

GUESTS FROM FAR AWAY BECOME CLOSE FRIENDS

Uzda and British charity "Chernobyl 2000" are strongly connected by friendship. For the past five years members of "Chernobyl 2000" have been bringing aid, working together with Territorial Social Centre, District Hospital, Orphanage in the village of Sutki and Special Needs Centre, helping our fire fighters and all people of the area. In 2005 our children saw the "Foggy Albion", twice British schoolchildren visited Uzda.

We welcomed the delegation again in early April this year. The guests spent five days in Uzda. The purpose of the visit this year was the discussions about future cooperation between the parties. The volunteers met with the Head of the Council, Michail Lapotko, discussed plans for the future and the possibility of the Belarusian delegation coming to Britain. Mr Lapotko thanked Mike Worton for the help and gave him a Certificate of Merit and traditional Belarusian souvenirs. Especially for the visit the council have prepares an information board showing the friendship between the two nations.

The "Chernobyl 2000" group's schedule was very busy. English teachers and schoolchildren were part of the convoy. They visited School 2, where they gave English lessons and shared their knowledge with their Belarusian colleagues. Some of them, especially children, wanted to stay in Belarusian families.

It was the first time that the delegation visited School 1. Local pupils introduced them to the school, and then it was sports day for everyone. Children in the orphanage which "Chernobyl 2000" also support were looking forward to seeing the guest. They gave the visitors their paintings and paper artwork. The volunteers also visited Karolina orphanage in Stolbtsy district, and on the last day of the group's stay the visitors saw a show at the Arts and Music School. It has been agreed that most gifted students from this school will come to England and take part in a music festival.

Last year the members of the convoy found interesting artwork of a local woman Maria Vorobei and wanted to see the author. When they met her, they found out that Mrs Vorobei has got a disability – she took part in cleaning the aftermath of Chernobyl explosion and since then finds it difficult to walk. The Englishmen offered their help. They left her a brochure about walking aids and this year brought an aid especially for her.

On the last day of this visit to Belarus convoy members met with the local MP – Nikolai Dubovik, who organised a trip to the Parliament.

"Chernobyl 2000" do not just bring aid. Friendship and mutual visits take a big part of the work of the charity. Every year the English party ask what else they can do for the area, for our schools and for individual people.