**Title: HISTORY WRITTEN IN ARBOREAL FOLIAGE**

**Theme:** treesof Piaseczno’s Dukes of Mazovia Park (formerly known as Chyliczkowski Park) tell stories of nature, including their own, chronicling lives of people who had shared the historical park complex with them for centuries.

**Where it is:** located at the very heart of Mazovia, Piaseczno forms part of the Warsaw agglomeration. It is the seat of the Piaseczno county, and of the urban-and-rural Piaseczno municipality.

**Expedition start line:** main entrance to the Dukes of Mazovia Park from Zgoda street. GPS co-ordinates: 52.074190, 21.029674

**Trail length:** 1.2 km

**Walking time:** 40 minutes

**Quest category:** walking, looped

Welcome to our park! Travellers will be greeted

with multiple treasures, here deeply seated.

We the three old oaks, giant trees of power

are here to assist you in your walk’s every hour.

Can you see the trunks, the boughs and the crowns?

The root system network, below soil level drowned,

has spread across the park. Its underground grid

is home to precious exchanges, hidden amid

the rhizomes and stems. Information and food

is sent across the network, to every tree’s good,

not least the weakest ones. We are all peers,

part of this world for three hundred and fifty years.

A nearby information board tells the park’s history.

While all in Polish, there are dukes across centuries

we can look at here. The first lady at the top,

Duchess ***ANNA*** Radziwill, provided a backdrop N-5

for the local parish by granting them land

and forests, too. Behind the board – a grand

old tree, partly growing, partly in recline.

This box elder maple’s trunk is a pantry fine

for insects and fungi. Walk down the main alley.

By the sculpture on the left for a while you can dally:

the aurochs was by master Józef Wilkoń created.

The species is extinct, the last individual fated

to die here, in Mazovia. What a pity… say goodbye

to the animal; to the intersection take a walk spry,

reaching sister linden. Look, she’s fully hollow;

an orderly row of eight others duly follow.

Contrary to common thought, hollow trees are full of might,

providing bats and birds with much-needed respite.

Walk on ahead. A Northern red oak springs forth

(*Quercus* ***RUBRA***) to your left, brought here from North R-22

America. Continue straight, my Friend,

pass a building on your right, remember not to spend

time taking turns. A western red cedar looms to your right.

*Thuja* ***PLICATA***! A charming and splendid sight, I-12, C-18

even to the mighty oak beyond the intersection.

A meeting awaits at the next questing section

with the youngest of three brothers! Check out my bark:

the green eagled emblem is for the eldest in the park.

Next to me – my cousin, the European ash,

*Fraxinus* ***EXCELSIOR***, the plaque a data cache. E-9, C-20

Find its height (***40***) quoted here in metres.

Regrettably an Asian fungus is for the ash a beater,

and can poison it. I, Oak named *Sułkowski*, was able to see

the splendour and flourish and gentle *esprit*

of the home at the end of the road, right there.

Find its name – ***PONIATÓWKA***. The manor gave an air N-23, I-10, A-1

of distinction to the Park of Mazovian Dukes.

(the name of the manor’s on the board. It’s no fluke).

When the place was built, all three of us were here,

watching ***FRANCISZEK*** Ryx the starost give an *“all clear”* F-15, N-17, E-13

for construction works (his likeness in the frame).

A horse chestnut in the back – its confusing name

was not always known in Poland. It was introduced

from the Balkans, the (non-insect) locust also a boost,

this one from America. Black locust, in full.

Next to it – the hornbeam. A quiet, forceful pull

for birds and animals, more popularity it should earn.

Circumnavigate the manor. Walking north, you’ll learn

more about trees, in oaken branches’ gentle shade.

Here’s a white dogwood – from Asia here strayed,

not very demanding. This one’s still quite young,

the *Sibirica* ***VARIEGATA*** variety neatly sprung. V-11, E-16

Keep walking! Are you hungry? Let’s look for a bush

whose fruit needs to be shelled for of taste a whoosh.

The common hazel (***CORYLUS*** *avellana*) board R-25, U-4

shows of fruit and leaves and blossoms a hoard.

The hazel female flowers stigma are pink.

This bush produces oil and good nuts in a blink!

You will pass beech trees – now part of local forests,

in the olden days not mentioned by Mazovian allegorists.

For forest planners they are a popular choice.

And in eating beech nuts animals rejoice.

Check the board for longevity, from the bottom two lines up:

right! ***300*** years! Stray off track at the playground. Chin up.

Walk towards two oaks, their crowns a noble sight.

Both natural monuments, protected by right

and law of the land. They have been named

after Duke Janusz and Father Balul. It is claimed

that hugging them is pure joy. Both are English oaks,

their peduncles are sprouts with juices well soaked,

letting flowers bloom. Now: locate the bear,

leave its back behind: a monument is there,

past some plane trees. Upon an armillary sphere

a rock has been placed, commemorating the year

of the Battle of Monte Cassino (or Rome). Turn left.

The board tells the story of a Hunting Lodge. Be deft,

in the Polish description you must find the date

of the royal Lodge receiving a Turkish envoy great.

His name was Numan bey. The year’s among the words

of the same sentence (final paragraph): ***1777***. Behind the board

is where the palace stood. Leave the firs behind,

by Tatra highlanders special meaning assigned.

Chosen today often as indoor Christmas trees,

they don’t feel as safe as secure they could be,

vanishing from lowlands. Pass them. Take a left,

then a right past the box elder maple trunk, bereft

of life, they say (in error). Walk past the start line,

ending up between maples. The silver one so fine

on the right (from America). Now, the Norway maple

to your left is also valuable, chosen as a staple

shelter for animals: two cute wooden wild ***BOARS*** O-21, R-2

beneath its boughs! Melliferous maples are adored

as a source of nutrition: the famous syrup, juice,

and blossoms (though no longer) were edible in use.

Walk on. Find the pond. Explore the water deck!

The park’s aquatic residents are surely worth a check.

There are assorted ***DUCKS*** and royal mute swans, D-6

basking in the sun, and on soft green lawns.

Our townmates, pigeons, love the pond too.

Turn back – you know this building already, don’t you,

the one on the right? At the frontal area take a closer look:

a trimmed hedge like something from a picture book,

shaped in flower form. How many petals? ***5***.

At the corner – a shrub, letting local birds thrive

in the wintertime. This blessed donor’s name

is hawthorn. ***CRATAEGUS*** *coccinea*. Humans have claimed T-7, E-24

this lovely shrub too, for preserves and for wine.

Walk around the old building to see what lies behind.

The information board – a treasure trove again.

Duchess Cecylia ***PLATER***-Zyberk invested in brains E-19

of young girls, giving them a school with proper education

here in ***CHYLICZKI*** (name in old record), a better station H-8

in life. First column, final paragraph – the year 1906.

This is when the Duchess had the school’s status fixed

as a College of Economics – thus described in the last

Polish capitalised word: ***GOSPODARCZĄ***. All done. Walk past O-3, D-14

outbuildings in the rear. To the left – a residential house,

a former barn and stable: horses, cattle, probably a mouse

happy with the warmth. Pupils lived right across the road,

in a laundry nearby they washed their clothes – and sewed.

The laundry’s gone, replaced with the oldest of the trees.

Glance right when passing the buildings in a breeze.

The horse chestnut’s massive body is to ivy host.

This great-grandfather tree remembers the most

of Piaseczno’s history, having seen great deeds.

Listen to him whisper: *“Look left to the stables, you need*

*the code to find the Treasure – what you came here for.*

*Four numbers you’ve collected: they are your door.*

*Square the first number. Add the product to the next two.*

*Subtract the final one – well done – this result’s for you!*

*Use the stamp, leaving it for other Explorers.*

*Catch a breath beneath my foliage, a great strength restorer.”*

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**3672**

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