

Swansea based photo journalist

LIZ BARRY visits St. Ives - a Cornish Idyll



Don't feed the gulls!

'Don't feed the gulls!' So the signs say in bold letters dotted on lamp posts and railings around the harbour of St Ives. Believe me they need no encouragement to whisk an ice cream cone out of the clenched hands of a little girl, tears rolling over her chubby cheeks, rosy red with indignation, her family roaring with laughter as the gull makes off with its bounty. But no sea-side resort would be the same without them.

Inspiring

St Ives is a family resort with a touch of panache, a mix which makes it one of Cornwall's tourist hot spots. There is a special clarity to the light here, deep blue see-through skies, that has inspired artists to create a haven and become home to a host of galleries, studios and craft shops.

The tidal sandy bottomed harbour is a working port; at low tide lines of rusty chains tether the colourful fishing boats to bright spherical red and green buoys. Children paddle with their nets searching in this world beneath the sea for shrimp, anemones and a crafty crab crawling through the weed.



Boats in the harbour



Brightly coloured buoys



St. Ives harbour and town

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Sloop Inn



Medieval Inn

Looking down from the granite quay is the Sloop Inn, one of Cornwall's oldest and most famous hostelries, dating back to around 1312 A.D. Low beams and a slate floor enhance the character of the inn, which is a haunt for locals and visitors throughout the year. If you are fortunate enough to bag a seat at one of the wooden benches on the cobbled forecourt you can sample locally caught fresh fish and shell fish washed down with local ale.

Shops and Caffe

Away from the harbour, cobbled streets wind their way past rows of fishermen's cottages and one or two steeper inclines such as Bunkers Hill. There are plenty of shops to explore: Cath Kidson with her unique floral designs, the St Ives Chocolate shop stocking handmade bars of Kernow chocolate made on the windswept north coast..... and quite a few Tea shops as no trip would be complete without a Cornish cream tea, a chunky scone oozing strawberry jam and a mountain of clotted cream.

Don't forget the pasty shops, an accepted Cornish creation. As the tradition goes it is said to have been the lunch for Cornish tin miners unable to return to the surface to eat. They would hold the pasty by the folded crust, eat the filling without touching it, then discard the dirty pastry, thus appeasing the knockers who were the spirits of the mines, who might otherwise lead the miners to danger.



Floral design shop



Bunkers Hill



Chocolate Shop front



Tea shop

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midnight sleep walk

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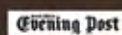
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Portmeor Beach

Surf and Sand

If after indulging too much of the local fare, exercise is in order, you can follow the south west coastal path around the headland for a mile to the hidden gem of Carbis Bay. Along the walk you will pass Porthminster beach, a sheltered half a mile of golden sand with a cafe that has great views and good food. Stretching away from the beach is a lush mini-putting green. There is easy parking and it is a stop on the St Ives branch line.



Glass floats



Front door St Ives

There are several beaches located within St Ives. Porthgidden is a sandy cove, a sun trap which catches the morning light. Porthgidden Cafe is perfect for breakfast.

It also has a small kiosk where you can get fresh coffee--an essential to accompany a good book as you get yourself comfy, relax on the beach and let the warm sand trickle between your toes. For the surfers there is Portmeor beach and open expanse of windswept silky white sand the sea constantly changing to shades of turquoise, blue and green bathed by shimmering light.

Arts for all

Above the beach on the site of the former gas works stands the Tate St Ives, where you can view changing exhibitions of local and national works. Connected to the Tate is the Barbara Hepworth Museum and garden; the sculptress lived and worked in St Ives from 1949 until her death in 1975. As the sun sets, nature paints its own work of art, a palette of vibrant oranges and deep crimson pinks spread across the sky, the salty sea smells wrap you in their wake and the cry of gulls pierces the air.

A gentle breeze warmed by the air of the Gulf Stream creates a sub tropical location and St Ives becomes the holiday destination of your dreams.



Surfing the deep blue sea



Low tide St Ives



Willow fish pot being made