



THE LINK

Sharing Faith in Jesus Christ



Easter 2019



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The Link is published three times a year, at Christmas, Easter and the Summer, and is distributed to members of all the churches in the Oakham Team Ministry.

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(front and back covers)

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Welcome....

Dear friends,

It's with great pleasure that I welcome you to this sample edition of our new Team magazine *The Link*. This edition is designed to give you a flavour of what we hope to produce in the future.

Many of you will be familiar with the Good News magazine, compiled and produced for many years by David Dyer. My thanks to him and all who helped to make Good News available around our parishes. A new group has now taken up the baton and want to continue David's good work in a new format.

Those producing *The Link* will be glad of your feedback as we develop the magazine over the coming year. Please use the contact details to the left if you'd like to get in touch or want to be part of the planning and production team.

We started the planning process by asking some basic questions:

What is the purpose of *The Link*?

We are very fortunate to have an excellent weekly pewsheet which carries up to date information about church services, social events, people, and activities in the wider community. We also have a very comprehensive website www.oakhamteam.org.uk containing lots of information including contact details, recent sermons, calendar dates, and links to church groups. Some villages have their own community newsletters which include church news. *The Link* does not aim to replicate the content of the pewsheet, the website or the village newsletters. Instead it will aim to provide articles on a range of subjects including local church events, the Christian faith, special places and people, interviews, contemporary issues, charities and mission agencies, the life of the Deanery, Diocese and wider church, prayers and poetry, book reviews etc. The list could go on. In addition, we want it to be colourful and well illustrated with photographs. We want it to be something that can be enjoyed by the whole team and build up our shared life as members of the church.

Who is *The Link* for?

We have two audiences in mind – firstly, those who regularly come to church and join

in our activities – we want the content of *The Link* to be encouraging to Christians, and secondly, we want *The Link* to be enjoyed by those who don't regularly come to church or think of themselves as Christians. We want church members to be able to give *The Link* away to friends and neighbours knowing that it's a good read.

How often will it be produced?

The pewsheet and website carry all of the up to date and urgent notices. *The Link* will have more of a seasonal feel as it is published three times a year. This will allow us to theme the articles around the church's year.

Price and circulation?

With a modest amount of advertising we can provide *The Link* free of charge, although donations to church funds of £1 per copy will be invited. Each church will be provided with a generous number of magazines to take home and give away. Church members who wish to give away copies to people in their vicinity can request a larger number of magazines. It would be good to have copies in local venues such as village halls, cafes, pubs, hairdressers, etc. (with permission from the owner).

The name *The Link* is the clue to what we hope to achieve. We hope to be better linked as churches, sharing our faith with one another. We hope to be better linked to our communities, helping people explore the Christian faith.

Please look out for a fuller edition in the late summer and please be in touch with any feedback or offers of help.

Yours in the service of Jesus Christ,

Revd Stephen Griffiths
Team Rector

Something to think about

Ann Blackett

What are you doing for Easter? After Lent – giving up chocolate, trying to build up our daily prayer, doing something for charity – surely we finished our forty days of prayer, fasting and almsgiving and we can relax and go back to normal. But if those forty days changed anything in us, then going *back to normal* isn't an option. St Augustine of Hippo preached on this to his Easter congregation in the fourth century AD:

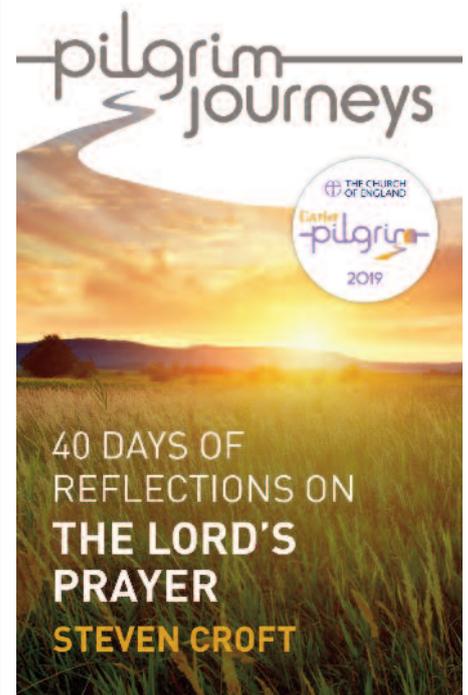
'What we commemorate before Easter is what we experience in this life; what we celebrate after Easter points to something we do not yet possess. This is why we keep the first season with fasting and prayer; but now the fast is over and we devote the present season to praise. Such is the meaning of the Alleluia we sing.

'We are praising God now, assembled as we are here in church; but when we go our various ways again, it seems as if we cease to praise God. But provided we do not cease to live a good life, we shall always be

praising God. You cease to praise God only when you swerve from justice and from what is pleasing to God. If you never turn aside from the good life, your tongue may be silent but your actions will cry aloud, and God will perceive your intentions; for as our ears hear each other's voices, so do God's ears hear our thoughts.'

What changes did you make in your life during Lent that you can make permanent this Easter? Then, as we move towards Pentecost, how might you use them to take the Good News into the world?

Exploring the Lord's Prayer



During Lent this year many of us followed the readings and reflections in the 'Pilgrim Journeys' booklet about the Beatitudes. You might also like to know that there's a follow-up booklet of readings, prayers and reflections based around the 'Our Father' prayer in the same series. Once again the author, Steven Croft, Bishop of Oxford, takes the reader on a 40 day journey through one of the key texts of our faith.

Each day contains a short Bible reflection, an invitation to pray and a suggestion for making the prayer part of your daily life. Feedback on the Lent booklet about the Beatitudes was that it was quite gentle and suitable for people who wanted a place to begin and develop a habit of daily prayer.

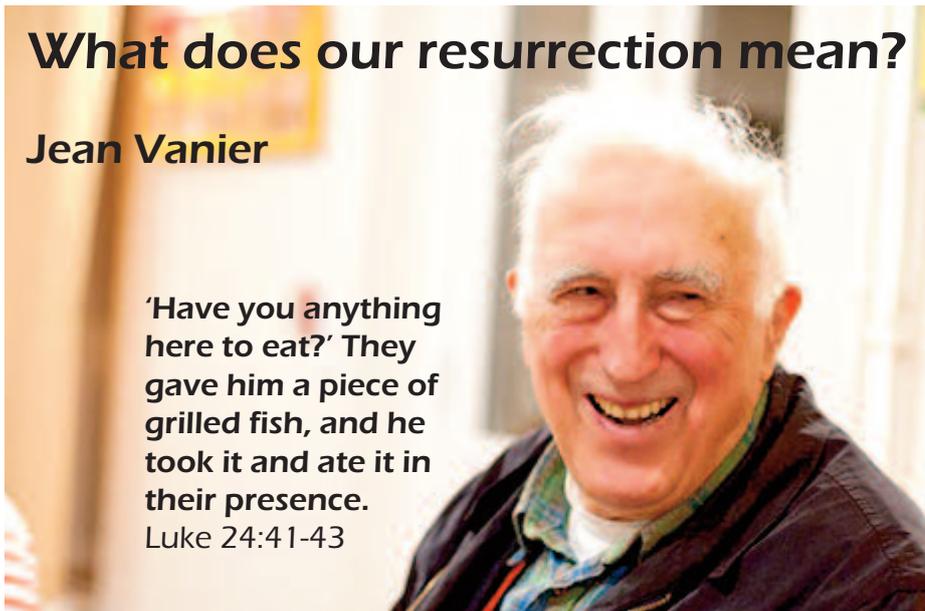
The booklets are available in churches around the benefice or via the Ministry team for a suggested donation of £3.

What does our resurrection mean?

Jean Vanier

'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of grilled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.

Luke 24:41-43



We need to look at what our resurrection means in the light of the resurrection of Jesus.

We are truly men and women of resurrection because that which we yearn for has already happened. This new life, new birth, is given at baptism when we are reborn in the Holy Spirit.

Yet it also remains so hidden and unassuming: like a tiny seed that grows and develops in the vulnerable earth of our being.

We are a wounded, broken people, our reactions springing from fear and

anguish. Our vulnerable hearts are so frightened of pain and rejection that we put up barriers.

But if we allow the Holy Spirit to enter into our hearts, they will be changed and transformed, little by little, through her presence.

from Befriending the Stranger (Darton, Longman and Todd, 2005)

Jean Vanier, who founded the L'Arche movement which provides homes and dignity for adults with learning disabilities in 38 countries around the world, died on 7 May.

In Jerusalem, every day is Good Friday

Revd Iain Osborne



So, at least, it seemed to me during the three weeks Susan and I spent last summer serving at the Anglican Cathedral of St George in that city.

The cathedral sits within a walled compound – it has been threatened often by riot or war since it was built in the 19th century – which also includes a pilgrim guesthouse, as well as a theological college and the Archbishop’s house.

I was mainly there to take morning and evening services, and the Dean housed us in a flat high up a winding staircase in the gothic bell-tower, which was fun. Thankfully, the bells are rarely rung!

Most days I would preside at the morning communion, and then we would walk down towards the Old City – this city is all hills – through a massively fortified Ottoman gate, along twisty cobbled streets lined with little shops. All built out of the same shining white-yellow stone: Jerusalem is literally a golden city, it shimmers under sunlight, and glows in the dusk.

Much of our route followed the **Via Dolorosa** – the road along which Jesus carried his cross. It ends, of course, at Golgotha – which is to say, at the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre that was raised over the site of Jesus’ crucifixion in the 4th century (archaeologists are now fairly sure this is the true site). Inside the church, a staircase takes one to the top of





the hill of the skull – an altar on the site where Jesus was stripped, and another where the cross was raised. Then down the stairs again, to the little chapel over the cave-tomb where his body was laid. Visiting the tomb is like standing across the still pivot of the turning world, and to this hub come pilgrims from all across the world; people of all tongues and nations, united by holy awe.

Why do I say that every day there seemed like Good Friday? I suppose it is because my experiences there overlapped and bled together, in a way that cast a new light on Christ's sacrifice. Each day I revisited the site of that sacrifice. Each day began by remembering it in the Eucharist, and each day, I celebrated in a cathedral church that mainly serves a Palestinian congregation – Arab Christians, in direct descent from the Jerusalemites of the book of Acts, but now sorely oppressed. The United Nations gave much of their country away in 1948; and since 1967, they have suffered under an illegal occupation. In East Jerusalem, as in the West Bank, Israel is stealing land and resources, while harassing the Arab population.

St Paul wrote to the Corinthians:
If one part of the body suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it
 1 Corinthians 12.26

Christ's body is crucified afresh, every day, in the Palestinian church.



Oakham has a busy Churches Together group which does much more than meet and talk. Many of you will know about the Drop-in Centre on Wednesdays, providing a cooked lunch on Wednesdays for people who otherwise might not have a hot meal or company to eat it with, and lots of you will have attended the annual Prayer Breakfast in the Victoria Hall when there is usually at least one speaker and a chance to meet up with friends and neighbours – and people we don't know – from the different churches around the town.

What you might not know is that during 2019 the churches will be working together to share our Christian faith with the whole community in a Mission in Oakham and the villages, which will be called ***A New Day Dawns***.

A programme of events and activities is taking shape over this year and next which are aimed at providing spaces for people to hear about the Good News and join in. At present, there are dates for a Ceilidh on 18 May, a shared evening prayer at All Saints on 9 June, an outdoor Songs of Praise in Cutts Close on 1

September, an evening event with comedian John Archer on 9 November and a sports quiz on 30 November. Other events will be added to the programme as they are developed – keep your eyes open for dates and details.

This will be an exciting year for Oakham and the villages and the Christian community here as we find ways of sharing our faith with others. Churches Together hope that you will join in – both by volunteering to help make the events happen and buying tickets to make them a great success.

153 Fish

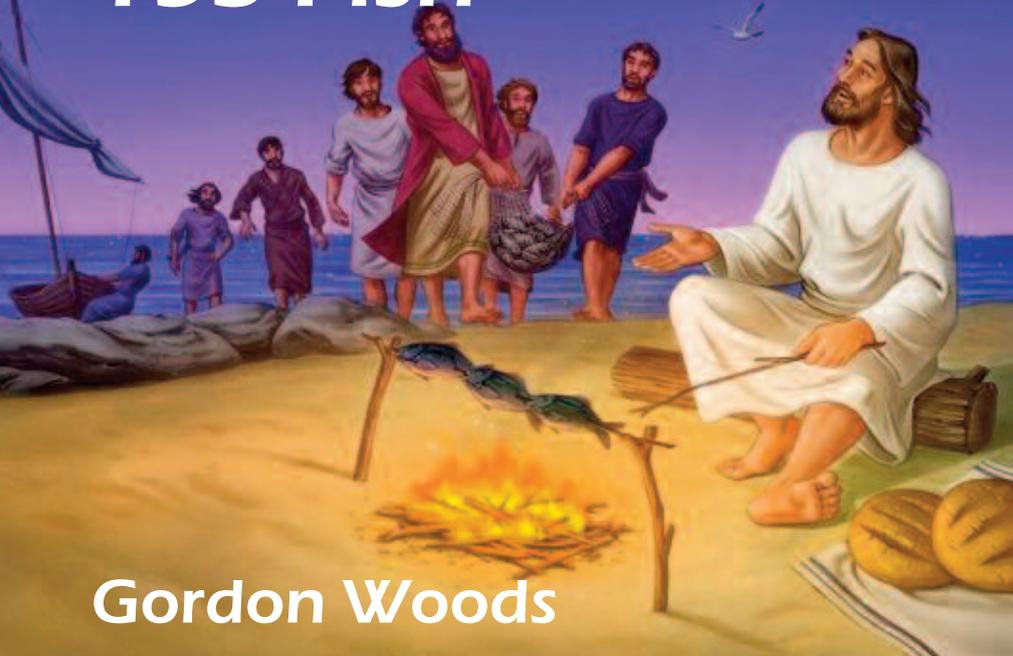
Quiz Answers

There are only three ways of multiplying numbers to get 153 – 3 x 51, 9 x 17 and 3 x 3 x 17, so Simon Peter's plan was 51 fish for each of 3 disciples, Thomas thought 17 fish for each 9 disciples, and John realised that with one extra, 154 could be shared equally between the 7 disciples present with 22 each.

Tower & Spire

1 – Oakham;
 2 – Whissendine;
 3 – Ashwell;
 4 – Market Overton;
 5 – Teigh;
 6 – Braunston;
 7 – Hambleton;
 8 – Brooke;
 9 – Langham;
 10 – Egleton

153 Fish



Gordon Woods

On the third Sunday of Easter the Gospel described the third time after his resurrection that Jesus appeared to some of his followers. Those who were fishermen had returned to their 'day job' on Lake Galilee. They had no luck at all but Jesus gave advice from the shore to try on the other side of the boat. Result – there was an enormous catch of 153 fish!

Some theologians study deeply the significance of numbers in the Bible. Early Christians mostly had Jewish or Greek backgrounds. One group were followers of Pythagoras, also known today for his mathematical equation about the sides of a right angled triangle (the length of the hypotenuse, z, squared equals the sum of the squares of the other two sides, x and y – mathematically, $z^2 = x^2 + y^2$). This was the **third** appearance of Jesus and there were traditionally **twelve** disciples (although only eleven by then of course). **Three** squared plus **twelve** squared equals the number of fish: $144 + 9 = 153$. This made me think of a numerical puzzle...

What John didn't tell us...

Simon Peter said 'We can share all the fish equally between just the few of us who have done all the work'.

Thomas thought for a moment, and said 'No, let's share them between more of us – we can still do that equally.'

John then said, 'No, that means we would have to take some of them back for those of us who aren't here today. If we asked Jesus to give us just one of his fish, we could then share them equally between all of us who are here today.'

What were Simon Peter's, Thomas's and John's ideas for sharing the fish?

Answers on page 5

Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples

Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Lake of Galilee. This is how it happened – a group of us were there, Simon Peter, Thomas 'The Twin', Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, my brother James and I and two other disciples.

Simon Peter said, 'I'm going fishing.'

'We'll come too,' we all said. We did, but caught nothing all night. At dawn we saw a man standing on the beach but couldn't see who he was.

He called, 'Any fish, boys?'

'No,' we replied.

Then he said, 'Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you'll get plenty of them!' So we did, and couldn't draw in the net because of the weight of the fish, there were so many!

Then I said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' At that, Simon Peter put on his tunic (for he was stripped to the waist) and jumped into the water and swam ashore. The rest of us stayed in the boat and pulled the loaded net to the beach, about 300 feet away. When we got there, we saw that a fire was kindled and fish were frying over it, and there was bread.

'Bring some of the fish you've just caught,' Jesus said. So Simon Peter went out and dragged the net ashore. By his count there were 153 large fish; and yet the net hadn't torn.

'Now come and have some breakfast!' Jesus said; and none of us dared ask him if he really was the Lord, for we were quite sure of it. Then Jesus went around serving us the bread and fish.

This was the third time Jesus had appeared to us since his return from the dead.

John 21.1-14 – Living Bible

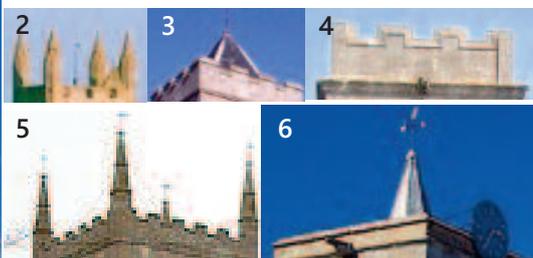
Do you know your towers and spires?

Kevin Slingsby

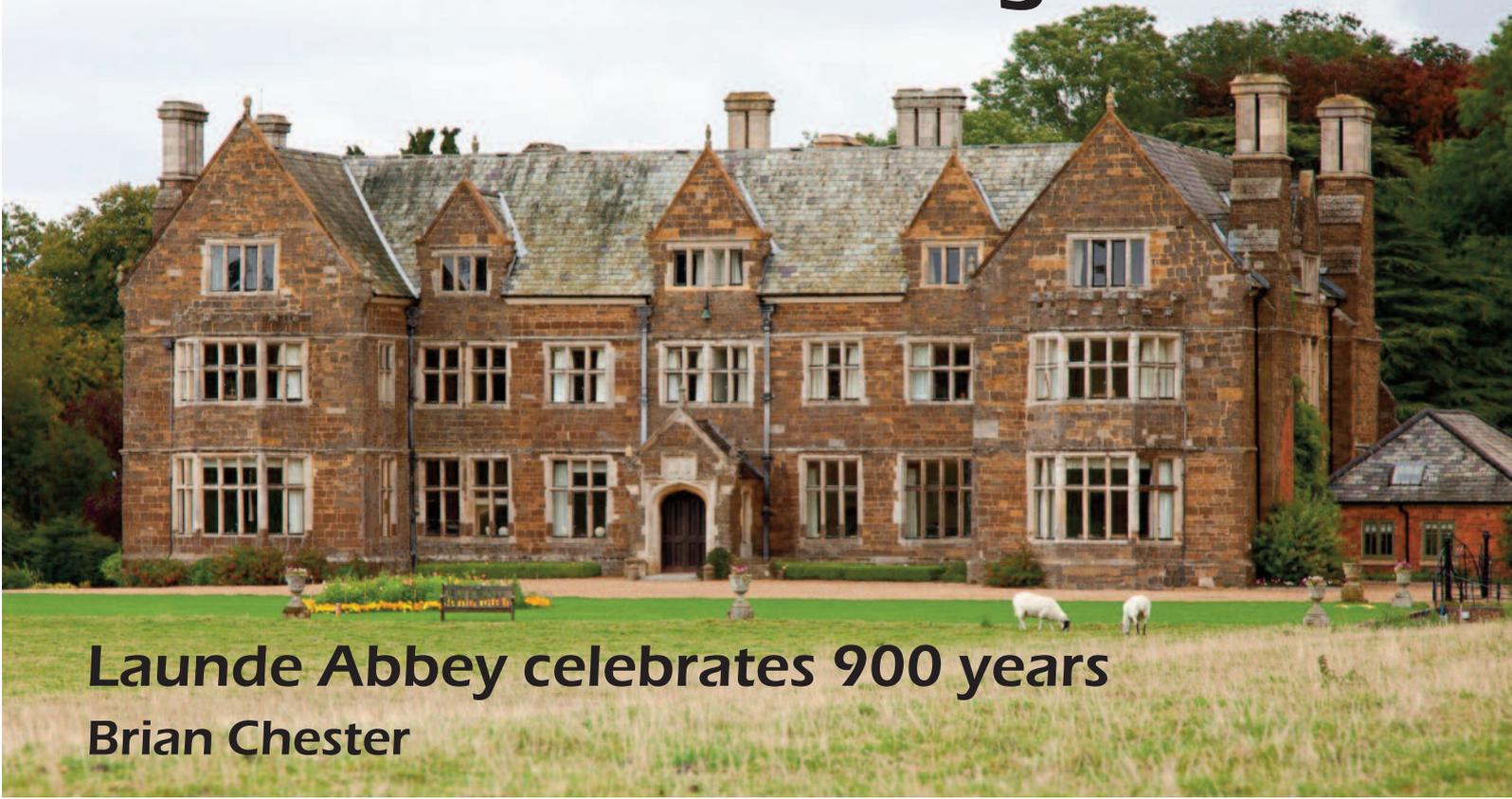


Our ten team churches have a variety of towers and spires – can you identify them all?

Answers on page 5



Ancient Wells – Living Water



Launde Abbey celebrates 900 years Brian Chester

Friday 21 June will be a day of significance for the Christian retreat house and conference centre, Launde Abbey, just a few miles south west of Oakham. That day will mark the beginning of a year of celebration to commemorate the 900th anniversary of its foundation as an Augustinian priory by a royal official in the court of Henry I. Four hundred years as a priory until Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries, several centuries of private ownership and the past 60 years in the care of the Church of England have yielded a rich history.

Today, in the words of the Warden, David Newman, Launde is a place 'where heaven feels close; a place to encounter God, refreshing spirit, inspiring minds, transforming lives'.

Running under the title *Ancient Wells – Living Water*, the celebrations open with a presentation of *Mark – The Gospel*; the entire Gospel of Mark being performed from memory by David Newman, offering an opportunity to experience 'perhaps the most dramatic and direct of the Gospels from beginning to end as it was originally meant to be heard.'

Saturday 22 June sees *The Great Celebration Service* at 10.30am, led by the Bishops of the Dioceses of Leicester and Peterborough, and followed by an afternoon of free events and activities to suit all ages and tastes. The events include poetry readings with Malcolm Guite, an art display (with three artists in residence), medieval archery in the walled garden, a re-enactment, 'watershed' activities, opportunities for prayer, walks in the grounds and woods, and tours of Launde.

On Saturday evening a Gala Dinner will be served in a 'sumptuously arrayed marquee' in the grounds of the Abbey offering an opportunity to experience Launde's hospitality and cuisine before an after-dinner presentation by author and speaker Adrian Plass.

On Sunday 23 June residential guests will experience a quiet morning of worship and walks in the local area. In the afternoon a Classical Concert featuring local young musicians is followed by a Launde cream tea. The day concludes with the unique opportunity to hear *Choirs Together at Launde* – classic sung evensong led by the choirs of Leicester and Peterborough Cathedrals coming together for the first time in their long histories.

Finally on Monday 24 June Launde hosts *Remembering Cromwell*, a presentation and conversation between Hilary Mantel (author of *Wolf Hall*) and Diarmaid MacCulloch (author of *Thomas Cromwell: a life*) about Reformation England, the life of Cromwell and the place of Launde

in that incredible story. This morning event will feature two presentations by the speakers followed by coffee and a time of open questions and discussion ending with a buffet lunch. (The Launde website now reporting 'sold out' for this final event).

The Warden says that with these events and others planned for the coming year Launde Abbey is 'celebrating our spiritual history and we are shaping Launde for the future, keeping its heart of prayer and stillness enabling us to serve the church of the 21st century. We warmly invite you to be part of our story in this anniversary year.'

For more details call 01572 717254 or visit www.laundeabbey.org.uk.





Easter in the Oakham Team

Some of the Easter
decorations in our Team
churches captured by
roving photographer
Beryl Kirtland

*Langham (top left & bottom left);
Market Overton (top right
& front cover);
Braunston (middle right
& bottom centre);
Oakham (middle left & bottom right)*

