



PERM NEWS

Оксфорд и Пермь — города-побратимы

Oxford Perm Association

Newsletter February 2018

The things that bring us closer: A joint project in clinical psychology

When, on one of my visits to Perm, I happened to talk to a colleague from my Alma Mater, Perm State Medical University, I was surprised and excited to hear that the university just opened a brand new faculty – a Faculty of Clinical Psychology. Why excited? Because this new development opened a brand new area for a possible co-operation between Perm and Britain, and we were perfectly placed to play an important role in making it happen.

My husband, Paul Grantham, a University of Oxford graduate and myself, a Perm Medical University graduate, felt like a mini-Oxford-Perm Association, and our business that focuses on postgraduate training in Clinical and Counselling Psychology, was just what was needed to assist the new Faculty to gain strength, knowledge and expertise in all the modern developments in the field.

The opportunity was too exciting to let it slip, and Paul and I packed our bags and set off for Perm in a cold and breezy October 2017 to meet our colleagues and discuss the ways we can help. Before I go any further with my story, I must admit that a previous visit to Perm 14 years ago wasn't exactly the favourite travel experience of my husband. Everything that could go wrong went wrong on that visit – from lack of hot water in my parents' flat and all the hotels nearby, to typical bureaucratic nonsense in every organisation we had to deal with just to put a visitor's stamp in Paul's passport, from lifts being out of order with us climbing to 11th floor of an apartment building, to the rudeness of a shop assistant in the local food store. The cherry on the cake during that visit was a cancellation of our flight to Moscow without any attempts at explanation, compensation or any form of helpfulness from the airport staff.

From the above, you probably can gather that there was a certain level of



apprehension before the new visit on my husband's part, as well as on mine, for I knew – another fiasco and he wouldn't go to Perm again!

But – I won't keep you in suspense any longer – on this visit my husband loved Perm! Perhaps, the main difference came from the fact that this time we were working, meeting with people as dedicated to their work as we are, talking to colleagues, discussing things that were interesting for all of us.

We were greeted by the Head of International Relations of PSMU, Ms Tatyana Efimova, who showed us around the university, introduced us to Professors Minaeva, Furman and Sedinina. We signed an agreement that outlined our future co-operation, met with the post-graduate students and young lecturers from the Department of Psychiatry, had a long meeting with all the staff of the Regional Centre for Psychotherapy, and with a multi-disciplinary specialist team working at the Stroke Unit.



Our company, SDS Seminars Ltd, specialises in training not only face-to face, but also in distance learning – from Live Interactive Webcasts to Online Training. Perm's doctors expressed huge interest in attending our courses and, I am happy to report, we have already had a few of them attending several of our webcasts and reporting back that the courses were extremely useful for their day-to-day work. We also shared with our colleagues from Perm a number of our psychotherapy training DVDs and our publications, which will be added both to the University's library and to the library of the Department of Psychiatry. Paul was invited to present a series of lectures on Motivation and CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) in 2018 and we are now planning our next visit.

On a personal level, Paul noticed that Perm had changed a lot in the last 14 years. From the readiness of people to speak English, to more politeness on the roads, good service in the restaurants, an excellent art gallery, and a beautiful, well restored Opera Theatre. Of Russian food,



perhaps surprisingly, Paul said that it was the healthiest food he'd ever eaten – freshly cooked from fresh produce and extremely tasty.

So, if you haven't visited Perm yet – here is the seal of approval from its, at one time, severest critic – he is there in the snow, with a symbol of Perm – the Brown Bear – and – looking happy! What else one would need as a recommendation?

Julia B. Grantham

Dr Julia Budnik-Grantham is a longstanding association member living in East Sussex, Ed

Why did “we” learn Russian?

The answers may well vary depending on how the question is articulated. “*WHY did we learn Russian*” and all nuances in between. For many, it was a question of timing, availability or choice and opportunity which would then lead to an intense personal relationship first with the Russian language, then with Russian people, literature and culture, entering that fascinating world which the Russian soul inhabits and from which there is no escape.

Are there any common threads which might explain why the “we” who did learn Russian were drawn into this challenging endeavour. Or have any possible common characteristics of this encounter with the Russian language gradually become overlaid by that sense of unique personal experience familiar to many have taken this path?

First, there is the “why” question to answer. In terms of learning languages in school which is where most people started, until recently the extent of language teaching seems to have focussed on Western European languages - French, Spanish, German. This meant it was part of a common pool with more or less the same profile. To learn Russian was to step outside the box, if the opportunity was available. Many schools now teach Mandarin – as a policy. The difference with Russian is that it while it was an unusual subject as a language, it was already part of our own literary heritage.

So, for many, the lure of Russian literature and the tantalising sense that no translation could really do justice to Pushkin, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Turgenev not to mention Mandelshtam and Pasternak or (latterly) Boris Akunin, would be a major incentive.

Others might find that in the prevailing circumstances of the time, it made sense to learn or at least to start learning Russian as a way of reaching a better understanding of the Russian Bear. Throughout the whole of the Cold War period Russia perhaps dominated the events which unfolded.

As important, I believe, was the enduring significance of Russian culture within Russia, which even today is the essential mortar which binds the Russian social fabric together. For example, throughout the 1960's and the Khrushchevian “relaxation”, the field of contacts with Russians was largely part of the “cultural offensive”, through groups and visits under the aegis of the GB-USSR Association and others, whether by students or performers from such as the Kirov Ballet, MKhat and the Red Army Choir.^[1]

More broadly, others would have their own experiences of timing, choice, availability and opportunity, often arising from fortuitous circumstances. But what about the next question? Having learnt Russian sufficiently well, what do you do with it, where could it take you? Here again, everyone has their own story depending on where you were at a particular moment of time, including the early days of perestroika.

In my case, the journey went from a University trip to the Soviet Union in 1959 through the Soviet Union by VW Kombi into Iran and further East in 1961/62. Regular visits later in the 1960s included a trip as a tour-guide to Central Asia and Georgia. Post-perestroika visits included an assignment to the Urals and Siberia promoting the development of SME (Small and Medium-sized Business Enterprises) businesses under the aegis of the EU in the TACIS (Technical Assistance to the CIS) programme. Where, after all this time, has this left me? Was it worth it? In reply, I feel I can only echo Aleksandr Blok: “В моей душе лежит сокровище, и ключ поручен только мне...”^[2] (without necessarily reaching his conclusion!). The satisfaction of having found that key might be my answer to the question “Why?” Why did you learn Russian?

Nigel Robertson

[1] I was not involved with Russia during the Brezhnev years of stagnation, coming back to Russia just after Perestroika, when the situation was completely different

[2] ‘In my soul lies a treasure, and the key is entrusted only to me’

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Short Items of interest

Newsletter and web site

Would all members please note that articles, including book reviews and letters are always welcome for this Newsletter. **The submission deadline for the summer issue of Perm News is 15th May** but it greatly assists planning if you let the editor David Roulston know if you plan to submit an item (normally a maximum of about 600 words plus two jpg images) or to discuss an idea for the newsletter. Readers can browse all past newsletters on the web site at [Perm News Index](#). Readers with on-line access may note the use of hyperlinks in Perm News, thus extending the scope of articles to readers with internet access. The editor is grateful to Sue Gregory for her invaluable proofreading and general help with each issue of Perm News.

Reports on Recent Events

Hassan Sabrie gave a talk at the Town Hall, on the recent visit of 17 boys (and six adults) from **East Oxford United Football Club** to Perm for which the Association had raised considerable sums of money. He told us that the hospitality in Perm had been extraordinary, not only at the International Football Camp, but in their visits to the city and to other towns where the tournament was taking place. The boys were impressed at the commitment and fitness of the Russian boys but pleased at their own achievements too. In the evenings, to their own surprise, they found themselves rehearsing and then performing a dance routine which they were taught by one of the camp volunteers. They also met the British Vice-Consul based in Yekaterinburg.

The **Discussion Group** had its fourth meeting on 23rd October to discuss articles by Stephen Cohen and Mary Dejevsky. The 5th meeting took place on 8th January where the topic was 'Sanctions', with the second item on 'Fake News' held over for a future meeting. If any members are interested in joining the discussion group, please email David or Karen.

Two special youth representatives of Oxford (Marianna Hunt and Louise Hall) went to Perm, as part of the **Young Representatives in Link Cities scheme** which Lauren Spiceley has devised. More information about this can be found on pages 11-12.

The **annual party for the Perm State University teachers** took place on 15th November. The teachers' report of the visit can be found on page 6.

Exhibition of artists from different cities, including Perm in the Cloister Gallery 14th - 30th October with artists from Oxford, Bonn, Grenoble, Leiden, Perm including work by OPA member Diana Bell.

In January we invited **Vladimir Beresnev, Curator of the Flahertiana Documentary Film Festival in Perm** to come again to Oxford with a selection of the best **Russian documentaries** of recent years. This visit required considerable planning, and we are grateful to Oxford International Links for responding with a generous grant to the submission by committee members, Ksenia and Andrew. There were two screenings of the films open to the public; the general theme could be called 'immigrants and other Travellers in Russia'. The different circumstances of the characters and the film photography of the directors made compelling and emotional viewing. Vladimir met members of [FilmOxford](#) and [ModernArtOxford](#) with the hope that further exchanges can be developed. Selections from the films were shown to pupils at The Oxford Academy.

Oxford International Study Centre

In Autumn 2017 we were pleased to welcome our first guest from Perm, the journalist Vadim Skovorodin. Vadim had been introduced to us by the Oxford-Perm Association. He was studying English here at Oxford International Study Centre on his second visit to the city.

We would very much like to welcome others from Perm, both professional adults and younger people. Our programmes include those for teachers (we are part of the EU Erasmus

Plus project) and other professionals, pre-university preparation for younger people, and of course English Language programmes.

Carolyn Llewelyn (OPA member), International Director, Oxford International Study Centre

Forthcoming Perm Association Events

The **Annual General Meeting** will be held on 1st March 2018 in the Long Room at the Town Hall at 6 p.m. After official business, a short and appealing film about a Japanese student at the Perm Ballet School will be followed by a discussion.

Members are asked to make small contributions of finger food. Wine and soft drinks will be provided by the Association.

Are we really so similar? or UNITY IN DIFFERENCES

Every city represents a unique social community whose members create its elements: traditions and institutions, civil society and culture, formal and informal rules of conduct. The picture of the city is written by its residents who constantly inhabit it, and guests often act as simple observers. However, there are also very special guests, and we were lucky to become some of them.

Even in the very title of the status of the twin cities, the human element in the relations between the two communities is laid. After all, this is not only and not so much the relationship in the sphere of economics or politics, it is relations between citizens of individual states, who preserve unity in their self-determination. We see that, despite all the existing differences between two cities, the inhabitants of sister cities are surprisingly similar, and this is confirmed by more than the 20-year history of the twin-city relations between Perm and Oxford.

Similarities can be traced, starting with one of the most important for our social institutions - the university. The branding of Oxford and Perm as "university cities" imposes an indelible imprint on their perception, especially in the implementation of the third role of the university - involving the university community in the city space. Civic engagement is another uniting feature. Oxford residents are widely involved in the discussion and solution of public problems. Moreover, the Labour, Lib-Dem and Green Party ideas form the city as an outpost of an oppositional political force. In the same way, the civil activity of Perm was always distinguished by a special degree of its influence in comparison with other major cities. In addition, it is necessary to distinguish art. Oxford as a city can claim the title of a work of art as a whole: all its peculiarities and sights brought together make the city one of

the centres of Western culture. Not without reason the Bodleian Library, which we were fortunate to visit and where we were able to study, claims the status of the oldest in Europe. Similarly Perm, despite its remoteness from the federal center, is famous for its outstanding ballet traditions, the annual Diaghilev International Festival, the Permian animal style, the Permian wooden sculpture, the International Festival of Documentary Films "Flahertiana" and others.

But the city as a social community is formed through deeper grounds, and the similarities cease to seem so obvious. Do our cities really look alike as social communities? Are we really so similar? Taking into consideration all the values that unite us, we tried to discover unique features that are typical of Oxford residents and form, along with "Englishness", Oxford's own identity, i.e. "Oxfordness". Originality and uniqueness of the Oxford environment are expressed in its barely perceptible charm, its special manner of behaviour and narrative. Thus, we were able to identify the main component of this uniqueness, namely the perception of knowledge as an exceptional value. Everyone wants to "make his own special way", not through mere ordinary experience, but with an appeal to tradition, be it education, science, or art. The permanent appeal to tradition and the desire to preserve it create a special atmosphere in which everything has its own unique history, from a large museum to a small private house, from lecture halls to pubs, from bookstores to street sites. Each inhabitant is the bearer of the magnificent centuries-old history of Oxford and realizes how important it is to preserve and reproduce this history. Finally, it is worth mentioning the special openness of everyone from whom we were lucky to learn. Oxford does not hesitate to raise problems, does not seek to disguise and hide them, and as truth is born in the struggle, the most optimal solution is born in discussions.

We can continue to talk about the features that distinguish Oxford in relation to other cities in the UK, Europe, and the world in general. Today, "copy-cities" which imitate everything, including their own history and culture, spread very intensively, and it is extremely important to preserve their own cultural and historical identity. And although our idea of such an identity does not claim absolute truth, it allows us to form the image of a unique city, which is developed by its unique inhabitants. It is a picture of an original city, which no other city in the world can resemble and does not even try.

We, the inhabitants of Oxford and Perm, really do not resemble each other. Our cities and atmosphere are extremely unique, which determines the development of partnership and sister-city relations. Our uniqueness continues to make us closer. Constant self-determination gives us an understanding of the common elements in the identity and way of life of cities. Uniqueness gives us an awareness of the kinship and unity of two so autonomous and distinctive urban communities in the rapidly growing flow of urbanization and globalization.

This article was compiled by Perm State University teachers: Ekaterina Isaeva, Elena Mikhailovna, Lev Pleshkov, Evgenia Kharebova, Mikhail Grabevnik and Alexandra Osmolovskaya who were in Oxford on November 2017.

The Perm News editor thought that Oxford Perm Association members may be interested in how their Perm counterpart organisation 'Perm Oxford' headed by Galina Gousarova reports some events in this country. The following are a small selection from 2017 extracted from Galina's emails and Facebook links. Translations with the help of Google Translate.

Galina Gusarova 15 July at 08:20

О вручение именных командирских часов «Восток» и памятных подарков ветерану Северных конвоев Э.Лидбеттеру 12 июля с.г. Генконсул России в Эдинбурге А.А.Прицепов принял ветерана Второй мировой войны, участника Северных конвоев Эдвина Лидбеттера. Ветерану были вручены именные командирские часы «Восток», выпущенные к 70-летию Победы во Второй мировой войне, а также набор памятных подарков,...

The presentation of the official "Commander - Vostok" watch and commemorative gifts to the veteran of the Northern convoys E. Leadbetter was made on July 12 this year. The Consul General of Russia in Edinburgh, AA Pritsepov received a veteran of the Second World War and a member of the Northern convoys, Edwin Leadbetter. The veteran was awarded the official "Commander - Vostok" watch, issued for the 70th anniversary of the Victory in World War II, as well as a set of commemorative gifts

Note: Edwin Leadbetter served in the submarine escort carrier HMS Fencer in the Arctic convoys. Ed

Galina Gusarova 14 November at 09:08

12 ноября 2017 г. в отмечаемый в Великобритании день поминовения погибших в двух мировых войнах состоялось возложение венков к Советскому военному мемориалу у Имперского военного музея в лондонском районе Сазерк. В церемонии приняли участие Посольства Российской Федерации и Республики Беларусь, мэр района, парламентарии, представители муниципалитета, британские ветераны, деятели общественных организаций и объединений российских соотечественников.



November 12, 2017, the day commemorating those killed in two world wars was celebrated in Great Britain with wreaths laid at the Soviet War Memorial at the Imperial War Museum in London's Saserk district. The ceremony was attended by the Embassy of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus, the mayor of the district, parliamentarians, representatives of the municipality, British veterans, public organizations and associations of Russian compatriots.

Galina Gusarova 7 November at 04:12

Приём «Первая волна эмиграции» в российском Посольстве 2 ноября в российском Посольстве в Лондоне прошёл приём «Первая волна эмиграции», посвящённый судьбам людей, бежавших от революции 1917 года. Среди гостей было немало потомков знаменитых в российской и мировой истории семей, в частности, княгиня К.Голицына.



Reception "The First Wave of Emigration" in the Russian Embassy

On November 2, a reception for "The First Wave of Emigration" was held at the Russian Embassy in London, dedicated to the fate of people who fled the revolution of 1917. Among the guests there were many descendants of families famous in Russian and world history, in particular, Princess K. Golitsyna.

Book Review of A.J.P. Taylor's autobiography, a Personal History

Although this memoir was first published nearly 35 years ago, it will repay reading by Perm Association members in several ways. Firstly, whatever Taylor's (1906-90) politics and obvious distrust of the British Communist Party, he remained a life-long friend of the USSR and the Russian people. His initial enthusiasm arose not because of contemporary influences at school or elsewhere but because his parents – hitherto liberals with pacifist tendencies – were converted to Bolshevism in early 1918 when he was 12 years-old.

Their reasoning was apparently simple: "While others had talked, Lenin had acted: he had ended the war." Writing in 1983, Taylor dismisses the idea that this was "very crude" stuff. Lenin's proposed general peace without annexations or indemnities would "maybe" have offered "mankind the chance which, once rejected, would never be offered again." As a result the Taylor household was transformed: where Lenin and the Russian workers had shown the way, British workers must follow. Two chapters later, describing his undergraduate days at Oriel, it is his visit to Soviet Russia with his mother in 1925 and exciting times in Manchester during the General Strike that sticks in the mind. Secondly, of all Oxford academics who achieved fame in the 20th century, he must rank as the one who was most at odds with the Establishment. From his withering assessment of a public-school-dominated Oxford in the 1920s where Liberal MPs, let alone Labour, were considered "dangerous revolutionaries" to the effective disbaring of him from any professorship (even if he maintains, he would have refused any offer), here was an outsider whose exclusion mirrored that of the USSR in the 'commonwealth' of nations.

The parallel should not be pushed too far. Taylor came from a rich, if "common", family of cotton traders. He was the only possessor of a car in college. Later, his father subsidised his years in Vienna while he learnt German and worked on his research. In 1930 his professor at Vienna was able to virtually secure him a job at Manchester University. Once suitably ensconced, he was passed on work writing reviews for the Manchester Guardian, a stepping-stone to a life in journalism and ultimately to becoming the first TV historian.

Although Taylor was too busy with his career and making money (which he appears to have done in shedloads though his outgoings were commensurate by the time he had had two wives and four sons) to have left a political legacy, his love of causes and public speaking gave him a memorable profile in a series of single issues over the years: from anti-war in Manchester in the 30s, to opposition to Suez in 1956 and as a founder member of CND in the 1958.

The final point in favour of the book is its entertainment value. You'll never read another poem by Dylan Thomas without recalling the ruthless manner in which the boozy bard fleeced AJP's generosity and good nature. Even Taylor's dislike of Germans (very common in Austria) has a funny ending: refusing to go to Germany for 30 years because he might end up with an ex-SS without knowing it, he finally relents. Driven by taxi from Munich airport to the television studio, his driver asks him if he knows a Mr Taylor? When the truth comes out, the driver is overjoyed and gets him to sign his copy of *The Origins of World War II*. The only problem is that he was ex-SS and thanked Taylor for showing that Hitler had not caused the war!

Jonathan Saunders

Friends' House Moscow

I first visited Russia in 2014. At the time I was living in Oxford and took part in two twinning visits to Perm. In 2016 I returned to Perm with a friend, Alison Watt, and we took a river trip on the Kama River to Kazan. Later that year I joined a small group of peace activists from the U.S. and we visited Moscow and Saint Petersburg, meeting and talking to people, including Quakers in Moscow, concerned about the worsening situation between Russia and the West.

Soon after my return from Russia in 2014 I attended a conference at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre on 'Quakers in Russia'. There I learnt about the history of Quakers in Russia and met the two Russian staff members from Friends' House Moscow (FHM), as well as British and American members of the FHM Board. (www.friendshousemoscow.org)

I was asked to join the Board in 2016 and in October 2017 I attended my first Board meeting in Moscow.

FHM helps to support projects which further peace and nonviolence, such as the Alternatives to Violence Project in Ukraine and a project which offers support to young men seeking alternatives to military service. Other projects are a refugee school in Moscow and a centre to support the educational needs of young people in care, also in Moscow. We visited both projects before our board meeting.

FHM also enables the translation into Russian of core Quaker texts and also texts specifically about peace, nonviolence and sustainability. We met a young academic who is working on the evolution of pacifism in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, 1900-1937. She is particularly working on Tolstoyan ideas recorded in the archives she is indexing.

We attended three Meetings for Worship with Russian Friends whilst in Moscow.

Friends' House Moscow has a Facebook page which is well worth following as it often gives positive and uplifting reports on activism in Russia and updates on the projects supported by FHM.

This was an interesting and exciting visit for me as, in addition to connecting to Russian Quakers, I travelled alone to Moscow and stayed in Godzilla's Hostel in central Moscow. As a visually impaired person this was quite a challenge but I was helped by the extreme kindness of Muscovites in shops, in the streets and on the Metro. I even got a chance to use my very basic Russian and was complimented on my Russian accent! (I'm a good mimic, that's all!)

One sunny, crisp Sunday I went for a walk with a new friend, Vik, a Bulgarian Quaker. Her English is good and we had a lovely long walk to and from Red Square, taking in many sights along the way. Together with Pat, from Philadelphia, and Natasha from Moscow, I went to a lovely concert of German classical music in the magnificent Tchaikovsky Concert Hall.

I am looking forward already to the next visit but in the meantime I am enjoying working with everyone connected to Friends' House Moscow- and working on my Russian!

Susan Clarkson

When the Perm News editor discovered the work of one of our new City Links representatives, Louise Hall, it was difficult to resist inviting her to let us see some of her work. The following is the result. Readers are encouraged to explore further using the links at the end of her article, Ed.

1week, 7 sunrises, and many cups of tea in Perm

This year, a group of 9 young travellers, writers, artists, scientists and journalists embarked on the project, Oxford City Links, a partnership with Oxford City Council, with the mission to engage Oxford's young people with our international twin cities. After many miles travelled around the world, and many hours fundraising and web developing, travel guides and a website were created, describing our experiences of each city, in the hope of inspiring Oxford's next generation to be involved in the projects that will continue these close and special bond between nations. As part of this team I have had the privilege of being a City Rep of Perm, Russia. As a result, here a handful of tales from my visit there, and a small collection of moments and memories that I was able to bring back with me.



On boarding the plane to Perm I was filled with both excitement and apprehension of the week ahead. My preconceptions of Russia were mostly from headlines in our own media, and faded memories of history lessons. I had no idea what to expect from a city that, despite being (just about) in the same continent, seemed a world away from Oxford. It was fitting then, that our departure to Perm coincided with the Russian 'Day of Knowledge', the first day in September when all school students begin a new year of studies.

For a traveller, not understanding the local language is like seeing the world with restricted vision. Only when words and conversations around you are translated, do your surroundings also visually make sense. With the help of some kind, inspiring and brilliant English-speaking locals on

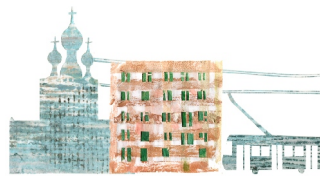
our trip, I could begin to understand this place and culture. I was lucky to hear about hundreds of years of history and traditions in Perm, as well as the future hopes and dreams of its people, from the stories that they told.

1. My first memory on entering Perm was catching a glimpse of The River Kama from the skies. Among the city skyline, it's vast winding body of water glittered as the sun rose. "Perm is the first city of Europe, not the last", our guide later corrected us.

"From the East, it's the first city to see the sunrise"

2. In Perm, most city dwellers live in blocks of flats like this. It was here that I stayed with my very friendly host family. Seeing

the daily routines of the locals from the inside is, in my opinion, the best way



to learn about Russian people.

3. With just a short drive out of the city, though, the urban landscape of traffic lights and shop signs



become fairy tale pine forests, and concrete buildings become Dachas-the city people's holiday home.

4. The Banya. A traditional Russian pastime, and one of the more unusual social



activities I took part in. Proceedings involved a sauna of 100 degrees, the consumption of melon, beer, fish and Shashlik (BBQ meat), the wearing of a Russian style felt hat, and being hit with birch twigs.

5. Food, I very quickly found out, is a main part



of Russian hospitality. On our visit there was not a meeting or activity which took place, without the offering of tea, coffee, breads, pastries or sweets. Several times during the week I was told by Russians that they stereotypically thought the English drank tea everyday at 5 O'clock. As an avid tea drinker myself, I can safely say I was offered more tea each day in Perm, than I would probably drink in a week back at home. The custom of tea and conversation is at the heart of both our cultures- something we could all bond over!



6. When eating with my host family, and out and about in Perm, there was always a chance to discover new condiments or sauces placed in pots at the table. Meals never failed to include home made jams (made from fruits grown at the Dachas), sour cream (once a Soviet alternative to mayonnaise, and still more popular) and my new personal favourite, *Khrenovina* - a spicy tomato and horseradish concoction.

7. Where else could you wander the museum and former home of Serge Diaghilev- founder of Ballet



Russe, look in on students training intensely at the prestigious Perm Ballet School, and watch a performance at the Opera and Ballet Theatre, all in one week? Dance and theatre is so close to the heart and history of the city, and I felt there was no better place to experience my first ever opera. (Despite falling asleep through the first half...) Adorned with chandeliers at every turn, the extravagance of the Opera and Ballet Theatre makes it a magical place to be.

8. Storytelling lies deep in Russian culture. Not only in it's literature, where most young people we met could recite a passage or poem from the country's long list of famous writers by heart, and recommend Russian books that I should read.

Russian storytelling is



mostly evident in everyday

word of mouth too. Some of my favourite memories include spending time drinking tea with my host family, looking through their collections of vintage children's books and illustrations, (like Russian Fairy tale, The Firebird) and flicking through the family photo albums whilst hearing stories about their own visits to the UK.

9. Football. A passion which unifies almost all



nationalities of the world. In Perm, this was no exception, despite the language barrier between myself and 10 year old son of my host family. After discovering that the recent kit of Amkar Perm was remarkably similar to a past kit of Oxford United some years ago, my very limited footballing ability was put to the test in a Twin City friendly FIFA game one evening. Unsurprisingly this time, Perm won 2- 0.

10. There are many sculptures and historical monuments in Perm, but the Legend of Perm Bear was one which I was most excited to see. This 2.5 tonne statue represents the animal symbol of the city and region, and is associated with the idea that foreigners think bears walk the streets of the city. Thankfully I can confirm this is not the case.

It is locally believed that if you rub this bear's nose, you will become lucky.



Happy weekends or summers are spent at these wooden houses, growing flowers, fruits and vegetables that are picked for reserves, used during the cold winter months.

For more on the **Oxford Twin City Links Project**, visit

OxfordTwinCityLinks.com

More of Louise's work can be found at

cargocollective.com/louisehall

And her blog

drawthemap.wordpress.com

Louise Hall