



During excavations at Bykhov Castle, archaeologists constantly finding various artefacts

New face for old town

17th century castle to be partially restored for Day of Belarusian Written Language in Bykhov

By Tatiana Smirnova

The Day of Belarusian Written Language is a traditional holiday held on the first Sunday of September. Each year, an historical centre of culture, literature, science and publishing welcomes guests from all over the country, with Bykhov enjoying the honour this year.

Reconstruction and conservation

The main historical attraction in Bykhov is Sapega Castle, built in the 17th century. At that time, the residence was surrounded by a moat and fortified with defensive towers. Today, it needs reconstruction, notes Nella Shunkova, the Deputy Chair of Bykhov District Executive Committee. She tells us, "We plan to

restore the two watchtowers for the Day of Belarusian Written Language. Work on them is almost finished, with wooden decking for the roof installed on one of the towers and the grounds landscaped. The building is being conserved according to the *Castles of Belarus* programme; reconstruction is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2018.

Students of Mogilev State University are helping restore the historic building, led by Professor Igor Marzalyuk, conducting archaeological excavations within the castle grounds. Many finds have already come to light, as Ms. Shunkova admits. "We've found plenty of artefacts, including many ceramics and encaustic tiles — which once covered the walls and facades. We've also found various tobacco pipes. In

all, we've unearthed about 400 items from across the centuries. They'll be exhibited in one of the restored watchtowers."

The castle is not the only historical and cultural treasure in the area, as the city also has a synagogue built in the 17th century. Funds are yet to be forthcoming for its reconstruction but investors and sponsors are invited.

From the past to the future

The whole city is enjoying a 'face lift' for the grand festival, including new tiles being laid in Railroad Square and renovations at the railway station. The Square is also to receive a composition called 'Razvitanne' (Farewell), by Belarusian sculptor Andrey Vorobiev.

"Retail sites are almost ready and, in the centre, most public areas are receiving attention, including Rodina cinema, which is gaining 3D technology," adds Ms. Shunkova. For the Day of Belarusian Written Language, facades of apartment

buildings along Lenin Street are being painted bright colours and the two-stored houses near the Executive Committee are being decorated with paintings.

Artist Oksana Krasnitskaya tells us, "I wanted to show Bykhov's historical past, expanding the urban space and extending the street with an imaginary 'duplicate'. From the Executive Committee building, you'll be able to see a view of Sapega Castle. It will be like looking back in time and into the future — at the new buildings now appearing in the city."

Beauty by our own hands

Private residents are also helping beautify their home city. A bas-relief is being installed in memory of famous Belarusian journalist Boris Streltsov, who was born in the Bykhov area, and the city library is to be named after him. An Avenue of Cities will open for the festival, with a tree planted to represent each previous host city, including a memorial bench.

Learn and study again

Belarus among four most educated countries worldwide

According to the National Statistical Committee, for every 10,000 residents of the Republic, 621 people achieve specialised secondary education, higher or postgraduate education. Only the Republic of Korea is ahead of us (686) alongside the USA (667) and Russia (660).

The National Statistical Committee notes that the level of education of young people increases each year, with 169 young people in every thousand having higher education; 245 enjoy vocational educational training. Most young men and women are students, while many take an active part in the social life of the country. As for 1st January this year, Belarus boasted 248 youth associations.

Rating reflects good dynamics

Belarusian State University electronic library among world's top hundred libraries

According to the latest edition of the Webometrics Ranking of World Universities, BSU's electronic library has moved up 31 positions, being now ranked 97th.

The main library of the Belarusian State University was one of the first in Belarus to start registering the full text of scientific publications, alongside teaching and methodical materials by university scholars and professors, within global databases. In addition, the BSU library has been digitising documents to make them available to the entire international community. The library's collection now boasts about 40,000 full-text publications by university scholars and professors.

The Webometrics Ranking of World Universities has been compiled for the ninth year, by Spanish Labo-



Scientific publications becoming more widely available online

torio de Internet Research Laboratory, being updated in January and July. This July, the rating covered over 1,500 electronic libraries of higher educational establishments and research centres from around the world. The final score is calculated as a weight average of four indicators: Presence, Impact, Openness and Excellence. These characterise the presence of universities on the Internet, including their level of scientific publications.

The ranking aims to support open access to research publications and

other educational materials in electronic form, encouraging researchers to publish online, making editions available to colleagues and anyone interested, wherever they are.

Among CIS universities, the Belarusian State University is up one notch, into 4th place, right after Lomonosov Moscow University, St. Petersburg State University and MEPhI National Research Nuclear University. The BSU is ranked 32nd among universities in Central and Eastern Europe.

Quick, affordable and convenient

By Victor Stepanov

Thousands of Belarusians countrywide use Express Mail

The Belarusian post now offers a wide range of services: traditional and new. Among the most popular is Belpochta's Express Mail: twice awarded a Silver Level Certificate for its high quality of service at international level. The Universal Postal Union's EMS Co-operative gave the service a Golden Level Certificate for its work in 2011. Belarusian customers also praise the service.

Today's businesses rely on speed of delivery, using the Internet and e-mail to contact customers around the globe. However, some information, goods and documents need to travel by regular mail. EMS Belpost will collect and deliver 'door to door' from any address, making it an invaluable addition to business' modern arsenal.

Internet-shopping is gaining pace in Belarus, with buyers keen to receive goods as quickly as possible. EMS Belpost ensures delivery in the shortest possible time, while offering tracking via Belpochta's website.

Polar station to be equipped within five years

Belarus and Russia to set up working group for joint exploration of Antarctica

Belarus' Ministerial Commission on Antarctica, meeting with Russian representatives, has agreed to set up the task force. The Acting Head of the Republican Centre for Polar Research, Alexey Gaidashov, who heads the Belarusian Antarctic expedition, notes that the group will include specialists from both sides: eight people in all. He explains, "This will enable us to realise our existing agreement on Belarus-Russia co-operation in Antarctica."

The new agreement stipulates major principles and mechanisms of joint research and exploration of Antarctica, detailing joint research programmes and the development of a system of environmental measures for Antarctica.

Attending the meeting on Russia's behalf were representatives of the Russian Antarctic expedition. Joining Belarus' Ministerial Commission on Antarctica were representatives of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, as well as of the National Academy of Sciences, the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, and of the Belarusian State University.

The agreement on co-operation in Antarctica was signed by the governments of Belarus and Russia on March 15th, 2013, in St. Petersburg. Belarus plans to build its polar station in Antarctica by 2018, with the first module supplied to the site by November-December 2014.