

Faversham Society Newsletter

January 2022

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Arthur's archive goes online

CHRIS WOOTTON

Since Arthur Percival died in 2014, a small group of volunteers has been working on his archive at the Fleur de Lis museum.

Arthur, a founder and director of the Faversham Society, had an extensive archive, comprising photographs, slides, glass plate negatives, correspondence, local history inquiries and written articles. The majority of the archive relates to Faversham but there are also records relating to other geographical areas and other areas of interest that he had. Two of the images are reproduced here. More can be found on pages 10-11.

Our initial work concentrated on digitising Arthur's glass plate negative collection, which dates from the 1890s. We

Standard Quay, in the days of the creek branch line and (below) a volunteer works on the Chart Mills restoration



have also digitised his black and white photograph collection and have started on his more modern colour photographs which date from the 1970s to 2014.

There are a vast number of photographs to be processed. To date we have digitised more 3,500 images and have processed more than 600 newspaper articles from his "Faversham matters" series published in the *Faversham News* between 2004 and 2014.

We have yet to start on his collection of slides, of which there are more than 20,000. His written archive is equally massive, numbering well over 200 lever arch folders and assorted boxes of papers. Many relate to local history and the late Margaret Harding made a great start cataloguing their contents to make them searchable on a computer. Arthur had his own filing and index system but to date we have been unable to trace it, which has made things more difficult.

We have now set up a website devoted to Arthur's archive. The web address is www.arthurpercivalarchive.co.uk.

At present, the website contains galleries of some of Arthur's photographic collection and examples of the articles written for the *Faversham News*. These are interesting in that we have been able to digitise the actual newspaper page the article appeared on, which also contains additional historical information, in many cases from 25, 50, 75 and 100 years ago from the *Faversham News* archives. Some business advertisements are also shown. The newspaper articles are searchable by keyword: for example, creek, brewery, abbey etc.

Work is continuing. If you are interested in local history and photography, or would like to help, we are always looking for additional volunteers to assist us in making

Museum closure

Our museum team had hoped to open between Christmas and New Year but in the context of the latest wave of Covid has decided not to open. The museum remains shut for the foreseeable future.

Arthur's and the museum's archives more accessible to the public.

Many thanks to Ian Montague, Paul Jessett, Liz Cameron and Peter Bullard for their hard work over the past four years. If you wish to find out more, please contact me at fleurmuseum@favershamsociety.org

Chairman's column

HAROLD GOODWIN

We had hoped to have completed the Visitor Information Centre's move to 12 Market Place by now, but there has been one delay after another caused by Covid and the shortages of materials.

The final stage is to install the wooden roller shutters on both entrances to the VIC and this, too, has been delayed. We are promised that the shutters will be fitted in the first week of January. If they are installed on schedule, we can make the move, and be open by the end of the month.

The next stage will be to fit shelves to the old VIC in Preston Street and move the secondhand bookshop from Gatefield Lane into it. This will take time and Covid may intervene, but we shall move as quickly as possible.

The housing numbers being imposed on Swale by national government are causing real anger. The problem is that the numbers are determined by Whitehall and Westminster. Swale has then to allocate

Shakespeare and Faversham

PAUL MOORBATH

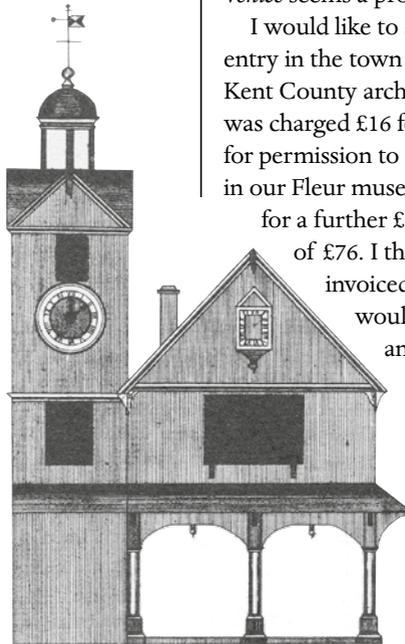
The story so far ... in the first instalment of my investigations (October, 2021), I suggested that William Shakespeare may have visited Faversham with the Lord Chamberlain's Men founded in 1594 under the patronage of the 1st Lord Hunsdon.

The players would not have performed in a church. Acting was so disreputable that women were not allowed to perform on stage until the Restoration in 1660. Female roles were taken by boys whose voice had not broken. The town council moved to the present guildhall in 1603 and I believe that is where performed. In this issue, I ask: What might they have performed?

It is thought that *Merchant of Venice* was written sometime between July 1596 and July 1598. In Act 1 of *Merchant of Venice*, Salarino says: "And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand ... and now worth nothing ...". This is thought to refer to the Spanish galleon, the *San Andres*, which ran aground off Cadiz in June, 1596, after a surprise attack by the Earl of Sussex. It was captured and

renamed the *St Andrew*. News of this exploit reached London on 30 July, 1596. Only members of the Stationers' Company were permitted to print and publish plays for sale. Any member wishing to print a play had to add the title on the *Stationers' Register*. The play was registered on 22 July, 1598. The title page of the first edition of *The most excellent historie of the Merchant of Venice* published by Thomas Heyes in 1600 states "it hath beene divers times acted by the Lord Chamberlaine his servants". The play was popular. It was performed before King James I in 1605 and was so well received that they gave a repeat performance. The Lord Chamberlain's Men came in 1597, and so *Merchant of Venice* seems a probability.

I would like to share with you an entry in the town accounts. They are in Kent County archives in Maidstone. I was charged £16 for an e-copy. I asked for permission to display the 1605 entry in our Fleur museum and was invoiced for a further £60 thus making a total of £76. I think they should have invoiced in guineas as this would still be unhelpful and unsupportive but at least in would have been posh.



Faversham Guildhall before 1814: Shakespeare may have performed there

them within the borough. I share the concern that building on greenfield land is very undesirable, bad for our environment and for our food security.

There is much talk of local control and not building on greenfield land but the standard method for determining the number that local authorities must have built by developers has not been changed. We know of no local authority that has successfully challenged the application of the standard method. Click on the map on the front page of the Faversham Society website to find a link to the many sites put forward for development. Most are on greenfield land.

We have responded at length to Swale's Reg 18 consultation about the Local Plan. You can find our full response on our website on the policy blog. On the question of whether Swale should decide not to deliver a Local Plan that meets central government targets, we responded as follows recognising the very real risks:

"If Swale Borough Council decides to challenge the 'Government's Standard Method', the risks must be mitigated. If Swale is without a Local Plan and 'a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites', or fails to meet central government's housing delivery targets, we are vulnerable to developer-led development overseen by the Planning Inspectorate.

"As it did at Perry Court, this results in less community say over roads, design, permeability, and infrastructure. Abbey Fields and Brogdale are currently in planning and there are a large number of strategic housing land availability assessment sites that may be brought forward if the Local Plan is delayed. If central government changes the Standard Method because of pressure from MPs and

the public, Swale could use the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 36d) to justify reworking the Local Plan to meet the changed NPPF."

We have written to our MP to raise the issue of the targets with her. The new housing requirement is allocated by national government; only they can change the Swale target. As we make clear in our letter to Helen Whately (see below) it would be a dangerous strategy for Swale not to plan for, and deliver, the numbers imposed on us, which would risk Abbey Fields and other sites being given approval by the Inspectorate.

We have organised public meetings for all the developers who have been willing to meet the public: the Duchy of Cornwall, Gladman's and most recently, Fernham, have taken the opportunity. Attwood and Prudential, the other two landowners in southeast Faversham, have not accepted our offer, which remains open. We believe there should be as much public consultation as possible in the planning process. All the sites in southeast Faversham involve the loss of greenfield land but so do nearly all the sites put forward by developers across Swale.

The Reg 18 consultation came out of the blue. We have notice of the Reg 19 consultation and are planning a Faversham Society members' meeting on February 15th if the Swale Reg 19 consultation goes ahead as expected.

May I close by wishing you all good things for 2022. Stay safe.

Letter to Helen Whately

This is the letter from Harold Goodwin, chairman of the Faversham Society, to MP Helen Whately:

As you know there is mounting concern

among your constituents about the number of houses in Faversham that your government requires Swale Borough Council to give planning permission for. This concern has been growing for some time.

We were pleased to read in this week's *Faversham News* your clear statement that the level of housebuilding planned for Faversham is "unforgivable" and a cause of "extreme concern". This was despite our disappointment that you did not add your signature to the September 2020 letter from Gordon Henderson MP and nine of your Commons colleagues objecting to the "inherently unreasonable" housing number demands on our area.

You also referred in the *News* to the enormous encroachment into the surrounding countryside and high-quality agricultural land. The Faversham Society shares your concerns, and would like to ask what more can be done to protect Faversham and Swale from the serious harm that will be inflicted as a result of national government policy in this area. We understand that you have raised the matter with colleagues in the government, but we are very concerned that there does not appear to be any subsequent prospect of change.

Faversham does need some additional housing, to enable local young people to move on in their lives, leave home and start families, in the form of more one- and two-bedroom properties, starter homes and provision for older people to downsize. However, the government's National Planning Policy Framework makes it difficult for planners to secure this type of housing, since the volume housebuilders prefer to maximise profits by building larger three-, four- and five-bedroom

houses that are far beyond the means of the hidden homeless and other Faversham residents most in need. If traditional terraced streets were to be built, along the lines of the award-winning Goldsmith Street development in Norwich, far less land would be required.

The reality is that there is very little land other than agricultural land available for building in Swale. The Duchy development has become the focus of local anger, but all the developments proposed in southeast Faversham (involving a further 800 houses) are on quality agricultural land.

This land is part of the fruit belt and essential to our children's future as population growth and climate change reduce food yields around the world. We would be interested in whether you have undertaken any work to identify other areas in Swale less damaging to important agricultural land, that the 1,048 new houses per year that central government demands could be built?

We are, however, acutely aware of the dangers associated with any delays in the approval of Swale's Local Plan. An inspectorate-approved local plan is our only defence against unwanted speculative development and inspector-led planning. We have been there before with the Perry Court development. If you do know of any cases where local authorities have been successful in achieving a reduction in target, we would be grateful for this information and learn from it.

The housing minister, in the House of Commons on 23 November explained the consequences of not delivering the required housing land supply:

"... In the land of no plan, the local

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Faversham's forgotten church

PAT REID

Everyone in Faversham knows St Mary of Charity, and its highly recognisable spire, which can be seen from all directions. And there's Davington Church, whose hilltop silhouette is also highly visible.

St Catherine's, Preston-next-Faversham, is, however, tucked away on minor roads well away from the town's main routes, hemmed in to the north by the railway line and hidden by large trees. Yet it is almost certainly the oldest church in modern Faversham, mentioned in a document of 822 whereas St Mary's is not in the Domesday Book of 1080 and Davington Priory was not founded until 1153.

In November this year we returned to St Catherine's because Nigel Mannouch, one of our founder members and our link to St Catherine's, heard that some very intriguing "rubbish" had been found under the altar and tucked away in other corners. Would we like to examine and report on it?

We seized that opportunity. We were allowed the use of Preston Schoolroom, a lovely place to work. The items were cleaned by careful soft brushing – they had not been buried, so the layers coating them were thick dust, not mud: our masks were very useful! Once revealed in all their glory, they were carefully recorded and photographed. The database with the details and photographs of all items will be available on our website in early 2022.



There were 38 items in all. They were either worked stone or baked clay. The stone was often richly carved, with one piece thought to be part of the original sedilia whose drastic renovation was mourned by Canon Scott Robertson in his 1895 article on St Catherine's. This item had a dog's head as well as the monkey head. The tiles were very similar to those of Faversham Abbey and also Canterbury Cathedral – not surprising as St Catherine's was owned by Christchurch, Canterbury (the name Preston means "priests' town"). Chunks of pillars and pedestals were more difficult to date but seemed medieval.

The most recent items were the six pieces of tile seen the trays (top right) that Ann and Lizzie are working on: these are fine examples of the early post-medieval period – the 1600s – with the most colourful one probably Early English Delft and the one with the ships possibly imported Dutch Delft.

The largest item was the part of a statue being worked on by Nick Wilkinson. In the image No 4, the (headless) statue is upright and under its left arm is tucked a book (a



1



2



4



3

1 An 18th-century view of St Catherine's. **2** Cleaning and recording tiles. **3** ornate decorated stonework. **4** Cleaning a large piece of sculpture of a person holding a book

Bible?). Its right hand is holding a large, double-pronged object that we think is a ritual item of some kind – if you recognise it, please contact us! Very interestingly, on this sculpture were traces of the original red and white paint. This figure must have been part of something important.

Working on all this was a pleasure and privilege for us and we are very grateful to Hilary Tulett, the churchwarden, who arranged church and schoolroom access, and to our own Nigel who negotiated

Faversham Society Archaeological Research Group's offer to help. Do look at the database on our website in the near future and meanwhile if you are at all interested in the history of the Faversham area, read the report mentioned above.

If you want to know more about St Catherine's, go to FSARG's new website www.favershamcommunityarchaeology.org and click on excavations/Preston, a most peculiar parish/An investigation into St Catherine's church

housing need number is king. If there is no set number in an up-to-date local plan, it is quite possible for developers to submit speculative development applications to local authorities.

“The local authorities may choose to turn them down, but if they have no number in their plan, the local housing need number is the default that the Planning Inspectorate will look at. It is entirely possible that the Planning Inspectorate will overturn refusals sent down by local authorities that do not have up-to-date plans or targets, and will instead look at the local housing need target. It is incumbent on local authorities that wish to protect their communities and avoid speculative development to get up-to-date plans in place.”

Faversham is a good example of where this risk is both imminent and high. There is currently a planning application for 180 new houses on Abbey Fields. The Faversham Society has strongly argued that this development would do substantial harm to the rural setting of Faversham on the marshes and place housing over an area of land important to many Faversham residents for recreation.

If the precedent is established, it is likely that the land as far as Thorn Creek would be developed over the next 20 years or so. Even an additional 180 houses would seriously increase traffic on Abbey Fields and the pinch point where it joins Whitstable Road. Central to arguments to reject this planning application is the case that this land is not needed for housing because of current allocations in the emerging Local Plan.

We know that many, if not most, of

your constituents in the town and surrounding area share our grave concerns about the number of new houses allocated to Faversham. Now is the time for all local interests to pull together and give strong leadership on this issue.

Given the demands of the government for housing numbers, and the very real perils of delay, we respectfully suggest that it is important you make clear your own responses to the options questions in the Swale Reg18 consultation and identify where you believe the more appropriate locations in Swale are for building that will meet the government’s targets.

We would of course be more than happy to meet with you to discuss these complex and pressing issues in more detail.

Latest on the Creek Bridge

HAROLD GOODWIN

On Friday, 10 December, MP Helen Whately met representatives from Kent County Council, Faversham Town Council, the Faversham Society and the Faversham Creek Trust to discuss progress since their last meeting in June.

The town council started the meeting with an update on their legal advice. It said the secretary of state for transport had the power to issue an abatement notice under section 43 of the Medway Ports Act 1973 to compel the party, Peel Ports, with obligations to maintain this bridge, sluice gates and associated works so as to permit navigation again. The town council has written to the transport secretary, Grant Shapps, asking him to issue this notice.

The meeting agreed that supporting the town council to achieve this objective was the best way forward. Money currently pledged by Kent County Council, Swale Borough Council, and Faversham Town

Council and raised from the community by the Faversham Creek Trust, is not enough to cover the cost of restoring the bridge. We need Peel Ports to play its part to get the bridge back into working order. This would go a long way towards plugging the funding gap for making the creek basin usable again. KCC confirmed that the Faversham community funding is safely held in a separate account except where individual donors have requested and received their donations back.

KCC is helping the town council to provide the Department for Transport with further information about the bridge and creek. Ms Whately will press the transport secretary to take this course of action. While this is a positive step forward there is still a long way to go.

KCC confirmed that design work on the bridge and sluices was completed and tender documents were ready.

Both Ms Whately and KCC have agreed to update residents about progress so far, including future designs for the bridge.

Walk reminder

LINDA IRELAND & PAT ROSS

Don't forget! The yuletide walk leaves Market Place at 10.30am on Monday, 27 December and will cover just over six miles. Please wear appropriate outer clothing and footwear if you are joining us, in case it is icy or muddy on the day, and remember the walk is at your own risk. In the mean time, have a lovely Christmas.

Oare Gunpowder Works

The Faversham Life website is featuring "A Stroll Around the Gunpowder Works at Oare" with words and photographs by Amicia de Moubray.

favershamlife.org/a-stroll-around-the-gunpowder-works-at-oare/



Here's a small selection of the images that can be found on the new Arthur Percival Archive website. The archive is still in its early stages and not all pictures have been captioned yet. Enjoy!

www.arthurpercivalarchive.co.uk

Above: a gent observes the gap in Preston Street where Boulding the butcher was. Behind was the Regal Cinema, once the Argosy. The site became a Lipton's and is now M&Co. Below: sheep safely graze on the Rec

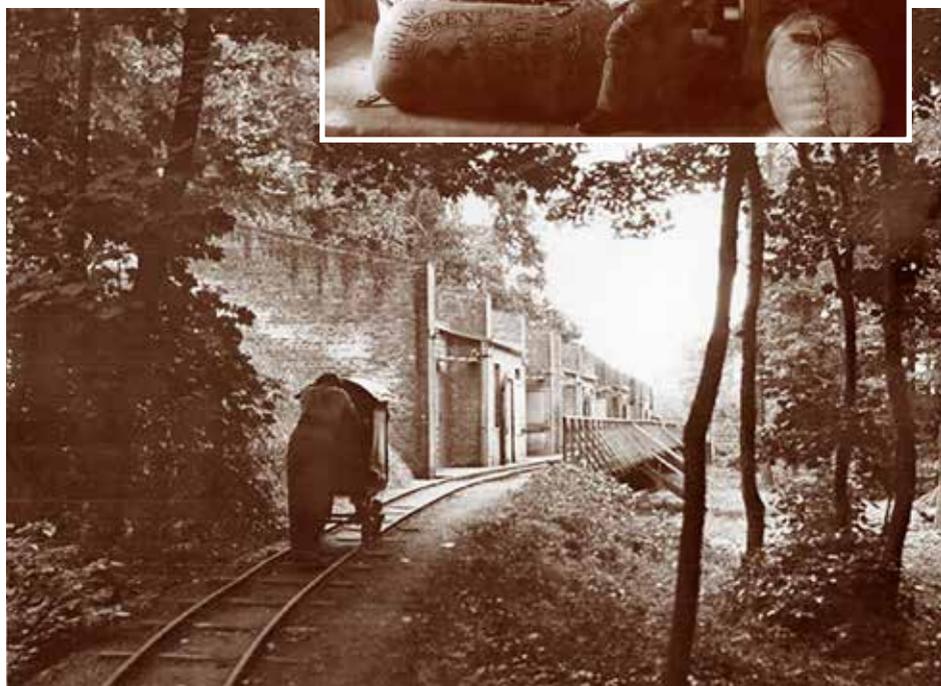




Left: the gasometer in West Street, now the site of the Morrisons supermarket

Below: hop sampling. The pokes (sacks) say they were grown by Curling.

Below: a 1926 view of the incorporating mill at Oare Works



FAVERSHAM SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



The Faversham Society Newsletter is edited by Stephen Rayner, who is independent of the board.

Contributions are welcomed, and should be received by midday on the 15th of the month before publication, preferably by email to favnewsletter@gmail.com. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Faversham Society or of the editor. All contributions will be edited and 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. Cheques should be made payable to the Faversham Society and sent to Jan West at the address above. We also use BACS – ask for details.

DIGITAL EDITION

Please consider saving the society printing costs by receiving your newsletter by email. Contact membership@favershamsociety.org.

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FAVERSHAM SOCIETY OPENING



Fleur Museum - see page 2

The Fleur de Lis visitor information centre and book and gift shop are open 10am-1pm Sunday to Wednesday and 10am-4pm Thursday to Saturday. 01795 534542
info@favershamsociety.org

The Fleur de Lis second-hand bookshop at 1a Gatefield Lane is open 10am-3.30pm, Monday to Saturday, closed on 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.

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www.favershamsociety.org