

Faversham Society Newsletter

May 2023

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Open Faversham: a new annual event for our town

HAROLD GOODWIN

The Faversham Society and the Friends of St Mary of Charity have joined forces to showcase our town's built, cultural and natural heritage in August. We hope there will be events and activities celebrating our heritage across Faversham and perhaps in nearby villages that relate to Faversham.

Open Faversham runs from 12 to 20 August. During those nine days, Faversham groups and individuals who would like to celebrate and share an aspect of our heritage will present an activity or event

and encourage visitors and residents alike to participate. St Mary of Charity has been at the heart of our town for centuries and, in August, it will be available as a venue. Along with the Faversham Society's Visitor Information Centre, opposite the Guildhall, the church will be signposting activities across the town and encouraging people to participate

If you or your group would like to organise an event or activity during the nine days of Open Faversham we will be happy to promote it. It is the summer



Silver donation

A silver salver presented to Bryan Tassell when he retired as clerk to Faversham magistrates in 1978 is among the latest donations to the Fleur museum

Mr Tassell, who retired after 28 years, was the sixth generation of his direct family to serve the court and, the *Faversham News* then reported, the family's combined service of 180 years must be unique in the British Isles.

This was, the *News* said, the first time since the early 19th century that the clerk had not been a Shepherd or a Tassell. *See pages 10-11*

New parish church history

THE EDITOR

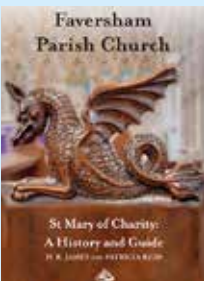
A new edition of Faversham Paper No 33, A History of St Mary of Charity Parish Church, first published in 1990, will be on sale in the summer.

The original paper, by H. R. James, has been revised and updated by Dr Patricia Reid and is edited by Stephen Rayner.

It will feature pages of colour images of the church known until the 17th century as Our Blessed Lady of Faversham and take us up to the retuning and renovation of St Mary's bells during the Covid pandemic.

Also pictured are some of the elaborate medieval carvings on the ends of the pews, possibly acquired from Faversham Abbey when it was demolished on Henry VIII's orders. One of the carvings, a dragon, is featured on the cover (above).

Full details of the book will follow nearer the publication date.



The old version has been updated

holidays and although some of us will be away, many will be enjoying a staycation and families will be home with children looking to be entertained. In August, Faversham attracts many tourists and day visitors and many of us have friends and family coming to stay.

We hope there will be many activities for children and young people during Open Faversham and that we shall attract old and new residents alike.

On Tuesday, 15 August, Geoff Sandiford's group will be putting on *The Charmed Life of Arden* at St Mary of Charity Church.

Many ideas are being talked about, from a demonstration of flint-knapping to a guided walk to appreciate Faversham bricks, the lives of Sir Sidney and Lady Alexander, maritime-themed exhibitions on the sailing barge *Roberta* and in the Town Warehouse (also known as *TS Hazard*), on Town Quay, guided nature walks along the Westbrook and down the creek out on to the marshes, exhibitions in the town hall and in the Maison Dieu, a boules tournament and goal-running on the Faversham Rec.

We hope that Open Faversham will grow into an established annual event celebrating our natural, built and cultural heritage – it will be what we make it. We hope that you will want to be part of it.

Our website at www.OpenFaversham.info will list the events and we shall be promoting the nine days widely in the town, across Swale and on Visit Kent.

If you would like to organise an event or activity and to have it included in Open Faversham, please email us at info@openfaversham.info – you will need to organise and insure your event but we will be happy to promote it for you.

Chairman's column

HAROLD GOODWIN

Wednesday, 24 May, brings the Faversham Society's AGM. Your chance to reflect on the work of the Faversham Society in 2022 and to raise questions with the board.

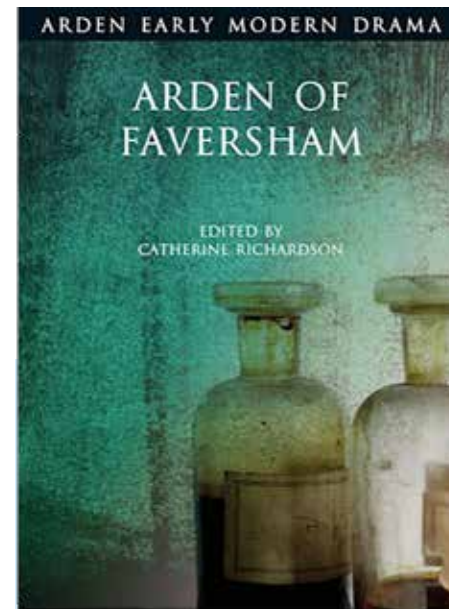
I am delighted to announce that, after the formal business of the annual meeting, Catherine Richardson of the University of Kent has agreed to speak on Thomas Arden and Faversham (see panel on the right). Her talk is a treat not to be missed.

For reasons so far unclear, the Abbeyfield planning application for 180 homes was not on the Swale Planning Committee agenda for its meeting on 13 April. It may be that the Faversham Society's second submission caused some additional considerations. You can find our submission on our [policy blog](#) on the society website. If it comes back to Swale's Planning Committee, it will be on 17 or 25 May after the local council elections. We will let you know if we need to present in numbers at the meeting. I understand that Swale now has a five-year supply of housing, which strengthens Swale's hand if it decides against the application.

The review of responses to the Regulation 14 consultation on the Faversham Neighbourhood Plan is nearing completion. There were many and they all have to be replied to in detail. The new Faversham Town Council will then consider the revised plan and send it to Swale, and there will be a further six weeks of consultation before going to the independent examiner who will review the plan and the representations made.

Once through that process, it can go to the referendum, where it needs a majority.

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Not to be missed

Make sure you come along to the society's annual meeting on 24 May and stay to hear our guest speaker, Catherine Richardson. She is professor of early modern studies and director, Institute of Cultural and Creative Industries, at the University of Kent.

Some of you will recall her entertaining and enlightening talk on *Arden of Faversham* which she gave at Faversham Guildhall on Shakespeare's birthday last year. Professor Richardson is editor of the new edition of the play, published by Bloomsbury, and will be talking about *Arden of Faversham* and its legacy.

Arden is emerging as a theme for Open Faversham (see front page) this year.



THE FAVERSHAM SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1962

FLEUR DE LIS HERITAGE CENTRE

ESTABLISHED 1977

Company No. 7112241

Registered Charity No. 1135262

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

Notice is hereby given that the 2023 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Faversham Society will be held in the Assembly Rooms, Faversham on Wednesday, 24 May, 2023, at 7pm.

Final details will be available online and in paper copies at the Visitor Information Centre at 12 Market Place, Faversham, ME13 7AE, along with the AGM papers and nominations, on Tuesday, 9 May, 2023.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2022 AGM and matters arising
3. 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, **nomination forms for trustees and officers are available (as of 24 April, 2023) online at www.favershamsociety.org and at the Visitor Information Centre (VIC), 12 Market Place, Faversham, Kent ME13 7AE. Nominations for Trustees and Officers must be returned no later than 7pm on 5 May, 2023**, either via email to membership@favershamsociety.org or by post or hand to the Visitor Information Centre.

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, a proxy form will be made available. **Proxy forms will be available on the website at favershamsociety.org and from the VIC, from 9 May 2023.** They must be returned to the Society no later than 7pm on the 23 May either by email to membership@favershamsociety.org or to the Visitor Information Centre, as above.

The papers of the AGM, that shall include details of all those nominated for election and the 2022 financial year's annual report and accounts, shall be made available to all members by 9 May 2023. These, and proxy forms, will be available to download from the Faversham Society's website at www.favershamsociety.org and hard copies will be available from the Visitor Information Centre, 12 Market Place, Faversham, Kent.

▶▶▶ From page 3

At the Reg 16 stage it is formally recognised as an emerging Neighbourhood Plan and begins to have some weight in informing planning decisions. The sooner we get the new Neighbourhood Plan in place the better.

chair@favershamsociety.org

New operating structure

KATIE BEGG

Some time ago the society ran a survey asking, among other things, members' and volunteers' views on what could be improved in how the society is run. The board of trustees has used this feedback to implement changes to our management structure that will equip the society to survive, thrive, and continue to protect our unique heritage for future generations.

We hope this changed structure will provide members with greater clarity on how we undertake our activities – as well as providing our volunteers with a clearer view of how we operate, and how their vital contribution of time and knowledge supports each area of our work.

The management of the society will

become both more transparent and accessible – with the intention of making our volunteers and members feel better informed and included.

The elected board of trustees will continue to take overall responsibility for the Faversham Society, as set out in our articles of association. It will move to meeting quarterly, and be enabled better to focus on strategy, policy and scrutiny.

We will establish four management groups to run the day-to-day activity of the society. These are set out below, including a list of the areas of work for which they will be responsible, and the trustee who will lead each. The society's current sub-committees will remain in place under their management group. The group's chairwomen or chairmen will meet monthly, and each will report on activity to the board and implement board decisions that refer to their area of work.

We are confident that our new structure puts the society in the best possible position to explore the opportunities for, and face the challenges to, the future for our town. If you have any comments or questions, please contact do let us know via *membership@favershamsociety.org*

Wedding exhibition

JENNIFER SHIPMAN

At the end of April, and for a couple of months only, the society will be putting on a display of wedding dresses from the Fleur de Lis Museum's costume department. Out of the attic we have selected a few from the interesting costumes that are in our care.

Although the dresses on show are mainly silk we have one early example of rayon (artificial silk), dated 1940, and an all-nylon dress from the 1960s.

We will also be showing photographs of some of the weddings where the gowns were worn. Are your relatives in the photos? All the dresses are from the Faversham area, so there's a chance.

Wedding gowns follow fashions but also reflect the wearers' character and interests. Come along to see what we mean.

If you donate anything to us, please give as much information and/or photographs that are relevant. We all love to know the background stories.

Free books online

LEIGH ALLISON

We've been busy in the Faversham Society publishing team loading up some of the older Faversham Papers so that they are available as free PDF downloads from our website.

Ten papers are now available on a variety of subjects from our online store. The link is here: favershamsociety.org/store. Sort by price low to high to spot the free ones.

Three papers form a series on the churches in the area, covering Ospringe, Davington, Preston, Oare, Brents, Stone, Sheldwich, Badlesmere and Buckland. Although they were written a while ago, they still hold much interesting information

from the parish registers and records.

Other freebies include:

- ❖ Two of the oldest papers, written to explain the history of Faversham Abbey and the gunpowder industry.
- ❖ Two papers relating to the story of Thomas Arden.
- ❖ A gunpowder personnel register, dating from 1573
- ❖ And two papers that describe the details – with some sad stories – of the Faversham Poor and the Union Workhouse.

As ever, please let us know if you find out any interesting information about your ancestors!

Hidden gems

PETER QUINCE

Sometimes I wander around the Fleur Bookshop and think: "What an astonishing wealth of material we have here." Most of it is on display, of course, for the benefit of browsers and book-lovers; but there are also what I call hidden gems, or fortuitous presences, things that betray an intriguing insight into the past lives of bibliophiles, and all culminating in this cornucopia in Preston Street.

I have written before about the slips of paper, cards, prayers, receipts and tickets left in donated books and I am not the only volunteer who finds such things a delight. When I sort through newly donated books I study the title, the author, cover illustration (the cover itself sometimes "sells" a book); usually I read the back-cover blurb and decide where in the shop the book will fit logically, after it has been processed in the office.

I also look for a dedication and whatever hidden gem may fall out when the book is opened and the pages flicked through. Such surprises sometimes offer an insight into

GROUP	AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY	GROUP CHAIR
Heritage Group	Archaeological Research Group, museum, library and archives	Jonathan Carey
Futures Group	Environment, planning and emergent issues	Harold Goodwin
Resources Group	Finances, bookshop, estates, VIC, membership, HR issues	Jan West and Andrew Holden
Outreach Group	Publications, education, events, print and social media. supporting members and volunteers	Leigh Allison

the book's previous owner.

Each second-hand book is essentially a palimpsest, a little window into the past, sometimes the recent past, but on occasion generations past. Hundred-year-old handwriting in flyleaf dedications, margin notes or inscriptions on those handy blank pages at the end of a volume, all easily overlooked by the casual observer, provide wonderful food for thought.

Who wrote those words? Why and on what occasion? And what was the relationship to the dedicatee? All books are, in a sense, gifts – from one person to another or from the author to the wider reading world.

Perhaps I might offer a few thoughts on the scraps in volumes donated to the Fleur and, if not accidentally discovered, then destined to be lost for ever, consigned to the historical wastepaper bin, examples of long-extinct emotions and cancelled lives. Books harbour such lives, frozen in time.

To this day I treasure a simple piece of card no bigger than a matchbox on which someone who will forever remain anonymous had written in beautiful calligraphic script: "Suscipe me ... Uphold me, O God according to your promise that I may live, and let me not be put to shame in my hope..." ("Suscipe me" may be translated roughly as "look over and protect me"). Some of the capital letters are emboldened with colour, blue and red, and there is a beautiful piece of decorative artwork beneath the inscription.

On the reverse is the date 29 April, 1978, not so long ago but sufficiently, perhaps, to make it historical. When I first read the prayer, which is based on a verse from the book of Psalms, I was deeply touched, and I am touched now whenever I reread those words. Perhaps the writer is lost for ever,



Open gardens help
More than 20 gardens in Faversham will open to the public on the Sunday 25 June. Money raised goes towards the Faversham Society and this year we're looking for volunteers.

Do you have a couple of hours to spare either helping out on our market stall selling tickets? Or you could volunteer in one of our gardens.

If so, please email the address below.
favershamopengardens@gmail.com

but I wish I had met them. I get the distinct impression that here was a sensitive, creative and deeply spiritual individual.

Another brief pencil comment written in a neat hand on a small slip of paper reads: "Only the loving find love and they never have to look for it." That puzzled me for a while. It can be interpreted in a number of ways, but I should resist reading too much into it. It fell out of *The Buddha in Daily Life*. That probably explains it.

A decidedly temporary bookmark, if that's what it was – one can never be sure – is a receipt from the former Faversham branch of Woolworths (now, for the moment, Multisave) which dates from 1999 and lists "40 bin liners, large pegs neon X2, all-purpose cleaner, can opener, universal grater and cutting board". The owner must have been a house-proud cook.

The receipt ends "Thank you for shopping at Woolworth's." I recall the branch of Woolworth's in Hoxton Market, east London, where I was brought up. It boasted a beautiful Victorian façade and, in those days, sold colourful children's books. Happy memories!

Last, a printed slip of paper which, on one side, shows an illustration of a blossoming flower in artistically water-smudged pink and brown tones but has no wording. On the other side is what might be called a formal welcome, neatly printed,

to a tourist resort on Mauritius. It reads: "Dear Mr and Mrs Smith, A warm welcome back to Le Gujorok! We are delighted to have you staying with us again. Each member of our team is looking forward to making your holiday on this Indian Ocean Paradise island a truly unforgettable experience. With my warmest personal regards, Trenka Lanson, general manager".

I hope the Smiths enjoyed the unforgettable Indian Ocean Paradise. Me? I am perfectly happy with Broadstairs.

No doubt we volunteers will continue to discover lost bookmarks, abandoned invitations, forgotten prayers and even treasured postcards and letters in the constant flow of lovely books we receive at the Fleur Bookshop. Remember that nothing is ever lost, only transformed – or left inadvertently in donated volumes.

** Names have been changed*



War history for sale

WENDY CLARKE

Who is interested in this lovely antique leather set? *The History of the War* is undated, but clearly published shortly after 1918.

We are open to offers and can offer free local delivery. The set is currently displayed in the history section of the

second-hand bookshop in Preston Street.

We are now trying to create a small courtyard garden at the back of the fiction room and hope to offer small plants for sale in the summer. We would be grateful for any pots or containers, garden chairs, or plants. Thank you.

Please contact me, Wendy Clarke, on 01794 529166.

You donate history ... and

HEATHER WOOTTON AND
CAROLINE CLARKSTONE

What do the following items have in common? A 2022 Queen's Jubilee badge, an electric fire from the 1940s, an 18th-century volume of *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, photographs of the Whiting family and Charlotte Shepherd's wedding veil?

The answer is ... in 2022, they all became part of the collection of the Fleur de Lis Museum, all donated.

The museum has a collections policy that guides the curatorial volunteers in deciding which donated items offered can be accepted and added to the collection. You may wonder why that includes modern objects. Surely they have no place in a museum? Well, yes, they do. The society aims to "Cherish the past, Adorn the Present and Create for the Future", and so we are curating some items that will tell our successors about life in Faversham in the 2020s.

The most important factors are that donations have a strong connection to Faversham, especially if they are not unique and that they tell a story. In 2022 we were offered, and accepted, a range of donations, dating from 1728 to 2022, of varying shapes and sizes and reflecting many facets of life in the town and surrounding area over three centuries.

The largest items accessioned were a bell headstock and clock winding handle from the Parish church, St Mary of Charity, and the smallest was a lapel badge from the former Wreights school.

The Faversham Society has a large collection of photographs of Faversham

and district, but we are always happy to accept more, especially when they are labelled with names, dates, and locations. Our volunteer curators spend a great deal of time poring over photos, debating or guessing, who, what, and where.

One of the most immediately appealing donations this year was a large, framed photo of a victory party held in 1945 by the residents of Preston and Makenade Avenues. One of our librarian volunteers was able to point out herself as a baby in the photograph! We also acquired family photos from the Whiting, Ronayne and Baldwin families and Sydney (Joe) Masters, along with some notable, former Boughton personalities and a cricket XI and football team from Wreights School for 1909-10.

Places can be easier to identify in images and we added photographs of St Mary of Charity Church, West Street, the Maison Dieu and the 1953 floods at Harty Ferry to the collection, as well as a print of Throwley church, two watercolours of the creek and a Spitfire Christmas card.

The museum is offered many household and everyday items and we carefully select those with a strong or unique Faversham association as these add character to displays and exhibitions and elicit many comments from visitors. In 2022 we accessioned a pewter tankard from the now-defunct Park Tavern, accounts books belonging to a local company, three electric fires from periods 1940 to the 1970s and a silver salver presented to the retiring clerk to the magistrates (see front page).

The museum attics provide storage for a surprisingly large costume collection and displays involving costumes are always

our curators record it

popular. Donations in 2022 ranged from the everyday – school and Beaver uniforms – to the very special: wedding outfits from known weddings (see page 7). Military uniform was represented by a pair of riding boots from the Kent Yeomanry and a pair of leather gloves.

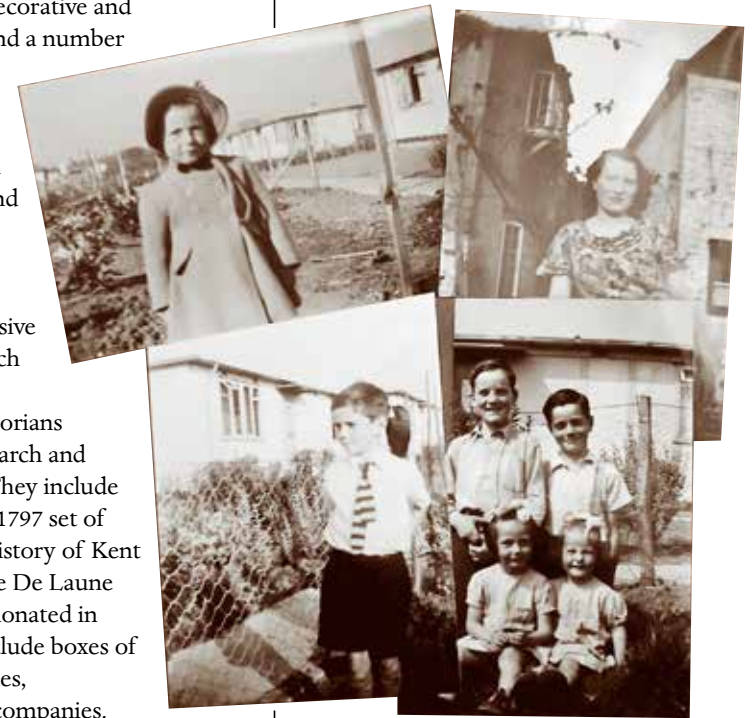
Badges can be decorative and commemorative and a number were donated last year, marking activities and club memberships from the 20th century and Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee.

The Fleur de Lis Museum has extensive paper archives which are catalogued so volunteers and historians can undertake research and answer inquiries. They include books: an original 1797 set of Edward Hasted's history of Kent and a history of the De Laune cycling club were donated in 2022. They also include boxes of papers, from families, organisations and companies.

There was plenty to fascinate and engage curators last year as they catalogued donations of Whiting family papers, documents relating to Faversham's original literary festivals in the 1990s, minutes and memorabilia of the Inner Wheel in Faversham and documents relating to St Barnabas Church in Boughton.

This is just a selection of the museum acquisitions, but our curators are kept fully

occupied, as every acquisition is researched, recorded and processed then stored or archived appropriately, using museum-quality materials. Some will be displayed, others will be stored in the archives and add to our knowledge of Faversham's history, through research.



The Ronayne and Baldwin families pose with prefabs on the Millfield estate

If you are interested in finding out more about the museum and its collections, contact us on museum@favershamsociety.org

If you would like to join our team of curators and help enhance knowledge about Faversham's history, please email volunteer@favershamsociety.org

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 12 Market Place, Faversham. 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 **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, will open on Fridays and Saturdays from 11am to 3pm.

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

The **Chart Gunpowder Mills** in Nobel Court, off South Road, are now open on Saturdays and Sundays from 2pm to 4pm.

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