



# BUTRIMONYS

Alytus district,  
Southern Lithuania





## BUTRIMONYS. Alytus district, Southern Lithuania

Butrimonys town is an exclusive place in our country: a town having only one in Lithuania triangle-shaped square, decorated with a vortex water fountain, the only one in Lithuania. The triangle-shaped square of the town symbolically interlinked the fates of people of three nations that once lived here – the Tatars, the Lithuanians and the Jews.

The pre-history of Butrimonys existence dates back to the times of Vytautas The Great, the years around 1400, when the Tatars were brought and settled in this region. These new nation's people were granted land in the strategically important areas – in the neighbourhood of highways, so that they could protect the roads. During the Wallach reform, in 1557, in the process of measuring land plots in the vicinity of the former Tatar settlement, Butrimonys village was founded. In written sources, this name was mentioned first in 1699. In the year 1720 already, the settlement that appeared between the Tatars' zone and the village of Butrimonys, was referred to as a town. This town evolved on the crossroads, an intersection of three roads, leading from Vilnius to Alytus and Punia – a convenient place to be engaged in trade. This way, a triangle-shaped square formed, which became a place for commercial activity as well. Butrimonys markets saw lots of buyers and sellers, exposing a very wide range of goods, and even merchants from Russia and Poland used to arrive in this town. The year 1812, known for Napoleon's crossing the Nemunas River and invading Russia, did not leave the town intact: this place stood in the strategic Napoleon's route; so, it goes without saying, that French troops did not spare the property of townspeople. Nevertheless, traders appeared soon in the square, and their intensive activity caused spontaneous recovery of Butrimonys town. Fire and flames devastated the town not once too. In the 19th century, Butrimonys used to have active communities of the Jews and Tatars. The Tatars were popular among those who needed animal skin and hide products, their tannery workshops were well known, although, according to some descriptions

survived, their leathers were not perfect quality; the Tatars were engaged in vegetable gardening as well, and this brought quite good profits to them. Butrimonys was a place well known for its markets, where trading in livestock was prevailing. This fact helped to conceal operations of horse thieves, who were acting boldly and used to have ties even with the tsarist police force, thus being free to be engaged in stealing horses. There was another thing, because of which Butrimonys was a place attracting people: local craftsmen knew how to make handmade high-quality tobacco-pipes. These items were sand-treated with artistic taste and plated with silver tin. The price of one handmade pipe used to reach up to 5 rubbles here.

In 1936, the newspaper "Lietuvos aidas" wrote about what Butrimonys town had to offer: "The town is large. Streets are paved, sidewalks tidy. Big markets take place on Tuesdays and people come here from other counties. Butrimonys residents have a unique church with a single tower." Although this market square description includes the church, yet this building occupies area a bit farther away, as the central square was intended for trade only.

Irrespective of dates and historical facts, there is a legend, describing emergence of Butrimonys town. Once upon a time, Butrimas, a trader, came to this land to live and work. He built a spectacular house in the place, where roads intersect, and began to engage in various types of trade. Folks got interested in the place, where he located his farmstead: it was not only picturesque, but obviously useful as well, because numbers of buyers were passing by. Later, others followed Butrimas example and a town emerged that was named after its first resident. And there is some truth to the legend – Butrimonys means the surname Butrimonis just in plural.

Butrimonys is a place of birth of Bernard Berenson (1865–1959), a famous art historian and critic, specializing in the Renaissance, and Senda Berenson Abbott (1868–1954), who was a pioneer in American basketball and in 1985 was inducted into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame, Algirdas Sliesaravičius, member of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. Butrimonys school is the place, where outstanding people of art, Laureates of National Premium, artist Antanas Kmieliauskas (in 2008, he was proclaimed a Honorary Alytus District Citizen) and opera singer Irena Milkevičiūtė, went to school.

Since 2014, Butrimonys town has been hosting "Adamkiada" (Adamkus Games), a traditional National Schoolchildren's Art and Sports Festival to honour President Valdas Adamkus. Students from all Lithuanian schools participate and compete in His Excellency's youth favourite events. Children with innate artistic abilities take part in the plain air.

Butrimonys town has been included into several national tourism itineraries as a destination: "Let's Follow the Footsteps of Lithuanian Presidents" and "Panemunė Džūkai Tourism Route".







## PLACES OF INTEREST

**A Triangle-Shaped Square in Butrimonys.** Butrimonys was founded on the crossroads of three roads: from Vilnius to Alytus and Punia. Therefore, this triangle-shaped square once formed became a market square. Around this market place, land parcels were partitioned and allocated to the merchants and craftsmen, thus causing development of the entire town. In the old part of the town, which had been formed before the end of the 18th century, one can walk the same old streets and, finally, reach the same old triangle-shaped square. This place has a shape of an equilateral triangle. Such type square is the only one in Lithuania and included into the List of Urban Monuments. This historical square is surrounded by houses of merchants and craftsmen, built at the beginning of the 20th century. The unique triangle-shaped square in Butrimonys is depicted on the coat of arms of the town, approved by Lithuanian President on 22nd August 2001.

The space in the square became even more beautiful after reconstruction in 2019, and since then this place attracts many locals and others. And no wonder, as everybody enjoys it: children have playgrounds with outdoor musical instruments and swings as a must; a drinking water installation invites to quench thirst... And a symbol from the old square, a stone weighing 58 t, gives a special charm to this space: it has an inscription carved in 1999 "To The Fighters for Lithuania's Independence". A wooden sculpture "A Lithuanian Girl" (authored by A. Judickas), which stands nearby, provides additional meaning to this symbol. Still the fountain, the only one in Lithuania vortex water fountain, remains the main attraction in the square.

*Vytauto str., Butrimonys, Alytus District*  
GPS: 54.501002, 24.252415 (WGS)



**A Fountain in Butrimonys.** In 2019, following reconstruction of the town's square, this place was embellished with the only one in this country Vortex Water Fountain. In the middle of the acrylic balloon, a large water whirl is rotating and water is flowing down the Fountain's wall, which creates a fascinating view. After dark, the Fountain becomes illuminated and colourful.

*Vytauto str., Butrimonys, Alytus District*  
GPS: 54.501002, 24.252415 (WGS)



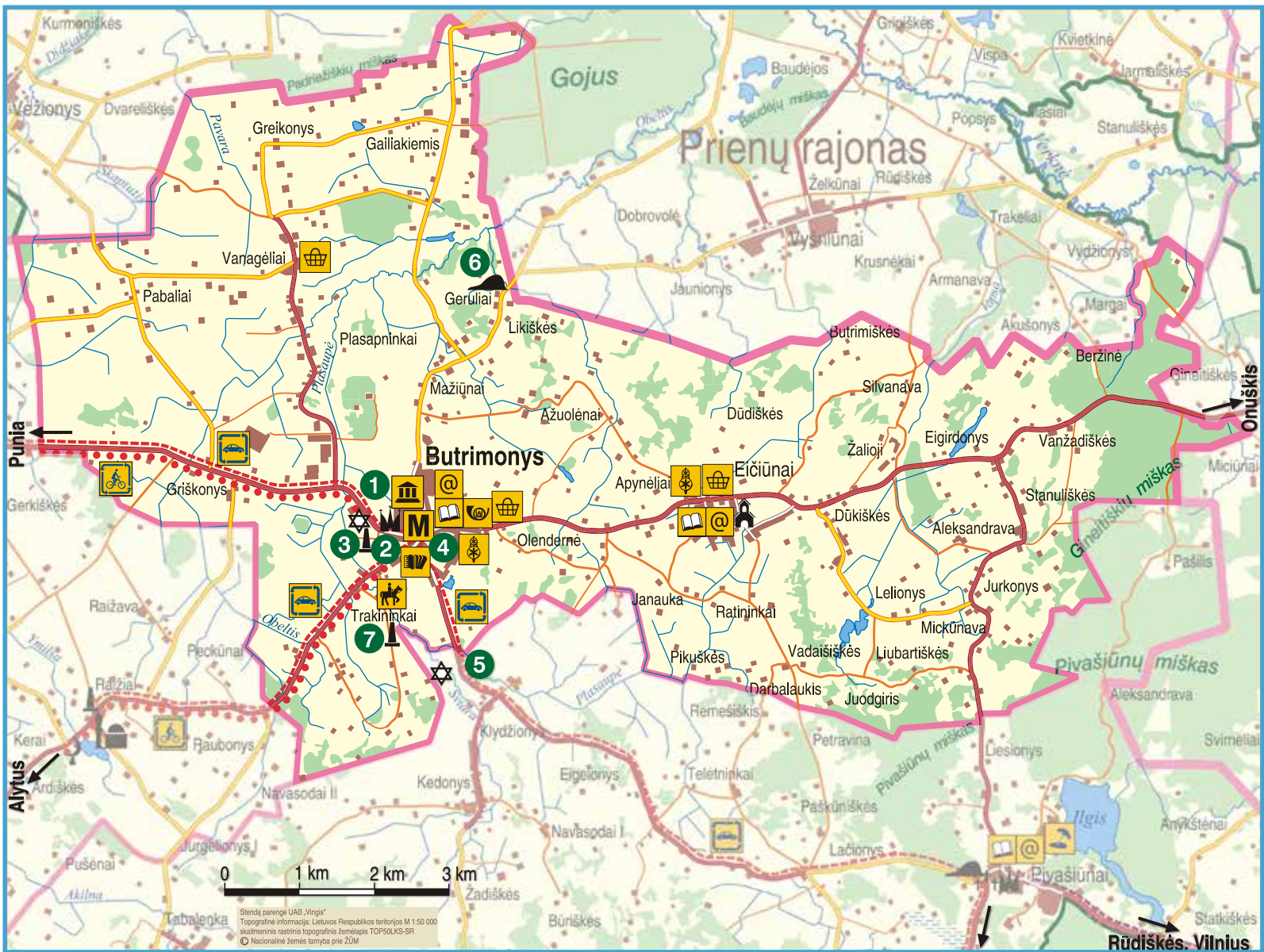
**The Saviour's Church in Butrimonys.** The first church in Butrimonys was erected in the 18th century and it was a wooden structure. Later the church was restored, reconstructed, and, finally, a new one was built. There was a project of the church's reconstruction prepared in 1901, yet it remained not implemented. In 1906, in accordance with the architectural project of A. Filipowich-Dubovsky, a stone church, which survived until our days, was commenced. The festive consecration ceremony of foundations took place on May 13th 1908. During construction of the church, the old one was not demolished, it remained inside the new building. The construction works on the stone church were interrupted by World War I. The massive single-tower church was completed in 1926 only. The style of the church is eclectic with some signs of Romanesque style; the facade tower is situated on the right. The church houses valuable artworks of painting and folk art of early 19th century, as well as early creative works of the outstanding artist Antanas Kmieliauskas, who was born in Butrimonys neighbourhood. The churchyard is enclosed by a stone fence, having a gate with three arches.

*Margirio str.*  
22, Butrimonys,  
Alytus District,  
phone: +370 611  
54 406

GPS:  
54.502185,  
24.246847 (WGS)







### Legend

	Municipality, Subdistrict boundary		Lake		Museum
	Regional park, reservation boundary		Swamp		Architectural cultural heritage object
	Railway, station		River, stream, ditch		Culture centre
	Hard surface road, motorway number		Settlement		Library, internet
	Gravel road		Catholic church		Post office
	Country, forest road		Mound		Shop
	Forest		Stone		Craftsman
	Gardens		Monument		Fishing
			Jewish cemetery		Autotourism route
					Cycling route

### Places to visit

- Historical centre of Butrimonys
- Butrimonys Church of St. Saviour
- Jewish Cemetery
- Ethnographic museum of Butrimonys gymnasium
- Place of the Jewish massacre in Klydzionys village
- Gerūliai mound
- Place of the Jewish massacre





**Old Cemetery of Butrimonys Jews.** Most likely that first burials took place even in the 18th century here. Data shows that in 1765–1766, 240–282 Jews were residing in the town; in 1868 their number reached 1151; in 1897 – around 2000.

In the northern part of the Cemetery, in 1999, a memorial was erected (authored by A. Janušonis) to honour the Holocaust victims, having inscriptions in Lithuanian and Hebrew languages: “In Memory of the Holocaust Victims. More than 50 female Jews from Butrimonys were murdered here in 1941”.

The Cemetery is fenced with a metal enclosure and included into the Register of Immovable Cultural Properties.

*Margirio str., Butrimonys, Alytus District*  
GPS: 54.502000, 24.244000 (WGS)

**A Stone Cross to Honour a Memory of Pope Francis Visit to Lithuania.** On the occasion of Pope Francis visit to Lithuania (Pope’s visit lasted from September 22nd to September 23rd, 2018), in Butrimonys, a stone cross 3 m high was consecrated on 16th September 2018, dedicated to this event. The idea of Pope honouring before his visit occurred to Daina Nemeikštienė, the founder of the Art Gallery “Daina’s Gallery”, while her brother professional sculptor Darius Miliauskas has realized this idea. This gift from the brother and sister has become one of the first symbols, immortalizing the upcoming Pope Francis’s visit to Lithuania. The cross has been erected in the vicinity of the Butrimonys Parish House.

*Margirio str. 15, Butrimonys, Alytus District*  
GPS: 54.501763, 24.247915 (WGS)



**A Monument in Memory of Lithuanian Partisans “They Gave Their Lives for the Homeland 1944–1949.”** About 40 Lithuanian partisans lost their lives in Butrimonys neighbourhood in 1944–1949. The bodies of many local partisans were desecrated in the central square of Butrimonys town and later buried secretly in different locations. In the summer 1990, a search for partisans’ remains was organized. The remains of four partisans



were found. They were reburied in the cemetery of Butrimonys. According to the Cultural Heritage Department of the Duke Margis Unit of the Dzūkai Squad of Dainava District were buried in this grave. In 1993, a monument was unveiled and consecrated in this burial location containing the main plaque with an inscription “They Gave Their Lives for

the Homeland 1944–1949”. Other plaques were erected with the names and surnames of killed partisans, burial places of whom had not been found.

In 1999, within the framework of festivities devoted to 300-th anniversary of Butrimonys town, a stone in the central square, where the process of partisans’ bodies desecration had taken place, was marked with an inscription: “To The Fighters for Lithuania’s Independence”.

*Margirio str., Butrimonys, Alytus District*  
GPS: 54.501000, 24.246000 (WGS)  
GPS: 54.501081, 24.252551 (WGS)

**A Headstone of the Kmieliauskai Family.** A red granite headstone, having shape of an irregular rectangle and containing a Pietà relief, was created and erected by Antanas Kmieliauskas. It was intended for the family grave in the Butrimonys cemetery and stands here since 1965. This artwork was among the earliest works by this sculptor, the future Laureate of the National Premium. The headstone is included into the Register of Immovable Cultural Properties.

*Margirio str., Butrimonys, Alytus District*  
GPS: 54.501000, 24.246000 (WGS)





**A Monument to the Victims of the Mass Shooting of Jews in the Village of Klydžionys.** On September 9th the year 1941, in the villages of Klydžionys and Trakininkai, Jewish people were murdered (they had been brought from the neighbouring towns of Birštonas, Butrimonys, Punia and Stakliškės). The killings were commenced at the time of sunset and continued without stopping until the midnight. The killed Jewish people were buried in the mass graves with 600 m distance between. In total 1231 persons were murdered. On the site of the mass grave, a monument has been erected in the village of Klydžionys. Mass killing locations are included into the Register of Immovable Cultural Properties.

*Trakininkai Village,  
Butrimonys Neighbourhood,  
Alytus District.*

*GPS: 54.488481,  
24.253659 (WGS)*

*Klydžionys Village,  
Pivašiūnai Neighbourhood,  
Alytus District.*

*GPS: 54.484857,  
24.259609 (WGS)*



**Geruliai Hillfort.** The Hillfort, dating back to the middle of the 1st millennium – early 2nd millennium, surrounded by valleys of rivulets on the northern, western and southern sides, is called differently as well: Zamkus or Zamkelis. The hillsides are steep, 8–11 m high. The site is oval in shape, about 45 m long and 21 m wide. A rampart 170 m long (1–4.5 m high) surrounds the Hillfort in a circle. There are four pits on the site, which remained as amateurish excavations by German troops in 1916–1917. North and east of the Hillfort foot, across the rivulet, an ancient settlement was discovered. A cultural layer of up to 0.5 m thickness was found with the fragments of handmade plain and coarse surface pottery and a brooch, loop type, containing a triangle stem.

Geruliai Hillfort is included into the Register of Immovable Cultural Properties.

*Stakliškių str., Geruliai Village, Butrimonys Neighbourhood, Alytus District.  
GPS: 54.531319, 24.270477 (WGS)*



**Art Gallery Dainos galerija (Daina's Gallery).** At the Art Gallery, founded by Daina Nemeikštienė, you can familiarize yourselves with numerous artists of our country, the district and neighbourhood. Exhibitions or symposia held there attract many people. Darius Miliauskas, the brother of D. Nemeikštienė, is a professional sculptor, who was among those, who initiated and established the Lithuanian International Heraldry Foundation.

*Visiting the Gallery by prior phone  
arrangement.*

*Vilniaus str. 1, Butrimonys, Alytus Dis-  
trict, phone: +370 685 32 787*

*GPS: 54.501381, 24.253463 (WGS)*



## INTERNET SERVICES

**Alytus District Municipality Public Library Butrimonys Affiliate.**

*Draugystės str. 1, Butrimonys, Alytus District, phone: +370 315 61 732.  
Open: 7.30–17.00; Sat 10.00–18.00. Closed Sun.*

**Alytus District Municipality Public Library Eičiūnai Affiliate.** *Butrimonių str. 10, Eičiūnai Village, Butrimonys Neighbourhood, Alytus District, phone: +370 315 41 233. Open: 11.00–17.30. Closed Mon, Sun.*

## ENTERTAINMENT

**Butrimonys Equestrian Sports Club.** *Žirgyno str. 26, Trakininkai Village, Butrimonys Neighbourhood, Alytus District, phone: +370 699 27 998*

## ACCOMMODATION

**Farmstead "Ymilsa".** *Vytauto str. 5, Raižiai Village, Punia Neighbourhood, Alytus District, phone: +370 619 73 902, www.ymilsa.lt*

**VO „Punios ainiai“.** (Descendants of Punia, a community organization) *Kauno str. 3, Punia, Alytus District, phone: +370 683 68 872*

## INFORMATION

**Butrimonys Neighbourhood.** *Vytauto str. 31, Butrimonys, Alytus District, phone: +370 315 61 486*

**Butrimonys Gymnasium Ethnographic Museum** (*visiting by prior phone arrangement*). *Dariaus ir Girėno str. 24, Butrimonys, Alytus District, phone: +370 315 61 386, www.butrimoniumokykla.lt*

**Alytus District Municipality Centre of Culture Butrimonys Division.** *Vytauto str. 30, Butrimonys, Alytus District, phone: +370 682 10 043*

**Butrimonys Gymnasium.** *Draugystės str. 1, Butrimonys, Alytus District, phone: +370 315 61 386, www.butrimoniumokykla.lt*

**Eičiūnai Chapel.** *Alyvų str. 2, Eičiūnai Village, Butrimonys Neighbourhood, Alytus District, phone: +370 699 12 696*

**Butrimonys Ambulatory.** *Ateities str. 4, Butrimonys, Alytus District, phone: +370 315 28 573*





**Source of the Photographs:** D. Jakubavičius, The Archive of Alytus Tourism Information Centre and Alytus District Municipality Administration.

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**Translation** UAB Dokana.



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