

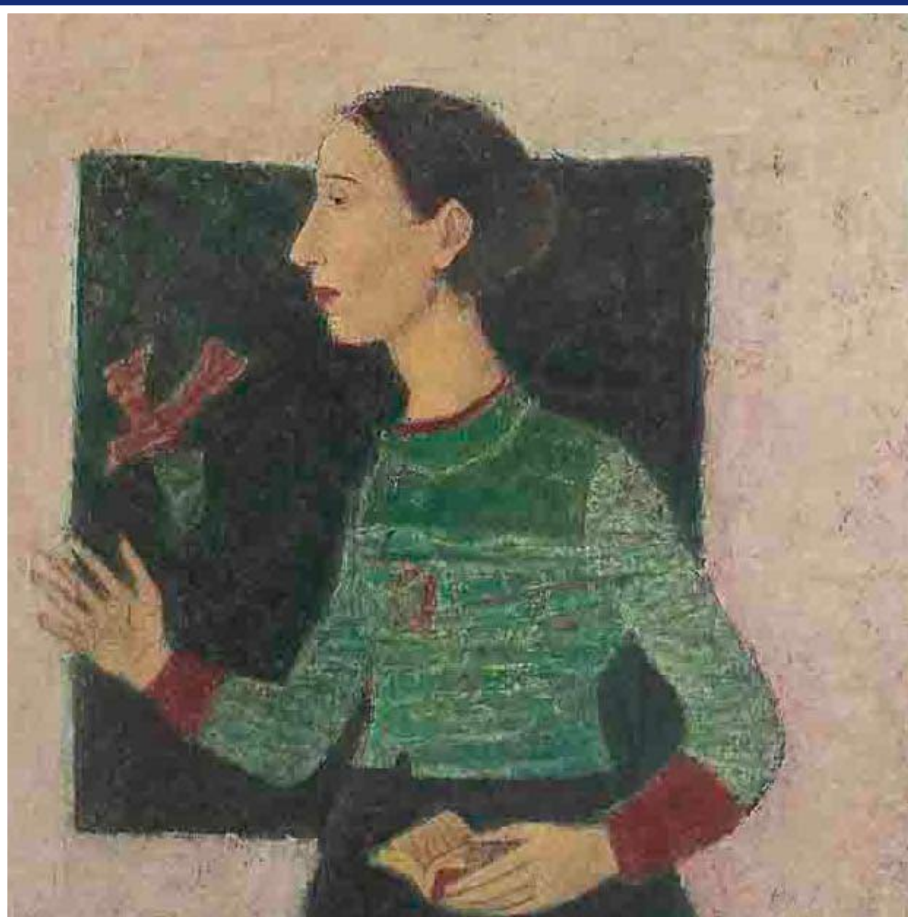
The Scotland-Russia Forum

# Review



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Part of this year's exhibitions at the Scotland-Russia Forum Institute, clockwise from top left: Zerkalo | Mirror by Alina Kisina, Feodosia Coast by Vasyi Floreskul, Spring by Olga Yukhtina-Geoghegan and Letter by Gennadii Gogoliuk

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Dear Readers,

This edition is packed full of articles, essays and reviews. So before I go any further, I would like to express warm thanks to those who contributed to it.

We welcome our new Honorary President, Sir Malcolm Rifkind, who reminds us why in times like these the Scotland-Russia Forum, and organisations like it, are so important. We cover the state of the Russian language today with a review of a new grammar book by professors at Glasgow University, an article in Russian about the change in language from 20th to 21st Century and a review of a book about the study of Russian in Britain. We also bring you reviews of two new collections of poetry, a look at films about minority peoples and human resistance, articles about Scots travelling Central Asia and Scots pondering a dreich Moscow spring. Our reviews editor visits two new restaurants and tells us what she thinks (health warning: do not read on an empty stomach).

The SRF Institute is going from strength to strength and our chairperson reflects on its first year. Our front cover is graced by some of the works you can catch at the exhibitions there. And in August the cultural centre is going to be on the list of venues for the Edinburgh Art Festival. Have a look at our website for a list of all the wonderful things going on, and stop by.

All that remains for me is to wish you a long, lazy, happy, hazy summer.

Chris Delaney  
Editor

Editor: Chris Delaney  
Reviews editor: Wendy Muzlanova

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## Honorary President Sir Malcolm Rifkind

I AM delighted to have the opportunity to write to you as the Honorary President of the Scotland Russia Forum. These are unusual times for Russia. On the one hand, Russia is going from strength to strength. It has established itself as one of the key players in the world's energy markets, with a major stake in both the oil and gas markets. Plans are afoot to expand the size and scope of the military, which has become very dilapidated over the course of the last decade. Preparations have also begun for the 2014 Olympic Games, which will provide Russia with a unique opportunity to showcase its culture.

Yet Russia also faces sizeable challenges. Demographic trends suggest that its overall population will decline in coming years. Moreover the collapse in world energy prices is posing a major challenge to Russia's economy, which depends heavily on the export of energy.

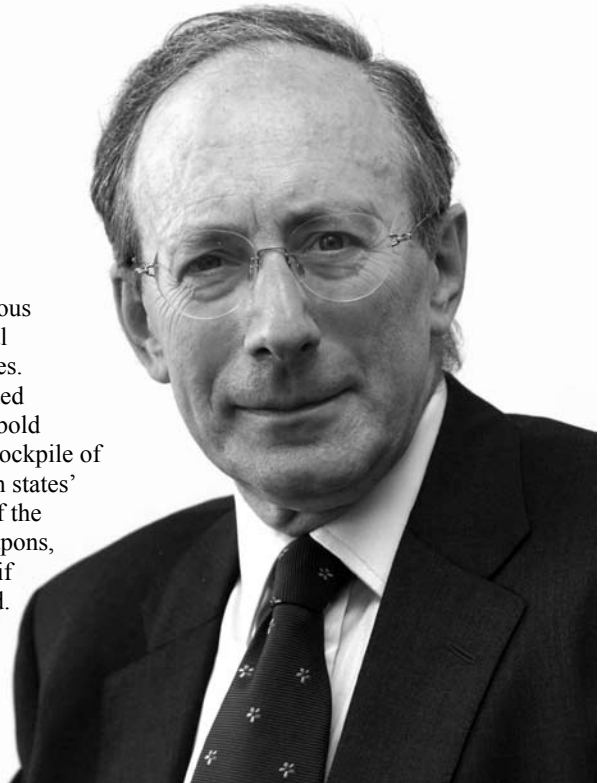
A similar dichotomy can be detected in Russia's relationship with the western world. In some areas, there have been very positive developments. Russia played a central role in discussions about the global economy at the recent G20 summit in London. It has also provided logistical assistance to NATO forces, in order to help the alliance with its mission in Afghanistan. Such co-operation would have been unthinkable a quarter of century ago, and is a testament to how much Russia has changed in recent years.

There has also been a tremendous improvement in Russia's bilateral relationship with the United States. President Medvedev has responded positively to President Obama's bold initiative to reduce the world's stockpile of nuclear weapons. Given that both states' armaments include 95 per cent of the world's total supply of these weapons, such good relations will be vital if the policy is to get off the ground.

YET there are also signs that familiar tensions are likely to endure.

As they did during the Cold War, external observers continue to struggle to determine the Kremlin's true thinking. Such efforts are likely to be compounded by last year's transfer of power from Vladimir Putin to Dmitry Medvedev, which although smooth, established a somewhat mysterious political relationship.

Doubts also remain about Russia's true intentions in what it refers to as its 'near abroad'. Last year's military intervention in Georgia was a very overt sign that Moscow does not intend to abdicate its traditional role as a great power. Likewise, recent months have seen similar, albeit less subtle actions. The standoff between Russia and the Ukraine, which cut off gas



supplies to much of Eastern Europe, was further evidence of an uneasy tension along Russia's western border.

These disparities make it very difficult to determine how the UK should respond to Russia. Is it a weak country that requires our assistance, or a strong country to be feared? Will it continue to be an uneasy partner? Might it suddenly emerge as a real friend, or perhaps a hostile enemy? Since all of these questions remain unresolved, greater efforts to understand Russia can only be a good thing. For that reason, I am thankful to the Scotland Russia Forum for the vital role it plays in increasing awareness of Russia, and I am delighted to be able to play a part in its work.

## Scotland-Russia Institute... One Year On

WITH great excitement we collected the keys to 9 South College Street in June 2008. There followed an



A visitor to the Novosti 'Russia-Britain' exhibition points to a photograph of his grandfather, Andrei Gromyko

enjoyable and messy period of painting and other refurbishment, several opening parties in September, and our first events. Since January the pace has hotted up: an average of two talks a month; a busy and varied programme of exhibitions; non-stop visitors – from casual passers-by and exhibition goers to delegations from the Urals Scottish Society and St Petersburg City Council; the opening of our lending library; a shop selling Russian books, textbooks and gifts; the establishment of a business networking group; a Russian-speaking tea circle; and a new Honorary President, Sir Malcolm Rifkind.

We will be busy during Edinburgh's August festival period too. Our exhibition of the work of Russian artist

Genadii Gogoliuk is part of the Edinburgh Art Festival and there will be a number of other events here.

We are already making plans for our 2009-10 programme. Highlights will include a talk by Geoffrey Hosking in October and an exhibition of the work of the 19th Century photographer William Carrick in November (jointly with the Portrait Gallery).

We have definitely stepped up a gear from the days we had to hire halls for every meeting – when we could offer members only a monthly talk, no exhibitions, no place to call in for tea and a chat, no library.

All our activities are possible thanks to the efforts of a growing band of volunteers – from those who organise events to those who man the front desk five days a week and welcome visitors. We now have over 260 members and are delighted how many ask 'How ►►

can I be involved?' when they join. And most importantly we are starting to get Russian noticed. For example, we join the other language organisations (Goethe Institute, French Institute, SCILT, etc) at a quarterly meeting with Scottish local authorities to discuss language provision in schools; we work closely with Edinburgh City Council on a variety of Russian projects; we are collaborating with the Scottish Government, the SDI, Glasgow University and others on business projects; and we are in discussion with Russkii Mir on ways to encourage Russian language learning in Scotland.

Getting Russia and its neighbouring countries noticed, and if possible understood, is why we are here. That means getting Russian into schools, support for university Russian departments, and encouraging awareness of Russian culture, current affairs and business in society as a whole.

We would like to continue to develop our activities and the end of our first year means we have to start thinking about finance to ensure our long-, or even medium-, term future. We

received a donation from S&N plc to cover three years' rent and associated costs of our new premises. So we now have two years left. We also received a generous grant from Awards for All which allowed us to furnish and equip the premises. The cost of activities is (just) covered by membership fees, income from events, etc.

We need to do more than just continue to pay for our premises. It is becoming increasingly clear that we need also to fund at least one and ideally two members of staff. Without that we shall have difficulty

doing much more than at present – and even the present level of activity will not continue unless other SRF members are prepared to take over in due course from the current key officers when they step down from the committee as the constitution requires.

So – work begets work. Year one has been very interesting, enjoyable and (we think) worthwhile but it is only a start. Given adequate finance there is far more we could offer!

**Jenny Carr, SRF chairperson**



Exhibitions running at the SRF Institute include, clockwise from left, Kirill Sokolov, The Silk Road and Turkmen Art

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# Russian whisky lover on the loose

by Andrei Rogatchevski

THE RENOWNED Russian writer and TV personality Dmitry Bykov did a whirlwind tour of Scotland visiting Edinburgh, St Andrews and Glasgow in the space of two days (23-24 April), at the invitation of the Scotland Russia Forum.

The tall and rotund quick-witted forty-something author of over twenty books of poetry, journalism and fiction charmed and teased his audiences, in Russian and English, at the University of Edinburgh, the University of St Andrews and the RCS Haven in Glasgow. At a specially organised event at the Scotland-Russia Institute, he also read his writings for children to a small but appreciative group of kids from the Russian speaking community.

Bykov is not yet widely known in the UK, but this might change with the English translation of his anti-Utopian futuristic epic in the alternative history genre, Jewhad (ZhD in the original Russian), which is coming out later this year with the Alma Books publishers. Bykov's earlier novel, Opravdanie, came out in French in 2005 as La Justification.

This is not Bykov's first visit to Scotland.



Dmitry Bykov in the footsteps of JK Rowling at Edinburgh's The Elephant House

He came to Edinburgh in 2005 to cover the release of JK Rowling's sixth instalment of the Harry Potter saga for one of the Russian periodicals he regularly contributes to. On another occasion, also in Edinburgh, Mr Bykov, a whisky fan, made an effort to meet the Scottish novelist Charles MacLean, who penned and edited more than half a dozen non-fictional books about the Scottish national drink, some of which have been translated into Russian.

While Edinburgh proved an instant success with Bykov, he might benefit, it seems, from another trip further afield, as his private remarks about rural Fife ('just like your typical middle Russian landscape') and the

East End of Glasgow ('the world's backside') appear a little too impulsive. Ah well, what else can be expected of a man who mistook both the Glasgow City Chambers and the Gallery of Modern Art for a church?

Nonetheless, the overwhelming entertainer, who prefers to be called 'Dima' although he is anything but dim, has returned to Russia leaving behind a fair number of new Scotland-based friends and admirers. We know you better now, Dima, and we still like you. Haste ye back!

Bykov's visit was facilitated and partly sponsored by Academia Rossica.

## notes from moscow essay

SO, the economic crisis. Food is going up in price, my artist and designer friends have no clients and I can't find a proper job. But Moscow carries on consuming as usual. It is the small towns and industrial regions that will suffer from unemployment and poverty. That is all I have to say on that cheery subject.

Although I see the occasional seagull in Moscow I am always conscious that we are miles away from the sea. I have the impression that I am sat on a vast shoulder of land, a comfortable, thick, earthy wadge with no ragged salty edges. When I want to be reflective, I don't know which way to look. I've started to notice differences in people's health consciousness. For example, in the UK I have never heard of iodine as a key dietary component. But in Russia it is a popular supplement and people anxiously buy seaweed salad to make sure they get iodine. I had a nosebleed and people at work said I should wash it with salt to extract nutrients. It might not be connected but after that I developed a craving to put caviar up my nose. In my fantasy I took

the largest, juiciest red bubbles I could find, like vitamin capsules, and placed them one by one in my nose. Then I squeezed with my fingers, popping them, salty elixir of pure health healing all my woes. I think I should write a column for a health journal.

Easter was a week later than in the UK and is a good example of how holidays give structure to everyday life regardless of whether or not you believe. There was a palpable sense that Moscow was collecting its strength to spring back full of life. On the day before Easter Sunday I was crying all day, empty and numb, weighed down by grey depression. I dragged myself out to meet some friends and we sat around with heads slumped in hands as if waiting for something. No one had anything to say. No one knew what was wrong. After midnight someone remembered. 'Hey guys! Christ is risen!' Suddenly everyone was animated, ringing distant family and old acquaintances, bidding them 'Christ is risen' and the answer 'He is risen indeed'. It was strange to hear so many atheists doing this with no

irony. We raised our glasses with laughter and joy in endless toasts to resurrection. We danced for hours to celebrate the return of life. I walked all the way home full of fluid strength, warm although it was cold, and gave directions to three separate groups of people. Most of the people on the streets at that late hour were not the usual revellers but respectable grannies on their way home from church.

For the May holidays – Workers' Day on the 1st and Victory Day on the 9th – lots of people leave town to go to a dacha. The newspapers can say what they want about tank parades on Red Square, but when you are in a sleepy village with goats bleating and food cooking on coals, it is easier to celebrate victory as a personal concept. At the start of May there was barely any buds on the trees and we were beginning to think that spring had been cancelled. But five days later full juicy foliage and greenery was everywhere, and we switched our collective mindsets to summer.

Steph Droop

# Cultural Learnings of Central Asia for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Scotland?

Oliver Edwards reflects on his travels around Central Asia

**M**AYBE a slightly facetious title, although I lost count of the number of times Borat was raised as soon as I said I was Kazakhstan-bound, for five weeks of travelling and volunteering around Central Asia.

For those looking for a break from over-priced, travel-supplement-type tourist traps, you could do worse than Central Asia. Despite the proximity of Afghanistan, this is a stable part of the world which has much to offer those looking for a less conventional holiday.

Visa regulations are being trimmed, travel is highly affordable once you arrive, and the area has that dubious, short-lived advantage of not being tainted by tourists. I found that a lot of locals recognised that Central Asia was not the world's number one tourist destination and so would go out of their way to accommodate me. Add to this the uncommercial tourist infrastructure and Central Asia is ideal for independently minded travellers, although there is no shortage of reputable tour companies for those who want a little less of the uncertainty.

It's worth remembering that there was a heavy Turkic influence on the USSR from Tatars in Russia and the Central Asian Republics. Likewise, the Soviet influence is still clearly visible in Central Asia, from the penchant for hard liquors even in mainly Muslim countries to the enduring use of Russian as a means of bringing together diverse peoples: Russians, Ukrainians, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Koreans, Chechens, Tatars.

Kazakhstan was a convenient dumping ground for 'troublesome' ethnic groups, to say nothing about political prisoners, heavy industry, nuclear testing and space launches. Unsurprisingly, building a coherent national identity has been a considerable challenge for Kazakhstan given its strong nomadic tradition. And yet slowly but surely, it seems to be coming together with the Kazakh language being spoken more widely,

particularly among younger people, even if for an outsider this Turkic language in a Cyrillic script of its own may seem impenetrable.

In Uzbekistan, if you can get over people's initial fear of talking about politics, it soon becomes clear that President Islam Karimov's approval rating is not as high as the government claims. And yet if ever there was a case of people not getting the politicians they deserve, it must be Uzbekistan. I was struck by the hospitality, kindness and courtesy towards visitors, as well as a genuine pride in the country's many cultural and historical attractions. Many in the region depend on tourism to make ends meet and this can be one of the few opportunities for contact with the outside world. Once inside Uzbekistan, it is easy to find places where your travel dollars will find their way into the local economy and judging by the fistful of tatty notes \$20 would get you on exchange, that money is needed. Yet this is a settled culture with a Silk Road heritage stretching back over thousands of years. Once seen, few can forget the dazzling blue and green of ancient cities such as Samarkand and Bukhara, each with their bustle of trade and consumption of endless cups of tchai. Some things remain unchanged by empire and the passage of time.

Kyrgyzstan is an altogether smaller and more enchanted mountainous republic. It has

enthusiastically opened its doors to visitors, reduced visa regulations and introduced 'Community-Based Tourism', which gives visitors the chance to stay in yurts with 'real' families, surrounded by stunning alpine scenery. In summer, the capital Bishkek has 'lights out' in certain parts of

the capital on different nights – a great chance to see the stars and wander in the dark.

I was enchanted by the places and people of Central Asia. For those who prefer more independent and less conventional travel, I cannot think of a better part of the world to visit.



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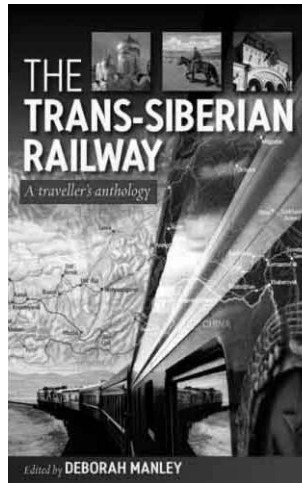
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## The Trans-Siberian Railway: A Traveller's Anthology

Reviewed by  
Mike Falchikov



by Deborah Manley,  
Signal Books, 2009,  
pp. 320, £12.99

**T**HIS book is a successor to Deborah Manley's earlier anthology on the same subject, published 20 years previously, and includes the introduction to the 1988 volume, which gives a short sketch of the railway's history. This reviewer has not encountered the earlier volume and so cannot judge how much has been transferred wholesale.

The current work has six items from 2007, and the next most recent pieces, written by Ms Manley herself, are from 1986. This is a pity, as travel on the Trans-Siberian has expanded considerably in the last 20 years and more comparisons with the Soviet period are needed.

The author explains her obsession with the Trans-Siberian by quoting another travel writer, Lesley Blanch, who first travelled the journey in her imagination as a young child. Blanch apparently lived to 101 and made the journey at some point in her life, but we're not told when and the two extracts from her travel notes give no clue as to whether she really ever travelled the Trans-Siberian.

Manley, however, certainly has, and states that since the end of the Soviet Union, she has made frequent journeys, at least between Moscow and Perm. So one would have liked her to describe ways in which the travel experience has changed in recent years.

The anthology itself is divided into 11 sections, some are geographical, describing different sections of the line, some are historical, including the why and the how of the line's construction and two sections at least are devoted to daily life on the train,

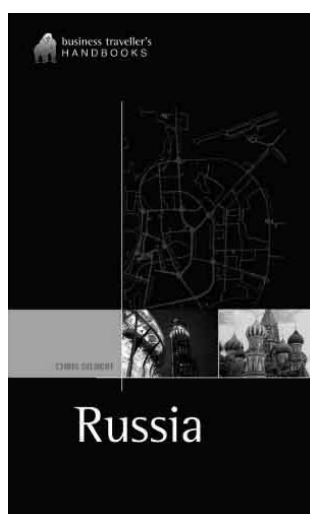
describing well the often claustrophobic minutiae of the hard/soft carriage, the vagaries of the buffet car, the fluctuating relationships with fellow-travellers and the horrors of the toilets. Other contributors offer a wider view and discuss, both positively and negatively, the role of the Trans-Siberian in Russia's expansion into Siberia, its glory in opening up swathes of new territory and shame in transporting prisoners and exiles.

When considering Manley's choice of contributors, there is an obvious limitation of outlook. Certainly they were enterprising people (missionaries, businessmen or curious travellers) but they are mostly Anglophone, mainly American or British, with at best only limited Russian (transcriptions of Russian phrases are often incorrect).

One exception is Leo Deutsch's early account from the 1880s – before the Trans-Siberian officially existed – of a journey by a group of political exiles. Another is a harrowing 1941 account by a young Polish girl, Esther Hauzig, of being transported in a cattle truck to a Siberian gulag.

Many of the pieces are from the railway's early period and contributions tend to thin out after 1914. There is, however, an interesting section on how the Trans-Siberian was taken over during the Civil War, including an account by the future General Brian Horrocks of being taken prisoner by the Red Army when trying to lead a contingent of White forces to safety. And from two American radical ladies, hoping to set up a commune in Siberia in the 1920s, on how much war damage remains along the line.

There are wonderful extracts from Peter Fleming (brother of Ian) from the 1930s and Paul Theroux and Eric Newby from the 1970s, but the richness and diversity of the earlier accounts is never reproduced. Perhaps this was to some extent understandable in the era in which the first version of the anthology was conceived, but if one is thinking of an overarching theme – the relationship between Russia and Siberia and the role of the Trans-Siberian in this – then with the passage of the time and the availability of so much diverse material, this anthology must count as a slight disappointment. It is certainly an enjoyable read and will be of use to the prospective traveller, but somehow this reviewer is left feeling that with a more ambitious selection, a more substantial book could have emerged.



by Christopher Gilbert,  
Gorilla Guides, 2008,  
pp.224, £14.95

## The Business Traveller's Handbook to Russia

Reviewed by  
John Stein

**T**HIS guide is consciously different from those in the Lonely Planet series. Its hotel list alone demonstrates that it is directed towards oligarchs or senior executives who have no compunction in looting shareholders' funds!

It is perhaps unfair of me – but I am Scottish and revolted by the thought of paying these silly sums to stay in a place advertised, self-consciously, as the epitome of luxury, and where you might be anywhere on the planet!

The budget business traveller might be well advised to consult another guide when researching accommodation. Also, remember, Russian hospitality is rightly famous. Quite apart from the personal friendships you will make, many organisations will help you by

meeting your train and finding local accommodation when you visit them on business. You must pay for your own hotel, of course, but this service can be a great weight off your mind.

The guide starts with a very readable potted geography, history and up-to-date report on modern Russia. It alludes to the bureaucrats' influence in the country. Bureaucratic problems are endemic in all countries, especially at Customs and when you are setting up a legal entity. What one needs to be prepared for in Russia, however, is the bureaucratic approach which pervades all levels of state bureaucracy. Getting a visa is almost as Byzantine as for a foreigner trying to get a UK visa! You need to get an invitation from a sponsor, however, you can by-pass the whole nonsense by getting visa procurement firms to do the job for you (bearing in mind that the quicker you need it, the more expensive it is). Once in Russia, you need an invitation to visit most customers' plants, and the whole procedure is – unbelievably for the 21st Century – still carried out by fax!

There are some interesting 'typos' in the guide. For example, Crimea is said to be a peninsular; and the price for securing (unofficially) single occupancy of a train sleeper is hilariously shown as '???'.

There is a comprehensive guide to government and non-governmental agencies, which will be extremely useful to anyone setting up in Russia.

A very worthwhile read for the serious businessman. As it makes clear, Russia is an enormous country, with a large population, and one which we in the West ignore at our loss.

## Guests of Eternity

Reviewed by  
Wendy Muzlanova

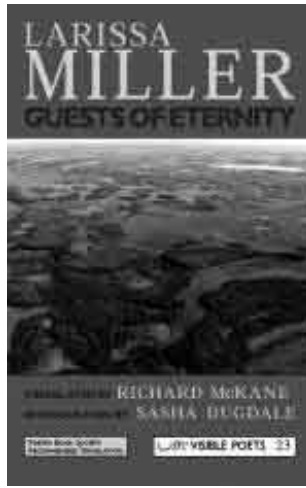
**T**HIS book is one of a series entitled Visible Poets from Arc Publications, in which the translator aims 'not to hide but to reveal the original, to make it visible'.

At the beginning of this work, there is an inscription which reads, 'In memoriam Arseny Tarkovsky' – a good beginning as far as I am concerned. If I were pressed to give my 'Best-Poems-In-The-World-Ever' list, Tarkovsky's *Только этого мало* (Not Enough) would be right up there in the Top10. If you ever get the chance to see the film *Stalker* (directed by his son Andrei), then you will hear a beautiful reading of this poem.

Alternatively, just 'You Tube' it on the internet!

But this review, after all, is about Larissa Miller – and not about either of the Tarkovskys.

*Guests of Eternity* is a collection of Miller's poems, spanning forty years. The works are presented in chronological order, beginning in the 1960s – to read her poetry is to witness the unfolding of events, to experience happenings. Occasionally, her words sound naive and unstructured, but I am betting that this is a



by Larissa Miller,  
Arc Publications, 2009,  
pp. 138, £9.99

woman whose pen rarely ever left her hand, whose thoughts never strayed too far from poetry, during these 40 years of writing. I am certain that those readers with a sound knowledge of modern Russian history will appreciate the way in which Miller reflects those events which were contemporaneous with her works.

At times, Miller's writing seems reminiscent of Blake. She deals with heaven and hell, living and dying, in both abstract and concrete ways:

'Everything is sung to the clumps, to the green twig, that is rocked by the little bird.'

'Всё воспето до клочка, до зелёного сучка, что колеблем птахой.'

Unexpected subjects are given animation and personification, 'The clouds fly across the sky raving about the limitless distance' '...бредя далью запредельной, летят по небу облака.'

It is a challenge to affix a particular style to Miller's writing, so let's not. We have here the physical, the metaphysical, the monotheistic and the pantheistic.

The highlight of this collection, for me, has to be the profoundly moving poem, *On the death of Yasha K.*

We translated this work at the Perth Russian Conversation Group one morning and more than one of us had a lump in the throat as we did. Throughout this book, Richard McKane has done a wonderful job of translating Miller's words, but if the English translation is able to stir your emotions, then Miller's original Russian will rend them....

'И повторяет: "Яшка, сын мой, Яшка". И повторяет: "Яшка, мой сынок.'

Look out for the new Arc publication of 'Pro Eto – That's What' by Mayakovsky featuring 'the 11 inspired photomontages that Alexander Rodchenko designed to interleave and illuminate the text.' It sounds like a treat to me!



by Regina Derieva,  
Arc Publications, 2009,  
pp. 170, £9.89

## The Sum Total of Violations

Reviewed by  
Susan Geddes

**O**NE ONE of my first dips into this book was at the poem *Grasp*:

'Life is an inn,  
where you spend one night only  
and in the morning  
they find you dead.'

In order to fully appreciate the poems it is perhaps helpful to know just a little more about Derieva's life of exile than is contained in the book's biography – from the years of grudging acceptance writing in Karaganda ('perhaps the most dismal corner of the former Soviet Union') to the difficult years in Israel, to her family finally being granted asylum in the US and Sweden, her poems are characterised by a 'sense of existential exile', as poet and academic Tomas Venclova says in his introduction to the work.

Nowhere is the magnitude of the Russian soul more evident than in its literature and poetry. I am not Russian and there is much here I do not understand; yet, there is much that applies to all of humanity.

Derieva's Catholic faith, her experiences and her bravery are the backdrop to honest, powerful and pithy poems. There is much religious imagery with some of the longer poems reminding one of the wisdom of Solomon's proverbs:

'To discover the meaning of life  
you must first lose your life.'

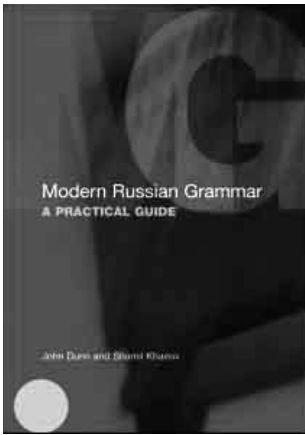
There is also everyday slang – sometimes in English – and images of totalitarianism.

Yet Derieva is herself a translator of poetry as well as an 'exile' and so is also in a way without national boundaries. Her poetry is international, both in subject, for example 'Archangelengland', but also in her observations on humanity. In fact, it has been suggested that she may be a possible future Nobel prize winner. I have definitely found the challenge of getting acquainted with Regina Derieva's work worthwhile.

I realised at this point that getting into Derieva's work would be something of a journey. To quote the translator, Daniel Weissbort, 'one works one's way in and then has to work very hard to find a way out again'.

Derieva's poetry is not easy, pleasant or pretty – and while it has (some) rhyme and rhythm in the beautiful Russian language, Daniel Weissbort favours literal translation and so has not generally tried to rework the poems.





by John Dunn and Shamil Khairov, Routledge, 2009, pp. 496, £19.99

## Modern Russian Grammar

Reviewed by  
Nijole White

**T**HIS volume is the latest in the Routledge series Modern Grammars. The grammars are aimed at all those who are learning a language by the communicative method and feel that the lack of systematic grammar knowledge prevents them from understanding how that language really works. All the volumes consist of two parts: part A deals with traditional

grammar, part B provides material on 'functions'. Putting both of these together is what makes these grammars 'innovative'.

John Dunn and Shamil Khairov's book follows that template adjusting it where appropriate to accommodate issues specific to Russian grammar and usage. The book covers parts of speech (nouns, verbs, numerals, pronouns, adjectives etc.) and their behaviour (case usage, verb aspect, grammatical agreement) as well as word formation and verbs of motion. Although the authors do not set out to produce a comprehensive grammar, it's really all there – from the alphabet and the sound system to conjunctions and particles.

Functions discussed in the book follow the logic of communicative situations: establishing identity, establishing contact, asking questions, issuing instructions and making requests, expressing likes and dislikes. Some of the 'functions' are focused on more 'grammatical' instances of usage that are particularly difficult for English students of Russian: 'Being and becoming' tackles the verb *быть* and the use of the instrumental or nominative case, 'Negation' includes the use of the genitive, while others involve set phrases e.g. the ones traditionally known as 'time expressions', comparisons indicating by how much older/younger, prepositions to indicate location, the use of *чтобы* and many others.

The authors' claim that they provide 'clear explanations' is justified – although not in all cases. In any discussion of verb aspect, the fundamental difference in the meaning between the perfective and the imperfective should be included in the definition; explanation in terms of action boundaries is not helpful. We are on much surer ground when the authors turn to 'Focusing on process', 'Repetition' and 'Focusing on completion'.

All usage is illustrated with examples, which occupy about half of the 496 pages of the volume. The aim of the examples is to reinforce the point made in the explanation, and they do that very well. They are not graded for difficulty of the lexis used, but are all translated into very good idiomatic English. All Russian material in the book is stressed, the English index is comprehensive and there is also a smaller Russian index to help locate a particular item by its keyword. The book will be of greatest use to teachers of Russian, practising translators or those who simply wish to refresh their knowledge of Russian, and of course to students at upper-intermediate or advanced level. A beginner, however, will need guidance to identify the most appropriate chapters for them.



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# The Russian Language in Britain: An Historical Study of Learners and Teachers

Reviewed by  
Andrew Jameson

by James Muckle,  
Ilkeston, Bramcote  
Press, 2008, pp. 275 plus  
illustrations, £25

**D**ON'T be fooled by the title – this is a campaigning book. It starts mildly with an academic study of who knew Russian in English history, and contains some gems, such as Queen Elizabeth I having her ambassador kneel beside her while she puzzles out Russian letters in the Tsar's charter to the Russia Company by reference to her knowledge of Greek. Connoisseurs of the Russian character will love the master-servant dialogue from Ludolf's Russian Grammar, published in Oxford in 1696.

However, as we move on to the 18th Century, described by Muckle as 'a great advantage squandered by the British', we quickly realise that the history of relations between our countries, and of mutual understanding through language, has been something of a rollercoaster ride through history, rather than a progress informed by intelligent policy or debate on either side.

While the continuing English belief in Russian barbarism prevented progress in the 18th Century, the 19th was blighted by the growing awareness of political conflict and terrorism in Russia – to take an extreme example, the shock experienced by the translator Constance Garnett when she found she had befriended a murderer, Sergei Stepniak, was palpable. We owe the founding of the British Special Branch to these political refugees.

The discovery of Russian literature by Garnett and the Bloomsbury set was linked to a 'Russian boom' at the turn of the century which continued through the First World War. The Russian revolutions brought this to an abrupt halt and rekindled British governmental paranoia, while dividing English society. Muckle castigates British blindness to the need for the language and knowledge of Russia, which contributed to the post-war situation, and which certainly rendered Britain incapable of dealing with it in an intelligent manner.

In this connection, the Society for Cultural Relations is singled out as a major force for reason in two passages of his book. The first describes its activities in teaching Russian, and the second, in a footnote which fills half a page, explicitly defends the SCR against the accusations levelled at it, lists the many famous names associated with it, praises it for resisting Soviet manipulation and for keeping open channels of communication.

Muckle covers the intervening history well, but we must move on to the founding of the Association of Russian Teachers (ATR) which coincided with a long Times correspondence on the theme 'Who learns Russian?' in October 1958. Vaughan James was the prime mover, and the move was ultimately out of frustration with the inactivity of the Modern Language Association. The ATR was a very effective ginger group, and when language organisations

joined for a joint conference once a year, the ATR was always there, and it was to this section that many teachers migrated for 'the crack' in the evenings. Eventually the many language associations came to amalgamate into ALL in 1989 – logistically it made sense, but politically it did not, and Vaughan James voted against.

A lot of the information in this book is for specialists, with many intriguing and appealing stories about people who studied Russian and their fates, about the ridiculous secrecy of military language courses and their contribution to Russian studies in Britain (and thank God for them), about the thoughtless unplanned growth of Russian in the 1960s, and the idiocies of the Atkinson Report which brought about the inevitable slaughter of departments from 1979, which is something this reviewer experienced personally.

The reader may ask if things have now improved, have official policies now reached a balance? Chapter nine goes into these questions in exhaustive detail. As far as higher education goes, things may have reached stability – around 15 universities (listed at [www.basees.org.uk/ahr.shtml](http://www.basees.org.uk/ahr.shtml)) produce circa 300 graduates with knowledge of Russian per year. As regards schools, the position is patchy, but state schools, language colleges and the private sector all make their contribution. Meanwhile, Russian overtures to the West, and Russia's aspirations to take its place as a superpower among equals, have been rebuffed by the British and American nuclear defence establishments who see their power threatened by a possible outbreak of peace and good relations. Plus ça change?

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# Русский язык на рубеже XX–XXI веков

Леонид Московкин, преподаватель в Санкт-Петербургском государственном университете

**Л**ЮБОЙ язык постоянно развивается, русский язык не является исключением. Обычно в относительно стабильные годы жизни общества мы этого не замечаем. Но в годы нестабильности в обществе начинают происходить изменения, и язык, как зеркало общества, отражает их. Он тоже начинает бурно развиваться и выходит из-под контроля людей, которые стоят на страже его норм. Мы начинаем замечать появление новых слов, изменения в грамматике, произношении и т.д. Происходит расширение границ литературного языка, оказываются допустимыми разные варианты употребления слов, грамматических форм и конструкций. В наше время российское общество переживает именно такой период нестабильности, и язык отражает это.

Какие же основные тенденции в развитии русского языка отмечаются на рубеже XX–XXI веков?

## Влияние английского языка

Эта тенденция отмечается не только в России, но и в других странах. Она связана с распространением англо-американской культуры и действует уже более полувека. Если быть более точным, то нужно сказать, что эти процессы начались после второй мировой войны.

Распространение англо-американской культуры неизбежно приводит и к влиянию английского языка на другие языки, к заимствованию английских слов. В Советском Союзе уже в 60-е годы в речь молодежи проникали английские слова. 60-е годы – это годы хрущевской оттепели, временной демократизации, годы формирования поколения шестидесятников, которое противопоставляло себя предыдущим поколениям. Для речи шестидесятников было характерным употребление английских слов, особенно для обозначения предметов одежды и явлений музыкальной культуры. Так, например, употребляя слова суперхит, диск-гигант, джинсы, лейбл, названия рок-групп и отдельных хитов, молодые люди сразу устанавливали межличностный контакт с собеседником, даже если он иностранец. Ученые дали название этому явлению – интержаргон. Этот интержаргон был попыткой молодежи создать свой собственный мир, уйти на дистанцию от взрослых.

Эта разрешенная свобода просуществовала недолго, и уже в конце 60-х гг., после пражских событий, культура шестидесятников ушла в подполье. Ушел в подполье и интержаргон, но в сознании многих людей он был связан с идеями свободы, демократии, которую искусственно сдерживают. Поэтому неслучайно в 1985 году, когда к власти пришел типичный шестидесятник М.С. Горбачев, возродился и интержаргон.

На рубеже 80-90х гг. усилилось влияние США в области культуры (в частности, на всех телеканалах начали показывать американские фильмы), усилилось и влияние английского языка. Появились новые понятия в экономике и для их обозначения были избраны английские слова бизнес, инвестиция, менеджер, маркетинг, холдинг, лизинг, брокер, дилер, ваучер. Представители власти на городском и областном уровне также стали называться не по-русски: мэр, губернатор, префект, субпрефект. И наконец, в бытовую речь проникли слова и выражения о кей, ноу проблем, фифти-фифти, секонд-хенд.

## Внутренние процессы

На рубеже 80-90х гг. русские люди приветствовали либерализм во всем, в том числе в употреблении русского языка. Это была реакция на тоталитаризм, где любое отклонение от нормы считалось нежелательным. Кроме того, речевой свободе способствовало устранение цензуры и

отсутствие внутреннего самоконтроля у многих журналистов и писателей. В это время появилась мода на индивидуальность, непохожесть, нестандартность.

Что же на самом деле происходит в языке? Прежде всего, в язык газет, журналов и художественных произведений стали проникать просторечные и диалектные слова намеренно, давеча, загадя, супротив, вчерась, халява и многие другие. В том числе иногда используются грамматические формы, всегда считавшиеся недопустимыми в литературном языке: ихний вместо их, махает вместо машет, полоскает вместо полощет, текет вместо течет. Академик В.Г. Костомаров, анализируя эти процессы, утверждает, что это делается сознательно людьми, которые знают, как следует говорить и писать. Но думается, что все-таки это проявление недостаточной грамотности, тем более что наряду с этим можно отметить огромное число орфографических и пунктуационных ошибок.

Еще один интересный пример. В русском языке имеются существительные, образованные от глаголов с суффиксами -ание, -ение: нагревание, повторение, и иногда наряду с ними существуют разговорные варианты без суффиксов: нагрев, повтор. В 90-е годы эти разговорные варианты получают широкое распространение в литературном языке, причем они затрагивают не только отглагольные существительные, но и существительные, образованные от прилагательных: посыл, отпад, завал, напряг, отлуп, прикид, прикол, опохмел, беспросвет, серъез, примитив, интим, криминал. Все эти слова были характерны для молодежного жаргона 70-80-х годов и ранее не входили в словарный состав литературного языка.

В 90-е годы также определенное влияние на русский язык оказывала речь уголовников, так называемое «воровское арг» или «блатная феня». Причина этого влияния заключается в том, что на рубеже 80-90-х гг. в России появляется довольно богатая и властная группа «новых русских», причем определенная часть этих людей имеет преступное прошлое и говорит на воровском жаргоне. Эти люди в современной России образуют замкнутую элиту, но при этом оказывают через СМИ влияние на все остальное общество, распространяя свои корпоративные вкусы. Явно подражая им, некоторые журналисты используют в своих репортажах жаргонную лексику: бабки (деньги), быть на зоне (сидеть в тюрьме), мокруха (убийство), сыскарь (следователь), тачка (машина), пахать (работать), крутой (лихой, дерзкий, модный, сильный, лучший), беспредел (высшее беззаконие).

В некоторых театрах ставятся новые пьесы, и в речи персонажей можно услышать даже обценную лексику (нецензурную, нелитературную, матерную). Это, конечно, крайняя степень речевой свободы. Можно вспомнить, что М. Горький написал в начале XX века пьесу «На дне», в которой изобразил жизнь низов общества – воров, нищих, бродяг, алкоголиков, проституток, но при этом не употребил ни одного матерного слова.

Но наряду с этим возрождается употребление слов, считавшихся устаревшими. Многие из них относятся к религиозной лексике: заповедь, грех, деяние, гордыня, духовный, судилище, покаяние, лик, кончина, ибо, уничтожение, и являются принадлежностью высокого стиля речи. И то, что они начинают активно использоваться, хороший знак, это знак того, что общество начинает проявлять интерес к явлениям, стоящим за этими словами.

Интересны изменения в области географических названий. В Москве можно, как и 80 лет назад, гулять по Тверской-Ямской, Мясницкой, Пятницкой, Старой Басманной, Волхонке, Солянке, Маросейке, в Петербурге можно пройти по Гороховой, Галерной, Шпалерной Малой Конюшенной, Большой Морской, Фурштатской. Это стремление отдать дань уважения нашей истории, причем истории досоветского периода. Иными словами, все, что происходит в русском языке, закономерно отражает то, что происходит в российском обществе.

# Marie B

Reviewed by  
Sam Sherry



by Tom Hubbard,  
Ravenscraig Press, 2008,  
pp. 108, £10

**T**OM Hubbard's new novel, *Marie B*, tells the life story of the artist Maria Bashkirtseva, or rather it recounts episodes of her life, each of which contributes to a fractured, multi-faceted interpretation of her personality.

Bashkirtseva (or Bashkirtseff) was born into a Ukrainian noble family in 1858. She grew up in Europe and studied painting in Paris, where she achieved fame as a painter and member of the intelligentsia. She died of tuberculosis in 1884, and has been remembered as a diarist as well as an excellent artist.

In this, his first novel, Hubbard draws on his experience as a translator and poet (in both English and Scots) to give a sense of Marie's life. The novel is episodic, mixing original poetry, loose translations of Russian poems, adaptations from the painter's diaries, and prose sections. The effect is less a traditional narrative than a series of glimpses, always from a different angle, of Marie's inner life.

The episodic arrangement creates a constantly shifting narrative viewpoint: the reader is always reaching for, but never quite reaching, Marie. This is a perfectly admirable tactic for a novel which does not claim to be a straightforward biography, but rather a 'distillation' of Marie's life and work.

Hubbard's poetry and critical work embrace both Scots and English language and he has worked on translations from Hungarian. Perhaps it is to be expected then that his novel should make liberal use of translated and adapted material.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the novel is how Hubbard uses his source material in an act of interpretation; this is most definitely a translator's book. Hubbard has taken the raw material of Marie's life and used it to create a new text, passing through a process of interpretation and rewriting.

As a result, one of the most interesting aspects of the novel turns out to be its use of language. Hubbard employs Scots dialect to portray Russian peasant and French proletarian speech. Thus, despite its foreign (to the author) subject matter, the novel is very much tied to the Scots literary tradition and the Scottish experience.

Hubbard's description of his own work as a distillation is appropriate. This novel is far from a standard biographical retelling, and this is part of its appeal. The author has created an innovative, highly personal account of Marie's life, which does not seek to define it, but rather hints at tentative conclusions. This interesting and innovative novel adds another facet to the myth surrounding Bashkirtseva.

film

# Vernaya (Faithful)

Reviewed by  
Tom Casey

**I**N HER short documentary *Vernaya* (Faithful), writer-director Nastia Tarasova examines the lives and traditions of a small surviving community of Nekrasov Cossacks. The Nekrasovites, as they are also known, take their name from their leader, Ignat Nekrasov. When the Bulavin Rebellion against Peter the Great was suppressed in 1708, Ignat and his followers fled south into the Ottoman Empire. There they were able to preserve their faith and traditions for some two hundred years.

The Nekrasovites were Old Believers, a persecuted religious sect within the Russian Empire. Conversely, they were able to exercise complete religious freedom under Turkish governance. In the second half of the 20th Century, groups of Nekrasovites left modern Turkey to return to Russia. Tarasova's film examines what has

become of a small community of these Cossacks living in modern day Russia.

*Vernaya* focuses on the traditional folk songs and faith of the Cossacks. Songs are sung both in Turkish and Russian, a testament

to the centuries they spent in exile. Interviews are also conducted with the old men and women of the village. Marriage is a central preoccupation of the women – it was through a system of arranged marriages that their unique cultural identity remained unadulterated in spite of their exile.

Despite their dedication to faith and tradition, the Nekrasov Cossacks of the film have not survived unscathed by contemporary problems. Alcoholism has taken its inevitable toll on the community, though references to this are made only obliquely.

The film maintains a sombre, plaintive tone throughout. It is an elegy to a bygone era and anachronistic way of life that has been kept alive by a dwindling community with only its faith and traditional songs to keep its identity alive. Without this there is little to distinguish it from the endless

numbers of impoverished, timeworn agrarian communities that permeate Russia's vast territorial expanse.

The melancholic tone of the film is tempered by its vivid, warm colours. It has an abstract, dream-like quality that conveys a sense that we are watching the last vestiges of the past disappear beyond the horizon of time.

This film will only ever have niche appeal but clearly it isn't targeting a mainstream audience. Almost no historical background is given about the Nekrasov Cossacks, nor any information to contextualise their place within modern Russia.

The visual aspect of the film takes complete precedence over its content and it is more of an exercise in aesthetics than anything else. Tarasova has a great eye for detail: shots have been carefully thought out and beautifully conceived, lending the film a poetic quality in keeping with its elegiac tone.

Only a recent graduate from Moscow's Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography, Nastia Tarasova is clearly a promising young film maker and it will be interesting to watch her work develop. *Vernaya* is an experimental piece that is worth seeing for those with an interest in the aesthetics of film: its merit lies in the way it is shot rather than in its subject matter.

# Karosta: Life After the USSR

Reviewed by  
Chris Delaney

**K**ARSOSTA, on the northern edge of the Latvian city of Lapaja, is a place where bad things happen. Ask well-healed Lapaja dwellers what they think goes on there (anyone in their right mind would never actually go) and they'll tell you of down-and-outs and criminals lurking in its ruined flats, of broken bottles that once held something like vodka littering its streets. And the public benches – that

is the few that haven't been broken up for firewood – they even have blood patches, where someone might have died waiting for an ambulance that was too scared to come in to help.

During the Soviet Union, Karosta was a closed naval port inhabited mainly by Russian officers and their families. When Latvia declared its independence, they fled. What possessions remained were promptly stolen and throughout the rest of the Nineties the place was looted of everything that could be carried.

What happened to the place is the subject of Peter King's film *Karosta: Life After The USSR*, shown as part of the London Documentary Festival. Beautiful, still shots of a post-apocalyptic landscape are cut with interviews with locals who take a modest pride in surviving the decay around them. 'Karosta is beautiful, it just has a dirty face,' says one of the film's protagonists, a young man who was born and has lived all his life there. At one point, he shows us his favourite place, the sandy beach on the Baltic, where he says he played as a child. He tells us of how as a boy he was fascinated by the thousands of pieces of driftwood, and once collected a bag of them to give to his grandmother. 'Where did you get these?' she shrieked. 'Put them back!' He had been collecting the sea-smoothed human remains of thousands of German prisoners executed by the Soviets.

Lapaja has made an attempt of sorts to integrate its citizens with the now open Karosta. The municipal government sends the city's unwanted – those who fall behind on their rent payments – to live in Karosta's squalid, empty flats. Some are philosophical about where they have ended up: 'A person can get used to anything,' says one woman. But most still blame the Latvian government for abandoning them, even accusing the city council of deliberately trying to isolate Karosta (a too-tall cargo ship recently destroyed the bridge linking Karosta to Lapaja over the Barta river – the bridge is yet to be repaired).

The government does have plans, though. A Belomor canal of a swimming pool is in the pipeline. If it's ever started, let alone finished, locals reckon it'll be too expensive for them anyway. So they're not holding their breath and instead have found hope in a group of Swedish artists, who came to Karosta in 2000, liked what they saw and stayed. They set up K@2, an organisation promoting the arts that has also created a community centre where locals can learn Latvian for free. The centre has given the people of Karosta something to take pride in. But the buildings that were once rented to K@2 for a nominal fee are now being sold as the credit crunch hits Latvia (potential bidders can go to <http://karosta.lv> for more details).

King shot the film in only six days (the producer couldn't afford to be without the camera equipment for any longer), in which time he paints a picture of Karosta emerging from decay. At a post-screening discussion, he told the audience that when he was doing vox-pops in Lapaja, it reminded him of London in that very few people would take the time to speak. In Karosta, on the other hand, the locals were more than happy to take a minute to welcome and talk to strangers. Let's hope those same people can afford to stay if the place ever does begin to prosper.

food

# Kinto Restaurant

35-37 Main Street,  
Perth

Reviewed by  
Wendy Muzlanova

**I**'LL USE the word 'outstanding' right now, simply to be rid of it, as it's been frolicking in my head since we dined at Kinto. So where is this wonderful establishment? Perhaps it's in Glasgow or Edinburgh? Perhaps it's even in Georgia?

No.

This time Perth has struck it lucky, as Kinto is in Bridgend, just across the Tay from the Concert Hall.

Travel, people! Travel from big cities, towns and villages, just to eat here! Believe me, it's worth it. The Perth Russian Conversation Group has travelled many miles in search of good, fresh, authentic food. Now that it's here on our doorstep, we'll let others make the journey. (I don't want to give the owner Levan any nightmares, but Bridgend has a notorious reputation for the failure of businesses and to put it simply, if we don't use his restaurant, we will lose it.)

Wine buffs will make the pilgrimage here to relish and to revel in the natural Georgian wines. No sulphates here! The Khvanchkara astounded my mouth and I was seduced by sweet, soft fruits. I remarked to my friend, 'You have to try this wine. It tastes just like alcoholic Ribena!' and I mused upon how my childhood might have been, if I had been served this beautifully decadent drink at 'elevenses'.

My experience was marred slightly when another friend divulged that Khvanchkara had been Stalin's favourite wine. I looked at the label for a caution, 'May cause paranoia and genocide', but was reassured to find none.

Kinto's decor is minimalist yet warm, the creams and coppers balm to the fraught soul. The tension of everyday life dissipated – and this was before we all passed 'Georgian Wine Appreciation 101' (with honours).

Regular readers will know that I am one of those unpopular diners called 'vegetarians' – so is Sharon, but on this occasion, we found ourselves spoiled for choice. She promised to give her husband Steve a piece of blini, but the next time he glanced over, all blini were gone! Levan prides himself upon the clean plates of his diners and we did not disappoint him. As for Steve, he was more than consoled by his Soup Kharcho, which contained an 'abundance of rice, meat, vegetables and spices' and which he had already sampled on an earlier reconnaissance trip. Perth RCG members are both tireless and selfless in their mission to source new delights for readers of the SRF Review!

The Tonis Puri (bread baked in an oven dug deeply into the earth) went down well with everything and being warm and fresh, was not reserved solely for gauche soup-dunking.

I began with the delicious Ajapsandali, an appetizer of aubergines, potatoes and tomatoes. I will not attempt to quantify the consumption of the grape, but Steve commented later that although he had enjoyed our intellectual conversation, he suspects that our erudition may have been an illusion brought about by the extensive wine list and our extensive appreciation of its contents... and on to the main course.

Steve was delighted with his Koreika – pork rolls with vegetables, red wine (!) and a plum sauce. This did not, however, stop him from secretly coveting Iain's Lula Kebab.

I am experiencing a 'deficit' of superlatives and have to admit that I was never going to be able to say 'nyet' to a dish containing both mushrooms and cheese, two of my favourite things, after World Peace and uhhh...money. So, I opted for the Sokos Chakapuli...ooooohhhhhh...

Dessert was wasted on me, still in a blissful haze after the first two courses and by then, the Torti Kemit seemed to be no more than Tiramisu...

My taste-buds could take no more pleasuring and I was forced to say 'Good-night, spokoinoi nochi, over and out'...

# Cafe Bayan

1125 Argyle Street,  
Glasgow

Reviewed by  
Wendy Muzlanova

ONCE again, the intrepid Perth Russian Conversation Group heads into uncharted culinary waters (!) to bring you this review of Cafe Bayan, Glasgow's new Eastern European restaurant. Hey, it's a dirty job – but someone has to do it. Upon our arrival, we were greeted warmly by the owner, Anna Dyer, a woman of exceptional energy, imagination and vision. Read on.

The cafe is warm, intimate and decorated in a highly original way. Along one wall, you can see a fascinating mural, executed by both Russian and Scottish artists, working together in a spirit of harmonious, international co-operation. Forgive the socialist worker/brotherhood of man-style description, but after studying the artwork in question, my mind is full of Soviet achievement, if not quite The Fulfilment of Glorious Five Year Plans... Lenin did like his plans and he did like them to have numbers. One wonders how history might have played out had he been in possession of a Glorious Soviet Filofax... but I digress.

We kicked off the meal with lashings of chilled Baltika. Kevin would have liked a larger selection of Eastern European beers from which to choose, 'like Cos\*\*ch\*k has...' but this was his only complaint. The table was beautifully decorated with souvenir menus printed especially for Perth RCG. Anna thinks of everything. We comprised six carnivores and three vegetarians. Anna and her chef Paul are responsive, unflappable and extremely good-natured in the face of requests for special diets and will do their utmost to please everyone, from the finicky-picky brigade (me) right up to gluten and lactose intolerant diners, some of whom who regularly make special trips to eat here.

The menu was imaginative and anything but run-of-the-mill. I started with the Shchi, which tasted really good, even to the point of inducing me to eat the accompanying butterbeans, a previously avoided legume.

Several diners chose the salmon rolled in fresh herbs with beetroot carpaccio and wasabi cream and they were enthusiastic about their choice, although my son Eoghan felt that the taste of the salmon was a little bit overwhelming in its strength.

Those who ordered the Root Vegetable 'Mish-mash' with Shopska salad delivered clean plates back to the kitchen and Anna told us proudly that this is one of Cafe Bayan's most popular dishes, again with people making the trip here especially for this.

Kevin enjoyed the Pork Loin with New Potatoes and Savoy Cabbage and pronounced it 'fantastic'.

We ordered in advance for our large party, as Paul prepares everything freshly and had to buy in exactly the right ingredients for us. Right at the last moment however, two of us vegetarians confessed to Anna that we were not very keen upon egg. I told Anna that I knew we were 'a tough gig' but she was delightful and when she went to break the eggy bad news to Chef, Kim and I sat and recreated the Fawlty Towers episode in which

Basil tells the luckless diners, 'Well, if you don't like duck – you're rather stuck!'

Fawlty Towers this ain't, however – and a wonderful wild mushroom and cheese dish was prepared for us, just like that! (Given my annoyingly rigid herbivorous tendencies, I had even feared the arrival of irate kitchen staff for a bit of impromptu Pythonesque cleaver-wielding.)

The desserts were deliciously different and well-received by all, with a massive 'отлично!' being given to the Braeburn apple and Thyme Custard Crumble.

As we are all committed Slavophiles, Anna chatted away to us throughout the afternoon about her journeys and experiences and we did likewise. She shared her future plans for special themed evenings at Bayan, including the inspired idea about holding Russian Karaoke Nights. She was the perfect host – молодец!

Cafe Bayan is tucked away in Argyle Street in Glasgow. Here's a handy tip – if you would like to visit this extraordinary little restaurant AND sample the very excellent Russki Standard vodka into the bargain, why not let the train take the strain and head for Exhibition Centre Station. The cafe is a pleasant hop, skip and a jump from there. Any hopping, skipping and jumping you undertake upon the return journey will be entirely down to Mendelev's excellent recipe for the smoothest wheat vodka you have ever tasted...

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# Karass: Scottish colony in the Caucasus

**S**COTS living in Karass (now Inozemtsevo, Stavropol Region) in the 19th Century pondered the origins of the Turkic toponymic Karass. Scottish missionary sources thought it could be a derivation of 'Kara Sultan' (Black Sultan), who first settled in the area, or the name of a Tatar Sultan buried in the area.

Not surprisingly, Alexander Paterson, co-founder of the Scottish colony (see previous editions of SRF Review) had his own explanation: 'Karass was named from the father of the Sultan who was called Karass, and as the Tartars move from place to place, wherever the family settles, it assumes the name of Karass.' A further detail appears in his diary on June 20, 1811: 'Karass Ismael visited us.'

A modern version sees it as 'Kara' and 'su', which in Turkish are 'black' and 'water' – a village near Black Water (its source being a spring). Co-founder Rev Henry Brunton and Alexander Paterson stayed in the original Karass in 1802 as guests (kunaks) of Gherye Sultans before setting up the colony nearby at the foot of Mt Beshtau. It became known as Karass or the Scottish Colony (Шотландская Колония), as well as the Scots Village (Шотландка), which people still call it.

A recent find bears witness to the colony's self-governing status – the existence of a seal (lost in later years). Judging by an impression made in sealing-wax, the design,



above, consisted of two parts. The outer rim indicates in Russian the seal was of the Scottish Colony at Mt Beshtau in Geogiyevsk District of the Caucasus Province. The centre is occupied by reliefs of, most likely, Mt Beshtau, and, underneath left to right, of a vine with grapes, two hives with bees buzzing around them, and a tree with a bundle of leaves, possibly, of a mulberry tree. What looks like a sheaf of wheat is in the centre. The features are highly symbolic, clearly reflecting features of the area as well as the essence of the colony's activities.

The Scottish Colony was home to the first publishing house in the Stavropol Region, which began with a printing press in 1805. Ransomed John (Ivan Ivanovich) Abercrombie used his skills as a printer and binder to great effect in Karass, Astrakhan,

Moscow, Shusha and Siberia. New information indicates him as the first person to try and start a private publishing business in the region in 1846.

Among other mysteries to be investigated is the Crimean diary of the Russian poet Alexander Griboyedov. He wrote of conversations with a missionary James. Anything to do with James Galloway? Griboyedov, foreign affairs secretary on Governor Gen Yermolov, must have been aware of the Karass Scots.

Captain Richard Wilbraham, Royal 7th Fusiliers, introduces another UK connection. While travelling to Karass in droshky (an open four-wheel carriage), he remarked, 'My driver had been for many years in the British navy, but he had almost forgotten his English.'

The more I study the area the more I discover an increasing number of people connected to the UK. The 19th Century British architect Samuel Upton was chief architect in the region's spas after being invited there by the anglophile Governor Prince Vorontsov, who himself had lived many years in the UK.

By chance, another opportunity to visit Karass this summer has come up. I am looking forward to new findings.

Anton Grizenko, primaxim@hotmail.com

## The connection

**T**HE Scots at Karass were supported by friends and sympathizers in Russia. They included Dr John Grieve, physician to Tsar Alexander I, Dr Crichton, Mr and Mrs Venning, Dr Ebenezer Henderson, Dr John Paterson who 'carried out the management of all the Scottish missions in Russia', and Dr Pinkerton. Rev Richard Knill, resident minister in the Russian capital, was of exceptional support. He accepted the appointment of Missionary Societies 'as a medium of communication between them and their missionaries in the remote parts of Russia', as Charles Birell testifies. 'He threw himself into it with his whole heart maintaining an extensive and enlivening correspondence with those brave men,' and Birell concluded that Rev Knill's letters to them were 'like showers that water the earth'.

Princess Meshcherskaya, Prince Galitsyn, reformer Mikhail Speranskiy, Count Kochubey, Count Rummyantsev, Gen Rtishchev, and Dr Hass (whose

motto was 'Hurry to do Good') were genuinely supportive. To date, my database of those directly or indirectly involved with the Karass community includes over 100 personalities. They all need serious attention.

Creating a gallery of actual portraits of the Karass Scots, and of other personalities linked to them, is very much on my mind. I have pursued a lead on a portrait of Rev Henry Brunton and his assistant Jellorum Harrison painted in Newfoundland, Canada, on the way home from his first mission to Africa. But it has gone cold both in Newfoundland and in Liverpool.

Nevertheless, a start has been made with the finding of Robert Pinkerton's portrait. He arrived at Karass in 1805 to be responsible for printing activities and stayed there until 1808 when he moved to Moscow.

Almost nothing is yet known of Rev Henry Brunton's African assistant from Guinea Jellorum Harrison, who came with him to Karass in 1802. He worked

there and elsewhere in Russia until Henry Brunton's death in 1813 after which he returned home.

The role of Karass in the development of the four spas of the Caucasian Mineral Waters ie Pyatigorsk, Zheleznovodsk, Essentuki and Kislovodsk is still to be properly understood. A few details available about ransomed James Peddi's family shows it was known for industrial acumen.

There may also exist a wonderful link between the Karass community and a plant at the foot of Mt Beshtau through my interest in botany. The Scots made many trips to nearby auls (villages) situated on the southern slopes of Mt Beshtau. They definitely would have seen and wondered about a decorative plant native to the area.

Did they know it was described in 1821 as a new endemic species by Dr John Lindley from seeds gathered at Mr Beshtau and grown at Chelsea Physic Gardens, London, by its curator William Anderson, a Scot from Edinburgh?



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