



A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

## St Ives - UK's Town of Culture?

Recently St Neots and Huntingdon expressed interest in becoming the UK's Town of Culture and potentially winning the £3million prize. Now we don't want to cast doubt on their cultural credentials but isn't St Ives 'leaps ahead' on its cultural contribution?

Looking at the amount of 'culture' being planned in St Ives this year, there is hardly a day over the rest of '26 that isn't offering something entertaining, thought provoking or educational in our town.

Friends from Huntingdon have often commented that 'St Ives always has something going on' and looking at what is being advertised in this issue of *The Riverporter* it should be a magnificent year for culture here. Applications for the Governments UK Town of Culture 2028 will be judged on three main criteria:

- Your story - the unique story of the town
- Culture for everyone - how the

town will design a cultural programme for all

- Making it happen - how the town will then deliver a successful programme

The competition is open to small, medium and large towns, (St Ives is small). Sir Phil Redmond will lead an expert panel, judging towns on the way they'll tell their unique story.

The strongest bids will progress to a shortlist, with each shortlisted town receiving £60,000 to help deliver their full bids.

The winner, crowned UK Town of Culture 2028, will receive a £3m prize. The two runners-up will each receive £250,000.

### Have we missed the opportunity?

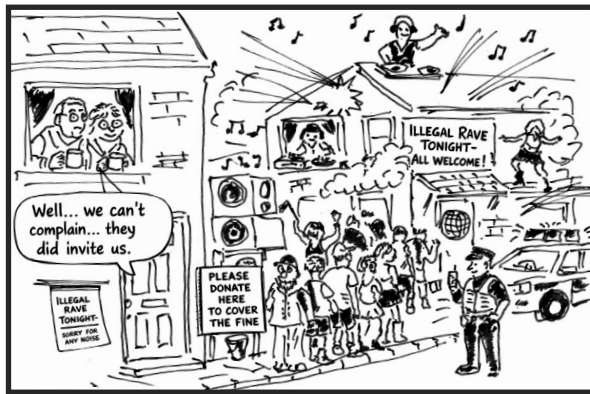
The deadline for Expressions of Interest is 31 March, so there is still time to enter the competition. It would appear that as St Ives Town Council was unaware of this Government initiative it will now take a considerable effort to prepare an application in time. **But not impossible!**

There is no doubt that there will be fierce competition from around the country but if there is one thing St Ives is good at it is community involvement. It is at the heart of everything happening here, resulting in a vibrant and inclusive cultural life for residents.

## BBC report on St Ives Rave

More than 400 people were dispersed from an illegal rave after police came across the event in an industrial unit on Burrell Road at 1:30 GMT on Sunday. Three people were arrested on suspicion of burglary, possession of drugs and violent disorder, and released on bail.

Police seized equipment, cut the power to the unit and boarded it up to prevent any further incidents.



## Italian young musical talents to play here



Trio Rinaldo, from Italy, to play two concerts in The Free Church on 27th and 28th March at 1pm (see diary right).

## DIARY OF EVENTS

Please email: [editor@theriverporter.uk](mailto:editor@theriverporter.uk)

### MARCH

**Friday 20 March - ADHD + AutiStic Ives Neurodiversity Celebration week** St Ives Corn Exchange 10.30am. Panel discussion and Q & A from the audience 11am. No need to book just turn up.

**Friday 20 March - Civic Society - The Enduring Art of Stained Glass in Huntingdonshire.** A presentation by local author Reverend Stephen Day. 7.30pm at the Free Church. Members free, visitors £3.

**Saturday 21 March - Table-top Sale in Free Church.** From 10am to 3pm. Tables available from £7 (set-up from 8am). Visit church office or [office@stivesfreechurch.org](mailto:office@stivesfreechurch.org) to book.

**Saturday 21 - St Ives Choral Society concert** - Schubert Mass in G and Rutter Magnificat, Free Church 7.30pm. Tickets from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-ives-choral-society](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-ives-choral-society).

**Thursday 26th - BHF Quiz** - St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30am. £5 pp.

**Friday 27th & Saturday 28th - Two Free Lunch Time Concerts** with the astounding **Trio Rinaldo** - St Ives Free Church 1pm.

**Friday 27th - Chapel Arts Concert - Marina & Johnny.** An evening of Country music. St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the venue or [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).

**Saturday 28th - School of Slam Wrestling** St Ives Corn Exchange

### APRIL

**Wednesday 1st - Engage Talk: The Watermills and Landscape of the River Great Ouse** - 2pm, St Ives Library (donations welcome).

**Friday 17 April - Civic Society - Mayflower Pilgrims & Links with Fenstanton.** A presentation by Adrian Moss about Fenstanton's links with the Mayflower. 7.30pm, Free Church. Members free, visitors £3.

**Saturday 18th - Great Ouse Valley Trust AGM and talk.**

**Saturday 18th - St Ives Corn Exchange - Stand Up Comedy** with Arthur Smith 7.30pm. In association with Jubado's Comedy. Tickets £18.

**Friday 24th - Lunch Time Concert** with James Stygall Trumpet and Piano - St Ives Free Church 1pm.

**Friday 24th - Chapel Arts Concert - Lift Music Collective.** U2, Talking Heads, Stranglers re-imagined as movie themes - Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the venue or [ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).

**Saturday 30th - FourTissimo** at 7pm St Ives Free Church. 4 talented performers whose repertoire ranges from Opera to Starlight Express.

### A SERIES OF CONCERTS CELEBRATING THE 600TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST IVES BRIDGE CHAPEL

These FREE concerts take place in the Chapel. Due to limited space tickets must be booked: [www.ticketsource.co.uk/eventsstives](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/eventsstives)

### JUNE

**Saturday 13th - Les Moutons Noirs Choir** 15th century music.

**Friday 26th - Dan Ecclestone plays Radiohead.** Pianist Dan accompanied by friends, will also play tracks from his new album.

### JULY

**Friday 17th - Kaveri Blues** - a Hindustani classical music concert with Dr Ranjan Vasudevan on specially tuned guitar (sitar), Vivek Dinesh on violin and Abhiram Sahathevan on Mridangam (drum).

**Friday 31st - Picking with a heart** - Percussive acoustic fingerstyle guitar concert with David Youngs.

### AUGUST

**Friday 28th - An evening of Percussion** with composer and arranger Derek Scurl on drums and Vibraphone.



Another new band this year is...

## The Kendall Connection

The Kendall Connection are the headline act for Festival Friday. A guitar-driven blues rock band spearheaded by Nick Kendall consists of four of London's finest session musicians. They joined forces to create a band that Blues Matters Magazine said produced 'One of the best debut albums heard in a long time'.

Band members have performed with 10cc, Brian May, Adele, Paul Weller, Alice Cooper, Gordon Giltrap and in over 20 West End shows. Jools Holland invited the band to support him on his 2022 Autumn/Winter tour, and Nick is currently touring internationally with Sting in The Last Ship show. The band released their second album 'Blood & Water' and are currently recording their third due to be released soon.

You can see The Kendall Connection at The Corn Exchange on Friday 11th September at 10pm.

## Plea for people with B negative blood to come forward

NHS Blood and Transplant is contacting all B negative donors asking them to book in to donate. Existing B negative donors will be given priority access to appointments and are urged to call 0300 123 23 23 if they are struggling to find availability. Alternatively, they can just walk in for an appointment at Cambridge Donor Centre.

Currently fewer than 20,000 people with B negative blood in England donate regularly. Only 2% of the population have B negative blood, making it one of the least common types. And patients with the B negative blood type can only

receive B negative or O negative blood. Those with B negative blood are also asked to encourage family members to register and book an appointment as they are 30 percent more likely to have this blood type than the general population.

Hospitals across England need more than 5,000 blood donations every day to ensure they have the blood they need to treat patients for a wide variety of reasons, including traumatic injuries or accidents, cancer treatments, sickle cell and childbirth.



As well as B negative, there is also an ongoing need for more donors with O negative and RO blood.

Donating a unit of blood takes just an hour and each donation can save up to three lives. Men can give blood every three months and women every four months.

## An evening with John Rutter

Best-known for his gloriously uplifting Christmas carols, John Rutter, who lives in Hemingford Abbots, is due to give a talk at St Ives Parish Church in April and tickets are bound to go fast for this prestigious composer.

### An Audience with Sir John Rutter



Join Sir John Rutter for an intimate evening of reflection, storytelling and musical insight.

7.30pm Saturday 25th April 2026, doors open 7pm

All Saints Parish Church, St. Ives, Cambridgeshire, PE27 6DG

Tickets £15, wine bar and raffle available

Book now at: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-ives-parish-church/t-pllrx>



Advertised as *Confessions of a Composer* it should be interesting to hear from a man who has dealt with adversity and great success. From 1985 to 1992, he suffered severely from ME (chronic fatigue syndrome), which stopped him writing music on commission, as he was unable to guarantee meeting deadlines.

In 2001 his elder son Christopher was knocked down by a car in Cambridge. John was devastated and worried that he wouldn't enjoy music-making anymore but credits music for playing a valuable part in his recovery which resulted in his work 'Mass of the Children'.

At 80 years he remains busy. Renowned conductor and choirmaster, David Wilcocks, considered him to be 'the most gifted composer of his generation'.

## CALLING STALL HOLDERS

Do you want to sell your goods or unwanted items?

You can - when the market returns on 10 May this year.



The Town Team will be running a Flea Market at The Quay on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month from 10am to 1pm - May to September.

If you wish to have a stall for just £5 contact Sandra on 07913 346845

or email:

[townteam@stivescambridgeshire.co.uk](mailto:townteam@stivescambridgeshire.co.uk)

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## SURPRISE APPEARANCE OF HANNAH PATTRICK

Headmistress of the Chestnuts Boarding School for young ladies



On Friday 20th February, the members and guests of the Civic Society packed the Free Church to hear the story of two of St Ives Historic Houses Through Time.

The Chestnuts on Church Street had been a boarding school for girls and a day school for boys. More recently it is the home of the presenter, Keith Grimwade.

Keith shared his research into The Chestnuts development since the 1600s. Midway, he introduced Miss 'Hannah Patrick', who had been a pupil at The Chestnuts, then one of its teachers before purchasing it in 1882 and extending it with a market garden and tennis courts in 1888. Miss Patrick was clearly bemused to have time travelled to St Ives in 2026 but regaled us all with reminiscences of being rescued by the solicitor Mr Day when she fell into the river to retrieve her handkerchief, and that of a mischievous boy, an obvious ringleader, Harold Turner, who went on to become St Ives Mayor!

The second half of the evening's presentation was introduced by John McKinnie, well-known for his St Ives 100 Years Ago blog, he focused on Fellmonger House once curiously known as the Messuage at the end of the Bullock Market. He set its story in the context of St Ives' as a thriving market town whose livestock auctions became so large that new pens were needed to separate the cattle from the sheep, and whose fleeces and hides were Fellmonger House's staple trade.

Its courtyard housed lime pits and water pumps, barns were erected for washing, drying, stretching and grading, and boats moored on the river to transport the skins (fells) for factory processing. The sign above the red gates declares the last fellmongers were the Dellars, who gave up the business in the 1950s.

For more details see St Ives 100 Years Ago/Places/The Chestnuts or Fellmonger House.

FRIDAY 27TH MARCH

MARINA & JOHNNY



A first appearance for singer Marina Bush, accompanied by the always brilliant Johnny 'Magic Boy' Wright. Get ready for feisty country songs about heartache, rage & vengeance, as well as classics to sing along with.

Concert starts at 7.30pm in The Riverport Bar, St Ives Corn Exchange  
Tickets just £10 from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents) or the venue



Jeffery, our new News Hound. Milly and Tilly are busy training him.



having your say . . .

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

**PLEASE NOTE:** Letters are reproduced as presented by the writer. Editing is confined to grammatical corrections or minor trimming to fit the space. *The Riverporter* neither condones nor condemns the opinions expressed.

**Dear Milly & Tilly,**

What is happening at The Vaults in the centre of St Ives? The advertising board tells us that a set of apartments and a retail space are coming soon.

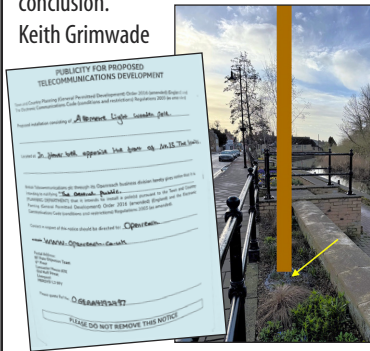


It seems that, almost two years in, the concept of soon is a relative one. Work on it slowed to a standstill after Christmas, and the tell-tale clearing up and resurfacing of their storage area nearby suggested cessation. Word from a good source has it that the team that was working there on and off is now off, working on other company projects elsewhere. Add to that, the two-year scaffolding contract is reportedly up in May. It would require a grand scramble to complete all of the exterior works - the walls need completion, and there is no sign of any cross members that might indicate final height or presence of a roof to come. It looks like May could come and go too soon. **A Watcher**

**Hi good morning Milly & Tilly,**

A circle with a cross appeared in the flower bed on The Waits, opposite the Post Box Garden at the end of last week. A notice explained that it is the planned site of a 10 metre OpenReach pole. The web address given provides neither additional information, nor a place to raise an objection. There is a postal address for views. However, I couldn't see the notice this morning (11th March), perhaps a victim of the weather. . . so the circle and cross would be an absolute mystery to anyone not in the know. Is the pole going to have wires attached to it that cross The Waits? What is it going to look like? How will it affect the view along this award winning garden? I do not want to deny homes a broadband connection but without further details and a consideration of alternatives I feel I have to oppose this proposed development. The lack of a 'respond by' date on the notice makes me think the consultation is a foregone conclusion.

Keith Grimwade



**Pull on your boots and get out in nature**

The days are getting longer, the sun is getting warmer, the fields are getting greener, leaves are covering bare branches. Is there a better time of year to do a lovely Ramble organised by your local group? Huntingdonshire Ramblers are busy getting together our spring and summer programme of walks, so why not follow the QR code or look at <https://www.huntsramblers.org.uk/walks-programme.html> We are a friendly group and love meeting new faces. If this is your first walk with us, do reach out to the walk leader to ask any questions you might have.



**Join in the fun to raise funds for charity!**

**T**he Rotary Club of St Ives is busy planning their next charity quiz, which will take place in pubs and clubs across Huntingdonshire on the evening of Thursday, March 26th, and they'd love you to take part!

Entry is just £5 per person, and each venue can have as many people as they like all playing in the same team, working together to beat all the other venues. The ultimate winner though is charity; the top ten teams will win cash prizes for their chosen charity, ranging from £300 to £50, and the team with the largest number of people will win £200. Any monies left will go into the Rotary St Ives Charity account, to be donated where it is needed most. The battle

of the pubs will see undoubted rivalry; will it be Floods Tavern or the Oliver Cromwell that come out on top? Can the Axe and Compass beat The Cock in the Hemingfords, and will it be The Three Horseshoes in Wistow or Lakeside Lodge Golf Club in Pidley that get the largest team? Follow Rotary St Ives Cambridgeshire on Facebook to see a list of all the pubs and clubs involved or for further information email secretary@stivesrotarycams.org.uk.

# The Riverporter

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

## OTHER NEWS

### St Ives Great Big Green Week date set

Once again St Ives is participating in the national climate and nature campaign the 'Great Big Green Week' from 6th to 14th June this year.



Among the events is a FREE concert organised by the Town Team at 2pm on 6th June at the Bandstand.

### The Native Oysters Band

Originally a New Orleans style Marching band formed for the Whitstable Oyster Festival parade, they have evolved into a funky, electrifying experience and their music ranges from traditional classics through to full on hip-hop and R&B, all given the Delta city treatment, Whitstable style of course.

### Five local Councillors join Lib Dems

Huntingdon Independent councillors Tom Sanderson and Ann Blackwell are the fourth and fifth Councillors in the District to join the Liberal Democrats this year, following Cllr Cath Gleadow (St Ives South), Cllr Sally Howell (Yaxley), and Cllr Michael Burke (St Ives East). It seems that council reorganisation has prompted Independent Councillors to join a party in order not to be sidelined after the unitary elections.

### Catholic Church Easter services

MAUNDY THURSDAY - 2nd APRIL	MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER	7pm
GOOD FRIDAY - 3RD APRIL	THE CELEBRATION OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD	3pm
SATURDAY - 4TH APRIL	THE EASTER VIGIL IN THE HOLY NIGHT	8pm
EASTER DAY SUNDAY - 5TH APRIL	NORMAL MASSES	9am & 11am

### Nearly £3,000 for young carers

The Maxine Lester letting and property management agency has raised nearly £3,000 for St Ives supports Caring Together a charity supporting young carers.

### New Christmas and Farmer's Market

Abbots Ripton Hall, home of the 4th Baron De Ramsey and his wife Lord and Lady John Ailwyn Feallows, could host a Farmer's and a Christmas Market according to a report in the Hunts Post. Recently it has hosted the Secret Garden Party and if it goes ahead it is likely to become popular.

### GOVT seeks to plants more trees

According to the Great Ouse Valley Trust's (GOVT) latest newsletter Cambridgeshire is the least-wooded rural county in the UK. However, finding landowners and farmers willing to plant trees on their own land is challenging. If you know of potential sites please let the Trust know. Their newsletter also says that **WOW** day (Walking The Ouse Valley Way) is returning although doesn't say when. Fortunately we have discovered it will be on 12th July. It is 151 miles long with the finest landscapes found in Huntingdonshire. Last year the revival of the Holywell ferry from the Old Ferry Boat inn to the Fen Drayton Lakes proved to be a real winner, and GOVT intend to repeat it this year.

**Is the Great Ouse Valley Landscape a step closer?** After months of detailed analysis Arkwood, the consultants appointed by GOVT and HDC, submitted their Business Case for Landscape Self-Designation. Its conclusions are overwhelmingly positive and the resulting document was very well received by Natural England.

### BHF Quiz Night at Corn Exchange

Local fundraisers for the British Heart Foundation are holding their annual Quiz Night and raffle in the Corn Exchange on Thursday 26th March at 7.30pm. Doors open 7pm.

### Film of 600 events well received

170 people attended a film night in the Corn Exchange on Thursday 26th February. Organised by the Town Team, six films were shown, including a record of the 600 Anniversary celebrations, the installation of the Bandstand and a film about St Ives Poet and Flying Ace, Miles Jeffery Game Day. 600 T-shirts and copies of the films can be bought from the Town Team. For details see [www.stivescambridgeshire.co.uk](http://www.stivescambridgeshire.co.uk) or email [townteam@stivescambridgeshire.co.uk](mailto:townteam@stivescambridgeshire.co.uk).





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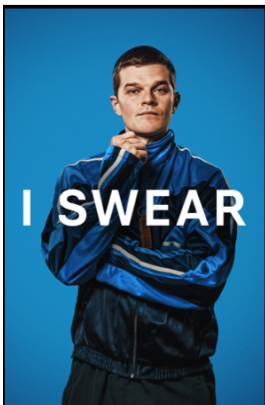
Peterborough PE1 5UA, Tel: 01733 344344



### The Choral

**Thursday 9 April 2026 at 7:30pm**  
**Doors open 6:30pm. Tickets £7**  
**Director: Nicholas Hytner (2025), 108m, Cert: 15**

**The Choral** is set in a fictional Yorkshire town in 1916. The Choral follows a local choral society depleted by men leaving to fight in World War I. The ambitious committee hires the demanding Dr. Henry Guthrie (*Ralph Fiennes*) as the new chorus master. Despite suspicions about his time in Germany, Guthrie recruits local teenagers to fill the ranks. The group prepares for a performance of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, chosen because it wasn't composed by a German. The film explores themes of community, resilience, and the power of music as the young men face impending conscription and the community grapples with wartime loss.



### I Swear

**Thursday 7 May 2026 at 7:30pm**  
**Doors open 6:30pm. Tickets £7**  
**Director: Kirk Jones (2025), 121, Cert: 15**

**I swear** is a drama that tells the true story of John Davidson (played by *Robert Aramayo*), a Scottish campaigner who, despite having severe Tourette's Syndrome—which includes physical tics and uncontrollable outbursts—became an advocate for the condition. The film shows his battles with bullying and abuse in the 1980s, his path to adulthood and his ultimate triumph in raising awareness. It delves into the tough realities of living with Tourette's, highlighting the 'cruelty and misunderstanding' John experienced while also including moments of humour, uplifting and moving scenes that celebrate life.

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

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