

Polish Navy in Okehampton

Timeline Date Cards

September 1939

Germany invaded Poland and Russia occupied the eastern part

1946 - 1949

Over 150,000 Poles settled in the UK

Summer 1942

Aleksander Szytko sailed from Palestine via the Cape of Good Hope to Liverpool with thousands of other Poles

**10% of the
RAF in the Battle of Britain
were Polish**

**German Prisoners Of War
painted a mural in the Fox and
Hounds pub in Okehampton**

**Several thousand
Polish sailors went through the
naval camp at Okehampton**

**146
Polish naval officers were trained
at the Academy**

1942

**Aleksander Szytko joined the
Polish Army in Iran**

**The Mariners Way
was a footpath for sailors from
Bideford to Dartmouth via
South Zeal**

1941

**A team of Indian soldiers played
hockey against a youth club
in Kingsbridge**

1947

**Okehampton camp becomes a
resettlement centre for 4000 personnel
and their families**

The Meg and Mog books

were illustrated by Jan Pieńkowski

Aleksander Szycko

leaves the Okehampton camp,
moves to Exeter and becomes a painter
and decorator

December 1944

The Polish Navy officer cadet
training camp moves to Okehampton

1943

The Polish Army in Italy includes
a bear called Wojtek

2010

**Aleksander dies in Exeter,
a few days before his 92nd birthday**

June 1944

**Aleksander Szytko was awarded the
Cross of Valour for saving his ship**

November 1939

**The Polish navy in exile was created
to serve with the British navy**

1957

**Aleksander married June Squire at the
catholic church in Heavitree in Exeter**

1939

Jan Pieńkowski left Poland at the age of three

Today

The Polish resettlement camp at Stover is now a nursing home for Polish Britons

1943

Aleksander Szytko served as an Able Seaman on ORP Piorun, escorting arctic convoys taking supplies to the Russians

Many German POWs worked on Devon farms after WW2

1949

**All the Polish Resettlement Camps
were closed**

May 1941

**Aleksander Szytko was conscripted
into the Russian army**

Today

**Okehampton Rugby Club &
Okehampton Primary school are on the
site of the Polish Navy camp**

Marynarka wojenna

is the Polish word for Navy

Aleksander Szytko

took training courses at Okehampton camp in cookery and English language

2016 / 17

Okehampton Rugby Club won
13 out of 25 matches

1941-1943

The RAF's 307 squadron defended
Exeter during the Second World War

The RAF 307 Squadron
were all Polish

2004

Poland joined the EU, starting a wave of migration to the UK

Today

There is still an army base on the edge of Okehampton

August 1939

3 Polish ships sailed to Britain: Burza (“Storm”), Błyskawica (“Lightning”), and Grom (“Thunder”)

During WW2

Poland lost a greater percentage of its population than any other country

1810

**There were 336 French Prisoners
of War in Okehampton**

August 1948

**Aleksander got a job at Countess Weir
House in Exeter**

At the Okehampton camp

**Polish men and women received lessons
in agriculture, building and mining**

Travelling by train from Liverpool

**Aleksander Szytko looked out of the
window and asked 'Why are all the
stations called Bovril?'**

1944

Black American soldiers were based at the Rugby Ground in Exeter

Mewki

means 'Little Seagulls'. This was the name for Polish women in the Navy.

**Four Nissen huts
(military huts) still stand near
Okehampton Rugby Club**

1918

**Alekzander Szytko was born
in Eastern Poland**

July 1941

**The Russians put Szytko in a
labour camp in Siberia**

September 1942

**Aleksander Szytko joins the
Polish Navy in Devon**