

PERM NEWS ПЕРМЬ

The newsletter of the Perm Association

June 2001

An introduction

Readers will know that Derek Holmes has graduated from editing the Perm Association newsletter to the editorship of the Oxford Times. At the AGM, nobody volunteered to edit the newsletter - so I rashly offered my semi-skilled services after the event. No newsletter can be produced without copy – so I am hugely grateful to Karen and Carole for their contributions to this number.

Members are warmly invited to follow suit. Please let me have your articles, news, anecdotes, reminiscences, opinions – and above all your photos to enliven each issue. You can contact me at The Map House, Vernon Avenue, Oxford, OX2 9AU, by telephone on 01865 721644, or by e-mail to richardsills@btinternet.com
Richard Sills, Editor

News from Permian Friends

Tanya Permiakova who teaches English at Perm University says that many visitors to Oxford remain in contact because they have shared their hosts. It's a fine way of bringing back memories. For instance, Tanya who stayed with Patrick and Winifred Gray regularly meets other guests of the Grays.

Tatiana Mekhanoshina who was in the very first group is working part-time while looking after her family, including her granddaughter, now twelve years old.

Lena Metchenkova is now a full-time radio DJ for Radio Maximov, which is the students' favourite radio channel. However she also teaches part-time, with the advantage that her students are enthralled at a popular DJ actually teaching *them*.

Olga Antinescul has received her Kandidat degree (approximately equivalent to a PhD) on 'Gender and Text' using English lit-

erature as her material. She has recently been giving concerts, singing arias and romances from operettas.

Tanya herself is developing a new course about 'inter-cultural communication'. She says it is about how people in different cultures (in this case the British and Russians) talk to each other and argue with each other – and how they evaluate what they think they have been talking about. Tanya wants this to be both a theoretical and a very practical course.

She also said that Vitaly Demin is now a 'dotsent' – in this context, a senior researcher in physics, besides being a Colonel at the military college where he teaches nuclear physics, and the organiser of an important scientific society for Perm students.

Karen Hewitt

Voluntary action

Liz Brighthouse will be visiting Perm between 9 and 16 June. Martin Stott and Rob Dance of the County Council will take part in an Environmental Conference managed by the British Council and the Oxfordshire Perm Voluntary Action Link Centre will be opened. Money raised in Oxford by Rose Hill and Donnington Advice Centre to set up an Adventure Playground (see article on page 3) will be handed over to the Mayor of Perm. The new British Consul General in Ekaterinburg will participate.

Sasha and Igor in Winter

Those members of the Perm Association who have paddled down the Silva River in canoes with the Dean of the Geography Faculty, Alexander Zyrianov (Sasha) and memorable physicist, Igor Volkhin, may wonder how they spend their winter months. I was in Perm in late March; a warm spell had been followed by great white masses of fresh snow and a temperature of around – 8 which were ideal conditions for cross-country skiing. Sasha and Igor together with Sasha's daughter, his new wife, two students and another woman, plus Robert and myself from Oxford left a ski-station just outside Perm at 11.15 a.m. I know that was the time because Igor had prepared a timetable which he wanted us to observe very strictly. (Five minutes for admiring the view, eight minutes for putting on boots and checking skis.) All the others were competent skiers. I kept falling over but loved the forests of pine and birch, the sloping pure-white meadows and the panoramic views, and would have continued for hours had it been possible. But after a mere two-and-a-half kilometres we climbed a little slope and set about preparing lunch. The men, of course, cut down a dead tree. Robert couldn't work out whether it was easier to drag branches across soft snow on skis or off skis. For the kebabs the students had brought their iron folding box in which one fire was quickly started. The other fire was built on a little platform of sticks on the snow, and two poles with a crossbar were erected above it on which they swung the pot for boiling wa-

ter. At first the pot dangled almost into the fire, but gradually, as the snow melted, the fire sank into an elegant hole and the pot had to be lowered on a series of hooks.

Meanwhile we threaded marinated pork onto huge skewers, and chopped up icy pickled cucumbers, just as if we were on the sunny banks of the Silva. Passing skiers waved to us enviously. 'How deep is this snow?' I asked as we picked out pieces of spicy lemon from the marinade to eat with the grilling pork. 'Oh, not very deep – not more than a metre,' said Sasha. We trod carefully, trying to stamp our feet against the cold without breaking through the surface of the snow. The fire sank lower in its hole, and after our mugs of tea there was little to warm our toes and our backs. We kicked the embers into the snow and – somewhat later than Igor's programme dictated - skied back to base where a large and noisy party were celebrating a club anniversary. Most of the skiers were in their sixties, full of reminiscences, song and food and vodka. We were swept into the festivities and asked to sing something 'English', so Robert and I ended up giving a very bad rendering of 'Jerusalem'. Outside small children hurled themselves into mounds of snow and the temperature was dropping fast. Igor marched off to catch a tram, while Sasha and his students were already planning their next expedition. Life in Perm, you might say, continues to flourish.

Karen Hewitt

News from other links

Bonn From 6 to 10 July 2001, Thames Valley Police Inspectors Simon Pont and Paul Hayles will be cycling from Bonn Square, Oxford, to Oxford Strasse, Bonn, to raise money for Sobell House Hospice and Helen House Children's Hospice. Readers wishing to sponsor Simon and Paul should contact them on 01865 846243 or 846648.

Leiden A trip to the London Eye is planned for 1 July. A study visit to Leiden, on the theme of Tourism, is planned for late October. Oxford delegates will visit Rotterdam, currently European City of Culture.

Leon The Leon Link hopes to send a delegation to Leon in late June/early July. They are planning a fund-raising dinner on 28 September and an Italian evening on 30 November.

Housing in Perm

Two years ago OCVA asked us to host and organise a week's programme for a group of council officers from Perm. The programme was to include information on voluntary groups such as ourselves, tenants' organisations, Housing Rights and representation in court.

This we did and had a busy but enjoyable week and we all became firm friends. Then in November 2000 we were asked to visit Perm and monitor how the group had benefited from their visit to Oxford. We were delighted to visit Perm and meet old friends.

We arrived late at night on Sunday 26th of November after two days travelling and found snow up to our knees and a temperature of -17 degrees. We were booked into a hotel on the outskirts of Perm, as all the accommodation in the centre was fully booked because Perm was hosting their first ever voluntary sector conference for the Perm Region.

We had a busy week, visiting and speaking at the conference, visiting tenants groups and meeting Council housing officials.

Fifty per cent of housing in Perm is privately owned. The accommodation is mainly in flats. The groups call themselves Self-Governing Community Bodies. We visited three such groups, all very different. The first estate consisted of about 40 blocks of 5-storey flats with an elected member from each block forming the committee. This group had convinced the local council to let them have a ground floor flat for community use. This they had turned into a community shop, hairdressers, and a committee room. They had also formed a children's group to improve their outside environment, and had planted flowers and bushes and erected seats.

The next group visited lived in a brand new block of flats. This self-governing group had a representative from each floor. They raised an internal levy from each flat and voted how to use the money on things such as security, car park, garden, and cleaning com-

munal areas.

The third estate we visited was the A.Y.R. estate on the outskirts of Perm in the industrial area. The estate was a former air force base and the accommodation was very dilapidated and the outlook was very grim. There was also a lot of pollution. Here there was also a self-governing group. They had been given an old Nissan hut, which they used as a community centre. They are desperate to improve their outside environment & have drawn up costed plans for an Adventure Playground & park for the elderly. They had entered a competition on environment but had no success.

We both felt that the money needed was achievable by fundraising in England & asked for the plans and a breakdown of costs to bring home. If the Perm Association could help in any way we would be very grateful. Liz Brighthouse is going to take the money we raise to Perm on June 7th and present it to the Mayor; that way we will not have to pay taxes. The costing is as follows.

Item	£
Timber & nails	986
Drying oil	27
Cement, sand, gravel	68
Chernozem	81
Seeds	27
Tools	81
Photo services	108
Transport	27
Lease of workshop	68
Decorators & carvers	810
Staff responsible	541
Baby platform	270
Other	<u>14</u>
Total	<u>3108</u>

Carole Roberts and Aletta Bruins

Appeal

Liz Brighthouse has an overwhelming workload at OCVA, and would much appreciate any offers of help. She can be contacted via e-mail: liz_brighthouse@msn.com

Report on AGM, 31 January 2001

In her Chairman's report, Karen observed that the committee elected in 2000 started with a rotating chair, but then elected her Chairman in April. New membership leaflets were produced, and members are encouraged to distribute them. In March a Perm Open Day was held, focussing on schools, small businesses, university links and voluntary action. A St Patrick's Day dance raised money for the City twinning projects. In April, a road sign was erected on the A40, announcing the twinning of Oxfordshire and Perm Region, but was later relocated to the A34. There is also now a sign in Perm, marking its twinning with Oxford.

In June, a dinner was held to raise funds to bring over student dancers from the Perm Ballet, for a production of Noyes Fludde. That took place in August, with participation of young people from Bonn, Grenoble, Leiden and Perm. We also supported one person to take part in an ecological camp in Perm. In September, members and others took part in the university exchange visit to Perm. In November the Association held a party for teachers from Perm, in Oxford for the annual 3-week course. In January there was a seminar at the Town Hall to discuss the activities of the various town twinning associations.

In the Treasurer's report, Tom noted that outgoings in 2000 were £3600 and income was over £3500 – much of this due to Deb Manley's efforts on behalf of the Disability Centre.

Karen Hewitt was elected Chairman; Tom Meinhard Treasurer; Mari Prichard Secretary. Following Derek Holmes' resignation as Newsletter Editor, this post remained vacant (but Richard Sills volunteered his services later). Other committee members elected were Liz Brighthouse, Derek Holmes, Pam Maugham, Ann Pigott, Cynthia Styles and May Wylie.

Liz Brighthouse reported that OCVA has set up the Oxfordshire Perm Voluntary Action Link Centre. A school link is required for a school in Perm; also a penfriend for a 12/13-year-old girl. Host families are needed for visiting Russians.

Committee Meeting, 14 March

It was hoped that a newsletter could be produced by Easter; but there was a need for material from members.

Tom reported a balance of £1299 on 1 January, a current balance of £1730; and recent grants totalling £2250.

A fund-raising dinner is planned for 29 June, in association with the Doyle Academy of Irish Dance. The City Youth Council proposes to send twelve young people to an ecological camp in Perm. Oxford Contemporary Music wishes to bring over Russian musicians, including Rossiyanne.

The committee approved the proposal to form a committee to co-ordinate all the City twinning associations. The Oxford International Links Committee had subsequently met, and considered proposals for future events, including a folk dance festival in 2002; an international year of sports in 2004; and a possible bid by Oxford to be the European City of Culture in 2008. The next committee meeting was fixed for 6 June 2001.

Forthcoming events

2001

6 June Perm Association Committee (6pm).
June Humphrey Carpenter & Karen Hewitt visiting Perm. Also Liz Brighthouse et al (see summary on page 1).

Fri 29 June Perm Association Dinner and fund-raising event at Town Hall. £12 for 3-course dinner and entertainment. Tickets from May Wylie (tel. 01865 252537).

3-15 August Doyle Academy of Irish Dance to visit Perm.

14-28 August Members of Oxford Youth Council and Venture Scouts to visit Perm for an ecological camp.

8-23 September Oxford group to visit Perm.
September Perm group (Good Government project) to visit Oxford.

November Perm University group in Oxford for 3 weeks.

15-24 December Perm Ballet group to visit Oxford.

2002

6 Feb Perm Association AGM (6pm)