



"All limits are self imposed" Icarus

Name: Zviedris-Johannsons

Called: Priekules Icarus or Edas Varaceplis

Born: around 1640 **Until:** around 1670

Place of birth: Kurzeme, Latvia

Country of living: Priekules Manor, Latvia

Known for: The courageous and reckless blacksmith made huge wings to be the first person to attempt to overcome the gravity of the earth and stay alive.

Short Biography



In 17th century, in Priekule manor, there lived a servant, who was marked with a peculiar fate, that is, with the genius of a mechanic, so that the memories of him in this region are still not lost due to his outstanding and strange experiment in aeronautics. Namely, he descended from the tower of Priekule church with self-made wings, and to the surprise of many spectators, he waved in the air with incredible courage. He flew about two miles away, where he fell and broke his leg. He did not regret this stroke, because he had bravely performed a heroic act, but it had not occurred to him that the steering wheel would have worked. However, he did not succeed until the second attempt. He soon died and his body was buried in the same place where he fell.

STEAM connection:



It is easy to take the physics of flight for granted, as well as the ways in which we exploit them to achieve flight. However, behind these scientific achievements a long timeline filled with eureka and failures stands upon. Dreams of flying have captivated human imagination since prehistoric times. The ancient question stayed and stays with us: What if we could simply spread our arms and fly like a bird? Priekules Icarus didn't invent an aircraft but was a pioneer in aerodynamics engineering and modern wingsuit technology, which are based on mathematical and physical relationships. Priekules reckless blacksmith designed his huge wings, but lacked the core knowledge of the basic physics of flight, so inevitably failed.

Anecdote. Despite the ambiguities of historical truth, the legend about Priekule Ikars is so beautiful and inspiring that the blacksmith of Priekule manor named after Icarus has become a symbol of Priekule county identity: in 2010 the state heraldry commission and Priekule county council approved Coat of arms of Priekule region. The Priekule City Icarus Festival is held on the second Saturday of August. Every time at Priekule aerodrome, everyone has the opportunity to ride a more modern aircraft to look at Priekule from above - from a bird's eye view, as Priekule Ikars once did.



PRIEKULES ICARUS

Legend and Timeline:



In the **middle of the 17th century**, during the reign of **Friedrich Heinrich von Corfu**, in parallel with the changes in the economic and social processes of the Duchy of Kurzeme and Zemgale, **the value system of the society** also changed. Therefore, people's lives, their social activities, recreation and interests also changed.

In **1670**, the blacksmith of Priekule Manor had for the first time decided **to fly** through the air and get to the village of Skoda (20 km) for which Baron Corfs promised to pay him 500 gold ducats. On the day of the flight, people from the surrounding area had gathered in Priekule, who had heard the reckless story about **flying**.

The second legend says that the blacksmith started the flight from the tower of Priekule church, which he himself had placed there, with self-made, visually durable wings. Surprised by many present, he took off in the air with incredible confidence and flew almost two miles to Knuipene manor, where he fell and broke a leg or both legs (two versions). Ikars was a real hero for the people around **Priekule**.

It was during the reign of Friedrich Heinrich von Corfu that the Lutheran Church was built in Priekule, which **still adorns** the city. The exact year of construction of the church is unknown. In the information obtained by Priekule local researchers, there is a reference to the memories of some older Priekule residents that there was an inscription on the wall of the church crypt - **1684**.

The blacksmith, protected by Baron Corfu, attached large **wings** of canvas, but to the chest a small box containing them. The blacksmith took off in the air, **flew** around the castle three times, but when he wanted to fly to the Skoda side, the wind took him to the Kaleta side. Unable to reach Kaleti, he fell. Here "the daredevil" was captured and taken to Grobiņa, taken to court, accused there as a magician and burned.

The route of flight

