

PERM NEWS ПЕРМЬ

The newsletter of the Perm Association

October 2001

An ABCD of horticulture (Apples, Bees, Cheese, Dachas ...)

Valentina Vereshchagina, Head of the Department of Botany and Plant Genetics in the Faculty of Biology of Perm State University, visited Oxford recently in the context of an “allotments and dachas“ exchange. Accompanied by her husband Anatoly, retired materials scientist from PSU, she stayed with Cynthia Styles for ten days. Anatoly is a beekeeper, and the couple enjoyed visits to a honey bottling company in Witney, a beekeeping shop in Windsor and beehives in Wheatley.

One of the highlights was a tour of two of Oxford’s allotments, accompanied by Dr David Steel, Oxford University graduate in botany and R & D officer in the City Council Leisure Department. English-Russian translation was redundant when it came to identifying plants by their Latin names! Near Florence Park, they saw an atypical allotment on land owned by the Elder Stubbs charity. Part of the land is leased by Restore, an organisation which provides employment for people recovering from mental health problems. The tenants not only cultivate plants but also make and sell garden furniture and other items from recycled materials. This was followed by a visit to the Twenty Pound Meadow allotments on Botley Road, where they were greeted by John Power, County Councillor, former Lord Mayor of Oxford and enthusiastic allotment gardener.



A visit to the cheese festival at Stow-on-the-Wold gave opportunities to taste cheeses and watch cheese being made. The climax was perhaps a visit to an orchard in Wytham, accompanied by Dr David Steel (see photo above), to attend an outdoor lecture on the origin and development of apple-growing, given by renowned expert Dr Barry Juniper, Emeritus Fellow of St Catherine’s College, who had just returned from a research visit to Central Asia, where all modern strains of apples originated. The ten-day stay ended with a visit to the Botanical Garden and tea with the Lord Mayor.

Richard Sills

Dates for your diary

Sunday 11 November – Saturday 1 December: Perm University group in Oxford.

Wednesday 14 November: Perm Association Party.

The Perm Association is holding a party to welcome the group of Perm University teachers who will be studying at Rewley House for three weeks. The party will be held in the Acland Room at Rewley House (corner of Wellington Square and St John Street) from 7.30 pm. You will be able to meet old friends and make new ones, hear some of the more entertaining episodes in the Oxford-Perm exchanges, enjoy drinks and light buffet food and take part in a special entertainment, should you wish to do so. Anyone with musical skills (vocal or instrumental) please get in touch with Karen Hewitt (01865-515635 or karen.hewitt@conted.ox.ac.uk) Rewley House provides the room for free but expects to provide the refreshments as well. So you will be asked for a small contribution towards the cost of these refreshments. It would be helpful if you could let any member of the committee know if you are coming. This year, five of the six Perm teachers are in their twenties, so do bring younger friends as well.

Saturday 15 – Monday 24 December: Perm Youth Ballet in Oxford.

Friday 21 December at 7.30 pm and Saturday 22 December at 3.00 pm: Concert.

The Orchestra of St Johns, together with the Perm Ballet School and youth orchestras of Oxford, Bonn, Leiden and Grenoble, will perform a programme which includes Copland's Appalachian Spring, and excerpts from Stravinsky's Firebird and Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite. Further information and tickets from May Wylie at the Town Hall, tel. 01865 252537.

Sunday 23 December: Lord Mayor's Carol Concert at the Town Hall.

The Carol Concert this year will involve the Carl von Ossietzky Choir from Bonn, musicians from Oxford, Grenoble and Leiden, and the Perm Youth Ballet.

Wednesday 6 February 2002: Annual General Meeting.

The provisional date and venue of the AGM of the Perm Association are Wednesday 6 February 2002 at 6.00 pm in Rewley House.

Recent Events

The dinner on 29 June raised £800 towards hospice care in Perm and the visit of the Perm Youth Ballet to Oxford in December.

The Doyle Academy of Irish Dance visited Perm in August. The group of 29 – 14 dancers and 15 accompanying relatives – stayed in the Perm Ballet School. During their 10-day stay, the dancers took part in many events, including an open-air performance to an enthusiastic audience of 700. Group leader Ann Marie Gallacher was asked to give master classes in Irish dance. The Academy has raised about £6000 to support the cost of bringing the Perm Youth Ballet to Oxford in December.

The Oxford Youth Council and the Venture Scouts organised a visit by six young people to Perm in August for an ecological camp. An article about the visit is on page 3.

The annual group visit to Perm State University took place in September. The group of eight visited the university and assisted in language classes. Other activities included visits to the opera and ballet, city tours and excursions – in unbroken Indian Summer weather – to Khokhlovka, Belogorsk monastery, Kungur (for the regular canoeing trip on the Sylva River) - and, for some, to a dacha or a bath-house.

Political scientists from PSU visited Oxford in September, working on the final stages of a project with Oxford political scientists.

News of other links

Leon

The Oxford-Leon Link has organised an operatic evening with Royal Opera bass Quentin Hayes and friends, in the Assembly Room of the Town Hall at 7.30 pm on Friday 30 November. Tickets, to include a pasta supper, £12 from May Wylie on 01865 252537. First prize in the raffle will be two £90 tickets for Tristan and Isolde at the Royal Opera House!!

Grenoble

The Oxford-Grenoble Association has invited the Grenoble pianist Frederique Nalpas to give a recital of music

by Brahms, Chopin, Liszt, Debussy and Satie at the Maison Française on Thursday 22 November at 8.00 pm. Tickets £5 at the door.

Leiden

The link celebrates its 55th anniversary this year, and will be welcoming a party of 50 from Leiden in November. The Leiden Youth Orchestra is raising funds towards the cost of their travel to play in the concert in December (see above). They are offering *high quality bulbs* for sale, from *8 November*. To place an order, telephone May Wylie on 01865 252537.

Oxford Youth Council trip to Perm

When I found out that there was a chance to go to Russia I was immediately enthusiastic, especially as I knew there were subsidies involved. Here was my chance to boldly go where no Cherwellian had gone before. I didn't really have any expectations of what Russia would be like, I was concentrating more on the fact that no-one else I knew had ever been there.

When we finally arrived I was surprised to find Moscow so similar to any major European city in a way, and yet so different. When the van which picked us up from the airport set off, the stench of petrol which immediately filled the inside was unbearable and reminded me of Nigeria. The roads were terrible and I felt sick before we got to the hotel. But when we toured the city, there were plenty of magnificent older buildings as well as some shiny new ones, and we saw other foreign tourists including some African Muslims at the Kremlin. However, that was the last that we saw of any black people.

It was a mad rush to get to the station in time to catch the Kama train for Perm, but once on it we had no option but to relax for the next 21 hours. This was a great opportunity for us to get to know each other better, and we got so used to being on the train that we would almost rather have stayed on it than face the unknown of our host families. Imagine our further horror when we saw the television cameras waiting at the station platform! However, our group leader James Collins was used to this attention and not at all disturbed, as he had been to Perm twice before. Leaving him to field the questions, we prepared to face our host families. They were all smiles and luckily all of the children were from the English school so they introduced us to their parents, who mostly couldn't speak English, and we set off on our Russian adventure. I have to say that nothing had prepared us for the hospitality that we received. The families were so kind and generous that they bought us presents when we left, making our presents to them seem quite inadequate.

Whilst staying with our host families we did a couple of mornings of community work, litter picking and painting the new playground (built with the help of funds raised in Oxford), the lat-

ter also being filmed for television. This was really fun because we spent time with Russian young people almost as equals (they wouldn't let us do anything really difficult). We didn't really have to speak the same language as we were doing physical tasks together. There were jokes and laughter all around and at the end we usually had a sing-song.

We visited a water purification plant, Khokhlovka museum of regional buildings, a monastery, and ice caves. These were official visits and weren't really interesting. It was much more fun spending four days at the Yunost camp, and participating in their sports day, their business day, and the highlight of the trip which was their formal ball. For the two afternoons before the ball we were taught some traditional Russian dances and a new one called the Blue Spin which was done to 'Think twice' by Phil Collins. I hope I never forget them.

At the camp, we were always being mobbed by Russian kids who wanted to talk to us because we were the first foreigners they had met. It was really nice to see how they got over the language difficulty, which was to speak in a group, where they all helped each other out. The ease with which they all seemed to get on with each other and the pride they took in their heritage, knowing their traditional songs and dances, was quite surprising to us because we are so used to having small friendship groups and not really mixing. Most English people don't know any of their traditions and when we were asked to do a performance, the best we could manage were the National Anthem and some campfire songs, with a Beatles medley put together by James.

I enjoyed being at the camp enormously and I wish English people could be as open and friendly as the people in Perm demonstrated themselves to be. I hope one day I can go back there.

Maryam Okole, Cherwell School

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Current membership rates

Individuals: £ 8.00
Organisations £16.00

I/we wish to join the Perm Association

DATE:

NAME:

ORGANISATION (if any):

ADDRESS:

.....

.....

.....POSTCODE:

Affiliation fee £

Donation £

Total £

(Cheques payable to the "Perm Association")

For more information on membership contact the Treasurer

Tom Meinhard
22 St John Street
Oxford
OX1 2LQ
Tel: 01865 557615



Guide to Perm

Some time ago, a proposal was mooted to draw up a guide to Perm, for the benefit of Oxfordians visiting the city. I hope to produce a first draft by the end of this year. The content is expected to include information about advance preparations, the journey, tourist information (public transport, the arts, interesting buildings, restaurants and shops, recreation), communications and the institutions with current Oxford links. Contributions from members will be most welcome – especially details of recommended restaurants and shops. You can phone me on 01865 721644 or e-mail me at richardsills@btinternet.com

Дача и баня

I was fortunate enough to be a member of the group visiting Perm this September and feel I could write a book on all my wonderful experiences. The inhabitants of Perm are both friendly and hospitable and because they are starved of contact with Europeans, we were treated like VIPs wherever we went. I could talk endlessly about the public transport, the beautiful architecture, the museums and Perm's wonderful Ballet Company but I have been asked to tell you about my experience in a Russian banya.

My host family had been invited to a Bar-B-Q at a friend's dacha. A dacha is a small, wooden house, usually without running water or electricity, located on the family allotment. These allotments are often as big as two acres and all the family fruit and vegetables are organically grown there and are the best I have ever tasted. All guests are expected to contribute something towards the feast and I decided to take the vodka which was warmly received and when I looked at the table, there was enough food to feed an army. After the meal we were told to pair up with a member of our own sex and I found myself with a very glamorous Russian lady who led me to what we would call a sauna but instead of coals, it is heated by wood. I modestly tried to keep bits of me covered but despite not speaking a word of English, Helena made clear that the banya was for naked bodies only. After ten minutes of roasting, I was plunged into a butt full of freezing water and just as I thought things couldn't get any worse, Helena started to beat me with a bunch of very prickly twigs which certainly got the circulation pumping. I then had to do the same to her, after which she shook my hand and thanked me - I'm still not sure what for. I can't wait to return next year to try it again.

Kay Harris

В музее

Экскурсовод: Этой вазе 3000 лет и 6 месяцев.
Турист: Откуда вы это знаете?
Экскурсовод: Когда я начал работать здесь, вазе было 3000 лет, и я работаю здесь уже 6 месяцев.

ARE WE SENDING YOU UNSOLICITED MAIL?

If you no longer wish to receive mail from the Perm Association, please complete the form below and send it to Tom Meinhard, 22 John Street, Oxford, OX1 2LQ.

Please remove me from the Perm Association mailing list.
Name (Block capitals).....
Address