

# PERM NEWS

The newsletter of the Perm Association

January 2004

## First Class “Fair” Returns!

The Yarmarka folk dance group from Perm returns to Oxford in April - for details of their programme, see pages 3 and 5.

For Russians the word “Yarmarka” means not only an open-air trade fair where merchants used to come to sell their goods and peasants from nearby villages used to buy what they needed. It was also a fun fair where people took part in folk performances, watched amusing buffoons, listened to chastooshkas (jocund couplets) and danced together. The Yarmarka was a real holiday! It was the name “YARMARKA” that the first participants and organizers gave to the group fifteen years ago. For all these years the folk group has performed for a grateful public in the Perm Region, elsewhere in Russia and abroad.

The troupe has successfully participated in various events: the Good Will Games in Seattle, USA (1990); festivals in France (1991), the USA (1992), Greece (1991), and Germany (1993); guest performances in Luxembourg and Germany (1994); the Great Tour in France (1994 – 1996); the Charity project for the Perm Children’s Cancer Hospital in Indiana, USA (1997); a Concert Tour in France (1998); performances in



Germany (1999, 2001, 2002); an International Festival in Yalta (Ukraine, 1999), a concert tour in Belgium and the Netherlands (2000), performances in Taiwan (1999, 2001); an International Dance Festival in Great Britain (2002).

The Yarmarka folk group takes an active part in the cultural life of the City of Perm and the Perm Region. Twice a year the group prepares big solo concerts, each being attended by over 1000 people. Concerts are always a success. On the City Day actors of the group are honoured to carry the flag of Perm. The Yarmarka was an invited group at the celebration of the 850<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the city of Moscow. It also took part in the inauguration of the Governor of the Perm Region Mr. Yuri Trutnev and in the meeting of the Patriarch of Russia Alexius II in Perm, participated in the cultural programme of the UNESCO Forum that took place in Yekaterinburg (1999) and represented the City of Perm in Moscow at the official march dedicated to Russian Independence Day on June 12<sup>th</sup> 2002. In September 2003 the “Yarmarka” group was a participant in the Congress of the Peoples of Russia in the City of Nizhny Novgorod.

Members of the group are talented young people.

Sergei KONOVALOV is the chief conductor of the group and a lead bayan

*[continued on page 6]*

## Russian students and the elections

A month ago in Russia the fourth elections to the State Duma took place. And for the majority of present students (including me) these elections were the first they participated in. What was our participation and what is our attitude to the elections and its results?

Many students started to take part in the election process long before the 7th of December, as they landed a temporary job at the local headquarters of different parties and, starting in autumn, collected signatures in support of candidates or parties and canvassed people, handing out leaflets and so on. The reasons why students participated in the election campaign are (with some exceptions) quite far from ideological - it was a way to earn some money. Other students were glad to help their friends or acquaintances in attaining this aim and (again, with some exceptions) put their signatures almost everywhere they were asked to, regardless of their political leanings (if they had any). So I wouldn't be surprised to learn that somebody supported a few candidates with absolutely different programmes.

As regards students' participation in the voting, the overwhelming majority of my acquaintances took part in it but, according to one analytical TV programme, in the whole of Russia fewer than 20% of voters under 25 years old went to the polling stations. However even these figures don't show the real percentage of politically active young people in our country: in accordance with a small survey I carried out among our students, many of those who participated in the voting did it because they wanted to fulfil their civic duty; but some named absolutely apolitical reasons such as curiosity, parental pressure or a wish to get a present (for 18-year-old first time voters there were tickets for sports matches at polling stations).

The majority of the young people I know voted for the democrats - "Union of Right Forces" and "Apple". However, to my surprise, quite a few of our students supported "United Russia" and Zhirinovskiy's party "LDPR". The most widespread answer to my question "Why do you support the party you voted for?" was "Its ideology is more close to my views than others"; and the most absurd - "I like the name of this party" or "They organized a very good rock concert".

The results of the elections were perceived by many students quite negatively. A few of my acquaintances even told me that they very much feared the establishment of an authoritarian regime in Russia in the very near future and only hoped for our presidents' wisdom. On the other hand I heard opinions from some students that such a regime is fully suitable for our country and that it is much better when one person with his "team" carries on a definite policy and nobody hinders him. At the same time many young people don't reflect on the results of the elections at all - it's just not a matter of interest to them.

On the whole it seems to me that the majority of our young people (to which, to be quite honest, I belong ) don't take a serious interest in current politics and don't really have a good understanding of it - and that's a pity.

*Olga Kirianova*

*(Olga is currently studying journalism at PSU and hoping for a career in the media afterwards.)*

### Perm Association contact details

Chairman: Karen Hewitt; tel. 01865 515635; e-mail: karen.hewitt@conted.ox.ac.uk  
Secretary: Mari Prichard; tel. 01865 556673; e-mail: mari.prichard@oxfordshire.gov.uk  
Newsletter: Richard Sills; tel. 01865 721644; e-mail: richardsills@btinternet.com  
Events: May Wylie; tel. 01865 252537; e-mail: mwylie@oxford.gov.uk

## **Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting will be held in the Florey Room at Wolfson College, Linton Road, Oxford, at 6.00 pm on Wednesday 4 February 2004. All members of the Perm Association are warmly invited to attend. After the usual business (reports and election of officers) there will be refreshments and a talk by Dr Federico Varese, Lecturer in Criminology in the Oxford University Law Faculty. Dr Varese, an international expert on the Russian mafia, and a member of the Association, will be speaking on 'Perm and the Russian Mafia'. (Linton Road is off the Banbury Road, about half a mile from St Giles. There is parking at the College or along the side streets. No. 2 and no.7 buses using the Banbury Road will stop at the nearby bus-stop.)

## **Other forthcoming events**

### **Oxford Youth Dance Company**

Members of the company will visit Perm in late March 2004. While in Perm they will work on improvisations with a Perm youth dance group, as well as giving performances from their own repertoire. To raise funds for their visit to Perm, the company is holding an evening of dance at the West Oxford Community Centre, Botley Road, at 7.30pm on 13 March 2004. Tickets at £15 per head, to include a buffet supper, are available from Cecilia Macfarlane, 16 Portland Road, Oxford; e-mail [ceciliamacfarlane@talk21.com](mailto:ceciliamacfarlane@talk21.com) or telephone 01865 515576.

### **Folk dance group**

Yarmarka will visit Oxford for a Folk Festival in April 2004. Members may recall their memorable contribution to the Folk Dance Festival in 2002, and no doubt they will again sing, dance and play in their usual superb style. They will perform in Oxford and London - including the Perm Association Annual Dinner, to be held in the West Oxford Community Centre, Botley Road (past Oxford station and adjacent to the allotments) on Thursday 22 April at 7.30pm. Tickets £12 (£10 unwaged) to include a buffet supper. Easy parking and of course a pay bar. Book now to avoid disappointment - numbers are limited. Tickets available from May Wylie on 252537 or e-mail [mwylie@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:mwylie@oxford.gov.uk) Cheques made payable to Perm Link.

Yarmarka will also perform at the Pegasus Theatre (box office 01865 722851; tickets £7.00, concessions at £2.50 and £4.50) at 7.30pm on Wednesday 21 April; and at The New Hall, St Edward's School, at 8.00pm on Saturday 24 April.

These and other events are listed in full on page 5.

On their previous visit to Oxford, members of Yarmarka wanted to buy clothes or toys for their children - but found the prices prohibitive. If anyone has unwanted clothes or toys of good quality, could they please contact May Wylie and arrange the delivery of them to May's office. The 12 children are aged 3 months, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12 years.

### **International Youth Sports Festival**

The festival, to take place from 17 to 25 July 2004, will include a group of eight 14-year-old gymnasts and two coaches from Perm (see item under OIL on page 4). The gymnasts will give a display of floor gymnastics with ribbons and hoops, and then act as coaches to enable other young people from Oxford and its twin towns to learn basic gymnastic movements.

### **September 2004 visit to Perm. (11<sup>th</sup> -26<sup>th</sup> September 2004)**

Anyone who would like to take part in the annual visit to Perm, organised by Oxford University and Perm State University, where each visitor lives with a Russian family for two weeks, should contact Karen Hewitt as soon as possible. It is a small group, and several places are already filled.

## Recent events

### Academics from PSU and Perm Association Party

Several academics from the Faculty of History and Politics at Perm State University visited Oxford from 1 to 9 November 2003.

The group of academics from PSU, coming to Oxford under the annual exchange programme, were in Oxford from 16 November to 6 December 2003. A party to welcome these visitors was very well attended by members of the Association.

### Perm Guide

The draft guide now runs to over 40 pages. Anyone visiting Perm is welcome to request a copy from Richard Sills (e-mail richardsills@btinternet.com or telephone 01865 721644) - and is invited to suggest additions or amendments, and to contribute photographs.

## News of other links

### Oxford International Links

Planning for the international youth sports festival from 17 to 25 July 2004 is well advanced. During morning and afternoon sessions, each participating group will offer a specialist sport, giving demonstrations and acting as coaches to the other participants. Each young person will learn two new sports in the course of the project – which is designed to be a sports festival, not a competitive event. Participating towns will offer the following sports: korfbal (Leiden), baseball (Bonn), gymnastics (Perm), fencing (Grenoble), ice hockey (Torün) and roller hockey (Oxford). There will be a social event each evening, and a celebration display on Saturday 25 July. It is anticipated that 200 young people will take part in the festival.

### Bonn

Rose Hill Youth Club plans to exchange with Bonn in February 2004.

There are plans for an art exchange in 2004 and 2005. Four Oxford women artists plan to exhibit in the Frauenmuseum in Bonn from 11 April to 6 June 2004; and a group of artists from Bonn hopes to exhibit in Oxford in 2005.

A Bonn school exchange visit to Oxford is planned for October 2004.

Initial planning is under way for Bonn week in Oxford in late May/early June 2005.

### Grenoble

An ice hockey team from Oxford is currently touring the Grenoble area.

### Leiden

A large delegation of volunteers and aldermen from Leiden visited Oxford for Remembrance Day events in November. Oxford city councillors joined the aldermen for a seminar on youth work provision and also on healthy living initiatives.

### Leon

A sponsored swim, to raise funds for Leon, took place on 22 November, raising about £1800 for health education for teenagers in Leon, and also to fund a motorbike for the Los Pepitos project, to enable health workers to support work in rural areas.

It is hoped that a delegation from Oxford will visit Leon in February-March 2004.

## Perm's Victorian Centre

The Victorian Centre is not a place of crinolines and top hats, but a library and reading room to be found in Perm University's philological building. It is quite unlike any other room in the university, for its walls are covered in wood with neatly built-in cupboards, its books and journals are on open shelves, and a strong and convenient box-stool made by Igor Volkhin ensures that those readers who are not tall and graceful can comfortably reach up and browse among the books. In other words it is (almost) user-friendly.

The library was a dream of Boris Proskurnin who became Russia's expert in the novels of Anthony Trollope before Oxfordians set foot in his university. He loved Victorian literature but, like his students and other teachers across Russia, he had to travel to Moscow in order to read most of his favourite books in the Library of Foreign Literature. In 1989 I left my books with him as the nucleus of a collection of literature and criticism *in English*. Since then, friends and colleagues at Oxford University, members of the Perm Association, students at Rewley House and others who have heard of the scheme have contributed to this collection.

Since every book has been carried out to Perm in somebody's case or rucksack, we rapidly decided that decent paperbacks (new or second-hand) are preferable to weighty Victorian volumes. Penguin classics with helpful introductions and clear print are ideal. In the Oxfam shop good criticism turns up regularly as lecturers retire or change jobs. Slowly we gathered not just the major works of Dickens and Hardy, but the shorter works of Elizabeth Gaskell, a lovely collection of Victorian ghost stories, the journals of Arnold Bennett, and *Larkrise to Candleford*. Critical biographies, anthologies of Victorian writings and – more recently – histories and art books have been added to the library which currently contains more than a thousand volumes. Many books in the Centre are available nowhere else in Russia, for university libraries have been starved of money for foreign acquisitions. Boris circulated the editors of scholarly journals, and his pleas were heard; the Centre receives valuable newsletters and journals from both Britain and America.

If anyone would like to contribute either books or money to the Victorian Centre or would like a copy of the catalogue, please contact me. And please think of bright ideas for making a heavy iron door look inviting to the wandering scholars in the corridors of the university. As I said, the Victorian Centre is *almost* user-friendly.

*Karen Hewitt*

### Yarmarka's programme

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event and Venue</u>
Thursday 15 April	2pm	Performance at Great Western Outlet, Swindon
Friday 16 April	7.30pm	Oxford Concert Party in Newman Rooms
Saturday 17 April	pm	Folk Festival, Town Hall and busking, Oxford city centre
Sunday 18 April	2pm – 3pm	Performance in Folk Festival, Oxford
Monday 19 April	pm	Workshop & performance at Oxford Brookes University
Wednesday 21 April	7.30pm	Pegasus Theatre, Oxford
Thursday 22 April	7.30 pm	Perm Assoc'n Dinner at W. Oxford Community Centre
Friday 23 April	7pm	Performance at Dragon School, Oxford
Saturday 24 April	8.00pm	Performance at St Edward's School, Oxford

(accordion) player. He is a graduate of the Ural State Conservatoire and is the author of the majority of orchestral arrangements of the Yarmarka group. He is also the composer of music for a number of concert performances such as “Skomoroshina”. In addition, Sergei is a splendid vocalist and often sings the leading part in songs. He is very artistic and looks great on stage. He was given an award “For Achievements in Culture” by the Ministry for Culture of the Russian Federation.

Yuri GAVRISH is the balalaika soloist. He is a graduate of the Novosibirsk State Conservatoire. He brilliantly performs the most difficult balalaika music and has mastered a magnificent technique on the instrument. He has been working for the Yarmarka group almost from the beginning.

Ludmilla SOZINA is a vocal soloist. The rich timbre of her voice makes the group’s concerts impressive. She has been working in the group from its very beginning. She is a graduate of the Perm State Institute of Fine Arts and Culture.



Pavel ROMANOV is a soloist. He is a graduate of Chelyabinsk State Institute of Fine Arts and Culture. He has mastered a number of folk instruments (garmoshka, gusli etc.) and is very artistic and flexible. While looking at him one is always ready to start dancing. He was awarded a diploma at the All-Russian Contest of Young Performers of Folk Songs in Chelyabinsk in 2003.

Yulia ISTOMINA is a lead ballet dancer. She is a graduate of the Syktyvkar College of Fine Arts and Culture. She has worked in some other professional troupes. She demonstrates perfect technique and performs the most difficult elements that make the performances of the group more vivid.

The soul and the major driving force of the group is its art director Victor KUZMINOV. He was one of the organizers of the group and has been its art director for fifteen years. Thanks to the enormous amount of work he has done the group got the status of a professional group in 2000. It is Victor Kuzminov who is an initiator of ideas and projects being realized by the Yarmarka group. For the realization of one of the projects Mr. Kuzminov together with some leaders of the group became a laureate of the Perm Region Award in the sphere of arts and culture.

The Yarmarka group has received a lot of Russian and international awards. The latest awards are:

- a laureate of the Perm Region Award in the sphere of arts and culture in 2002;
- a laureate of the All-Russian Contest of Young Performers of Folk Songs in Chelyabinsk (Russia) in 2003;
- for participation in the Congress of the Peoples of Russia the group got the Letter of Gratitude (September, 2003).