

Henson Herald

The Newsletter Sharing Staffordshire with the World...

Spring Edition



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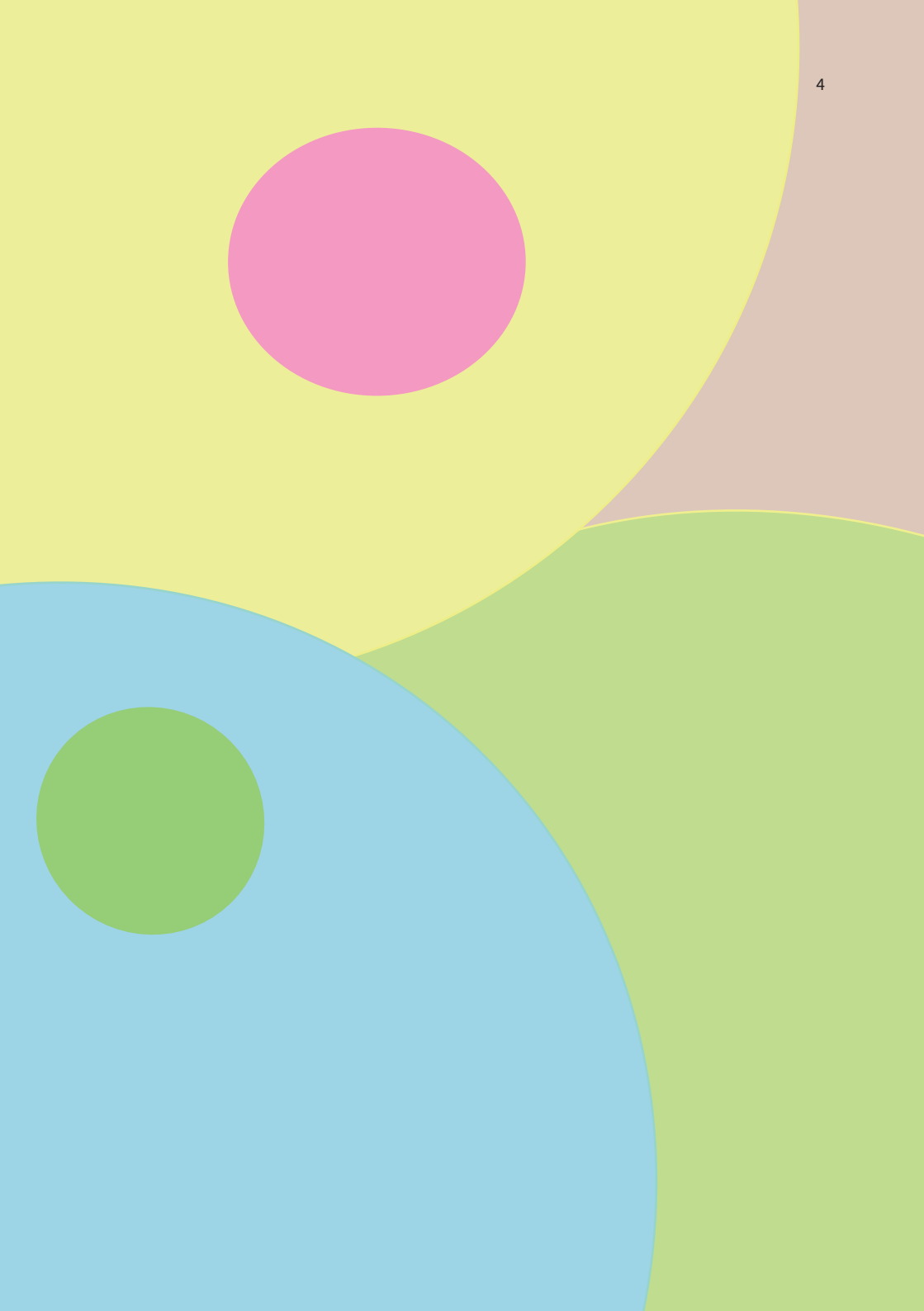
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A Message From Malcolm...

In these challenging times we are very fortunate that Georgia Smith has stepped up to edit the Spring copy of Henson Herald. Georgia has an MA in Publishing and freelances with us. Britain is currently ranked third in the world for Covid-19 mortalities. Such a dark statistic masks the fact that business still functions albeit at a much reduced rate.

Since the lockdown the North Staffordshire Press team has managed to publish three books with another in the pipeline. Congratulations to the authors, proofreaders, artists, printers etc who have made this possible. Without the Internet and Zoom where would we all be?

Malcolm Henson, MD



Publishing News

It has been an exciting couple of months at North Staffordshire Press and we are delighted to share our most recent titles with you.

Katrina Francis
Broken But Not Destroyed

The 21st century has witnessed the rise of many black female legends as icons and role models in all spheres of life, for example, politicians, entertainers as well as writers, such as Malorie Blackman OBE Literature. In the field of BAME (Black Asian Minority Ethnic) Publishing Association encourages writers to put pen to paper and to express their ideas commercially. Katrina Francis is at the forefront of this movement and writes about topics that are deemed as taboo for mass readership.

London based author, Katrina Francis has written an autobiographical account of her journey starting in her late teenage years, to adulthood. This book is a harrowing account of her relationship and the struggles she faced in bringing up a young family as a single mother whilst trying to defy the odds of emerging as a successful young woman in modern Britain.

Liz Hart
Bound By Clay

From the beginning women have dominated the manufacturing of pottery. Their dexterity and attention to detail enabled the industry to flourish. It can also be said they have been at the vanguard of new design that remains recognisable to this day.

In 2019 the Stoke and North Staffordshire Women's Network was successful in bidding for funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the project, Bound by Clay. This book unearths the story of a project that aims to celebrate and document women's contribution to the pottery industry in Stoke-on-Trent.

Ian Stockton
Cathedral Prayers For All

Cathedral Prayers For All grew from Ian working at Blackburn Cathedral, 2011-2017, when he needed to prepare prayers for all sorts of circumstances, from the round of daily services to special events and occasions, such as Srebrenica Memorial Day.

This collection of prayers reflect the seasons and the Church's year and include festivals, some saints' days and commemorations, as well as covering a range of contemporary themes and issues, from homelessness to sport, to sexuality and politics.

These modern, short, collect-like prayers are accessible, and whilst growing out of an ancient tradition of prayer, are accessible for all who might want a convenient resource in helping them to pray with thanksgiving and concern for the world.

International News

We speak to our friend T. Vasantha Kumaran (TV), who reflects on the community within the Kollihills, India.

I (TV) still remember vividly the first ever visit I made to the Kollihills some 40 years ago, as a young University researcher. It was 1980 and I was just about 30 years old. It was a senior of mine from the University of Mysore (1971-73) who urged me to propose a research project to the Indian Council of Social Sciences Research (ICSSR) and I made this visit to have a reconnaissance of the Kollihills. The Kollihills are quite interesting because, with multiple pasts, the hills are layered with fascinating legends and cultural landscapes. I will speak about them in the next field visit report.

Field Visit 2019

People of this village are mainly farmers, engaged in crop cultivation and agricultural labour. Cattle and sheep rearing is also quite common among them. Some do go periodically to Kerala to make additional income. There too they do agricultural work, particularly picking pepper. They normally return after 2 or 3 months, with their earnings that would stand them in good stead.

Malayalis are Hindus and worship Hindu gods and goddesses.

Pallikattupatti is known for people going on pilgrimage to Sabarimalai to worship Ayyappa Swami in Kerala. They are devout bhakthas who do penance and prayers for forty long days before embarking on the pilgrimage.

At the village now are about 40 devotees who have been on penance and prayers for the last 25 days and they are leaving for Sabarimalai this evening after a Pooja and bhajan for some hours after lunch at 2.0 pm.

The year 2019 is the 28th year of their pilgrimage and the 40 of the devotees are not only from Pallikattupatti but also from other nearby villages. For the last 25 days they all have been staying in the village praying and also occasionally attending to their farms and farm work. They all sleep at the temporary shed on bedsheets spread out on the hay on the floor until they rise early about 4.30 am to begin their daily rituals. The devotees for the period of their penance and prayers abstain from non-vegetarian food and liquor and smoke until they return from the Sabarimalai hills of Kerala.

Some 30 or so years ago, the tribe was very happy and content with their

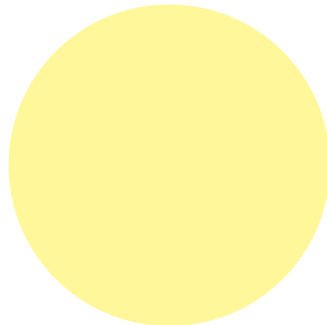


traditional hill life and lifestyles. They were engaged in some agriculture, some cattle and sheep rearing, and some collection of minor forest produces from the forests. They produced cereals for their home consumption and needs. They seldom went out to make a living.

It was however with the advent of plains people that they began to change. Some plains people bought land here and started farming as they knew it. They made themselves good money and a good life. Tribal farmers, working with them and for them, learned the trade and began to cultivate different crops and plantations: tapioca, pepper and became commercial along the way with tapioca (about 20 years ago) and pepper in the last ten or so years.

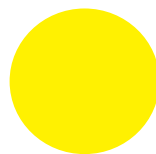
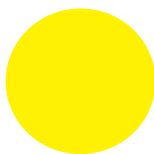
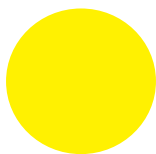
Today some are rich and most are still poor. But they have lost their carefree life in harmony with nature and with it their contagious happiness.

By T.Vasantha Kumaran (PhD)



International News

Luba Malutina shares with us what life is like in Russia during the Easter period.



Easter is one of Russia's biggest holidays. Easter sounds like Paskha in Russian. Easter is the major religious celebration of the year in Russia. It is even more important than Christmas celebrating Jesus Christ's resurrection following his crucifixion and death.

The dates for Orthodox Easter do not coincide with the Catholic or Protestant traditions. The Orthodox Church uses the Julian calendar to determine their holy days. Easter for the Orthodox Church will always fall sometime between April 4th and May 8th each year. This year Easter falls on Sunday, April 19th.

The date used for Easter was determined at the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. Orthodox Easter will usually fall later in the year than Western Christian Easter because Orthodox Easter uses the Julian calendar and the Western Easter uses the Gregorian calendar.

One week before Easter there's Palm Sunday. In Russia it is known as Willow Sunday. The hallowed willow branches are put in the most important place in the house and are as a rule kept in the house until the next Easter.

The week before Easter is called "Passionate". During this week it is customary to remember and talk about the last days of the life of Christ. This week – the last week of the Great Lent – is marked by the most strict observance of fasting during which believers refuse food and fast on water and bread only and pray with special inner feeling and strength. Special attention is paid to the cleanliness of your home, your body and your thoughts.

The following Friday is the day when the eggs are dyed and the Easter bread called "kulich" is baked. The house is usually decorated with willow branches. Kulich and eggs are not just delicious holiday treats but the main attributes of the Russian Easter.



The legend has it that after death of Christ his disciples put bread meant for Him on the table during their meals. Today kulich is a personification of that holy bread. In some regions of Russia they also make a cottage cheese Easter dessert called “paskha” – a dish in the shape of a trapezium or a pyramid made from cottage cheese, sour cream, cream, raisins and candied fruits which symbolises the Holy Sepulchre and is super delicious.

On Saturday, the day before the beginning of the Orthodox Easter, believers usually go to church in the morning where they put their Easter baskets full of Easter eggs and Easter bread on a table and wait for the priest to bless them with holy water. Russian Easter service starts on Saturday evening and goes into the night until 2 am. Midnight serves as the high point of the service. At midnight the bells of all churches and cathedrals start ringing, announcing the resurrection of Jesus to the whole world and all believers who gathered at the church make a religious procession of the Cross around the church three times. The priest says: “Christ has risen!” The

In the morning after the service a festive table is served at people’s homes where the whole family gathers together and celebrates the resurrection of Christ with kulich and eggs.

On Easter morning people congratulate each other by saying: - Christ is risen! And the reply is: - Indeed He is risen! After saying that, don’t forget to kiss each other on the cheek three times – the Russian way!

The Head of the Russian Orthodox Church – Patriarch Cyril of Moscow and of the whole of Russia addressed the parishioners. He said that all his life he called on people to attend the church, so it was very difficult for him to tell them not to go to church. But because of the pandemic he asked everybody to stay at home, to watch the Easter service on TV and to pray at home. You can watch the Head of the Russian Orthodox Church – Patriarch Cyril lead the Easter Liturgy Mass in Moscow’s Cathedral of Christ the Saviour live on TV and online.

By Luba Malutina



Don't forget to give us feedback on this edition which will be gratefully received.

NSP is diversifying into producing PPEs in the form of Scrubs for the Royal Stoke University Hospital. In some ways the manufacturing of such items is similar to book production and as Paul Samuelson in his Economics textbook said, "It's opportunity cost of guns or butter" which in these circumstances is a no brainer.

Stay Safe.

Malcolm Henson, MD



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