



Civic Society of St Ives

Annual Report 2021

THE CIVIC SOCIETY OF ST IVES

Our Legacy Statement:

“That future generations will be able to easily recognise the historic character and heritage of our Town despite the inevitable changes that happen down the years .”

The Civic Society of St Ives was formed in 1968 to fight the proposed plans to route the St Ives Bypass down Ramsey Road, across The Waits, Holt Island and Hemingford Meadow.

The siting of the St Ives Bypass today is a result of our early campaigns.

The Society continues to care for the beauty and character of the town, as well as working to stimulate public interest in civic matters and to provide an information service for those who wish to know more about the town’s history and development, and of the surrounding area.

The Civic Society of St Ives is a registered Charity, registration number 257286.

The Civic Society’s website can be found at:

www.stivescivic.org.uk

The society is a member of:

The Campaign to Protect Rural England

www.cpre.org.uk

The Cambridge Antiquarian Society

www.camantsoc.org

The Great Ouse Valley Trust

www.greatousevalleytrust.org.uk

FRONT COVER: The front cover photo shows St Ives, the photo was taken by Terry Harris, in late December 2020. Courtesy of Terry Harris.

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Chairman's Report 2020-2021

I will, once again, commence my annual report by commentating how different the last year has been, compared with normal times. When I prepared my last report I anticipated that we would be able to hold the AGM, if not in the Free Church, then in another venue in the Town. I also discussed some of the problems of complying with requirements to create a safe environment.

The change in approach by Government, allowing larger groups to meet and making some safety precautions non mandatory allows us to plan for holding our open meetings but the decision to attend remains with each individual; for my part and that of the Committee, we will plan to make the Free Church Centrum safe for everyone. You will likely see some changes to help keep us all safe. More of that nearer the time.

We have sought to rearrange the three speakers we cancelled at the end of last season, one (blood runners) is arranged, we have been unable to arrange the Farmland Museum talk and Mike Petty now prefers to use a conference call.

This Annual Report is necessarily different. We have not held open meetings this year and consequently we do not have any reports. I am pleased to include two new articles submitted by members, one taking a look at the Hunts Post in 1946, 75 years ago. The other records part of the old National School in Station Road.

For some years the County Council has had a programme of works to maintain the **New Bridges** and make them safe for continued use. A new stage has just commenced, a 20 week programme of work to make the east elevation brick parapets safe. This will involve some replacement of brickwork and coping stones. In addition, work to the **Bridge Chapel** will make the stairway safe thus allowing visitor access to the lower floor, and balcony. A future phase of work is planned to complete works to the parapets. Our thanks go to the County Council for including these works in their programme.

Red Valerian has grown in the soft mortar, damaging the walls - David Stewart



My thanks also go to our Committee, we have continued to hold meetings using Zoom. The committee are Jane Amaral, who has organised the forthcoming Heritage Open Day, Basil Belcher has continued as Treasurer, Helen Eveleigh maintains our Membership Records, Peter Jackson, Peter Newbould, Dr Tim Reed, Barbara Richmond, Peggy Seamark and Peter Whatnell, our Secretary. Last year I wrote “Peter gave notice last year that he would not stand for the Committee again this year”. In fact, because Peter’s plans were put on hold he did continue, this year that will not happen again. I again appeal for one of you to come forward and offer to take on this role, either as Secretary, or as a minute taker at our committee meetings.

Brian Richmond has continued to maintain our website and Diane McGoff has examined our Accounts, my thanks to both for your help. Another role I wish to see filled is that of note taker and report writer at our open meetings. Please contact me to find out more: secretary@stivescivic.org.uk

Until May this year the Town Council held their Planning Meetings using Zoom, I found this worked well. The Town Council has now recommenced meetings in person. To ensure spacing these are now held in the Corn Exchange, where I find it more difficult to follow the comments of councillors, especially when masks were being worn. I have continued to comment on planning applications, both to the Town Council and in some instances to HDC’s planners. Later in this report I have commented on some of the planning applications affecting the Town.

In our Newsletters I have reported on two further consultations, one would affect St Ives and the other was entirely about the future development of St Ives. The one affecting St Ives is the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority’s proposals for the St Ives transport network. Challenges are congestion, unreliable journey times, rat-running, and unsafe cycle and walking routes which results in a lack of travel options. All of us know and experience these challenges, however the majority of the options were essentially to solve a different problem: Transport infrastructure for the proposed development of Wyton Airfield for housing.

Options 1, 2 and 3 all include a new traffic route from the airfield to St Ives, extending either as far as Parson Green roundabout on Harrison Way or terminating on Marley Road, I guess near the Co-Op store. From the termination of the new route in each option improvements were proposed as far as the Hemingford Road/Low Road roundabout on the A1096. The sketches provided, in order to assess the extent of work proposed, were not very clear. It would appear no work is planned to improve the Busway crossing, and no work is planned further along the A1096 towards the A1307 (old A14). These schemes, especially number 2 and 3, do little to improve the traffic situation in St Ives.

All fail to deal with the very poor junction onto the A1307. As traffic into St Ives continues to increase, this junction is suffering more during the evening rush, as

Cambridge bound traffic has to wait to cross the T junction. In that respect none of these latest proposals are as comprehensive in dealing with the overloaded bypass and London Road as the earlier Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's (CA) Local Transport Plan, (see my report last year).

Options 4, 5 and 6 involved no major new routes but improvements to a few local junctions, or sustainable travel improvements and finally non motorised options, that is improvements for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. The consultation has now closed, I have not yet seen any summary of the responses.

The consultation on the future development of St Ives results from the decision of the Town Council to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. If the developing plan completes all its stages, including the final community referendum, it will become a part of the development plan for St Ives. HDC's planners will have to ensure development proposals comply with the Plan. Whilst a minor part of the planning process, it has the potential to influence development of the Town for several decades.

The council invited members of the community to become involved in a working group. Their deliberations resulted in the Informal Consultation document. This identified a number of policy themes, the thrust of them is that St Ives has reached housing capacity, but many ways to improve the quality of life for residents exist and should be sought.

This informal consultation has also closed, the information is still available on the Town Council's website, under the Neighbourhood Planning tab. No doubt updates will be added.

HDC's proposals for St Ives, A Strategy for Growth, continues to be developed, but on an extended timetable to March 2023. The newly elected Mayor for the CA is not in favour of the Cambridgeshire Metro, planning for the metro is now suspended.

Last year, there was very **heavy rain** on the evening of 23rd December. I understand over 50mm of rain fell in areas west of Huntingdon and I recorded 40mm in Hemingford Grey. This resulted in low lying parts of St Ives experiencing rapid flooding. The small ditches, brooks and streams bringing water down from the higher ground overflowed. Even worse, a sewage pumping station failed, resulting in sewage flooding some properties. The Marley Gap Brook overflowed into the Abbey Retail Park, the fast food outlets suffered some water damage but reopened within a few days.

The Environment Agency's flood warning system for St Ives only monitors the River Great Ouse. There is no monitoring of the local brooks and streams, consequently many people were caught unaware. The Marley Gap Brook/ Parsons Drove Drain is the responsibility of the EA only as far upstream as the Sewage Works. This is the brook which carries away much of the rainfall from

Wyton on the Hill. Any development on the old airfield should ensure there is no increase in rapid runoff to the brook. Indeed, a reduction of the current level of runoff would assist in easing flood risk in the town.

Development on the **old golf course** continued this year and is now just about complete. **Berman Park** has now opened on the hillier area with a footpath/cycle way link to Westwood Road. This has opened a partly off road route to and from town. I hope this new route will be linked into **The How** development. Linking areas are already included up to the How's land.

Work to complete **The Grove Medical Practice** (ex **Cromwell Place Surgery**), is not yet complete; the building looks no better to me than I feared when I first saw the plans. Elsewhere, part of Bull Lane has been redeveloped with a terrace of homes, with access from both the Lane and Post Office Yard. An apartment block in New Street, **Osier House** is now complete.

The old **Nat West** premises is being developed into a restaurant, with flats above. It is planned to have outside seating to the rear.

Two planning applications for housing developments remain 'in progress', developers proposing the **Vindis Garage** site, at the corner of London Road and Low Road, have recently submitted a revised scheme. A new scheme for the former Murketts **Car Showrooms** on London Road was submitted in January. The Environment Agency have withdrawn their objection since the submission of a revised flood risk assessment, although mitigation measures will still be required. This site has stood unused since 2009 when Murketts relocated.

Another 'in progress' application is for a site north of **Stocks Bridge Way**. This site is included in HDC's Local Plan for commercial use and an outline application for two buildings is underway. Judging by the most recent documents a sticking point is accommodating the additional traffic which will access the site from Somersham Road.

Both the **Edinburgh Woollen Mill** and **Peacocks** groups entered administration during the year, the Woollen Mill store is now closed but Peacocks is trading again. St Ives has a relatively low rate of closed and vacant shops. This is very pleasing, the streets seem to be busier these days and I hope this is translating into more trade for the shops and businesses of the town. As COVID-19 restrictions have been eased the most obvious difference in the town centre has been the removal of the red barriers from Bridge Street and Market Hill. This was immediately welcomed by those wanting to park their car and by just about everyone else for the removal of the eyesore.

The **Street Markets**, both the Monday/Friday and Farmers' Markets are to return to The Pavement and Market Hill in August. Closing of the Edinburgh Woollen Mill leaves a big hole in Crown Street, will it be unoccupied as long as Restaurant Molise and the Robin Hood public house have been? I hope not.

The **Vadi Kitchen** has replaced Rumbles Fish Bar in the Broadway, La Cucina in Station Road is now **Cambridge Worktops**. Hyperion Auctions have developed their yard into **The Courtyard**, the 20 individual 'market style' units house a range of outlets, many are open seven days a week, they are well worth a browse. The application to convert the **old Free Church Hall** into four flats was refused, partly on the grounds of maintaining shops in the centre of the town. A new application to convert the upper floor into two flats has now been submitted. What a pity that **St Ives Beds** was forced out!

The Manor House in Bridge Street, together with its adjacent building suffered damage to a chimney. This was discovered after roofing repairs were required following a rainstorm. Emergency works commenced last October to make the chimney safe and the roof watertight. This involved a structural scaffold to ensure the safety of the building. Both buildings are listed, the Manor House being grade 2*, indicating its importance and special interest. The reports submitted to planners give some interesting background to the history of the buildings. Listed building consent has now been issued and work is underway. However, it will be a good day when the scaffolding and its white wrapping is removed.

As a group we should thank the owners of listed buildings in the town. Upkeep of our listed buildings is generally very good, no doubt this does not come cheap!



Scaffolding at The Manor House, Bridge Street - David Stewart

Another good day will be Friday 17th September 2021, starting at 7.30pm in The Free Church, St Ives. We will hold our first open meeting in over a year. I am looking forward to this when the speaker will be John Gibson, he will talk about the Motor Bike Rider Volunteers - Emergency Blood Transporters.

TREASURER'S REPORT 2020-2021

This year's accounts have been independently checked and approved.

The overall result in the year, including interest, is £636 which reflects the savings made on hall hire, speaker's fees and a three-month free extension to our insurance cover, as a result of Covid restrictions.

The resultant saving has been reduced by the repayment of the £750 grant from the Goodliff Fund, as we are unlikely to be able to proceed with the church yard lamp for the foreseeable future.

Annual Subscriptions are due in September and will remain at the current level of £7 for single membership and £12 for household membership. Payment can be made at meetings and by standing order. Standing Orders are preferred and forms for this are available for this at any meeting from Helen Eveleigh or me.

Both membership and standing order forms are available on the website.

Basil Belcher

Treasurer

Civic Society of St Ives Statement of Income & Expenditure
as at 30th April 2021

<u>Income</u>	Year to	Year	<u>Expenditure</u>	Year to	Year
	30/04/21	2020		30/04/21	2020
	£	£		£	£
Subscriptions	1,902	2,094	Hall Hire		290
Slepe Hall Donations			Annual Report	595	595
Visitors		105	Speakers		278
Memorial Fund			Memorial Fund		
Social Evenings			Social Evenings		
Raffle			Raffle		
Interest			Insurance		151
Gift Aid	281	292	Antiquarian Soc Subs	20	20
Heritage Weekend			CPRE Subs	36	36
St Ives 2068			St Ives 2068		
Bequests			Donations/Gifts	17	200
Deposit Acc Transfer			GOVT	30	
			Administration	58	142
Donations	55	56	Postage	48	42
			Phone		
			Travel		
			Web Site	87	193
			Heritage Weekend	147	189
Remembrance Collection			Remembrance Collection		135
Church Light			Church Light	750	
	£ <u>2,238</u>	£ <u>2,547</u>		£ <u>1,641</u>	£ <u>2,036</u>

Balances from 30th April 2020

Current account	5,830
Deposit Account	<u>10,233</u>
Total	16,063
Plus	
Surplus for year	597
Interest	<u>39</u>
Total	16,700
less	
2019/2020 Payments	<u>90</u>
	£ <u>16,610</u>

Balances as at 30th April 2021

Current account	6,454
Deposit Account	<u>10,273</u>
Total	16,727
add	
Receipts after Period end	0
less	
Cheques yet to be presented	<u>117</u>
	£ <u>16,610</u>

Civic Society of St Ives Committed Funds as at 30th April 2021

	<u>Gift Aid</u>	£
Slepe Hall Old Girls Fund	✓	901
Memorial Fund	✓	207
Remembrance Books		109
Church Light	Repaid	<u>0</u>
		£ <u>1,217</u>

Open Meetings 2021 - 2022

All monthly talks are held in the Free Church, St Ives at 7.30pm
Non-members are always welcome and a donation of £3 is
Requested to help cover costs.

- 17 September 2021 John Gibson: Motor Bike Rider Volunteers -
Emergency Blood Transport
- 15 October 2021 Annual General Meeting.
Followed by Best Laid Plans - *a look at some
changes to, and outcomes of, infrastructure planning*
- 19 November 2021 Councillor Nick Dibben - The St Ives Neighbourhood
Plan - *Nick is Chairman of the team preparing the
Plan for the Town*
- 21 January 2022 Details of the remaining speakers will be announced
in our Open Meetings and on our website
- 18 February 2022
- 18 March 2022 For the latest information about our Open Meetings
please see our website -
<http://www.stivescivic.org.uk/index.php/talks>
- 15 April 2022
- 20 May 2022

A date for your diary

Saturday 18th September is HODs, Heritage Open Days

Maybe we should call it 'HOD' as this year it is only one day. Day or days, either way it's a day you don't want to miss. After the last 18 months we all deserve a distraction and some light relief that is easy and doesn't involve travel with the associated testing and worse.

Along with the opening of some of our lovely old buildings, you can also enjoy the Farmers Market; the second day of The Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival; and a St Ives Eco Action Group event at the Methodist Church.

On our Flyer this year we have a light-hearted search for "Our 7 wives and their cats". The wives, each with a cat, will be in shop windows waiting to see you; or to be correct, to be seen by you. The idea is to give children something to look for but there is no upper age limit, there is also no material prize, just the satisfaction of having found them.

The back page of the Flyer has some interesting, short pieces of information about St Ives, which for members of the Civic Society won't be anything new; but it may tempt visitors back for a longer stay or to our next Heritage Open Day in 2022.

On 18th September you can have a full and interesting day out in St Ives! The Farmers Market starts at 8.30 where the Civic Society will be sharing a stall with the St Ives Eco Action Group; The Old Riverport Jazz & Blues will start there at 11.00 and then you can explore one of the best market towns in England.

Hopefully we will have lots of visitors, some of whom may need directions, so make them feel welcome and make sure you send them in the right direction to their interesting destination in town. There will be Civic Society members, wearing bright pink sashes, handing out Flyers and ready to assist.

Heritage Open Days are a national event, organised locally by the Civic Society of St Ives. We create, arrange printing and distribution of the enclosed Flyer.

Jane Amaral

Committee Member and HODs organiser



Civic Society of St Ives
52nd Annual General Meeting
15th October 2021
AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 51st Annual General Meeting
3. Matters arising from the minutes.
4. Chairman's Report
5. Matters arising from the Chairman's Report
6. Treasurer's Report and to accept the Accounts for the year to 30th April 2020, (see page 13 of the Annual Report 2020) and for the year to 30th April 2021, see page 10
7. Resolutions
 - a. Appointment of an accounts examiner for 2021-2022
8. Election of Officers and Committee
9. Any Other Business

Resolutions:

To Appoint Ms Dianne McGoff BSc, ACIB, as independent accounts examiner until the conclusion of the 2022 Annual General Meeting.

MINUTES OF THE 50TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on 18th October, 2019 at the Free Church, St Ives.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies have been received from: Jane Amaral, Colin Saunderson, Norma Head, Nick Dibben, Bob King, Peter Newbould, and Mrs Landemoo.

2. MINUTES OF THE 49TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Chairman advised that the minutes had been published in the Annual Report. There were no amendments raised.

Motion to adopt the minutes as published

Proposed: M King

Seconded: P Baker

Motion passed on show of hands

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman's reports, up to July, are printed in the Annual Report. Since that time some points of note are:

I commented in my report I would talk about the Local Plan and other forthcoming plans after the AGM. My apologies to you if you are waiting for that talk. I have stepped away from it after Bridget Flanagan offered her talk because I've recently been ill. I have prepared some notes, some copies are on the table at the back. After the AGM I will try to answer any questions.

In my report I mentioned proposals to develop part of Wyton Airfield for housing. Recently a full planning application has been submitted. However, the company based at Cambridge Airfield, Marshall's Aerospace is looking at three sites for relocation of their facilities. One is Wyton. Marshalls have made presentations to the three local district councils for each of their shortlisted sites. I gather Huntingdon District Council are supportive of Marshall's plan.

I understand the county council are likely to construct the traffic light controlled crossing on Needingworth Road in the first half of next year. This will be paid for by Aldi.

Following the closure of the lower floor of the Bridge Chapel I'm pleased to now report the Information Boards are complete. There are seven in total, three recording the history of the Chapel and the rest showing photos of the lower

floor and balcony, They were in place for Heritage Open Days in September. One is on display at the back of the hall, there are also photos of the other six.

We have made a donation to the Town Council of £200 towards the cost of preparation and printing.

The Chairman invited comments and questions from the floor.

There were no matters arising from the Chairman's report.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasure's Report had been published in the Annual Report. There were no unusual expenses

There were no questions.

Motion to accept Treasure's J Limentani

Seconded: Mr Kelley

Motion passed on a show of hands.

6. RESOLUTIONS

To appoint Ms. Dianne McGoff, BSc, ACIB, as independent accounts examiner until the conclusion of the 2020 Annual General Meeting.

Proposed: Paul Faupel

Seconded: Margaret Hogan

Motion passed on a show of hands

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

Notice had been given of the nomination timetable for the Officers and Members of the Executive Committee. No new nominations have been received

The following Officers are standing for re-election:

Chairman David Stewart

Secretary Peter Whatnell

Treasurer Basil Belcher

Motion to appoint these nominees as officers for 2019-20

Proposed: P Baker

Seconded: C Reed

Motion passed on a show of hands

The following Committee members are standing for re-election:

Jane Amaral, Helen Eveleigh, Peter Jackson, Peter Newbould Tim Reed,
Barbara Richmond and

Motion to appoint these nominees for 20-19-20.

Proposed: S Limentani

Seconded: J Ralph

Motion passed on a show of hands.

Peggy Seamark missed the deadline for submitting her nomination form, due to illness. As permitted by the Constitution, it is our intention to co-opt her to the Committee.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

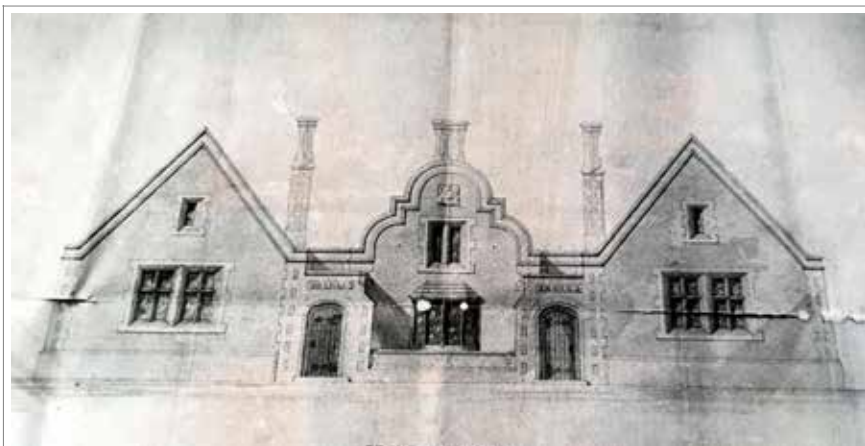
None

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7:47 pm

THE ANGLICAN SCHOOL, STATION ROAD, ST IVES.

The shop in Station Road, formerly C A Whetstone Farm and Garden Supplies, later called Petzone is now being redeveloped. As the interior is stripped back for redecoration there is an opportunity to glimpse part of the building that was originally built as the Anglican School.

Built in 1844 as the town's Church of England (Anglican) School and Schoolmaster's house, it was clearly of considerable size occupying the entire four gabled building, and with a school roll of 150 boys and 150 girls.



Original front elevation design and final building in 2021 for comparison.

The writer was allowed access to a framed Front Elevation drawing for what was probably the original design for the school, shown above.

It appears to bear the legend

J.D.HOPKINS *Architect*

12 BEDFORD ??

LONDON (Italics for interpreting covered section)

The drawing is headed (blurred) SCHOOL St IVES HUNTINGDONSHIRE

It seems that a decision was made to increase the size of the building by giving it two dutch gables centrally to allow a first floor room or rooms, perhaps for the schoolmaster.

In 1884 all the town's schools were brought together under a single School Board and the building was converted into shops in 1890.

There is a centrally placed black Historic Buildings of St Ives plaque courtesy of St Ives Town Council and The Civic Society entitled The National Schools.



Eastern School Hall showing last two sets of windows, bricked externally.



Inner wooden door to Eastern Hall



Detail of interior, first set of windows Eastern Hall (Bricked outside)



Western side, windows still in position and use, this portion of the school now Nuts Bistro and adjacent to Priory Road. Showing interesting detail to the top of the wall

Susan Limentani

With thanks to The Cambridge Building Society for access to the Front Elevation Drawing.

All photographs S Limentani

ST IVES 75 YEARS AGO

No-one topic dominates the news in the Hunts Post for St Ives during 1946, but there are lots of short articles. The paper continued its occasional series of 'Industry Went to War' which described the part played by local industries during the Second World War. Two St Ives companies are featured during the year – the first is Scotney's Timber on 31 January:

Scotney's Herculean Achievements

A century of service to the timber trade stands behind the firm of Tom M Scotney, manufacturing woodworker, of London Road, St Ives, switched to war-work fifteen months before the outbreak, it stood its firmest in the uneasy hush before the invasion of Europe.

It was then that a group of senior Commando officers carried into the factory a piece of strange mechanism – a bomb-rack cover for dropping dummy parachute troops. Grimly the order was given for the manufacture of 20,000 more within three weeks. The necessary fitting would have to be designed by the factory experts.

All other work was put aside. Under the supervision of Mr Tom Scotney, the fitting was evolved, the staff worked late hours and at weekends and the vital order was fulfilled within a fortnight. Management and staff received official thanks for this remarkable piece of work.

From the workshops of this factory came too, the ladders used in getting the men from the landing crafts in the invasions of Sicily and Italy.

The manufacture of National Fire Service ladders brought Tom Scotney's to the front early in the War. In the London blitz of 1942 the management received a confidential message that so many ladders had been destroyed that replacements were impossible. The factory workers were asked to strain every nerve to increase their ladder output. By working longer hours, they met orders of from 5,000 to 10,000 at a time and in London the position was eased.

Mr G F Matson, office manager throughout the war, believes the firm has turned out more ladders than any other in the country. It has also made several hundred N.F.S. hand hose carts, barrows, used by American Forces in this country, platform, sack and box trucks, tent bottoms and Nissen huts.

..... When war started, the firm, with its own men, tractors and trailers, assisted the Air Ministry by clearing aerodrome sites of timber, which was cut up at the factory. Some went to make railway sleepers and wagon bottoms of vital use in the war and the rest was stored for war purposes.

..... With its blacksmith's engineering shop, electric welder, wheelwright's shop and saw doctor, the factory is self-contained.

..... It was Mr Tom Scotney's grandfather who started the business at Sawtry nearly a century ago. Its chief work in those days was with English timber and the making of agricultural goods. Twenty-eight years ago a move was made to the West End Mills in Ramsey Road, where business extended so rapidly that Mr Tom Scotney, who had succeeded Mr William Scotney, purchased 10 acres of orchard in London Road so that all departments could be accommodated together as they now are. Shortly after war broke out, Mr Tom Scotney launched a subsidiary company under the title *St Ives Hunts, Saw Mills, Ltd*, for the purpose of carrying on the English timber side which played so important a part in the national war effort.

The second trade is Harrison's, basket makers, under the title **St Ives Made Basket Panniers for War Effort – To Feed Arnhem 'Skymen'** on 7 March:

Excitement gripped the Harrison family when a cinema news reel flashed pictures of the loading of airborne panniers for action at Arnhem. The Harrisons knew that any one of the panniers on the screen might have been made at the family basket making a willow-growing concern at London road, St Ives.

What, they must have wondered, would Grandfather John Harrison, who founded the little business 70 years ago, have said could he have seen its part in history's greatest War.

Airborne panniers, made in the small workshops set amid the fields, were dropped by parachute over Arnhem and collected in jeeps by airborne Forces. Skill went into their making. Designed in two halves, one fitted closely into the other to avoid the use of force in separating them.

The founder's son, Mr C W Harrison, and his grandson, Mr J H Harrison, have guided the business through the war years, straining with the workers to produce the goods for which, in ever-increasing numbers, the Government called.

Before the war, the industry struggled hard against Dutch competition. It fulfilled a few Government contracts, mostly for the Postal Service, but its main work was in supplying baskets for agriculture in the fenlands, and as far afield as Lancashire.

War broke out and five of the eight employees were drawn into the Services. A number of boys were taken on, but it meant gruelling work for everyone. All available supplies were switched to the war effort.

..... *Craftsmen and boys worked with a will in 1940 on thousands of baskets for the navy, knowing these usually carried the sailors' rum ration. They made*

R.A.F. laundry hampers and trolleys for the War Office. They made baskets for Ordnance factories, sorting trays and collecting trays for the Post Office, registry baskets for Somerset House and fixed the wheels on the trolleys they turned out for the War Office.

The firm today is getting back to agricultural work. Potato baskets take the place of airborne panniers.

In the old days, boys were apprenticed to the industry for six years, paid two shillings per week the first year and three shillings the second.



Picture is of the first cart made by Scotney to have pneumatic tyres, photographed in Parkhall Road, Somersham in 1931, reproduced by kind permission of the Norris Museum.

Picture is of baskets made by John Harrison & Son, basket makers of St Ives, on display in the Norris Museum in 2016, reproduced by kind permission of the Norris Museum.

Lesley Akeroyd



The front cover photo shows St Ives, the photo was taken by Terry Harris, using a camera drone, in late December 2020.

Many thanks to Terry for permission to reproduce the image.

The photo, taken from the drone above Harrison Way, shows the extent of flooding of the meadows around St Ives. The New Bridges, the Mill and housing at Enderbys Wharf fill the centre of the image. Both All Saint's Church Spire and the Free Church Spire are picked out in early morning sunlight. The trees of Holt Island nature reserve are in front of All Saint's spire, compare this photo with the cover photo on the 2019 Annual Report.

Very heavy rain fell on December 23rd 2020; streets and some houses in St Ives were flooded that evening. Floods in the meadows were at their highest on the 27th and 28th December, after which they began to fall. Whilst this picture shows the meadows bathed in winter sunlight and doing what they are intended to do, some streets in St Ives as well as some houses were flooded during and immediately after the very heavy rainfall. For those home owners Christmas was ruined.

Terry Harris is a professional editorial photographer based in Peterborough. He specialises in Press Editorial, PR and Commercial Photography, his work includes drone photography and video. For more examples of his work see <https://www.terry-harris.com/>

Correction

Our Annual Report 2020 featured a cover photo showing a watercolour painting by Edward Walker (1879-1955). This was incorrectly stated to show Houghton Mill. In fact the painting depicted Hemingford Mill, a little way downstream from Houghton. The V&A believe the painting dates to ca.1941. We are sorry about this mistake.

The biography about Edward Walker was correct, and the description of Houghton Mill does refer to the mill at Houghton.

Historic England record that Hemingford Mill was demolished in 1958, although some gears remain in the grounds of The Mill House, Hemingford Grey (a private property). In 1973, when the Mill House was Listed grade 2, weather-boarded and pantiled timber-framed barns and an open hovel to the north were noted as being associated with the Mill.

*Published by the Civic Society of St Ives © 2021
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Printed by the Artworks 01487 842687 e-mail: the.artworks@btconnect.com