

The Riverporter

ST IVES AWARD WINNING NEWSPAPER

Issue 73: 27 November 2020

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

You can join in with the new Recycled Snowman Festival - see page 4 for details

Planning failure unveiled

Questions are being asked of HDC's planning system and of local councillors who supported the plans for the Cromwell Surgery extension against the advice of their own Conservation officers.

Meanwhile Josie Betts, an eighty-year-old pensioner, who has lived in Cromwell Terrace for nearly fifty years, feels badly let down, both by the planners, councillors and her neighbour, the Cromwell Surgery, for presenting her with a view of a tall metal box a yard from her garden fence (see below).

The plans, submitted in early 2018 were heavily criticised at the time by many, including residents, the Civic Society and *The Riverporter*.

Our headline in RPS March 2018 was 'Is this the best we can get?' Although the plans were delayed being passed for a bat survey (which never took place - see RP20) Councillors Jason Ablewhite and Ryan Fuller ignored the concerns of everyone, including their own Conservation Officer and passed the application.

A Carbuncle?

The comments we have received, since the building has been unveiled, show that concerns about the plans were justified, although that is no compensation for Josie who now looks out on a super-sized tin shed. Speaking with a local Estate Agent the impact on the value of the property is considerable and could reduce it by as much as 10%.

We asked David Stewart, Chairman of St Ives Civic Society, if he had changed his view of the building now it was built. He said not and reminded us that he had presented the Society's views to the District Council Planning Committee which stated that they could 'find very little to recommend this application, even as revised. The choice of cladding colour is wrong, the choice of roof design is a disaster.'



Whilst everyone agreed that additional health services was a good thing, that fact, and the poor design of the existing extension, built in the 1960s, seemed to override design considerations and the likely impact on the surrounding listed buildings.

Right:
Do we need to change The Old Riverport sign now?

Left:
The view from a bedroom window impacted by the massive wall, more in keeping with an industrial unit or container port.

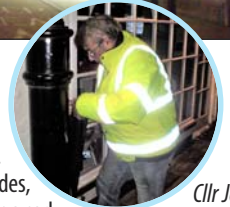


The lights are on but nobody's home!

Well actually it's more like everybody is home. Such a contrast on past years. No fairground rides, no popping in the pub, no hot dogs. ... There is a sad irony that for years residents and shopkeepers have pleaded to brighten up our Christmas town centre and this year, when these lovely improvements have come, most of us are locked away at home and so many of our shops are shut and have missed out.

The team organising this year's lights are to be congratulated on their efforts. Working in partnership with local company ILUX, a specialist IT business, and assisted by a local fund raising campaign, that has seen many local shops act as collection points for donations, there has been much praise for the displays. The switch on was still fun for the few that turned out to watch.

Town Councillors and volunteers could be found with their heads buried in lampposts around the streets ready to flick the switch when told. Somebody shouted a countdown and a general kerfuffle occurred at zero. In recent evenings it has been reported that people have been conducting a slow drive through town to show the kids. Well done the Christmas Lights Committee and new Chairman Michael Burke and ILUX of course.



Cllr John Davies looking for the switch!

St Ives switch-on relies on old tech.



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The Rotary Club of St Ives - Santa Sleigh Programme 2020



Following full Covid-19 safety protocols, the Rotary Club of St Ives plan to run a programme of their Santa Sleigh visits within St Ives and our surrounding villages this Christmas.

The routes will be shorter this year, the smaller Closes and Cul-de-Sacs will be avoided, and the Sleigh will remain on the larger roads. The Sleigh crews will be limited to six people and will not be knocking on any doors this year, but donations can still be safely made, both on the night and by text.

The Sleigh will not be able to stop as in previous years, but will move slowly and thus enable residents to see Santa. The Rotary Club will urge people not to congregate and to observe the social distancing rules in force at the time. The areas they will be visiting and the dates are shown right, more details will appear on the Rotary Club of St Ives Facebook page nearer the time.

Rotary Club of St Ives - Santa Sleigh Routes December 2020

THURSDAY 3RD	ST IVES - WAVENEY RD & NORFOLK RD AREAS
FRIDAY 4TH	NEEDINGWORTH
SATURDAY 5TH	WAITROSE ST IVES - ALL DAY
SATURDAY 5TH	ST IVES - YES ESTATE (EVENING)
MONDAY 7TH	ST IVES - WESTWOOD ROAD AREA
TUESDAY 8TH	SOMERSHAM
WEDNESDAY 9TH	BLUNTISHAM
THURSDAY 10TH	FENSTANTON
FRIDAY 11TH	ST IVES - CONSTABLE RD & BURLEIGH RD AREAS
MONDAY 14TH	ST IVES - WARREN RD AREA
TUESDAY 15TH	EARITH AND COLNE
WEDNESDAY 16TH	ST IVES - KINGS HEDGES AREA
THURSDAY 17TH	HILTON
FRIDAY 18TH	ST IVES - HILL RISE, PETTIS RD & MALLARDS AREA
SATURDAY 19TH	ST IVES FARMERS' MARKET - ALL DAY
SATURDAY 19TH	ST IVES - SLEPE MEADOW (EVENING)
SUNDAY 20TH	MORRISON'S ST IVES - ALL DAY



TALES FROM ABROAD

by
Sophie
Meredith

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS IN FRANCE

I never got them to appreciate Xmas pud but then I never made the case for marmalade in my 22 years over there. Pulling crackers puzzles our neighbours and funny paper hats are not amusing.

BUT ... They do have turkey or guinea fowl – taken to the local baker to roast in his oven. And oysters to start and a chocolate log to finish. Gorgeous cheeses BEFORE dessert – the logic being to keep the RED wine flowing. Oh yes, the wine. The WINES. And the digestifs – the trou normand (Calvedos) between courses to make room for the next dish.

And come New Year there is the Galette des Rois – such a fun cake, all flaky and almondy (reminiscent of a REAL Bakewell pudding) with its hidden fève. If you find this bean (more likely these days to be a tiny plaster figurine of baby Jesus or a spaceman) in your slice you are handed the gold cardboard crown provided by fiercely competitive bakers. If you are a husband, a fiancé or a loving son you will offer it to the lady in your life.

Christmas cards are unheard of but Happy New year cards are sent out till February ... Vive la différence!

Shedding tiers for Christmas

As from the 2nd December our area is Tier 2. The lockdown restrictions that now apply in St Ives are: (extracted from The Daily Telegraph)

- Households will not be allowed to mix indoors apart from in support bubbles, while a maximum of six people can meet outdoors.
- Pubs and bars must close unless operating as restaurants, meaning they must serve substantial meals and may only serve alcohol with such a meal.
- All hospitality is restricted to table service and last orders must be called at 10pm, with people allowed to finish their food and drinks by 11pm.
- Only people of the same household can visit together under the Tier 2 restrictions.
- Spectator sports will be also allowed to resume both indoors and outdoors, but with limited numbers and social distancing in place.
- Outdoors, 2,000 people, or 50 per cent of usual capacity, will be allowed to attend. Indoors, the limit is 1,000 people.
- The public will also be allowed to attend performances and shows in theatres and other venues, at 50 per cent capacity indoors and indoors attendees will be limited to 10,000.
- Exercise classes and organised sport can continue to take place outdoors. They will only be permitted indoors if it is possible for people to avoid mixing with people they do not live with or share a support bubble with, or for youth or disability sport
- The 'Rule of Six' will apply outdoors and in private gardens
- People must not meet with anybody outside their household or support bubble in any indoor setting, whether at home or in a public place
- People should aim to reduce the number of journeys they make where possible. If they need to travel, they should walk or cycle, or to plan ahead and avoid busy times and routes on public transport
- International travel will now be allowed across all tiers, but the advice is still not to travel unless necessary, and to check FCO restrictions for your destination.

From our history correspondent Daniel Wiseman

A brief history of St Ives schools

What do Nuts Bistro, Slepe Hall and the dental practice at 1, Ramsey Road all have in common? The answer is that in the past they have all been the locations for St Ives' schools!

The Anglican school, built in 1844 and closed in 1884, was converted into shops. One of these premises is now the home of Nuts Bistro.

Local historian Herbert Norris attended Manchester House school, which became the St Ives Grammar school. It's now the site of the Old Grammar School Dental surgery. Manchester House and surrounding buildings are currently up for sale for over £1m.

A private school for ladies was established in St Ives Hall, a grand house located in what is now Cromwell Place (home to the doctors surgery and dental practice). The house was demolished in 1848, and the school moved to a new building, Slepe Hall, which was completed a few years later. Pupils were a mixture of 'day girls' and boarders.

One student remembers at break time, they would have hot milk served in blue cups and saucers along with bread and dripping. In 1962 tuition fees were £30 / term with an extra £65 for boarding (that's around £645 and £1400, respectively, in today's money.) Slepe Hall was converted into a hotel in 1966.

Eleven years earlier, St Ivo School opened as a secondary modern with places for 340 pupils. Today, it is an academy and has 1,800 students attending.

Ed's note: We learned today that Slepe Hall Hotel has become a casualty of the pandemic and is now permanently closed.



having your say ... The Riverporter



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

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

NEWS UPDATE

Town Council get new play area

A new play area has been agreed in Knights Way as a result of the housing developments in that area, paid for by developers as part of the planning arrangements. The Mayor, Jonathan Pallant told *The Riverporter* that this should be up and running next year. The Mayor also said how delighted he was with the Christmas Lights this year and praised the efforts of the new committee, which has a new found enthusiasm to 'light-up' the town.

Time Capsule to be buried on New Years Eve

Donations have been coming in for the Mayor's Time Capsule, both objects and financial donations to help the Mayor's Charity fundraising, which has been difficult this year due to the lockdown. The Capsule will be buried on New Year's Eve in the Norris Museum garden and will include a special edition of *The Riverporter*, that covers all the main stories over the past year. A memorable one for many reasons, probably the most unusual year any of us have experienced.

We are Ignite St Ives

A community radio station is hoping to bring the Christian message of Christmas to St Ives. At 7pm on 20th December 2020 they will be holding a 'Doorstep Carol Service' for anyone who wants to join in. And before then, we'll be bringing you the good news of Christmas, Community chat and Christmas music all day long. They hope to be broadcasting on FM in the St Ives area, but they haven't had final confirmation of their application just yet, so stay tuned by going to ignitestives for more details, carol sheets and more!



Do you need childrens toys this Christmas?

The Riverporter was contacted by Rosie Burke to see if we could help advertise the Parent & Carer Hub. Their Facebook page explains the following...

We've all struggled as parents at somepoint so we want to give back and help those that need. So whether it be for childrens items/clothing/toys or maybe just an ear to bend we are your go to hub!! All confidential. No judgement.

If you can help or need help contact them by email to: parentandcarershub@gmail.com



Dear Erik, SURGERY PURGATORY

The architectural abject awfulness of the Cromwell Surgery extension should be additionally enhanced, so a friend of mine urges. This could be achieved very easily by making the workmen's sheds and portaloos a permanent feature of the premises, he suggests. That would further emphasize the owners' total contempt for the built environment of St Ives and this main Gateway approach to the Old Riverport, he muses. My friend asked not to be identified. Only he fears instant rubber-glove treatment the next time he visits the Surgery, needed or not.

Doberman

Dear Erik,

Subject: The Large Brown Carbuncle

Can somebody please explain to an ordinary resident of St Ives which HDC councillors, contrary I understand to the Conservation Officers advice, approved the planning permission for the construction of the very ugly large brown portakabin on top of an existing building at the Grove Medical Practice on Cromwell Place.

This monstrosity is within the Conservation Area and attached to a listed building and adjacent to a row of listed houses on Cromwell Place. It is at the entrance to the town centre and as such gives the appearance of entering an industrial estate.

What was the overriding reason for ignoring the Conservation Officers advice? What can be done to remedy the situation or make sure it doesn't happen again?

Will the councillors concerned explain the reasoning behind their decision?

Disgusted of Tenterleas

Dear Erik, Ref: Cambridgeshire Metro

Today's Rail Magazine carries an article on the Autonomous Metro. The article examines the proposal and concludes thus..

'For once, Elon Musk actually teaches us something about transport. Despite the big talk, CAM is a gadgetbahn that should be pushed to one side in favour of a more straightforward and conventional tram system..'

Mike Stanley

Dear Erik,

As a former resident of Cromwell a Terrace, in the 80's, we and our neighbours wanted to build garages at the bottom of our gardens. The results can be seen as you approach the town down Needingworth Road. I remember that, as they were grade two listed we had to submit plans and get them approved, the rules were: they had to be set back a certain distance from the edge of our property to remain discrete, they had to have slates on the roofs not tiles, they must have wooden sliding doors, definitely not metal 'up and over' doors! We complied as this was to keep the integrity of the surrounding listed area. If conservation officers are to be taken seriously their decisions should be sensible and upheld.

Sandra Souter

Dear Editor,

Please could you ask Heidi or the lovely Erik to walk along the western section of the footpath beside the river at The Waits. They are allowed one other grown up on the end of the lead and if they could take a small child or two or a buggy as well it would help to illustrate the problem a number of us have struggled with lately.

I've nothing against a person with a rod doing a bit of fishing but in the last few weeks it has been a take over bid. Fishermen set up with rods that stretch to the other bank, and across the pavement periodically, large boxes of equipment, stands for rods and barely enough room for a determined adult to get past.

We watched a mother with children and a buggy this Monday morning squeeze past one such outfit with no help from the fisherman because it was left unattended.

Your observations please.

I know it's lockdown 2 and folk need to occupy themselves and fishing in the sun is much more appealing than dusting the house but others need to access the riverside safely too. Perhaps they could fish on the lawned sectioned and leave the walled section for the public to enjoy?

Susan

Dear Susan,

Our observation is that clearly there is room for everyone to enjoy The Waits with a little thought and consideration for other people.

We also observed the following snippet in this week's Hunts Post Sport section, Angling report from St Ives Tackle:

There is also some great coarse fishing to be had on light tackle down at the Waits in St Ives now where some great netfuls of Roach, Skimmers and Perch have been caught.

Fishing Pinkies and regular feeding should soon see you catching plenty. The Waits on the River Ouse in St Ives town is also free fishing.

I guess there may be more fishermen to navigate around in the coming weeks. Ed.

Dear Erik,

I nearly cried when I saw it. What an abomination. How could that ever have been approved in a conservation area? What does it say about the planners and councillors in our Planning Authority at HDC?

Surely the only excuse is that they were temporarily all out of their minds. And how must the poor residents of Cromwell Place and especially Cromwell Terrace feel who invested in period properties and now have to look at that carbuncle every day when they open their curtains?

I feel bad enough driving past it when I drive down Needingworth Road (one of the busiest thoroughfares in the town) to get to Waitrose. Shame on whoever designed and proposed this excuse for a building. This corrugated monstrosity is the ugliest most out of place construct I have ever seen.

Jan Dobson



HYPERION

Entries Invited for Our Next Antiques & Later Sale on 5th December



To Include a Good Collection of Christmas gifts to include Jewellery, Collectables, Ceramics, Pictures, Prints & Furniture

Sold In Our Last Fine Art Sale



Rare Lemania Steel military chronograph wristwatch **Sold £1800**

Good quality 18ct Gold Half Hunter with Roman numeral dial **Sold £1700**



Suite of Edinburgh Crystal Thistle pattern glassware comprising of Wine glasses **Sold £2200**

Hyperion Auctions, The Salerooms, Station Road, St Ives PE27 5BH
www.hyperionauctions.co.uk 01480 464140

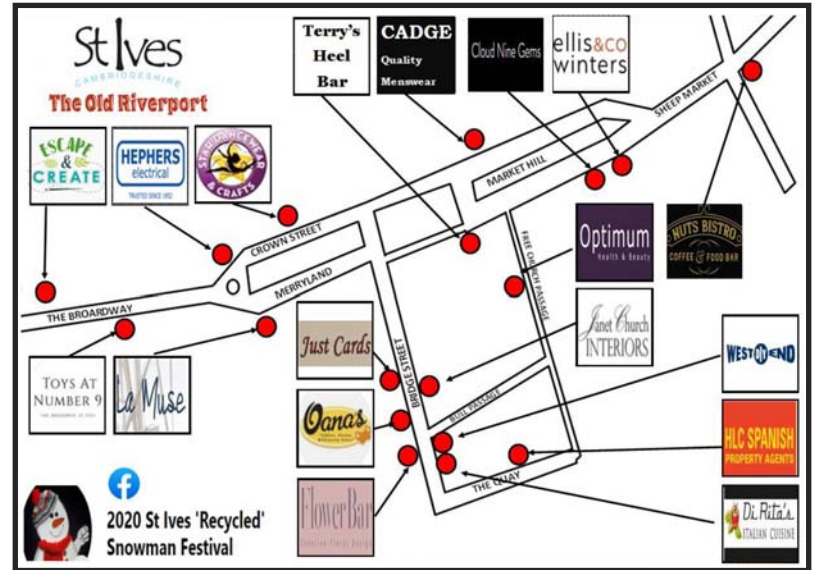


A chance to win £20 Shopping Vouchers

The 2020 St Ives 'Recycled' Snowman Festival is now underway and retailers are invited to dress their windows, which will be judged by Ellis Winters who are, once again, donating the £200 prize to the winning entrant.

How to win a £20 Shopping Voucher

A 'new' Snowman Elf Trail (see below) involves 18 independent retailers who are displaying 'Snowman Elves' in their windows, revealing 18 letters which spell out 3 words related to the Christmas season. Children are invited to find these 3 words and ask an adult to private message the new Facebook page '2020 St Ives 'Recycled' Snowman Festival' with their answers.



Ten correct entries will be randomly selected and announced on line along with details on how to collect their £20 voucher to be spent in St Ives shops. The Town Team are donating £200 prize money.

Four St Ives schools are encouraging students to design, paint or make snowmen to be displayed in their houses. Their entries will be judged by the schools and FEST have kindly donated books for the winning entries and for the schools libraries.



Pictured right: The snowman melting by the fires on sale in Hephers shop window.

ADVERTORIAL

10 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD GET YOUR PROPERTY VALUED BEFORE CHRISTMAS



It's safe to get moving

The property market in England is open and you can still safely get your property valued, marketed, viewed (both virtually and in person) and sold within record time!

Record asking prices

The average asking price of properties coming to market has increased by 5.5% in comparison to last year and stands at an all-time record of £323,530.

Sell quickly

The average time to sell stands at 50 days, which is quicker than ever before according to recent reports from Rightmove.

High demand

The number of active buyers in the market is 66% higher than a year ago.

Growth in all regions

Every region of the UK has seen an annual increase in average property prices, which means that it is highly likely that your property is worth a lot more than you originally paid for it.

Increase by type

Detached, semi-detached and terraced properties have all seen a 2.4% or higher increase in value over a comparative 12-month period.

Five-year increase

The latest HM Land Registry Index shows that, in the last five years, the average value of property in the UK has increased by a substantial £37,223.

Record sales

According to Rightmove, October saw the highest number of sales agreed ever in a single month.

Negotiate better prices

Buyers are willing to pay record prices for properties that fit their new lifestyle requirements.

Don't wait too late

If you want to take advantage of the stamp duty holiday, you need to plan carefully to avoid missing the deadline, particularly if you are selling a property first. Anyone completing a purchase on their main home before the March deadline does not have to pay tax on property values up to £500,000 – a saving of as much as £15,000

Source: Brief Your Market, Rightmove

SNOWMAN COMPETITION 2020

We are pleased to be part of the annual Snowman Window Competition in St Ives. It's a small way to give a little back to the town which has helped to make us so successful.

ellis&co winters

