

Faversham Society Newsletter

March 2022

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Protesters make their views known about plans for more housing in and around the town.

Faversham at a crossroads, pages 4-5

Chairman's column

HAROLD GOODWIN

The new Faversham Society visitor information centre and shop will be formally opened by the town's mayor at 10am on Saturday, 26 February. Christine Smith and her team, with help from Abbey Removals, will be moving that week, hoping to open in the new premises on Thursday or Friday. We owe a big thank you to all who have made the move possible.

The new VIC creates an opportunity to promote our town's history and celebrate our heritage. From 14 to 27 March, we are organising an exhibition on behalf of Faversham Museums Together to showcase our heritage. We use the word museum

loosely, to include anywhere with heritage that can be visited or viewed

At our AGM in the Alexander Centre on 1 June, there will be an opportunity to reflect on the society's 60 years and on recent developments and to thank all those involved in moving the VIC and charity bookshop to new premises. The museum is temporarily closed for reorganisation and refurbishment as building work goes on apace. The shelving for the charity bookshop is already underway and will accelerate once the VIC and shop moves.

Swale met its housing delivery target – just. Members of the Faversham Society board met MP Helen Whately about the housing numbers issue and there is a report of that meeting on our website (see “policy

blog”). The society continues to work on the case against housing development on Abbey Fields and to make representations on planning applications affecting listed buildings or in the conservation areas. We are also making representations on the housing development still coming through from Bearing Fruits, the current Local Plan. The emerging Local Plan has clearly been delayed, and we do not yet know when the next stage of consultation, known as Reg19, will take place. When it does, we shall hold a members’ meeting.

Below you will find details of the Faversham Neighbourhood Plan consultation on the sites being considered for small-scale development. Please take the opportunity to have your say. As you would expect, the Faversham Society will be reviewing all the sites and commenting. If you have particular views on any of the sites, please make your view known to the Faversham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (with a copy to me) by 1 March so that your views can be taken into account as the society prepares its response

You will recall seeing Clive Foreman’s piece in the last month’s newsletter on Catherine Richardson’s “new” *Arden of Faversham*. She will be speaking in the Guildhall on 23 April, Shakespeare’s birthday. Tickets will be on sale in the VIC in 12 Market Place from 26 February and be available for online. See page 3.

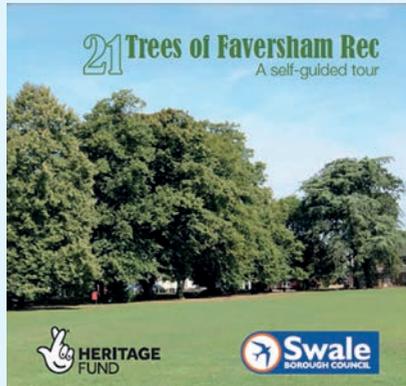
chair@favershamsociety.org

Selecting development sites

JOHN IRWIN

Faversham Town Council continues to make progress in developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Faversham – the whole of the area within our parish boundary.

Rec tree guide



Swale Council has produced the guide, *The 21 Trees of Faversham Rec*. Copies are available from the society’s visitor information centre or by searching for “The 21 Trees of Faversham Rec” online.

The public consultation on the housing allocations within the parish boundary opened on 1 March and runs until 31 March. There is a public exhibition in 12 Market Place, from 1 to 12 March or you can find full details and comment online at favershamtowncouncil.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan/site-selection-public-consultation.

Housing allocations are always the most contentious part of any Neighbourhood Plan. It will be seeking to allocate sites for a minimum of 219 homes over the duration of the plan, which is until 2040. The shortlist for consideration has been drawn up by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group based on sites put forward by landowners, agents and members of the public. When shortlisting the sites, town councillors were guided by the following

principles, which highlight the preferences of Faversham residents as expressed in our previous public consultations.

- ❖ Preference should be given to brownfield sites. Faversham is surrounded by some of our country's best and most versatile agricultural land as well as land of high landscape and ecological value. It is our belief that development of smaller derelict sites within our town represents efficient use of land and has the potential to contribute positively to the existing community.
- ❖ Preference should be given to sites within the existing built-up area rather than those on the periphery of our town. New developments that are within easy reach of existing infrastructure such as public transport, schools and shops can minimise adverse impacts on existing residents and contribute positively to our community.
- ❖ Preference should be given to sites that provide benefits to our community beyond housing provision. Development of brownfield sites can contribute positively to community cohesion and economic regeneration. Development can provide new community buildings, green spaces or improved public access to private land. In addition, sites can provide new opportunities for work, retail, leisure or tourism.

All sites selected for public consultation meet two or more of the above principles. No greenfield development is proposed. Please be aware that at this stage we are only identifying sites, not describing the conditions which will be attached to their development (eg building height and type, density etc). That comes later.

John Irwin is a Faversham town councillor and chairs the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Arden and Shakespeare

'When was I so long in killing a man?', Black Will asks in desperation towards the end of *Arden of Faversham*.

The play, based on the true story of the murder of Thomas Arden by his wife, her lover and accomplices in 1551, is one of the earliest domestic tragedies and has continued to thrill audiences since its first staging.

Catherine Richardson, who lives near where one of the many murder attempts takes place, has spent five years editing the play – and she, too, wondered whether she would ever finish the job.

Catherine, who is director of the institute of cultural and creative industries and professor of early modern studies in the School of English at Kent University, will be giving a talk at Faversham Guildhall at 7.30pm on 23 April. In this talk, she will try to pin down the play's enduring popularity, taking a trip through its performance history – by both actors and puppets – and the latest, controversial thinking about the play's likely authorship.

Her book is published on 24 February and she will be signing copies after her talk. Copies will also be available from Tales on Market Street.

Tickets cost £5 and will be on sale at 12 Market Place from 26 February and online from favershamsociety.org/product/arden-of-faversham-april-2022

Return of Open Gardens

LEIGH ALLISON



One of the gardens open in 2019

The Faversham Open Gardens scheme is back this year, on Sunday, 26 June. If you love your garden and are happy to open it to visitors for one busy day, then please get in touch with me at the email address below. Back gardens and front gardens in homes old and new are all welcome.

The only criteria are that you're proud of your garden, there's access to it other than through your house, it is ideally walkable from Market Place, Faversham, and you ensure that your insurance company is happy for you to allow visitors for one day.

We don't select gardens but are very happy to visit you and give any advice and help you may need to make a decision.

Please email me at the address below for further information.

favershamopengardens@gmail.com

Faversham at a crossroads

IAN NEWMAN

In a few years' time, I wonder if we will look back to now and ask what happened to Faversham and why? In the February newsletter, we read the letter to Michael Gove and Wendy Clarke's article about the scale of development in Faversham.

Dorothy Percival also reminded us why the Faversham Society exists. Given what is happening now, it was a timely reminder.

Swale Council is considering the Local Plan and the Regulation 18 consultation comments. The next stage is the Regulation 19 consultation. The timing of the consultation and the extent of any revision to the plan are currently uncertain.

The February newsletter reported the main issues with the plan which was put forward for the Reg18 consultation, namely the scale of the development and the destruction of prime agricultural land.

For the Reg 19 consultation, Swale will issue a plan for further comment, before it is submitted to the secretary of state who will then appoint an inspector to carry out an independent examination.

The inspector will consider the plan and any representations made, so it is vitally important that these address relevant issues. There are two areas upon which the plan can be challenged: legal compliance and soundness.

For the plan to be legally compliant, it must be prepared with proper consultation and in accordance with laws and regulations.



Protesters gather in Market Place in January with the message: stop mass housing in Faversham

Soundness has four strands: the plan must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent.

The inspector’s examination will assess evidence in 13 areas: air quality; environment; climate change; communities; economy and employment; flood risk; heritage; housing; infrastructure; land; landscape; viability; and open space, sport and recreation.

The inspector also needs to consider whether the plan provides a strategy consistent with national policy to meet “objectively assessed needs”. This highlights the problem that developments feed economic demand rather than local housing needs. This was confirmed in KCC’s Statistical Bulletin of October 2021 – Migration Indicators in Kent 2020, which advised that annual net migration to Kent of 6,300 people all came from London.

The plan should also include an “appropriate” strategy based on

proportionate evidence. The strategy of building on prime agricultural land is inappropriate and is, at best, reckless. Finally, the plan should be deliverable over the plan period. However, the planning process is rigged to favour developers. Via tactics such as “land banking”, developers can prevent Swale from delivering the plan and are then able to apply for permission to develop sites which were not included in the plan.

It will be interesting to see the revised plan, but it is likely that it will propose significant development on prime agricultural land in and around Faversham. If this is the case, it is important that relevant representations are made in the Reg 19 consultation. Please do what you can to ensure Faversham takes the correct turn at the crossroads. 

For updates and events concerning the plan, please follow Farms, Fields and Fresh Air – Faversham on Facebook.

Well-chosen words

DOROTHY PERCIVAL

Continuing the short series of brief, random extracts from Arthur Percival's letters which I promised last month. The only common thread is that when they caught my eye I thought "Well said!"

Arthur worked in London for 30 years with the environmental charity the Civic Trust. He contributed a major national report towards their campaign against HGV vehicles wrecking small towns. So heavy lorry transport matters were always in his sights.

In response to a letter in The Independent newspaper about food miles in 1999.

"It's not just food. It's drink as well. Beer which used to be brewed in Faversham for Kent, Surrey and Sussex is now brewed in Cheltenham and trundled back for distribution in the southeast along roads which are already overcrowded. As the product is 99% water, anything more wickedly wasteful of energy and resources is hard to imagine."

Second this month, a rare bit of sarcasm. During the row about the development of Abbey Farm in 1991 feelings ran high and ill-informed input into the muddy water was infuriating.

About a local politician at the time:

"It is nice that she shows such an intense, if perhaps not altogether disinterested, concern for the area's welfare, and I imagine that, as someone still relatively new to Faversham, she feels she can make up for any lack of any knowledge and understanding with an outsider's detached objectivity. I have to give her the benefit of the doubt and assume that if she had known that the technique involved here could be described as 'asset stripping' she

would have been a bit less fulsome in her endorsement of the suggestions for an Abbey Farm business and leisure 'park'."

Ouch!

Memories of Faversham

HAROLD GOODWIN

Joanne Randles, one of our members who now lives in Sevenoaks, wrote to me with memories of the Rec before the war with trains shunting on the siding and of falling asleep in Park Road, listening to the chatter of the rooks in the trees on the Park Road side of the Rec. She mentions a big iron "open work" "that went over the sidings". Does anyone know more about this? Is it the Long Bridge, perhaps?

The *Sevenoaks Chronicle* featured a story last year about Tommy Ratcliff, who organised and originated pre-match community singing. Born in Faversham in 1874, and married in 1909, he went to America in about 1919, when he encountered community singing at sporting events.

Returning to the UK, he was sponsored by the *Daily Express* to conduct singing at football matches. He stood on a small platform at Wembley Stadium on cup final days to encourage the crowd to sing along before the match and at half-time. In 1927, King George V asked to meet him, and in 1937 he moved to Sevenoaks, where he died in 1952.

Tommy features in the journal *Popular Music* (2008) in an article by Dave Russell headlined Abiding Memories: The Community Singing Movement and English Social Life in the 1920s

If anyone knows more about Tommy Ratcliff, please write a piece for the newsletter or send it to me at harold@haroldgoodwin.info

The Faversham Society

Annual General Meeting 2021

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 at **7pm on Wednesday, 1 June, 2022.**

Final details will be available in the newsletter and online, along with the AGM papers and nominations, not later than 17 May, 2022.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2021 AGM and matters arising
3. Chair's Review and receipt of the Annual Report

5. Chair's review and receipt of the Annual Report

4. Receipt of the Annual Accounts
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 on the website at favershamsociety.org and from the Visitor Information Centre, 12 Market Place, Faversham, Kent ME13 7AE, from 17 May. They must be returned to the Society no later than 7pm on **30 May**, either by email to agm@favershamsociety.org or to the Visitor Information Centre, as above.

The papers of the AGM, include details of all those nominated for election and the 2021 financial year's annual report and accounts, shall be made available to all members by **17 May, 2022**.

Long and winding tale opens literary festival



Geoff Sandiford and his live acoustic band entertain the audience on the opening night of the Faversham Literary Festival at the Old Brewery Store with the premiere of his musical presentation *The Long and Winding Creek*.

Praise on social media included “brilliant mix of interesting history, humour and great songs” and

“fabulous musical”. The show was sold out weeks before the start of festival week and, to cater for those people who could not get tickets, another two shows have been arranged at the Gospel Mission Hall in Tanners Street on Sunday, 13 March. Tickets cost £6 and will be on sale from the Visitor Information Centre at 12 Market Place.

A treasury of trivia

MARION RIPLEY

Are you a collector of small items? Have you amassed your own treasured hoard of thimbles, Pokémon cards, Matchbox toys, stamps, Lego figures, Christmas tree decorations, banana labels, hair slides or whatever? If so, we would love to hear from you.

To mark the 60th year of the Faversham Society we hope to mount a display of collections put together by individuals,

schools, organisations, shops, etc. Each collection should consist of 60 items – no more, no less – and so reaching the required number may need to be a team effort.

Do let us know what you might come up with. The items should be small in size as display space will be limited. To make it interesting and enjoyable the exhibition needs a variety of displays; if your collection is something really unusual, so much the better!

We're scraping away more

PAT REID

Since 2005, when the Faversham Society Archaeological Research Group (FSARG) was launched, we have excavated many exciting and impressive finds but the find type that has, unexpectedly, been the most prolific is worked flint, evidence for the presence of early man in what is now the Faversham area.

Not only do we find worked flints in every pit we dig but local people bring us ones they have found in their gardens, on allotments, or have spotted while walking next to a ploughed field.

The oldest one we have found so far is a small Acheulian hand axe from the garden of Queen Court Cottages, Ospringe (OSP2011: KP83), about 250,000 years old. ("Acheulian" relates to a Lower Paleolithic culture originating in Africa.)

The most complete undisturbed prehistoric site was Late Bronze Age in the garden of nearby Dawson's Row (OSP09: OA61). In the summer of 2021 we were overjoyed to be given permission to dig in the garden of Queen Court, Ospringe, lying in between the two locations mentioned above.

On our website, www.favershamcommunityarchaeology.org, you can read the report on the Queen Court 2021 excavations – complete except for Appendix 7 on the flints. Huge quantities of flint were present in both of the trenches, and from these 223 flints were identified as probably deliberately worked to become useful tools – scrapers, awls, hammers, arrow heads, and even microliths (tiny flints) shaped to become the teeth of saws



or harpoons. For three days in early February, 2022, a group met in the Fleur hall to examine this selection closely, decide what each one was used for and to which period of prehistory it belonged.

First, 52 of these flints were set aside as being waste flakes from the manufacturing process rather than actual tools. The remaining 171 were measured, weighed, examined under a microscope, and compared carefully with published examples. The photographs show the concentration this demanded! In broad terms, 50% of these flint tools dated back to the Neolithic – the New Stone Age, the first age of farming in human history. Another 32% were dated to the Mesolithic

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of prehistoric Ospringe



Clockwise from left: the team hard at work; Ann and Lizzie consult reference material to identify and date the flints; and Nick labelling and varnishing each of the flints





Prehistoric Ospringe

▶▶▶ *From page 12*

– the forerunner to the Neolithic, the age of living by hunting fishing and gathering in the Great Wild Wood of Northern Europe. Only 17% could be dated to the Bronze Age, a period when bronze took the place of many tools and flint (except for fine arrowheads) became a second-rate material, used for roughly-made tools. The final 1% were Late Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age) tools, rare in this part of Europe.

The next stage for us is to enter all of this data into a database and use this to

identify the favourites in different periods.

Overall the commonest types seen are scrapers, piercers and awls, all very small.

Arrowheads are relatively rare but commonest from the Neolithic. This suggests that overall – and we are talking thousands of years here – this was mostly a site where processing of hides, bone etc was being carried out using scrapers and borers rather than a simple hunting base using arrows and spears. The hunting camps were probably higher up on the forested chalk hills.

Overall, all of these tools were of a



The flints all now individually recorded in an Access database, along with all of the other Faversham worked flints we have found – nearly 2,000 of them

simple, rather crude type throughout the whole prehistoric period. This is by no means always the case in this area – in 2008 we found exquisite Neolithic flint scrapers in a garden on Ospringe Street, along with grooved ware pottery and the teeth of an auroch (the European wild ox, which became extinct in the 17th century).

In 2009 we found many fine Late Bronze Age flint tools at the nearby Dawson's Row site. These contrasts are what makes these finds much more interesting than just bits of stone. The final detailed description and interpretation of the flints of Queen Court

will be published in Appendix 7 of the Queen Court 2021 report later this year.

Great thanks to all of the FSARGers who came to the Fleur to work on these flints – after all the privations of the last two years it was wonderful to be back working with enthusiastic, skilful colleagues on an important team task. Special thanks to Nick Wilkinson, our director, who organised the whole event support framework (and also labelled all of the flints with their assigned numbers– no mean task). Life is coming back to our town. 

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



The Fleur Museum is closed until further notice for reorganisation.

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