

## Russian Christmas 2023 Study Day -14/12/23

The Russian group of 5 hardy souls, (Jean missing on a family visit to Latvia) met at Pauline's house in Formby as per usual. Also as per usual, Pauline started the session by taxing the group's knowledge of esoteric Russian vocabulary that she had gleaned from her early morning readings of the online Russian press. As always, this inexhaustible fount of knowledge had unearthed a new nugget. Namely that the Russian word for 'area' as in 'area of a triangle was 'ploshchad", more commonly found to mean 'square' as in Red Square. Diary arrangements were then fixed for the coming spring and early summer. This was followed by a reading and dissection of an article on the Trans-Siberian railway, which built neatly on Jean's cultural input on its history in the previous session. During that account, Derek had mentioned the activities of the Bolshevik agit-prop enthusiasts, taking their message to the masses, in particular, the 'poet of the revolution' – Mayakovsky. Following the customary tea, coffee and biscuits, Derek read out two extracts from Mayakovsky's poems to highlight his input. Chris then took up the baton with a spirited, soulful, rendering of 'Kalinka', providing his own musical accompaniment. Maria and May contributed throughout with their customary thoughtful observations. Sadly, time had passed so quickly that Chris was unable to squeeze in his short account of the history of the Red Army Choir. The group then headed off to the Sparrowhawk for a convivial Christmas lunch. Members departed from there in good heart, with much to look forward to in 2024!

Derek Aitken