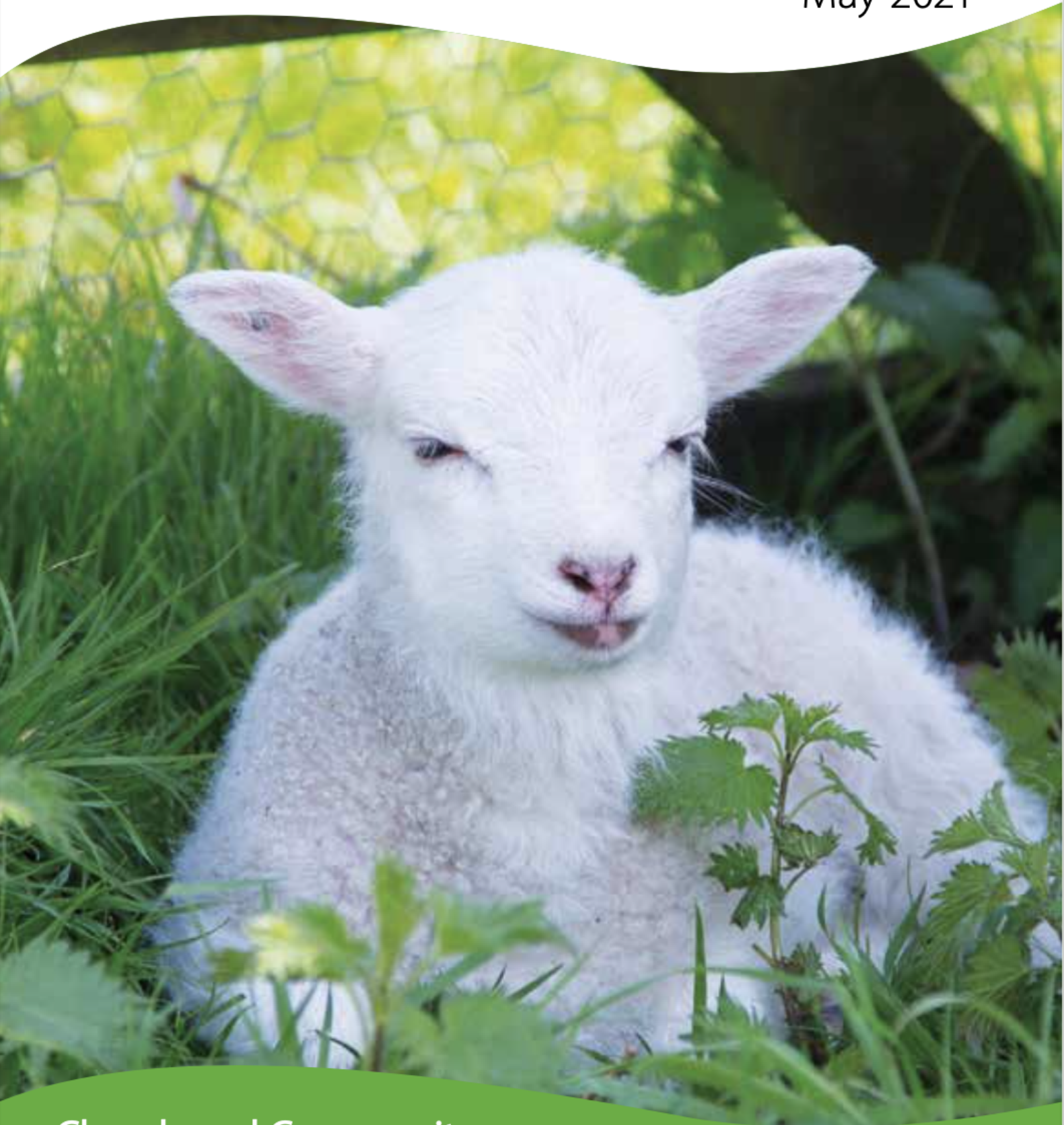




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HEATHER DUFFY MEETS SOSLAN SALAMOV FROM SALANTI PIES

Many Brits enjoy a pie but the Ossetian pie will be new to most of us and now it has arrived in Beaconsfield! Soslan Salamov and his wife Zarina are originally from North Ossetia in the Caucasus region of South West Russia and from their home in Beaconsfield they have set up a business to bake and sell these traditional pies in our community. The Ossetian pie is steeped in the traditions of the area and is eaten at celebrations and as an everyday food. It is a flat pie with more filling than pastry, savoury and sweet options are both available. I've tried some of them and they are very tasty.



Soslan and Zarina

Today Soslan is talking about what brought him to Beaconsfield and in particular the Ossetian Pies.



Please tell me about you and your family

I moved to London more than twenty-six years ago to see and get to know the country and to improve my English. Two years later my Uni pal and I set up a business focused on supporting students from all over the world including Russia, who wanted an education in British boarding schools and universities.

In 2001 I got married to Zarina and she joined me in London where we had three lovely children living in Ealing. We moved to Beaconsfield back in 2015 when our eldest son won a place at John Hampden Grammar School. He is now finishing his A levels this year. Our middle son is also at John Hampden in year 9 and our ten-year-old daughter is at Butler's Court School. We love living in Beaconsfield and have made good friends and neighbours who are very encouraging and supportive of our new business adventure. We really feel part of this wonderful community.

I'm interested in Ossetia....

Ossetians, the descendants of warlike Persian nomadic tribes, occupy both the northern and southern slopes of the central part of the Main Caucasus Mountain Ridge, forming South and North Ossetia. Its largest city is Vladikavkaz, a former mighty fortress that protected the southern borders of the Russian Empire. The territory of North Ossetia was first inhabited by Alans, Persian nomadic tribes, who settled in the region in the 4th century. The pies were originally baked by the Alans using recipes passed down through the generations. Naturally all Ossetians speak Russian but we also have

our own Ossetian language which is of Persian origins.



Why is the Ossetian pie important?

Ossetian pies are an integral part of the traditions of Ossetia and a centrepiece at any celebration and festive table, the three pies are piled on top of each other so that each one is visible from above and represents God, Sky and Earth or some even associate them with the Holy Trinity. On sad days such as funerals there are two pies on the table, showing that someone is missing.

The pies themselves are about the size and shape of a pizza and are made of two thin layers of pastry with an abundant filling. In fact, we are striving to achieve the highest baking standard, which assumes more filling than pastry. For over a decade Ossetian pies have been a very popular choice all over Russia and now they are becoming known further afield.

What made you decide to set up a business making Ossetian pies?

Zarina and I were born and raised in Ossetia and we have thought for years about setting up a business to bring the traditional Ossetian pie to the UK but haven't had the

time or chance to focus on it. The other businesses I do are heavily dependent on overseas travel and the Covid pandemic has made it very difficult for us to trade. But this has given us a golden opportunity to diversify and the chance to nudge our Salanti Pies dream into reality. We are totally new to the food business and if it wasn't for Ossetian pies, we wouldn't dare to start. But we grew up with these pies, they are more than just a food for us, it's a way of life. We believe they are unique and delicious, and this makes us proud to introduce the pies to this country. We are already getting very encouraging and welcome feedback from the local community.



How have you set up your business?

Salanti is a family business which at present we run from our own home. My wife bakes the pies in our kitchen which has been renovated to comply with council health and safety regulations. The pies are cooked to order so that they are always fresh to the customer and make use of high-quality local produce. We only started trading in November but with lockdown restrictions it has been difficult to reach wider markets, so we are spreading the word through social media and word of mouth. Huge

thanks to our family and friends back in Ossetia and local people who are driving us forward, especially our neighbours, who have been supportive throughout the journey and continue to help spread the word in the community.



Tell me about the pies

The Ossetian pie is very different from the standard British pie with a softer pastry and using ingredients which are not as commonly eaten here – such as cabbage and beetroot tops. We have pies to suit all tastes including both meat and vegetarian options. In response to local demand, we also cater for vegans. Many of the pies use a cheese, which is a well-balanced mixture of locally available cheeses, but we plan to produce a traditional Ossetian

cheese to achieve a more authentic flavour. The pastry is made from flour, water, milk and a small amount of yeast. Our most popular pie is the Tsakharadjin – filled with cheese and beetroot tops or chard. We use a variety of traditional Ossetian savoury fillings including potato, pumpkin, minced beef and cabbage and among sweet pies apple and sour cherry are proving to be favourites. As the emphasis is on more filling than pastry, the pies can be eaten on their own or as an accompaniment to other foods. Whilst the pies are lovely when taken straight from the oven, they can be heated up the next day and still taste excellent. All the options are available on our website www.salantipies.com



How can people order a pie?

Pies can be ordered through our website www.salantipies.com, through the Instagram account @salantipies, by email order@salantipies.com or by telephone on 07880 788791. As the pies are freshly made to order, normally six hours' notice is requested before collection or delivery. Pies can be delivered free of charge to the HP9 postcode.

