

Facing the future while remembering the past

By Irina Sviridenkova

It's not long before the Day of Belarusian Written Language arrives — traditionally held on the first Sunday of September. This year, it will be hosted by Glubokoe: the centre of the district. It boasts the richest cultural, historical and spiritual heritage, possessing over 50 architectural monuments and churches, including those of national importance.

Preparations are well underway to welcome guests and participants at the highest level. Over 2,000 people are likely to gather from all over the country, as well as from the CIS and beyond.

Oleg Morkhat, the Chairman of the Glubokoe District Executive Committee, tells us, "The Glubokoe District is known for its spirituality, with 37 religious communities operating, in addition to 32 churches (19 are Orthodox and 12 Catholic). We can now admire cathedrals erected centuries ago."

Glubokoe is a hive of construction, beautification, cleaning and repairs, shining not only with newly-laid pavements and renewed facades but with its spirituality. As is traditional, the holiday is hosted by towns which are historical centres of culture, science, literature and book printing. In this respect, Glubokoe is rich in history.

"The Glubokoe District is home to many prominent people, including Pavel Sukhoy, an outstanding



Town of Glubokoe is getting ready to the Day of Belarusian Written Language

aircraft designer, and Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (Perelman) who reformed the Jewish language to become the state language of Israel. Moreover, folklore researcher and artist Yazep Drozdovich resided and worked here, as did the founder of Belarusian theatre, Ignaty Buinitsky, and patron of arts Iosif Korsak, who helped build churches in the 17th century. These included Glubokoe's two major sites: the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God Cathedral and the Holy Trinity Catholic Church. We can read about these people in books and documents but their names aren't indicated vividly.

Residents, as well as guests and tourists (whose number may reach 40,000 per year) could be more aware of them, so we are unveiling eight bronze busts to our prominent fellow countrymen on the eve of the Day of Belarusian Written Language," explains Mr. Morkhat.

Another surprise for residents and guests of the holiday is a sculptural composition entitled *Paulinka*, which is modelled on Honoured Figure of Culture Pavlina Myadelka. She grew up in the Glubokoe District and was the first to play *Paulinka* in Yanka Kupala's play of the same title. The sculpture

shows a Belarusian young girl in national dress, wearing a headdress of meadow grass, walking under a bridge with full buckets of water — a sign of hospitality. A rainbow and stork are above — the bird being a symbol of revival, purity and nobility. The roots of trees, symbolising ties with earth, family and homeland, form the foundation of the sculpture.

The sculpture of *Paulinka* symbolises hopes for the future while remembering the past and is perfect for Glubokoe: a contemporary developing town which honours an almost 600 year old history.

Newly married couples first to walk down Avenue of Love

Avenue of Love opening in Gomel to mark City Day

The unusual avenue dedicated to love was the idea of Gomel Technical University students. They sent their proposal to the local authorities of Sovetsky District, suggesting Festivalny Park for its location and a competition was then announced for draft projects. Ten designs were chosen from 80 submitted, including *Lights in Love*, *Lonely Benches* and *Small Boat*.

Currently, work on the sculptures is being completed, with the first already unveiled: *Small Boat* — created by Gomel Art College graduate Olga Melnik-Malakhova. It shows two young people in the boat, looking at each other.

The Avenue of Love is due to open officially on City Day, September 8th, and is to host newly married couples. They can pass *Lonely Benches*, travel to 'islands of meeting and parting' and complete their journey at a tree of love, on which they can hang 'locks of happiness' bearing their names.

Marriages registered not only in Heaven

It's a Minsk tradition for newly-weds to go to the Pobedy Monument or the Island of Tears for photographs, honouring our ancestors. Now, marriage ceremonies can actually be performed in front of these beautiful monuments.



Rain is a good sign for newly-weds

Fashionable couples have married while parachute jumping or under water but Belarus' Justice

Ministry only recognises ceremonies organised at specific sites: cultural institutions and histori-

cal places nominated by local executive committees. Register office employees can travel to any place in their district.

Over the past year, informal marriage ceremonies have become popular at Nesvizh. Sergey Klimov, Director of the Nesvizh Historical and Cultural Museum-Reserve, monitors weddings at Radziwill Castle, to ensure they are held in strict compliance with ancient traditions.

"We invite actors from the House of Culture to dress in medieval costume. It's vital that newly-weds feel the atmosphere of another age, remembering the day as the beginning of their joint life ahead. We organise ceremonies in the Town Hall but also plan to allow weddings in the castle itself. It won't be cheap, costing at least \$500 per hour, but such services cost \$5,000 per hour at Trakai Castle in Lithuania."

By Victor Andreev

Metro is growing visibly

By Olga Polikova

September will see the opening of three new stations: Grushevka, Mikhalovo and Petrovshchina

The depot has prepared thoroughly, with seven new trains ready to launch, although the exact date won't be named until the end of August. Pavel Tsarun, the Head of the Directorate of Minsk Metro Construction, tells us that work on the new buildings is in full swing. "We've mounted the entrances, and are now performing finishing works and dismantling supports." Next year, another metro station is to appear in the capital: Malinovka.

Safety is being given major priority, with innovations affecting the whole underground, explains Rostislav Yurenya, the Head of the Minsk Metro. By the end of the year, emergency devices will have been installed, which will summon the police at the touch of a button. Raised relief lines at the edge of platforms will also help passengers — especially those with impaired vision. Escalators will be adjusted to move only when they are stepped upon at less busy stations, such as



Metro station

Molodezhnaya. Meanwhile, containers able to absorb explosive force are being fitted, into which suspicious items can be placed until they are removed. Within five years, security will be able to track every movement on trains in real time.

Work on the third metro line is in full swing, linking the southern part of Minsk with the north: from Zeleny Lug to Kurasovshchina. Two additional hubs are planned, between Frunzenskaya and Yubileynaya stations and between Vokzalnaya and Ploshchad Lenina. Moreover, toilets and lifts for those with restricted mobility are being fitted at every station. Special doors are to be fitted on platforms, as in St. Petersburg, while trains will be equipped with special devices to control brakes, which will allow them to open at exact points along the platform.