

## A GUEST FROM ENGLAND

**Richard Pomfret came to our University for the second time this year. We would like to know his opinion about some questions. So we asked him about his wonderful arrival to Novosibirsk, and heard many interesting things about football, snow and Russian spies**

**– First of all, could you tell us the story of your arrival in Novosibirsk? How did you learn about our University, where did you get acquainted with the woman from Yekaterinburg and so on?**

– Ok. Well, the story goes back for quite a long time. I've already visited Yekaterinburg each year since about 2003, so that's another story. I've always wondered if I'll visit another Russian city, but I didn't expect to do so. Two summers ago I was working on a preserved railway. I work sometimes there as a volunteer and sometimes have a sort of a paid job. I was selling tickets for the train in the station Haworth, where the Bronte Sisters lived. So I sold two tickets to a man who was from Liverpool (as I decided from his accent), but when I spoke to his wife I understood that she was Russian. So I got a conversation with them and I've talked about my trip to Yekaterinburg to teach English, to work with my music, which she found very interesting. And her best friend in Russia was a dean of the Faculty of foreign languages in Novosibirsk Pedagogical University and maybe she'd be interested in going me there as well. So the month later the day the dean had visited them in Liverpool she had visited me in my home, we talked for a long time, and she said – Yes! I'll be glad very much if you'll go to Novosibirsk. So that was how it happened. And my first visit here was last year in 2009

**– That's wonderful! So, you've been here twice?**

– Twice, yeah

**– Have you noticed some changes in our University, our students, or maybe in our city during this year?**

– Not really. You know, I wasn't here long enough to see the difference. I've noticed changes in Yekaterinburg, big changes. The only change I've noticed is not really a change at all. Just when I came last year, the snow has already arrived, and I've seen it only with snow. This year the snow hasn't arrived yet, so I see it in a different way.

**– We know that you have a lot of hobbies, one of them is music, another one is railway. Can you tell us something about them please?**

– Well, music is the main hobby. Since I was a child I wanted to sing. No to be a soloist, I didn't particularly want to sing for audience, I just wanted to sing. If anyone else want to listen – that doesn't matter. And I started to sing in a choir, but I've never been playing musical instruments, so I assumed I was not a very good musician. So I sang in a choir at school and then when I was at University. And then I started to realize I was really good at that. And then I've tried to conduct a choir at University. I did it without studying the music. I've just once

started to conduct, and the more I did, the more confidence I've got., and the more I discovered that I'm actually have a quite good instinct for music. And that continued almost through my career of a teacher, and then in the early 1990-s, when I was already 45 years old I've started with a small school choir and suddenly everything changed, because it was extremely successful. It was the best choir of the country. And suddenly I've realized that I'm much better at music than I was at Maths. So I stopped teaching Maths in 1996, so I did more music. So my musical career has just blossomed in the last 15 years. It was only a hobby before, and it is still a hobby now. It's a hobby which takes a lot of my time, but it's also a hobby which helps me in English teaching, because it's an option of music – meeting people from other countries and accidentally English teaching. So that's the hobby number one.

Hobby number two. Sport. I love playing football, cricket, and enjoy watching them. So I've always been a supporter of my football local team – Bradford City. Most of time they're terrible, occasionally they're very good. And I'd played football for as long as I could. I think I was in my late thirties when I've finally decided that I couldn't continue playing anymore. But I can still occasionally play cricket, because you need not only physical ability to play cricket, but also experience can help you in that game too. So if the team one time will be very short of players I'll be able to play a game. Another thing I love doing is watching sports, and I was lucky to see a football match two days ago. Sibir was playing.

**– Did you like it?**

– Very much! It's a very nice experience. Especially the stadium which was so different from the British football stadium.

**– Really?**

– My home city Bradford is nothing like as big as Novosibirsk. Much smaller and in bottom division of British football, but the stadium is for 25000 people, everybody is on the cover from the rain and we can have a crowd of people of about twenty fans. And here in the third largest city in Russia you have a stadium only for 10000 people. The football stands are still made of wood, which are not allowed in England now after a terrible fire that was in my city 35 years ago. And everybody is out for the rain; there is no cover to support it. And you get fewer supporting here in the Russian top-division game that we do in Bradford group, in bottom-division game. So, there is difference. But football is football, isn't it? I enjoyed the game very much even it was raining. So, that's the sport.

And interest number three is railways. I always enjoy the atmosphere or railways, especially steam railways, the old-fashioned steam trains. Steam locomotives died out in Britain in about 1967-68, something like that. But there are number of places in Britain people preserved many of these locomotives and some the old railway lines. Which one by one opened up to have maybe a hundred of different preserve lines in Britain for steam trains now. The one where I worked was opened first. It opened in

1969. Now it's a big tourist attraction. And it has the advantage; it runs through the Haworth village, where the Bronte Sisters lived. So we have two tourists attraction in the same place.

**– And the last question, very useful, I suppose. About stereotypes about Russians, if you have such ones...and about the features of pronunciation, which shows, that we are not native speakers.**

– Well, first of all, stereotypes. I don't think I have stereotypes, because I have been coming to Russia for so long. There was only British stereotype of different kinds of Russian people. There was time when people were think that all Russian people looks like president Bregnev. All were very stony-faced, everybody never smiled. Stereotype of Siberia is that it is huge area full of snow where nobody lives. And they just get prisoners there, if the Russian authority don't like them. So most people in Britain if I say Siberia, don't realize that there are cities in Siberia and it's just extremely cold there all the time. What stereotype that British people do not have, but Russian people like to think they have is that you have bears in the streets. But they don't have that stereotype at all. This is the Russian invention of the stereotype they think that like western people to have, but actually they don't. Another stereotype is about the beautiful Russian spy, as they have in James Bond films. The Russia is full of incredibly tall, beautiful spies. And I meet a lot of tall people, but they are not probably spies. I think it's very difficult. British people do not make stereotypes, they just try to get a general picture of Russia and it's very difficult to understand modern-day Russia. That's about stereotypes.

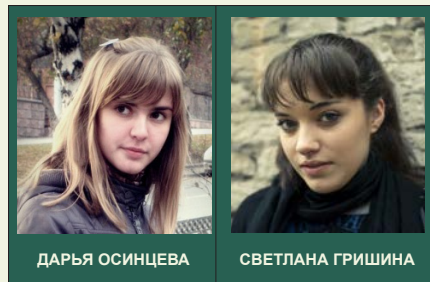
And about features of speaking. It's difficult to answer on the spot. If it needs the example, what you notice is the difference in vocal intonation, especially your long vowels. You don't have short vowels as we do in English. So you lengthen them, you should keep them short. So even in the word "Russian". The [ra:ʃn] is much longer when you say it. And I just say [ˈrʌʃn], [A]. So that is the thing, but it's lovely to hear. And most British people like to hear English spoke with different kind of foreign accent, especially Russian speakers. It sounds really pleasant. It's just interesting to hear the different sounds.

**– Thank you, we hope to see you next year.**

– I hope so. I don't know it'll be, but I hope it will.

**– So we'll be waiting for you.**

– Now I have two visits here and I am making more friends, so I would be glad to see them all again.



ДАРЬЯ ОСИНЦЕВА

СВЕТЛАНА ГРИШИНА