

Leonardo da Vinci Funded Placement 2009

Ballad of Western Poland

By Liz McDonnell

Illustrated by Debbie Adams

Leonardo went to Milicz
With a motley EuCAN Crew
July and August two-o-o-nine
Making friends anew



Nigel Spring and Kathy
Were our leaders through and through
They brought Neil Young and Pink Floyd
To keep us company too



We started off at Basingstoke
From Fleet and Ashford way
We loaded up the mini-bus
And soon were on our way

At the tatty Chequers campsite
We put up all the tents
Decided who to share with
(Cally slept with Trent)



We breakfasted at P&O
In the ferry café bar
We watched the channel slipping by
And Calais from afar

We sped at speed through northern France
Dunkirque, through Belgium too
And slipped across to Holland
With amazing maize passed through



Wild parsnip on the verges
White carrot with it too
And Andy's jacket flapping red
Above the tarmac new



The mighty turbined wind machines
With red and white striped blades
Strode across the landscape
Dwarfing the mighty maize

Bob Dylan kept us buoyant
With his sleepy nasal drawl
The signs of freedom flashing
And the endless concrete walls

After salad in a wonky bowl
The heat grew more intense
We sped along the autobahn
Graffiti on the fence

At the power station camp site
The evening sun went down
And each thought out time had come
With the massive roaring sound

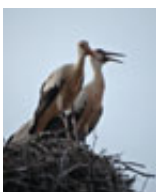


We set off to an easy run
Lorries grounded for the day
Parked up in hoards with sleepy men
On a Sunday lazy day

The first hills in the distance
With a darkling wooded mass
Gave us hope that we would see
Some landscape treats at last

We crossed the River Wasser
Where the pied piper drove the rats
White crosses on the roadside
Where lives were likely lost

Neil Young, he had the answer
It was blowing in the wind
Like the fat man on a Vespa
Grey ponytail flowing behind



We spotted storks in nests on high
Bought honey and gherkins sour
Drove round and round the German lanes
To camp before the hour

At the lovely lakeside campsite
Some swam in water clear
And ate raw fish at supertime
At dusk with German beer

At the scary Polish border
Straz Graniczna guards drew close
And took away our passports
Into the border post

But we were soon upon our way
Through Polski country fields
We stopped at gnomes and blue ice-cream
Pierogi our first meal

Our hearts sunk at the hostel
Bleak buildings were on loan
No cheer, soft chairs or comfy beds
And we were far from home

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

The Polish builders capped it all
With their foreign noisy ways
Sprawled outside the ladies loos
In a drunken smoky haze

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In the green and olive dining room
Out time-off-time was spent
In the echoing noisy clatter
The metal chairs were scraped



We waged a war on sallow
In the ~~Milicz Ponds~~ Reserve
For the snipe, Redshank and Lapwing
Which they richly deserve



We lopped and sawed and strimmed and cut
As the midday sun beat down
Roman gave us our directions
As we squelched across the ground

But where is Roman, where's he gone?
Is he chatting all alone?
No he's talking to his colleagues
On his Polish mobile phone!

We drank tea from an army urn
Bought bottles by the score
Of water (gaz and neigaz)
So we should thirst no more

Our evening drink was piwa
At 50 pence a go
So cheap we drank an awful lot
To help the laughter flow

Gregor taught us 'mad dog'
On Roman's birthday day
With raspberry juice and vodka
Drunk the Polish way....

...with a dash of hot Tabasco
Sitting in between
It must go down in one go
To prove you're not a 'queen'

We lit bonfires on the island
Of the brash we had cut before
Roman punting skilfully
To reach the reedy shore

So thanks to Leonardo
Nigel and Kathy too
We've had fun and education
And done some conservation too

With special thanks to Roman
He's our Polish super-star
You've made our visit quite unique
We'll remember you from afar

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The European Conservation Action Network was established in 2007 by The Kingcombe Trust, a charity based at The Kingcombe Centre in west Dorset, dedicated to conservation and environmental education (Reg. Charity no. 1054758), in association with the Dorset Branch of Butterfly Conservation. The project is funded through the Leonardo da Vinci section of the European Union Lifelong Learning Programme and has partners in France, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland. Further information can be obtained from www.kingcombecentre.org.uk or from Nigel Spring (tel: 0044.1963.23559; email: nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk).