

As Taverham Band prepared to perform at their sell-out Christmas concerts, we spoke to longest serving member **PETER ALMOND**, who will have been playing with the band for 40 years in 2016! Here we tells us about life as a professional trumpet player and how the band keeps his music alive!

Peter is very modest about his career as a professional musician, which came about purely by accident.

When he was 10 years old, Peter met the father of his elder brother's girlfriend, who happened to be a musician.

"He had an old cornet and he gave it to me and told me to see if I could get a sound out of it, and I did," said Peter.

"I must have had a bit of a gift at it because I could copy the pitch that he played – it just came naturally."

After learning for a couple of years, Peter joined the Norwich Lads' Club band, before being called up in 1946, aged 18.

"The officer who interviewed me asked what I could do, and I said I could play, so I passed some tests and then, after basic training, I joined the RAF band at Cranwell.

"I was lucky that I never had to do any other duties. Cranwell was a big camp with a college where they trained the officers. We would play for them and go out to other camps."

After three years in the RAF, Peter returned to Norwich and got work as a trumpet player at Norwich Hippodrome, which stood where the St Giles car park is now.

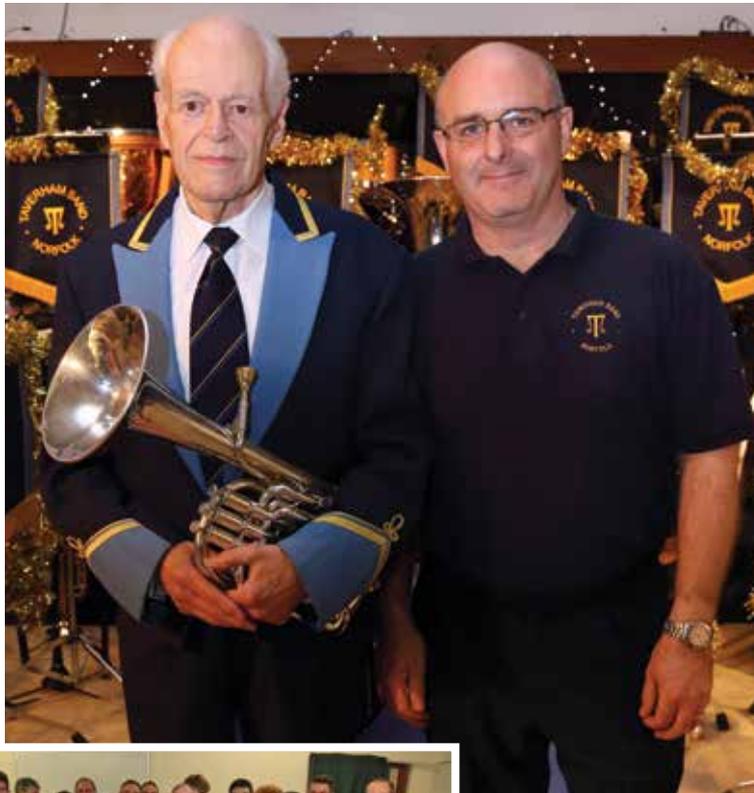
"It was a lovely theatre and I worked there for 10 years, before television got popular and a lot of the theatres began to close," explained Peter.

"We worked six days a week and every week we had to learn different music for the new acts coming in, supporting such stars as Laurel and Hardy, comedian Vic Oliver, Randolph Sutton, The Leslie Brothers and Vera Lynn."

When the theatre closed in 1959, one of the musical directors was working at the Britannia Pier Theatre in Great Yarmouth and asked Peter to come with him. Peter worked there for 25 summer seasons, which each lasted for 20 weeks, six days a week. Here the list of famous names included The Beverley Sisters, Mike and Bernie Winters, Morecambe and Wise, Bob Monkhouse, Des O' Connor and Ken Dodd.

Peter also worked the winter season in

Not one to blow his own trumpet



PLAY ON: Taverham Band's longest serving member Peter Almond with musical director Ian Colman; (below) with the rest of the band at the Christmas concert.



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pantomime in Birmingham, working with artists such as Frankie Howerd, Ronnie Corbett, Frank Ifield and Cilla Black.

His career also included stints with the circus, both at the Belle Vue in Manchester and Yarmouth Hippodrome before it was taken over by Peter Jay.

Peter retired as a professional player in 1984 and was asked to take the role of brass tutor at Town Close School, which he did every lunchtime for 10 years, before fully retiring aged 65.

With such a busy professional music career, it's a wonder how Peter also manage to fit in playing for Taverham Band.

The band was formed in 1974 and Peter, who lives in Taverham, joined two years later, making him the longest serving member.

Playing when he could during the off-

season, Peter fully committed to the band once he retired as a professional player.

As a brass band doesn't traditionally include a trumpet, Peter initially played the cornet, and currently plays the tenor horn.

And he's certainly a valued member of the band, bringing a wealth of experience with the older big band pieces, and an appreciation of the modern arrangements.

"I'm all for the new stuff," said Peter, who can read music like he reads a newspaper. "Ian's always bringing in modern music and I like learning new pieces."

With next year being Peter's 40th with the band, does he have any plans to stop?

"Once you've played, you don't like to give it up," said Peter. "Touch wood, I'm lucky health wise, so I'll carry on as long as I can. There's lots of things I can't do these days, but I can still play!"

Musical director Ian Colman, who is the second longest serving member after Peter, added: "I've been conducting the band for 23 years, but before that I was lead cornet player with Peter and he taught me so much, his experience is invaluable.

"We've also got a great age range in the band, the youngest being my 13-year-old daughter Emily – that's a 74 year age range!"