



Red West Riding?

In a chilling echo of the **Cold War**, a set of Soviet **spy maps** which show Leeds and the surrounding area in remarkable detail are today being made public for the first time. **Ron Miller** reports

IN THE years between 1950 and 1997 the Soviet military and its post-Communist successors produced maps which reveal the precise location and purpose of every structure of possible military importance in Leeds – including a tank factory labelled on a map from 1974.

For secrecy reasons, the site of the Vickers tank factory at Barnbow, Cross Gates, is listed as vacant on Ordnance Survey maps between 1890 and 1993 and although it is now marked as a “works”, no specific detail is given. The Soviets were obviously interested in the site where the British Army’s Challenger battle tank was produced.

Details

Other details shown on the maps, complete with place names and inscriptions in Cyrillic Russian script, include the width of our roads, the height of our bridges and even the depth of our rivers. Leeds was among 103 major British cities and towns to be surveyed by Kremlin spymasters, who managed to map out 16,000



square kilometres of our country. Their secret work was part of the most comprehensive global survey of all time, with the Soviet and Russian military creating accurate, highly detailed maps of almost every country in the world.

The maps of Leeds have today been made available online by

Old-maps.co.uk, the home of the digital Historical Map Archive for mainland Britain. Their release has been made possible through a joint venture with the Ordnance Survey. Free to view online, the maps can be bought as electronic images or prints. To view the maps visit



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 – Dr Nick Barratt of TV's *Who Do You Think You Are?*



HEAVY METAL: A detail from map, *above*, complete with place names in Russian, of the tank factory site at Barnbow, *left*

www.russianmaps.co.uk or www.old-maps.co.uk.

Co-ordinates

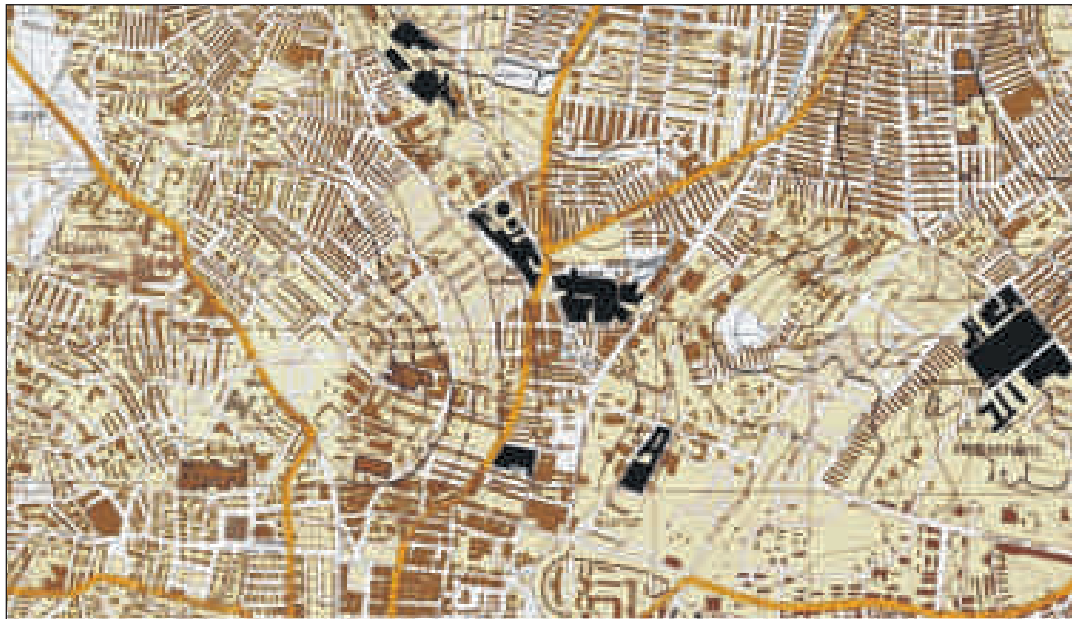
Russell Morris, of Old Maps, said: “Our website allows users to search for a particular area by Ordnance Survey map co-ordinates or by postcode, so it’s easy to examine how a specific

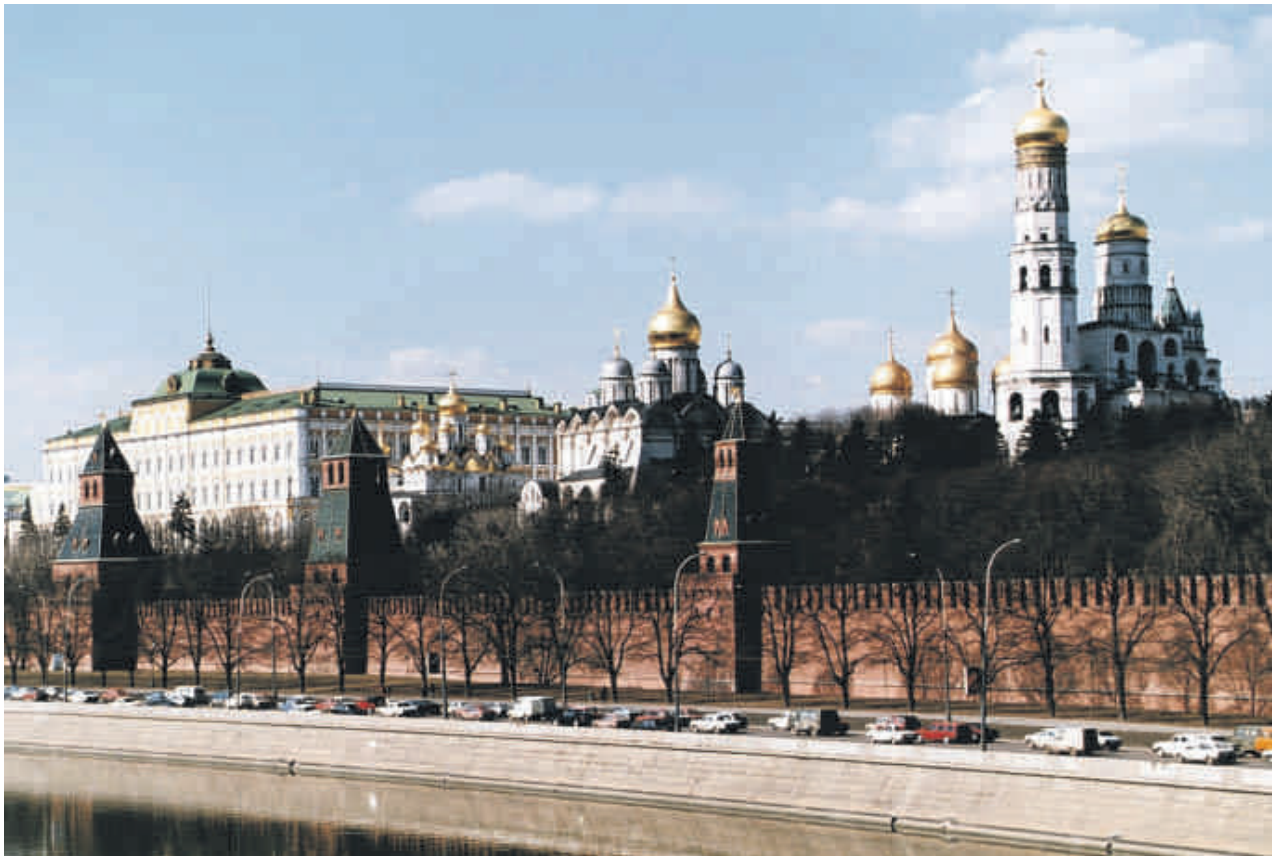
neighbourhood was recorded by the Russians.” In a grim reminder of the tensions of the Cold War period, some of the maps show sensitive details such as the depth and contours of the Thames – essential knowledge for anyone planning to take a submarine into the heart of London.

Dr Nick Barratt, best known for his work on the TV programmes *Who do you think you are?* and *House Detectives*, 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.”



TOP MAN: Leonid Brezhnev, *above*, was at the height of his powers as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union when this Russian map of Leeds, *below*, was produced in 1972





POWER BASE:
Military chiefs
at the Kremlin
ordered the
mapping of the
countries of
their
ideological
foes in the
West
throughout the
Cold War and
beyond