Chairman’s column
HAROLD GOODWIN
We have presented our final evidence to the examination of the planned Cleve Hill power station. The more we have learnt about it, the more those of us who have worked on the proposal have become concerned.

See page 7 and a link to our final evidence which is published on the Faversham Society’s website.

The inspectorate’s decision will become known at the end of the month, and the board will then need to decide how we respond to it. We may find ourselves with a major campaign to mount as the decision rests with a secretary of state. The final decision is a political one.

I would like to thank David Melville and Matthew Hatchwell who worked with me to draft our evidence and all those who have contributed knowledge and ideas over the past 18 months.

Every year we hold a reception to thank the Open Houses and Open Gardens teams for their work for the society, these are our flagship educational events, and they raise money to enable us to maintain the Fleur and contribute to the maintenance of our heritage, in the Fleur and in the town.

This year marked the peak of our annual Open Houses programme (see page 2). After 50 years we are going refresh the idea and evolve Open Houses into Open Faversham, inspired by Open House London. Take a look (see page 3) and get in touch if you’d like to be part of this.

We have been actively working on traffic, pollution and housing all year. With a Swale Local Plan due to be delivered in two years and continuing pressure from central government for us to take more...
housing, the society’s board will be spending a great deal of time on these issues in the next few years. The town council has decided to develop a Neighbourhood Plan and several board and other members are already actively engaged with it through the Faversham Future Forum. The society will be stretched next year. If you are concerned about these issues and have time to engage please get in touch.

The change in leadership in KCC has resulted in cabinet posts changing and Michael Whiting is no longer KCC cabinet member for planning, highways, transport and waste. We are working with his office to organise something in early 2020.

May I take this opportunity to thank all our volunteers for their work throughout the year and to wish you all season’s greetings.

harold@haroldgoodwin.info

The society in music
GEOFF SANDIFORD

The inspiration for the musical Our Beautiful Town came directly from Christine Rayner’s book 50 Years of the Faversham Society 1962-2012.

It tells of the epic struggle to protect this medieval gem of a town against the ruthless planners of the 1960s. It features some great stories about the individuals who founded the Faversham Society.

I thought this would be a great idea for a musical presentation. I approached the society, which agreed to help with the research and had fun poring over old photographs and videos with Chris Wootton. I met Dorothy Percival, who organised meetings with some of the founder members to get the inside story of those exciting days.

Several months later the musical presentation is finished and ready to perform. It comprises 15 songs and many images, which celebrate the achievements of the early days of the Faversham Society which saved our beautiful town.

Our Beautiful Town will be performed at the Fleur hall at 7.30pm on 14, 15 and 16 January. Tickets are £5 and are available from the Fleur.

50th year of Open Houses
HAROLD GOODWIN

The Faversham Society ran its first Open Houses programme 50 years ago with three properties. From this small beginning it grew until this year, when we sold 650 tickets for entry to 51 properties.

Over the three weekends, we estimate that there were 6,300 visits. We have checked nationally and, so far as we can
ascertain, Faversham ran the first Open Houses programme in the UK. There is now, of course, a large national programme, Heritage Open Days, which run in September each year.

Heritage Open Days have just celebrated their 25th anniversary and have grown into a vibrant celebration of histories and cultures, with more than 5,500 events taking place in 2018 across England. The London Open Houses programme now comprises 800-plus buildings, walks, talks and tours.

The current Open Houses Committee, Moyra Harding and Helen Albery, assisted by Chris and Annette Brooke-Taylor, Sheila Gibbins and Linda Hird, created a great success this year. Open Houses and Open Gardens, the latter run by a different group, are remarkable for their combination of educational work and fundraising. The society is justly proud of this achievement and extremely grateful to all those who have built it into such a great success.

I have known for some months that the current committee wishes to retire and that this 50th anniversary year would be their last. They have done brilliantly to grow the programme. Its success is a result of their considerable effort over many months each year. It is increasingly difficult to persuade people to open their houses, and there were none, for example, open in Abbey Street this year. More and more people and members are commenting that there are few new properties to visit.

Open Faversham: Jonathan Carey and I have been meeting Moyra Harding and Helen Albery and their committee for a while, and it is clear that it is time for change. They will continue to assist with advice, but the work needs to be taken up by others. The Faversham Museums Together Group and the mapping project continue to develop and what has emerged from our working group within the society is Open Faversham.

Our thinking has been stimulated by how Open House London has grown to encompass streets, streetscapes, buildings,
open spaces, talks and cultural activities. In London, there is something of a mini-festival across the city. Faversham is good at festivals.

So Open Faversham will each year invite residents and visitors to share in a celebration of aspects of our heritage through guided walks, visits, music, drama, talks, displays and exhibitions. The themes will change from year to year and may repeat perhaps every four or five years. We are planning two weekends each year in mid-July. We hope to attract people from further afield and to create opportunities for evening talks and performances.

For 2020 we are planning two weekends with opening events, talks or performances, on Friday evening.

11 July The coming of the railway to Faversham for train buffs and historians

12 July Victorian Faversham – houses, streets, public buildings and the recreation ground

18 July Gunpowder in the town – the industrial archaeology, the housing for the workers, the owners and the managers

19 July The Gunpowder works on the marsh and the great explosion

If you would like to be involved with one or more of these days, or know of others who might, or have contacts with whom we should be in touch, within or beyond, Faversham please email harold@haroldgoodwin.info or call 01795 532737

Walking with podcasts
ANTONY MILLETT
Mike Adams from Creek FM and I met one fine Sunday morning for a walk around the centre of Faversham. Along the way, Mike was introduced to parts of the town that he

To page 7 >>>

Masterful sailing study
CHARLES TRAILL
Sailing Coasters of Faversham is the third volume of Hugh Perks’s study of the vessels associated with the port of Faversham, a trilogy started in 2010. Having covered smacks and barges in his two previous Faversham Papers, this new one covers the cargo ships that were based at or visited the port.

Its 16 chapters encompass not only the extent of the Port of Faversham but also the trades it supported and the talented individuals employed in and who, in many cases, also operated the ships. The author investigates the wide variety of sail-powered cargo ships utilised, such as the brigs, schooners and hoys, as well as the large ketch-barges. Each have a distinctive rig and redeeming features for relevant trades; all are readily explained in the extensive glossary.

This is no rose-tinted account of times gone by. The harsh reality of life at sea is stressed from the outset: ships sank and crews drowned. “Too many Faversham coasters ended their days on sands and rocks or were posted as missing believed foundered,” he says. Even so, the East Swale had for decades been considered the only safe refuge between the Downs and Harwich, much more so than the Medway.

To aid his researches Hugh has explored a variety of official documents including ship registers, newspaper reports, family history archives and personal interviews recorded over many years. He sets the scene by explaining Faversham’s unique position at the heart of the Swale which in medieval times
adjoined the sheltered route between the English Channel and London, an advantage it sought to consolidate in subsequent centuries. Early on, this involved a wide variety of commodities from foodstuffs and Kentish wool to cereals; later in the 19th century coal and timber, gunpowder and cement increasingly featured as associated shore-based industries became substantiated.

One of the most interesting and intricate sections of this book involves the evolution and instigation of the Faversham Navigation. The creek had long been a convoluted waterway and schemes were explored as far back as the 18th century to make it easier for commercial shipping to reach the town’s wharves. Discussions went back and forth on various schemes, notably one by Thomas Telford, the eminent Scottish civil engineer, which was questioned on the basis of cost.

Compromises ensued and the amended scheme went under way but not until two acts of parliament has been required. Facsimiles of original documents provide real substance to the intricacies of the project, and a fascinating insight into the machinations of events. Despite bad planning and inexperience, the Navigation’s commissioners correctly foresaw the need for sailing vessels to be assisted up the creek to the town’s wharves. Merchants also realised that Faversham could not compete with Whitstable and increasingly turned more to the coming of the railway.

As with so much of Hugh’s work it is his attention to detail that proves so enlightening; for example we learn of the direct labour force employed: not only their identities but also the cost of their equipment, even their beer allowance. The sections on the salvaging of stricken vessels and the decoy ships of the Great War also fascinate, bringing information not often available to the casual reader.

The same goes for the phrase “rope walk” which initially puzzled your reviewer until he looked into the matter: evidently it is a long straight narrow lane, or a covered pathway, where long strands of material are laid, before being twisted into rope. The rope “walkers” probably travelled 10 miles a day. When you consider a single vessel needed at least two miles of cordage, such additional information only goes to emphasise how involved this vital commodity was for sailing coasters.

The attention to detail also goes for the author’s choice of photographic material. Any reservations your reviewer might have had about picture reproduction in previous papers have largely been addressed. To keep production costs down, there have inevitably been some restrictions but these have been minimised and the pictures definitely enhance the text. It is fortunate the author can draw on the Crossoer collection in the Faversham Society’s archive for many of the illustrations that all go to provide fascinating evidence of the times.

Volunteering opportunities

Help in any of the following areas would be much appreciated:

Customer service People to staff our Visitor Information Centre and shop, second-hand bookshop, museum reception and gallery stewards. Previous experience is not essential.

Stewards Our museum and the Chart Mills Gunpowder Works both need stewards to assist members of the public. Familiarisation and training is not onerous and will be provided.

Town guides There is no script to learn; enthusiasm for our town is sufficient. Training proceeds at your own pace and you are encouraged to include your own anecdotes and personality. If you don’t enjoy it, our customers won’t either.

Curators, archivists, historians, librarians, and archaeologists Enthusiasm and an interest will get you started; any training necessary will help you, and us, to proceed. Any skills and experience will be gratefully accepted.

Media communication skills Experience and contacts with all media areas, whether in print, broadcast or online are especially welcome.

Admin and IT support Come and hide around the back and make the front appear most efficient. We are always grateful for assistance with minute taking. Committees meet monthly during daytime and evenings. Giving up two hours a month will make these meetings run so much better.

Social media skills (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and website update/design) will enable us to interact better with customers and potential visitors.

Open Faversham and Open Gardens The success of these events is ensured by planning and communication during the year and stewards on the days.

Interested? Contact Harold Goodwin: harold@haroldgoodwin.info
had previously ignored and heard stories of people and events that have provided us with the rich heritage that we now enjoy.

The two-hour walk has been edited into five 20-minute podcasts and cover the area bounded by Market Street, Market Place, Middle Row, Court Street, Abbey Street, Abbey Place, Church Path, Church Road and East Street.

The walk took Mike and I about two hours and follows the route usually taken on the “walking with history” tours. The timing for the regular tours is between 90 minutes and two hours but depends on the speed of the slowest guest. As such, these podcasts contain material that is often omitted from the walking with history tours because of time constraint.

For the podcasts, go to the link below.

favershamsociety.org/guided-walks/

Cleve Hill power station
HAROLD GOODWIN
The Faversham Society supports solar power, along with wind power and other forms of renewable energy. We are accordingly dismayed that hundreds of new houses are being built around Faversham without any sustainable energy provision.

The society supports clean solar. However, the Cleve Hill proposal is for dirty solar: we have significant concerns about the batteries, safety and security and decommissioning. These concerns have not been allayed by anything presented at Deadline 6 or subsequently.

We remain unconvinced by the developer’s case for the need, and we are deeply concerned about the scale and flood risk, about the batteries that pose a safety and security risk, the environmental and traffic impacts and about whether Swale will have the time and capacity to oversee and enforce the development consent order.

You can read our final submission to the Inspectorate here favershamsociety.org/cleve-hill-deadline-7-submission

The examination is now over, and the decision will be published at the end of November. If the application is approved, it then goes to the secretary of state for department for business, energy and industrial strategy. Of course, ministerial responsibilities may change after the general election on 12 December.

The board will need to decide what the society does once we have the inspectorate’s decision, but it is likely that we would campaign against it. Some would accuse us of Nimbyism and that’s an ugly word. The Faversham Society is committed in our charitable objects to “secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest in Faversham and the surrounding area.” We seek to cherish the past, adorn the present, create for the future.

Boxing Day walk
LINDA IRELAND & PAT ROSS
What do you usually do on Boxing Day? Are you bored/tired/miserable/stressed out? Are you worried about your credit card bill for the presents and the food leading up to Christmas Day itself? Have you got a headache? Never fear – your society is here to help!

Why not join us for an invigorating walk? Come with us and get out in the fresh air and clear your mind ready for whatever challenges 2020 brings.
We will be leaving from the Guildhall in Market Place at 10.30am on Boxing Day morning, Thursday, 26 December.

You do not have to book. The walk is free. The only money you will need is if you decide to have a drink or some food after the walk itself.

We will be walking along part of the Swale Heritage Trail, through allotments, over fields and the railway line to the 12th-century St Bartholomew’s Church at Goodnestone, a designated Grade I listed building, under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. Its east window is by Thomas Willement.

We will then be walking on to Nagden, and back along the side of Faversham Creek. The walk is about 5½ miles, but you can turn back earlier.

Please wear appropriate outer clothing and footwear, as it may be icy and/or muddy on the day. You also need to bear in mind that you are going on the walk at your own risk and will not be covered by Faversham Society insurance.

It all, of course, depends on what the weather is like on the day. But as you do not have to book, you can leave it until Boxing Day morning to decide.

Family and friends who are not members of the society are also welcome to join us, but also need to be aware the walk would be at their own risk and of the insurance position, as mentioned above.

Passing and parking
HAROLD GOODWIN

With increasing amounts of housing imposed on Swale by central government, parking is becoming a problem in many parts of town and with it the challenge of cars being able to pass in streets already narrowed by parked vehicles.

Residents in the Mall and the Abbey Neighbourhood Association have written to the society, and the board discussed the issue at length at the October meeting.

Members are aware that on-street parking and passing places are issues throughout the town including, for example, St Mary’s, St John’s, Ospringe Road, St Ann’s, Abbey Street, Broomfield Road and Reedland Crescent.

With increased housing demanded by the government, traffic pressure will increase, and parking will become increasingly difficult. The society hopes that the proposed Neighbourhood Plan will address some of these issues, and produce guidelines for how residents can engage to develop solutions and have them
tarmac. But it struck Tim that the island was there, that it was unusual, that it seemed to make some drivers pause and think about how they should negotiate it – and that it might perhaps stay.

So it then seemed that the appropriate – and perhaps even obvious – thing to do would be to restore the island. But given that there was no need for a central lamppost or bollards, the question remained as to what should go in the middle of the hexagon. Tim settled on the idea of a stone or, borrowing from the terminology of the cathedral-builders, a “boss”.

Whereas bosses are typically seen high up in medieval vaulting, at the intersection of ribs, Preston Street’s boss would sit at ground level, at the meeting of the three brick arms.

What should go on the stone? It seemed the best, most appropriate device would be the crest of the town.

The Faversham Society agreed to pay for the stone, and for Clive Sherwood to make it and Faversham Town Council had KCC install it.

implemented. The society broadly supports all community initiatives to develop solutions: residents are generally those most knowledgeable about the issues and most likely to be affected by changes.

**Full steam ahead**

CHRISTINE SMITH

Here’s a selection of books at the Fleur that will appeal to the railways enthusiast. All are from the excellent Shire range.


Gwynne outlines the history of this most famous train and its namesake locomotive, from the instigation of the “special Scotch express” in 1862 through to the 1930s, to the introduction of diesel and electric services that slashed journey times. He also examines the influence of Sir Nigel Gresley on locomotive design and his legacy that lives on in the form of the preserved Flying Scotsman.

*The Great Western Railway*, Tim Bryan, £7.99.

The GWR story, from the foundations laid by I. K. Brunel to its glory days before the First World War and from the years after the war when the Great Western was the only large railway to maintain its identity after the grouping of 1923; to its decline during the Second World War years and its nationalisation in 1948.


An insight into the origins and working lives of the little-known locomotives that spent their working days...
behind the walls of factories, docks and shipyards and were rarely seen by the public.

*Railways in Wartime, Tim Bryan. £7.95.* The heroic role of railways in warfare was firmly established in the months before and after the D-Day landings in 1944 when thousands of trains were run to support the Allied invasion, cementing their position as the “fourth service” during the Second World War.

**Wartime Faversham**

**PETER STEVENS**

Here are some extracts from 1940 wartime diary of Harold Austin, who served as a special constable in Faversham. He kept two shops, one in East Street (above which he and his family lived) and the other in Court Street. His daughter, Eve, was a Faversham Society stalwart.

**21 July** Man injured by bomb at Oare died in hospital.

**23 July** Bombs dropped at Graveney and Syndale. Saw 8 or 9 bomb craters either side of Coastal Road.

**27 July** 4 bombs dropped at Eastling.

**12 August** 2 bombs at Boughton.

**13 August** 5 bombs at Beacon Hill

**15 August** Bombs at Sharsted, Lynsted and Uplees.

**16 August** 8 bombs dropped at Uplees.

**3 September** Incendiary on Dr Porter’s house in East Street.

**9 September** No trains from London – damage on line.

**18 September** Bombs fell in Newton, St Mary’s and St John’s roads. A time bomb buried itself in garden at St Mary’s. Police turned people out of their houses from the Royal William to the top of the road. Another bomb in middle of St John’s Road, breaking many windows.

**23 September** Big air battle overhead. Four parachutists down, two in Faversham – one of our own landed in the Creek.

**28 September** Dog fights overhead – machinegun bullets spattering down in East Street.

**4 October** 9.15pm, two explosions, sounded near. We made for the cellar and when we came up, every window in shop and house were blown in. Hilda [Mrs Austin] wanted to ask Woods at 1 Newton Road to put us up but debris in road so she couldn’t get across. Later, alas, we found that the bomb had demolished their house and Mr & Mrs Wood, their daughter Pearl and their maid, Nellie Cox, had all been killed.

**8 October** Three bombs between Canning Factory and Heaters on the creekside.

**11 October** Town was dive-bombed. One fell in Union Street, another on Black’s Garage and a third in Forbes Road. The latter smashed many houses, and the glass at 14 The Mall was all blown out. A number of people were injured.

*Further details can be found in About Faversham No 68 – Wartime Faversham, 1940-44, The Diary Of Harold Austin*

**Christmas books and gifts**

**WENDY CLARKE**

We will be opening a small second-hand gift shop in the Fleur gallery, Preston Street, from 14-22 December, 10.30am to 3.30pm. Do come and have a look. There will be bargain gifts and curio items of all kinds, and stocking fillers.

All donations are gratefully accepted – if you have any unwanted presents, bric-a-brac, toys, artwork or vintage items please bring them into the second-hand bookshop in Gatefield Lane or we can collect if heavy. All proceeds to go to the society.
The Fleur bookshop in Gatefield Lane is now open from 11am to 2pm on Sundays.

**Warden remembered**

**PETER STEVENS**

The recent death of Frank Coppins at the age of 97 brings to mind this extract from my 2004 book on The Brents:

“Frank Coppins, the son of Frederick James and Minnie Eleanor Coppins, whom many will remember was our local traffic warden for many years, lived as a boy at 25 in Court’s Opening on The Brents. Before the 1914-18 war his father was a costermonger/fishmonger trading from a donkey or pony cart and was later a fish-frier in a West Street shop next door to the North Kent public house. During the 1914-18 war he worked at the Cotton Powder Company and was off duty on the day of the big explosion in Apil, 1916.”

Frank recalled The Brents as a close-knit community where families and neighbours stuck together and tended to remain in the area throughout their lives. His aunt was the wife of Thomas George Seager, the landlord of the Brents Tavern from 1922-25, and another aunt was Mrs Lew Wood at 116 Upper Brents.

**Traveller’s tales**

**PAULINE MILES**

Many people have said to me over the past year: “We miss your Traveller’s Tales, Pauline.”

But I haven’t really been travelling since my Amazon trip in January 2018 ... until now. On 1 October I set sail on the Marco Polo from Tilbury to six places I had not been before so I needed to tick them off.

Initially sailing along by Whitstable and the forts and I couldn’t help exclaiming “Oh, the Maunsell Forts”, which then started a conversation with a couple who asked: “What, who, where?” Conversation continued and they had visited Faversham over one Christmas and had lunch in The Anchor pub.

Next through the Kiel Canal and first port, Wismar, Germany. Rønne on the Island of Bornholm, Denmark, Visby on the Island of Gotland off Sweden. Riga in Latvia was the jewel in the crown, then Klaipeda in Lithuania which I had not heard of before. Finally we came to Gdansk in Poland where the old town was beautiful, a most attractive place to wander around and drink in the architecture.

A couple of days at sea relaxing and back through the Kiel Canal and home safely to Tilbury. Whether I travel again, and write a little piece, remains to be seen.
The Faversham Society Newsletter is edited by Stephen Rayner. Contributions are welcomed, and should be received by midday on the 15th of the month before publication, preferably by email to favnewsletter@gmail.com or at the Fleur de Lis, 10-13 Preston Street, Faversham, Kent ME13 8NS, marked for newsletter editor. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Faversham Society or of the editor. The editor’s decision is final.

ADVERTISING
Clubs, societies, organisations and businesses are encouraged to advertise in the newsletter. The cost is £40 a page (discounts are available for block booking). The minimum boxed ad measures 59mm x 93mm (or equivalent) and costs £10. If interested, please email the editor. Cheques should be made payable to the Faversham Society and sent to Jan West at the address above.

DIGITAL EDITION
Please consider saving the society printing costs by receiving your newsletter by email. Contact the membership secretary at fleurmem@hotmail.com.

All content © the Faversham Society.

The Faversham Society Newsletter

12 December 2019

FAVERSHAM SOCIETY OPENING

The Fleur de Lis museum, 10-13 Preston Street, Faversham ME13 8NS, is open 10am-4pm Monday to Saturday; and 10am-1pm on Sunday. The gallery is open 10am-4pm Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday; 1pm-4pm Tuesday and Thursday; and 10am-1pm Sunday.
01795 590726
fleurmuseum@tiscali.co.uk

The Fleur de Lis visitor information centre and book and gift shop are open 10am-4pm Monday to Saturday and Sunday 10am-1pm.
01795 534542
ticfaversham@btconnect.com

The Fleur de Lis second-hand bookshop at 1a Gatefield Lane is open 10am-3.30pm, Monday to Saturday and 11am-2pm Sundays.
01795 590621

Chart Gunpowder Mills in Nobel Court, off South Road, is open 2pm-5pm Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays from Easter to end of October, at other times by arrangement.

The Faversham Society is Registered Charity No 1135262 and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales No 7112241.
www.favershamsociety.org