

Thousand year old city promoted

Brest's new museum projects developed, evaluated and endorsed with participation of European professionals

By Yuri Chernyakevich

Brest is almost a thousand years old; its wealth of history is a pleasure to explore. The city is known for its Berestie Unia church (a failed attempt to reconcile Western and Eastern Orthodoxy), the execution of medieval atheist philosopher Kazimierz Łyszczyński and for the 1918 Peace Treaty. Of course, two decades later, war entered Soviet territory, bringing the heroic defence of Brest Fortress.

Much of Brest's history, for good and bad, revolves around its position on the border of several states. It cherishes that history tenderly — as most brightly felt at Brest Fortress. The citadel is saturated with history, as its walls are riddled with bullets. The barracks await reconstruction, following in the footsteps of recently restored St. Nicholas' Garrison Church.

Not long ago, the fortress' museum hosted a seminar organised by Belarus' Culture Ministry, presenting a six-year development plan for the site and its grounds; the *Brest-2019* project will coincide with the regional's centre's millennial jubilee.

The Director of the Brest Fortress-Hero Memorial Complex, Grigory Bysyuk, tells us that this new initiative will build upon the huge historical-cultural potential of the city. He emphasises

“Everyone is aware of the history of the citadel's defence but few Belarusians — even in Brest — know that the city itself was situated on the site of the fortress in the past. The city, which was small at the time, was shifted a few kilometres aside. Visiting the fortress and its surroundings, it's easy to imagine the old city. You can learn about old Berestie's rich history and its path of development. We hope this fascinating aspect will attract an increasing

Young people remember and honour the deed of the Brest Fortress defenders

Schoolchildren from Belarus, as well as from other CIS states, often visit the Brest Fortress with patriotic excursions



number of tourists.”

The city authorities are serious in their approach, having invited specialists from Russia, the Netherlands, the

UK, Poland and Ukraine to share their expertise for three days in April. Museum workers, tourism experts, architects and market researchers

pooled their ideas on how best to promote Brest Fortress and its surroundings, creating a major historical-cultural centre. The event

was led by Austrian Dieter Bogner — a leading specialist in museum planning and marketing, who helped design Vienna's Museum Quar-

ter and Salzburg's museum development. Directors of Belarusian museums were intrigued to hear Mr. Bogner's personal feelings on visiting Brest, where, on June 22nd, 1941, the German 45th infantry division (which included former Austrian army soldiers) crossed the western Soviet border, attacking the citadel. Mr. Bogner believes that the war, which began over 70 years ago, should be remembered by all those involved: Germans, Austrians, Russians and other nations. He is keen that future generations know of their forefathers' tragic mistakes and brave deeds, so that Europe's peace and tolerance can be nurtured. He wishes to see history unite nations rather than cause disjoint, focusing on friendship and mutual understanding. His wise words roused a storm of applause, showing their universal truth and appeal.

Many of the proposals for *Brest-2019* have been welcomed by local authorities, including extending infrastructure at the site, to encourage visitors to stay longer. Mr. Bysyuk believes that facilities will soon appear, including the reconstruction of a cable bridge near the Terespol Gates, for pedestrians and cyclists. European tourists are known for their love of bicycle travel, so it's hoped that this will encourage them.

Mysterious ice keeps its secrets

By Lyudmila Minakova

Belarusian polar researchers return home with unique samples for further investigation

Our Belarusian polar researchers have spent around six months in the Antarctic, headed by Alexey Gaidashov, of the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Physics (named after B. I. Stepanov). The team also included Mikhail Korol and an associated professor of the Microbiol-

ogy Chair of the Belarusian State University's Biological Department, Vladislav Maymin. They were particularly studying the effects of aerosols in the atmosphere while conducting palaeographic, physico-geographical, climatic and meteorological investigations.

Belarus plans to construct its own station in the Antarctic, so the team was assessing its possible influence on the Antarctic environment, as well as con-



Belarusian polar explorers return back home

ducting biological research. Particularly, they took samples of microorganisms on the icy continent, which have now been brought to Belarus with the aim of growing them for further study. Samples were gathered from the bottom of

ice-bound Lake Nizhnee. “It looks dead yet life is humming down there,” stresses Mr. Gaidashov, noting that underwater camera footage has been taken in the freshwater lake. The Belarusian satellite has also been engaged in research.

The best awarded with gold medals

Belarusian team occupies first place at European Girls' Mathematical Olympiad

The international competition was held in early April, in Luxembourg, with the Belarusian team taking part for the first time. The girls claimed three gold medals, with 99 points, which earned them first place above Serbia and the USA (who had the same number of points but fewer gold medals).

Belarusian State Univer-

sity lyceum students Yelizaveta Dovgyalo and Varvara Kuzmitskaya each won a gold medal at the Olympiad while the third went to Anastasia Zhirkevich of Bobruisk. The fourth member of the Belarusian national team, Irina Burak, representing one of Minsk's gymnasiums, claimed a bronze medal.

Teams from 22 countries took part in the event, which was being held for the second time; the UK hosted the first gathering last year.