



## **St John's Church News No 48: June 2013**

**ЦЕРКОВЬ СВТ. ИОАННА ШАНХАЙСКОГО  
ST JOHN'S RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH  
Military Road, Colchester, Essex CO1 2AN**

His Holiness Kyrill, Patriarch of Moscow and All the Russias  
Most Rev. Metropolitan Hilarion, First Hierarch of ROCOR  
Very Rev. Mark, Archbp of Berlin, Germany and Great Britain

**For this newsletter in electronic form: [www.orthodoxengland.org.uk/zchurchnews.htm](http://www.orthodoxengland.org.uk/zchurchnews.htm)**

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**Сторож / Caretaker:** Paul Hopkins, 69, Military Road

**Youtube:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rE2T2sYTy8s>

### **Расписание богослужений / Services in June**

#### **Saturday 1 June**

5.30 pm: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

#### **Sunday 2 June: Sunday of the Samaritan Woman / Неделя о Самаряныне**

10.00 am: Hours and Liturgy / Часы и Божественная Литургия

#### **Saturday 8 June**

5.30 pm: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

#### **Sunday 9 June: Sunday of the Man Born Blind / Неделя о слепом**

10.00 am: Hours and Divine Liturgy / Часы и Божественная Литургия

#### **Wednesday 12 June**

5.30 pm: Vigil for the Ascension/ Всенощное бдение накануне праздника Вознесения Господня

**Thursday 13 June: Ascension Day / Вознесение Господне**

10.00 am: Hours and Divine Liturgy for Ascension Day / Вознесение Господне / Часы и Божественная Литургия

**Saturday 15 June**

5.30 pm: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

**Sunday 16 June: The Holy Fathers of the First Universal Council / Свв. отцев 1 - ого Вселенского Собора**

10.00 am: Hours and Divine Liturgy / Часы и Божественная Литургия

**Saturday 22 June**

5.30 pm: Pentecost Vigil / Всенощное бдение накануне праздника Пятидесятницы

**Sunday 23 June: Pentecost – Whitsun – The Feast of the Holy Trinity / Пятидесятница – Св. Троица - Сошествие Св. Духа на апостолов**

10.00 am: Hours and Liturgy. Vespers with the Kneeling Prayers / Часы и Божественная Литургия. Вечерня с коленопреклонными молитвами

**Friday 28 June**

5.30 pm: Vigil for St John of Shanghai, the Wonderworker / Всенощное бдение накануне праздника свт. Иоанна Шанхайского, чудотворца

**Saturday 29 June: Patronal Feast / Престольный праздник: St John of Shanghai / День памяти Свт. Иоанна Шанхайского**

10.00 am: Hours, Liturgy and Procession (Blessing of Water at 8.30 am). Meal in Hall / Часы, Божественная литургия и крестный ход (в 8.30 – малое освящение воды). Общая тпапеза.

**Patronal Feast: Saturday 29 June**

**Saturday 29 June**

5.30 pm: Vigil for All Saints / Всенощное бдение накануне праздника Всех Святых

**Sunday 30 June: All Saints / Неделя всех святых**

10.00 am: Hours and Divine Liturgy / Часы и Божественная Литургия

**Church News**

**Funeral in April**

Mary McCabe (1925-2013) reposed in Dublin on Lazarus Saturday, 27 April. Few of you knew here, but she was one of our founders and one of the first Irish people to have joined the Russian

Orthodox Church. She was a delight. What a privilege to give up one's soul on Lazarus Saturday, which is second only to Easter Day! Her funeral took place at Sts Peter and Paul Russian Orthodox Church in Dublin on 29 April. Eternal Memory!

### **Wedding in May**

12 May: Alexander Body and Audrey Phillips

### **Easter**

Over 300 people came for Easter, including Fr Gregory from Moldova, who also came during Lent and on Palm Sunday, together with Deacon Ion. We were very pleased to welcome Fr Gregory and those who brought him. All the more so as Fr Gregory is bilingual Romanian and Slavonic and this was a great help, especially on Easter Night.

### **Thomas Sunday**

On this Sunday we were fortunate to have the visit of Protodeacon Christopher Henderson and his wife, Julianna, who last visited two years ago. Fr Protodeacon is from the Australian Diocese of our Church and often concelebrates with our Metropolitan Hilarion in our many churches in Australia, Papua and Indonesia.

### **Painting Finished**

The painting of the side wall of the Church was completed on 9 May and on 20 and 21 May our carpenter, Tony Humm, whose wife is Ukrainian, came and repaired rotten wood.

### **Candles**

We are finishing off our old candles. Every eighteen months we order a quarter of a ton of candles. This time we have ordered longer and larger ones, which will burn for at least an hour and a half. This does mean, however, that the price will be increasing, for the first time in five years, from 25 pence to 30 pence. These will go on sale at the end of June or else in July when we have finished the old stock.

## **2012-13 Report of the Chairman of the Trustees of the East of England Orthodox Church**

**St John's Orthodox Church, Military Road, Colchester CO1 2AN, Grade 2\* Listed,  
Registered Charity Trust Name and Number: East of England Orthodox Church (EEOC),  
No 1081707**

### **Introduction**

Within six weeks in 2008 we managed to raise £180,000 to buy and equip our Church, thanks to our nationwide and even international internet appeal. From early September 2008 we refurbished it and moved in at the end of November 2008. The period up to 2012 was a period of interior adornment, consolidation and parish-building. However, the 2012-13 financial year was when we began to make many other improvements and look very seriously at our longer-term ambitions, as there is still much to do. However, let us first look at the pastoral work carried out over this past year.

### **Pastoral Work**

As part of the multinational Russian Orthodox Church, with 164 million or 75% of all Orthodox Christians worldwide, we generally take care of all Orthodox around us, regardless of nationality. At present our church has 403 regular parishioners of 22 different nationalities, mainly from Eastern Europe. However, this number is increasing continually and will almost certainly reach 500 regular parishioners by the end of next year, as in 2014 we shall probably have a further influx from Romania and Bulgaria, not to mention more Orthodox from Cyprus and war-torn Syria. Fortunately, we have a large church with a capacity of 500.

To keep in contact with all, we issue a 16-page monthly bilingual newsletter, which is mainly sent out electronically. Apart from regular services on Saturdays, Sundays, feast days and weekday services by request, as well as confessions, communions, baptisms, weddings, funerals, memorial services and services of intercession, I generally spend one or two days a week on pastoral visits. I cannot spend more time on these visits because I have to work for a living, spending three days a week teaching or translating in order to make ends meet. Pastoral visits may take place in Colchester, throughout Essex, Suffolk and beyond. Although we have concentrations of parishioners in Colchester and Ipswich, we have parishioners living in all the following towns and villages:

Lincolnshire: Boston, Spalding.

Kent: Gillingham

London

Cambridgeshire: Fenstanton, St Neots, Cambridge, March.

Norfolk: Norwich, Thetford, Gt Yarmouth, Eccles, Rackheath.

Suffolk: Bury St Edmunds, Bardwell, Great Whelmetham, Monks Eleigh, Bures, Glemsford, Leiston, Lavenham, Stowmarket, Ipswich, Felixstowe.

Essex: Colchester, Stanway, Gt Bromley, Layer de la Haye, Lawford, Leavenheath, Frating, Dagenham, Chelmsford, Witham, Halstead, Braintree, Dunmow, Notley, Coggeshall, Kelvedon,

Feering, Dovercourt, Stanford le Hope, Wickford, Rayleigh, Shenfield, Frinton, Clacton, Point Clear, Bishops Stortford, Southend, Westcliff, Tolleshunt Knights, Maldon.

Last September I visited Thetford in Norfolk, where we have 17 parishioners, in December 2012 Lincolnshire and in September 2012 and again in January 2013 Gillingham in Kent, where we have 11 parishioners, and in March Norwich. We have visitors from these counties and from London very regularly. They depend on us since the only other permanent and staffed public-access Russian Orthodox churches in England are in west London, Oxford, Birkenhead and Manchester.

Every Sunday we see at least two different families from Norwich and we also have baptism requests from Kent, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Lincolnshire, apart from the regular baptisms from all over Essex and Suffolk. In Kent I was called on to give communion to an isolated Russian lady who has terminal cancer, and also to one in St Bart's in London. I also had to go up to Lincolnshire (Spalding). Pastoral visits always involve house blessings and frequently confessions and sometime communions or baptisms at home.

Contact with a Russian Orthodox priest really does make a difference to our many parishioners, who often live in isolated conditions, with a low level of English. Most have arrived here over the last ten years and more are arriving every month, seeking to keep their Orthodox roots but also to integrate, which is often a difficult balance. A bilingual Church, priest and choir, taking the best from different cultures, undoubtedly helps. The fact is that we have new people every Sunday, many of whom end up coming regularly.

It should be explained to outsiders that most of our people are poor; even to get to church is a struggle. In one town, for example, among others we have three families, totalling eight people, who all live in a small terraced house which they rent. All the adults work on the minimum wage. On top of this, most are sending back considerable sums monthly to family in Eastern Europe, to the Baltics, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia and Bulgaria. In most of these countries a good salary is 200 euros per month; many have less. We have one surgeon who works at a factory in Witham and earns five times more than as a surgeon at home.

Another area of pastoral activity is as prison chaplain in Essex and Suffolk. Since the closure of HMP Bulwood Hall, the main centre is HMP Chelmsford, where I have baptised and given communion, as well as confessed. I also visit HMP High Point at Stradbroke in Suffolk. Here last year I had to help someone on suicide watch. After he left prison, he came to our church from London to express his gratitude. I have now done 145,000 miles in my car, which is 75,000 more than in November 2008. Most of this mileage has been due to pastoral work and costs come out of my own pocket.

I sometimes travel by train, as a member of the Theological Commission of the Inter-Orthodox Assembly of Bishops in the British Isles and Ireland. Meetings take place twice a year at the Greek Orthodox Diocesan headquarters in London. At least once a year I go to our Cathedral in

London. Last October I went up to London to take part in a BBC Radio 4 programme, 'Beyond Belief'. In March 2013 I had to go to Oxford for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the repose of Fr Nicholas (Gibbes), formerly the English tutor to the Tsarevich Alexis, and I gave a talk on Fr Nicholas.

Last year I visited Russia twice, in May and July, as part of the Theological Commission of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, and was given an award by Patriarch Kyrill in Moscow 'for Colchester'. I will be going to Russia again this year, as I do every year.

### **Improvements Carried Out during the 2012-13 Financial Year**

1. Between 16 and 20 April 2012 the front of the Church, including the bell-tower and the doors, was repainted. This was by far the cheapest of three quotes and carried out by local Contractors. This was an exceptionally low price. In all likelihood we could get them to paint the other three sides of the Church in due course, as soon as finances permit. They have already quoted for the work, including the washing down of the north and east sides, which will be necessary before painting.

2. In May 2012 the electricity supply to the kitchen was upgraded, so that the electricity there would no longer trip, and PAT tests on 23 items in the Church were carried out. One kettle had to be replaced. Our electrician also changed the bulbs in the sixteen main lights in the Church from the old yellow sodium ones to white ones. This was a welcome improvement.

3. In May 2012 the outside of the Hall and the gents' toilet block were repainted, using two coats of Dulux Weathershield, which is very expensive as it is very good quality.

4. In May 2012 we received the six painted icons for the chapel iconostasis. They were painted in Moldova, who painted the main iconostasis.

5. In February 2012 our 23-year old electronic Bell Machine broke and was deemed beyond repair. It would have cost at least £2,000 to replace it. At the end of August we had a new Electronic Bell Sound System installed by Smith's of Derby and our electrician. £1200 had previously and very generously been donated for this.

6. The making of three new large stands, finishing the Church sign, making the chapel doors open outwards, mounting the new icons on the chapel iconostasis and extensive repairs to rotten wood on the exterior of the Hall and the replacement of one piece of rotten wood on the front of the Church were all carried out by our carpenter, who finished all these jobs in September 2012.

7. Between July and October 2012 I bought two new censers for the church, a new seven-branched candlestand for the chapel altar-table, incense, books for the bookshop and 4 small candlestands for the main church.

8. Between August and October 2012 the front railings of the Church were repainted by John Boulden and David Perkins. This was a labour-intensive task. Labour had been donated, and

David had also donated paint and materials. The total cost had been £100, as against one professional quote we had received of £2,000! We are very grateful to John and David.

9. In November 2012 we had problems with the toilet in the Hall, which had cracked. This was replaced by our plumber.

10. In January 2013 the kitchen drain blocked and as we were unable to unblock it with rods we had to call on a professional.

11. In January we ordered 20 more chairs and 2 tables for the Hall, which is now fully independent in this respect and we will no longer have to move chairs and tables from the meeting room for parish feasts.

12. In February we had to have a new heat exchanger for a heater in the meeting room, since the old one was split and so dangerous.

With these jobs completed, the chapel now looks as it should on the inside and the whole front of the Church looks far better, ready for the opening of Roberts Road in the next few months. This will lead directly to the Church like an avenue and therefore, we are intending to floodlight the front of the Church.

### **Future Projects**

The largest wooden church in the UK, on nearly an acre of land at the highest point in Colchester proper, and nearly 160 years old, our white Church is a unique, historic building and tourist attraction. The Church, which belongs to our East of England Orthodox Church trust, is a growing community of over 400, mainly composed of people from EU countries – especially the Baltic States, the Ukraine and Romania. Our future projects are:

1. To finish the repainting of Church exterior (three walls). Estimated cost: £11,000. Contractor sourced, has quoted and is ready to start.

2. To retarmac the exterior parking area measuring 475 square metres. Estimated cost: £6,000. Contractor sourced and has estimated this cost verbally.

3. To extend the Church Hall, doubling its size and modernising its facilities. At present we have 90 square metres and this needs to be at least doubled, with a new toilet block with separate gents, ladies and disabled toilets. It is used by the Church, AA groups, local New Town societies and would be used by a local Pre-School, if it were updated. It is a New Town Community resource and we have cultivated links with the Community and could be used much more if modernised. Our income from it at present pays the Church insurance. We consider that this income could be at least trebled with a new Hall. In order to obtain planning permission, this must be a wooden building exactly like the present, built on brick pads, without foundations. Three contractors have been contacted for quotations, which we should receive in the next two

weeks, whereon we will have to obtain the necessary planning permission. Our estimated cost: £75,000.

4. To relight the Church interior: Estimated cost: £15,000. Contractors sourced.

5. To refloor the 450 square metres of the non-carpeted part of the interior floor with polyvinyl. Our estimated cost: £20,000. Contractors sourced.

6. To raise money, perhaps from revenue funding, in order to pay clergy a full salary and meet travel costs.

7. New Church furnishings: Gospel cover, Golgotha, Second font. More painted icons. Estimated cost: £10,000.

8. Ultimately, in the longer term, we wish to be able to attempt to meet the needs of Orthodox in other centres in the East of England yet to be established, possibly in Norwich, Peterborough, St Albans and Cambridge. This cannot at present be costed, since our priorities are the above.

### **Conclusion**

In order to meet the above ambitious, long-term but necessary vision for the future, we have contacted a Charity Fundraising company and hired them for an initial twelve days of work. If they are successful, we will certainly hire them for a further period. We have much to do and will have even more after the arrival of more Orthodox from Bulgaria and Romania from January 2014. We believe that if we can do this, we will be able to provide for our growing flock, be self-financing and, God willing, expand in the East of England region over the coming years, where the numbers and spiritual needs of Orthodox will only grow.

**Archpriest Andrew Phillips 5 April 2013**

### **Who to Pray for?**

It is now five years since we bought our church and although we did not receive the keys for another four months after that and then we were faced with three months of work, it is nevertheless an anniversary. In this time we have formed a parish. Some come to us from far away, others can walk to church. Some come to us once a year; others come every Saturday and Sunday and feast day without fail. Below is a list of those who come to us at least once a year. I have not counted, but someone who did said that it came to 653. If you would like to pray for others, please do use this list. I pray for all those on this list every Sunday and before every Liturgy. Those in brackets are not yet Orthodox but are married to Orthodox. May they too join our Church family!



Adrian, (Adelinde)  
Ala, (Stephen), Sophia  
Alevtina, Viktor, Nadezhda, Anna,  
Alexander, Elena, Alexandra, Irina, Anna  
Audrey, Alexander  
Alexander  
Alexander, Irina, Alexandra  
Alexandra  
Alexiy, Vera, Elena, Ekaterina  
Alina, Marius, Mikhail, John  
Alina, (Michael), Emilia  
Alina, (Alec), Sophia  
Alla, (Alphonse), Nikita  
John, Iuliana  
Alona  
Anastasia, (Richard), Philip +  
Andreas, Lydia  
Andrei, Elena, Maria  
Archpriest Andrew, Sabine, Alban  
Andrew, Mary, George, Anna  
(Angela)  
Angelina, Paul, George, Alexander, Sophia  
(Angelo)  
Anysia (Seamus, Brendan, Bruce)  
Anna, (Jason), Elizabeth (Nina)  
Anna, Julia  
Anna and children  
Anna, (Anthony), Pavel  
Anna, Sergei  
Anna, (Michael), George  
Anna, Alla, (Robert)  
Anna, Peter, Alexandra, Ioann, Galina,  
Anna, (Richard), Victor  
Anna, John, Luke  
Anthony  
Antonina, (John), Daniel, Philippa  
(Barry), Larisa  
Bogdan, Claudia, Ana-Maria, Mihail, Anna  
Boris  
Brendon, Laura, Alexandra, Nicolae  
(Bryn), Svetlana, Elizabeth  
Catalin, Mirela, Andrei  
Catalin, Mariana  
Catalina  
Christine, (Philip)  
Ciprian, Laura, Maria, Christian  
Ciprian, Georgina, Georgiu, Maria, Doina +  
3

Cristina, Daniel, Alesandra

Dan

Daniel, Anna

David

David

David, Christina

Despina, Dinu, Joshua, Maria, Josef

Dorota, (Mathew), Joseph, Alexandra

Dorota + 3

Dushan, Sanja, Jakov

Ekaterina, (Kieran), Alexandrou

Edward

Ekaterina, Nicholas, Leo

Ekaterina, Katleen

Elena, (Richard), Alexander, Vladislav

Elena, Symeon, Ilya, Erast

Elena, Vladimir

Elena

Elena, Viktor, Rodion, Daniel

Elena, Mikhail

Elena, (Gareth), Sophia

Elena + 3

Elizaveta

Emilia, Ilie, Ilsa, Ilie, Alexander, Ilie,  
Margarita

Eugene, Julia, Angelina, Valeria

Priest Evgeny, Ludmila, Nikolai, Feodor,  
Ioann

(Federico), Ekaterina, Filipp

Gabriel, Bianca, Patrick

Galina, Valentin, Zinaida, Oleg

Georgy, Lukia, Joanna

Georgy

Georgy, Tatiana, Adrian, Lutsia,

Gleb, Daria, Ekaterina, Timothy

Helen, George

Helen

Ija, Maria, Alexandra

Iliodor

Ioana, Dumitru, Andrei, Andrea

Ioana-Daniela, Iulian-Dan

Irina, Eva

Irina, (Michael), Elena, Victoria, Natalia

Irina, Paul

Irina, (Michael)

Irina, (Luigi), Michael, Mariamna

Irina, (Ricky)

Irina, Ioann, Ekaterina, Sophia

Irina, (Peter), Dimitry

Irina, Roman, Nicole

Irina, Vasile, Maria

Irina

Irina, Ilya, Aleksandr

Irina, Dmitry

Irina, (Raymond), Marina

Irina, (Scott)

Jack, Anne

Jelena, Aleksejs, Mark, Sofia

John, Zoe, Marina, Alexandra

John, Maria

John, Peter

Julia

Julia, (Steve), Sergey, Alexis

Julia, Dragos, Stefan

Julia, Sophia, Mark

Julia, Pavlo, Anastasia

Julia, (Mark), Eva, Victoria, Angelina

Julia, Samuel, Elizabeth

Julia, Alim, Kieran, Cyprian, Timothy

Julia

Julia, (Jose), +

Kallistheni, Maria, Andreas, (Tammy),  
Gabriella, Effi

Katalina

Kyriacos, Kyriaki, Alexandra, Anna

Larisa, (Steve), Alexandra

Lilia, (Graham)

Liliya, (Arunas), Dimitry

Lia, (Stewart), Aleksander, Anna,

Ludmila, Joanna

Ludmila

Ludmila, Alexei, Andrei

Ludmila, (Colin)

Lukass, Luiza, Roman, Maria

Lyubov

Madalena

Margarita, Ielizaveta

Maria, Elena, Iraida

Marina, Anna, Alexandra, (Peter)

Marina, (Raymond)

Marina, Christopher

Marios, Suzanne, Madeline, Maryanna,  
Christopher

(Martin)

Michael, Nicole	Olga, (Marcus)
Michael, Elena, Alexander	Olga, Daniel, Sophia, (Guy, Jake)
Michael, Margaret	Olga, Alexei, Sophia
Michaela	Olga
Miglana, Mark	Olga
Mihaela	Olga, Gleb, Nicholas, Marina, Peter
Mikhail, Daria	Olga, (Mark), Lilia
Nadezhda	Olga, (William), Ioann, Maria
Nadezhda, Mikhail,	Olga, (David)
Nadezhda, Michael, Antony	Olga
Nana, Jason, Georgy, Anne	Olga, Laurence
Natalia, Igor	Olivia
Natalia, Kyrill	Ovidiu, Ekaterina, Sophia
Natalia, (Alex), Alexandra, Apollinaria	Panagiota, (John)
Natalia, Daria, Feodor	Pelagia, Parascheva, Barry, Stefan, Seraphima
Natalia, Simon, Alexander, Daniel, Elizabeth	(Penelope)
Natalia, Tatiana, (David)	Peter, Helen, Ruth, Ian, Jane,
Natalia, Anna, Alexandra, Christopher, Alexander	Peter
Natalia	Radu, Mariana
Nonna, Anna	Rafal, Rebecca, (Bradley, Isaac), Elias, Paul
Oleksandr, Oleksandra	Raisa, Natalia, Olga
Olga, Georgy, Ksenia +	(Richard)
	Igumen Sergiy

Sergiy	(Tina)
Sergiy, Anna, Alexandra, George	Tudor, Luminitsa, Sabin, Alexandrou
Sergiy	Vadim
Sergiy, Olga, Elisaveta	Vadim, Natalia
Sergiu, Elena, Andrei, Mikhaila	Valentina, Nicholas, Mirona, Constantine, Emilia, Catherine, Tatiana, Elizabeth
Sophia, Angelina, Victoria, Tamara, (Andrew)	Valentina Valerie
Stefan, Monica, Matei	Valery, Marina, Edward
(Stephen), Loredana	Valerie, (Miratte, Marina)
(Stephen), Elena, Victoria, Ludmila	Priest Vasilios, Maria
(Stephen), Tatiana	Vasiliy
Svetlana, (Trevor)	Vasiliy, Ivanna, Victoria
Svetlana	Vasiliy, Julia, Georgiy, Anton
Svetlana, Alexander	Vera, (Simon)
Svetlana, (Ray)	Victoria, Christian
Tanya, Emil	Victoria
Tatiana, Anton	Vitaly, Olga
Tatiana, (Rene), Polina	Vladimir, Victoria, Elizabeth, Maria, (Dorothy)
Tatiana, (Kevin), Alexandra	Vladimir, Anna, George, Valeria, Svetlana
Tatiana, (Keith), Maxim, Zakhar, Emma	Vyacheslav, Ksenia, Victor, Evdokia, Tamara
Tatiana	Vyacheslav, (Beverley), Jacob, Emilia
(Thomas), Andrea	Yana and family
Timothy, Victoria	Zoya, (David), Alexandr

# Grandfather Ivan

By Matushka Lyudmila

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In Russian: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/jurnal/61388.htm>.



Grandfather, grandmother and my mother

Grandfather died when I was ten. “When there are no veterans left, please publish my memoirs”, he told me. Thirty years have passed since Grandfather's death. I remember very well his kind eyes on a face exhausted with illness. But most of all I remember his tenderness. Grandfather was a man of few words, but he spoke a lot with me. He called me “little sweetheart”. I remember all his sayings: “He who spends a lot of time in front of a mirror is a shallow man.” Browsing my first school copybooks written with terrible handwriting, he said, “Moscow was not built in a day.”

In winter grandfather fed blue tits. He hung a piece of bacon on a string in the balcony and we watched the birds. Grandfather even fed mice when granny was not looking. He left a piece of stale bread under the gas cooker and waited patiently for the mouse to come. Then he called me in a whisper, “Mila!” I crept to the kitchen quietly to see a pink nose and whiskers protruding from under the cooker.

He was given the nickname, “Little mouse” when he was four. He was left home alone when mother worked in the field. They used to bake huge loaves of bread. On coming from work the women saw that the edges of the bread were eaten by mice. They cut those bits off and fed them to cows. Once they found little Ivan sleeping on the bread. They laughed and said, “We have finally found the mouse who's been eating the bread.” Once Grandfather decided to please me and bought a whole box of ice cream, no less than twenty cones. He himself did not have a sweet tooth but of course he knew that most children do, so he always put a lot of sugar in my tea.

Grandfather also encouraged me to eat plenty of onions and garlic and explained that they contained vitamin C. Much later I found out that he had suffered from scurvy when he finished school. He went to Zagorsk to study to be a camera man despite his mother's strong disapproval. Grandfather attended lectures during the day and unloaded sacks of sugar in his free time to earn a living. His diet was bread and sugar and his condition became so bad that he, a very strong and robust man, was wheeled in a wheel-chair to the lectures. His mother gave in and came to forgive and care for her prodigal son who was her favourite. She brought onions, garlic and germinating wheat rich in vitamin C.

His mother Anna was devout, shrewd and very stern. They respected her and were a little afraid of her in the village. It was believed that all her three sons returned from war thanks to her ardent prayer. There was a loss in every family apart from the Zelenukhins. Grandfather was close to death many times, but miraculously survived.

“I was lucky,” he would tell us. “Once I gave an order to wheel a canon to fire at the bunker that was disturbing us. The bunker was destroyed but a mortar started firing at our canon. A mine blasted behind the canon, then in front of it. The next one was to be “ours”. I ordered to wheel the canon into a “pocket”. The gunners grabbed the cannon but everyone was reluctant to pull the canon at the front as it was the most vulnerable position. I shouted to the gunner in charge and together we started pulling the canon. The next mine killed all the gunmen and we two remained alive.”

The sons were fighting at their front and their mother was fighting at hers. Later she became a nun. Grandfather used to say, “If we believed in communism as ardently as my mother believes in God, we would have built it already.” They said about Grandfather that he was born “old”, meaning he was mature, responsible and serious. Grandfather had a unique and truly charismatic personality. Neighbours, colleagues, subordinates and superiors had a special attitude towards him. A famous doctor, academician Amosov who treated Grandfather for tuberculosis, said, “You are a mysterious man! Go home and keep living as you have lived. If anything bad happens I shall send an airplane for you.”

Grandmother confessed that she could not cook when they got married. She was only nineteen and during the war they had hardly had enough to eat. So she cooked terrible soup, and Grandfather praised it, “Oh, it is delicious, dear Claudia”. Later she asked him why he had praised her awful cooking, and he answered, “It didn't matter. I knew you would learn”. My aunt told me that she studied a lot at night when she was preparing for entrance exams. In the morning grandfather crept into her room with a cup of freshly brewed coffee, put it beside her bed and left quietly. She was woken up by the wonderful aroma, drank the coffee and got up. She also said that she never paid any attention to her mother's scolding, but a sad look from her father made her feel ashamed. Grandfather never scolded his children, let alone physical punishment.

Everything was in perfect order at grandfather's land allotment. Once he wanted to give his three-year-old son a task to make him feel useful. So, grandfather tore a plank from the fence and said to the little boy: “Look, son, the fence needs mending. Here is a hammer and some nails for you. Please help me.” The boy was so happy and proud to help Dad. When it came to helping Grandfather, no one ever felt bored or annoyed. Helping Grandfather was a privilege. He himself

liked all sorts of work. He put his soul into whatever he did, and watching him at work, he always wanted to join in.

Shortly after the war my grandfather got married, and his first child, my mother, was born. Suddenly, grandfather was struck with tuberculosis. At the age of twenty-nine he was disabled. During the war he had spent hours in cold water. He went under the ice with canons and horses when they were crossing the Volga in winter during the battle of Stalingrad. On another occasion, he spent sixteen hours standing in the cold water mixed with melting ice. He related:

“We were given an order to transport the canons across the river. At dusk we started crossing the river. The horses were walking cheerfully pulling the canon. Suddenly a mine exploded right in front of the horses. They got scared, bucked and broke the ice. The gunmen, the canon and I went under the water. This was foreseen and the emergency team rescued everyone. I was rescued last and fainted as soon as they got me to the river bank. But our medical team was brilliant and we were ready to fight the next morning.”

All these ordeals had an effect on Grandfather's health. He died aged 62. It was the first grief of my life. Grandfather wrote his memoirs for many years and thought them so important that he kept writing until the day of his death. Every year on the 9th of May (V-Day) I promise myself to read, sort out and type all Grandfather's papers. Grandfather participated in the Battle of Stalingrad, the biggest battle on land in the twentieth century, which took two millions lives on both sides. Its anniversary has passed, but I am only beginning to work on the papers. I take out the handwritten copybooks and the typed papers and start reading. Ivan Zelenukhin, a platoon commander, is twenty years of age.

*“The gunmen under Kurtish' command destroyed five German tanks. But the gunmen of the second canon abandoned the canon and ran to the trench as soon as they saw the approaching German tanks. The nearest tank was only 200 metres away and I had no time to think so I ran to the canon, aimed and fired. The tank stopped and caught fire. This was my first destroyed tank. I triumphed. But the most important thing is that the gunmen returned to the canon having realised that tanks can be destroyed. They set fire to three more tanks in no time.”*

Just to think that a twenty-year-old set an example to other people without judging, but rather giving a hand. He was like that in everything. I cannot read on because of the tears. This young, fearless and resourceful warrior is my grandfather. I read some of the memoirs aloud to my sons. They listen attentively. I say to the boys, “His blood is running in your veins. Look what a wonderful great-grandfather you have!” One of the boys mentions, “But how can his heroic genes show when there is no war?” Who told you, darling, that there is no war? Your battle is more frightening than grandfather's. At least he knew who his enemy was and fought. And you, my sons, are growing up in a politically correct world. You will have to fight against drug addiction, face make-up for men, virtual reality and triumph over common sense. I beg you, my boys: win this victory!

*[Liudmila Selenskaya](#) 09 / 05 / 2013*