

Busy bees' life revealed

Beekeeping Museum to show video footage from inside hive

Belarus' first scientific Beekeeping Museum is soon to open at Grodno's State Agrarian University, with exhibits already on display in its Veterinary Medicine Department.

Visitors will be able to see the equipment used by beekeepers past and present, while viewing footage of bee life, shot by a camera installed inside the hive. The organisers of the display aim to show us the history of this craft while familiarising us with the technology of honey manufacture. Amateur beekeepers can apply to the museum for professional advice and practical experience, attending courses and seminars.

Only mountains surpass mountains

By Inessa Vegero

Participants of Belarusian alpinist Seven Peaks project to climb second highest summit on African continent: Mount Kenya

According to the head of the group, Sergey Varivoda, the mountain in the south-east of Africa is considerably lower than African Kilimanjaro (5,895m) but is much more difficult to scale. "The classic route up Kilimanjaro is actually a 1B category track; the climb to the summit of Mt. Kenya is ranked as being in the 4th-5th category of difficulty — even taking the classic route," he explains.

Mr. Varivoda tells us that the group will consist of 18-20 climbers, with most planning to ascend Kenya's lowest peak — Point Lenana (4,985m). The rest will probably attempt Batian (5,199m).

The *Seven Peaks*' traditional world route comprises such mountains as Qomolangma (Everest, Asia — 8,848m), Aconcagua (South America, 6,962m), McKingley (North America — 6,194), Kilimanjaro (Africa — 5,895), Elbrus (Europe — 5,642m) and Vinson Massif (Antarctic Continent — 4,892m). However, two peaks in Australia and Oceania — Puncak Jaya (Indonesia, New Guinea — 4,884m) and Mount Kosciuszko (Australia — 2,228m) — are used by some for the Antarctic region. Some alpinists have already climbed both.

The primary goal of the *Seven Peaks* project is to popularise a healthy lifestyle, promoting active leisure. Apart from mountaineering, other forms of sport tourism are advocated. "In various years, we've ascended the highest peak of the Grand Atlas Mountains and Northern Africa — the mountain of Toubkal (4,165m) in Morocco, and the summit of Kala Pattar. We've also visited Ecuador's volcanoes, climbing the highest in the world — active Cotopaxi volcano. We've reached the Margarita Peak of Uganda's Mountains of the Moon and have climbed Elbrus, Kilimanjaro and Aconcagua. We've even attended the base camp of the tallest mountain in the world — Everest, and Peruvian Andes' Coropuna," says Mr. Varivoda.

City on the banks of beautiful Vilia River

Vileika enthusiasts tread in footsteps of Duke Tyszkiewicz and erect monument honouring lost villages

By Lyudmila Minkevich

Many coloured leaves fall onto a wooden boat, moored to the bank, while fish — caught by the host — dry under the roof. Anchors are seen everywhere and a mermaid sits on a stone, as if having just emerged from the water. Within just a few steps, you know that Vileika is a river city, with the Vilia River surrounding it like a blue ribbon.

Vileika was known as a large river port until the 20th century (when the railway was laid). In the 1970s, the largest water reservoir in the country was built in the city, as the Belarusian capital lacked water. Viliya's popularity has grown and, for several years, water voyages dedicated to Konstantin Tyszkiewicz have been organised along the river. In 1857, he was first to research the Vilia, from its rise and outflow. Enthusiasts travel in kayaks, rafts and twin-hulled vessels along the river for a month, visiting Belarusian and Lithuanian historical sights and beautiful places.

Fishermen say that church bells can be heard on winter Christian holidays at Vileika water reservoir — just place your ear to the ice. The area has many churches, which perhaps explains the phenomenon. Several major houses of worship are situated in Vileika's central square, just a few metres from one another. Snow white St. Mary of Egypt Orthodox Church was built in 1865, using ancient architectural designs. Some time ago, it had chiming clocks. Interestingly, the church never closed and, during WWII, only one tower was damaged by a shell.

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross Church had a different fate. It was built in 1913 and, in Soviet times, was a warehouse for sweets, cereals and al-



Vileika, a district city in the Minsk Region, boasts enthralling history

cohol. The church's stained glass windows were covered with iron boards and its frescoes were painted over. However, two years later, the paint began to crumble, being laid upon cement. As a result, Christ's painted out face mystically reappeared. In the

ing that it comes from lost villages, flooded during the construction of Vileika water reservoir. Nine disappeared under the water, obliging residents to be relocated. However, memories live on. Rybchina's former villagers began organising meetings

and recollect their past. A priest is always invited to give a service.

The idea was recently supported by the Chairman of the District Council of Deputies, Yevgeny Ignatovich, famous local land researcher Anatoly Rogach and architect Anatoly Koptuyuga. They decided to unveil a memorial to honour the villages which disappeared in the Vileika District last century. There are 250 in all, including those flooded, burnt during the war and lost for other reasons. It took several weeks to erect the 'Honouring Former Villages' memorial, which is unique countrywide, resembling a cottage, built using thirteen stones (symbolising the 13 village councils of the Vileika District). It is inscribed with two hundred names of lost villages. Many come to lay flowers in remembrance....

Vileika was founded in 1460, on the Grand Ducal lands of Kurenets. It gained the status of a city in 1795 and is now home to about 27,000 people

1970s, the church was reconstructed; its tall Gothic towers were visible to anyone coming to the city, so the authorities had little choice.

Local residents have another explanation for the mysterious bell ringing heard through the ice, say-

not far from the site where their village was previously situated. A stone has been erected to honour their original home and, every year, former villagers — now residing in Minsk, Moscow, Tallinn and Kiev — come to celebrate Trinity Sunday

Families strike root for future

Tradition of planting tree on wedding day appears in Grodno

By Lilia Novitskaya

Nine newly-married couples have recently laid a new public garden on the quay of the Nieman River in Grodno. The event was dedicated to City Day, with the young larches laying the foundations of a good tradition. From now on, each newly-married couple will be able to plant their own tree in the city on their wedding day. "Now our family has definitely taken root," notes one bride.

Two more events were dedicated to the holiday: the reopening of a city sauna (after reconstruction) and the launch of a revamped section of busy Brikel Street. The sauna and recreational facilities have reo-

pened well ahead of schedule, offering clients SPA procedures, salt treatments, Turkish and 'wet' saunas, steam rooms and swimming pools with water massage, as well as a gym with contemporary fitness machines, massage rooms, a hair dressing salon and a café-bar. Sports grounds, tennis courts and a wonderful fountain also adorn the site.

The restored section of Brikel Street is now part of Grodno's ring road, freeing the city's historical centre of excess traffic. It too has been finished ahead of schedule, taking just two months instead of four and a half. Three new buses out of 49 recently supplied to Grodno by Minsk Automobile Works were



Newly-weds plant first small trees in public garden

the first to drive along the reconstructed section.

The regional centre celebrated its holiday for three days and was visited by delegations from various corners of Belarus. Parliamentarians and diplomats attended, alongside those from twin cities. Boris Kozelkov, the Chairman of the Grodno City Executive Committee,

presented Vladimir Deshko, Director of Grodnograzhdanproekt Institute, with a certificate naming him an Honorary Citizen of Grodno. Members of the Kapella of Grodno were also registered in Grodno's City Book of Fame. Squares and parks hosted concerts, folk craft trade fairs, competitions and sporting contests.