

Imogen Evans – Russia, December 2013

In December 2013 I took a week-long trip to Russia, staying in Yaroslavl and Moscow, in an attempt to revitalise the spoken Russian which I had gained during my Year Abroad and to spend some time re-immersing myself in Russian culture.

I spent my first few days in Yaroslavl, living with the woman who had hosted me for a semester in 2012, discussing books, snow, politics and mushrooms along with a daunting (but welcome) onslaught of food, and endless cups of tea. Speaking Russian again was like returning to an old and familiar friend, and remembering all of the in-jokes and cultural references which come with them. I was even pleasantly surprised to realise that the topics that we were covering often came back to those which haunt the Russian media, and I don't think I could have found a friendlier, more domestic and strikingly un-academic environment in which to revise for my Text and Culture paper!

In Moscow I was again staying with friends made during my time there, but here we managed to engage in more cultural activities, visiting galleries and exhibitions whose visual art tied in with elements of my current paper on late 20th century Russian culture. I also managed to make a raid on a large bookshop to get hold of texts which I have found hard to find here.

All in all, this trip made up a wonderful breath of fresh air for my Russian studies (even if that air was -8 and slightly frosty), giving me the confidence to come back and return to my Russian grammar books again with the knowledge that even if I still find it hard to remember every case ending, I can speak for hours in Russian if given the chance!

And the snow was beautiful.