

PÉLI ÖRÖKSÉG ALAPÍTVÁNY



NEWSLETTER

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OUR LATEST NEWS


PÉLI ÖRÖKSÉG ALAPÍTVÁNY

IN MEMORY OF THOSE WE HAVE LOST
All Souls' Day Commemoration

Let us remember together those who have gone before us. Let us light candles together in their memory.



IN THE CHAPEL'S FAMILY CEMETERY
25 OCTOBER 2026, 4:00 PM
EVERYONE IS WARMLY WELCOME

Our Foundation has had a quieter few months – but only so that, behind the scenes, we could continue reflecting, planning, and preparing for the work ahead.

We are now ready once again to build, preserve, and bring people together. We want to continue protecting our shared heritage, strengthening our community, and turning as many of our plans as possible into reality.

To achieve this, however, your support is essential. We therefore encourage everyone who is able to contribute to the work of the Péli Heritage Foundation, even with a small donation. Every contribution matters, and every donation brings us one step closer to achieving our goals.

Donations can be made to the following bank account:
11722003-22489186

UPCOMING EVENTS

25 October – In Memory of Those We Have Lost

We warmly invite everyone to join us for a candlelit All Souls' Day commemoration at the family cemetery of the St Ladislaus Chapel in Alsópél. Let us remember together our departed loved ones and all those who came before us.

Everyone is warmly welcome!

HISTORY – IN SEARCH OF OUR HERITAGE

FAMILY

Baroness Puchner Leokádia Elise Adeline Anna, later affectionately known within the family as “Leo Mama”, was born in Graz on 16 March 1860. Her father was Baron Hannibál Puchner, an Imperial and Royal Major General, and her mother was Anna Schultz. She was their firstborn child, and her grandfather was perhaps the best-known member of the family, Baron Antal Puchner, Imperial commander-in-chief in Transylvania during the 1848–49 campaigns.



Although she was born in Graz, she spent much of her youth on the family estate at Bikal. The family chronicle preserves the image of an educated, active and strong-willed young woman. She was a passionate and accomplished horsewoman, had a beautiful, trained singing voice and sang frequently. She often travelled with her mother, while at home, under her father's guidance, she used the family's extensive medicine cabinet to care for the sick in Bikal and the surrounding area using homeopathic methods. According to later recollections, those who had known her in her youth simply referred to her as “the beautiful Baroness Leo.”

In 1896, 130 years ago, she married Ákos Visolyi de Pap in Bikal. After her marriage, her life became increasingly closely connected with Alsópél, which later became her true home. Contemporary family recollections describe Alsópél as a charming manor house set in a beautiful park, on an estate that was relatively secluded from the outside world.

They had three children: Gusztáv Visolyi de Pap Jr., Annamária and Judit. After her husband's death in 1927, Leokádia continued to live at Pél with her children. She also took in her elderly mother and her brother during the final period of their lives. Following the division of the estate within the family in 1930, she moved to Budapest for a time, but later returned to her family.

Family memory has preserved her as a loving yet strong and disciplined woman. Behind the name “Leo Mama” stood both the strictness rooted in her Austrian-German upbringing and the figure of a woman deeply devoted to her family. According to the family chronicle, her upbringing and youth tied her strongly to Austrian culture throughout her life, and she never spoke Hungarian particularly well.

In the final years of her life, her health gradually deteriorated, with serious problems with her eyesight making everyday life increasingly difficult. In March 1944 she suffered a severe stroke, from which she recovered only with great difficulty. She was later brought back to Alsópél, where she died on 16 February 1945, at the age of 84, on the very estate that had been one of the most important settings of her family life for nearly half a century. Leokádia represents a special link between the histories of the Puchner and Visolyi families: a baroness of Austrian culture, born into an Imperial military family, whose life ultimately became closely intertwined with Bikal, Alsópél and the history of the family who lived there.

COATS OF ARMS

The Coat of Arms of the Puchner Baronial Family

The family, of Saxon origin, was granted Hungarian nobility in the 17th century and was elevated to the Hungarian baronial rank in 1830, during the military career of Antal Puchner.

The central figure of the family coat of arms is a double-tailed golden lion rampant, standing on green ground within a blue shield and holding a leafy rose branch in its forepaws. Red and white roses bloom on the branch.

Above the shield are a baronial coronet and two crowned helmets. One crest features an arm in armour holding a sword, while from the other rises the golden lion of the coat of arms. The mantling is blue and gold on one side, and red and silver on the other.

ESTATES

The Puchner Family Estate at Bikal



The history of the Puchner family became closely connected with Bikal in the mid-19th century. As early as 1839, Baron Antal Puchner was planning to acquire an estate in Hungary, partly to invest his wealth in land and partly to tie his family's future more closely to Hungary.

In 1841, he acquired the Bikal-Maróc estate. According to the family chronicle, he paid 118,308 florins for approximately 676 hectares of land and additional property rights. On his first visit to Bikal, he was so taken by the peace and seclusion of the countryside that he wrote in his notes: “I enjoy this solitude.”

The development of the family residence began in the late 1840s. The building known today is, naturally, the result of several later alterations. Antal Puchner's son, Hannibál, subsequently expanded and developed both the manor and its park, and by the end of the 19th century it had acquired much of the historicist appearance that can still be recognised today.

From 1860, Hannibál lived permanently at Bikal and personally managed the estate. According to the family chronicle, his aim was not to maximise short-term profits; instead, he reinvested a substantial part of the income into the property. As a result, the estate soon gained a reputation as a model farm.

He achieved this under rather isolated conditions. Bikal did not yet have a proper main road, and until 1870 the nearest railway connection was at Pécs, approximately 50 kilometres away.

For almost a century, the manor and estate remained at the centre of Puchner family life. The building suffered serious damage during the Second World War, and after the land reforms the estate passed into state ownership. In 1949, the family was forced to leave the manor.

The former family residence was restored from the 1990s onwards and today, as the Puchner Castle Hotel, it continues to preserve both the family name and one of the most important reminders of Bikal's history.

