



# PERM NEWS

Оксфорд и Пермь — города-побратимы

Oxford Perm Association

Newsletter June 2018

## Guests at the Mayor Making Ceremony

*Natasha Rudometova (from Perm)*

Almost every 'permyak' knows that Perm is a twin-city of Oxford (and vice-versa) but only few people here, in Perm, realize how important these relations are for the Oxfordians, how warm their attitude to their twin-city is. And being in Oxford I had a lot of opportunities to hear it, to see it and to feel it.

The Mayor- Making Ceremony was one of such opportunities. But let me start from the very beginning. A group of nine Russian university teachers came to Oxford University in May for a teacher training course in English literature. Karen Hewitt, a director of the course, did her best not only to teach us English literature but also to make us feel, see, and live through the English way of life, the English culture, ourselves.

The event on 15th May, the 'Mayor Making Ceremony' had remained a kind of mystery for us till the day before, when we all received a very official invitation on our e-mail. Surprise #1! We believed it was a real honour to be invited to such a very English and very traditionally official event! And in a written form! So the next afternoon we set off for Oxford Town Hall. We could hardly imagine that future Lord Mayor would be receiving all the guests (or perhaps not all of them?) at the entrance shaking our hands in the friendliest manner possible! Surprise#2! A photo with the future Mayor Colin Cook (who was pleased to hear that I am 'from Perm itself' and to tell me that he had already been to my native city. Surprise #3!).

And we enter the building. We go upstairs where surprise #4 is waiting for us: a diagram of the hall with all our seats marked by our names on a map! It was quite exciting to see nine Russian names (and mine as one of them!) among the English ones.

At the same time it helped us not to get lost in the hall. We took our seats and had plenty of time to look around and to admire the interior and the paintings on the walls. One of them was even a gift of the Duke of Marlborough to the citizens of Oxford ( if I am not mistaken)!

We were greatly impressed by the people wearing blue and red robes. Everything and everybody looked solemn and serious. And we were ready for the most ceremonial ceremony in our whole lives. Frequent standing up and sitting down added even more solemnity



and seriousness.

We have always been taught that "England is the country where each stone has a tale to tell", in other words, it has a very rich history and fine traditions. What we saw in Oxford Town Hall was for us English history and traditions in action! The procedure itself seemed to be quite democratic: one person proposed that Colin Cook should be elected Lord Mayor and another person seconded the proposal. Nobody opposed him (it is the possibility of opposition that seemed to be democratic to us). After that a Deputy Lord Mayor and the Sheriff were elected following the same procedure. Perhaps the most striking thing for us, Russian guests, was a combination of serious formalities and funny, sometimes quite informal, English jokes. Sometimes we laughed heartily and sometimes only smiled (unfortunately it is not easy to understand brilliant English humour completely if you are not a native speaker!). It was a good 'listening comprehension practice' for us. By the way Perm was mentioned several times in the speeches in connection with the newly elected Mayor and his visit and it was always remembered with warmth and respect. That was surprise #5 that made me feel important and really proud of Perm and its citizens. And surprise #6: one of the first activities of Councillor Cook as Lord Mayor is to make an official visit to Perm!

I hope to see him and many other familiar and already dear Oxfordian faces in Perm, my native city, as soon as possible! With love to Oxford,

### **Among the Ukrainians - Peter Shirt**     *Jonathan Saunders*

Published by Laundry Press, this book has been poorly edited with copious spelling mistakes, e.g writing 'ceased' instead of 'seized' etc. and mis-datings that confuse the arguments. A pity because this is an interesting book about a country with a remarkable history virtually unknown to the outside world.

Shirt claims to be an English businessman living in Moscow before moving to Kiev and using it as a base to explore what he describes as "Europe's largest country". Over the years he realised that in the same way as Ukraine had never been independent (at least, not since the 9th century), so too its history has been merged into that of Russia and the USSR.

Shirt says that Westerners are so ignorant about Ukraine that they frequently ascribe to Russia or the USSR what should be credited to Ukraine and its people. He draws a parallel with the Scots. While they might accept that Burns was British, they would be incensed to hear him described as English. And yet this happens all the time with Gogol, for example, who usually wrote in Russian but was definitely Ukrainian.

The book has absorbing chapters on medicine and the achievements of socialised healthcare under the USSR but also of Ivan Pulyui (sometimes written Palyui!). He was the theologian and physicist who discovered X-Rays and whose discovery was appropriated by Roentgen including the discharge tubes which actually produced the X-Rays.

In the 19th century Ukraine became famous as the breadbasket of Europe and in the Soviet era the growing population relied heavily on Ukraine's black soil – among the most productive in the world. In fact 2,500 years ago the Greeks built a port near today's Sebastopol to export wheat and rye to Athens and the rest of Greece thus providing Socrates and Plato with their daily bread.

According to Shirt it was the slow pace of collectivisation which "forced" Stalin to unleash his collectivisation plans in order to be able to feed the workers in the planned new industrial revolution. Not so. In fact Stalin along with other bureaucracy had 6 years earlier rejected Trotsky's ambitious 5-year plans in industry and agriculture which they had deemed "adventurist". It was only when the power of the kulaks and NEP-men had grown to the point where they were in a position to challenge Stalin's leadership that he zig-zagged and pushed the panic button. This unleashed what is known to Ukrainians as Holodomor (murder by hunger) and death on a vast, though unintended, scale as a version of Trotsky's plans were hastily and ham-fistedly implemented.

The coal and steel industries in the Donetsk, East Ukraine, founded by Welshman, John Hughes, were the

cradle of the industrial revolution in Imperialist Russia and later the USSR leading to a massive influx of Russian peasants to work them. One such was Stakhanov, a skilled pneumatic driller who continuously broke records of tons of coal drilled in a shift during the 1930s (and lived until 1998!). However by the 1960s seams were worn out and production fell.

The chapter Bits, Bytes, Trits and Trytes chronicles the discoveries of Ukrainian computer pioneers, Lebedev and Sulim, who produced computers rivalling the West's until the 1970s. Soviet scientists could claim that during the joint US-USSR Apollo-Soyuz space mission in 1975, the Soviet BESM-6 processed its data faster than the USA's IBM. As to why Soviet computers faded in the following two decades: the USSR as a whole was underdeveloped compared to the West. They fell behind in computer-related areas such as telecommunications. Apart from the reluctance of Soviet officialdom to allow the ease of communication that computers enabled, the Kremlin considered the projected cost of indigenous computer growth too great, while the alternative of teaming up with Western firms was politically unacceptable. Instead the industry was told to rely on imitating the IBM 360, facilitated by industrial espionage.

There are other engrossing chapters on Western Ukraine's religious divergences with Russia (Greek catholic or Uniate as opposed to Greek Orthodox), the limits of Stalin's "cult of atheism" and the partial revival of religion since 1989. Ironically Shirt places his chapter on religion just before that on 'Sex and the Soviets' which is mainly about the explosion of pornography and prostitution since 1989 – clear evidence of the inability of a post-Soviet economy to provide decent jobs for Ukrainian women.

Other chapters recount the history of Ukrainian involvement in developing the great aircraft that fly today (both Sikorsky and Antonov are Ukrainian) but also in providing stiff resistance to the Luftwaffe. Even if the USSR could not match the full might of American technology in putting men on the moon within a decade, the world's most famous cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space, was Ukrainian.

This book has a useful function, highlighting many Ukrainian men and women who have contributed to science and culture. However, even if Shirt does not say it, one is left with the profound feeling that after more than 25 years of independence from Russia and with an ongoing civil war, Ukraine's future emphatically lies with a revitalised Russia.

## **My First Visit to Perm**      *Kiril Hewitt*

My name is Kiril and I am ten years old. I am half Russian and half English. This February was the first time I went to Perm. I expected the city to be white because of the snow. I also expected Perm to be a smaller version of London. And I was correct! Dad was really nervous about the cold before we went, but I wasn't. Although I was wrong: it was colder than I could have imagined.

We arrived early in the morning and dedushka (which is grandad in Russian) picked us up from the airport. When we got to the flat babushka was waiting with a huge pile of pancakes with jam and condensed milk! I felt spoilt.

I ate lots of pancakes that week, including in a pancake shop in the supermarket and that was really tasty and fun. We also went to a restaurant which sold pancakes as well. They were good... The shops in Perm were surprisingly big and immaculate. The streets were lively and fun.

Obviously the main attraction in winter is the group of ice sculptures which were AMAZING! The slides were fun and exciting. There were lots of Russian children having fun sliding and I joined in. There was a big bowl made of ice: children got into it and then had to climb out of it. That was tricky – I kept sliding back down! There was also a lane of sorts which had lots of statues about the war. Then we saw a tank which was massive. Dedushka said it beat the Germans during the war.

The transportation is slightly hard with all the traffic but the pavements are pleasant to walk along. The only main bad thing about Perm is that the air is a bit murky because of all the smoke. The Perm Opera House was a wonderful experience: we watched the Nutcracker which was beautifully performed with lovely music. The opera house itself was grand and well decorated in the inside and on the outside.



Belogorsky Monastery was big and white and wonderful, with the snow surrounding it for miles and miles. The golden domes of the Monastery looked like sweets – they shone in the sunlight. During the day we went sightseeing, and seeing friends. In the evening I sometimes played chess with dedushka and my parents sat in the kitchen talking with babushka

I am glad I went in winter – I have never seen so much snow in my life. I liked the feel of Perm, it was homely and bright! I was uncertain what to expect before I went, but the family and friends made me feel at home.

## Recent Extracts from our twin city Perm Oxford news

Galina Gusorova Perm-Oxford 14 May at 04:17

### **В Великобритании прошло празднование Дня Победы**

9 мая 2018 года в Лондоне, в парке у Имперского военного музея, прошла традиционная церемония возложения венков к памятнику советским гражданам, погибшим в годы Второй мировой войны. В церемонии приняли участие российские и британские ветераны, представители британских властей, политических партий, Посольств России и других государств, общественных организаций, а также ассоциаций российских соотечественников. После возложения венков состоялся приём для ветеранов, совместно организованный Посольствами стран СНГ. По центральной улице Лондона Уайтхолл прошло шествие «Бессмертного полка», собравшее около 3500 человек. Участники держали в руках портреты своих родственников, принимавших участие в сражениях Второй мировой войны. Памятные мероприятия также прошли в ряде городов Великобритании: Манчестер, Дерби, Лидс, Эдинбург, Белфаст, Кардифф и др.

### **The celebration of Victory Day was held in Great Britain**

On May 9th, 2018 in London, in a park near the Imperial War Museum, there was the traditional ceremony of laying wreaths to the monument to Soviet citizens who died during the Second World War. The ceremony was attended by Russian and British veterans, representatives of British authorities, political parties, Russian embassies and other states, public organizations, as well as associations of Russian compatriots. After laying wreaths, a reception for veterans was held, jointly organized by the Embassies of the CIS countries. On Whitehall, a central street of London, the march of the "Immortal Regiment" took place, watched by about 3,500 people. The participants held portraits of their relatives who took part in the battles of the Second World War. Memorable events also took place in a number of cities in the UK: Manchester, Derby, Leeds, Edinburgh, Belfast, Cardiff, and others.



Galina Gusarova 10 April at 05:28

**О приёме в Посольстве России в Лондоне в честь российского участия в Лондонской книжной ярмарке**

9 апреля 2018 года в Посольстве России в Лондоне состоялся приём по случаю открытия Лондонской книжной ярмарки 2018. Российское участие в ярмарке стало традицией, в этом году национальный стенд «Read Russia» представляет более 500 книг, большей частью современных авторов. На приёме были вручены призы...



**On the reception at the Russian Embassy in London in honour of Russian participation in the London Book Fair**

On April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018, a reception was held at the Russian Embassy in London on the occasion of the opening of the London Book Fair 2018. Russian participation in the fair has become a tradition; this year the national stand of Read Russia represents more than 500 books, mostly by contemporary authors. At the reception, prizes were awarded.

## Reports on Recent Events

The **Discussion Group** had its fourth meeting in October where we examined articles by US academic Stephen Cohen (American Committee on East West Accord) and UK journalist Mary Dejevsky. The following meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> January the topic was on ‘Sanctions’. On March 2018 we discussed a paper by Paul Robinson (Canada) on ‘The International Order’ and ‘false news reporting’; this was followed by the topic of ‘the Russian Athletes at the Winter Olympics’. If any members are interested in joining the discussion group, please email David or Karen.

## Newsletter details

Would all members please note that articles, including book reviews, etc. are always welcome for this Newsletter. **The submission deadline for the autumn issue of Perm News is 14<sup>th</sup> October** but it is helpful if you let the editor David Roulston (contact details on p 6) know sooner if you plan to submit an item. Articles should be sent as email attachments preferably in doc or docx format and not exceed about 600 words plus two jpg images, or 800 words maximum with no images. Shorter articles are always welcome. Readers can browse all past newsletters on the web site at [Perm News Index](#). The editor is grateful to Sue Gregory for her invaluable proofreading and general help with each issue of Perm News.

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### Forthcoming Perm Association Events

**The second Perm Talk of 2018** will be held in late June/early July. Details to be confirmed.

**The Annual Garden Party** will be held at Karen's house on Wednesday, 11th July from 5 p.m.

**The return leg of the Oxford-Perm young footballers' exchange** will take place in Oxford from 8th to 22nd August. The boys will be accommodated at Hill End Camp, and for the first week we will be grateful for any practical help, including preparing camp meals - more about this later. During the second week (15th to 22nd August) teams from other City Links will be joining the Russian and Oxford boys, and an International Football Tournament will be the challenge of the week.

### News Items

#### Representation from Oxford at Perm City day celebrations

The Lord Mayor of Oxford, Colin Cook and his wife (the Lady Mayoress), Tim Sadler, Executive Director of Oxford City Council and Karen Hewitt have been invited by Perm City Council to visit Perm for their City Day celebrations from 11th to 13th June. All are members of the Oxford Perm Association.

#### Memorandum of Understanding between Oxford University and Perm State University

The Memorandum of Understanding between Oxford University and Perm State University was updated and re-signed on 22nd March 2018. The signatories were the Pro-Vice Chancellor, Robert Easton and the Rector, Igor Makarikhin. This agreement was first signed in 1990 and has been regularly updated ever since. Dr Easton spoke of the major - and very popular - internship programme in which up to 35 Oxford undergraduates and graduates spend 6 weeks in Perm, studying scientific specialities in Geology, Chemistry, Biology and Physics. The programme last summer caught the attention of the Russian 'First Channel' on TV. A special news item was developed to show why Oxford students were so keen to study in Perm.

#### 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of death in 2018 of Grand Duke Mikhail Aexandrovich Romanov ('The Last Tsar') and his English secretary Nicholas Johnson *from notes sent by OPA member Vladislav (George) Krasnov*

There will be a Cross Bearing procession at Noon in Perm on June 12<sup>th</sup>, followed by a wreath laying ceremony at the Korolevskie Nomera, a former hotel from which Mikhail and Johnson were abducted. On June 13<sup>th</sup> there is a conference with reports about Capt. Peter Sarandinaki's US team of diggers, including a couple of Britishers with their search dogs. Vladimir Bystrov will report about Johnson's descendants (via his sister) including Natalia Krutikova from St. Petersburg. They will announce that part of the Korolevskie Nomera will be converted to a museum of Mikhail and Nikolai.

See also '*Perm Welcomes Donald Crawford on the 90th anniversary of Michael Romanov's Death*' by George Krasnow [Perm News Oct 2008](#) and '*Last Tsar Emperor Michael II*' [Perm News Jan 2013](#) by David Roulston, where details of books by Donald Crawford are also given.

### **Member's Publication**

A member of the Perm Association, Michael Taylor has published a novel featuring Perm and Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovitch Romanov, who was in effect the last Tsar (for 24 hours) after his brother Nicholas abdicated in March 1917. The book is written under his pen name, Michael Roman, and combines historical documentary with counter-factual thrilling events. It describes his life up to his murder in 1918 – and his ‘second life’ in the UK after being rescued barely alive by the MI6 spy Sidney Reilley ‘Ace of Spies’ Romance, spy-story and tragedy combine to challenge the real-life story. *The novel, The Two Lives of Grand Duke Michael can be obtained via Amazon, Waterstones, W.H.Smith and other outlets.*

### **Newsletter masthead**

*New members may be interested in the origin of the Newsletter masthead introduced in May 2014. It was designed by Robin Carr and his description follows:*

The Ox, steeped in his traditions and Oxford blue, stumbling over a thoroughly water-logged meadow, perceives a possibly somewhat alarming red mass from the east, but he is re-assured, inspired, energised and his mood totally uplifted when he meets this exceptionally friendly white bear with a large yellow book of wisdom and knowledge on his back and illuminated by the star of the east. The bear offers his paw in friendship, to which the Ox responds by raising his hoof and he resolves thereafter to take a proper and fitting interest in Russian culture and language.

## **Russian Holidays    Jessica Vlaslova**

In 2018 Russians get 14 days of public holidays. In the UK we get a measly 8 and spend most of December building up to Christmas. Here is a short summary of the Russian holidays, many of which differ from those in the UK.

### **New Year (НОВЫЙ ГОД)**

This is the most popular holiday with Russians getting 10 days off. Christmas was banned after 1917 so many traditions carried over to New Year's celebrations. The president's speech is broadcast on TV at midnight followed by the chimes of the Kremlin clock, the National Anthem and fireworks. Celebrations can last several days and the New Year holiday period includes Christmas Day on 7th January.

### **Defender of the Fatherland Day (День защитника отечества) 23rd February**

Officially a day dedicated to veterans and members of the armed forces, it has now become a holiday to celebrate all men and is known colloquially as Men's Day (День Мужчин).

### **International Women's day (Международный женский день) 8th March**

This became an annual holiday in 1917 when women in the Soviet Union gained suffrage. Although its original intention was to celebrate the abilities and achievements of women throughout the world and to continue lobbying for equal rights, in Russia it has become a day to celebrate womanhood rather than politics. Women receive flowers and presents and it is comparable to Western Mother's Day and Valentine's Day.

### **Spring and Labour Day (День Весны и труда) 1st May**

Originally known as “International Worker’s Day” and associated with huge Communist parades during Soviet times, the holiday has been renamed and is now less about workers’ rights although rallies are still held. It is the beginning of the dacha season and a good opportunity to get out to the country.

### **Russia Day (День России) 12th June**

This is the national day of the Russian Federation and celebrates the establishment of Russia as an independent country after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

### **Unity Day (День народного единства) 4th November**

During the Soviet Union, the October Revolution was celebrated on this day (according to the old calendar). As Russia tried to distance itself from its Soviet past a new holiday was established to celebrate the defeat of foreign forces in 1612.

Apart from Christmas, important religious holidays include:

**Epiphany (Крещение) 20th January** - water blessed by priests on this day is considered holy by believers and many immerse themselves in freezing rivers and lakes

**Easter (Пасха)** In Orthodox churches celebrations begin the evening before with a service and a religious procession (**хрестный ход**) with icons. Paying respects to the dead is an Easter tradition from Soviet times and relatives leave painted eggs and kulich (Easter cake) on graves.

There are also holidays that only some groups celebrate, for example:

- **Students’ Day** - 25th January
- **Day of knowledge (День Знания) 1st September** - marks the first day of the school year when children give flowers to teachers
- Many professions have their own days including teachers, miners, border guards, cultural workers, railway workers, social workers, cosmonauts etc. **Paratroopers day is on 2nd August** and involves much drinking and jumping in fountains
- **City day** - when cities celebrate their official founding date with fireworks, concerts, cultural events and speeches by local politicians. Perm’s City Day is 12th June



Ice dipping during Epiphany (20th January)



Paratroopers enjoying warmer water (2nd August)