***Title:* *You Gotta Love Podhale***

**Theme:** Andrzej Skupień-Florek, famous folk writer, poet and storyteller from Biały Dunajec, will take you on a walk around Gliczarów Górny and the hamlet of Stołowe, both in the Biały Dunajec municipality. Expect breathtaking views of the Tatra Mountains!

**Where it is:** Gliczarów Górny, a village perched on a ridge 900-1,006 m ASL, is among Poland’s highest-elevation locations. In administrative terms, it is part of the Biały Dunajec municipality in the Tatra county.

**Expedition start line:** in front of the west entrance to the church in Gliczarów Górny. GPS co-ordinates: 49.348818, 20.047829

**Trail length:** 4.25 km

**Walking time:** 2 hours 30 minutes

**Quest category:** walking, looped

A warm and cordial welcome, Traveller dear –

I’m Andrzej Skupień-Florek, happy to be here

and take you on a pleasant little hike today.

Together we will walk Gliczarów Dolny’s ways.

I loved the region of Podhale and our faith,

local art and customs. Wanted others to bathe

in all things we treasured – which is why I wrote

poems, books and legends, keeping history afloat

also in newspapers. My multiple accounts

described things we thought to be paramount

to anything else: a better world to build.

I was given medals – authorities were thrilled

to see me as *“ambassador of highlander culture”*.

Go see the church and belfry – remarkable sculptures

in local airy space. I could not hear them knell,

predating their construction. Look up: how many bells? ***3***-20

Near the belfry locate the wooden mission cross –

check out the dates on the plaque embossed.

How long was the mission? Tell me in weeks. ***1***-21

Stained-glass church windows of olden days speak,

well worth a look before you walk to the roofed gate

and find the oxblood arrow sign. It points to a great

trail, after ***WOJCIECH*** ***KUŁACH*** *“Wawrzyńcok”* named. W-5, O-17, H-12 / H-16

Cross the street. In the graveyard continues our game.

A stone slab at the entrance. Observe the first word:

***CMENTARZ*** for *“cemetery”*. Now, many have heard C-15, E-1, T-4

of Father Szczepan ***GACEK***, exalted at the yard’s far end A-6, E-13

in black marble, with others. A rescuer, he would ascend

mountains to save lives, a guide and parish priest.

Travel straight ahead now, and soon you will feast

your eyes on an artist’s house, across Jurzyste street.

Many sculptures there – at the gatepost guests meet

a bird that would warm the heart of Edgar Allan Poe:

the raven. The creature’s usual colour? ***BLACK***, as we know. L-19, A-2

Walk for a little while, then glance to the right,

an amazing location sadly hidden from sight:

of the *Tour de Pologne* the most challenging stage

is down there. Oh well. While no bike, the next page

in our quest is a chapel. John of Nepomuk the saint

sculpted by Wawrzyńcok, in glorious golden paint

stars atop his head. How many are there? ***5***. 5-22

I was the one to make the sculptor come alive,

telling his life’s story, and giving him fame.

The *“Leonardo of Gliczarów”* he would even be named.

Turn back now to shortcuts of the Kaniówka road.

By marvellous views of the Tatras you’ll be slowed.

Enjoy the vista. It’s high time to turn right,

nice and easy – just ahead lies the expedition’s next site.

After a few minutes, a street number awaits:

this villa has been marked one hundred and eight.

Enchanting is the house, its sturdy log frame

intricately finished; protruding beams reclaim

the highlander style. Let us now admire

how a new home’s designer was justly inspired

by local craft and charm. It’s worth my applause.

I well and truly fought for the worthy cause

of sustaining art and attire of the region.

People were poor, mind you; by no means legion

were such lavish houses, plain the usual stead.

***STOŁOWE*** reads the white sign on your left ahead, S-3, O-18

since we’re leaving Gliczarów. I was born right here.

Even when away, the place never disappeared

from my soul. Heads up – the change is rather neat:

no longer on Wierchy, you’re on ***SKUPNIOWA*** street. S-14, O-9

Leaving for a time wondrous Tatra views,

a valley road to Świdrowy stream we will choose

to reach my old home. Other houses on the way

will keep your mind in focus, you won’t go astray:

look at the lovely pinkish building to your right,

wrought-iron hearts and foliage on balconies a sight

for sore eyes. Street markings are in a beast concealed,

below the deer’s forked ***ANTLERS*** is the numbered field. T-11, L-8

Pass a cross to your left; a little down the way

more highlander ornaments will brighten your day.

The new two-storey house is a work of art,

local craft and beauty in the owner’s heart.

In a home with a small chapel anyone is able

to discern a radiant sun in the rusty-coloured gable.

Up we go. You will appreciate the views, I hope.

To the left – another house on a lush green slope.

Near the road, its roof all finished in wood,

regional-style trimmings will do your heart good.

At the end of the road – a gazebo on the right,

its local art flair another worthwhile sight.

Turn right, and keep walking for a little while.

We have crossed my village – each and every mile.

To your left watch out for number twenty-nine –

leading to my homestead, it’s the obvious sign

that you have arrived at my timber place.

It has stood the test of time. A panel on its face

will tell you that from the year nineteen oh ***2*** 2-23

I lived and worked here. Without further ado

let me be forthright: it was harsh to find

that my folks went to America, leaving me behind.

Born in this wooden house, I followed local rules.

Helping out at home, I started out at school,

but my grandpa Florian to that put an end:

to sheep and hay-making I daily had to tend.

After he had died, things got truly tough:

I worked another’s land and sometimes had enough,

though he was a neighbour. A few years went by.

I was called for draft – the army found me spry,

and I could leave the toil and animals behind.

I found that this time, fortune had been kind,

as the military taught me valuable things –

yet I missed Podhale in autumn and in spring.

Returning to Gliczarów, I couldn’t find myself,

but then I met my wife – a local skilful elf.

Our household well-run, my wife was a prize,

kind and hard-working, pretty and wise.

I studied different fields to try and help the locals,

about supporting others I became very vocal.

My first wife passed when still extremely young,

by the Grim Reaper many at the time were stung.

The Lord was good enough to send another girl to me,

also a kind creature, and as pretty as can be.

We got married soon – I loved my dear wife,

who helped me lose all grief, lightening my life.

The only thing we missed was a child of our own,

while a happy couple – we sometimes felt alone,

longing deeply for the patter of tiny feet.

Not for lack of trying – we were deprived of sweet

parenthood. My sister-in law with many kids was blessed,

to one girl named Antosia we gave a loving nest.

Running a farmstead requires a hundred chores –

but I helped many neighbours, dozens and more,

writing letters for them. I burned the midnight oil,

backing my people. After all, we shared the soil

of the Podhale region. My lamp shone every night.

Once done looking at my home, a fascinating site,

go right back to the church. Yet before you go,

let me convince you it’s worth your while to know

a little more about me, about my life and work.

My daughter is the hostess here! That’s a perk

I’m urging you to use. She is a source of knowledge

you might not find at the most prestigious college.

Once you talk to her, you can also surf the web –

learning’s always valuable, like the tide and ebb

of words moving between the print – and the spoken.

Once you pass the church – the school is your token,

the location of your treasure. It was also mine.

Erected through my efforts, it now bears my name’s sign:

Andrzej ***SKUPIEŃ-FLOREK*** – that’s the end of our quest. F-10, L-7

Find the treasure, hear me whisper: Traveller, you’re the best.

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**EAST WALL OF THE SCHOOL 3152**

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