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# Polish Museum & Archives in Australia Newsletter



296 Nicholson Street, Footscray Vic 3011  
[www.polishmuseumarchives.org.au](http://www.polishmuseumarchives.org.au)

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## President's welcome

A very warm welcome to all the members of the Polish Museum and Archives Inc. to the first issue of our newsletter. It is always heartening for a small organization such as ours to receive new memberships and this last year we received 15 new memberships so a very warm welcome to you. We hope to produce a newsletter on a regular basis as a way to let our membership know about our current activities with the hope to engage and involve our members.

There were a number of important events we wish to report on in this last year.

## Our Heritage Workshops

Three workshops were held this last year at Millennium House and have to a large part contributed to the rise in membership as we have reached out to second generation and have tried to tap into their growing interest in discovering their Polish roots. We received \$500 for the workshops from the Blum Foundation. Thanks to Lucyna Artymiuk for initiating the workshops and organizing the speakers and for committee members Ania Zamecznik and Maria Peszek for their assistance in the smooth running of the workshops on the day.

The three workshops were:

1. *The Forgotten Exiles* held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2013. Guest speakers included our own Marzenna Piskozub, Zdzisława Wasylkowska, Roman Zylinski and Anuradha Bhattacharjee, who had recently published a book about Polish

refugees in India, spoke to participants from India via skype. Seventeen participants were in attendance.

2. *The basics in researching Polish family history* held on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2013 with Cecil Wendt Jenson, Director of the Polonica Americana Research Institute as the guest speaker via skype. There were approximately eight participants.

3. *Family History - the art of story* held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2013 run by the renowned Arnold Zable with seven participants.

We have also received more inquiries via email and telephone from people wanting information on how to find out more about their parents and grandparents.

A writing group inspired by the workshop with Arnold Zable is about to start. The idea behind the writing group is to provide informal support and encouragement in writing individual family histories. For further information contact Lucyna via [lucynaartymiuk@bigpond.com](mailto:lucynaartymiuk@bigpond.com)

## Visit from Poland

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 2013, Pawel Pietrzyk archivist from the State Archives in Lodz (Archiwum Panstwowego w Lodzi) visited and assessed the museum's collection over a period of 10 days. During this time he gave a very favorable appraisal of the work done thus far and recommended further work with the promise of another archivist coming from Poland for a longer period of time to continue the work of sorting and

cataloguing the collection.

At a local level, Ania Zamecznik attended the Victorian Collections Cataloguing Workshop run by Museums Victoria held on the 24th June 2013.

Our Organisation is now a member of the overseas Polish Libraries, Museums and Archives.

### **Community engagement**

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of August 2013, a small group of about ten students aged 15-17 years, with some of their parents and their teacher Grace Walendzie came from the Polish Saturday School, Albion, to see the Siberian exhibition and hear a first hand account from Sofia Skarbek (president of the Siberian association) tell her family's harrowing ordeal in being exiled to Siberia and their struggle for survival. The students were very much engaged and asked lots of questions regarding the

exhibition and the story they had heard.

More recently, MAPA in-conjunction with Kresy-Siberia had a stall at the Polish festival at Federation Square on Sunday 17 November 2013. Lucyna was very busy answering a variety of questions from many people and Zdzislaw was explaining the intricacies of the events depicted the January Uprising of 1863 in the exhibition prepared by the Archiwum Głównie Akt Dawnych (AGAD) i Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych (NDAP) Poland.

I wish to acknowledge that our industrious committee member Lucyna Artymiuk was awarded the Henryk Sławik Award for her outstanding contribution to Polish-Jewish relations awarded by the Australian Society of Polish Jews & their Descendants at the Annual General Meeting & Ceremony last November 2013

## Plans for 2014

- Continue to increase the Museum's profile and membership
- Produce a newsletter & update information on our website
- Ongoing collaboration with other like-minded organisations
- Continue with preservation work, cataloguing and conducting an inventory
- Developing a collections strategy and policy
- Seek additional funding. This last year we received \$1200 from Blum Foundation.
- Mark significant historical anniversaries such as the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising and the Battle for Monte Casino
- Prepare and publish the sixth edition of the Polish Museum and Archives Year Book

**Finally I would like to thank the committee of management for all their good work and on behalf of the Committee of Management**

**I would like to thank our membership for their interest and support.**

**Wishing everyone a very happy Christmas and all the very best for 2014**

**Helena Evert**