

September/October 2026

FOCUS

Issue 307



Parish Magazine of St Stephen's, Hightown



Editor's Note

"All good gifts around us, are sent from heaven above"

This is the famous chorus, from the traditional harvest hymn, "We Plough the Fields and Scatter", originally written in German by Matthias Claudius, around 1782, and translated into English in 1861. It is one of my favourite hymns. We have so much to be grateful to God for. Last month, I gave sincere thanks to our Creator for the safe birth of a new grandchild, a boy, weighing in at a healthy 9lb 4oz.



No such thing as a free lunch? If we cast our eyes around us at this time of year, we can see many free gifts to give thanks for. In the autumn, our hedgerows and woods are full of these: blackberries, crab apples and chanterelle mushrooms, to cite a few.

One of my favourites is the sloe, suitably processed and added to a considerable quantity of gin. It is a time consuming process, but the result is pure nectar. Sloes are the fruit of the blackthorn, and as the name suggests, the bush is well endowed with needle like protuberances. According to an old recipe, handed down to me by a dear friend and former resident of Hightown, Gill Rowe, each sloe has to be pricked with a silver fork. However, if your grandmother has not yet coughed up the family plate, another sort will do. The sloes are then weighed, and with the correct proportion of sugar, put into a glass jar. After that, taking infinite pains not to spill a drop, the gin is poured on top. The addition of a little almond essence adds to the flavour, in my opinion. The jar then goes to the darkest corner of our garage, where it is shaken once per week. It takes three months to mature, so just in time for Christmas, and must be strained through muslin and bottled with loving care. If you can bear to leave it for one further year, so much the better. I have such a bottle, made in 2025, eagerly awaiting consumption this Christmas. As with all good things, it won't last long, and we have many months without before repeating the whole process again.

Enjoy the blessings of the season,
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,

I don't know about you, but I really can't believe that we are heading into Autumn, the final four months of the year! Where has that time gone?

Hopefully, you will have had the opportunity to enjoy some time out over the summer months for a break, a time of rest, refreshment or even doing something completely different for a change!

The children and young people will be returning to school; some moving classes and some new schools and starting high school. New ways of doing things, new friends to make.

Our Youth Club (age 7 upwards) and Toddler Time (preschoolers) also start up again this month. It will be good to welcome back familiar faces and also welcome new ones too!

As autumn settles in, the air turns crisp and the trees begin their slow transformation into a tapestry of gold, amber, and red. It is the favourite season of many, enjoying the changing colours and landscapes in the wonders of our natural world.

Our All-Age Service on September 6th will also be A Pet Blessing Service, where you are most welcome to bring along your pets for a blessing, giving thanks to God for their companionship. Weather permitting, we will hopefully hold the service outside on the grass. There will a short said Eucharist at 9:30am that day.

The following weekend, Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th, we are having a Prayer Festival. With this edition of Focus, there is a 'Prayer Card' for you to make any requests for prayer... for someone you know, for a situation, or a thanksgiving. Please just drop the card off at church or the vicarage. All prayers received will be prayed at Sunday Evensong. The Church will be open each day from 10am until 4pm for prayer and there will be several Prayer Stations around the church to engage with if you would find that helpful. Light refreshments will also be available. Please do come along. All are most welcome.

Prayer is the link that connects us with God.

Sunday 4th October will be our All-Age Eucharist & Harvest Celebration. We give thanks to God for his provision for us, and all that is good in our lives. We are truly blessed.

'All good gifts around us, are sent from heaven above; then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord, for all his love.'

***God Bless,
Keith***



Harvest Festival

Sunday 4th October 10.30am



Church Services at St Stephen's in September/October

Wednesday 2 nd	10:30	Eucharist
Friday 4 th	09:30	Morning Prayer
Sunday 6 th Trinity 14	09:30	Said Eucharist
	10:30	All Age Service with Pet Blessing
	18:00	Evensong
Wednesday 9 th	10:30	Eucharist
	19:00	Sanctuary @ Seven
Friday 11 th	09:30	Morning Prayer
Sunday 13 th Trinity 15	10:30	Eucharist
	16:00	Toddler Church
	18:00	Evensong
Wednesday 15 th	10:30	Eucharist
Friday 18 th	09:30	Morning Prayer
Sunday 20 th Trinity 16	10:30	Eucharist [Sunday School]
	18:00	Evensong
Wednesday 23 rd	10:30	Eucharist
Friday 25 th	09:30	Morning Prayer
Sunday 27 th Trinity 17	10:30	Eucharist
	18:00	BCP Holy Communion
Wednesday 30 th	10:30	Eucharist
Friday 2 nd October	09:30	Morning Prayer
Sunday 4 th Trinity 18	10:30	All-Age Eucharist for Harvest
	18:00	Evensong
Wednesday 7 th	10:30	Eucharist
Friday 9 th	09:30	Morning Prayer
Sunday 11 th Trinity 19	10:30	Eucharist with Healing
	16:00	Toddler Church
	18:00	Evensong
Wednesday 14 th	10:30	Eucharist
	19:00	Sanctuary @ Seven
Friday 16 th	09:30	Morning Prayer
Sunday 18 th +St Luke	10:30	Eucharist [Sunday School]
	18:00	Evensong
Wednesday 21 st	10:30	Eucharist
Friday 23 rd	09:30	Morning Prayer
Sunday 25 th Last after Trinity	10:30	Eucharist
	18:00	BCP Holy Communion
Wednesday 28 th	10:30	Eucharist

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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!



'Word Together' **Bible Study**

Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday

2pm

St Stephen's Church

'Souper Troopers'
Mondays

Noon-til- 2
in the Church Hall

All Welcome!



Please do come along for company
and a tasty bowl of soup! Give what
you can!

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	Kate Holmes Kateellis1983@gmail.com
Gift Aid Secretary	Brian Taylor
Safeguarding	Cath Marshall cathmarshall47@yahoo.co.uk
Electoral Roll	Beth Cresswell
Sacristan Team	Hazel Roberts
Health and Safety	TBA
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

See Church porch for
details

Dates for your Diary:

26th Sept Cocktail Evening

28th November Christmas Fayre

Further details to be published

Brass Rota

September

Hazel Roberts

October

Colette Hudson
and Jayne Cudby



Prices for advertising per annum:

Full page: £550

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PET BLESSING SERVICE

Sunday 6th September

**At 10.30am on the
Church field (hall if wet!)**

**All very welcome to join
us as we give thanks for
our pets and all they
bring to our lives.**

(Please ensure that all pets are safely secured!!!!)

HIGHTOWN FRIENDSHIP GROUP

We are a group of ladies who meet the first Wednesday every month, at 8pm, in St Stephen's Church Hall to enjoy chatting and social interaction.

Each month we have a different guest speaker, on a variety of interesting subjects.

We also have a charity evening supporting local organisations.

Twice a year we have a meal out in various venues.

In addition to the above, we have a book club. We have four to six weeks to read the chosen book, then meet up to discuss it. It is very interesting to hear how the different aspects of each book appeal to each person, or not.

Why not come along and meet us?

A warm welcome is extended to all newcomers.

Marjorie Walker (Chairman)

Smile Lines

A little boy at Sunday School had listened to the story of when Jesus had changed the water into wine at a wedding. Afterwards, the teacher asked him what he had learned from the story. He replied, "If you're having a wedding make sure Jesus is there!"

Prayer Prompts

From the Centre for Action and Contemplation (CAC) in New Mexico

Week 1. When God took on flesh in Jesus Christ, the uncreated and the created, the eternal and the temporal, the divine and the human became united. This unity meant that all that is mortal now, points to the immortal and all that is finite now, points to the infinite.

Week 2. In and through Jesus Christ, all creation has become like a splendid veil, through which the face of God is revealed to us. All that is, is sacred, because all that is, speaks of God's redeeming love. Seas and winds, mountains and trees, sun, moon and stars and all the animals and people have become sacred windows offering us glimpses of God.

Week 3. How do we live in creation? Do we relate to it as a place full of 'things' we can use for whatever we need? Or do we see creation first as a sacred space where God reveals to us the immense beauty of the Divine?

Week 4. Only when we relate to all that surrounds us as created by the same God as created us and as the place where God appears to us and calls us to worship and adoration can we recognise the sacredness of all God's handiwork.

Let us pray for the people of:

Alt Rd, Village Way, The Roundway, Lower Alt Rd and Thistledown Drive



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St Stephen's Church Choir

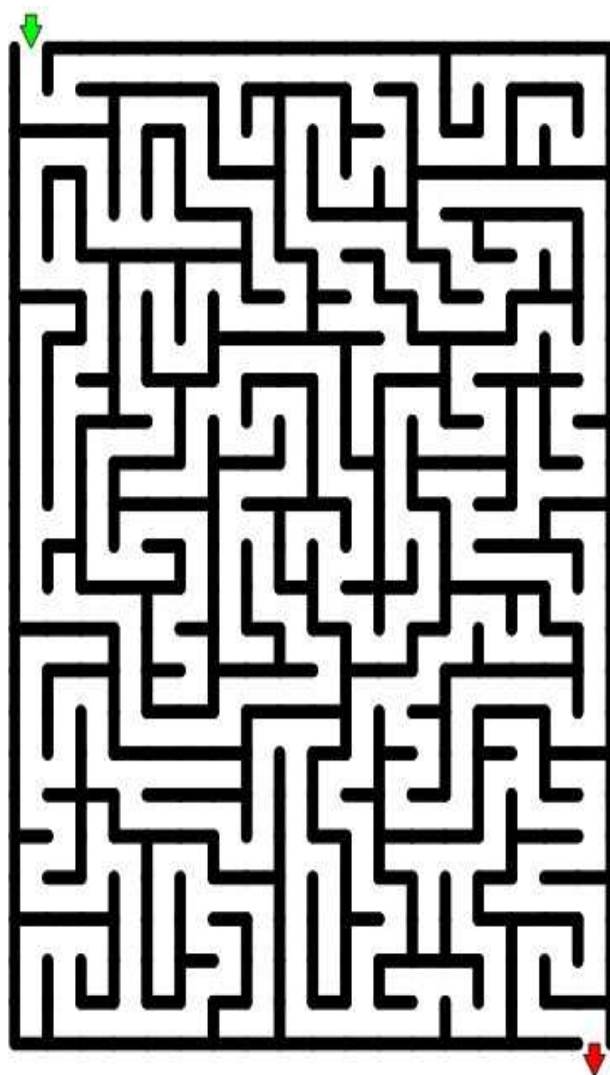
St Stephen's RSCM affiliated Church Choir meets for rehearsals on the first and third Mondays each month and supports the singing at the Sunday morning Eucharist. The choir often sing whilst the congregation come up to receive Holy Communion.

Do you enjoy singing?

Why not come and join us? You would be most welcome. If you would like to find out more, please have a word with Berenice Gibson on [07454988479](tel:07454988479) or Judith Welch on [07944542110](tel:07944542110). Many thanks!



...I take it our local supermarket has a rather good offer on tinned peas at the moment!



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You can also contact me on 07926 587776 to make an appointment.

Caroline Speakman

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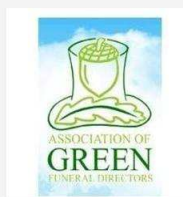
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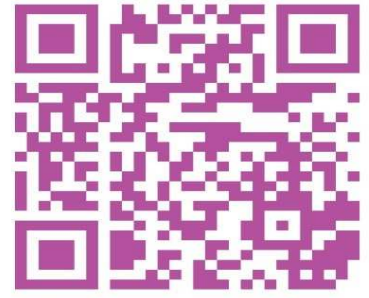


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Village Organisations and Activities

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

HORNBY TRAINS AND DINKY TOYS

It was also 90 years ago, on 21st September 1936, that Frank Hornby, the British inventor, died. He is remembered for the immensely popular Meccano, Hornby Model Railways and Dinky Toys.

Hornby was born into a Liverpool working-class family and was said to have been inspired by the industry in the city. He was brought up as a Methodist and was interested in music, having a strong tenor voice. He met his future wife, Clara, when they were members of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society choir: they married in 1887 and had three children.

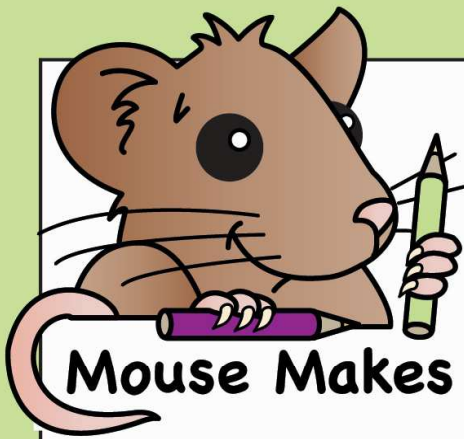
To amuse his two sons he constructed a model crane using perforated strips of metal held together with nuts and bolts. It could be dismantled and the parts used to build other things: this formed the basis of Meccano, which when refined proved hugely popular.

After the first world war he turned his attention to the construction of toy trains, powered by clockwork. At first, these were made from kits, but it was not long before they were sold as ready-made train sets - a perfect children's toy. Dinky toys started as an accessory but soon developed into big-sellers in their own right.

Later, Hornby, who was described as polite and a "keen observer of morality", became a Conservative MP for Everton. In his youth he joined the anti-alcohol Band of Hope and set up a number of groups and clubs dedicated to the improvement of society. He was a great believer in determination and the ability to overcome setbacks.

This enabled him to become not only a visionary but a practical creator in toy development and production. His persistence in adapting his original ideas and making them workable brought him deserved success in producing three of the most popular lines of toys in the 20th century.





THE TRUE VINE

Who is the vine?

— — — — —
John 15:1

What does Jesus ask us to do?

"Go and bear

— — — — —"
John 15:16

What happens to the branches that do not remain in the vine?

Thrown into the

— — — — —
and

— — — — —
John 15:6



READ
John 15:1-17

How many times does Jesus use the word **FRUIT**?

What does Jesus command?

To — — — — —
one another.
John 15:12,17

How many times does Jesus command us to **LOVE** one another?

H T H R O W N A W A Y
I R A B I D E W I S B
D U F R U I T F U L U
N E R A J S I A M J R
C V U N F C U T V P N
L J I C W I T H E R S
E O T H O P J E S U S
A Y V W R L C R O N V
N G A R D E N E R E I
O S F J E S I S W S N
E R E M A I N F I R E

JESUS • I AM • TRUE • VINE • FATHER
GARDENER • FRUIT • FRUITFUL
BRANCH • PRUNES • CUT • WITHERS
CLEAN • THROWN AWAY • FIRE • BURNS
REMAIN • ABIDE • DISCIPLES • JOY

From Beth's Kitchen



COURGETTE AND CHEESE FLAN

I have been the lucky recipient of some beautiful homegrown golden globe courgettes. They deserve something special and so I made this recipe which is easy to make, delicious to eat and freezes well for future use. The recipe suggests using a 22cm flan dish but that would be too big for me, now on my own. I made 2 x 12cm ones and 3 individual ones from the following ingredients. The smaller ones being handy for the odd, unexpected guest.

Ingredients

225g flour quantity shortcrust pastry	340g courgettes
55g butter	1 clove of garlic, crushed
2 tbsp plain flour	½ pint milk
Grated zest of 1 lemon	2 tsp lemon
110g Cheddar cheese, grated	1 egg, separated
2 tbsp fresh white breadcrumbs	Chopped fresh chives to garnish
Grated zest of 1 lemon	2 tsp lemon

Method

Preheat oven to 190C. Line dish or dishes with pastry and bake blind until golden.

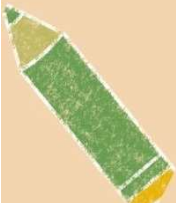
Wash, trim and slice the courgettes. Place on a wire rack set over a tray and sprinkle with 1 tsp of salt. Leave to disgorge for 30-60 minutes, then rinse well.

Melt the butter in a large frying pan and add the garlic, lemon zest, courgettes, salt and pepper. Saute for 2 minutes until the courgettes begin to soften. Add lemon juice and lift courgettes onto a plate.

Stir the flour into the butter, cook for a minute and then add milk. Bring to the boil and then simmer for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat, add $\frac{3}{4}$ cheese, seasoning to taste and beat in the egg yolk. Whisk the egg white until stiff and fold into the sauce, using a metal spoon and spoon into pastry case/cases.

Arrange the courgettes on top and scatter the remaining cheese and breadcrumbs over. Bake for 15 minutes and garnish before serving

Serves 4



ST STEPHEN'S CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL



EVERY 3RD SUNDAY @ 10:30AM



Toddler Time

A new fun group for Toddlers 0-4yr and their carers!

St. Stephen's Church Hall

Fridays 10am-11:30am term time

Play- Craft- Snack- Story- Songs- Fun!

£2 PER CHILD. ALL WELCOME!

Toddler Church

St Stephen's Church

2nd Sunday of each month 4pm

A service for pre-schoolers and their families

Fun songs, a bible story, craft and refreshments

We look forward to meeting you!

Youth Club

From age 7

Friday Evening Term Time

6pm until 7.15pm

£2.00 includes snacks and drinks

Contact: Jane Bessant 07776 305 660

**Please note that there will be no youth club
during school holidays**