

Traditional Custodians of Mount Kosciuszko in the footsteps of Strzelecki in Poland

On Monday, May 22, 2023, a ten-person delegation representing the Traditional Custodians of Mount Kosciuszko from the Monero-Ngarigo tribe returned from Poland, while the author of this report, Andrzej Kozek, represented a Polish-Australian organization Kosciuszko Heritage Inc., the initiator and organizer of the tour. Monero-Ngarigo was represented by the Elders Aunty Iris White and Uncle Gnublum John Dixon, accompanied by the Djinama Yiliga choir lead by Cheryl Davison-Overton. The occasion was the celebration of the Strzelecki Year 2023 proclaimed by the Sejm of the Republic of Poland.



Kraków, Wawel. Prof. Mieczysław Rokosz (in the middle) the President of the Kosciuszko Mound Committee with Aunty Iris White (left) and Uncle Gnublum John Dixon (right) from Monero-Ngarigo with Tadeusz Kosciuszko monument in the background.



Kraków, on top of the Kosciuszko Mound. Prof. Mieczysław Rokosz (right) and Uncle Gnumlum John Dixon (left) in a friendship handshake.



The Traditional Custodians of Mt Kosciuszko in Australia at Kościuszko Mound in Kraków, Poland



Elders of Monero-Ngarigo, the Traditional Custodians of Mt Kosciuszko lay wreaths at the Tadeusz Kosciuszko sarcophagus at Wawel.



Wrocław, a group photo at Panorama Racławicka Museum. Kobi Davison (in the front) is showing a t-shirt with Tadeusz Kosciuszko.



Enthusiastic welcome for the Traditional Custodians of Mt Kosciuszko from students of Strzelecki School in Głuszyna, the birth place of Sir Edmund de Paul Strzelecki.

The delegation visited the most important places in Poland associated with Paul Edmund Strzelecki, who named Mount Kosciuszko in 1840, and Tadeusz Kościuszko, after whom this highest peak of the mainland Australia was named. The tour began with a meeting at the Kościuszko Mound in Krakow. In the following days the delegation laid wreaths at the Wawel Castle at the sarcophagus of Tadeusz Kościuszko, visited the Raławice Panorama in Wrocław, visited Poznań and Głuszyna – the birthplace of Paweł Edmund Strzelecki, lit a candle at the Strzelecki sarcophagus in the Crypt of Meritorious Wielkopolska Residents in Poznań and laid flowers at the urn with the heart of Tadeusz Kościuszko at the Royal Castle in Warsaw.

At the end of their stay, the guests visited the Warsaw Uprising Museum. In Krakow, Poznań, Głuszyna and Warsaw information meetings were held, followed by performances of the Djinama Yiliga choir directed by Cheryl Davison.



Poznań, Pawilon. Choir Djinama Yiliga performing and filmed by Chris Ćmielewski.



Głuszyna, the birth place of P.E. Strzelecki. A traditional welcome with a bread loaf and salt by Bammers of Głuszyna for very special Australian guests.



Poznań. Aunty Iris White and Uncle Gnumblum John Dixon at the sarcophagus of Paul Edmund Strzelecki at the Crypt of Meritorious Wielkopolars under the St. Wojciech Church.



Poznań. The Mayor of Poznań, Jacek Jaśkowiak welcoming Traditional Custodians of Mt Kosciuszko named by Paul Edmund de Strzelecki.

The tour was held under the honorary patronage of HE Australian Ambassador to Poland Lloyd David Hargreave Brodrick and ended with the reception of the delegation by Minister Wojciech Kolarski, the Secretary of State for Culture and National Heritage in the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland. The last meeting of the delegation at the Museum of Independence in Warsaw was honored by the presence of three ambassadors: former ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Australia Michał Kołodziejcki (currently deputy director of the MFA Department for the Pacific and Oceania), the new ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Australia Maciej Chmieliński and the ambassador of Australia to Poland Lloyd Brodrick.



Warsaw, at the Belweder Palace. A group photo with Minister Wojciech Kolarski, a Secretary of State in Cabinet of the President of Poland (from left, the first row: Andrzej Kozek (KHI), Uncle Gnumblum John Dixon, Minister W. Kolarski, Aunty Iris White, Jason Davison, the second row: a bus driver Edward Stojański, cameraman Krzysztof Ćmielewski, Melanie Horsnell, Sharlene Cruickshank, Maria Walker, Jannice Luland, Kobi Davison, Michelle Davison and the Djinama Yiliga Choir director Cheryl Davison).



Kraków, Sheraton Grand Hotel reception. Aunty Iris White with Ambassador of Australia in Poland Lloyd Brodrick - an Honorary Patron of the visit - at the ceremony of passing a traditional Message Stick as a sign of friendship.



Warsaw, Museum of Independence. Aunty Iris White and Uncle Gnumblum John Dixon with Ambassador of Poland in Australia Maciej Chmieleński at the ceremony of passing a traditional Message Stick as a sign of friendship.



Dr Adam Bocheneek from the Polish Kosciuszko Foundation and the Monero-Ngarigo Elders, the Traditional Custodians of Mt Kosciuszko lay wreath at the heart of Tadeusz Kościuszko at the Royal Palace in Warsaw



Warsaw, Royal Castle. Gnumblum John Dixon at the urn with Tadeusz Kosciuszko heart.



Warsaw, Belweder Palace. Kobi Davison at the portrait of Marshal Józef Piłsudski.

An important element of the visit of the Traditional Custodians of Mount Kosciuszko to Poland was getting to know each other's history and cultures, with an emphasis on common experiences, such as losing independence and the threat of denationalization due to the ban on the use of the mother tongue.

Making friends was facilitated by the famous Testament of Tadeusz Kościuszko, in which all the property received for his contribution to the American Revolutionary War he bequeathed

for the redemption and education of black American slaves. Also, Strzelecki's documented Aborigine-friendly attitude and his condemnation of slavery contributed to building mutual understanding, respect and trust.

Andrzej Kozek Vice President Kosciuszko Heritage Inc

PS. The Readers are invited to Puls Polonii www.pulspolonii.com where you can find unusual details of the unique and important events accompanying the tour, opinions of both Aborigines and Poles encountered, links to the film reportages, and to the YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/@ernestynaskurjat-kozek8472>

<https://kosciuszkoheritage.com/150/z-tilba-do-sydney-i-dalej-do-warszawy-krakowa-i-poznania/>