

SOHAM COMRADES BAND

One Hundred Years

A Brief History of the evolution and the first hundred years of the Soham Comrades Band.

Much of the following information has been gathered from the notes taken and recorded at each Annual General Meeting and particularly from the handwritten minute book from 1921 to 1972.

Please contact the Band if you find errors in this document or you can help us add further information.



SOHAM COMRADES BAND

Early records show that the Soham Choir Brass Band gave a concert in the Town Hall on 11th December 1863, one of the first references to a 'brass band' in Soham.

The Soham Comrades Band was formed in 1920-21 with the amalgamation of the Soham Excelsior Band led by Mr H Liddle and Mr J C Conner and the Soham Town Band which was formed in 1890 and led by Mr Fred Moody.

The first official Bandmaster was Mr Frederick J Talbot (February 1921), previously with the Excelsior Band from 1919, who was paid the sum of £1 per week for his duties which included teaching the younger players. This agreement was recorded in the minutes of a Special Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 17th May 1921. Mr Talbot had apparently resigned prior to this for some reason but withdrew his resignation after agreeing to new terms and for a trial period of three months. He voluntarily reduced his fees to 15/- a week in 1923 for reasons unknown, possibly the financial situation at the time but he went on to hold this post for over fifty years.

Under his leadership the Band competed in major competitions in venues such as Alexandra Palace, Belle Vue in Manchester and the Crystal Palace. The first BBC radio broadcast made by the Band was on 30th November 1938 and at the 1939 AGM Mr Talbot was presented with a framed photograph of the Band to commemorate the occasion and to recognise his 20 years of service as Bandmaster. The Band also broadcast again on 29th July 1939. Locally the Band was also very successful in various competitions, including the title "Champions of East Anglia" which it first won in 1935. The Band has to date won this prize on fifteen occasions.

Committee meeting Sunday, 15th May 1921.

President F. J. Talbot.

B. Clark, President.

Members, Frank Talbot, V. Palmer, A. Amos, B. Clark, & Isaacson.

It was agreed on a proposition by F. J. Talbot.
Sec^d by A. Amos that the Band purchase a bag
for music that the Secretary obtain same.

H. Dawson
Hon^{ry} Sec^y

Special Committee meeting called by the President.

Comrades Hall, Tuesday 17th May 1921:-

Present: H. Morley President.

R. Clark Vice President.

H. Dawson Sec^y.

R. Duck Treasurer.

F. J. Talbot B. Smith.

Members B. Clark, V. Isaacson, A. Abatten, B. Bunker,
V. Palmer, A. Amos, H. Amos, L. Nichol.

1. The existing system of accounts & "Finance" was
discussed and it was suggested by the President
that a new system on modern lines be adopted
for all monies business & that with the exception
of a nominal sum to be placed in the hands of
the Secretary for Petty Cash, all transactions shall
be cheque & vide bank.

2. All cheques will be signed by the Secretary Treasurer.

This is the first page of the original minute book from 1921 and shows the first action of the new band 'to buy a bag for the music'. It was all handwritten with the last entry on 2nd February 1973.

This photograph shows one of the pre-war bands based in Soham and contains several members of the Talbot family including Fred as a cornet player in the middle row.



Soham Excelsior Band, the Hare Park Competition winners in 1912-13. The names listed below are as written on the back of the photograph.

Back row, Left to Right: L Nichols, Frank Talbot, A Gordon, G Fordham, B Long, W Baker, V Isaacson, L Talbot, C Fordham

Middle row: J Reeve, Fred Talbot, J C Connor (Bandmaster, ex Kneller Hall) V Palmer, B Clark

Front row: E Fordham, G Palmer, B Taylor, E Clark



This photograph shows the Band in 1919? and may have been taken before the official amalgamation took place, when the two bands were working together following the war. Mr Talbot is the Conductor here, centre front, with Mr Moody, the leader of the Town Band, to his left on the front row.

Early Days:

Engagements undertaken in 1921:

Fordham and Burwell Hospital parades.

A Band organised Sports day.

A Band organised Archery Tournament.

Church Fetes and other events. Sunday evening concerts in the Cinema Hall on alternate weeks. The fee received for town church fetes etc was usually £2 or £1 with a collection.

Also, during 1921 nine instruments were transferred from the old Soham Town Band, some from storage and some from its former members. Other instruments were gathered from other players in the town. On 7th August 1922 the Band won the local Upwell Contest [against Manea, Clifton Colliery, G E R Cambridge and Upwell bands] playing Classic Gems No 2 and conducted by Charles Anderson from Leicester, a professional conductor. This seems to have been the first competition success for the new Band.

On Saturday 23rd September 1922 the Band entered the Crystal Palace Junior Shield Contest again with Mr Anderson [result unknown].



1921 – Fred Talbot conducting local bands at the Soham Parade in Red Lion square.

Unveiling of Soham War Memorial 1921.

The Ceremony for the unveiling of the War Memorial was held on Sunday 23rd January 1921 at 2.30 pm.

The War Memorial is situated on Red Lion Square and was erected in Honour of the Men of Soham who gave their lives for Liberty and Justice in the Great War, 1914 - 1919 and later also Commemorating those who lost their lives in WW11.

Major General Sir G.W. Hare, K.C.M.G., C.B., unveiled the Monument.

The Band was in attendance and Bandmaster F.J. Talbot played the 'Last Post'





Soham Comrades Band – Winners of the Upwell Cup in 1922

Back row, Left to Right: Robert Talbot, Fred Talbot, (conductor of the Excelsior Band) Charles Green, Arthur Human, Thomas Smith, Gordon Fordham, Charles Anderson (professional conductor) Arthur Ames, Bert Clark, Ellis Clark, Earnest Peachey, Frank Talbot

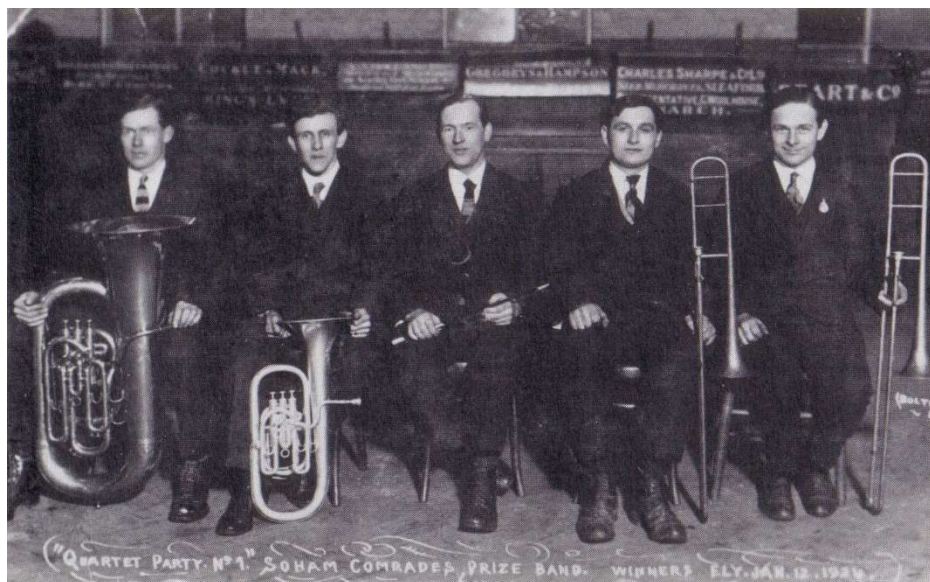
Middle row: Bert Lockwood, Percy Chapman, Victor Isaacson, Percy Smith, Alf Clark

Front row: Reg Talbot, Wallis Fordham, Jack Smith, Fred Moody (conductor of the Town Band) Herbert Hobbs, Ben Hobbs.

Messrs Crowfoot of Newmarket are believed to have built the prefabricated timber building. The Bandstand was finally completed and opened on 12th May 1937, the Coronation Day of George VI and Queen Elizabeth thanks to much work by Dr T Nicholle [President] and Mr Roger Clark.

Mr Clark was subsequently presented with a signed photograph of the Band by Mr Talbot at the 1938 Annual General Meeting with a vote of thanks to him and Dr Nicholle for their efforts in seeing that the project was completed. Dr Nicholle was also presented with a framed photograph a few weeks later.

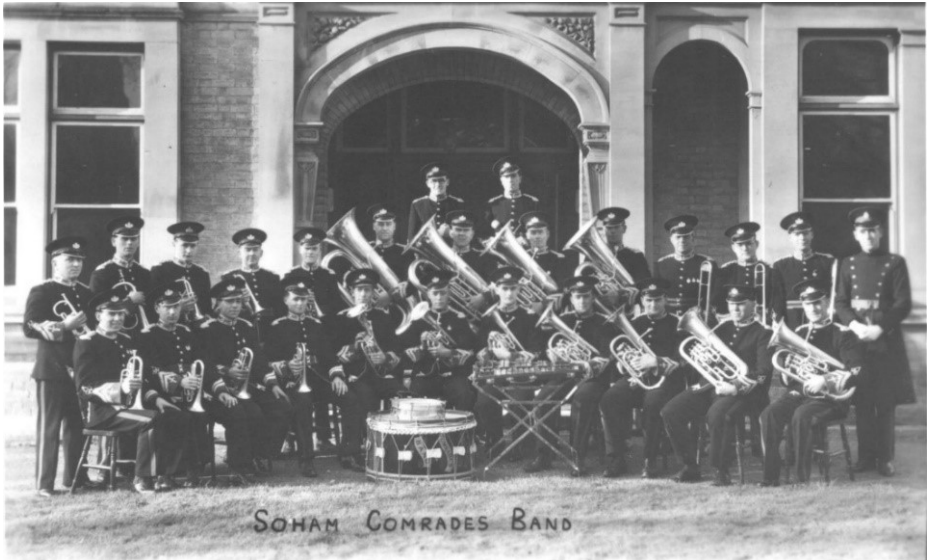
The Bandstand was used for regular Sunday evening concerts until the early 1970's when it was beginning to be over-shadowed by trees and was in a poor state of repair.



Winning Soham Comrades Band Quartet Party No 1 at Ely – 12.1. 1924

*Left to Right: Ben Hobbs, Percy Chapman, Charles Anderson (professional conductor)
Thomas Smith, Gordon Fordham*

In 1930 Soham came 4th in the Junior Shield Competition at the Crystal Palace, this time conducted by F J Talbot. In 1933 the Rev Boughey suggested at the AGM that a fund be arranged to facilitate the construction of a Bandstand on the recreation Ground, which was agreed at a later meeting with the Parish Council. The Bandstand would be a permanent structure but also be capable of being dismantled if necessary. The Band was to be responsible for the maintenance of the building and would pay the Council a ground rent of 1/- [5p] per year.



The broadcasting Band of Nov 30th 1938 outside Soham Pavilion

Back row, Left to Right: L Winter, F Ashby

Middle row: Wallis Fordham, J Smith, D Oakham, W Gilbey, W Lockwood, F Coulson, Robert Talbot, Frank Talbot, S Edwards, Arthur Human, S Bayes, Robert (Bob) Peacock, Fred Talbot (Bandmaster)

Front row: Percy Gilbey, R Cox, J Lockwood, W Eley, B Beeton, B Lockwood, Percy Smith, S Finch, T Smith, Herbert Human, Bert Clark

The War Years – 1939 to 1945

At a committee meeting On October 15th 1939 it was agreed to keep the Band together during wartime although of course they had no idea what this would mean. They would also continue with Band Concerts to be held every third Sunday during the winter of 1939 – 1940 and the Band continued with fortnightly concerts throughout the war.

Many members of the Band had to resign at this point including Mr Talbot. However, in spite of his Military duties, Mr Talbot managed to take the Band through the Second World War and although depleted in numbers was able to call upon other local players and also soldiers posted in the area. This included the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) who were then stationed in Fordham village as well as some Polish and American troops.

In October 1939 Mr Talbot volunteered to take a pay reduction from 15/- (75p) to 10/- (50p) a week to help the Band's financial situation, in that year the Band's Bank balance was £52-2-10.

In 1941 the Band invested £20 with National Defence Bonds to help increase the target for Soham's 'War Weapons Week'. Further investments were made in 1942 to help with 'Warship Week' and in 1943 for 'Wings for Victory. This earned interest at 3% and would help to maintain the financial situation of the Band. At this time uniforms and almost all instruments would have been provided from Band funds.

At the 1943 Annual General Meeting on the suggestion of the President and Mr Talbot it was agreed unanimously to send 10/- [50p] to each Band member serving in the armed forces.

'The Band had again lost more players to the services, and he trusted that with the help of the Wicken Bandsmen they would be able to keep going until the boys came home again'.

(Mr Talbot taken from the 1943 AGM minutes)

On the 2nd June 1944 the town bandstand was damaged by the Soham ammunition train explosion. This was a very serious event during the war when a train that was passing through Soham station exploded as it stopped to warn the signalman.

The driver, Benjamin Gimbert and fireman James Nightall had already uncoupled all but one of the wagons carrying high explosive bombs and prevented what would have been a catastrophe for the town. Fireman Nightall was killed together with the Signalman and Driver Gimbert was seriously injured. Both driver and fireman were awarded the George Cross for their bravery.

The help from Wicken players during the war appears to have been significant and helped Soham continue its regular public concerts in the Bandstand and other town engagements. At the 1945 A.G.M. Mr Talbot suggested that an official letter of thanks be sent to Wicken Coronation Band and its players.

'We all regretted to hear that Mr P Gilbey was now in enemy hands and trusted that it would not be long before he and the other members of the Band were back home again'.

(Mr Talbot taken from the 1945 AGM minutes)

By 1946 some Band members had returned from the War and numbers were increasing with new players that had been trained during the War years. Mr Talbot's full salary was also re-instated at the AGM in March. During that year the Band seemed to be back in full operation with performances at several contests.

In 1955 the Band redeemed a Defence Bond valued at £150 to help pay for a new set of uniforms at a cost of £320. These were a black worsted material with royal blue lapels, gold braiding and silver buttons.

The players who left for military service that we know of and who are also mentioned in meeting minutes:

J Ashby	Sept. 1939 – RASC
D Oakman	Sept. 1939 – Suffolk Regiment
W Eley	Oct. 1939 – Suffolk Regiment
S Bayes	Jan. 1940 – War work
S Edwards	March 1940 – Army Pay Corps
S Finch	Nov. 1942
J Palmer	June 1943 – Royal Navy
A Talbot	June 1943 – RAF College
P Gilbey	Norfolk Regiment
R Peacock	



Soham Comrades Band in April 1957 outside Soham Pavilion.

Back row, Left to Right: Sid Scotting, Roy Seymour

Middle row: Wallis Fordham, Michael Everitt, David Gilbey, John Palmer, Melvin Scrivener, Stan Edwards, Jack Vinall, Peter Audus, Neville Beeton, Arthur Human, John Fuller, Arthur (Charlie) Human, Robert (Bob) Peacock

Front row: Percy Gilbey, Johnny Gilbey, Eric Cooper, Colin Thornhill, Don Driver, Arthur Badcock, Fred Talbot (Bandmaster) Alan Shaw, Jack Matthews, Percy Smith, John Royston, Herbert Human

Soon after the opening of Soham Village College in 1958 the Lodeside Hall was used for Band rehearsals. It was deemed then as an activity within the evening class programme which covered many diverse subjects and skills. Mr Talbot also took lessons for the College Junior Band. This useful and enjoyable link with the College continued until 2012 when, by then, the evening usage had reduced to a small number of privately run classes.

Mr Talbot was made an honorary member of the London College of Music in 1966 for his services to music and received the award from Dr. William Lloyd Webber, a great honour for an amateur musician. Now with two female players in the Band, Barbara Rouse and Anne Potter, it was decided to provide them with made to measure uniforms; probably a first for Soham Band. Also in that year the bands instruments were converted to low pitch. For this, all the instruments were all sent away to be fitted with sleeves added to the tuning slides.

During 1973 it was decided to ask the Parish Council if the bandstand on the recreation ground could be moved to the Cherry Tree public house in Fordham Road. The structure was not being used in its present location and had been neglected for several years. This request was refused.



Fred Talbot probably taken in the 1960's.



Two stalwarts of Soham Band, Percy Gilbey and Robert (Bob) Peacock.

Both men were in the Band before WW2 and are on the BBC broadcasting picture of 1938, Percy then as the Principal Cornet player and Bob as Solo Trombonist. They also served in the Army during the war and played with the Band well into the 1970's.

The Band decided to honour Mr Talbot's long service by purchasing a trophy to be presented to the East Anglian Brass Band Association and also to provide a memorial shield for the 'Most Improved Player' to be awarded annually. Mr Talbot finally retired in 1973 due to ill health and passed away the same year aged 76.

Respected, feared, but also loved by the Band he was like a father figure to many of the senior players. For his funeral service at the United Reform Church in Soham the music was provided by the Band; an emotional and sad day for all of us, with some senior band members in tears as they played for him one last time.



The Band at Fowlmere for a concert circa 1969

Frederick James Talbot 15.9.1897 to 13.5.1973

‘Fred’ Talbot passed away on 13th May 1973 in his 76th year after giving 52 years of service to Soham Comrades Band.

Born to Thomas and Emma Talbot and educated in Soham he was introduced to cornet playing at the age of eight by his brother Leonard and soon joined the ranks of the Soham Excelsior Band.

His first Band Contest was at Lower Hare Park in Newmarket in 1912, held to celebrate the Conservative election win of that year. Fred, still a young boy, played solo cornet and the Band won first prize out of eight competing bands. At this time Fred was lucky enough to have professional training from Mr Sam Liddle, former Bandmaster of the Manchester Regiment and then with Mr J Connor of the King’s Royal

Rifles. These two musicians laid the foundations for his eventual career in music.

When Mr Talbot left school he started work as a printers apprentice with Hobbs King and Parr in Soham. When the First World War broke out Mr Talbot joined the 1st Battalion of the 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment as a private with service number 3872 and was soon put in charge of the Regimental Band. At this time the Band toured the county to encourage recruitment and it was during this time that Fred met his future wife, Lizzie Gunton Ward, when staying with her parents in the town of March. They were later married at St. John's Church, March in 1919. In February 1915 Fred was mobilised for war. Listed as Lance Corporal F J Talbot in 1916 he was entitled to wear a "wound stripe" and during 1916 was also hospitalised in Brussels with typhoid.

Following the hostilities, in 1919, Fred took over as Bandmaster of the Excelsior Band.

With the depletion of the two Soham bands, Soham Excelsior Band and Soham Town Band decided to amalgamate as the Soham Comrades and Mr Talbot was appointed at its inception as the Conductor in February 1921 at the age of 23.

Mr Talbot was made an honorary member of the London College of Music in 1966 for his services to music and received the award from Dr William Lloyd Webber, a great honour for an amateur musician.

Prior to the Second World War he also coached other local bands including Wicken, Chatteris, Manea and Mildenhall with notable success. Fred served the Band continuously until 1973.

Mr Talbot was succeeded in 1973 by ex-military bandsman Mr Desmond Nineham, a position he held for the next two years who brought renewed confidence and a new dynamic to the Band.

In 1974 the Band was joined by Mr Peter Mott, a well-known musician and conductor from Cambridge. Peter, from a very musical Salvationist family, took the Band very successfully for the next few years.

A set of new uniforms was purchased in 1978, which was a big change to the look of the Band with less of a military look and more of a modern stage jacket style.

The jackets were light green with black facings, trousers were black with a braid side stripe and the hats were black with green piping around the top and bottom of the headband. The Band also bought black bow ties (a very new look at this time) as well as straight black clip-on ties with our name and a lyre/ treble clef motif.

On June 12th 1980 the town bandstand was finally moved from its original site on the Recreation Ground to the Cherry Tree public house on Fordham Road. This was carried out with a low loader supplied and operated by Mr King in cooperation with Mr Charles Lomas the landlord at the time. Mr Lomas 'Podge' was a great supporter of the Band and the bandstand was rescued in a very dilapidated state to be restored for use for concerts purposes. Mr Lomas supported Sunday afternoon band concerts for several years. These were very popular and were a platform for many other local bands.



The Bandstand being re-located to the Cherry Tree public house on the 12th of June 1980. Thanks to the negotiation and effort from the then publican Mr Charles Lomas.

The bandstand in 2014 just prior to some repair works and redecoration.
The cast iron plaque to the front says:

CORONATION BAND STAND
1937
ERECTED BY PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION
TO RECORD APPRECIATION
OF THE SOHAM COMRADES SILVER PRIZE BAND





Soham Comrades Band with Peter Mott in 1974

Back row, Left to Right: Susan Driver, Michael Gilbey, Brian Page, Ray Boulter, Stephen Eley, Nigel Driver, Barry Peachey, David Gilbey, Bernie Bavester, David Mills, Don Page, Martyn Aves, Robert Peacock, Paul Filby

Front row: Cedric Palmer, Charlie Hayes, Mike Smith, Colin Smalley, Percy Gilbey, Arthur Badcock, Peter Mott (Bandmaster) Anne Potter, Barbara Rouse, Arthur Aves, Robert (Bob) Peacock, Richard Gilbey, Neville Beeton

In 1979 former Principal Cornet player with the Band Mr Raymond Boulter took up the baton to become Bandmaster. Under his leadership the Band qualified for the Third Section of the National Brass Championships held in the Royal Albert Hall, London on the 6th October 1984, and was subsequently promoted from Third to Second Section. Two years later the Band won the Pontins Regional Competition to qualify for the 1986 finals held in Prestatyn, North Wales.



Soham Comrades outside the Royal Albert Hall 6.10.1984

Back row, Left to Right: Don Page, Graham Strand, Paul Coulson, Gerry Woodroffe, Colin Smalley, Richard Gilbey, Stephen Eley, Neville Beeton, Barry Peachey

Middle row: Arthur Badcock, Lindsay Sampford, Ernie Eley, Paul Anderson, Colin Badcock, Cedric Palmer, Graham Turner, Mark Page, Martyn Aves

Front row: David Gilbey, John Gilbey, Nigel Bramley, Kelly Kleifges, Julie Gilbey, Barbara Smalley, Angela Turner, Ian Gilbey, Brian Page

Seated: Ray Boulter (Bandmaster) Denis Hotson (President)



The Band at the Royal Albert Hall, London, playing in the Third Section of the National Finals in 1984 and led by Ray Boulter.

Sadly in 1986 we were hit with the sudden loss our very talented Principal Cornet player, John Gilbey; a big shock for all. He had started with the Band during the war years; a memorial concert was held in 1987. During this period the Band was carrying out about thirty paid engagements a year, about two thirds of which were in Soham.



Soham Comrades Band with Ray Boulter 1979

Back row, Left to Right: Colin Smalley, Mark Page, Keith Peacock, Paul Anderson, Arthur Aves, Paul Coulson, Neville Beeton, Lindsay Sampford, Arthur Badcock Barry Peachey

Middle row: Graham Strand, Cedric Palmer, Ian Gilbey, John Gilbey, Kelly Kleifges, Nigel Bramley, David Gilbey, Julie Gilbey, Angela Beeton, Barbara Smalley, Robert Peacock, Richard Gilbey, Colin Badcock

Front row: Don Page, Ernie Eley, Graham Turner, Ray Boulter (Bandmaster) D Hotson (President) Stephen Eley, Bernie Bavester, Gerry Woodroffe, Brian Page

During 1989 Mr Paul Filby, a trombone soloist with the renowned GUS band, was appointed as Musical Director and it was during this period that a Band Constitution was put place by the members.

After Paul's departure in 1991 the Band survived a difficult period without a musical director before appointing Mr Robert Judd, a former military musician in 1991.



Soham Comrades Band with Ray Boulter circa 1980

Following the period with Mr Judd, Mr Andrew Kierl took over the Band in 1992 and after only a few weeks of rehearsal took us to the local Cambridgeshire Competition where we achieved the runner-up position in the Championship Section, a position the Band held in the following year. The Band also achieved third place in the Second Section of the Regional National Qualifying competitions of 1993 and 1994 and followed this with a first place in 1995. In that year the Band went on to compete in the National Brass Band Championships Second Section finals at the Wembley Conference Centre in London and was followed by promotion to the First Section. During 1993 the Band invested in a set of new uniforms, with navy blue worsted jackets, red lapels and gold buttons and braid decoration. The cost of these from R. & J. Handley – Leeds was £4592.48, a very large outlay at the time.

With Andrew the Band produced its first self-promoted recording in 1993. The audio tape entitled 'Frosty's Christmas Music' featured a selection of popular Christmas music and sold very well. During April

1996 five Band members plus friends travelled by ferry to Guernsey where they took part in a concert with the Guernsey Concert Band. Later in the year the Band travelled by coach on a ten-day tour to Hungary to perform at various venues including: Szeged (twin town of Cambridge), Sandors Palace in Budapest and Bekescsaba where the Band took part in the Zenit 96 Festival. The festival competitions were a mix of brass and wind bands which proved a problem to some of the judges, but Soham's contribution was greatly appreciated.



The Band on tour in Hungary - 1996



Soham Comrades Band with Andrew Kierl 1992-1996

Back row, Left to Right: Lesley Aves, Andrea Bignell, Rebecca Holiday, David Notley

Third row: Pippa Reeves, Mark Limbert, Nigel Bramley, Angela Beeton, Barbara Smalley, Colin Smalley, Andrew Gilbey

Second row: Richard Gilbey, Philip Bignell, Colin Badcock, Arthur Aves, Graham Turner, Stuart Hall, Richard Gesh, Annette Ginn

Front row: Chris Pannell, Not known, Steve Cottage, Dianne Pannell, Andrew Kierl (Musical Director) Richard Pannell, Graham Strand, Don Page, Tim Pannell

The formation of a Youth Band in 1994 under the leadership of Diane Pannell offered youngsters in the area an opportunity to learn to play a brass instrument and to play music in a band environment.



The Junior Band circa 1994

Back row, Left to Right: Cheryl Aves, Tim Pannell, not known, Laura Midgley, Sally Willis, Debbie Heath

Middle row: Ryan Aves, Antony Sore, Hazel Heath, Louise Smalley, not known, Ian Bowman, Chris Pannell

Front row: Mark Bocking, Emma Ames, Nicola Sore, not known, not known

In 1998 this was taken over by Robin Norman, the then principal Eb bass player with the senior band. Under his leadership the juniors achieved first place at the Second section of the Cambridgeshire Championships in 1998. Due to work commitments Robin handed over to Ken Ellis in 1999 where their success at the Cambridgeshire Championships was repeated. In 2002 David Notley, Soprano player and music teacher, took over the leadership. In 2003, after about ten very successful years, the Youth Band was finally handed over to the C.I.M.A. organisation at Soham Village College under the continued tutelage of David.

After a period of uncertainty following Andrew's resignation in 1996, Paul Filby again took on the Directorship of Soham Comrades on a permanent basis in 1997, a post which he successfully maintained until 2004. After a three-year period of good results the Band was promoted to Championship status for the 1999 season, the only band in this section in Cambridgeshire at the time. This was a first for Soham Comrades and a very proud moment, if not a daunting one. To maintain this level we were going to have to work even harder in the future.

Also during Pauls' time with the Band we took part in a very successful production of 'Brassed Off' at the Arts Theatre in Cambridge from 4th to 8th May 1999. The show was a Sheffield Theatres production and featured Dennis Lill (Only Fools and Horses) as Danny, Steve Huison (The Full Monty) as Phil, Bill Rogers as Harry and Loveday Smith as Gloria. This production was touring Britain at the time and we were very fortunate to be selected as 'The Band' for the Cambridge performances.

The strength of the Band at this time was shown off with a CD recording 'Comrades in Concert' made in Beechurst Hall at Soham Village College in October 1999 which was very well received.



Soham Comrades Band with Paul Filby 2003

Back row, Left to Right: not known, not known, Carol Farr, not known

Middle row: David Notley, Jamie Clay, Lesley Aves, Emma Strange, Rebecca Mason, Sarah Wilson, Don page, Kevin Hopkins, Trevor Johnson, Rachel Aves, Neil George

Front row: Nigel Bramley, Sally Bramley, Colin Smalley, Richard Franklin, Paul Filby (Musical Director) Nicola Sore, Annette Ginn, Lucy O'Reilly, David Aves, Duncan Wilson

The Bands' Celebrity Concerts which were generally combined with a Master Class and held mostly held at the Lodeside Hall in Soham Village College:

Celebrity Concert star guests:

23 rd October 1993	Russell Gray - Cornet
22 nd October 1994	Nicholas Hudson - Trombone
1 st October 1995	Philip McCann - Cornet
28 th September 1996	Steven Mead - Euphonium
4 th October 1997	Steven Sykes - Bass
31 st October 1998	Simone Rebello - Percussion
30 th October 1999	Sheona White - Tenor Horn
16 th September 2000	Robert Childs - Euphonium
29 th September 2001	James Shepherd – Cornet

As a serving Army officer, Chris King took over the Band in 2004 whilst also being the Bandmaster for the Minden Band of the Queen's Division at Basingbourn Barracks. During his time with the Band we took part in the British Open Spring Festival Senior Cup competition in the Winter Gardens at Blackpool. The Band was also helped by several Minden Band players stationed at Basingbourn.

Matthew Brown joined the Band in 2006 as Chris King had not been able to continue because of his Army duties. During 2006 the Band went its first trip to Andrezieux Boutheon in France. It was a long weekend trip by coach, organised by Peter Beer to visit Soham's twin town and to perform at the local concert hall. After a considerable period of time without a permanent Musical Director the band was demoted to the First Section following a poor result at the 2007 Area Contest. This ended a very successful run of nine years in the Championship Section.

L'ASSOCIATION CULTURELLE DE THÉÂTRE
PRÉSENTE

THE SOHAM COMRADES BAND

ORCHESTRE DE CUIVRES

de Soham, ville jumelée
avec Andrézieux-Bouthéon



SAMEDI 16 MAI 2009
À 20H30
AU THÉÂTRE DU PARC


ANDREZIEUX-BOUTHEON
en


A. C. T.



Soham Comrades Band with Chris King 2005

Back row, Left to Right: Army player, Rebecca Mason, Jennifer Tinkler, Emma Strange, Jonathan Hammond, Bryan Herman, Owen Duffield, Jamie Clay, Lesley Aves

Middle row: Trevor (Andy) Johnson, Neil George, Rachel Aves, Army player, Richard Franklin, Army player, Tricia Lenton, Ryan Duffield

Front row: Carina Lobley, David Aves, Lucy O'Reilly, Chris King (Musical Director) Sarah Lenton, Army player, Alan Sugars

After several difficult years for the Band, Keith Schroeter took over in 2008. In May 2009 a second trip to Andrezieux Boutheon in France, this time by air, was organised by Peter Beer and Colin Smalley. Again, a great success, the concert this time was given in a huge outdoor pavilion along with other local performers and musicians.

In 2010 Soham combined with Zone One band from London, of which Keith was also a playing member, to perform a charity concert for 'Help

for Heroes' in Tattersalls luxurious sales ring Newmarket. The event raised over £500 for the charity.



Soham Comrades Band with Keith Schroeter at The Ely Bandstand

During 2013 the Band was taken on by Jayne Murrill, a professional local musician and teacher. With Jayne the Band reached the Second section finals of the National Brass Band Championships of Great Britain held in 2014 in Cheltenham.

The Band also gained the runner up position at two or three other key national competitions including the Butlins Mineworkers competition at Skegness in 2016.

During 2016 the Band played at the funeral of Donald Page, our most recent President and former Bb bass player. Don was a stalwart of the Band for well over 40 years and during this time he led from the front in many official roles. Even through years of illness he never lost his interest and total dedication to the Band.



The Band with the Viva Arts Company taking part in 'Brassed Off' at Soham Village College in 2017. A sell out success at the Performing Arts Centre.

In September of 2017 we worked with Soham's accomplished Viva Arts organisation to provide a band for a production of 'Brassed Off' in the Performing Arts Centre at Soham Village College; this proved to be a sell-out success. Although a new venture for most of us, a few members of the current band had taken part in the professional production at the Arts Theatre Cambridge in 1999.

Unfortunately, Jayne parted with the Band in 2017 due to the increasing pressure of work commitments and home life duties.



Soham Comrades Band with Mark Ager 2018

Back rows, Left to Right: Andrew Gilbey, Doreen Martin, Maxwell Mears, Colin Smalley, Elise Mears, Richard McCormick, Stephanie Redgate, Andrew Everitt, Nigel Markwell, Steve Stokes, Catherine Bailey, Barbara Smalley, Paul Lowes, Tracy Reeve-Smith, Jonathan Lockwood, Debbie Murray, Colin Badcock

Front row: Andrew Hobbs, David Bailey, Rebecca Raven, Cliff Davies, Amanda Reeve-Smith, Mark Ager (Musical Director) Lucy O'Reilly, Steve Perry, David Minchin

After a fruitless and frustrating search for a new conductor in 2017, Mark Ager agreed to take us on for the 2018 Area Contest at Stevenage. Our 7th place was enough to make us eligible for the First section in 2019. Later in 2018 Mark was appointed as our official MD. In April 2019 the Band repeated their Brassed Off performances with Viva and this time at the ADC Theatre in Cambridge.

In late 2019 Soham Comrades Band was asked by Andrew Barnabus of Bob and Barn Ltd to provide some musical input for a new Musical Score. This was then used in the film 'Me, Myself and Di', a 'Bridget Jones' style comedy set in Bolton?? Recordings were made at the Millennium Centre in Red Lodge, to provide the sampling for the soundtrack and the film was eventually aired in Bolton during 2021.

In March 2020 the country was put into lockdown with the Corona Virus pandemic. Our last rehearsal was held on the 11th of March, when we were practicing for the Area Contest. The Contest was cancelled as were all rehearsals throughout that year and all our summer concerts were gradually removed from our list of bookings. The Band produced a video of the Wallace and Gromit theme music; with all performers recording individually from home with the use of a backing track. This was skilfully put together by David Minchin and circulated on social media. Committee and social band meetings had to be conducted via Zoom sessions during this period and all Christmas Concerts were cancelled. This left only a few isolated local events (socially distanced) and some supermarket carol playing.

It was not until 23rd May 2021 that we resumed rehearsals with a 'risk assessment' in place, two metre spacing of players and bell covers being used on the instruments.

The first post covid concert was given at the Coleridge Recreation Ground in Cambridge on 22nd August 2021 as part of the Cambridge Summer Concert series.

The normal remembrance parade and service was cancelled in 2021 and replaced by a drumhead service in front of the Pavilion on the Recreation Ground. This was well attended and proved a satisfactory replacement under the circumstances.

2021 was the centenary year for the Band and for the Royal British Legion. For this a combined concert was performed in St Andrews Parish Church.

Soham Comrades Bandmasters and Musical Directors:

1921-1973	Frederick Talbot
1973-1974	Desmond Nineham
1974-1978	Peter Mott
1978-1989	Raymond Boulter
1989-1991	Paul Filby
1991-1992	Robert Judd
1992-1996	Andrew Kierl
1997-2004	Paul Filby
2004-2006	Christopher King
2006-2007	Matthew Brown
2008-2013	Keith Schroeter
2013-2017	Jayne Murrill
2018-2021	Mark Ager
2022	Jayne Murrill

Presidents of the Band:

1921	H Morbey	1938	Dr H Nickson
1925	W R Clark J.P.	1939	R Clark
1929	E Leonard	1950	E Leonard
1930	S Moore J.P.	1954	R F A Clark
1931	R Clark J.P.	1957	J R Ennion
1932	W H Bennett	1984	D Hotson
1933	E Leonard	1991	R W Hillman
1934	R Clark	2004	D Page
1935	E R Ennion	2018	C J Smalley
1936	Dr A P Nicolle		
