

# The Scotland-Russia Forum *Review*

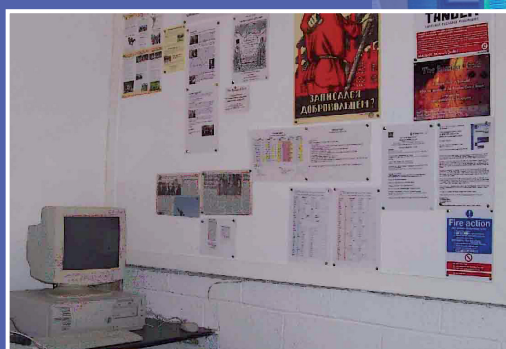


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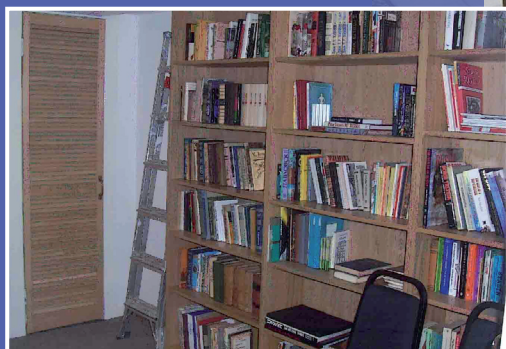
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## Contents

Sarah Gibson, head of BBC Russian Service, talks about the recent scheduling changes **3-4**

Arctic convoy veteran Jock Dempster on 'the worst journey' **4-5**

A new voice in Russia's media market **6-7**

Karass - Anton Grizenko continues his research into a Scottish colony living and working in the Caucasus **8-9**

### Reviews

Английский язык: вчера, сегодня и завтра. Англо-русский словарь **10**

Comrade Jim: The Spy Who Played For Spartak **11**

Earworms **11-12**

Hammer and Tickle: A History of Communism told through Communist Jokes **12**

St Petersburg and the British **13**

Strange Telescopes **14**

Latest news from St Gregory's Foundation and Dneprokids, plus SRF member's letter and events to look forward to at the Scotland-Russia Institute in early 2009 **15-16**

Dear Readers,

I am pleased to present on our front page pictures of the new Scotland-Russia Institute. Its opening and the support it receives from volunteers eloquently describe a relationship between Russia and Scotland rarely written about in the Press.

And so to this edition's content. Just as the SRF is expanding, it seems the BBC Russian Service is making cuts (as described in an open letter to The Times). In an interview with the SRF, Sarah Gibson, head of the Russian Service, explains the changes and touches on some of the points made in the letter.

In our second interview, we speak to John Bonar, who recently launched his own bilingual business-to-business magazine in Russia. He describes what drove him to start up the publication and his view of Western news coverage of the country.

A short essay from Jock Dempster, an Arctic convoy veteran, puts a human face to what Churchill described as the worst journey in world. Jock describes the dreadful conditions aboard the boats, as well as his dealings with Russians in Murmansk.

And we return to Karass in the Caucasus, where Anton Grizenko is researching the remarkable story of a Scottish family who settled and flourished there.

Our Reviews section is very much for the wanderer in us all. If you need to improve your Russian before a trip, read our review of the music-based Earworms technique, said to give you an intuitive understanding of the language. And once you reach that, you may be interested to flick through *Английский язык*, a book on the origin of English words and phrases, and their equivalent in Russian. Our remaining four reviews are of books that deal with foreigners in Russia and the outsider's perception of the place.

The SRF also takes a look at some of the valuable work done by British organisations in Russia, and looks forward to events at the new Scotland-Russia Institute.

Thank you to those who graciously contributed to the Review.

With warm wishes for Christmas and the New Year,

Chris Delaney  
Editor

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# What's going on at the Russian Service?

*Changes to programming at the BBC Russian Service have met with hostility. In an open letter to The Times, signatories described the new strategy as a 'perverse concession' to the Russian authorities. In response, Nigel Chapman, then head of the World Service, said the changes were necessary in order to increase the impact of the Russian Service's output. So what brought about the changes? To try to answer this, the Scotland-Russia Forum spoke to SARAH GIBSON, head of the Russian Service.*

**Scotland-Russia Forum:** *How many hours of radio broadcasting will be cut?*

**Sarah Gibson:** It is wrong to see this as being about cuts. This is about re-focusing the resources of BBC Russian on peak audience listening times (morning and early evening drive time) – and placing more investment in our flagship news and current affairs programmes.

We are increasing the availability of our in-depth news and current affairs output at weekends. We are strengthening our newsgathering in the region.

We are further strengthening our website, [bbcrussian.com](http://bbcrussian.com). The site has increased its unique users by more than 34 per cent over the last year – a figure which does not take into account users accessing the site through partner sites. The number of users accessing our video content has increased dramatically over this period. We aim to strengthen the site by increasing the number of video reports, original journalism in all media, and interactivity.

Overall this is a major enhancement of [bbcrussian.com](http://bbcrussian.com) and BBC Russian radio programming for listeners and users.

There is a net cut of 19 hours of broadcasting. Specifically these are news bulletins designed for rebroadcast on FM partner stations which are obsolete as we have no partners; some long form non-news and analysis features (the key elements of which will be put in our new extended peak hour programming) and 11.5 hours of



**Pillar of stability** – Bush House in London, the home of the Russian Service

repeats. BBC Russian will retain 58 hours of radio broadcasting, which is the second highest amount of radio broadcast by a BBC World Service language service.

**SRF:** *What brought about the changes?*

**SG:** The reprioritisation followed a strategic review of BBC Russian. BBC World Service regularly reviews its operations, and BBC Russian is no exception to this.

We took the opportunity to look at what was working for us and how we wanted to prioritise our resources. After serious consideration, we decided to put resources where they would have most impact. That means strengthening and extending our radio programming at peak times where it will have more impact with audiences.

It also means putting more resources into [bbcrussian.com](http://bbcrussian.com) where we have experienced significant and steady growth in recent years. The response from users in August during the Russia/Georgia crisis was overwhelming, and we feel that there is a large and growing demand for our multiplatform content through the site in Russia.

Access to the internet is growing,

and the internet is a very important part of the media landscape in Russia. And of course the internet is the only distribution method we have that we have full control over – in addition to shortwave broadcasts.

**SRF:** *Bearing in mind the effective closure of the British Council in Russia, why has the RS decided to cut its cultural, arts and features content in particular?*

**SG:** Themes of culture and the arts will continue to have a strong presence in the new peak-time radio programmes and on [bbcrussian.com](http://bbcrussian.com). We believe our coverage of these areas will be stronger and easier for the audience to access.

**SRF:** *If the situation with FM in Russia was to change, will the RS still be in a position to revive its radio output?*

**SG:** Aside from the specially designed news bulletins, the programmes we are dropping were never used by our FM partners.

Over recent years we have been producing programmes of high editorial and production quality – as you'd expect from the BBC. We believe that the new peak



# 'The worst journey in the world'

**JOCK DEMPSTER is a Scottish veteran of the WWII Arctic convoys, described by Winston Churchill as 'the worst journey in the world'. He has been critical of the British Government's recognition of those who served on the convoys, in particular of what he called the 'five pence' Arctic Star medal. In contrast, he has praised Russia's attitude to remembering its veterans. Before a meeting of veterans at Loch Ewe in October, Jock said that this year's Armistice Day gathering could be last that he and the sailors he served with would meet to march in London. In this piece for the SRF, he describes how he came to serve on the convoys and his opinions of how the convoys are remembered.**

**A**FTER completing my basic training in the Merchant Navy Training Establishment at Wallasey, Liverpool, in 1944 I joined my first ship, the oil tanker San Venancio as a junior ordinary seaman.

From day one, although only 16, I was classed as a full crew member and was treated as such. I was even given the duty of helmsman and must admit that I was as proud as punch to be at the wheel of such a large ship.

We sailed a couple of times to Philadelphia to load with high octane which was then off-loaded in France and the UK. Only after this was I faced with my trip to Murmansk.

My father was extremely concerned – Russian convoys were often described as 'suicide missions', even by Winston Churchill. But I found the prospect of sailing to Russia quite exciting.

The weather was appalling most of the time: blizzards, freezing fog, gale-force winds – sometimes all at once. We were kept on our toes all of the time. Being a tanker, we were quite low in the water and the deck would be sheathed in ice. As we travelled further north, every ship 'frosted' over – quite an eerie sight, particularly at night. We were like a fleet of ghost ships.

Convoys were constantly under threat of attack from sea and air and three of our ships were torpedoed. Tankers were always prime targets. I recall one occasion when we were at our UK departure anchorage, the Shore Boat came alongside to take some of us ashore for a couple of hours. A party of American seamen was already aboard and as we headed for shore, one of them, a big John Wayne type looked down at our bosun, a small, tough character from the Western Isles, and

## 'Some programmes are closing, but others are expanding...

*From page 3*

programmes – stronger in its journalism and analysis – will make us very attractive to prospective FM partners.

Therefore if we were able to secure an FM arrangement in Russia that we could enter into without compromising any of these standards, we would do so.

**SRF:** In which medium does the RS ultimately see itself broadcasting?

**SG:** BBC Russian needs to keep looking at what its audience is

doing, and how they are accessing content, and be agile and ready to change if audience habits change. We believe these changes will put us in a strong position to take advantage of any future changes in the marketplace. The most important thing for me is to be able to bring high quality news and current affairs – in the widest sense – to the audience in Russia.

**SRF:** Will the RS strategy affect the number of people that have access (or choose to access) its content?

**SG:** We believe that putting strong news, information and analysis at

a time, and by the means, when audiences want to access us will strengthen our impact in the market.

The online offer – through which radio is accessible – will be strengthened, and the audience for this is growing. We are not reducing any medium-wave or shortwave distribution.

Some programmes are closing, but others are being expanded.

There may be some listeners to specific programmes that are closing who can't access them any more. But we believe those that come to us for high quality editorial and production will not go away disappointed.

said: ‘Gee Whiz Scottie, if the Krauts put a tin-fish in you, you won’t need a life jacket – you’ll need a parachute to come down again.’ Everyone laughed. A few moments later as we passed an American Liberty ship, laden with a deck cargo of tanks and locomotives, the bosun looked up at the American and said with a wry grin: ‘Well, Yank, I reckon if the Jerries put a torpedo in your ship, you’ll go down as quick as we go up!’ Laughter again erupted. A sense of humour prevailed despite the circumstances.

**W**HEN we arrived at Murmansk, we were all saddened to see the awesome damage inflicted on the city by the Luftwaffe from their bases in Norway. The front line was around 15 miles away. The air raids were continuous, sometimes hourly. Ships anchored in Kola Bay were regularly bombed and strafed. We spent seven weeks in our berth and ventured into the city and surrounds regularly. There were no restrictions although we were advised not to wander too far off the beaten track, not to fraternise and be extremely careful to behave ourselves.

The deck crew were mainly Scottish and we didn’t waste any time in venturing into Murmansk. The authorities had created a social club which we were encouraged to use. Concerts, dances, the occasional ballet and choral renderings. Hard to imagine an audience of unshaven seamen sat watching the classical entertainment but I remember one choral concert which performed to a packed house and a very appreciate audience.

The dances were very well attended, and the local militia also used the club. Hostesses – mainly students, teachers and secretaries – were happy to waltz round the floor, but in this instance fraternisation stopped at the main door. The girls would chat, teach us few words of Russian, talk socially but no more. I have never met any veteran who ever saw a girl home. Respect was observed on both sides. I did learn quite a few Russian phrases and the first two verses of a song I’d heard at one of the concerts, as well as the phrase: ‘Can I see you home, please?’ The answer was always ‘Nyet’, but I always received a big smile.

Contrary to the advice given on our arrival, we did fraternise closer to the ship. We struck up excellent friendships with the local militia and had many happy evenings at their barracks singing and listening to balalaikas and accordions. A bond of mutual respect was created with both sides appreciating the extreme hardships jointly endured.

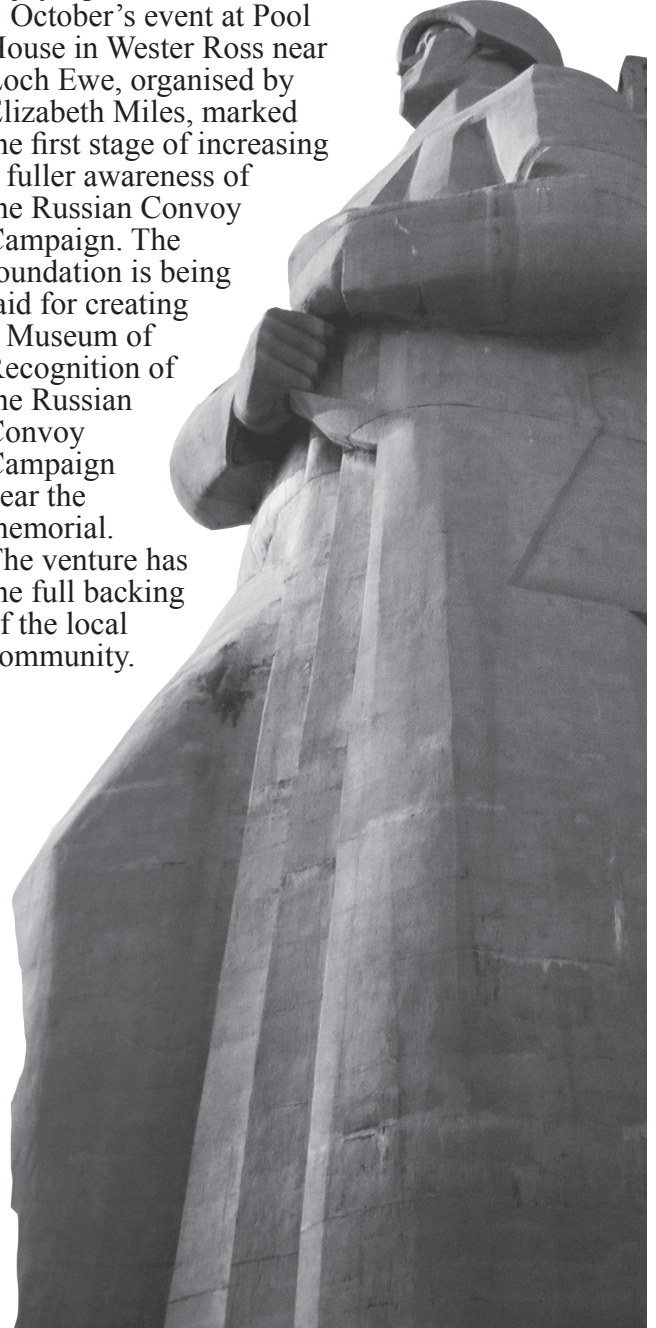
I have never ceased to admire the stoicism shown by the inhabitants living under unbelievably harsh conditions. They appreciated how vital the supplies which we delivered were to their survival.

Successive Russian governments have never ceased thanking Allied Convoy veterans for the

vital role they played in securing their victory on the Eastern Front. The Russian Convoy Campaign is taught at school and the sacrifices of the veterans is fully acknowledged. How different it is in the UK.

Two thousand, eight hundred allied seamen never returned to our shores but comparatively few members of the general public are aware of the Campaign. Even fewer people appreciate that the Russians lost 28 million and had they not won the war on the Eastern Front, we wouldn’t now be enjoying the free world as we know it.

October’s event at Pool House in Wester Ross near Loch Ewe, organised by Elizabeth Miles, marked the first stage of increasing a fuller awareness of the Russian Convoy Campaign. The foundation is being laid for creating a Museum of Recognition of the Russian Convoy Campaign near the memorial. The venture has the full backing of the local community.



Aliesha – in memory of the defenders of the Soviet Union’s polar regions – stands 35m tall and overlooks Murmansk. It is part of a complex of war memorials on the outskirts of the city.



# An alternative voice in Russia's media market

Frustrated by Western news coverage of Russia, **JOHN BONAR** launched Business Special Report, an independent, bilingual magazine that aims to dispel some of the myths surrounding the country.

John was born in Edinburgh and grew up in Walter Scott country, in the village of Earlston. He has lived in Russia for 14 years, having spent most of his working life abroad from Libya to the Eastern Mediterranean.

In this interview with the SRF, he explains why he felt the need for another voice in the Russia's media market, his view on relations with the UK, and what took him to Russia in the first place.



John Bonar discusses his magazine with Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Zhukov

**I** GOT involved with Russia in 1993 through marketing the 1994 Goodwill Games in St Petersburg. The job was based in London but I visited Russia a couple of times and developed many contacts. One of these was the chairman of Moscow News publishing house who invited me to Moscow to advise him on developing a commercial publishing house. I went to Russia in 1995 and in late 1996 launched my own magazine, Marketing Russia, a marketing trade magazine.

What has kept me here for nearly 14 years? I am fascinated with this country in transition. Unlike many of the countries that the Soviet empire enmeshed then, in 1991, set free, Russia had never in its history practised democracy.

It is a huge, unwieldy territory spanning eight time zones from Kaliningrad to Chukotka, from where in winter when the Bering Straits are frozen, it is possible to go overland to Alaska; a land richly endowed with natural resources from oil and gas to huge fresh water resources, forestry, precious metals and diamonds and with untapped agricultural potential this is a fascinating country. To see this young democracy making its faltering and sometimes stumbling progress towards evolving their own political system which will end up being as different from Britain's as the US version of democracy is; just as the German, Swiss and

French all have their own modifications on democracy, so too will Russia, and being able to witness that is a rare privilege.

Added to which, like many a foreigner here, I have found personal happiness with a beautiful partner who has shared my life for the last 13 years.

**SRF:** *Are there many other Scots doing business in Moscow now?*

**John Bonar:** There is a thriving Scots business community here, centred on Moscow and St Petersburg but spread throughout the country. Scots hold leading positions in the oil industry multinationals, the oil service companies and the big four audit and consulting firms. Scots are enthusiastic entrepreneurs here, owning SME companies in telecommunications, construction, engineering and smaller enterprises. The key business association for Scots is the Russo British Chamber of Commerce with its operations in London, Moscow and St Petersburg. The London-based Executive Director, Stephen Dalziel, is a former BBC correspondent and a Scot.

A more informal organization is the British Business Club in Moscow, which organises monthly networking meetings. The president of the Club is a Scot, Don Scott OBE. The Club holds celebrations

for St Andrew's Day, St George's Day and St David's Day. A leading expatriate charitable organization is the St Andrew's Society, which organises an annual St Andrew's Ball, a summer family Stramash and a Burns Supper. The Ball, with kilts, country dancing and whisky galore, is one of the leading social occasions in Russia and every year raises thousands of pounds for charity

**SRF:** *Why did you launch your magazine and are who its readers?*

**JB:** For the last few years there has been mounting frustration among leading foreign businessmen in Moscow that I meet in the Association of European Businesses in Russia, the RBCC, and others that I meet in the pub. They say the Russia they read about in their mainstream home country newspapers, be it The Times or Die Welt, The Washington Post or The Independent, seemed to be a different country from the Russia



*From previous page*

we live and work in. There seemed to be an anti-Russian spin on most major stories and analysis written about Russia. As someone recently said: 'There's too many Sovietologists out there and not enough Russian experts.'

It seems to me that there are too many think-tanks and foundations whose respected academics have been swayed by the generosity of grants from Russian emigres with dubiously acquired wealth and who are overtly hostile to the regime in Moscow.

Of course the Russian government is NOT always right. It makes errors and it does not really know how to present its case on many controversial issues allowing opponents to increase the controversy and polarize issues.

I am independent. I receive no government funding or backing from any major corporation – Russian or western. The magazine is supported purely by commercial advertising.

**F**OREIGN heads of branches of multinationals here are being frustrated in their investment and development plans by their boards at home. These board members in the UK, Germany and the United States are swayed by reports painting Russia as a belligerent, autocratic country reneging on the democratic reforms of the Yeltsin years, stamping on media freedom and nationalizing key sectors of industry.

We are an alternative voice, dealing with the facts, exposing the myths and constructively criticizing. By concentrating on internet delivery for the first year, we are able to keep costs down and advertising rates extremely reasonable. It also makes us available around the world. People here can send links to relevant articles to their key audiences anywhere. We are the only completely bilingual business publication in Russian and English. No summaries, no different version for foreigners and Russians.

Russians are our key audience but the magazine is 90 per cent written in English by a seasoned group of professionals – Scots, Australian, Indian and American. We are a multi-national team. Our photographer is Malaysian, our translator a Belorussian and our designer an American.

**SRF:** *Have you noticed any effects of the 'cooling' in the relationship between Russia and the UK?*

**JB:** The 'cooling' of the UK-Russian political and diplomatic relations had no effect on the everyday life of me or any other British Passport holder in Russia either in day to day life or in business.

In fact, business continues to grow and expand without any reference to the official relations, which in any case have improved dramatically since the end of October. We have a new British Ambassador, a Scot, Mrs Anne Pringle, who is a personable no-nonsense professional. The first UK Cabinet Minister to visit Russia in recent years was Lord Mandelson who was fulsome in his public statements and clearly charged with re-building official relations between Russia and Britain. His visit was an unqualified success for diplomacy.

**SRF:** *Are you confident that business between UK/Scotland and Russia will grow further?*

**JB:** Scots have an incredible advantage in Russia which not many of us realize until we are here a few years.

There are the historical ties. Scots generals and admirals were instrumental in many great Russian victories under the Tsars since Ivan the Terrible. Field Marshall Barclay de Tolly played a leading role in defeating Napoleon; General Patrick Gordon, who had served the Tsars since 1661, put down a revolt against Peter I while he was on his Great Ambassadorship to Europe. The 19th Century Russian poet Mikhail Lermontov is a descendant of the Learmont family of Fife.

Robert Burns and Sir Walter

Scots' works were translated and taught in schools during the Soviet era and all Russians over 35 can quote you *To a Mouse* and other Burns classics in Russian.

**T**HERE are the similarities in idiom, lifestyle and passion. While a typical Scottish response to "How are you doing?" would be "nae bad", the Russian is a word for word translation "неплохо"; both nations love pies (пирог), strong drink, poetry and pretty ladies. Russians, both personal friends and business associates, I have found to be initially cautious in their personal relationships but once they thaw they are as warm-hearted, unstintingly generous and lavish hosts as any nation on earth.

As Russia develops its hydrocarbon resources at the new geographic frontiers, our experience in the North Sea oil and gas fields will be in demand; whisky is Russia's fastest growing liquor segment and as Russia seeks to develop a nanotechnology industry the experiences of Silicon Glen could find applications in Russia. Traditional Scottish skills from canny banking to innovative entrepreneurship can find a niche here and flourish.

**SRF:** *Where do you see yourself and your business in 5-10 years' time?*

**JB:** I am 60 this December. I am in a hurry. I want to build something that will have strong foundations, be a flourishing business using all the innovations of new technology and new media available and in five years' time I want to have trained Russian management to run the business, take majority control and allow me to retire from its day-to-day running. With the internet growing faster and more powerful by the month and spreading to the most remote corners of the world, I am leaning towards Malaysia.

**John Bonar is editor-in-chief and publisher of Business Special Report, available at: <http://www.e-pages.dk/bsrussia/1/>**

# Karass - Little Scotland in North Caucasus

by Anton Grizenko



Dr Alexander Paterson (either II or III)

The main street in Karass, as published in a 1903 article, with a German church on the right, now a 'House of Culture'



**R**ESearch into the 19th Century Scottish colony and missionary station at Karass (now Inozemtsevo), North Caucasus, Russia, continues unabated (see previous articles in SRF Review). This summer was spent gathering new details in and around Karass.

We can now take a closer look at Alexander Paterson and his family. Born in Edinburgh on October 4, 1779, he died in Karass on January 9, 1844, and was buried there. His list of achievements continues to grow. In June 1835 Tsar Nikolay I signed a decree allocating Paterson 1,000 desyatin (27,000 acres) of arable land in appreciation of his development of the area as head of the colony's administration. Paterson even seems to have joined the ranks of the nobility, spending his retirement between Karass and a town house in the nearby spa-town of Pyatigorsk.

Little is known of his first wife, who was the sister of the co-founder of the colony and missionary station Rev Henry Brunton. In 1803, she sailed from Scotland for St Petersburg on board the *Fidelity*, but a year later died of fever and ague in Karass. Her final resting place is still to be found.

Alexander Paterson later married Helena (Bogdanova) Wigner, who came to Karass in 1810 – most likely from Sarepta, a German colony which is now a district of Volgograd. Paterson himself visited it in 1811. In Karass there is a grave with the inscription 'Helena born Wiemerer, wife of the missionary Paterson', who died on September 28, 1841. Do the two names belong to the same person?

On the same family plot are the graves of four children, but the inscriptions are difficult to read. One is of 'Elesabeth daughter of Dr Paterson', (born October 16, 1840, - died August 11, 1842). Another child died in 1844, a third in 1845. The fourth is still to be identified.

Some information is now available about two of Alexander Paterson's children – son Edward and his daughter Henriette Emilia. They are both buried in the family plot, with Edward laid to rest right next to his father. It has emerged that there was another daughter who had married a Russian officer.

Henriette Emilia (born February 7, 1815, in Karass; died March 26, 1874) reflects her father's desire to give his children a good education. She was initially educated by her parents and later at a school in Karass. She then travelled to a

large city to further her education, and married a Russian officer, becoming Henriette Pashutina.

Alexander Paterson's son Edward (July 18, 1817, to May 18, 1852) reached the rank of Captain in 'Prince Albert of Prussia's Cuirassier Regiment'. The

regiment carried this name from May 1829 until March 1857, and was stationed in what is today Ukraine. In 1862, the building that held the regiment's library burned to the ground due to 'unknown circumstances'.

Much more information is available about Alexander Patterson's other son, also called Alexander (whose own son was also called Alexander – Roman numerals are added here, with Alexander Paterson (I) being the founder of the family tree in Russia).

Dr Alexander Paterson (II) or Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Paterson (September 16, 1812 to August 6, 1873) completed his early education in Karass. He then went to a higher grade school in Astrakhan. In 1833, he qualified as a doctor at the Imperial Academy of Medical Surgeons in Moscow.

His first posting was with the Russian Navy in Kronstadt near St Petersburg, which he left in 1839 at his own request. On returning home in 1841, he was appointed doctor at the military hospital in Pyatigorsk. He resigned in 1852 and would go on to practice privately for another 32 years. Remarkably, he also held the positions of Secretary (1863-1868), Treasurer, and Librarian of Russia's first Balneological Society. The Society gathered



sporadic information on the local spa waters and began to conduct systematic research. It eventually grew into a Research Institute.

Dr Alexander Paterson (II) is buried in Pyatigorsk's oldest cemetery. The funeral was a very modest affair, a wish he had consistently expressed. The cemetery is so dilapidated I haven't been able to find his grave; however, it is known to be close to the first burial place of the Russian poet Lermontov, who himself had Scottish ancestors. On Dr Alexander Paterson's (II) death in 1873, A.Baykov, director of the Caucasus Mineral Waters' group of four spas, wrote of the great loss of a successful doctor and of such 'a good-natured, honest and honourable person'.

Dr Alexander Paterson (III) followed in his father's footsteps. He joined the same Balneological Society, becoming its Secretary and Treasurer. He was also a

member of various committees.

I have managed to uncover some photographic evidence of the family (see left).

Another, published in a 1903 article, shows the main street in Karass with houses on each side, trees running down the centre and a German church on the right. The view has not changed much with only the church rebuilt into a 'House of Culture' some decades ago.

Work continues painstakingly on Alexander Paterson's (I) diary entries (1811-1812). After comparing sources, I have established the true names of several visitors to the colony. For example, one name spelt as Artesif, or Arteshef, belongs to Lt Gen Nikolay Fyedorovitch Rtishchev (1754-1835) (Russian: Ртищев), commander and governor in the province at the time.

Alexander Paterson (I) also

mentions a Dr Crichton. While studying a rare book on the spas published in 1831, I noticed it was devoted to a Василий Петрович Крейтон. It appears he inspected the spas in 1811. Further analysis revealed him to be Sir Archibald William Crichton, physician to the Tsar and his family, and another Scot closely connected to Karass. Incidentally, he was a member of the same Imperial Academy Alexander Paterson (II) had graduated from.

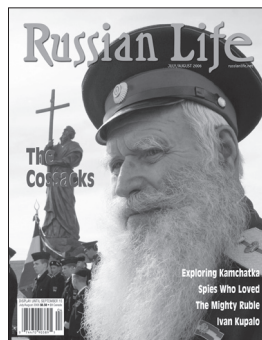
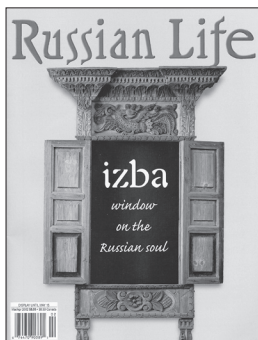
Work on Karass is expanding in many exciting directions, and is limited only by resources. Nevertheless, the next leg of my research will be to archives in the UK, notably, in Scotland.

**Anton Grizenko**  
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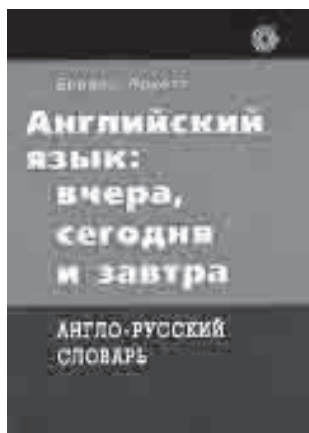
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## Английский язык: вчера, сегодня и завтра. Англо-русский словарь

Reviewed by  
James Muckle



by Brian Lockett,  
Издательство «Русский  
язык – Медиа», 2008

**M**R LOCKETT has made it a mission in life to explain the English language to the Russians. He has a column in Russian-language newspapers in Britain, and this enormous paperback (nearly 700 pages) is an impressive compilation of his work, bigger and better than the last edition.

It is an immensely entertaining book for anyone, certainly not only Russian native speakers. If you want a translation for 'to sashay',

'to skive', 'Hobson's choice', 'the rubber chicken circuit', 'Mickey Finn', or 'to rub something in' (to choose six entries at random), you will find a serviceable version in this book. If you're looking for bedside reading, this is ideal. And many entries explain the origin of words and phrases that I'm ready to bet even native English speakers never knew.

The book contains more than just linguistic information. I enjoyed the paragraph on Margaret Thatcher and her handbag (translation: инструмент для политического убеждения), though perhaps Lady Bracknell deserved a footnote, too. I was interested that the dreaded 'lurgy' was attributed to the Goon Show, but then I never much took to that programme. I had never even wondered about the origin of 'the whole caboodle' or 'shebang', but they are here. It is a pleasure to read entries such as 'a sandwich man' – and why does the literal 'человек-бутерброд' seem so amusing? One realizes that Russians are much more used to 'open' sandwiches and need to have the other sort (сандвичи) explained to them – laboriously! Sayings such as 'cast not a clout' are here alongside popular media-derived phrases ('her indoors'). 'Catchphrase' appears, but not 'signature tune'. But then it is far too easy to demand the inclusion of things that seem to be missing. Maybe future editions might give more attention to common sporting expressions which foreigners could not possibly be expected to know. I have remonstrated with colleagues for addressing foreign visitors who have with phrases like to 'field' questions, or 'hit for six'. Would even an American understand 'hit for six'?

One or two comments on individual entries, not as criticism, but to seek further enlightenment – on the Services' Russian courses of the 1950s we were taught лодырничать for 'to skive', something we did quite a lot and wished to do a lot more. Since this

is in the mid-century standard Soviet dictionary, I take it as non-slang; but Lockett gives no one-word translation for skive. And then skinhead. I seem to remember being told about 15 years ago that the 'in' expression was – wait for it – британский ужас! Was that so, and is it still used? Lockett is circumspect in his entry on political correctness, describing it as the avoidance of causing offence on racial, national, sexual or cultural matters. Under 'brainstorming', after a clear definition, he omits to mention that this expression has been banned in some quarters by those thundering idiots who think up words to be offended by. Russian readers might need this information, if only in order to deliberately irritate the PC ninnies.

While we congratulate ourselves that the rest of the world learns and speaks 'English', we forget that it is not our English that they speak. There is the so-called 'international English' spoken between parties neither of whom have it as a native language. It is a sort of cultureless Esperanto. You will know what I mean when you try to buy a railway ticket on the phone from some person at a call centre in Asia. Mr. Lockett's book is not for Russians who want no more than this. It presents the civilization of English-speaking countries through the language and the way it is used today. Happily, he deserves to be read widely by them – and also by us.

Copies at £10.00 may be ordered from [brian.lockett2@btopenworld.com](mailto:brian.lockett2@btopenworld.com)

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*Elena Cooper. Atlas Language Centre, Paignton, Devon.*

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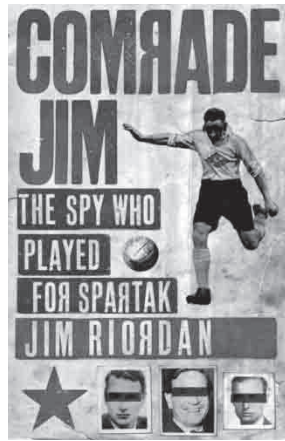


## Comrade Jim: The Spy Who Played For Spartak

Reviewed by  
James Muckle

**J**IM RIORDAN has an unusual CV for a professor of Russian: grammar school, National Service, university, teacher-training, Communist Party member, USSR Higher Party School graduate, translator for Progress Publishers in Moscow, player for Moscow Spartak, British university academic (one of his fields is the sociology of sport) and now successful children's author.

I first met Jim Riordan when he was a fellow 'spy' in the RAF. (Now, let's put an end to this nonsense about 'spying' – of course, publishers like to sell their books with sensational titles – but what we were doing was collecting intelligence that anyone with a VHF radio could have accessed). He then disappeared from my radar for 15 years before re-emerging, having exchanged the title of 'Corporal' for 'Dr' and later 'Professor' at Bradford and Surrey Universities. It was clear then that he had a very interesting story to tell. Apparently, he tried to sell the idea for a book on Russian football to the publisher, who rejected the idea and asked him to write his autobiography



by Jim Riordan, Fourth Estate, 2008, £14.95

the neighbours when he stayed on at school for A-levels, a course of action unusual for youngsters of his class. It was the National Service experience which kick-started his desire for higher education leading to a degree in Russian at Birmingham. Disillusionment at Labour-party policy and an interest in Marxism led him into the Communist Party and to a course in Moscow with his young wife, soon to bear a daughter. Now, if you are imagining young Mr Riordan as some hard-faced party fundamentalist, mouthing slogans and waving banners, forget it. His account of his time in Moscow reveals his strongly critical attitude to communism as practised by the Soviets, his dismay at the way British communists of an earlier generation had been persecuted and his contempt for officials of rigid mentality who eventually labelled

instead. Reluctantly, he agreed. Comrade Jim is the fascinating result.

Jim was a working-class boy in Portsmouth, who survived a direct hit on an air-raid shelter in which many were killed, an incident he makes use of in his acclaimed children's novel *Sweet Clarinet*. His family was put under some pressure from

him 'anti-Soviet'. Yet he loyally kept his party card to the bitter end, even after being refused a re-entry visa. Why? A man of clear vision, I suppose he retained his ideals and would not relinquish them simply because he saw others – even a whole society – flouting them. I invite readers of this intriguing book to reach their own conclusions.

Of course there is a lighter side too: portraits of British expatriate society in Moscow, and most of all of the Moscow football scene and his friendship with the greatest of Soviet goalkeepers, Lev Yashin. Jim takes us through his first momentous match in the first team for Spartak – and how did it happen that he got in? This story is bizarre and very Russian! Nevertheless, the book's ending is in a way tragic: not that it finishes in physical death and disaster, but because the author writes of the collective 'loss of memory' apparently experienced by former Russian friends and colleagues who will not discuss the old days, and who will not even turn up to meet him. He is dismayed (as we all must be) at this desire to blot out the past rather than face it – and the challenges of the present.

*James Muckle's new book, The Russian Language in Britain: An Historical Study of Learners and Teachers, is out now. SRP members can buy it for the special price of £12.95 (RRP £24.95). Send a cheque to Bramcote Press, 81 Rayneham Road, Ilkeston DE7 8RJ. We look forward to a review of the book in June and are sorry it hasn't appeared in this edition.*

## Music and words

### A technique for language learners

### Earworms Musical Brain Trainer

[www.earwormslearning.com](http://www.earwormslearning.com)

**E**ARWORMS is a technique for learning languages whereby audio phrases are played to background music. The company says the method's success lies in our natural ability to remember words when they are put to music.

The Earworms course attracted me for a number of reasons: I hoped it would be a 'short cut' to skip out too much grammar; I

could learn while driving (usually 'dead time') or at the gym. I also felt that at the age of 51, retention of phrases would be a problem, so I needed every bit of help I could get.

I was initially a little concerned about Earworms' claim. I myself am a musician and have found that music in a learning environment can be distracting and can diminish the ability to concentrate.

However, this was not the case in the Earworms project. The music was of a very good quality, pleasant and really did complement the phrases being repeated. Some of the phrases were dovetailed into the rhythm of the music, for instance on the track for learning numbers, there was a subtle 4/4 rhythmic pattern of 1,2,3,\_, 4,5,6,\_, 7,8,9,\_, 10,\_,\_,\_. The rhythms and the phrases went comfortably together, and I

feel it really assisted my learning.

The two speakers had particularly clear voices. Their cadence and relaxed tempo of delivery assisted comprehension. The fact that phrases were repeated also helped. This differs from some of the other audio schemes where speakers seem to bark phrases and the learner has to rewind to hear it again – not easy with many CD players. After about 4 weeks of listening to the Earworms CD in the car, I did find that phrases were popping into my head at other times, indeed, just the way one would experience re-hearing the lines of a song.

The claim of the people at Earworms did appear to have

been reflected in my experience. The company claims the method suits those with reading problems as the audio can be listened to without the supporting booklet. However, I think that with Russian, it might help to be able to understand the script, which would benefit from being more prominent in the booklet.

Without formal tutoring to accompany the technique, I would argue that the level of progression, in Russian at least, would be quite modest.

For example, Earworms only covers time phrases for hours greater than five, conveniently skipping the genitive case. It was only with the help of my Russian tutor that I understood the correct

way to tell the time. Earworms provides only one volume for Russian while other languages are available in two. Even after a month using Volume 1, combined with face-to-face tuition, I am keen to stretch my language learning further. A Volume 2 would have supplied a welcome continuation. However, I would say that the Earworms course delivers a good grounding in the basics.

The technique has definitely assisted my first attempts at Russian, and I would certainly use it to get a foot in the door to other languages before heading abroad.

Frank Glynn,  
beginner student

## Hammer and Tickle: A History of Communism told through Communist Jokes

- Who dug the White Sea canal?
- The right bank was dug by those who told jokes...
- And the left bank?
- By those who listened.

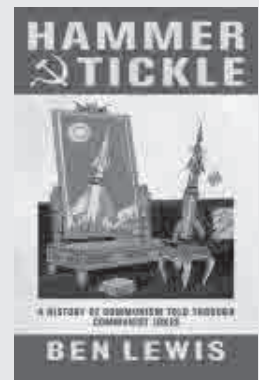
**J**OKES, or *anekdoty*, were a vital part of Communist popular culture. Witty, irreverent and deeply rooted in the political culture of the times, they reveal a great deal, not only about the official Communist ideology, but also about people's attitudes, and resistance, to it. Ben Lewis's book, based on a BBC4 documentary of the same name, formulates a parallel history of the Communist period, demonstrating how jokes developed and changed in response to historical events: the flourishing satire of the 1920s giving way to harder black humour in the face of mass oppression in the Stalinist era.

A man knocks on the door of his neighbour's apartments: 'Quick, quick, get up, get dressed.' Inside he hears the

screams of fear. 'Don't worry' he continues, 'it's nothing serious. I'm not the NKVD. I just want to tell you that your flat is on fire.'

Hammer and Tickle recounts Lewis's quest to prove that humour played a vital role in bringing down the Communist system. Particularly illuminating are the sections which deal with official jokes in publications such as *Krokodil*. Satire against bureaucrats and lazy workers was used by the authorities as an outlet for negative attitudes and thus, paradoxically, a means of strengthening the system. Lewis concludes that although jokes did contribute to the corrosion of the system, they could not be the powerful tool of resistance that he initially assumed. Far from weakening the book this proves to be its strongest aspect: Lewis reaches a more balanced

Reviewed by  
Sam Sherry



by Ben Lewis,  
Orion, 2008, £14.99

conclusion than previous historians who have tended to over-emphasise the power of the joke in Communist societies.

Combining historical narrative with accounts of his travels around Eastern Europe and his relationship with an East German girlfriend sometimes overwhelms the main thrust of the book. Lewis also occasionally allows his language to drift into pretentiousness. Nonetheless, this is an engaging book for the general reader, worth the cover price for the wealth of jokes and rare comic illustrations it contains.



# St Petersburg and the British

The City through the Eyes of British Visitors and Residents

Reviewed by  
Antony Wood



by Anthony Cross,  
Frances Lincoln,  
2008, £25

**A**NTHONY CROSS is the author of a number of previous books on Anglo-Russian relations; he has made this subject very much his own. His latest book is a wonderfully entertaining anthology of British experience of the city from its foundation by Peter the Great in 1703 up to the present day. For three centuries, broken only by a seven-year period before and during the Second World War when it was closed to foreigners, the city was continuously observed by the

British. One is struck by the long-standing rapport between Russians and British and the Russian fondness for things British, which, as Anthony Cross reminds us from time to time in his linking narrative, isn't always the same as Russian fondness for individual Britons. The British impact on St Petersburg – aside from Byron and Scott – is evident in trade, symbolized by the commanding street of English merchants' houses known as the English Embankment, and in the work of such architects and planners as the two Scots Charles Cameron, Catherine the Great's favourite builder, and William Hastie, who brought about uniform Neo-classical facades throughout Russia.

St Petersburg, of course, visitors had a city of European inspiration they could understand and admire, a 'Venice of the north'. Although they didn't at first. After Peter the Great's death in 1725, with the city still scarcely half-built, fashionable society was quick to scuttle back to the old comforts of Moscow. Sixteen years later a young aristocrat on the grand tour gave his impressions of the new Russian capital: 'Petersburg is built in spite of all the four elements ... the Earth is all a bog, the Air commonly foggy, the Water sometimes fills half the houses, and the Fire burns down half the town at a time, the houses being for the most part built of wood.' Then under Peter's daughter Empress Elizabeth came the insistence on stone building in central St Petersburg; this was the Baroque age of Rastrelli, builder of the Winter Palace as we know it. The magical transformation continues: another 20 years and Rastrelli is forgotten in a frenetic wave of Neoclassical building under Catherine the Great. Another young touring aristocrat comments: 'I am struck with a pleasing astonishment, while I wander among havens, streets, and public buildings, which have arisen, as by enchantment, within the memory of men still alive, and have

converted the marshy islands of the Neva into one of the most magnificent cities of the earth.' But 'This city is as yet only an immense outline ...' By the middle of the 19th century the outline was to be substantially filled in.

Against the backdrop of the changing face of the city, diplomats and their wives, merchants and travellers, professionals such as doctors and engineers, writers and journalists from Defoe to Isaiah Berlin, Alan Sillitoe and Colin Thubron describe scenes from Russian life: the building of an exquisite palace of ice under the prank-loving Empress Anne, which was to stand for three months; a 'masquerade with illuminations' for 5,000 people 'admitted without distinction' at Peterhof in the late 1740s; the traditional 'blessing of the water' ceremony at the breaking of the ice. As one witness puts it with relish: 'social life is less inhibited than in England.' There are harsher scenes, from flogging and beheading in early St Petersburg to destruction and desolation.



## Strange Telescopes

Reviewed by  
Wendy Muzlanova



by Daniel Kalder,  
Faber and Faber,  
2008, £14.99, 416pp

**Y**OU want to read this? Here is the forecast. Expect chaos, delays, deviants, exorcists and, it has to be said, large doses of boredom, on both my part and Daniel Kalder's. The inclement weather of *Strange Telescopes* will be interspersed with cynical spells, relieved only by the author's sunny intervals of acute humour. Well, perhaps 'sunny' is not exactly the correct word.

Welcome to the subterranean world of the strange. We start off in the sewer system of Moscow. I am not enjoying the ride and neither is Kalder. This is evident.

The book is introduced by a quote from Gogol – 'Скучно на этом свете, господа!' (It's dull in this world, gentlemen!)

Now, what I would like to know is this – did Kalder select this quote before he wrote the book or afterwards? Is the quote an indication of why he wants to venture off on great and hapless trips in search of the odd and bizarre? Is the quote a summation of his journey?

By way of our guide, we are introduced to the self-styled Lord of the Diggers. We end up feeling sorry for him. Previously, Kalder had been under the fond impression that the Diggers 'were a group of sensitive, educated people who had turned their backs on modern life and retreated to the network of tunnels and secret bunkers beneath the city'. But he is disillusioned by his friend Sergei, who informs him that the Diggers 'live on the surface, in flats, like everybody else'. He is still in thrall, however, to rumours of secret Metro lines, Ivan the Terrible's lost library and underground vampires.

We also meet Edward, who is passionate and obsessive about making a film about exorcisms, in order to warn modern society of the danger of demons. Edward has his own demons, however, and loneliness is surely one of them. Kalder gives him some much-needed advice about dating – 'When you meet a girl for the first time, don't talk about exorcism.' I have to say that however I felt about the book in general, Kalder is open and sympathetic to the people he meets on his travels. As a reader, I did end up caring about them.

He is not always so complimentary about places – 'Komsomolsk consists mainly of dirt,

dust and decaying concrete...throughout the day humans can be seen standing around in abandoned yards, willing their own brains to explode.'

There is no doubt that Kalder is thoroughly steeped in his subject matter, although this statement just sounds unfortunately nasty, when he is writing about the Moscow sewer system. I am a huge fan of his first novel, 'Lost Cosmonaut' – an inspired, irreverent, deeply funny jaunt – and I fervently hope that his third novel will be great, but in this second work, I feel that he has lost his way. It is true that his wit is biting and he has an exceptional turn of phrase – but for how long can an author write about non-events, recurrent disappointments and frustrations without demotivating his audience in terms of reading the whole book until its conclusion? I felt like I was stuck on the greyest train in the world, waiting for a destination which I believed would never arrive.

With all apologies to Mr. Kalder, not even the promise of an encounter with the 'Jesus of Siberia' could keep me on track and I alighted at page 194.

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# Reaching out to Ukraine



**D** NIPROKIDS was set up by a group of Hibernian fans led by Steven Carr and Mark Strachan. When the Edinburgh club played Dnepropetrovsk, the supporters visited a local orphanage, and since then have been raising money for the children of the city.

Part of the group's work is turnstile collections – at a home game against Rangers, they raised £1400 and a further £1000 at a game against Aberdeen. The money will buy presents for the children at the Odinkova and Tabachnaya orphanages in the city.

On November 6, Dniprokids held a charity dinner at the Sheraton Hotel in Edinburgh, which was opened by Grant Stott. The night raise £12,500.

In Ukraine, when babies reach the age of one, mothers receive \$30 a month from the government. For those mums that don't have the support of friends and relatives, this is barely enough to buy nappies, let alone food and clothes.

To try to help mothers in difficulty, Dniprokids set up the Dnipro Kids Baby Centre.

Its first month has been

a success – single mums, orphaned girls and mums with lots of children are grateful to have somewhere to receive help and support.

Sveta was one of the centre's first clients. She herself is an orphan from the Vasylovka orphanage in the Dnepropetrovsk region, but is now a student at a Teacher Training School. Sveta was funded and given accommodation by the government. When she fell pregnant, the school said that she either had to leave the school, and lose her funding and accommodation, or give the baby to an orphanage. Sveta has found emotional, material and legal support at the centre, and we are hopeful that the situation will be resolved.

In its first month, the centre already has 50 registered clients. We are managing to help most, even if it is just with a small amount of nappies, food and clothing.

They are all very thankful to the generosity of the people of Scotland who graciously share their love with kids in Dnepropetrovsk.

[www.dniprokids.com](http://www.dniprokids.com)



## Letter from SRF member Natasha Black

### What a Great Event!

On Sunday, September 14, the SRF welcomed a delegation from St Petersburg: the president and members of the St Petersburg Association for International Cooperation.

For SRF members it was a very significant day – the first event in the new Scotland-Russia Institute.

On this happy occasion we cannot miss the opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you to Jenny Carr and to express our gratitude and appreciation. But for Jenny's unsurpassable determination, inexhaustible energy and initiative, and her hard work that was so demanding and time-consuming, we would never have had such an institute, not even in our wildest dreams.

Now this dream has come true. Jenny has many ideas for new projects and we are happy to support her in all ways possible. With Jenny at the helm we shall sail confidently to new horizons.

Thank you, Jenny,

N.B.



TOP LEFT: Baby Bogdan with nappies provided by the Dnipro Kids Baby Centre

ABOVE: Little Rita receives a warm winter coat from Scotland

LEFT: Sveta and Lena, one of the volunteers, sort baby clothes



Children at Holy Cross Parish in Edinburgh (above) raised £50 for the St Gregory's Foundation by selling brownies. The money will go towards helping street children in Mkurnali, Georgia. Information about the project was available at a stall (pictured above right). The organisation also does work in Russia and as part of its fundraising will be selling Christmas cards at the Scotland-Russia Institute. Visit [www.stgregorysfoundation.org.uk](http://www.stgregorysfoundation.org.uk) for more information.



## EVENTS TO LOOK FORWARD TO AT THE SCOTLAND-RUSSIA INSTITUTE

### January 10 **Tarkovsky's Zerkalo**

Edinburgh Uni RusSoc will show the film, which will be followed by a talk relating Tarkovsky's work to our current exhibition. Details tbc. Time probably 1pm onwards.

### January 15 **Russia & the Credit Crunch**

Talk by David Cant, business consultant, author of *Russia: Market Approaches*, and incidentally one of our most popular speakers at the SRF business conference in 2005.

### January 29 **From Red Square to Tianenmen Square**

A Journey on the Trans-Siberian and Trans Mongolian Railways from Moscow to Beijing. Illustrated talk by Meg Luckins, former chair and co-founder of the SRF

### February 2-28 **Splendour Perfected**

Trade Relations Between Byzantium and the Countries along the Silk Road. Exhibition of photographs related to Byzantine trade and international relations

### February 20 **Uzbek Music: Love Terrestrial and Divine**

A glimpse into the traditionally private music of the women of Uzbekistan. Playing the Uzbek Dutar (plucked lute) and Doira (frame drum), Razia Sultanova will give a rendition of Uzbek female music.

### February 27 **The Silk Route: Image, Politics and the Invention of History**

Illustrated lecture by Warwick Ball, archaeologist and author, on the myth and reality behind the Silk Route, and how it has become a part of contemporary international political spin.

More information on all these events can be found on [www.scotlandrussiaforum.org](http://www.scotlandrussiaforum.org) or tel. 0131 668 3635.

EXHIBITIONS: Open to all. No entrance charge. Tues-Fri 11am to 4pm daily, most Saturdays 1.30-4pm. Institute closed 24 December, reopens 6 January. Other times by appointment.

TALKS: 7.30pm, talk followed by light refreshments. Entry £5 (£2 members and students). Advance booking necessary.