



Civic Society of St Ives

Annual Report 2019

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

and

The Cambridge Antiquarian Society

www.camantsoc.org

FRONT COVER: The front cover photo shows the river at St Ives looking up-stream towards Holt island. This beautiful photo was taken by a drone hovering over the river near the bridge

CONTENTS

The Civic Society of St Ives - Its Aims	2
Chairman's Report	4
Treasurer's Report	8
Annual Accounts as at 30th April 2019	9
Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting - 2018	12
Annual General Meeting 2019 - Agenda	17
Summary of Talks 2018 - 2019	18
Programme of Talks 2019 - 2020	26
Sir George Cayley - Barbara Richmond	37
Your St Ives '68 - Jane Amaral	40
A Walk in Portholme Meadow - David Stewart	49
More on 37 The Broadway - Barbara Richmond	50

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

As you read this annual report You, one of our 350 or so members of the Society, may not appreciate the important role you have in supporting the committee in the work done to protect the historic character and heritage of St Ives. By your and others' membership the members give the committee the strength to speak to councils and other groups in the town. Therefore I start this report by thanking all our members for their continued membership.

Secondly I thank our committee members, Jane Amaral; Basil Belcher, our Treasurer; Helen Eveleigh, Membership Records; Peter Jackson; Peter Newbold; Dr Tim Reed; Barbara Richmond; Peggy Seamark, Talks Organiser; and finally Peter Whatnell, our Secretary.

We are helped by others, their assistance is very much appreciated:

Brian Richmond - Webmaster and Annual Report compiler

Dianne McGoff - Accounts examiner

The Free Church Staff

You may notice that our committee over the last year is the same as in 2017-18, that situation can not continue for ever and we are always on the lookout for new volunteers. Please contact me or any member of the committee for more information.

This year the Committee decided they would not sponsor a concert for Music on the Waits. We have sponsored the Ouse Valley Jazzmen with Angela for a number of years. This year we felt we needed to use our money for a longer term benefit. The lower floor of the Bridge Chapel could now be cited as a good example.

Recently the lower floor of the **Bridge Chapel** has been closed to the public. This decision was made following a review of the responsibilities assumed by The Norris Museum in managing the day to day use of the Chapel. The Bridge and the Chapel are owned by the County Council. The museum, with the assistance of volunteers of the Friends of the Norris Museum, undertook to open the Chapel more frequently, both to the public and also for small events. The review raised several concerns.

The Society immediately offered help to the Town Council in providing new information boards to describe and illustrate the lower floor. We hope these will be in place by the time this report is published. Longer term we are very keen to ensure sympathetic improvements are made to allow the lower floor to be reopened. This will take some time, the bridge and chapel are both listed Grade 1 and Historic England, planners at HDC as well as the County Council will have to approve any work. However, I am sure this will be

achieved because there are many instances of listed buildings having work done to improve access.

Noble's Field Trust is a charity that looks after a small meadow between the river and the start of the Thicket Path. The meadow was given to the Town and is now owned by the Town Council. Visitors are free to walk around the meadow, to sit and picnic by the river and it provides mooring for GOBA members. The Rowing Club hold their regatta there. A section of the river bank has eroded over the years and the Trust has started an appeal to raise money to pay for bank protection works. It is seeking funds from various sources and individuals can make a one off donation or pledge a regular payment.

Elsewhere in this annual report is Jane Amaral's writeup on **Your St Ives '68**, I was disappointed more schools did not participate, but equally I was impressed by the quality of the entries. My thanks to Jane for organising the project. The aim was to seek ideas as to how St Ives might look in another 50 years.

HDC's Local Plan to 2036 is now in place and beginning to influence development 'here and now'. I will talk about the Local Plan together with the various plans being prepared by the Combined Authority after the AGM.

One change brought about partly by the new Local Plan and partly by changing National Policy is illustrated in a recent decision for two additional dwellings in Park Avenue, the appeal was refused because the risk of flooding over the next 100 years is now considered to be a more serious risk than previously. This decision was made in spite of the site being surrounded by existing houses and the design floor level was above the anticipated flood level. The concern with such sites is that, notwithstanding the house would not be flooded, the access to the house would be, consequently emergency services may be called on to rescue occupants, Extra houses would impose extra work on the emergency services and consequently this application was refused.

The St Ives sites included in the draft plan have all made their way into the adopted plan. Since last year a detailed planning application has been submitted for the former car showroom in London Road, this is in progress. This site is in the same flood zone as the site in Park Avenue and the outcome of the application is awaited with interest, not least as the dilapidated buildings are an eyesore.

Any further development sites in St Ives will be additional to the ones in the plan, and consequently will require additional infrastructure, which is not in the plan. One such site is a proposal by Bellway Homes to develop a site described as **East of Houghton Hill Farm**, this is north of Houghton Road and west of the St Ivo Outdoor Centre and the Garner Drive development.

Another site, **Wyton Hill Gardens** seeks to develop part of Wyton Airfield. It proposes 670 dwellings, a care home and a small amount of industrial development. The site only covers part of the airfield because of the access problems on the A141 corridor. Homes England, the organisation charged with selling government owned land for development is behind this scheme. They are supporting a new dual carriageway road from the A141 by Wyton Airfield to the proposed Alconbury Weald Railway Station. This would connect with Alconbury Weald's new dual carriageway access from the A141 Huntingdon Northern Bypass. If Homes England's idea comes to fruition the remainder of the airfield would become available for development.

The How, south of Houghton Hill, is a new application for 22 apartment dwellings. Most of the existing buildings will be retained, some new buildings are proposed. HDC made an application to have The How recorded as a Listed Building, Historic England agreed. The applicant had submitted a sympathetic application, they will also now have to satisfy Historic England.

Other notable planning applications or decisions this year include:

Abbey Retail Park is now operating, better known as McDonalds, the site also houses Costa, Subway and Erics. The original application was for four units in three single storey buildings, this was revised to enlarge one building but also insert a small extra unit, There is now a new application to add a further two storey unit. We have raised concerns about this new application, particularly in respect of it being a two storey unit in the area of the site most frequented by foraging bats.

Aldi now have permission for their site opposite the Marsh Harrier, they have undertaken to fund a new traffic light pedestrian and cycle crossing of Needingworth Road.

Cromwell Surgery have received permission for their first floor extension but some details are not yet approved. The Surgery is planning to merge with the Exchange Surgery and to operate from the enlarged building. Maybe it's unfortunate that the Exchange Surgery site was not incorporated into the old **ATS Tyres** site in East Street, but the ATS site is now under construction.

The Society has continued to comment on planning applications. We consider all planning applications before the Town Council and comment on the ones that concern us. We also make comments direct to the District Council.

Sometimes our suggestions are picked up by developers and incorporated into revised applications, one such site is opposite 4-6 Cow and Hare Passage, a proposal to build a terrace of four dwellings with access to their rear gardens. Our suggestion was to provide cycle and bin stores in each rear garden, we hoped this would result in less clutter in the gardens. The idea was acted on and now smart sedum roofed stores are proposed, but these are

now in the front gardens and the block of houses has been moved towards the back of the site. This has allowed a much more conventional house design to be used, which I find is not nearly as attractive as the original design.

The Town Centre continues to thrive, compared with some towns of a similar size there are just a few empty properties. **New Look** closed to be rapidly reopened as a **Mountain Warehouse**. The **Chai Kai** tea bar in Bridge Street closed but has reopened as **Oana's**, they specialise in Transylvanian cakes. **The Oliver Cromwell**, a free house, has been sold to Wells and Co, the new name for Charles Wells, so maybe no longer a Free House!

The **Nat West Bank** and **Robin Hood** both remain unoccupied, the bank's blanked off cash machine hole is another eyesore.

Restaurant Molise in Bridge Street remains empty, the **Rumbles Fish Bar** in the Broadway, **Little Acre Kitchen** in Crown Street and **La Cucina** in Station Road have closed. Was the stress on these recently closed businesses caused by the development of the four outlets in the Abbey retail park? There is no doubt the new outlets have extended opening hours, free parking is adjacent, and you can just drive thru two of them.

Finally, in this rundown of some of the planning issues affecting the town, over 15 months after Morrisons opened, **bus services** have been extended to serve the new store.

We continue to keep in contact with several of the organisations in the town. It seems to be a general case that members of the organisations will volunteer and attend events but given the busy lives so many lead these days not many people are willing to become more involved.

We always welcome new members, our leaflet has a list of the forthcoming season's talks inserted into it. That's one way you can keep up to date, the website is updated whenever a change is made to our plans. Also I prepare a newsletter each month, if we don't have your up to date email address you will not receive it!

You may contact me through the Contact Us page of the website or by email to stives.civic.society@gmail.com , I welcome your feedback.

David Stewart

Chairman.

TREASURER'S REPORT 2018 - 2019

The year's accounts have been independently examined and approved. The Examiner's report and accounts summary follow this report.

The overall result in the year, after the interest on our deposit account of £76 is taken into account, shows a 'loss' of £240 which reflects costs for St Ives 2068 our 50th Anniversary Competition. We have in the year continued our support for Music on the Waits with a donation of £350.

Gift Aid held up well and contributed £297 this year and remains an essential part of our income.

Interest on our deposit account has actually increased this year from £66 last year to £76 this year.

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 at any meeting from Helen Eveleigh or me.

We hold reserves for future expenditure and have £1967 committed to specific projects principally the Slepe Hall Playing Field storyboard and the Church Gate Light. In the year we spent £47 in updating the Remembrance Books.

Basil Belcher

Treasurer

Civic Society of St Ives Statement of Income & Expenditure						
as at 30th April 2019						
Income				Expenditure		
	Year to	Year			Year to	Year
	30/04/19	2018			30/04/19	2018
	£	£			£	£
Subscriptions/Donations	2,290	2,281	Hall Hire		501	182
Slepe Hall Donations			Annual Report		672	732
Visitors	85	60	Speakers		420	350
Memorial Fund			Memorial Fund			
Social Evenings			Social Evenings			
Raffle			Raffle		0	0
Interest			Insurance		151	151
Gift Aid	297	321	Antiquarian Soc Subs		20	20
Heritage Weekend			CPRE Subs		36	36
St Ives 2068			St Ives 2068		558	73
Bequests			Donations/Gifts		350	2,350
Deposit Acc Transfer			Deposit Acc Transfer			
			Administration	38		545
Donations	60	1,028	Postage	35		52
			Phone			
			Travel			
			Web Site		73	48
			Heritage Weekend		220	127
Remembrance Collection			Remembrance Collection		47	
Church Light						
	2,732	3,690			3,048	4,666
Balances from 30th April 2018			Balances as at 30th April 2019			
Current account	5,586		Current account		5,230	
Deposit Account	10,082		Deposit Account		10,157	
Total	15,668		Total		15,387	
Plus						
Surplus for year	-316		add			
Dep. Ac.Transfer + Interest	76		Receipts after Period end		0	
Total	15,427		less			
less			Cheques yet to be presented		0	
2017/18 Payments	40					
	£ 15,387				£ 15,387	

Report to the Trustees & Members of The Civic Society of St Ives, Charity No 257286, on the Accounts for the year ended 30th April 2018 which are set out on the attached.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011(the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- To follow procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
 - a. To keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act

b. To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or

(2) To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: Dianne McGoff Date: 20/5/19

Name Dianne McGoff BSc (Open)
4 Seathwaite, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE29 6NY

MINUTES OF THE 50th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on 19th October 2018, at the Free Church, St Ives.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies have been received from: Julian and Sue Limentani, Paul & Vicky Faupel, Ian and Gilly Jackson, Bob King, Alex Wedderburn, Robin & Annie Waters

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: P Baker

Seconded: J Amaral

Motion passed on show of hands

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.

No matters were raised

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman invited Jane Amaral to give an update on the 50th anniversary competition, Your St Ives '68

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

Whippet Coaches have given notice to cease their C service on the guided busway. When the Morrison's development was approved a requirement was that they contribute to the County Council so that a bus service to the store would be started. It is understood plans are at last being made.

The Aldi application for a new store across the A1123 from Morrison's was considered by HDC's Development Management Committee on Monday and deferred. A recent Highways Department recommendation was that Aldi be required to pay for a new Toucan crossing of the A1123,.

The application to build 14 apartments on the old **ATS Tyres** site in East Street has been approved.

.The **Mick George** application to make changes at their plant in Meadow Lane remains undecided.

The **Cromwell Surgery** application to add a first floor extension is visually

unsatisfactory, and the elevations include some very strange elements. They have now, in supplementary documents, applied for longer hours and more days of working. . HDC's Conservation Officer objected because of the impact on the surrounding grade 2 listed buildings as well as on the Conservation Area generally.

Only because of the work of local residents has it become clear that the garden of number 1 Cromwell Terrace will become an almost enclosed courtyard. The planning officer's report to the development management committee states *"Whilst it is accepted No 1 would still be negatively affected by the proposal, it should be considered this is a town centre location which is characterised by dense development. The proposed overbearing impact is now not considered significant enough for a refusal."*

This application was also considered by the DMC on Monday and again was deferred.

The **Football Club** has finally been successful in its application to have dwellings built on its ground near the Recreation Centre. They have now made an outline application for their new site on Somersham Road.

Bellway Homes have made an outline application to build 325 homes on a site described as **East of Houghton Hill Farm**. This is from the Sawtry Way junction, and north of Houghton Road to the Garner Drive development. I've no doubt the homes are much needed, but the infrastructure problems are not being dealt with. This site is additional to the proposed Local Plan that I spoke about after last year's AGM.

Last year, after the AGM, I spoke about the development of the Local Plan, and also the new search for additional sites to satisfy the Government's call for more sites. The Local Plan has now reached the examination stage.

Less than a month ago the Combined Authority launched "a bold, innovative and ambitious housing strategy for an additional 100,000 homes and 40,000 affordable homes by 2037". I'm honestly not at all clear what this means. Are we to expect 100,000 homes in total or 140,000? Are these homes additional to those planned in the various district local plans? In which case they are truly additional, or are they not? Digging into the strategy I could only find a total of 76,852 sites, so yes I'm not at all clear about what is planned.

I recognise many of the site names, so the houses are not as additional as first indicated.

The strategy plans to bolt these new homes onto existing settlements, there is no new town or towns planned. Consequently it's likely more towns will suffer from the same sort of problems St Ives has now, with a bypass that development has outgrown.

The Combined Authority has several working groups, including one working on the A141 Huntingdon northern bypass route and another on the traffic problems around St Ives, these two have recently been combined into one group. They face some big problems. Rather than a new route for the A141 from Wyton-on-the-Hill across the valley towards Godmanchester it's more likely in my mind that a westerly route towards Spittals will be chosen, shorter, no river bridge required and therefore less costly.

The Chairman invited comments and questions from the floor.

1 Whippet have made losses in the last two years.

2 A third river crossing study has been suggested several times but nothing has been done.

3 The new A14 is coming in ahead of time and under budget.

5. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

The Treasure's Report had been published in the Annual Report.

There were no questions.

Motion to accept Treasure's Report as published.

Proposed: Margaret King.

6. **RESOLUTIONS**

To appoint Ms. Dianne McGoff, BSc, ACIB, as independent accounts examiner until the conclusion of the 2019 Annual General Meeting.

Proposed: Colin Saunderson.

Seconded: Peter Whatnell.

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.

Vice Chairman Peter Whatnell.

Treasurer Basil Belcher.

Motion to appoint these nominees as officers for 2018-19

Proposed: Colin Saunderson.

Seconded: Peter Baker

Motion passed on a show of hands

The following Committee members are standing for re-election:

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

Motion to appoint these nominees for 2018-19.

Proposed: Norman Head

Seconded: Bill Harrison

Motion passed on a show of hands.

Peter Newbold missed the deadline for submitting his nomination form, due to being out of the country. As permitted by the Constitution, it is our intention to co-opt him to the Committee.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman advised that the Committee are presently considering our annual membership fees. They are £7 for a single member and £12 for a household. The new fees being considered are £10 for a single member and £15 for a household. The new fees would apply from next September.

The increases are quite large, but this would be the first increase since 2011 and we would hope to maintain the fee without further change for a good few years again.

The Chairman invited comments and feedback on the proposal. None were raised.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8:15pm.

*After the AGM the Chairman asked our guest the
Rt Hon Jonathan Djanogly MP to address the meeting*

JONATHAN DJANOGLY MP

Jonathan became MP for the Huntingdonshire Constituency in 2001. For some years we have kept him informed of our activities by forwarding a copy of our Annual Report to him as well as advising him of our concerns. For instance: to ensure the Heritage lighting in the centre of St Ives was not removed and replaced by ordinary street lights and before that to secure the Listing by Historic England of the Cross of Remembrance.

He was very supportive of our appeals to refurbish the names and clean the stonework of the Cross and also for the Books of Honour and Remembrance. I have met with Jonathan and found he has a close interest in St Ives as well as the wider constituency.

As this annual general meeting marked the 50th Anniversary year we invited Jonathan to speak after the meeting, he congratulated the Society on its work over the years. Tying this to our initial efforts to ensure the original route of the bypass was changed, he told us he had recently been taken on a tour of the A14 Huntingdon Southern Bypass works. He was impressed at the progress already made and that the works were on time and under budget. Jonathan also mentioned the rail and road proposals for the Cambridge-Oxford corridor, of which the new route for the A428 between Caxton Gibbet and the Black Cat Roundabout form part.

Despite the ferment in Parliament, Jonathan maintains his interest in the town, he is aware of the pressures new housing and industry have brought to the local area, and whilst welcoming the opportunities for housing and jobs offered in Alconbury Weald and Northstowe recognises improvements in infrastructure are necessary in St Ives

CIVIC SOCIETY of ST. IVES
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
18th October 2019
AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 50th 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 30 April 2019.
7. Resolutions.
8. Election of Officers and Committee.
9. Any Other Business, including:
 - a. Appointment of an accounts examiner for 2019-2020

Resolutions:

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

SUMMARY OF TALKS 2018 - 2019

The opening talk of the 2018/2019 season was given by Bridget Flanagan.

HOUGHTON GRANGE

In 1897 the Home Farm of Houghton Hill estate comprised of a farmhouse and around 38 acres of land. It was sold to Harold and Edith Coote by the estate of Mary Ansley. Harold Coote was Deputy Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire and was a partner in the well known local firm of coal merchants Coote and Warren suppliers by appointment to the royal household. The Coote's commissioned James Ransome to design for them a house to be known as Houghton Grange.

The resulting Mansion was planned along Elizabethan lines and was so sited that it had excellent views over the idyllic pastoral valley of the Great Ouse. It was to be approached along a 300 yard long avenue of limes. A lodge cottage (the West Lodge) was built at the junction with the road. A cottage on the east side was erected four years later. The driveway itself was made by digging out the soil to a depth of one foot, packing the trench with coal replacing the soil and then firing the coal. The surface thus created remained maintenance free for at least fifty years.

Over the next few years the estate was to take in several parcels of land bordering on the river. The eastern and western limits of the estate were marked by the planting of rows of conifers.

In 1920 the house was sold to Mr H Perkins a market gardener. He added to the stocks of trees and plants many of which still survive today. By now the gardens required 6 gardeners to maintain them. They were also needed for 2000 sq. ft. of glass under which were grown grapes, cucumbers, melons, peaches etc. along with 7 acres of plum orchards, three acres of flowers, two acres of mixed plums and apples, espaliered walks, a walled vegetable garden along with strawberry and asparagus beds.

The house was up for sale again in 1932, the price being £7,500. This time it was purchased by Mrs Gregory. She and her husband were both physicians, he practising in Harley Street. They already owned the nearby Houghton Hill Farm, Hiam Farm and Wiggin Hill Farm. The Gregorys had hoped to develop the Houghton Grange as some sort of health hydro or treatment centre. The Cambridge architect A L McMullen produced several designs for this development in 1935. However fate intervened and with the coming of war in 1939 all that came to pass was the construction of a squash court and a swimming pool. The government then required the estate as a centre for food production and the staff on the estate were increased by the allocation of some women's land army and also eventually some prisoners of war.

With the ending of the hostilities the Gregory's did not bother to amend their plans for the treatment centre and the property, together with Houghton Hill Farm and Hiam Farm was put up for sale in 1947.

The eventual purchaser of this 1000 acre estate was Veterinary Educational Trust. Later to change its name to Animal Health Trust. The price paid was £80,000 of which £20,000 was the original Grange estate plus an adjacent 40 acre field which also included what is known as the Bird Sanctuary. It was the intention of the Animal Health Trust to use the estate as a centre for scientific research and two institutions were set up in 1948. These were the Poultry Research Station and the Farm Livestock Research Station headed by Dr Bob Gordon and Professor William Miller respectively. Because of financial constraints the poultry enterprise developed considerably more rapidly than the farm animal station and soon much of the land of Houghton Grange had been set aside for rearing various breeds of chickens and turkeys.

From 1948 to 1959 the house suffered various humiliations. Parts were converted into flats for scientists, a library, laboratories etc. In 1959 it retained some of its former glory when it became the admin centre for the Houghton Poultry Research Station. The Animal Health Trust had sold its interests in the research station to the Agricultural Research Council. A further consequence of the change of ownership was that the Farm Livestock Research Station moved to Billericay.

The house was restored in 1959 but suffered when it had attached to it a purpose built laboratory wing. This was repeated in 1969 when a second wing was added

The two lodge cottages were listed by the Department of the Environment in 1982 as buildings of architectural interest.

In the mid 1990s there was a government proposal to establish a British Academy of Sports on the site, it reached the final short list but was not chosen. Also due to a change of Government policy the Academy was never built anywhere.

At the end of the 90s the building was placed on the Buildings at Risk Register but nearly 30 years later still stands empty, slipping further into disrepair.

In recent years there have been a number of outline planning permissions to develop the site for extensive housing schemes.

*On Friday 16 November 2018 Michael Knight talked about
Milestones in Huntingdonshire.*

Michael Knight is a member of the Milestone Society and has contributed to their newsletters as well as being local representative for Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire. He illustrated his talk using acetates shown on an overhead projector. He told us this was partly because many of his originals were made as acetates and do not transfer well to a newer computer.

In St Ives there is a fine obelisk milepost at Republic Cottage, Stock's Bridge. This is on the corner of Needingworth Road and Somersham Road. It is listed Grade II and is also an Ancient Monument. It is recorded as made of Ketton stone and lists the distances to Somersham, Chatteris, March and Wisbech on one face, London and Ely on another. Earith is also listed but the distance is not shown. Pointed fingers are cut into the stone to show the direction to take. Photographs show it was restored in 2007. There is a similar stone obelisk just beyond the Windmill pub in Somersham.

In contrast most milestones are much simpler, in Huntingdonshire around 70 milestones have been recorded and entered in the Milestone Society's records. Unfortunately some have been lost, road works are a major cause. In 1940 all sign posts and milestones had to be removed, to help confuse the enemy. Some were buried where they had been located, others moved to the local highways depot. After the war not all were replaced.

Whilst many milestones were erected by order of Parliament. In the various Turnpike Road Acts there are examples of older milestones. The Romans used them, and some still exist, but none are known in Huntingdonshire. In Cambridgeshire milestones on the coach route to London were erected after 1725, some years



before the road became a Turnpike. Naturally Turnpikes were not liked, they were Toll Roads, we still don't like tolls today. Creation of Turnpikes reached a peak between 1751 and 1771, there were over 300 Acts.

The Bury to Stratton Turnpike Trust was founded in 1755. Bury is just south of Ramsey and Stratton was a hamlet on the Great North Road, to the south east of Biggleswade. The road is now mainly the B1040 and it passed through St Ives on the New Bridges. Many of the milestones indicated on old OS maps can not now be found, but the stone against the low wall to the Work House (now Limes Park) on London Road is still in place.

Old Ordnance Survey 6 inch maps are an excellent source of information about the locations of stones, not only the location but the names and distances. However, detailed information on these maps was not often revised. Sometimes stones had been removed but remain recorded on later map issues.

As well as using stone many distance markers are made in other materials. Cast iron is probably the most common. On the demise of the Turnpike Trusts Highways surveyors took over their maintenance. It is now very difficult to be precise about the age of a stone but there is no doubt in Michael Knight's mind that the study of milestones is very rewarding and their importance in the improvement of the road network must not be ignored.

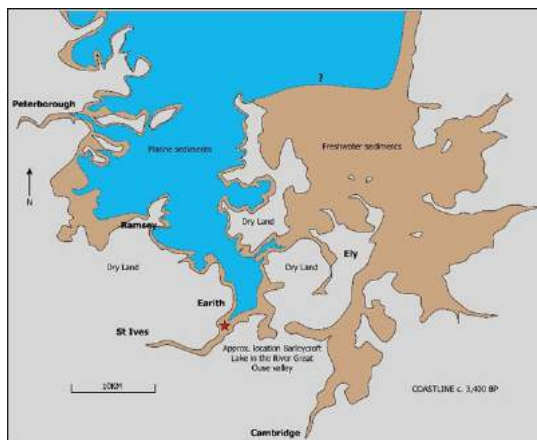
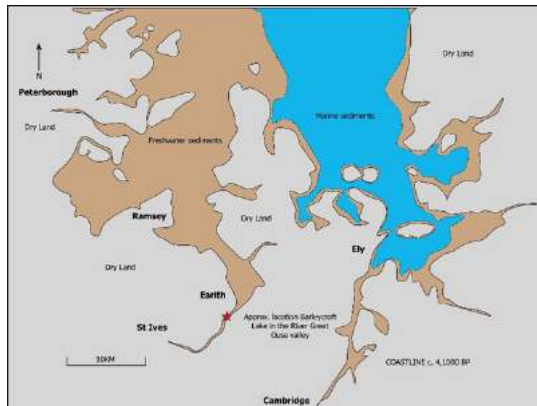
On 18th January Dr Pat Doody spoke about the Fen Edge Trail

THE FEN EDGE TRAIL

Over the last two million years (The Quaternary) there have been eight major periods when the global climate alternated between cold (glacial) and warm (interglacial) periods. The cooling climate caused polar ice sheets to expand and sea levels to fall. A warming climate caused the ice to melt and sea levels to rise.

The last ice age, the Devensian, ended about 20,000 years ago, marking the beginning of the most recent interglacial (Holocene). At first this rise in sea level was rapid but slowed as the volume of ice decreased. About 6-7,000 years ago, global sea levels were near their present position and the coastline roughly where it is today. However, in southeast England other forces came into play. During the glacial maximum the weight of ice in the north depressed the land surface, causing the land further south to bulge upwards. With the release of this pressure as the ice sheets melted the 'bulge' began to subside. This subsidence was particularly marked in southeast England. Thus, in Fenland a continuing but slowing rise in sea level was augmented by a sinking land surface. By about 4,000 years ago the sea reached its maximum

inland extent roughly in the vicinity of the present day 5m contour. Interpreting this ancient landscape forms part of the Cambridgeshire Geological Society's 'Fen Edge Trail'. The aim of this Landscape Heritage project is to create a walking route around the edge of the Fens in Cambridgeshire (guided by the 5m contour) highlighting the links between geology, landscape, soils, wildlife, human history and culture.



The position of the coastal margin depended on the balance between the rate of sea level rise and the extent to which impeded drainage created freshwater conditions and with it, peat formation. The figures show the approximate maximum inland limits of the shoreline during the Holocene. The figures come from a detailed report "Flandrian Environmental Change in Fenland" by Martyn Waller (1994). Note that this is highly simplified and hides complex interactions. Landward or seaward progression of the coastal/marine environment may change over periods as short as 100 years depending on the relative rise or fall in sea level. The River Great Ouse, particularly between Earith and St

Ives, provides an excellent opportunity to interpret the nature of these long-term changes.

[Trail guides for the route between Earith and St Ives are in preparation.]

Some of the features that will be included are:

Drainage of the Fens. The walk begins at the southern end of the Ouse Washes. The Old Bedford River and the Forty Foot Drain (also known as Vermuyden's Drain) allowed drainage of some 40,000 acres by 1652;

The Civil War fieldwork known as The Bulwark is amongst the most elaborate fortifications in England to have survived from the Civil War;

In 1813 Bluntisham cum Earith had a Bandy team unbeaten for 100 years or so it says on the plaque near a village pond in Earith;

Churches and other buildings provide additional information relating to the geology of the area;

Bluntisham Manor was the home of Dorothy L Sayers writer and creator of the aristocratic detective Lord Peter Wimsey;

At several points the route joins existing Long Distance Footpaths (LDF) such as the Pathfinder Way near the White Swan, Bluntisham, the Rothschild Way and the Greenwich Meridian Trail;

The path crosses the Great Eastern Railway which in August 1862 included the Ely to St Ives branch, which crossed Berry Fen;

The meadows along the valley, once rich in wildflowers, have been subject to considerable change since the second World War. Some species-rich examples survive as nature reserves;

The route reaches the Ouse Fen at the Hanson/RSPB project to create a major wildlife wetland with significant ornithological interest;

For the Fen Edge Trail, most walks are designed and described by individuals with a special interest in a particular area. The project is undertaken in collaboration with local organisations also working to research and promote the interest along the Fen Edge. If the Civic Society is interested contact Chris Donnelly on info@cambsgeology.org.

The river valley between Earith and Needingworth is rich in wildlife including waterfowl in gravel pits, dragonflies and a few surviving herb-rich meadows, such as Houghton Meadows.



Herb-rich ancient meadows



Some of the waterfowl that can be see in our gravel pits

More information can be obtained by emailing jp.doody@ntlworld.com
Or visiting the website www.fenedgetrail.org

On 15th February we listened to Alan Butler giving a talk about his 15 years with Oliver Cromwell.

MY FIFTEEN YEARS WITH OLIVER CROMWELL

My 15 years with Oliver Cromwell began in 2000 when I was appointed museum assistant at the Cromwell Museum, Huntingdon. So these are some of my reflections during that time with some History thrown in for good measure!

Some background – the Museum was opened on October 19th., 1962 by the Speaker of the House of Commons, Sir Harry Hylton Foster Q.C. In terms of numbers, 3000 had visited in the first eight days, 50,000 by January 1965 and the half million a few years ago.

Among the initial benefactors were the Rt Hon Isaac Foot, Trustees of the Museum of London, Keeper of Public Records, Master of Armouries of the Tower of London and the Cromwell Association. More locally the Corporation of Huntingdon and Godmanchester gave grants of money. Descendants of Cromwell were most generous in giving or lending possessions treasured by their forebears, particularly the Cromwell-Bush, the female line.

The idea of the museum was conceived by Dr.E.B.Pauley who did the original catalogue. The aim was summarised in what today would be called the Mission Statement, 'to commemorate this remarkable man, both reviled and revered in his own time and ever since'.

The building had started life sometime in the 1100s as St. John's Hospital, hospital as in hospitality for the weary traveller, rather than associated with doctors and nurses.

The building escaped the Dissolution as it was owned by the town but by 1565 it was part demolished as being under-used, the part retained starting life as Huntingdon Grammar School. Both Oliver and Samuel Pepys attended Huntingdon Grammar School but many years apart. Did they ever meet? That I could not find out although Pepys did attend Cromwell's State Funeral.

However, Oliver may not recognise the present building as his school. For many years a dull metallic plaque in a dark corner intrigued me with an inscription indicating a train crash at Abbots Ripton in 1876. Among the dozen or so fatalities was Willie Boucicault the son of Dion Boucicault an accomplished playwright. Father, although grieving for his son, was so impressed by the manner in which Huntingdon dealt with the tragedy that he not only had Willie buried in the town cemetery he donated money to the town. At the time the building was in danger of subsidence, it was taken down, re-erected and to my knowledge has not sunk since!

The building remained an annex to the main Grammar School until the school

/continued on p 29

OPEN MEETINGS 2019 – 2020

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

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 20th September 2019 | Dr Pat Doody: The natural history of the River Great Ouse Meadows. |
| 18th October 2019 | Annual General Meeting.
Followed by: St Ives, a view of the future. |
| 15th November 2019 | Stuart Orme: What did they teach you in history at school? |
| 17th January 2020 | Dr Mike Osborne: The Civil War in the Fens. |
| 21st February 2020 | Martin Lines: Hope Farm — a nature friendly farm owned by the RSPB. |
| 20th March 2020 | John Gibson: Motor Bike Rider Volunteers — Emergency Blood Transporters. |
| 17th April 2020 | Speaker to be advised: Farmland Museum, Denny Abbey. |
| 15th May 2020 | Mike Petty: Cambridgeshire History, on your laptop or from the Record Office & Museums. |

Visit our website www.stivescivic.org.uk for programme changes.



Civic Society of St Ives

Registered under the Charities Act 1960, No.257266



Membership Secretary, Civic Society of St Ives, 88, Warren Road, St Ives, Cambs, PE27 5NN

BANK STANDING ORDER

To: The Manager,.....Bank PLC

.....
.....

Sort Code: Account No.....

Account Name:

Payee Details

Please pay to :- **Barclays Bank PLC, The Pavement, St Ives, Cambs, PE27 5AQ**

Sort code: **20-43-63**

Account No.: **60247839**

Account Name: **Civic Society of St Ives.**

Payment Reference: (Your surname & initials)

Now and on 1st September each year until further notice the sum of £.....

.....(figures and words)

Please cancel all previous banker's orders to this account

Dated.....day of20.....

Signature

Name

Address

.....

.....

.....



Civic Society of St Ives

Registered under the Charities Act 1960, No. 257286



www.stivescivic.org.uk

Formed in 1968 the Civic Society of St Ives has cared for the town since. The Society engages with its members and local government to promote high standards of planning and architecture for the future, as well as conserving the best from the past of St Ives and the surrounding area. With your help we can continue to inform its people of local issues regarding environment, transport, flooding and planning; act as consultees for town, district and county council proposals to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic and public interest in our local area.

We would love to welcome you as a member.

Household Subscription: £12.00 per year - Individual Subscription: £7.00 per year

I/We would like to join the Civic Society of St Ives

Mr/Mrs/Ms		First Names	
Family Name			
Address			
Post Code		Tel Number	
E Mail			

Please make cheques payable to The Civic Society of St Ives and return it with this form to

The Membership Secretary, Civic Society of St Ives, 88, Warren Road, St Ives, Cambs, PE27 5NN

If preferred a standing order form can be obtained from our website

We can claim up to 25% more on your subscription from the HMRC via **GIFT AID**

In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £_____ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference

Please notify the Civic Society of St Ives if you - want to cancel this declaration - change your name or home address - no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

The information you have provided will be stored on a computer and used exclusively for managing your membership of the Society it will not be disclosed or released to any other organisation. A copy of our Security & Privacy Policy is on our website. We will send you email and postal mail about our meetings, news about St Ives and other activities of the Civic Society

By completing this form you agree to this.

moved to Brampton Road, although during World War II it quickly became a part-time school for evacuee children.

When at the museum it wasn't long before I realised Oliver's name could have been otherwise.. Years before Oliver, Katharine Cromwell, sister of Thomas Cromwell, married Morgan Williams from Wales, so by the convention of the time they should have been Mr and Mrs. Williams. However the Cromwell name was taken for advantages of privilege, land and money. Although, later, Thomas's bad advice to Henry VIII gave the Cromwell name a bad press it was retained and eventually along came Oliver.

There have been many stories about Oliver and the first one I came across was in the museum in the Oliver Cromwell Ladybird book featuring two stories of Oliver's boyhood at Hinchingsbrooke House. The future King Charles was a visitor and he and Oliver both indulged in a scrap which Oliver won. Unsurprising, as there was a near two year's difference in their age, which counts a lot when three or four years old, Charles was a quite sickly youngster while Oliver was probably a more than healthy country lad. A few years earlier when Oliver was a babe in arms, a pet monkey supposedly grabbed Oliver and took him on to the roof accompanied no doubt to screams and shouts from below. Oliver was returned to terra firma safely, otherwise you would not be listening to me.....

It's fair to say that there are not many hints of a smile among the several dozen images of Cromwell. Such lack of levity could well be credited to a man accused by some to have been responsible for the banning of mince pies and cancellation of Christmas. From early November I would be fed up with these comments and asked the curator, John Goldsmith for some appropriate comments. He made these in the 'About Town' magazine to the effect that following the Church of Scotland banning Christmas as early as the 1560s as there was no scriptural basis for Christmas – it was Popish, pagan and profane – Parliament eventually followed in the 1640s. Cromwell almost certainly would have agreed as would thousands of other devout Protestants. Perhaps he gets the blame befitting a 'dour Puritan' image.

Of course I have met many visitors over the 15 years. Sitting at the desk is as interesting as you wish to make it , and you can soon find out if someone wishes to converse or not. Some are so keen that they will walk past the CLOSED sign and ask if the museum is OPEN.!

A black American came in and said " I'm Oliver Cromwell "to which I replied " Which one ? . " It turned out that way back his ancestors were slaves in Senegal. One did not toe the line – a brave act for which the slave master nick-named him Oliver Cromwell. When the family eventually reached America the tradition became that the first male in each generation was named Oliver Cromwell.

It is sometimes said in Huntingdon that Royalty would not come to Huntingdon because of what Oliver was part of in the trial and execution of Charles I. However, in 2005 Princess Anne came as part of the Town Charter Celebrations. Her police minder on a pre-visit indicated a visit of just ten minutes which actually turned out to be nearer 25 minutes. When she entered the museum, to prove I was a gentleman I wore a tie and opened the door for her. To prove she was a lady she said a gracious " Thank you "and she had a Visitor's Book to herself.....no cutbacks then !

Visitors' comments have been varied and constructive over the years but this conversation was along different lines:

" Did Mr Cromwell set the museum up " ?

"No....."

" Oh so someone set it up for him ! Does he get in often ?

" No Madam, he's dead"

" That's a shame. Do his children get in at all ?"

"No, they too are dead"

" Oh my, what about his grandchildren ? "

" No, also deceased "

"Was there a great tragedy ?"

This was an American lady – she was fun – and also asked at one point if Oliver had painted some of the pictures.!

An occasional historical mis-match was a visitor who observed that this Cromwell was not Thomas Cromwell, although this comment did give the opportunity to enlarge on the family tree connection.

A national figure who visited was Peter Bowles whose relative had attended the school and Peter was appearing in a theatre production in Cambridge.

In fact I should have started a separate visitors' book for those who had attended the school as evacuees, notably Highbury Hill School for Girls.

One man who visited recalled as a boy he had had a good war because there was part-time schooling and when he should have come in the morning he attended in the afternoon (and was sent away) and vice-versa !

It was always interesting comparing overseas visitors' comments on Oliver. I have discussed Ashes cricket with Aussie visitors, football with historically minded Walsall F.C. supporters but a group of Irish students came in making somewhat derogatory jokey anti-Cromwell remarks but then on the way out put money in the donations box !

One grey winter's afternoon I looked outside to see blue and white 'Do Not Cross' Police tape behind the museum. A bomb scare alert was in operation but the officer I eventually spoke to indicated, observing the thickness of the walls, that I would have been safe. However I noted that I would have suffered from the flying glass !

Some paranormal groups have tried, late at night, to clarify or otherwise The Ghost of Oliver Cromwell. To my knowledge there was little evidence, although after the visit of one group the alarms misbehaved and lights in a display cabinet mysteriously flickered on and off !

When on holidays with my wife we invariably encountered the Oliver connection, the furthest north being making landfall in the Orkneys, the first street being named after Cromwell in Gaelic and in English.

Much further south The Parish Church of Falmouth that of ' King Charles the Martyr', was situated almost unfeelingly next to 'The King's Head' pub.

Local Huntingdon pub, 'The Lord Protector', at one time offered a ' 5-a-day' breakfast for £14.99 – 5 Bacon, 5 eggs, 5 sausages etc to be eaten within 45 minutes – with a one cup of tea allowance – which successfully completed would result in the person's name being entered on the Wall of Fame and the reimbursement of the £14.99, while a no doubt valiant unsuccessful attempt was entered on the Wall of Shame!

Various nicknames of Oliver were mentioned depending on one's allegiance, for example ' The Almighty Nose, The Blasphemer, The Imposter, The Town Bull of Ely, King Oliver, Copper Nosed Saint, The Great Independent, The Brewer, A Glorious Villain '.

More recently the most popular names, according to the Office for National Statistics, for boys and girls have prominently featured Oliver and Olivia, Oliver being most popular since 2013 and Olivia since 2016.

Noting the venue for this talk, Oliver Cromwell's Statue, and the lack of one in Huntingdon has been of comment to visitors. Having clarified the lack of Huntingdon's enthusiasm counteracted by the opposite in St. Ives, I often mentioned that Cromwell's posterior is pointing towards Huntingdon while his finger is pointing towards Cambridge – or the car park machine ' Have you paid ? '

At the first proposal to erect a Cromwell statue in St.Ives, a poem by Rev Paxton Hood was penned in 1848. The first few verses concluded with variations on

'To the leader of the " good old cause", the Farmer of St.Ives.'

Cromwell in the news ranged from a T.V. Antiques related programme which featured a Newark Siege Coin being valued at £2,500 (at the time a facsimile available for £2.45 in the museum !) to the Daily Mirror telephoning me requesting a Cromwell image. Intrigued I bought the said newspaper to be confronted with 'The father of our democracy or a WAR CRIMINAL?' ... which goes somewhat beyond the often quoted 'Hero or Villain?' format.

In national newspapers you would expect Political news and views.

Daily Telegraph. April 11th 2005.

New Labour and the New Model Army could be on the way out. Tony Blair could be about to suffer the fate of Oliver Cromwell, another reformer who promised a glorious start but failed to deliver.

The Guardian, the same month, had a contrast, where there was an article about an Anglo Saxon bowl missing from the Society of Antiquaries' Collection. 'The Society has form on losing things. Cromwell's Wart, once the pride of the Museum, has not been seen since a long dead secretary took to wearing it as a watch fob'.

The sports pages may not be a likely home for Oliver Cromwell. However, The Guardian, once reported that 'Liverpool's forwards were compared to Prince Rupert's Cavalry while Spurs' defence was likened to Cromwell's Model Army'.

The Sunday Telegraph of September 26th 2004 compared Oliver Cromwell to Jose Mourinho in terms of ' the same self doubt and joke telling qualities '.

My favourite national media comes from Radio 4, May 22nd 2006, - ' I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue '.

'What If History' is always interesting.

Q. What question, if asked, may have altered History ?

A. Charles I to Oliver Cromwell – 'May we have an orderly transition?'

In conclusion, the Cromwell Museum, having had an initial threat of closure, is now thriving under a Trust with Stuart Orme as the Curator with over fifty volunteers covering not only reception but education, marketing and general publicity.

On the 15th March 2019 Christine Adams gave us a fascinating talk on her Aunt May Alice Savidge.

MISS SAVIDGE MOVES HER HOUSE



Christine currently lives in what was her Aunt's 15th century house, Ware Hall, in Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk but when her Aunt, May Savidge, bought the house it was situated in Ware, Hertfordshire.

May Savidge was a remarkable woman. She was born in South London in 1911. Her family was poor and the early death of her father meant that her education was limited. Leaving school around the age of 16 May found work at a wallpaper design studio drawing patterns. She never married but planned to do so with an actor 30 years her senior. He died and May never fully recovered from the loss.

The outbreak of the Second World War saw May moved to Blackpool with her employer. Wanting to be more actively involved in supporting her country, in 1941 she applied to the Ministry of Aircraft Production and was employed in the drawing office of De Havilland working on the development of the Mosquito and becoming one of the first female engineering draughtsmen in the country. It was this appointment that brought May to Ware. Housing was in short supply in 1945 and May bought a dilapidated Thames water bus which she moored in the River Lee at Ware alongside the Saracens Head Pub and converted into a habitable house boat. The house boat was not big enough

for all her possessions so she rented a workshop to take the excess. In 1947 the workshop was put up for sale along with the adjoining cottage. Although in need of work May obviously thought it worth renovating as she bought it and thus became the owner of 1 Monkey Row, Ware.

Initially, with the roof and drains replaced/repared by a builder, the cottage was let whilst May continued to live on the houseboat. Letting proved to be an error as her tenants were unreliable with the rent and difficult to evict. Finally on the 11th November 1949 May was able to move into 1, Monkey Row and sell the house boat that had been leaking badly for some time. May spent the next three years renovating and decorating the cottage herself. Then in December 1953 the local council began to claim that the cottage was not fit for habitation and should be demolished to facilitate the construction of a relief road. Undaunted she enlisted the help of local societies and Press to start the battle to save 1 Monkey Row which continued for 15 years. Now working for ICI May, accepting the inevitability of 'progress', made an offer to the council to demolish the house and re-erect it elsewhere. Several locations were considered for the relocation but finally Norfolk was chosen and a plot in Wells next the Sea purchased together with a second hand caravan. Planning permission was granted and Ware Hall House hit the headlines the 1967 Daily Mirror reporting:-

"FIFTY SIX YEAR OLD spinster May Savidge is moving house - every 500 year old oak beam and inglenook of it. She says she is going to knock down her pre Tudor home and move it to a new site 100 miles away - ALL BY HERSELF. Then she is going to rebuild it - again all by herself....."

1968 was taken up with preparations for the move. May contacted both the RAF and the USAF with a view to airlifting the frame of the building to Norfolk. Both informed her that this was not possible so she set about arranging for the careful dismantling of the building by making detailed drawings of the house and individually numbering each timber. Bricks and tiles did not need identifying separately but rubbings of the laying pattern were taken for replication at the Wells site. The house was surrounded by scaffolding and then carefully taken apart by a demolition contractor personally supervised at all times by May. All the while she continued to live in the house until forced to move into the workshop when the outside walls were finally dismantled. It took 11 lorry loads to get the dismantled parts to Wells each load personally overseen. All of this taking place during the 1969/70 winter months with May refusing to leave the house/demolition site unattended. A builder had been employed to prepare the site in Wells installing foundations and drainage. February 1970 saw heavy snow, freezing fog and hard frosts. May, her cat and dog living in the workshop (shed) though the winter.

June 1970 saw the move to Wells finally complete and having only just celebrated her 59th birthday May embarked on the final phase of the Ware Hall

House project. Her determination to do as much of the reconstruction work herself was a major factor in determining the pace of progress. Calling on help from local fishermen for heavy lifting progress was slow. The site in Wells was adequate for the building footprint and a small garden but not for the stacks of reclaimed timber bricks tiles etc. And there was no space to sort and lay them out. Access was via a 4ft gate down a narrow lane and even narrower alley so new materials when needed had to be carried into the site.

Christine Adams visited her Aunt regularly and in the spring of 1973, two years into the erection, with May claiming to have made a lot of progress the site still looked little different. Progress was laying out the timbers adjacent to their respective walls de-nailing all the other beams and restacking them. Christine's offer of help was once again refused. Although concerned for her Aunt work took Christine and her family to Scotland for the next two years. It was not until 1976 that she was able to visit again to find scaffolding up the main timber frame erected and brickwork started, but progressing fitfully as May had been let down by her bricklayer and was laying bricks herself.

1977 saw the roof finally started but the house was still far from complete .The early 1980s saw some parts habitable but now every available space was stacked with May's possessions as the firm storing them had closed down making progress even more difficult. Interest in the project had grown and there had been and continued to be a number of newspaper articles and TV reports. By 1985 it was becoming clear that progress had stalled with May 'camping' in the great hall her time seemingly being taken up by minor repairs and caring for her dog. Cold winters combined with a lack of proper heating and a house that wasn't weathertight were taking their toll but not dampening her determination. The summer of 1991 saw a milestone reached when most but not all the windows were finally glazed twenty one years after the rebuilding had started and January 1992 saw the installation of a Rayburn the first proper form of heating. May's health was failing and in 1993 at the age of 81 she died.

But May's determination to rebuild Ware Hall House was reflected in her will which left her house in trust to her nephew on the proviso that the project was completed and then passed to his children on his death which is how Christine Adams comes to be residing in the house. Motivated by her Aunt's single minded devotion to the house Christine took on the task of completing its construction. A huge amount of work remained to be completed not least the clearing /sorting of the huge amount of stuff that May had accumulated over the years. She had hoarded everything that might have a future use with her favoured filing for correspondence being between the sheets of the Radio Times. Some of the accumulation had value and the sale of it helped finance the completion.

The 'Radio Times' archive also allowed Christine to derive the extraordinary life of her Aunt and write May's biography 'Miss Savidge Moves Her House' the publishing of which added to the rebuilding fund.

Our meeting in April was cancelled at very short notice. The Free Church was undergoing plumbing work.

On Friday 17 May 2019 Robert Burton talked to us about The Stanpoint Tractor and the Antarctic Connection.

THE STANPOINT TRACTOR AND THE ANTARCTIC CONNECTION

In his introduction the Chairman apologised for the early adverts for the talk being for Standpoint Tractor, rather than Stanpoint. Standen Caterpillar Tractors were manufactured in St Ives by F. A. Standen and The Chairman had found only one piece of information about the subject of Robert Burton's talk and that had misled him.

Robert Burton agreed there is very little information, that's one reason why he was so intrigued when he came across this story. After university training in zoology he took a job with the British Antarctic Survey. Initially he worked in the South Orkney Islands. Since then he has made many extended visits to Antarctica, taking part in expeditions as well as working in the Arctic.

Knowing he lived near St Ives, a colleague told him of some film found on YouTube that might interest him. The film was of a tractor with caterpillar tracks being driven around in soft snow in Finse, Norway, but the interesting thing was the name on the side of the Tractor, Stanpoint - St Ives Hunts England. Why was a tractor from St Ives being filmed in Norway?



Standens had grown out of a blacksmith business and had a factory between London Road and the old railway line on the south side of the river. They manufactured agricultural equipment.

One of the films, all from British Pathé had the title 'For the next Antarctic Expedition' so the film reports seemed to be of an evaluation or practice prior to use. Some films were very short, under 2 minutes. One was longer, around 10 minutes, it seems to Robert that this was the full film, before cutting for the short newsreel items.

Finse is a small settlement at the highest point (over 4,000ft) on the Oslo to Bergen railway, it was therefore accessible and was a good location to test equipment for use in the polar regions. He told us the films show the tractor being driven off the flatbed cargo carrier onto the platform. Other sequences showed the radiator being filled and the tractor towing sledges with passengers. In others the soft snow slopes were too steep for the tractor.

As Bob continued his research he found a report of the trials in the November 1925 papers of the Royal Geographical Society. The trials were held in March 1925. However, he has not yet found evidence the tractors were used in the Polar regions.

Notes:

The films, all with the title 'For the next Antarctic AKA The next Antarctical (1925)' can be found on the British Pathé website, (search for Finse), and also on YouTube, (search Finse, Norway Tractor test 1925 or enter <https://youtu.be/FDCXfzpAj5c> for a film of outtakes)

Twentieth Century St Ives (Bob Burn-Murdoch 2001 - The Friends of the Norris Museum) has a photograph, on page 30, of the Hunstanton Lifeboat being towed by a Standen Caterpillar Tractor. The text states that in 1927 the Standen Caterpillar tractor was adopted by the The Royal National Lifeboat Institution for launching lifeboats over sandy or muddy beaches. Tractors were tested for this work by being driven into the river Great Ouse from outside the factory.

SIR GEORGE CAYLEY, 6TH BARONET (1773 – 1857)

In Robert Burton's talk he spoke of Sir George Cayley, how he admired him and thought he should be as well-known as Isambard Kingdom Brunel, so for those members without an engineering background an article about him seemed appropriate.

Sir George was an English engineer, inventor, and aviator and one of the most important people in the history of aeronautics, many considering him to be the first true scientific aerial investigator and the first person to understand the underlying principles and forces of flight. From Brompton-by-Sawdon near Scarborough he showed great ability in science from a young age so was taken out of school to be tutored specifically in such interests.

In 1799, Cayley set forth the concept of the modern aeroplane as a fixed-wing flying machine with separate systems for lift, propulsion and control. He was a pioneer of aeronautical engineering and is sometimes referred to as the father of aviation, discovering and identifying the four forces which act on a heavier-than-air flying vehicle: weight, lift, drag and thrust. Modern aeroplane design is based on those discoveries and on the importance of cambered wings, also identified by Cayley.

He constructed the first flying model aeroplane and also diagrammed the elements of vertical flight. He designed the first glider reliably reported to carry a human aloft and correctly predicted that sustained flight would not occur until a lightweight engine was developed to provide adequate thrust and lift. The Wright brothers acknowledged his importance to the development of aviation.

Cayley helped found the UK's first Polytechnic Institute, the Royal Polytechnic Institution (now University of Westminster) and served as its chairman for many years and was a founding member of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

Captured by the optimism of the times, he engaged in a wide variety of engineering projects from self-righting lifeboats, tension-spoke wheels, automatic signals for railway crossings, seat belts, small scale helicopters, and a kind of prototypical internal combustion engine fuelled by gunpowder. He suggested that a more practical engine might be made using gaseous vapours rather than gunpowder, thus foreseeing the modern internal combustion engine. He also contributed in the fields of prosthetics, air engines, electricity, theatre architecture, ballistics, optics and land reclamation, and held the belief that these advancements should be freely available.

According to the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, George Cayley was the inventor of the hot air engine in 1807: "The first successfully working hot air engine was Cayley's, in which much ingenuity was displayed in overcoming practical difficulties arising from the high working temperature." His second hot air engine of 1837 was a forerunner of the internal combustion engine: "In 1837, Sir George Cayley, Bart., Assoc. Inst. C.E., applied the products of combustion from closed furnaces, so that they should act directly upon a piston in a cylinder.

He is mainly remembered for his pioneering studies and experiments with flying machines, including the working, piloted glider that he designed and built. He wrote a landmark three-part treatise titled "On Aerial Navigation" (1809–1810), which was published in Nicholson's Journal of Natural Philosophy, Chemistry and the Arts. The 2007 discovery of sketches in Cayley's school notebooks (held in the archive of the Royal Aeronautical Soci-

ety Library) revealed that even as a school-boy Cayley was developing his ideas on the theories of flight. It has been claimed that these images indicate that Cayley identified the principle of a lift-generating inclined plane as early as 1792. To measure the drag on objects at different speeds and angles of attack, he later built a "whirling-arm apparatus", a development of earlier work in ballistics and air resistance. He also experimented with rotating wing sections of various forms in the stairwells at his home at Brompton Hall

The model glider successfully flown by Cayley in 1804 had the layout of a modern aircraft, with a kite-shaped wing towards the front and an adjustable tailplane at the back consisting of horizontal stabilisers and a vertical fin. A movable weight allowed adjustment of the model's centre of gravity. Around 1843 he was the first to suggest the idea for a convertiplane, an idea which was published in a paper written that same year. At some time before 1849 he designed and built a biplane in which an unknown ten-year-old boy flew. Later, with the continued assistance of his grandson George John Cayley and his resident engineer Thomas Vick, he developed a larger scale glider (also probably fitted with "flappers") which flew across Brompton Dale in front of Wydale Hall in 1853. The first adult aviator has been claimed to be either Cayley's coachman, footman or butler:



Replica of Cayley's glider at the Yorkshire Air Museum

It was for Sir George Cayley's invention of the "Universal Railway" – his term for caterpillar tractors – that was mentioned during the talk, as we saw the Stanpoint caterpillar tractor in the Antarctic. It is thought by many that this invention was new in World War I when the tank was introduced to the battlefields, but it was well over 70 years old. Perhaps our speaker was right – we should know the name of Sir George Cayley a lot better.

Your St Ives '68

How do you celebrate being 50? Do you moan that things are not as they used to be or do you embrace the fact that you still have plenty of years to enjoy life?

In 2017, aware of our approaching bicentenary, we racked our brains to think of a suitable event, something which could involve everyone, was not weather dependent, was more than a one day event and most importantly looked to the future. With that in mind *Your St Ives '68* was conceived, asking the question, "What do you think St Ives will look like in 50 years time, in 2068?".

To give everyone a chance to show their creativity there were four categories, eight age groups and entries could be from individuals or groups. It was open to everyone, no restrictions, not a test of ability, absolutely free and with plenty of time to dream, speculate and create an image of St Ives in 2068.

In July 2017, fourteen local primary schools and the St Ivo school were sent information about the upcoming competition which would start in September 2017. The idea of the advance notice was that, hopefully, they would include it in the curriculum in the Autumn term. September 2017 and all the schools received the details: categories, maximum sizes and age groups from infants to school leavers. Plenty of time to think and create as the competition ended in September 2018.

From October 2017 through to June 2018 poetry groups, reading groups, gardening groups, gardeners, Scouts, painters, photographers, Councillors, friends, Civic Society members and the general public were all invited to give some thought to how St Ives would look in 2068 and to put their thoughts forward in their chosen format.

Newspaper articles were submitted - acknowledged but not printed. Local magazines and papers printed pieces, posters were all over the place and updated, promises were made - some were kept some were not. Schools were sent updates and encouraging emails with offers of a short visit to talk about *Your St Ives '68* - none accepted.

We had entries from one Infant school, one junior school and the general public. All the Primary school entries were created by students who were between 7 and 9 years of age at the beginning of 2018. It was obvious that all the entries had been given a great deal of thought, time and effort.

Now to the really fun part of *Your St Ives '68*, the categories and entries!

The four ways to enter were:

1. Written - maximum 1000 words e.g. prose, poetry, horror, humour, sci fi.
2. 2D - maximum size A3 e.g. painting, collage, mixed media, sketch, photography.
3. 3D - maximum size A2 e.g. plaster, play dough, Lego, papier mache, wood, clay.
4. Video - maximum 5 minutes e.g. spoken, animated, sung, acted.

With the permission of the creators here are a few samples from some of the entries.

The written word took us from 1894 Victorian Music Hall to 2068 St Ives.

With thanks to lyricist Edgar Bateman and composer George Le Brunn, a slight adaptation of their 1894 song "If it Wasn't for the 'Ouses in Between".

*Oh it really is a werry pretty garden
And Holywell to the Eastward could be seen
Wiv a ladder and some glasses
You could see the Marsh Harrier
If it wasn't for the 'ouses in between.*

*Oh it really is a werry pretty garden
And the industrial Estate from the 'ouse-tops could be seen
If I got a rope and pulley
I'd enjoy the breeze more fully
If it wasn't for the 'ouses in between.*

And thanks to the Riverporter we have a future front page article dated 24th August 2068

"Rising sea levels bring a new opportunity for Historic St Ives"

Over 50 years ago the disgraced ex-president Donald Trump refused to sign up to the world climate change initiative and the resulting world-wide confusion has lead to continuing rising sea levels. The threat to low-lying countryside, especially here in the East Anglian Fenlands, has been an on-going challenge with huge unsustainable costs to councils.

St Ives council have decided to take a different approach to the problem.

Rather than continue to construct larger and larger water defences some of those defences are to be removed to allow the river to take over some of the town centre streets.

This astonishing idea will transform the river-side areas into a 'Bruges-style' environment.

A junior entrant gave us an acrostic poem, Fifty Years Time. The 2nd verse is:

Yesterday's rubbish recycled to make our paths

Exciting news..chapel Bridge will be extended

And made into a massive Sweetie shop

Record number of children playing sport

St Ives town will still be beautiful

Two dimensional entries gave life to the written word and our younger entrants were also very much aware that climate change might create a very different St Ives in 2068.

NOTE: Photographs of the numbered entries below can be seen on pages 44 - 48.

1. Changes to the Great Ouse create a beach beneath the Chapel on the Bridge.
2. This entry gives us numerous interesting suggestions e.g.
 - *Eco houses may be built on Hemingford Meadow but have to be on stilts to help in case of future floods.*
 - *A flood defence will be built so that flood water can be used to make electricity to power the town.*
 - *The Free Church will become an "area of all religions" where people can worship together, in peace and harmony.*
 - *Oliver Cromwell will stay to represent our towns history.*
 - *There will be a state of the art recycling centre near the guided bus route.*

Adult entries gave us computer generated photographs, sketches, fine detailed artwork and were just as inventive as the children's pieces

3. Could this be Hemingford Meadow 2068?

4. This entry shows that we can retain the charm of the town whilst embracing change. There is an area for lorries to unload deliveries to electric trucks for delivery before 9.00 am. This maintains pedestrian areas and prevents blocked roads.

From a trilogy of delightfully decorated poetry, part of the “Pessimist” view:

*What is still a lovely town
is very soon going to drown
The meadows are flooded most of the year,
Extinction, not Brexit is what people fear.*

*The bees were gone in two thousand forty-eight,
The banning of pesticides came far too late.
The Guided Bus is still struggling along.
but with water levels rising will soon be gone.*

5. We must be watchful and heed the warning.

A three dimensional entry was a harder task but our youngsters didn't let us down.

6. Pupils at the Infant school created these colourful bridges and swirling rivers.

7. “*I don't think it will change much in x 50 years not much changes*” Who knows? (my apologies for the tag).

The final category, Video, provides very enjoyable viewing. On You Tube “Max our town in the future” and “Flo presents St Ives 2068” (you really MUST view this!) gives you plenty to consider, including the hunt for buried treasure.

At the beginning of September 2018 the entries were displayed and judged in the Free Church, then were on display at the Norris Museum for thirteen days

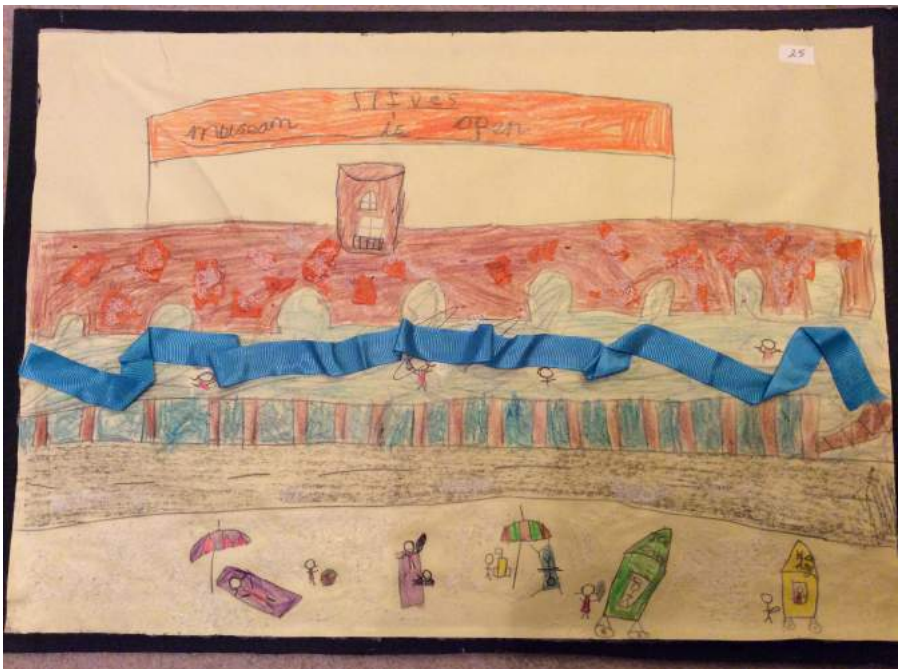
In October 2018, the creators of the winning entries in the adult age group received a Certificate; there were only two as they were not brave enough to tackle 3D or Video. The two schools involved were visited and all the children who had created an entry were presented with a Certificate, thanking them for taking part.

What will St Ives look like in 50 years time? *Your St Ives '68* has given us some ideas. The entries were fantastic. Some pieces were highly imaginative, a few science fiction but with the speed of change we see today maybe these science fiction entries will be 2068 reality! Some were very personal, others hopeful, a few resigned to less than pleasing change, some embracing change. The common denominator was our charming town. From the entries the overwhelming feeling was one of hope, that people young and old care about St Ives and enjoy living here now and will in the future. There is the natural positivity and enthusiasm from the young and the natural cynicism, sometimes wisdom, from those who have had years dealing with bureaucracy. With the best will in the world the warning to "Beware of poor planning, Politicians and Developers" is one we should not ignore.

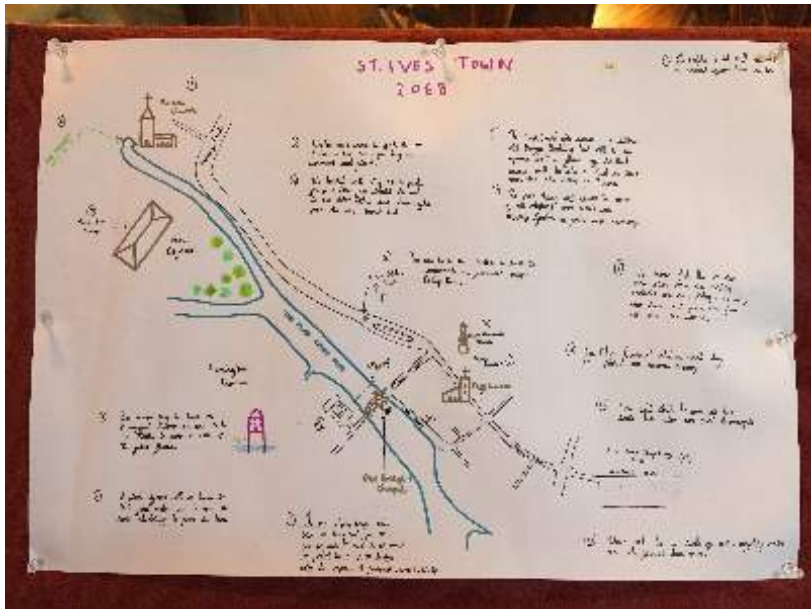
Overall, in spite of the disappointing number of entries, the positivity of our younger generation should give us hope for the future of St Ives.

Will members of the Civic Society of St Ives read this in the Archives and shake their heads in dismay or nod in agreement with our foresight?

ENTRY 1



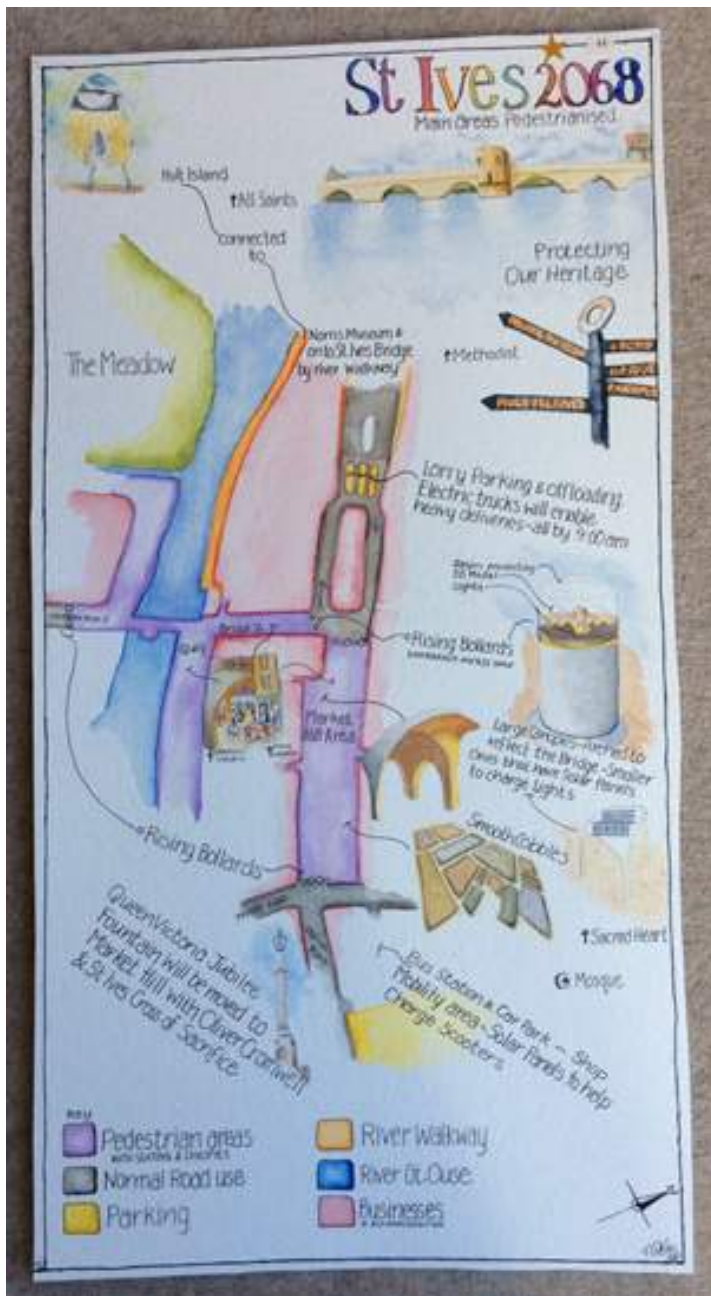
ENTRY 2



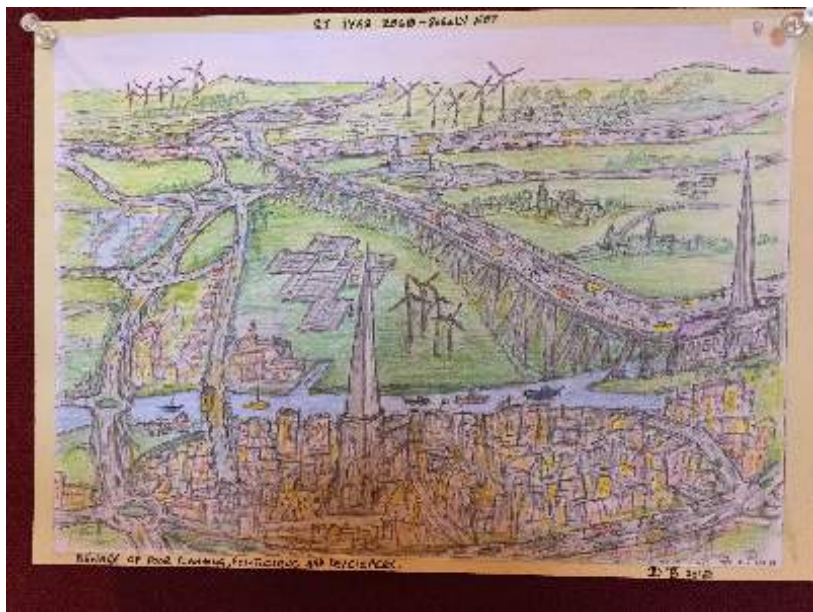
ENTRY 3



ENTRY 4



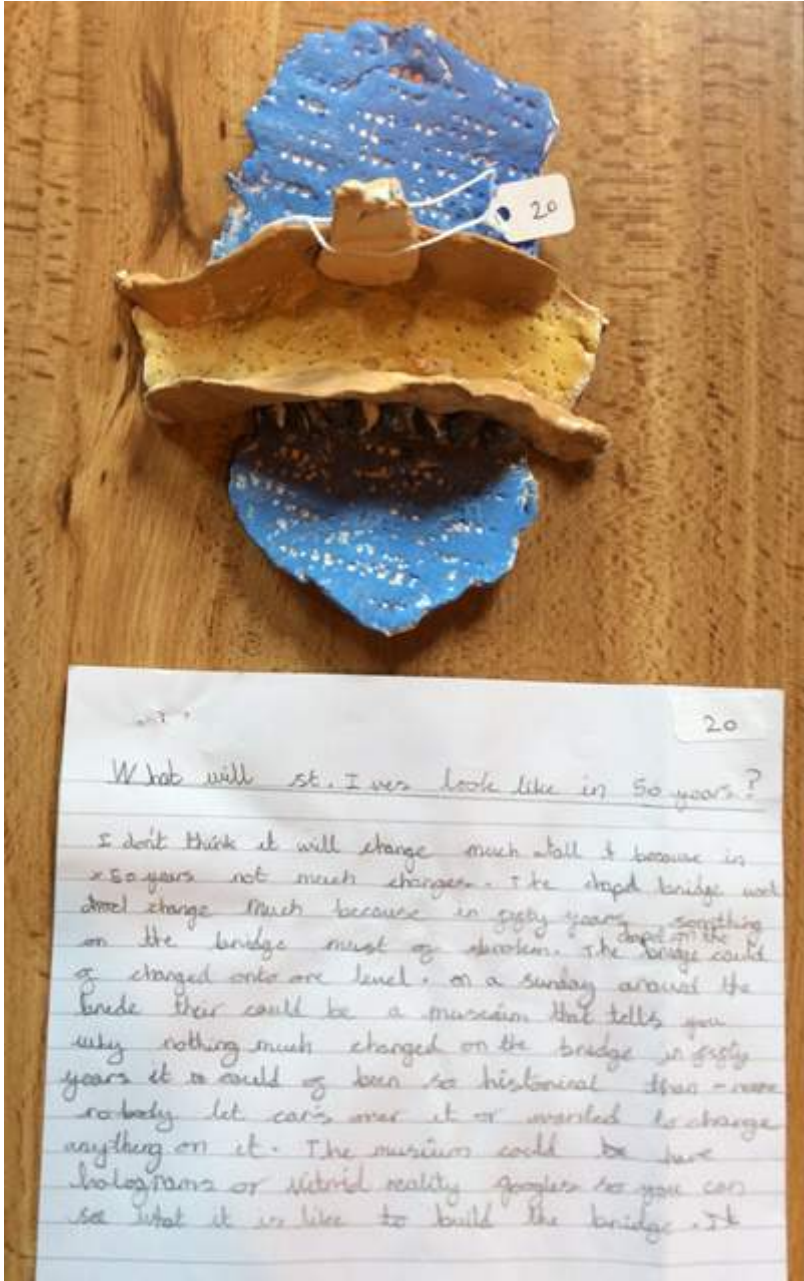
ENTRY 5



ENTRY 6



ENTRY 7



A WALK IN PORTHOLME MEADOW

During his talk to us on the Fen Edge Trail in January, Dr Pat Doody showed a slide of fritillaries in flower on Portholme meadow. The image led to our asking Pat to lead a summer time walk around the meadow to describe its history, flora and fauna.

The walk was arranged for Sunday 2nd June. This date was chosen as later in the month the river flood plain meadow is cut for hay by the owners. Before Enclosure the meadow was unenclosed Common Land. After Enclosure the land was sold in small areas but the management of the meadow continued and remained unfenced. The area now is a rare example of a traditionally managed water meadow and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest as well as being recognised internationally as a Special Area of Conservation.

The 2nd of June was a dry, sunny but breezy day. The meeting point was Huntingdon's Mill Common access to the meadow. We walked towards Brampton and continued towards Godmanchester Lock, before returning to Mill Common.

On the way Pat explained the meadow's history as well as the flora and fauna. Not long after commencing he pointed out a depression in the ground. The explanation is that from around 1910 to the 1930's Portholme was a centre for flying displays and a short lived aircraft manufacturing site. The depression was the result of digging out the ground to allow taller aircraft to be housed in a hanger that had been built when aircraft were smaller.

For around 200 years Portholme was used for annual horse races. The location of the site of the stand, which was built on stilts, can just be made out.

Some areas of the meadow have a greater variety of grass and herb species than others. Small changes in the soil type or level can be responsible. The traditional single cut for hay, followed by a short period of grazing continues. However, harvesting practises are changing, nowadays the hay is cut by machine and modern machines cut much closer to the ground. This is thought to be responsible for a reduction in the numbers of ground nesting birds.

Whilst the walk is an easy 2 mile stroll Dr Doody made it into a very interesting eye opener to the detail that can be seen if only we know what we are looking at.

MORE ON 37 THE BROADWAY

In the Annual Report of 2017 there was an article about 37 The Broadway, taken from notes provided by the last owner, the late Jenny Smithers, in which the Dellar family is mentioned who ran a wool-stapling and fellmongering business from their home at No. 37.

As a result we have since received further information from John Dellar who hasn't lived in St Ives for many years but thought we would like to add further to our interest in local people and places.

The 1881 census shows George Dellar, aged 18 living in Cow & Hare Yard and employed as a fellmonger's labourer; he was later joined by his younger brother, William, and together they bought the business at No. 37 some time after 1906; John says the business closed in the late 1930s but the family remained there. He visited often so remembers the house well, including a small trap-door in the floor of one of the rooms to check the water level below! The 1947 floods required a move upstairs for three weeks.

The family boat was moored under the river wall and in later years was used to ferry the dog to run about on Hemingford Meadow, not too close to the hostile swans nesting at the end of the Holt (not yet called Holt Island), and John's father remembered otter hunting, as well as being kept awake by corn-crakes on the meadow. How times have changed.

John's grandfather once fell backwards out of the door of the working building and cracked his skull when the string broke as he was baling wool. He recovered thanks to Dr Teddy Rose, a highly-regarded GP, who was as likely to leave half-a-crown as to charge for his services to the poor.

Sometime in the 1960s changes were made to the defunct buildings, the lime and washing pits were filled with rubble and a garden made. The last time John was at No.37 before it was sold he remembers netting gudgeon in the shallow water.

More reminiscences from John Dellar:

John's grandmother inherited two or three acres of land in Pig Lane on which John's father and his brother raised poultry, pigs and a few goats until World War II put a stop to it; after the War it was let and pig production resumed. Following John's grandmother's death in 1958 an application was submitted to build on the land, but this was refused on the grounds that it couldn't be built on. This caused considerable delay in the settling of the Estate. However, the land was then compulsorily purchased, the policy changed, and the police station was built on the land!

John's Uncle Len lived at 1 Paragon Road, where he enjoyed the excellent view in the summer of cricket on what was then the town cricket ground (now Slepe Hall Playing Field). After the sale of the land in Pig Lane Len used his legacy to build a bungalow next to his house, which became 1a Paragon Road, although not before unnecessary objections to the positioning of the front door!

Many members will remember George Dellar living there, almost the last of the Dellar family in St Ives.



No's 1 & 1A Paragon Road

The front cover photo shows the river at St Ives looking upstream towards Holt island. This beautiful photo was taken by a drone hovering over the river near the bridge.

Photo by courtesy of XCopters Aerial Media.

XCOPTERS AERIAL MEDIA is a St Ives based drone aerial photography and video company. Drones offer a view of the world never before seen without movie style budgets. Their multi-rotor drones can operate up to 400ft giving a unique view of the world from above. Thanks once again to Dave Brooks for allowing us to use the cover photograph. For more information visit his website:

<http://www.xcopters.co.uk/>

*Published by the Civic Society of St Ives © 2019
Registered under the Charities Act 1960 (No 257286)*

Printed by The Artworks 01487 842687 E-mail: artworks@sundial.co.uk