

Spotlight

ON **RUSSIA**

#Vol. 5

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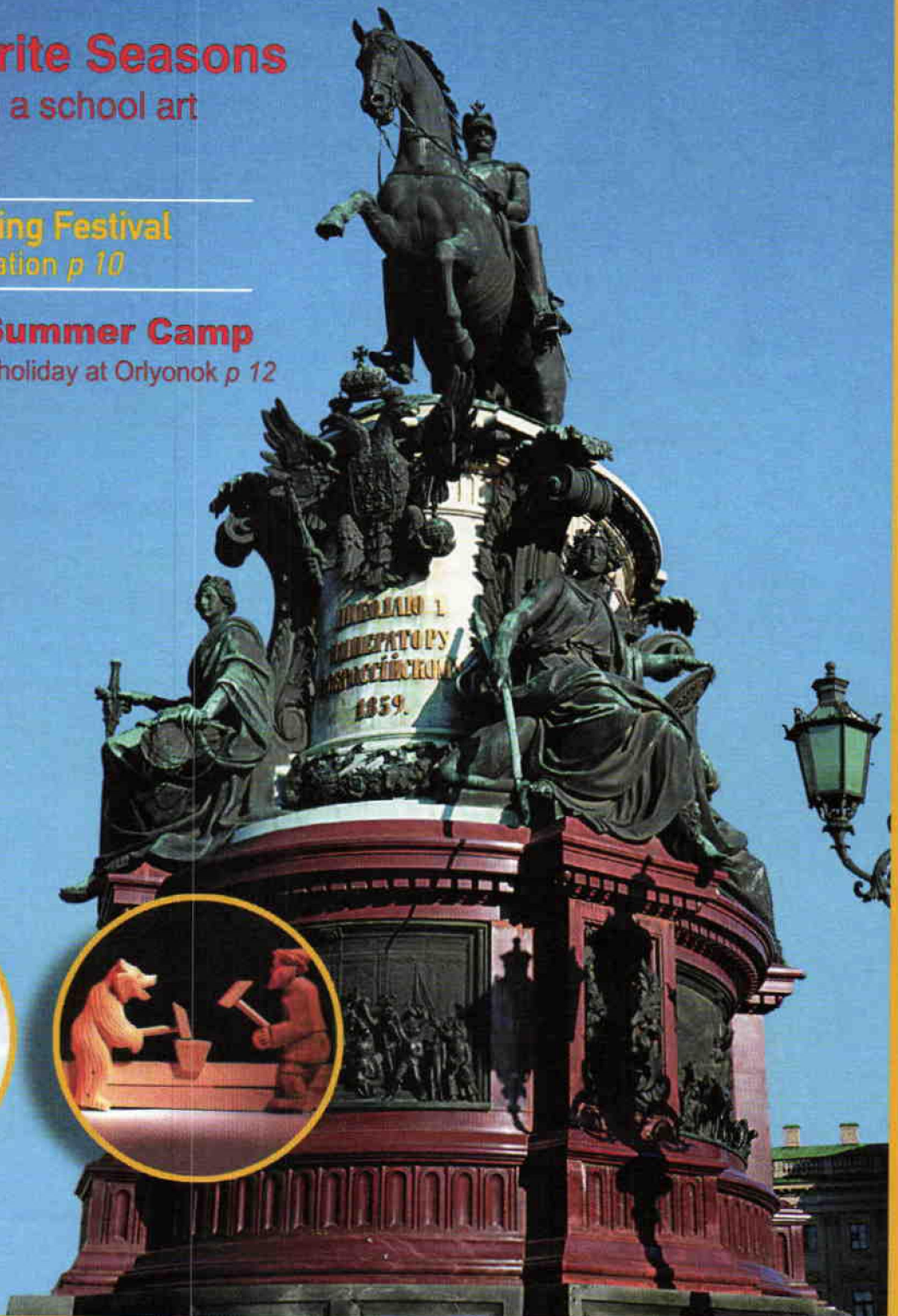
My Favourite Seasons

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Letter from the Editor

Hello from *Spotlight on Russia!*

Our magazine is all about you and our great country – Russia! It's about places and things from all over Russia. Read about **bears, toys**, a famous **young musician** and much more!

But our magazine isn't just for Russians. Children from around the world send e-mails to the *Spotlight on Russia* website. You can read what children from other countries want to know about Russia.

Can you answer their questions? Send us an e-mail!

Have fun reading about Russia in English. And remember – we want to hear from you!

Goodbye until next time.

The *Spotlight on Russia* team.

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What are Russian schools like?

Here's an e-mail to the *Spotlight on Russia* website.



Read Andrew's questions, and the e-mail answers from schoolchildren around Russia.

Spotlight on Russia at school

How old are Russian schoolchildren in Year 1? How many years are there?

They're about six years old in Year 1. There are four years of primary school, five years of secondary school, and two years of senior school.

Yuri (11), Perm

What about the teachers?

In primary school, there is one class teacher for most subjects. In secondary and senior school, there is a different teacher for each subject.

Daria (10), Nizhny Novgorod

What about lesson times and holidays?

The school year is from 1st September to the end of May. There are three short holidays, and a three-month holiday in the summer. Lessons are from about 8:30 am to 3 pm, from Monday to Friday.

Yevgeni (11), Novosibirsk

What about school subjects?

All students do Russian, history, maths and literature. There are other subjects, too. Foreign languages are important – especially English. It's my favourite!

Sofya (10), Moscow

What about school uniform?

Some schools have got a uniform, others haven't got one.

Maria (10), St Petersburg

Spotlight on Russia is doing a survey. Write to us and vote for your favourite school subject.

School life



ACTIVITIES

- Is all the information true about your school?
- What's different between schools in Russia and the UK?
- Ask and answer Andrew's questions about your school.

Our Country

One Country, Many Cultures ...

Russia has got 145 million people. They're all Russian citizens - but there are over 130 different nationalities. Many nationalities have got their own republics.

Spotlight on Russia looks at two of these.



Chuvash Republic

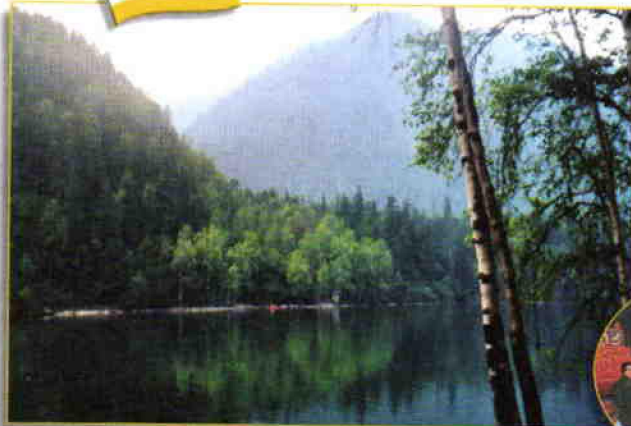
Traditional Chuvash costume

Chuvashia's capital is Cheboksary. It is on the River Volga. Chuvashia's population is about 1.4 million people. Two out of three people are Chuvash. There are also many Russians, and 50 other nationalities. Many people speak Chuvash as well as Russian. Chuvash people have still got their own culture and traditions.



Cheboksary is a very clean, pretty city on the River Volga

Buryat Republic



Beautiful Lake Baikal, Buryatia



Inside a yurt (a traditional Buryat tent house) 100 years ago

Buryatia is next to Lake Baikal. The capital is Ulan-Ude. There are about 1 million people in Buryatia, with 100 different nationalities – Russians, Buryats, Ukrainians, Tatars, Belorussians and more. The main languages are Russian and Buryat.

Write to **Spotlight on Russia** and tell us about the republic or area you live in.

ACTIVITIES

- Fill out a fact file like this about each of the two republics above.
- Find out about another nationality with its own republic. Fill out a fact file, then write a short paragraph about it.

Name:

Location:

Capital:

Population:

Nationalities:

Languages:

Russia's open-air museums show us wooden buildings from long ago. One very famous museum is Kizhi, on a beautiful island in Lake Onega (Onezhskoye) in Karelia. But there are many others.

Spotlight on Russia visits the museums at Malye Karelie and Vitoslavlitsy near Novgorod.

Here we are at Malye Karelie, near Arkhangelsk.

This is a typical *izba*. It's a small wooden country house with just one or two rooms. The family room is a bedroom, kitchen and living room all in one. There isn't a bathroom, but there is a wooden sauna (*banya*) outside.



This is the 'beautiful corner' (*krasny*), with the family icon and a special table for guests.

Now we're at Vitoslavlitsy. Let's look inside the 1882 'Ryshevo' izba.

There is a large clay oven (*pech'*) in a corner near the door. There are sleeping benches (*polaty*) above the oven.



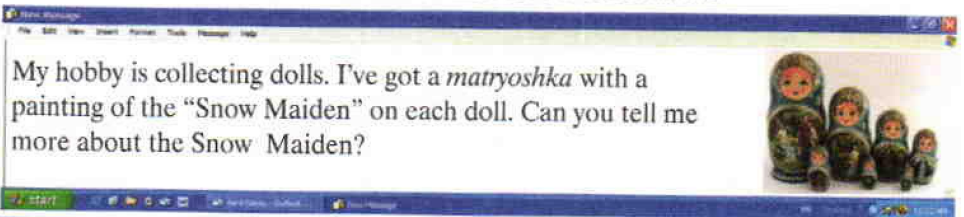
There are low benches along the other walls, one or two tables, and a cupboard for dishes.

There are different sorts of traditional buildings in different parts of Russia. Draw or photograph some old buildings and send your pictures to us, with a short description.

ACTIVITIES

- Tell your partner about the rooms and furniture in your house.
- Use the text to tell your English-speaking pen friend about a typical Russian izba.

This is part of an e-mail to the *Spotlight on Russia* website. It's from Jeanne Lefevre in Paris.



Dear Jeanne,

"Snegurochka", or the "Snow Maiden", is a well-known Russian folk tale. Here's our favourite version.

Snegurochka (The Snow Maiden)



An old man and his wife haven't got any children. They're very sad about this. "Let's make a child out of snow," says the man.



They make a pretty snow-girl. "Look!" says the woman. "Her lips are red and her eyes are open!" The snow-girl is alive!



The old couple are very happy. They call their new daughter Snegurochka. She is kind and polite. But she is pale and shy.



Now it is summer. Snegurochka is not well. "Go out to play," her parents say. They are worried.



Snegurochka is in the forest with her friends. But it's very hot, and Snegurochka isn't happy.



"Let's jump over a fire," the girls say. Snegurochka jumps – and melts. She is gone for ever.

Write to *Spotlight on Russia* and tell us your favourite folk tale. Draw pictures for it too!

- ACTIVITIES**
- Cover the text. Use the pictures to tell the class the story of Snegurochka.
 - Is this the version of Snegurochka you know?
 - What are your/your friends' hobbies?

For many people, the bear is a national symbol of Russia. There are lots of folk tales about this strong and clever animal. But Russian bears aren't all the same. The Kamchatka brown bear isn't like Siberian bears.

Spotlight on Russia looks at ...

KAMCHATKA'S GENTLE GIANTS

Kamchatka is a wild land of volcanoes, forests and lakes. It is also home to thousands of Kamchatka brown bears.

The Kamchatka brown bear is very, VERY big. It can weigh 400 kg. When it stands up, it can be 2.50 m tall. It is very strong, with big teeth and long, sharp claws.

These big animals are usually very peaceful – unlike Siberian bears. For most of the year they live in thick forests and eat berries, nuts and roots.

In the summer months, millions of salmon swim up Kamchatka's rivers from the sea. These fish are the bears' favourite food. Bears travel hundreds of kilometres to live next to the rivers and catch the salmon. Bears are very good swimmers, and their thick fur keeps them warm in the ice-cold water.

When summer finishes, the bears go back to the forest. There they make a warm den¹ where they can spend the winter.

¹home



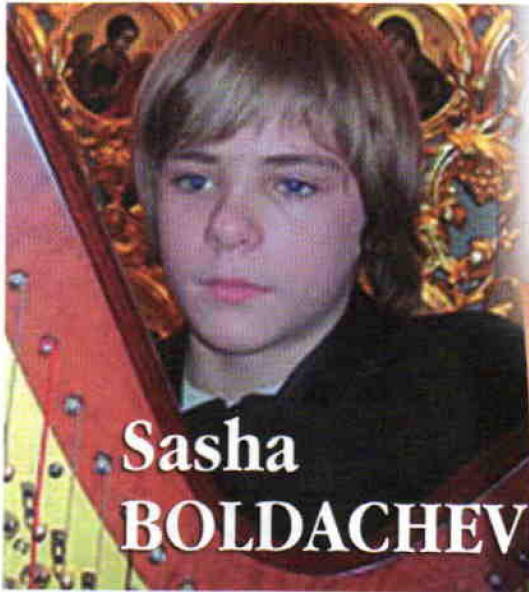
ACTIVITIES

- Do you like bears? Do you like other wild animals? Why/Why not?
- What stories or folk tales do you know about bears?
- What wild animals can you see in the part of Russia you live in?

What's your favourite animal?
Write to *Spotlight on Russia* and tell us about it.

Sasha Boldachev is a normal young Russian boy with normal interests. But he's also a famous musician who gives concerts all over the world. He is the winner of many international competitions for composing, as well as playing.

Spotlight on Russia looks at this child prodigy who plays the harp like an angel.



**Sasha
BOLDACHEV**



Sasha performing at the age of eight (sitting on a box because his arms are so short!)



Sasha's cats – Modya, Gosha and Vinya (Vinya has got one blue eye and one green eye!)

ACTIVITIES

- Ask and answer questions about Sasha (e.g. How old is he? What does he do? etc)
- What can you do well? What job do you want to do when you leave school? Discuss.

Important Dates

21 January 1990	Sasha Boldachev is born in St Petersburg.
1994	He begins studying music.
1995	Sasha enters the Special Lyceum of St Petersburg Conservatory.
1996	He begins composing his own music and playing in concerts.
1999	Sasha goes to Lithuania on his first foreign concert tour.
2000	He wins his first big competitions.
2005	Sasha is the Laureate of the European Foundation for Culture.

Residence Sasha lives in St Petersburg.

Family Sasha's mother, Irina Sharapova, is a concert pianist and a professor at the St Petersburg Conservatory. His father, Alexander, is an advertising and book designer.

Routine Music takes up a lot of Sasha's time. He practises several hours every day. He also travels and performs all over the world.

Hobbies In his free time, Sasha reads, watches TV and plays computer games. In the summer, he goes fishing and hunts for mushrooms.

Pets The Boldachevs have got three cats – Modya, Vinya and Gosha.

Contact Sasha's e-mail address is boldachev@classicalmusic.spb.ru

Who is your favourite Russian celebrity? Send us a fact file like this about the person.

Spotlight on Russia goes to an exhibition of paintings by schoolchildren. They are landscapes showing the students' favourite seasons.



- A** The sun is shining in a warm pink sky. There is blossom on the trees and the grass is green.
- B** The leaves on the trees are red. Some leaves are lying on the ground. The sky is a bit dark and it looks windy.
- C** The sun is shining, but there's a lot of snow. A child is skiing, and another child is making a snowman.
- D** It's a bit cloudy but it looks warm. There is a butterfly and some red flowers. The grass and the trees are green.

Read the descriptions (A-D). What picture (1-4) is each comment about? What season does each picture show?

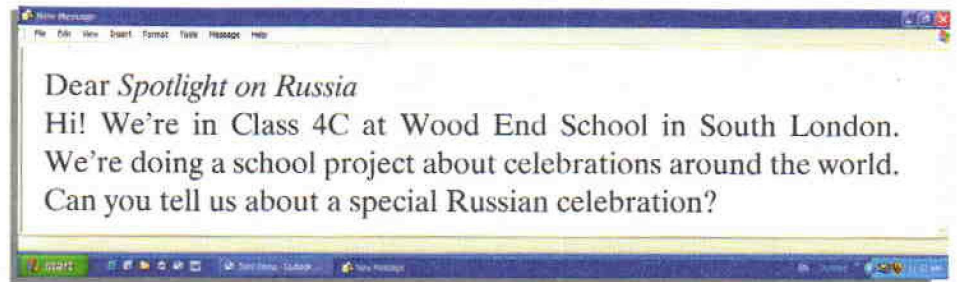
ACTIVITIES

- What's the weather/climate like where you live?
- What do you like doing each season?

What's your favourite season? Paint a picture and send it to *Spotlight on Russia*. Write a short description of it.

Festivals

Here's another e-mail to the *Spotlight on Russia* website.



Read the answer from Class 5 at a Moscow school. They've got great photographs too!

Maslenitsa Spring Festival

'Maslenitsa' is the week before Lent. It's when Russians say goodbye to winter and welcome spring. It's a time of singing, dancing and fun. There's a lot to eat, too – especially *blinis*, which are delicious butter pancakes.

Children dress up¹ and play in the snow. We go for sleigh rides, go sledging, have snowball fights and lots more. We make a straw doll of 'Lady Maslenitsa', who is dressed in special clothes. On Sunday evening, we burn Lady Maslenitsa on a big bonfire. The spring festival is over and Lent begins.

¹put on special clothes



This is the straw doll that we call 'Lady Maslenitsa'. She's pretty, isn't she?



Children in fancy dress



We're having a tug-of-war in the snow.



We're dancing around Lady Maslenitsa.

Write and tell us about another traditional Russian celebration. Send photos too!

- Is this how you celebrate Maslenitsa in your area? What's different/the same?
- Do you like Maslenitsa? Why/Why not? What's your favourite celebration?

ACTIVITIES

Spotlight on Russia goes on a school excursion. Come with us to ...

Sergiev Posad

TOY  MUSEUM



A set of toy soldiers



An original 'Trinity' toy



This is the very first Russian matryoshka, painted by Sergei Maliutin in 1898.



A beautiful wooden troika



Painted Red Army soldiers

Sergiev Posad near Moscow is famous for its wooden toys. They still make toys there today, and they've got a great Toy Museum.

There are about 30,000 toys in the museum. There are old wooden 'Trinity' toys with moving parts. There are lots of dolls and matryoshkas and toy soldiers. There are modern electronic toys, too.

You must go there some day!

ACTIVITIES

- Imagine you went to the Toy Museum last Friday. Did you like the visit? What did you see there?
- Do you often go on school excursions? Where do you go?
- What can you learn from visiting a museum?

What museums are there in your area? Write and tell us about the one you like.

Holidays

SEE YOU AT SUMMER CAMP!



Russia has got over 50,000 children's camps. Every year, over 6 million Russian children go to camp - especially in the summer. They go for health reasons, to make new friends, or just to have a great time. They swim, sunbathe, play sports and enjoy campfires, concerts and discos.

Spotlight on Russia looks at one very special camp ...

Orlyonok 
 **Children's Centre**



This year, 20,000 lucky children from all over Russia will go to the world-famous *Orlyonok Children's Centre*, on the Black Sea. This camp has got great beaches and sports facilities. It's got libraries, cinemas, museums and much more.

Any child who comes to Orlyonok will have the holiday of a lifetime!

Write and tell us about the children's camp you went to last summer. Send photos too!

ACTIVITIES

- Do you/your friends go to summer camp? Where? Do you/they like it?
- What can you see in the photographs? Which of these things do you like doing?