

The Riverporter

ST IVES AWARD WINNING NEWSPAPER

Issue 69: 2 October 2020

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

All change in the town centre

Notices have been popping up in town from Cambridgeshire County Council about social distancing. It appears we are to have a new parking regime on Market Hill.

The extent of the changes won't be clear for a few days, but we do know that all the middle of the road parking bays outside WH Smiths will be designated as disabled.

The other bays, opposite the Town Hall, will be for loading only and kerb markings outside Smiths will prohibit any parking, allowing traffic to flow around Market Hill unobstructed.



Town Mayor, Jonathan Pallant said, 'I am in support of the scheme as it adds much needed Disabled Parking and avoids the need for delivery lorries to encroach on the extra pedestrian space the barriers provide. I'm also grateful



the barriers are being nailed down in Market Hill and would kindly ask people to stop moving them - they are there for a reason!

Of course Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) has a slightly different agenda, but not to be out done by the race to install new Covid signs, we noticed that HDC are reminding us of the Government's instruction to wash our hands...

Note the effective red barriers doing their job!!!

Final point... Erik nails it!

Erik has had it confirmed that the old Nat West Bank, currently under renovation, is NOT going to be a nail bar after all. Previous mention of this in other journals is apparently 'fake news'. It appears that no new tenant has been identified but *The Riverporter* will let you know as soon as we find out.



On the Road again...

At this point the author has to own up to his age. As a younger man I always loved my cars and always went for the more unusual marques, so when sitting at the desk last week the sound of a familiar engine note got my attention and I found a beautiful condition Reliant Scimitar sitting outside my window.

Intrigued I had to speak to the owner, but I found the car was already the centre of attraction

complete with camera crew and tv celebs.

The bright yellow Scimitar did several circuits of The Quay and Bridge Street before I caught up with one of the production team, when I discovered they were filming an edition of the BBC's 'Antiques Road Trip'.

The show which first aired in 2010 sees two antiques experts compete against each other over five days,



usually driving various classic cars around the country, buying antiques and selling them in five auctions.

The programme is done in a light-hearted fashion with all profits going to charity. The production team couldn't say when the St Ives episode might air but it would be sometime in the new year...

I really miss that car!

Town toilets remain a sticky problem

The only public toilets in the centre of town continue to be a problem and may close forever unless a solution can be found to make them usable again. The bus station toilets, which have been problematic for many years, due largely to drain problems, have been shut since March.

As is often the case in matters of this nature, the three authorities involved seem to want to pass the buck [or should that be bucket?] when it comes to finding a solution. In a nutshell the issue is this:

The toilets, which the Town Council (SITC) took over running in December 2010 are leased from Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC), owners of the land.

The lease was for ten years and expires at the end of this November. Currently the toilets cannot be used due to them blocking almost daily. Anglian Water are responsible for the sewage infrastructure but seem to want to only deal with the Town Council who pay their bills, rather than HDC who are responsible for the building.

It seems that HDC have been very

slow in dealing with the issue for some time and particularly since the lockdown.

The Riverporter has been in touch with the Town Council, who spend over £33,000 a year on public toilets, and we have been told that SITC are now working very closely with HDC and Anglian Water on the problem.

The Mayor, Jonathan Pallant said, 'I have been given assurances that just as soon as someone can work out exactly what is going wrong with the antiquated sewer system, it will be fixed and we will then be looking to open the toilets again.'

He also said that he understood the difficulties people are having and the Amenities Committee resolved last week to reach out to local businesses and community facilities in the area with customer-only

toilets, to explain the predicament and see if there was anything they can do to help.

The Town Clerk, Alison Benfield added 'At the moment the intention is that patch repairs and descaling will be carried out early next week and the toilets will re-open in a Covid safe manner as soon as possible.'

Mayor Pallant did confirm that, if the problems cannot be fixed, 'I don't think we can commit to taking on the lease at the Cattle Market again at this time because it would be imprudent to commit public money to a facility that cannot be used, but of course I'm hopeful we can get the issues resolved swiftly and then be in a position to move forward.'

It remains uncertain whether the toilets will be available after November.

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

The publishers, Ron Westrip and John Souter, reserve the right to determine the content of the publication. © copyright reserved

HEIDI GETS THE HUMP ABOUT DUMPING!

So let's get this straight shall we? St Ives is a beautiful town, yes? Not perfect we know, but as market towns go I'd say the best of the bunch. We all love to live here and we love to see the visitors coming back and the lovely al fresco atmosphere a sunny day brings to our riverside. [That's a lot of love – Ed.]

And it's the riverside that has got me going this week. Take a look at these pictures.



Now look at them more closely. Every one of them has been dumped - yes DUMPED on an official town mooring on our lovely Waits [there's another 'lovely' - Ed].



And they have been there for weeks. (Plus, incidentally, a car tyre a bit further along.)

Now who would do such a thing?

More to the point, what is our Town Council and the Environment Agency doing about them? Not only are they denying three boatloads of visitors spending time and money in our lovely town [and another - Ed] but they are on a blot on our lovely [no more Heidi - Ed] landscape.

Oooh, I was in such a state

I contacted that lovely, I mean handsome, Andy Hubble, our EA River Inspector. 'Heidi,' he said, 'calm down. I am on the case and have spoken with your Town Clerk'. Well, Andy, I say that was some time ago now, so can you please pull your finger out and tow them away?' We will not be dumped on.

I'm pleased to say the car tyre has since vanished. But wait! There's more. What did I find round the corner?



I'm sorry to be ranting this week dears but I do believe these things are important. Most of us take pride in our town. Our authorities should recognise this and support our efforts to keep it lovely - sorry Ed!

Bye Heidi x



From boats to a car.

It's been there for weeks with a flat tyre and taking up a valuable parking space. About time you towed it away HDC, as per your notice on the screen! District Councillors please note.

Day Care Centre to reopen



We are pleased to announce that St Ives Day Centre will reopen on Monday 5 October in a new, Covid 19 secure way.

They will offer two 2½ hour sessions per day (am and pm) with a maximum of 6 people with a break in between for cleaning/sanitising. We are unable to offer the minibus service or a lunchtime meal. We hope that this will give older people a chance to enjoy meeting up again for chat and socialisation (from a 2 metre distance of course!) and families/carers can have some much needed respite. There is no charge for this service but sessions must be pre-booked to comply with regulations.

To get further information and/or book a session please contact the Centre in one of the following ways:

Telephone 01480463444, Mobile 07856899729 or email daycentre25@googlemail.com. All are welcome, we look forward to seeing our old members and meeting some new ones.

Would you like to be a Town Councillor?

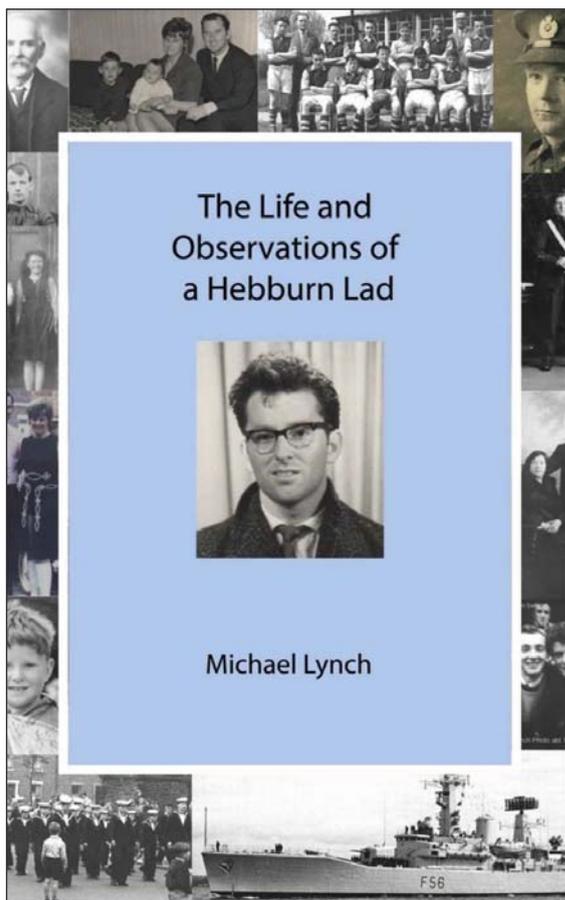
The Riverporter has been informed that an election has not been asked for by the requisite 10 East Ward electors, to fill Richard Bellamy's seat. Therefore the Town Council's October meeting will co-opt somebody.

If you would like to be considered for the position you should contact the Town Clerk either by post to the Town Hall, Market Hill, The Old Riverport, St Ives PE27 5AL, or by email to clerk@stivestowncouncil.gov.uk or by telephoning 01480 388929.

ADVERTORIAL

Former Mayor – Michael Lynch – Pens Biography

Michael Lynch a former Mayor of St Ives and Huntingdon District Councillor has published his biography; - 'The Life and Observations of a Hebburn Lad'. Hebburn (Tyneside) being his place of birth.



He originally wrote his biography as a memento for his six grandchildren but was then persuaded by his wife Sheila to go public and publish his mementoes as a book. Michael now of Houghton & Wyton, self published 200 copies of his book in March, to raise money for 4 charities. The books sold out within 12 weeks and it was oversubscribed.

The total raised for the 4 charities was £1,738-80p.

British Heart Foundation - £455-00p

Cancer Research UK -£558-80p

Marie Curie - £335-00p

Huntingdon Community Cancer Network - £390-00p.

With the help and assistance of Sophie Hollis a local Medical Student who edited and amended the structure of the book to meet 'Amazons' production requirements. The book is now available on Amazon both in Paperback and as a Kindle version, at :- https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B08DSYRVJD?ref_=pe_3052080_397514860

The book takes you from his early school days to his working career from Pit boy to Chair of an NHS Organisation a successful NHS Business, with 750 Staff and budget of £170Million. At the age of 19 he became the Chairman of the National Association of Youth Clubs, National Members Council, representing 360,000 youth club members. He also won a 3 week scholarship to the USSR in 1961.

He was the youngest ever member of his local Urban District and Durham County Council.

Along the way he had tea with the Queen Mother at St. James Palace in 1961, met (and spoke with) HM the Queen and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh in 1978 and later met other Royals, Government Ministers and many VIP's.

His last job as an employee (of British Gas) was as the Project Development Manager of the Greenwich Peninsula, obtaining the planning consents and cleaning up the 320 acres of contaminated land to prepare the way for what exists there today including the O2 site.

It is a contemporary social history of a working class secondary schoolboy who failed the 11+ and went on to have a successful and varied business, civic and social life.

Readers Comments:-

'The joys and sadness, I even had a few tears at the end' - Flora Mott.

'A lovely book, lovely stories a cracking read' - Dr. Nik Johnson

'What an absolutely charming personal record you have compiled for your family, friends and wider circle' - Dame Mary Archer.



having your say ... The Riverporter

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

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

NEWS UPDATE

It is that time of the year when landowners graze their sheep on the meadows and signs have been put up to politely remind dog walkers to keep their dogs on a lead when near the sheep. It has also been brought to *The Riverporter's* attention that these signs had been damaged maliciously (see above). The meadows are private land and farmers are perfectly entitled to request the control of dogs. Only the marked pathways have the right of public access.



Dear Erik,

I was told by a lady with impaired vision that during lockdown she was unable to use the bus station toilets. The Town Clerk was apologetic and explained there was a serious problem with the sewer. The Town Council have been in dispute with HDC for seven months and no resolution has been achieved.

Edna Mathether

[Dear Edna, Please see article on front page. Ed]

Dear Erik, Ref: Needingworth Road crossing.

The works stand desolately and scruffily idle - since whenever. Awaiting, it appears, the subterranean electrical installation, to power up the Belisha Beacons and the Floodlights that tower above them; tIme was of course that floodlights were not necessary, because ordinary street lights, the bane of house burglars and street robbers, did that job.

GRUMPY DOG Doberman.

Dear Erik,

Ref: *Cromwell Surgery keeping quiet* RP68

The powers of the press are many it would appear. Within 24 hours of your little piece in *The Riverporter*, about build completion, the Surgery Practice Manager scurried round personally (this time to all neighbouring houses on the Place and Terrace) with a note confirming that the build was due to finish by Xmas. Having denied this before ...

Andy Notherthing

Barking mad

In a recent issue we wrote of a Priory road resident complaining about barking dogs in the immediate area and we later published a disturbing reply from a local dog owning resident, who explained his side of the story and revealed he had in fact received provocative and seriously threatening letters. During the past week we now learn that police were called when an elderly resident had her front gates maliciously padlocked, effectively trapping her inside her home. This act was described by neighbours as cruel and frightening.

Police are now aware, and neighbours have suggested that the individual responsible should stop from escalating the issue further.

Karohered! Chris Morgan pressure cleans the Swan Mural, installed by The Town Team in Free Church Passage, watched by George Smerdon, owner of the wall. The Mural, painted by Denny Gaudin, is very popular, according to George, who often hears children counting the numbers of swans and birds and the spots on the ladybird.



Dear Erik,

Can I thank Odd Job Man for starting to remove the ivy in the copse in Chestnut Road. I know what a valuable nature resource ivy is, but we need to keep the trees healthy too. I would have had a go but wasn't sure if I was allowed to. I suffer from Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and can't do too much of anything. I always found it therapeutic peeling ivy off.

Mrs FizzCrick

[Dear Mrs FizzCrick we received this]

Dear Erik,

I have now dealt with the ivy on about 6 trees in the coppice, see picture.



Ivy provides much needed food in winter for birds and shelter for invertebrates.

The downside is that it makes trees much more vulnerable to strong winds. This is particularly noticeable in the Thicket which is on a slope facing the prevailing wind.

Ivy has been removed in the Thicket by Holt Island volunteers and at the back of Waitrose along Harrison Way by St Ives in Bloom team and along Hill rise by HRAA members.

Very Odd Job Man

Dear Erik,

I always enjoy reading *The Riverporter*. At least it gets folks thinking about local issues. And [here is] my two penneth about parking charges- Pay for one hour but get second free so you can wander round town, spend local and have a coffee. All this stuff to make people rush around in one hour is not good for mental health or the shops. **Tony Plant**

Dedicated *Riverporter* reader Jackie Ablett has again commented on our Facebook page ...

More absolute 🤩 from a non journalist.

Spinning hate and bile Call yourself a journalist!?!

[Nice emoji, but not quite as good as her (or is it his?) previous comment that The Riverporter is 'Lower than a worm's tit!' **Ed**]

Countdown to Christmas



This year really hasn't gone to plan and so it would be nice to try and recapture a little good spirit as we start the run up to Christmas. This year has seen a campaign to raise money to repair and improve the St Ives Christmas lights, following what has felt like years of criticism. The campaign supported by town businesses and retailers has a social media page and donation collection points around town and is led by Town Councillor Angie Dickinson. So with all the Covid gloom and doom here is our chance to light up the town and raise a few more smiles. Find them on their facebook page ... St Ives Christmas Lights 2020.

A different Snowman Festival

The very popular Snowman Festival, which normally attracts hundreds of children and their parents to visit many town centre shops in the Snowman Trail, will be a little different this year. Covid restrictions have put paid to the trail but every shop is being asked to still welcome the



Snowman back and proudly present them in their shop windows. As before there will be a £200 prize for the best window display.

Everyone can join in

The Festival organisers are also hoping to give a great prize to the best snowman display by children in their house windows. Perhaps some of those rainbows can become snowmen? Wouldn't it be good if every house could be home to a Snowman over the Christmas period. *The Riverporter* hopes to give more details in our next issue.

Housing accelerator???

Within the last week the planning application by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, involving 224 homes to the west of St Ives, that takes in part of the former golf course and the redundant Houghton Poultry Research Station has been withdrawn. The site has been the subject of controversy for some years but an article in the Hunts Post says that the project has now been taken over by a government-owned 'housing accelerator' which is set to bring more than 200 homes to the site with their aim of getting the project built.

Homes England has been carrying out a planning exercise for the site which will culminate in a new outline planning application. Homes England said it was also responsible for increasing the number of new homes being built in England, improving existing affordable homes and bringing empty homes back into use as affordable housing. But there have been long running concerns from residents of Houghton and Wyton that their community would become joined to St Ives, leading to a top level legal challenge to the planning procedures. Watch this space!

Police report extract

Police and an ambulance were called to a brawl outside a fast-food restaurant on The Broadway on Tuesday evening, 22nd September, in which several males were fighting and a shop window was broken. One person was arrested at the scene and police are looking at CCTV footage as part of the investigation to determine exactly what happened.

A message from The Mayor

Mayor Jonathan Pallant told *The Riverporter*, 'Following a brief illness I will be continuing 'Walk with the Mayor' on Saturday. Meet me at the Co-op for 9am or stop me anywhere en-route to the Farmers Market (we take the path past Wheatfields School, Kings Hedges, Ramsey Road and the Broadway). You can ask me anything, or just enjoy a little company and a brisk, socially distanced walk. It's good for our mental and physical health if nothing else and supports our status as a CALMtown. Please do follow Covid-19 precautions though, we can't have more than six together.'

B's Coffee Shop & Bistro



7 Kings Hedges, St Ives

Open 8 til 6 Mon to Fri
and Sat 8 til 5

A newly refurbished,
welcoming & dog friendly cafe
serving breakfast all day.



Buffets, Business lunches and Parties
also catered for.

Please call 01480 462422 for enquiries or find us
on Instagram @bees_coffeeshopandbistro

That went down a bomb

Well there we were, Erik and I, driving home when we were overtaken by a rather plain looking truck with the eye catching words 'BOMB DISPOSAL' written on the side. It's been many years, thankfully, since I last saw one of these on the streets.

I watched it head off towards the Hemingfords but thought no more of it until having got back to our Riverporter desk only to see reports of a WWII bomb discovery in Hemingford Abbots. It turned out that the bomb squad was called to carry out a controlled explosion. The Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) along with police responded to a property in Hemingford Abbots on September 21st following reports that workmen in the area had found an unexploded bomb. A police cordon had been put in place as a precaution in the High Street but only remained there for about an hour. Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) safely disposed of it with a loud controlled explosion witnessed by a Hunts post reporter Ella Pengelly.

We understand from reports that an 18-year-old landscaper found the bomb and actually picked it up before realising what it was. Mystery surrounds how the bomb got there as there are no reports of bombs landing in Hemingford Abbots during World War II!



ADVERTORIAL

HOUSE PRICES HIT A RECORD HIGH AS BUYERS LOOK TO UPSIZE



The latest ONS data shows that UK house prices have increased by 3.4% to a new national average of £237,834 in the year to June 2020. The mini post lockdown boom has pushed house price growth to the highest level since March 2018. While in the East of England, prices rose by 2.6%.

In addition, RICS August residential survey revealed a sharp acceleration in house prices, 44% of agents reporting an increase, the strongest reading since 2016.

So, good news: short-term sales expectations remain positive. Dataloft reports house prices will rise by 4% in 2021 and anticipates strong price growth in the following year and leading property listing, Zoopla, estimates property price growth of 2-3% by this Christmas.



UP-SIZING TO A LARGE HOME: LARGE DEMAND FOR THREE- AND FOUR-BEDROOM PROPERTIES

There is a trend for up-sizing to larger homes as the buyer demand of three- or four-bedroom homes has increased - hence, the record asking prices in the second-stepper sector, Rightmove House Index.

Tim Bannister, Rightmove's Director of Property Data comments: 'Increased competition for second-stepper homes has pushed prices to a record this month for those looking to take the next step up the ladder. Needing more space has always been the most popular reason for moving house, but now there's a new urgency for extra space to be able to work from home, which means that there are different sets of buyers competing for the same type of property.'

'At the start of the year, a fourth bedroom was very much a luxury for buyers trading up, but it's now emerging as a must-have for those who are able to take that step. With overall asking prices just a few hundred pounds shy of July's record, and buyer demand at an all-time high, those currently looking for their next home are likely to find that only offers close to the asking price will be considered, especially for larger homes,' Rightmove's Director of Property Data said.

The stamp duty holiday introduced until the end of March 2021 has created a great opportunity for investors. In total, £15k will have been saved on properties over £500k until 31 March.

Source: Dataloft, UKHPI, Zoopla, Rightmove.

ellis&co
winters

