

The Riverporter

PLEASE READ AND PASS ON

COVERING THE NEWS FOR ST IVES AND AROUND

Issue 205: 27 March 2026

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

St Ives applies to be UK's Town of Culture

Following an article in our last edition, St Ives Town Council, together with the Town Team and with support from many of the town's community groups and businesses St Ives is entering an 'Expression of Interest' to become the UK's Town of Culture.

St Ives will join Huntingdon and St Neots as local representatives, although both those towns should be in the Medium Town category (over 20,000 people) and St Ives should be in the small town group. The bid will need to be in by 31st March and as if to show why St Ives has all the credentials to be the Town of Culture, a tremendous amount of work has been done in just two weeks.

The application form required among other things to hear a strong, compelling local story about the town, its culture and how it will fill local need and involve the whole community. It turns out that St Ives already has a strong supportive community with around 50 organisations meeting and working together, allowing this bid to be made so quickly and putting the town in a

good place to succeed. As part of this process a questionnaire was formed and circulated in order to back up our claim for local support. Answers need to be in by the end of this Saturday 28th March, so if you can, please complete it by going to *St Ives Town Of Culture Application* - it only takes a few minutes to answer the questions. Of course we will let you know if St Ives' bid succeeds!

Year-long celebration for Chapel

The Norris Museum has announced an ambitious programme of events to celebrate the 600th anniversary of Bridge Chapel, St Ives, beginning in April 2026. The programme will bring together the local community, heritage and cultural partners, and visitors to mark six centuries of this Grade I listed building. Completed in 1426 as part of the iconic St Ives Bridge, Bridge Chapel (St Leger) is one of only four surviving in England. For 600 years, it has stood as a testament to medieval engineering, faith, and community life.

The anniversary will be celebrated through a diverse programme of events and activities, including:

- A major exhibition at the Norris

Museum exploring the 600-year history of the bridge and chapel, featuring the remarkable original licence for the consecration of the altar on loan from the National Archives.

- A series of expert lectures, featuring a new talk by former Norris Museum curator Bob Burn-Murdoch, exploring the bridge and chapel's remarkable history, and lectures by ecclesiastical historian John Vigar.
- Choral performances by visiting St Austin's Choir, of Wakefield Chantry Bridge Chapel, during Heritage Open Day, creating a rare and meaningful connection between England's surviving bridge chapels.

- Specialist workshops, including illuminated manuscript calligraphy and themed art sessions
- Concerts in the chapel, delivered in collaboration with St Ives Town Team, bringing music to this historic space.
- A time-travel family fun day featuring costumed reenactors, storytellers, and period musicians touring the town centre, alongside boat trips from the Waits offering unique views of the bridge and chapel from the water.
- A new guided town tour highlighting the churches of St Ives.

Continued on page 2.



DIARY OF EVENTS

Please email: editor@theriverporter.uk

APRIL

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

Saturday 4th - MORRIS DANCING IN THE TOWN CENTRE



Come and enjoy the music and join in with the dancing.

Friday 17th - 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. see p2.

MAY

Saturday 2nd - Silent Disco - 8pm to Midnight St Ives Corn Exchange featuring Motown, Disco, Rock playlists from DJ Michael. Tickets £7.

Friday 15th - The Pianoman 8pm Riverport Café Bar Tickets £10.

Friday 15th - Civic Society - The Life of Lord Fairhaven: 7.30pm at the Free Church. Members free, visitors £3.

Friday 29th - Lunch Time Concert 'The Two Richards' Violin and Piano - St Ives Free Church 1pm.

Friday 29 May - The Houndogs - Fundraising concert for The Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival. 8pm St Ives Corn Exchange. Tickets £15 from the venue or www.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

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.

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

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St Ives Bridge Chapel marks 600 years cont. from p1.

Community resources and education

Alongside the public programme, the Norris Museum is developing new resources for schools and community groups to deepen understanding of the chapel's history and significance. These resources have been made possible through the generous support of Huntingdonshire District Council, the Freemasons, the Co-op, local business Cube6, and St Ives Rotary Club, and also the ongoing support from St Ives Town Council.

Leading the celebrations

The Norris Museum is leading the anniversary programme in partnership with local organisations, creating a wide-

ranging celebration that reflects the chapel's enduring importance to St Ives.

Claire Hardy, Museum Director at the Norris Museum, said: *'Bridge Chapel is an exceptional heritage asset – not just for St Ives, but for England. This 600th anniversary is an opportunity to celebrate its remarkable survival, share its stories with new audiences, and ensure future generations understand why this medieval chapel matters. We're thrilled to be bringing together experts, performers, and the community to mark this milestone.'*

About Bridge Chapel

Bridge Chapel stands at the heart of St Ives' medieval heritage. Built as part of the stone arch bridge, its

altar was consecrated in 1426 and dedicated to St Leger. Medieval bridge chapels served both practical and spiritual purposes: travellers could pray for a safe journey, while tolls were collected through hatches that remain visible today.

Following the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539, the chapel passed into secular use, including a period as a public house famously nicknamed "Little Hell" in the 19th century. Restoration work in 1930 returned the building to its 15th-century appearance. Today, it is a scheduled monument and Grade I listed building, and is occasionally used for public worship. For more information and to book events go to: www.norrismuseum.org.uk/



Jump raises £ thousands

St Ives Mayor, Julie Kerr, Cllr Michael Burke and Sheila Stones, Chair of the Town Team, completed their Sky Dive two weeks ago and have raised £4,605 for the Mayor's charities so far.

With more with money still coming in they are hoping to top £5,000.



Is there a Mrs Mills out there?

Part of the 600 celebrations of the Bridge Chapel - this is new project that will take place from 4th to 10th May aims to:

- Get people out playing who normally wouldn't
- For those who do play a chance to play in a beautiful setting
- Bringing people together for a good ol' fashioned sing song round the piano
- And bring a little music to the quay side.

We will publish a timetable when the Chapel will be open, which will be around 7 hours a day, and visitors & players are welcome to

come and play. Accompanying instruments are also welcome.

If the piano is being played, when you arrive please respect the vibe and yes, we know the piano isn't concert pitch!

There may be some occasional filming & broadcasting by the Town Team but you can ask that to be switched off during your set. If you want to play a bigger set, do some filming & recording of your own, or even make a music video, that would be great - get in touch with what you want to do at: townteam@stivescambridgeshire.co.uk and we'll try to make it happen.



For those who do not know who Mrs Mills was, she was a pop phenomenon in the 1960s recording over 40 piano medley albums, mostly at Abbey Road. The Beatles apparently used her piano.



Join us for our next event

care UK

Field Lodge care home, St Ives

Easter egg hunt open day

Saturday 4th April 2026
11am - 12 noon

Join us for a fun-filled Easter Egg Hunt, open to children from our local community! Enjoy the egg hunt, pin the tail on the bunny, colouring activities, an Easter Hamper raffle and a prize for the best fancy dress outfit.

Trusted to care.

To book please email beverley.tyrrell@careuk.com or visit our website careuk.com/field-lodge

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

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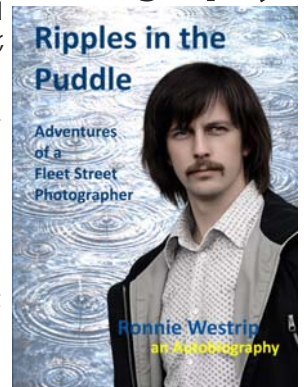
Editor writes Autobiography

I must confess I was a little surprised that my colleague on *The Riverporter*, Ron told me he was writing an autobiography. I was even more surprised when I saw the book cover (right). I had to ring him up and ask who was the bloke he'd got to pose for the picture?!

In typical Ron fashion he said he didn't remember him.

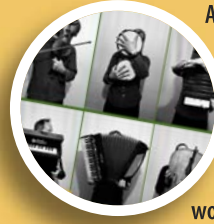
Even more surprising than all of that is its an interesting read, not a literary gem you understand but an account of a man more interested in

the visual side of things, as you might expect of someone fascinated with photography. He spent his formative years in Fleet Street, which was at the height of its power and met a lot of 60's celebs. A lifestyle now gone. We will serialise it here over the next few issues so you can check it out. To buy a copy - www.blurb.co.uk/b/12813594-ripples-in-the-puddle.



FRIDAY 24TH APRIL
LIFT MUSIC
COLLECTIVE

Chapel Arts
@ the
Corn Exchange



Another new act for Chapel

Arts. They are a Histon-based ensemble (violin, cello, accordion, piano, percussion and tuned percussion) playing new arrangements of 'pop' music from the 70s and 80s, re-imagined as soundtracks of magic and wonder. Intertwined with classics from U2,

Talking Heads, Stranglers and more, are new arrangements of movie themes: Cinema Paradiso and Amelie amongst them.

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

Thanks to Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue

Emma Parker thanked Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service for responding to her house fire. This dramatic picture shows how fortunate she and her family were, to all get out, including their cat who they thought was trapped inside. Emma said *We couldn't have got through it without the amazing support from our neighbours, friends & family. We've lost pretty much everything but things can be replaced over time. Our fire alarms did the job raising the alarm, please everyone check yours work, if you don't have one, get one!*





having your say . . .

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

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

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,

It's fortunate that we live close to Carrot Country, we are going to need all the help we can get to be able to see in the dark and be secure around St Ives.

The latest reduction of street lighting is underway, a few years ago we lost about a half of our street lights in that round of improvements, now the remainder are becoming low energy LED units probably about half as powerful as the most recent fittings.

So now we can look forward to having about one quarter of the light we used to have a few years ago.

There are now areas of extreme darkness lit only by a faint glimmer from the top of the standard. We have gone down a long way from Gas Lights. Yet another case of higher rates and fewer services. Burglars will have a field day. Living in the Gloom of Parkway.

Name withheld

Dear Milly & Tilly,

When we cast our vote in elections we vote for a political party and the person representing that party, taking into account their promises if elected. The same is true if we vote for an Independent candidate.

When elected politicians decide to move to another political party, they no longer represent the party we voted for. Is that democratic?

Surely there should be legislation which ensures an immediate by-election when any MP or councillor does this, meaning the Parliamentary or Council seat is vacant. Does any government have the nous to do this, or are they all guilty of failing to deal with due to self-interest?

The recent move by a number of so called Independent councillors to join a political party, brings this issue up as something that needs resolving.

Anthony

The smiles say it all!

Coinciding with national Neurodiversity Celebration week, an event was held on Friday 20 March at the Corn Exchange to celebrate the first anniversary of ADHD+AutiStic Ives.



It was a great success. Following a short presentation about how this adult peer support group was established and how quickly it has grown, a capacity audience posed questions to a panel of local ADHD and autistic people about their lived experience. The panel discussion

prompted sober reflection and laughter!

County Councillor Alex Bulat and HDC Councillor David Landon Cole are seen here supporting our anniversary celebration.

Everyone agreed that it had been good fun and an excellent learning opportunity.

For more information about this local adult peer support group, please email autisticives@outlook.com

Other bits of news

HDC are preparing to launch the St Ives Shop, Drink & Dine Loyalty Card, designed to help boost footfall and support businesses across the town centre, supported with funds from UKSPF. This initiative runs from 1st April – 31st May. COPE's Talking Together Programme will host

three online Zoom events, this April. The first - **Have the market towns of Ely, St Ives, Huntingdon and Saffron Walden been forgotten by history?** - should be interesting. Tony Kirby will be leading this fascinating talk.

To register for any of their events, please phone the COPE office on 01223 364303 before Thursday 2 April.

Wonderful turn-out for inspiring talk

Clive Boase from the charity *Climate Change Gardening* gave Eco Café attendees ideas as to how we can help our gardens look and be their best in these times of wetter, milder winters and hotter, drier summers. In England, private gardens are the third largest land category, so he said not to feel that with our little plots we cannot make a difference to our own garden and to the environment. He suggested No Mow May can be extended to not mowing all summer.

More insects are found in longer grass, feeding more bats and swifts; some insects are very small, living down in the soil but the robins will find them. Clive suggested electric mowers to reduce CO2 emissions and make the neighbourhood quieter - and to stop digging which releases carbon, but to let the worms take mulch down into the soil. However small, have a pond - for insects, birds and mammals to drink. There were so many small, achievable goals that Clive suggested; we found it encouraging to know we can all do our bit to make a difference. Eco Cafes are at Free Church on 2nd Saturday, 10am - noon.

The Riverporter

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

OTHER NEWS

Multi award winning film made here

Ren The Girl with the Mark, the award-winning fantasy series filmed in St Ives, is about to release its third season. Made entirely by volunteers, the series has been honoured with 19 international awards to date. Around half of the series is filmed at Burleigh Hill Farm in St Ives, where the team build elaborate sets. Other locations include Colchester Castle and Suffolk's Thorington Theatre. Season Three comes to YouTube, free to view, in five weekly installments beginning Saturday, 4th April. Search *Ren: The Girl with the Mark*.



Swimmers achieve over 90% lifetime best time



22 St Ives club members competed at the City of Luton 50 metre Olympic Pool Level 1 Swimming Meet. The club said the *high intensity competition between 8am to 7pm each day saw many strong races*. With Myles Burridge, Bertie Titheridge, and Tessa Quayle winning bronze and gold medals in their respective categories.

Sushi to St Ives

Family run, Sushi & Salad, with restaurants in Ely, Stamford, and Saffron Walden have now acquired the old Lloyds Bank premises. CEO of Sushi & Salad, Juliana Rodrigues, said: *We care a lot about creating places that feel warm and welcoming, where people can enjoy fresh food, beautiful presentation, and a relaxed atmosphere. St Ives is a lovely town and we're happy to be part of the community.*



TWIG (Thicket Woodland Improvement Group) seeks volunteers

A kettle, a clutch of liqueur miniatures were just some of the discoveries found by TWIG volunteers as they tidied The Thicket. Now the woodland flowers can be seen in their glory. We will be going out every couple of weeks, under the supervision of Sam, the Ranger, to clear the paths to make it a safer place to walk - but we could use a few more volunteers - so if you enjoy being outdoors, have a spare couple of hours a month and own some thick wellies please get in touch with lorraine.stork@btinternet.com

Slimming World



ST IVES

The Burleigh Hill Centre, PE27 3ER

Tuesdays 9.30 am

Thursdays 5.30 pm

Fridays 9.30 am

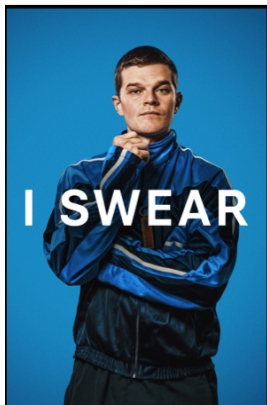
Saturdays 8.00 am & 9.30 am

feel *real* good



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 or in the Corn Exchange

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