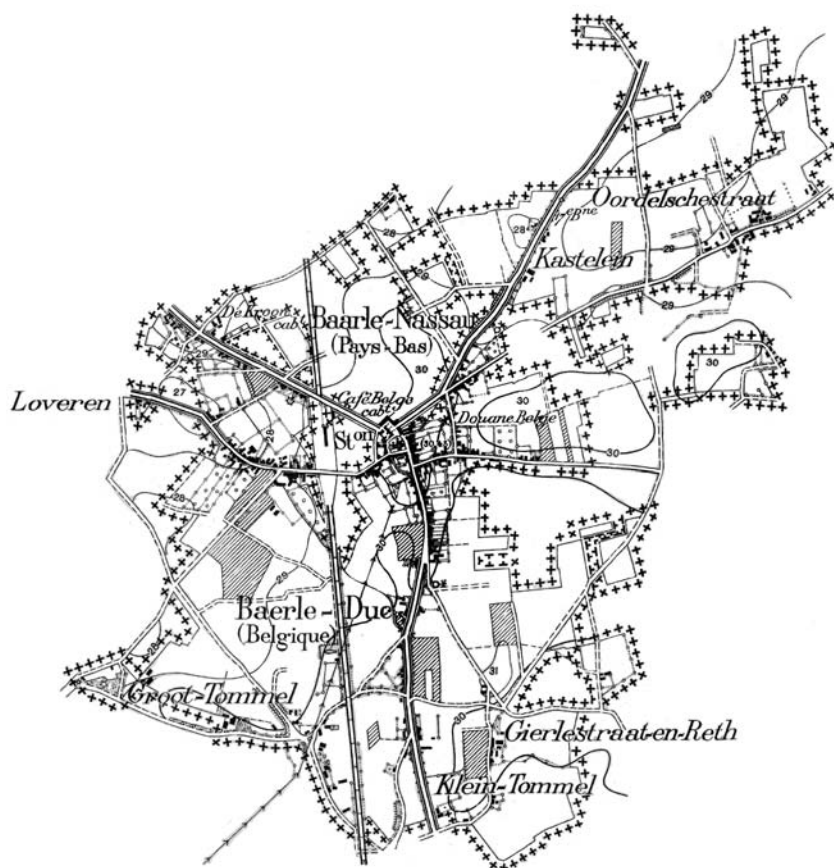


tangled territories



Most of us, if we have ever thought about it at all, would generally subscribe to the notion that somehow countries should be contiguous. That is, one continuous area of land. True, we'll tolerate an offshore island or two, but little corners of land tucked away as exclaves in a foreign territory generally go against the grain.

When representatives of the international community met in Paris in December 1995 to sign the Dayton Peace Accord, a treaty designed to bring a measure of calm to troubled Bosnia, they placed great stress on the achievements of the negotiators in devising generally contiguous areas of land for Bosnia's political entities.

Of course there were difficulties, and some remain, most conspicuously the uniquely strategic position of the town of Brčko on the Sava river. But, although the borders between the Republika Srpska and the Muslim-Croat Federation within Bosnia may be hugely complicated, the negotiators avoided having one entity peppered with patches of territory belonging to the other.

Quite why it offends our sensibilities when political units have non-contiguous territories is hard to say. A Welsh friend tells how she used, as a child, to worry a lot about the county of Flintshire, which had a good wedge of territory on the north coast of Wales, and then an entirely disconnected exclave away to the south. That isolated portion of Flintshire was not only disconnected from the Flint motherland, but had the effrontery to make a wedge between two English counties: Cheshire and Shropshire. This was surely a spot where Flintshire didn't belong.

But look back to the nineteenth century, and we find that, even within Britain, Flintshire was far from unique. Thomas Moule's handsome county maps of England, first published in the 1830s, are as interesting for the geographical border curiosities they reveal as for the high Gothic flourishes of the maps themselves. They show that the county of Cambridgeshire contained an outlier of Suffolk

and that Derbyshire had an isolated portion in Leicestershire. Dorset, Gloucestershire and Shropshire all spawned exclaves and there were several little islands of Wiltshire seemingly stranded in Berkshire.

Move to the national level, and the notion of non-contiguous nation states offends the rationalist geographies of tidy minds. How can Azerbaijan really function with the Nakhichevan exclave so distant from the main part of the country? And what are the practicalities of life in Russia's Baltic exclave of Kaliningrad?

The second half of the twentieth century saw two conflicting trends as Europe's nation states sought to manage the little parcels of land that, by accidents of history, were somehow disconnected from their main territory. On the one hand, it was a period when exclaves that had never really been noticed by Western Europeans before, suddenly acquired a visibility. Russian or Lithuanian outposts in Belarus never attracted our attention when the whole ensemble was the USSR. Dubrovnik's status as an exclave of Croatia was never very obvious on maps of federal Yugoslavia. Russian Kaliningrad's visibility as an exclave ruled from Moscow only became evident when, in March 1990, Lithuania became the first of the Soviet republics to assert its independence.

But there have also been, during the last fifty years, significant efforts to codify Europe's borders, with a notable attempt either to resolve exclave territories through land exchanges or to secure the long term status of such parcels of land by formal agreements. The German village of Büsingen am Hochrhein finds itself curiously surrounded by Swiss territory, a little enclave of Germany in a foreign land. It took many weeks of parliamentary time in both Bonn and Berne, plus protracted intergovernmental negotiations, to hammer out the treaty that came into force in 1967, defining how this riverside community of 1500 souls by the Rhine could function as an island of German territory in Switzerland.

As so often in the case of territorial exclaves, the compromise is that the exclave adopts many of the forms and conventions of the host nation that surrounds it. In Büsingen that is scarcely difficult, for the place speaks the

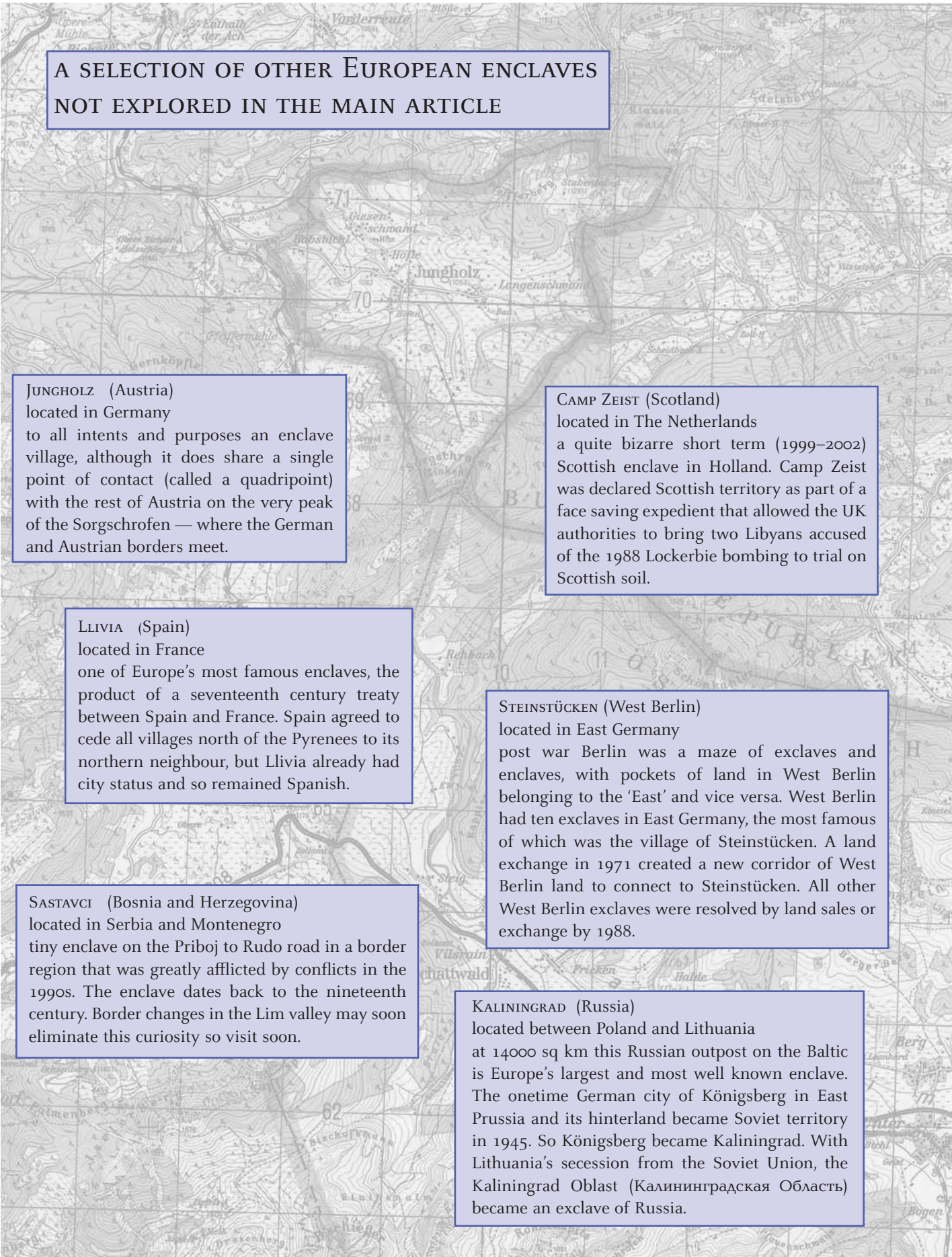


an improbable piece of competition in telecommunications: German and Swiss payphones stand adjacent to one another in Büsingen

same language as the surrounding areas of Switzerland. Given that life in Büsingen centres around the large international bible college there, many of the inhabitants find themselves theologically well disposed to Switzerland's Calvinist tendencies. Büsingen's residents are as comfortable using the Swiss franc as the Euro. The locals can hedge their bets when it comes to postal codes, electing to adopt either a Swiss CH code or a German D code. For a place that has few shops, insular nationalism is not an option, and Büsingen residents treat Swiss Schaffhausen as their local shopping centre. Swiss and German telephone boxes compete for business alongside one another on Büsingen's main plaza, and the officials of both Germany and Switzerland keep a low profile. There are no customs or passport checks as you pass from Büsingen into neighbouring Switzerland.

Much the same tale can be told of Campione d'Italia, that most peculiar of Italian

OPPOSITE: an old Belgian map (1928) showing the complex international borders and multiple exclaves at Baarle Hertog (here called Baarle-Duc) and Baarle Nassau: the frontier is indicated by the small bold plus signs (from the collection of Brendan Whyte)



A SELECTION OF OTHER EUROPEAN ENCLAVES
NOT EXPLORED IN THE MAIN ARTICLE

JUNGHOLZ (Austria)
located in Germany
to all intents and purposes an enclave village, although it does share a single point of contact (called a quadripoint) with the rest of Austria on the very peak of the Sorgschrofen — where the German and Austrian borders meet.

CAMP ZEIST (Scotland)
located in The Netherlands
a quite bizarre short term (1999–2002) Scottish enclave in Holland. Camp Zeist was declared Scottish territory as part of a face saving expedient that allowed the UK authorities to bring two Libyans accused of the 1988 Lockerbie bombing to trial on Scottish soil.

LLIVIA (Spain)
located in France
one of Europe's most famous enclaves, the product of a seventeenth century treaty between Spain and France. Spain agreed to cede all villages north of the Pyrenees to its northern neighbour, but Llivia already had city status and so remained Spanish.

STEINSTÜCKEN (West Berlin)
located in East Germany
post war Berlin was a maze of exclaves and enclaves, with pockets of land in West Berlin belonging to the 'East' and vice versa. West Berlin had ten exclaves in East Germany, the most famous of which was the village of Steinstücken. A land exchange in 1971 created a new corridor of West Berlin land to connect to Steinstücken. All other West Berlin exclaves were resolved by land sales or exchange by 1988.

SASTAVCI (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
located in Serbia and Montenegro
tiny enclave on the Priboj to Rudo road in a border region that was greatly afflicted by conflicts in the 1990s. The enclave dates back to the nineteenth century. Border changes in the Lim valley may soon eliminate this curiosity so visit soon.

KALININGRAD (Russia)
located between Poland and Lithuania
at 14000 sq km this Russian outpost on the Baltic is Europe's largest and most well known enclave. The onetime German city of Königsberg in East Prussia and its hinterland became Soviet territory in 1945. So Königsberg became Kaliningrad. With Lithuania's secession from the Soviet Union, the Kaliningrad Oblast (Калининградская Область) became an exclave of Russia.

villages, for, like Büsingen, it finds itself entirely surrounded by Switzerland. Here, Italian police drive Swiss registered cars. As in Büsingen, Campione residents can access the Swiss health care system and the Swiss franc is the currency. For a while Campione d'Italia even produced its own postage stamps, bearing the imprint *Poste Italiane* but denominated in Swiss francs. There are no formalities at the borders into Campione d'Italia and that frontier is often quite difficult to find, marked as it is by just a simple line on the road and occasional boundary stones. The Swiss-German treaty over Büsingen took care to specify no casino or gambling was permitted in the German enclave. Campione had no such restraints, and it is a place that lives from its casino. Now in operation for over seventy years, the Campione casino turns the whole Italian enclave into a strangely nocturnal place. It is a little fiscal island, one step removed from the taxman. In winter the cafés scarcely open before midday, and streets are empty. The small town's only bus service runs from three in the afternoon till three in the morning.

Another small foreign enclave within Switzerland is no more. Verenahof, just twenty minutes drive from Büsingen, changed hands in 1967. The inhabitants of three houses at Verenahof woke up one morning to find that their homes had moved from Germany to Switzerland. Verenahof was a real tiddler of a place compared with Büsingen. Just a few fields and a population of less than a dozen. But it was a German exclave in Switzerland until 1967. When *hidden europe* checked out Verenahof, the grazing Swiss cows seemed blissfully unaware that they occupied what had until 1967 been German grass. In early May this year, Hansruedi Fischer, a lifelong resident of Verenahof, recalled the moment sixty years ago, when, just after six in the morning, his father answered the door to find a posse of German soldiers searching for a quiet spot of German



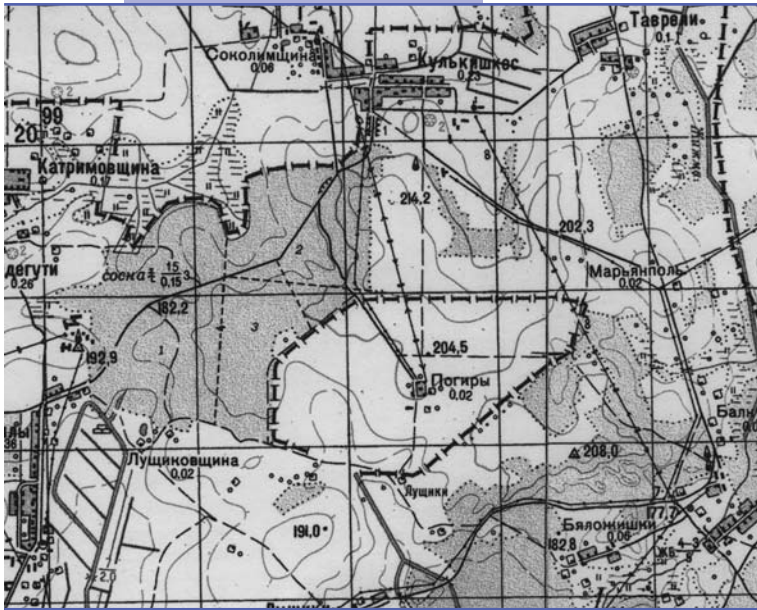
LEFT: a 1944 postage stamp from Campione d'Italia — a splendid enclave curiosity, showing Italian allegiance but denominated in Swiss francs! (from the *hidden europe philatelic archive*); OPPOSITE BACKGROUND FEINT MAP: US military edition of a 1973 map showing Austria's Jungholz exclave in southern Germany. The map uses a 1 km grid (from the collection of Brendan Whyte)

territory where they might await the end of the war. It took a week of delicate negotiations between the allies and the Swiss government to sort out how the soldiers might best be repatriated to Germany proper.

Small though many enclaves are, they are often very demanding of government time. On 18 May 2005, representatives of the Estonian and Russian governments met in Moscow to sign a formal treaty that defined the borderline between the two countries. As news of this relatively obscure piece of diplomacy spread through Europe, devotees of geographical curiosities turned immediately to that section of the document that clarified the line of the border through Lake Pihkva (Pskovskoe ozero in Russian — Pihkva järv in Estonian). For on the west shore of the lake there has been, for as long as anyone can remember, a Russian village called Dubki. To the Estonians of the Setumaa region, that little exclave of Russia, bounded on one side by the lake, and otherwise entirely surrounded by Estonian territory, is often known in the local Setu dialect as Tupka.

Dubki is just one of many geographical curiosities in the Setumaa region. The Estonian-Russian border around Lake Pihkva is famously complicated, and the recent treaty has done nothing to change that. Drive the main road from Värskä to Saatse, both Estonian villages, and you will find yourself traversing a short stretch of Russian territory. No Russian visa required, but no stopping off for a picnic along the way either!

In the days of the Soviet Union, the borderline as it weaved through and around



a 1959 Russian topographic map showing the erstwhile Lithuanian enclave of Pogiry (Погіры) in Belarus. The map uses a 1 km grid (from the collection of Brendan Whyte)

Lake Pihkva was viewed as a bureaucratic oddity, but it never caused any real problems. But the political changes of the last fifteen years have created a wholly new order in this quiet region of forests, lakes and marshlands, and suddenly the Setu people — as the inhabitants of the Setumaa region are called — find themselves living in a divided territory. Inhabitants of Estonian Saatse can no longer easily make the twice weekly trip to the market in nearby Krupp. And the few Setu who stayed on in the Russian village of Dubki found themselves deprived of easy access to the Estonian territory that surrounded them.

Two enclaves in Belarus acquired visibility following the break up of the Soviet Union. About forty kilometres south of the Lithuanian capital at Vilnius, just over the Belorussian border, there existed for years a cluster of farmsteads that were part of Lithuanian territory. This little hamlet was called Pagiriai or Pogiry (Погіры — see map above). The few people who lived there drew their income from growing lupins. The inhabitants of Pogiry simply crossed Belorussian territory when they needed to get to Lithuania proper. In the run-up to the Baltic States' accession to the European Union, Belarus was less than happy at the

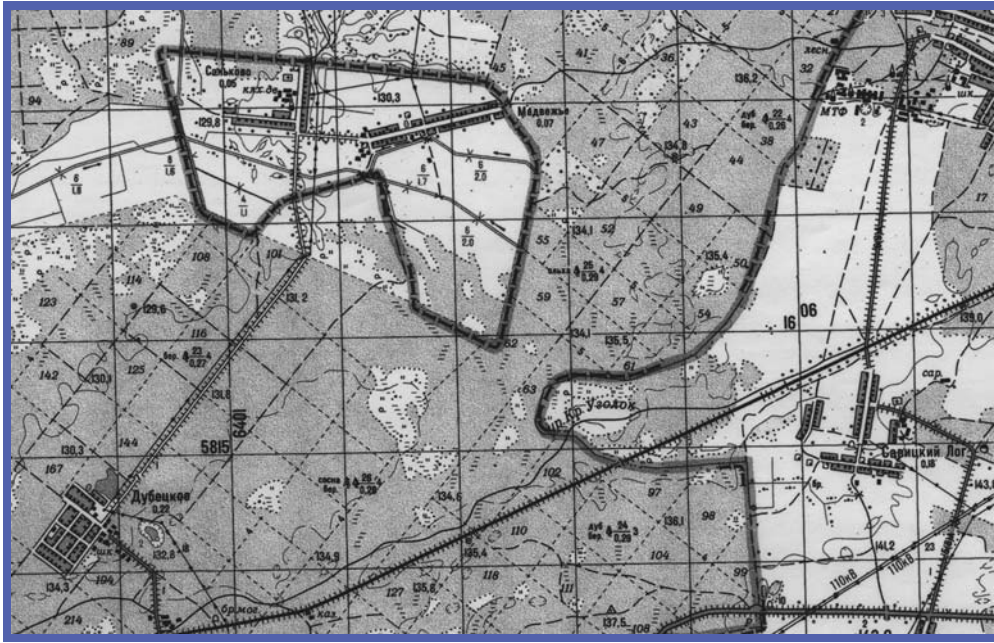
prospect of an island of EU land within its territory, and the two governments agreed to swap parcels of land. So this island of Lithuania within Belarus is no more.

But there is still a Russian exclave within eastern Belarus. Two villages, San'kovo (Саньково) and Medvezh'e (Медвежье), about thirty kilometres east of Homel', are Russian through and through — or at least they were until radiation from the stricken nuclear power plant at Chernobyl led to their enforced evacuation. The population may have gone, but the two villages remain Russian territory (see map right).

But in our book the most bizarre collection of European enclaves is to be found on the Dutch-Belgian border. Regular road maps do not reveal the true complexity of the international borders around Baarle, about midway between the Belgian town of Turnhout and the Dutch town of Tilburg. In 1843, a border commission, charged with settling the frontier between the two countries, gave up in despair, unable to disentangle the complex territorial claims of each side. To this day, Baarle-Hertog as its Belgian residents call it, and Baarle-Nassau, as the same town is named by its Dutch inhabitants, retains Europe's most complicated border configuration. There are well over a dozen exclaves of Belgian land isolated within Dutch territory. The largest of these islands of Belgium has six Dutch exclaves within it.

Walk the main street of Baarle, and the only sure way to tell which country you are in is to check the house numbers. Rectangles, usually with a red and blue bar recalling the colours of the Dutch flag, indicate that a house is in the Netherlands, while an oval sign reveals Belgian loyalties. Many individual houses cross the international frontier, and in such cases it is the location of the main door of the house that determines to which government its inhabitants pay their taxes. In one celebrated case in 1995, the de Bont household secured a deft redefinition of loyalties by moving their front door!

Explore old maps of Europe and you will surely find all manner of curious exclaves. So Zara, nowadays Croatian Zadar, was for 26 years an Italian enclave in Yugoslavia. And there were little islands of territory located in



a 1989 Russian topographic map showing the Russian enclave of San'kovo (Сањково) and Medvezh'e (Медвежье) in Belarus. The map uses a 1 km grid (from the collection of Brendan Whyte)

East Germany that belonged to West Berlin. But few exclaves are more curious than the 30,000 square metres of Czech territory in the middle of the Hamburg docks. Ceded to Czechoslovakia under the terms of the post World War I Treaty of Versailles, the purpose of this exclave was to afford to landlocked Czechoslovakia a place where goods that were ferried down the Elbe on barges could be trans-shipped onto seagoing vessels. The land is still there, nowadays forlorn and abandoned. It will revert to being German territory in 2018. A similar provision was made for Czechoslovak access to the docks in Polish Szczecin.

Many exclaves survive because the countries involved have amiable relations. Where conditions are less cordial, the exclaves are the first to suffer. When Armenia and Azerbaijan tussled in the nineties, their various little islands of land in each other's territory were among the first to be occupied.

But for every case where exclaves have spawned hostilities, there is a tale of compromise. None better perhaps, than a moment in July 1945 when Suite 212 at Claridges Hotel in London was designated by the UK Government as being Yugoslav territory. By this device, the British conspired with the Yugoslav monarchy, then in exile in London, to ensure that the heir to the Yugoslav throne was born on Slavic soil.

Naturally, such governmental largesse has its limits, and a day or two later the hotel room reverted to the English realm. ■

SOURCE: *hidden europe* 3 (july 2005), © 2005 Gardner & Kries GbR, Nicky SC Gardner

hidden europe is much indebted to Brendan Whyte, Assistant Curator with the University of Melbourne Map Collection, for his extraordinary efforts in helping us track down out of copyright maps of various European territorial exclaves.