

# Future of Kmita Castle

Mysterious construction from times of Grand Duchy of Lithuania will become one of the country's most interesting tourist site

By Tatiana Kurasheva

A team from Grodno's Historical-Archaeological Museum — headed by Natalia Pochobut — has completed a study of Kmita Castle (previously known as an ancient settlement near the village of Berezovets of the Korelichy District). The dig — conducted for the first time on the site — brings to life a historical legend about the old castle.

## Forgotten duke

The head of Orsha and Smolensk's Voevoda — Kmita-Chernobylsky and Semen Kmita of Vilno — are the most famous characters in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Their signatures remain on many court-related documents from 1528-1541. However, writer and book publisher Piotr Blastus Kmita could have also owned the castle in Berezovets. In Lyubcha (Novogrudok Voivodship), he set up a printing house, with support from Hetman K. Radziwill and, from 1612-1629, published 52 books on history, medicine, literature and philosophy — in Polish and Latin. Yan Kmita later continued his father's business, publishing 23 books, but the printing house ceased operation after Lyubcha's bankruptcy by Tsar Alexey Mikhailovich's troops, in 1655.

The site has a depth of over 2.5m, dating back to the 16th-early 17th century. This layer shows trac-

es of three fires (the castle was built anew after each). All the discoveries relate to knowledge of local sand, clay, stones, broken bricks and lime. In addition, archaeologists have found remains of a stove (made from boulders and bricks) and of a solid brick-and-stone construction (supposedly used as 16th century accommodation). Only further research will throw light on whether the castle was originally wooden or made from bricks and stone.

## Valuable finds

A rich collection of stove tiles has been discovered during the dig, including those decorated with botanical and geometric motifs and Biblical themes: Christ's face, the Archangel Michael (Novogrudok's divine patron, depicted on the city emblem) and the Virgin of Anguish. Other discoveries include household items (a knife and keys), weaponry (an arrow head, fragments of a harquebus and tin bullets), and dishware

(fragments of clay pots and bowls). A fragment of a wine glass has been found, probably of Venetian origin, and there are numerous fragments of a stained glass window. There are also animal and bird bones, showing that our forefathers hunted and bred animals. Moreover, fragments of a bronze bell have been unearthed, leading to the conclusion that a church was once situated on the site. Five 16th century coins — including Lithuanian Grosh, a Polish-Swedish



Natalia Pochobut

King's Solid and a Kopeck from the days of Ivan (IV) the Terrible have been unearthed, with the latter discovered in a fire layer — probably arriving at the site as a result of the Livonian War.

All the artefacts will occupy a worthy place at Grodno's Historical-Archaeological Museum and at Korelichy's Museum of Local History. Specialists who have worked previously on Korelichy District digs, L. Koledinsky and V. Khartanovich, have helped, as have local authorities, the heads of the Grodno museum, volunteers from Minsk, Grodno and Korelichy and schoolchildren from the villages of Berezovets and Krynki.

## Novogrudok — Kmita Castle — Mir

Kmita Castle could become an interesting tourist site in the future — being situated just 3km from the Novogrudok-Mir highway. Like Mir Castle, it is one of Belarus' historical-cultural treasures. Information tables are to be placed on the site, to inform tourists of the castle's history. Next year, digs will continue, with the participation of archaeological specialists from Belarus and neighbouring states.



On excavating ancient settlement, scientists discover many interesting finds

## 'Diamond' in futuristic style



'Fantastical' National Library

## US Flavorwire edition includes National Library of Belarus among 'Top 20 Works of Architecture That Belong in a Sci-Fi Film'

We don't have to travel to the stars to enjoy futuristic architecture, since there are plenty of bold, bizarre and contemporary buildings right here on Earth. Among those which look as if they belong on the set of a sci-fi movie is the National Library of Belarus, according to Flavorwire; they've ranked it 11th, while noting its fantastic public observation platform and ability to seat 2,000 in its reading halls.

Also mentioned in the rankings are the 2010 UK Pavilion for World Expo in Shanghai, the United States Air Force Academy Cadet Chapel (with 17 spires), the Atomium in Brussels, the Milwaukee Art Museum, Spain's Auditorio de Tenerife, the futuristic Design Museum Holon in Israel, French Futuroscope theme park, Beijing's Galaxy Soho, the Baha'i House of Worship in India, the Cathedral of Brasilia, the Los Angeles International Airport, the Sanzhi UFO houses in Taiwan, the Graz Art Museum in Austria, and the New Beijing Poly Plaza Hotel.

## From ancient park — to promising honey apiary

Lida's forestry enterprise invests funds in promising project

By Yelena Svetlova

Within the past year, the hunting complex in picturesque Gorni Park launched, becoming one of the most popular vacation sites in the Lida District. It's booked ahead by several months, offering comfort and beauty at an attractive price. At the initiative of the forestry enterprise, one of the most fascinating tourist routes in the Lida District is being developed.

"Here, in Gorni Park, we have two ecological paths, created as part of the Forestry Ministry programme for the Development of Hunting and Ecological Tourism. The path is covered in wood chips so even ants are unafraid," says Mikhail Motsevich, the director of the forestry enterprise.

Curiously, one path in the ancient park is a natural sanctuary, founded in 1881. Avenues dating back over 130 years are still visible today. Mr. Motsevich notes that the wooden house located in Gorni Park was constructed in 1936, belonging to the forestry. It is now being reconstructed and will soon house the Administration of Lida Forestry. The existing



Gorni Park always attracts tourists

modern and comfortable premises of the Administration will become accommodation and house an eco-centre.

Mr. Motsevich takes me to Gorni Park's beehives, explaining, "The apiary's beekeeper, Alexander Korenko, boasts great experience, as well as a passion for his job and much business knowledge." There's even a beekeeping museum, with a natural wood interior; at its carved table, tourists can sample the delicious honey and listen to Mr. Korenko's stories about the ancient tools used for collecting honey. He also tells guests about the future

of the profession, saying, "Honey-making is complex, since it relies on the weather. This year's long winter reduced the expected honey yield."

Mr. Motsevich adds, "The apiary has existed here for dozens of years and we'll certainly continue developing it." He knows the secrets of beekeeping from his own experience. Donning protective clothing, you can even peep into the hives, accompanied by Mr. Korenko. What could be better than walking in the open air, seeing the bee hives and sampling that sweet delight in a cup of herbal tea?