

JAN KOZMIAN (1896-1975) from Wierzchowiska

Fragments of Memories Part 2

(Edited and translated by Elisabeth Kozmian-Ledward, his only child,
with some brief notes about Polish history)

KOZMIAN' S Coat of Arms is Nałęcz.



PART TWO

My Wierzchowiska Estate.

I would have to write several dozen pages to describe Wierzchowiska in full... This property of over 1,600 hectares could be called a real 'golden apple'. The soil throughout was capable of producing quantities of sugar beets and wheat. The vast fields were mainly adjacent to the main road which leads from Lublin to Zamość and Lvov. Adjacent to the fields was a forest exceeding 500 ha, so not huge, an ancient forest - mainly oaks. Under my uncle's management the farm was run according to the old system. When our father, a good talented farmer, took over the administration, everything changed: new agricultural machinery made it possible to cultivate the land more productively. Newly established growing of hops gave significant income. The old and neglected farm buildings were replaced with new brick ones covered with sheet metal or roofing felt, some had ceilings supported by iron posts, my dad built 15 on these.



1990 Photographs of Wierzchowiska

The neglected park was completely changed according to the plans of a well-known designer. The marsh which separated the house from the road was drained; the park was planted with valuable trees and shrubs. A white entrance gatehouse in the style of an Italian villa was built.

And a mysterious large pond was created with dense reed and flag which gave protection to waterfowl and marsh birds. There was a large island with old lime trees - a good place for reflections and for dreaming for adolescents. When I add the many beautiful flower beds, the tropical plants in front of the house and on the terraces, and the old 200 m long avenue planted with linden trees which remembered Sobieski's times - this should give you a complete picture of our family seat. Later a wild section was added to the park, overgrown with alder and spruce, and a pheasant house built then. The entire park was approximately 15 ha. I have to say that it was probably one of the most beautiful parks in the Lublin region.

The house, or rather the villa-palace, was quite impressive. Built by my uncle in 1878, it was a typical example of style popular in the second half of the 19th century. There had to be a fairly tall clock tower of course, with the clock striking every hour. The building had two stories, with the ground floor on high basements. The porch facing the end of our driveway had white columns; on the back of the house there was a wooden porch overgrown with wine, with a vast terrace. Next to the house was an annex drowning in flowers, with four guest rooms and a kitchen.

Long before the First World War, my father set up sewerage and central heating, and later connected to the high-voltage grid, so the electric light came on brightly. The rooms were furnished mainly with valuable items and relics collected by our family over hundreds of years. Our mother was very fond of antiques so bought more.

As I lived near Lublin, I could be there in only 15 minutes thanks to my car and I could be settling in that city all matters relating to running a large farm. I also made all deliveries of cereals or sugar beet to Lublin, thanks to my 10-ton truck bought from France. In my agricultural business all grain, especially wheat and rapeseed, gave a plentiful harvest - regardless of weather conditions. Despite not achieving high yields, sugar beet was the main source of income on my farm. I grew only enough rye for the needs of my workers and for the needs of the farm; I also planted potatoes on a small plot. The second best income item was hops on 12 ha but results from this crop were a bit of lottery.

My farm was not industrialized, but well motorized for those times: two tractors ploughed day and night. I thought of my cattle, over 100 cows Dutch breed, which gave a lot of milk - from each cow around 4200 litres each year (according to the Association of Cattle Farmers) - this amount placed me on the 4th place in Poland. There were over 100 working horses, and my stables housed 14 breeding, riding and working mares and one thoroughbred stallion. Breeding horses 1/2 blood as well as being my hobby also brought income not to be despised. Every year there were exhibitions of top breeding horses from the Lublin Voivodship and Volhynia organized by the Horse Breeding Association, and at intervals of several years - from all over Poland.

At the national show in 1935, the horse of my breeding 'Oedipus' (from one of the state farms stallion 'Eros' and the mare of my breeding) turned out to be the best... I received for this

horse the maximum price of 3,500 zlotys and there were also state awards and the Breeders' Association of over 1,500 zl each so that in total I collected 6,500zl and a gold medal and silver cup!

In addition to the farm, I also had my forest - the wood from clearings went for sale, and also covered the needs of the farm. In the sheepfold there were about 2000 animals of Spanish breed . Comprehensive drainage, good cultivation of fields and rational planning, and above all the soil, the best for wheat and sugar beet - put my farm estate in line with most praised ones - in the whole county. In the course of 20 years of managing my estate, I employed only two managers to help me and I was lucky enough to find decent and honest people who were also very good farmers. The salary of my workers was not very high cash-wise, but when we add other benefits such as allowances of grain, fuel, land for growing potatoes, benefits from two cows, and such – altogether that gave quite a good situation. As to illness - the farmer was obliged to reimburse the costs of doctors, medicines and hospital stay. When I sometimes meet one of the former employees, they show me a lot of friendship.

During the occupation in WW2. we all stood together to protect ourselves from the occupying Germans, and people saw in me a protector, ... several times I managed to save my boys and girls from being taken forcibly to work in the 'Reich' I personally covered the costs of creating the volunteer Fire Service for Wierzchowiska village, and in return for that the village community appointed me chairman of that service; they also gave me the lifelong permission to hunt on the territory of the village. I was also elected to the School's Building Committee – as well as a cash donation I gave 1.5 ha of land, and after some time a large two-story for seven classes' school was built by the main road. My community activities were within our district only.

HUNTING

Hunting and shooting were my great passion from an early age to old age. When I was 11, I was given a 28 calibre shotgun as ab patron's name's day gift. In the fall of that year real game shooting began for me and I was under the care of a forester looking for partridges with his leggy dog. From the moment I reached adulthood and took over the care of the hunting territory all my efforts were directed towards increasing the quantity of game. Years later, I achieved my goal using methods such: as introducing live hares and partridges, later pheasants; combating poaching, intensively feeding in the winter, and setting up shelters for hunters among fields. Five people were the hunting guard. (Here Jan gives the results of individual hunts in the period from 1919 to 1939, he also kept a chronicle of numerous hunts). In 1936 I was elected Chairman of the branch of the Polish Hunting Association for the Lublin County.

Those were the happy times when appointed district' hunters came to meetings so to speak - under the banner of Saint Hubert (patron of hunting – ek) and exchanged their views and plans for the future; I also attended the general meeting of the Association in Warsaw once a year. In the spring of 1937, an international congress of all European hunting associations took place in Warsaw. The dignity of the president was held by Prince Racibor from the family

supposedly derived from the Piasts (first ever rulers of Poland)! The meetings ended with a great banquet at the Merchant's Association building. (Jan vividly describes the 'Year of the Hunter' - the variety of game and the numbers shot in Wierchowiska' forest; the hunts were for wild boars, deer and stags, capercaillies, partridges, waterfowl, wolves. Jan hunted not only in Wierchowiska, but also in the Eastern territories of Poland, and throughout Poland; he also mentions some personalities of great hunters he knew – in the original manuscript - ek).



The big trophy! A dangerous elk.

I had various hunting dogs: English and German, but my favourite was Hektor, perhaps the best retriever in Poland - a large long-haired dog of an undefined breed, coloured tan with dark brown patches, he had beautiful wise eyes - he accompanied me on all my car trips to the best shooting grounds all over Poland. I shot wild boar from an early age, slaughtered 123 wild boars in total, including 8 large males. How we did that hunt in Wierchowiska : we had fires lit, a roundup of about 300 people, in groups of 15 people, who moved back and forth with the dogs; 16 to 20 hunters took part, of which at least half belonged to the elite of shooters in Poland. Old hunters often recall that a meeting with wild boars can be very dangerous for a hunter.

Personally, I had only two emotional encounters that might have ended up tragically. Once in Mełgiew when the men chased out of a very fat boar from a dense grove He jumped in big leaps to no further than 20 meters from me - and after I shot it rolled like a hare, but immediately got up and sat on its rump. His eyes expressed such terrible hatred that even today I am shocked by this memory - if this boar had had the strength to charge, I could have met a tragic end. A bullet shot in the head stopped him.



From my early youth, I was attracted by Africa, its mysterious vastness and exoticism. My youthful imagination was captivated by reading about the discoveries of Livingston and Stanley, and later by descriptions of Dzieduszycki and Józef Potocki's hunting expeditions, I dreamed of getting to know the Dark Continent! And I managed to make this dream come true in 1928 - on a hunting trip - a safari - when I set off to Tanganyika together with my close friend, Jan Petkowski.

On a beautiful May day, we got on the ship 'S.S. Adolph Woerman' – and the sea journey lasted 18 days. We sailed through Port Said, Red Sea, Aden, Indian Ocean, Mombasa (flights were very rare indeed then – ek), at last landed in Tanga, but the formalities and obtaining hunting cards took us 3 days ... Finally! Exhausted by the terrible humid heat, we boarded a wood-powered train going at a huge speed of 25 km per hour! Stops at the various stations took a long time due to frequent loading of wood fuel; then by lorry from under mount Meru, the second highest mountain in Tanganyika; from there a sort of pretend road full of potholes to the small settlement of Mbulu, where it took 3 days to organize our safari and where we were obliged to pay a visit to an English official. (Jan nicely describes the landscapes, the nature and the folklore of the inhabitants ...- in the original Polish manuscript – ek).

Our safari included 78 people, 65 of them porters - because the administrative regulations did not allow a porter to carry more than 25 kg. After a one-day walk, we entered an uninhabited region – which probably had not changed for thousands of years (beautiful descriptions ...), in a word, the territory which we had traversed over two and a half months presented a most wonderful scenery...(here Jan describes their visit to Ngoro-Ngoro crater – in the original manuscript-ek)

We started our march through the forest towards the crater and walked slowly along a steep path surrounded by a real virgin forest. Tall, sparse trees with thick trunks were connected by lianas and lined with a thicket of small plants, and it was fairly dark because of the thick fog and the shadow of the forest giants.

Finally... the view from the hill – below lay a crater in the shape of a great ellipse surrounded by mountains - partly covered with forests; other slopes were crisscrossed by ravines in which rushing mountain streams went down. In the rays of the setting sun appeared countless herds of animals: through our binoculars we could already distinguish various species of antelopes, gazelles and zebras; and on the slopes of the mountains were hiding some buffaloes, leopards, and many rhinoceros and lions. At that time it was estimated that there lived around 150,000 animals at Ngoro-Ngoro.

The overall result of our expedition was impressive: Jan Petkowski killed 120 creatures and I killed 86; but our trophies were almost completely lost during WW2.

But a trophy in the form of lions was achieved in a bloodless way. We were following a fresh trail of lions...My guide Bakhari suddenly jumped into the thicket, and after a while he appeared carrying two baby lion cubs. I was dumbfounded by emotion - after all, any moment

the grown lioness would attack us! ...but the lioness did not appear ... The lion cubs were tiny, their fawn fur was covered with darker dots, and they had bright blue eyes.

Back in the camp, the natives performed some sort of rituals showing their hatred for their ancient enemy, the lion. I could not avoid being tossed in the air several times, as well as having to give away numerous money 'bakczysz'.

Personally, I would have liked to let the lion cubs free, but such an act would have exposed me to the contempt of our whole crowd.

With the arrival of night, loud roars were heard around us, and a few lions decided to break into the camp. We kept watch almost all night shining the searchlights ... amid the constant roar, only before sunrise did the lions broke the siege. The lion cubs were given milk from our nomadic Maasai, or condensed milk, and after a few days began to eat freshly ground meat. After the expedition, the lions reached Hamburg by ship, under the captain's care, and there my companion Jan picked them up and took them to his estate in Wielkopolska. They were tame like dogs, but only for the time being... so however reluctantly, we decided to give our lion cubs to the Poznań Zoo. They lived there until WW2 - an impressive addition to that Zoo, because of their large size not normally achieved by captive-born lions.

It was a great joy for me to be awarded in 1948 - a gold medal for my contributions to hunting as Chairman of the Lublin Hunting Council during the inter-war period. My former friends and colleagues remembered me ... (here many memories of companions). All of you, nice companions of hunting and shooting, companions of merry outdoor feasts and banquets: Where are you now? ...We sinned seriously, we killed so many innocent creatures...but maybe we can put our trust in Saint Hubert now, this knight and patron saint of hunters. He will perhaps intercede for his brothers - with the Supreme Judge - and ask him for a more lenient sentence...

TRAVEL - was also Jan's passion.

He was wealthy and could afford it, and he could leave Wierchowiska under the care of his honest and trusted manager. He described in a visual and interesting way some of the contemporary then - Paris, Vienna, London, Italy, also Warsaw and the countries of North Africa. And wrote about his driving adventures - he owned some early cars - famous models – and even travelled through very dangerous mountain passes in the Alps, together with his new wife Lili.

(Details of above are not translated from Polish – ek)

Here is the story of his very first adventure:

‘My interest in the seas arose as a result of staying with my parents, over the course of several winters, in Monton, on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. (At that time wealthy people from all over Europe stayed there for the sake of health). While visiting the Genoese port and the bay of Villefranche ... I gradually got to know details of almost all ships and passenger ships from all over the world. I started dreaming about a long voyage.

Then an opportunity came. The exclusive International Sporting Club de Monte Carlo organized round trips. I pestered my parents for so long - and I was only 14 - that they finally allowed me to go on a 14-day trip, alone! but under the supervision of the tour' manager.

On February 14, 1909, the steamer Ile de France left the port of Monaco and sailed through Corsica to Tunis, Palermo, Messina, Naples, Civitas Vecchia (Rome) ... In the morning, when I came on the deck, I saw the African coast: a high land covered with yellow dunes, at the foot of the hills were faintly seen buildings of villages surrounded by palm trees and other lush green trees ... Our ship was slowly moving towards the port of Tunis. In the distance was a city with the appearances of exotic East: domes and minarets rose loftily above the low white houses, slender palm trees soared upwards, and the high mountain, closing the horizon from the south, further embellished this unforgettable panorama ...

The door to the East stood open before me - which I crossed many times in my later journeys ... The European French' districts were built up with lofty apartment houses standing along wide streets and boulevards planted with palm trees and plane trees; there was a great cathedral, also a large casino, a theatre and a luxurious hotel 'Tunisia Palace'.

Behind this elegant area the medieval gate of 'Porte de France' took us to a completely different world: a weaving of countless narrow and winding streets filled with crowds, who wore a great variety of outfits. more or less colourful. Representatives of probably all peoples inhabiting the countries of the Mahreb and of the Sahara were seen: Arabs, Kabyles, Bedouins and Turks, and also Italians, Maltese and Jews...

People were trading with all they could, slapped shoulders and kissed; groups of children with strikingly beautiful eyes attacked tourists and asked for bakczysz...The large Bazaar was divided up according to types of goods sold by the merchants and by speciality craftsmen. However not buying the goods did not cause any annoyance on the part of the merchants, on the contrary - they were eager to show more of their goods, even if they seemed to guess in advance that it would not be bought. These merchants offered each customer aromatic coffee that it would have been an insult to refuse, and bidding goodbye asked to be visited the next day. Here and there groups of curious people were surrounding fairy-tale-tellers, wise men reading the Koran and snake charmers.

As I was leaving the African land, in the light of the rising sun, my eyes had a wonderful view of the white city and of purple mountains. I was saying 'goodbye', and I did not know then that in the future I would visit often.

'Messina - that city was hit by one of the most powerful earthquakes - on the night of December 28-29, 1908 ... the large square where the old cathedral once stood, was just rubble, no trace of the great temple was remaining ... only, by a strange coincidence, the statue of Mary Mother of Jesus survived - it stood over the rubble as if struck dumb ... it could not occurred to me that one day, in the future, I would witness the destruction of most of Warsaw, not by forces of nature, but by a cruel barbarian enemy.

BEHIND THE WHEEL - a fragment:



Lili Kozmian

In the years 1921-39, 8 passenger cars passed through my hands: 3 Austro-Daimlers, 3 Citroens, 1 Lorrain-Dietrich, 1 black Buick 8-cylinder;

I really enjoyed driving so I became very skilled in this field. ... I also had an 8-ton truck for work on the estate....

In 1939, the Buick was ready to take off myself and my wife Lili - through the Alps to sunny Italy and France. (Jan's last beautiful and interesting journey)... In Cannes, all the nations of the world were crazily having fun and no one was expecting that 'a dance of skeletons' was to start the next year! ...

(On the way back from Italy)... we stopped for lunch at a small mountain town in the Alps.

We needed to take a good rest, because ahead of me was not a mean feat! - Perhaps the most difficult mountain road rising almost from 0 to 2800 meters above sea level, the 'Passo Stelvio'. From the restaurant's terrace we could see a mountain massif so steep that it seemed impossible to climb ... Behind the town there were initially small bends – which soon turned into endless serpentines. The road was narrow, and not fenced off from the abyss at all! Very tall steep rocky walls went all the way down - a few hundred meters - to rustling streams down below.

The road's inclination and the sharp turns demanded constant gear changes from the first to the second. Shifting gears, and keeping keen attention to the wheels so we don't end up over the precipice as well as the still prevailing heat were pouring sweat over me. And my continuous attention to the road - in front of us - prevented me from noticing the dangers of the situation and the wild nature of the mountains. My wife, sitting next to me, experienced moments of true horror, as she could see the bottomless chasms just under the car. The motor became so hot that the water in the radiator started to boil. I had to stop from time to time to cool the engine.

The bends were not stopping and a still higher road appeared above us! Completely exhausted and wet with sweat - I noticed at last - a mountain shelter and so the summit of the pass!

At the bottom, the temperature was 35 Celsius, and here it was below zero. I got off at the glacier, wet as a mouse, and run quickly to the shelter, where a strong coffee and a large cognac made me feel good. A tall greenish glacier right next to the building was beautifully reflecting the blue sky. Torn rocks down below. The descent from this height is also quite a feat, one has to be slowing down with gears....

Then in Austria... the towns were formally decorated with swastika flags...and suddenly we entered endless army' columns. Countless tanks, armoured cars, tractors with cannons ... signs ordered us to stand on the edge of the road ... the columns moved slowly, the whirr of



Lili with daughter Elisabeth age 8

motors and the dazzling of the headlights made me feel crazy ... At last we stopped in Vienna - at midnight. Vienna under occupation was not the lovely one from previous years. The atmosphere of this once merry city was sleepy, not cheered up by a few Wehrmacht' soldiers present. So we left...

On the way home we gave our homage to Our Lady in Częstochowa and returned to Warsaw. The Buick behaved flawlessly and it returned us both to its homestead ...But the Germans took it when they entered Poland – that upset me greatly - to think that the enemy's hand would drive 'this chariot of mine'....

MY WORK FOR THE FRENCH MISSION IN 1920.

The First World War was over – for the world, and in Poland it was just beginning. After heavy fights, the heroic and always patriotic Lvov was regained by the Poles, while the whole eastern Malopolska Poland was won only after a year of fighting.... After General Żeligowski had re-captured Vilnius and created the so called 'Central Lithuania' Russia felt threatened. Also Pilsudski's plans for an expedition to Ukraine had already caused a real war; at the end of April, Kiev was occupied and remained in Polish hands for only one month, then revolutionary troops enlisted from all over Russia launched an attack.

Due to the threat of the red troops entering proper Poland the entire nation was mobilized, all Polish youth volunteered to join the ranks: sons of peasants, workers, scientists, intelligentsia and landowners- came to stop the storm from the east threatening our country with loss of independence, which was so recently won back.

I left my farm to serve ...and I was assigned to the 7th Lublin Uhlans Regiment, but my short eyesight was not suitable for front-line service. So - as I had very good knowledge of the French language - I was referred to the 'French Military Mission' to work as translator - at the Instruction Centre in Lublin. The chief position was held by Colonel Berecki, a French descendant of Polish emigrants from 1830. The activity of the Mission consisted primarily in supplying Poland with equipment and ammunition, and in organizing these deliveries ... so that they could reach their destination as quickly as possible.

The Instruction Centre was composed of several French officers who acquainted our people with the new weapons, and simultaneously instructed on tactical war news. My job was to translate lectures, how to use weapons and so on, and to translate a lot of different documents. In July the situation of our troops became more and more dangerous, and French staffs whose officers carried help and gave advice and assistance to our staff. Were sent to each of the two Polish armies, northern and southern,

When Colonel Berecki, several officers and I were directed to Chełmno, the French General Bernard arrived there, he came to Poland in 1919 at the head of the Hallerczyks, formed a parallel staff to the Polish one that was headed by Śmigły. The French staff of about 30 officers, included Captain Charles de Gaulle, who served here. When I met this captain, who was getting attention on account of his height, noble attitude and calmness- I could not have foreseen that later he would become famous for organizing the Free French resistance and he would lead their struggle with the Nazis- after the fall of France in 1940. And I would never have guessed- that this humble captain would one day attain the highest dignity of becoming President of France.

In Chełmno, I assisted the French during conversations with Polish officers, I also became General Bernard's personal interpreter. I had the great opportunity of being the translator for Bernard's meeting with Pilsudski who came to inspect and for a military council. Our Commander in Chief and Chief of State Pilsudski made a great impression on me. His piercing eyes, calmness and seriousness showed that I had an outstanding figure in front of me. His uniform consisted of a dark, modest jacket without any insignia. The Commander, frugal in speech, asked Bernard questions and answered slowly. Piłsudski showed great courtesy

towards me, shook my hand when greeting me and invited me to sit down during the conversation.

On August 5 or 6, Śmigły and his staff chose as their headquarters Lublin, and the French too, who stayed in hotels and private homes. Lublin had now become a city under military operations, the inhabitants watched the movements of the troops with anxiety, and with horror envisaged the city to be taken by the enemy. Only the supporters of Bolshevism were already preparing red banners to greet the liberators. Amongst the refugees from the enemy present in Lublin were administrative officials from small towns and landed gentry families - as they would be at risk of probable death staying in their homes- at the hands of red troops, or by revolutionary committees.

Our parents also left Wierchowiska and they reached far Kujawy and the property of our mother's brother. I drove a French car several times to the Wierchowiska which is close to Lublin. The farm was in complete chaos, and hooligans were getting ready to rob. My sudden appearance in a limousine decorated with the French flag and assisted by gendarmes, stopped them just in time.

Between August 10 and August 15, the Red Army reached the farthest towns of Poland. On August 15, in the outskirts of Warsaw near Radzymin, a part of the Polish army stopped further enemy advance after a heroic struggle. . Finally, after heavy fighting, in the last days of August a ceasefire was concluded. (Jan describes the events and actions quite accurately)

General Bernard and his staff which was already disbanded, moved to Warsaw and became the head of the Instruction Centre, which included a dozen French people and as many as 3 translators including myself. In our office in Warsaw initially worked also captain de Gaulle - I got to know the captain well as I often went with him to Bristol or Europe elegant hotels for meals, also to private homes and to Blikle's well known patisserie.. Life in Warsaw had already returned to its normal state. Charming Warsaw ladies, stylish and elegant, decorated the streets of the city with their appearance. After the victorious war which lasted 6 long years, people rushed into a whirlwind of crazy dancing, fun and of spending money- everyone was in it!

President de Gaulle having been invited by the Government of the People's Republic of Poland, decided to come in September 1967.

I took the liberty of writing a letter to the President, in which I expressed my hopes of having the honour of exchanging a few words with the former captain at the French Mission ... A few days before the arrival of de Gaulle and his wife to Warsaw, I received an invitation from the President to a great banquet at Wilanów palace ... When the President appeared, preceded by the Chairman of the State Council, I approached and, starting with the words 'Mon General', I recalled myself to his memory.

De Gaulle thought for a moment and then replied that he remembers well our times together at the French headquarters, and then mentioned all the places we visited together. As he said goodbye, the General shook my hand with both hands and stressed the great pleasure he had in meeting 'avec Mon ancien camarade' - 'with my old colleague'.

A few words from daughter Elżbieta:



Elżbieta aged 16

JAN's FAMILY in the 20th / 21st century.

During the Second World War, Jan continued to run his estate and was obliged to station high-ranking German officers, who did not seem to be very interested in Hitler's plans; at the same time, he was helping with food provisions for the guerrillas hiding in the forests, risking his own life. He also brought food to Warsaw for residents, especially during the Uprising.

After the war, all Wierzchowska estate including Kozmian's home was confiscated, without any compensation by the communist state - and the land sold to the peasants at low prices. Jan could no longer work in beloved agriculture because the new authorities did not trust former landowners.

He worked honestly as a minor clerk, raising his daughter and he enjoyed talking with her about history, about French culture and language he knew so well, and of course – about the countryside he loved.

The family was supported mainly by wife Lili's shop selling technical dental supplies (how did she choose such speciality?) – She traded in that already had during the Occupation of Warsaw when she employed her entire family (I guess the starter funds came from Jan? ***).

The memoirs of Jan Koźmian were written in the 1960s; Jan was hoping for it to be published then, but despite Marian Brandy- the famous historical writer giving encouragement - it was impossible to publish at that time - due to the political climate...

My own feeling has been that Jan's ease of writing and talent for describing events and places - could be due perhaps - to 'Kozmian' genes' ...?

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The translation into English was helped by 'Mr. Google' but needed much more work, and some historical notes by Elisabeth inside the text are **included**.

The manor house in Wierzchowiska is one of very few that survived the war, and did not fall into ruin like many other - due to neglect by authorities, when the former gentry's families were chased out. Wierzchowiska's manor house and gatehouse, both attractive buildings were kept well maintained - first as a forestry school, later as offices for a large greenhouses' business, and finally sold by the district council at an auction.

Elzbieta and her husband Peter tried unsuccessfully to buy it back for a small price, later were invited to participate in that auction but of course we declined.

The current owners Cioczek family have carefully and opulently renovated the house, the gatehouse and the park is back to its former glory. In the house they have their **elegant Palace Restaurant**, and there is a corner about the Koźmian family they created. Elisabeth was welcomed to stay in 2000 and our Koźmian-Ledward family is always welcome.

And here is what Jan wrote around 1962:

'I am the last male descendant of Koźmians living in Poland, and I live in Warsaw, together with my wife Lili since 1944. From the younger generation, my brother Henryk's son, also Henryk (Harry de Koźmian), lives in the USA and works there as an attorney. His father married an American, Wilcie, whom he married in 1923. During the Second World War, Henryk senior acted as an emissary of the Polish Government in London, agitating in many US cities for the Polish cause. He died in New York in 1968 (as far as I know he was an engineer by profession and went to the U.S. before WW2 - ek).

My second brother, Andrzej, married Maria.L. Komorowska. He went to London through Italy, where he served in the General Anders' Polish Army fighting as part of British Army. He died childless in 1964 (Andrzej's wife took part in many racing cars events with very good results, before World War II - ek).

We have only one child, our daughter Elizabeth, who now lives permanently in England. So our Koźmian family from Rzeczyca ends' ...;

Elisabeth has a different view on that:

It is acceptable for a daughter to carry on a family traditions -

My husband, architect, Englishman, Peter Davenport Ledward, and I - legally took the name KOZMIAN-LEDWARD to keep the family's good name and history - for our children.

(Henryk's son Harry died childless, he married a French woman; I had lost touch with them, we had briefly met in Paris;

Jan was able to visit Andrzej in London around 1957 when at last Polish citizens were allowed to 'travel to the West' by the more liberal communist government***)

My dear Dad came with me to Cornwall in 1965 when stayed with his cousins Skowronski in London, this family invited me to London when Andrzej died suddenly; official invitations were needed then - 1964...)

SADLY

In Poland both my parents died in 1975.

I have cousins from my mother Lili's side, and their families but Andrzej died - my 'brother' – recently in 2021... distant cousins in Australia keep in touch..

Peter has a brother called Shaun in New Zealand with family, and relatives in Spain - sadly his sister Nicola who lived there and had a Spanish husband died also in 2021... her daughter and son and her grand- daughter remain.

We visited Poland several times, Spain too, and amazing New Zealand on several occasions.

Now a bit about our Kozmian-Ledward Family:

Ralph Jan works as architectural designer Bsc and is married with Sophie-they have two talented daughters, proud to be partly Polish. They live in historical Norwich in a large house he converted from a coach house.



Our daughter Lily Marine Biology scientist MSc. does research and skippering work in New Zealand and her name is on many science papers.

She sailed there as captain on our 'Amadis' wooden yacht - from the U.K. across the Atlantic and Pacific, and together with other young graduates did voluntary surveys of coral reefs for Reefcheck.

Peter sailed as far as the Caribbean then had to return to his work. We exhibited Lily's amazing underwater photographs more than once.

After many years in London Peter and I lived for nearly 30 years in the tiny, village Wickhampton in Norfolk- in a large thatched barn converted by Peter – his dream come true... We became true members of the village community and helped to look after the medieval village church which has large 14th century wall paintings of national importance.



‘Deeds of Mercy’ and ‘the 3 Living & the 3 Dead’ 14th century wall paintings.



These wall paintings were an important reason for me to move to Wickhampton - because I studied medieval art at Birkbeck College London University, BA Honours. We found this church almost by chance...

Peter worked as architect. Together we organised many group art exhibitions at the church and at the barn, and art and holistic workshops with good tutors happened in our large space.



I worked mainly as a community artist tutoring art classes for children and for adults, - inspired by nature, by Polish folklore, Pacific culture, and by imagination. My main artistic inspirations have been ancient, medieval and folk arts, and 'Young Poland'; also French artists like Gauguin, Matisse, and van Gogh. Solo shows in Norwich, London and one in Poland.

In March 2022 we moved to historical old Norwich to a semi-detached house 100 years old. It has a beautiful garden and is closer to Ralph and family.

I carry on making lino and woodcut prints mainly 'creatures, and colour pictures with pastels and paints. Peter is enjoying creative gardening.

We both designed our OPEN STUDIO 2022 – at the new garden Studio...

Open Studio 2021 was the 'goodbye to the barn'! so many friends came, and strangers too.

Books:

'Fairy Tales from Poland –re-told' , designed by Peter Ledward, edited by Anna Korovilas, illustrated with paper-cut pictures by Elisabeth and by English colleagues I taught; self-published by Wickhampton Farm Barn Project in 2014; this has been very well received; we donated copies to primary schools;



Woodcut print 'Dream of a Zebra'

Poems with drawings **'What a beautiful world...in spite of it all!'** were self-published in 2019 by Wickhampton Farm Barn Project; edited by Anna Korovilas again.

'Diary 1078 from the Punjab' - printed on demand on our printer; '

'Poems like a Diary of ' that Strange time'- walks in nature, memories and thoughts' - with drawings- Self -published in September 2022 ; same editor and publishe

Strength permitting later – a small book with New stories for children , some from my early childhood – will be created together with colleagues.

It would be good perhaps to edit more of words by Jan - about his travels long ago ...when the world was very different! ...but?

...I don't know.