

Faversham Society Newsletter

August 2021

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Chairman's column

HAROLD GOODWIN

About this time last year we announced that the AGM would be held online and I said that we were looking forward to being able to hold a more traditional meeting in 2021. It is not certain what the Covid situation will be in September when we must hold the AGM. As we have said above, you will find the formal notice of the AGM on page 2 and 6-7.

With so much uncertainty we are not planning to have a speaker. There will be plenty of opportunity to hear about our work over the last year and plans for the future and to have your questions answered. We have taken a cautious approach and planned to run a hybrid, or blended, meeting when you will be able to attend in person in the Alexander Centre or participate by Zoom.

There will be the usual elections, with three trustee directors retiring this year: David Melville, Heather Wootton and Chris Wright. Elections to the chair and vice-chair are from among the trustees by membership each year at the AGM. Nomination forms are available from the Fleur or can be downloaded from our website.

Lithium danger You may have seen the article in the *Mail on Sunday* about the dangers associated with large-scale lithium-ion batteries of the sort we believe are to be used at the Cleve Hill solar power station. We are very concerned about the



Champions to curate

Have you seen the museum window display this month, connecting today's skateboarders with our town's world-beating roller-hockey team?

There are many stories about Faversham that endure. They are an important part of our cultural heritage, and they tell us about who we are, about how we see ourselves. We want to find someone to begin to record these stories. If you have a story you would like to share or if you would like to curate them, please contact chair@favershamsociety.info

dangers. Our vice-chairman, Sir David Melville, is to meet senior officers and members at Swale to discuss how the planners will respond to the detailed planning application when it is submitted. There are increasing concerns about the performance of the Faversham Waste Water Treatment Works and its capacity to cope with our growing population. See pages 10-11.

Henderson honour Mike Henderson, a previous chairman of our planning committee, stood down from the society's board when he was elected to Faversham Town Council. He will be missed. He was made an honorary freeman of Faversham at a ceremony in the Guildhall in July. David Melville and I represented the society and were honoured to be invited.

Creating for the future With the Local Plan and the separate Neighbourhood Plan going to referendum in 2022 or 2023, the Faversham Society will be actively working to ensure that the town develops in ways that build on its heritage and that meet the needs and aspirations of its citizens for themselves and their children.

Faversham is a great place to live and we shall work to ensure that it continues to be. We shall continue to “cherish the past, adorn the present, and create for the future”.

New interpretation The Oare Gunpowder Works and Country Park will have new interpretation boards by mid-August with things to spot. Well worth a visit, particularly if you have children with you. See page 4-5.

Faversham web Arthur Percival and others wrote a great deal of the town's history that was published on the Faversham.org website. When the site was deleted and a new one developed, this material was not

AGM 2021

The 2021 annual general meeting (AGM) of the Faversham Society will be held in the Alexander Centre, Preston Street, Faversham, at 7pm on Tuesday, 7 September.

Government advice permitting, we intend to hold a blended meeting with participation possible both by physical and virtual attendance. Final details will be available in the newsletter and online along with the AGM papers and nominations on 23 August. Proxy forms will be available from 23 August and must be returned to the society no later than 7pm on 5 September (ie 48 hours before the meeting).

The agenda is on page 6-7

The agenda and nomination papers for trustee directors and officers are also available on the society's website: <https://favershamsociety.org/agm-2021/>

included. I have the material and it could be uploaded to the Faversham Society website. If you would be interested in doing this, please contact me on chair@favershamsociety.info.

Heritage display An exhibition of Faversham and Swale's natural, cultural and built heritage will be held in the Town Hall at 12 Market Place from 16 August to 2 September. We are looking for volunteers to help put up the exhibition and to staff it.

If you are looking for activities– with or without children – as the summer holidays draw to a close, plan to visit the exhibition and discover new things to do during your



staycation. To volunteer [contact chair@favershamsociety.info](mailto:chair@favershamsociety.info).

Our Saxon Shore Way There is a good deal of material available on line about the Saxon Shore Way from Conyer, through Faversham to Whitstable. However, we have no leaflets or simple guides about it in the Fleur.

A basic map and some interpretation would raise awareness of the trail and increase people's enjoyment of walking it. If you would be interested in working with us to develop a trail leaflet [contact chair@favershamsociety.info](mailto:chair@favershamsociety.info).

Action on creek pollution

THE EDITOR

Many of you will have seen the coverage in the press about Southern Water's fine for misreporting its effluent discharges. Faversham Waste Water Treatment Plant was not mentioned, but it is run by Southern Water.

The raft race was once an attraction on Faversham Creek, but it is now far too polluted

We understand that the works in Faversham is very near to capacity. With the proposed developments taking place in and around the town both now and in the near future, the capacity will be exceeded and will need to be increased. We understand the present plant meets its consent, although the consent is not at all stringent, and indeed leads to serious pollution of Faversham Creek.

Faversham Creek is unfit for recreational purposes over its whole length, including the part in the town. The present discharge takes place near the town and at all stages of the tide. This means that the partially treated effluent returns into the town on an incoming tide, and then disperses on the

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OARE Gunpowder Works

A walk through the "Danger Houses"

Welcome!

The Oare Gunpowder Works site contains the remains of a former gunpowder factory that is known to have been in production from the late seventeenth century until its closure in 1934. In addition to the industrial remains the site provides a range of wildlife habitats that are all being conserved and enhanced to increase their value to a wide range of trees, plants, animals and insects.

General Information

This site and walks are open to the public, daily. The Visitor Centre and Interpretation Centre are open to the public only at the specified times or by special arrangement. The Visitor Centre contains an exhibition on the history of the site and wildlife habitats. The Interpretation Centre contains reinstated machinery and information on wetland habitats. Toilets are available only at the Visitor Centre. We welcome school groups for supervised educational activities.



The Walks

The **Yellow Route** has been designed for visitors with special needs and is mostly on level ground with shallow ramps where needed. It can accommodate wheelchairs and light motorised buggies for people with disabilities.

The **Red, Blue and Green Routes** include steps and steeper inclines.

Please leave your vehicle in the car park during your visit and continue on foot via the several circular routes which are indicated by coloured bands on the way-marker posts. These allow access to the parts of the original works where the more dangerous processes were carried out.

Interpretation Centre



Information Boards

- A. Visitors Centre
- B. Foreman's Office and Packing Rooms
- C. Remains of No. 3 Proprietary Mills
- D. The Glazing House
- E. The Lairs
- F. The Corning House
- G. The 1926 Incorporating Mills
- H. The Lower Millpond
- J. Site of Stables
- K. Marshland Boardwalk
- L. The Press Houses
- M. Test Range & Laboratory



Brown long-eared bat



Peacock Butterfly

Wildlife

The site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the reed beds at the far end are a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The whole area is being managed to improve its value as a wildlife habitat, particularly for bats, birds and butterflies.

- We would be grateful if you could:
- Clear up after your dog
 - Keep to the existing tracks and footpaths.
 - Keep your dogs on a lead
 - Not pick wildflowers and grasses
 - Take your litter home with you
- Generally respect the interests of other people on the site.



Reed Warbler



Green Tit



Common Frog



PLEASE DO NOT LITTER
PLEASE DO NOT FEED ANIMALS
PLEASE DO NOT PICK PLANTS

PLEASE USE BINS PROVIDED

Swale Borough Council,
Oare Gunpowder Works,
Faversham, ME13 3UD
Tel: 01795 424841
www.gunpowderworks.co.uk

Friends of Oare Gunpowder Works



This site is being managed in partnership with Swale Borough Council and Friends of the Oare Gunpowder Works. Scan the QR Code to find out more.

A complete list of the species recorded here from the Council's management will result in publications.

Test Range and Laboratory

OARE Gunpowder Works

On this part of the site the various types of gunpowder produced at the Oare works were tested or "proofed" in a small cannon or "proofing mortar", from which shot could be projected with a measured amount of powder or "charge".

The test range and laboratory were created in newly-planted woodland between 1865 and 1885. The range was 170 metres long and 11 metres wide and was terraced into the slope of the hill. It was lined on both sides by Wellingtonia (Sequoiadendron giganteum), of which the stumps survive, and several of these trees have been replaced.

The Woodland & Wildlife

The Wellingtonia is native to California and known as "The Big Tree" - the largest recorded has a height of 81 metres (272 feet), with a trunk girth of 24 metres (79 feet) and is called General Sherman! These trees are generally acknowledged to be the world's largest living thing.

**HEY KIDS!
CAN YOU SPOT?**

- Snowdrop
- Wellingtonia
- Red Campion
- Song Thrush



The test range, laboratory and proofing mortar in the 1920's. The line of stakes in front of the gun were presumably to measure the distance that the shot was projected.

The brick and concrete footings that you can see here are the remains of the laboratory. Set in the floor there is a millstone (possibly from one of the old incorporating mills of the site).

The test range is being managed as a woodland glade habitat to sustain plants, insects and birds. It is surrounded by coppiced woodland. Coppicing is a method of producing a regular crop of straight poles from the bases of trees, which are cut down close to the ground level on a seven-to-ten-year rotation an form "scooks" of numerous stems. The process opens up the tree canopy at regular intervals and encourages a greater variety of ground flora.

A variety of insects gather in sheltered glades encouraged by the wide range of trees on site. At dusk Bats are attracted to fly here to feed on these insects as they require a huge amount of food for their size.

In the Autumn the Cap Fungus are seen along the range and their "juice" was once used as an ink for writing.

In the late Winter look for the wonderful display of Snowdrops along the paths.



Oare Gunpowder Works,
Byring Wood Road, Oare,
Faversham ME13 7UD
www.gunpowderworks.co.uk



Swale Borough Council, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne Kent ME10 3HT
Tel: 01795 624441
www.swale.gov.uk
www.friendsofswale.gov.uk



This site is being managed in partnership with Swale Borough Council and Friends of the Oare Gunpowder Works. Scan the QR Code to find out more.

5. Appointment of Independent Examiner
6. Election of Trustees
7. Election of Officers: Chair and Vice Chair
8. President's Review
9. Any other business
10. Date of next meeting

In accordance with the Society's Articles of Association, all members have the right to attend, speak and vote at the AGM. If you are unable to attend the AGM but wish for somebody else to vote on your behalf, please submit a completed proxy form. Proxy forms will be available from **23 August** and must be returned to the Society no later than 7 pm on the **5th September 2021** (ie 48 hours before the meeting).

The papers of the AGM, that shall include details of all those nominated for election and the 2020 financial year's annual report and accounts, shall be made available to all members by **25th August**. These, and proxy forms, will be available to download from the Faversham Society's website at favershamociety.org and hard copies will be available from Faversham Society, 10-13 Preston Street Faversham Kent ME13 8NS.

Harold Goodwin
Chair
July 2021



THE FAVERSHAM SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1962

FLEUR DE LIS HERITAGE CENTRE

ESTABLISHED 1977

Company No. 71112241, Registered Charity No.1135262

Address 10-13 Preston Street, Faversham, Kent ME13 8NS

Notice is hereby given that the 2021 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Faversham Society will be held in the Alexander Centre, Preston Street, Faversham on Tuesday **7th September 2021** at 7pm.

Government advice permitting we intend to hold a blended meeting with participation possible both by physical and virtual attendance. Final details will be available in the newsletter and online along with the AGM papers and nominations on 23rd August

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2020 AGM and matters arising
3. Chair's Review and receipt of the Annual Report
4. Receipt of the Annual Accounts

outgoing tide, only to return on the next incoming tide. While the creek has not been used for serious recreational purposes for many years, since the raft race was abandoned due to the pollution, plans for the town include the creek becoming a focal point for more activity.

The wastewater from the works that eventually discharges into the Swale is partly why that body of water is of a very low standard – yet the Swale water is classified as suitable for shellfish.

The Centre for Environment Fisheries & Aquaculture Science, a government agency, reports: “There is a managed plot on which oysters are grown on the sea bed on the intertidal off the Graveney Marshes to the east of the mouth of Faversham Creek. The main contaminating influence in this zone will be the ebb plume from Faversham Creek, which receives sewage from Faversham [sewage treatment works], has a marina and significant areas of moorings, as well as receiving some freshwater inputs.”

The development of the town, and the contributions being made by developers to new sewers and infrastructure present Southern Water and the Environment Agency with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to improve radically both the local watercourse and the Swale estuary.

Should we beat the bounds?

KATIE BEGG

Last month we mentioned

the stones that survive around our parish boundary – evidence of the town’s expansion.

The society is putting together a map of boundary stones around Faversham and we are appealing for your help.

Meanwhile, here is what Arthur Percival said about Faversham’s parish boundary stones: “In 1846 when the bounds of the parish of Faversham were painstakingly ‘beaten’ by the vicar, churchwardens and overseers of the poor, they were marked mainly by boundary stones – in a few cases only by wooden markers.

“In the detached portion of the parish in the Uplees area there were 17 stones and in another detached portion near Selgrove [*a hamlet near Copton – Editor*] there were 12. Such were the intricacies of the boundaries of the main parish that it mustered a total of no fewer than 64 stones.

“It was then long and narrow, extending west to east from near Judd Folly Hill in the west to near the railway bridge in Graveney, but ‘pinched’ in the middle by the two halves of Preston.”

The question is – how many of this total of 93 stones still survive in situ? Perhaps members can help? Ones at present known

to survive are those outside Mall House (buried by successive layers of asphalt), in the private car park off Solomons Lane, between Newton Road and St Mary’s Road, in the Rec, and by Chart Mills. But surely more than four must survive?

If you can help, please drop a line to me, Katie Begg, at the Fleur or email chair@Favershamsociety.info. Images would be helpful.



Three days on the Rec

BEN SIMON

To celebrate summer, Swale Council is organising three days of events that explore three different aspects of Faversham Recreation Ground.

❖ Friday, 30 July: Poetry in the Park. Join us to discover the beautiful Faversham rec and become inspired to write a poem. Use our poetry style guide, write a verse, display it for a day! Events start at 10am, noon, 2pm, and 4pm.

❖ Saturday, 31 July: Trees at the Rec. A walk around the rec to meet our leafy friends and chat about their magic. Discover how to identify different species and explore tree folklore, traditions and timber uses. Walks start at 10am, noon, 2pm, and 4pm.

❖ Sunday, 1 August: Hidden Heritage. A stroll to uncover the story of the rec. Join us on a wander around the paths to find out about the heritage of the buildings and grounds, and how the site used to be embellished with ornaments including a First World War tank. Walks start at 10am, noon, 2pm, and 4pm.

To book places please go to the events page on the Friends of Faversham Recreation Ground Facebook site and follow the links, or email me, Ben Simon, at FaveRec@Swale.gov.uk before 28 July. Meet in front of lodge by the kiosk. Each event is limited to 20 people.

Swale migration stories

HAROLD GOODWIN

Did you know Sittingbourne once had the largest paper mill in the world? Or the Wright Brothers flew planes on Sheppey in 1910, or that Faversham rehomed and protected refugee Serbian children from the First World War and Jewish children

fleeing Germany in the Second World War?

These and other stories and many more waiting to be discovered, experienced, and shared will be waiting for you when you visit the free Swale migration stories exhibition.

Migration includes the movement of people, animals, or things from one place to another. Migration can be within a country or between countries.

Visit the pop-up exhibitions that will provide a sense of the rich and varied cultural history of Swale through museum objects, personal stories, photographs, postcards, films, and videos, as well as hands-on experiences, at these venues:

- ❖ Faversham Town Hall 12 Market Place, 9-16 August, 11am-4pm
- ❖ Sheppey Rose Street Cottage, throughout August
- ❖ Milton Regis Green Porch Country Park, 6-7 August, 11am-4pm
- ❖ Sittingbourne at 34 High Street 23-30 August, 11am-4pm

The Swale Migration Stories project is a community-wide history project that explores people's memories, our amazing heritage through the 16 local Swale museums, local history plus our own family stories.

Find out just who were our ancestors; what famous people in Swale made a difference to history; and what events have made an impact on the community and the wider world.

The project has involved Swale Borough Council, Swale Community Voluntary Services, Sheppey Matters, Historic Swale and Heritage Lottery; working with local groups, schools, artists, young people, and museum volunteer staff over the last year – throughout the Covid pandemic – to pull together this exhibition.

Cleve Hill: planners can halt

DAVID MELVILLE

The world-record breaking Cleve Hill Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) is being planned for a location just a few miles east of the site of the Great Gunpowder Explosion of 1916. There is a real danger of history repeating itself due to thermal runaway in Li-ion batteries, a technology for which the Health and Safety Executive has developed no standards or regulations. We have just coauthored and published a comprehensive report on the 'Safety of Grid-Scale Lithium-ion Battery Energy Storage Systems' which lays out the science and analyses these dangers.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/352158070_Safety_of_Grid_Scale_Lithium-ion_Battery_Energy_Storage_Systems

The report draws attention to the many Li-ion BESS fires around the world including a recent one in Liverpool in September 2020 which is still the subject of investigation. A highlighted issue is the difficulty of extinguishing these 'fires' since they do not require oxygen to burn and can only be dealt with by deploying prodigious amounts of cooling water. The reason is that they can and do continue to reignite for days whenever local temperatures in the battery stack rise above 150C and there is still energy stored.

25,000 gallons of water were required to contain the Tesla car "fire" in Texas April, 2020. The Cleve Hill BESS is 7,000 times larger than this car battery. 175 million gallons, or the equivalent of about 318 Olympic-size swimming pools, might therefore be needed to manage a major thermal runaway event at Cleve Hill. The proposed solar power station

infrastructure at Cleve Hill couldn't possibly contain that amount of contaminated water, so it would inevitably flow out into the drainage ditches that crisscross the site and, from there, out into the Swale SSSI and the Thames Estuary beyond. In terms of toxicity, levels as low as 5ppm are enough to cause eye damage in humans, so the environmental consequences of such contamination would be catastrophic.

With many more BESS being built throughout the world Li-ion fires and explosions are regularly in the news. Since our paper was published there have already been two major and damaging incidents reported:

Beijing, China

On 16th April this year an explosion occurred as firefighters were dealing with a fire in a 25MWh Lithium-ion battery associated with a 1.4MW rooftop solar array at an electric vehicle charging station in the Chinese capital. Two firefighters were killed, and 235 firefighters had to be deployed with 47 fire trucks from 15 fire stations.

The proposed BESS at Cleve Hill is 700MWh – 28 times larger than Beijing. If we scale up the Beijing experience to a potential disaster at Cleve Hill it would require 6,580 firefighters, of whom 56 could die, and a fleet of 1,316 fire trucks. Clearly, these figures are absurd, especially since Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) only has a total of 75 fire engines spread across the whole county.

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an environmental disaster

They simply serve to illustrate that the fire would be impossible to extinguish and would have to be left to burn out with consequential pollution and risk to health.

The only option must be to introduce prevention measures to make the probability of thermal runaway vanishingly small along with appropriate safety protocols and protection for firefighters.

Illinois, USA

On the 29th June this year a fire occurred in a warehouse in Morris, Ill. storing 80-100 tons of Lithium-ion batteries. Despite desperate attempts to extinguish the blaze using 28 tons of cement the fire continued for three days and 3,000 people were forcibly evacuated in a 10 mile radius that included 1,000 homes. A week later the evacuation was still in force due to the persistence of the clouds of toxic fumes.

This volume of batteries equates to approximately a 15 MWh BESS. Cleve Hill is planned to be 47 times larger. A 10 mile radius evacuation around Cleve Hill would embrace the whole population of Faversham, Sittingbourne and Canterbury District.

The Faversham Society remains deeply concerned about the serious thermal runaway risks associated with the proposed development at Cleve Hill, particularly on the scale proposed by the developers. Swale Borough Council will receive the final stage of the planning application for the development at Cleve Hill shortly with details of the battery deployment.

The degree of container separation and other measures required to avoid thermal runaway, appropriate arrangements to deliver huge amounts of cooling water, firefighter safety and the environmental impact of thousands of gallons of contaminated water being discharged into the sensitive environment on the marshes, all require careful consideration by Swale.

As the paper makes clear The explosion potential and the lack of engineering standards to prevent thermal runaway may put control of 'battery fires' beyond the knowledge, experience and capabilities of local Fire and Rescue Services. This has already proved to be the case for incidents in the USA and lives have been lost.

When the developers of the Cleve Hill solar power factory submit their final planning application, Swale Borough Council will have just eight weeks to determine it. They will have to take account of all of these issues before granting final planning permission for an installation that could result in serious consequences for the residents of Swale. This constitutes a huge challenge for Swale Borough Council. They do have the power to ensure that risks are minimised.

For the future safety and wellbeing of the residents of Swale it is not a challenge which can be ducked.

Professor Sir David Melville CBE, FInstP, professor of physics, is vice-chairman of the Faversham Society

FAVERSHAM SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



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.

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FAVERSHAM SOCIETY OPENING



The second-hand bookshop in Gatefield Lane is now open from 10am to 3.30pm Monday to Saturday (closed Sundays) and the Fleur Visitor Information Centre shop is open from 10am to 1pm Sunday to Thursday and from 10am to 4pm Friday and Saturday. Please consult our website, favershamsociety.org

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www.favershamsociety.org*