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## Pole POSITION

### How new kids on the bloc built a home from home

By Rory Smith [Rory.Smith@Mirror.Co.Uk](mailto:Rory.Smith@Mirror.Co.Uk) 07/08/2007

From wiejska sausage at the deli counter in the supermarket to Tyskie on tap in your local, being Polish has never been so British.

There are around a million Poles who call Britain home, and now a Polish university is setting up a campus in England to help them continue their studies as they work here.

Wshe, based in Lodz, is moving a dozen professors to its London annexe. It will offer undergraduate and masters courses with classes slotted in for the weekends.

And with Polish newspapers in our newsagents, Polish food on supermarket shelves and TV companies about to start offering Polish subtitles, bonds between the two countries have never been stronger.

#### Police

Forces around the country have been keen to help migrants settle in to their new homes.

In Consett, Co Durham, officers have been issued with prompt cards to help them communicate with more than 600 workers who have made the small town their home.

The cards have phrases including "Are you injured?" and "Please turn your music down" translated into Polish.

Thames Valley Police is recruiting Polishspeakers to man 999 phone lines after a sharp rise in the number of calls from Poles.

#### Signs

Road signs in Polish are becoming an ever more common sight in areas with large Polish communities.

In Crewe, Cheshire, which has one of the biggest Polish populations in the country, council chiefs sparked fury by putting up diversion signs in Polish. The signs on the A49 were supposed to help Polish drivers follow a diversion but were declared illegal and removed.

And in London, Westminster Council last month put up six signs in Polish to stop drivers using a short cut near Buckingham Palace.

Hundreds of drivers with foreign-registered cars had used the rat run and dodged the £100 fine, claiming they could not read English.

And it's not just on the roads that signs have been springing up in Polish.

Anglers at Erddig Country Park, near Wrexham, were surprised to see No Fishing signs in English and Polish - but not in Welsh.

#### Radio

Radio Orla, launched in West London in May 2006, plays the usual fare of British radio stations as well as rock, dance and jazz from Poland.

It offers UK news alongside updates from Poland and some of the broadcasts are in English.

Internet radio station Radio Hey Now offers a mix of Polish and British music, and a number of pirate radio stations have started broadcasting in Polish to attract listeners.

#### Food

There are hundreds of specialist Polish delis and restaurants all over Britain, and Tesco and Asda now stock a full range of Polish food, including delicje (biscuits with chocolate and jam),

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• Yes 680

36%

• No 1196

64%



borscht (beetroot soup) and fasolka (beans in sauce with pork and sausages).

Elena Connell, Tesco's ethnic food buying manager, said: "The types of items Polish people have told us they miss most are comfort foods. The first batch of products we brought from Poland were generally tinned or in packets, but we now sell chilled meat and bread.

"But it's not only Polish customers who are buying these - soft drinks, sweet delicacies and beer have become very popular with non-Poles too."

Last month, Tesco said it would double the amount of Polish food it sells. The chain will now stock Polish ingredients in more than 370 stores all over the country. Experts say the boom in Polish food has made it the fastest-growing ethnic food market yet seen in Britain. And with the "Polish pound" thought to be worth £4.2billion, it's not hard to see why the supermarkets are keen to cash in.

#### Drinks

All that traditional Polish food is being washed down by gallons of lager brought over from Eastern Europe.

More than 17.6 million pints of the two most popular Polish lagers, Tyskie and Lech, are pulled every year in the UK and Ireland. They're sold on tap in some of Britain's biggest pub chains, including Wetherspoon's and Greene King.

And the companies that supply us with Polish beers are seeing their profits boom. Sales of Tyskie grew by 400 per cent last year alone and BDD, the biggest importer of Polish beer, saw sales double in the last 12 months.

#### Newspapers

More than 30,000 Poles buy the Dziennik Polski newspaper every day.

The paper reports on British and Polish news and has been around since 1940 - when it was set-up to cater for Poles who fled here during World War Two.

But sales have gone through the roof since Poland joined the EU in 2004.

In 2003, the weekly Polish Express was setup and now has more than 250,000 readers.

And local newspapers have started printing special editions to keep Poles up-to-date with the news.

The Reading Chronicle was the first paper to print a special Polish section. The seven-page supplement is sold in delicatessens, shops and clubs across Berkshire.

Nottingham In Polish was launched in March and the magazine Goniec Polski is published in London.

#### Priests

Dozens of Polish Catholic priests are flying to Britain to make up the numbers in our churches.

The number of men applying for the priesthood in the UK has fallen in recent years, but in Poland they have a surplus of priests and nuns.

And as well as covering for British priests, they are also offering mass in Polish for migrants eager to practise their faith as they do at home.

In fact, the huge influx of Catholic immigrants from Eastern Europe means that Catholic services are now better attended than Anglican ones.

High street banks are battling it out to bag Polish customers.

In January, NatWest launched Welcome, Britain's first dedicated Polish bank account. It offers a second debit card for family members to use in Poland.

And in West London, where there is a 40,000-strong Polish community, Barclays employs Polish counter staff to make customers feel more comfortable.

Bookshops have been quick to cater to Polish immigrants.

Specialist shops, including Bright Books in Manchester and London's Orbis Books, sell Polish literature.

And high street giant Borders last month opened Polish sections in some of its stores.

They now sell more than 100 titles in Polish, including translations of the Harry Potter books.

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