

Пожарная безопасность друзей из России



FIRE SAFETY FRIENDS OF RUSSIA

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NEWS LETTER No. 5

In September 2006, I escorted the Mayor and Mayoress of Chichester, Rob and Liz Campling to Kursk. In March that year the Mayor of Kursk, Victor Sorzekov asked, at one of our meetings, if I could help create some links between Kursk and a town in England. On my return to England, because of their close links with West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, I made an approach to Chichester City Council. Rob Campling, the then Mayor, was very enthusiastic about the idea. There followed an exchange of letters which resulted in an invitation for Rob to attend the Kursk Town Day Celebrations.

Rob and Liz only had a week available in their very busy schedule which meant it was a very full and intense visit.



ABOVE, RELAXING WITH FRIENDS

This was a welcome bit of relaxation after some 9 hrs traveling from England to Moscow immediately followed by an 8 hr overnight 500 Km minibus ride from Moscow to Kursk.

The second day consisted of a visit to the Kursk Administration Offices. Unfortunately the Mayor was unable to be in Kursk at the time so Rob and Liz had an informal meeting with the Deputy Mayor.

The first day was a brief private introduction to Kursk town center and a picnic by the river with some of our Russian friends they had met in England.



MEETING WITH THE DEPUTY MAYOR JUST BEFORE THE OFFICIAL MEETING

That was followed by the first part of the Town Day Celebrations formal activities, an assembly of representatives from various towns in both the old Republic and the EU together with representatives from the Navy who help support the families of the victims of the Kursk submarine disaster.

Each representative was introduced to the group, with short speeches about their links with Kursk and congratulating the people of Kursk on their special day.

The representatives from the towns and the Navy then proceeded to the main meeting room where there were further speeches and the signing of various protocols and agreements including a letter of co-operation between Chichester City and the Town of Kursk.

Following these meetings we all walked to the war memorial park and placed flowers on the steps of the memorial. Here also, are the graves of some of the sailors killed in the Submarine Kursk. I had the opportunity to speak to some of their relatives and a representative of the English charity set up to assist the families.

There followed a couple of hours in the theatre where the Town day was celebrated in music, song and dance, both modern and traditional performed by local groups, entertainers, and children and students from the local schools, colleges and universities. During the entertainment local citizens were presented with awards for their special contribution to the Town.



SIGNING THE LETTER OF FRIENDSHIP AND CO-OPERATION BETWEEN KURSK AND CHICHESTER



MEETING VETERANS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

After the theatre we had some time to walk around the open air exhibitions and displays during which we had a very serious, interesting and friendly conversation with two World War II veterans. This was later the subject of quite a spread in the local papers.

By this time, very late afternoon, I am not sure about Rob and Liz, but I was getting rather hungry having only eaten a light breakfast quite early in the morning, so was somewhat relieved to know that we were about to have a meal.

Rather more than I had expected. A very large ornately decorated dinning hall. Several courses and of course many toasts which meant too many vodkas. However this all has a plus side in that everyone seemed very happy and very friendly by the time we all left to see the fireworks display.

**SOME PHOTOGRAPHS
TAKEN AT THE
CELEBRATION
DINNER**



The next day was taken up with guided tours of the local natural history museum and the agricultural centre followed by lunch at a entertainment park. This was a pleasantly sighted outdoors and very enjoyable. With a police escort we just managed to get back into Kursk town centre in time to see the final stages of an annual procession of an Icon.



**LUNCH IN THE PARK AND THE
PROCESSION OF THE ICON IN THE
CENTER OF KURSK**

That concluded the official engagements. The next two days were arranged by my friends with visits to factories to try to raise money for our Trust. Meetings with Universities including Kursk State University where Natasha, our principle link with Russia teaches English language and Institutes to start creating links between similar institutions in England and a visit to a home for disabled children that the local firemen try to support and help.



**RIGHT,
VISITING A
FACTORY TO
TRY TO
RAISE FUNDS
FOR THE
TRUST.**



**ABOVE, OUR VISIT TO THE
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL FOR
HANDICAPPED CHILDREN.**

**LEFT, MEETING AT THE REGIONAL
OPEN SOCIAL INSTITUTE TO
DISCUSS LINKS.**

BELOW, FIRE STATION VISIT

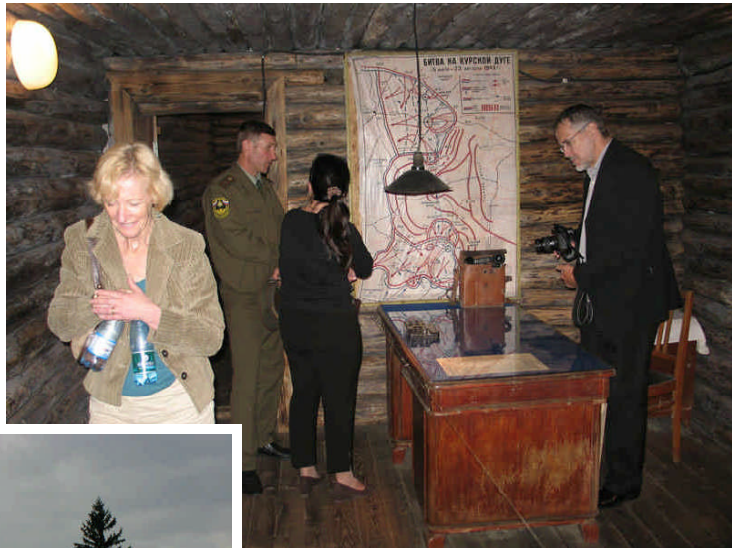


In a very rushed day, I was pleased we managed to visit Station 10 whilst Sasha and his watch were on duty. Our visit was much shorter than I would have wished, but after a short tour of the Station we did just have time for a cup of tea with the watch.



Rob's main interest is history, which includes a considerable knowledge of the second world war. Liz studied the Russian Revolution and the history and development of Russia. I grew up with a considerable interest in the second world war, generated by a large family who were intimately involved, including my father who fought in tanks in the 8th Army throughout the whole of the North African Campaign and a lot of reading. We were therefor particularly pleased to be able to have a private visit to the Battle of Kursk underground command center which has been preserved with the original maps and furniture.

The last day in Kursk was spent visiting the Marino. A very large home built by a Russian prince in the 18th Century English style for his English wife. It has been used as a sanatorium for many years. During the Communist period mainly by the Russian Leaders. However, it was also used and still is by the Russian Cosmonauts, including the first, Urie Gagarin.



**ABOVE, THE UNDERGROUND
COMMAND CENTER**

LEFT, THE MARINO

**BELOW, IN CONTRAST A
TRADITIONAL HOME**

On the way back we introduced Rob and Liz to the real Russia, stopping off to speak to villagers and go into one of their houses. I think for Rob and Liz it was quite an experience to see the difference between the town dwellers and the majority of Russians who live in wooden houses in villages or small towns and still have to get their water from a well regardless of their age and the weather..



We finished the day with a rather rushed meal in the company of many of our friends and a dash to the railway station to catch our overnight train to Moscow.

The trip was concluded with a day and a half exploring Moscow. Rob and Liz decided to explore the Metro to see the fantastic architecture and decoration of many of the stations and the main sites around Red Square on their own, which was very kind of them as I have seen them many times. It also left me free for a few hours to meet up with some friends I have from Kursk who now live in Moscow.



ONE OF THE METRO STATIONS AND LIZ AT THE STREET MARKET

We were all rather tired by the time we got home. As I said at the beginning a rather intensive visit, but one that achieved a great deal of goodwill and the start of some links between institutions and organizations that I am sure will develop in time into both friendly and useful working relationships.

Our Trust is a none political organization as our objectives, set out in our Charity Commission registration documents, clearly show.

This visit was at no expense to the Trust and simply facilitated the opportunity to start friendly links between other organizations in Russia and the UK.

I hope you found this letter interesting even though a bit different from our normal letters.

If you are not already one of our supporters, we would welcome any assistance whether it be donations, help with fund raising, practical help finding and renovating equipment, translation and interpreting or any other skill you think will help. It would be especially nice if we could have a Russian version of our web site.

We now have a web page www.fsfor.org. Holgate Fire safety Limited has provided the server space and John Godwin has kindly donated the charity domain name and set up the site. If you have not already visited please do so. We would welcome any comments. I am trying to update the site and add more information, pictures and video whenever time permits.

The next news letter, which will bring us up to date, to follow as soon as possible.

**Chris Holgate
Chairman and
Founding Trustee**