

HOLY TRINITY (OLD ST CLEMENTS) BLACKTOFT NEWSLETTER MARCH 2026

Two pictures 40 years apart—



- 2026 at Blacktoft
- 1986, The Queen's College at Birmingham (with me on the right)

**Revd James Little –
Retirement after 20 years in
Howden**

MARCH 2026 BLACKTOFT CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 15th 9.30am – **Mothering Sunday** – Stewart
Sunday 22nd 9.30am – Holy Communion – Rev'd James
(his last service here at Blacktoft)

Team Rector:	Rev'd James Little	01430 432056
Churchwarden:	Stewart Calligan	01430 441709
Church Secretary:	Sue Nicholson	01430 441064
Treasurer:	Robert J Thompson	01430 440347

From Revd James Little

My last Sunday service at Blacktoft will be 22 March 2026, but everyone is invited to Howden Minster on 12 April at 11:00 for my final service before retirement, followed by a bring-&-share lunch.

There are exciting plans developing for the future, working more closely with Goole, so I am glad that I can retire with everyone in good heart & looking forward to what lies ahead.

I was put into post as Team Rector at Howden Minster by Royal Mandate on 20 January 2006 (just over 20 years ago), having previously served my curacy in Nottingham, before becoming the Rector of East Markham (& surrounding villages) along the lower Trent in 1993, where I served for over 12 years.

I have worked with three Team Vicars at Blacktoft: Kate Burgess, Graham Thornally, and finally Lynn Kenny. Since Lynn's retirement, it has been my privilege to look after Blacktoft myself.

I recently learned that a direct ancestor of mine, Simon Appleton, had been born in Howden 358 years ago, and that his father was born at Laxton during the Civil War.

Claire and I will be moving to a bungalow at Haxby, north of York, where we will be closer to our two grown up sons.

I will miss these quiet villages looking across the river into Lincolnshire & carry fond memories of you all into my retirement.

Stewart's Observations

It has been a pleasure to work more closely with James and his wife Claire since the retirement of Rev Lynn Kenny in 2023, if work is the right word. James had a professional approach to his duties, laid back in style as if nothing was too much trouble. He was a fatherly figure having an aura of stability, security and steady guidance. I'm sure this helped believers stand firm in their faith. Members of the congregation said that they felt blessed with a sense of tradition, peace and hope after his services. His preaching was always very informative usually based on a wealth of experience, appearing effortless even in the grand setting of Howden Minster.

A distraught lady walked into church halfway through a Blacktoft service, having just received devastating personal news and James placed his hand on her head saying a comforting prayer which immediately calmed her and the rest of the congregation.

Thanks go to Claire for among other things, printing our monthly newsletter and supporting James so well. A big thank you from all at Blacktoft Church and extra thanks from me for saying some kind words at my recent milestone birthday and for Churchwarden duties guidance.

We wish you both well as a new chapter opens in the Little adventure of life.

Parish Council News – Sue Nicholson – Clerk to the Parish

The precept (budget) for the financial year 2026-2027 was agreed at the January 2026 meeting. The request will remain at £8,000.00 as the last financial year. This request has been agreed by the East Riding of Yorkshire Council and means that a band D billing amount attributable to Blacktoft parish council will be £72.01, which is a reduction of £-0.06 and -0.1% compared to 2025-2026. The precept is paid in two halves – April 2026 and September 2026.

The next parish council meeting will be held in March 2026 in the Old School, Blacktoft.

For more information contact: Sue Nicholson – Clerk, 01430 441064
or email: clerk@blacktoft.org.uk or The Joiners Shop, Blacktoft.

HIGHWAY REPAIRS

1. **Potholes/road surfaces** – all the potholes and road surfaces in the whole of the parish have been reported by the Clerk repeatedly and over many months, to the East Riding of Yorkshire Council. All the different reports have been acknowledged and given a reference number.
2. **Passing Places** - The latest report to be forwarded to the East Riding of Yorkshire Council is regarding the demolished PASSING PLACE sign on Faxfleet Lane – near to the pond. PASSING PLACES should be always kept clear of parked vehicles to allow the safe passage of traffic on single lanes.

The provision of PASSING PLACES on single track roads is a critical aspect of road safety and traffic flow. In the UK, PASSING PLACES are marked with a square or diamond shaped white sign with the words PASSING PLACE on it. These places are essential for allowing vehicles to pass one another, especially on rural roads where passing is not always possible. The provision of PASSING PLACES is supported by policies from local authorities.

LITTER PICKING – this is the best part of the year for litter picking. Bit warmer, not so stormy and the grass verges are still short. All the awful litter is easily seen. But the constant questions is - Why do people drop litter? I have just done from the church to Blacktoft House Lane both sides and filled one East Riding of Yorkshire Council litter picking bag (pink).

It was heavy by the time I made it home. Just that little bit of road and so much rubbish. If anyone wants to litter pick outside their home or area, I have some bags and if you do not want to go through the ERYC website I can arrange for it to be picked up via the parish council.

Gardening tips for March

GENERAL

- Mulch well-rotted compost around the base of roses, fruit trees, and shrubs.
- Pot houseplants into slightly larger pots using fresh houseplant compost. Give your houseplant leaves a clean and remove any dead or dying ones.
- Protect fruit tree blossoms on frosty nights using a cover. Take the cover off during the day to encourage pollination.
- Do paths, paving, patios, and steps with a pressure washer or chemical cleaner.

VEGETABLES

- Try raised beds for early seed sowings. Cloches or similar are great for trapping heat in the soil of your raised bed, as well as protecting the young seedlings.
- Beetroot, carrots, parsnip, radish and spring onions are good choices.
- You can warm the soil in your vegetable beds by covering with black sheeting. The black absorbs the sun and warms the soil.

FLOWERS

- Now is the time to prune roses, removing any damaged, dead or diseased stems. Cut back to just above an outward facing bud, using sharp secateurs.
- Sow busy lizzie, petunia, lobelia and marigold in a heated greenhouse or indoors.
- If soil conditions are not too cold and wet, make early sowings of hardy annuals outdoors.
- Directly sow calendula, clarkia, larkspur and nigella etc out in the garden where you want them to flower.
- Sweet peas can be planted out in sunny borders or pots, remembering to tie stems onto supports to encourage quicker climbing and flowering.
- Plant anemone bulbs out into beds and borders this month.
- Trim the stems of early spring-flowering bulbs after they've finished flowering, leaving them to die back naturally.

- Begonias can be planted in pots of moist compost, concave side facing upwards. Keep the pots in a bright, warm spot, watering only when the compost dries out.
- Try dahlia tubers in trays of compost to encourage shoots and roots to start sprouting for later use.
- After flowering, but whilst still in leaf, lift and divide aconites and snowdrop bulbs. They should be teased apart and the bulbs replanted at the same depth as they were.

POND CARE

- Fountains and features can go back into the pond when risk of frost is over.
- Oxygenating plants in your pond should keep the algae levels low, or add a natural deterrent like a barley straw bag to the water.
- Remove winter debris from around the pond and use a net to scoop out leaves etc.

Recipe of the Month-The humble carrot roasted-Stewart

Either bought or homemade pesto can be added. The pesto compliments the sweet carrots perfectly. It's a winter side dish that balances a rich, heavy meal such as roast beef, stew or roast chicken, perfectly.

Ingredients

- 1.5 lbs of carrots with or without the leafy tops or use Parsley as a substitute
- a tablespoon full of olive oil (or rapeseed or butter)
- a handful of toasted walnuts
- clove of garlic
- grated parmesan or any cheese
- parsley

Method

- Set oven at 220 or 200 for fan or gas mark 7
- set aside the leafy tops if appropriate or use parsley for the pesto or buy a jar.
- scrub the carrots and dry off. Cut in half lengthwise.

- toss the carrots in the olive oil and salt and pepper to taste
- place on a baking tray side by side and roast for 25 to 30 minutes, turning over halfway through until tender.
- while the carrots roast away, make the pesto if desired.
- place the carrot tops or parsley in a food processor along with the walnuts, cheese, garlic and a drop of olive oil to make a paste. Season to taste.
- place the roasted carrots on a serving platter and cover with a line of homemade pesto or bought. Bon appetit.....

Local History

The Saltmarshe Family

After the Norman conquest in 1066, King William granted Howdenshire to the bishop of Durham. By 1069 he had subsequently leased out the place known as Saltmarshe and the area around it, to what is believed to be the ancestor of the Saltmarshe family, and hence the family got their name from the land they possessed. The first recorded name was that of Elnard de Saltmarshe who died in 1230. By the Middle Ages they owned the land, and the 2000-acre estate or more, consisting of Saltmarshe, Laxton, Balkholme, passed from father to son till the death of Captain Philip Saltmarshe IX in November 1970.

During that time, the family took part in The Hundred Years War, with France, where Sir Edward Saltmarshe was knighted by King Edward III during the Crecy/Calais campaign of 1346-47 (his father also a knight, has his tomb and effigy in Howden Minster.) In the 16th century they were prominent in the northern rebellions of 1536 and 1570.

The first Philip Saltmarshe was Justice of the Peace during the rule of Oliver Cromwell, and one of his curious duties, was to carry out civil marriages in the Old Saltmarshe Hall, since church ceremonies were then prohibited. The present hall dates from 1819.

And so finally Philip Saltmarshe IX, inherited the estate in 1929. During WW2 he led the local East Howdenshire Home Guard. He never married and so died in 1970 without issue. In his last few years, he regarded his cat as his one faithful friend. So in his will, his cat went to the Cats Home in York, and his entire estate of over 2000 acres, plus all the antiques, paintings and ancestral heirlooms he had in the hall was all auctioned off. The total proceeds, which today would amount to £25 million, was left to the Cat's home, so that "his cat would be well looked after."

Mad as a March Hare facts

The famous phrase, popularized by Lewis Carroll in Alice in Wonderland, refers to the erratic behaviour of male hares during their mating season in March.

- "Hlyda" (The Loud Month): In Old English, March was called "Hlyda" or "Lide," meaning "loud," due to the roaring and unpredictable March winds.
- In like a Lion, Out like a Lamb: This classic UK proverb describes the typical transition from harsh, wintery weather at the start of the month to milder, spring-like conditions by the end.
- The Original New Year: Before Julius Caesar's calendar reform, March was the first month of the year in the Roman calendar.
- ☐ The Oranges and Lemons Service: **On the last day of March**, children in London attend a service at St Clement Danes church, recite the famous nursery rhyme, and are given an orange and a lemon—a tradition dating back to when fruit barges docked nearby. **As our church is Old St Clements, should we revive this service? If only we had children, who could be given an orange and a lemon! We could recite.....**

•
*Oranges and lemons,
Say the bells of St. Clement's.*

*You owe me five farthings,
Say the bells of St. Martin's.*

*When will you pay me?
Say the bells of Old Bailey.*

*When I grow rich,
Say the bells of Shoreditch.*

*When will that be?
Say the bells of Stepney.*

*I do not know,
Says the great bell of Bow.*

*Here comes a candle to light you to bed,
And here comes a chopper to chop off your head!*

A darker meaning to the rhyme.... the bells sing "when will you pay me." This refers to some of the people locked up in Newgate prison, the most notorious prison in medieval London. Many of the prisoners were debtors, meaning they didn't pay back money they had borrowed.

- National Bed Month: In the UK, March is officially designated as National Bed Month by The Sleep Council to raise awareness about the importance of a good night's sleep. It's OK to have 40 winks during the day but take care not to have more as it could spoil your night's sleep.
- Whuppity Scoorie: On 1st March in Lanark, Scotland, children participate in a traditional "scaring away of winter" by running around a church while swinging paper balls on strings. Now there's a thing – fancy trying it????

- **The Spitfire's First Flight:** The iconic British fighter plane, the Spitfire, made its very first test flight from Southampton on 5th March 1936.
- **Union of the Crowns:** On 24th March 1603, the crowns of England and Scotland were united under King James VI (James I of England).
- **First Rugby International:** The first-ever international rugby match was played between England and Scotland in Edinburgh on 27th March 1871. My AI (Artificial Intelligence) tells me that the Calcutta Cup was introduced in 1879. They have played 143 matches with England winning 77, Scotland 44 and drawing 19. I make that 140 - has AI faltered?

Roberts Brainteasers

Last month's answers

Is this the bank manager- **Granny convene the time ?**

Yes **The Environment Agency**

Where do you **Try Cuban toasts and flick drabs ?**

Blacktoft Sands Bird Sanctuary

This month's anagrams.

Where was it **Hastened Patrolled ?**

Where do **Coo Folk Tremble**

Any other business

Flowers

A big thank you to Glen for decorating the church with all the beautiful flowers.

Coffee Morning in the School Room

There will be a coffee morning in the School Room, Blacktoft on the last Saturday in March – the 28th from 10am to 12ish

Please come and spend a half an hour or so over a nice cuppa and cake and see old friends and possibly make some new ones.

Proceeds will go to either the Church, the School Room or MacMillian's.

Any help would be appreciated and please contact either Sue N or Sue M or any of the telephone numbers at the front of this newsletter.

Tombola prizes would be gratefully received -

March 2026 Sunday Services Across the Howdenshire Churches

March	Eastrington <i>St Michael</i> AM	Blacktoft <i>Holy Trinity</i> AM	Wressle <i>St John of Bev</i> AM	Laxton <i>St Peter</i> AM	Newport & Gilberdyke <i>St Stephen</i>	Howden Minster AM	Howden PM
1 March Lent 2	9:30 am Morning Prayer Churchwarden		9:30 Holy Communion James	11:00 Morning Prayer Churchwarden		11:00 Sung Eucharist James	5:30 Choral evensong
8 March Lent 3	9:30 Holy Communion James (last)	9:30 Morning Prayer Churchwarden		11:00 Morning Prayer Churchwarden	11:00 Multi-media Anthony	11:00 Sung Eucharist Geoff	
15 March Lent 4 Mothering Sunday	9:30 am Morning Prayer Churchwarden	Move?		11:00 Morning Prayer Churchwarden		11:00 Sung Eucharist James	3:00 Messy Church
22 March Lent 5	6:00 pm Methodist-led Worship	9:30 Holy Communion James (last)		11:00 Holy Communion James Holy Communion James (last)	Wednesday 25 7:00 PM Meditative Communion (last)	11:00 Morning Worship Elizabeth	
29 March Palm Sunday Clocks forward						11:00 Sung Eucharist James	5:30 Readings & Music for the Passion

Saturday, 17 January 2026