

Po wizycie w naszym regionie...

Written by Edward Wills
Thursday, 18 November 2010 19:28

There are no translations available.

RTPI Yorkshire Region Newsletter Summer 09

Yorkshire Region Study Visit to Poland 2009



In the 1960's Leeds Planning School employed two charismatic Poles, Konrad Smigielski, (*Head*) and Jan Cybulski, (*Design Lecturer*).

They constantly extolled the virtues of Krakow and the opportunity to visit their home City was too good to miss for members of the Study Party who had studied under the pair.

On 5 May 2009 the 16 members of the group flew from Leeds/ Bradford Airport for a week's visit, including the 3 *main locations* of Krakow, Gliwice, (3 *days*) and Szczyrk, (4 *days*). Flying over Poland a major feature of the landscape was immediately clear. Villages expanding alongside roads,

(*the record is*

a

village

12

miles

long)

and each home has a long thin strip of farm land behind.

Landing in Krakow in the afternoon we were given a whistle-stop tour of the centre by Architect, Tomasz Bradecki. Particularly impressive sights were the arcaded courtyard of the Wawel Royal Castle, the Cathedral, (*imagine York Minster but with every internal surface covered with rich materials and patterns*) and the Church of St Mary.

Po wizycie w naszym regionie...

Written by Edward Wills

Thursday, 18 November 2010 19:28

We were fortunate enough to be in the main square when a trumpeter played a fanfare from the top of the tower. This is broadcast every day at 12 noon on Polish radio. Our visit to Krakow concluded in a traditional Polish restaurant where we sampled various local delicacies and Tomasz showed us how to drink soup from a hollowed out cottage loaf.

As darkness descended we were taken by coach 100 kilometres along motorways, (*under various stages of construction*), to the University's Hotel at Gliwice.



1930's Flats

The following morning a short walk brought us to the Faculty of Architecture. We were welcomed by the Vice Dean, Professor Z Kaminski and given a seminar on the Polish Planning System, (*which revealed that Planning was mentioned in the first Polish Constitution in 1791*), and shown some excellent work by students.

In the afternoon we visited a museum housed in the Royal Prussian Cast Iron Foundry. We were surprised to find a statue of John Baidon, a Scottish Engineer who designed the original furnace. To our surprise the displays showed cast iron wall decorations, statues, delicate household ornaments and fine jewellery, (*such as a rather heavy looking tiara for a Duchess*). These products were sold throughout the world as "Berlin Iron". They also produced the famous military Iron Cross.

From a tower in the centre of Gliwice we saw working Silesian coal mines, (*some are onekilometre deep*)"

and tile--tower of the radio station.

(*It looks like the Eiffel Tower but is actually made of larch wood*).

In 1939 Hitler justified the outbreak of war by alleging that Poles had attacked the facility

Po wizycie w naszym regionie...

Written by Edward Wills

Thursday, 18 November 2010 19:28

*(the insurgents were actually
SS
soldiers in civilian clothes).*

Next day we were whisked off to the "Municipal Association of Upper Silesia", in Katowice. A traffic expert told us that trams, trains and buses were becoming less popular. There is terrible congestion on the roads but we were assured that it would be solved by building more and more motorways. This sounded very familiar. The "Upper Silesian Metropolis" is well sited at the junction of the A4 (*east-west*) and A1 (*north-south*) motorways which should be completed, (*thanks largely to EU funding*), by 2013.

A pleasant afternoon was spent at the Regional Forestry Office. Green uniformed foresters, (*why can't our Planning Officers have uniforms?*), told us how the forests had been exploited and damaged by fire, mining and (*particularly from 1970 to 1990*), by industrial air pollution. Following the Rio Summit, (1992), emission limitation was imposed and ecological management accepted. A "Shelter Belt Project", (*wholly for public use*), was planted around Katowice. Forty five "Recreation and Relaxation Centres", comprising beaches, tennis courts, playing fields, footpaths and cycleways, were built in the woods on reclaimed mining and industrial sites.

The dense forests are now home to diverse wildlife, including lynx, bear, capercaillie, otters, beavers, storks, cranes, wild boar and even, (*in a Reserve*), bison. A most interesting day was rounded off magnificently by a bar-b-que. The fare included a delicious whole roast wild boar and for dessert, sweet honey, (*still in it's honeycomb*), from the Director's hives.

Po wizycie w naszym regionie...

Written by Edward Wills

Thursday, 18 November 2010 19:28

