

East-West Review

Journal of the Great Britain-Russia Society

Autumn 2019



East–West Review

The journal of the Great Britain–Russia Society, registered charity no. 1148802

Editor: Andrew Sheppard

Sub-Editor: Martin Dewhirst

East–West Review is published three times a year; succeeding issues are designated Spring/Summer, Autumn and New Year.
The views expressed by contributors should not be taken as representing those of the Great Britain–Russia Society itself.

Great Britain–Russia Society

Patron:

His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent GCVO

Honorary President:

Professor Geoffrey Alan Hosking OBE FBA FRHistS

Honorary Vice Presidents:

The Rt Revd. and Rt Hon. Lord Williams of Oystermouth PC FBA FRSL FLSW

Professor Philip Hanson OBE; Sir Roderic Lyne KBE CMG

The Rt Hon. Sir Malcolm Rifkind KCMG PC QC

The Rt Hon. Lord Robertson of Port Ellen KT GCMG PC FRSA FRSE

The Rt Hon. Baroness Williams of Crosby CH PC

Chairman

David Brummell CB
chairman@gbrussia.org

Vice Chairman

Barbara Emerson
contact via www.gbrussia.org

**Hon. Membership and
Meetings Secretary**

Ute Lynch
Mobile: 07884 464461
membership@gbrussia.org

Hon. Treasurer

Jenny Alexander
83 Putney Bridge Road
LONDON
SW15 2PA
treasurer@gbrussia.org

Hon. Secretary

Henry Pares
secretary@gbrussia.org

Journal Editor

Andrew Sheppard
22 Millway
Chudleigh
Newton Abbot
Devon. TQ13 0JN
journal@gbrussia.org

Talks Organizers

**Lincoln Pigman &
Daragh McDowell**
talks@gbrussia.org

The Great Britain–Russia Society's aim is to advance the education of the public in particular but not exclusively in the following: the historical background, culture, the economic, political, social conditions and trends in the Russian Federation and its near neighbours. This is done through lectures and members' meetings and this journal, as well as by encouraging as wide a range of people as possible to become members.

Prospective member subscribers should send a cheque for £20 in favour of Great Britain–Russia Society to the Hon. Treasurer at the address above. By standing order, however, membership costs only £17; standing order forms can be provided by the Hon. Treasurer on request.

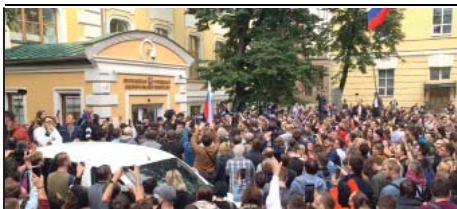
Back numbers of *East–West Review* published from Spring 2014 onwards and offprints of most articles published in Volume 7 (2008) and later can be obtained from the Editor; contact details as above.

© The contributors 2019.

In accordance with the terms of the Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003 or the Irish Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000, as appropriate, copies of each issue of *East–West Review* are lodged with the British Library, the Bodleian Library Oxford University, the Cambridge University Library, the National Library of Scotland, the National Library of Wales and Trinity College Dublin.

Contents

<i>A Student in Leningrad, the Prague Spring and the BBC</i>		
By Elisabeth Robson	5	
<i>Russia Past, Present and Future: As seen by a representative sample of people who live there</i>		
By Sasha Molotkova	10	
<i>The Restoration of St Andrew's Anglican Church, Moscow</i>		
https://moscowanglican.org	14	
<i>Sketches from a Cook's Album: Vladimir Mukhin & the reinvention of Russian cuisine</i>		
By Thom Dinsdale	16	
<i>Chernobyl</i>		
A historical drama television mini-series		
Reviewed by Tony Cash	18	
<i>Dark Shadows: Inside the secret world of Kazakhstan</i>		
by Joanna Lillis		
<i>Light of the Other: Unveiling the art of Central Asia</i>		
An exhibition at the Grafton Street Gallery		
Reviewed by Frank O'Reilly	21	
<i>The Caspian Sea Agreement: What was settled?</i>		
Report on a British-Kazakh Society Networking Session		
Rapporteur: Frank O'Reilly	23	
<i>Stalingrad</i>		
by Vasily Grossman (tr. Robert & Elizabeth Chandler; ed. Robert Chandler & Yuri Bit-Yunan)		
Reviewed by Andrew Sheppard	25	
<i>Zuleikha</i>		
by Guzel Yakhina (tr. Lisa C Hayden)		
<i>The Aviator</i>		
by Eugene Vodolazkin (tr. Lisa C Hayden)		
Reviewed by Michael Pursglove	29	
<i>The Steep</i>		
by Richard Freeborn		
Reviewed by Kate Pursglove	31	
<i>Pan Tadeusz: The last foray in Lithuania</i>		
by Adam Mickiewicz (tr. Bill Johnston)		
Reviewed by Frank O'Reilly	32	
<i>Mirror Sand: An anthology of Russian short poems in English translation</i>		
Edited and translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky		
Reviewed by Michael Pursglove	34	
<i>We are Building Capitalism! Moscow in transition 1992-97</i>		
by Robert Stephenson		
Reviewed by Martin McCauley	36	
<i>Vladimir Lenin: How to become a leader</i>		
by Vladlen Loginov		
Reviewed by Kate Pursglove	39	
<i>Fortress Russia: Conspiracy theories in post-Soviet Russia</i>		
by Ilya Yablokov		
<i>Plots Against Russia: Conspiracy and fantasy after socialism</i>		
by Eliot Borenstein		
Reviewed by Thom Dinsdale	41	
<i>Alexander Ivanovich Guchkov and the Great Russian Revolution</i>		
by Viktor Ivanovich Kozodoy		
Reviewed by Tony Cash	43	
<i>Three Sisters</i>		
Maly Drama Theatre of St Petersburg		
Vaudeville Theatre, London		
Reviewed by Vera Liber	46	
<i>A Tribute to Victor Hochhauser (1923-2019)</i>		
By Daniel Salbstein	47	



In *Plots Against Russia: Conspiracy and fantasy after socialism*, Eliot Borenstein argues that it has become harder for the Russian government to plausibly claim that demonstrations such as the one seen here, demanding the registration of opposition and independent candidates for the September election to the Moscow City Duma, are a result of nefarious foreign finance and promotion.

Thom Dinsdale's review of the book is on page 41.

Picture credit: Leon Kremer CC BY-SA 4.0.

List of Contributors

Tony Cash spent 40 years in radio and TV production, including a spell broadcasting Russian language musical and cultural programmes to the Soviet Union. He was a founder Producer/Director of the South Bank Show and is, with Mike Gerrard, the author of *The Coder Special Archive: The untold story of naval national service men learning and using Russian during the Cold War*. He is currently pursuing a number of further media projects.

Thom Dinsdale has a background in freelance journalism and other non-fiction writing.

Vera Liber is a freelance writer and translator.

Martin McCauley was formerly Senior Lecturer in Politics and Chair of the Social Sciences Department at University College, London.

Sasha Molotkova is a 2019 graduate of the UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies. Born in Siberia, she has lived in the UK for most of her life. Her 'year abroad' project was undertaken in 2017-18.

Frank O'Reilly is a geographer with a special interest in development studies, agricultural geography and energy matters and a regional interest in the Baltic area. He has served as a visiting lecturer in the Forestry and Social Policy Departments of the University of Joensuu, Finland.

Kate Pursglove read Modern History at Oxford, and has taught Russian history. She has visited the USSR and

Russia with her husband, who taught and now translates Russian Literature. She enjoys reading Russian novels and poetry, and writes, publishes and reviews poetry.

Michael Pursglove is a former Senior Lecturer in Russian Language and Literature and is now a freelance translator and researcher. His published translations include poetry by Pushkin, Lermontov, Tyutchev, Yazykov, A K Tolstoi, Apukhtin, Larissa Miller and others. He has translated six works by Turgenev for Alma Classics, most recently *The Diary of a Superfluous Man and Other Novellas*. Additionally, he has posted online an annotated translation of V A Giliarovskii's *Moskva i Moskvichi* and *Druz'ia i vstrechi* ([www. Gilyarovsky.com](http://www.Gilyarovsky.com)).

Elisabeth Robson is the former Head of the Russian Service, BBC World Service.

Daniel Salbstein was the founding Chairman (2002-08) of the Great Britain-Russia Society. For each of the 12 years in the past 15 in which either the Bolshoi or the Mariinsky ballet company has come to London, he has arranged with the impresarios Victor and Lilian Hochhauser for complimentary seats at a dress rehearsal for Great-Britain Russia Society members and guests.

Andrew Sheppard is the Editor of *East-West Review*.



Cover illustration: *Jankiel's Concert*.
Oil on canvas by Maurycy Trębacz (1861-1941).

Towards the end of Adam Mickiewicz's 'Pan Tadeusz', a new translation of which is reviewed by Frank O'Reilly on page 32, the elderly Jankiel is persuaded to play 'The Third of May Polonaise' on a dulcimer. That particular passage of 'Pan Tadeusz' is a time-honoured favourite with many Poles.

The Steep

by Richard Freeborn

(Dynasty Press, 2019) 240pp., pbk. £8.99 ISBN 978-0955350771

Reviewed by Kate Pursglove

Readers will have learned with sadness of the death at the beginning of this year of Richard Freeborn, whose obituary appeared in the Spring/Summer 2019 issue of *East-West Review*. The fact that he left one more novel in the pipeline will be some consolation to his readers and friends.

The Steep, published posthumously, is therefore Richard's swan song, and sounds some sombre notes. Towards the end of the book there is serious illness, death, mourning, a funeral, a cremation and a wake, and the grim task of sorting out the possessions of the deceased. A quotation from Turgenev's *Living Relic* in *Sketches from a Hunter's Album*, 'I walked through meadows of green grieving for my life', seems to speak for many of the characters. The novel begins with Jim Nordon, divorced and stuck, despite his earlier dreams of becoming an artist, in a 'mature and responsible' job in local government. His current (secret) task is earmarking colleagues for redundancy. He has escaped from the suburbs but there is a feeling that he hasn't left behind the 'constraining neatness of the many lives housed within them', and hasn't the courage to break out. He is beset by memories of the failure of his marriage to Vicky, and of an earlier lost love, Megan, and is now in a desultory relationship with Vicky's friend Rachel, in which there is no commitment on either side.

Yet cheerfulness breaks in. To begin with, there is the satisfaction of painting. Jim still paints and can still feel 'the excitement he always had when he held a brush and drew the one stroke that completed the line of an upper eyelid or caught the exact line of a cheekbone, a nostril, a lip. The human face had delicacy and depth'. He is moving from portraiture to figure painting, a departure not entirely approved of by his cleaner, Mrs Morris, and one which gives Freeborn some opportunities for sly humour.

Jim's models are mainly women, and the delicacy and depth with which he paints them are matched, as always with Freeborn's female characters, by the delicacy and depth of the author's depiction. In this, he follows Turgenev, about whom he has written and several of whose novels he has translated. While Freeborn's male characters can seem boring, pompous, blinkered or mean, or all of these, the women, always depicted as fully-rounded characters, are more often cheerful, wise and loving. Here we have Mrs Rogers, the cleaner, who wants to be painted wearing her wedding dress; the understanding Rachel, a mother who stoically accepts

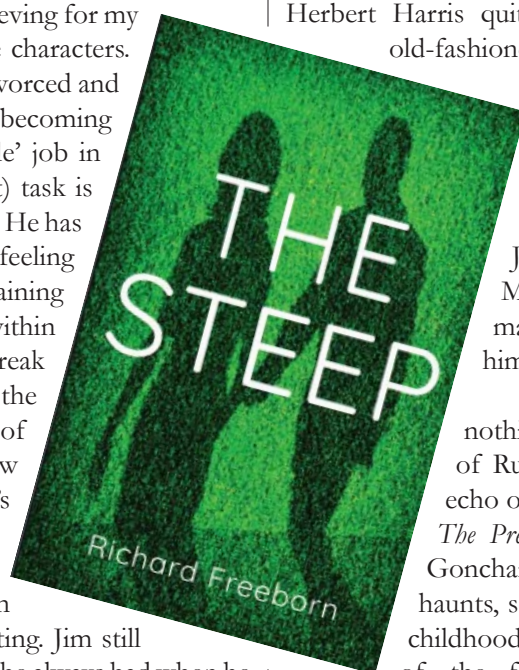
ill-health; another who quietly supports her husband in his illness; the forgiving Megan; and an unlikely *dea ex machina* in the shape of rich, elderly Dora Pratts-Morris.

And there is Sally, the girl with 'a gift for happiness', who shares her gift with Jim during an ecstatic summer of love. It seems, though, as autumn sets in, that Sally will be reclaimed by suburbia as epitomised by her parents' house in Guildford, 'The Cherries'. There, 'the same similar, though not identical, semi-detached shapes linked to one another with the inexorability of paired, bonded individuals, male-female, sex to sex', and Sally's parents seem to be living lives of quiet desperation. Jim thought at first he could categorise Herbert Harris quite easily: an unimaginative, resentful,

old-fashioned man even when young, who would do his job well enough provided the boundaries were fixed...? Would marriage to Sally end like this?

Then there is the epiphany on The Steep, a piece of countryside near Jim's childhood home in the suburbs of Manchester, where he has a meeting that makes clear what is really important to him in life.

Freeborn said that there was to be nothing of Russia in this novel, but lovers of Russian literature may hear in the title an echo of Goncharov's last and favourite novel, *The Precipice* (*Обрыв*). Just as the genesis of Goncharov's novel was a return to childhood haunts, so *The Steep* is remembered by Jim from childhood, and we could see in Jim a reminder of the frustrated artist Raisky, Goncharov's protagonist whom he described as 'an honest, kind and likeable man'. The struggle within Jim seems to echo the contrast between the nihilism of Volkhov, and Raisky's commitment to life. 'You know it's two things in life that are really dangerous', Dora Pratts-Morris warns Jim. 'One of them is a kind of fifth column, do you know what I mean? It's always there in your life but you think it isn't ... you find you just haven't got the lines of communication other people have.... I think that's one of our enemies.... The other enemy is envy.' It is Dora who suggests to Jim that The Steep can be a metaphor, telling him how her father, whom she nursed in his last illness, said that 'the worst, most lasting steepes ... were those connected with love and with death, the ending or absence of love and the death of a loved one'. And, between sips of whisky, Dora confirms for Jim what he had already glimpsed on The Steep: 'In this country ... you'll find married bliss mostly in suburbs. That's



what they're there for. Suburban bedrooms.... And that's the best place for it. We all need to love each other a lot more. It's our crying need.'

And so Jim, who began the novel like 'an empty red and white cigarette carton ... trapped against some wire-netting

... that the wind continually shook and flicked about', finds that art and love will be his compass and his destination. Unfashionably, but in a way that is very true to its author's life and work, this novel has a happy ending. □

Pan Tadeusz: the last foray in Lithuania

By Adam Mickiewicz

Translated from the Polish by Bill Johnston

(Archipelago Books, 2018) 300pp., pbk. £14.99 ISBN: 978-1939810007

Reviewed by Frank O'Reilly

'Language is the only homeland'

Czesław Miłosz, Polish poet, 1911-2004

'History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake'

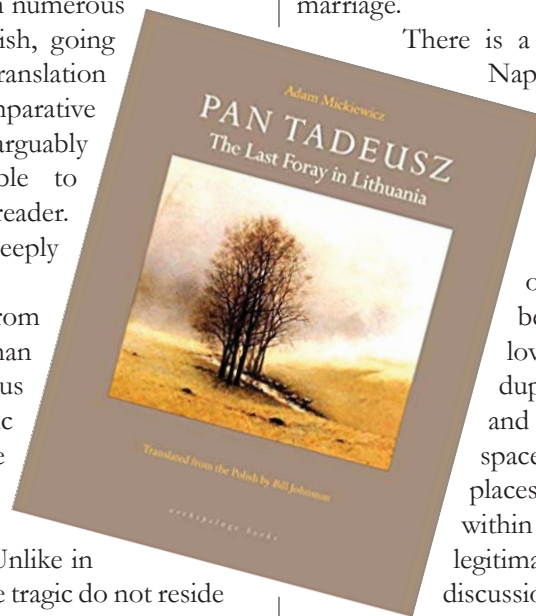
James Joyce, 'Ulysses'

Pan Tadeusz (Master Thaddeus) is a Polish classic written by the prolific nationalistic author Adam Mickiewicz. Published in 1834, it is considered the national epic of Poland and the last great epic poem in European literature. There have been numerous translations of the work into English, going back as far as 1885, but the new translation by Bill Johnston, Professor of Comparative Literature at Indiana University, arguably makes the classic more accessible to and enjoyable for the modern reader. Uncluttered with archaisms, it is deeply visual, perhaps even cinematic.

This is a different poetic species from the traditional epic with its superhuman heroes, virtuous maidens, monstrous challenges and sonorous mnemonic declamations. Here the heroes are quarrelsome, boozy, somewhat coarse-tongued rural folk. The term 'mock epic' also seems inapt. Unlike in Shakespeare's plays, the comic and the tragic do not reside in separate spaces and personages; rather they interdigitate, sometimes in a disorienting manner. Romance and heroics are constantly punctured and parodied bathetically, and the earthy intrudes onto the ideal: a smitten Count realizes that farmyard nymphs still have farmyard ways; a forlorn lady, seeking solitude, sits on an ant colony; the rebels defeat the Muscovites in a pivotal battle by getting the soldiers drunk and then using unconventional weaponry including aerial bombardment by heavy cheeses. But this is nonetheless a tale of real patriotism, not a skit on nationalism.

Although long, the story is simple. The protagonist, Tadeusz, returns from the city to the countryside and falls in love with the 13-year-old rural lass, Zosia. However, her family, the Horeszkos, and his, the Soplicas, are at daggers drawn over ownership of an old castle and the killing of its traditional master. It would be wrong, though, to see this as

a simple Romeo and Juliet tale.¹ For a start, the young lovers are not central to the action and are often off-stage; their love seems gauche rather than passionate, and is certainly not doomed or tragic, as at the end they are on the verge of marriage.



There is a wider context: it is the eve of the Napoleonic invasion of Russia, and the violent conflict between the feuding families is resolved by both sides taking on the Russian forces sent to quell their barnyard battle. Within this narrative are all the ingredients of an adventure novel: the conflict between dynastic alliance and true love; vendettas and duels; rivalry and duplicity in affairs of the heart; disguise and espionage. In addition, substantial space is taken up by lengthy description of places, people and foodstuffs; by 'stories within stories' as characters tell long tales to legitimate or control current controversies; by discussion of geopolitics and even aesthetics. Flora, especially trees, and fauna are elaborately anthropomorphized. Like Thomas Hardy, Mickiewicz makes extensive use of the pathetic fallacy: the natural world mirrors and chimes with the affairs of men. Thus, at the very end the crimson-hearted cloud signified the advent of Bonaparte. Similes can be startling. The sun is 'ruddy now like a farmer's hearty face/ As he comes home to rest in weariness'.

Despite the attractiveness of Johnston's version, the question arises as to how faithful it is to the original. Only a Polish scholar could answer that question. Every translation is an act of comparative translation. Johnston admits he referred to earlier English translations, and one of those, that of George Noyes in 1917, says: 'I have had constantly

¹ Boyd, Tomkin 'A Lithuanian Romeo and Juliet: *Pan Tadeusz*', reviewed in *The Spectator*, 15th December 2018, online version.



Great Britain–Russia Society Summary of Guest Speakers: Autumn 2019

The State Duma's Role in Russian Politics

Ben Noble

Thursday 19th September 2019 at Pushkin House, 5a Bloomsbury Square, WC1A 2TA

Ukrainian Politics after the 2019 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections

Andrew Wilson, Sarah Whitmore & (a third panellist pending confirmation)

Thursday 3rd October 2019 at Pushkin House, 5a Bloomsbury Square, WC1A 2TA

Russia's Relations with the West: Is the West's strategy for dealing with Russia fit for purpose?

Ruth Deyermond and Malcolm Chalmers

Wednesday 16th October 2019 at the Open Russia Club, 67 Wimpole Street, W1G 8AP

Politics Beyond the Kremlin: Developments in Russia's regions

Gulnaz Sharafutdinova

Wednesday 13th November 2019 at the Open Russia Club, 67 Wimpole Street, W1G 8AP

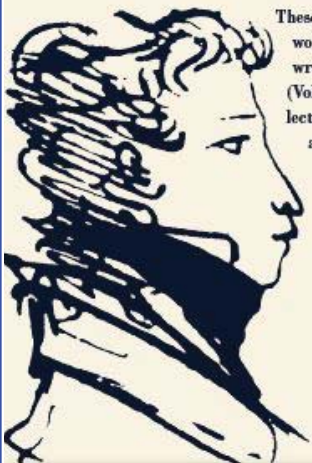
All the above talks are at 6.30pm for 7.00pm.

All details subject to change: check www.gbrussia.org for the latest information

www.gbrussia.org

LYRICS VOLUME II Alexander Pushkin

EDITED AND ANNOTATED BY ROGER CLARKE



These volumes, part of Alma's series of the complete works of Alexander Pushkin, collect the poems he wrote during his teenage years at the Imperial Lyceum (Volume I) and his time as a rebellious young intellectual in St Petersburg, the Caucasus, the Crimea and Russia's Balkan frontier-lands (Volume II). Enriched with notes, pictures and appendix.



LYRICS VOLUME I
Ed. R. Clarke
ISBN 9781847407814
29.95 • 480 pp



LYRICS VOLUME II
Ed. R. Clarke
ISBN 9781847407821
29.95 • 416 pp

Alexander Pushkin: Complete lyrics and shorter poems Volume II, edited and annotated by Roger Clarke, has now been published. Volume I was reviewed by Michael Pursglove in the Autumn 2018 East-West Review. Both volumes can be purchased direct from the publisher, AlmaBooks.com, or from any good bookshop.

KESTON INSTITUTE

TALK BY LORD WILLIAMS OF OYSTERMOUTH

(the Rt Rev and Rt Hon Dr Rowan Williams)

*Keston Institute invites members and friends of
the GB-Russia Society*

*to join in celebrating the 50th Anniversary of its
founding at its forthcoming annual meeting.*

*The meeting will be addressed by
one of Keston's Patrons, Lord Williams of Oystermouth*

and will take place at

*the Royal Foundation of St Katharine,
2 Butcher Row, Limehouse, London E14 8DS*

on

Saturday 9th November at 2.00 pm.

A buffet lunch will be available beforehand.

There is no charge for entry to the meeting, but a charge of £25 will be made for the buffet lunch. If you would like to attend, please reply by 25th October to Keston Institute, PO Box 712, York YO1 0GX.

E-mail: administrator@keston.org