



# Network Russia

September 2000



## 3<sup>rd</sup> Time Lucky!

**a** consensus of opinion was that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Russian Jamboree of scouts and guides was the best yet! 3500 Scouts descended on a riverside camp in the Saratov region for 10 days of fun (both at work and play), frolics (wet and dry) and friendship (new and old).

Dmitri Ajatskov, the Governor of the region, which is twice the size of France and has a population of 5.5 million, opened the jamboree in front of the Russian media at a formal ceremony. Everyone else christened the event with an evening of celebration and entertainment around the main stage.

Right from the beginning it was clear to everyone that this was a superbly well organised and executed Jamboree, thanks to a lot of hard work and support from local government, which included transport, environmental and refuse management (a considerable improvement on previous Russian Jamborees), water and electrical supplies, site hospital (staffed with a medical team of high calibre) and security (including on-site police).

The Scouts themselves had everything they would need to make this a week and a half they would never forget.

The camp was split into seven Subcamps who's names celebrated Russian fairytales. Cooking was over fire with more wood provided than you could strike a match at (which was just as well as petrol and gas supplies on site were limited). There was no shortage of food to put over your flames with an onsite market to provide a range of fresh food, confection, drinks, ice creams, general supplies

and even a film developing service (the only thing not available was fresh meat). If you were a lazy foreigner, you also had the option of two cafes.

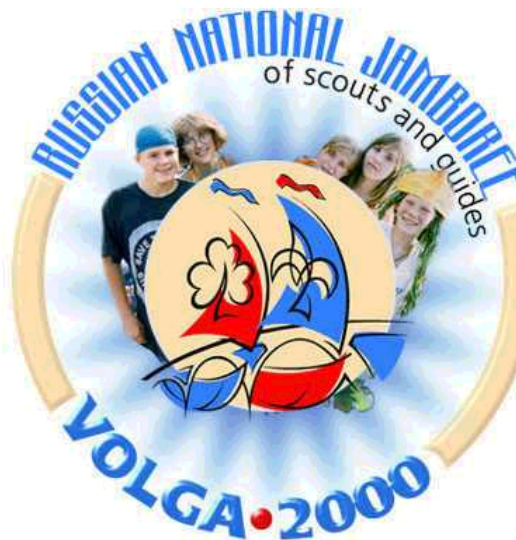
Whatever you ate, you were going to need the energy with a programme of over 200 activities that included not just scouting skills and games, but also skill crafts, creative crafts, theatre, dance and circus skills, climbing and paintball, concerts and plays. If that and the plus 30°C heat did not exhaust you, the wide Volga river was only a couple of visits walk away, where a sandy beach and warm water (including pedlos at 10 roubles per hour) provided afternoon entertainment for many.

Evening entertainment was laid on every night, allowing a theatrical race of people to get everyone laughing and singing, plus concerts and Discos (including booze cruises on the Volga for leaders) to dance the night away to.

The media profile of the event was high; Mr Sergei Kirenko, a former prime minister and now president of a federal region, flew in by helicopter to give the event the seal of government approval. Reporters & cameras were often around including those from a Russian programme "Above

16" who were making a special one hour edition that is view by 150 million people.

As well as young members of the movement, a several hundred students were on site who were working voluntarily to help with the day-to-day running of the camp. They and the leaders and organisers worked enthusiastically and very hard





so that by the closing ceremony everyone had had such a good time they did not want to leave. Many lifelong friendships were made and strengthened. The energy and commitment shown by the Russian Scouts inspired conviction

in all to make our organisation work for young people at home and abroad.

If the forth Jamboree goes ahead in 2003 we look forward to seeing you again or welcoming you to the ultimate Russian Scouting experience!

## Emma Roberts, aged 13 (3<sup>rd</sup> Torbay) Recounts the experience of her trip to Russia...

Our trek across Russia covered over 2,500 mile. 22 days well spent! We did a lot of famous site seeing and visited such places as the Hermitage, and Aurora in St. Petersburg. The Trans Siberian railway for 36 hours at a time. Experiencing the metro system. Perms' open air museum. weather. Moscow's Mac Donald's, Red Square inc.(St. Bazils Cathedral, The Kremlin, Lenin's Tomb The Russian Circus and Gum, the local shopping centre.)

We spent 10 days of our voyage in Saratov, at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Russian Jamboree. The campsite was in better condition than we expected, the ground was tough and the grass hoppers and mosquitoes became too much for some who went to check out the Russian Hospital. And crickets were an un-expected visitor, along with plenty of dragonflies. The toilets had improved, they were still only a hole in the ground, but at least they had a fence! They showers were cold, but that's what you expected, although you had to get into a routine if you wanted to get any water, ie get up before anyone else does!.

The days were long and filled with lots of activities. If you didn't like potato, tomato or cucumber, you did by the end of the Jamboree. I think we had it every way possible. It didn't take me long to learn that a Russian woman's place is in the kitchen, and it didn't take the Russians to learn that I was not their everyday woman!

Russian people were friendly, and it was hard to fight off the swarm of street vendors at every corner. The art of Bartering was quickly to be learnt! Food and gifts was surprisingly cheap. In the end we ended up paying 48p for a large packet of Russian Walkers crisps. The Mac Donald's was bigger and with armed guards at the gate, It was certainly a place you didn't want any trouble.

The metro system, which we used a lot, was fast and cheap. It cost 6p to go anywhere and with trains coming every 2 minutes (literally!) being in a hurry wasn't that much of a problem.

Just when we thought we had seen it all, the last night in Russia was still a shock, we went to see The Russian Circus. Although the acrobats was impressive, most of our group walked out when the animals were brought on stage. They have good potential in their acrobats, and I will say no more.

