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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 (ten pounds). Price is for two months in magazine and on associated web site: [www.sohamtf.co.uk](http://www.sohamtf.co.uk)*

## SOHAM TOWN FORUM



### who are we - an introduction

Above: The Walter Gidney Pavilion  
Photos by: EJ Photos - [www.ej-photos.co.uk](http://www.ej-photos.co.uk)

Soham Town Forum is well into its eleventh year and still going strong. It was set up as an organisation in June 1998 to give Soham residents an opportunity to learn about and discuss local issues.

Councillors. The Forum was originally set up as an open meeting, and a regular opportunity for Soham residents to discuss local matters with their Town, District and County Councillors.

Founder member and local resident Donna Martin is currently *Chairman*, with Robert Peacock serving as *Vice Chairman*. Other officers are Rosemary Aitchison, *Minutes Secretary* with Maureen Hardingham as *Assistant Secretary*, and Pat Nash, *Treasurer*. The Chairman or a representative of Soham Town Council attends every meeting, as do other Town, District and County



Above: The Fountain Pub and Shops

The relationship with Soham Town Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, and Cambridgeshire County Council is reciprocal and also provides an opportunity for Councillors to discuss local matters with residents and gauge local opinion. It gives residents a real opportunity to make contact with their Councillors and get their views across and make a

difference. Meetings are held approximately every six weeks. The past few meetings have been concerned with topical issues, such as, the installation of brand new community notice boards, the Old Grammar School site, the problems with the Barleyfields development, and improvements to CCTV, amongst other items.

The agenda includes current issues concerning infrastructure and amenities, and local community projects, such as; Soham in Bloom, Soham Railway Station, Community Amenities, Soham Magazine, Soham Masterplan Vision - a project looking towards the future of Soham led by Town and District Councillors, and a proposed event for Soham Lode.

All meetings take place in Hall 1, The Pavilion, Fountain Lane, Soham, and all Soham residents have an open invitation to attend.

Local community groups such as Viva, Soham Allotments and Leisure Gardeners Association, Soham Community History Museum, Soham Festival, Soham Twinning Association and Soham Heritage

and Tourism Group give regular updates to the Forum via a slot for Community Project Updates.

The Forum also maintains an 'any other business' heading on the agenda, which allows for new items and issues to be raised by anyone present. Residents wishing to attend for the first time will be assured of a friendly welcome and an



interesting evening of debate and discussion.

The next meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Thursday 24th September. Following meetings are scheduled for: 22nd October and 26th November 2009. Readers can look forward to brief reports from the forum minutes in future issues of the magazine and online at:

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



Above: St Andrews Church  
Middle: Downfields Windmill  
Below: Red Lion Pub and High Street

*Piece by:*  
*Donna Martin - Chairman STF*

## **Ely Soham Dial-a-Ride**

*Giving our community a lift*

Available to all ages, you can use this service to:

- do your weekly shopping
- attend essential appointments with the doctor, optician or dentist
- access the public transport system
- see friends and family in near by villages get to leisure facilities
- travel with friends and meet new ones

**Excursions** - join one of our many regular trips:

- pub lunches
- trips to regional shopping centres
- Norfolk and suffolk coasts
- theatre trips and places of interest

### **Group hire service**

We wish to support local charities, social groups and non-profit making organisations by providing an affordable group hire service. Fifteen seat mini buses are available weekdays, evenings and weekends. We cater for short or long trips and can provide a regular service if required. Information packs available on request.

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**Telephone: 01353 661161**

**Email: [info@esdar.org.uk](mailto:info@esdar.org.uk) Web: [www.esdar.org.uk](http://www.esdar.org.uk)**

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**Soham Dial-a-Ride, Unit 3, Newman Park, Sedgeway  
Common Road, Witchford, Ely, Cambs, CB6 2HZ.**

## NEWS AND VIEWS

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

### Soham Masterplan

*ECDC*

It's time for the next stage of the Soham Masterplan. Public meetings have already taken place, on the 4th and 5th September at the Walter Gidney Pavilion.

These public exhibitions have offered residents the chance to view and have their say on the emerging ideas and options for Sohams' future over the next decade and beyond. The first round has already established what residents would like to see and have within the town. However it's still not too late to have your opinion or view the tabled options. Copies of the Masterplan and newsletter can be obtained from:

[sohammasterplan@eastcamb.s.gov.uk](mailto:sohammasterplan@eastcamb.s.gov.uk) or telephone us on: **01353 665555**.

### A Sign of the Times...

*Soham Town Forum*

Six long awaited notice boards, destined for Soham, have been stolen from their storage facility with East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC). Anne Tuite, Soham Town councillor, has spoken with John Hill of

ECDC about the matter. He has informed her that this is now a matter for the police and insurance companies involved. The tragedy is that these notice boards were paid for a number of years ago when they cost approximately £1000 to £1200. It has now been mentioned that a sum of up to £10,000 would be needed to replace them.

### Jeremy's Great North Run

*Jeremy Reader - J K Memorials Ltd*

Meningitis survivor Jeremy Reader, from Soham, will be taking on the 13 mile Great North Run to raise money for the Meningitis Research Foundation on the 20th September this year.

Having survived the disease six years ago, he hopes to raise a thousand pounds to help with awareness about the disease, support it's victims and raise the all important funds vital for research into this potential killer. If you wish to sponsor Jeremy, please go online to:

[www.justgiving.com/jeremyreader](http://www.justgiving.com/jeremyreader)

**Local news items to:  
editor@sohamtf.co.uk**

## SOHAM GHOST WALKS - FRIGHT NIGHT!

'O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear,  
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,  
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,  
The place is Haunted!'

The last lines of the poem - The Haunted House,  
by Thomas Hood first published in 1845.

### take a walk with our local undead...

Photo by: Luke Johnston

Being introduced to local ghost stories in my early years by a fantastic history teacher; who would occasionally forget the national curriculum and entertain us all with gruesome tales and ghostly experiences; I finally decided to do something with them three years ago.

Soham Ghost Walks was formed to entertain and inform 'walkers' of our town's illustrious and very haunted past.

Each ghost featured has been documented for decades or even hundreds of years by a wide range of individuals. They include monks belonging to the first

christian cathedral and abbey in East Anglia, set up here in our very own Soham by St Felix; the very beautiful scented floral lady of St Andrews house to the ghostly goings on within 'The Retreat' and madness and mayhem with the poltergeist of Centre Road, Downfields.



So if you have an interest in the past or past lives, be brave and join a walk. You never know who or what you may meet...More information about our walks and Halloween night special can be found on:

[www.sohammuseum.org](http://www.sohammuseum.org) or  
[www.sohamghostwalks.co.uk](http://www.sohamghostwalks.co.uk)  
*Elizabeth Johnston - Founder,  
Soham Ghost Walks.*



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## ST ANDREWS HOUSE



### a house built on history...

Above: St Andrews House as it is today.  
Below: St Felix - from window in St Andrews Church  
Photos by: EJ Photos - [www.ej-photos.co.uk](http://www.ej-photos.co.uk)

Every town has its mysteries, Soham no more than any other place, but St Andrews House Soham combines so many mysteries that once you start to investigate you inevitably end up with more questions than answers.

My kind of historical research starts from the basics - the actual physical evidence - the what we can find out just by casting an eye over the place. Once this is embellished with archeological reports, wider research and personal stories, a picture of what might have taken place starts to emerge. In this way, I was able to reconstruct the architectural history of this very important building.

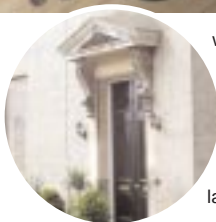


The story of St Andrews House is inextricably linked with that of St Andrews Church, after all it was the Vicarage for many years, but before that it could have been the site of Norman monastic buildings.

If we go as far back in time as we can to stand on the very spot on which our Church was to be built, we would find a Bronze Age and later Iron Age enclosure here at the highest point of the surrounding landscape.

Archeological evidence suggests that it was surrounded by a deep ditch. It must have had some spiritual significance because as far as we know the ground here remained undisturbed by the Romans.

Although the town was clearly set out according to a Roman grid pattern, this site, perhaps on the edge of the Roman Forum was never built on. The only suggestion that we have of activity from the period has to do with the Roman Altar, now in the Lady Chapel of St Andrews Church - does this indicate that there was a Christian Church in Soham at that time?



Above: Roman finds  
Circle: Main entrance to house

One of the questions I had to answer was about the removal of stonework. If Soham was the huge Roman city that evidence suggests it was, and if St Felix built a monastery here, and if the Normans built a new structure because the older one was destroyed by the Danes, what happened to all that stone, and why don't we have any evidence of it today? Because, it was used as hardcore for our roads and farm tracks - even into the 20th Century, tombstones and stone coffins discovered around the area of the Church were being smashed up for hardcore!

Of course some of the stone was re-used. There are masonry marks on the internal frame of the front door to St Andrews House, the name of the carpenter who put

them there is inscribed on them, George Levitt, but they came from a much older building.

The St Andrews House we know and love today was the result of improvements that the Reverend Henry Tasker carried out to his Vicarage in 1834. He enlarged the building by about half its original size at a cost of £3,000

which was provided by Queen Ann's bounty fund, against the wishes of Pembroke College who owned the living at the time and predicted that the large house would be a liability to future incumbents. They were right. After

Henry Tasker, the Reverend Cyprian Rust was incumbent from 1874 to 1927, and then the Reverend Boughy from 1927 to 1953.

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*Even into the 20th Century, tombstones and stone coffins discovered around the area of the Church were being smashed up for hardcore!*

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Following World War II, the idea of keeping staff was going out of fashion. Women were more

independent and able to perform daily tasks. The living had become excessively expensive and was removed to a smaller but still very fine building on Cross Green that did not require servants to run it.

The building that Tasker left us has a fairly plain exterior for the period. There is very little architectural embellishment. Instead the money was spent on fine decoration inside - large marble fireplaces and expensive wall coverings. To outward appearances Reverend Tasker led a simple life, but required a large household in order to perform his duty to the Parish. In reality, artifacts found on the site reveal that the Vicars of Soham lived the high life of society gentlemen and could boast fine English porcelain and expensive French wine.

Indeed the Vicarage that Henry Tasker inherited, and turned into servants quarters and kitchens, was built c.1720 by the Reverend Reginald Hawkins and incorporated two wine cellars. Hawkins integrated a very fine and

substantial Tudor house into his Jacobean style Vicarage and archeological evidence reveals that he substantially remodelled the gardens at this time.

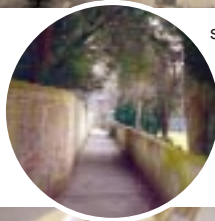
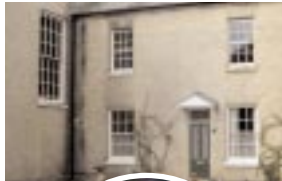
We know very little of the origins of the Tudor house and only vestiges of it remain. This range overlooks the Churchyard and was once much longer, extending towards the Co-op car park. The Tudor stable block which formed the boundary to Church Alley was still used into the 20th Century, the last portion of this building being demolished during the recent remodelling of St Andrews House. Like most of Soham's old buildings, St Andrews House has seen many changes and has many stories to tell of the lives lived there.

The forthcoming edition of 'Old

Curiosities' (pub. Soham Community History Museum) will further explore the history of St Andrews House and the people that lived there.

**Donna Martin**

*Chairman of Soham Community History Museum.*



Above: Victorian range  
Middle: Alley way  
Below: Stoneware wine jug from Soham

## WHATS ON - EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

An online version of our 'whats on' can be found at: [www.sohamtf.co.uk](http://www.sohamtf.co.uk)

### Dynamic Theatre



#### **HOBSON'S CHOICE**

*By Harold Brighouse*

*The Viva Theatre Company presents: This Victorian comedy, and timeless classic - Hobson's Choice..*

24th, 25th and 26th  
Sept 2009 at 7.30pm,  
Lodeside Hall, Soham

Village College.  
You can obtain tickets from the Box Office at the Viva Centre, 7 Churchgate Street, Soham, Cambs or call: 01353 722228.

[www.viva-group.org.uk](http://www.viva-group.org.uk)

#### **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST**

*Viva Youth Theatre - Do you have the 'X' factor?*

**Act...sing...dance...  
perform...have fun!**

The Viva Youth Theatre are recruiting for their next production - Beauty and the Beast. So if you are aged between 11 and 21 years then you are eligible. No experience necessary.

**Auditions are:**  
14th Sept at 7.30pm in Babylon Gallery, Ely.  
17th Sept, 7.30pm at Soham Village College.  
20th Sept at 3pm in Brook House, Soham.

**01353 722228** or email: [vivayouth@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:vivayouth@hotmail.co.uk) if you wish to attend



#### **Jack and the Beanstalk** *Stage Chance*

Thurs 3rd to Sat 5th  
December 2009 at  
Beechurst Hall,  
Soham Village  
College. Shows  
begin at 7.30pm  
A matinee  
performance will be  
held on Sat 5th  
December at 2pm.

Tickets are available from the Box Office, Resource Centre, Soham Village College or you can telephone: 01353 724100 ext: 242.

**Please be advised that the Box office will be open from 1st October.**

*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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## Talks and Walks

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### Soham History Group Talks

[www.sohammuseum.org.uk](http://www.sohammuseum.org.uk)

#### The Bayeaux Tapestry - Mary Dicken

Thursday 1st October at the Soham Methodist Church Hall, Berrycroft from 7.30pm onwards.

#### A trip to the Antarctic - Dr Julie Bond

Thursday 3rd December at the Soham Methodist Church Hall, Berrycroft from 7.30pm onwards.

*Admission to each talk is 2.50 unless otherwise stated. A raffle and refreshments also available.*

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### East Cambs Ramblers Group

*Chairman: Chris Morris*

#### Saturday 12th Sept - Wimpole Hall and the Eversdens

Starts at 9.30am in the car park of Wimpole Hall, map and grid ref: 209/TL338510. A delightful walk with fine views. Finishes between 12.30 and 1.30pm, with lunch available if desired at the Wimpole Hall cafe. (13km/8 miles).

**Call Adrian 01353 688463.**

#### Saturday 26th Sept - Isleham

Starts at 10.00am from Isleham Priory, map/grid ref: 226/TL643744, for a walk along footpaths going via the outskirts of Soham and Fordham. (10km/6 miles). **Call Jim 01638 780415**

#### Saturday 10th Oct - Chippenham

Starts at 10.00am from near Chippenham Church, map/grid ref: 226/TL663698 for a walk going via Red Lodge. (8km/5 miles). **Call Jim 01638 780415.**

#### Sunday 25th Oct - Hadstock, Icknield Way and Linton

Starts at 10.00am at Hadstock church (parking nearby). Map/grid ref: 209/TL558447. A circular walk which takes in two stretches of the Icknield Way. We will stop for a pub lunch at Linton and finish at Hadstock between 2.00 and 2.30pm. (13km/8 miles). **Call Adrian 01353 688463.**

Map and grid references can be found on:  
[www.cambsandpeterboroughramblers.org.uk](http://www.cambsandpeterboroughramblers.org.uk).

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## Events in Brief

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### September 2009

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Royal British Legions Annual Bazaar will be held at the Walter Gidney Pavilion on Saturday 19th September. It will include white elephant stall, cakes, toys, cosmetics, vegetable stall books and tombola finishing with a grand draw. An auction of household goods will begin at 2pm.

Please note our AGM is on 8th October, 8pm at Soham Comrades Club.

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The annual and very popular Pumpkin Fair will be held on Saturday 26th September at the Walter Gidney Pavilion and Soham Recreation Ground.

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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)

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

# **Soham Twinning Association**

[www.sohamtwinning.org.uk](http://www.sohamtwinning.org.uk)

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## **Soham Pumpkin Fair**

**26th September 2009**

Visit our stall, guess the weight of the pumpkin and win it!

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## **Musical Evenings**

Jean Monty and his Tango Orchestra from Andrézieux-Bouthéon will be playing in Soham.

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**30th October 2009 at 7pm.**

Guests at Soham Ball - Brook House

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**31st October at 7.30pm.**

Soham Comrades Club

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**1st November at 6pm.**

The Ship Public House

## CONTRIBUTORS

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### *From Soham Town Forum*

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Donna Martin - Chairman  
Anne Pallet - Soham Twining  
ECDC

### *Features*

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Elizabeth Johnston - Soham Ghost Walks  
Donna Martin - Chairman Soham Museum Project

### *Photographs*

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

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