

The Riverporter

A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR READERS

COVERING THE NEWS FOR ST IVES AND AROUND

Issue I24: 9 December 2022

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

Use it or lose it!

The Riverporter had a call from one of our readers, Catherine Morton, who had visited the Monday Market in town and was surprised how quiet it was. She spoke with a stallholder who told her that they'd had few customers and were considering not returning after Christmas.

Catherine rang us in the hope that The Riverporter could help promote the market, which she said has beautiful flowers, plants and, in this cost conscious time, lots of bargains. She was concerned that, since Covid disrupted everything, many people have not returned to the market.

It's no surprise

The Riverporter has highlighted the problems that our famous market has had over the past five years. For about 800 years Mondays were very busy with stalls filling the town centre, something we reported on in RP90 in July 21 when the market was due to return to the town centre after Covid.

Recently we have been critical of the District Council, which is responsible for the market, and doesn't seem to promote it well or encourage traders to come. Indeed in RP108, last April, a Market Supervisor was quoted as saying 'the market died ages ago'.

We know what needs to be done

It's not exactly rocket science to understand what needs to be done. You need good stalls and lots of customers. The more customers, the more stallholders will be attracted here, and vice-versa. You get stallholders by treating them well and you get more customers by making it easy for them to visit the market. Take Ely for example, where parking is free and stallholders say they like it there. Their market is very busy as readers have often told us.

So unless HDC pull their finger out and make an effort, including having a period of free parking, we fear the end could be nigh. Perhaps they should have spent the £100,000 they wasted on the 'Masterplan' to help our Market out and solve the parking problems instead. But it is also up to us to ... use it or lose it!

Mayor welcomes Santa and the Chief Snowman



Santa and the Chief Snowman were welcomed by crowds of cheering children and their parents as they arrived by boat at The Quay last Saturday (see below).

The Mayor Phil Pope, accompanied by Macebearer Phil Ganny, welcomed them aboard land (above) and accompanied Santa to the Corn Exchange, where 156 children visited Santa in his grotto over the weekend and received a free gift.

Organised by FES, Santa will be in his grotto from 2 to 4.30pm on 10th, 11th, 17th and 18th December, and every child who visits receives a FREE gift.

Photos courtesy of Alan Bennett.

NEWS FLASH

So 80's Night - change of timing!

Please note due to the football the Corn Exchange will be opening the doors at 6:30pm and showing the England v France match on the big screen. Therefore So 80's will be coming on at a later time of 9PM, not 8:15 as previously advertised.

Calendar of events 2022/3

SEND DETAILS OF YOUR EVENT TO: EDITOR@THERIVERPORTER.UK

DECEMBER

Thursday 15th December - Christmas Cracker Concert - 2pm at the Corn Exchange. An afternoon of Christmas entertainment and laughter with Neil Richardson and Mark Burton.

Saturday 17th - Christmas Craft and Vintage Market - 10am to 3pm - Corn Exchange.

Saturday 17th - Snowman Trail Maps to be handed in by 4pm to participating shops.

Saturday 17th - St Ives Choral Society Christmas Concert - at the Free Church.

Tickets £8, under-12s free, available from the Free Church Fair Trade Shop or www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-ives-choral-society.

Sunday 18th - Christingle Service - 11 am St Ives Free Church.

Monday 19th - Snowman Festival Trail Draw and best Snowman Display Awards.

Friday 23rd - Riverport Singers Christmas Concert - 4pm St Ives Corn Exchange.

Friday 23rd - Christmas-Sing-Along - with mulled wine and brass band - 7pm at St Ives Corn Exchange. A FREE event.

JANUARY 2023

Wednesday 11 - Lecture: A Highland Thing? 18th-20th Century Scottish Art at St Ives Corn Exchange, 2:30pm. Guests £5.00. The Arts Society, Huntingdonshire.huntsarts.org.

Saturday 14th - COSI Winter concert - 7pm, in the Free Church, St Ives. Mendelssohn's violin concerto, op 64, Ruy Blas overture - Mendelssohn, String Sinfonia no 3 - Mendelssohn

Symphony no 104 - Haydn.



Read on-line at www.theriverporter.uk or see our Facebook page. Email: editor@theriverporter.uk

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The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

When we published the first issue of *The Riverporter* in January 2018 we never envisaged that, five years and 124 issues later, we would still be reporting the news for the people of St Ives and the surrounding area.

And what a five years it has been. It may have been possible to predict some of the events we have experienced, such as climate problems, or even a pandemic but no one could have envisioned such a relentless range of issues that have coloured our world during this relatively short period.

The Riverporter concentrates on reporting local news and more than ever this has been affected by world and national news. Particularly the effects of the pandemic and more recently the economic problems exacerbated by the war in Ukraine and the failure of the world's nations to deal with the climate crisis.

Looking back at our reports we have covered a wide range of topics - some good, some bad and one or two ugly ones. Below are just a sample, but you can see every issue on line at www.theriverporter.uk or for those lucky people who ordered *The History of St Ives* they will soon have a copy of every issue we have printed to date.

The Good

Surprisingly we really do like good news and we feature lots of positive stories about the good work done by local groups, such as St Ives Rotary Club and Eco Action for example. However one of the best good news story of the past five years has to be the Inspiring Message by Police Officer No.7173 we featured in RP64 in July 2020. The Facebook post was about an unusual incident involved a man suffering heart failure while driving with his young son in the car. Titled '**I STAND IN AWE OF YOU**' it praised all those people who came to help with the difficult situation.

The last verse said:

I STAND IN AWE OF YOU

We are living in a world at the moment, where there is so much uncertainty and understandable fear, but with all of the above, it just goes to show that humanity and kindness, I am happy to say will always prevail. Thank you doesn't seem enough, but thank you to you all. You are what makes the world a good place.

The Bad

It's a fact that bad news often features more than good news, most probably because people more often comment on something they dislike or on a bad experience rather than highlight a good experience. Several organisations and people, that have performed poorly, have featured more than once but one business seems to have caused upset more than most, namely The Dolphin Hotel.

Our very first issue reported on a website called St Ives Matters on which the Dolphin Hotel's

new management was criticised and there have been numerous stories of strange goings-on, such as we featured in RP93 in September 2021, titled **150 Facebook comments declare their amazement**. The Dolphin posted a notice at it's entrance saying: '**IF YOU CAN'T WAIT OR CAN'T AFFORD TO DRINK HERE, DON'T GO ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO COMPLAIN ... GO ELSEWHERE.**'

Clearly not a good public relations stunt as our cartoon highlighted.



The Riverporter did receive a letter from Director Mr Gupta seeking £thousands in damages for comments that appeared in RP48 in November 2019 titled **From Hotel to Truck Park**. As we had quoted Mr Gupta's own words we didn't see the need to reply to him.

The Ugly

There have been a few ugly stories but the one that topped the list has to be the report that featured in RP50 in December 2019 titled **EXPOSED - Why Jason Ablewhite resigned**.

As the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Mr Ablewhite was advised to quit after sending a woman pictures of his manhood.

The story made the Sun newspaper and effectively ended his career as a politician. A controversial figure, Mr Ablewhite had become a leading politician in the area, when he became leader of HDC. As reported in RP15 in August 2018, after being appointed the PCC, he upset several councillors when he claimed that '**they had not done the town any favours and had cost the town some investment.**'

When we questioned him about this statement he gave no evidence but through a spokesperson said: '**The Commissioner has asked me to reply that he attended the meeting and made the comments because he is entitled to do so.**'

It was a surprise that he should have exposed himself in such a way, having secured the role of 'overlord' of the local police service, and of course we treated this news with our usual sense of dignity.



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Bag free insulation & water-saving gadgets

Did you know: Households can obtain a range of free insulation and water-saving gadgets, and there are a huge number of them available.

While the freebies are funded by the water companies, it's water efficiency company **Save Water Save Money** that manages the distribution of them.

You can get one item each per household, but what's available varies by water company, where you live, and what's available at the time.

How do I check if I can get them and how do I apply?

- If you're with Cambridge Water, you'll need to use *Save Water Save Money's* savings calculator <https://www.getwaterfit.co.uk> to access the freebies.
- If you're with Anglian <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk>, they're not part of *Save Water Save Money's* promotion, but you can sometimes get the freebies if you go direct to their website.

How much could I save?

Savings vary by supplier and usage, but the Energy Saving Trust estimates that replacing an inefficient shower head with an efficient one could save a family of four £75 on their gas bill and about £120 on their water bill each year.

With the new winter insulation freebies, not only could you cut down on leaks, but they will protect you from costly repair bills from burst pipes and reducing water consumption helps the environment. The Energy Saving Trust says it can cut energy use, reduce the impact on your local environment and limit carbon dioxide emissions by using less energy to pump, heat and treat the water.

For those on a water meter, saving water means saving money. For those not on meters, it can slash energy bills. Nowadays we use an average 150 litres of water a day per person – our grandparents only used around 20!

I have taken this little gem from the COPE newsletter. I hope they don't mind ...



When I Met Olivia ...

Due to the 1940/50's Examination Boards and my school deciding the studies I should take, I found myself studying German as a subsidiary subject. But I was rather lacking in getting a grip on the basics of German. The school, Cambridgeshire High for Boys, had recently acquired a new

Headmaster, Bryn Newton-John, who was an expert in German, having been in military intelligence in Bletchley during the War. So he decided I should have extra lessons in the evenings at his home.

A few weeks before the exams, I found myself at the Headmaster's home being put through my German studies. On one particular night, his wife was out at choir practice, so when their new born started crying, the baby was put in my lap, while the Headmaster prepared her bottle.

The baby became famous as Olivia Newton John, so I can say that I held Olivia in my arms. Sadly Olivia died recently of breast cancer.

Unfortunately the name of the author is not stated. ED





Erik's joins in with the Snowman Festival



having your say ...

Get it off your chest,
email Erik at:
editor@theriverporter.uk

The Riverporter

Voted Best local newspaper of the year 2019/20 in the Cambridge Building Society's Community Magazine Awards

OTHER NEWS

Neighbourhood Alert Fraud warning

Imagine losing your life savings just before Christmas to heartless fraudsters running a complex and sophisticated scam. Imagine the dreadful sinking feeling when you realise the money is gone, unable to be returned, all because you agreed to help someone you thought was trustworthy. Sadly, this happened to an elderly couple from Swavesey just last week. The con artists behind the scam called the couple purporting to be officers from the Met Police. They concocted a story about a fraud they were investigating and stated they needed help to solve the crime. They claimed the victim's banks accounts may have been compromised so they needed to withdraw large amounts of cash – changing some into Euros – and hand it over to an officer as part of the investigation.

They weren't officers at all, this was all part of an elaborate scam to defraud the victims out of thousands of pounds. Remember the authorities, including the Police, will never call you up to collect or request cash, bank details or cards.

If in doubt always apply caution and say no.

- Stop – if you're called by someone purporting to be from the police, end the call and process the information. Make sure the line is clear and call us on 101 so we can verify if the person you spoke to was a genuine officer
- Protect – call your bank immediately if you think you have been scammed so they can freeze your account to prevent further loss
- Alert – report the incident to police as soon as possible

For more information and advice, visit the dedicated courier fraud page on our website. https://s-url.co/B_UBAA



Some of you may be wondering what is happening about the Jubilee Bandstand on The Waits as we haven't mentioned it lately. We have continued to be receive pledges and the total now exceeds £38,000. On top of that we have assistance promised from a number of town businesses to help install the bandstand, which will mean that we are very close to achieving the target of £43,000 we need. The Town Team are delighted that the community supports this initiative and once again it shows just what a supportive community St Ives has.

The only reason for the delay is the time it has taken to get planning consent. We submitted the application in June and 6 months later we still do not have formal permission to install it.

The main hold up is due to a proposal from the Environmental Protection Officer that use of the Bandstand would not exceed 15 times a year, they should not occur on consecutive days and be no more than two in any calendar month!

Naturally the Town Team found this condition totally unreasonable, considering this area sees that number of 'events' already, without any restrictions. The Team argued that one of the reasons to install the bandstand was to use the area more, not less, and that the expense of the project could not be justified with such restrictions.

We are currently close to agreeing the level of use of the bandstand with HDC planning department but sadly our latest email sent two weeks ago received the automated reply that the officer was now on holiday until 12 December!

Watch this space... in the meantime we still a need to raise more so please make a pledge if you can. It is easy to do - all contributions are welcome. You can make a pledge (from £25 upwards) by sending your contact details (address, email and telephone number) to: townteam@stivescambridgeshire.co.uk, stating the amount you wish to pledge. Alternatively you can give details at The Town Hall between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday. Your pledges and donations will be recognised. Every person or company that donates to the bandstand will be inscribed on a panel (unless they wish to remain anonymous) so that future generations will see all of the people who contributed.

Please note: Any contact details you send us will remain confidential.

We will only request payment of your pledge once we have planning consent and know we can purchase the bandstand, which we hope to install in time before next summer.

Dear Erik,
May I through your paper, thank the Mayor of St Ives and all his helpers for the wonderful meal and entertainment that was supplied to the members of Darby & Joan Club last Thursday in the Corn Exchange. It was a very kind gesture by the Mayor that he put on such a good Christmas meal for 67 members, who I am sure all enjoyed the afternoon.

With kind thanks,
Sidney J. Fisher
Chairman, St. Ives Darby & Joan Club

COPE in St Ives

From 2pm to 4pm in St Ives Corn Exchange. Meetings are held on third Thursday of each month. Contact Angie 01480 300726. Entry is £2.00 and includes refreshments and the celebrated £1 Raffle with donated prizes. COPE membership is free. Everyone is welcome.

PROGRAMME

- 15th December 2-4 pm Musical Afternoon (£8)
- 19th January New Year Lunch (Golden Lion)
- 16th February Waste Management
- 16th March Royal British Legion
- 20th April 'Afternoon Tea

Dear Erik,
Through *The Riverporter* I would like to thank Colin [Saunderson we assume] for all his hard work in the last few months in securing a speed sign on the Marley Road, which has involved police speed checks as the road is notorious for cars doing at least twice the speed limit of 40 MPH.

After I complained to *The Riverporter* about the speeding on Marley Road, Colin came to see me and I know he was determined to get something done about it. It would be fantastic if we could also have a sign in the other direction of Marley Road but that would be too much to ask as this has taken so long just to get this one sign. **Valerie Ritch**

Dear Erik, Subject: 904 Bus service

We have just discovered that the 904 Stagecoach bus no longer runs from St Ives to Huntingdon, although it still runs from Huntingdon to Peterborough. This was a very quick service as it ran via Houghton along the main road every hour. (No detour round the Oxmoor). Presumably the people of Houghton no longer have a bus service unless they walk to the main road to catch the B bus.

Regards **Sheila**



NEW ACTS FOR NEXT YEAR

2022 was a very good year for the Town Team's monthly concerts with around 400 people enjoying 10 great performances by excellent musicians. All concerts start at 7.30pm in the Riverport Café Bar and tickets are just £10 from the Café Bar or from www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents.

Already booked for 2023 are:

Friday 27 January - The Lightwaves - Ranjan (guitar) and Lee (ukulele) will amaze you with their renditions of Life On Mars, Killer Queen and other sensational songs. Old Riverport Jazz & Blues fans will recall how they stood in at the last minute, when Covid hit, and had the Nelson's Head audience completely hooked after the very first number.

Friday 24 February - Mark Burton - Many of you will know Mark from his concerts with Neil Richardson but tonight he will show his great keyboard skills with a range of music from classical piano pieces to the most popular of music genres.

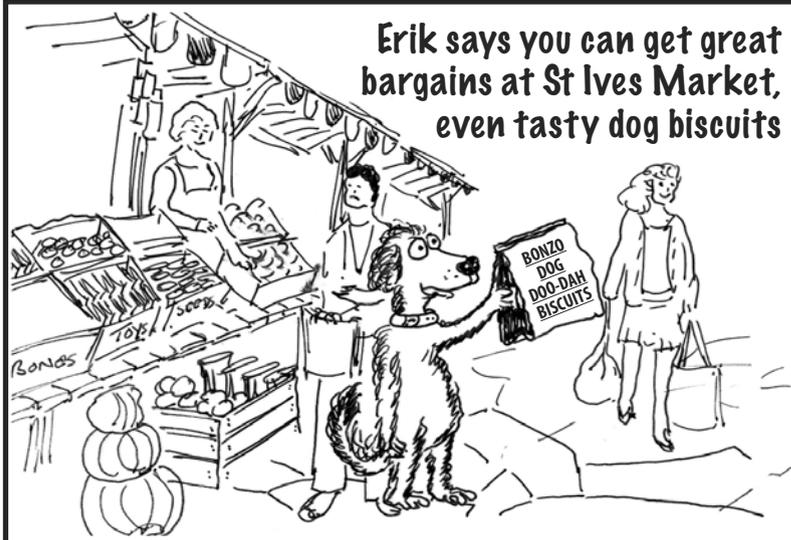
Also booked are:

March Stella Hensley's Musical Amigos with Chris Newman and Myke Clifford.

April Daniela Rossi - surely the finest classical guitarist around.

May Johnny 'Magic Boy' Wright and Chris Newman - two simply stunning blues guitarists.

Erik says you can get great bargains at St Ives Market, even tasty dog biscuits



What an Egg-sell-ent idea!

This enterprising stallholder at Saturday's Farmers' Market, clearly knows how to market his produce. Perhaps it is time for HDC and the Town Council to work on a plan to ensure our markets not only survive but thrive. Can our new councillors get on top of this important issue? Or will the famous St Ives Markets be allowed to fade away?

What do you think should happen?



The COURTYARD

St Ives

Open-air boutique market, run by independents



Christmas has arrived at the Courtyard!

Late Night Christmas shopping
Thursday 15th December
Live Music from 5 until 8 with
Mulled wine, Coffee, Cakes,
and Hot Nuts



Stocking Fillers, Gifts for all the Family including Makeup, Olive Trees, Handmade gifts, Jewellery, Bespoke Christmas outfits, Vapes, Christmas Decorations and loads more



Looking forward to seeing you there!



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A Christmas & New Year message

Ron and I would like to thank all of you, our readers, for your support, and hope that you can enjoy a joyous time with your friends and relatives over the Christmas break.

This is the time of year when most of us reflect on life over the past year and more often than not look forward to a better year to come. As I write this message we are experiencing the first cold spell of the winter, where up to 3cm of snow is forecast in Norfolk. People of a certain age [that includes Ron and I] will remember snowy winter days that often caused havoc and an opportunity for snowball fights, building a snowman and to go sledging [travelling down a snowy slope on a sledge, not insulting a sportsman!].

Cold weather was normal and despite being relatively poor we were able to keep warm around a coal fire. Today, in spite of our greater affluence, that may not be the case for some of us.

If anything last year was, surprisingly, worse than the year before, which seemed impossible 12 months ago. Rishi Sunak, the latest of three Tory Prime Ministers, would appear unable to govern, leaving many of us feeling that things can only get worse as the country grinds to a halt with industrial strikes left, right and centre.

The message is 'Don't get ill', 'Don't go anywhere', 'Don't read social media', 'Don't send a letter' and definitely 'Don't watch the Harry & Megan Netflix series if you love the Royal Family.

A Christmas message is usually upbeat and positive and although difficult to do these days, here it is . . .

Despite all the difficulties there have been many positive things in St Ives. The people of St Ives and surrounding villages are generous - as the support for Ukraine demonstrated. The Jubilee celebrations, along with the Jazz & Blues Festival, Picnic in The Park and the many other events organised, demonstrated we can still enjoy ourselves. Most positively there are still many groups that care about our community, such as COPE, the Darby & Joan Club, EcoAction and the Riverport Singers that helps support people with Dementia.

Let's hope that we can continue to look out for one another over the coming months.

Let's also hope that people of Russia can find a way to get rid of Putin, who is, single-handedly, responsible for most of the world's problems at the moment.

A Happy New Year to you all. Ed



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THE RAILWAY CHILDREN RETURN

Thursday 15 December 2022 at 7:30pm

Director: Morgan Matthews, 1h 39m, Cert: PG

An enchanting and heart-warming adventure set in 1944, where three evacuee children are sent to the Yorkshire village of Oakworth and are met by Bobbie Waterbury (*Jenny Agutter*), her daughter, and grandson. Having settled into their new life the evacuees discover an injured American soldier, Abe, hiding out in the Oakworth's rail yard. They are then thrust into a dangerous quest to assist their new friend who, like them, is a long way from home.



MRS HARRIS GOES TO PARIS

Thursday 5 January 2023 at 7:30pm

Director: Anthony Fabian, 1h 55m, Cert: PG

In 1950s London, a widowed cleaning lady falls madly in love with a couture Dior dress, deciding she must have one of her own. After working to raise the funds to pursue her dream, she embarks on an adventure to Paris that will change not only her own outlook, but the very future of the House of Dior.



THE WORST PERSON IN THE WORLD

Thursday 19 January 2023 at 7:30pm

Director: Joachim Trier, 2h 8m, Cert: 15; Norwegian with subtitles

The chronicles of four years in the life of Julie, a young woman who navigates the troubled waters of her love life and struggles to find her career path. From the outset you think that this might be a snarky anti-romantic comedy that's drenched in smug irony but as it goes along the movie reveals itself to be a deeply emotional examination of how people fall in and out of love and the regrets that haunt us.

Tickets £5 from screenstives.org.uk or in the Corn Exchange. Doors open 1 hour before screening.