Faversham Society Newsletter

October 2022

701

From the chairman

HAROLD GOODWIN

I have just returned from a month working in Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Mumbai and Delhi, distant from Faversham as we heard of Queen Elizabeth II receiving the new prime minister and then, two days later, of her death.

Like all those who celebrated their 70th birthdays this year – and indeed those who are younger than me – I have known no other monarch. In a Britain that seems increasingly divided, the Platinum Jubilee demonstrated the ability of our monarchy to bring our diverse nation together. Let us hope that the monarchy can continue to work its magic. I returned in time for the funeral, although I missed the proclamation in the Market Place.

King Charles III's accession to the throne was proclaimed in Market Place, Faversham, by the mayor, Trevor Martin, on 11 September.

Seventy years ago, on 8 February, 1952, the proclamation of Queen Elizabeth II was read from the same place outside the guildhall by town clerk Sydney Wilson.

He is pictured with the mayor, Frederick Johnson, and his chaplain, the Rev E. E. Stanton

We are marking the end of the Elizabethan reign and the start of the Carolean era with the photograph above, from the Faversham Society's extensive archive, of the late Queen's proclamation

Right: crowds gather in Market Place to hear the proclamation of King Charles III and (below, right) the mayor, Trevor Martin, town clerk Louise Bareham and chaplain Ros Parrett with town councillors during the ceremony. Below: a tribute to Queen Elizabeth on the post office pillar box by Faversham's guerrilla knitters

at the guildhall, and two images of the proclamation of King Charles II by today's mayor on these pages.

I was in India assisting Kerala and Madhya Pradesh to develop better forms of tourism to manage "overtourism" – too many visitors to a particular destination – and to ensure that the negative impacts of tourism are well managed and the positive impacts maximised.

India is now the world's leading Responsible Tourism destination with state governments committing to work with village-level panchayats (councils) to use tourism to make better places to live in, and better places to visit: critically, in that order. The choice is to use tourism or be used by it. In India, tourism is being used to build communities and develop additional income streams for the economically poor but culturally rich.

Dorothy Percival's article in this issue

Our 60 years in print

LEIGH ALLISON

The society's publications group would like to thank everyone who has bought a copy of F*aversham: A Brief History*, mentioned in last month's newsletter.

Two hundred copies of the new book, by Dr Pat Reid, sold out within a month! But if you missed it, you will be glad to know that it's now back in stock. We have received so much positive feedback. Thank you for your support.

Our next publication will be launched at the 60th anniversary event in October.

Ten years ago, the society produced a celebration of *Faversham in Fifty Objects*, which highlighted some of the gems of the museum collection and the wider town.

This book has now been revised, updated and expanded to include some of our more recently acquired treasures, with improved digital photos throughout.

Faversham in Sixty Objects, edited by Stephen Rayner with the help of the newly formed society publications team, will cost £9.99 and be available at the Alexander Centre event and the Visitor Information Centre, or via the online shop on the website *favershamsociety.org/store*

resonates here. She has found the scribble that resulted in our motto "Cherish the past, adorn the present, create for the future". These are objectives that have served us well for 60 years and will for many more. We need to remind our masters that they are our servants, elected to steward our communities through difficult times, and these are challenging times.

As Arthur articulated so well: "If Faversham has emerged as a pleasant place in which to live and work, it is as a result of dedicated effort, mostly voluntary, on the part of local people".

Our history demonstrates that we can make a difference. Come along to our anniversary exhibition (*see pages 10-11*) and encourage your friends and family to join.

Never judge a lecture …

DOROTHY PERCIVAL

A little anecdote this month as well as my piece (*pages 6-7*) on Arthur's letters.

There is a society that promotes lectures on the most boring topics it can conjure up: the design of envelopes or towel rails, for example. Apparently, against all the odds, the audience does actually become riveted by the subject matter. So it was for a member of Arthur's WEA (Workers' Educational Association) evening classes on the history of Faversham.

Returning from a long commuting day and seeing that brickmaking in Faversham was the evening's topic, he almost wimped out, fearing tedium and embarrassing public slumber. He then recalled that Arthur, too, had commuted, and so he dragged himself along, half planning an unnoticed tea break escape.

"I went out of loyalty and stayed to be

To page 6 ▶▶▶

A day at the museum

CAROLINE CLARKSTONE

We are always keen to recruit new volunteers to help in the museum. You may think that all we require is people to open the Fleur museum three days a week to welcome our visitors. However, there is much more going on behind the scenes and we need volunteers with many skills.

In a typical week our current team has:

- **Photographed museum items for a new Faversham Society book**
- **Moved a completed archive box back to the archive and set up a new box**
- **Added records to our computer system**
- **Undertaken research, using our archive and the internet to answer inquiries from the public**
- **Prepared the next museum window display**
- **Added newly donated items to our costume collection and general collections**
- **Taken a box of tools and a box of papers from our collection and asked: what are they? Are they associated with Faversham? Do they meet our collections policy? What condition are they in? Are they deteriorating?**
- **Prepared for a museum committee meeting (a secretary is needed!)**
- **Logged museum visitor numbers and dealt with the money donated**
- **Scanned photographs from our extensive collection**
- **Sorted through documents in the Arthur Percival collection**
- **Catalogued maps**
- **Printed out a new selection of photographs to display in our windows**

John Clarkstone (above) in map heaven. Right: Lizzie Eyre identifies a flint after the archaeological excavation season

- **Emptied the basement dehumidifier**
- **Reviewed part of the newspaper collection, removing anything not related to Faversham**
- **Catalogued library books**
- **Weeded the courtyard**
- **Repaired and adjusted displays**
- **Maintained our historic telephone exchange**

If you think you would like to join us or would just like to find out more, please email *volunteer@faversham society.org*

You can also leave your details at the Visitor Information Centre at 12 Market Place or museum reception in Preston Street.

The words of the master ...

DOROTHY PERCIVAL

The Faversham Society's inaugural meeting was 60 years ago this month and I think it's safe to say that the few of us still around who were in the guildhall that evening would agree that no one there any idea what would grow out of that first small committee.

We have variously been called rabble-rousers, nostalgic fuddy-duddies, idealistic do-gooders, left-wing conspirators, capitalistic lackeys or elitist-out-of-touch romantics.

Sometimes there has been praise and appreciation. I recently found a rather touching scrap of crumpled paper on which Arthur had doodled around with possible wording for a motto.

In the unforgettably awful scribble that he called handwriting *[hear, hear – Editor]* were: "Presence, challenge, promise, savour, adorn, cherish, conserve, create, warmth, share, past, present, future."

Right at the bottom was the finished version: "Cherish the past, adorn the present, create for the future."

What follows are random sentences that struck me as food for thought, pulling no punches, and in some cases I hope, a bit of a rallying call for the future.

"What gives strength to societies like ours is that they are non-party political. I was once asked by Labour and Conservative on two successive evenings to stand for election as a local councillor. Neither could understand why I refused. I thought anyone prominent in the society should steer clear of party identifications." (**2000**)

"We have to come to grips with the fact that somehow ordinary people have got to assert their rights in the face of big outside interests." (**2000**)

"Our servants prefer to think of themselves as our masters. We are lumbered with a situation in which elected representatives make key planning decisions without even knowing the places concerned. This is no way to run a country which calls itself democratic." (**2000**)

"Instead of dressing its windows with fancy democracy-substitutes [regional assemblies], the government should think of returning power to local communities so that local government and hospital administration could be made fully responsive to, instead of contemptuous of, people's wishes, needs and aspirations." (**2000**)

"If Faversham has emerged as a pleasant place in which to live and work, it is as a result of dedicated effort, mostly voluntary, on the part of local people." (Private letter, undated)

"It is all too easy for people to think there's no point in airing their views, because it's too late / no one will listen etc. It's only because over the years the dear old FavSoc has kept at it, remained vigilant and looked at every planning application for the areas between Dunkirk & Teynham, Stalisfield to Oare, that this area is actually a lot better than it would have been and less damaged than many others. If you don't believe me, go and look elsewhere in some other parts of Kent. We're not just lucky here, we've worked very hard. The Planning Committee in particular." (**Private letter, undated**)

"In the past the society has been at its

Arthur Percival: 'We're not just lucky in Faversham. We've worked very hard'

strongest when fighting some nasty cheapjack development scheme. We have often won, sometimes against huge odds. David can defeat Goliath. Trouble starts when we don't even try. If you have a society that won't stand up for itself, then authoritarianism takes over" (**Private letter, undated**)

"Knowledge, consistency, vigilance, thought and action." The five "golden virtues" to which amenity societies should aspire were cited by Arthur in *The Organisation of an Amenity Society*, a 1967 lecture for the Civic Trust. I recommend its brochure format publication as a more gripping read than the title might suggest. Each of those headings is expanded with lots of gems from experience, for example: "Do not subject local government officials to letters which are ill-informed, Utopian, wild or ill-mannered." Oh yes, haven't we all done that and how useless it was. I'm sure Arthur erred similarly in his youth too … but not in the past 60 years, as far as I know.

▶▶▶ *From page 5*

astonished" was his admirably honest account of the evening. He admitted that he had never really looked at brickwork before but after the lecture couldn't stop doing so. He never again walked around Faversham without observing with fascination their variety, patterns and artistry.

The poet Robert Browning nailed so shrewdly that kind of awakening of visual awareness and appreciation in one of his poems. How, once alerted, we notice "things we have passed perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see".

Then we do see, we do care and if what we see is well-made, fitting and enhancing to the townscape we don't want it to be casually cast aside without good reason. So, we fight to keep it. That was the heart of Arthur's two core endeavours: education and conservation. His lectures encouraged many to become active in the Faversham Society and other local conservation groups. Many friendships started as well during the joyful post lecture sessions in the Bear. Great times.

Neame, VC, by his son

CHRISTINE RAYNER

The son of Faversham's First World War hero, Sir Philip Neame, VC, will be giving a talk about his gallant father.

Sir Philip, who lived in Selling, won the Victoria Cross for his actions at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle in December, 1914. Ten years later he won a gold medal at the Olympics. He is the only person to have done both.

His youngest son, also called Philip, will speak at the Alexander Centre at 7pm on 4 November. Tickets cost £5.

The gallantry of Lieutenant Neame, 26, of the Royal Engineers, was celebrated upon his return to Faversham in July, 1915. The mayor and corporation of Faversham, members of the military and a huge crowd turned out to welcome him.

He won his VC for dealing, as he put it in his account of the action, with "some trouble in the captured trenches owing to German bombing". The British had to rely on "jam-tin" bombs – hand-made from tins filled with gun cotton and hobnails, rivets or any other lumps of metal. They were fired by safety fuse lit by special fusees.

These fusees however, had all been used and Neame improvised. "I asked for matches, as I am not a smoker and did not carry them," he wrote. "I knew that one could light the safety fuse by which the bomb was ignited by holding an ordinary match head on the clean-cut end of the fuse and striking the matchbox across the match head. It is an awkward feat … No fumbling is permissible."

The lieutenant's superior throwing ability held the Germans off long enough to help the wounded out under fire.

Neame, who became a lieutenant-general and was knighted, went on to win a gold medal for shooting at the Paris Olympics in 1924. His gravestone, at St Mary the Virgin Church, Selling, modestly mentions none of these achievements.

His son, Philip, has recently written his own war reminiscences – *Penal Company on the Falklands: A Memoir of the Parachute Regiment at War 1982*.

An easier creek walk

WILLEMIEN DE KONING

I am a life member of the society and since living in Faversham have been interested in the recent developments over the England Coast Path alongside the east and west banks of the creek, and have been especially pleased to see that works have commenced with the demolition of the wall near the Posillipo restaurant. It has made walking along the creek so much more enjoyable.

I am keen that the path will continue along the creek in front of the new housing, before you reach Standard Quay and trust the society is in full support?

A small party was held by society volunteers to celebrate the move of the second-hand bookshop from Gatefield Lane to 11 Preston Street, where it is already doing a brisk business.

MARY RANSOM

Calendars on sale now!

MARY RANSOM

Calendars for 2023 will be on sale from September at the new Visitor Information Centre at 12 Market Place priced at £5.75 each, which represents excellent value for money.They would make ideal Christmas presents.

Calendars will also be available from our website, *faversham society.org/store* (plus a postage charge of £1.50), so there's no excuse if you are not local!

Christmas cards featuring our lovely tree in Market Place, with cinema in the background, are also available at 65p each or £3 for a pack of five.

Photographs are always welcome for the ME13 area for possible inclusion into the calendar. The images need to show Faversham at its best.

We can't pay you for your images but if one is selected your name will get a mention and you will be entitled to a free calendar. Please send one best quality jpg landscape format image per email as an attachment to *ransom@gmx.co.uk* using the heading "Faversham Society Calendar".

You may send as many images as you like during the year but please only one per email. Include your full contact details, where the picture was taken and the month it was taken. Images need to be received by the end of June. Thanks to those who have already taken part.

Thank you for your continued support of the Faversham Society.

You are invited to

Secret Treasures

An exhibition of curious collections to celebrate 60 years of the Faversham Society

This free exhibition in October will give everyone a chance to enjoy some wildly varied, quirky collections usually tucked away in homes, garages and store rooms. Each display consists of sixty items, to celebrate sixty years of the Faversham Society and its work to protect the things we care about

Visitors of all ages will be encouraged to engage with the displays – and to start a collection of their own!

The exhibition runs from 15-29 October and is open from 11am to 3pm. (Closed Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays)

Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre, Preston Street, Faversham

Your exclusive preview

TO

The Faversham Society's diamond jubilee celebration

The Faversham Society's exhibition celebrating the past 60 years of our work will take place on 25 and 26 October, in the Jubilee Room of the Alexander Centre. We urge you to visit and learn more about the achievements of the society since it was founded in 1962, and about our continued efforts to preserve the rich and vibrant cultural, historical and natural heritage of our beautiful town.

We will be holding a **members-only private view** of the exhibition from 6.30pm on Tuesday, 25 October. We would love members to join us for complimentary drink, to view the exhibition, to meet society trustees and to hear from our chairman and some of our most experienced volunteers about our history and work.

Booking instructions

Registration is required for the private view. Please register by at *https://favershamsociety.org/store* and book your preferred entry time for the event as advertised. You will be required to enter this password: *Fleur60Years*. If you are not able to book online, please pop into the Visitor Information Centre at 12 Market Place and leave your name and preferred entry time of either 6.30pm or 7.45pm.

The exhibition will be open to the public from 10am-5pm on 25 October and 10am-9pm on 26 October

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*.

All content © the Faversham Society.

FAVERSHAM SOCIETY OPENING

The Visitor Information Centre and book and gift shop at 12 Market Place is open 10am-4pm Monday to Saturday and 10am-1pm Sunday (opening hours may vary). *info@favershamsociety.org*

The Fleur de Lis museum at 10-13 Preston Street, Faversham, is now open from 11am to 3pm on Friday and Saturday to the end of September and will be opening for October half-term – watch this space for dates and times. Entry is free and further opening times will be announced later, depending on building work.

The Fleur de Lis second-hand bookshop in Preston Street is open 10am-3.30pm, Monday to Saturday.

Chart Gunpowder Mills in Nobel Court, off South Road, are open 2pm-5pm Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays from 2 April to 31 October.

The Faversham Society is registered charity No1135262 and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales No 7112241.
www.favershamsociety.org