

Beehive rocks

tains, which is called Királyszéke (meaning King's Chair). In 1958 stone mining began in the area of the beehive rocks. However, several people objected to it in order to save the rocks and they also urged the protection of the area. Although the county council did ban mining afterwards, it had already caused serious damages. Finally in 1960 the cause of these monuments of cultural and natural history was settled after all: the National Nature Conservation Council declared the range a nature conservation area.

There are some more beehive rocks west of Szomolya, on the western slopes and on the edge of Ispánberki hill and east of the village on Gyűr hill as well as to the north on Csobánka. However, the name "beehive rock" was only used in Szomolya.

Fruit production has centuries-old traditions. The **short stemmed, black cherry** is particularly well-known and beloved with its dark red flesh and unique taste. Local people are equally proud of the high-quality grapes produced here, which are used for the production of the most delicious wines of the Eger Wine Region. Szomolya has some really good **wine cellars**, too. The smaller and bigger private wineries ensure modern, high-quality entertainment in every aspect. The winemakers' vocation and knowledge command respect among all those who drink a glass or two with them at a wine tasting.



Bükkalja Rock-way Information Point Eger, in the yard of the Fellner block

[bukkalja.info.hu](http://bukkalja.info.hu)

Mayor's Office of Szomolya, Szabadság square 1.  
Phone: 49/526-000 • [www.szomolya.net](http://www.szomolya.net)



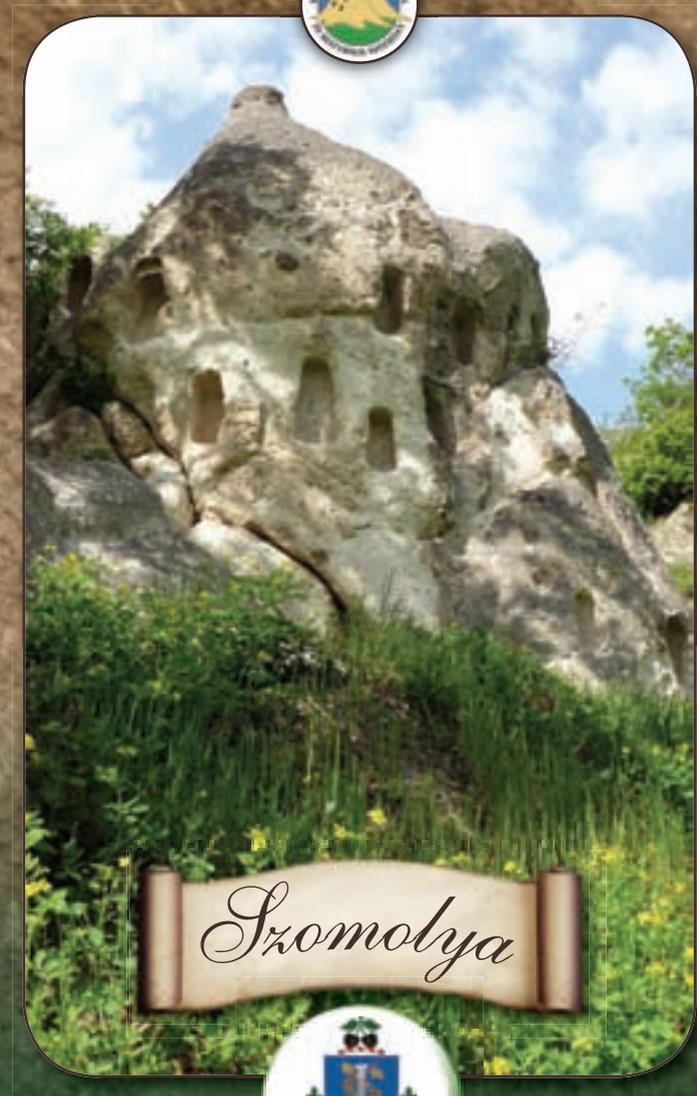
Map: Cartographia Kft.

1. Sheep-cote
2. Beehive rock - Vén Hill
3. Beehive rock - Ispánberki Hill
4. Beehive rock - Gyűr Hill
5. Beehive rock - Csobánka Nature Conservation Area)

Photo: Havasi Norbert, Klein Dávid, Szögedi Zsuzsa

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*Szomolya*





The Catholic Church of Szomolya

The village of Szomolya is situated 18 km from Eger, in the valley of the Kánya stream at the foot of the Bükk mountains. The first written record of the settlement is from 1269 in a deed of gift. There, the village was called Ighazosszumula (Egyházasszumolya) with a prefix before the present name. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century the village already had two parts: Egyházasszumolya and Felsőszomolya. In 1486 the prior of the Carthusian monastery in Felsőtárkány bought Felsőszomolya farm. The village had several owners, including the

chapter of Eger for a long time, who still owned 1208 cadastral acres (1715 acres) in 1935. The Turkish devastated the village and forced the community to pay them taxes. However, thanks to the geographical location of the settlement neither the Turkish, nor the kuruc wars caused considerable damages in the village. In honor of Gyula Gömbös prime minister in 1937–after his death– the village was renamed as Gömbösfalva (meaning Gömbös village) and it was called by this name on the maps until 1945. In the 1930s Szomolya was a flourishing settlement, and the cherry grown here had a considerable market abroad. After 1945 the statue of Gyula Gömbös was carried away to an unknown place by cart. Some people say that it is still in the village, buried somewhere. However, no one knows for sure.



The rock cone of Királyszéke (King's chair) on the western slope of Vén Hill

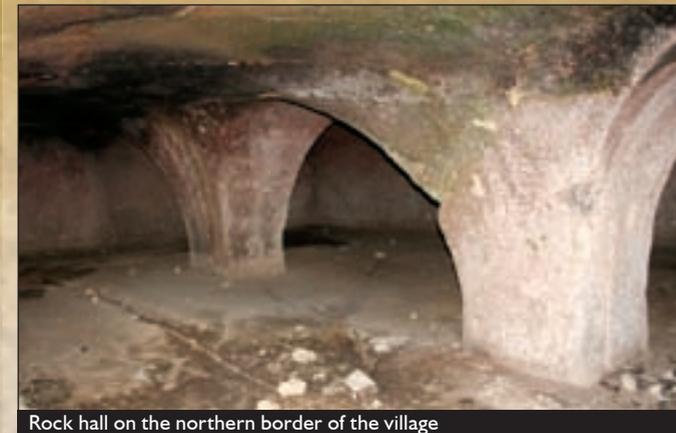


The Potter's house in the centre

is the result of the natural characteristics of the area. The clinker of dacite and rhyolite tuffs is a very good building material and it was mined near the village. Cellars and cave houses were carved into the rhyolite tuff hillsides. There is also a **sheep-cote** carved into the rocks on the Northern edge of the village. According to a census from 1862, there were 82 **cave houses** in those days. However, between the world wars 820 people lived in the 172 cave houses of the village. In 1971 there were still 39 cave houses, 27 of which were inhabited. The cave house at 28 Toldi street is a national monument and today it is used as a **country house museum**.

Stone-carvers of the village were once very famous, and the laden stone walls, stone crosses, statues and pillars of porches determine the atmosphere of the village and the image of streets. They are all the works of local masters. **Márton Szalóki**, the best-known of them, was a member of a famous stone carver family. He did not study stone carving; he only did it for the love of the craft. Perhaps because of this could he carve any, even the most fantastic, ideas. At the end of his life he lost his sight, thus he made his last works as a blind man. The village and its surroundings only knew him as the blind sculptor. He lived at the present 38. Kossuth L. Road. The entrance of his cellar was decorated by two stone lions, which are now placed at the gate of the house. Above the entrance of the cellar we can see an embossing with biblical episodes and historic figures. The embossing has been strongly eroded by weather. In his last years, already blind, he carved two chambers in his cellar. One of them holds a

The present day **Roman Catholic Church** (Title: Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary) was built in the end of the 19th century, in the place of a Romanesque church from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The baptismal font and the font for holy water is from the Roman era. The carved stones of the Romanesque church were used in the fence of the graveyard. Later, they were removed and brought to the museum of the Castle of Eger, and today they can be seen in the lapidary of the collection. The spread of stone mining and stone carving



Rock hall on the northern border of the village

small altar with Christ and Mary. In the other on there is a bed carved of stone. He spent his last years, totally blind and reclusive, in these chambers. The **Potter's house** is also worth a visit. The master is well-known for his ceramics all over the country and in the garden there is a collection of carved stones from the past of the village. The stone collection of the GP of the village, István, Dr. Molnár, includes statues, gravestones and stone bowls from the beginning of the 1900s.

On the edge of the village there are altogether 137 chambers in the 13 beehive rocks of four different places. West of the village, on the slopes of the **Vén hill**, above Kaptár meadow (named after the beehive rocks) there are eight bigger, conic beehive rocks on the rhyolite tuff range. There are 117 chambers in these rocks, which make up one-fifth of all Hungarian beehive chambers. Also in this region, there are 48 beehive chambers in one of the biggest tuff cones in the Bükk Moun-



A lion carved in stone – by Márton Szalóki