

Beautiful patterns of renewed craftsmanship

Young craftsmen create thread linking past and future

By Yelena Svetlova

The loom at Lida's Regional Centre of Crafts and Traditional Culture — Spadchyna — is no museum exhibit, being in regular use by two young weavers. The eager craftsmen have revived this rarity, creating beautiful cloths, towels, coverlets and belts on the ancient loom, just as their great-grandmothers once did.

Lida resident Yevgeny Markevich, in the ninth form, was on a summer visit to his grandmother in Lyubcha when, with her permission, he began looking in her attic. His curiosity unearthed an old loom, set aside for dozens of years. His genuine interest in its mechanism won over local grandmothers, who began assembling the 'krosna' (handloom) and the urban teenager was soon weaving his first piece of cloth. The neighbours all came to marvel! Yevgeny spent every holiday weaving, learning the subtleties of the art of our ancestors. When he showed his first woven towel to his grandmother, she was moved to tears.

Today, Yevgeny is a fifth-year student at Grodno State Medical University but still travels to Lida every week-

end, to devote himself to his main hobby. The talented young man has already made hundreds of cloths, coverlets and towels but most impor-

graduating from Mir College as a 'master of decorative and applied arts and an artist of painting'.

Yevgeny warned her that

sharing Yevgeny's genuine interest and dedication, as is vital. It takes a whole day just to thread the loom, so it's not a hobby for everyone. In just

has her own worthy collection, including towels and belts.

Yelena Shchelina, the Director of the Regional Cen-

masters have revived our ancient skills, reproducing the most complicated patterns, as are characteristic of the Lida District. We use their cloths to restore original folk costumes from the region, as well as coverlets, towels, napkins, belts and so on." Clearly, their work for the museum has great importance.

The young weavers' work has aroused interest from abroad, especially during the museum's participation in the trans-boundary *Spirit of Our Ancestors Lives in Our Hearts* event, in March. Ms. Shchelina explains that the event aimed to promote traditional Belarusian crafts, with woven items on show alongside ceramics and straw weaving.

Daria tells us, "I took some of our belts to Lithuania and was delighted by our neighbours' interest. In fact, our weaving is similar to that of Lithuania in technique and colour. I did notice that their masters tend to be much older, while our craft was represented by young people." She is already keen to pass her knowledge to new pupils, ensuring that the binding threads are passed from the present to the future.



Student Yevgeny Markevich has independently mastered ancient craft of a weaver

tantly, has found a partner in Daria Matashuk, who shares his interest in weaving. She came to 'Spadchyna' after

he was no teacher but, despite Daria's initial frustrations with the handloom, she has learnt a great deal,

one year, she has mastered both harness weaving and eight-thread weaving. To the joy of her mentor, Daria now

tre of Crafts and Traditional Culture, notes, "The textiles woven by Yevgeny and Daria are unique. These young

Pure source of holy well

By Tatiana Svetlova

The Blue Well, near Slavgorod, is known for its 'miraculous' curative waters, which spring from 100-200 metres below the surface, drawing visitors from across Russia and Ukraine, as well as from the Mogilev and Gomel regions. The Institute of Geochemistry and Geophysics of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus even recognises the water's purity.

At the end of October, I joined others in taking a barefoot dip in the pure turquoise waters of the spring, found in the Kliny area. I'd feared I might develop pneumonia from the experience, as the temperature is no more than five degrees at any time but, according to legend, it's necessary to cross the stream six times to enjoy the full benefit. Of course, the first steps are the most difficult, as your toes go numb. However, this sense of discomfort soon passes, and you feel quite invigorated, even strangely warm all over. Afterwards, we didn't want to put on shoes, preferring to sit for five minutes with our feet resting on the soil. The snuffle I'd had didn't develop into anything more seri-



Blue Well, near Slavgorod, attracts tourists all year long

ous; in fact, by the next morning, my cold had vanished.

Stories abound of recoveries, including one about a young soldier whose wounds refused to heal, despite doctors' efforts. On leaving hospital, he tried the Blue Well treatment and, miraculously, his legs began to heal. The doctors could not explain the fact, having

to accept the powers of the spring water.

Through the centuries, thousands of people have made their pilgrimage here, making it the most popular such site in Belarus. Some travel thousands of kilometres, with some even coming on foot, to purge their souls of anxiety and maximise the cathartic effect on their body.

Petrovich predicts

By Yelena Matusevich

Gigantic crab to forecast results of 2014 IIHF World Championship in Minsk

The results of the 2014 IIHF World Championship matches are to be foreseen by a gigantic crab, called Petrovich, brought especially to Minsk's Open Ocean Oceanography Centre, from the Barents Sea.

The crab is a successor of Paul the Octopus: known for his accurate predictions of football matches. The Kamchatka crab is the world's big-



Crab was named Petrovich

gest crustacean, living in the northern regions of the Far East. The Giant Crab's leg span is 95cm, and it weighs 3.5kg. Petrovich is currently living in a cold-water marine aquarium in the shape of an ice hockey pitch.

Excursion in new format available to visitors

By Sergey Svetlov

Lida Historical and Art Museum launches mobile audio-guide

Audio-excursions are now available for all visitors to the site, using any contemporary mobile device (Android or iOS operational systems); the application can be downloaded immediately, near the entrance to Lida Castle, by following displayed instructions and the QR-code. The application also contains photos and text descriptions, thanks to the fa-

mous *Izi.travel* service files, created by museum historian Nikolay Ioda. The download even features access to photo and text information on several dozen museums worldwide.

The Lida Castle audio-guide currently includes eight sections but Mr. Ioda hopes to expand the application's content with time — to cover, separately, the history of Lida, and major displays within the museum. Information is also to be available in Belarusian, English, Polish and Lithuanian.