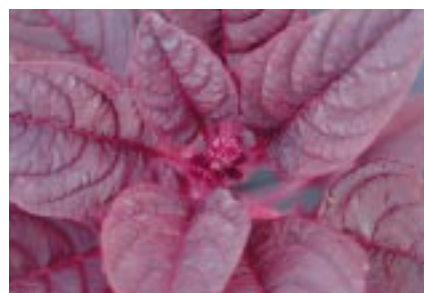
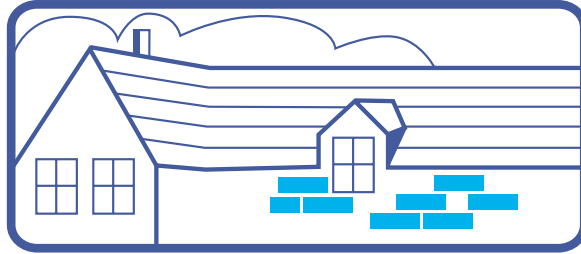


SOHAM TOWN FORUM





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*at The **Blue Shed Studio***

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DUAL CUTBACKS

Plans to make the final stretch of the A11 dual carriage way are looking increasingly uncertain. The project, to dual a nine-mile stretch between Thetford and Barton Mills, was one of the region's top election issues last month.

But new doubts over the project, which will cost between £106 million and £147 million, have been raised after the Government said its funding would be assessed in UK-wide spending review.

It means no decision on the long-awaited scheme will be taken until the autumn at the earliest.

The findings of planning inspector Neil Taylor, who oversaw the A11 public inquiry, have been sent to the Government although nothing from the report, including any recommendations, have been disclosed.

A Department for Transport spokesman said: *"The Government has made clear its most urgent priority is to tackle the UK's record budget deficit to restore confidence in the economy and support the recovery. As part of its plan to eliminate the bulk of the deficit over the course of this parliament, it will undertake a full spending review, reporting in the autumn.*

"The Department for Transport will play a full part in that process. Once the spending review is completed, the department will be in a position to identify those major transport schemes that it can support, consistent with the Government's objectives."

A £1.3 billion upgrade of the A14 already faces an uncertain future after a public inquiry was postponed indefinitely because of doubts about funding.

ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME CLAMP DOWN

East Cambs District Council

A bid to clamp down on fly-tipping, graffiti and other 'environmental crime' will be launched this week as the district council prepares to put its seal of approval on new enforcement guidelines. They are being introduced in response to a reported rise in incidents of environmental crime in the district.

It is hoped the new rules will allow the council to take a tougher stance with offenders.

Liz Knox, head of environmental services, said: *"It is important that the council tackles issues such as fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles and graffiti before they blight an area. Left unchecked, what seem like minor problems can escalate, blighting areas and causing more fundamental issues for the local community.*

Complaints of increased levels of fly-tipping and graffiti led the council to employ a 'clean neighbourhoods enforcement officer' for a two-year period starting in April last year.

After a brief consultation period between December 2009 and January 2010 the document was formally drafted and submitted for consideration.

The guidelines aim to set out what legal action the council is entitled to take against offenders, including issuing warnings, fixed penalties and even ASBOs.

A decision on whether the document will be officially adopted is expected on Thursday 17th June.



A short story by writer and musician - Gary O'Connor

Five men sit waiting in the barbers shop.

Four of them have a lot of hair.

I'm looking at a picture of Nick Caves' new band Grinderman on the cover of a magazine. It lies on the chair next to me. It's upside down. I'd like to have a closer look but I don't want to draw attention to myself by picking it up because the four men to my right bear a striking resemblance to the group in the photograph. They appear not to know each other. The one nearest to me (the Cave look-alike) is reading the Times, not the sort of thing I would expect to find in here, he must have brought it with him. I look at his fingers: thin, pale, perfectly manicured they grip the edges of the broadsheet with authority. The man next to him has very long black hair, he is thinning a little on top and has a huge beard. It must have taken years to grow so much hair. I've kept my hair short for some time now, my girlfriend cuts it for me but this time I just fancy something different. I can't remember when I was last in a barbers shop, they have always made me feel uncomfortable, I think it stems from my childhood. I do remember my father taking me to his. I remember it being so dim in there. It was a mans' place, somewhere no woman would venture. Although I always felt tense in

my fathers company I recall it having a peaceful atmosphere like a place of worship. There was dark wood panelling everywhere and shelves either side of a large mirror in front of a single barbers chair. In my mind I can still see the tins of Brill cream arranged like little pyramids on the shelves. The barber was a short portly gentleman who always wore a white shirt, a black tie and a thin grey jacket- the sort of thing a porter would wear. He had a tortoiseshell comb in his top pocket that he never used. I have a friend who has been going to the same barber now for more than twenty years, he has a very special relationship with the man who cuts his hair and he says the experience has become a kind social ritual, an important part of his life that he could never give up. Well today I have decided to take the plunge. I walked past Tonys' Hair stylists for Gentlemen, several times before plucking up the courage to go in. It has the traditional red and white stripped pole suspended outside the door and grubby net curtains at the windows making it impossible to see what's going on inside. To get a good look I would have needed to push my face right up against the glass. For years I wondered what the red and white pole was all about, than I heard an interesting program on the radio about the history of surgery. It turns out that centuries ago a barber had the

authority to practice minor acts of surgery such as bloodletting, stitching wounds and pulling teeth. The pole is a symbolic reminder of those days. It represents a white bandage wrapped around a bloody limb, quite a fitting place then, to come across a Nick Cave double.

I take my book out of my coat pocket, rest it on my lap and take my time to look around. The shop is small: a row of six chairs along the back wall, the door I came in through is to my left and another marked private on the far right. There are two barbers chairs facing a long counter full of the usual paraphernalia and above this are two large circular mirrors positioned in front of each chair. Opposite me a short elderly man cuts the hair of a teenage boy. He stops now and then, just for a moment or so to look up at a television mounted on the wall by the coat stand to his left. There is a football match on. The picture reception is terrible, he appears to be the only person in the shop who's interested. This must be Tony. At the other chair is a much younger man and judging from the way they address each other, I guess this must be Tonys' son. On his side of the shop hangs a cheap looking electric guitar and a framed black and white photograph of a group of musicians. They look like a 1950s rock 'n' roll band: six young men with quifs and slicked back hair, huddled together posing for the camera. They are all dressed the same in light jackets and black trousers except the man at the centre of the photograph who I presume is the singer. He cuts a striking figure: thin and lean in a white shirt, black shoes and white socks. He stands with legs apart and a huge hollow body guitar swung low in front of him. Cave looks up from his newspaper and catches me staring at the photograph. He smiles. I open my book. The young barber has a bit of a rock 'n' roll hairstyle going on himself. He cuts the hair of an Asian man, they chat as if they know each other well. A shrill wolf-whistle rings out from above my head followed by HELLO- HELLO. I look up to see a parrot in a cage. I'm surprised that I didn't notice it before. Tony brushes the hair away from around the neck of the teenager as he loosens the black cape

tucked into the back of his shirt. At the end of the row a rather nervous looking man folds a copy of the Sun in half and sits forward in anticipation. The boy gets up and follows Tony over to the till, he pulls a ten-pound note out of his pocket and hands it over. In a rasping Italian accent Tony says, 'thank you sir.'

He hands the boy his change, the till snaps shut and the boy leaves. Before the barber has a chance to ask who is next the nervous man is on his feet. Tony smiles politely and with a gentle gesture of the hand invites the man to sit down. He looks so uncomfortable as Tony draws the cape up around his neck. I do my best not to stare at his reflection but I cannot help myself. The man chews his bottom lip and his eyes dart from left to right never settling on a single thing for a moment. Every now and then our eyes meet in the mirror and I quickly return to my book. Tony glides around his customer in silence, sweeping aside the morning's harvest. I look at the hair as he piles it up in a corner: raven black, speckles of blonde and shades of brown, clumped together with white and grey. The sight of this chills me. Tony inspects his tools, he cleans the clippers and sharpens the razor. His sloth like attendance appears to be making things worse for the man in the chair.

'So what can I do for you sir?' Finally Tony speaks. He stands behind his customer with both hands on the man's shoulders and with a sly smile, regards him in the mirror.

'Err... Can you thin it out a little and take a bit of top?'

'Off the ears sir?' Tony runs his fingers through the man's hair.

'Yes... that would be, good,' replies the man hesitantly.

The TV sizzles with white noise. The football players are now nothing but ghosts on the screen. The young barber walks over and turns it off. Tony doesn't seem to mind. His son takes a CD out of its case and slides it into a small CD player beneath the television then returns to his customer, he says

something into the ear of the seated man and they both laugh. Guitar picking and the sound of tapping drumsticks fill the shop, it sits well with the snipping of scissors and the rustle of newspaper. Immediately I feel more at ease: I look over my book at Grinderman, all four men tap their toes in time with the music. The Asian man taps his fingers against the arm of the barbers chair and every now and then Tonys' son steps back and gives a little shake of the hips and a nod of the head, even Tony looks a little lighter on his feet. His customer however does not share the same enthusiasm for rhythm.

The brass bell above the door jingles violently as a rather large man bursts in pursued by the intrusive sound of market traders selling their wares on the square outside. Tony spins on one heel coming to a perfect standstill in front of the man, with both arms out stretched he greets him jovially with a comb in one hand and a cutthroat razor in the other, 'good morning sir, please... take a seat.'

The fat mans' face splits with laughter, 'Ha-ha-Tony me ol-mucker - lookin busy son?'

'Si si, it is a fine day, come in Andy; sit yourself down.'

Andy picks up the magazine from the chair and parks himself between Cave and me. I shunt to my left until I can't go any further, squashed between the till and the big man I have no room to move my elbows, I can barely turn a page. Andy seems oblivious to my discomfort, he huffs and snorts like a gorilla. I can see Grinderman in the mirror, they clutch their newspapers and tap their feet without concern. I rest the book on my lap and become absorbed in the music. The singers' low southern drawl is hypnotic, every now and then it fractures and crackles, each word trembling with emotion. He sings about railroad tracks and trains cutting across the southern states of America, they take his girl away; they bring them back together again. I wonder why trains feature so strongly in his songs? Even the music reminds me of a train, that sound the wheels make as they rattle over the tracks.

The young barber removes the cape from around the neck of his customer who gets to his feet and follows him to the till.

'That's £8 please.'

The till springs open and the man takes a note from his wallet.

'Who's next please?' Tony's son announces.

Cave stands up and folds his newspaper thoughtfully before placing it on his chair. He slowly removes his jacket then glides across the floor towards the coat stand. He turns as if to address an audience. He rolls up his shirt sleeves then with both hands he tugs at his waistcoat and grins. Suddenly the rockabilly rhythm grows more intense, the volume increases and he begins strutting like a chicken around the shop, his head back and his eyes wide, his black winkle picker boots send tufts of hair flying about him. Everyone in the shop starts clapping and stomping their feet in response, it's so infectious I find myself doing the same. Andy's body feels like a huge vibrating jelly next to mine. With out warning he lunges forward convulsing like a man possessed. I watch in amazement as Andy (now on his feet) shakes himself wildly this way and that. Now the whole place erupts and everybody joins in the mayhem: Tony frantically spins his nervous customer around and around, the man clings to the chair with an expression of uncontrollable excitement- he looks as if he is about to pee himself. The rest of Grinderman gyrate with style, grooving and bopping amidst the chaos. Andy lifts me from my chair and starts spinning around, my feet leave the floor and all I can see is his bright pink complexion and a mouth full of gold fillings. I shriek with excitement, his bear like hug is so constricting it's almost painful but the euphoria is unexplainable. Andy drops me to the floor and I start bouncing around like a rabbit with my arms in the air. I can see Tony standing beneath the TV set wriggling his hips and singing into a hair dryer, his customer now lies on the floor laughing uncontrollably with his legs behind his ears. Cave pulls up beside me and gives me a wink then chicken steps towards the till, Tonys' son has taken

the guitar of the wall, he does his best rock 'n' roller impersonation while the Asian man screams and wails like an obsessed fan at his feet. The whole building shakes and shudders: tubs of hair gel skate across shelves, cups of coffee, combs, scissors and hair-trimmers fall to the floor. The bird cage rattles, the macaw shrieks, a clock falls from the wall then the music stops.

The coat stand suddenly comes crashing down on top of the CD player.

Andy gasps for air and falls to his knees. We all watch each other. Everyone looks exhausted. My heart is racing, beads of sweat trickle down my forehead and sting my eyes. Slowly we all make our way back to where we

were. I help Andy to his seat. Tonys' son hangs the guitar on the wall and straightens up the group photograph. The Asian man smiles and pats his friend on the back then raises his hand in a gesture of farewell to the rest of us as he leaves the shop. He is closely followed by the nervous man who doesn't look nervous. Cave is on his hands and knees. He retrieves his copy of the Times from under a radiator, folding it in two he drops it onto the seat next to Andy then makes his way over to the barbers chair where Tonys' son waits with a smile. Tony straightens up the coat stand then sweeps the detritus to one side of the shop. He leans the broom against the wall and wipes his brow with a handkerchief.

'OK,' he shouts, 'who's next please?'

www.elypepeople.co.uk

Community website/twitter



Soham Ghost Walks

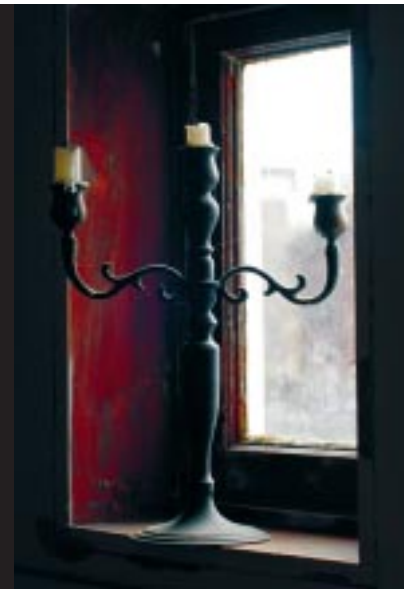
We're now taking bookings for this years walk:

Saturday 30th October

(yes I know Halloween is on Sunday, but even ghosts need a day of rest)

Starts at 8pm from the foot of St Andrews church tower. Walk takes approx 1.5 hours. Five pounds per person and all money raised goes to Soham based charities and organisations.

www.sohamghostwalks.co.uk



SOHAM IN BLOOM



Planting for Soham

If you haven't already noticed, certain areas in Soham seem more colourful than usual these days. This is because Soham in Bloom, a Soham Town Forum based initiative, has begun.

Headed by committee member Rosemary Aitchinson, her team of wonderful volunteers, have single handedly grown and nurtured each plant for you to enjoy.

The beds were planted out by volunteers and some Forum committee members, on a very hot Saturday in late May and took all day to finish. This is the first of many opportunities, I hope, to improve our town however small the start.

If you wish to help with the winter planting scheme, please contact: Chairman Soham Town Forum, c/o Walter Gidney Pavilion, off Fountain Lane, Soham, Ely, Cambs. Or email us at: editor@sohamtf.co.uk

I must also add that the beds were dug and sprayed by a very willing Mr Aitchinson!!! and the weed free matting was supplied by the council.

By: *Elizabeth Johnston - Chairman STF.*



WHATS ON - EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

An online version can be found at: www.sohamtf.co.uk

THE BIG WEEKEND

Parkers Piece - Cambridge.

Friday 9th to Sunday 11th July.

FREE with the exception of fair ground rides.

Three days of non stop entertainment!

Friday - live music and a stunning fireworks display.

Saturday - All day music with Children's Festival Family Fun Day, market, sports and stalls, fun fair, and bar.

Sunday - World music day, tea dance and a traditional Asian Mela with lots of activities in the John Lewis marquees.

HADDENHAM STEAM RALLY

11th and 12th September - Sutton Road, Haddenham.

Traditional steam and country fair featuring over 600 exhibits including: engines, vintage cars, stationary engines, tractors and lorries. Enjoy an old time fair with the steam driven Gallopers and heavy horse show on 12th.

WORLD PEA SHOOTING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Witcham, Village Green - 10th July at 12pm.

The competition starts at 1pm. Also includes novelty games, face painting, draws, cakes bric-a-brac, plants, bouncy castle BBQ etc. Entry two pounds, juniors one pound.

OUT OF TOWN

Events and activities form around the country

National Trust Days Out

Long Melford Hall - Suffolk

Long Melford, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 9AA

Tel: 01787 376395

Children's treasure hunt

Become a spy for the afternoon! The year is 1786, a few years ago Captain Hyde Parker captured a Spanish Galleon full of treasure and sent his share back to England. Now the King of Spain wants it back!

Various dates available, see website for more details: www.nationaltrust.org

Sherringham Park - Norfolk

Visitor Centre, Wood Farm, Upper Sherringham, Norfolk,

NR26 8TL. Tel: 01263 820550.

Bumblebee Workshop

Covering identification and conservation of

these fascinating insects and how to encourage them in your garden with Dr Nick Ownes. Adults only. Various dates available www.nationaltrust.org

Wimpole Hall - Cambs

Arrington, Royston, Cambs, SG8 0BW. Tel: 01223 206000.

Scything Beginners Courses & Smallholders weekends.

Various dates: www.nationaltrust.org

English Heritage Days Out

Audley End - Essex

Audley End House, Nr Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 4JF

Time travellers go World War II

Weds 4th to Sun 8th Aug, 10am to 5pm.

Step back into the 1940's. Learn about aircraft identification, secret codes, signalling systems and take part in an obstacle course and drill.

If you would like to advertise your event or activity here, free of charge, then contact: editor@sohamtf.co.uk

All events are correct at time of publication. Please check nearer the time if event is still going ahead with parties concerned.

BRING OUT THE BBQ



Munchie Mustard Chicken Escalopes

Portions serve 4 people

4 large chicken breast fillets
4 table spoons of olive oil
2 - 3 tablespoons Dijon mustard
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 loaf of ciabatta
1 teaspoon lemon juice
snipped fresh chives to garnish
salt and pepper

For the salad

50g (2oz) baby spinach leaves
1 bunch of watercress, large stalks removed
1/2 small radicchio lettuce
4 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

Method

Place the chicken breast one at a time between 2 large sheets of cling film and beat out gently with a rolling pin until they are about 5mm thick.

Mix 3 tablespoons of the oil with the mustard and the crushed garlic. Brush with some of this mixture over both sides of the chicken. season

with salt and pepper and set to one side.

For the salad, place the prepared leaves into a bowl and lightly toss together. Mix the mayonnaise with the mustard and set a side with the salad.

Cut the ciabatta in half lengthways as if you were going to make a sandwich and then across into 4 chunky pieces. Place cut-side down on the barbecue and leave for a couple of minutes until lightly toasted. Remove and set aside.

Barbecue the chicken over medium-hot coals for about 3 minutes on each side until golden on the outside but still juicy in the centre.

Whisk the rest of the olive oil, lemon juice add some salt and pepper into the remaining mustard mixture. Add to the salad leaves and toss together lightly.

Place a piece of ciabatta on to each plate an another dollop of the mustard mayonnaise and sprinkle with a few snipped chives. Serve.

Please make sure the chicken is thoroughly cooked through before eating. No pink and juices run clear.

CONTRIBUTORS

Soham Town Forum

Features

Gary O'Connor
Elizabeth Johnston

Photographs

EJ Photos - www.ej-photos.co.uk

Disclaimer: All information, dates and events are correct at time of publication. We do not accept responsibility for any changes made there after.



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