

## **“SOSNOVY BOR – A TOWN NOT ON THE MAP”**

[A talk given by Nick Oldfield on 24/10/2013 at the Conservative Club, Ross-on-Wye]

WORKING on a nuclear power project in Russia provided a fascinating and enlightening subject for a talk entitled, 'Sosnovy Bor – a town not on the map.' given to Kyrle Probus Club by member Nick Oldfield recently,

Sosnovy Bor, some eight kilometres west of St Petersburg, is home to the Leningrad Nuclear Power Plant and is a closed town, meaning one can't get there without a special visa, Nick explained. It is also a centre for military research and has the largest nuclear waste processing facility in the world.

Nick said he was in Sosnovy Bor in the 1990s, working on a EU-funded project on nuclear safety. He said nuclear safety and security had to be taken into account when designing a system, for the cost of clearing up after nuclear accidents was enormous.

While the number of deaths following a nuclear accident was lower than might be expected, the real damage that came from such accidents was mental and economic. He went on to mention some of the notable accidents such as the Windscale fire in October 1957, Three Mile Island in the USA in March 1979, Chernobyl in April 1986 and Fukushima Daiichi in March 2011.

Nick described how he arrived in Moscow in November 1993 on his way to Sosnovy Bor, to find huge poverty and despite the extreme cold, there were people sleeping in the street. He said that when he first went there, the exchange rate was 800 rubles to the dollar. Two years later it was 5,000 rubles to the dollar.

On the plus side, there were highlights such as travelling on the Moscow Metro, visiting the Bolshoi Theatre and seeing the lavishly decorated Cathedral of the Assumption. There was also a visit to Trinity Lavra, a monastery founded in 1345 in Sergyev Posad, north of Moscow. The spiritual home of the Russian Orthodox Church, Peter the Great took refuge there in the 17th century.

Nick said he would return to his work at Sosnovy Bor in a future talk, something that Kyrle Probus members will look forward to.

This was just the latest in the varied and interesting talks members hear when they meet on the first and third Thursdays of each month. If anyone is interested in finding out more about Kyrle Probus Club, they can visit the website on: [kyrleprobusross.org.uk](http://kyrleprobusross.org.uk)

Jeffery Morris 7/11/2013