



Secret Russian maps give clue to Pembrokeshire's strategic significance

I spy with my Soviet eye a county beginning with ... P

By Jackie Hadley

PROOF that Russian spies have been active in Pembrokeshire has been revealed on a historical website.

Detailed maps of Milford Haven and Pembroke Dock in 1950 have just been published by online company, Old-Maps.co.uk.

They were created by USSR cartographers during the Cold War after the two Pembrokeshire towns were highlighted as important strategic locations.

Agents 'on the ground' were ordered to collect information on military buildings, government

offices, power plants, radio stations and fuel storage tanks.

Special attention was also given to harbour depths, road widths and railway stations.

And, in a scene worthy of a James Bond movie, the secret maps were discovered on a train in the Baltic states in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

They are now available to the public via the website and are of significant interest to Pembrokeshire residents, according to local historian John Evans.

"It wouldn't surprise me if there were lots of maps of Pembrokeshire in a dark vault in the Kremlin," he said.

"Strategically it has always been a very important area, right back to Elizabethan times."

But rubbing shoulders with spies on the streets of Pembrokeshire in 1950 was nothing new.

John added: "The Luftwaffe knew all about the area in 1940, when they bombed the oil tanks at Llanreath, so we knew there had been German spies among us. In 1950 they were just a different

nationality."

But they were obviously after the same information as their counterparts a decade earlier.

"We still had flying boats at Pembroke Dock, a mine depot in Milford Haven and armaments at Trecwn, not to mention airfields and radar sites," said John.

"And that, along with our geographical position, would have to be taken into account by any military strategist."

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