

# Russia's Secretive Corners

Passions are running high in Ukraine and the breakaway states of the Caucasus. Vladimir Putin's adventures in Ukraine took the West rather by surprise. But in some ways I think they're following a pattern that goes back more than a century to the legendary 'Great Game' between Russia and Britain in Victorian times.



Since the Soviet Union's break-up, Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia have become Russia's 'forgotten' satellite states – unrecognised and unheard of by most outsiders. Now Donetsk and Luhansk have joined the list, and Russia has full control of Crimea.

I've always loved eastern Europe, and 2015 seemed the perfect time to get to know it better and discover the stories behind the news headlines. I also visited two places that have hosted



the most horrible events in the region's history – Auschwitz and Chernobyl.

The trip was both upsetting and at the same time incredibly heartwarming. After five months of talking to people on both sides, I'm none the wiser about what Mr Putin is planning. But I did get a surprising insight into the Russian and Ukrainian people, their sadness about past and present conflicts, and the practical steps some of them are taking towards a calmer future.



As always I took lots of photographs, and I've put the best of them into a new presentation. The slide/sound show **Russia's Secretive Corners** generally lasts an hour, but I can easily adjust it to your needs. I provide all the equipment, including a choice of big screens.

**"Thank you for your brilliant talk. We can always rely on you for a super evening!"**

Grange-over-Sands Lecture Society, 2013

My fee for this talk is £425 plus travelling expenses. If you'd like to make a booking please get in touch.

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