

DON'T LET THE GRAMMAR GHOULS AND FIGURE FIENDS FRIGHTEN YOU THIS HALLOWEEN



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Who knows what arithmophobia or numerophobia means?

The word sleuths among you might be able to work it out - they both amount to an irrational fear of numbers.

How about hippopotomonstrosesquipped aliohobia? It's possibly the world's most ironic name for a phobia - meaning a fear of long words. Whoever came up with it clearly didn't have much sympathy for its sufferers.

There's nothing wrong with getting a little scared at Halloween. Who wouldn't be a little frightened by eerie costumes, tales of the undead rising up and chilling campfire stories?

But there's something you can do about being spooked by spelling or being mortified by maths, whatever time of year it might be.

If you've said (or heard your staff say) the ghoulish phrases "I don't do numbers" or "spelling's never been my thing" then they could come to haunt you.

That's because any business owner will tell you literacy and numeracy are essential skillsets in running a successful company.

Yet figures by charity National Numeracy show around 17 million adults in the UK have the maths skills of a primary school pupil. And here's a really scary fact - England ranks almost bottom for literacy in the western world, according to international think tank OECD.

The fundamentals at the heart of a business are built on these core skills - from basics like stock checking and quoting professionally to strategic financial and business planning.

Investing in English and maths often results in improvements to lifelong practical skills - both in professional and personal development. This leads to better communication, efficiency and productivity in business and the possibility of career and salary progression.

City College Plymouth offers courses covering English, maths and ICT that will give you and your employees valuable knowledge.

We're one of 21 colleges to be named a Maths Centre of Excellence, because our innovative and engaging approach yields relevant and confidence-boosting results. Our courses are friendly, affordable and designed to help people improve their professional and personal lives.

Don't let nightmares about struggling with English and maths at school hold you back. To discover how the College can help you support your organisation's training needs, please contact the College's Business Engagement team on 01752 305026 or e-mail employers@cityplym.ac.uk.

Sadly, we can't do anything about being scared at Halloween.



News

Our Russian twin has thrived on oil exportation

The Herald's Business Editor **William Telford** has visited Plymouth twin city Novorossiysk in southern Russia to discover the remarkable similarities and differences between the two waterfront cities

IT IS a city very much like Plymouth - but our Russian twin has a port that has flourished on oil exportation and a shopping mall that dwarfs Drake Circus.

Novorossiysk, on the banks of the Black Sea in southern Russia, is twinned with Plymouth, and it is not hard to see why.

Both cities are about the same size, they are both marine focused, have stunning waterfronts, respected universities and both heroically stood up toe the Nazi onslaught in World War Two.

But when The Herald visited Novorossiysk (the name means New Russia) it found a city with a thriving economy based mainly on Russia's oil wealth.

With petrol being sold at around 50p a litre in the Krasnodar Krai region, and oil wells and refineries dotting the surrounding countryside, it is not hard to see where the riches come from.

Igor Zharinov, president of Novorossiysk Chamber of Commerce and Industry, explained how the city is on ice-free Isemes Bay, ideal for its port to become the most significant on the black sea.

"Novorossiysk is a city port," he said. "All the economy is based on the port and the companies

providing services for port facilities.

"Several stevedoring companies provide the shipments of all kinds of cargo, that's containers, oil and oil products, grain and general cargoes, ores and metals.

"But the biggest volume is oil and oil products.

"We've found oil in the Krasnodar region, and very good quality. But the main oil comes from Siberia and Kazakhstan. It arrives in pipes and is exported by ship."

That explains the plethora of filling stations, and Mr Zharinov said: "Filling stations are a good business, very convenient for customers."

Novorossiysk even has its own independent shipping firm Novoship, but it has now merged with the giant state-owned Sovcomflot company.

"One of the biggest shipping companies in the world, based in St Petersburg it is the biggest in Russia," said Mr Zharinov.

The city is also home to the Maritime State Academy, the educational institution which trains marine officers and sailors for the merchant navy and is the biggest of its kind in the country.

But the port is not the only revenue driver for the city.

"We also have a lot of cement factories," said Mr Zharinov.

"They used to export plenty of cement but with the development of Russia building industry and construction most of the cement is being used inside the country.

"I don't know if we even export cement now, but we used to have to import it from Turkey. Now all the cement manufactured is used for local markets.

"And we have hotels and restaurants to serve people, but we are trying to develop tourism in this city, but it is very difficult."

Like Plymouth, Novorossiysk finds itself as a non-tourist city in a region that attracts tourists.

Krasnodar Krai had the resort towns of Gelendzhik and Anapa, 20 and 50km away respectively, but the biggest resort is Sochi, host of the 2014 Winter Olympics.

"We should develop recreation facilities, first for local people, we can't compete with Sochi, that's impossible," Mr Zharinov said.

Novorossiysk's population is now heading towards 300,000 and the city is growing as more people move in to work, particularly, in merchant shipping.

"Unemployment is not very much of a problem, but as everywhere in the world the employment needs are moving towards new horizons," Mr Zharinov said.

"Like everywhere in the world the education system is not flexible enough to provide new directions for education, that maybe a problem."



The shopping centre, Red Square, and the sweeping harbour in Novorossiysk



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By that he means the inexorable shift towards the tech economy. "We are moving towards a digital economy - the creativeness of Russian people is known all over the world," Mr Zharinov said.

He said the tech economy still needs to grow but is, however, well integrated into other sectors such as logistics.

Novorossiysk also has two hospitals for the general populace, one large one small, a third for railroad workers, and a fourth was for Novoship, a Soviet era affair

now used by the general public as well as marine industry employees, and a fifth for the military.

Then there is the naval base.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has overseen a significant increase in Russia's military presence in the Black Sea, mainly due

to the build-up of its forces in the occupied Crimea.

A naval base for the Black Sea Fleet was under construction, and due to be finished by 2020, but work appears to have stopped.

"We are not very familiar with it," Mr Zharinov said.

The retail economy has seen no

signs of slowing, with internet shopping, that scourge of the British high street, yet to have an effect. The main city centre mall, named Red Square, was already bigger than Drake Circus before it was extended, more than doubling in size in

2017.

A statue of Lenin in the centre of Novorossiysk



Chambers signs pact of friendship

THE Plymouth and Devon Chamber of Commerce has signed a friendship pact with its mirror image chamber in Russia.

A delegation of business bosses has just returned from Plymouth's twin city: Novorossiysk in the Krasnodar Krai region of Russia.

The delegation visited the Black Sea port to develop future business, educational, and cultural opportunities between the two peninsulas.

That involved the chamber signing a memorandum of understanding with its counterpart Novorossiysk Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

At a meeting in the centre of Novorossiysk Linda Middleton-Jones, managing director of International Trade Matters (ITM) and director of the Plymouth and Devon Chamber of Commerce, said: "We extend to you the hand of friendship and prosperity."

And Igor Zharinov, president of Novorossiysk Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said: "This is a special procedure. We are signing a contract of interaction between the chambers of Devon and Novorossiysk."

Ms Middleton Jones explained that chambers in the UK and Russia both exist to help companies trade internationally.

"We get to hear the challenges and opportunities and share them with our

members," she said. "This is a great opportunity for us to talk chamber to chamber, country to country, which will make us both stronger. We can learn from each other.

"We want to work with your chamber and your city and share in prosperity and, most importantly, friendship," she told the Russians.

Mr Zharinov explained that the Novorossiysk Chamber of Commerce and Industry is part of the system of chambers for the Russian Federation, which is based on the British, Anglo Saxon, model with voluntary membership unlike in Europe.

It is itself a member of the 181-member, Moscow-based, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Russian Federation, but there is also a Krasnodar Krai regional chamber which includes 32 municipal chambers.

"We are a small city but we are usually amongst the 10 best chambers in Russia," Mr Zharinov said.

Novorossiysk's chamber has 238 members and is growing. They include SMEs, which make up 80%, up to large employers.

They pay each a small fee but most of the chamber's income comes from the 70 services it provides for firms.

"The main idea is to represent the interests of the business community," Mr Zharinov said. "To achieve a business' goals of working



Linda Middleton-Jones, managing director of International Trade Matters (ITM) shakes hands with Igor Zharinov, president of Novorossiysk Chamber of Commerce and Industry

legally and being competitive, we are the mechanism that will help to do this.

"Russia is a huge country, geographically, the region round St Petersburg has a good connection to the UK.

"But here, because of geography and logistics, we have no access to the North Sea and the UK has no access to the Black Sea, but we still think the UK is a good country to work with, a strong economy, though there are geographical obstacles."