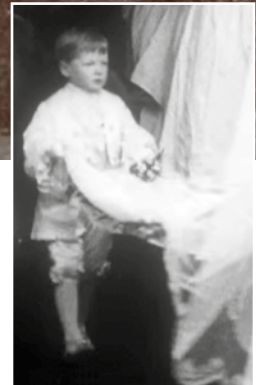


Faversham Society Newsletter

June 2023

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Chairman's column

HAROLD GOODWIN

Faversham has a strong sense of community, evident at the mayor-making on 23 May. And the next day, there were public meetings about the proposed closure of the Faversham tip in Salters Lane and the planning application for a new development on the marshes at Ham Road.

I would like to have been at both. These meetings clashed with the Faversham Society's AGM and concern about being quorate. In the event, there was a good turnout for the AGM and Professor Catherine Richardson's stimulating and erudite discussion of the importance of Arden of Faversham to our town and the world. The play has recently been

Carrie and Stanley emerge from church, her train carried by Peter

Peter's star role

A relic of the town's greatest society wedding is now in the Faversham Society collection. When Carrie, daughter of Dr (later Sir) Sidney Alexander, married in 1913, the town was decked with garlands and crowds turned out to greet Carrie and her beau, Stanley Lloyd. Her train was carried by pageboy Peter and the society now has his intricate costume. See pages 8-9. The wedding was filmed and can be seen online at the link below.

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www.youtube.com/watch?v=RhbbZB1H1qE

▶▶▶ From front page

performed at the Red Bull Theatre in New York, billed as a “sexy ... true crime thriller... a bloody, darkly comic Elizabethan noir”.

Our president, Richard Oldfield, opened the AGM by announcing that I would be retiring from the chair of the society at the AGM in 2024. Leigh Allison, Jonathan Carey, Matthew Hatchwell and I were elected as trustees for a three-year term. As I said at the AGM, I joined the board 12 years ago, standing for election at Arthur Percival’s request.

Arthur gently pointed out that I had benefited from everything that the society had done for Faversham, but beyond being a member and paying my subs, I had not contributed. It was, he said, time ... Two years later, the society needed a new chairman or chairwoman, and I agreed to stand because no one else was willing to take the responsibility. It has been, and still is, an honour and a privilege to serve in this post.

Ten years ago, Jan West and I agreed that we would seek to future-proof the society. We have made progress. The society is financially strong. We are maintaining and improving the Fleur. We have moved our visitor information centre and shop to the heart of the town by the Guildhall, brought our charity bookshop into the Fleur and we are starting to renew the museum and establish a library and archive room in the Fleur hall.

We are launching Open Faversham to bring together and showcase our heritage and an archives group to bring together the

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Fred’s tale of



PATRICIA ROSS

Fred Poynter’s Faversham Paper, *The Skate Boys*, has been a bestseller ever since he wrote it – and society members may recall a recent display in the museum window in Preston Street of roller hockey skates alongside modern skateboards attracting a lot of attention.

A roller-skating rink was opened in Faversham in 1910 in an old barge chandlery on the bank of the creek near the bridge, on land now used as a factory car park. The rink was a huge success when it opened, and a roller hockey club was soon formed. Keen players were split into teams and competed against other local towns and further afield. The best players from the four Faversham teams in 1921 were selected to become a representative town side.

One fine sporting gesture drawn attention to in this paper about rink hockey was that teams did not use reserves. If a player was injured and

world-beating Skate Boys



unable to continue play, the opposition would withdraw one of their players to redress the balance.


In 1925, however, the rink was destroyed by fire. The building was not insured and was never replaced. But that was not the end: Herne Bay generously allowed the Faversham players – often their rivals – to continue training using their rink.

The Faversham team’s finest hour was undoubtedly in the 1929-30 season, when they were invited to represent England in Cup of Nations at Montreux, Switzerland, where national teams from France, Germany, Italy and Belgium competed against a team of players from a small town in Kent, which did not even

Faversham’s world-beating skate boys and (left) one of their roller boots

have its own rink! How did they get on? Fred’s story – which has also been made into a musical – contains press cuttings galore and many photographs to explain what happened.

Perhaps it is worth adding that Herne Bay still has a skating rink and are still playing matches in a league. If only the rink had been rebuilt, and the club continued, who knows what could have been achieved?

Editor’s note: My grandsons play rink hockey at Herne Bay and their footwear is considerably more comfortable than the boots held in the society museum. 

▶▶▶ From page 2

remarkable collections of archives we have in the town. The society board has reshaped the management of the society with the board taking a supervisory and strategic role: the new executive board has grown out of the standing committee and is working. It is my role and responsibility to ensure that it beds in over the next year and to report on progress to the AGM.

At next year's AGM, the members will need to elect a new chair. It is essential that the new person is known to the volunteers and that there is mutual respect. I was unknown to our volunteers when I was elected to the board. That was a significant handicap. It took time to become known and trusted. The society is run by its volunteers. The board will begin work to identify a new person to take over the chair and recommend someone to the AGM. It is essential that our volunteers are involved in identifying a new person to be elected.

The society pressed for the Faversham Conservation Area to be reviewed, which is essential for ensuring that new developments complement our built environment and do not detract from it. The society has been involved in the review and the draft is being submitted to Swale this week.

Garden programmes

More than 20 gardens in Faversham will open to the public on the Sunday, 25 June and programmes for the day are now available at the Visitor Information Centre at 12 Market Place.
favershamopengardens@gmail.com

Swale is seeking nominations for the Local Heritage List. The consultation runs to 26 June. We need to act quickly. Full details and forms are here: swale.gov.uk/planning-and-regeneration/heritage-and-landscape/swales-local-heritage-list. There is a meeting about this in the Guildhall at 7.30pm on Thursday, 8 June. We need to take this opportunity and act. Please start form-filling! Rapid progress on the Neighbourhood Plan will prevent developments like the one planned for Ham Road.

Finally, I understand that the Faversham Society played a role in establishing the tip. Does anyone know more?

chair@favershamsociety.org

Faversham's turkey link

KEITH ROBINSON

It is generally agreed that the turkey, now a staple Christmas fare, was introduced into England by the navigator William Strickland (died 1598), a Yorkshire adventurer who sailed with Sebastian Cabot in search of the northwest passage, in 1541. Indeed a "turkey-cock in his pride proper" appears on his coat of arms granted in 1550 and is probably the earliest surviving English drawing of a turkey.

The 2021 excavation by the Faversham Society Archaeological Research Group (FSARG) at Queen Court, Ospringe, found a turkey skeleton in the front garden. The bones were still articulated, indicating that the bird had been buried whole, that is to say uneaten, a possible example of the earliest birds brought to England being kept as pets. Sadly, it was not possible to date the Queen Court bird.

Probably the earliest record of domesticated turkeys in a farmyard setting was found in the probate inventory attached to the will of Nicholas Wigmore

of Goodnestone-next-Faversham dated 7 March, 1560. Wigmore owned Langdon Court Farm and held a lease on Goodnestone Court Farm where he was resident. His personal estate (domestic and farm goods together) was valued at £240 2s 5d, a goodly sum for a mid-16th-century Kentish farmer. Wigmore was a mixed farmer with 150 to 200 acres of arable planted with wheat and barley, 21 cattle, 64 sheep and 23 pigs valued at £40 7s; along with 18 chickens, valued at 8d each; six geese valued at 10d each and "2 turkey hens and a cock" valued at 6s 8d.

The forgoing was extracted from an article by Dr Dennis Baker, later head of History at Christ Church College, Canterbury, published in the summer of 1979 in the Faversham Magazine.

Research into the ownership of Queen Court reveals that during the reign of Charles II one Henry Mellish (1623-77) of London became possessed of it. Mellish was described as a "turkey merchant" and a "merchant of Levant" on memorials in the parish church at Sanderstead, Surrey, his resting place. He is further described as having "indured the Inconveniences of several Years Travell in forreign Countries, which contracted a lingering Weakness on his Body". Henry was doubtless a merchant in exotic merchandise rather than a dealer in poultry.

The Queen Court turkey was buried in the formal garden at the front of the building. FSARG will be returning to excavate in the former farmyard behind this year.

2024 calendars reminder

MARY RANSOM

If you wish to submit photographs of Faversham for next year's calendar, please

Postboxes crowned



Faversham's guerilla knitters celebrated the coronation with these postbox decorations

note than images need to be received by the end of June. Images need to show Faversham at its best, preferably with some sort of landmark that indicates that the picture couldn't have been taken anywhere else.

We can't pay you for your photos but if one of your images is selected your name will be mentioned and you will get a free calendar.

All you need to do is submit one best-quality jpg landscape format image per email to the email address below using the heading Faversham Society calendar. You may send as many images as you like but preferably only one per email. Please include your full contact details, where the photograph was taken and, if possible, when it was taken. Images need to be received by the end of June to allow us time to have the calendar printed and out for sale at the Hop Festival in September.

Thank you for your support in helping to raise vital funds for the society.

ransom@gmx.co.uk

Direct us to a directory

NIGEL MORGAN

From the early 1800s until the mid-1960s trade and residential directories were regularly published detailing house occupiers, trades and often both.

These directories are an invaluable help in tracing family histories, commercial operations and for researching the past of your own house. Examples include those published by Pigot & Co, Kelly, and Voile & Robertson, plus lists taken from census and burgess roll data. Unfortunately, the Faversham Society does not own many of these directories and our records are therefore incomplete.

If anyone possesses any directories and is

willing to allow the society to make a copy, then please bring them in to the Visitor Information Centre at 12 Market Place, marked for the attention of the publications group, and enclose your name and address so we can return them to you. Thank you.

Chart Mills help

ROD MORLEY

Help is required for our Chart Gunpowder Mills, now open for the summer season on Saturdays and Sundays, 2pm to 5pm.

Our unique restored Mills off Stonebridge Way are very popular.

We are down to three volunteers which is not enough to cover any problems.

No intense knowledge is required! You will soon pick it up with some help from us. Please contact me on the address below.

rod.morley@hotmail.co.uk

Tickled pink by books

PETER QUINCE

Books invite us into an alternative reality, a through-the-looking-glass world. The power of the written word to create images and emotions in the reader's mind is enormous, sometimes dazzling and often overwhelming.

That is why, at least in part, the Fleur Bookshop possesses such a wide appeal: enter this emporium in exchange for a few pounds and a few minutes of your time, and you will leave with characters, scenes, narratives, landscapes, poetry and quite possibly an edifying or even hilarious exchange with one or more of the volunteers. I am not joking.

One of the great delights of working in the Fleur is the exchange of views, the repartee, the sheer good-heartedness between customers and volunteers, often

stimulated by books brought to the counter to be bought and talked about, a sort of improvised seminar. It happens.

Many's the time I've picked up a novel or a biography or a history which was about to be bought and exclaimed: "Oh, I've read that and it's brilliant. Believe me you'll love it! Let me tell you..." At which point the customer gives me a doubtful look as if to say: "You don't have to sell me the qualities of this book; I am actually just about to buy it."

But my enthusiasm over Charlotte Brontë, Friedrich Nietzsche and even Michael Palin knows no bounds. I revel in the admiration of brilliant novelists, thinkers and explorers.

But getting back to humour – or, more specifically, wit. So many authors, critics and commentators have had a whale of a time offering observations on books and reading, some of which relates either directly or peripherally to life in the Fleur Bookshop.

Groucho Marx once exclaimed: "From the moment I picked it up until the moment I put it down, I was convulsed with laughter. Some day, I intend reading it." And equally cruel, Dorothy Parker's considered opinion: "This is not a novel to be tossed aside lightly – it should be thrown with great force."

I have never been a fan of Henry James, I must say, even if he did live in Rye; his writing is too dense and convoluted even for me. Oscar Wilde said of him: "Mr Henry James writes fiction as if it were a painful duty." But don't be put off. Wilde was sometimes consumed with his own wit. Most of the time, actually.

In rather more serious vein, the publisher Michael Lynton once said: "The book is the greatest interactive medium of

all time. You can underline it, write in the margins, fold down a page, skip ahead or go back. And you can take it anywhere." Lovers of social media, please note.

Enter the Fleur Bookshop and, browsing, you will soon come across much serious reading, as well as many books that will tickle you pink. I am not joking!

Sailing as a team

JUDY HARRISON

At Sea-Change Sailing Trust we operate the engineless Thames sailing barge *Blue Mermaid* and our usual work is taking groups of young people and vulnerable adults on residential sailing voyages.

Our aim is that they learn some nautical skills, but the main takeaway is the resilience, communication, team-working, ability to listen and follow instructions and resilience that comes from a voyage with us.

Blue Mermaid will be competing in the Swale barge match on 28-29 July. We use these occasions to invite a small group of charter guests onboard to learn about the heritage of Thames sailing barges and experience first hand how exciting it is to be racing among a fleet of historic craft. Would any members of your organisation, or their friends or family be interested in joining us?

There is information about sailing with us on a barge match in our website www.seachangesailingtrust.org.uk. Guests join on Friday evening in time for supper with the race crew and a night onboard, and then the race on the Saturday. No sailing experience is necessary, and guests may opt just to watch, or to join in with the action of sailing the barge. Anyone interested can contact me for more information.

judy@seachangesailingtrust.org.uk

Here comes the bride – and the cutest pageboy jacket

JENNIFER SHIPMAN

Following on from our wedding dress exhibition, which is now running at the Fleur Gallery in Preston Street, I would like to tell you about some other similar items we have.

We have several veils, some of which you may have seen in past exhibitions, wedding shoes and floral head-dresses. One bride gave us the pearl necklace she had worn on the day. But a month or so ago we had one donation that covered three weddings – and for a change the clothes are not the bride’s gown, but part of a pageboy’s outfit.

The pageboy was Peter, aged four, and featured fleetingly in the film of Carrie Alexander’s wedding in 1913, an important social occasion in Faversham. Carrie was daughter of Dr (later Sir) Sidney Alexander, of Gatefield House, Preston Street – now the Alexander Centre. And Peter is better known as Bryan Tassell, later clerk to Faversham magistrates. In the previous newsletter we featured the silver salver presented to him on his retirement in 1978. The items have been donated by her family.

But back to his childhood and the cream frock coat he wore to the wedding. Imagine the kind of long jackets that the Stuart kings may have worn. There is ornate appliquéd lace on the collar and deep, turn-back cuffs. This is where embroidered lace is cut off its silk net base then stitched by hand on to another fabric, in this case cream silk.

There are three buttons to each side of the front, six in all. These are made of



Peter the pageboy’s jacket from 1913 and (right) a classic 1960s bridal gown

metal with a cut-out baroque design on them, expensive to make and purely decorative. Originally there would have been two on the back of the garment on the two deep pleats but they have been removed – perhaps kept as keepsakes by the family.

Peter also wore shaped stockings in knitted cream silk thread and a pair of the cutest cream leather gloves. A guest asked if the gloves had been made by fairies, to which he answered: “Oh no, Mummy bought them at Child’s shop.”

The last remains of Child’s shop – in Court Street, on part of the site now occupied by Shepherd Neame – is on first floor of the Fleur museum: counters,

fixtures and some of their stock boxes. Have you seen it?

Mr Tassell was the sixth generation of his direct family to serve as a court clerk and the solicitors in West Street still bears his name.

His daughter, Jean Duchin, who died in 2020, was a stalwart Faversham Society member and also the great-great-great-great-granddaughter of the first Shepherd to own the Shepherd Neame brewery.

Also donated by her family is a square veil of silk net



with appliquéd lace flowers stitched all over and a scalloped edge of machine-made lace round the four sides. This was worn by Charlotte Shepherd when she was married in 1846. Charlotte, born 1825, daughter of Julius Gaborian Shepherd, solicitor and descendant of the brewing Shepherds, married James Tassell, born 1819. Charlotte was therefore Bryan Tassell’s great-grandmother.

Next there are two gentleman’s waistcoats. One has written on it “Father’s wedding waistcoat” and signed by Helen Tassell. Both waistcoats are styled the same, with rolled collar, chest darts, watch pockets, six silk-covered buttons and the narrowest silk cord to trim and protect the edge of collar, pocket and even round the arm holes. The only difference is that “Father’s Waistcoat” has a leafy pattern in flock silk up the front and the other is made from silk brocade, both a rich cream colour.

Both these items are much more complicated than those made today and both have something I have not seen before. There are linen tabs stitched in the side seams and almost meeting at the back. Once there would have been some kind of tie threaded through the tabs and pulled tight to make the waistcoat fit tighter. A narrow strip of fine leather is also stitched on the bottom of the inside front edge.

These are to save wear on the fabric, I presume – but these are garments that would possibly only be worn once. Interesting.

Duncan Harrington: death

JOHN OWEN

The death of Duncan Harrington aged 78 sees the passing of an outstanding Faversham historian.

While he was known to few Faversham Society members, Duncan carried out more research into late Mediaeval and Tudor Faversham's original manuscript sources and then got it published, with the collaboration of the late Patricia Hyde, than anyone else has ever done or is likely to do in the foreseeable future.

By upbringing Duncan was neither a Faversham native nor an antiquary. He was born in Dorset and read zoology at Nottingham University. He drifted to Kent and local history in which he was encouraged by the Institute of Genealogical and Heraldic Studies at Canterbury. From there he became a professional record searcher and genealogist, a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, a fellow of the Society of Genealogists, president of the Kent Family History Society and a member of the Faversham Historians.

He soon discovered Faversham, but never lived here, when he married the daughter of Arnot and Ros Johnson, activists in the Faversham Society from its earliest days of the 1960s. As a widower he then married Rhona, the daughter of Arthur Britten, the Faversham veterinary surgeon who was Mayor of Faversham 1972-74 and another early supporter of the society.

In 1986 a serendipitous encounter at the Canterbury Cathedral Archives with Patricia Hyde drew him to committed Faversham study. Patricia, from Guildford,

an Oxford historian trying to recover from the early deaths of her husband and son, had been researching the life of Henry Hatch and became intrigued by the early development of Faversham. She needed someone locally to trawl through the long series of corporation and Kent records and Duncan valued a client who would write up his finds. They complemented each other perfectly for 30 years.

Their approach was comprehensive and logical but immensely time-consuming. Their seminal productions, whose authorship revolves from Harrington and Hyde to Hyde and Harrington, are the result. Duncan wrote up his transcripts and Patricia wrote the supporting texts.

The scope of their research was Faversham and the Hundred of Faversham, that ancient land unit comprising the villages around and south of the town, and whose historic economies were interlinked. They started by compiling lists of primary records, with locations and references by town and village. They published those as Faversham Bibliographies in eight volumes.

From these they selected the series of records that would give a structure to the society in which they were interested. They chose the closest to lists of inhabitants over a long period. Duncan transcribed the manorial rentals of tenants from c.1515 to 1532. These were published with transcripts of many supporting records in *Thomas Arden: the Man and the Myth*. He moved on to the rentals from 1573 to 1654 which he published on DVD.

He then transcribed the 16th and mid-17th century town muster rolls, of those men liable to arms, and the hearth

of an outstanding historian

tax of all the householders of the hundred of Faversham villages from 1662 to 1673. He compiled lists of the area wills, inventories and probate records of the period. All these were published in two volumes. At the same time, he started transcribing, and translating – some from Latin – 16th-century Faversham wills.

A little break from lists produced *The History of the Faversham Oyster Fishery Company*. Based once again on diligent research on primary sources, it dealt with a subject for which there were more inquiries at the Visitor Information Centre than for any other local topic.

From here followed two massive undertakings. The first was the transcription of the first Town Wardmote Book which recorded the proceeding of the Faversham Corporation, and supporting documents. They were published as *The Early Town Books of Faversham 1251-1581*

with an accompanying text by Patricia. The second was the transcription of the *Faversham Leiger Book* compiled by John Caslocke, the last Abbot of Faversham just before the dissolution of the abbey. Here is a primary Faversham property register of rights and privileges, people and charters.

In parallel Duncan worked on much wider Kent records that contained Faversham references. For the Kent Archaeological Society records series he transcribed and published lists of property transactions from the Middle Ages known

as Feet of Fines. For Canterbury Cathedral Archives he listed the contents of hundreds of boxes in the basement of miscellaneous diocesan records, referenced affectionately as BBs. With an enthusiasm for church records, he transcribed and indexed the proceedings of the Canterbury Diocesan Church Courts for the 16th century.

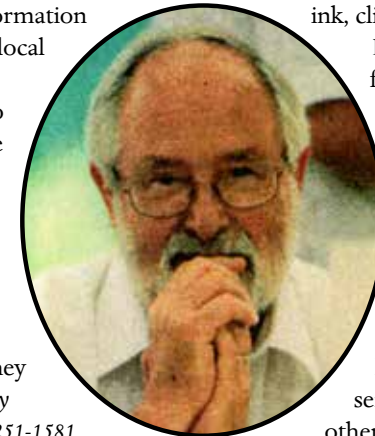
His private client work led him to constructing family pedigrees, cataloguing private archives and listing myriad bundles of deeds. His easily recognisable slightly craggy handwriting or distinctive black

ink, cling to much of this work.

Duncan always shared his finds. If he stumbled upon stray references to subjects in which he knew others were interested, in unexpected places, he passed them on.

Conversely, he always answered inquiries from fellow enthusiasts. He lectured, organised seminars and contributed to other publications, such as *The Faversham Charters*.

The publications of Duncan and Patricia have revealed an important period of our local history. His original research, based on a firm grasp of palaeography, Latin and context has left us, inter alia, the Faversham Society, a springboard or hat, coat and umbrella stand upon which all subsequent research into his period will start; people and employment first. His legacy sets also an example of how to research methodically later periods of Faversham history.



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 here 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. Additionally, it will open on Sunday, 28 May, for a Wheels of Time presentation.

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.

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www.favershamsociety.org