Park Centre "Baita Pescate"

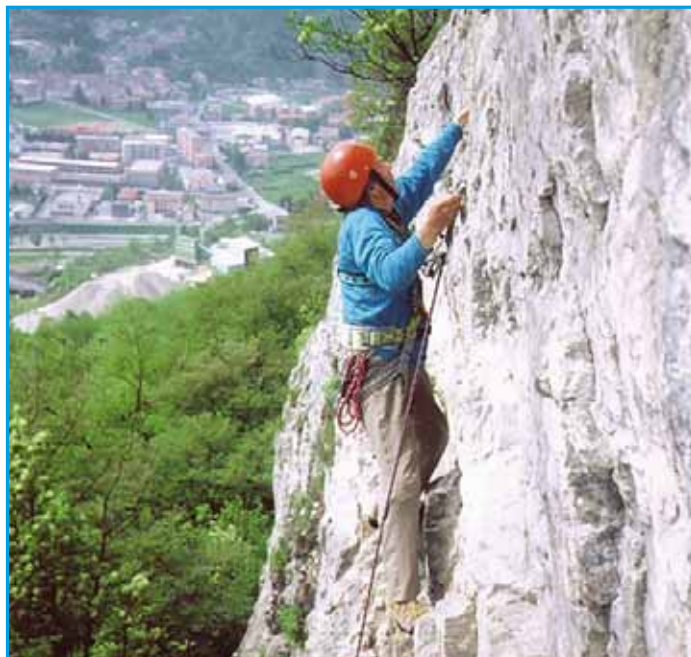
2G - ROCK CLIMBING

The most enthusiast *climbers* should remember that Monte Barro has one of the most popular outdoor practice walls in the Lecco area. The Camporeso cliff (Ref. no. 8 on the map) is famous for the wide choice of itineraries (there are 143 of them) and the presence of numerous technically easy pitches, very much sought after by beginners and climbing enthusiasts alike.

The cliff progresses with a succession of not very steep smooth rock faces and vertical walls, with occasional stretches of overhang. However, the style of climbing changes according to the sector, guaranteeing a fair amount of variety.

The cliff can be reached from the Sala al Barro station (path no. 311), from the large car park in Valle Oscura very close to the cliff, and from Camporeso.

*Rock climbing
near Camporeso*



3 - DETAILED INFORMATION

3A - VILLA BERTARELLI - HEADQUARTERS OF THE PARK AND OF THE CFA

Ref. no. 1 on the map.

Over the 18th and 19th centuries, numerous villas were built in the area of Galbiate, in order to permit the nobility to establish residences where they could spend periods of holiday.

Villa Bertarelli stands out amongst these for its position: a splendid balcony that seems to embrace the magnificent panoramic view of the lakes of Brianza already visible from the main entrance.

It is a luxury 18th century villas, located in the Rizzolo district of Galbiate, along the road leading to Camporeso.

A LITTLE HISTORY ...

- In 1721, it was already recorded in the Maria Theresa of Austria's Land Registry
- In 1754, it became the property of the Gariboldi family.
- In 1796, it was sold to the Villa family.



Villa Bertarelli



- In 1799, the ownership passed to the Ballabio family (the poet Carlo Porta was a guest at the villa several times in the period from 1801 to 1815).
- In 1873, Giuseppe Bertarelli of Milan became its owner and carried out a systematic and careful restoration and extension of the gardens. Architect Piero Portaluppi from 1911 to 1913 worked on the villa giving it a charming neo-late baroque appearance.
- In 1938, it became the property of the Lecco industrialist, Ernesto Bonaiti. During the war (1942-1945) it was used by the M. Immacolata teachers training school run by the sisters of Maria Bambina, the order to which Bonaiti's two daughters belonged as nuns.
- In 1954, it was given to the two nuns by their father as their dowry.
- In 1965, it became a rest home for elderly nuns.
- In 2003, it was purchased by Monte Barro Park Consortium and by the Municipality of Galbiate.

THE VILLA

It is a splendid building decorated with relief friezes, exquisite granite columns and wrought iron balustrades. Its gardens, covering around 7000 square metres distributed at different levels, are particularly admirable and represent an integral part of the villa.

*Panorama
from Villa
Bertarelli:
the Brianza
Lakes*



They contain numerous species of trees, the particularity of which can be appreciated due to the educational circuits related to plant evolution and biodiversity - run by the CFA - that blend into the garden and are easy to enjoy, since they have been created using existing underground tunnels.

Observing the gardens from the entrance to the villa, it seems as if you are admiring a marvellous painting where the trees in the garden form a frame that enhances the view.

The gardens were created and looked after as a work of art, designed on three levels joined by a stairway terminating with a fountain decorated with a pebble mosaic.

From the villa, you can access the gardens by walking along the first balcony with its characteristic exedra. A pergola resting on it supports a splendid wisteria which, when in flower, creates a particularly enchanting corner of the gardens.

Going down to a lower level, there is an Italian-style garden formed by box hedges, an artistic and balanced composition that offers visitors a work of fine aesthetic taste.

Descending even further you arrive in the most extensive part of the garden with footpaths that allow you to observe all the peculiarities of the place: from the historical hothouses, to the underground tunnels (now used for educational purposes), to the majestic cedars and beeches, to Portaluppi's characteristic fountain, to the Poggio della Brianza and the landscape garden.

It is a garden with a high level of biodiversity; considering only the trees, there are 60 different species in it.

Italian formal garden at Villa Bertarelli





3B - THE MUSEO ARCHEOLOGICO DEL BARRO (MAB)

Ref. no. 3 and 4 on the map.

ARCHAEOLOGY PARK

The archaeological area of the settlement dating from the Goth period (5th -6th century AD) is open to visitors who can stroll around it calmly observing all the places of most interest.

The highest concentration of remains of buildings can be found at Piani di Barra (Ref. no. 3 on the map). Then there are the remains of walls and towers that you can see in the vicinity of the Eremo and, following the Path of the Towers (path no. 307), you can observe the “*muraio*”, that is the ancient boundary wall with what remains of the watch towers.

THE SETTLEMENT

In 286 AD, Milan was chosen as the capital of the Western Roman Empire. Even after the transfer of the capital to Ravenna, in 402, Milan retained great cultural and economic importance due to its central position with respect to routes connecting the Po Valley with central Europe.

To protect it from the invasion by barbarians, its walls were repaired and numerous castles were also built at the entrances of the alpine valleys and on the lakes, in naturally defended positions.

On Lake Como, at the beginning of the 5th century, a naval force was set up under the orders of a perfect. It was in this scenario that the Isola Comacina, located close to the western shore of the lake, became an important castle. Among the various settlements established to the south of the lake, certainly the most famous,



*The
Archaeological
park at
“Piani di Barra”*



*Map and trail
for the visit
of the 12 main
ruins*

thanks to the excavations carried out, is the one of Monte Barro. The Piani di Barra Nature and Archaeology Park is located on a number of flat terraces, at an altitude of around 600 metres above sea level in an environmental context of considerable scenic interest. One of these terraces was occupied by a single large building, covering an overall area of around 1,700 square metres. From 1986 up until 1997, the Park promoted archaeological research campaigns that made it possible to confirm the truth of the legends that, from medieval times, spoke of Monte Barro as the site of a legendary town.

The excavations, conducted according to the ministerial concession issued to the "Giovio" Museum in Como and under the scientific direction of Prof. Gian Pietro Brogiolo and Prof. Lanfredo Castelletti, brought to light the remains of a Goth-age castle, in which a settled area at Piani di Barra and a defence system between the Eremito and the south-eastern slope have been recognised. The Piani di Barra archaeological areas can be freely visited following the circular path, with information panels to guide visitors. It comprises various areas where the remains of 12 buildings have been found.



Information panels showing the reconstruction of the "Grande Edificio", the main building (paint of A. Monteverdi)

It is conjectured that the so-called "Large building" may have been the dwelling of the chieftain of the settlement; it has a central area and two lateral wings joined together by a boundary wall with an entrance in the middle area. In the rest of the village there are other smaller-sized building, most of them comprising 3 rooms; some have a portico at the front. Traces of fireplaces have been found, proving the use of

these buildings as dwellings, as well as a small blacksmith's forge, as indicated by the finds brought to light there.

Around the second half of the sixth century, this settlement was totally destroyed by a fire. The absence of weapons amongst the remains would seem to indicate that the fire was not caused by an attack, but rather that the settlement was abandoned voluntarily.

Along the "Path of the towers" previously mentioned, the remains of the fortification walls (*muraioo*) with two excavated towers can be seen.



Tower ruin near the ancient wall

THE ANTIQUARIUM

The Antiquarium (Ref. no. 4 on the map) is the museum containing and displaying to the public over 400 of the most significant finds brought to light and studied during the excavations.

The new setting up, enhanced by a number of reconstructions, by information and interactive panels and by the guided contextualisation of the finds, has been created *ad hoc* over recent years to help visitors better understand the activity and the life of the settlement.

Among the objects displayed, the piece that is certainly worth particular mention is the reconstruction of the suspended crown, found amongst the remains of the central area of the “Large building”. Crowns of this kind, made from a thin sheet of bronze or precious metal, finely decorated and which were usually hung, by means of four chains, symbolised the power and the importance of the people belonging to a very high rank. Coins found during the excavations are also on display and these are very important finds because they made it possible to date the site.

The remains of ornaments, combs, fibulas, spurs have offered clues useful for reconstructing dress, while the findings of oil lamps, earthenware cooking pots, spindle whorls, bottles and glass goblets have helped to reconstruct the life in the village.

Lastly, plant remains and carbon have helped to understand the main characteristics of the natural environment, the diet and the economy of the settlement.

Anthropological reconstruction has been possible partly because of the only human remains discovered in the courtyard of the

*Tourists
at the
archaeological
museum
at the Eremo*





*A room
of the MAB
and a bronze
fawn fibula*



MUSEO ETNOGRAFICO
DELL'ALTA BRIANZA

Large building; they are the remains of two adults and a child, very probably high-ranking people, given that they were buried in such an important place.

**For the opening times
of the antiquarium,
visit the park's
website www.parcobarro.it
Tel. (39) 0341-542266**

3C - THE MUSEO ARCHEOLOGICO DELL'ALTA BRIANZA (MEAB)

Ref. no. 2 on the map.

CAMPORESO

The Museo Archeologico dell'Alta Brianza is located in the ancient hamlet of Camporeso, a farming community dating from medieval times situated in an area of ancient terracing used in the past. This hamlet dates from the 1300s and comprises a closed courtyard building, currently still partly inhabited. It is an active evidence of the peasant history of this place.

The name "Camporeso" has two possible meanings: it may be interpreted as "Camporegio", telling us that it was a territory "of the king" or, therefore, "State-owned", or as "Campus Laetus" that is "fertile field". The territory of this area was in fact suitable for growing vines, thanks to the composition of the soil and its exposition (it is in a very sunny and well ventilated area) and for breeding silk worms.

THE MUSEUM

The Museo Archeologico dell'Alta Brianza, which illustrates the life of the poorer classes in Brianza and in the Lecco area in the 19th and 20th centuries, is one of the few museums recognised by the

Lombardy Region in the demographic and socio-anthropological sector for the value of its cultural contribution and is the leading museum in the Lombardy Network of Museums and Ethnographic Heritage (REBEL).

Inaugurated in 2003, it took the place of a series of homes that up to the 1970s/1980s were occupied by families of agricultural workers, who later became factory workers; there is also a branch of the museum, devoted to hunting and bird catching, at the Costa Perla bird snare, along the road leading up to the Monte Barro Eremo.

The museum is a research and exhibition centre dedicated to everyday life, and in particular to the work of the women and men who lived and live in the hills of Brianza. It describes the past but through the people of today, with their occupations, their ways of expressing themselves, their customs, their beliefs, traditional or new.

The museum shows rooms preserved as they were previously used and where traditional activities were carried out, like the room for breeding silkworms, the kitchen, the cowshed, the portico and the cellar. Other rooms are dedicated to activities that are particularly significant in life in Brianza, such as work in the fields: one of these

*The Camporeso
medieval
hamlet,
headquarters of
the "Museo
Etnografico
dell'Alta Brianza"*



rooms is devoted to Pan pipes (*firlinfö*), which in the 20th century also became a folk music instrument, typical of our area.

In the various areas of the museum there are also house working tools, objects for everyday use or for use on feast days, but also film footage and photographs showing the people at work, as well as sound recordings of voices telling stories or singing and playing musical instruments.

Observing the work of time gone by, listening to chatter in dialect, trying to use the tools from the past: through this visitors can imagine that they are the people belonging to the working classes of former

*“Saperi femminili”
(feminine
traditional
wisdom), one of
the temporary
exhibits of the
museum*



*A lesson by
Mr. Romeo Riva in
the hunting
section of
the museum*





*The room
dedicated
to traditional
silkworm rearing*

times, trying to experience and getting to know their difficulties, their hardships, but at the same time understanding the simplicity of everyday life in the most recent past. A life made up of family, religious faith, nature, traditional activities, a life in the open air and shared with the people of the place.

The museum reminds elderly people of their childhood and youth; therefore a visit to it often leads them to feel nostalgia for what they have lost, but also convinces them of the improvements that later generations and they themselves have managed to achieve.

To adults, the museum seeks to offer a comparison between the present and the past, between usages and customs that differ according to people's social status, but also between practices and beliefs that differ in time and space, spurring visitors to ask themselves the reasons for human behaviours, just as an anthropologist wishing to know and understand instead of judging would do.

To children - by means of a very varied choice of educational options - the museum presents an age and ways of life that they do not know, that arouse their curiosity, that amaze them and that make them reflect on the present.

*The room
dedicated to
the traditional
Pan flute*



*The transport
section in the
old porch*



Important areas are the workshops for the activities in which the younger and older children learn more about the subjects studied in the museum, as well as the rooms used for temporary exhibitions that the museum organises periodically on a wide variety of subjects. During the visit it is possible to watch numerous documentaries that the museum has produced on various aspects of culture in Brianza and in the area of Lake Como (fishing, hunting, sheep breeding, wine-making, silviculture, olive growing, puppet theatres, etc.) in the room devoted to Roberto Leydi, called the room of anthropological

dialogue and immaterial assets. This room is also used for meetings with witnesses of tradition, conferences, conventions, training courses, presentations of researches and publications - in both printed and audiovisual formats - which can be found in the museum's bookshop.

For the opening times of the ethnographic Museum, visit the park's website www.parcobarro.it - Tel. (39) 0341-542266



*A lesson
about wool*



*The conference
room*

3D - THE NATIVE FLORA CENTRE (CFA)

Ref. no. 1 on the map



*In vitro
germination of
rare plants
in a growth
chamber
at CFA*

The Native Flora Centre, located at Villa Bertarelli, is an experimental station of the Lombardy Region, whose essential purpose is to promote actions to guarantee the availability of native plants compatible with the populations in Lombardy, for conservation projects and for environmental requalification and recovery that respects or increases natural biodiversity.

The CFA, therefore, takes care of all the phases that lead to

the production of seeds or of potted plants, from collecting seeds in the field to their preservation in the Lombardy Seed Bank, to the study of the germination process and the subsequent phases of cultivation in hothouses and in the field.

Following this procedure, over 500 species have been examined, and many of them have been successfully reproduced.

These include the Lombardy primrose (*Primula glaucescens*), Rainer's harebell (*Campanula raineri*), the pasque flower (*Pulsatilla montana*), symbol of Monte Barro Park, and many orchids.

The CFA is involved in many projects, such as the floristic requalification of deteriorated woodland on the plain, the seed production for the turfing of stripped areas (quarries, ski runs, etc.), the production of rare or threatened plants for restocking and reintroduction.

The CFA was set up by the Park in 1996 and recognised by the Lombardy Region in 2000: it is supported not only by the Lombardy

Government, but also by the Fondazione Minoprio, the University of Insubria, and the University of Pavia.

All the seeds and plants are certified by the **FLORA AUTOCTONA®** trademark, therefore they are produced according to well-defined protocols and are accompanied by very precise instructions on their use to ensure the respect for the natural biodiversity found in the place where they are planted or sown.

The CFA includes the Lombardy Seed Bank where seeds are collected, cleaned, dehydrated and permanently stored.

LSB is responsible for collecting seeds in the field and preserving the seeds of rare and threatened species from Lombardy. The bank, set up in February 2005, as of 31/12/2009 preserves 1878 samples for 669 species, that is around 20% of the approximately 3200 species of spontaneous flora found in Lombardy: 611 of these are rare species. In the seed bank the vitality of the seeds is maintained for almost indefinite periods thanks to the process of “cryopreservation”, that is controlled freezing. Duplicates of the rarest species are sent to other banks like the Millennium Seed Bank in Great Britain.

*A rare orchid
flowers
in the CFA
greenhouse
after in vitro
propagation*





*Guided visit to
the greenhouse
in Villa Bertarelli*

In the gardens of Villa Bertarelli, visitors can follow an educational circuit, organised with a number of information panels along the underground tunnels.

The first part of the circuit accompanies visitors in a journey describing plant biodiversity in the past, in order to better understand the evolution of plants, their adaptations and also the series of extinctions occurred during the various geological eras up to the present day.

*Seed
cryopreservation
at the Lombardy
Seed Bank*



The last panels showing present-day plants, are positioned at the end of the tunnel and introduce the area of the gardens, where visitors can observe many plants and start discovering the biodiversity within the gardens of the villa.

Discovering the modern concept of biodiversity, getting to know how it is studied and appreciating its importance is the aim of the rest of the circuit the historical hothouse.

The study of biodiversity allows visitors to investigate the problems related to the loss of biodiversity, from both the naturalistic and the anthropic points of view and at the same time understand the ethical, social, economic, cultural and scientific reasons why we strive for its protection. At the end of the circuit, a number of panels describe possible tangible actions and the activities of CFA.



Information display on plants and biodiversity along underground passageways at Villa Bertarelli

3E - THE OSSERVATORIO ORNITOLOGICO DI COSTA PERLA

Ref. no. 5 on the map



*The old bird
snaring area,
known as
"Roccolo" in
Italian, has been
converted into
the Costa Perla
Ornithological
Station*

In 1988, the Park purchased an ancient bird snare, the Roccolo Rosa, at Costa Perla and the woodland area around it with the aim of regenerating the area, so that the bird snare could be converted into a scientific and educational facility.

In 1990, after two years of work, the Costa Perla Experimental Ornithological Observatory was inaugurated.

The scientific research conducted at the observatory involves the capture, the study and the ringing of birds with their subsequent release.

Birds are captured by special nets (mist-nets) positioned in the structure of the bird snare. The mist-nets have been specially designed with a scientific approach and allow to capture the birds without harming them, so that they are immediately able fly again.





Details of species, age, sex, weight, length of feathers, the quantity of accumulated fat and moulting are recorded for each captured bird. Each bird is marked with a sort of personal “registration number” stamped on a metal ring applied around one of its claws: this number exactly identifies the specimen to which it is assigned. In this way, when recaptured, it is possible to know when and where it was ringed and the variations it has undergone over time.

Since the observatory opened, over 30,000 birds belonging to 88 different species have been ringed; some of these have later been found in various European and African locations.

When the birds are recaptured in different places, it is possible to trace the route that they have travelled during migrations, identify their passage and reproduction areas, their duration, the periods in which they occur and understand the changes in such data over time.

From the data collected, it emerges that Monte Barro is part of a stop-over area, offering food and shelter and is situated on the intersection between the Prealpine and Larian migration routes, the most important in Lombardy.

*The
Ornithological
Station viewed
from above*



*Lesson
with the
ornithologist*

The species most frequently captured are the Pied Flycatcher and the Robin.

A branch of the Museo Archeologico dell'Alta Brianza dedicated to describing bird catching and traditional hunting has also been set up at the Costa Perla Bird Snares. It allows visitors to find out about a “part” of our past linked to game: in particular, the practice of *aucupio*, that is the catching of birds for food, which was the purpose for which bird snares were built. These techniques were used to catch birds in the places where migratory birds passed, especially in autumn, when their numbers were highest.

Trees were purposely pruned to form corridors along which tram-mel nets were placed so that they were invisible. Extensive use was made of decoys, kept in cages or tethered or with their wings cut,

and forced to sing. Precisely such practices have led to the prohibition of bird trapping.

The Costa Perla facility is one of the largest in Lombardy; it has two bird snares, structures built with nets in a circular position, and two Brescia-style snares, structures made up of nets placed in straight lines.

Shrubs full of berries were grown inside the structures to attract the birds. In the middle of the net structure a *casello*, a tall and narrow tower from which the bird catcher could observe the nets and, when a large number of birds had landed, use the *spauracchio*, a spade-shaped wooden tool with a flattened round wicker part used to frighten the birds and make them fly towards the nets.

The observatory takes part in national and international research programmes. It is visited each year by ornithologists, enthusiasts, classes and people who are merely curious, and offers guided tours during which it is possible to directly watch ringing and seasonal activities.



Schoolchildren during a visit to the hunting section of MEAB at the Ornithological Station

3F - SAN MICHELE: CHURCH AND FAIR

Ref. no. 6 on the map

THE CHURCH

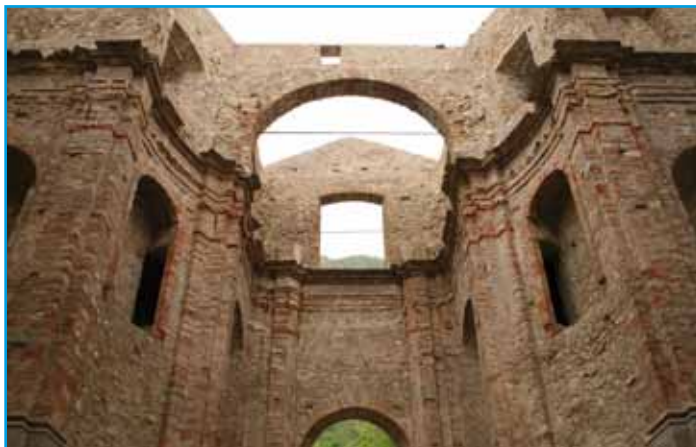
The original little church dedicated to the Archangel Michael at San Michele dates from long ago, probably from the Longobard period. The oldest record of it dates from 1146, when the church of San Michele was sold by Archbishop Uberto to the monastery of St. Dionysius in Milan. In the 17th century, the ancient Oratory (now incorporated into the present church as a sort of crypt) was restored and enlarged and the adjacent Chapel of St. Ann (1690) was built to serve as an ossuary for the dead buried at San Michele, especially during plagues.

The site began to be the destination of frequent processions to commemorate the dead.

The present large church was built on the wishes of Francesco Spreafico, a notary from Galbiate, who in his will dated 1682 gave

*The hamlet
of San Michele
with its
unfinished church*





*Internal
view of the
church*



*The
inauguration
of the restored
church
(2008)*

dispositions for its construction according to a design by the Milan architect Attilio Arrigoni (1640-1709). Its building began in 1718 and was concluded in 1752 with a temporary roof, which collapsed in 1939. Since then, the uncompleted church, as Stoppani wrote in 1885, *“remained as a stripped skeleton, a nest for bats, hawks and barn owls, and a summer residence for swallows.”*

With the conservation and restoration work promoted by Monte Barro Park and inaugurated on 27 September 2008, the magnificent building of the Church of San Michele has been saved from a deterioration that had seemed to be relentless and given back to the community



"The Festival of St. Michael", oil on canvas by Casimiro Radice (1878)

as a place extraordinarily full of atmosphere, to be used for cultural events in the midst of the natural scenery of the Park.

THE FAIR

The fair of San Michele, much renowned throughout the territory of Lecco, has been held every year since the first half of the 18th century, on 29 September, the day dedicated to the Saint. The stalls were supplied by the Confraternity of the Most Holy Sacrament in Galbiate, to whom the merchants had to pay a rental fee. The large sums earned in this way were used for the needs of the Church. From some of 18th century accounting records, it can be seen that the fair often had over 100 stalls.

The fair reached its greatest popularity in the 19th century and was immortalised by Casimiro Radice in a famous oil painting dated 1878. In 1883, Queen Margherita of Savoy accompanied by the Duke and Duchess of Genoa visited San Michele; a plaque commemorating this historical event is still embedded in the wall of a farmhouse in the hamlet of San Michele.

On the subject of this fair, in 1885, Stoppani wrote the following: *"Perhaps in no other place in the world is a merrier fair celebrated in*

a finer season. Ah, a September day under the sky of Lombardy, so beautiful when it is fine!Every field is invaded; every hillock is covered; every crag is stormed. By brigades large and small, in knots, circles, haphazardly, any old how, everyone sitting down around the famed hampers, the flask set down carefully at the side on soft ground, and made fast so that it does not overturn, the rest to be eaten. Meanwhile, a wave of people coming and going everywhere. The tide swells, the storm increases. To the greatest flood arriving from Lecco, another is added from Galbiate, and brings us the people of Brianza...".

The fair continued until after World War II and then in 2009, half a century later, it was revived by the Park.



The first edition of the new Festival of St. Michael (2009)



3G - THE EREMO

Ref. no. 4 on the map

From the most ancient times Monte Barro has been an important strategic-military site, due to its position open to all four cardinal points.

A large defence system was built on the top of the mountain and was used between the 5th and 6th centuries at the time of the Goth domination in Italy.

At the end of the 13th century, the presence of a little church dedicated to San Vittore, a 3rd century martyred Christian soldier was recorded there and in the 15th and 16th century there was a Sforza fortress on this site.

In that period, according to tradition, a miracle took place, described by the parish priest Villa, as follows: *When a number of parishioners decided to remove the image of the Madonna from the church to take it into the village, while walking along the ruined path, those carrying it were blinded and to get back their sight had to put down the image near an overhanging rock and then take it back to the church.*

Towards 1480, a number of nobles from Galbiate, prompted by the miracle, enlarged the ancient church of San Vittore, which took on the present late-Gothic appearance, and dedicated it to the Blessed Virgin. In 1488, a small Franciscan friary, able to house fifteen friars, was built beside the church and was dedicated to Santa Maria al Monte Barro. The friary remained in use up until 1810 when, during the Napoleonic period, it and many other monasteries were suppressed. Shortly before the arrival of the Franciscan friars, father Bernardino Caimi (1425-1500) wanted to create a Sacro Monte but the inhabitants of Galbiate refused to permit him to do so, whereupon



St. Mary's church
at Monte Barro

In the next
page:
The "Porta
Infra"
Madonna
(above)

The vintage
poster of
the Eremo
Grand Hotel
from the late
XIX century
(below)

the friar made the same request to the community of Varallo Sesia, which agreed, and the famous Sacro Monte of Varallo was created.

Towards the end of the 19th century, interest in Monte Barro shifted towards tourism and in 1889 the *Grande Albergo Monte Barro* was opened.

There is a fascinating picture of the hotel in which the guests were taken along the old *road*, the only road connecting the hotel with Galbiate, on foot, on horseback or by sedan chair. The hotel went out of business in 1927.

In 1931, when the antituberculosis campaign was in full swing, the Balassi family in Gallarate purchased the whole complex and equipped it for use as a sanatorium, also building the carriage road connecting it with Galbiate. Between 1950 and 1955 the building was radically renovated and considerably enlarged up to 28,000 cubic metres.

On the death of Mrs. Marta Balassi (1969), the entire property known as the *Monte Barro Eremo* was left to the Istituti Riuniti Airoldi e Muzzi in Lecco. The huge complex remained in a state of abandon for years until it was purchased in 1976 by the newly set up *Consortium for the protection of Monte Barro*.

Today the building is owned by Monte Barro Park which, after demolishing some floors to reduce its impact on the environment, created the *Park Visitor Centre* with the adjacent *Park Teaching Centre*, the *Antiquarium* with the most important archaeological finds for the Goth age discovered at Piani di Barra, as well as guest quarters and a restaurant.

Nearby, surrounded by majestic beech trees, there is a fine 18th century fountain.



*A fountain from
the 1700's*



At the Eremo, the Park has created new gardens and a waste water treatment plant using a phytodepuration system (the first in the

*Flowering in the
Eremo garden*



Province of Lecco) to treat the waste water from the whole complex using an efficient, low-cost technology that does not harm nature or the scenery. The plant material required for the two tanks of the system was produced and transplanted by the Lombardy Native Flora Centre.

3H - THE CAMPORESO CLIFF

Ref. no. 8 on the map

The Camporeso Cliff offers a much appreciated and popular rock climbing practice wall with numerous routes equipped with bolts. It progresses with a long succession of smooth rock face structures and vertical walls, sometimes slightly overhanging, with heights varying between 15 and 30 metres.

The quality of the rock is generally excellent, while the climbs vary according to the sector, offering a wide range of styles. There are around 150 routes, on average varying in difficulty between grades 6a and 6c; there are also numerous possibilities for easy levels, while the pitches at higher levels, prevalently from



Climbing on the "Black Macigno" way



The large car park near the free climbing rockface



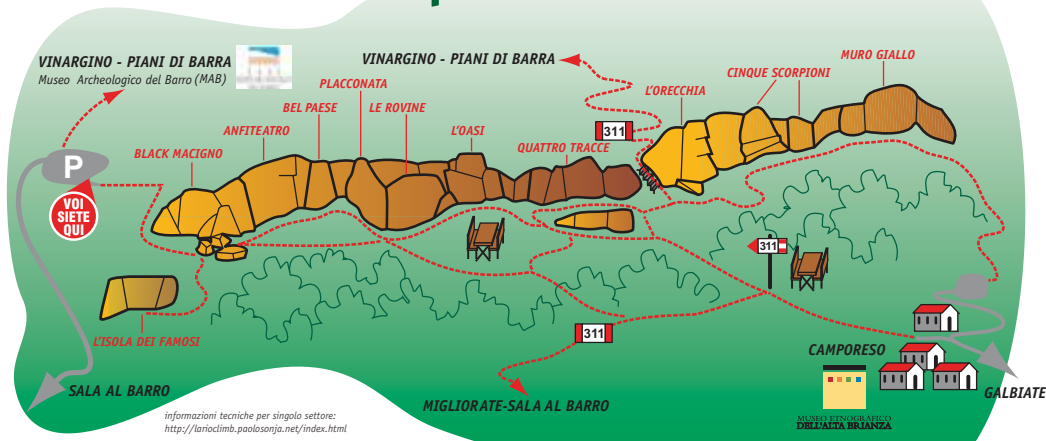
PARCO REGIONALE DEL MONTE BARRO

Sito di Importanza Comunitaria (SIC)



Regione Lombardia
Qualità dell'Ambiente

Falesia di Camporeso



One of the panels showing the climbing rockface

grades 7a to 7b up to grade 8a, are concentrated on the Muro Giallo and the Placconata. Many ways are suitable for rock-climbing beginners, always bearing in mind, that the protections, although excellently placed are generally fewer than expected. A cliff typically used in spring and autumn, it can also be used in winter, depending on the exposure of the walls. The anchoring of the resin-fixed U-bolts, ring-bolts and fixed bolts is excellent.

On weekends, holidays and the days before holidays, climbers can park their vehicles in the large car park known as "Piazzale quota 400" right next to the practice wall.

A FEW PIECES OF INFORMATION ON THE CLIFF SECTORS:

From the panels installed in situ on wooden shelters:

ISOLA DEI FAMOSI: A small vertical wall, in parts slightly overhanging, on excellent rock with edges.

BLACK MACIGNO: A steep smooth face with numerous handholds, with enjoyable pitches providing technical and finger passages. This sector includes some routes that date from the origins of the cliff, from “Ricomincio da Trekking” to “Piroetta”, shorter but very continuous.

ANFITEATRO: Large smooth rock face with not very continuous, but quite long routes. Curious passages over the channelling and holes left by old quarrying work. The smooth slate of the “Manimal” is very unusual.

BEL PAESE: Sloping smooth rock faces that turn into short, but rather intense, vertical walls.

PLACCONATA: A magnificent vertical face provided with concretions, holes and reglettes. The sometimes-overhanging starts force climbers to perform brief acrobatic sequences, but generally it provides very elegant climbs requiring resistance and precision on routes up to 30 metres long.

LE ROVINE: A wide, more varied rock face, with passages that are often complicated on flat handholds and outwardly-opening footholds.

OASI: A long strip of vertical or slightly oblique walls, on broken rock that has required a considerable amount of scaling. Pleasant routes with limited difficulties.

QUATTRO TRACCE: Vertical walls of excellent rock with very elegant pitches, some quite continuous, on holes and small hand holds.

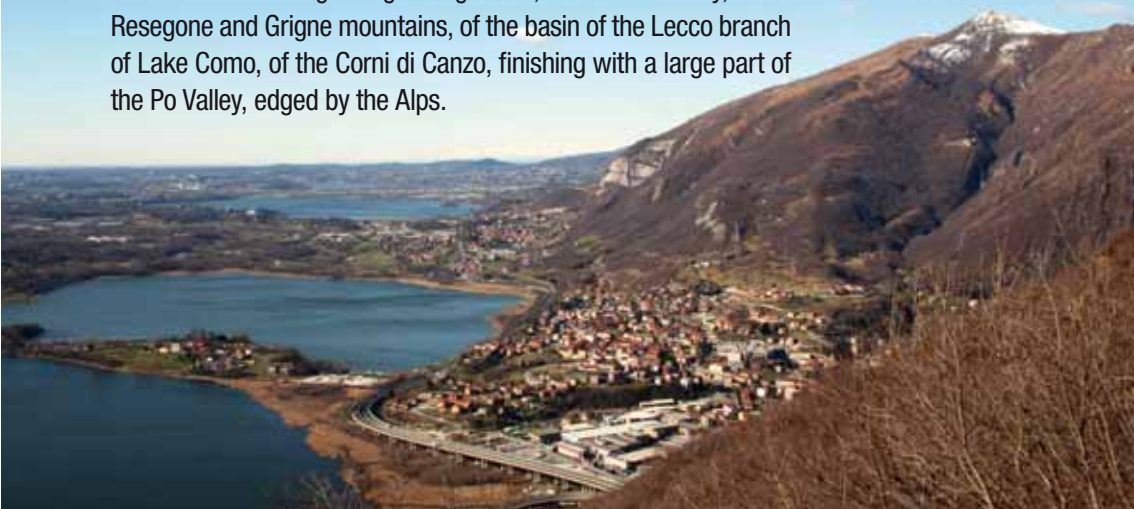
L'ORECCHIA: Here too, quality rock, full of concretions typical of the area. On the left, small steep walls with good handholds and enjoyable routes, while in the centre the wall becomes decidedly vertical or slightly overhanging with technical routes, continuous and in parts athletic on pipes and holes.

CINQUE SCORPIONI: Routes that are a little discontinuous but very pleasant on the left-hand wall; more difficult on the right-hand wall.

MURO GIALLO: The most difficult sector of the whole cliff with very continuous routes, despite the relative brevity, on a vertical-overhanging wall. Technical passages, sometimes difficult, on small footholds often slippery.

31 - PANORAMIC VIEWS FROM MONTE BARRO

Monte Barro is an isolated mountain forming a kind of panoramic balcony offering an all round view of the surrounding territory. The scenic and excursion interest of Monte Barro is therefore also connected with the magnificent views it offers of the hills of Brianza, dotted with lakes originating from glaciers, of the Adda valley, of the Resegone and Grigne mountains, of the basin of the Lecco branch of Lake Como, of the Corni di Canzo, finishing with a large part of the Po Valley, edged by the Alps.







*An environmental
education
lesson*

4 - EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE PARK

From 1988, in line with its mission, Monte Barro Park has organised an environmental education service in the territory of the Park. The educational activities include visit routes and workshops in the Park and at the educational centres and museums located on Monte Barro; they make it possible to explore all the most interesting sites within the Park, with particular attention to the protection of the environmental and cultural heritage. Children and young people, depending on the various age groups, from nursery schools up to upper secondary schools, are taken on visits with games and practical experiments that appeal to their curiosity, stimulating their ability to work in groups and their spirit of adventure.

There are three main subject areas for the educational routes: nature,



ethnography and archaeology.

There is also the possibility of carrying out orienteering activities and competitions on several slopes of the Park and to spend a night on Monte Barro at Monte Barro Hostel at the Eremo, surrounded by a wood of centuries-old trees. Devised for those who wish to carry out various activities or simply enjoy the beauty of the Park for a longer time, stays at the hostel

are an excellent idea for year-end school trips, for which “ad hoc” programmes are prepared.

Classes spending the night on Monte Barro also have a chance to take part in the “Al chiaro di luna” (Moonlight) contest, educational activity on the Park’s nocturnal fauna during which the children go out in search of birds and bats accompanied by an expert.

4A - NATURE

Educational nature trails take place along the paths of the Park and in the educational centres like the Park Teaching Centre at the Eremo and at the Mountain Hut in Pescate, at the Native Flora Centre and the Costa Perla Ornithological Observatory and include three types of trail: the first aims to increase knowledge of the various parts of the Park and its naturalistic peculiarities (woodland and arid meadows, geological and geomorphological aspects, migratory birds stopping on Monte Barro, etc.); the second aims to provoke in-depth considerations on the relations between humans and the environment starting from a point of view that is in any case biased towards protection typical of a protected park and tackles themes such as the climate, the soil and the problem of disposal of waste, etc.; the third, thanks to the presence of the Native Flora Centre, focuses on the importance of biodiversity and its preservation.

All the routes can be combined with visits to scientific laboratories or, for the younger children, with creative workshops and games.



4B - ETHNOGRAPHY

The schools courses taking place at the Museo Archeologico dell'Alta Brianza, created by the "Gruppo Scuola del MEAB" (MEAB School Group), are devised to offer pupils suitable tools, based on their age and knowledge, to get to know some aspects of everyday life of the "common people" of Brianza in a past that, while not yet remote, nevertheless appears far-removed from the experiences of the new generations. For this reason, they are set up as integrated activities to 'discover' the museum followed by time in the workshop, where

"The grandfather field": educational project about biodiversity and tradition



*Maize
educational
activity at the
MEAB*

pupils learn by taking an active part through dialogue and discussion with the guides, with materials and objects that they can touch and handle, and with operations that they can actually carry out. Growing of crops, animal breeding, craft work, forms of expression (language, storytelling, singing), games played by the common people of rural Brianza are some of the subjects dealt with in the educational activities, using ethnographic research tools such as oral testimonies, sound recordings and traditional materials.

4C - ARCHAEOLOGY

The educational activities linked to the Barro Archaeology Museum focus their attention on the fall of the Roman Empire and on the barbarian invasions making use of the privileged point of view offered by the important fortifications that have been discovered.

However, the workshop courses also aim to help the children to understand the fundamental role of archaeology in reconstructing the most ancient history and the importance of protecting every find, even those that are apparently less important, and lastly to stimulate them to visit archaeological sites and museums, having provided them with a number of basic skills for “interrogating” finds. The

visits therefore also include workshops that allow the children to learn more about some aspects of the early middle ages, normally very unfamiliar to them, and a workshop with an archaeological excavation simulated in a room of a specially reconstructed building on Monte Barro.

*Activity of
experimental
archaeology*



5 - GROUPS AND ASSOCIATIONS WORKING IN THE PARK

There are many groups, formally set up, working in the Park which play an essential role in its protection, promotion and maintenance. The valuable contribution of these groups, in which hundreds of volunteers take part, includes looking after the paths and maintaining the meadow and woodland areas, running the two museums in the Park, protecting the flora and fauna, monitoring the correct use of the Park, organising guided tours, environmental education activities and events promoted by the Park, fire prevention, etc.

Many of these volunteers take part in the annual ecology days held in spring and autumn in the Park.

Without the contribution of these groups, Monte Barro Park would certainly not be as interesting and lively.



A group of volunteers after environmental management works in the park





6 - PARK ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES

There are a number of accommodation facilities within the Park, including Monte Barro Park Hostel at the Eremo (reference no. 4 on the map).



The Eremo complex with Monte Barro Park Hostel

The building housing the Hostel has a long history. The complex was built as a hotel in the 19th century, beside the very beautiful church of Santa Maria (15th century), which was already mentioned in 13th century records. Initially built as a holiday facility, it was then

converted in the mid 20th century into a nursing home. When this use ceased, the complex underwent progressive deterioration until the Park took action at the beginning of the 1990s. First of all, three floors of the sanatorium were demolished and more recently major redevelopment works were carried out on the building, leading to the current new form of accommodation facility. The complex includes the Visitor Centre, the Museo Archeologico del Barro and the Park Teaching Centre.



A room in the Hostel

Monte Barro Park Hostel, in operation since 2013, is in a central position in the Park's territory at an altitude of 750 metres above sea level. With its wide views of the Brianza lakes, the vicinity with Lecco and other areas of cultural interest make the Eremo an ideal place to stay, as well as for excursions, educational activities and conferences. From Monte Barro Park Hostel, the summit can be reached to admire the splendid scenery from Lake Como to Mount Grigna, from the Adda valley to the Resegone, the mountain described by Alessandro Manzoni in his *Promessi Sposi* (The Betrothed). It is also possible to walk along interesting paths inside the Park or ancient routes in medieval Lecco, go along the wayfarer's path staying at a number of bed & breakfast establishments along the lake, reach Montevecchia and Curone Valley Park crossing the main Monte di Brianza path, discover Mount Cornizzolo, with the Basilica di San Pietro al Monte, or visit the Sasso Malascarpa reserve.



*The lounge
in the Hostel*



The meeting room in the Hostel



*Monte Barro
Eremo
restaurant*

The hostel has 48 beds, divided in two parts: the Orchidea sector, with rooms with two or three beds each with a bathroom and shower, and the Scoiattolo sector, again with rooms with two beds, but with shared bathrooms outside the rooms. The Scoiattolo sector also has a kitchen where guests can prepare their own meals. A lounge, a small meeting room seating 30 people and an auditorium seating 99 people are also available to guests. It is possible to stay as families, individuals or

organised groups and also to book a sector or the whole facility to organise study activities and meetings. At the Hostel there is the Monte Barro Eremo Restaurant, where local products can be tasted.

Other facilities with restaurant services are: The Alpini Mountain Hut just below the Eremo, the Pian Sciresa Mountain Hut at Pian Sciresa and the Pescate Mountain Hut in the vicinity of San Michele.

***...and after this presentation,
we hope that you can spend
pleasant hours in this small
but fascinating park***



Via Bertarelli no. 11
23851 Galbiate (LC)
Tel. (39) 0341.542.266
fax (39) 0341.240.216

www.parcobarro.it
info@parcobarro.it



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Carta priva di cloro elementare



- ❶ Villa Bertarelli - Sede dell'Ente Parco e del Centro Flora Autoctona della Lombardia (CFA)
Head offices of the Park and of the Native Flora Centre of the Lombardy region
- ❷ Camporeso - Museo Etnografico dell'Alta Brianza (MEAB)
Ethnographic Museum of Alta Brianza (MEAB)
- ❸ Piani di Barra - Parco Archeologico, insediamento ostrogoto (V-VI sec. d.C.)
Archaeological Park, Gothic settlement (V-VI centuries A.D.)
- ❹ Eremo - Centro Parco con Ostello Parco Monte Barro e Museo Archeologico del Barro (MAB) - Chiesa di Santa Maria (sec. XV)
Centre Park with the Hostel Parco Monte Barro and Archaeological Museum of Barro - St. Mary's Church (XV century)
- ❺ Costa Perla - Ex roccolo, sede della Stazione ornitologica sperimentale e della sezione staccata del MEAB sulla caccia e l'uccellazione
Ex hunting lodge, home of the experimental ornithological station and of the annex of MEAB dealing with hunting and bird capture
- ❻ San Michele - Chiesa incompiuta di San Michele (sec. XVIII) sede di eventi culturali
The incomplete church of San Michele (XVIII century) location for cultural events
- ❼ Baita Pescate - Centro visitatori Parco
Park Visitor Centre
- ❽ Falesia di Camporeso - Palestra di Roccia
Cliffs with climbing ascents

CARTA DI IDENTITÀ DEL PARCO

Date di nascita:
 Parco Regionale - 1983
 Parco Naturale - 2002
 Sito di Importanza Comunitaria (SIC) - 2003
 Zona di Protezione Speciale (ZPS) - 2003

Ente gestore:
 Comuni di Galbiate, Garlate, Lecco, Malgrate, Oggiono, Pescate e Valmadrera, la Comunità Montana del Lario Orientale - Valle San Martino e la Provincia di Lecco

Superficie: 665 ettari
 Altitudine: da 200 a 922 m s.l.m.
 Specie di funghi censite: circa 600
 Specie di piante censite: circa 1200
 Specie animali censite: circa 1000

Sede
 Via Bertarelli, 11 - 23851 Galbiate (LC)
 tel. 0341.542266 - fax 0341.240216
 www.parcobarro.it - info@parcobarro.it



Oggiono

MAP OF THE PARK



- Strade di accesso al Parco
Access road to the Park
- Strade interne al Parco
Road inside the Park
- Inizio sentiero
Start of footpath

THE IDENTITY CARD OF THE PARK

Date of birth:
 Regional Park - 1983
 Natural Park - 2002
 Site of Community Importance (SCI) - 2003
 Special Protection Zone (SPZ) - 2003

Managing body:
 Towns of Galbiate, Garlate, Lecco, Malgrate, Oggiono, Pescate and Valmadrera, the Mountain Community of Lario Orientale - Valle San Martino and the Province of Lecco

Surface area: 665 hectares
Altitude: from 200 to 922 m a.s.l.
Species of fungi present: approx. 600
Species of plant present: approx. 1200
Species of animal present: approx. 1000

Head office:
 Via Bertarelli 11 - 23851 Galbiate (LC)
 Tel. 0341.542266 - fax 0341.240216
www.parcobarro.it - info@parcobarro.it



Monte Barro

Monte Barro Park is:

BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPES AND TRAILS

Monte Barro offers 360° panoramas in a territory with mountains and lakes



Landscape from Monte Barro towards



Villa Bertarelli gardens – Park headquarters



Landscape from the Monte Barro summit

TRADITIONS

Museo Etnografico dell'Alta Brianza (MEAB) at Camporeso.

It shows and studies the everyday life of the Brianza population at present and in the past



Camporeso – MEAB headquarters



A MEAB classroom

MEDIEVAL ANTIQUITIES

Museo Archeologico del Barro (MAB) at the Eremo, with Archeological Park. It exhibits the largest Goth settlement found in Italy (5th-6th century A.D.)



Piani di Barra – Archeological Park



A MAB exhibit room

BIRD MIGRATORY STOPOVER

Costa Perla Ornithological Station, with the MEAB hunting section. It studies the migration of birds.



Costa Perla – The old bird snaring area



A long-tailed tit just ringed

PLANT BIODIVERSITY

The Native Flora Centre of Lombardy (CFA), at Villa Bertarelli. Its aim is to improve propagation and use of the native flora.



Peony



Orchid in vitro germination



RegioneLombardia



MILANO