

May 2025

FOCUS

Issue 294



Parish Magazine of St Stephen's, Hightown



Magazine part-sponsored by John Gibson - notary services



Editor's Note

Since the May Day bank holiday was first introduced in the late 1970s, we have come to associate it with a long weekend off work, but its origins go back much further in time. The pagan festivals of Flora, the Roman goddess of flowers and the ancient Celtic festival of Beltane, both marked the mid-point between the spring equinox on 21st March to the summer solstice, three months later.

For centuries, the English have celebrated May day with a range of traditional pastimes: from maypoles and morris dancing to the crowning of the May Queen. Every village school would have had an anchoring point for the maypole, so that the children could practise the intricate weaving in and out. The village school in which I taught, had a May procession in honour of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. The girls wore white dresses, with blue sashes around their waists and, on their heads, a circlet of bluebells. The boys wore blue sashes over their blazers. They all looked incredibly smart.

We also mark this time of year because it is when we can finally say goodbye to winter and celebrate thoughts of warmer months ahead. Having said that, I remember my late mother telling me of one year when it snowed on May 1st!

During this busy time for the natural world, bird eggs will hatch, (I've been observing the mating pairs in my garden and I know exactly where the maternity wards will be), babies will be fed, and flowers will bloom. Millions, perhaps billions of insects will buzz, bite and sting their way through their brief, yet most useful lives, and indeed through ours! I, for one, will not be mowing my lawn for a while, to encourage them.

Wishing you all the excitement of the spring,
Colette.

Entries for future issues of Focus to be sent to

Focus.Mag.2023@StStephensHightown.org.uk

Please submit before last day of month

Reverend Janet has come to join us at St Stephen's , Hightown, and we are delighted to welcome her with us.

Pondering! “How did we get the unimaginable”?

By the Rev. Janet Eastwood

Quite a few of you will remember that I helped at some Sunday services when St. Stephen's was waiting for a new vicar. Now ,Reverend Keith is the vicar and has asked me to write and tell you how I came to be a priest.

I cannot remember not being part of a church.

When I was 8 years old, we moved from Edenfield in East Lancashire to Crosby and we joined All Saints' Church. After leaving school I went to work at George Henry Lee (now known as John Lewis) on a management course becoming a Section Manager and then a Staff Training Manager as we introduced 'new' computerised tills. I learned so much in the ten years there.

After a few years, I became restless, trying to find new work but nothing came, until a friend, a new curate, who teasing me said that he thought that I should become a deaconess because of my faith. I talked this over with my parents and spoke to the (late) lovely Frances Briscoe. They could not understand why I had not done this before! Was this the cause of my restlessness?

I talked to my Managing Director who said “Just tell me what you are doing”.

“I want to become a Deaconess” I replied

“Thank heavens” he said, “I thought you were pregnant!”

He supported me all the way through ,until I left in early 1985, then I went to Wycliffe Hall in Oxford to attend from September 1985, studying and learning History, The Bible, Faith, and (hated) learning to speak Greek - giving that up as soon as I could!

I was one of only 3 women hoping to become potential deaconesses, whereas, the men on our course were working to become deacons prior to becoming priests.

Little did we know that, sometime later, we were going to be amongst the first women allowed to become priests! My unimaginable dream had become imaginable!

To be continued.....

St Stephen's Church Services for May

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|--|
| Friday 2nd | 09:30 | Morning Prayer |
| Sunday 4 th -Easter 3 | 10:30 | All-Age Eucharist |
| | 16:00 | Toddler Church <small>1st Sunday this month only!</small> |
| | 18:00 | Evensong |
| Wednesday 7th | 10:30 | Eucharist |
| Friday 9th | 09:30 | Morning Prayer |
| Sunday 11 th -Easter 4 | 10:30 | Eucharist |
| | 16:00 | Churches Together Pause for Hope Service |
| | 18:00 | Evensong |
| Wednesday 14th | 10:30 | Eucharist |
| | 19:00 | Sanctuary @ Seven |
| Friday 16th | 09:30 | Morning Prayer |
| Sunday 18 th -Easter 5 | 10:30 | Eucharist |
| | 18:00 | Evensong |
| Wednesday 21st | 10:30 | Eucharist |
| Friday 23rd | 09:30 | Morning Prayer |
| Sunday 25 th -Easter 6 | 10:30 | Eucharist |
| | 18:00 | BCP Holy Communion |
| Wednesday 28th | 10:30 | Eucharist |
| Thursday 29th | 19:30 | Ascension Day Eucharist – Holy Trinity Formby |
| Friday 30th | 09:30 | Morning Prayer |

VE80 Service

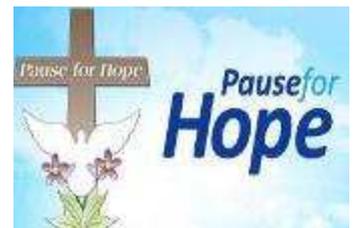
St Stephen's Church

Thursday 8th May

7:00pm

Churches Together

St Stephen's Church with
Crosby Community Choir
Sunday May 11th at 4pm



For people who have had any connection with cancer

Children's Church

10.30am Sunday 18th May and every third Sunday in
St Stephen's Hall

All children, and parents of young children are very
welcome

Prayer prompts May

From the writings of Julian of Norwich

- Week 1:** God is our true repose. And he desires to be known, and is pleased that we should rest in him. Nothing less than God can satisfy us.
- Week 2:** So are we spirit and flesh, clothed head to toe an the goodness of God.
- Week 3:** Behold, I am in all things. Behold, I accomplish all things. Behold, I never withdraw my arms from my work.
- Week 4:** In my vision, Jesus informed me of everything necessary for me to know. And he told me: Sin is necessary, but everything will turn out for the good, and all will be well, and everything will be well.

Let us pray for the people of:

Larkhill Grove, St George's Rd, Grasmere Rd and Mark Rd

Quiz Night

A great time was had by all, at the quiz night, in St Stephen's Hall.





PODS

Altcar Camp Commandant, Carl Gardner, addressed the April Coffee Morning gathering.

He advised that the permission to use the PODs for rehabilitating service men and women has finally been received, and they look forward to opening them very soon.

He thanked, most sincerely, the folks of St Stephen's Church and Hightown Village for their wonderful support over the years with fundraising for the PODs. The funds raised at alternate coffee mornings are given to the PODs.

There will be an opportunity for all to visit the PODs with a welcome barbecue.

St Stephen's PCC has pledged ongoing support.

Thank You So Much!

St Stephen's would like to extend their thanks to the Amadeus Choir for their generosity and support in raising £950 for the church, with their wonderful Springtime Serenade.



Coffee Morning

Saturday 3rd May

10:00am—12:00 noon

St Stephen's Church Hall

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



Brass Rota
May
Hazel Roberts



Sunday Coffee Rota May

4th Beryl Howard
11th Dave Phillips
18th Di Aldis
25th Margaret Bate

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Christian Aid Week

11th-17th May

In this month's issue we are extending an invitation to you, to give to Christian Aid using the envelope attached. The envelope can be handed in at the village shop or posted through St Stephen's Church letter box.

Meet Aurelia:

"Climate change has been killing our crops, and this is our food. An inspirational farmer and community leader, Aurelia, and her family belong to the Indigenous Q'eqchi' community of the Alta Verapaz region.



The climate crisis and industrial plantations have changed Q'eqchi' land dramatically. Gruelling heatwaves, savage storms and unpredictable seasons are ravaging farms. Industrial agriculture is taking over the last of the region's natural resources to feed the world's richest countries.

Many of the vital crops that Aurelia depends on are withering and dying before her eyes.

When Aurelia was two years old, her father, Ricardo, brought her to the land that she now calls home.

We were fortunate enough to meet Ricardo and hear him talk about how the Alta Verapaz has changed over five decades.

"I came to this community when I was 25 years old, I'm 78 now. This was a forest with different types of trees. You could really feel the freshness of the environment while walking through the mountains, under the shade of these trees." says Ricardo.

It's a heartbreaking injustice that a community should be threatened by a climate crisis they didn't cause. Aurelia, along with the women and girls of her community, has the twice-daily challenge of collecting water from a cenote – a natural sinkhole like a cave, with water at the bottom.

"Climate change is getting worse every day. It's killing our plantations and it's

killing us.” says Aurelia.

Aurelia’s farm, first and foremost, feeds her family. She tries to grow a range of crops so she can provide them with a balanced diet that contains the vitamins and minerals they need to thrive. In this way, Aurelia can protect her loved ones from malnutrition and ill health. But, as increasingly intense conditions kill her crops, Aurelia’s ability to safeguard her family slips away.

Aurelia’s observed many impacts of the climate crisis, including extended dry seasons, the degradation of soil, contaminated water and a decreasing diversity of plants and crops.

“There was a prediction this would happen in the future, but it has come earlier. This is very worrying for our Guatemala’s dry and rainy seasons dictate that farming families like Aurelia’s must carefully plan how and when to use their harvests.

It’s essential that they build reserves to sustain them through lean periods. A pressing concern is that smaller yields will result in smaller reserves, leaving people exceptionally vulnerable to hunger in between harvests, especially our kids and grandkids. “ says Aurelia.

When Aurelia discovered the work of our partner, Congcoop, she put herself forward to attend the specialist agricultural training on offer, along with 22 members of nearby communities.

With funding from Christian Aid, Congcoop supports communities to return to Indigenous farming practices and adopt agroecological approaches that conserve their land, culture and livelihood.

Thanks to Aurelia’s ever-growing knowledge base, she’s now cultivating cacao, sugarcane, cinnamon, corn and pineapples. It’s steady progress that holds promise. Aurelia’s resolute hope has also inspired her to develop and lead other activities in her community, including producing chocolate, establishing a farmers’ market, and fighting for women’s rights. Aurelia’s story reminds us that even the most proactive, determined and ambitious among us can need a helping hand in life.

Your support is urgently needed to ensure we can be there for indigenous families who are bearing the full force of the climate crisis.

Together, we can be more like Aurelia, and put the unstoppable power of hope into action, because a brighter, fairer future is possible.

Who's Who at St Stephen's

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Vicar | Revd Keith Thornborough |
| Warden | Judith Welch Judith.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 Croxton |
| 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 |

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Deryk Johnson - Vice Commodore
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You can also contact me on 07926 587776 to make an appointment.

Caroline Speakman

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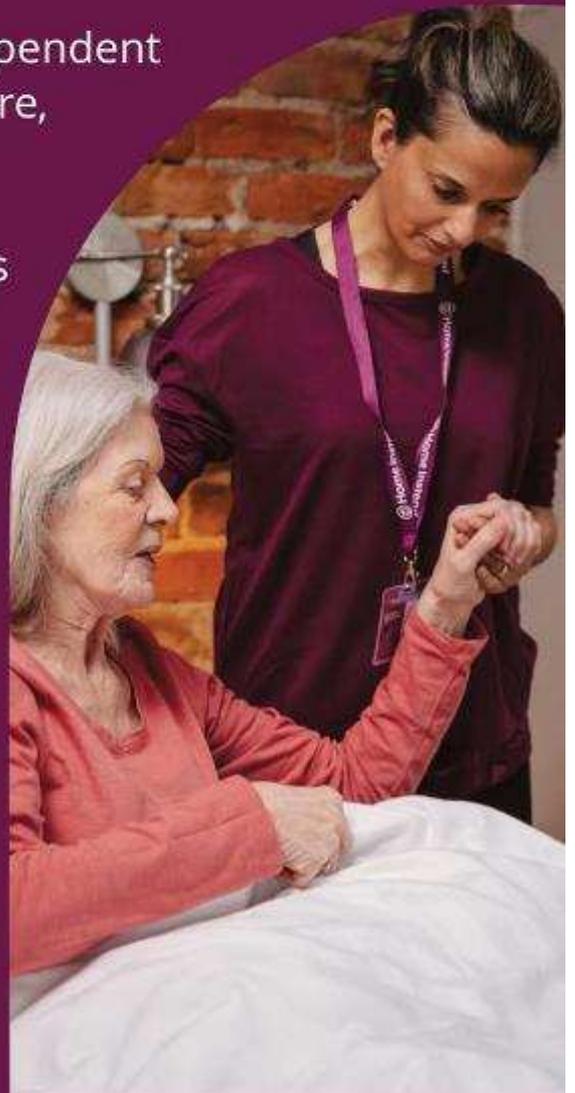
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Hi

I'm Gaynor Stobie, a 54 year mum of 2, Personal Trainer, nutrition, weight loss & lifestyle coach with over 15 years of experience . I'm the owner of B-Fit, based in Hightown and the creator of the '7 step B-Fit B-Fabulous Formula'.



The average 45-year-old woman will try 60 diets in her lifetime, and 95% of people who go on diets weigh more 2 years later than when they started. I don't believe in 'fad' diets! Instead, I believe everyone should be able to enjoy healthy, nutritious food for life as well as the occasional bit of whatever they fancy. It's more about the quality of what you eat, rather than how much you eat! As a nation, we need to stop obsessing about weight loss and calorie counting and instead focus on optimum health and being the best version of ourselves. The results I consistently achieve with my clients are a testament to this approach and I've an abundance of success stories and testimonials, some of which you can read on my website www.b-fit.uk.com

I have a private studio in Hightown and I specialise in helping women of all shapes and sizes to B-Fit and fabulous, feel 10 years younger, lose weight, and tone up without doing faddy diets or spending endless hours in the gym.

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I do this all by using tailor-made and proven, nutrition and lifestyle programs and workouts that are sustainable and become an enjoyable part of everyday life. Once we achieve optimum health, we can achieve and maintain our optimum size.

Improving women's health is something I'm very passionate about and I've been writing my B-Fit blog for many years covering a wide array of topics to help women improve their health such as: how to prevent cravings, healthy recipes, foods to help you sleep, how stress makes you fat ,tips for a flatter tummy, how to balance your hormones, tips to help menopause , why we need to detox and much more! (You can find my blog on my website www.b-fit.uk.com)

I do hope you find my bio of interest and I would love to share some health, fitness and nutrition tips with you in the future. In the meantime if you have any questions or would like a FREE confidential chat feel free to call me on 07748 298 728 or email on gaynor@b-fit.uk.com

Healthy regards,

Gaynor

Cacao, Pistachio and Almond Energy Balls

From Gaynor's Kitchen

When you're ravenous, and there's not much healthy food around, that's when your most tempted to make poor food choices. Well, look no further. I've the antidote in these energy balls. And what's not to love as they're ...

- Full of sustainable energy to keep you going
- Sweetness from the dates and a chocolatey note from the cacao
- Healthy: containing good fats, protein, fibre, and antioxidants, plus they're alkaline
- Quick and easy to knock together
- Can be stored in the fridge for 7 days

INGREDIENTS

- 4 medjool dates
- 1 cup ground almonds
- 1/2 cup shredded coconut
- 1/3 cup coconut oil
- 1/3 cup cacao powder
- 1/3 cup pistachios
- 1/4 cup almonds
- 1 tbsp chia seeds



METHOD

- Remove the date seeds, and soak in hot water for 1 hour
- Soak and soften the almonds in hot water for 4 hours
- Blend the dates, ground almonds, almonds, half of the pistachios, shredded coconut, coconut oil, cacao and chia together
- Let the mix stand for a few minutes to allow the chia to soften and expand
- Crush the remaining pistachios
- Divide the raw mixture into 12 rolled balls
- Roll and coat each ball in the crushed pistachios
- Refrigerate

Find lots more healthy, quick, delicious recipes on my B-Fit website: www.b-fit.uk.com

Enjoy!

Village Organisations and Activities

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| 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, Tues 1-3, | 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 |

God in the Sciences

This series is written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.

Humility

A few years ago I visited the Smithsonian Museum's Hall of Human Origins. Our guide, the curator of anthropology, was keen to help Christians understand his research. Whatever you make of the evidence for human evolution, the fact remains that other species a bit like us were around before we came on the scene – or in the case of Neanderthals, at the same time.

Part of the exhibit included lifelike reconstructions of the face and hair of several different hominins, displayed on pillars at the right height for each species. So I could crouch down to 'meet' Homo floriensis or stand tall to look into the eyes of Homo heidelbergensis. Most of these – beings? creatures? – were on other branches of the evolutionary tree to us, and we share a common ancestor much further back. I did, however, feel as if I was meeting my forebears.

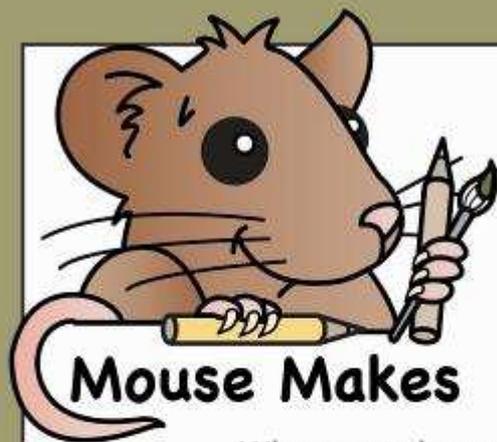
As I walked between the statues I asked myself, "Why us?" There's evidence that Neanderthals used symbolism as we do, and also buried their dead. Did they have the potential to evolve to a point where they could do similar things to us? The curator explained how, as the ice ages came and went, human beings moved around but other species appear to have stayed put and suffered the consequences – they just weren't ready yet for that big change. As I took in the displays about how we began to gather socially around a fire, make music or write, I felt humbled. We managed to adapt, but we could so easily have disappeared with the rest.

In his book *The Message of Creation*, theologian David Wilkinson shares his view that being made in the image of God has nothing to do with our own cleverness or abilities, but is a gift. God created us on purpose (I believe through the long slow process of evolution) and chose to enter into a relationship with us, making us His representatives on earth. Thankfully I don't have to figure out how to interact with other human-like hominins today. I do, however, have an equal share in humankind's God-given commission to tend and keep creation. Am I ready to go further than ensuring my own species' survival - not necessarily because we have evolved further than our ice-age ancestors, but because I have one of the 'new hearts' promised in Ezekiel 11:19? Can I work together, in a true spirit of humility, with people from all over the world to ensure the full diversity of life can flourish?

Pippa's Song

The year's at the spring;
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew pearled;

The lark's on the wing
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his heaven -
All's right with the world.
By Robert Browning

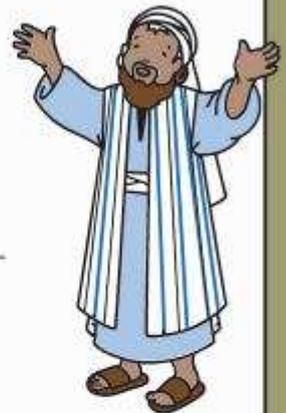


Mouse Makes

MIRACLES OF PETER

At which temple gate did the crippled man lay?

Acts 3:1-10



Who were the man and wife who lied to God?

and

Acts 5:1-11

People carried the sick into the streets so that when Peter came by at least his

might fall on them.

Acts 5:12-16

How long had Aeneas been paralysed for?

----- years

Acts 9:32-35

Where had Tabitha's body been laid? in the -----

Acts 9:36-42



"And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly."
Acts 6:7

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After Jesus ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles and Peter was able to perform many miracles in Jesus' name. *See the book of ACTS*

PETER • SIGNS • WONDERS • MIRACLES • HEALED
CRIPPLE • LAME • WALK • LEAPING • PRAISING • LIED • DIED • SICK
AENEAS • PARALISED • TABITHA • ILL • PRAYED • ALIVE



Find the words from the questions too!

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Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in John chapter 5 verses 1-18

Jesus was in Jerusalem for a festival, and he visited the pool of Bethesda. People said that an angel sometimes made the water ripple.

Sick people waited for the water to ripple, because they thought that the first person in would be healed.



Jesus went up to a man who had been sick for 38 years.



Do you want to be healed?

I've got no-one to put me in the pool, so I can never get in first.



Pick up your mat and walk!



He was healed! The man picked up his mat and walked around. But it was the Sabbath.

God had given the Law that the Sabbath day was a rest day (Ex20:8-11)... but to make sure it was kept, the Jewish leaders had made up rules, and then more rules so that anything that even might be work was banned.

The Jewish Leaders saw the healed man.



It's the Sabbath! You can't carry a mat, that's 'work'!

The man who healed me told me to carry it.



Which man?

I don't know.

Later, Jesus found the man in the temple.



You are healed now, but don't sin any more, or something worse might happen to you.

Now the man knew who Jesus was...



he went straight back to the Jewish leaders to tell them.

and they went to Jesus



You were working on the Sabbath!

My father, God, doesn't stop working on the Sabbath so I keep on working as well

Not only does he disobey our Sabbath rules, but he says he is equal to God!



We definitely have to kill him.



Toddler Time

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

St. Stephen's Church Hall

Fridays 10:00am-11:30am term time

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

ALL WELCOME!

Toddler Church

St Stephen's Church

Sunday May 4th 4:00pm

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

£2.50 includes snacks and drinks

Contact: Jane Bessant

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