

POLAND



2nd May – Polish National Flag and Polish Diaspora Day

All public administration and most residential buildings are adorned by Polish flags on May 2, as the country observes its National Flag Day.

Polish National Flag Day was established in 2004 to draw the attention of Poles to the importance of the flag and national symbols for the nation.

The current Polish flag was adopted on February 9, 1990. Its colours have been white and red since 1831 when the country first proclaimed independence from Russia, yet it was not until August 1, 1919 that the white and red flag was first officially adopted by a fully independent Poland.

The white symbolises peace and the red colour is believed to symbolise the bloodshed in the country's fight for independence.

The Day of the Polish Diaspora and Poles living abroad also falls on May 2.



OPA Picture Gallery: www.opaoxford.org



3rd May – Constitution Day

The First Constitution in Europe



This year Poland and Lithuania, which are bound by the centuries-old ties, mark special occasion for both of our nations and states. It is our honour to share with you the achievement of our common legal and political history.

On 3 May 1791, parliamentarians of Polish and Lithuanian Commonwealth adopted, during the deliberations of the Great Sejm, the Governance Act known as the Constitution of 3rd of May. This modern legislation of Enlightenment was the world's second, after the American one, and Europe's first written constitution.

It introduced a tripartite separation of powers and reformed the existing political system, ensuring more equal treatment of all nationalities within the Commonwealth. Constitution foresaw the establishment of constitutional monarchy and laid down framework for development of civic society.

Adopted on 20 October 1791 by the joint Sejm, the Mutual Pledge of Two Nations was an integral part of the Constitution of 3 May and an act of utmost importance to the Commonwealth's political system. Ensuring equal representation for the Polish and Lithuanian citizens in the common state bodies confirmed a strong union between the two nations.

The Constitution was abolished in 1792 due to intervention of foreign powers followed by the division, occupation and eradication of the Commonwealth. However, the fundamental legal acts of 1791 emboldened Polish and Lithuanian Nations to strive for freedom and independence. Poland and Lithuania reappeared on the world's map in 1918.

Also today, shared historic legacy and principles of freedom and democracy embedded in 3 May Constitution, inspire our strategic co-operation in bilateral and foreign policy domains.



11th November – National Independence Day



Józef Piłsudski

While other parts of the world celebrate 11 November as Remembrance Day, Armistice Day and Veterans Day, for Poles the end of the Great War is perhaps even more significant as it saw Poland finally regaining its independence, having been partitioned by Austria, Germany and Russia for the previous 123 years. After the defeat of various occupying forces Poles began to regain control over their country for the first time in more than a century, with famed military hero Józef Piłsudski appointed as Commander-in-Chief on 11 November, 1918. Piłsudski went on to form a new centralised government and went on to command Polish forces in the 1920 Battle of Warsaw, a key turning point in the rebirth of the country. Sadly enough, National Independence Day (Narodowe Święto Niepodległości) was constituted in 1937 and only celebrated twice before World War II.



2021 - The Year of Stanislaw Lem



Stanisław Lem (sta'niswaf lɛm) was a Polish science fiction, philosophical and satirical writer of Jewish descent. His books have been translated into 41 languages and have sold over 27 million copies. He is perhaps best known as the author of *Solaris*, which has twice been made into a feature film. In 1976, Theodore Sturgeon claimed that Lem was the most widely read science-fiction writer in the world.

His works explore philosophical themes; speculation on technology, the nature of intelligence, the impossibility of mutual communication and understanding, despair about human limitations and humankind's place in the universe. They are sometimes presented as fiction, but others are in the form of essays or philosophical books. Translations of his works are difficult and multiple translated versions of his works exist.

Lem became truly productive after 1956, when the de-Stalinization period led to the "Polish October", when Poland experienced an increase in freedom of speech. Between 1956 and 1968, Lem authored 17 books. His works were widely translated abroad (although mostly in the Eastern Bloc countries). In 1957 he published his first non-fiction, philosophical book, *Dialogi* (Dialogues), one of his two most famous philosophical texts along with *Summa Technologiae* (1964). The *Summa* is notable for being a unique analysis of prospective social, cybernetic, and biological advances. In this work, Lem discusses philosophical implications of technologies that were completely in the realm of science fiction then, but are gaining importance today—like, for instance, virtual reality and nanotechnology. Over the next few decades, he published many books, both science fiction and philosophical/futurological, although from the 1980s onwards he tended to concentrate on philosophical texts and essays.

He gained international fame for *The Cyberiad*, a series of humorous short stories from a mechanical universe ruled by robots, first published in English in 1974. His best-known novels include *Solaris* (1961), *His Master's Voice* (*Głos pana*, 1968), and the late *Fiasco* (*Fiasco*, 1987), expressing most strongly his major theme of the futility of mankind's attempts to comprehend the truly alien. *Solaris* was made into a film in 1972 by Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky and won a Special Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 1972; in 2002, Steven Soderbergh directed a Hollywood remake starring George Clooney.



2021 - The International Chopin Piano Competition



The International Chopin Piano Competition is the most important music event in Poland and one of the most important music events in the world. Beside the huge role which it has played for over 90 years in popularization of Chopin's music, it discovers the greatest piano talents, providing young musicians with the most effective start of the international career. It is a source of the multicultural polarization that is visible in the various interpretations of music of the outstanding composer.

The idea for creating the Competition came from the teacher and pianist Jerzy Żurawlew. Working with young people, he observed their keenness for rivalry and for displaying their talents, so he considered that a pianistic tournament would be the best way of encouraging them to play Chopin. At that time, implementing such an idea was by no means straightforward, and for years the Warsaw Competition was the only event of its kind in the world.

The Jury of the 18th Fryderyk Chopin International Piano Competition will include eminent artists, distinguished experts and excellent educators. They will select those who will contribute to the shape of the musical world over the coming decades. For it is all about music: its value, beauty and what it brings to life for all of us. This is what it is worth fighting for – and cheering on.



The Chopin Competition confirms the timelessness of the music of the brilliant Polish composer, from the very beginning it is far more than just a music tournament of the highest level. Attracting a growing number of pianistic talents from all over the world (452 entries in 2015, more than 500 in 2020!), it draws the attention of not only the international music community and music lovers, but also those who have little contact with classical music on a daily basis. In Poland it is a kind of national holiday, a headline event; on a global scale it is one of the most important music events.

The 18th International Chopin Piano Competition, scheduled for 2–23 October 2020, was postponed to the same dates in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Links:

[The First News PL](#)

[Culture.pl – The First Constitution in Europe \(video\)](#)

[Jan Matejko – The constitution of 3rd May \(painting\)](#)

[3rd May 1791](#)

[More about 11th November](#)

[Stanislaw Lem](#)

[International Chopin Piano Competition](#)

[Fryderyk Chopin Monument \(image\)](#)



UK – POLAND



102 Years of Diplomatic relations

Diplomatic relations between Poland and the United Kingdom were established in 15th July 1919.

Political cooperation /Historical view

Anglo-Polish relations date back as far as the 11th century, when the first tentative contacts were made during the reigns of King Ethelred II the Unready and Bolesław I the Brave.

For many centuries commerce and trade remained the mainstay of relations between the two kingdoms. It was not until the 15th century that greater political considerations began to play an important role. Monarchs on both sides would send their envoys to each other, usually to deal with specific ad hoc matters rather than to maintain constant bilateral relations.

From the 17th century onwards there was an increase in continuous diplomatic contacts, especially from the English and then British side, with semi-permanent and permanent representatives being appointed, while envoys with the rank of ambassador would be sent in the event of special missions.

Despite the lack of a permanent resident envoy in London, diplomatic contacts were also maintained on the Polish side. In 1769, the first permanent diplomatic presence of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – once the largest and one of the most populous and ethnically-diverse states in Europe – was set up in London. The beginnings of the mission coincided with partitions of Poland by three absolutist monarchies of Russia, Prussia and Austria, which lasted for 123 years. The close Polish-British relations maintained by the last King of the Commonwealth, Stanisław August Poniatowski, saw Britain react fast to the founding of Poland's Constitution of 3rd May 1791 – Europe's first and world's second democratic constitution – with the document being translated into



English almost immediately after proclamation, owing to the then ambassador of Poland to Britain, Franciszek Bukaty, while British newspapers broke the news on 20 May. The Polish constitutional act was also praised by British thinker and Whig politician Edmund Burke.

After the restoration of Poland's independence on 11 November 1918 Polish-British relations began to flourish. Britain acknowledged the restoration of Poland's independence on 26 February 1919. On that day, Sir Esme Howard, Civil Delegate on the International Commission to Poland, wrote to Józef Piłsudski, Chief of the Polish State: "His Britannic Majesty's Government acknowledged Poland's restoration to independence", adding, "this was the most honourable and agreeable message I had ever had to give in my life." On 15 July 1919, diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and Poland were officially renewed, with Prince Eustachy Sapieha becoming the first official envoy of independent Poland in London, while Percy Wyndham became the UK's Minister Plenipotentiary in Poland.

During the war, London was the home of the legitimate Polish state representation, including the Polish Government-in-Exile. Though it suffered from a lack of recognition when the communist regime was imposed, it survived the aftermath of the war. Many Polish émigrés also remained in the country after the war.

On 22 December 1990, Poland's last President-in-Exile Ryszard Kaczorowski passed on the presidential insignia kept safe since the outbreak of the Second World War to the first post-war, democratically elected President of Poland, Lech Wałęsa. After 45 years of Soviet control, Poland, for the second time in 72 years, fully regained its independence and sovereignty, ushering in a new era for Polish-British relations.

Political cooperation after 1989

Poland and the United Kingdom remain important partners. The political changes in Europe after 1989 awarded new dynamism to our bilateral relations. They laid the foundations for a rekindling of the close cooperation which existed between our two countries during the Second World War. The visit of President Lech Wałęsa to London in 1991 was a symbolic reaffirmation of this change. The United Kingdom supported the changes in the Polish political system, and encouraged Poland's aspirations of becoming a member of NATO, which eventually became reality in March 1999. Poland also received strong British support in the build-up to her accession to the European Union. The British government's decision to open the UK's labour market to Polish citizens without any transitional periods, immediately after Poland joined the EU in May 2004, was particularly important for Poland, and Poles alike. This meant that a large contingent of Poles has begun to work and study in the UK, making them the largest group of foreign nationals in this country. Poland and the United Kingdom, as members of NATO and the EU (until Brexit), have a shared outlook on many issues on the European, economic and defence agenda. Bilateral political cooperation, which takes the form of meetings between heads of state and government, government ministers, and members of parliament, creates a positive climate which is conducive to working together on a range of issues. These include maintaining Poland's positive trade balance with the UK, intensive academic, research and development cooperation, as well as ensuring the appropriate treatment of Poles living in the UK, that



being of particular importance in the context of the negotiations relating to Brexit. Recently, a number of important visits took place. On 5 June 2019, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki took part in the Portsmouth commemorations of the 75th anniversary of the Allied invasion of Normandy, prior to which he met with the then UK Prime Minister Theresa May. On 18 March 2019, Poland's Minister of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation Marek Gróbarczyk met with UK Transport Secretary Chris Grayling in London, while on 15 February 2019 Polish Deputy Minister of Science and Higher Education Piotr Dardziński met Chris Skidmore, UK Minister of Science, Research, and Innovation. On 20 December 2018, the third intergovernmental consultations took place, with the participation of Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, ministers of foreign affairs, the interior and administration, defence, and entrepreneurship and technology as well as a deputy minister responsible for finance. During their talks with their British counterparts, the most topical issues on the bilateral, economic, security and international, including European, agenda were discussed. This intensive dialogue is complemented by regular, frequent meetings between our two countries' foreign ministers, ministers for Europe, and ministers and deputy ministers across a range of government departments. Worth pointing out at this juncture is a unique formula in bilateral contacts, i.e. the quadrilateral consultations between the foreign and defence ministers of both Poland and the United Kingdom, the so-called Quadriga, which last took place in Warsaw in June 2018. Furthermore, the introduction of an even more unique formula of intergovernmental consultations must be emphasised. Cooperation between parliaments, particularly the active work of the British-Polish and Polish-British parliamentary groups, various committees and the annual civic society Polish-British Belvedere Forum constitutes another important facet of the bilateral relations. Naturally, one of the most important topics of the talks in a foreseeable future will be the negotiations on Great Britain leaving the EU, including the acquired rights of Polish citizens (and other EU nationals). Setting down the British expectations towards its future relationship with the EU is of crucial importance as well. For Poland, it is vital that access to the single market should still require the continued realisation of the four freedoms, i.e. the freedom of movement of goods, capital, services and people. Despite the UK's decision expressed in the referendum on 23 June 2016, consultations on the running of the European Union remain a very important part of our mutual cooperation. We have much in common where this effort is concerned: support for the effectiveness of the EU-led activity, focus on practical projects, completion of the single market, including the digital agenda, support for EU enlargement and increasing the EU involvement in the immediate neighbourhood (including in the Eastern Partnership countries), tackling the consequences of the financial and economic crisis in the eurozone, and all of the EU, an effective energy policy, including its external dimension, relations with key partners, especially the US, China, India, and Brazil, the EU's role in stabilisation and peacekeeping operations in conflict zones. At the same time, we do not run away from discussions on issues on which our views may differ, including the size of the EU budget and its structure, especially the structural funds, the speed of reducing the Co2 emissions, the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the development of the European External Action Service, advancing cooperation as part of the Common Security and Defence Policy, and the importance accorded to the principle of the free movement of people. Equally significant is our collaboration within the NATO framework, despite differences in our countries' political and defence potential (the UK's nuclear capability and a permanent seat on the UN Security Council). This cooperation is informed by an affinity of views on military issues, regional, European and global security, on countering the present-day threats to security, anti-terrorism measures and the modernisation of the armed forces. There exists a long-standing tradition



of Polish-British military exercises on land, at sea, and in the air. Moreover, our defence industries are cooperating as well. This cooperation hails back to the proud tradition of the Polish-British brotherhood-in-arms during the Second World War. In the context of international security, one should also point to the convergence of the Polish and British views with regards to the OSCE.

Links:

[X, Y & Z: The Real Story of How Enigma Was Broken by Dermot Turing](#)

[First to Fight: The Polish War 1939 by Roger Moorhouse](#)

[Royal Air Force Museum](#)

[Anglo-Polish relations in the past](#)

[British Council](#)

[Office for National Statistics](#)

Economic cooperation

Poland and United Kingdom maintain close economic and trade relations. United Kingdom is the third most important trade partner for Poland, with the trade turnover growing systematically since the 1990s. Polish economy was reclassified to a developed market status by the London Stock Exchange FTSE Russell indices in September 2018. Polish and British political and economic partnership has historical roots. British economic model and experiences gained during the privatisation period were the points of reference for Poland while undergoing free market transformations in the 1990s. Throughout the years, Poland received great support from the British government. United Kingdom offered its help in the reduction of Polish foreign debt and advocated for Poland in the process of joining the European Union. The accession to the EU in 2004 opened a path for a closer cooperation between the two countries. Poland and United Kingdom share a common vision for the economic agenda – both countries have a similar perspective on the competitive internal EU market, regulations of labour market, European digital market and the global trade policies. With the increasing number of Polish citizens migrating to the United Kingdom, Britain was among the first few countries that opened its labour market to Polish citizens. After the global financial crisis of 2007-09, both Poland and Britain supported the efforts of strengthening the European economy. Trade exchange is an important part of the UK-Polish cooperation. Close relations between the countries encouraged British companies to invest in Poland already in the early 1990s. An example of that is Tesco, which came to Poland in 1996, and currently it has an annual turnover of about 2 billion pounds, with 5 million customers visiting every week around 400 stores across the country. Furthermore, United Kingdom became the second biggest foreign export market for Polish goods and services. Currently, there are about 60,000 businesses established by Poles and operating in the UK (e.g. Black red White, Kulczyk Investments SA, Inglot). Poland is also an important receiver of British foreign direct investments. The value of British FDIs in Poland is more than 10 billion euros, which makes Britain the 6th largest investor in Poland. Major British companies that have come to Poland include Imperial Tobacco Group PLC, GlaxoSmithKline, AVIVA and Shell Overseas Holding. It is worth noting that British exports to Poland doubled since 2006 and Polish export to Britain tripled. Poland and Britain cooperate in a number of areas, inter alia, innovation, digital economy, new technologies in finance, support of the service sector, scientific exchange between Polish and



British universities, especially in the area of research and development, and the exchange of experiences in the support of small and medium entrepreneurs. Also, there is a strong cooperation in the area of energy, especially in terms of energy security, development of nuclear energy and unconventional hydrocarbons. There are many growing opportunities for British and Polish companies in renewable energy, including offshore wind.

Links:

[Poland - The Official Gateway](#)

[Ministry of Economy](#)

[National Bank of Poland](#)

[Central Statistical Office](#)

[Warsaw Stock Exchange](#)

[Foreign Investment and Trade Office in London](#)

Cultural cooperation

An important institution responsible for promoting Polish-British collaboration is the Polish Cultural Institute in London. It promotes Polish Culture and supports such projects as the ‘Kinoteka’ Film Festival organised yearly and the ‘Shakespeare in Poland’ at Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre in London on the occasion of the 150th of the birthday of Stanisław Wyspiański and a Gala Piano Concert on the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining independence in 2018. PCI supports many concerts, promotes Polish literature as well as history and modern art. There are also events planned for 2020 and 2021, including the exhibition of the image of "Astronomer Copernicus, conversation with God" by Jan Matejko at the National Museum next year, and the exhibition "Painters of the Young Poland", which will take place in 2021 .

Links: [Polish Cultural Institute in London](#)



303 Squadron RAF

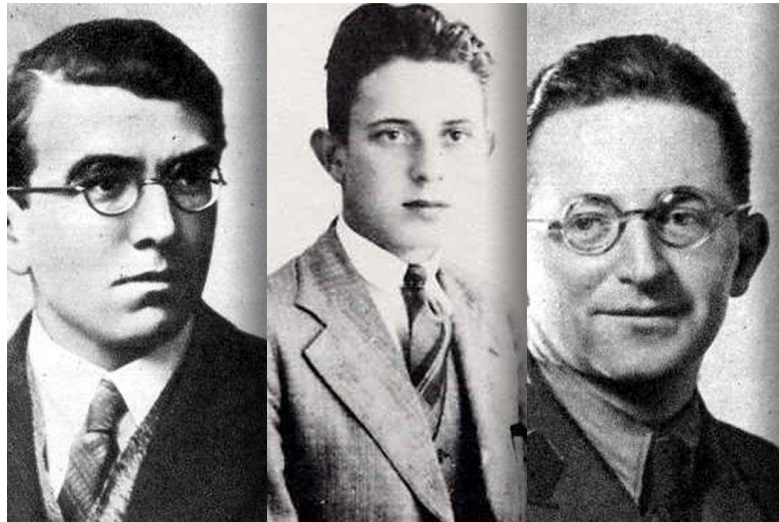


The spirit of camaraderie formed between Poland and Britain was evident before and during the Second World War. On 31 March 1939, in response to Nazi Germany's defiance of the Munich Agreement and occupation of Czechoslovakia, the United Kingdom pledged the support of itself and France to assure Polish independence. When some of the Polish Armed Forces arrived in the UK from their occupied homeland after the outbreak of the war, Poles and Brits found themselves fighting together in the Battle of Britain, which turned the tide of the war. The Polish 303 Squadron, serving under British command, became the most effective unit in the battle, and almost 20,000 Polish airmen and airwomen served in 16 Polish Air Force squadrons in Britain. Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding, who led Fighter Command, wrote: "Had it not been for the magnificent material contributed by the Polish squadrons and their unsurpassed gallantry, I hesitate to say that the outcome of the Battle would have been the same."

Links: <https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/the-polish-air-force-in-world-war-2/303-squadron/>



Three Polish mathematicians worked together on braking the Enigma code



Henryk Zygalski (left), Jerzy Różycki, and Marian Rejewski
via Wikimedia Commons

On May 9, 1941, a boarding party from the *HMS Bulldog* retrieved an intact Enigma code machine from a captured German submarine. It was a lucky break, and would help the famous Ultra code-breakers

at Bletchley Park. The story of those code-breakers, among them the brilliant and tragic [Alan Turing](#), has been told a number of times, including in the movies *Enigma* (2001) and *The Imitation Game* (2014).

Movies, of course, tend to simplify history. At Bletchley Park, for instance, fully [two-thirds of the staff were women](#). Another thing usually elided or forgotten is that the British had an Enigma machine in their possession *before* the war even started. Just months before Poland was overrun by Nazi and Soviet armies in September 1939, the Polish Cipher Bureau provided their reverse-engineered Enigmas, called “doubles” in the code-breaking business, to the British and French.

Richard A. Woytak tells the tale of [Poland’s code-breaking success](#). Stuck between Germany and the Soviet Union, both of which coveted Polish territory, the Poles monitored their neighbors’ communications throughout the 1930s.

Jerzy Rozycki, Henryk Zygalski, and Marian Rejewski,

especially trained as mathematicians for the task, were the men who broke the German code in 1932. After Poland was swallowed whole, they continued their work in France and then—minus Rozycki,



who went down with a ship in the Mediterranean in 1942—in Britain (but not at Bletchley Park itself, evidently because of misplaced security concerns).

Chris Christensen adds more details from a mathematical perspective, including [how substitution ciphers like Enigma work](#) and how the Polish trio cracked this cipher by finding patterns in the code. The Polish Enigma doubles could only go so far, however, because the Germans kept changing their versions of Enigma. Or at least most of them did: the varying quality of German operators and sometimes untimely changing of security keys also helped in cracking Enigma. Code-breaking is a kind of duel, Christensen says, and as new Enigma versions were introduced, the Polish gift became outdated. Still, it was one of the major components of the success of the top-secret Ultra project.

The Allies were reading some Enigma messages—different branches of the Nazi war machine used different Enigmas—by 1940. There's a paradox in this kind of intelligence, though: those sending coded messages may realize they've been cracked if they see that all their plans are being preempted, and so change their coding system to something even harder to crack. Intelligence, after all, is only one part of warfare; the Axis would be defeated by sheer industrial might, human bodies, and luck, not just mathematicians. But the mathematicians definitely helped.

Link: <https://daily.jstor.org/polish-codebreakers/>



Around 1 million Poles live and work in the UK

Analysis of the population of the UK by country of birth and nationality

Non-UK population remains stable following previous year-on-year increases

In the year ending June 2019, the non-UK born population was 9.4 million and non-British population was 6.2 million, which were both similar to the previous year.

In the year ending June 2019, the number of people with an EU8 nationality was 1.4 million and was mainly accounted for by those holding Polish nationality. This was similar to levels seen in 2015, following peak levels in 2016 and 2017.

When looking at year-on-year change, caution should be taken when comparing with international migration flows data. Our recent work on [understanding different migration data sources](#) shows our latest understanding on the coherence of these data sources and the steps we are taking to adjust our survey estimates.

Despite the recent decrease, Polish has continued to be the most common non-British nationality in the UK since 2007. However, India is now the most common non-UK country of birth, the first time since 2015 that Poland has not been the most common. The countries of birth and nationalities making up the top five remain the same as for 2018.

Country of birth:

1. India
2. Poland
3. Pakistan
4. Romania
5. Republic of Ireland

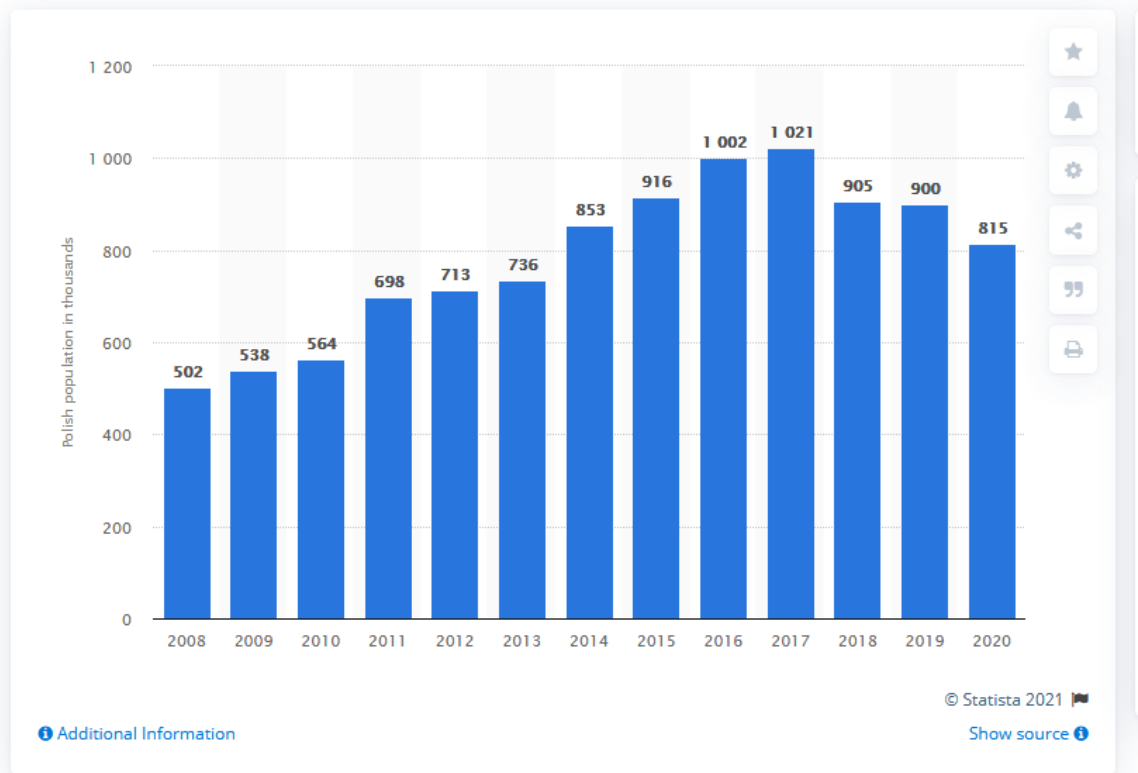
Nationality:

1. Poland
2. Romania
3. India
4. Republic of Ireland
5. Italy



Estimated number of Polish nationals resident in the United K 2008 to June 2020

(in 1,000s)



Links:

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1061639/polish-population-in-united-kingdom/>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/ukpopulationbycountryofbirthandnationality/july2018tojune2019>



Polish is the 2nd spoken language in the UK

In the 2011 Census, 92.3 per cent of people (49.8 million) aged three and over in England and Wales reported English as their main language (English or Welsh in Wales).

The remaining 7.7 per cent of the population (4.2 million) had a main language other than English.

Polish was the most common language after English¹ with 546,000 people (1.0 per cent of the population) reporting it as their main language.

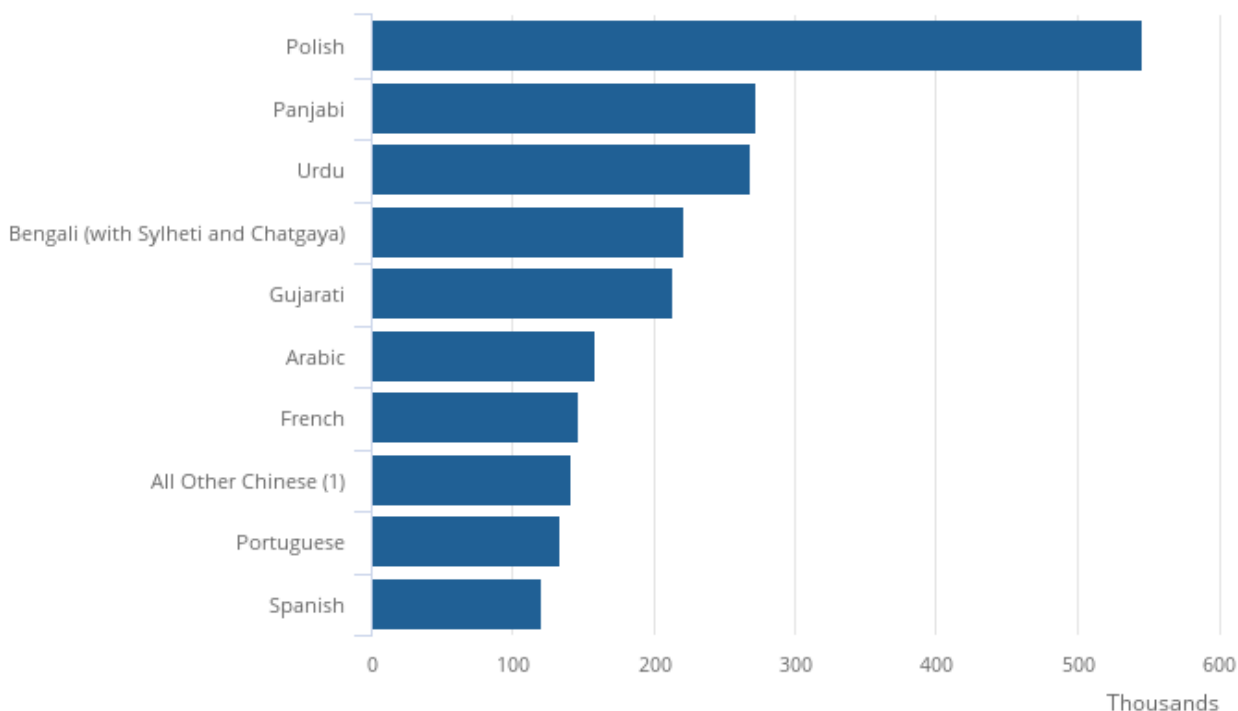


Figure 1: Top ten main 'Other' languages in England and Wales, 2011

Link:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/language/articles/languageinenglandandwales/2013-03-04#toc>



OXFORD – POLAND



Paulina Kewes

Paulina Kewes, born in Gdynia, grew up in Sopot, studied and taught English and American literature at the University of Gdansk (1983-91), meanwhile freelancing as a translator and interpreter, among others at the 2nd National Solidarity Congress in 1990. Awarded a Soros Visiting Scholarship to Oxford in 1991, she subsequently won a Graduate Scholarship at Jesus College (1992-95) and a Junior Research Fellowship at University College Oxford (1995-97). With a Gdansk MA thesis on late C20 black American women writers, in 1996 she completed an Oxford D.Phil. on dramatic authorship and literary property in England, 1660-1710. She developed these themes in a monograph, as well as publishing extensively on plagiarism and appropriation, translation, *histoire du livre*, Dryden, Rochester, and Shakespearian adaptation and biography in the Long Eighteenth Century. Since then, her central academic interest has shifted to Elizabethan and early Stuart drama, principally Shakespeare, classical reception, historiography, as well as British and European history, politics, and religion.

Paulina is a Tutorial Fellow of Jesus College and Professor of English Literature at the University of Oxford ([Jesus College faculty page](#); [University of Oxford faculty page](#)). She is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and serves on the Oxford English Monographs Committee and the editorial boards of *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, *Postgraduate English* and *Critical Survey*. She is the author or editor of numerous scholarly works, including *Authorship and Appropriation: Writing for the Stage in England, 1660-1710* (Oxford, 1998); *Plagiarism in Early Modern England* (2003), *The Uses of History in Early Modern England* (2006), *The Oxford Handbook of Holinshed's Chronicles*



(2013), *Doubtful and Dangerous: The Question of Succession in Late Elizabethan England* (2014), *Stuart Succession Literature: Moments and Transformations* (Oxford, 2019); and *Ancient Rome in English Political Culture, c. 1570-1660* (2020).

Paulina led the [Holinshed Project](#), and was a Co-Investigator on the AHRC-funded [Stuart Successions Project](#), which explored succession literature from James I to Queen Anne and led to the development of [Stuarts Online](#), a resource bringing scholarship on the Stuart era to a wider audience.

She is writing a monograph entitled *Contesting the Royal Succession in Reformation England: Latimer to Shakespeare* for Oxford University Press, for which she has been awarded a Leverhulme Trust Major Research Fellowship (2021-24), as well as leading an international, interdisciplinary project ‘Recovering Europe’s Parliamentary Culture, 1500-1700: A New Approach to Representative Institutions’ (<https://earlymodern.web.ox.ac.uk/recovering-europes-parliamentary-culture-1500-1700-new-approach-representative-institutions>). Supported by Oxford’s John Fell Fund and the Europaeum (<https://europaeum.org/>), this project brings together scholars and institutions from Oxford and the wider world, to carry out a pilot study centring on the English Parliament, the Polish Sejm, and the Dutch States General.

Paulina is currently coordinating the celebrations of the 450th anniversary of Jesus College (<https://www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/450th-anniversary/12-objects-digital-exhibition>), co-curating a digital exhibition ‘Oxford Re-Formed’ which will be launched in September on the Museum of Oxford’s City Stories website, and co-leading the commemorations of the 150th anniversary of the Universities Tests Act of 1871 which finally opened the University of Oxford – and Cambridge and Durham – to students and staff of all faiths and none.

Paulina is the Senior Member of Oxford University Polish Society (<https://www.oxpolsoc.pl/>), the first woman to hold this position.





Prof. Leszek Kolakowski

Leszek Kolakowski, (born Oct. 23, 1927, [Radom](#), Pol.—died July 17, 2009, Oxford, Eng.), Polish [philosopher](#) and [historian of philosophy](#) who became one of [Marxism](#)'s greatest [intellectual](#) critics.

Kolakowski was educated privately and in the underground school system during the German occupation of [Poland](#) in [World War II](#). In 1950 he received an M.A. in philosophy from the University of Łódź, and in 1953 he received a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Warsaw, where he taught and served as chair of the department of the [history](#) of philosophy until 1968. Kolakowski began his scholarly career as an orthodox Marxist. He was a member of the [communist](#) youth organization and joined the Polish [United Workers' Party](#) (PUWP; the communist party) in 1945. When he was sent to Moscow for a course for promising [intellectuals](#), however, he began to become disenchanted with the Soviet Marxist system.

Upon his return to Poland, he became part of the movement for democratization that led to the Polish workers' uprising of 1956. His revisionist [critique](#) of [Joseph Stalin](#), *What Is Socialism?* (1957), was officially banned in Poland but was widely circulated nonetheless. His 1959 essay "The Priest and the Jester," in which Kolakowski explored the roles of [dogmatism](#) and [skepticism](#) in intellectual history, brought him to national prominence in Poland. In the 1950s and '60s he published a series of books on the history of [Western philosophy](#) and a study of religious [consciousness](#) and institutional religion, at the same time attempting to define a [humanistic](#) Marxism; the latter effort resulted in *Towards a Marxist Humanism* (1967).

A speech given by Kolakowski on the 10th anniversary of the 1956 uprising led to his expulsion from the PUWP in 1966. In 1968 he was dismissed from his professorship and soon afterward left Poland.



He was elected in 1970 to a senior research fellowship at All Souls College in the [University of Oxford](#), where he remained until his retirement in 1995. He also taught at many prestigious American and Canadian schools, including [McGill University](#), [Yale University](#), and the [University of Chicago](#).

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Kolakowski eventually abandoned Marxism, which he described as “the greatest fantasy of our century.” In his most influential work, the three-volume *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Rise, Growth, and Dissolution* (1976), he described the principal currents of Marxist thought and chronicled the origins, rise, and decline of Marxist [communism](#). As an adviser and supporter of the [Solidarity trade union](#), which challenged the communist regime in Poland, Kolakowski played a practical as well as theoretical part in the collapse of the Soviet empire in the late 1980s.

Kolakowski also wrote much on religion and the spiritual basis of [culture](#) and was the author of three plays and three volumes of stories. He was the recipient of the German Booksellers Peace Prize in 1977, the Erasmus Prize in 1980, a MacArthur fellowship in 1983, the Jefferson Award of the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) in 1986, and the Order of the White Eagle (Poland’s highest honour) in 1998. In 2003 the U.S. [Library of Congress](#) awarded him the first John W. Kluge Prize in the Human Sciences.

Link: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Leszek-Kolakowski>





Prof. Zbigniew Pelczyński –
picture from <https://alchetron.com/Zbigniew-Pe>

Zbigniew Pelczyński, OBE (born 29 December 1925) is a Polish-born British political philosopher and academic. He is an Emeritus Fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford, where he taught politics from 1957 to 1992. He has been instrumental in providing opportunities for qualified scholars from Poland and other post-communist countries to study at British universities, especially at Oxford and Cambridge.

Pelczyński was born in Grodzisk Mazowiecki, Poland. He fought in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising and was taken prisoner by the Germans. After the war Pelczyński settled in Britain, where he attended St. Andrews University in Scotland. In 1956, he completed his D.Phil. thesis at Oxford University on Hegel's minor political works.

After 1956, Pelczyński made regular visits to Poland and was instrumental in developing several programmes for the education of students from communist Europe at Oxford. In 1982, he was instrumental in establishing a scholarship program for Polish students at Oxford. Then in 1986, through collaboration with the Hungarian-American philanthropist George Soros, who had earlier established the Open Society Foundation, scholarships became available for Hungarian students at Oxford and the Stefan Batory Foundation was established in Poland. The programme widened with participation from Cambridge University, Manchester University, and other British universities. In the United States, Pelczyński became well known for having been the politics tutor at Oxford University for the Rhodes Scholar and future President Bill Clinton. Other famous students include prime minister of Hungary Viktor Orbán, former Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Radek Sikorski and journalist and biographer Walter Isaacson.

Pelczyński is an honorary member of the Polish academic society *Collegium Invisibile*, a prestigious institution that offers tuition for outstanding Polish students.



In 1990s Pełczyński was advising the Constitutional Committee of the Polish Sejm (lower chamber of the parliament), which was working on the new Constitution of the Republic of Poland. He was an advisor to the Chief of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland on government institutional reforms and was a member of Prime Minister's Council on the education of civil servants. He was consulting the European Economic Union and the OECD on government reforms and public administration in Poland.

In 1994 Pełczyński founded the School for Young Social and Political Leaders in Warsaw. The organization, which subsequently changed its name to the School for Leaders Society, states as one of its goals "creating social capital based on leadership".

A biography of Pełczyński by his former student David McAvoy was published in 2012.

Link:<https://alchetron.com/Zbigniew-Pe>





Prof. Norman Davies – 2009

Norman Davies, born in 1939 in Bolton (Lancashire) was educated at Bolton School, Magdalen College, Oxford, the University of Sussex and at several continental universities including Grenoble, Perugia and Kraków. His formative years created a lifelong European outlook. He was for many years Professor of History at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, and has also taught as a visitor to Columbia, McGill, Hokkaido, Stanford, Harvard, Adelaide, and Australian National, Canberra.

He is the author of *White Eagle, Red Star: the Polish-Soviet War, 1919-20* (1972); *God's Playground: A History of Poland* (1981); the No.1 bestseller *Europe: A History* (1996); *The Isles: A History* (1998); *Microcosm: Portrait of a Central European City* (with Roger Moorhouse, 2002); *Rising '44, the Battle for Warsaw* (2003); *Europe at War, 1939-45* (2006); and *Vanished Kingdoms* (2011). His books have been translated into more than twenty languages, and he is a regular broadcaster.

From 1997 to 2006 he was a Supernumerary Fellow at Wolfson College, Oxford, and is now an Honorary Fellow at St. Antony's College, Oxford and Professor at the Jagiellonian University, Cracow. He has been a Fellow of the British Academy since 1997 and since 2011 of the Learned Society of Wales. He has been awarded Poland's Order of the White Eagle and in Britain the CMG 'for services to history'. He holds honorary doctorates from several universities in Britain and Poland as well as the honorary citizenship of five cities, and is a life member both of Clare Hall and of Peterhouse Cambridge.

He lives in Oxford and Cracow with his wife, Maria, and has two grown sons, Daniel and Christian.

“There is too much history,” he says, “for anyone to try and understand it all.”

Link: <http://www.normandavies.com/?lang=en>





"Zyczliwec" from Wroclaw in the Covered Market

Wrocław, Poland - Twinned 2018

Wrocław is one of the oldest and most beautiful cities in Poland. Situated at the foot of the Sudetes, by the Oder River, crisscrossed by its numerous tributaries and channels, it is an exceptional city of 12 islands and more than 100 bridges.

The large market square, enclosed by impressive tenement houses, after a thorough renovation in 1997 is particularly impressive.

Wrocław is also a dynamic centre of culture. Numerous theatres, an opera, a concert hall, and many clubs, museums, and galleries ensure a rich programme of artistic events, including music and film festivals of international renown.

You may also come across a few of the bronze gnomes the city is famous for. There are over 300 hundred of them around the city. Oxford has its very own gnome in the city centre. This gift of friendship from Wrocław is a gnome named Życzliwec, or 'well-wisher' and his permanent home is in the Covered Market.

The Oxford Polish Association is actively involved in the Oxford-Wrocław link.

Links:

https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20139/oxford_international_links/1297/international_links_-_wroc%C5%82aw_poland

<https://visitwroclaw.eu/en>

<https://youtu.be/G-IWMTZSs-U>





Maria Czaplicka

Maria Czaplicka she was a pioneer of anthropology in Europe and the first lecturer of the subject in Oxford. She rode across the Siberian tundra in a dog sledge to learn the cultures of unknown tribes.

Maria Czaplicka is born in 1886 in Warsaw. As a young woman, she wants to pursue higher education. However, Maria soon realises she doesn't have much choice in the matter: the University of Warsaw won't start accepting female students until 1915.

Czaplicka doesn't come from a wealthy family, so she cannot afford to move to another country. Instead, she teaches at a girls' boarding school and works as a private tutor. In her free time, she focuses on her academic interests, attending meetings in various scientific societies in Warsaw. She becomes increasingly passionate about geography, ethnology and anthropology. Maria's life changes forever in 1910 when she receives a Mianowski Scholarship. It's an unprecedented situation: never before the institution had granted anyone funds for studies abroad. Maria leaves for London with 900 rubles in her pocket.

Once in England, Czaplicka begins her studies in Anthropology at the London School of Economics and Political Science. There, she meets Bronisław Malinowski, who in a few years' time will leave for his expedition to New Guinea. After a year in London, Maria transfers to study Anthropology at Oxford. There, she has a chance to impress English academic circles. The British want to know the results of Polish and Russian research on Siberian tribes. Czaplicka speaks both languages, and so she



is tasked with an important duty: she is to write a book on this topic, based on her reviews of the Russian literature on the people of Siberia.

Czaplicka becomes increasingly interested in the far ends of Siberia. She decides to organise a scientific expedition to those lands. Her goal is to research and describe the Evenks (then called Tungu), indigenous peoples of that area, barely known in Europe.

Maria collects funds, manages to get the support of various scientific bodies, and puts together a team of researchers. In May 1914, the expedition is ready to go. In Moscow, they board the Trans-Siberian Railway. After reaching Krasnoyarsk, they transfer to an English steamer that takes them to the estuary of the Yenisei River. Their work begins there.

Czaplicka, the leader of the expedition, learns the local languages, creates a dictionary and writes down local legends. The ornithologist Maud Haviland observes local birds. The artist Dora Curtis makes drawings and takes photographs. American anthropologist Henry Hall collects exhibits for the University of Pennsylvania and assists Czaplicka with her anthropological research.

During their physically exhausting journey in a reindeer sledge, they will experience cold up to -60°C and dangerous snow blizzards. It's not easy, but the Polish-American duo survives. They eventually reach the lands inhabited by the Evenks and continue their research. They return to London in September 1915, travelling through Scandinavia to avoid the front lines.

Their experiences in Siberia make ready material for a book. Czaplicka knows as such, and so in 1916, she writes **My Siberian Year**, published in a popular non-fiction series. The book is full of anecdotes, exotic facts and blood-curdling stories: and it's all true.

That's not the end of Czaplicka's successes. She is offered a position at the University of Oxford, becoming not only the first anthropologist to teach there, but also the only female lecturer at the whole university. However, her luck doesn't last long. Maria's fellowship is only a temporary position to cover for a professor who was conscripted to fight in World War I. When he returns in 1919, Maria needs to step down.

Maria decides to try her luck in the United States. She gives lectures at several American universities and museums, but she doesn't receive any attractive job offers, and after a few months, she returns to Europe. She starts teaching Anthropology at the University of Bristol. It's not Oxford, but what can she do?

In the end, the fellowship jury did not delay their decision. Czaplicka finds out someone else received the grant. The news is crushing. Her contract in Bristol is coming to an end: what to do now? The next day, she poisons herself with mercury chloride. In her will, she requests to be buried in Oxford.

Links: <https://culture.pl/en/article/maria-czaplicka-whirling-with-shamans>
<https://notesfrompoland.com/2021/05/27/the-trailblazing-female-academic-who-advocated-womens-suffrage-and-polands-independence/>





Mr Alfons Maćkowiak, also known as [Alan Mack](#) (born March 29, 1916 in Berlin, died January 31, 2017 in London) - artillery officer of the Polish Army of the Second Republic of Poland, captain of the Polish Armed Forces, soldier of the 1st Independent Parachute Brigade, after World War II Polish community activist in England, posthumously promoted to the rank of Brigadier General. Mr Maćkowiak, was an **Oxford University Athletic Club coach for 25 years**.

Polish Ambassador to the UK Arkady Rzegocki unveiled the plaque commemorating gen. Alfons Maćkowiak, WWII veteran and athletics coach.

The plaque on the Oxford University campus commemorates Alfons Maćkowiak, who as a Polish Army officer fought against Germany in defending Poland in September 1939 as well as in the paratrooper operation Market-Garden meant to liberate Holland in September 1944.

“After Mr Mack passed away, many people paid tribute to him with the emphasis of his military past. We appreciate that, but today, however, we are honouring a man, who devoted decades of his long life to inspire the youth engaging in sport activities”, said a member of the Achilles club that unites athletes from Oxford and Cambridge universities.

In 1939 Mr Maćkowiak succeeded in escaping from Soviet captivity, which saved him the fate of thousands of Polish army officers who were murdered in Katyń and other locations of the Soviet Union. He managed to get to England and later served under general Stanisław Sosabowski during the Market-Garden operation. After the end of the war, he run a boarding house in Essex.

In 1950 Alan Mack was awarded a medal for heroism by King George IV for saving the crew of a burning British bomber which crashed near his work place. Many years later his friend, the Royal Air Force captain Mark Ponting said that Mr Maćkowiak “was a big loss for Poland, but a great gain for the UK”. Mr Maćkowiak was posthumously promoted to brigadier general rank by the Polish President Andrzej Duda. His ashes were brought to Poland and buried at Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw.

Links: <https://polandin.com/37888901/memorial-plaque-of-polish-veteran-unveiled-in-oxford>

<https://www.special-ops.pl/artykul/id859,general-brygady-alfons-wiktor-mackowiak-1916-2017>

