

**Visit to Camp
at Losavo,
St Petersburg
on
14/7/2006 –
23/07/2006
by
Bill Turnbull
& Paul
Findlay**

Before the visit

Paul was invited by Galina & Tatiana to the camp accompanied by Bill.

Obtained visa from ASLA and booked flight through EBookers .com with Pulkova Aviation - £227 return each.

Friday 14th July.

Flight from Gatwick at 16.00 – flight was on time, comfortable with warm food.

Met at airport by Kirel and Katia and taken to Tatiana's home in Metalostroy – familiar territory for Paul. As usual we were well looked after before bed at 01.30.

Saturday 15th July

Got up at 05.30 – wash & breakfast and left at 06.10. Caught bus to metro and on to meet young camp staff leaders and Roman Annenkov near to Lenin's statue.

Went to Losavo by minibus over very rough roads with a considerable amount of traffic.

Helped a bit to set up extra facilities. Food supplied centrally before arrival of young people was basic but nourishing.

Met Alec (known from previous camp staff programmes) who phoned Anna Grigoryeva only to find that she was in London on her way to Scotland with 12 scouts.

Went to Alexei Krutchinin's camp about one kilometre away. Greeted well once again by all.

Met Ainur Shaikhimova – Kazakhstan International Commissioner.

Also met German / Belaru-

sian Leaders of the Eurotransit Network. Theme of their camp was Health and the Natural World. German Scouts were from Dortmund and were members of the Catholic St. George's organisation. They wanted to share information on RASN. They met the Honorary President and the International Commissioner in Moscow to discuss their expedition and to seek help and support getting to the camp from the airport.

The meeting was held in a very posh office in a Yukos building where the World Membership plaque was prominently placed. The discussions were cold and not 'Scouty' and no help was forthcoming. They decided that the organisation was 'Virtual' with no evidence of there being any Scouts – a view supported by Russian Scouts on site.

Their aim appears to help children of the Oil company only and no desire to recruit existing scout groups. The questions that were being asked by German and Russian Scouts were – Has any more money been given to the World Bureau since the initial payment of \$14,000 now that the company's assets have been frozen? Who will come to the World Scout Jamboree in 2007 (we understand that RASN has applied for 4 full units).

Attended the camp fire at which there was evidence of considerable activities during the day and great friendship.

Alexey K escorted us back to our camp and met Roman before departing. After tea with Roman went to bed at 00.30 – a long day

Sunday 16th July

Scout Groups arrive this morning.

Helped with decoration of the café.

Met Natasha Skorokhodova and her daughter Katia (now the Leader of Ed's group).

We become members of the Argonauts (ARGO) Scout Group > nafteam@rol.ru < run by Nina Fedoseeva. They reside in the NE corner of St. Petersburg and were formally led by Marina and linked to the Black Dam Venture Unit from Basingstoke (Nick Woodcock). Marina now runs a travel agency called Uncle Nick and still is in contact with Big Nick as they call him. (I think that the last time we saw Nick was at Wood Green). Two of the children are from Moscow and our camp staff member, Masha, is from Dubna and was a young scout when we went on the Study visit in 1992.

Opening ceremony ended with a firework display.

We are invited to supper with Katia's sub camp which takes the form of individual meditation on what was the best / worst bit of the day and an opportunity to comment on anything.

Katia is in her 3rd year of 5 at University studying Economics – a bright young lady. Two of the young men are on the camp staff programme this year – Timo and Dimo. They are going to UK via Helsinki by bus and by Ryanair to Stanstead. A text to Graham Hall identifies that they will be at Chalfont Heights – being looked after by Fred Russell.

Discussion afterwards with Natasha on joint programme to help orphanage project and to take part in an Explorer belt expedition. Interested in both although the date for the Orphanage project is no good for Russian Scouts (near end of term.)

Vladimir Gromov is the Acting President of ARNSO and wants Natasha S. / Alexey K.



Bill and Paul at Losevo ... continued

and Roman A. to organise a camp in 2009 to celebrate 100 years of Scouting in the St. Petersburg area for all Russia scouts.

Paul is given a bottle of Vodka in the form of a Rocket and called red army Vodka by Vladimir (Camp Site owner).

Monday 17th July

Today is wet. ARGO's are rafting on the rapids. We go with good intentions but decide that a coffee at the café is a better bet and so turned down the chance to be a man. On the second run (the one that we would have been on) the two instructors fell in leaving the Scouts to do the rescuing. Dined in the RAIN – RAIN – RAIN, WET – WET – WET, I feel it in my fingers and I feel it in my toes. Walked back to camp and met Hans and Helle – Danish Leaders of 21 scouts who have arrived at camp today.

Our very smelly toilet was changed in our cabin.

Went to see Ainur S. and to take photographs.

Paid our camp fees €100 (a bit over the top for us as we are missing 5 days of the camp) and 11000 RR for the cabin (a bit expensive for us as there is only two of us in a 6 birth cabin).

Went to guest night with a Group on site who are not scouts but their organisation is to develop young people to seek their 'Way to the road of Life' There are two of these groups (age seems to be 15 +) on site and we're told are quite different in the methods.

Klaus and Ainur arrive to see us and met Sergey, the camps international support.

We attend an international meeting in Roman's cabin.

The camp is for YMCA or-

ganisations and therefore dry. Roman has no Scout Group now but is still affiliated to YMCA. Danish scouts are from YMCA organisation. There is a small contingent of Latvian scouts.

Paul gives me the news of the death of Derek Nash – a scouting colleague from Welwyn. Derek came on the 1st Study visit in 1992 following his involvement in the training course at Gilwell for about 20 Russian Leaders. Time for reflection.

Tuesday 18th July.

Today is Russian day – the theme of which is Ivan and Maria.

We started a daily Quiz from the Brits for the newsletter and Paul provides the prizes for the winners.

Morning activities consist of combat games and include:-

Nail in wood / tail on donkey / rolling up a streamer / throwing cones at a tree / arm wrestling / football / knocking a tennis ball through a goal with a suspended filled bag / spin 360 deg quickest / hopping in a circle / pencil in bottle / Kims game / sitting on bottle tops.

Stage show on Ivan and Maria.

At meeting we learn that the Danes have brought with them 15 metres of fibre optic cable and are to run a base at the International day on the morse code.

Wednesday 19th July

Morning relay games are simple but exhausting such as :-

Straight run - Hopping on left foot up and returning on right foot - Leap frog -

Ball through tunnel - Small ball on bat - Hockey around slalom - Crab crawl - etc

Played the part of an old man

in a play – very difficult for Bill especially after the morning games. Paul played a part based on his ring (was he Gollum we ask). Plays went on until 22.45. Wide game started a 00.

Danish scouts came by train – boat to Helsinki and train to St Petersburg (Finlandia station). Train takes 7 hours and cost about 85 Euros per adult return (children half price). Booked through >international.tickets@vr.fi< VR Limited PO Box 488 FIN 00101 Helsinki Finland: Phone: +358 307 23 703 Fax: +358 307 20 111 Web: > www.vr.fi <

Thursday 20th July

Assault courses successfully completed by both Paul and Bill, much to everyone's surprise, but not the orienteering as it involves too much running. (Alec in charge).

We find out what is in Helle's day sac – a tooth brush and paste.

We are cooking tonight's supper.

Phoned Janet to find out if she has received Text messages – No. Retext to Do-reen and reply within 5 minutes.

Marina's daughter arrives for a 24 hour stay.

Paul & Bill have a wonderful (but sneaky) Banya – temp 120C.

Alexey K. camp leaders



arrive for a meeting in the café but no Alexey). Euro-transit Network will camp in Ireland next year.

Paul meets with Julia the camp site manager to discuss Winter Expedition. There is another camp site on the shores of Ladoga owned by Vladimir. Expedition to Karelia for UK scouts is being put forward by Vladimir.

Friday 21st July

NEPTUNES DAY

Morning bases aimed at collecting pearls – all associated with water.

Water guns extinguishing candles

Crawling under string in mud

Water spooned from a con-

tainer into mouth to be transported around tree and back into container.

Move billy from A to B using 4 strings tied to a hook and around tree at the other end.

Feed water down a shoot into a bucket

Rifle shooting at a partly filled black sack

Squeeze plastic bottle between legs full of water into a cup

Light fire on a floating log

Log paddle around bottle

Relay race around bottle

Rotate around pole in sea 20 times.

Played international water balloon volley ball (pairs holding a sack).

Receive a copy of ORYR newsletter – second of 2006 – evidence of plenty of activity in USA but not in Russia.

Had a Banya with Sergei (2 ½ hours)

Sasha Karesev is back in St. Petersburg with local government (previously in Nizhny Novgorod with Big Regional Government). Visiting USA for 40 + days on fact finding mission with 20 + people that includes a group of 4 scouting people. The resulting book will compare a similar fact finding visit 100 years ago. Sasha helps Natasha with the Scout Group.

Pasha Z. now in Moscow (censoring) auditing all youth literature (previously in Nizhny Novgorod with big Regional Government).

There is a camp in August 2006 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the new St Petersburg Scout association - sub part of new NORS (FSR & ORYR) – formed in 1996. It would have good to be able to have gone there.

Andrei Smirnov is no longer a Scout Leader – his Group do

not exist now. Sasha Karesev is assisting Natasha S.

Derek Nash's funeral today – time for more melancholy reflection.

Paul and Bill sing? 'On Ilkley

Bill and Paul at Losevo ... continued

Go to bed for 1 ½ hours after a bottle of vodka and a bottle of whiskey are emptied for the good of English – Russian understanding.

Alexey's boss goes home by bike – we ask if there is a law regarding being drunk in charge of a bike.

Have a further 1 ½ hours sleep and up at 02.45 and out at 03.15 by car to airport.

Pick up Alexey's boss on route, who has had an accident on his bike on the way home, and take him home. We are told – It is normal for him – we think he has dislocated his shoulder.

Flight leaves at 07.00 and arrives in Gatwick early at 7.00am.

Met by Janet.

Conclusions

Camp was very well organised by Roman with plenty of varied activities throughout the day using the full range of facilities offered by this privately owned campsite.

Evidence is that there is a considerable reduction in the number of Scout Groups in St Petersburg and the surrounding suburbs since the recognition of firstly ARNSO and now RASN. Evidence that those Groups that still exist are being handed over to younger Leaders.

No one believes that RASN are anything but 'Virtual'. There is no evidence of Scouts in St. Petersburg but their information says that there are Scouts in St. Petersburg belonging to RASN. Information suggests that the organisation is solely for the benefit of families working for Yukos. It will be interesting to see who comes to the World Scout Jamboree in 2007 and also to know if WOSM have received further membership subscriptions.

The Anniversary camp in August is a wonderful format for Scouts in St. Petersburg (both ARNSO, former FSR and ORYR). It would be great if Barry, the Chairman, was able to go – he would be made very welcome but too close to make and change personal plans.

There is a strong desire to hold a camp in 2009 to celebrate



100 years of Scouting in Russia in the St. Petersburg area – but no-one is confident of running a camp for all Russian Scouting. Perhaps it will be a topic of conversation at the anniversary camp in August.

We need to keep in contact and provide our continual support and encouragement. There may be less Scouts now than in the 90's but they, together with ORYR, are still the real Scouts of Russia.

If there is a celebration camp in 2009 then we should strongly encourage Groups to go – it will be an ideal opportunity to rejuvenate real Scouting in Russia. Perhaps the WOSM should ask RASN is they are going to organise an International Jamboree to mark this very special landmark.

Bill Turnbull / Paul Findlay
NRSF

25



YUKOS latest (from Moscow Times 26 July 06)

Yukos' creditors voted overwhelmingly to liquidate the nation's one-time biggest oil producer on Tuesday 25 July 06, opening the way for state energy flagships to gobble up its remains and ending its long battle for survival.

"This is the end of Yukos," said Eric Kraus, manager of the Nikitsky Fund. "It has been the walking dead for the past two years."

The creditors' vote on Tuesday ends a 2 1/2-year saga that began with the arrest of Yukos' majority owner Mikhail Khodorkovsky on a Siberian runway in October 2003, and led to the crippling of his company as it fought more than \$33 billion in back tax charges.