

The Riverporter

8 PAGE BUMPER CHRISTMAS EDITION
A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR READERS

Issue 50: 20 December 2019



A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

EXPOSED

Why Jason Ablewhite resigned

Police chief quits after 'sending shocked woman pictures of his manhood', read the headline in Wednesday's Sun newspaper.

Under the heading **Cops & Nobbers** the article stated that Mr Ablewhite, whilst Cambs Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), allegedly sent a shocked woman pictures of his manhood and is said to have texted the snaps of his 'truncheon' after she visited the Police headquarters.

The report first appeared on the front page of the Hunts Post after the Editor of the group's Cambs Times, John Elworthy, was contacted by the woman in question.

The article explained that over a nine-day period exchanges of increasingly personal Facebook messages took place with a 50-year old vulnerable woman.

The woman, who was not named, reported the exchange to Cambridgeshire police and was soon visited by two detectives and interviewed for seven hours. Detectives asked her to give them access to her Facebook, mobile phone and Kindle. More

interviews were to follow after Cambs police reported to the IOPC.

The IOPC investigation into allegations of criminal offences against Mr Ablewhite is ongoing and they are likely to make a decision whether to make a referral to the Crown Prosecution Service when complete, sometime in February. Whether he will face charges

is a matter for the Crown Prosecution Service although there has been no arrest and no charges brought.

The Hunts Post reported that both the alleged victim, and a friend, who is supporting her, were allegedly asked not to speak to anyone – even their closest friends – about the inquiry, now underway into Mr Ablewhite's alleged conduct.

But both said they had decided to speak out for the first time because of a lack of support and information and they felt that the police's attitude was, 'there, there you'll be all right'.



HELLO

GOODBYE

The political appointment of PCCs was questioned when it was first suggested and has been heavily criticised by the National Police Chiefs' Council (see RP18). With the public's opinion of politicians being so low at the moment perhaps now is the time to reconsider if this is the best way to supervise the police. It is somewhat ironic that victim support, which Mr Ablewhite championed whilst in post, has been absent for this female victim who said if she could go back in time she would not report the incident now.

Above: Jason Ablewhite, with Tory colleagues after being elected Police & Crime Commissioner in 2016.

Photo Saffron Walden Reporter.

Picture right by Cambs Times.



No smoke without fires!

Riverporter readers may have seen the new development being built on the former tyre depot site in East Street. What you may not know is that every single chimney is a fake.



Many of you may have noticed in the last month the appearance of chimneys on the new roofs. What you will not perhaps know is that every single chimney is a fibreglass dummy not connected to a single fireplace and from which no smoke will ever rise.

Developers are not known for splashing the cash on 'fake embellishments' in their projects. One can only conclude therefore that these 'symbols of harmful emissions' (chimneys) are the cosmetic requirements of the local Planning Officer presiding over a 'quaint chocolate box' planning policy.

Question - In the midst of the current climate emergency, why are our local planning officers demanding that developers create this fake and dishonest architecture instead of encouraging and insisting on the use of energy saving solar panels and other such devices? Thanks to Stewart Denham for this information.

IT'S PANTO TIME



The award winning Centre Theatre Players will soon be treading the boards as they present **DICK WHITTINGTON** in the Burgess Hall of One Leisure St. Ives on January 8th-12th. The Players have been providing the town with seasonal entertainment for the last 45 years and have gained an excellent reputation in the area for their standard of production.

There are still tickets available for evening performances so if you would like to join Dick and his faithful companion Tommy on their amazing adventure why not pop along to the centre and book your ticket or go on line www.burgesshall.net **This is a show not to be missed. Oh yes it is!!**

Norris Highly Commended

The Norris Museum took part in Museums in Cambridgeshire Awards of 2019 and entered 'Plants through the ages' for Project of the Year. The criteria was to recognise a creative approach to using museum collections as a foundation for reaching out to new audience, with a clearly articulated goal and a successful, measured result.

On Monday 4th November they attended the awards ceremony at the Museum of Zoology and where the project received Highly Commended.

Judges noted that the project 'brought together a creative idea for using their museum collection and spaces whilst meeting a clear local need. This project was in partnership with St Ives in Bloom and Spring Common Academy.

A huge thank you to everyone involved.

The next Exhibition at the Norris opens on 11th January and is about the historical importance of the Great Ouse river to St Ives.

See the details on page 6 or go to: www.theoldriverportstives.co.uk



Want to be a journalist?

The Riverporter is St Ives' own newspaper bringing stories and comment on issues that are of interest to the people of St Ives and our neighbouring villages.

The Riverporter is growing as our circulation reaches more and more people in the area and we are looking for one or two contributors to send in stories or articles that we can publish. We are a free paper run by volunteers, so there is no payment involved but you get the satisfaction of bringing interesting stories to a town wide audience.

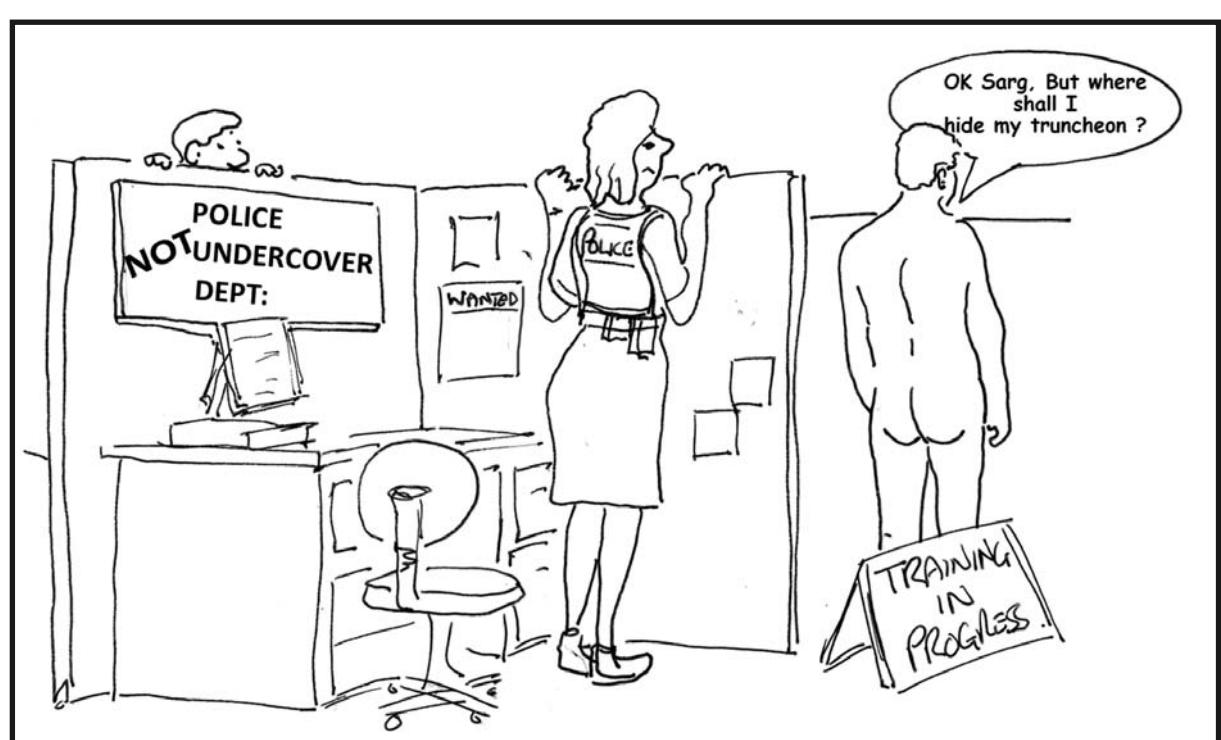
We already have wonderful support from our lovely contributors, Heidi and Doberman, and remember we are an award-winning publication.

We distribute copies in the surrounding villages of Hemingford Grey, Hemingford Abbots, Fenstanton, Needingworth and Somersham, so we are particularly interested in hearing from anyone in those areas who can send us news articles of interest.

We try to help promote the work or events organised by our wonderful community groups, so if you wish to send us articles about any organisation you are connected to please do so.

If you are interested in sending us contributions please email us at editor@theriverporter.uk.

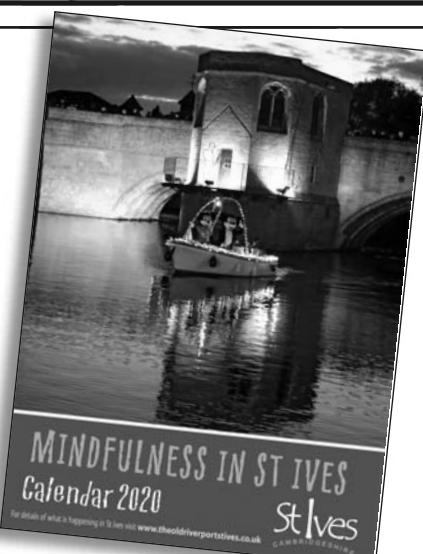
Copies are obtainable from many places including: The Corn Exchange, The Library, W H Smiths, Mace, Kings Hedges Post Office, The Coop in Constable Road, Morrisons and many of our pubs, cafes, hairdressers and shops. Copies are also available in Somersham Library, and the village stores in Needingworth, Fenstanton and Hemingford. Of course if you can't get hold of a printed version you can read it on-line at www.theriverporter.uk



It is not too late to get hold of this limited edition Calendar which is full of great photographs of the year's events in St Ives.

Sales of the Town Team's Mindfulness Calendar for 2020 have gone really well and most have been sold but there is still a chance to support the work of the Town Team with 50% of the profits going to the St Ives Dementia Friendly Community Group.

A great gift at just £5, it is still available from The Norris Museum



having your say ...



Dear Erik PAWS FOR THOUGHT

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

Dear Erik,

Jean Chandler's photograph in RP issue 48, alongside her BHF colleagues, Helen Hunter and Anne Strong and The Duchess of York was a delight to behold. The prestigious Underglobe on London's South Bank was obviously a fitting location for the annual British Heart Foundation Awards.

Jean founded the St Ives Branch of the British Heart Foundation fully 36 years ago in 1983. Ever since then St Ives folk have keenly supported the Branch's many fundraising activities and events: the sponsored children's swims in the earlier years and more recently the sponsored Santa Runs round the St Ives, Houghton & Hemingfords Loop, to name but two. In that time, as you reported in Issue No. 44, the Branch has raised more than £500,000, and the members are regarded by the BHF as a 'fundraising juggernaut'.

Jean was Mayor of St Ives in Millennium Year and was a long-serving Town and District Councillor. Alongside her work for the BHF Charity Jean is also a Trustee of St Ives United Charities.

Never, to my mind, was the BHF's Outstanding Achievement Award so richly deserved.

Dear Erik, it's good to be able to write to you about nice things like this. You're in for another big cuddle the next time I see you.

Ian Dobson

And there it was...gone!

Did anyone see it go? Will anyone miss it? We refer of course to the old phone box outside W H Smiths at the end of Market Hill.

The stainless steel monstrosity, not shown in the picture below, had certainly seen better days and was a smelly blot on the town landscape but suddenly one morning Erik sat back in surprise when overnight it appeared to disappear with no trace that it was ever there...

Perhaps it was really that Tardis thing that Dr Who drives around in.



Dear Erik,

Firstly I am a big fan [of *The Riverporter*]. I'm not sure if you were at the St Ives hustings (Friday 6 Dec), but Mr Djanogly offered a different 'dog ate my homework' excuse for not attending.

He claims that he didn't receive an email from the organisers. They claimed that they used the same contact details as the St Neots hustings which had reached Mr Djanogly. I posted about this in the St Ives FB group and Djanogly's secretary came to his defence, saying the following.

Nikki Standbrook

Here is a screenshot of the email the organiser of the St Ives hustings sent to Jonathan Djanogly. The correct email address is parliament.uk not parliament.com. You don't have to be an expert to know if you send an email to the wrong email address it won't be received by the intended recipient!

It seems a farcical state of affairs that the MP is both aware and unaware of hustings. Particularly since he refused to share a platform with Mark Argent the previous week. Keep up the good work

Stephen Ferguson

Dear Stephen thanks for the letter. It doesn't seem odd that Mr Djanogly didn't attend, he seemed to avoid most scrutiny during the campaign. His personal website is jonathandjanogly.com and our email to that address never got answered.

Perhaps all MPs will avoid talking to their voters in future if doing so gets them elected with an even larger majority. Ed.

The Riverporter

NEWS UPDATES

Girton Road works

Well our new section of A14 opened last week a full year ahead as previously announced. But, judging by the St Ives social media response it didn't quite live up to expectations.

Tailbacks occurred at both ends of the new section and some drivers complained of poor signage (Anticipated by Erik's Cartoon in the 8th November issue) when drivers couldn't find the new northbound St Ives turn and had to brave the tailbacks in Huntingdon as they could only turn back from there.

To add to the misery the second super smart suspension bridge near Bar hill required constructors to close the road for three days and The Girton west bound link suffered a further delay with Highways England issuing the following Tweet...

'Due to weather conditions over the last week, we've been unable to complete final works on the Girton westbound to westbound link. As a result, opening of the new link has been delayed further and we aim to open overnight Thursday 19 Dec, weather permitting... 'We're sorry for the delay.'

Wandering on the waves

'Dangerous fast-moving water' was one of the recent reports coming from the environment agency this week.

Heavy rain in the whole region has contributed to high

water levels which have flooded our low lying areas.

However, the fast-moving waters are very dangerous, and several boats have been swept from their moorings by the swirling waters.



This week riverside visitors were surprised to see a small cruiser with nobody aboard glide past, narrowly missing the bridge. We understand the owner was reunited with the boat later that day from Jones boat yard.

The Environment agency also has warned people venturing too near the water's edge as the depth and flow of water could easily sweep a person away, should anyone fall in.

Miraculously the pilotless boat passed under the bridge undamaged.

Knifeman on the loose?

Tuesday this past week saw a considerable armed police presence in town following reports of a knife wielding person spotted in Ramsey road. Police were called to Ramsey Road at 10.56am Tuesday morning following reports of a man with a knife. The suspect remained on the loose, with armed officers engaged in a manhunt in the town. Later that afternoon police reported that no one had been found, but Police would reassure the public that they believe it was an isolated incident. 'There will be increased police patrols in the area and investigations will continue.'

UPDATE • UPDATE • UPDATE • UPDATE • UPDATE

A 19-year-old man from St Ives has now been arrested on suspicion of making threats to kill, a section 4 public order offence and possession of an offensive weapon. He remains in custody at Thorpe Wood Police Station. A Cambridgeshire Police spokesman confirmed the arrest and charges but as yet the name of the offender has not been released.



Are St Ives people more generous?

We noticed the following letter in this weeks Hunts Post.

Hundreds raised at collections

Collections were held in aid of Guide Dogs in St Ives on October 5 where a total of £416.35 was raised.

A collection in St Neots on October 10 raised £301.06 and, in Huntingdon on October 12, a total of £396.43 was raised.

There were no expenses.

I would like to thank the public for their generous contributions and for the help we received from Guide Dog owners, puppy walkers and volunteers.

Ruth Norman, Potton Road, St Neots.

120 years ago St Ives raised enough money in a short time, to fund the, now famous, statue to Oliver Cromwell in Market Hill after Huntingdon had failed to do so during the 240 years following Cromwells death.

Snowman Festival Prize Draw

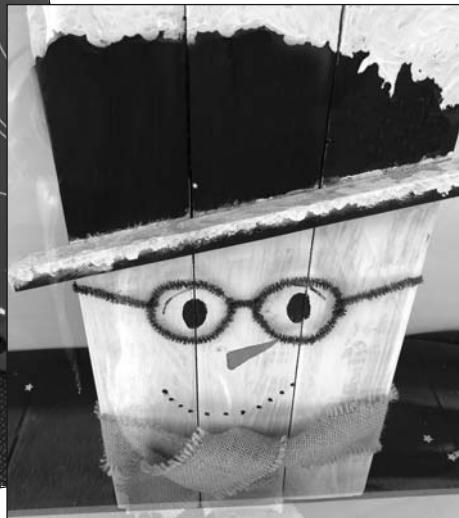
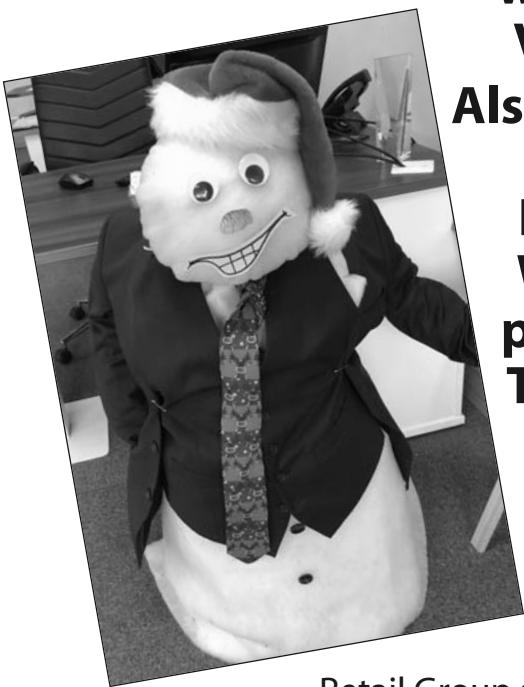
Come along at Noon to The Norris Museum on Saturday 21 December and see if you are the lucky winner of the £200 Townrow Gift Voucher in our Snowman Trail.

Also see who has won the £200 cash prize donated by Ellis Winters for the Best Window Display and the prize winner of afternoon Tea For Four at Slepe Hall Hotel for the Best Snowman Rocks Picture.

The organisers, The Old Riverport Retail Group and the Town Team would like to thank all those companies and families who took part in the Snowman Festival, which has been very successful this year.

As a result the Festival will be giving donations totalling £400 to the following local groups: Thorndown School, Acorn Cancer Support Group, St Ives Dementia Friendly Community Group, Second St Ives Sea Scouts, Calmtown and St Ives Shed (BullShed) group.

Pictured are some of the many snowmen that have decorated our town this festive season.



Little boxes on the hillside . . .



Planning application for The How could destroy the meadow's setting and tranquility - for ever!

Hemingford Meadow is in the St Ives Conservation Area and is also a valuable wildlife site with two small parcels actually owned by the Wildlife Trust. It is viewed from the bridge and from Holt Island and visited by tens of thousands of people each year.

Walkers, boaters, rowers, fishermen and picnickers share its charms. The meadow view from the Dolphin dining room is particularly fine. It is one of St Ives' key attractions. But there is currently a planning application that could destroy the meadow's setting and tranquility - for ever.

This historic flood meadow, one of the few of its size left in the country, is managed traditionally with sheep grazing during the winter and with hay crops taken in the summer. It is outstandingly attractive; on the banks of the Great Ouse; fringed with deciduous trees on its two

longest sides; and with no visual intrusions west of the St Ives Parish Church spire.

The meadow gives a sense of space and freedom to people in an era when they have never been more needed. In times of flood it is totally transformed into a lake that is unexpected and dramatic.

The threat

Surely this meadow's setting should not be damaged for thousands of visitors for the benefit of the few who could live on the land north of the How, Houghton Rd.

The plans by the developers specifically extol the view from the development and if they can see the meadow, then anyone on the meadow will see them!

This means that meadow users will performe have to look at lots of *'little boxes on the hillside, little boxes made of t... t..., little boxes all the same.'*

Everyone who cares about our unique and beautiful meadow should go to the HDC web site at <https://publicaccess.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/online-applications>

Look up application no 19/02280/FUL for 'Land north of the How, Houghton Rd, St Ives.'

You will see for yourselves how in fact the application includes 20 houses south of The How on the tree covered slope down to the river. Your comments will be taken into account - so the more people who comment the better.

The seven wives would certainly resist this desecration of their view across the meadow from the London Road viaduct!

St Ives Town Council, Hemingford Grey and Hemingford Abbots Parish Councils have objected to the development.

The Riverporter is grateful to Robin Waters for this information.

Residents near the How have also objected

Peter Law wrote to us to let us know of the concerns of local residents who have also objected to the new application which seeks to increase the total development by 50%. Their objections include comments about the unique character of Houghton Road, which they say should be respected; the proposal to provide 97 parking spaces - a very

significant increase on previous proposals impacting on the Houghton Road traffic.

The traffic survey submitted in support of this application also comes in for criticism with claims that rush hour is only between 8am and 9am and 5pm and 6pm. Residents say that heavy traffic has already started before 7am and

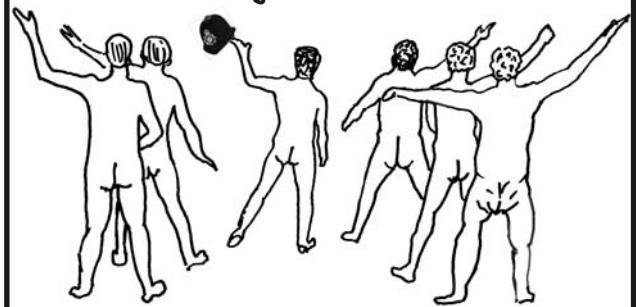
continues until well after 9am and is heavy again from the end of the school day and continues unabated until about 6.30pm.

The residents also commented that the social housing units should be integrated within the main development and not separated wholly or partially from it, as is indicated.

Elevations from the planning application of some of the housing.



New Line-up for the Full Monty at Burgess Hall 2020



There is no Planet B!

In response to growing concerns about the impact that human consumption is having on the state of the planet, a group of community-minded St Ives residents are gathering in January around the common theme of the environment to begin to form a local Climate Action Plan.

We are pleased to announce that the first meeting of St Ives Eco Action will take place on **Wednesday 22nd January, 7:15pm for 7.30pm start at St Ives Methodist Church.**

It is the aim of the group to work with St Ives Town Council, local businesses, organisations, community groups and residents to map out a pathway to St Ives becoming carbon neutral by 2050, with a 60% reduction by 2030.

It is not yet known what that map looks like and the group are calling upon local people who care about the environment to get involved to help to set the pace and direction of travel.

While it is envisioned the plan will reflect the talents, knowledge, interests and concerns of all those who wish to get involved, themes may include:

- Recycling & Waste Minimisation
- Litter Picking
- Transportation
- Food
- Local Economy
- Nature Conservation
- Health & Wellbeing

- Gardening, Horticulture & Tree Planting
- Policy and Planning
- Energy
- Education

The group recognise that by working together, to share knowledge and skills, and by learning from each other, it is possible to build on all the good work that is already happening to make even more of an impact locally. The first meeting will include a number of key speakers with the overarching aim to identify priorities and interests, and agree a format for future meetings. The group is part of a growing network of local Eco Groups that are forming across Cambridgeshire.

If you have ideas or suggestions to contribute, time, skills and talents to offer, or simply for more information, please email stivesecoaction@gmail.com.

- **Learn More**
- **Care More**
- **Do More**

St Ives

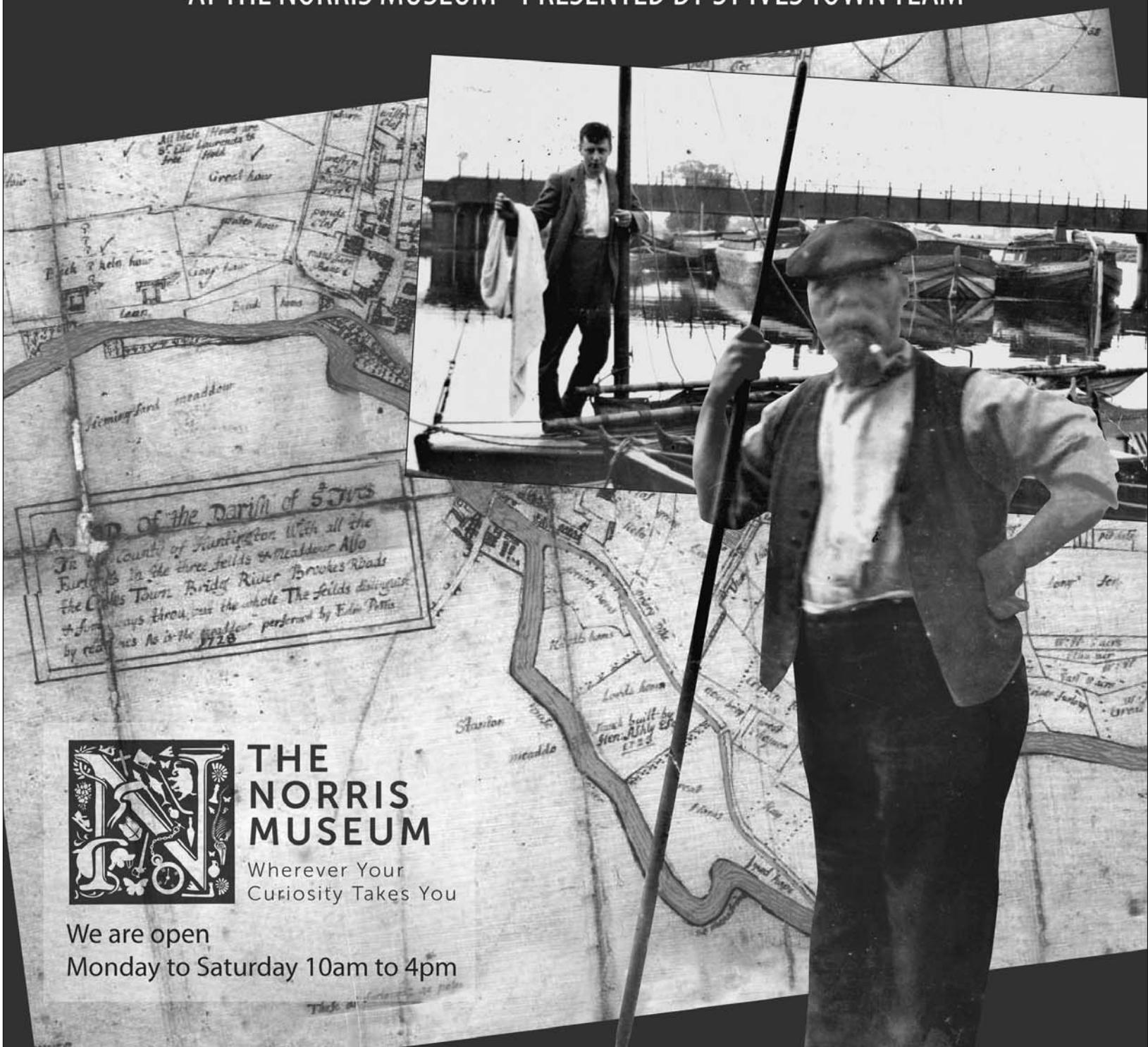
CAMBRIDGESHIRE

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AT THE NORRIS MUSEUM - PRESENTED BY ST IVES TOWN TEAM



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MORE NEWS UPDATES

Watching out for modern slavery

Businesses across Cambridgeshire are being encouraged to attend a one-day workshop raising awareness of how to spot the signs of modern slavery.

The workshop takes place on 10th January and has been organised by Cambridgeshire Constabulary's Victim and Witness Hub, which recently celebrated its fifth anniversary. Its aim is to raise awareness of modern day slavery among employees at local businesses - particularly factories, banks and recruitment agencies - as well as offering advice on how to spot possible victims and report any concerns.

Speakers at the event will include police officers, representatives from the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), the Stronger Together initiative, registered charity Stop the Traffik and company auditor Verisio Ltd.

Daniela Dumitache, specialist victim care co-ordinator at the witness hub, said: 'No business is free from the risk of modern slavery or human trafficking.'

'High-risk sectors include those whose businesses and UK supply chains are characterised by a high proportion of migrant workers undertaking unskilled and irregular work. By the end of the workshop it is hoped businesses will have a strong understanding of what modern day slavery, human trafficking and labour exploitation is.'

'As well as this, it is hoped staff at these businesses will be able to recognise the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery and know how to access support from the Victim and Witness Hub.'

Detective Superintendent Rebecca Tipping, the force strategic lead for modern slavery and human trafficking, said: 'Victims of modern day slavery and human trafficking are often forced into work or other services against their will and moved from location to location.'

'This is regularly under threat of violence or some other form of punishment. The signs of modern day slavery and human trafficking can often be hard to spot - but being able to recognise them may help save someone's life.'

'We are working hard to tackle modern day slavery, but we can't do it alone. If anyone has any concerns, no matter how small, we'd urge them to get in touch.'

Concerns can also be reported to the confidential 24/7 Modern Slavery Helpline on 08000 121700 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Latest from St Ives Town Council

At the December Town Council meeting one of the items discussed was the Council's Social Media Policy following recommendations after the issues around Facebook messages during the incident with George's Bakery. It was agreed that the current policy was adequate.

One of the main topics was to discuss the estimates of income and expenditure for 2020/21. After a brief discussion the likely result of the estimates is a potential 3.3% increase in expenditure.

The report from the working party for the Warner's Pavilion was also discussed and the likely cost for the work has now grown to £241,000. The next stage is to seek planning approval from the District Council for the plans.

Increase in drug related incidents

Neighbourhood police reports have listed an increased number of drug related incidents occurring in the town centre. Reports issued this week include...

Manor Mews, Bridge Street - Police received a report of on-going anti-social behaviour by groups of youths around Manor Mews, Bridge Street, on Tuesday evening, 10th December. The youths leave drugs paraphernalia on the ground and use the Mews as a lavatory. Details have been passed to the Neighbourhood Policing Team for them to follow up on the report.

Paragon Road - Officers on patrol in St Ives on Tuesday evening, 10th December, observed a teenager behaving suspiciously in the area, who tried to ride off on his bike when approached. A search revealed seven foil wraps of a substance believed to be cannabis inside a spectacle case. Investigations are continuing.

Cow and Hare Passage - A person found loitering suspiciously in Cow and Hare Passage late on Tuesday evening, 10th December, was found to be in possession of a half-smoked joint of cannabis, hidden under the hood of his clothing, and was reported for summons.

Wildlife habitats are being destroyed

Say angry neighbours about a 4 acre plot of land on the edge of St Ives.

People living near the land, behind Limes Court, believe that work, removing trees and scrub, is part of a new bid to develop it for housing, which has been turned down in the past.

Landowner Martin Braybrook, from Cromer, said that although he did want to get planning permission to develop the land, the work was part of routine maintenance on the site and that there had been no intention of putting wildlife at risk.

One neighbour, quoted in the Hunts Post, said machinery had been used over several days to clear trees, hedges and scrub from the land, between London Road, Limes Court and the Brambles, destroying wildlife habitats.

'I could just about accept this if planning permission had been granted for the development of this scrub land but I find the wasteful destruction totally upsetting and unnecessary, given that no such permission has been granted,' she said.

Mr Braybrook was quoted as saying that he had inherited the land from a relative about 10 years ago and, although he did want to develop the site, the current work was to catch up with routine maintenance of the land and was not part of a backdoor attempt to get planning permission. **Eds Note.** Has Mr Braybrook heard of re-wilding?



Dear Erik,

The FEST Elves are very happy to let *The Riverporter* know that this year, once again, approximately 600 children visited Santa in his magical Grotto, located as usual in the St Ives Corn Exchange.

Designed by FEST Elf, Pat, each child received a gift and it was all free thanks to the support of St Ives Town Council and local businesses. **FEST Elves thank everyone who helped them.**

Above: Santa and FEST Elf Pat. Below: More Elves in the Grotto.



Bogus Police Officer Warning:

Detectives are advising residents to stay vigilant following a number of reports of scam phone calls in recent weeks, in which elderly victims are phoned by fraudsters pretending to be police officers or bank officials, asking them to transfer funds or make withdrawals of cash for later collection.

Around 20 such incidents have been reported around the county since September. It is vital to remember that genuine police officers or bank officials will NEVER ask you to withdraw or transfer money or divulge your private banking details.

More information is on the Cambridgeshire Police website at:

<https://www.cambs.police.uk/news-and-appeals/bogus-officer-fraud>



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Eriks Wit and Wisdom

is a fun read and a bargain at just **£2.50** or 2 for a fiver! Get yours from **Terry's Heel Bar**, 4 Foundry Walk or email editor@theriverporter.uk with your order and address details.

Profits go to the St Ives Christmas Lunch Charity, which provides a festive lunch in the Free Church for local people on their own on Christmas Day.

**The
Wit
and
Wisdom
of
Erik**

The Riverporter

Reprinted from the St Ives Award Winning Newspaper

ADVERTORIAL

New Year, New Home

Mike Ellis of Ellis Winters gives 7 tips to help you buy your own home



One of the biggest challenges to taking a step onto the property ladder is the deposit. With property prices high, even saving for a 5% deposit can seem a daunting task.

Here are seven top tips to help start you on your campaign to turn your pennies into pounds:

1. Set up a realistic monthly saving plan to start the wheels in motion. There is a lot to be said for initiating the 'saving' and there is no better way to start than a regular monthly plan.
2. Work out how much you can afford to save. There are plenty of free online budget templates you can download which will help you to assess your finances. This is a great opportunity to trim your outgoings and you could be surprised how much you spend on small items.

3. Start this process by reviewing your previous month's spend to set a realistic plan. Try to avoid being too optimistic by overestimating the amount you can set aside each month.

4. Settle on a minimum figure and, if you have a particularly good month, you can always transfer some extra pounds into your savings that month.

5. Before you choose an account, do some research as interest rates can vary.

Since saving for a deposit is a long-term goal, it may be that an account which gives you better interest rates, but does not allow you instant access, is more appropriate.

6. Remember that a savings account is not for life so you should periodically assess whether moving your savings somewhere else could be more beneficial.

7. Talk to an independent financial advisor before you start to save. Very often spending double the time to save a larger deposit is not cost effective. You may pay a slighter higher interest rate with a smaller deposit, but if house prices increase by 5% per year, the £150,000 home you are aiming for will be over £165,000 in two years' time which means you could be saving for longer than you need to.



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