

PERM NEWS

The newsletter of the Perm Association

July 2004

Winter fishing adventures

For many Russian men one of the favourite ways of spending their leisure time is fishing. My father is no exception: he is an inveterate angler with quite long experience. But only this year he started to go in for an exotic (for those who live in a warmer climate) kind of fishing - through ice-holes.

To my surprise from father I learned that winter catches are, as a rule, bigger than summer ones and that ice-hole fishing is no less popular among Russian fishermen than summer fishing. Neither hard frost nor icy wind stops real fans of winter fishing. A lot of warm clothes, vodka and, of course, hope for a big catch help them to overcome all difficulties.

However, this year the weather didn't put a lot of obstacles in the way of Permian anglers and even helped them: we had a minus temperature till the end of April but all winter (excepting about a week or two) the mercury didn't fall below -5-10 °C. Besides the sun was shining so brightly that after a couple of outings my father's face became as brown as if he was a dweller of southern latitudes (it was a very strange tan: with an absolutely white neck and a broad white stripe on the forehead where he wore his cap; though one of father's friends even believed a joke that father spent a week in Egypt).

Real fishing is an outing for not less than the whole day, so on Saturdays and Sundays streams of cars start to move to the most promising fishing places in the early morning - about 6 a.m. Usually the route to the destinations takes one or two hours and sometimes (especially in spring) the route is quite dangerous because it is necessary to drive a few kilometres right on the ice which covers a river. By the way, in spring the very process of ice-hole fishing also becomes perilous because of the ice tracks and it happens that ice floes carry unfortunate fishermen away from shores. What's typical - many anglers continue to take risks even after they have experienced such misadventures.

As there are not very many really good places, especially those with convenient approach roads, the concentration of fishermen and also fisherwomen on the surface of a river is quite high. With special drills they make holes in the ice (the thickness of which can be up to 1.5 metres) and settle down near their tackle boxes with special rods for winter fishing in their hands.

Since it's not at all easy to find exactly where a school of fish is situated under the ice, anglers keep watch over their colleagues (some even use binoculars for this purpose) - and as soon as one of them catches a few fish during a short time or a big one, others surround him and drill new holes in the neighbourhood - which usually frightens the fish away.

My father went ice-hole fishing about ten times this year. His catches weren't big (especially in comparison with the 7 and 9 kg pikes he was lucky to catch last summer), but quite enough to make fish-soup and pamper our pussy-cat. Next year father is going to improve his technique and achieve better results. Though he says that the result is not the main point of fishing and there are more important things: the very process, an opportunity to get to know many people, to breathe fresh air and, on the whole, to have real relaxation in the company of friends far from city civilization.

So those who are searching for an unusual experience, you are welcome at Permian winter fishing!

Olga Kirianova

Olga is a student in the History Faculty of PSU. Her father - the fisherman - is Igor Kyrianov, the Dean of the History Faculty at PSU.

(Editor's note - see page 4 for a Russian's illustration of ice-hole fishing!)

The Hospice Seminar in Perm, 8th-10th June 2004

Following my visit to Perm in September 2003 on the Oxford/Perm annual exchange, when I did a two-day workshop with 20 hospice health care professionals and volunteers on 'Bereavement and Loss', I was asked if I could return and work in greater depth on Theoretical Perspectives, Communication Skills, Complicated Grief, Risk Assessment and Working with Children.

My friend and colleague, Kathy Warburton was very keen to accompany me and we were enabled to set up the three day seminar in Perm from 8th to 10th June 2004. We were prepared to pay for ourselves but have in fact received funding from a variety of sources (see below) which has supported us and validated our work.

Natalia Pereverseva (of the Perm Hospice Charity Trust) and Vitaly Barlomov did all the organisation the Perm end and liaised with me at each stage of the planning. It was agreed that we would cater for and accept up to 40 participants and that Perm would provide a suitable central venue, snacks and a meal at lunch time, overhead projector and a multi-media projector and a translator/interpreter. (I was delighted that it would be Natasha Dubrovina who had interpreted for me last year). We are indebted to all the benefactors who met our requirements so admirably and in addition, made us so comfortable, well-cared for and welcome.

The participants came from a five hundred mile radius around Perm and they were accommodated by Permians. They were all from a palliative care background and included doctors, nurses, psychologists, teacher/trainers and volunteers. Several of them had attended the workshop last year and so had some idea of working experientially. This way of working is apparently unusual in Russia but the group warmed to the concept and brought a great deal professionally and personally to the training. We worked from 10.00 to 14.00 with a 20 minute break and then from 15.00 to 17.00 having had a delicious sit-down meal provided by a local restaurant. This worked well and everyone was able to relax with tea and cakes at the end. Much networking went on in the breaks and participants were able to talk to us more personally.

The materials were prepared well in advance as I had been asked if they could be translated into Russian if possible. Kathy and I were able to use the Sobell Bereavement Service materials. I revamped the ones we wanted to use and had them translated by Irene Pasternak, a trained Russian psychologist who lives near Oxford. The resulting 20 page handout books (40 copies) were taken by us to Perm. The training materials (acetates, worksheets and cards etc) were translated via email by Natasha the translator beforehand. Kathy and I were thus well prepared and we also took pens, posits, visual aids and a variety of surprises like toys for each of the participants as well as individual attendance certificates which were to be given out for completing the seminar.

We left all the training materials with the Perm organisers, as the hope is that they may be able to put on another seminar themselves, although we were asked by people from many different backgrounds if we could return to further the training. I am sure we would consider this if we felt that it were appropriate.

The evaluations indicate that the seminar fulfilled a real need, especially in the areas of basic counselling (communication) skills and working with children. The participants appreciated learning experientially with practical exercises, small group work, role-plays and a variety of visual aids; a new way of working for many of them.

The seminar has been a demanding but very worthwhile experience. The time and energy that Kathy and I invested has been amply rewarded by the interest, hard work, generosity and appreciation of everyone we met; a big 'thank you' to all the participants who brought so much of themselves professionally and personally.

Kathy and I are also indebted to The Perm Association, Dr.Robert Twycross, The Victor Zorza Hospice Trust, The Study Centre at Sobell House Hospice, Katharine House Hospice, my friends and acquaintances in Bladon, Woodstock and Oxford, Natasha Dubrovina, Irene Pasternak, Natalia Pereverseva, Vitaly Barlomov, Tamara Dyemchuk and the many benefactors in Perm. We also really appreciated the deputation to meet us at Perm Station when we arrived, the visits to people's homes, the many gifts we received and the warmth and appreciation from everyone.

Rosalyn Roulston and Kathy Warburton

Oxford International Links

In January a highly successful Victorian Evening raised over £600 to support the Oxford Youth Dance visit to Perm and this summer's International Sports Festival in Oxford. It was well supported by members of all the link organisations.

The OIL AGM was held on 8th May. Don Rouse stood down as Chairperson, but will continue to serve on the committee. He has been a tower of strength and his energy, experience and expertise will be of great benefit to the new committee. The officers elected to serve in the coming year are as follows. Chairperson: Bill Pinkerton. Vice-Chair: Councillor Beryl Keen. Treasurer: Nora Allan. Minutes Secretaries: Marilyn Ward and Pam Ogden.

Planning for the international youth sports festival from 17 to 25 July 2004 is well advanced. A full programme of sports and social events is planned for the 150 young people from Leiden, Bonn, Perm, Grenoble, Torün and Oxford. Anyone able to help with catering or driving should contact May Wylie on 01865 252537.

All twin towns have been invited to be represented at the Lord Mayor's Parade, which will take place on 18 September.

Initial planning is under way for an international performance of Bernstein's Mass in October 2005. This would involve the East Oxford Community Choir, Interlude (from Grenoble), the Bonn Youth Choir, an orchestra from Leiden, Oxford Youth Dance and Perm Contemporary Dance, with soloists from all the twin towns. John Lubbock has agreed to direct the work.

News of other links

Bonn

Rose Hill Youth Club had an exchange visit to Bonn in February 2004.

Four Oxford women artists exhibited works in the Frauenmuseum in Bonn from April to June 2004. A group of artists from Bonn hopes to exhibit in Oxford in 2005.

There has been a successful preparatory visit, to arrange an exchange between Oxford School and the Bertold Brecht School in Bonn, and the first visit will take place in October 2004.

Initial planning is under way for Bonn week in Oxford from 25 May to 1 June 2005. It is hoped that the programme will include an art exhibition, church service, youth theatre performance, Burgerfest, barbecue and barn dance, and punting with a picnic lunch.

Grenoble

The Oxford Grenoble Association is unable to continue to function, because of a lack of volunteers willing to manage its affairs. It is to be dissolved and its remaining funds transferred to Oxford International Links. It leaves a legacy of contacts between the two cities, and it is hoped that links will continue, both directly between individuals and organisations and under the auspices of OIL.

An artist from Grenoble recently displayed his work at the Museum of Oxford. May Wylie visited Grenoble to discuss policy on continuing and future links between the two cities. A new link is being established between Oxford School and a school in the Villeneuve district.

Leiden

A group including representatives of the British Legion visited Leiden in May for their Remembrance Day celebrations. The Doyle Academy of Irish Dance plans to visit Leiden in early October 2004.

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Perm Association Garden Party

We shall be holding a Garden Party at The Map House, Vernon Avenue, Oxford, OX2 9AU, at 6.00pm on Wednesday 4 August. Olga Kirianova, our newsletter correspondent in Perm, will be there, together with her mother. If you would like to come, please complete the enclosed reply slip, and send it to reach Richard & Gilliane Sills at the above address, no later than 26 July 2004.

Other forthcoming events

International Youth Sports Festival

The festival, to take place from 17 to 25 July 2004, will include a group of eight 14-year-old gymnasts and two coaches from Perm (see item under OIL on page 3).

September 2004 visit to Perm. (11th –26th September 2004)

A group of eight people from Oxford will visit Perm as part of the annual exchange with Perm State University.

Recent events

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting, on 4 February 2004, was very well attended. Robin Carr stepped down as Treasurer. Rosalyn Roulston is our new Treasurer; and David Roulston has taken on the role of Membership Secretary. The rest of the committee continue in post. After the business meeting we were treated to an absorbing talk on 'Perm and the Russian Mafia' by Dr Federico Varese, Lecturer in Criminology in the Oxford University Law Faculty.

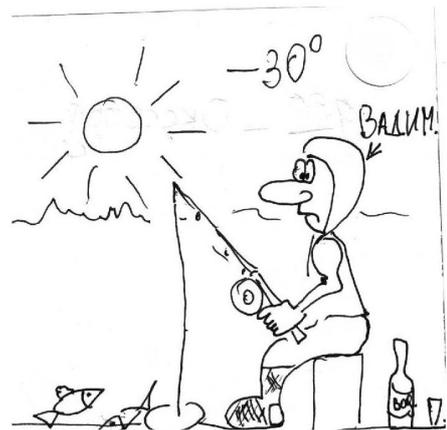
Oxford Youth Dance Company

Members of the company visited Perm in late March 2004. While in Perm they worked on improvisations with a Perm youth dance group, as well as giving performances from their own repertoire.

Folk dance group

Yarmarka visited Oxford for a Folk Festival in April 2004, performing at many venues in Oxford and London. Many members of the Perm Association enjoyed hosting their guests. David and Rosalyn Roulston comment on their experience ...

“Our two friendly Yarmarka guests Alexei and Vadim spoke hardly any English and we spoke even less Russian. The week involved lots of mime and gesticulating - and pieces of paper. When Vadim tried to tell us about his favourite hobby in the Perm region, we were completely lost until he produced this drawing in just a couple of minutes. Then we understood - the hole in the ice at -30 degrees C (in spite of the sun), the bottle of vodka.....”



Hospice seminar

Rosalyn Roulston and Kathy Warburton ran a seminar in Perm in June, for 40 participants from all over the Perm Region. See their article on page 2.

Perm Guide

The draft guide now runs to over 40 pages. Anyone visiting Perm is welcome to request a copy from Richard Sills (e-mail richardsills@btinternet.com or telephone 01865 721644) - and is invited to suggest additions or amendments, and to contribute photographs.

Oxford's Twin City in Russia, PERM, will be the site of a dangerous and illegal experiment

We all know that Russia's aging nuclear rockets should be decommissioned, safely, under international scrutiny. According to international disarmament treaties, Russia has to build factories for the re-utilisation of old missile engines within the rockets, and their fuel. The techniques for the utilisation of solid rocket fuel require temperatures of 3500 degrees, and lethal dioxins are formed in the cooling stream of gas. Currently methods and technical equipment for the safe utilisation of rocket fuel do not exist in Russia.

Nevertheless, Perm's powerful company 'Mashinostroitel' has been licensed to construct all the apparatus for extracting and reprocessing the solid rocket fuel inside its main factory in a central suburb of Perm. The construction is being carried out with American money, and the involvement of American firms. Ecological, health and safety considerations are being ignored although scientists from all over Russia consider that lethal dioxins will – with the present techniques – leak into the atmosphere, get into the food chain, and cause widespread disease and deaths.

Local ecological, medical and democratic activist groups in Perm and neighbouring Urals cities are setting up a protest camp outside the factory where the rocket fuel will be reprocessed.

They invite people from Oxford and Oxfordshire (twinned with Perm City and Perm Region) to come and camp with them! – or at least to write a letter supporting the activists in their efforts to protect Perm from dioxin contamination.

Roman Yushkov

Further information can be obtained from the Campaign's website <http://www.util.pc.cz/index.php> or from its leader, Roman Yushkov iouchkov@mail.ru who speaks and writes English.

Background information

Many of these rockets would have been built in Perm. The main explosive material has been removed, but there is Big Money in the removal of the nuclear fuel. Roman thinks this explains the involvement of the American companies, which were very keen, but which are now rather coy, though keeping their offices in the city.

The original idea was to remove the fuel in a city about 150 miles away in the Udmurt Republic. But the people there led a vigorous campaign, and the project was withdrawn. Now the authorities are trying it in Perm – on the principle of "if-we-keep-going-we-will-wear-down-the-protest". Roman says it is difficult to go on when so many powers are arrayed against you, and the civil movement is comparatively weak. But it is stronger in Perm than in many places. I'm not sure who is really promoting the processing in Perm. The Governor? The owner of Mashinostroitel which I think is the one that makes the aircraft engines? The Federal Government? Roman will have his facts right, so send him an email.

Karen Hewitt