

MINISTER'S LETTER

Over the coming days and weeks we will be invited, once again, to tell the stories of Easter and reflect upon them, that we might consider the significance of these stories and the events that they speak of, for ourselves and for our world.



It is always exciting, I think, to discover something new and fresh amongst the old and familiar.

As part of the *Living The Questions* course that some here have been following, John Dominic Crossan (New Testament scholar, historian of early Christianity and former Catholic priest) reflects on that story that we refer to as ‘The Walk to Emmaus’ (Luke 24: 13-35). It is a story that many of us love, myself included.

We know this story well. Two of Jesus’ followers are walking along the road when they are approached by the risen Jesus - only they don’t recognise him, to them he is a stranger. He asks them what they’ve been talking about and they recount to him all that had happened in recent days - about Jesus’ death and the reports that he was alive once more. They are confused, unable to make sense of what has happened/is happening. They do not know what to think or believe. As they continue walking, Jesus explains how the Scriptures should have prepared them for all that they’ve described.

As they near Emmaus and as evening falls, the two invite Jesus to stay with them in what could be their home. When later, over a meal, he takes, blesses and breaks bread, the two finally recognise him. He vanishes from their sight but suddenly all that had happened along the road makes sense to them. ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?’, they ask before running back to Jerusalem to tell the others.

Whether we take this story literally, as an account of something that actually happened on the evening of that first Easter day, or, as Crossan does, as a parable written about Jesus, a story made up for

teaching purposes, its meaning remains the same, Crossan maintains:

“The meaning of the story is that you will not find Jesus except by studying the Scriptures - where you will find him but that’s only preparatory. You will really meet Jesus when you take *the stranger* in to eat with you - not to share *your* food but because you believe the world, creation, food, belongs to God and you’re sharing God’s stuff with God’s people.”

In other words, reading and reflecting upon the Scriptures, though important, will only take us so far. It’s only when we invite (not Jesus into our lives but) *the stranger* into our homes - and, we could add, our church - and share God’s food with that stranger/those strangers, that Christ is present. This is a compelling reading of this much-loved story, I think, and one that should influence our understanding not only of how we meet the risen Christ in our midst but also of how we seek to live out our lives as Jesus’ followers in the world today.

Easter blessings

Paul

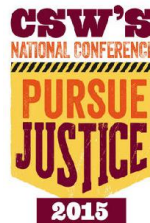
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Saturday 25 April 2015

11:00am - 4:00pm,
doors open at 10am for registration

Venue:

Emmanuel Centre, Marsham Street
Westminster, SW1P 3DW



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The Great Wall Challenge



On 4th April Myself and Rachael Conquest will be heading off to China to take on a charity challenge - a trek along parts of the Great Wall over six days.



The Great Wall of China was originally constructed to keep out nomadic tribes who raided China's Northern frontier.

Our trekking challenge starts in Jinshanling with a vigorous upward climb over a thousands of steps that loop along the mountains either side of the Gubeikou Gateway.

Each day we should trek approximately 12kms (8miles) along the stony path, twisting and winding its way along the mountains, interspersed with crumbling watchtowers. It is demanding but should also very rewarding, particularly on a clear day when we can look at the vast and beautiful mountain ranges.



I am doing this in aid of my cousin Alex who has terminal cancer himself and has set up a charity - **The Alexander James Mullins Charity** which helps people with Cancer and Heart problems in England and Ireland. To donate or just to find out more visit his website www.a2q.co.uk

Rachel is doing the trek in aid of **The Ben McNicol Trust** which supports Children with Cancer and their families, find out more by visiting the website www.benmcnicoltrust.com



Please if you are able to donate a few pounds to encourage me along the trek I would very much appreciate your support!

Abby Herring

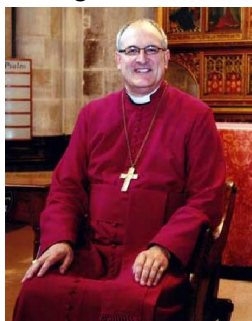
Because he is God, and also Friend, we are touched at the depth of our beings as we live with him through every event of his trial, death and resurrection.

Justin Welby

Lent and Easter are the heart of the Christian year. The revolutionary events of Jesus' Passion and Resurrection are the foundation stones of Christianity, and the seasons when we explore their mysteries are at the heart of our faith. but how can we experience these seasons so that these extraordinary stories reach our hearts and change our lives?

Three of the church's most senior pastors and teachers will explore the meanings of Lent, Holy Week and Easter, and the impact they can have on how we live, believe and behave. They will also reflect on their own experiences of the seasons, and offer recommendations for how we can keep them most fruitfully.

Too often we think of Easter as just one day, but in reality it's the fifty day season during which we explore the disciples' experiences of the risen Christ and the meaning of the Resurrection. From Mary Magdalene meeting Christ at the tomb on Easter Sunday to his great commission to the apostles to make disciples of all nations, they meet, eat with, touch and talk with the risen Christ, seeing his wounds and hearing his voice. Lent and Holy Week are seasons when we remember the past, but the time we live in now is the time of the Resurrection. How can we enter into this supremely mysterious story and hear its call to us to rise with Christ and live new lives?



Stephen Conway is Bishop of Ely and was formerly Bishop of Ramsey. He is the Anglican bishop accompanying the L'Arche Community in the UK, Patron of the Arthur Rank Hospice and editor and contributor to books including *Living the Eucharist* and *This Is Our Calling*.

Free tickets for this event can be booked from
www.stpauls.co.uk/learning-faith/st-pauls-forum/passion-and-resurrection

Also at this site you can view recordings of the other two events from this series

Extreme strength

Taken from: Extreme devotion, the voice of the martyrs from the co-authors of Jesus freaks. Serious followers of Jesus pay a price, and extreme followers often pay the ultimate price. Each story is true.

INDONESIA: FRITZ

Fritz felt each crashing blow to his head and prayed for strength. The Muslim attackers surrounded him and took turns beating him in the face. One of the Muslim attackers brandishing a large knife thinking this would rid them of the Christian pastor. The first time the blade went into Fritz, all he could do was yell, "Jesus!" He was stabbed repeatedly. And each time, he yelled "Jesus!" The attackers grew frustrated at the pastor who just wouldn't die!

The radical Muslims proceeded to pull the benches and pulpit from the church and set them on fire. Two of the Muslims grabbed Fritz and heaved him onto the blazing wood. Satisfied with their attack, they ran away. Fritz doesn't remember much after that, but he knows one thing: Not a hair on his head was singed.

Shortly after the attack, Fritz was brought to the largest hospital in that area of Indonesia, but he was refused treatment when they learned he was a Christian. He was brought to another hospital, but the attending doctor said that if he happened to live through the night, he would have permanent brain damage.

After a long recovery, Fritz is now preaching again at a new church. To his amazement, one of the Muslims who attacked Fritz began looking for him, only to ask a single question: "Who is this Jesus?"

Who doesn't enjoy being thought of as the resident "expert"? It may be mechanics, mathematics, tools, carpentry, art, stamp collecting, or sports -- everyone can be thought of as an expert in at least one area. We love to field questions on a topic with which we are very familiar. But if someone were to ask, "Who is this Jesus?" would we be as prepared as an "expert" would be? Not every Christian is an evangelist, per se. But every Christian can evangelise by sharing the plan of salvation when the opportunity arises. If you were asked that question by a non-believing friend, how would you answer? If you're not sure, talk to someone who knows.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have, (1 Peter 3:15)

St Mary's – Guildford

A recent trip outside London found us in the historic town of Guildford, from the Saxon gilden (golden) ford, home to Guildford Cathedral, Guildford Castle and Lewis Carroll.

Lewis Carroll's real name was Charles Dodgson. He became a deacon in December 1861, but did not preach a sermon until June 1862, when a friend asked him to. He did not preach between 1867 and January 1887, but the rector of Holy Trinity and St. Mary's persuaded him to preach at St. Mary's. He preached eleven times in all, over the next ten years, usually at the 11 o'clock service. The current pulpit was given in 1889: so about half of Dodgson's sermons were preached from it. He died at Guildford in January 1898, aged nearly 66. His funeral was held in St. Mary's and he was buried in the Mount Cemetery.



I was interested in St Mary's rather than the Cathedral, not only due to the connection to Lewis Carroll but because it is the oldest church in Guildford. People have worshipped there for more than 1000 years.



The church is at the top of a steep slope and is a glorious flint building. The stone tower was at the west end of the first stone church on the site, built perhaps as early as 950. In about 1050 a big new nave was built west of the tower, further down the slope, and transepts were built either side of the tower. Chapels and aisles were added over the years until the church was completed in about 1250. There have been changes over the years: at the Reformation, and around 1710 when a

west gallery and box pews were built. In 1863 all this was swept away and replaced with Victorian fittings.



While from the outside this looks like it will be a conventional, if old church, the interior has a remarkable layout. Thanks to the rather haphazard construction over the years and the steep slope, the floor of the church slopes quite noticeably with the altar at the

highest point (so the congregation was always looking upwards to the altar) and the main aisle has a number of steps between three level floors. While the pews are level, several benches in the arches are set at quite uncomfortable slopes.

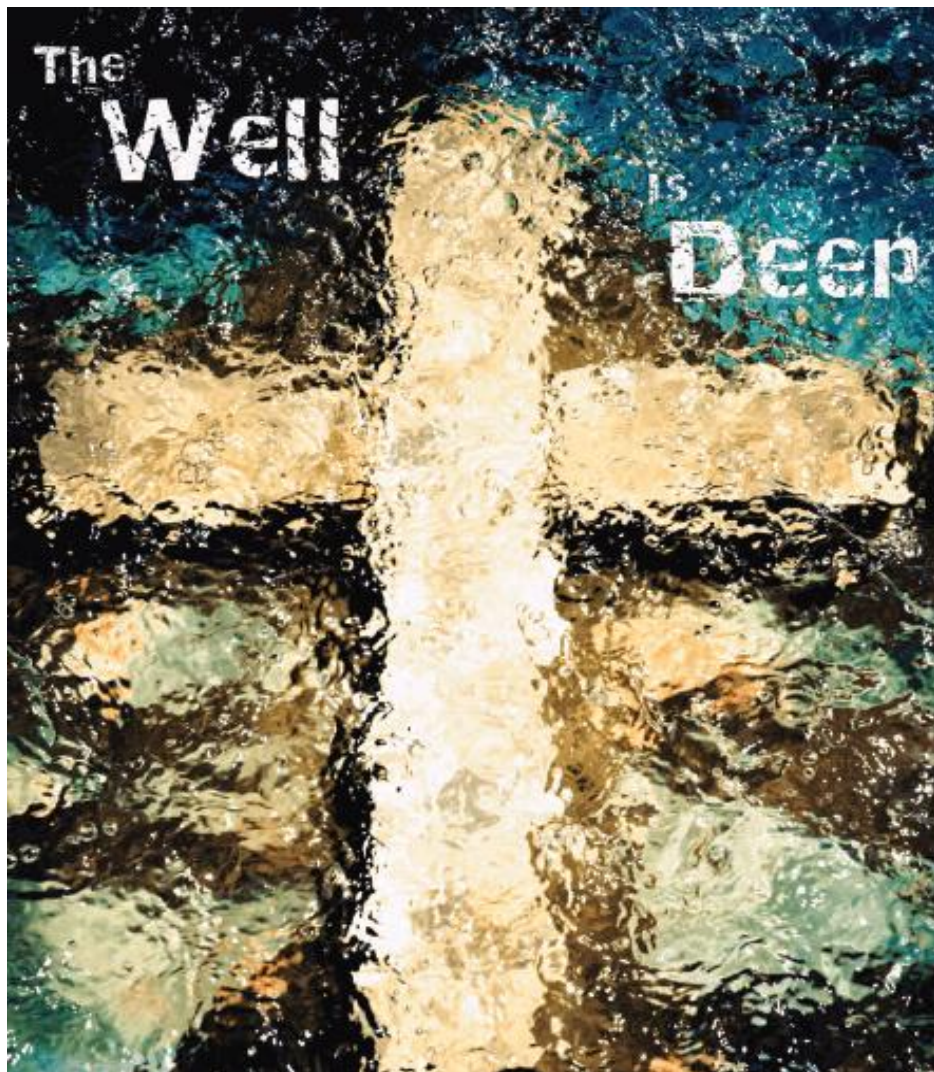


Even though the tower was closed, we were lucky enough to be able to chat with one of the church wardens. Church furniture came up in our conversation. He was interested to hear that we now have chairs rather than pews, similar to them. He was happy to point out that over the history of St Mary's church furniture changed a lot. We may always think

on churches having pews, but this was a fairly modern piece of furniture (at least for St Mary's!) When the church was first built the congregation had to stand as they had no seating at all.

St. Mary's has a very special atmosphere, reflecting hundreds of years of prayer and worship. If you ever go to Guildford I would certainly suggest a visit to this wonderful old church, and if you are lucky you might also get a trip up the tower.

Andrew Fox



Service for Christian Unity

Organised by Churches Together in Merton Park

St John Fisher Church

Preacher: Canon John O'Toole

Sunday 10th May at 4.00 pm

Tsoureki bread (Greek Easter bread)

By Paul Hollywood From The Great British Bake Off



This is a traditional Easter bread served in Greece to break the Lenten fast. Mahlab is a spice made from ground cherry stones and, along with piney gum mastic, gives this bread its distinctive flavour. It is traditionally plaited, with a red-dyed, hard-boiled eggs. The three plaits represent the Holy Trinity and the red eggs the blood of Christ. Beautiful to look at - delicious to eat. Like many yeast breads, these loaves do require two risings, so it can't be rushed.

Ingredients

500g/1lb 2oz strong white flour, plus
extra for dusting

7g fast-action yeast

10g salt

60g/2½oz butter, softened

75g/3oz caster sugar

1 orange, zest only

150ml/5fl oz warm water

150ml/5fl oz milk

pinch ground cinnamon

pinch gum mastic powder

pinch mahlab (also called mechlebe or mahlepi, available from
specialist delicatessens or online)

handful sultanas

3 free-range eggs, hardboiled in their shells with red food colouring

1 free-range egg, beaten for egg wash



Preparation method

1. Put the flour, yeast, salt, butter and sugar into a large bowl. Add the mastic powder, mahlab and cinnamon, then the orange zest. Pour in half the water and milk and mix together briefly, then keep adding the liquid and mixing until you have a soft glutinous dough.
2. Mix the sultanas through the dough, then tip out onto a lightly floured surface and knead until you have a pliable dough. Shape into a ball and rest for at least an hour, or overnight in the fridge, until doubled in size.
3. Line a baking tray with baking parchment. Divide the dough into three and roll into three strands. Plait the strips together, place on the baking tray and leave to rise for another hour, or until doubled in size.
4. Preheat the oven to 210C/400F/Gas 6. Brush the top of the bread with egg wash and push the coloured eggs into the bread. Bake for 20-25 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool.

What price on love?

On our second Saturday last September whilst holidaying on the Greek island Santorini (famous for it's 1500BC volcanic eruption which only left a crater rim – nine miles long and 3 miles wide) we experienced gales and rain all day then Sunday saw it very windy but with beautiful sunshine. After morning church (Greek Orthodox style) we went to the other side of the island to Vichada, a small fishing harbour with a small beach, very quiet, a few tavernas and sheltered by giant pumice cliffs, so was out of the wind.

As we drove down the narrow twisty road, on the right Mary saw a very



large blue articulated lorry, on it's side read 'Melksham, Wilts, England'. A strange view considering the type of roads they have in Santorini and that the lorry was so far from home.

Then just round one of the bends were four more giant artics and two large lorries, all from Britain. All were heading to some large double gates, through which we could see a beautiful stage set. We thought maybe a TV show was being produced – how wrong we were!

After visiting the fishing harbour and a taverna we met some of the lorry drivers. There was another set of gates where a number of folk were lighting candles in beautiful glass containers, making an illuminated pathway. Other folk were decorating shrubs and bushes with real cascading cream and white long stemmed roses and ribbons, in the backdrop was the stage setting with two massive speakers and lighting rig.

All of this was being erected in the grounds of a disused tomato canning factory. We learnt from the drivers all of this was for a Wedding which

should have taken place on Saturday, but due to the storm had been postponed 24 hours!

The lighting, stage sets etc – everything had been driven out from England, and the guests were all being flown in. At the airport a small executive jet was on standby awaiting the call for the return flight.

We now realised what we were witnessing was massive preparations for a wedding that one only reads about in high profile magazines like 'Hello'. Fifty to one hundred yards of beach had been cordoned off and hundreds of barrel-like containers had been placed in the sand for a grand firework show in the evening.

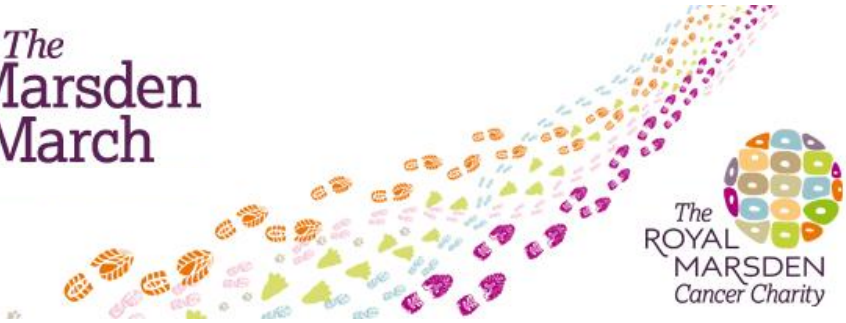
When we later left for our own evening meal we looked in and saw numerous tables laid, crystal glasses sparkling and the cutlery shining in the light of the table candle decorations. It was a fairytale setting for a beautiful wedding; the two stage sets, one for an orchestra that played whilst everyone ate and the other set for a pop group for later.



We never did see any of the wedding party, our taverna host that evening did know of the wedding as the pilots of the small jet were eating at the taverna. All the British drivers and crew were planning to dismantle everything on the Monday ready to get the ferry back to mainland Greece for the journey back to England.

Let's hope this wedding went well and the fortunate couple have a great and lasting marriage. We did hear the cost of such an occasion was around two and a half million pounds, one wonders how much was involved in postponing such a lavish occasion for 24 hours. Keeping it all dry, not being damaged by the storm, the food not being spoilt – headaches for the organisers and the family - but as they say you can't put a price on love!

The Marsden March



I have just had 2 things happen for the first time – well they are for me. First I have walked 14½ miles non-stop and the second was well I'll leave that to later.

What am I talking about you may well ask – well in case you didn't know I have taken part in the annual charity walk for the Royal Marsden (The Marsden March) along with 5499 other people, 28 of us from the same group [Slimming World – Carshalton Saturday Group].

This is the 5th year that the walk has taken place and over the years the numbers have grown from 2000 in the first year to the great numbers of today.

I have been training for this walk over the past weeks – walking up and down the roads that link Worple Road and the Ridgway was my first outing and then with another walk to Croydon Fire Station (Dropped in on my son at work – dropped being the operative word). With my last training day just days before the walk (which was on Sunday 22nd March) being a 9 mile walk from home to home via Raynes Park, the A3, Tibet's Corner, Wimbledon Common and Wimbledon Chase.

Sunday arrived and while walking my dog as usual on Cannon Hill Common I was thinking what have I let myself in for at my age doing this walk – I had said to my son (who was also walking) that as he was expecting to walk at about 4 miles/hour I would try to keep up with him to start with.

Well we got a coach from Sutton Marsden at 9.30am and arrived at the drop off point in Fulham at 10.20am, giving us 10minutes to get to the start but no one told us it was a good walk to the starting point.

We started out on the walk at 10.45am and I set off with one of the ladies from our group thinking that all the fast walkers would be with us, but each time we looked back they seemed to further behind us – still thinking that we would tire and they would catch us we carried on at the pace we had set ourselves. The encouragement we got on the route was amazing and it gave us much needed renewed energy.

The route took us from Marsden Fulham to Fulham High Street over Putney Bridge up Putney Hill (That's some hill – it just keeps going up and up) onto Wimbledon Common (The Windmill) down into Raynes Park and up Grand Drive then onto King Georges Playing Fields in Tudor Drive [That is where many people started – having chosen to do the 5 mile walk instead of the 14 mile walk] up Stonecot Hill past North Cheam on into Nonsuch Park and out the other side down into Cheam Village and on to Belmont with the final 200 yards *UP* Downs Road (it could have been 200 miles for all I cared).

When we turned into the entrance of Sutton Marsden the welcome was just fantastic – all 9 ladies from our group who had opted to do the 5 mile walk were there and it was great to think that we had achieved our goal of walking 14 miles (14½ actually) and in a very good time of 3hours and 42minutes (Average of around 15mins 36seconds per mile). Oh, and the group whom we thought we would not be able to keep up with crossed the finish line some 10 minutes behind us.

I would like to thank everyone who has sponsored me I am very pleased to say that at this moment in time I have raised £450.00 – again thanks very much – I enjoyed the whole event.

As for that other first I spoke about earlier - I was presented with a medal [1st of many perhaps] and I hope it will not be my last – it just goes to show that with help, encouragement, (and training of course) you can do many things you thought you couldn't do.

Tony Loft

P.S. could those who have still to give me they sponsor money, give it to me A.S.A.P. so I can forward all the money in one go to the charity.

CHURCH DIARY



March

Mon 30	8.00pm	Easter Meditation
Tues 31	8.00pm	Easter Meditation

April

Weds 1	8.00pm	Easter Meditation
Thurs 2		Maundy Thursday Services at: 7.00pm Worcester Park 7.30pm Raynes Park
Fri 3	10.30am	Good Friday Service at Martin Way with the local Baptist Churches led by Rev Paul Timmis
Sun 5	6.30 am	Sunrise Service on Cannon Hill Common followed by Breakfast at Martin Way at 7.30am
	10.30am	All Age Worship led by Brenda Cannon
	6.30 pm	Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis

Spring Harvest (6th to 10th April)

Mon 6		Easter Monday
Tues 7	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
	8.00pm	Time for Prayer
Fri 10	12.30pm	Luncheon Club
Sun 12	10.30am	Holy Communion led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tues 14	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
	8.00pm	Time for Prayer
Sun 19	10.30am	Morning Worship led by Tony Loft

Tue	21	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		7.00pm	Men's Supper Club - Behind the scenes at Polesden Lacey
		8.00pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	24	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	26	10.30am	Morning Worship led by David Eagle
Tues	28	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00pm	Time for Prayer

*Please refer to the Website (www.martinway.org.uk)
or Weekly Notice Sheet for any additional information*

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We wish all of those who celebrate a birthday
in April a very

Happy Birthday
and especially to:

Celia Johnson on **4th April**
Rosie Randall on **10th April**
Phoebe Pallister on **29th April**

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Spring shows what God can do with a drab and dirty world

Virgil A. Kraft

In the spring I have counted one hundred and thirty-six different
kinds of weather inside of four and twenty hours

Mark Twain

Every April, God rewrites the Book of Genesis

Author Unknown

APRIL FOOLS' DAY APRIL

In years gone by, the rules surrounding April Fool were this: between midnight and noon on 1st April, everyone is 'fair game' to be made a fool of. It is the morning

of the practical joke. But the aim is not just to discomfort the victim: he must be tricked into taking action himself, sent on a 'fool's errand'.

And so children would be sent to the bookseller for '*The Life of Eve's Mother*' or to the dairy for a pint of dove's milk. (*My own father used to tell of tales of the builders apprentice being sent out for a left handed hammer and spirit level bubbles - Editor*)

Practical jokes on a bigger scale were played: in 1860 a vast number of people received an official looking invitation to the Tower of London that read: 'Admit the Bearer and Friends to view the Annual Ceremony of Washing the White Lions.' Precisely the same trick had been played in 1698.

Then, on the stroke of noon, tradition decrees, April Fools is finished. If anyone attempts devilry thereafter, even while the clock is still striking, it recoils on his own head. A child would then race through the sing-song formula : 'April-Fool- Day's-past-and-gone-you're-the-fool-and-I-am-none!'

Taken from St.Mary's Church, Merton, Parish magazine

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90 years young!



I would like to thank everyone for all the cards, gifts, phone calls and visits on my 90th birthday.

Your thoughtfulness and kindness was heart-warming and made me feel truly blessed.

Eileen Handy

Items for the **May Newsletter** should be with Andrew Fox, (email: roife@hotmail.co.uk) by **Sunday 19th April** at the latest