

# The Riverporter

MERRY CHRISTMAS • READ AND PASS ON

COVERING THE NEWS FOR ST IVES AND AROUND

Issue I74: 20 December 2024

A FULLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION



## A Christmas & New Year message

Someone said to me today, 'Doesn't it come round quickly', meaning the next issue of *The Riverporter*. It doesn't sound so quick coming out fortnightly but what is a surprise is that this is our 7th Christmas message and we have produced 175 issues. Doesn't time fly?

Looking at *Riverporter* 24 from December 2018 another surprise is that some of the subjects covered then remain relevant today. Articles included: *Santa Arriving*, *What's going wrong at St Ivo?*, *Making better use of the Octagon* and *Improving the Town Centre*.

We were about to watch *Paddington 2* at Screen St Ives and on Boxing day we were to re-instate a fox hunt, which fortunately was just for Hobby Horse riders.

The past year has seen *The Riverporter* continue to attract readers, particularly the on-line colour version which has had nearly 50,000 readers and now averages almost 3,000 per month. Of course each printed version is enjoyed by a further 1,500 readers. We are often asked where you can pick up a copy and the list includes, Kings Hedges newsagents, W H Smith, Mace, the Co-op, Morrisons garage, the Library and the Corn Exchange. You need to be quick though, as they are snapped up fast. We do hope that people share a copy as we try to keep waste to a minimum and of course you can always see every issue at [www.theriverporter.uk](http://www.theriverporter.uk) and last month we launched the Riverport Radio podcast. Hear it at <https://riverportradiopodcast.buzzsprout.com>.

As for 2024 we all hoped it would be a better year. A year when the climate might be a bit kinder. A year when the many elections around the world would deliver less conflict abroad and an efficient and humane government at home. Whilst that seems far from reality in the world as a whole, here in St Ives we see a few more positive signs.

Yes there are empty shops but there are also new businesses opening. Sadly we lost some wonderful community minded people, whose lives we celebrated, however we still have a remarkable number of good people and community groups providing services and entertainment any town would be proud of. Let us all keep working for a better future.

**A Happy New Year to all our readers from John, Ron and Erik of course.**



## Santa brings some Christmas sunshine



8 PAGE  
CHRISTMAS  
ISSUE

Although Father Christmas was unable to sail to St Ives by boat for the second year running, due to the high river levels, he still managed to park his sleigh in the Park and Ride and reach The Quay in time to greet the Mayor. As usual flanked by a guard from the Second St Ives Sea Scouts and a posse of Grinch's, reindeer and the Giant Snowmen, Father Christmas made his way to the Corn Exchange where he gave presents to all the children who came to see him (see page 3).

## HAPPY SNOWTIME



Martin and Katie Prest enjoying the Snowdome with their son Zep at Santa's Snow Fest in the Corn Exchange last Sunday. Pic D.Prest.

## DIARY OF EVENTS

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

### DECEMBER 2024

**Monday 23rd - Children's Christmas Party** St Ives Corn Exchange 2pm  
Tickets [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents) or from the venue.

**Sunday 29th and Monday 30th - St Ives Antiques Fair** - Burgess Hall.

**Tuesday 31st - New Year's Eve to Remember** St Ives Corn Exchange  
7.45pm. Tickets [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents) or from the venue.

### JANUARY 2025

**Wednesday 8th - Engage Talk - 'What do I do with all this?'**

A talk from Cambridgeshire Archives - 2pm, St Ives Library - free

**Wednesday 8th - Langley Bread** 10am St Ives Corn Exchange.

**Wednesday 8th to Sunday 12th - Pantomime Beauty and the Beast**  
The Burgess Hall. Tickets - [www.ticketsource.co.uk/burgesshall/e-pllaok](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/burgesshall/e-pllaok)

**Thursday 9th - Screen St Ives - Wonka** 7.30pm St Ives Corn Exchange.

**Saturday 18th - COSI Scottish Themed Winter Concert** 7pm at the Free Church. Tickets £10, under 16s free, on the door or from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/chamber-orchestra-of-st-ives](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/chamber-orchestra-of-st-ives).

**Saturday 25th - Burns Night Celebration** - St Ives Corn Exchange 7pm  
Tickets [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents) or from the venue.

**Friday 31st - Chapel Arts concert with The Lightwaves** Corn Exchange  
7.30pm. Tickets £10 [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents) or from the venue.

### FEBRUARY 2025

**Wednesday 5th - Engage Talk - The Muddy Hoard**

A local metal detector discovery - 2pm, St Ives Library - free.

**Sunday 9th - Tea Dance hosted by Lesley's Social Dancing** St Ives Corn Exchange 2pm Tickets [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents) or from the venue.

### HERE ARE SOME MORE DATES FOR 2025

Annual Town Meeting 20th March - Mayor Making 14th May,

Bible Dicing 10th June - Civic Sunday 22nd June,

Remembrance Sunday 9th November.

Look out for news in the New Year about the launch of St Ives eco café monthly on Saturday mornings. Dates to note are **Saturday 11th January** (10 am at St Ives Library) when the formal bits will be done and **Saturday 1st February** (10am at St Ives Corn Exchange) when we will be hosting a town discussion about St Ives Green Week in June.

Read on-line at [www.theriverporter.uk](http://www.theriverporter.uk) or see our Facebook page. Email: [editor@theriverporter.uk](mailto:editor@theriverporter.uk)

You can contact The Riverporter by telephone on: 07900 112635. The publishers, Ron Westrip and John Souter, reserve the right to determine the content of the publication. © copyright reserved

# HAPPY CHRISTMAS & A PEACEFUL NEW YEAR



## A Christmas Message from the Mayor

As we approach the festive season, I would like to extend my warmest wishes to everyone. Christmas is a time for reflection, celebration, and, most importantly, coming together as a community. It's a time when we are reminded of the power of kindness, generosity, and connection.

This year, more than ever, I am deeply grateful for the incredible spirit of St Ives. Whether it's through supporting local businesses, volunteering, or simply lending a hand to a neighbour, our town has shown what it truly means to be a community.

Your kindness and compassion make St Ives a place we can all be proud to call home.

As we celebrate this joyful season, let's carry forward the spirit of goodwill, warmth, and unity into the new year. May you all find peace, happiness, and moments of joy with those you hold dear.

On behalf of myself and the town council, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. With warmest wishes, Councillor Pasco Hussain  
The Mayor of St Ives, Cambridgeshire.

## What the new year might bring?

Wearing my Nostredamus hat there are some things I'm pretty certain will happen next year. The most obvious is that Trump will dominate the news. Whether you like him or loathe him it's going to be impossible to ignore him. Perhaps more worrying this time round is that his power and those attached to him will be colossal. In particular the thought that Elon Musk is not only going to be insanely rich but could be the power behind the throne, not only in the States but here also, is something we should all fear.

Ethics doesn't seem to be a word that has meaning anymore for those in charge. I notice that many of the most influential people who opposed Trump before, such as Bezos of Amazon and Zuckerberg of Facebook, are prepared to do deals with Trump this time. Which indicates they fear what he might be able to do when inaugurated as president in January. Once again the power of money supersedes integrity.

Most annoyingly it will allow Trump to do whatever he wants - perhaps even shoot somebody and not lose any voters! And I'm sure he will continue to boast about being right! Damn it!

## Thanks to all those who donated

The traditional weekend Christmas Candle Lighting in the Bridge Chapel raised £1,430 for the British Heart Foundation. All of this money goes to supporting research into heart disease in the laboratories of the Addenbrooke's and the Royal Papworth hospitals in Cambridge.

Jean, Ann and Helen of the St Ives & District fundraising group would like to thank all of the many people who came along and supported the BHF with their donations.



Thanks go, of course, also to *The Riverporter* and to the helpers who make this event in late November and early December possible. Very best wishes for Christmas and a more peaceful New Year!

*Pictured left are Jean Chandler and Helen Hunter with the award for the St Ives & District fundraising group who were the best BHF fundraisers in 2019.*



## Police out and about

Meanwhile our local Police have been out and about on patrols in response to peoples concerns about anti-social behaviour. Officers engaged with the British Heart Foundation in the Bridge Chapel when it was open to the public to be able to light a candle for moments of reflection (see left).

They also conducted a welfare check on homeless individuals in St Ives following concerns raised by residents and were then handed some delicious chocolates from a lovely lady in St Ives for their efforts which were much appreciated.



# Slimming World

feel  
real  
good

**SOMERSHAM \*\*NEW CONSULTANT\*\* Opens 2 Jan 2025**  
Thursday 7.00 pm Somersham Primary School  
Call Vicki on 07741 813217

**ST IVES - The Burleigh Hill Centre**  
Thursday 5.30 pm  
Call Vikki on 07955 155215

**ST IVES - The Burleigh Hill Centre**  
Friday 9.30 am & Saturday 8.00 am or 9.30 am  
Call Kathie on 07772 868472

real food, real support, real results



## Top tips for injury-free training

by *Suvarne Southgate, owner of Cutting Edge Podiatry*

**If you're training for the Cambridge Half Marathon on 9th March, what steps can you take to avoid injury in the run-up to the event?**

Give your body time to adjust to training – increasing distance and speed before your body is ready to do so, and not having enough recovery time in between runs, are common causes of injury. Don't increase your mileage by more than 10% in any given week, have rest days – and alternate speed and distance runs.

Alternate runs twice weekly with strength and flexibility training – running with muscle weakness and imbalances often causes overuse of muscles not strong enough to do the job being asked of them. Aim to alternate your runs twice weekly with strength and flexibility training – including your hip, leg and ankle adductors and abductors.

Wear the right trainers – not the ones you wear every day to take the dog for a walk. Get some advice from a proper running shop where they can look at your gait style and recommend the appropriate trainers for your running style. And these are then your 'running trainers' only.

Pay attention to running gait – familiarise yourself with some basic running gait knowledge or seek professional advice. For example, when striking the ground with the heel, having the knee too straight at impact will significantly increase the risk of injury. By not overstriding, you'll allow the knee to flex appropriately.

Don't ignore niggling discomfort – ignoring an injury will not make it go away, so deal with any issues at an early stage. Seeing a professional will help you identify the problem so that you can rectify it. In most cases, it will be muscle imbalances and weakness that have caused tissue damage. Nipping issues in the bud will get you back on the road and across that finishing line.

# Santa's Snowfest comes to town

Last weekend in St Ives was all about Father Christmas and the Snowman Festival as hundreds of families came to see Santa in his grotto and enjoy playing in a Giant Snow Globe.

Father Christmas and the Giant Snowman arrived at 10am on The Quay on Saturday where they were met by the Mayor, The Macebearer and the Town Clerk, and the boys and girls of the 2nd St Ives Sea Scouts, before they marched through the town to Santa's Snowfest in St Ives Corn Exchange.

Here they took part in the now annual event organised by FESt and the St Ives Retail group's Snowman Festival.

Families could enjoy playing in the giant Snow Dome, see Father Christmas in his grotto, where they received a gift, and join in with craft activities all for just £2 per child.

## Snowman Trail Results

The activities continued on Sunday when the winners of the Snowman Trail were selected with the help of Father Christmas.

The trail is designed to brighten up the town centre with snowmen in the shops and to encourage people to shop here over Christmas.

Using the Trail Map (supplied by St Ives Town Team), children under 12 years, accompanied by an adult, must collect at least 20 stickers from the 26 participating stores to stand the chance of winning one of four prizes of a £50 Townrow voucher.

This has proved very popular for participating shops, as it brings many adults and children to their premises.

It is also popular with the children as the 114 finished entries shows.

## This year's winners

With the help of some of the children at Sunday's event Father Christmas was able to draw out the following winning entries.

In no particular order they were:

- Faye Richardson** 10 from Somersham
- Olivia Butler** 9 from St Ives
- Ben Howe** 11 from St Ives
- Harry Adamson** 10 from Bluntisham.



Screen St Ives  
Community Cinema

Supported by  
**BOONGATE KIA**  
Peterborough PE1 5UA. Tel: 01733 344344



**Wonka**  
**Thursday 9 January 2025 at 7:30pm**  
**Doors open 6:30pm. Tickets £7**  
**Director: Paul King, 116m, Cert: PG**  
**Synopsis:** An impoverished chocolate-maker with big dreams befriends a young orphan in this colourful musical fantasy. Moments of peril are balanced by zany humour and a focus on friendship and adventure. Starring *Timothée Chalamet* as Wonka, with an ensemble cast including *Calah Lane, Keegan-Michael Key, Paterson Joseph, Matt Lucas, Mathew Baynton, Sally Hawkins, Rowan Atkinson, Jim Carter, Olivia Colman, and Hugh Grant.*

Ticket at [screenstives.org.uk](http://screenstives.org.uk) or in the Corn Exchange



Clockwise from top left:

*Father Christmas and his helpers pick the winning entries.*

*Craft activities.*

*The Town Clerk, Mayor Pasco and the Macebearer await Father Christmas.*

*The Mayor's posse arrives in the Corn Exchange.*

*A feast of father Christmasses as St Ives Rotary Club's sleigh pulls onto the Sheepmarket.*



# Shades of White win Regional Award



**Shades of White, the bridal boutique in Manor Mews off Bridge Street, has been awarded East of England Bridal Boutique of 2025 Regional Winner in The Wedding Industry Awards (TWIA).**

Considered by many in the wedding world to be 'the big one' and established in 2011, TWIA is the only Regional and National client voted, expert-judged Award in the UK Wedding Industry.

'TWIA is the most coveted, credible, rigorous and independent Award in our Industry, so the Regional Winners really are a the top of their game' says founder of the Wedding Industry Award, Damien Bailey.

'The competition is tough, the standards very high indeed, but thanks to over 27,000 client votes and our panel of more than 150 expert judges, the Regional Winners have risen to the top in an industry that absolutely demands the best. 'With the UK wedding industry being worth an estimated £15 billion annually, it is no surprise that wedding suppliers are working hard to stand out in a crowded marketplace. Happily for this year's winners, they've now got a coveted award to help them woo clients in 2025 and beyond.'

Regional winners will then go through to the National Final in London on 22nd January.

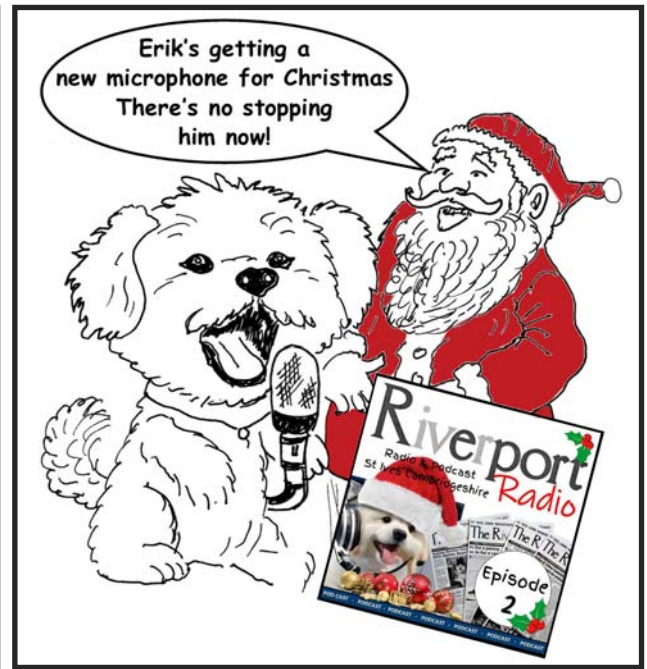
Jo Taylor (right), the owner of Shades of White told *The Riverporter* ... 'It is an incredible, humbling honour to have been announced as the East of England Regional winner Bridal Boutique of 2025 in The Wedding Industry Awards.

'Unlike most other competitions, TWIA awards you based on your whole business - not just the brides reviews - but everything including your website, your social media, your personality and customer service, your answers to the questions they ask, images of your Bridal Boutique, and most importantly, the feedback from the Brides whose weddings you have been a part of in the last year. 'To even become a finalist for your region you need almost full marks in



every category and this is why I am so happy, humbled and unashamedly proud to have won in my region.'

The regional finalists are then judged by a panel, and the winners go on to become national finalists. The winners are then announced on stage in London on 22nd January. Jo continued 'I work so hard to deliver such a personal service to each and every bride, so it is fabulous to have been recognised in this way.'



## Eyesore replaced with living wall

Thanks to Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority funding, Huntingdonshire District Council have been able to transform part of St Ives Bus Station. Ground Control were employed to use over 400 plants to transform the space into a thriving hub for biodiversity, making it greener and more inviting for everyone, as well as looking much better.



Above: Westfield School children visiting the wall prior to the school being given the surplus plants to make its own living wall in the school grounds.



Above: Rob Chivers of Ground Control, who built the wall with District Councillor Cath Gleadow who helped get the project agreed.



**Join us for our Christmas Podcast** as we chat with Sam and Michael Purchase of The Whisky Café about the challenges of renovating a listed building and uncovering Roman soil and ancient sheep bones!

We also dive into flooding issues with Matthew Setchell of St Ives Flood Action Group (FLAG) and observe some strange happenings with a sofa in St Ives. Hear about a couple of music events and the Hangover party on New Year's Day. The podcast lists chapters so you can choose which items to listen to.

Find Riverport Radio at [https:// riverportradiopodcast.buzzsprout.com](https://riverportradiopodcast.buzzsprout.com)

## The Langley Bread tradition resumes

**The annual St Ives tradition of the Langley Bread distribution will be upheld on Wednesday 8th January 2025, at St Ives Corn Exchange. Up to 130 grocery bags comprising bread, butter, jam, teabags, sugar and biscuits will be distributed.**

Those wishing to take part should be in the Charter Hall of the Corn Exchange by 10am. Eligible recipients are widows and widowers who are on the Electoral Register for St Ives.

The origins of this cherished, centuries old tradition will be explained briefly by the Mayor, Councillor Hussain, after which the distribution will take place.

In 1656 Robert Langley, a prominent and philanthropic St Ives man, left money in his will so that 40 shillings could be distributed each year on a day in January to the poor widows and fatherless children of St Ives.

After 1860 parcels of bread instead of money were distributed and to widowers as well as to widows. Since 1990 the parcels of bread were replaced by a grocery bag of bread, butter, jam, teabags, sugar and in 2005 biscuits were added.

The bags will be handed to widows and widowers attending the event but also to relatives and friends of qualifying residents who are unable to attend in person.

The event is organised by the St Ives United Charities Trust. The United Charities also provide the money for the Bibles at the annual Bible Dicing ceremony that is held in the Parish Church on the first Tuesday of Whitsuntide.

Robert Langley also left money in his will for the bell ringers of the Parish Church to ring a peel of bells each year in January. Legend has it that he became lost in a snowstorm one day on Hemingford Meadow, while walking to St Ives. He heard the bells of the Parish Church and they guided him to safety.



### ST IVES TOWN COUNCIL FESTIVE OPENING TIMES

<b>Open</b>	Friday 20th December 2024*
<b>Closed</b>	Monday 23rd December - Wednesday 1st January 2025
<b>Reopening</b>	Thursday 2nd January 2025*

\* Business as usual - open 10am until 4pm

# LANGLEY BREAD 2025

**JANUARY | 08 | 2025**

**10AM AT THE ST IVES CORN EXCHANGE**

**Eligible recipients are widows and widowers who are on the electoral register for St Ives.**

For more information visit [www.stivestowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.stivestowncouncil.gov.uk) or [www.thestiveshub.co.uk](http://www.thestiveshub.co.uk)

## Get a **FREE local** NHS Health Check

If you're aged 40-74, even though you might be feeling great, you may be at risk of heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, diabetes or dementia.

A FREE NHS Healthcheck can help you reduce these risks and make sure you stay healthy.

**Monday 20th January – St Ives Library, St Ives, PE27 5BW – 10.00 to 13.15**

**Monday 10th February – St Ives Library, St Ives, PE27 5BW - 10.00 to 13.15**

To book your **FREE** NHS Healthcheck appointment  
**Call: 0333 005 0093, or Text: HEART to 60777**

Helping you prevent diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, stroke & dementia

National exclusion criteria will apply.

Cambridgeshire County Council | PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL  
 Funded by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council

# St Ives 2025 - a year to look forward to...

It looks like next year will be another busy one in St Ives with lots to do and see. As well as celebrating the 600th Anniversary of our famous bridge, with hundreds of Cavalier and Roundhead troops marching through the town and having a pitch battle, there will be some new events and lots of our favourite old ones as well.



One of the usual events is the Chapel Arts Concerts, which begin again in The Riverport Bar at the St Ives Corn Exchange (see right) with The Lightwaves, who are always popular - so get your tickets soon as places are limited.

Also coming around again are the Music on The Waits concerts every Sunday in July and August at the bandstand. Organised by FES, who are celebrating their tenth year, they start their season with the very popular Picnic in the Park concerts on Sunday 22nd May.

FES, which organised the successful Snowfest last week, wish to thank everyone for their support over the past ten years.

Another annual event eagerly awaited is The Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival, which is on from 11th to 14th September. Below is the line-up featuring 13 new acts for St Ives.



Another new event includes **The Old Riverport Ukulele Festival Easter 25** on Saturday 22nd March. Following the success of the October Ukulele Festival this extra event has been organised to allow more Uke Groups to attend. Tickets can be purchased in January at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/eventsstives](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/eventsstives).

To support the Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival there are two fundraising concerts, to help keep the Festival Free to attend.

The first on Saturday 10th May features the amazing Toby Lee.

## The Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival 2025 29 CONCERTS ALL FREE TO ATTEND



### THURSDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER

6pm Golden Lion Hotel  
6.30pm Amore Restaurant  
7pm Floods Tavern  
7.30pm White Hart Hotel  
8.30pm Nelson's Head  
10pm The Corn Exchange

Brooks Williams & Aaron Catlow  
Soloman Smith Trio  
Judvh  
Claude Bourbon  
The Lightwaves  
The Hounddogs

UK Americana  
Coolness and groove  
Black Soul  
Guitar virtuoso  
A bit of everything ...  
Rockabilly

### FRIDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER

5.30pm Floods Tavern  
6pm Slepe Hall Hotel  
7pm The Corn Exchange  
7.30pm Ivy leaf Club  
8.30pm Golden Lion Hotel  
10pm The Corn Exchange

Get Not Got  
Greg Brice Duo  
Mr Griff Big Band  
The Scoundrels  
Mim Grey  
Connor Selby

Funk, Soul and Jazz  
Acoustic Blues  
Dynamic Soul Fusion  
Punchy covers  
Tom Jones' favourite singer  
Brilliant Blues artist

### SATURDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER

11am Sheep Market  
12.30pm Golden Lion Hotel  
1pm The Bandstand  
2pm The Quay  
4pm Floods Tavern  
5pm The Corn Exchange  
6pm Golden Lion Hotel  
7pm The Royal Oak  
8pm Ivy leaf Club  
10pm The Corn Exchange

The Barefoot Doctors  
Will Sketches Band  
We Got That Swing  
The 29th Funktion  
Freddie does Reggae  
Riverport Dancers  
Split Whiskers  
Dan Walsh & Alistair Anderson  
The Blues Boy Kings  
Santiago and the Soulmovers

Electric Blues  
Jazz, Funk, Fusion  
Swing Band Jazz  
Blues, Funk, R&B  
Reggae with Soul  
Riverport dance lesson  
Chicago Blues  
Dynamic folk  
Blues  
Rock & Soul

### SUNDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER

11.30am Golden Lion Hotel  
12.30pm Ivo Lounge  
1.30pm The Quay  
3pm The Corn Exchange  
3pm The Bandstand  
4.30pm Nelson's Head  
6.30pm The Lounge

Myke Clifford Quartet  
Borders Duo Acoustic  
Chris Lord & her Blues Express  
Fred's House  
Jazz Division  
Jonno's 3 piece Blues Quartet  
Jamie Williams & the Roots Collective

Pure Jazz  
Blues, Folk Americana  
Rhythm & Blues  
Award-winning Folk/Rock  
Big Band Jazz  
Blues  
Rocking Roots

A series of intimate concerts by excellent musicians on the last Friday of each month



**31st January - The Lightwaves** have become a firm favourite with their renditions of Life On Mars, Killer Queen and other sensational songs.

**28th February** - Eurovision winning musician and songwriter with Katrina & The Waves - **Kimberley Rew & Lee Gave-Berry**.



**28th March** - The Cambridge based singer songwriter **Soloman Smith** will perform with his Friends, blurring the lines between Folk, Soul and Blues.

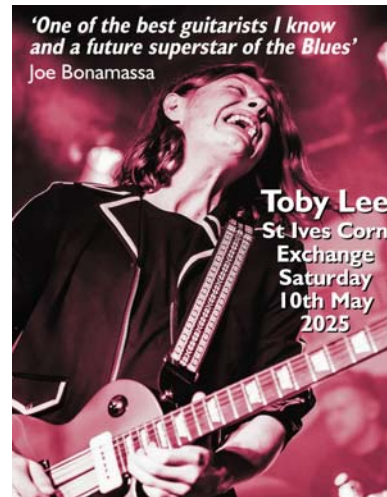
**25th April** - Nominated as Best Acoustic Act at the 2024 Blues Awards, **Greg Brice's** performance will leave you wanting more - *'The most exquisite finger-picked acoustic blues that you could wish to hear.'*



**7.30pm in the Riverport Café Bar.**

**Doors open at 7pm. Tickets: £10 from the Riverport Café Bar or online from: [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents)**

**Toby Lee** is the real deal – a mind blowing guitarist with a voice to match. At 10-years-old Toby recorded a get well soon jam for BB King and the video went viral, racking up 5 million views in a week.



Toby was the original Zack Mooneyham in the West End production of School of Rock the Musical. He did this for a year winning an Olivier Award.

Due to his popular Sunday online jams, Toby has appeared on many TV shows around the world including the London Palladium where he performed with McFly. He jammed with Ronnie Baker Brooks at the Blues Heaven Festival in Denmark and their video also went viral with over 115 million views.

Some might say he was born in the wrong era, his music oozes class and sophistication that belies his age. The self-taught guitar slinger has appeared on stages with Buddy Guy, Billy Gibbons, Peter Frampton, Slash and Joe Bonamassa. With a number one record under his belt and a new original album released this year, Toby, still a teenager, is currently on a 60 date tour with Rhythm & Blues maestro Jools Holland and we are very lucky to have Toby visiting St Ives with his own band in May.

The second fundraising concert will allow you to experience the 'sounds' and 'looks' of 'Britain's Biggest Singles Chart Band Of All Time!' with the **The Quo Experience** featuring **Jeff Rich**, Status Quo's drummer from 1985 to 2000.

Here are some of the comments from a recent concert... *'Having seen the band last night at venue 23 in Wakefield, what can I say, just wow. Fantastic these guys are the total package'...* *'They are the purest thing giving you the show... without seeing the Quo.'* *'Can't wait to see them again. The bonus was Jeff rich on the drums, keep rocking guys. Excellent.'*

### SATURDAY 14TH JUNE 2025 ST IVES CORN EXCHANGE



With **JEFF RICH**  
Status Quo drummer  
1985-2000

**Both concerts start at 8pm. Tickets are £15 and can be purchased from: [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents) or in person from St Ives Corn Exchange.**

Remember all profit from these concerts will go towards paying for bands to perform so you can enjoy The Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival in September 2025 for free.



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

### Spaced out - at Huntingdon Station

Although there are signs of possible progress on the A1307 between the St Ives turning and Huntingdon: there are now areas marked with cones, and fetching lights at night, but with no obvious activity, one of the destinations for drivers using that road does possibly show that authorities listen -sometimes (following our article **A speed restriction too far** in RP172). For a long time there have been ongoing complaints about the size of parking spots at Huntingdon Station. For parents with kids in car seats, it has proved nigh on impossible to access the kids in the back seat. For the svelte, and especially the not so svelte, it has been hard to get out of a car if using a slot next to normal cars. Chelsea tractors have long since given up trying to park properly, regularly overstepping the white marks. Various writers to the Hunts Post- when there was a letters page- were scathing over the inadequacies of high-cost/ can't get in or out, parking slots. In the last week or so, parts of the car park at the station have been blocked off on a daily basis. Returning after a week's absence it seems that the slots are now wider: it is possible to park and get out of the car, although not with complete ease. Whilst this seems like progress, all that is now needed is to stop the station taxis using the 20-minute drop-off/collection slots, rather than their own designated area. I guess you can't have everything at once. If those 'roadworks' and cones were to be finished, that would be a happy Christmas.

### Is the Fawly signwriter from Yorkshire?

The latest excellent message from the Highways Authority seems to ask more questions than it answers. Firstly it suggests that drugs might be underwater. Is that in the river? It also suggests diving for them isn't good for you, which on the whole would seem logical.

Having sought out who might be responsible for these Fawly messages we can confidentially predict that the culprit is from Yorkshire!



### Are we to lose some of our councillors?

The latest Government proposals in the English Devolution White paper could result in several local authority layers being scrapped in favour of Combined and Unitary authorities. *The Riverporter* has previously stated the opinion that we have too many councillors and too many layers of government, so it will be interesting to see what these proposals will mean for Cambridgeshire. District or County? We may not have both in future.

Erik is very excited about Christmas.

Dear Erik,

#### Five ruined views

Excited by news of next year's bridge celebration I thought I'd have a sniff round. Look what I found - five of the alcoves have vandalised lights (see right).

Now I know you can't see over the parapet, but us humans like to pause and gaze up and downstream at the lovely views. Not so lovely anymore.

And we want to show off the bridge to visitors soon. Let's hope our Council is already on the case. Woof!

Luca That

Dear Luca, Of course this needs to be repaired before the bridge is blown up again on 26th July 2025!

More importantly though isn't it a tad dangerous to leave the lights like this, with presumably live wires open to the elements and accessible to inquisitive hands and fingers? Ed.



Dear Erik,

#### A correction Re 'More Trees Please' in RP 173

The Great Ouse Valley Trust wishes to clarify that the sources involved in funding and distribution to enable this project were in fact the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation (CCF) and Natural Cambridgeshire (NC). Many thanks GOVT

## EA turns its back on St Ives boaters

In a recent article Ben Jones of Jones Boatyard, explained why the St Ives and Brownhill Staunches may become beyond economic repair allowing more flood events and higher water levels upstream of the structures.

Ben explained that the River Great Ouse is a natural drain with a large catchment area of 8500km<sup>2</sup>. It originally became a navigation in the seventeenth century as it was historically important for commercial navigation.

Lock structures were erected to manage the water flows, the gates holding back water during dry periods and allowing the river to behave 'as nature intended' during wet ones.

Last winter, St Ives Staunch and Brownhill Staunch at Earith, fell into disrepair with many gates inoperable, restricting the Environment Agencies ability to manage water levels.

In October 2023, heavy rainfall meant that the River Great Ouse went under 'strong stream'

and remained so for an unprecedented 235 days, severely affecting the abilities of boaters to use the river. St Ives also experienced unusually high flooding, restricting access to Enderbys Wharf, Whitecross and The Waits.

At St Ives Staunch only three of the seven sluice gates remain operational and at Brownhill, only one of the three large radial sluice gates is working. Both structures are currently restricting the river flows and preventing flood water escaping. This issue was raised with the Environment Agency at a bad tempered meeting in the Corn Exchange in August (see RP165).

In May 2024, the EA published a report that



Flooding at Crystal Lakes. (Image: Jones Boatyard)

essentially said that the structures do not significantly offer flood protection to homes and buildings and that affects the funding to repair the structures.

The EA having now changed the Staunches primary purpose to 'Navigation' from 'Drainage' the structures are unlikely to attract sufficient funding to allow repairs to be made.

In October 2024, flood levels again rose to similar levels to January. In 2024 Jones Boatyard has experienced the two highest flood events seen in over 70 years.

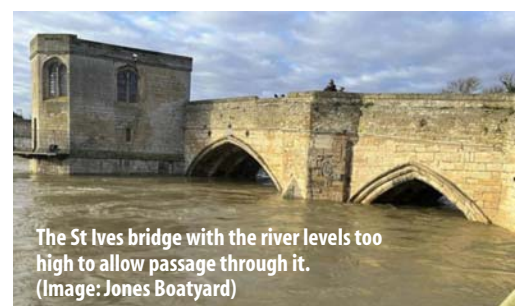
Ben concluded that we are swiftly moving toward a position where the entire structures will become beyond economic repair, and they will effectively become a weir meaning longer flood events and higher water levels upstream of the structures.

Whilst the EA may be happy for that to be the case, St Ives residents are not.

And neither are the businesses that work on the river such as the boat hire companies, which have lost income and incurred extra costs due to high river levels.

Just this week, for the second year running, Father Christmas could not arrive by boat and the Illuminated Boat Parade had to be cancelled in October because of high water levels.

That and the increased flooding in Huntingdonshire this year should surely make the EA think again!



The St Ives bridge with the river levels too high to allow passage through it. (Image: Jones Boatyard)



St Ives Staunch by Jones Boatyard in summer 2024, where very little water is able to flow through. (Image: Jones Boatyard)

# Wishing all our Customers a Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year



**Audi A3 Sportback S3 TFSI  
Quattro 5dr  
Sold £11,000**



**A George Best 1967/68 Match  
Worn #11 Manchester United  
Home jersey  
Sold £13,300**

**Pair of Large Fine Cast  
Bronze Lions of Life Size  
Sold £2600**



**Weir & Sons of Belfast  
longcase Regulator clock  
Sold £3600**



Hyperion Auctions, The Saleroom Station Road, St Ives  
PE27 5BH [www.hyperionauctions.co.uk](http://www.hyperionauctions.co.uk) 01480 464140



**Now Fully Licenced ...**  
and creating superb  
Indian Cuisine right in the heart of  
St Ives town centre

Order online  
[www.bengalspicestives.co.uk](http://www.bengalspicestives.co.uk)  
**Tel: 01480 537 015**  
Chapel Lane, St Ives PE27 5DX

**15% Discount**  
On collection of orders over £20

Large party bookings still  
available before Christmas