

**Year 11 history students were privileged recently, to welcome Mr Barski as a visitor to our school. Mr Barski described growing up as a child in Nazi occupied Poland and becoming part of the Polish resistance movement. He explained how he had lived through both the Nazi invasion of Poland and the Soviet occupation after World War II.**



Through the course of his forty five minutes spent with us, he told his attentive listeners of his remarkable stories of resistance to and life under the Nazis.

I do not think that year 11 have ever been so quiet! He told of how he watched from a distance as his cousin and a friend lured a Nazi officer into an alley and then how his cousin came out with a large bundle under his arm. When the officer reappeared he was in his longjohns and t-shirt. The Polish resistance needed uniforms for their work.

He also explained some of the more serious aspects of life in Poland in the 1940s. His father slept with a gun under his pillow and the family gave refuge to a Jewish family as the resistance moved them out of Poland. Mr Barski was not able to tell us what happened to this family. He explained to us that to know the ends of stories was to put people in danger.

Everyone played their part without needing to know how events linked together. We asked him if there were any collaborators in Poland and he was absolutely adamant; everyone was in the resistance. We also heard how Mr Barski was under surveillance by the Russians in the 1950s and how he jumped ship in England and sought political asylum. He was not even free to return to Poland to his parents' funerals.

The experience of listening to Mr Barski really made the facts and figures in the text book leap off the page. It was an important experience for us to see the effect that major international events from last century had on one individual person. Mr Barski joked that talking to us was like taking an exam. We are very thankful that he came and took our exam!

Written by R Bradshaw 11J