

# SOHAM TOWN FORUM

May/June 2010



[www.sohamtf.co.uk](http://www.sohamtf.co.uk)



# Soham Carnival

## & Heavy Horse Show 2010

### 31st May 2010

### 9.00am - 5.00pm

The Recreation Ground, Fountain Lane, Soham



**Heavy Horse Show 9.00am -1.00pm**

Grand Parade of Horse Show Winners 12.00pm-1.00pm

**Carnival Float Parade 1.00pm-1.45pm**

From Townsend through the Town to the Recreation Ground

**Tom Longton Sheepdog Display**

Two Appearances in the Main Arena

**Vintage & Classic Vehicle Show**

(Including Cars, Motorbikes, Vans, Lorries & Tractors)

PLUS Peter Leadbeater Chainsaw Carver

Glenmoriston Pipe Band, Circus Workshops

Children's Entertainment, Fun Fair, Mini Landrovers

Static Birds of Prey Display, Live Music & DJ's

Beer Tent, Food Stalls & Refreshments

Punch & Judy Show and Much, Much More...

Admission: Adults £3.50, Concessions £2.50, Children 50p

Raising money for local charities, organisations and groups

Enter A Carnival Parade Float - Win Cash Prizes & Trophies!

Tel: 01353 624493 [carnival@soham.org.uk](mailto:carnival@soham.org.uk) [www.carnival.soham.org.uk](http://www.carnival.soham.org.uk)

For More Information, Details or Help with Carnival Float Transportation

Tel: 01353 624493 E-Mail: [carnival@soham.org.uk](mailto:carnival@soham.org.uk) Website: [www.carnival.soham.org.uk](http://www.carnival.soham.org.uk)

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To coincide with the warmer weather... we hope, we would like to share two seasonal treats with you

If you wish to submit an article, advertise an event or place an advert within this publication and associated web site, please email: [editor@sohamtf.co.uk](mailto:editor@sohamtf.co.uk)

*NB: Advertising is sold as either a full page (twenty pounds) or half page (fifteen pounds). Price is for two months in our online magazine - visit: [www.sohamtf.co.uk](http://www.sohamtf.co.uk)*

### Playground Face lift

*Soham Recreation Ground*

A 40,000 pound revamp of play equipment on the Recreation Ground could be finished by July. The plans include a new play area and a skateboard park.

Soham Town Councillors approved minutes from March 8th meeting stating that two skate park companies had been consulted and been asked to provide quotations for a concrete skate park. The Council has ambitions to see the current play area equipment refurbished and repaired.

### War Time Soham

*Viva Arts and Community Group*

Nearly 50,000 pounds has been awarded to local charity - Viva Arts and Community Group, to carry out a project on the evacuation of children and adults to the area during the Second World War.

The massive 47,900 pound grant, from The Heritage Lottery Fund, supports projects aimed at preserving and making the country's heritage accessible.

The money will enable Viva to deliver a research project, involving residents, in east Cambridgeshire to focus on the evacuation of pupils and staff from the London Jews Free School to Ely in 1939. Around 4,910 adults and children were sent to Ely and the surrounding areas during this period and residents within the communities were involved in homing the evacuees and making arrangements for their stay.

If you have a local news story, please email us at: [editor@sohamtf.co.uk](mailto:editor@sohamtf.co.uk)

### Masterplan Concerns

*Soham Masterplan/Vision*

Concerns over an increase in traffic and a lack of infrastructure and funding have featured strongly in the initial feedback on the Soham Masterplan/Vision.

In a report released to councillors which summarised the results of a recent public consultation, residents fears regarding more heavy traffic in the town centre and a lack of funding to pay for the ambitious Vision itself featured prominently. However 66% of people questioned supported some of the Vision whilst 24% were either opposed or strongly opposed to it.

Councillor Derek Beckett, said "There are a few problems identified in the feedback and we would accept those and we want to help residents and businesses to work on those. We want to stress though that the plans involved are aspirational at this stage and there is more yet to be done.'

A spokesman for Vision developers Entec, said "There were a number of concerns that came to light regarding the Eastern gateway, but I think the plans are still conceptual at this stage and the finer details of the development will come to light at a later stage".

### STF Hustings

*Soham Town Forum - 15th April*

A huge thank you to all who came along to our recent Hustings. The event was very well attended and feedback has been excellent. Again thank you all.

Elizabeth Johnston  
Chairman STF (Soham Town Forum).

## SOHAM, MARRIAGE AND THE ABOLITIONIST



### Gustavus Vassa...

Perhaps the most famous marriage at St. Andrew's Church, Soham was between Olaudah Equiano (The African) and Susannah Cullen (Spinster of the Parish of Soham) on the 7th April 1792. At the time of their marriage, slavery was still very much in force

Olaudah Equiano otherwise known as Gustavus Vassa was an African slave who gained his freedom and became an activist for the abolition of slavery in the 18th Century. He also wrote a celebrated Autobiography - '*The Interesting Narrative of the life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African 1789*' which is still available to buy to this day.

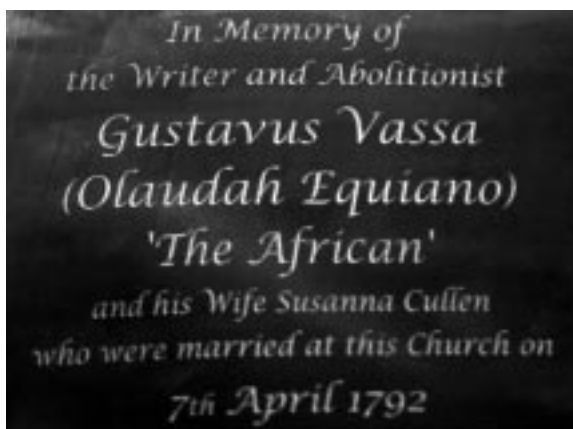
Evidence to suggest that the couple took up residence in Soham comes from the fact that both of their children were born here. He had two daughters Anna Maria Vassa born on 16th October 1793 and was baptised in St. Andrew's Church on 30th January 1794. His second daughter, Joanna Vassa was born on 11th April 1795 and baptised in St. Andrew's

Church on 29th April 1795. Susannah was always thought to have died during Joanna's birth, however, records show that she died a year later, and was buried in Soham as Susanna Vassa, wife of Gustavus the African on 21st February 1796, aged 34.

Gustavus died on 31st March 1797, aged 52, his death occurred in London, but the whereabouts of his burial is unknown. Sadly Anna Maria died a few months later on 21st July 1797, aged just 4 Years and is buried in St. Andrew's Church, Chesterton, Cambridge where there is a commemorative plaque in her memory. Joanna Vassa inherited a sizable estate from her father equivalent to £100,000 in todays money.

She went on to marry the Reverend Henry Bromley and they ran a Congregational Chapel at Clavering near Saffron Walden in Essex, before moving to London in the middle of the nineteenth century. Joanna died in March 1857 at the age of 61 and is buried along with her husband in Abney Park Cemetery in Stoke Newington.

It's not yet known whether Joanna had any children.



Commemorative plaque in St Andrew's Church, Soham.

The Slave Trade was finally abolished on British ships 10 years after the death of Olaudah Equiano, in 1807. It took a further forty years to see the abolition in the British colonies.

This account is only a snapshot of his personal life and connection with our town. His efforts to bring about

the end of slavery and more detail about his life can be found readily within a local publication: Soham at the time of the abolition, the life story of Olaudah Equiano.

*Extracts from information obtained from Soham Community History Museum - [www.sohammuseum.org](http://www.sohammuseum.org)*

*Edited by: Elizabeth Johnston*



# DISCOVER DANCE

*at The Blue Shed Studio*

Classes and workshops for:

- Schools
- After School Clubs
- Creche
- Saturday Club's
- Birthday Parties

...in fact , just about anywhere, for boys and girls aged three and above. Call Denise Beaumont on **01353 722348** or **07821 038007**

## **Melody Movement Early Learning**

**Pre school dance and movement classes with Melody Bear.**

Come and join in with Melody Bear. Our classes are a fun introduction for young children to the world of dance. They promote coordination, physical fitness, agility and early learning curriculum skills.

**[www.melodymovement.com](http://www.melodymovement.com)**

**[www.melodybear.com](http://www.melodybear.com)**

## THE OLD GRAMMER SCHOOL



### Highs and lows of one of our historic buildings...

As an historic building and one with a glorious past that many have used and obtained an education from, you would not expect it to look so derelict and forgotten today.

The foundation of The Boys Grammar School in Soham dates back to 1686, when an award dated April 26th 1686 mentions 116 acres on Soham Moor for the raising of a town stock and revenue for a schoolmaster. By 1706 a schoolhouse had been erected on a 1/4 acre site west of Churchgate Street at its north end.

The original school building, a long one with projecting ends, built of brick and a tiled roof, may have had glazed windows. Included was a dwelling for the schoolmaster, this building was reconstructed in c.1847 to the seven-bayed rear wing, gabled to the north. A four-bayed wing stretching towards the street was then added. It was built in grey brick, partly dressed in red, whose upper floor contained a high schoolroom.

From its earliest period it taught for free. A new scheme of 1878 diverted it towards

providing a more middle-class type of education. It was to take boys from 7 to 15 years of age. Initially 60 day boys and 10 boarders were to be admitted after examination with a preference, that continued in later schemes until 1916, for sons of villagers.

A few scholarships were available after two years attendance. Pupils had to pay fees, more for the boarders, by 1900 the school was restyled as a Grammar School. In 1916 it came under the control of the County Council and became officially known as the Grammar School, taking in free pupils once again. In 1926 the building was sold and the school moved to Beechurst in Sand Street, now part of the Soham Village College today.

The building still stands today and was converted into small shops. It is now used as flats and is but a shadow of it's former glory.

*Text from Soham Roots, edited by:  
Elizabeth Johnston*



Top: The Old grammar School as it is today in a state of decay.  
Image by: ej-photos

Above: School when first opened.

## WHATS ON - EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

An online version can be found at: [www.sohamtf.co.uk](http://www.sohamtf.co.uk)

### SOHAM BEER FESTIVAL

*Soham Staploe Rotary Club*

Yes it's time to force yourself down to the Pavilion and sample the delights of the Soham Beer Festival. We would like to further twist your arm into attending by also offering music and an auction as part of the days activities.

So if you feel the need for something pint sized, cool and sometimes bubbly, please join us on the 19th June.



### GARDEN PARTY

*Soham Community History Museum*

Soham Museum will be holding a Garden Party on Sunday 27th June from 3pm to 5pm at The Hall, Sand Street, Soham.

For more details please check website: [www.sohammuseum.org](http://www.sohammuseum.org)

### SVC Open Day

*Soham Village College*

Soham Village College will be holding an open day offering activities and 'taster' courses on 8th May at Lodeside Hall, for both adults and children. All welcome.

### OUT OF TOWN

*Events and activities form around the country*

#### SALVO Fair 2010

International architectural and garden antiques fair at Knebworth House, Hertfordshire.

25th June - 11am - 1pm Trade only. Tickets fifteen pounds each. Knebworth park, house and gardens closed.

26th to 27th June - 11am to 4pm, Tickets eight pounds per adult and children four years plus. Twenty eight pounds for four person family. Ticket includes entry into Knebworth Park, Dinos adventure playground and gardens. Ticket for house is extra.

Free parking. Tel: 01749 813899 for tickets. [www.knebworthhouse.com](http://www.knebworthhouse.com)

### Cambridge Folk Festival

29th July to 1st August. Tickets available from 16th May at: [www.cambridgefolkfestival.co.uk](http://www.cambridgefolkfestival.co.uk)

This years line up will include: Seasick Steve, Seth Lakeman, The Imagined Village, Sharon Shannon, The Unthanks and the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain. US song writer, actor and Grammy Award winning country music legend Kris Kristofferson will play his only outdoor UK festival at Cherry Hinton Hall. There will also be an exclusive UK summer performance from Natalie Merchant, one of America's most respected singer-songwriters.

### RHS Chelsea Flower Show

25th - 29th May, Royal Hospital, Chelsea, London. Tickets are now on sale via Tel: 0844 338 7524. [www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)

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

## WHATS ON - EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

An online version can be found at: [www.sohamtf.co.uk](http://www.sohamtf.co.uk)

### EVENTS IN BRIEF

The Soham Community History Museum will be having stalls at:

Soham Carnival on 31st May, Recreation Ground and 27th June at the St Andrews Church Fete.

### Soham History Museum - Talks

Heritage Protection - Soham's Listed Buildings - 3rd June - Donna Martin  
Exposures of a Cameraman - 5th August - Vernon Place

Both at 7.30pm at Soham Methodist Hall, Berry croft.

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

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## SUMMER TASTER



### Broccoli with chilli, feta and mint

50ml (2floz) extra virgin olive oil  
1tsp caster sugar  
finely grated zest and juice of 1 unwaxed lemon  
1x 30g pack fresh mint  
2x 200g packs of purple sprouting broccoli  
1x 200g pack feta cheese  
1 large red chilli, thinly sliced and de-seeded

#### Dressing

Put the olive oil, sugar, lemon zest and juice into a bowl and mix well. Finely chop half of the mint and add it to the bowl, then season to taste. Whisk until slightly thickened.

#### Method

Bring a large pan of water to the boil. trim off any tough ends from the broccoli, then blanch it in the boiling water for 2mins. Drain well.

Put it in a bowl and pour over half of the dressing. Toss together to coat all the stems.

remove the remaining mint leaves from their stems. Crumble the feta over the chilli and the mint leaves.

Pour over the remaining dressing and serve.



### Rhubarb and ginger jelly

1x 400g fresh rhubarb  
40g (1 1/2oz) caster sugar  
20g (1oz) fresh root ginger, peeled and grated  
250ml apple and elder flower cordial  
10 leaves gelatin

#### Method

Wash and trim rhubarb, then cut into 2.5cm (1inch) pieces. Put in a heavy bottomed pan with the sugar and grated ginger

In a jug, mix the cordial with 750ml (1 1/4pints) of water. Add 50ml of this mixture to the rhubarb then stew over a medium heat with a lid, for 5 - 8mins.

When the rhubarb is cooked add the rest of the cordial and bring it to the boil

Put the gelatin leaves into a bowl of cold water for 4mins to soften.

Take the rhubarb mixture off the heat. Remove the gelatin from the water, squeeze out any excess liquid and add the gelatin to the mixture. Stir thoroughly for 1 min until the gelatin has melted.

Cool, then ladle into four glasses. Put into the fridge to set for 4 to 6 hours, then serve.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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Soham Town Forum

### *Features*

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Soham Community History Museum  
Soham Roots  
Elizabeth Johnston

### *Photographs*

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EJ Photos - [www.ej-photos.co.uk](http://www.ej-photos.co.uk)  
Soham Roots

*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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