

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

## Erik meets Britain in Bloom judges

Last Wednesday *The Riverporter's* news hound, Erik, was invited to meet the judges from Britain In Bloom at the Norris Museum when they came to assess if St Ives will be a winner in the National competition.

Over the past few years St Ives has been a gold medal winner in the annual Anglia in Bloom competition in the Large Town category. This year the town was chosen to represent the Anglia region in the National Britain In Bloom competition.

The two judges, Rae Beckwith from Sunderland and James Cordingley from Exeter spent three hours seeing the displays and seeking information about the heritage and how things work in order to make a judgement about St Ives.

There are six towns in the country in this category and the two judges will visit them all before making a decision. The other five towns are: Altrincham in the North West, Colwyn Bay in Wales, Cramlington in Northumbria, Haywards Heath Town in the South East and Yeovil in the South West.

There are 20 National judges and eleven categories, including villages, urban and coastal communities. Rae and James are the judges for the Large Town category and will have visited all six towns by next Monday.



*Erik takes centre stage with the Mayor, Cllr Pasco Hussain (4th from left), St Ives In Bloom volunteers and Britain In Bloom Judges Rae Beckwith and James Cordingley (standing front centre).*

The judges started their visit at the Norris Museum sensory garden, created by Spring Common Academy children aged 12 - 18 yrs. They then inspected The Waits and its post box garden, Westfield Junior School's gardening project, Kings Hedges, Ramsey Road Cemetery, Hill Rise Allotments, and the Park and Ride. After a walk along Station Road to see the garden there, they visited The Courtyard shopping centre, The Sheepmarket, Market Hill, Bridge Street and finally The Quay, where

they took a trip on the river, thanks to the St Ives Electric Boat Company. They were able to view the Chapel on the Bridge, Hemingford Meadow and Holt Island reedbeds before returning to The Waits, to meet Erik! Rae and James' visits will be over soon but the results are not expected until November. Anglia In Bloom results will be announced on 6th September at Thetford Carnegie Hall. For once Erik didn't have to sniff out the news but did enjoy the smell of the lovely food supplied for lunch!

## DIARY OF EVENTS

If you wish to inform us of your events please email: [editor@theriverporter.uk](mailto:editor@theriverporter.uk)

### AUGUST

**Every Sunday in August - Music on The Waits.** The Bandstand 2.30pm  
**Wednesday 7th - Engage Talk - The Riverporter. Why when and how with a special guest appearance of Erik.** St Ives Library. 2pm.  
**Friday 30th - Chapel Arts concert with Huntingdonshire Guitar Ensemble** - Seven guitarists. St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the Bar or [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).

**Saturday 31st - St Ives Flower, Craft and Produce Show** - St Ives Corn Exchange. Doors open to public at 12.15. Website [www.stivesshow.org.uk](http://www.stivesshow.org.uk)

### SEPTEMBER

**Friday 6th The Mayor of St Ives Summer Ball** at The Out Out Club, The Broadway, St Ives. Tickets from the Town Hall. £19.50 per person, including a welcome drink, professional photographer and a raffle.

**Thursday 12th - Sunday 15th - The Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival 2024** - 26 free concerts over four days see the full programme at [www.stivescambridgeshire.co.uk](http://www.stivescambridgeshire.co.uk)

**Saturday 14th - Heritage Open Day.**

**Saturday 14th - RAFA charity band concert** at the Free Church. Tickets from [ticketsource.co.uk/rafa-wings-concert](http://ticketsource.co.uk/rafa-wings-concert) or the Free Church office.

**Saturday 28th - Repair café** - Methodist Church.

## Duet pleases the crowds at the Bandstand



*Above: On a beautiful sunny afternoon singer James Schouten wowed a maximum audience with a wide range of standards climaxing with a wonderfully energetic 'Figaro' and a passionate duet with his partner Charlotte. Another memorable Music on The Waits, a continuing series of free concerts from FESat at our beautiful bandstand.*



## Helpers still needed?

Following an appeal in the last issue of *The Riverporter*, St Ives Town Team, organisers of The Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival, were delighted to be contacted by volunteers who have offered help during the Festival on 14th and 15th September. Chair of the Team, Sheila Stones said, 'Thanks to those people who have responded, however we will still need a few more helpers this year. Venues holding the concerts look after their own arrangements however when using the Sheepmarket, Bandstand and The Quay for concerts the Town Team is responsible. The help consists mostly of erecting gazebos and putting out chairs, giving out programmes and selling our popular T-shirts and, this year, our Anniversary CD, featuring bands playing at this Festival.'

**If you can give an hour or two over that weekend please contact the Town Team by email at: [townteam@stivescambridgeshire.co.uk](mailto:townteam@stivescambridgeshire.co.uk)**  
**Or you can phone John on 07900 112635.**



# OUSE VALLEY WAY SUCCESS Footpath is clear at last!

The Great Ouse Valley Trust (GOVT) has been campaigning over a number of years to ensure that the Ouse Valley Way long-distance footpath should get its proper national recognition and, critically, is properly maintained.



The path has often been impassable in recent summers due to excessive growth of brambles and, in the shorter term, rampant stinging nettles and teasels, etc. After many meetings with all the Parishes and help from our County Councillors, a new green management structure has been established at the County Council Highways department. At the time of writing the path is more accessible than it has been for many years. Fallen trees that have blocked it for a long time have been cut back. As a direct result of the Trust's work we are more confident that the right regimes are now in place to ensure a great future for the path.



Additional clearance will still be carried out by the Ouse Valley Way Marathon organisers using their own equipment. Now we must work with our colleagues in the neighbouring counties of Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Norfolk to make the whole 151 miles completely accessible, to represent a celebration of our river. Meanwhile, clearance of obstacles on the path continues!



## Editor accused of sending 'passive aggressive' email.

Last week *The Riverporter* received this unsolicited email from someone called Abi. It said ...

*I am writing to inform you that former Education, Health and Home Secretary Alan Johnson will be appearing at The Acorn Penzance on Wednesday 23rd October and is available for an interview in anticipation of this. If you would be interested in speaking to Alan, please let us know. Many thanks, Abi.*

Naturally the Editor, realising that Abi had no idea where *The Riverporter* was replied thus.

*Dear Abi, We are not in St Ives Cornwall but in St Ives Cambridgeshire, so it's*

*unlikely we will bother to travel to Penzance to interview a former secretary of state!*

*Regards John. Editor The Riverporter*

*Abi responded ...*

*Hi John, I appreciate your email and response. However, I think the passive aggressive nature of the email wasn't needed.*

Now the Editor is aware that he can sometimes be succinct in his responses with a touch of irony. He has also been labelled all sorts over the years such as flippant, but never 'passive aggressive'. He had to look up what it meant. Passive-aggressive behaviour was first

defined during World War II in the context of soldiers who were not openly defiant but expressed their civil disobedience by 'passive measures, such as stubbornness or inefficiency, and passive obstructionism' due to 'routine military stress'.

More recently it is characterized by a pattern of passive hostility and an avoidance of direct communication. After some thought on the matter the Editor concluded that Abi's comment was probably the result of a clash of generations, but is fearful that this opinion might also attract more comment.

## THE OLD RIVERPORT JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL 2024 Brooks Williams & Dan Walsh



Brooks Williams is appearing twice at the Festival with a different partner and a different combination of instruments each time. Here we feature him with the Banjo player Dan Walsh.

Admired by both listeners and fellow musicians alike, Brooks and Dan combine talents for an extraordinary collaboration of British and Americana roots music. Each is a leading light on their respective instruments, add to that poignant songs and lively humour and the result is a truly remarkable duet. Brooks plays guitar with 'melodic virtuosity'. He is, quite simply, one of the most unassuming, natural performers on the circuit.

BBC Folk Awards 'Best Musician' nominee Dan Walsh plays British, Irish and American folk music. His 'virtuoso playing' features a unique and dazzling take on clawhammer style banjo helping to challenge all preconceptions about the instrument. 'Absolutely terrific' said Mark Radcliffe of BBC RADIO 2.

You can see Brooks and Dan at Slepe Hall Hotel on Friday 13th September at 7.30pm.

## IT'S A KIND OF MAGIC

The Centre Theatre Players are busy preparing for their forthcoming Charity Cabaret 'IT'S A KIND OF MAGIC' which they will be staging in the Burgess Hall of One Leisure St Ives on Saturday 28th September starting at 7.30pm.

The show is a fabulous variety of music, comedy and dance and features many of the regular Players performers along with a few guests including the Vicky Grant dancers. This year the Players will be supporting MIND and CALMTOWN. To date, The Players have raised well in excess of £100,000 for Charity, with nearly 40 different charities benefiting from their efforts.

Tickets for the show are £12 and can be obtained online from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/starliteroadshow](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/starliteroadshow) from 1st August.



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Erik will be appearing at St Ives Library on 7th August. (see Diary of Events)



having your say ...

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

# The Riverporter

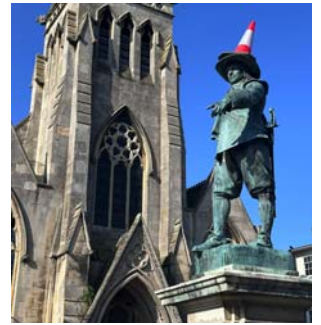
Voted Best local newspaper of the year 2019/20 in the Cambridge Building Society's Community Magazine Awards

## OTHER NEWS

### Mr Ben Objects

Several St Ives residents were surprised to hear that Mr Ben objected to the placing of a traffic cone on Oliver Cromwell's head in St Ives town centre last weekend.

A local Facebook page was alight with comments ranging from *'It happens every year as the school holidays start!'* and *'wait 'til the condom appears on his finger'*. Readers of a particular age will recall that Mr Ben regularly enjoyed dressing up and it seems a little paradoxical for him to object to this attire.



Picture by Sandra, taken from Cambs News

One person, who seemed to agree with Mr Ben, said *'The culprits are probably young thugs with no knowledge of history. Everyone knows that Cromwell was a Roundhead and a bowler hat would have been much more suitable.'*

By Wednesday the cone had been removed although no one at the Town Hall knew who by. We believe it could have been by Cambs County Council Highways Dept.

### Fifi's opens amid roadworks

The Mayor of St Ives, Cllr Pasco Hussain (pictured), had the pleasure to open FIFI'S CAKERY on Friday 19th July. You will find Fifi's new shop on 9 The Broadway where you can enjoy deliciously stylish cakes for all occasions. Fifi's also offer baking and cake decorating classes plus group parties perfect to celebrate birthdays or team building work parties. We don't know if the Council's workmen have booked a team building session yet!



### Envar incinerator application approved

Planning permission has been approved despite Cambs County Council turning down the application. On appeal a Planning Inspector approved the installation and the new Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Angela Rayner, has ratified that decision. Our new MP Ben Obese-Jecty said in the House of Commons that the decision was at odds with what the local people want. Criticism of Angela Rayner's decision seemed unfair as the appeal and Inspectors report was made well before the election. A point made on a local facebook page by Town Councillor Mike Gleadow, who reminded readers that the County went against their own planning advice and that there were no grounds for objection left.

### More bereavement support

The county's fourth Sue Ryder Grief Kind Space launches today Friday 2 August and will run weekly from 10am-12 noon at Morrison Supermarket. Grief Kind Spaces are weekly, in-person drop-in sessions that provide a safe, informal, and supportive place for people to come together and share their experiences of grief, helping attendees to feel heard and less alone.



### Sluices - Public Event confusion?

The Environment Agency (EA) are holding a public event on Monday 12th August at 4pm in St Ives Corn Exchange about the St Ives & Brownhill Sluices. The event will explain the history of the structures, the challenges faced in funding their repair and the steps EA are currently taking to address the situation. Whether there will be a general discussion is not clear. Criticism of EA is mainly about the lack of maintenance.

Only 4 of the 7 St Ives Sluice gates (right) are working and just 1 of the 3 gates at Brownhill (below). Experienced river users say that the loss of 5 sluice gates, designed to control water



flow has resulted in flood water taking longer to escape. The Flood defences around St Ives were designed to cope with a 1 in 100 year event, which are now happening every 25 years. EA practices and terminology have been changing. *'We don't dredge - we de-silt'* is one such comment.

Their briefing paper suggests that repairing the sluices is not worth it as only one or two properties would be affected by flooding if they remain out-of-use. However river users are convinced that lack of maintenance has contributed to the decreased use of the river. Although not essential to the economy St Ives does benefit from boaters visiting the town and spending money here. There certainly have been fewer boats coming recently.

Environment Agency staff will be available to answer questions following presentations at 4:30pm and 5:45pm. If you have any questions beforehand, please email them to: enquiries\_eastanglia@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Dear Erik

#### Britain in Bloom

Am I the only one not to get too enthusiastic at the Awards for the above? This is because of the Judging system whereby the Judges are met by the host's representatives and then shown selected areas.

Surely in this day and age the Judges should visit each entrant secretly and see the Host as a whole and not pre-selected spots. We've all seen what's happened with the judging system for hosting major sporting events etc.

To eliminate any risk of corruption the judging should be done in secret. Sorry to dampen the euphoria about St Ives' Award. I'm not casting aspersions at the validity of these Awards but I consider nowadays everything has to be squeaky clean. Ian

Dear Ian, Erik spoke with the Britain In Bloom Judges and asked why they didn't judge secretly. They said that it's not just about pretty flowers. The heritage and how the community is involved is part of the award and it just wouldn't work to turn up unannounced. When asked if they had ever been bribed they said never. They never give any hint of how their visit has gone as Erik discovered. (see P1).

Dear Erik,

I am contacting you in my voluntary role of publicity officer and committee member of the local Huntingdonshire Ramblers.

We are currently putting together our list of autumn walks, and wondered whether this could be included in your diary of events in future editions?

Hunts Ramblers have been walking together for 50 years and we recently celebrated this achievement with a walk and picnic for our current and ex-members. Our walks range from 5 to 12 miles, from local starting points and others slightly further afield in Beds, Northants and Herts. We host a walk every weekend, and also in summer put on a mid-week evening walk. Other special events we have hosted include a guided walk at Portholme Meadow in the company of an expert historian and naturalist, and a combined Boat 'n' Boots trip with St Ives Electric Boat Company. We welcome any potential new member. Check our webpage for more information. Welcome (huntsramblers.org.uk)

Marion

Dear Marion, Send us a list of your walks but the Diary section is for one off events really and we have limited space.

Dear Erik,

#### Subject: 35 Victoria Terrace empty for 25 years

I hope you don't mind me raising this but it does seem to be an ongoing scandal that no politicians want to address despite the desperate shortage of housing in this country. I believe that HDC have the power to sort this particular case but have ducked the issue over many years.



It was raised several years ago but it never seems to get any serious attention. We were told that the owner pays the council tax but he/she clearly has no moral conscience! This house is derelict, an eyesore and now a danger to the neighbouring properties and ought to be compulsorily purchased, refurbished, and sold for over £200k or rented out to someone on the waiting list. Other houses in this terrace are snapped up all the time. Name withheld.

#### Wonderful opportunity for self-motivated person CONE AND CAR TRAP REMOVER

With an ever increasing number of incidents at the infamous 'St Ives Car Trap' and the recent defacing of Oliver Cromwell, St Ives is looking to fill this important position. Candidates should be able to work at height and deal with public criticism.

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Thank you so much to you all for your kind words and continued support.