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**February Guest Speakers.**

Zofia Laba and Barbara Masur were our Guest Speakers for the first meeting of the year. A very interesting and informative presentation on two of the earliest Polish pioneers of Wollongong, Ignacy Zlotkowski and Paul Radecki.

Ignacy Zlotkowski, a Professor of Languages, purchased his first allotment of land in Harbour Street, Wollongong, in June 1854 adjoining the site of the Royal Marine Hotel. He married Jane Haigh a Scottish lass in 1855 in Sydney. Ignacy and Jane raised their 5 children in Bayalla Cottage in Smith Street, Wollongong. In the 1860s Ignacy was a chairman of the National School and Hon. Secretary of the Agricultural Society. He was nominated in 1864 as an Alderman on the Wollongong Municipal Council.

Jane, Madame Zlotkowski, operated a school in Smith Street, Wollongong.

A Miss Randall operated a private school in the building owned by Zlotkowski. With the owner of the Royal Marine Hotel becoming insolvent and closing its doors in 1855 Miss Randall moved in opening her school as "Denison House Academy" freeing up the Zlotkowski premises.

The Zlotkowski family moved to Sydney in 1873 where Ignacy died in 1886.

In 1882 a Polish family, Paul and Victoria Radecki, arrived in Wollongong. Paul, a coal miner, and wife Victoria with their 7 children lived in Young Street, Wollongong. During their early days in Wollongong Paul and his son John walked to Kiama looking for work. On the return trip tired and hungry they paused near Dunmore at the home of William and Elizabeth James. The James' gave them food and accommodation for the night.

John Radecki became the well known stain glass window artist and remembered the kindness afforded him and his father so long ago. When the new St Andrews Presbyterian Church was being built in 1938 John received the commission to do some of the windows. John dedicated 'The Good Samaritan' window to William and Elizabeth James with the following inscription "*I was a stranger and you took me in*". *In the grateful remembrance of William James of Shellharbour and his wife Elizabeth who in 1882 befriended artist and his father.*

In 1930 John made the stain glass window for the chapel at St Mary's Star of the Sea Chapel. The Polish Community hold their mass in the chapel of St Mary's Star of the Sea where they can admire the craftsmanship of John Radecki and set foot upon the land once owned by Ignacy Zlotkowski. Both Zofia and Barbara exhibited the pride they have to follow in the footsteps of their earliest Polish Pioneers.