

# THE PYZDRY FOREST



# HERITAGE OF OLENDERS

Puszcza Puzdrska - Ołederskie dziedzictwo

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URZĄD MARSZAŁKOWSKI  
WOJEWÓDZTWA WIELKOPOLSKIEGO



## *Publishing note*

We are giving to the hands of the readers a small book inspired by a previous publication: „Każde miejsce opowiada swoją historię” (every place tells its own story) published in 2001 by COOPERATION FUND Foundation. The booklet showed what is meaningful and valuable in Poland’s cultural heritage of the countryside. Although currently this inheritance is largely neglected in the future it can become a significant factor for spiritual and economic development of rural areas. Across Europe original forms of cultural heritage are carefully maintained because it is profitable. In Poland after a period of progressive uniformity it has become difficult to distinguish particular geographical areas (with an exception of Podhale). Standardization was complemented by development of more commercial intensive farming along with polluted environment, monotonous landscapes, depopulation of rural areas and extinction or traditional agricultural techniques and customs. An original construction style has become the most easily distinguished cultural benchmark. Up until the present few rural areas in Poland retained enough cultural heritage to employ it as an asset for progress. One of them is the area of the historical Pyzdry Forest. It is a territory containing an original heritage as compared to other parts of Europe. You will be able to learn about it reading this publication and discovering the real image of the forest.



*Baraniec village*



*Zapowiednia village*



*Czarny Bród village*



*Konary village*

# Introduction

Richness of Pyzdry Forest not only consists of water, forests, and people who run their homesteads there, but also is made up from cultures, traditions and landscapes brought in by various waves of settlers who came to cultivate it. Much of this heritage has been lost for us owing to the turbulent times of 2nd World War and the postwar years. Jewish population that was numerous in small towns around Pyzdry Forest was exterminated. Olenders of German origins who settled central part of the forest in 18th century either ran away before the march of the Red Army or have been resettled after the war. Pyzdry Forest up to 2nd World War was a multicultural area managed and inhabited by Polish citizens of three nationalities and numerous religious affiliations. Today this plurality is gone irrevocably. Houses, temples, churches and cemeteries are left after Jews and Protestants. The whole of the heritage of the three nations amounts to an impressive heritage that ought to be saved. If it is to take place this inheritance has to be noticed, preserved and approached with an idea how it can be used. The book is first and foremost for inhabitants of Pyzdry Forest. We are hoping that this publication will make readers more attentive to the value of the heritage surrounding them, more knowledgeable about the subject, and will show how this inheritance can be used to raise attractiveness of their own surroundings thus raising the quality of life. The book presents

mainly the material heritage such as architecture, local crafts and cultivation methods as well as spiritual heritage and everyday life of village communities. We are hoping that the book could help preserve as much heritage of Pyzdry Forest as possible, that it could contribute to well planned realization of necessary changes including an impact on architectural styles to an extent that new households would be built in style related to the traditional local architecture. A catalogue of characteristic features of regional architecture for Pyzdry Forest developed by scientists from Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań, The Academy of Fine Arts in Poznań and National Museum in Poznań is available on the website of Cultural Association Echo Pyzdr [www.echo.org.pl](http://www.echo.org.pl) and is for disposal of potential investors. It was produced during a project: „Puszcza Pyzdrska – Olędrzy i ich żelazne domy”. Realization of the project is planned for many years. The final goal is to turn the Pyzdry Forest into a geographical area with an original cultural heritage most visibly characterized by architecture based on bog iron as a building material to a greater extent than anywhere else in Poland or in Europe.



*Spring backwaters of Warta river*

*„Human beings need a beauty of landscape” Człowiekowi potrzebne jest piękno krajobrazu*

John Paul II



*Warta and its oxbow lakes*

A natural border of the area on the north is Warta river, Proсна river on the west, on the east – Czarna Struga including its reception basin, on the south



*Female deer*

the border of forest on the line of towns: Brudzew, Jarantów, Zbiersk, Mycielin. Sizeable and compact forested areas have remained up to the present. Their main part amounts to as much as 16 500 hectares. Other 3 major sections have from 1 000 to 1 500 hectares. In Polish nomenclature Pyzdry Forest can be

*Beavers in the forest 2010*



called Puszcza only on condition that major forested areas have remained. Widely known is Niepołomnicki Forest (Puszcza Niepołomska) near Cracow which only amounts to 12 600 hectares. In this context re-activation of historical (used up to 19th century) name Pyzdry Forest (Puszcza Pyzdrska) is fully justified. Little is known about the forests of Puszcza Pyzdrska. There is no registered natural reserve. Nonetheless, there are many places characterized by unique plant life. To the west of Stara Ciświca village on Ciświca Swamp lives Poland's largest fern *Osmunda regalis*. Next to Trzcianki grow exquisite salty meadows. The most beautiful forests with large presence of Oak trees can be seen between Imielno and Zagórowo. Natural unplanted by man riparian forest persists on the banks of Bawół between towns Borowiec and Piskory. Looks of the olden forests are exemplified by monuments of nature, among other things by Oak trees the biggest of which grow in the park belonging to the palace in Grodziec and have 720 cm in their circuit. Landscape of the



*Road*

forest is diversified by numerous dunes. The biggest among them stretch between villages: Stara Ciświca and Łądek. On them stands an observatory tower from which one can look up to a panorama of Pyzdry Forest. The best viewpoint for the Warta river valley is in Rataje where during floods the river turns into a huge 3

Translated into English language words puszcza and las are both forest. Therefore translation of Polish title of this booklet (Puszcza Pyzdrska) is Pyzdry Forest. In Polish, however, the word puszcza is used to distinguish some forests as particularly big, ancient and/or endowed with rich wildlife. Puszcza may also include non-forested areas.

## Pyzdry Forest today



*Forest ponds*

km-wide backwater. Pyzdry Forest abounds in numerous swamps the biggest of which are present in valley of Czarna Struga between Grodziec and Nowe Grądy. The forest is profusely inhabited by rare species of animals: deer, beaver, otter and periodically also wolves



*Cranes before departure*

and moose. The world of birds is represented by: bald eagle, black kite, black stork, crane, great egret, heron, ruff, black-tailed godwit, common redshank and sandpiper. Expositions devoted to environment in Pyzdry Forest are in the headquarters of Grodziec District Forest Management (Naleśnictwo Grodziec) and Ośrodek Edukacji Przyrodniczej in Łądek.

*Water and dunes*





*Kolonia Obory village*

Pyzdry Forest is a compact forest area that owes its name to the fact that about 1/6 of its territory belonged in years 1387-1793 to the City of Pyzdry. In middle ages it was bounded from west, east and north by fragments of rivers: Warta, Prosna and Powa, and from the south it was reaching the line of towns: Brudzew, Brudzewek, Lipe, Jarantów, Zbiersk, Petryki, Kościelec and Stropieszyn. Administratively it formed parts of three powiats (Kalisz, Konin and Pyzdry) within Kaliskie voivodeship. Along the western edge of the forest, parallel to Prosna river, ran a road from Kalisz through Pyzdry to Poznań and Gniezno, and it's eastern end was used for a tract linking Kalisz with Kruszwica through Konin. The middle of the forested area was traversed by a tract along Czarna Struga: Łądek-Stawiszyn from which further economic inroads into the Pyzdry Forest were done, which is why its territory was not without settlements. In medieval period in or near Pyzdry Forest sprang up at least 36 settlements, among others: Wrąbczynek, Dłusk, Tarnowa, Lipie, Lisewo, Rychwał, Zagórow, Drzewce, Grodziec, Chocz, Szymanowice, Rzgów, Łąd, Łągiewniki, Biskupice, Królikowo, Grochowcy, Jaroszewice Rychwańskie. Apart from farming establishments emerged colonies related to exploitation of forest (Wrąbczyn), services (Obory), bog iron mining and smelting (Ruda Komorska, Ruda Wieczyńska, Huta Trąbczyńska, Huta Łukomska), tar production (Smoliniec). In modern times (16th - 18th c.) the development of the settlement in the territory of Pyzdry Forest was almost twice as fast as in medieval times since in that period emerged 188 new hamlets. In years 1761-1793 among them emerged 46 Olender establishments: Ciążęńskie Olędry (today: Ciążęńskie Holendry), Lisewo Ol. (Lisewo), Lisewskie Ol. (Olisz), Pyzdrowskie Ol. (today: Kruszyny, Zamość, Dolne Grądy, Górne Grądy, Baraniec, Zimochowiec, Tłoczyzna, Glinianki, Trzcianki, Zapowiednia, Walga,

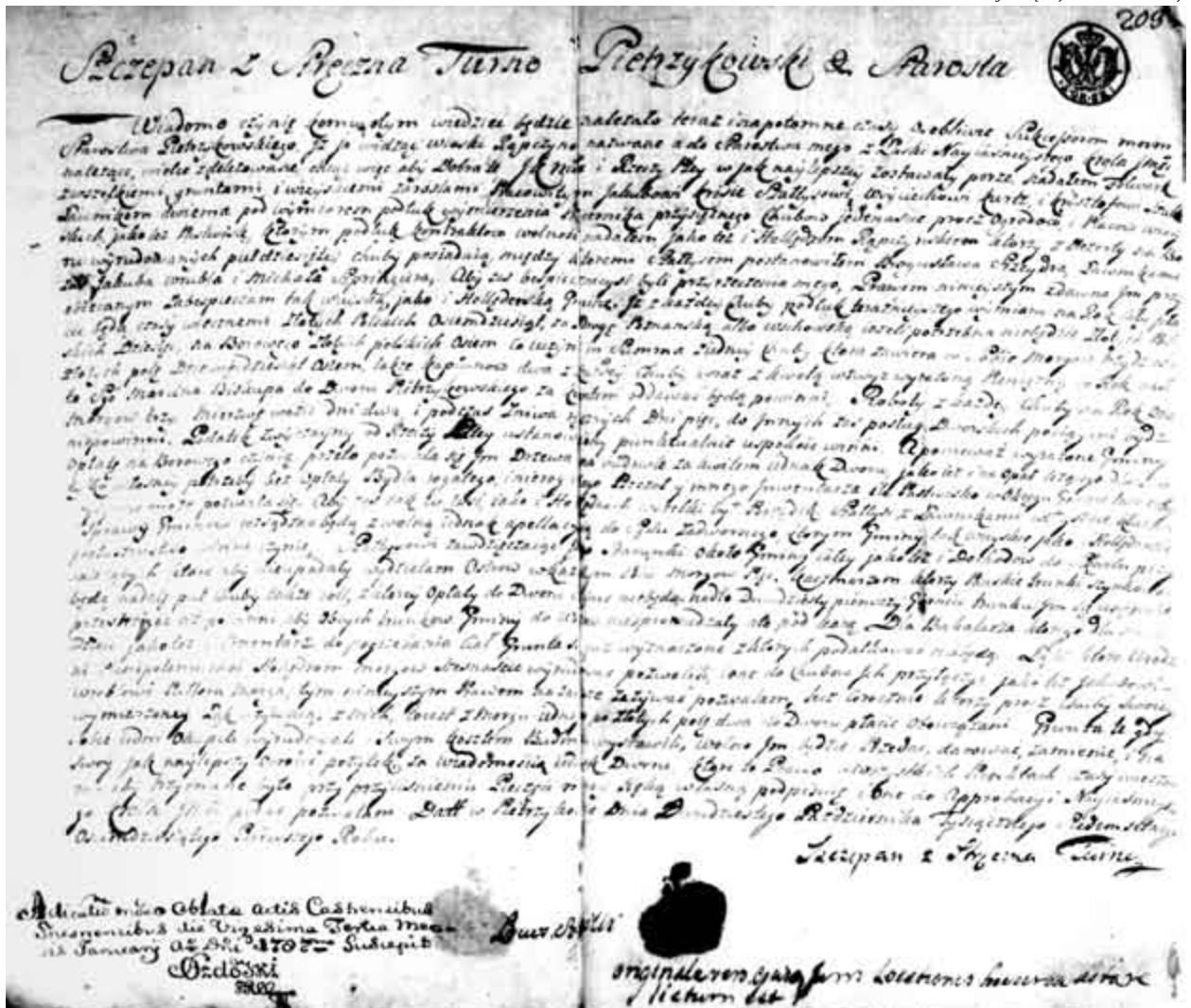
# Settlements in Pyzdry Forest since medieval times till 1945.

Królewny), Tomickie Nowe Ol. (Ciemierów, Tomickie Stare and Nowe Śnietnie), Wrąbczynek, Wrąbczynkowskie Ol. (Wrąbczynkowskie Holendry), Białobłockie Ol. (Białobłoty), Borowieckie Nowe

Olędry (Borowiec Nowy), Borowieckie Stare Ol. (Borowiec Stary), Bukowa Ol. (Bukowo, Bukowe), Gadowskie Nowe Ol. (Gadowskie Nowe Holendry), Gadowskie Stare Ol. (Gadowskie Stare Holendry),

Gliny Ol. (Gliny), Grądy Stare Ol. (Grądy Stare), Grądy Nowe Ol. (Grądy Nowe), Imielno, Dębniaki Ol. (Dębniaki), Dzierzbińskie – Zdanowiec Ol. (Danowiec), Zamęty Ol. (Zamęty), Jarantowskie Ol. (Jarantów

Document of foundation of village Wrąbczynkowskie Holendry



## Settlements in Pызdry Forest since medieval times till 1945.



Kolonia, Jarantów), Kazimierskie Nowe Ol. (Każmierka Nowa), Kazimierskie Stare Ol. (Każmierka Stara), Mycielińskie Ol. (Kazala Nowa, Kazala Stara), Oborskie Nowe Ol. (Obory Kolonia), Oborskie Stare Ol. (Wronów), Piskory or Lipeckie Ol. (Piskory), Joanna-Grojeckie Ol. (Joanna), Konary Ol. (Konary), Kowalewskie Ol. (Kowalewek), Lubieńskie or Biała Ol.

(Lubień), Luśnie Ol. a. Łukomskie Ol. (Łukom), Myszaków Ol. (Myszakówek), Orlińskie Duże Ol. (Orlina Duża), Orlińskie Małe Ol. (Orlina Mała), Siąszyckie Ol. (Siąszyce Nowe Drugie), Sławskie Ol. (Sławskie Holendry); Smuszewskie Ol. (Olędry Smaszewskie), Stara Huta a. Zagórowskie Ol. (Huta Stara), Trąbczyńskie Nowe (Łazińsk, Łazińska Kolonia, Łazińsk II), Trąbczyńskie Stare Ol. (Łazińsk III), Wielołęka (Wielołęka), Stropieszynskie Ol. (Radzany Kolonia, Gostynie Kolonia), Szymanowickie Stare Ol. (Szymanowice), Tomickie Stare and Tomickie Nowe Ol. (Tomice Drugie, Tomice Trzecie), Wierzchy Ol. (Wierzchy), Zbierskie Ol. (Kolonia Zbiersk). Olender settlements in Poland were initiated in years 1527/1540 by Dutch mennonites (named in old Polish "Olędrzy" - Olenders) who as they were specialists in controlling floodlands and swamps came to work in Żuławy and a selection of areas situated along banks of rivers. This kind of settlement was continued by their ancestors as well as 'in the Dutch fashion' predominantly by Germans from Church of Augsburg confession (Lutherans), in smaller degree from Evangelical Re-

formed Church (Calvinists) as well as Poles. The status of Olender hamlet was not decided upon ethnic origin of settlers or by the character or method of harnessing new terrain such as drainage or stumping. There were two general principles of Dutch (Olender) settlement. First, there were two main legal rules of the Dutch law: a group responsibility of communes for regular fulfillment of services by its members to the owner of the ground and, in consequence, equal legal status among settlers themselves. Their status was expressed in democratic self-government and obligatory neighborhood help guaranteed in locational contracts signed between the landlord and the whole commune. Second, Olender hamlets had a characteristic economic function manifested in often taking over areas difficult to cultivate. Their farming technique was based on cultivating soil usually in one block. The geographical arrangement made individual three-field system and crop rotation possible, but keeping animals, milk cows in particular, was at least as important as growing crops. Olender villages had their own local government – commune's general meeting and an elected office-court comprising a village leader and aldermen. Whole village was responsible as one for services owed to the landlord (mainly in a form of rent) either in exchange for timeless cultivation rights or due to the timeless right to rent after

*Photographs from State Archive in Poznań, Łazińsk in 1920s, taken by Artur Breyer*



*Photographs from State Archive in Poznań, Łazińsk in 1920s, taken by Artur Breyer*







*Wrąbczyn Górski village, during annual floods  
houses remain safely on dunes*

## Settlements in Pызdry Forest since medieval times till 1945.

purchasing land. Settlers were individually free and also had a limited judicial freedom in non-criminal cases expressed in submission to their own village court with possibility of appeal in landlord court. They paid tithe to the Catholic Church as well as state taxes, benefited from freedom to trade and freedom of religion. Majority of Olender hamlets were created on so



*Stefan Borowiak in village Rybie*

called "raw root", i.e. in places previously uninhabited, in forests or swampy areas; only sometimes in areas where villages have been depopulated earlier, e.g. village Lisewo in Pызdry commune. There were several factors leading to a dynamic growth of Olender settlements in Poland and Greater Poland region during 17th and 18th c. In the background there were crisis of economy based on serf labor, destruction and depopulation in consequence of wars and epidemics. The founders of hamlets strove to reconstruct their estates and raise their incomes – from various forms of rent, taxation, market control and work requirements imposed on settled collectives. The settlers, mainly of foreign origin, wanted to improve their means of livelihood through religious, legal and economic benefits resulting from this type of settlement,



*Photographs from State Archive in Poznań, Łazińsk in 1920s, taken by Artur Breyer*



## Settlements in Pyzdry Forest since medieval times till 1945.

as mentioned above. External immigrants were coming spontaneously (there were no rigid borders) but mainly in an organized manner. They were peasants from Silesia, Brandenburg and (Western) Pomerania who ran away from extended exploitation including increasing burdens of serfdom, expropriation from farmland, army conscription, strict taxation regime, starvation, epidemics as well as war destruction in conclusion of Silesian wars (1740-1742) and the 7-year War. In years 1794-1863 in Pyzdry Forest emerged at least 20 further Olender hamlets including: Święcia, Olchowo, Emilienheim (Oleśnica), Michalinów, Tarczewo, Grądzeń Las, Mały Las, Chruściki, Grądzeń, Drzewce, Kopojno, Oleśnica Kolonia, Oleśnica Wielka, Zarzew, Czarny Bród. Year 1864 marks end of serfdom and appropriation of land by peasants in the Kingdom of Poland which brings end to the phenomenon of Olender settlement. What followed was a new wave of settlers on lots extracted from manor lands. Some earlier Olender settlements, in consequence of incoming of new settlers began splitting into separate villages. Most visibly it took place in Pyzdrskie Oleńdry which transformed into 12 villages. In interwar period (1918-1939) emerged about 12 new settlements established on lands from divided land estates as a result of agricultural reform from year 1925. 2nd World War brutally stopped the process of colonization of Pyzdry Forest. Evangelical Olanders were subjected to pressures from two totalitarian regimes (Hitler's and Stalin's) and eventually were forced to abandon their homes. Olender villages were partly depopulated (e.g. village Wióry disappeared completely, in Olsz and Ciążeńskie Holendry remained single houses) and forest grew over abandoned fields.



*Photographies from State Archive in Poznań, Łaziński in 1920s, taken by Artur Breyer*



## What constitutes heritage?

### Landscape around us

forests, water, fields, meadows, copses

### villages and their spatial organization

houses, buildings related to keeping livestock, churches, shrines, cemeteries, tumuli, industrial and public benefit structures, manors, palaces, castles, grads, previous border, archeological excavations

### method of cultivation and production

crops and agricultural practices, old trades and handicraft, folk art, traditional preserves and dishes

### spiritual heritage

customs and rituals, private and social life, legends and local dialect



### Is house a heritage?

Try to discover the cultural heritage of your own village or a broader area. Describe it and name its characteristic features

## What values does it demonstrate?

### ancient skills

well produced buildings and objects, from a different material than what is used today, endowed with an interesting structure

### beauty and emotion

decorative items, simple and close to nature, touching and bringing up memories

### uniqueness

rare, exceptional, interesting for inhabitants and tourists, important for scientists

### sense of identity

says a lot about our antecedents and predecessors, about what they created, about our shared history



### Kids, look! This house has been built from bog iron.

Judge values that connect you with particular elements of heritage, about their state today and their presence in the conscience of local inhabitants.

## What does it speak out about?

### **about our ancestors**

and about ourselves,  
about our village,  
about our geographical area,  
about Poland



**Look how beautiful is this house!**

Try to write a story of your family, your village, or maybe even a history of Pyzdry Forest. Draw on memories of people and perhaps even from documents.

## How can it help us?

### **It will allow to rescue an old beautiful house,**

preserve the beauty of the place, in which we live, It will bring a sense of pride from our tradition, will help to organize our life well, and become more affluent



**A house like new. There is a place to sleep and additionally it is in a beautiful landscape!**

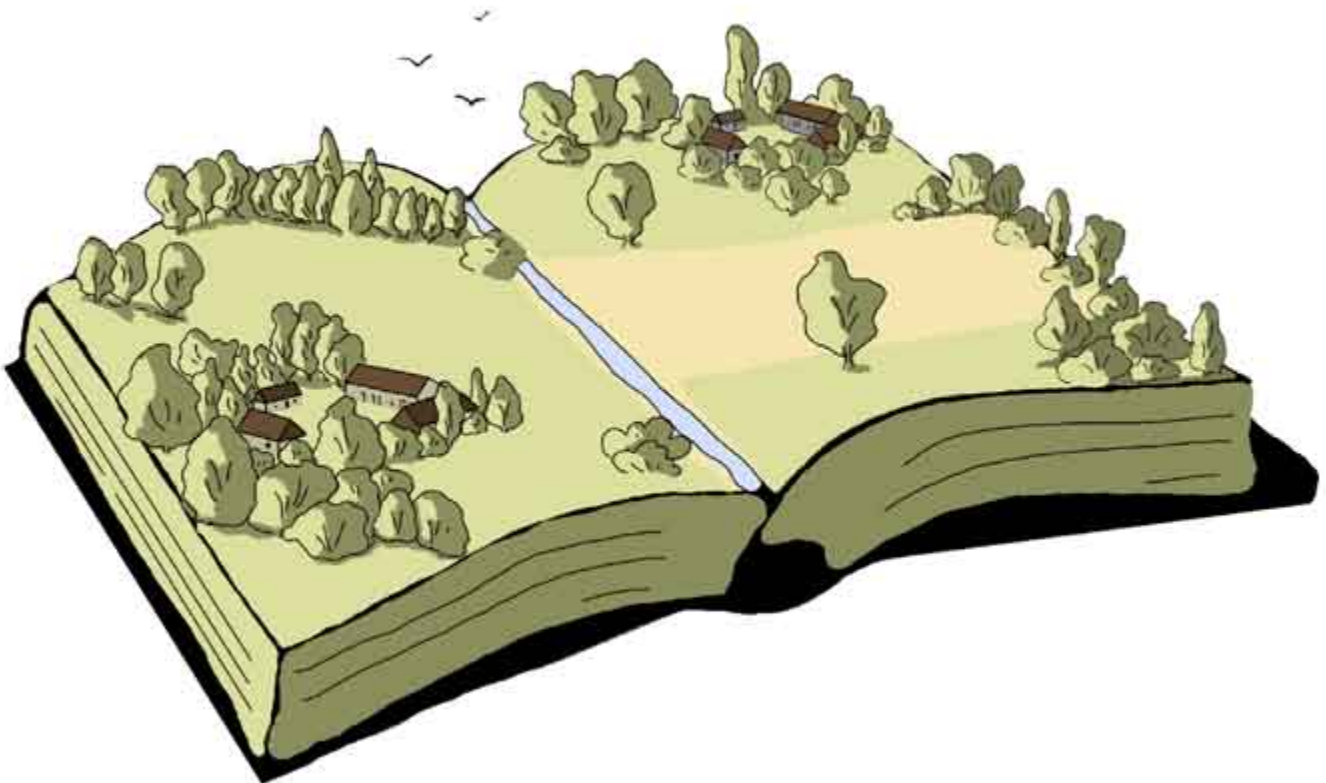
Prepare several suggestions for protection and utilization of heritage together with neighbors, representatives of government and local leaders.

# Reading the landscape

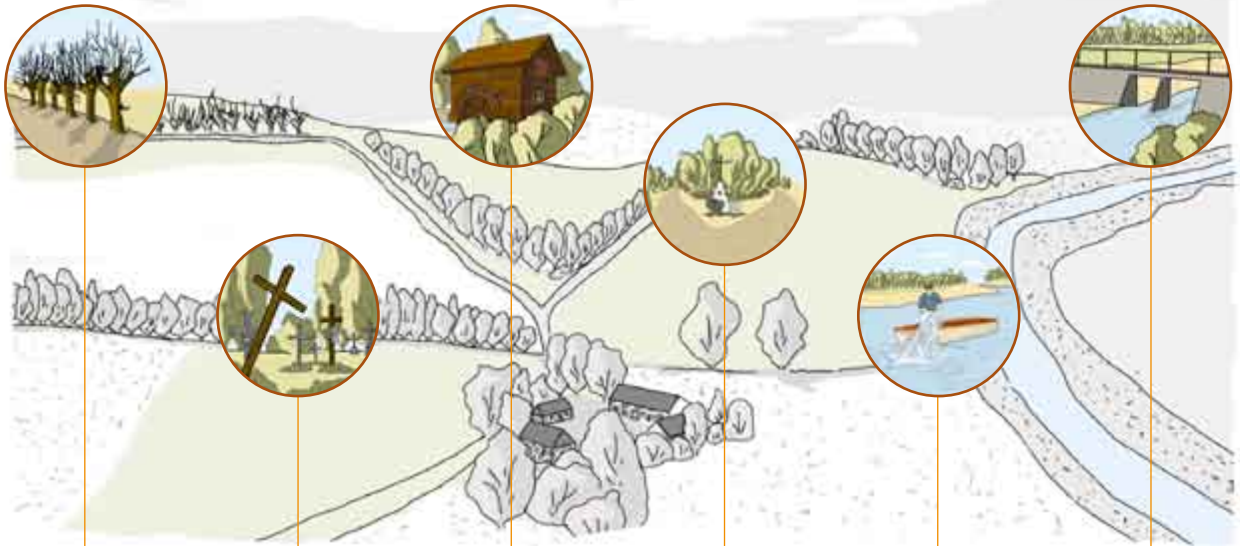
Landscape is like a book containing records of past and present. However, in this book there are different letters of alphabet, words and sentences. Some of them were created by nature (trees, rivers, dunes, swamps), others – by humans (houses, roads, churches, grads), and still others by humans and nature together (crop fields, meadows, orchards, gardens, boundary strips, drainage ditches). For example, we can compare a park to a beautifully composed sentence. Charming happen to be also sentences not composed by anyone such as the patchwork of fields, meadows and forests whose picturesque form is not

an objective, but results from practicality. There also happen slapdash, poorly structured or even glaring sentences – such as the listless development of new housing that does not fit the encountered spatial organization or the architectural style. Landscape can be read like a book but one has to learn how to do it. This skill will allow us to derive knowledge not only about our geographical area but also about ourselves and about our neighbors. Let us try to answer questions:

- what does landscape comprise of?
- how to look at landscape?
- how to understand and feel landscape??



# What does landscape consist of?



## **Greeneries:**

forests  
greenness in between  
fields  
fields  
meadows and pastures  
boundary strips  
riparian forest reserves  
orchards, gardens, parks

## **Memorials:**

temples  
cemeteries  
shrines  
monasteries  
monuments  
historical sites  
other extraordinary  
places

## **Developments:**

village,  
town  
hamlets  
farmsteads  
courts, granges  
templeswater mills,  
wind mills  
blacksmiths' shop  
sbrickworks

## **Roads:**

village streets  
squares  
crossroads  
roads between fields  
alleys  
rail tracts

## **Waters:**

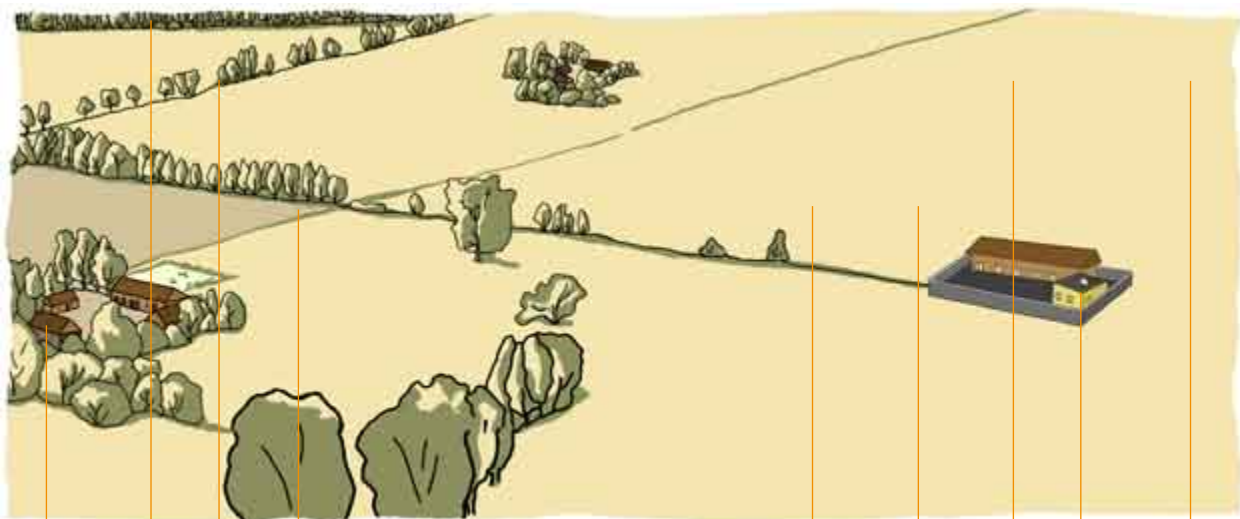
springs  
wells  
rivers, streams  
ponds  
drainage ditches  
wetlands

## **Engineered structures:**

bridges  
fortifications  
railway stations  
dykes  
water gates

# GREENERIES

## Krajobraz wsi olęderskiej



old development blended in greenery

neighboring of river and forests

abundance of greenness between fields

mosaic of fields, meadows, pastures and forests

*values*

lack of boundary strips and green areas between fields

land consolidation

plowing of meadows and pastures

new style-less development without plants

illegal garbage dumps

*threats*

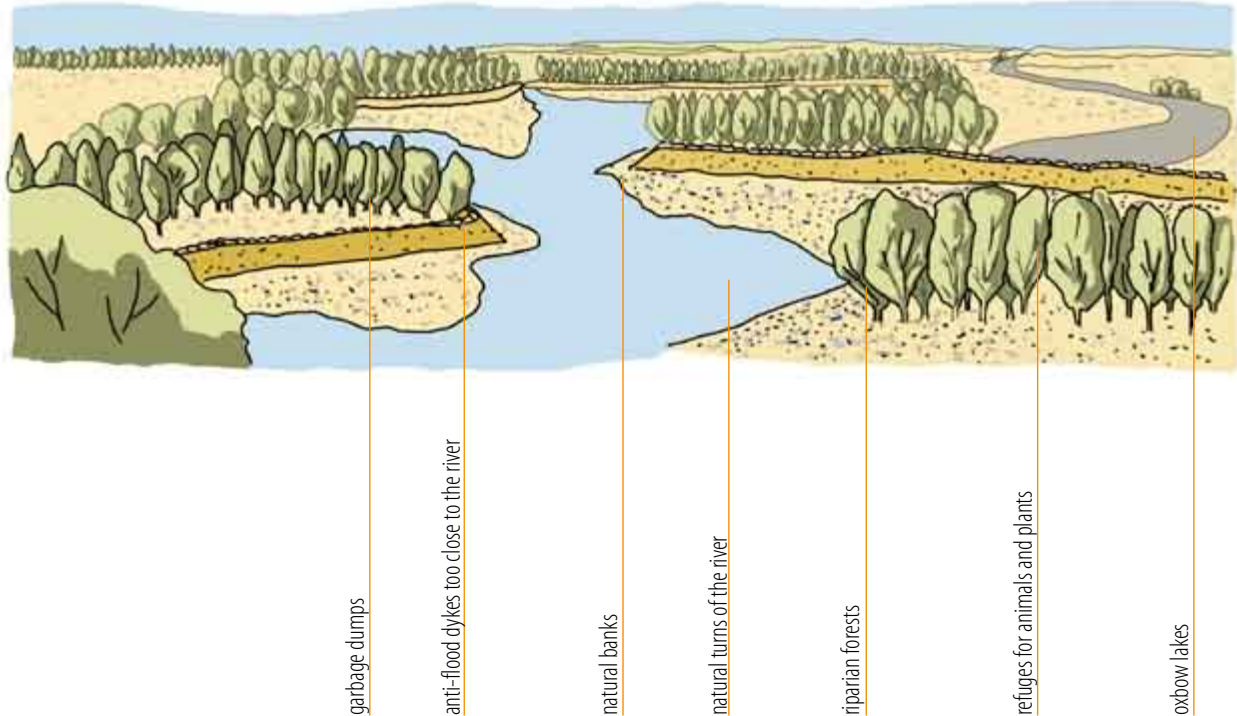
**Values:** a. mosaic of fields, meadows, pastures and forests; b. abundance of greenness between fields; c. neighboring of river and forests; d. old development blended in greenery

**Threats:** a. lack of boundary strips and green areas between fields; b. land consolidation; c. plowing of meadows and pastures; d. illegal garbage dumps; e. new style-less development without plants

Patchwork of fields, meadows, pastures and forests – evidence of Olęder agriculture. Nowadays biodiversity and landscape differentiation become flaunting features of organic farming. Boundary strips (some of them several hundred years old) are habitats for many plants and animals indispensable for maintenance of biological balance. Large-scale farms resulting from land consolidation and their intensive production techniques (intensive chemical use and heavy machinery) lead to liquidation of fields' boundaries and trees between fields together with other animal and plant life. Sometimes riparian patches of forest between fields and by roads characterize agriculture that skillfully links charm with the practical. Rows of trees render warmer fields, more humid and fertile soil. Riparian habitats lessen the risk of flood. Forests store water, "produce oxygen", give cover against wind and provide home to animals.



## Landscape of Warta river



garbage dumps

anti-flood dykes too close to the river

natural banks

natural turns of the river

riparian forests

refuges for animals and plants

oxbow lakes

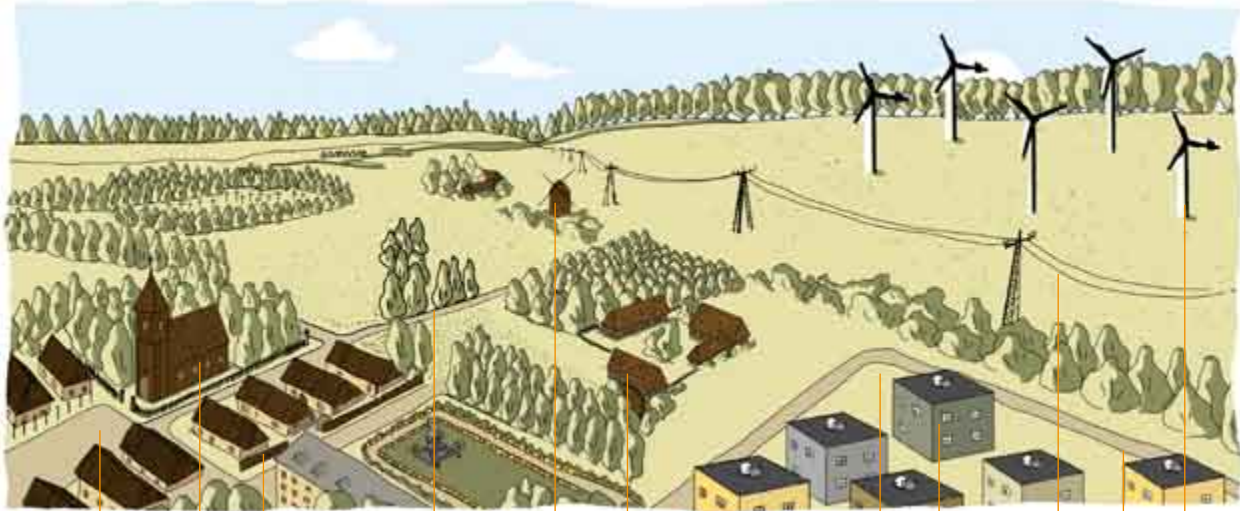
## Quantity and quality of water

**Values:** a. natural turns of the river; b. oxbow lakes; c. riparian forests; d. natural banks; e. refuges for animals and plants

**Threats:** a. garbage dumps; b. anti-flood dykes incapable of stopping large flood waves and blocking natural fertilizing of meadows at riverbanks thereby causing a decrease in crop yields and disappearance of rare plants and birds

Depleting available water resources in Poland as well as water pollution may hamper development of the country. We wastefully use water without care about its cleanliness which is symbolized by unauthorized garbage dumps in river beds as well as the illegal practice of disposing sewage to watercourses. Rivers and streams flowing along natural bends in broad and flat river beds amidst riparian forests are evidence of reasoned water management. Then in times of drought there is no shortage of water, and when flood looms close – it's excess is stopped and absorbed. River banks – best location for recreational developments. However, owing to landscape and environmental respects it is better if along the banks there is a strip of riparian forest. It is good to have a possibility of a walk on a path along the riverside. A house situated just above the edge of the river is an expression of egoistic attitude that is in fact adverse towards environment as well as other people.

# Rural developments



preserved spatial order from the beginnings of village's foundation

church

wooden fencing

roads and ditches with planted trees

windmill

farmstead (house, farm buildings, a yard with a well, garden and orchard)

cut down willows

new free standing buildings that are not reminiscent of old farmsteads

power lines too close to households

concrete fencing

wind turbines that blemish landscapes and make noise

## Values:

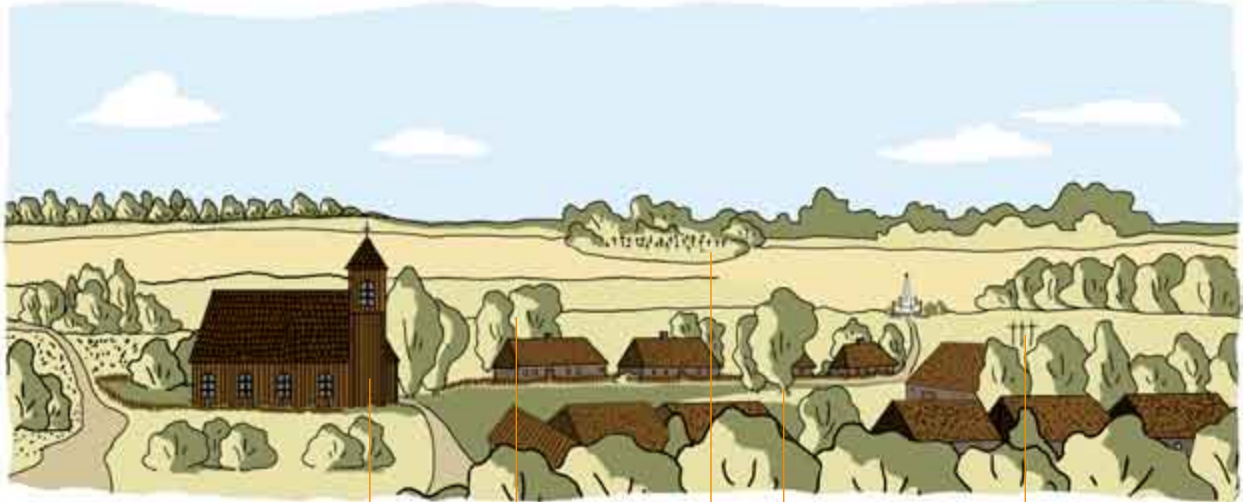
- preserved spatial order from the beginnings of village's foundation;
- farmstead (house, farm buildings, a yard with a well, garden and orchard);
- church;
- roads and ditches with planted willows;
- windmill;
- wooden fencing

## Method of development:

Plans of Olender villages were adapted to local environmental circumstances. Buildings were erected in places safe in the instance of flood. Currently buildings are frequently constructed in areas unsuitable for the purpose at the same time ignoring building traditions of the area. Constructions are often two stories high. Roof inclinations are random. Window and door carpentry has different shapes and proportions from traditional ones. Traditional construction materials were abandoned. Home gardens are dominated by earlier unknown plants.

## Threats:

- power lines too close to households;
- wind turbines that blemish landscapes and make noise;
- new free standing buildings that are not reminiscent of old farmsteads;
- concrete fencing;
- cut down willows



parish church with old trees

old cemetery with old trees

stary cmentarz ze starodrzewem

shrines on trees

pestilential crosses

## Values:

a. parish church with old trees; b. old cemetery with old trees; c. monument commemorating a battle from the January Uprising (1863-1864); d. shrines on trees; e. pestilential crosses;

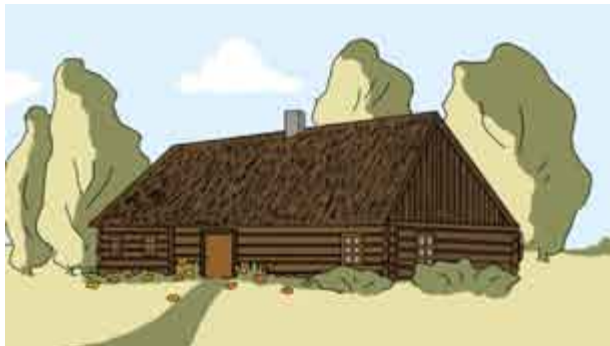
## Threats:

a. new cemetery with cut down trees so that they will not "dirt graves with leaves"; b. new shrine (cave) that doesn't refer to style and material of traditional shrines; c. lack of signs signaling historical sites

## A temple in the landscape

A tower of a church is still a clue for someone looking from afar to know where is the village and what is the faith of its inhabitants. Currently built churches are sometimes so bizarre constructions that it is hard to recognize a church in them. A traditional Polish cemetery looked at from a distance is a cluster of old admirable trees. Also from small distance we can feel the spell of a cemetery. Here wrongly understood modernity and convenience are wholly out of place. It is good for a village to have a distinguishing feature, i.e. something exceptionally rare.: old border crossing, farmsteads from local construction materials, churches of different denominations, traditional craftsmanship or traditional crops. This "something" what distinguishes us has to be valued above all else. Thanks to that our village cannot be mistaken for any other.

# Attractive landscapes and how can they be spoiled



*old house blended with greenness*



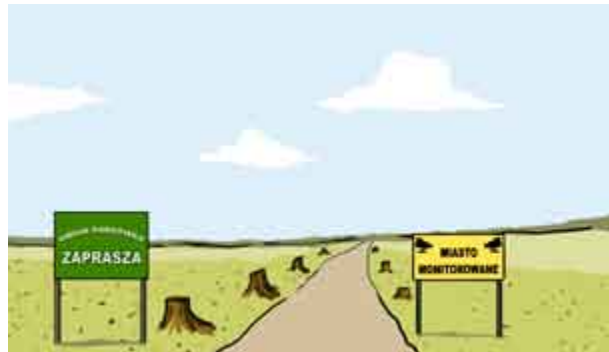
*this same house spoiled in result of adding new windows out of proportion, placing an extension with a flat roof, cutting down old trees*



*just next to the old dwelling a new house was put up, a so called 'gargamel' surrounded by a concrete fence, the added greenness is not traditional, and old trees have been cut down*



*a road with rows of trees*



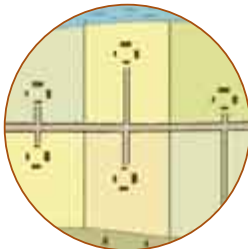
*a road without trees*

# Plans of villages and farmsteads

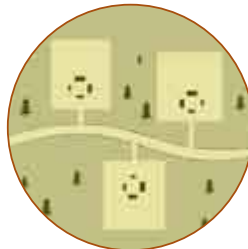
On the territory of Poland we can encounter various village plans. Villages of medieval origins situated on borders of Pyzdry Forest belong to categories: eye-shaped (*owalnica*), e.g.: Ruda Komorska and street (*ulicówka*), e.g.: Kwileń. They were concentrated around a common ground or a street. Hamlets originating from 18th century formed by Olenders were scattered owing to the fact that farmlands were directly adjacent to the household. We distinguish two types of Olender villages: street dispersed villages (*rzędówka bagienna*) and dispersed settlements (*wieś rozproszona*). Dispersed street villages were established in transitional zones from marshes to dry land. Each settler received a similar strip of land covering both damp and dry terrain. Across landholdings or on their edge ran the main village road next to or close to which farmsteads were built. Lisewska Kolonia is an example of such a village. Scattered settlements were characterized by settlers building their farmsteads in the middle of their own land. This type of settlement emerged where soils were of more less the same quality. The condition was fulfilled normally by forested areas. Slightly differently looked scattered settlements in Warta river's floodlands where households were built in places where the situation allowed for it, that is on dunes which in times of flood turned into islands.



*dispersed settlement in a forested area (Łazińsk)*



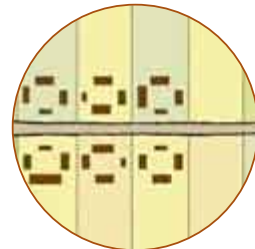
*dispersed street village*



*dispersed settlement*



*eye-shaped village*



*street village*

# Types of rural buildings

## Houses:

Cottage – house for a husbandman

Manor – residence for a landlord

Czworak – living quarters of farm helpers in a grange

## Farm buildings:

Barn – for storage of grain, hay, straw

Granary – for storage of grain

Pigsty – for keeping pigs

Cowshed – for keeping cows

Stable – for keeping horses

Woodshed – for storage of firewood

Coach house – for storing carriages and other machinery

Dovecot – for keeping pigeons

Cellar – for storage of food



## Rodzaje zabudowań wiejskich



*Well sweep in Stara Kazmierka*



*Manor in Russów*



*Woodshed in Młynek*



*Cowshed in Wierzchy*



*Cowshed from split stones originating from fields nearby, in Piskory*



*Cowshed and outhouse in Kolonia Obory*



*Barn and woodshed in Wróbczyn Górski*

Center of the yard comprised of a well with a well sweep. Next to buildings often grow voluminous trees: lime or oak serving as protection of houses against wind or fire.

Frequently buildings were constructed to combine different functions, e.g. of pigsty, cow shed and stable.

If on your farmstead remains an old farm building or house it should be adapted to new needs without changing its older external form and new modern buildings should not be built just next to it. An old building is a testimony to a respect of history and also a positive distinguishing factor for the household. Such house makes it easier to start with a non-agricultural economic activity. Old buildings should not be surrounded by concrete fences.

# Construction techniques and materials

## Material and structure of walls

From beginnings of 20th c. majority of buildings on the territory of Pызdry Forest were erected from local and untransformed material, i.e.: wood, clay, bog iron and sporadically – field stones. Wood was used mostly in buildings constructed in what can be called a post and board technology. The posts in the technique constitute an element of walls' construction. They had vertical notches to which horizontal 10 cm thick boards were fitted. Gaps between boards were filled with clay. On the inside most often wooden stakes were hammered into the boards and posts on which 10 cm thick clay plaster was put on in order to insulate walls. Post and board technology allowed to construct buildings from boards of relatively small thickness which was easily available in Pызdry Forest because before coming of the settlers owners of

the forest normally had cut down any thicker trees. Owing to this reason few houses were erected in the saddle notch system as they were built from thicker logs connected to one another on corners. There were also buildings with timber framing where gaps were filled with clay. Often constructions were erected using clay mixed with dry sticks and common heather (*Calluna vulgaris*). The most rare were buildings from split field stones. By far the most original construction material for walls and foundations that distinguishes developments from Pызdry Forest on European scale is the bog iron. Nearly all buildings from the forest's area stand on a foundation from this kind of iron which has an excellent insulating capacity. Bog iron was extracted in the territory of Pызdry Forest from time immemorial also for the purpose of smelting. In

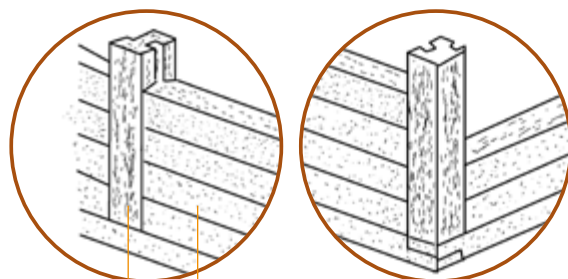


*Post and board construction in Zamęty*



*Saddle notch construction in Borowiec Nowy*

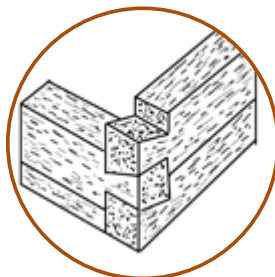
*Post and board construction*



wall  
post

wall  
board

*Saddle notch construction*



the times of 2nd World War in Łazińsk existed a mine for bog iron from where output was transported using specially built narrow-gauged railway to Jarocin and then to steelworks in Silesia. Bog iron occurs practically on all marshy meadows just under the surface of the grass. It's presence is confirmed by brown-red color of water.





*Extended joists for fixing roof in Wierzchy*



*Bog iron structure in Wierzchy*

Old buildings should also be renovated using original wall constructions. When rising new constructions one should utilize local materials as much as possible. It is worth utilizing materials from demolition which have exceptionally attractive decorative values, much beyond new materials.



*Stakes driven into boards for supporting clay plaster in Wierzchy*



*Clay and dry twigs in Stara Kaźmierka*



*House in Łazińsk*



*Clay construction in Ciążeńskie Holendry*



*Farm building in Wojciechów*

# Material for construction of roofs

## Materials used for topping roofs:

Straw – good insulating properties

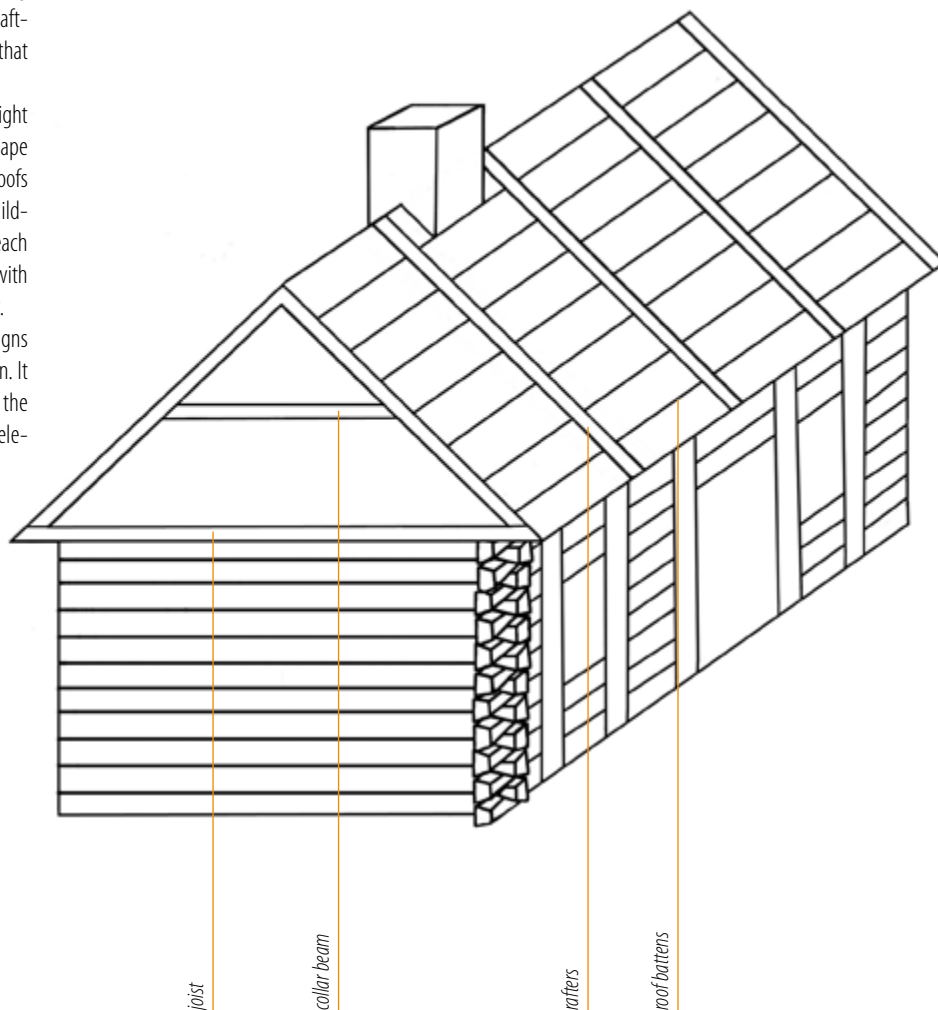
Shingles – light and more durable than straw

Tiles – the most durable material

Gable roof is the most popular form of roofing in Pyzdry Forest, more rare were jerkin heads. Rafters that constituted roof were supported by joists that extended wall's face by about 50 cm.

A major change was the lowering of the height of roof for more narrow parts of buildings. Landscape of countryside is interrupted by buildings where roofs have different slopes from roofs on traditional buildings; particularly bad looking are roofs where each slope has a different angle. Also constructions with flat roofs do not fit the landscape of Pyzdry Forest.

When building a roof one should utilize designs and covering materials utilized in particular region. It is not appropriate to introduce new coloring to the surface material or to install additional alien elements on the roof, e.g.: balconies.



## Material for construction of roofs



*Tiled roof in Zamęty*



*Hand-weaving of straw on a roof, Wojciechów*



*Gable covered with boards in vertical position, Stary Borowiec*



*A new house built in Orlina Wielka. Straw was used to cover the roof; inclination of the roof is about 45 degrees; gables are lined with boards in a way that pertains to preexisting developments.*

## Architectural details

Architectural details are elements that define regional architecture. They may involve fragments of construction or constitute only a decoration. Puzdry Forest's architecture is poor in purely ornamental details. Carefully created facades from bog iron pass as the most pronounced structural detail. Characteristic rust-coloured patches with white borders from lime plaster are an exceptional distinguishing factor.



*In-wall wardrobe in Wrębczynkowskie Holendry*



*Doors with stone step in Ciemiarów Kolonia*



*Patched wall from bog iron in Czarny Bród*



*A porch in Piskory*

During refurbishments of old houses instead of replacing it is best to fix the original carpentry and other details. Walls built from bog iron are worth uncovering through hammering off unnecessary plaster and insulation of such houses should be done on the inside. It is a mistake to use new and old carpentry of different shapes in the same structure. It introduces chaos and unbalance into proportions of a building. In villages where there are traditional structures it is inappropriate to build overly decorated houses, e.g. with concrete balusters or broken glass and mirrors.



*Joist in Wierchy*



*Window shutter in Stary Borowiec*



*Date of construction of a barn in Stara Kaźmierka – year 1796*



*Date of construction of a farm building in Wierchy – year 1908*



*Small window in a farm building*



*Decorative facade in Łazińsk*



*House joist in Stara Kaźmierka*



*Door handle to a building in Wierchy*

## Protestant churches and cemeteries

Every Olender village inhabited by Protestants had its own cemetery located nearby, most commonly on a mound created by a post-glacial dune. On cemeteries grow old trees, mainly oak trees.



*Cemetery in Piskory*

In every major Olender village inhabited by Protestants existed a school that also served as a prayer house. In larger settlements imposing churches were built. To this day churches in Stara Kaźmierka and Zagórowo host protestant masses.



*Protestant church in Zamęty*



*Cemetery in Orlina Duża*



*Protestant church in Nowa Kaźmierka*



*Interior of the protestant church in Stara Kaźmierka*



*Cemetery in Piskory*



*Former school and chapel in Stary Borowiec*



*Cemetery in Stawiszyn*



*Cemetery in Ciemierów Kolonia*



# What distinguishes developments in Pызdry Forest

Architecture of houses and farm buildings in slender villages from Pызdry Forest possesses features in common with the whole area.

## Houses:

- only ground floor
- walls from bog iron, clay or wood, mostly in post and board technique
- gable roof with inclination of 40 to 45 degrees, symmetrical, rafters are supported on joists extending wall face, gables lined with vertically oriented boards or at times in timber framing technique; sometimes gables can be seen that extend the wall face by the width of the extreme joist; covering for the roof: straw, reed or tile
- rectangular (standing rectangle) casement windows opened from both right and left, proportions 3:4 or 4:5; windows divided into smaller glasses; all glasses of equal size or smaller on the top and larger at the bottom; single or double casement windows
- external doors of either ledged and braced or frame and filled techniques, decorated or not; most frequently double doors in proportions 3:4, 4:4.5 or 6.5:7

## Farm buildings

- on ground floor
- walls from bog iron, clay or wood
- gable roof with a inclination of 40-45 degrees; gables tiled with vertically oriented boards or with timber framing; roof's covering: straw, reed or tile
- rectangular or square windows; one can come across unusual small window openings with wooden frame in a shape of an equilateral triangle without glass
- doors from boards oriented vertically
- picket fencing



*Small window in a farm building in Zapowiednia*



*Charming abandoned homestead in Wierzchy*



*Gable extended beyond side wall's face in a building*

## What justifies talking about an architectural distinguishing factor

The most characteristic construction feature of Pызdry Forest area has been the application of bog iron to erecting houses and farm buildings on a greater scale than anywhere else in Poland or in Europe.



*Fragment of a bog iron wall*



*Cowshed in Wręczynek*



*Typical window*



# What distinguishes developments in Pyzdry Forest



*House in Kolonia Obory*



*House in Nowolipsk*



*House in Rybie*



*House and picket fence in Zamęty*



*Rear of a house in Krzyżówka*



*Barn in Wojciechowo*

## Historical constructions



*Panorama of Pyzdry*

On the edges of current Pyzdry Forest exist historical buildings related to earlier settlements.



*Stawiszyn, Poland's territorially smallest town on 99 hectares*



*Monastery originally built by Cistercians in Ląd*



*Manor in Jarantów*

## Archaeological monuments

Houses, housing developments and tombs fall into disrepair with time, become forgotten. After them remain earth dykes, ditches, mounds, stone or brick constructions, urns and other small objects hidden under ground. They are archaeological monuments, sources of knowledge about the most distant past. Evidence of important historical events are often embraced in legends. These monuments should not be dug up, leveled or deconstructed. Commune government or monument conservator assigned for the area should be notified in case of discovering remnants of earlier epochs while doing earthworks. In recent years emerged treasure hunters searching terrain with metal detectors; these individuals do much harm through digging up archaeological sites. Well maintained and renovated monuments can become an attraction for tourists and a positive representative feature for a town.

Prehistoric grad from times of Lusatian Culture (the beginnings of iron age in Tarnowa). In a process of archaeological excavations traces of the oldest



*Cottage in Greater Poland similar to the ones discovered in grad near Modlica, open-air ethnographical museum in Russów.*

cottage in Greater Poland region were found there. It was a single chamber house with a small entrance hall and doors from narrower side of the house. Currently a similar house can be found in open-air ethnographical museum in Russowo.

*Grad near Modlica situated at the estuary of Proсна to Warta*

## Leisure in the countryside



*Road to Ciqżeńskie Holendry during a spring flood*



*Hucul ponies in Grodziec*

Rural tourism can meaningfully affect development through creating jobs and generating profit. A condition for development of tourism is the support of local government and non-government organizations. For tourists to come it is not enough only to have comfortable accommodation and tasty food. Needed is a wide range of tourist attractions: tourist trails, cycle rental, stud farms, folklore, architecture, handicraft, environment, bathing beaches, organic food, accommodation in buildings "with soul", possibility to work in traditional agriculture, e.g.: to do horse plowing. Only rich offers that go beyond the stereotype of agritourism can satisfy expectations of customers. They guarantee authentic emotions and sensations; make possible experiencing a journey full of surprises. The driving force for increasing the scale of tourist traffic are natural and man-made attractions. A condition for good promotion of one's own area, e.g. a commune, is cooperation in this respect



*Carriage in Tomice*



*Small deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) in educational centre of Grodziec District Forest Management (Nadleśnictwo Grodziec) headquarters*

with other communes, poviats and non-government organizations. Tourist attractions know no administrative boundaries and naturally cover the ancient geographical areas, e.g.: Kashubia, Podhale, Kociewie. Around these lands Local Tourist Organizations (Lokalna Organizacja Turystyczna) are taking shape. They are specialized organizations that optimally help expand tourist traffic



*Observation of birds by Warta river*



*Sleigh ride near Pyzdry*



*Cross-country skiing near former village Tarnowiec*



*Spring floodlands can be traversed in waders...*



*...or on kayak*

# Traditional agriculture



*Harrowing in Ruda Wieczyńska*



*Drying of beans in Wojciechowo*



*Red cow from Polska czerwona breed*

In the Pyzdry Forest area remained many home-steads which due to economic or demographic factors (no successor) do not follow the progressive mechanization and use of chemicals in farming. Farmers of this kind predominantly run small scale production of many kinds. They keep pigs, cattle and poultry which they feed with fodder of mostly their own production. Farms of this kind produce food of higher quality than large scale equivalents that employ methods of intensive production and cultivation. Small farmsteads do not pollute environment and food originating from them tastes better and is valued in cities. Oftentimes former Olender farms surrounded by old trees and small orchards fit excellently into landscape. On new large scale farmsteads the looks of the farm buildings in no way refer to architectural traditions of the Pyzdry Forest area. Another unfavorable consequence of enlargement of farms is the land consolidation – disappearance of field boundaries and impoverishment of landscape.



*Village Wojciechowo – evaporator, that is a place where food for animals was prepared*



*On the way to Nowolipisk*



*In Zagórowo Mr. Ryszard Partczak continues traditional breeding of geese*



*Goats in Leszczyca*



*Traditional fishing on floodlands*

## Orchards and gardens



*Orchard trees painted with lime*

In the past every farm possessed its own orchard and home garden. Traditional orchards consisted of sizable apple, pear, walnut and plum trees. Trees from old varieties were resistant to diseases and pests, did not require application of pesticides or fertilizer. Unfortunately those orchards did not produce equally good-looking fruit compared to the most recent varieties originating from modern intensive orchards. That is why owing to economic reasons majority of home orchards was cut. Today fashion for old varieties of fruit trees has come back and plant nurseries again offer exotic varieties of apples like ananas berzenicki (an old apple variety originating from Vilnius area)



*Garden at the front of a house*



*Blooming apple tree*

Old home garden provided indispensable vegetables, herbs and served a decorative function the front of a building. According to old passages flowers not only decorated but with their charm repelled evil spirits. Nowadays garden serves mainly as an adornment. Sadly, rarely in our gardens grow old varieties of decorative plants such as: hollyhocks, peonies, asters. They were replaced by fashionable needle trees, lawns, rock gardens and plastic embellishments.

## Craftsmen and folk artists



*Home forge in Wojciechowo. Sylwia Osińska runs a gallery in Kolonia Obory where her works can be purchased*



*Sylwia Osińska prowadzi galerię we wsi Kolonia Obory gdzie można kupić jej prace*



*Józef Dzieciatkowski, potter in sixth generation from Czarny Bród...*

Agriculture always co-existed with local craftsmanship. A craftsman created items of everyday use. A folk artist made them or created products serving only as ornaments. Only on some territories in Poland up to today local production is continued. It is worth checking whether in the local surroundings remained items produced by local craftsmen, whether objects currently manufactured refer to traditional patterns. Tradition transformed in a creative way can become a source of income.



*Franciszka Kaźmierczak and her son Mariusz, wickerworkers from Wrąbczynkowskie Holendry*



*...and his son Łukasz Dzieciatkowski*



*Sztator Arkadiusz Adamczak from Przyranie*



*Chapel by Proсна river*



*Tapestry with a traditional Olender pattern*





*Greater Poland's pork haunch of Ms. Edyta Michalak received 2nd place in Poland in contest "Nasze kulinarnie dziedzictwo" (2003)*

Regional cuisine was always dependent on environmental circumstances which determined plant and animal production. Traditional recipes are passed on from generation to generation. Products of regional cuisine in Poland are very diverse. They constitute an important element of heritage. Methods of producing traditional dishes and preserves should be popularized and protected. Various contests serve this purpose, and even more so promotion of local foods in rural tourist houses and gastronomical premises. Traditions of regional cuisine are continued in Pyszdy Forest by Rural Women's Clubs (koło gospodyń wiejskich) and catering companies.



*Potato pancakes made on stove lids. Specialty of Ladies from Women's Club in Sławsk*



*Ladies from Women's Club in Skowyk known from making potato bread, polewka and żur soups, pierogi and white cabbage with beans*



*Traditional pantry in Wrębczynskie Holendry*



*Ms. Edyta Michalak in Wrębczyn Górski presents pine wine*

# Trade markets, festivities, church fairs

Trade markets are a means to sell and exchange goods known from Medieval times. Every town on borders of Pyzdry Forest has its market day every month. Zagórowo hosts the biggest fairs which take place on first Wednesday of the month. Trading day is an excellent opportunity for social meetings. For farmers very important is the separate farmers market where every kind of agricultural produce can be bought and sold. One regrettable phenomenon is the negligible presence of crafted goods in contemporary fairs which have been squeezed out of the market by Chinese production.



*Awards attract participation in celebrations*

Increasingly important are parish festivities. They are celebrations that integrate communities through entertainment, contests, food and drinks. Festivities are accompanied by collections for charitable purposes.



*Market days can be accompanied by cultural events*



*Festivities are an opportunity for promotion of local cuisine*



*Farmers market in Zagórowo*

Church fairs celebrating patrons of parishes are important events for local community. They are accompanied by trade next to the church involving typical church-fete items: souvenirs, toys and the characteristic pretzel-shaped type of pastry: obwarzanki.



*Church festival in Szymanowice*



*Farmers market in Zagórowo*

## Place names



*Grad from 10<sup>th</sup> century near Jarantów known as „szwedzki okop”, the Swedish ditch*



*Wójtostwo in Pызdry*

Names of places are a very valuable element of heritage. They transmit a lot of information about the identity of inhabitants. Their elimination by local administration is a great loss.

**Historical names**, examples:

- „szwedzki okop” Swedish ditch (a name used for all kinds of ancient fortifications regardless of period of their emergence)
- „wójtostwo” (residence of a reeve – town leader)

**Names resulting from function**, examples:

- „młynek” (place of a former młyn – mill)
- „smolarnia” (place of production of smoła – wood tar)

**Topographical names describing features of a place**, examples:

- „białe góry” (white hills – forested sand dunes)
- „trzęsawka” (swamp)



*Grad from 10<sup>th</sup> century near Jarantów known as „szwedzki okop”, a Swedish ditch*

# Language

Regional varieties of language, local dialects are one of the most enduring markers of identity. The main factor determining formation a variety of dialects on both sides of Prosna river was the Prussian-Russian border in years 1815-1918. Inhabitants of Pyzdry Forest called their neighbors from other side of the river „bażanty” (pheasants) whereas „bażanty” called Pyzdry Forest dwellers „łańcuchy” (chains) and „chadziaje” (peasants, farmers). One of the most characteristic features of the language of people living in Pyzdry Forest is inflection of verbs in the second form plural. Instead of saying: „chodźcie”, „dajcie” they say „choćta”, „dajta”. An another difference regards the way inhabitants of eastern bank of Prosna use infinitive and past tense of some verbes, e.g. Instead of saying: „stać”, „stał”, „stali” they say: „stojąc”, „stoją”, „stojeli”. There exist also differences in register of individuals living on both sides of Prosna, for example: „zeszyt” (notebook) – on eastern side „kajet” and respectively: (coat) „kurtka” is „kapota”, (bottle) „flaszka” is „butelka”, (bag) „tytka” is „torebka”, (spade) „szpadel” is „łopata”, (level tool) „wasserwaga” is „poziomica”, (plane tool) „hebel” is „strug”, (table saw) „krajzega” is „piła”, (bucket) „węborek” is „wiadro”.



*Border pole*



*Border crossing near Pyzdry recreated by Cultural Association Echo Pyzdry has been enlisted as one of the major tourist attractions in Poland*

## Local activists and leaders

Actions of non-government organizations and leaders add invaluable input into rescuing cultural heritage of Pызdry Forest and promoting this area.



### **Mariola Śniecińska**

– searches out and compiles basing on written sources materials about Blizanów commune which she publishes in *Zeszyty Kaliskiego Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk*. Author of a pamphlets: “Blask małej ojczyzny”, “Gmina Blizanów wczoraj i dziś”.



### **Tomasz Wojtyński**

– chairman of „Perkoz” society that supports tourism on waters of Prosna and Warta. Initiator of construction of a river harbor in Pызdry



### **Piotr Czajczyński**

– founder of: [www.puszczapyzdrska.blog.onet.pl](http://www.puszczapyzdrska.blog.onet.pl) that promotes Pызdry Forest. Edits and uploads to the Internet information on history of the Pызdry Forest



### **Andrzej Bernat**

– vice-chairman of Fundacja Pro Memoria; specializes in history of Zagórowo and its surroundings; publishes articles about it in local newspaper



### **Zdzisław Kulawinek**

– author and publisher of: „Tam gdzie kwitną konwalie”, the action of which takes place in Pызdry Forest; documents Olender and Jewish cemeteries of the area; collects information regarding persecutions of Polish and Jewish populations during the 2nd World War.



### **Eugeniusz Markiewicz**

– pioneer of research on application of bog iron in construction in the area of Pызdry Forest. In 2002 he realized a project: „Zastosowanie rudy żelaza w architekturze na terenie gminy Gizałki” (Application of bog iron in architecture on the territory of Gizałki commune), and in 2009: „O czym szepczą polne grusze”.



### **Leokadia Śniegowska**

– compiles data on prominent personalities of Rychwał area (Gabriel Złotowski, Wacław Jedyński) and also legends, customs and rites describing the life of the area.



### **Tomasz Frankowski**

– Originator and organizer of: “Ekspedycje Nadwarciańskie” – annual foot walks through the wilderness of Warta valley, an event awarded with the highest prize of Marshal of Greater Poland for the best touristic product of the region (2004) and rewarded with 5th place in Poland in a contest organized by Trade Fair of Regions and Tourist Products.



### **Czesław Matyjak**

– author of 38 unpublished analyses of the history of Stawiszyn; in years 1993–2000 executive of Towarzystwo Miłośników Stawiszyna; participant of cyclical Congress of Regional Culture in Poland



### **Marzena Bonczysta, Urszula Gęsikiewicz**

– together edited and published 3 books on the history of Grodziec commune with particular interest in the school and the church in Królikowo. They collect interviews and old photographs related to the history of the area.

# Every place tells its own story



## Grandpa and grandson

- Grandpa! Why did we come here?
- I wanted to show you how beautiful is in our place around here
- Beautiful? Forest is a forest, and out there are those old cottages, fields, meadows and those sandy roads...
- You know, I too thought like that. I was jealous of our neighbors, the Olenders, that after the war they left for Germany.
- But some came back here, I heard at the school
- Yes. That lady that returned, her last name was Sontag. She is from Wrąbczynek. She told me that always when she saw in the world different beautiful places in her thoughts she was coming back here. Especially in Christmas; she always imagined her home Wrąbczynek, and in it the snow covered cottages and horse-drawn sleighs...
- So... it came out that ours is the best?!
- For us it's the best. Look, the same is with the plants. When they grow up they don't like being replanted. When we leave we have to adapt to the others, though if we don't like something in our own place we can always change it. Instead of leaving it's good to try to change what your own turf.



## Farmers and a monuments lover

- Could I take a picture of your house?
- This ruin? I guess you'd better take a picture of my neighbor's house.
- But, you see, I like such old buildings built from bog iron or wood, covered thatched roof with a traditional garden
- My husband plans to tear this one down and build a new house, an elegant one.
- Lady, you should not let this happen, it is a charming historical house
- I have heard from my son that in the neighboring village the city people bought such a house for quite a sum. They installed a bathroom inside and went on to live in it permanently.
- That's it! Why not fix it???
- Refurbishment is more expensive than building a new house
- But as the countryside will be beautiful then the summer tourists will come. There will be a chance that your son will find a job and won't have to leave this place for ever

### Incomers

- I have heard that you know this village better than the locals
- You know, this villages and villages around were studied by ethnographers two years ago and the outcomes of the study have been published on the Internet. There was a beautiful exhibition in the Ethnographic Museum of Poznań and a pamphlet was published about it, too
- What's next?
- Pyzdry Forest area becomes a point of interest for individuals willing to purchase an old house for permanent living or for vacations
- What could one do here in winter for example?
- Many villages have Internet. There are more and more vocations that can be done from home, using a computer. Besides, Pyzdry Forest is situated reasonably close to a motorway and larger towns: Kalisz, Konin, Poznań
- Can one still buy building lots or old houses here?
- Yes, it's possible to get an old Olender homestead or an empty lot with beautiful trees



# How to use a history of a place



## A tourist and a farmer

- You want to come here for summer? Few people come here. Only some to their relatives
- But the landscapes are beautiful here, forests full of mushrooms, rivers with fish and those exotic old houses
- Maybe yes. Each year some city people come here. They drive their cars to fish, pick mushrooms, cycle and kayak on the streams.
- You know, they must like something here
- But we don't like it, only litter is left and they go
- It's worth thinking how to make money on tourism
- But how?
- It's useful to prepare accommodation in old buildings, offer food, rent bikes, horses, canoes and give guided tours around the area
- Housing in old cottages? They are shameful. These shabby buildings ought to be torn down so as to build new ones with all the conveniences
- That's not like that. Tourists prefer to live in old cottages, of course after adaptations. If you level all of them nobody will come.



## Entrepreneur – public official

- This is my home area. Many years I have worked in the West and accumulated some capital. I would like to invest in here. The village leader told me that you are responsible for designing the development plan for the area and that you can give me some advice...
- In the development plan we have areas meant for economic activity where you could for example start up a processing plant for fruit and herbs. We also have areas intended for tourism
- That's good because in the West I used to work in the tourist industry. Could you tell me some more about conditions for development of tourism in this area?
- The development plan states that newly created buildings have to refer to traditional constructions and their outer lining has to be made from local material, that is bog iron, wood or clay
- That's very interesting. The West is dominated by tourism around historical sites, comebacks to the old times... but will that be profitable?
- In Pyzdry Forest area it could be possible to create a chain of guest houses in different standards that would allow to feel the spirit of life in the countryside and would be connected to horse riding trails and cycling paths. They could create an original tourist product
- Well well, I'll have to think about it. First I would like to see those old traditional buildings, how do they look like- let's go and see them



## A village leader and a history teacher

- Mr village leader, I would like to come back to the issue of rescuing monuments
- I know, I know. They are also dear to me but you know, there is still a shortage of money...
- But relics can't wait indefinitely. I am especially worried about the case of those old Olender homesteads. Their owners are mainly elderly and cannot afford refurbishments. Now it is enough to fix the roofs whereas in several years it will be too late to rescue them in any way. How can I teach children respect for history if they see that nobody cares about it?
- It's not like that even though it's true that most of people here would rather build a pavement or fix a fire station- But I've heard that there are funds for reconstruction of old cottages from the Leader+ program
- They are there but their distribution is decided by the Local Action Group from our powiat. Their membership is made up of local government officials, non-government organizations and entrepreneurs. I have only one such vote. Thus far LAG streamlined funding for fixing fire stations of the Volunteer Fire Fighters (Ochotnicza Straż Pożarna). For your voice to be heard you should, together with like minded people, create a society and within what is possible start rescuing old monuments. The local government will help you.
- That's easy to say... Who today wants to work for free. Or maybe I could start working together with those people who wrote the book on the history of our school
- That's a good idea. I think that there will be some more people interested in participating.



## Bringing back memories of the past

Poland is a country where the 2nd World War and the postwar years caused radical transformations together labeled as a breakage of the continuity in formation of the cultural environment. Millions of individuals were forced to desert their cities, villages and houses. Their places were taken by newcomers from different traditions in construction, economy and customs. All had to subject themselves to the system where the tradition to the date was officially rejected and labeled as bad. The above mentioned process partially emerged in Pyzdry Forest where

the space of Olenders of German origin was taken by Poles from closer or more distant areas. How to bring back the memory? How to accept a heritage after „others“? Firstly one should act in a way so that new inhabitants realize that ancient values exist and can be important. The next step would be to show that what is new does not have to be contradictory to the old, but can be a continuity. Carrying on the old tradition local people will become conscious heirs and citizens of their own “little homeland”.





Further activities related to the cultural heritage of Pyzdry Forest will be realized in year 2011 by Cultural Association „Echo Pyzdr” in the project: “Pyzdry Forest – the Olender construction traditions”.



Cultural Association „Echo Pyzdr” is active nationally and internationally in areas: education, culture, local development, democratic dialogue. Activities are accompanied by conferences, publications, exhibitions, cultural and artistic events, training seminars and promotion of local communities. The organization does not employ permanent staff and is based on community work of passionate individuals. Projects are realized from funds originating from won grant contests as well as donations and 1% income tax deductions from natural persons.

A warm thank you for all donors!

Support from 1% can be given through providing the tax office with the following information: Towarzystwo Kulturalne „Echo Pyzdr”, no. KRS 0000117319;

Contact to the organization:

electronic address: [www.echo.org.pl](http://www.echo.org.pl)

email: [echo@echo.org.pl](mailto:echo@echo.org.pl); tel.: 63/276-86-64

Wiesława Kowalska, chairman of Cultural Association „Echo Pyzdry” from 2006; editor in chief of a local newspaper „Echo Pyzdry” (1991-2001), coordinator of national and international projects, including: Polish-Ukrainian artistic en plein airs „Sztuka Łączy” (1994-2003), “a fair of craftsmanship and film” (2005), „Meetings with America” (2006) and „Caravan of Unity” (2007) realized on the Border (Granica) in Borzykowo; author and coordinator of a scholarship programme „Mecenat” meant for talented youth from the countryside (the program is realized from 1998; awarded with Pro Publico Bono 2003); trainer of rural leaders in European Academy for the Chairman of Village Council in Szczecin (2008) among others, as well as leaders of civil society in Eastern Europe; graduate of the PAFF Leaders programme (2007); scholar of the US Department of State in the programme for civil society leaders. Co-author of publications promoting local development and equalization of educational opportunities: „Granica”, „Gagauzja – uroki prowincji”, „Wyrównywanie szans edukacyjnych – narzędzia finansowe”. Rewarded with Oscar for Education by monthly periodical Perspektywy (2000), Medal of the National Education Commission (2009) and the title of Community Worker of the Year by the weekly Newsweek Polska (2010).



Przemysław Kowalski, member of Cultural Association „Echo Pyzdry”, its founder and chairman until 2006; mayor of Pyzdry in the first term of local government; coordinator of projects devoted to cooperation with countries of Eastern Europe including: „Farming Internships for Ukrainians in Poland” (1998-2000) – a project honored with Complimentary Letter from the ambassador of Ukraine in Poland (2001); Initiator of reconstruction of former Prusso-Russian border crossing in Borzykowo. Coordinator of projects for activation of rural areas: „Former border is a good promotion” (2004), „Pyzdry Forest – the Olenders and their iron houses”, „Orhea – multiculturalism for agritourism” (2010). In years 2006-2007 head of „Tutaj Warto” Foundation that was introducing the Leader+ Programme, and also co-author of the Integrated Strategy for Development of Rural Areas for communes: Kołaczkowo, Miłosław, Pyzdry which received 7th place in the national ranking. Rewarded with: Province Governor’s Award (1998), Optimus Hominum (2004); for activism in opposition during communist times honored with „Commemorative Medal for contributions to the restoration of freedom and democracy in Poland” (2009).

