

The Riverporter

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

Fun in the sun

Last weekend's warm weather brought out the crowds in St Ives and throughout Huntingdonshire as 'flaming' June heralded the start of the summers activities as our pictures show.

Sunday, in particular, was busy with an International Children's Day in Warner's Park, described as an outdoor family party by the Polish organisers. Meanwhile in the town centre the Town Team's Day of Dance provided music, dance and laughter to large numbers of visitors. See right and on page 2.

The weekend was also busy for cyclists with the increasingly popular Tour of Cambridge taking place (see below). Although the event didn't reach St Ives this year it did engage 11,000 riders around the quiet lanes in the north of Huntingdonshire, starting and ending at the East of England Showground.

The Riverporter seems to be one of the few newspapers to mention this colossal event, probably because it went past the Editors house!

The next two events to take place are the **Regatta** at Nobles Field on Saturday 22 June and **Picnic in the Park** on Sunday 23 June in Warner's Park.



The Day Of Dance - everyone joined in even dogs on scooters! Photo © Andrew Blagbrough.

Can it be a coincidence?

The Riverporter has been going 18 months now and judging from the comments the editors have had it has been well received.

As we said from the outset we wanted to give publicity to all those worthwhile voluntary groups that contribute to the community of St Ives and once again this issue has details of events being put on by these organisations.

The Editors also said that they wanted to give readers the latest news with a touch of humour where possible but also in some detail.

This approach has sometimes resulted in the paper delving into the details behind the headlines.

Such an approach means that we try our best to ensure that we are accurate in our reporting and therefore we offer the opportunity to all parties to get their point of view over in their own words.

Worrying trend

In this regard *The Riverporter* hasn't been quite as successful with some councillors refusing to engage with us despite our assurance that we will print their comments verbatim. Of course that is their prerogative and we accept that entirely, but we do still try to accurately reflect their views on issues when known.

Sadly of late that indifference has changed and *The Riverporter's* Editor

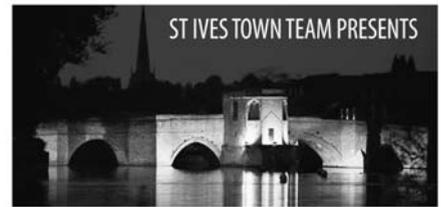
has now been threatened in what seems as an attempt to stop the newspaper from asking questions about Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) matters and the views of it's controlling councillors.

Coincidence?

At the same time *The Riverporter* has learned that a leading member of the opposition in HDC, Labour Councillor Dr Nik Johnson, has also been subject to comments and actions designed to threaten his ability to scrutinise and offer an alternative point of view of HDC.

Details of these feature on P3 in the article: Is democracy under threat in Huntingdonshire?

Flea on the Quay THIS SUNDAY 10AM TO 2PM THE QUAYSIDE ST IVES



ST IVES TOWN TEAM PRESENTS

THE Chapel Arts Season 2019

An evening with Classical guitarist

Daniela Rossi

Friday 5th July 8pm

Doors open at 7.30pm

Daniela returns once again to the Chapel this time to perform a range of works of European composers including Rodrigo, Albinez and Tarrega.



THIS IS A FREE EVENT

Due to the limited space people wishing to attend should still obtain a ticket for each concert

Tickets can be obtained in person from St Ives Corn Exchange or on-line from www.ticketsource.co.uk/eventsstives

Anyone who has paid in advance will be reimbursed on the door. The lower floor of the Chapel has been designated unsafe so all the concerts will be on the ground floor, which is easily accessed from the bridge.

For details www.theoldriverportstives.co.uk



Gran Fondo (Big Ride)
Tour of Cambridgeshire 2019

Dancing and a prancing in the streets



Three sides (teams) of Morris Dancers provided entertainment throughout The Old Riverport. Above: Coton Morris on the Sheepmarket. Right: Manor Mill Morris on The Waits and below: Sutton Masque in their colourful costumes.



Right: Helen Hunneyball-Gibson, dressed in chicken hat of course, with our own Newshound, Erik in a natty bandana, about to join in with the dancing.



A Skiffing good weekend

The Riverporter was on hand to welcome the members of The Skiff Club from Teddington who spent May Bank Holiday weekend skiffing the Great Ouse. Skiffing is sculling with an oar in each hand, rowing is one oar in both hands. We asked one of their members, Gordon Wuest, for a comment about their Meander. The conclusion was that the Great Ouse was a wonderful choice, with variety and beauty on its banks and charming towns and villages along the way. That's high praise, given that they've rowed the Thames and the Severn and Avon from Worcester to Stratford, and Bristol to Devizes.



The Skiffers arrive at their overnight stop, The Dolphin Hotel St Ives.

'There was regret that we couldn't see more of the places we passed, and a longer trip with more stops along the way would be great,' said Gordon. 'The most scenic section was Bedford to St Ives. A delight round every corner. Some ventured into St Ives after dark: they had fun, but I turned round when I realised I wouldn't be able to hear myself think in any of the bars we passed! But the charms of the town are apparent, certainly more so than when I was last there 50 years ago! Definitely a trip we recommend to future meanderers.'

Update on Fake News

Four issues ago we reported on a good news story from the District Council which said **The Council is pleased to announce plans to expand its existing loyalty reward schemes for regular market stall holders.**

The report went on 'The Council has worked successfully with St Ives Town Initiative (SITI) and the Town Council to run events to encourage visitors.'

We tried to find out what the scheme was and what events had been run but could get no answer from the Council or the councillor in charge, a Mrs Marge Beutell. So we asked the market traders, who said they knew of no scheme, but suggested we talk to HDC's man in charge on the ground.

This proved more fruitful as he told us that the scheme was still being decided, although an incentive was offered in January - market traders who booked stalls in January got February free. Still no one could tell us of any events that had been run to encourage visitors. Fake news?

The cheapest commuter towns surrounding Cambridge revealed

But wait a minute where is St Ives on the list?

Cambridge live have published an interesting article comparing the cost of commuting into Cambridge from a selection of towns taking into account the cost of rents and the cost of rail fares. The towns they have listed include: Melbourn, March, Downham Market, Royston, Letchworth, Newmarket and Bury St Edmonds. The outcome showed that living in Melbourn (cheapest) saved £5428 per year and Bury St Edmonds saved £1128 a year.

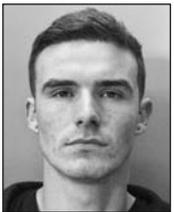
But we ask the question 'Why was St Ives not included in this article?' Our commute doesn't even need the train and our property prices are way below Cambridge. **Are there any estate agents reading this that can do the numbers for us?**

Eagled-eyed officers spot drug deal

A drug dealer has been sentenced to more than two years in prison after officers spotted a drug deal at the War Memorial Parade in St Ives on 12 November 2017 when they witnessed suspicious activity in a grey BMW. Officers pulled it over, discovering the driver, 22-year-old Daniel Currell, to be in possession of several bags of cocaine. Currell, of Fairfields Crescent, St Ives, was arrested and admitted the drugs were his, but claimed they were for personal use.

A police drugs expert examined Currell's mobile phone, along with other seized items, and found conversations which indicated the stash was not for personal consumption. Earlier this month, Currell admitted being concerned in the supply of cocaine, possession with intent to supply cocaine, possession of cocaine and possession of cannabis and on Tuesday 28 May was jailed for two years and five months at Peterborough Crown Court.

Anyone with information about drug dealing in Cambridgeshire is urged to report online at www.cambs.police.uk/report or call 101.



Well Dressing

On the weekend of 21-23 June Holywell will celebrate its **Well Dressing and Flower Festival.**

The theme this year is Open the Book (stories from the Bible). Friday 21st is the well blessing service at 6.30pm followed by refreshments. Saturday 22nd the church is open all day and from 12pm there is a fete with stalls, games, plants and teas. Sunday the morning the service will be at 9.30am and at 3pm there is a family friendly concert followed a Big Tea.

Donations are appreciated for charity no tickets needed.

Below the well 'undressed'.



ST IVES TOWN TEAM PRESENTS

THE Chapel Arts Season 2018

A series of concerts and events in the Chapel on St Ives Bridge

Poetry Folk Nite

Tuesday 18th June 7.30pm

Doors open at 7pm

Presents . . .

Spoken Word Artist
Amber-Page



Amber, the Cambs Hammer & Tongue Champion came second in the national finals of this prestigious poetry competition recently held in The Royal Albert Hall.

She will be supported by Simon Baron • Open Mic Sessions for all • The Bridge Poets of St Ives • St Ives Poet Laureate Patrick Macdonald • Folk Songs from David Gardner

THIS IS A FREE EVENT

Places are limited to 30 places on a first come, first served, basis

For details www.theoldriverportstives.co.uk

having your say ...

The Riverporter



Dear Erik PAWS FOR THOUGHT

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

Dear Erik, Can you help find volunteers?

EACH are looking for a number of local people to collect at Morrisons in St Ives between 9am and 5pm on 21st June. This is a fantastic opportunity which involves giving up just 2 hours of your time to support local children with life threatening conditions and their families! If you are interested in helping at this collection or would like to know about our future collection dates in the area please get in contact with our Fundraising Assistant at phillipa.graham@each.org.uk or call us on 01223 204916. We can't wait to hear from you!



Trashing our parkland



Local news services and social media this week are carrying a news item showing damage and mess left behind in the children's play area in Hill Rise Park.

The story reports that our St Ives school kids have set about burning books in the area causing damage to the equipment and leaving ash and mess for others to clean up ...

But along to save the day came Batman and Superman Yes, you read that right! Two unnamed primary school students took up the challenge to clear up after their older but seemingly less caring counterparts. **Well done lads!**

Local residents published some rather harsh words on Facebook about the culprits.

To my chum Erik

Markets - abject neglect

Out and about in town on Monday mornings, I'm thinking the state of our dwindling weekly Markets may make us growl and holler out loud. Hardly any need for you to paws for thought. It's staring you right in your cuddly, fluffy little white face.

A couple of stalls in front of HSBC, then no more stalls along the whole of Market Hill. Plus gaping holes in what's left, where stalls should be. Loads of space for us to cock a leg. The District Council HDC 'owns' the Monday Market. It could soon be the size of the Friday Market, a pitiful shadow of its former self. Two years ago St Ives' HDC Councillor Fuller proclaimed how well HDC's markets were doing again. Well, he's in the dog house now. Or he's looking the other way.

Do HDC and the Town Council really care any more? Have increases in stall fees been part of the cause of the decline?

Through HDC's abject neglect the Monday and Friday Markets are going to the proverbial dogs. And the Town Council's Farmers Markets are not far behind. Not good for our town centre. No good at all. **Duke Doberman**



COUNCIL & COMMUNITY NEWS

Is democracy under threat in Huntingdonshire?

The *Riverporter* regularly receive press releases from various organisations, which we read and decide if the information will interest our readers. Mostly they're from local groups eager to inform us about what they are doing and several examples of that are in this edition.

We have also received press releases from local authorities including Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC), until recently that is. We don't usually print them verbatim because they can be long and repetitive and if we are unsure on a particular issue we ring up the HDC press office, or try to speak to the councillor quoted in the press release, for clarification.

Often an answer is forthcoming so all is well, but sometimes this causes difficulties, as with the recent item about an improved scheme for the Market Traders (see Update on p2).

The *Riverporter* also attends council meetings, the editor sitting at the press desk so that we can get the news quickly and speak directly to our politicians who run our town and keep our readers informed with the facts. Recently this scrutiny of councillors and the authorities has led to some unexpected consequences. Often our requests for information are totally ignored. More worrying is that reasonable requests for information has led to this email to the Editor.

Mr Souter

I have been made aware of a number of incidents that have taken place in relation to certain District Councillors in St Ives. Whilst being a District Councillor does present a person as a public figure, there is a limit to what can reasonably be expected in terms of interaction with the public. Furthermore, I believe that you are not a resident of St Ives, and so I would not expect you to have any recourse to seek out the local councillors for the town. The manner of your engagement with them is prompting me to write to you to express my strong dissatisfaction with the manner in which you are frequently engaging and confronting certain councillors and I therefore request that you desist.

Furthermore, your increasing contact with my officers asking a range of questions which could be answered by viewing the councils website and social media feeds is consuming too much of our time with little practical benefit for council tax payers in the district. Should you persist in this I will have little choice but to categorise your behaviour as vexatious and consider withdrawing access to certain services. As you may gather from the content of this message, I am asking you respectfully to modify your behaviour towards the District Council, its councillors and staff. Should you decline this request, then I will have no hesitation in considering further action. Yours faithfully *Joanne Lancaster, Managing Director, HDC.*

The Editor naturally replied, a rather lengthy one, the gist of which was that in the last 12 months, he had politely asked simple questions of three councillors, which hardly amounted to a number of 'incidents', and none of the information was available on the council website. It also said that Ms Lancaster's comments were far from accurate, relied on hearsay from councillors and, in his opinion, were designed to intimidate and curtail his work as a journalist, his rights as a registered voter (he was resident in St Ives at the time) and said that the email had upset his wife, who was worried the bins would not get emptied.

The *Riverporter* will let our readers decide if this is an attempt to stop us bringing you real news and whether or not the Council's senior officer should be issuing threats to protect councillors from the most basic scrutiny.

Riverporter not alone in being targeted

Since we compiled the above we learned that even elected councillors may have been subject to intimidation. Dr Nik Johnson, Labour's candidate in the last Parliamentary elections and currently a St Neots District Councillor has made a formal complaint following a fierce attack on him by Councillors Ablewhite and Fuller.

The *Riverporter's* editor witnessed this attack from the press desk and although he considered it an overtly aggressive attack on Cllr Johnson, thought of it as 'handbags' considering the issue revolved around an interview given by Dr Johnson to Anglia Television about refuse collection. Cllr Ablewhite claimed that Cllr Johnson had misled the public, falsely stating that services would be cut. These claims were later made in a Conservative leaflet and included a quote from the Chair of the Council who had rebuked Cllr Johnson.

Cllr Johnson's complaint was that not only did Cllrs Ablewhite and Fuller misquote the interview given to the TV (a video of the interview seems to back up this opinion) but also that the Chair of the Council, Cllr Richard West, failed to remain impartial and the leaflet issued by the Conservatives reinforced this inaccurate account of the television interview.

Now it seems that the issue has taken a turn for the worse

The formal complaint was made 3 months after the incident and these are usually conducted by officers confidentially. Within days of it being made Dr Johnson's employers, North West Anglia Trust, received a letter from local Conservative Party Agent, Adam Roberts, challenging why the TV interview had taken place on NHS property. Cllr Johnson claims this was an attempt to get him in trouble with his employers and to prevent him and councillors from speaking about issues and that it raises concerns of a possible leak in the complaints process.

Cllr Dr Nik Johnson told The *Riverporter* that he was grateful to his employers who were robust in their response to Hunts Conservative Association, confirming the TV interview had been held well within the local protocols for the Trust. Cllr Johnson is still awaiting the outcome of his complaint. **Interesting note:** Adam Roberts used to compile the Quay News in St Ives, which heavily promoted conservative candidates during elections. Mr Roberts went on to be Communications Manager for the Police & Crime Commissioner Jason Ablewhite before becoming Agent for Huntingdon Conservative Association. **ED**

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

OSPREY



OSPREY



The first Osprey of summer?

This weeks visit from President Trump saw one of The UK's highest security operations ever, and sharp-eyed sky watchers will have seen these remarkable flying machines (right) patrolling over our town and surrounding areas. Each machine can carry up to 32 heavily armed marines so probably best not to mess with them. **The Osprey on the left can be a bit of a handful too!**



**Entries Invited:
Next Fine Art Sale
Saturday 29th June**



Starting at 12.30 with Viewing Friday 28th June 9.00-5.00 and on the morning of the Sale

To include a One Person collection of over 150 Lladro Figures and Sculptures, Military and Toys as well as a good collection of Ceramics, Silver and Collectables

Results from Our Last Interiors Sale

Edwardian Silver 3 Piece Tea Set Sheffield
1907 by Thomas Bradbury & Sons
SOLD £230



Van Cleef and Arpels Impressive Cabochon Blue Sapphire and Turquoise set cluster ring
SOLD £750

Next Antiques & Interiors Sale: 15th June starting at 11.00am

Hyperion Auctions, The Salerooms, Station Road, St Ives PE27 5BH

www.hyperionauctions.co.uk 01480 464140



Bid online at our auctions through
the-saleroom.com



From Heidi N. de Tries our Environmental Correspondent

CONFUSED TIT!

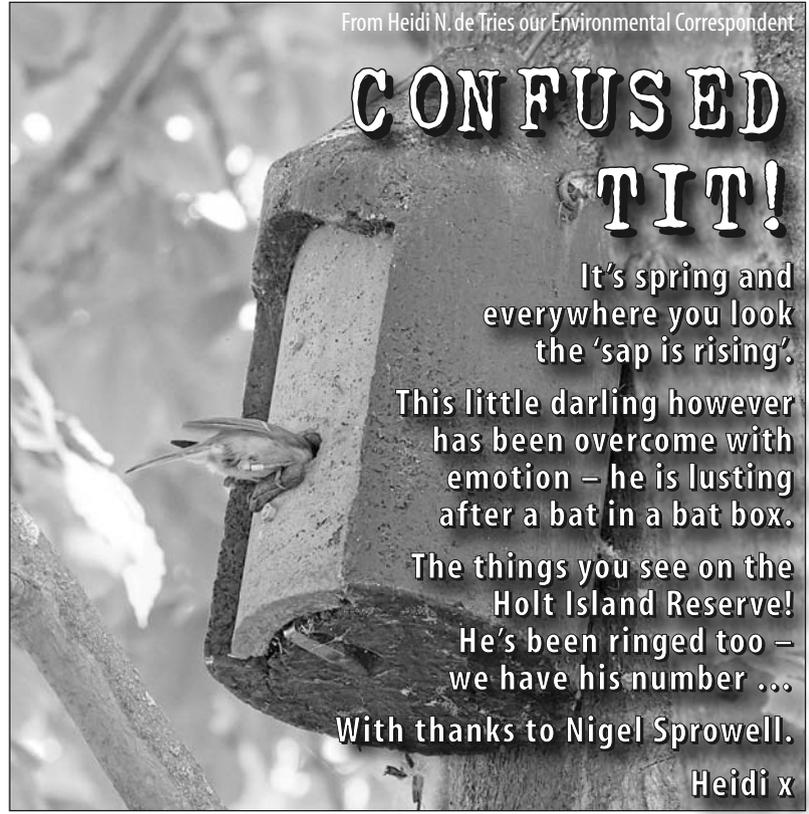
It's spring and everywhere you look the 'sap is rising'.

This little darling however has been overcome with emotion – he is lusting after a bat in a bat box.

The things you see on the Holt Island Reserve! He's been ringed too – we have his number ...

With thanks to Nigel Sprowell.

Heidi x



Screen St Ives

Doors open at 7.30pm and films start at 8pm. Refreshments are available before the screening. All tickets cost only £5, and are available online or in person at the Corn Exchange, St Ives.

Friday 21st Jun 2019
Screen 1
THE FAVOURITE
Director: Yorgos Lanthimos
Ireland | UK | USA 2018 1h 59m



An astounding film about the fascinating and troubled Queen Anne. Joint acting honours go to Olivia Colman, Rachel Weisz and Emma Stone, who form a captivating, comic and unusual trio of strong women - perhaps not how we normally think of early 18th century England.

ADVERTORIAL

THE TENANT FEES ACT - ARE YOU READY?

Mike Ellis of Ellis Winters assesses the current housing market



The Tenant Fees Act 2019 comes into force on the 1 June banning all tenant fees charged by agents and landlords except those specifically permitted by the Act. The 'permitted' fees include rent, security deposits, holding deposits, early termination and some default fees.

The ban applies to all residential ASTs in England entered into on or after 1 June, including existing tenancies that renew for a fixed term. Tenancies continuing after 1 June on an existing fixed term or periodic basis will be bound by the terms in the current contract meaning agents and landlords will still be able to charge fees on these up to 31

May 2020. After this any fee taken will be classed as a 'prohibited payment'.

The other big change is the tenant's security deposit which is capped at five weeks rent (or six weeks rent if the annual rent is £50,000 or more).

Letting agents are still required to display their fees schedule and client money protection in their offices and on their websites to make these as transparent as possible. The act will also enforce visibility on all additional advertising, whether this be rental pages like Rightmove or Zoopla, social media or magazines.

This undoubtedly will impact both landlords and lettings

agents so it is very important to ensure that anyone considering letting a property is confident that the agent they use is accredited and knowledgeable about the current legislation.

If you would like some help or advice concerning the Tenant Fees Act, please contact any member of our experienced Lettings team on 01480 388 888.



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