

Rarities from underground

In the centre of Mogilev, a heating main was replaced during the summer. Nothing exciting about that, you may think. But it has brought a welcome surprise to the inhabitants of Pionerskaya Street, and to the city as a whole. The local Museum of History has received a windfall of items, dated from 17th-19th centuries, which were unearthed in the holes and open pits which were created during the removal of the old pipes.

By Olga Kislyak

Historical splinters

People who are not interested in the past, never pay attention to clay crockery, pieces of tile and moulding in the ground. It is good when these types walk by. These invaluable, tiny splinters of history are often inadvertently destroyed by such people. But fortunately, there are people who understand that these objects, as ugly as they may appear, should not be in the dirt, but under glass, in a museum exposition.

There were no gold coins or ancient jewels found in Pionerskaya Street, but those objects which were unearthed were of equally great interest. The red brick chipped on the edges doesn't sound anything, but it tells us much. It is larger and flatter than modern bricks, with



Rarities found in the centre of Mogilev

deep grooves. Grooves are the author's mark of a master, who pressed the bricks from clay, explains the Museum's Director.

"Such bricks were used until the end of the 18th century. Other finds included pieces of green and

white-blue tile. On one is an image that resembles a lion, although it is possible that it was a different animal. These fragments will be studied by archaeologists, but already we know that such tiles were used for lining furnaces and fire-

places by our fellow countrymen in 17-18th centuries. The biggest piece of tile, a moulded piece, was made later, in late 19th or early 20th century."

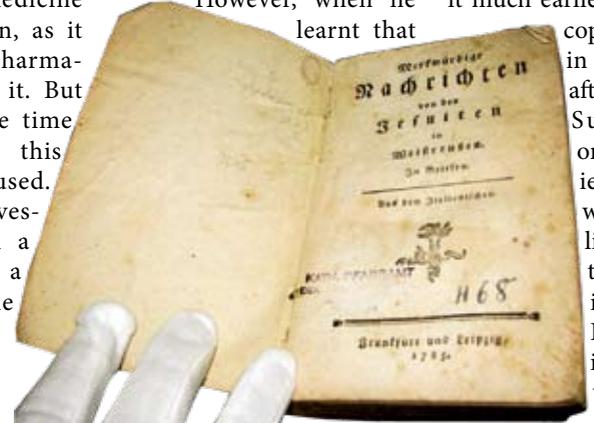
It is unknown what was stored in a tiny small bottle made of thick, dark glass. Probably, medicine of some description, as it has a distinctive pharmaceutical feel about it. But what is clear is the time period in which this small bottle was used. On a bottom of the vessel decorated with a horseshoe, there is a monogram with the date — 1895.

Maps, newspapers, coins

The collection of the Museum of History of Mogilev, which holds 8,000 items, was augmented by the receipt of a book — *Marvelous Messages about Jesuits*

of Belarus which recently arrived from Russia. Published in 1785 in Frankfurt (Germany), it went on sale on an online auction. The museum badly wished to add this rarity to its collection but was outbid by Belarus born Ales Chaichits.

However, when he learnt that



exhibits at the museum is a 1608 map of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which belonged to the renowned Belgian cartographer Gerardus Mercator. This well-known cartographer, (he suggested to name collections of maps an 'atlas') made it much earlier, but the first copy was issued in 1595, a year after his death. Subsequently, only a few copies of this map were republished. One of them is stored in the National Library, but it is from a later year.

The Mogilev museum had long dreamt about this edition, Mr. Chaichits, now living in Russia, kindly donated the book to his fellow countrymen.

Among the other new

seum also received a large number of the German newspaper *Illustrirte Zeitung* from 1863 in which the events of the revolts in Poland, Lithuania and Belarus are described and illustrated in detail.

Return of the Berestie Castle

By Dmitry Selvestrov

Archaeologists find remains of ancient stone building

During excavations, which are being conducted near Berestie Archaeological Museum at Volyn's fortification of the Brest Fortress, an ancient 15th century pavement and the stone remains of a massive construction from the 17th century have

been unearthed. Perhaps this foundation is a fragment of the most ancient fortification of Belarus — that of Berestie Castle.

The area where the excavations are taking place was suggested to today's archaeologists by the work of T. Zhuk-Rybitysky, a Polish scientist who did his research in 1938. During his time, he discovered many fragments of wooden and stone

houses and the same stone structure, but he did not find the pavement then. The excavations were temporarily closed for the winter and, a year later, the Second World War broke out. Not surprisingly, nobody was interested in archaeological digs at that point. Today, modern scientists, under the direction of Professor Piotr Lysenko, continue research that started before the war.

Ticket convenience

From mid-September, train tickets are available from Belarusian Railways online website

By Igor Smirnov

Online tickets can be paid for with Visa, Visa Electron, MasterCard and Maestro international payment cards (Visa International and MasterCard). The system is even easier than previously, requiring customers only to enter their card details and confirm authentication. Soon, BelCard cardholders will also be able to use these to make payments. Following the updated launch, with-

in less than 48 hours, 270 tickets were already sold.

From January to August this year, 318,000 tickets were purchased online, via the Belarusian Railways site: 193,000 were made with additional service of electronic 'check-in', avoiding a trip to the ticket office.

Marina Matyushina, the leading engineer of the Production and Technical Department of Passenger Service, with Belarusian Railways, recommends

that Minsk residents go to get their paid tickets to the international ticket offices located at 2 Kirov Street. Tickets can be received from any office equipped with an 'Express' system terminal, but passengers need to present a printed order form; alternatively, you can give the 14 figure reference number of the order form and proof of identity. An authorised representative of the passenger can also perform the purchase.

Religious procession and mass honouring of church during festive celebrations



Celebrating the 390th anniversary of Kuteinskaya Laura

By Alexey Kotov

Orsha hosts 390th anniversary celebrations for Kuteinskaya Laura

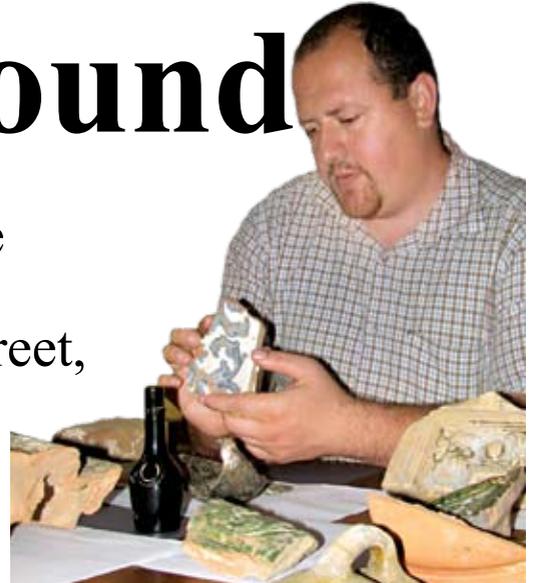
The celebrations began with a Divine Liturgy at Ilyinskaya Church, involving the Archbishop of Vitebsk and Orsha, Dimitry. After the service, the sacred procession set off from the church walls, bearing the Orsha icon of the Mother of God, and includ-

ing clergymen, residents, guests and pilgrims. They headed for Kuteinsky Monastery, which hosted a prayer service honouring the icon of the Orsha Mother of God and a bell consecrating ceremony.

The Kuteinskaya Laura hosted a concert and a dramatic performance, *Spiridon Sobol*, as well as an exhibition of children's art works: *Orthodox Orsha. The History of ABC Books* display also de-

lighted visitors. A conference entitled *Kuteinskije Readings* was held at the monastery, gathering historians and museum curators — including representatives of the National Academy of Sciences and the National History Museum. The festivities finished with an evening service at the Holy Mother of God Cathedral.

The Holy Trinity Monastery of the Theophany in Orsha appeared back in the 17th century, boasting the largest printing house in Belaya Rus at that time. In 1631, printer Spiridon Sobol released the first ABC Book in Belarusian from the monastery, which became a focal point for masters in book making: wood carvers, engravers, tile specialists, minters, icon painters and book printers. In the 19th century, Orsha was called the 'Belarusian Suzdal' and the Kuteinskaya Laura is thought to have laid the foundations for monastic brotherhoods throughout Belaya Rus.



Director of the History Museum Alexey Batyukov