

NEWS FROM HANSLOPE & CASTLETHORPE CHURCHES



# THE LINK



*Easter Vigil and Candlelit First Mass in the Resurrection Night 2025*

**APRIL 2026**

**£1.20**

# Diary for April 2026

(Also visit [stjameshanslope.org/whats-on](http://stjameshanslope.org/whats-on))

## Worship

### Sunday Services

Parish Mass at Castlethorpe, 9.30am (Sunday School 9.15am during term time)

Parish Mass at Hanslope, 11.15am (Sunday School 11.15am during term time)

Evening Prayer at Castlethorpe, 5.00pm (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday)

### Weekday Services

Wednesday Mass at Castlethorpe, 5pm

Thursday Mass at Hanslope, 9.30am

Friday Mass at Hanslope, 12noon

### Rosary Group

Every 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month at The Vicarage 4.30pm

### Following the Silence Prayer Group on Mondays

11 Weavers End, Hanslope, 5.30pm

### Shrine Live Stream @[walsinghamanglican.org.uk](http://walsinghamanglican.org.uk)

Sunday Mass, 8.30am

## Weekly Events

### Mondays during term time

Little Angels – 9.30am to 11.30am

### Wednesdays

Choir Practice – either Castlethorpe or Hanslope Church, 6pm

### Fridays

Hanslope Church open for refreshments and reflection – 10am to 12 noon

Craftivists and Flower Team – 10am to 12 noon

### Fridays during term time

Little Lambs - Castlethorpe Church, 2pm – 3pm babies and pre-school age

Little Lambs - Castlethorpe Church, 3.30pm – 4.30pm school age children

Inspire Youth Group - Hanslope Church, 4pm – 6pm

## April 2026

Mon 6<sup>th</sup> Easter Monday Eggstravaganza Event, Hanslope Church - 11am to 3pm

Sat 11<sup>th</sup> Hanslope's Monthly Coffee Morning, 10am to 12noon

**Sun 12<sup>th</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter, Service times as above**

Tues 14<sup>th</sup> Castlethorpe's APCM Meeting, Castlethorpe Church – 7.30pm

Thurs 16<sup>th</sup> Community Lunch, Hanslope Church – 12.30pm

Explorer Course, The Vicarage – 7.30pm

Sat 18<sup>th</sup> Castlethorpe's Monthly Coffee Morning, 10am to 12noon

**Sun 19<sup>th</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter, Service times as above**

- Mon 20<sup>th</sup> Cancer Support Group, Hanslope Church – 8pm  
 Wed 22<sup>nd</sup> Carers' Support Group, Hanslope Church – 10.30am  
 Thurs 23<sup>rd</sup> Explorer Course, 12 Weavers End – 7.30pm  
**Sun 26<sup>th</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter, Service times as above**  
 Hanslope's APCM Meeting, Hanslope Church – 12.30pm  
 Mon 27<sup>th</sup> Teatime Treats at Lincoln Court – 2.30pm  
 Tues 28<sup>th</sup> Hanslope's Standing Committee Meeting, Hanslope Church –  
 4.30pm - TBC  
 Thurs 30<sup>th</sup> Explorer Course, The Vicarage – 7.30pm

### May 2026

- Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> Hanslope's Monthly Coffee Morning, 10am to 12noon  
**Sun 3<sup>rd</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter, Service times as above**  
*St James Church Cleaning (not every week or at exact times) Monday afternoons.*  
*Any queries, please contact Mary Nokes 01908 337939*

## Sunday & Feast Day Readings Easteride 2026

<b>April 12<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>EASTER 2</b>	<b>white</b>
Acts 2:42-47; Ps118; 1 Peter 1;3-9; John 20:19-31		
<b>April 19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>EASTER 3</b>	<b>white</b>
Acts 2:13-35; Ps 16; 1 Peter 1:17-21; Luke 24:13-35		
<b>April 26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>EASTER 4</b>	<b>white</b>
Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Ps 23; 1 Pet 2:20b-25; John 10:1-10		
<b>May 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>EASTER 5</b>	<b>white</b>
Acts 6:1-7; Ps 33:1 Peter 2:4-9; John 14:1-14		



## Spring & Summer Rosary

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April**

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May**

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June**

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July**

**Rosary is prayed at The Vicarage at 4.30pm  
 on these dates and all are welcome – no  
 prior experience is needed, just come along!**

## From the Editor - and into Spring

You may notice a slight change to this edition. We hope it can be an occasional feature at festival times and very grateful to Mark at NBR Printers for making this possible.

This month's *People Who Care* is from St James' churchwarden, Glyn Hollinshead (p 26). He, like so many others in our benefice who devote hours to care for our churches, had another life – as a police officer. It's an extraordinary and humbling read which you may find occasionally distressing.

During Easter 1987 everyone knew and quoted this month's Extract! (p9) I was surprised to find it was first spoken in November 1986 by one of my favourite saints.

*Mary Nokes*

**Easter Monday**  
**Eggstravaganza**

Come and join  
the fun at  
**St James  
the Great,  
Hanslope**

**6th April 2026**  
**11am to 3pm**

**Easter Egg Hunt,  
Stalls,  
refreshments  
and a raffle**

**Registration from 11am with 3 staggered  
age group egg hunts from 12:15pm**

# From The Vicarage April 2026



*Dear Friends,*

The Lord is Risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia, Alleluia!

I am writing this on the eve of *Passiontide* and so cannot reflect on Holy Week or Easter. What I do know, however, is that our many Lenten activities have been hugely well supported. We have seen increasing numbers worshipping on Sundays, a record number at our three Lent Courses, very successful and enjoyable Coffee Mornings, and greater numbers engaging with more niche activities such as Morning & Evening Prayer on weekdays, Compline and Rosary on Tour. A massive thank you to everyone who makes these things happen, it has been a season of many encouragements in our shared life as two churches.

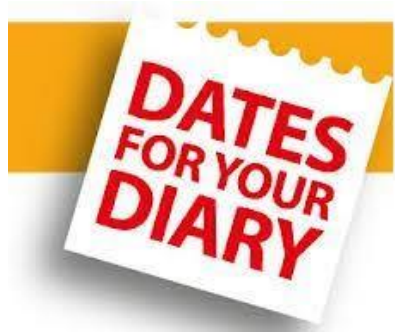
April is also the month of **Annual Church Meetings**. Castlethorpe's is on Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> and Hanslope's after Mass on Easter 4, April 26<sup>th</sup>. This gives me an opportunity of thanking, on your behalf, our Churchwardens. PCC Treasurers and PCC Secretaries and indeed all our hardworking Church Council members for all that they do and for their commitment to the wider life and mission of the church and indeed for their prayerful support for me personally. We are well blessed in the dedication of so many, and not just those who happen to serve on the Church Councils – after all, you do not need to be a PCC member to roll up your sleeves and get involved as so many of you ably demonstrate, day by day, in church life.

Can I also ask you to pray for those currently attending our **Explorer Course**, one of whom features on the back cover of this month's magazine. The course is heading towards the half way point. Nurturing those who wish to learn more about Faith is a critical part of the work of the church, the church would die without such work, in fact. The Bishop will be with us for a **Service of Baptism & Confirmation on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June**, the Feast of St Barnabas the Apostle, and I trust that members of both churches will be present in good number – services such as these, whilst intensely powerful to those receiving the sacraments, are also celebrations for the whole church, as we give thanks that the Lord continues to add to our number, both adults and children. Our Easter journey takes us through forty days to **Ascension Day** and fifty days to the great feast of **Pentecost**. We will mark Ascension Day with a joint parish Sung Mass at Castlethorpe on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May.

With my prayers and every blessing,

*Fr Gary*

# Coming Up



*Details of these, and other (yet to be announced) events will appear in due course, but please put the dates in your diary!*

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May: ASCENSION DAY**

Marking the 40<sup>th</sup> day of the Easter Season and Jesus' return to the Father. Sung Mass at Castlethorpe at 7.30pm.

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May: MAY DEVOTION**

Honouring Mary in her traditional month of May. A simple service of Vespers and Benediction at St James at 5.00pm

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May: PENTECOST**

The 50<sup>th</sup> and final day of Eastertide is Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May.

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May: NATIONAL PILGRIMAGE TO WALSINGHAM**

Join our parish group heading to Norfolk for this annual pilgrimage at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham.

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June: CORPUS CHRISTI**

Solemn Sung Mass and Procession at St James followed by a shared meal, as we give thanks for the gift of the Eucharist, the source and summit of the Christian life.

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June: CONFIRMATION SERVICE**

The Bishop will be with us at 7.00pm at St James on this feast of St Barnabas the Apostle to administer the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June: CASTLETHORPE DUCK RACE**

Once again the *Race of a Thousand Ducks* will be taking place on the River Tove, raising valuable money towards the life and work of the local Church.

**Saturday & Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> June: HANSLOPE OPEN GARDENS**

Alternating with Castlethorpe's event it's Hanslope's turn to throw open the gardens of the village.

**Saturday & Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> July: ST JAMES OPEN WEEKEND**

The Church and Tower will be open once again for this annual event.

# Some Eastertide Thoughts on the Lectionary

I don't get to pick the readings we hear in church each day, they are part of what is called the lectionary, formed over centuries of use, a way of hallowing the seasons, and reading large portions of the Bible over a three-year cycle (on Sundays) and a two-year cycle (on weekdays). In what follows we discover what the rationale is for the readings we hear in Holy Week and Eastertide, between Maundy Thursday and the great feast of Pentecost.

On **Maundy Thursday** at the evening Mass the remembrance of the meal preceding the Exodus casts its own special light because of Christ's example in washing the feet of his disciples, and Paul's account of the institution of the Christian Passover in the Eucharist.

On **Good Friday** the service has as its centre John's narrative of the Passion of him who was proclaimed in Isaiah, as the Servant of the Lord, and who became the one High Priest by offering himself to the Father.

At the **Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday** there are up to seven Old Testament readings which recall the wonderful works of God in the history of salvation. There are two New Testament readings, the announcement of the Resurrection according to one of the Synoptic Gospels and a reading from St. Paul on Christian baptism as the sacrament of Christ's Resurrection.

The Gospel reading for the Mass on **Easter Day** is from John on the finding of the empty tomb. The first reading is from the Acts of the Apostles, which throughout the Easter season replaces the Old Testament reading. The reading from the Apostle Paul concerns the living out of the paschal mystery in the Church.

The **Gospel readings** for the first three Sundays recount the appearances of the risen Christ. The readings about the Good Shepherd are assigned to the Fourth Sunday. On the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Sundays, there are excerpts from the Lord's discourse and prayer at the end of the Last Supper.

The **first reading** is always from the Acts of the Apostles, in a three-year cycle of parallel and progressive selections: material is presented on the life of the early Church, its witness, and its growth. For the **reading from the Apostles**, the First Letter of Peter is in Year A, the First Letter of John in Year B, the Book of Revelation in Year C. These are the texts that seem to fit in especially well with the spirit of joyous faith and sure hope proper to this season.

As far as the weekdays of Eastertide are concerned, as on the Sundays, the first reading is a semi-continuous reading from the Acts of the Apostles. The Gospel readings during the Easter octave are accounts of the Lord's appearances. After that there is a semi-continuous reading of the Gospel of John, but with texts that have a paschal character, in order to complete the reading from John during Lent. This paschal reading is made up in large part of the Lord's discourse and prayer at the end of the Last Supper.

For the first reading the Solemnity of the **Ascension** retains the account of the Ascension according to the Acts of the Apostles. This text is complemented by the second reading from the Apostle on Christ in exaltation at the right hand of the Father. For the Gospel reading, each of the three Years has its own text in accord with the differences in the three Synoptic Gospels.

In the evening Mass celebrated on the **Vigil of Pentecost** four Old Testament texts are provided; any one of them may be used, in order to bring out the many aspects of Pentecost. The reading from the Apostles shows the actual working of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The Gospel reading recalls the promise of the Spirit made by Christ before his own glorification. Meanwhile for the Mass on **Pentecost** day itself, in accord with received usage, the account in the Acts of the Apostles of the great occurrence on Pentecost day is taken as the first reading. The texts from the Apostle Paul bring out the effect of the action of the Spirit in the life of the Church. The Gospel reading is a remembrance of Jesus bestowing his Spirit on the disciples on the evening of Easter day; other optional texts describe the action of the Spirit on the disciples and on the Church.

I look forward to preaching on all these occasions and we will see what the Holy Spirit inspires me to say!

*Fr Gary*

## Extracts

**We are an Easter People and Alleluia is our song!**

*Do you recognise this month's extract? Answer p11*



*St James has been open for silent prayer*



## **HANSLOPE AND DISTRICT CANCER WELLBEING & SUPPORT GROUP**

**Meets on 3rd Monday of each month at 8pm**

**Venue— St James the Great, Coffee Area**

**Contact - John Sorrell 07889 181158**

## **HANSLOPE & DISTRICT CARERS' SUPPORT GROUP**

**Meets for a tea, coffee, piece of cake**

**and a chat and support on the**

**FOURTH WEDNESDAY OF MONTH**

**1030am to 1230am— venue:**

**St James the Great Coffee Area**

**Contact - 07889181158**



**DO  
YOU  
CARE?**

## **COMMUNITY LUNCH**

**St James Church, Hanslope 12.30pm**

**Thursdays April 17<sup>th</sup>**

**Join us for homemade soup, a pudding, a cuppa & chat**

## **2026 Teatime Treats at Lincoln Court**

**Mondays 2.00pm – 4.00pm**

**April 27<sup>th</sup> - Quiz**

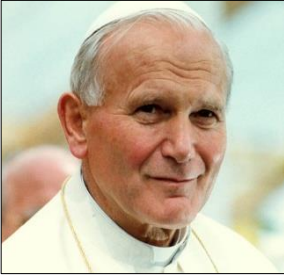
**NB NO MEETINGS on BANK HOLIDAYS 5<sup>th</sup> April or 4<sup>th</sup> May**

**Transport available on request**

**More information please contact**

**Ann Ellis 01908 511435**

# Extracts from p 9




The quote is from a sermon by Pope John Paul II, (pope from 1978 to 2005) preached during his visit to Australia in November 1986.

The most deeply loved of popes, he was Polish, the first non-Italian for 455 years and one of the youngest ever. He travelled to a staggering 129 countries. His aim was to bring healing to the divisions between the different Christian churches, transforming the Church around the world. He was made a saint in 2013.

The extract is part of this sermon: "...We do not pretend that life is all beauty. We are aware of darkness and sin, of poverty and pain. But we know Jesus has conquered sin and passed through his own pain to the glory of the Resurrection. And we live in the light of his Paschal Mystery – the mystery of his Death and Resurrection. **We are an Easter People and Alleluia is our song!** We are not looking for a shallow joy but rather a joy that comes from faith, that grows through unselfish love, that respects the fundamental duty of love of neighbour, without which it would be unbecoming to speak of Joy..." MN

[St. John Paul II, Pope - Information on the Saint of the Day - Vatican News](#)  
[St. John Paul II: The Pilgrim Pope and a Beacon of Hope - Catholic Heroes](#)

BRINGING TOGETHER ANGLICAN AND METHODIST NEWS FROM  
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Hanslope – June Paterson; Castlethorpe – Nick Fearn

## April Saints from the Church Calendar

### **21<sup>st</sup> April: St Anselm, Bishop, Doctor of the Church**

Born in 1033 at Aosta (Italy); died at Canterbury (England) on this day in 1109. A monk at Bec (Normandy) where he taught theology and devoted himself to the spiritual life. Later, as archbishop of Canterbury, his bitter disputes with the King resulted in his being exiled twice. Noted for his theological learning and writings and for organising Church life in England.

### **23<sup>rd</sup> April: St George, Martyr**

George died at Lydda (Israel) around 303, martyred under the persecution of the emperor Diocletian. His cult, which predates the legend of his slaying the dragon, spread quickly through East and West. During the crusades, George was seen to personify the ideals of Christian chivalry, and he was adopted as patron of several city states and countries.

### **26<sup>th</sup> April: St Mark, Evangelist**

Died about the year 74. Usually identified with the John Mark whose mother's house in Jerusalem was a meeting place for the apostles, and with the young man who followed Christ after his arrest (Mark 14:51). A cousin of Saint Barnabas. Accompanied Saint Paul on his first missionary journey and later followed him to Rome. A companion of Saint Peter and traditionally identified as author of the gospel which reflects Peter's teaching and memoirs. Honoured as the founder of the Church in Alexandria.

### **29<sup>th</sup> April: St Catherine of Siena, Virgin, Doctor of the Church**

Born at Siena (Italy) in 1347; died at Rome on this day in 1380. Committed to the practice of prayer and penance from an early age, she entered the Dominican Third Order while still an adolescent. Became an influential spiritual leader and made strenuous efforts to reconcile Church and state and to reform the Roman papacy. Noted for her holiness and determination and, though she never learned to write, for the quality of her teachings. Noted also as a mystic and a reformer of religious life.

## Our Sunday Schools

**St James 8<sup>th</sup> March** Lovely session - prayers for family, friends, sunshine and Sunday school! Then hunt the fruits and learn of patience and the parable of the fig tree where waiting was understood and linked with Lent!

Craft was making a fig tree which looked great! Much to celebrate!



**SS Simon & Jude 15<sup>th</sup> March** Mothering Sunday was all about mothers, of course! We spoke about the Virgin Mary and how special she was, not only for being the mother of Jesus, but how she supported him all the way through his life, and she was even there when he was crucified. We made some beautiful icons featuring her face and with the Hail Mary printed on it. A lovely lesson.





To keep up to date with news log on to:

**[Hanslope Open Gardens](#)**

# PLANTS FOR HO

**BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY 25<sup>th</sup> MAY**  
**at Applegarth, 21A Castlethorpe Road**  
**Can you think of this event when you're**  
**planting seeds or**  
**splitting up established plants please?**

## St James Fundraising Update

During the season of LENT, both churches have been taking it in turns to host weekly coffee mornings. On the 14<sup>th</sup> March, the coffee morning was 'taken over' by the gentlemen of St James and they did a fabulous job! The ladies enjoyed sitting down to chat, whilst keeping the odd eye on them 😊

A record total of £429.30 was raised – we got to see some new faces with at least 70 people spending most of their morning in church.

Did you know... during 2025, 44 packs of Warburtons soft white sandwich rolls (12 in a pack) were bought? These were the 2<sup>nd</sup> most bought items on my shopping list... *sandwiched* between Lipton Ice Tea and fresh fusilli

### What's Coming Up....

☉ 6<sup>th</sup> April 2026 – Easter Eggstravaganza Event 11am to 3pm

# Hanslope Open Gardens 2026



We are planning an Open Gardens Weekend  
**20th & 21st June 2026**

Are you interested in opening your garden or allotment for the weekend and sharing its features?

We would love to hear from you soon.

It doesn't matter how big or small your garden is (some of the smallest are the prettiest) and it is not a competition and a few weeds can be attractive too!.

**Can you help organise the event?**

**Contact [john.e.sorrell@gmail.com](mailto:john.e.sorrell@gmail.com) or  
 send a message 07889 181158**

**Raising funds for the St James the Great**



# Lent Coffee Morning at St James



£429.30 – a record total!!  
Over 70 people came  
through the doors. The  
men took over this Coffee  
Morning. Great result!



# News from Castlethorpe



## Coffee Morning Churchyard Tidy

A big thank you to those who came to help with our churchyard tidy up on the 7<sup>th</sup> March. You can now see much more of the wall in front of the church although there is still more ivy to clear from the rest of the wall... we're having another tidy up on **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May** so do put this date in your diaries!



## New PCC member

At our March PCC meeting we welcomed Matt Malloy as the newest recruit to Castlethorpe PCC. Our first new recruit to for 5 years. We thank Matt for joining us and look forward to working with him in the future.

Our **Lenten Coffee Mornings**, to raise funds towards a new mower to keep the churchyard looking good, are proving popular. As we go to print, we have one more to go.



And those who have joined us for our monthly **Soup and a Roll** lunches continue to enjoy delicious homemade

soup, a pudding, a cuppa and a chat. We only hold these through the colder months, so the next one after the one on Maundy Thursday will be in the autumn. That seems a long time away!

## New payment point for Ss Simon and Jude

We've taken delivery of a new card payment device that will allow us to take card payments in addition to cash donations. This will be especially helpful to maximise donation opportunities from visitors when the church when it is open during the day.



## Family Fun Day

Another thank you, this time to Kimberley Tibbs for organising the **Family Fun Day** on Sunday 8 March. After the appalling weather for her Christmas Fayre in December, this was better attended with many families enjoying the face painting, tombola and stalls, plus delicious food from Baked by K. Kimberley has again kindly offered to donate the money raised to the church. Thank you so much, Kimberley. We look forward to your next event in the summer!

## So, what's happening in the next few weeks?

Next **Coffee Mornings** are on **Saturdays 18<sup>th</sup> April and 16<sup>th</sup> May**. The usual format and time 10-12 noon, with the churchyard tidy up on 16<sup>th</sup> May.

Meanwhile lots of work is going on behind the scenes to prepare for this year's main event – the **Castlethorpe Duck Race and Fun Dog Show** on **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June**.

Please join us in praying for good weather and put the date in your calendar today!



Justin Lavender is co-Director of  
the Arcadian Opera.  
Advance news of their next production:



**[www.arcadianopera.com](http://www.arcadianopera.com)**

Tickets now on sale for their summer production of Franz Lehar's sparkling comedy romance *The Merry Widow*. The Arcadian Opera, renowned for bringing imaginative traditional opera to Stowe, employs professional singers for the principal roles, a chorus of talented and experienced local singers, accompanied by a professional orchestra.

Performance starts 4.00pm with an hour and a half interval in which to enjoy your picnic in the environs of the theatre situated within Stowe Landscape Gardens.



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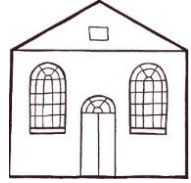
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07517 535898

# NEWS FROM THE METHODIST CHURCH

## SUNDAY SERVICES

12 April	Revd. Kofi Tekyi-Ansah
19 April	Revd. Barbara Winner
26 April	Mrs Elaine Warner
3 May	Revd. Margaret Goodall (Holy Communion)
10 May	Revd. Stephanie Hibberd (Chapel Anniversary)



Sunday services are usually held at 10.30am and are always followed by tea and coffee. We are a family friendly Church.

## CHAPEL ANNIVERSARY – SUNDAY 10 MAY

We celebrate the Chapel's Anniversary at our afternoon service which starts at 3.00pm and will be followed by afternoon tea.

**Looking ahead to 2028 we will celebrate our 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary!**

## ELAINE AND ALAN WARNER

Elaine and Alan moved away from Hanslope in 2024 and so we are looking forward to seeing them again on 26 April, when Elaine will lead our service.

**TUESDAY MORNING COFFEE SHOP 10.00am - 12.00pm**

Pop in for a cuppa and a chat.

Meet up with old friends and make some new friends.

We'd love to welcome you to our warm and cosy Tea Room....

## COMMUNITY FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION FIVE DAY RETREAT, JULY 2026

The Community for Spiritual Formation is holding a five-day retreat at Ripon College, Cuddesdon, Oxford from 12<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> July 2026.

The theme is '*Practising Peace - how can we live as peace-makers in a disordered world?*' The retreat follows a Benedictine rhythm of worship, teaching, silence and response - with time for eating together and having fun together too.

The speakers are Barbara Glasson and Steve Radley, and there will be opportunities for community weaving as a response to our theme. See the District website for more information - [Northampton Methodist District | Community for Spiritual Foundation - Retreat](#)

### LOOKING AHEAD

We will be holding a **Bric-a-brac sale** on the morning of **Saturday 16 May**. We will also have a Pop-up Café.

We will also be participating in this year's **Hanslope Open Gardens** over the weekend of **21/22 June**. As well as visiting our peaceful garden, visitors will be able to enjoy refreshments including home made cakes.

More details in the next issue of The Link.

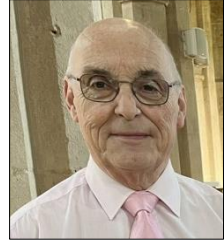


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NEWS – HANSLOPE METHODIST CHURCH**



# People Who Care

## Being a Police Officer – Glyn Hollinshead



When you look at a Police Officer what do you see? An Officer in a car driving at speed with blue lights flashing and sirens wailing, or a police Officer putting someone in handcuffs often associated with violence?

What you do not see is the other part of the job the part rarely in the press or on the news, the part that sometimes will stay with the Police Officer for the rest of their life, things that will revisit them in the quiet moments. But that is the career I choose and accepted all that went with it.

I was born in Barry, South Wales but moved to Reading when I was five. I was brought up by my mother without the guidance of my father who died from cancer when I was eleven. We lived in some tough areas of Reading. I was brought up to respect and not to cause harm to others. That did not stop me being a bit of a tear-away, fighting, and dodging school, and I saw the bad side of life. I think this was one of the reasons I chose a career in the Police.

I joined Reading Borough Police at the age of sixteen as a cadet becoming a Police Officer at the age of nineteen, in what is now called Thames Valley Police working at Maidenhead. First shift, nights walking the town centre with just a wooden truncheon, whistle, torch, handcuffs, no radio, and a set of points (locations to meet the sergeant). You get use to the strange noises of the night when you are down the backs of the shops checking the doors are locked. Woe betide you if a shop got broken into during your shift.

What I found out was that policing is not just about chasing bad people you also are there to help, sometimes at the worst moment in their life. One day after I graduated to a police car I was sent to a sudden death of an old chap who had died of a heart attack as he watched wrestling. His wife was lovely and said it was the way he would want to go, then it was off to another sudden death, this time a baby with a mother hugging her deceased child. Everyone stood there waiting for me to do what they never wanted to do; to get the mother to give up her child so the undertakers

could do their job. Hopefully, I did it with compassion but there I was a young Police Officer of 20 years. In those days it was the job of a Police Officer to deal with bodies before the undertakers took over. Hopefully, I always did this with respect and kindness.

One of the hardest jobs for a Police Officer is delivering death messages. We were never trained to do this, so you learned by hard experience how to not draw out what you had to say but say it with true kindness.

In 1972 I joined the Diving Team, which was on a part time basis alongside doing normal police work. I could be call away to a diving job at any time often on my days off. I was a diver for eight years leaving in 1980 when I came to Milton Keynes. Most of the jobs were searching for persons who had either drowned or committed suicide. Sadly, some were children, sometimes we had their parents watching us doing the search. The diver would spend hours in cold dirty water searching using only touch with a safety line connecting you to the rest of the team. You might wonder why I did that job. When I was in the water finding the body was the most important thing because by doing so we were bringing back a loved one so the family could see the body, say their goodbyes, and hopefully find some kind of peace. When you found the person, you would signal your safety officer by pulls and whistles (long and shorts pulls). You would then carry the body underwater carefully to the bank edge and slip it into a body bag before lifting it out. It sounds very cold

put down in writing but that is due to the mental place you had to put yourself in.

In 1974 I transferred to the Traffic Department but remained on the diving team. As a Traffic Officer we would often be the first on the scene of traffic accidents. You would need to look after the injured



*Glyn left, with his crew-mate for a number of years*

doing your best to help them but being thankful when the ambulance arrived. Sometimes there were persons who had died with their friends or relatives in the car with them. The dead needed our respect and the living our care. In one weekend, I dealt with two accidents involving fatalities, one involving a child running across a road for an ice cream. Not only the parents needed consoling but occasionally a driver who happened to be in the wrong place.

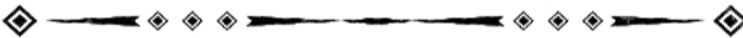
The things I saw during my time as a Traffic Officer made me more determined to catch bad drivers and that shaped my career during my time as Traffic Officer.

When I retired, I stayed with the Police first as a speed camera operator then as the Team Leader of the men and women who loaded the fixed cameras and who conducted mobile enforcement. Speed enforcement had long been a passion. Too many times in my career as a Traffic Officer I had seen the results that inappropriate speed can impact on the human body and the heartache it caused to parents, relatives and friends.

I have never regretted joining the Police and hope that along the way I have brought comfort to those I have met in their darkest moments but also dealt fairly with those who had committed offences.

I was a bit of a lapsed Christian although I had attended Sunday School as a child. I re-found my faith in 2005. I think it would have helped me with some of the things I dealt with, but who knows.

What I would like to finish with is how much during my career Sandra my wife supported and counselled me when I came home after a rough shift.



## In Remembrance

18th March 2026

Funeral at Oak Chapel, Crownhill Crematorium

**Christopher John Belton**

Died 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026 aged 53 years

## Bobs Ramblings April 2026

Hello again to a Spring like day but quite chilly. This month's railway selection has some old and very new traffic that has passed through our old station that I managed to photograph.

The MK Dons are doing well this year currently chasing the top position, The Saints unfortunately lost to Exeter in the Cup match and The Cobblers look a relegation side this season after sacking Kevin Nolan.

Let us start with a new locomotive, on the 27<sup>th</sup> Feb saw the Stadler Co-Co Class 99, 99004 piloting 66727 after a publicity event at the Northampton



Gateway.  
On the 2<sup>nd</sup>  
March  
50050  
Fearless  
was used  
for a  
route



learner on a  
Crewe to  
Oxford  
working.  
Running on a  
high-speed  
test from



Euston to  
Crewe was  
Stadler 93002 on 25kV power on the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
March. Another Class 50, 50049 Defiance in



the Large Logo livery on the Watford to

Derby special  
on the 8<sup>th</sup>  
March. An  
early morning  
special from  
Euston to  
Carlisle saw  
D9000



powering towards Northampton on the 11<sup>th</sup> March. Finally, the 15<sup>th</sup> March saw 56045 on a light engine movement from Colwick Junction to Willesden.

That is all this month, I hope you enjoyed the variety.

Bob.

# Daily Bible Reading Scheme

## Eastertide 2026

Day	First Reading	Gospel
Octave of Easter – Mon 6th	Acts 2:14, 22-33	Matt 28:8-15
Octave of Easter - Tues	Acts 2:36-41	John 20:11-18
Octave of Easter - Wed	Acts 3:1-10	Luke 24:13-35
Octave of Easter - Thurs	Acts 3:11-26	Luke 24:35-48
Octave of Easter - Fri	Acts 4:1-12	John 21:1-14
Octave of Easter - Sat	Acts 4:13-21	Mark 16:9-15
2nd Week of Easter – Mon 13 <sup>th</sup>	Acts 4:23-31	John 3:1-8
2nd Week of Easter - Tues	Acts 4:32-37	John 3:7b-15
2nd Week of Easter - Wed	Acts 5:17-26	John 3:16-21
2nd Week of Easter - Thurs	Acts 5:27-33	John 3:31-36
2nd Week of Easter - Fri	Acts 5:34-42	John 6:1-15
2nd Week of Easter - Sat	Acts 6:1-7	John 6:16-21
3rd Week of Easter – Mon 20 <sup>th</sup>	Acts 6:8-15	John 6:22-29
3rd Week of Easter - Tues	Acts 7:51—8:1a	John 6:30-35
3rd Week of Easter - Wed	Acts 8:1b-8	John 6:35-40
3rd Week of Easter – Thurs <b>St George</b>	Acts 8:26-40	John 6:44-51
3rd Week of Easter - Fri	Acts 9:1-20	John 6:52-59
3rd Week of Easter – Sat <b>St Mark</b>	Acts 9:31-42	John 6:60-69
4th Week of Easter – Mon 27 <sup>th</sup>	Acts 11:1-18	John 10:1-10
4th Week of Easter - Tues	Acts 11:19-26	John 10:22-30
4th Week of Easter – Wed <b>St Catherine</b>	Acts 12:24—13:5a	John 12:44-50
4th Week of Easter - Thurs	Acts 13:13-25	John 13:16-20
4th Week of Easter – Fri <b>St Athanasius</b>	Acts 13:26-33	John 14:1-6
4th Week of Easter - Sat	Acts 13:44-52	John 14:7-14
5 <sup>th</sup> Week of Easter – Mon	Acts 14:5-18	John 14:21-26

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**DEADLINE for the MAY EDITION**

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April**

**covering May 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> 31<sup>st</sup>**

**to our email TheLink@handparish.co.uk**



**Confirmation  
Preparation**  
Our 'model' is  
wearing  
Priest's vestments  
consisting of  
biretta  
amice  
stole  
cincture  
alb  
chasuble