



THE POLISH CONNECTION

Downside is the natural choice for Polish families who wish to educate their sons and daughters in the Roman Catholic, Benedictine tradition in a leading British Independent boarding school.

DOWNSIDE SCHOOL

DOWNSIDE IS THE LEADING CATHOLIC CO-EDUCATIONAL BOARDING SCHOOL IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

Founded in 1606 at Douai in France and based in Somerset, England, since 1814, the School has continuously provided an elite education for talented young Catholics from across the world. The first Polish boys began arriving at Downside before the First World War.



One of the first was **Prince Maria Alfred Sapieha**, who treasured his time at Downside between 1908 and 1913. He was killed in action in the trenches of Sapanów near Krzemieniec in Wolhynia on June 5th 1916, in a break from military action on April 6th 1916 prior to this, he wrote to one of the monks.

“YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT IMMENSE PLEASURE YOUR LETTER GAVE ME. AT LAST A PIECE OF NEWS FROM DOWNSIDE AFTER ALMOST TWO YEARS [....]. I AM ALWAYS SO GLAD TO HEAR SOMETHING OF DOWNSIDE”

That same year, another Polish boy, **Count Stefan Zamoyski**, arrived at Downside. He went on to the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, where he took a doctorate in Law. Following a distinguished record in the War, fighting at Narvik, in France in 1940 and with General Maczek’s Armoured Division, as well as a spell as aide-de-camp to the Polish Prime Minister and Commander-in-chief General Władysław Sikorski, he settled in London, where he became a prominent figure in the Polish Emigration.

Two of his brothers followed him to Downside. During the Second World War, **Count Zdzisław Zamoyski** served with the Polish Air Force in England. He lost his life when his Wellington bomber, in which he the Navigator, was shot down over the Belgian coast and ditched in the North Sea. His brother, **Count Władysław Zamoyski**, fought with the Polish 25th Lancers in September 1939, and in the Home Army (AK). He was killed in the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944 and posthumously awarded the *Virtuti Militari*.



They are commemorated in a stained-glass window with which all Downside boys are familiar as they make their way to the Abbey church.

They were not the only Polish pupils who lost their lives in the Second World War:

Prince Leon Sapieha was killed on the Marne in France on 13th June 1940 while serving with General Maczek’s 10th Motorised Cavalry Brigade. He was awarded the French Cross of Valour. His brother, **Prince Karol Sapieha**, known as Charles when he was at Downside from 1929 to 1935, died as a member of the Free French Air Force in 1941.

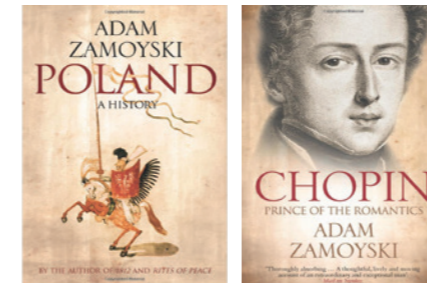
Count Władysław Żółtowski, who left Downside in 1927 was murdered by the Russians at Katyn in 1940.

Other Polish Downside alumni (‘Old Gregorians’) distinguished themselves in several arenas in the great conflicts of the Twentieth Century and the School is extremely proud of its connection with Poland’s heroic struggle for independence. This connection did not cease after the war:

Post-war Polish alumni included not only the next generations of the Sapieha and Zamoyski families, but also the sons of some of the most distinguished soldiers, sailors and airmen of that war; such as the fighter ace **Aleksander Gabszewicz** and Rear-Admiral **Józef Bartosik**. And many of those who attended Downside after the war went on to play prominent roles in various spheres.

Count Zygmunt Tyszkiewicz left Downside in 1951. He became Secretary-General and Director of the Union of Industrial Employers’ Confederations in Europe (UNICE), Chairman of the Lancoroński Foundation, and Visiting Professor at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen. He was awarded a CMG in the Queen’s Birthday Honours in 1998.

Krzysztof Mańkowski left Downside in 1948. He worked for Shell in Africa and followed this up with a distinguished career in business. A prominent member of the Order of Malta, he lives in Poznań.



Count Adam Zamoyski, who came to Downside in 1963, went on to Oxford University and became a renowned historian, featured on best-seller lists in several countries and widely translated. He is also a distinguished contributor to all the major British papers and periodicals who has lectured widely in Europe and the United States. A Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, the Royal Society of Arts and the Royal Society of Literature, he has been highly decorated by the Polish government.

He looks back on his time at Downside with fondness:

“THE FOUR YEARS I SPENT AT DOWNSIDE, LIVING TO THE RHYTHM OF ST BENEDICT, MARKED BY THE CHIMES OF THE ABBEY AND SCHOOL BELLS, GAVE ME A BROAD AND DEEP EDUCATION. THEY ALSO TAUGHT ME TO THINK AND TO CONTEMPLATE, AND TO LIVE WITH OTHERS. MOST IMPORTANT, IT WAS AT DOWNSIDE THAT I DEVELOPED A FAITH AND A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD WHICH HAS ENDURED THROUGHOUT MY LIFE.”

Martin Kochanski (1969-72) was recently awarded the Old Gregorian Medal, the highest honour that St Gregory’s Society (the alumni organisation) can give, for his exceptional work in the world of computing and the internet; after graduating with a First Class degree from Oxford University, followed by a career in advanced computing, he created the ‘Universalis.com’ website which has made the prayers and readings of the weekly liturgy available to everyone around the world, including the visually impaired.

Halik Kochanski (1978-80) was one of a small number of female pupils at Downside in her generation; she went on to study History at Oxford and completed a Ph.D. at King’s College, London. She has written a number of historical articles and two books. Her most recent publication, *The Eagle Unbowed: Poland and the Poles in the Second World War* (2012), has been widely acclaimed. She is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and a member of other distinguished institutions.

Other Polish alumni work in a variety of areas world-wide, from hedge-funds to the IT industry, from Medicine to Law.



POLISH SCHOLARSHIPS AT DOWNSIDE

More recently, Downside set about developing its historic relationship with Poland by offering **St John Paul II Scholarships** to Polish students of the highest calibre. For over twenty years the school has been providing places for some of the most talented students from Poland. Through a highly competitive selection process coordinated in Poland, pupils are selected in a final interview. The current Head Master, Dr James Whitehead, has been visiting Poland since 2005 to conduct the interviews, building up links within the country and supporting past scholars: there is an annual Downside Polish Old Gregorian dinner in Warsaw. Customarily, these scholars attended the school during the Sixth Form and then progress on to the top universities in the world, to Oxford, Cambridge, British Medical Schools or the American Ivy League universities.

A good example of what a Downside education can do for a bright young person from Poland is provided by **Rafał Milczarski**, one of the first two scholars. He came to Downside after attending VI L.O. im. Jana Kochanowskiego in Radom, and from Downside he went on to study at Cambridge University. Because he wanted 'to be involved in building a better Poland' after the collapse of communism in 1989, Milczarski returned to his home country. He founded an independent train company and campaigned for a better deal for Poland's railways, and for the new generation of railway operators. He founded the Association of Independent Railway Operating Companies (ZNPk) and was one of those instrumental in setting up the "Pro Kolej" Foundation.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As a current Polish scholar within the school, **Katarzyna Jaroszewicz**, has put it,

"DOWNSIDE PROVIDES A UNIQUE ATMOSPHERE FOR WORK AND LEISURE AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT, WHICH IS UNLIKE ANYTHING I HAVE EVER EXPERIENCED BEFORE. BEING A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY, ENGAGING WITH THE FASCINATING HISTORY OF THE PLACE, MATURING AS A PERSON AND AS AN ACADEMIC WITH AN ESTABLISHED GOAL IN LIFE IN THIS SITUATION, IS SUCH AN AMAZING PRIVILEGE."

The school is keen to attract Polish students with a range of abilities (academic, sporting, medical etc.) whose parents can afford an education in a British Independent School. For those who apply for a place and are successful, there is the opportunity to be part of a rich cultural and spiritual tradition.

Those wishing to enquire about a place for their child at Downside School should contact **The Registrar, Mrs Anastasia Hatvany**.

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www.downside.co.uk