

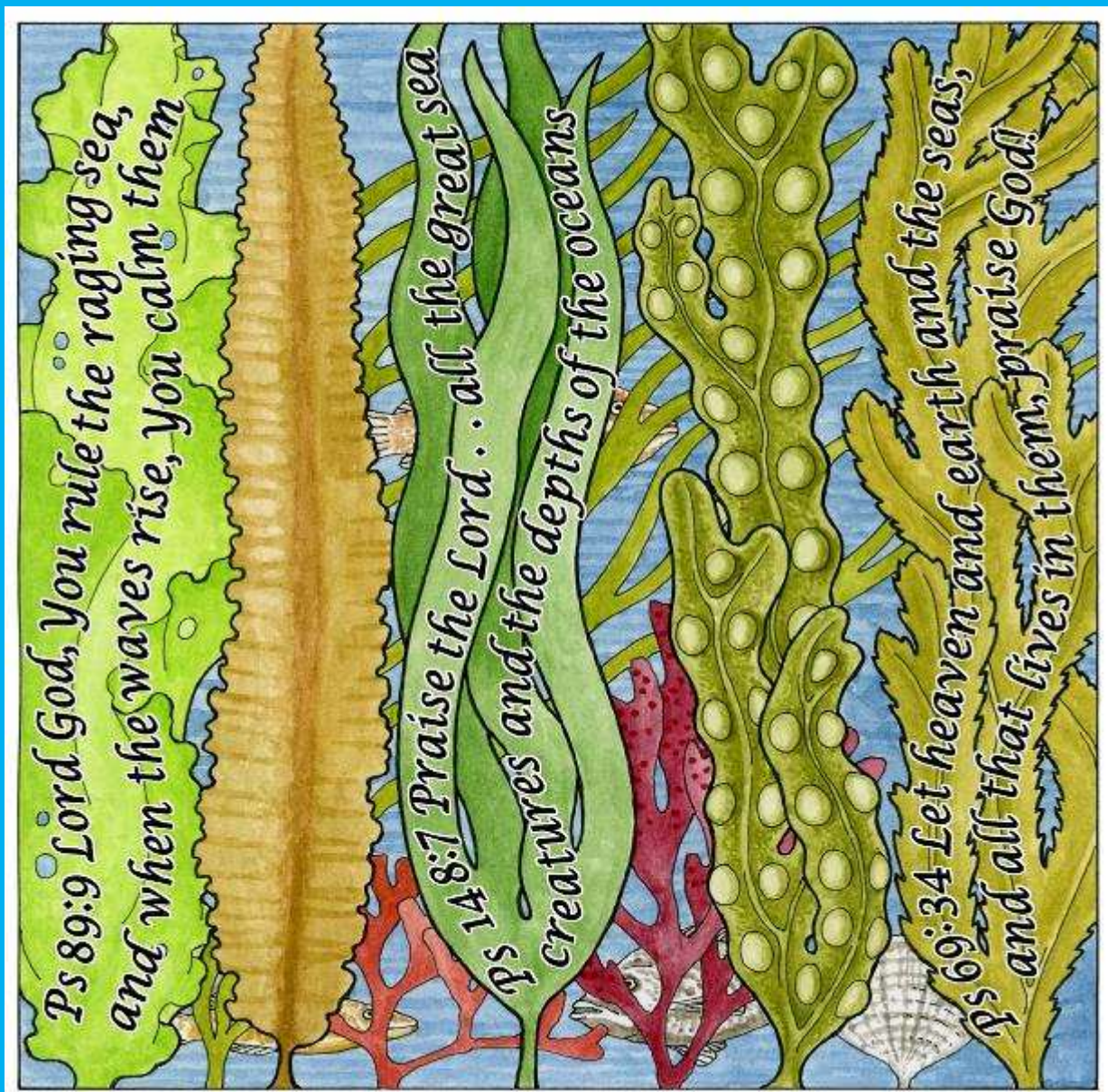
July 2026

FOCUS

Issue 305



Parish Magazine of St Stephen's, Hightown



Editor's Note

It's incredible to think that, by the time you receive this magazine, more than half the year will have passed.

By July, the very brief season for elderflowers will already be over, the flower heads darkening as they slowly turn into berries. How my young grandsons used to love collecting and snipping the soft creamy blossoms, and with my help, steeping them in boiling water with a little lemon juice and a not inconsiderable amount of sugar, to make a delicately scented elderflower cordial.



Later in the summer, the elderberries will appear in great, heavy, purple bunches. As a child, I would pick these with my grandmother and we would crush them between our palms to release their deep magenta juice. I was never tempted to eat them- they were said to have a foul and bitter taste- but they did make a deep red wine. I thought it tasted divine! Nowadays, even the cheapest supermarket red would probably taste better. It's a pity though, that our modern drinking habits have lost the connection with the land and its bounty. Elder itself is a remarkable and frequently overlooked plant, often used in traditional and modern herbal medicine.

Why not try your hand at making some elderberry wine this year for entry into the Hightown Village Flower Show in 2027?

With the Show fast approaching on July 18th, the recipe for a Victoria sponge on p.25 is a suggestion only. If neither cake making nor flowers are your passion, there are many more fun categories.

Good luck with your entries.

Colette

Entries for future issues of Focus to be sent to
Focus.Mag.2023@StStephensHightown.org.uk
Please submit before last day of month

Dear friends,

On the last Sunday of May, we held our APCM, when we had the opportunity to review the past year, and elect those who are to serve for the coming year. Thank you to all who have agreed to help our church in such a way. (We also enjoyed a very delicious Bring'N'Share lunch too!)

The Annual Report tells some of our story over the last year: the highlights! It's amazing how much we have done and achieved. We are truly blessed.

We feel privileged in having so many people who are willing to say, 'Yes! That's something I can do, and I will offer to help!'

As I write, we are coming to the end of the National Volunteers Week, and as a trustee of Compassion Acts, it was my privilege to visit the Food Pantry at Bishop David Shepherd school to say 'Thank you' to the volunteers and present them with a card and a small token of appreciation. Our food we bring to our church collection each week supports the pantries locally. Thank you to all who donate- you are a blessing to others.

Volunteers play a vital role in supporting others: helping, sharing, giving and caring. Without our willing volunteers we would not be able to do as much as we do. We do still need some additional leadership for our Youth Club and Sunday School though. Could that be you?

We are blessed that we have so many people who give so generously to our church in both time and money in order that we can continue to serve our parish in Hightown and beyond. Thank you.

We look forward to the blessing of having Bishop Ruth with us at our morning Eucharist on Sunday 26th July.

As the Summer Holidays are upon us, may you too be blessed with time with family, friends, time on holiday, time to relax and rest. Hopefully we will be blessed with some summer weather too!

***God Bless,
Keith***



Thank You

Regular donors to St. Stephen's Church have received a letter of thanks for their continued and much appreciated financial support to our ministry and mission here in Hightown.

However, it was not possible to acknowledge anonymous donors or those who give directly onto the plate in church. We do want to say 'Thank You' to you too and so please accept our grateful thanks for your ongoing support.

Revd. Keith on behalf of St. Stephen's PCC.

Church Services at St Stephen's in July

Wednesday 1 st	10:30	Eucharist
Friday 3 rd	09:30	Morning Prayer
Sunday 5 th Trinity 5	10:30	All-Age Eucharist
	18:00	Evensong
Wednesday 8 th	10:30	Eucharist
	19:00	Sanctuary @ Seven
Friday 10 th	09:30	Morning Prayer
Sunday 12 th Trinity 6	10:30	Eucharist
	16:00	Toddler Church
	18:00	Evensong
Wednesday 15 th	10:30	Eucharist
Friday 17 th	09:30	Morning Prayer
Sunday 19 th Trinity 7	10:30	Eucharist
	18:00	Evensong
Wednesday 22 nd	10:30	Eucharist
Friday 24 th	09:30	Morning Prayer
Sunday 26 th Trinity 8	10:30	Eucharist - We welcome Bishop Ruth
	18:00	BCP Holy Communion
Wednesday 29 th	10:30	Eucharist
Friday 31 st	09:30	Morning Prayer

On Sunday 26th July we look forward to Bishop Ruth visiting our church. Everyone is welcome. There will be a sandwich lunch in the church hall after the service.

Coffee Morning

First Saturday of Every Month 10am
till noon

St Stephen's Hall

Come and enjoy a bacon or sausage barm
and a cup of tea or coffee.

Proceeds in July will go to Motor Neurone Disease
in memory of Robin Smith





Rosie & Stu Bayford, CMS partners

We are very excited to welcome Rosie and Stu to our 10:30am service on Sunday 12th July, when they will tell us about their work in Olinda, Brazil and share a coffee with us afterwards. Please come along and meet them too.

"We want to see people in poverty be nourished - physically and spiritually. Having served in Brazil for a few years, we've listened to the community's concerns and worked with a local church to develop a Community Market that redistributes surplus food from supermarkets to those who most need it. This project also cares for the planet by sending less food to landfill.

The church helps identify potential market members who pay a small amount to shop, so as to encourage saving and keep a sense of dignity. Market members are invited to be a part of the church and they know the church cares for them. We hope to start another Community Market soon in another struggling neighbourhood.

We have felt a deep call to Recife, Brazil, since we first visited in 2015, when we were struck by the desperate situation that so many children find themselves in, living on the streets. We believe mission should bring about lasting local change. By working with those that know and understand the local community far better than us, we hope to support sustainable, life-changing work in this part of the country where poverty, unemployment and crime are big problems.

In January 2019, we returned to Recife to work with ReVive, a Christian organisation working with children and teenagers in Brazil who have suffered from abuse, trafficking and exploitation. We are involved with some of the day-to-day tasks at the ReVive safe house; doing the school run, helping with any tech needs and doing creative activities and exercise with the girls."

St. Stephen's Church Youth Club

Can you help us?...

We have a successful Youth Club, which meets on Friday evenings from 6pm until 7:15pm, term time, in our Church Hall. It's a popular club, but we need more help in terms of



leadership and helpers. It's a great gathering of youngsters from the village and it provides a safe space for them to meet with friends, play sports and games, share in crafts etc. Can you help us?

Recruitment is in accordance with Church of England Safer Recruitment practices and a full Enhanced DBS check would be required. For more information, please contact Youth Club Leader Jane Bessant on 07776305660 or Revd. Keith Thornborough on 0151 929 3097.

Thank you!

APCM Review 2026

At the Annual Parish Council Meeting we report on the events of the past year and look forward to the future. We also make appointments and this year the following were elected:

Churchwardens: Judith Welch, Jane Copeland

PCC Members: Beth Cresswell, Jayne Cudby, Colette Hudson, Brian Taylor.

Deanery Synod Reps: Jane Copeland, Kate Holmes, Beryl Howard.

Electoral Roll: There are 73 on the Electoral Roll. 66 resident within the parish and 7 living outside the parish boundaries.

At a PCC meeting the following were appointed:

Lay Vice Chairs: Judith Welch and Jane Copeland.

Treasurer: Keith Aldis

PCC Secretary: Beryl Howard

Electoral Roll Officer: Beth Cresswell

Safeguarding Officer: Catherine Marshall

Committees: there are many different committees that serve our parish: Finance, Fabric, Social and Fund Raising, Magazine, Worship, Eco.

We are very grateful that we have so many people, both on the committees and other volunteers, who are involved in working for St Stephen's and the parish of Hightown.

'Word Together'

Bible Study

Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday

2pm



St Stephen's Church

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Mondays

Noon-til- 2

in the Church Hall

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and a tasty bowl of soup! Give what
you can!**

'Souper Troopers Summer Season'

Over the summer we are offering a sandwich/buffet lunch and a cold dessert.
All are still most welcome and there's still a 'pay-as-you-can' donation basket.
Prayer Ministry is always available. (No meeting on 31 August.)

Who's Who at St Stephen's

Vicar	Revd. Keith Thornborough
Associate Priest	Revd. John Reed
Warden	Judith Welch Judith.Churchwarden@StStephensHightown.org.uk
Warden	Jane Copeland Jane.Churchwarden@StStephensHightown.org.uk
PCC Secretary	Beryl Howard
PCC Treasurer	Keith Aldis
Gift Aid Secretary	Brian Taylor
Safeguarding	Cath Marshall cathmarshall47@yahoo.co.uk
Electoral Roll	Beth Cresswell
Sacristan Team	Hazel Roberts
Health and Safety	<i>TBA</i>
Flower Rota	Sue Taylor
CMS Secretary	Berenice Gibson
St Stephen's Youth Club	Jane Bessant
Church Hall Bookings	Sally Fraser
Focus Editor	Colette Hudson: Focus.Mag.2023@StStephensHightown.org.uk
Focus Adverts	Colette Hudson Adverts@StStephensHightown.org.uk
Focus Distribution	Mr. and Mrs. K. Bradshaw
St Stephen's Church Website	StStephensHightown.org.uk

Sunday Coffee Rota

5th Jayne Cudby

12th Dave Phillips

19th Di Aldis

26th Margaret Bird

Dates for your Diary:

26th Sept Cocktail Evening

28th November Christmas Fayre

Further details to be published

Brass Rota

July

Kevin Bradshaw



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Village Organisations and Activities

Tuesday Group, St Stephen's Hall Tuesday morning 10.30am	Beryl Howard Jan Branigan
Hightown Friendship Group 1st Wednesday at 8pm St Stephen's Hall	Marjorie Walker
Gardening Club 2nd Monday 8pm St Stephen's Hall	Hilary Munro
Bowling Club, Sandy Lane	Diana Killen
Hightown Club	Chris Scrine
Blundellsands Sailing Club	Rohan Pickard— RohanPickard@gmail.com Deryk Johnson— DerykJ@gmail.com
Yoga Classes, Hightown Club	Rose Billinge
Flower Show	Debbie Underhill underhillsathome@aol.com
Open Mic Poetry Group 3rd Thursday 7.30pm St Stephen's Church hall	Sally Anne tapiabowes@gmail.com Alex
Craft Group, Every Thursdays 1.30-3.30pm, St Stephen's Hall	Sue Taylor
Hightown Parish Council	Jenny Farrar clerk@hightownparishcouncil.uk www.hightownparishcouncil.uk
Community Library, Alt Centre, Lower Alt Rd. Mon 12-2, Weds 11.30-12.30, Fri 10-12	Linda Munro lindamunro@hotmail.com
Zumba Gold, Dance for all aged 55 plus, Mondays 9.45-10.30, St Stephen's Hall	Nicky Garsforth
Creo Dance Company Mon Tues Wed Thurs Sat Children 3 to 18 years	Georgia Cardwell

Sissinghurst Castle Garden *by Colette*

A trip to Sissinghurst Castle has long been on my wish list, so on a recent visit to my sister, who lives relatively close by, we drove through the picturesque countryside and quaint villages of East Sussex and Kent to our destination.

When prolific writer, Vita Sackville West, and her diplomat husband, Harold Nicolson, bought the castle in 1930, the site was a derelict ruin. Over the next thirty years, she and Harold transformed the run down farmstead into one of the world's most influential gardens. It is recorded that Vita was so focussed on her gardens that she would get up on a moonlit night to inspect the colours of flowers by moonlight.

Our main purpose for the visit was to explore the gardens, so armed with our waterproof macs, we explored the several 'rooms', each very different in their planting schemes, colours and scent. We were impressed by the use of natural materials to train and support the growing flowers, such as the use of long branchlets to train the sweet peas, (see photo below.)

For Vita and Harold there was beauty in all cycles of nature. A result of their creative partnership, the garden is in tune with each season. For me, I felt very lucky to have visited in June, when each room was a riot of colour and scent. I would highly recommend a visit, if you are ever in that corner of England.



Prayer Prompts for June

From St Augustine of Hippo

Week 1. Pray as though everything depended upon God. Work as though everything depended upon you..

Week 2. Men go abroad to wonder at the heights of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motions of the stars, and they pass by themselves without wondering.

Week 3. God judged it better to bring good out of evil than to suffer no evil to exist.

Week 4. My mind withdrew its thoughts from experience, extracting itself from the contradictory throng of sensuous images, that it might find out what that light was wherein it was bathed...And thus, with the flash of one hurried glance it attained to the vision of That Which Is.

*Let us pray for the people of:
Old Acre, Larkhill Grove, St George's Rd, Grasmere Rd and Mark Rd.*

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Please give it a go!

The Editor's Victoria Sponge Recipe

With the Village Show / Hightown Flower Show fast approaching, I have a suggestion for a prize winning recipe for this category.

Ingredients:

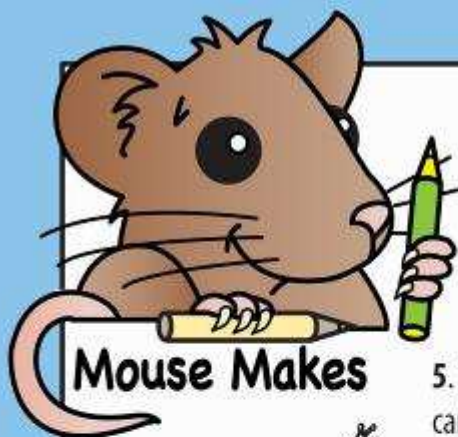
225g Sugar
225g Margarine or Butter
1 tbsp of milk (or non-dairy alternative)
4 medium eggs
225g of self-raising flour, sieved
1 tsp vanilla essence
PLUS
6 rounded tbsp good raspberry jam
Icing sugar to dredge



Method:

1. Pre-heat oven to 180°C/160°C Fan/350°F/Gas Mark 4
2. Grease and line with baking paper the bases of 2 x 20.5cm (approx.)/ 8 inch sandwich tins.
3. Cream together the butter and the sugar until pale and fluffy,
4. Add the milk and the vanilla essence, then beat in the eggs, one at a time.
5. Fold in the flour slowly and carefully..
6. Spoon the mixture equally into the cake tins and smooth evenly across the area right to edges. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, or until golden and just firm to the touch.
7. Leave the cakes in their tins for a few minutes and when slightly cooled, remove from tins and place on a cooling rack. Ensure that the bottoms face down to avoid any grid pattern on the upper surface of the cake.
8. When the sponges are completely cool, invert one of them and cover with the jam. Place the other on top with rounded side showing.
9. Dredge with the icing sugar, through a sieve. Less is more!

(This is a suggestion only. Whichever recipe you use, I wish you good luck!)



Mouse Makes

1. What bird makes
it's nest on high?
Job 39:27



2. What ate the seeds along the path?
Matthew 13:4



3. The hair of which animal
was used to make curtains?
Exodus 36:14

4. What insect
can we learn from?
Proverbs 6:6

5. What plague
came out of the
River Nile?
Exodus 8:6



7. Which animal
was Jesus
compared to?
John 1:29



8. What bird did Noah release
from the ark first?
Genesis 8:7



9 across.
In what creature's mouth
was a coin found?
Matthew 17:27



9 down.
What lives
in holes?
Matthew 8:20



12. Which bird
did the
Holy Spirit
appear as?
Luke 3:22

13. Which animal
did Jesus ride on?
Matthew 21:7

14. What bird did God provide
for food in the wilderness?
Exodus 16:13

15. What insects did John eat in the wilderness?
Matthew 3:4

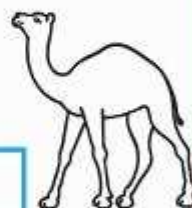


16. Which animal is the
"mightiest among beasts"?
Proverbs 30:30



B I B L E

C R E A T U R E S





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