



Russian Cold War spy maps will be seen by public

A SET of Russian spy maps revealing the hidden secrets of South West cities are to be made available to the general public for the first time.

The unique maps — which include Plymouth and Exeter — are a Cold War legacy and were produced by the Russian military from 1950 to 1997.

They reveal the exact location and purpose of every structure of possible military importance, including details such as the

width of roads, the height of bridges and the depth of rivers.

In some instances the Russian maps include potentially sensitive details not shown on UK versions.

For example, a quarry near Exeter is noted which is not shown on any Ordnance Survey mapping between 1890 and 1990, but is likely to have been of interest to the Russians as a possible source of contaminants.

Similarly, the Russian map of St Katharine's Docks in East London shows the numbers of moorings available and the depth and contours of the river bed — which was essential knowledge for anyone planning

to bring a submarine up the Thames.

Experts believe the maps were developed using aerial photos, satellite images, local knowledge and even spies.

The Russians managed to map out 16,000sq km of the UK, including 103 major UK towns and cities, forming part of the most comprehensive global survey ever attempted.

Family and local history expert Dr Nick Barratt said: "Not only do the Russian maps provide an intriguing insight into the Cold War, they can also prove to be a valuable research tool if you want to find out more about your local area.

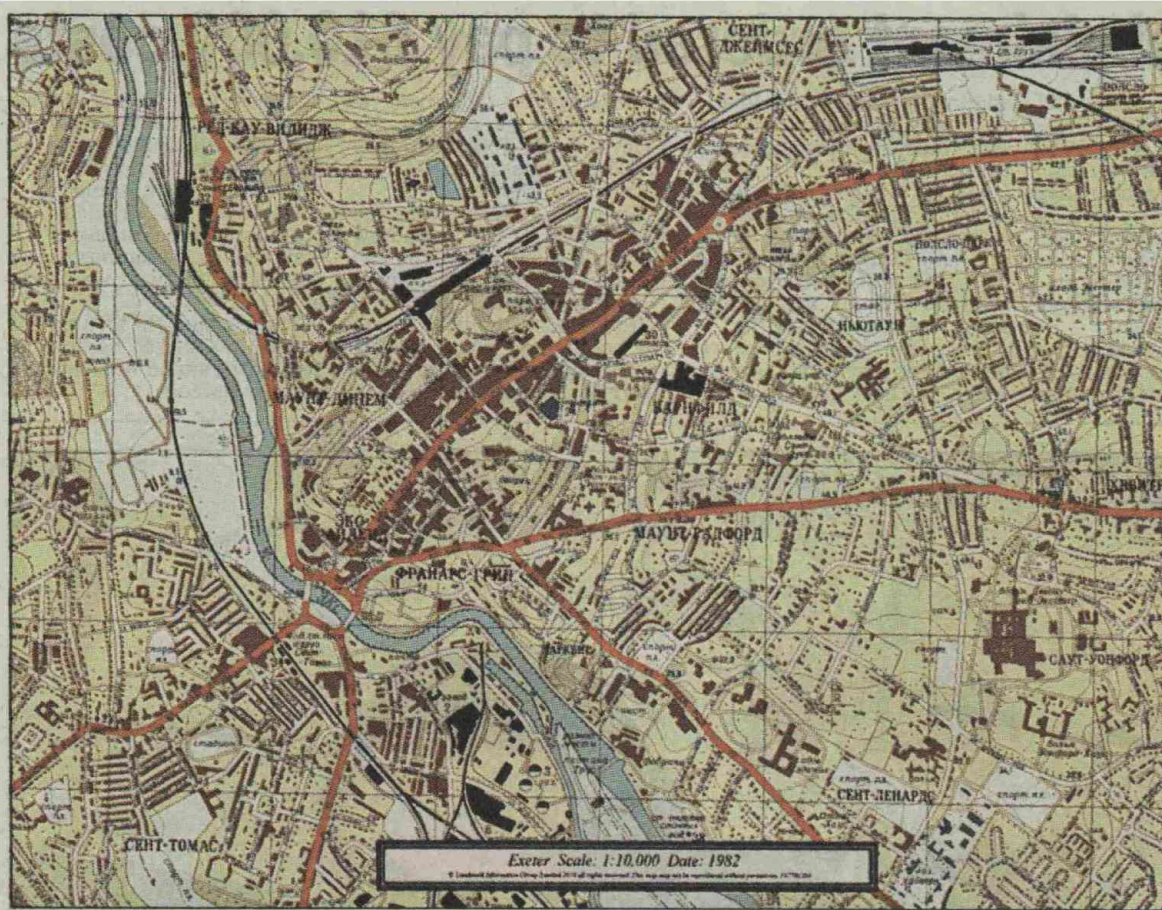
"Maps form a vital part of any

piece of research, whether focused on family or local history. They will show how an area changed over time, allow you to

pinpoint houses that may no longer stand, and show you how to build up a picture of the period you're interested in.

"This social historical context is crucial — and this online collection really is a major resource."

The maps will be made available to the general public from October 1 at www.russianmaps.co.uk



SECRETS: Above, the Russian map of Exeter. Right, a scene from Exeter High Street in the 1950s

