

Faversham Society Newsletter

July 2019

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Marion Ripley with society president Richard Oldfield (right) and Alistair Mackay Miller at the AGM receiving the sensory book produced by the Sociable Sewing Group
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Chairman's column

HAROLD GOODWIN

We have been busy preparing the Faversham Society's representations to the inquiry into the plans for a huge solar park at Cleve Hill.

We have to provide detailed notes of what we plan to say. These will be posted on favershamsociety.org/blog/ along with the schedule of meetings. If the development is permitted, there will be a significant impact on our town.

Mike Whiting, cabinet member for transport at Kent County Council, came to our members' and guests' meeting on 17 June, and there was a very useful exchange of views. Chris Wright has written an

account of the meeting, which can be found on pages 2 and 3.

The society will continue to engage on traffic, walking, cycling and public transport. Much of the character of our town and its culture is a consequence of the town being walkable and people converging around the guildhall for events and festivals – just as they did on Midsummer's Day for the evening feast.

The A2 will become a street within the town as housing development spreads to the motorway – we need to reclaim the A2 as the Watling Street. Whenever you would have said A2, say *Watling Street*. This does not affect people's postal addresses!

At the AGM, Marion Ripley presented a

sensory book, which in an amusing way spells out Faversham.

The Sociable Sewing Group, which produced it, hopes that it will quickly look worn. Come along, take a look and feel it! It is now on show in the museum entrance. I hope that this gift may result in our doing more to make out collections more accessible to people with a range of sensory disabilities.

Fifty-six members attended the AGM and four new board members were elected: Katie Begg, Andrew Holden, Sophie Kemsley and Laurie McMahon, more about them in the next edition. Michael Frohnsdorff was appointed a society vice-president and a vote of thanks was made to Clive Foreman and Ted Davis, who both retired from the board.

Don't forget Open Gardens on 30 June and Open House the first three Saturdays in July – these are a great celebration of Faversham, and we appreciate the efforts of the volunteers who put the programmes together and the residents who open their houses and gardens for others to enjoy.

chair@favershamsociety.org

Archaeology update

PAT REID

At the end of May you might have seen people working on Faversham Recreation Ground, using a hand-held machine to go up and down rope lines within a taped-off boundary.

These were members of Faversham Society Archaeological Research Group (FSARG) carrying out a georesistivity survey of the southwestern part of the Rec over six days. Because the Rec was laid out so early – in 1860 – it has not had its

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What does the

CHRIS WRIGHT

Faversham is facing unprecedented changes over the next 20 years, and they are happening at an unprecedented speed.

New housing estates on the outskirts will generate a disproportionate level of road traffic, and the Faversham Society is concerned that the growth is managed in a way that protects the heritage of the medieval town centre together with its attractive pedestrian environment.

A members' meeting held in the Fleur hall on 17 June aimed to offer a platform for Kent County Council, as local highways authority, to outline its strategy for transport in our area. We were fortunate to have as our guest speaker Michael Whiting, the KCC cabinet member for planning, highways, transport and waste, with Tim Read, the KCC head of transport.

The meeting was chaired by Harold Goodwin and began with a brief review by board members Tim Stonor and me, Chris Wright, of the present situation:

- How the town has grown to the north of Watling Street with a dense network of pedestrian connections that makes it a highly walkable town;
- How the 20's Plenty project (*see pages 6-7*) is taking advantage of this network to slow traffic down and encourage more people to walk and cycle;
- How the boundary is expanding southwards to generate demand for movement across Watling Street,

future hold for town traffic?

■ And the consequences of travel demand growth generally within the area.

Michael Whiting sketched out the issues as they are seen at county level, and outlined the powers available to manage them. He explained that the KCC guidelines for developers were being updated and recognised that creating a sense of place was an important aim.

He supported the 20's Plenty initiative and applauded the efforts of Amanda Russell and fellow campaigners in bringing the issue to the fore: a town-wide scheme was now in preparation. Keen to emphasise that KCC has limited powers and limited resources with which to extend or improve the road network, Mr Whiting agreed that traffic pollution was an important issue, and he was promoting a scheme to control access to the A2 by lorries not complying with EURO6 regulations that govern the level of exhaust emissions.

There followed a question-and-answer session covering six main topics:

■ Traffic modelling – how robust are the predictions?

■ Layout of housing estates;

The “walking town”: how to protect our heritage;

■ The role of Watling Street;

■ The A251 junction;

■ Environment: noise, air quality, severance.

These topics provoked a vigorous and productive debate. The county's traffic model is expected to come online in October this year and we can look

forward to seeing more transparent forecasts that may help both the county council and ourselves to influence the structure of new developments – if not where they are located.

To the relief of all present, Tim Read explained that the county was recommending a junction with signals at the intersection of the A251 and the A2 rather than a “Scalextric” roundabout; it would not greatly increase capacity but it would be affordable and it is intended to allow pedestrians and cyclists to cross the A2 safely and comfortably.

(Members will be aware that currently there is only one accessible crossing in more than four kilometres of route between Brenley Corner and the Western Link roundabout.)

Tim Read suggested that pollution issues will be an important lever for influencing future housing development.

Other matters that could not be pursued within the time available were:

(a) If the KCC's powers are limited, how can a clear vision for Faversham's traffic network emerge from the current political framework?

(b) What reduction can we expect to see in pollution levels if the KCC scheme for lorry control is implemented?

(c) How can we persuade residents and visitors that continued growth in car usage will damage the town's heritage together with the qualities that make it an attractive place to live, and encourage them to walk or cycle rather than drive?

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brickearth “dug off” for brickmaking, so it has real archaeological potential and the preliminary results are very intriguing: watch the website, www.community-archaeology.org.uk, for details.

Meanwhile in the grounds of St Mary’s Primary School other FSARGers were extending a pit dug last summer to further investigate the prehistoric archaeology. The 2018 pit was the first since our Davington Plateau pit to yield almost solely prehistoric finds and the first to reveal what seems to be a flint surface within the brickearth, about 90cm down.

The May 2019 investigation confirmed this layer but also revealed another deeper layer of flints at about 1.2 metres. Professional archaeology carried out nearby in 2005 on the site of new accommodation for the elderly also yielded prehistoric flints and two prehistoric pottery sherds. This is looking very interesting.

The importance of the Cooksditch Valley in the early history of Faversham is something we did not foresee. Today the Cooksditch is a mere trickle, rising just east of St Mary’s Primary School, but even in the recent past it was much larger and probably rose, pre-Rec, further to the south. So far, there is evidence for prehistoric, Roman and early Saxon settlement with St Catherine’s (a Saxon church, based on archaeological evidence) overlooking the valley to the south.

Because of the spring drought, the ground was iron-hard and a real challenge to the resistivity surveyors who make the prongs penetrate the ground: they were

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Social sewing

OUR NEEDLEWORK REPORTER

The Sociable Sewing Group was set up in 2013 by Jean Yeomans, a Faversham Society volunteer and a former trustee. Jean was supported by Ruby Poppy, whose husband Fred was a regular volunteer until his death.

Group members – by Jean’s invitation only! – were Janet Colthorpe, Chris Fagg, Lesley May, Pam McLean, Marion Ripley and Gill Wagstaff.

Marion just came along to talk to the group about tactile books and the work of the ClearVision charity – and, luckily for us, she never left.

We meet to share our interest and love of sewing in its many forms and to learn individual skills and methods from each other. As far as those two serious needlewomen, Jean and Ruby, were concerned, the social side was incidental, but it quickly developed into an important aspect as we learnt to work on projects as a team.

The group feels strongly that we should put something back into the community and we have found a practical way to do it using the skills we have by making and donating items to local hospitals and organisations.

The Faversham Society allowed us to stage an exhibition of our work featuring:

- Shaped cushions helping women recovering from a mastectomy;
- Cot quilts and hats for premature babies;
- Lap blankets for hospital patients

circle creates a sensation



- First World War pennants;
- Twiddle mats, cushions and aprons for people with dementia;
- And tactile books for visually impaired and blind children.

When Jean and Ruby died within a year of each other, it was a fitting tribute to them to hold a craft sale, with the proceeds split between Cancer Research and the Pilgrims' Hospice.

We hope that the sensory book that we made, and which Marion presented to the society at the AGM, will be enjoyed by both sighted and visually impaired children. It is also a thank you to the Faversham Society for the support it has given us.

Editor's note: ClearVision is a postal lending library of children's books designed to be shared by visually impaired and sighted children and adults. The charity lends books all across the UK and Ireland.

Its books all have braille, print and pictures. This allows children with little or no sight to share books with their sighted friends and family, and adult braille readers to enjoy stories with sighted children.

There are more than 14,000 books in the ClearVision collection, catering for children from birth until they are independent readers.

www.clearvisionproject.org

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exhausted by the end of afternoons. Full credit goes to John Clarkstone who masterminded this large-scale survey and has carried out a sophisticated digitalisation of the findings. For the St Mary's excavations, great credit goes to the excavators who took even more than usual care to record every subtle detail of the archaeology, especially the flint surfaces in the brickearth.

This summer we are returning to the Cooksditch valley at the Market Inn and opening a much larger area than we usually excavate to try to find out more about that rich deposit of early-mid Saxon finds last year.

Over the weekend 20-21 July we are taking part in the National Festival of Archaeology and there will be lots to see and do for all ages in the grounds of the Market Inn: see you there!

Indexing Arthur

MARGARET HARDING

I am glad to say that this year I have, so far, made better progress in indexing Dr Arthur Percival's local history archive than last year when I was hampered by bad weather and ill-health. To date I have completed 62 of the 200 or so ring binders in which Arthur filed his findings.

Progress can never be quick because the folders comprise pages of various sizes and types, including newspaper cuttings and articles, copies of wills, invoices, receipts, many letters, family histories and family trees.

Some time ago I decided to treat, with a separate appendix, those items, such as some villages, topics or families which have

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Speed surveys

AMANDA RUSSELL

20's Plenty for Faversham is, as the name suggests, a project to create a town-wide speed limit of 20mph.

The project was started by residents and has been supported by the town council, Swale, and KCC, as well as by Helen Whately, the MP for Faversham.

Expert input has been provided by transport consultants PJA, by 20's Plenty for Kent and by 20's Plenty for Us, a national charity, campaigning for 20mph as the default speed limit in places where people and vehicles mix.

Kent County Council has now agreed, in principle, to a town-wide 20mph limit, subject to a positive public consultation.

What are the benefits of a 20mph limit? Such limits have been shown to:

- Reduce road casualties;
- Improve air quality;
- Improve public health, including obesity among adults and children;
- Make it safer and easier for children, elderly people, pedestrians and cyclists to move around.

A consistent town-wide 20mph limit will be simpler and cheaper to sign and promote and will make it easier for motorists to understand, leading to higher levels of compliance.

In general, 20mph zones should be self-enforcing, meaning that the street design and environment should lead most motorists to slow down.

The speed surveys that have been commissioned for the project show that

show 20's plenty for town

many streets within Faversham are already naturally low-speed routes but some faster speed streets may need some physical changes to encourage compliance.

The consultants PJA have recommended calming measures such as painted surface signs, planters, road narrowing, additional parking bays, removing the centre line and advisory cycle lanes. These are described further in a technical report, which is available online at: tinyurl.com/yxtnvqvd.

If you'd like a paper copy of the report, please contact us for a on [favershamsplentyforus@20splentyforus.org.uk](mailto:faversham@20splentyforus.org.uk)

In recent weeks, changes to KCC policy have relaxed the requirements for calming, so we have requested that they revisit the recommended measures, with further advice from the transport consultants PJA, to make the scheme simpler and more affordable.

How can you help? Gaining public support for the project is essential, especially before any changes are made.

It helps when people understand, as early as possible, why a town-wide 20mph limit is being proposed and what the benefits of it will be.

For this reason the 20's Plenty for Faversham Community Working Group

is seeking the formal support of as many individuals and organisations across the town as possible, ahead of an independent public consultation exercise, which we expect to take place in the autumn of 2019.

If successful, we hope that funding will be found to deliver the project in 2020.

In the first instance we are asking for pledges of support: for example, a letter or an email, which can be sent to: [favershamsplentyforus@20splentyforus.org.uk](mailto:faversham@20splentyforus.org.uk) or 67 Ospringe Road, Faversham ME13 7LG.

In addition, we are seeking help to share the aims and the benefits of the project through newsletters, social media, window posters and bin stickers.

Furthermore, if individuals and organisations wish to host events to promote the project, members of the community working group will be happy to speak at these.

Finally, we are looking for volunteers to help with our communications: everything from website and social media assistance to printing and delivering project updates throughout Faversham.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us so far. With your help we are working towards 20's Plenty in 2020!





The Abbey School, Faversham, held an art exhibition in the Fleur Gallery in June

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a particularly large set of entries and which are of particular reference to Faversham. Such an appendix appears as a separate folder in the digital index but does not involve any rearrangement of Arthur's folders. For instance, Folder 60 has an Appendix 60a, which contains all the entries for Selling but is a virtual folder and causes no disturbance in Arthur's material. These appendices, to some extent, slow down the overall indexing process, but I believe the result will be improved and more user-friendly by my decision to utilise them.

I started the task of indexing full of admiration for Arthur Percival and this has in no way diminished. Rather, as I have

grown to know his mind better. I am sometimes almost overwhelmed by the reaches of it and to wonder how anyone could fit so much in to one lifetime.

I can only be grateful to be allowed to come into close contact with one minor section of his work. I have learnt and am learning a great deal from it.

The remarkable Mr Oliver

THE EDITOR

John Oliver is known to most people in Faversham as the skipper of the tug *Hobbit*, which towed their barges, but there's a lot more to the life of this man who was born without hands.

Known by some as "Johnny No Hands",

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Open Houses: we're ready

MOYRA HARDING

The final count of properties taking part in Open House – on 6, 13 and 20 July – is 53, including 14 new or returning houses.

We will feature our first property that is registered as an ancient monument – the Foreman's House (pictured top) in the grounds of the Oare Gunpowder Works Country Park (which is also an ancient monument). With a grant from English Heritage, the exterior has been restored exactly as it was when it was built in 1846.

It's worth making the effort to go out to Ospringe to visit the church on 6 July, when there will be a flower festival. En route you can see inside the Grade II listed 1 Tudor Cottages in Water Lane. A short distance away is 6 Ospringe Place, built in 1799.

It was occupied by female servants of the Montresor family who lived in the main house.

South House on the corner of South

Road and Napleton Road was built in 1785 but was bought by Kent County Council in 1943 and used as a youth centre until 2014 when it was converted back into a house.

Another very popular property – the former Ship Hotel in the Market Place – is opening again this year. In addition to apartments one and two, the owners have created a third small apartment which will be open to visitors.

There is a link to the list of all the properties and opening times on the Faversham Society website.

Handbooks are now on sale in the Visitor Information Centre, Preston Street; the welcome centre in St Jude's Shrine, Tanners Street; the Shepherd Neame shop, Court Street; and the Heritage Hub, the Forum, Sittingbourne.

We are still looking for more volunteers to help owners of open houses. Please contact us if you are interested at ticfaversham@btconnect.com or 01795 534542.

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he had a difficult early life but succeeded in living independently and having a rich cultural and personal life.

The author Frances Beaumont will give an illustrated talk, *The Extraordinary Life of John Oliver*, at the Fleur hall at 7pm on Friday, 12 July. Tickets cost £5.

His biography and love story is planned for publication next year. If you knew John, come along and share your memories of him.

<http://francesbeaumont.co.uk>

New books at the Fleur

CHRISTINE SMITH

***Kent in Photographs*, by Bryan Phillips, £16.99.** More than 100 beautiful landscape photographs of east Kent are featured, which the author has broken down into the following categories: rivers and coast, town and country, secret spaces and here and there.

***50 Gems of East Kent*, Paul Harris £14.99.** Another book about east Kent in which the author explores some of the places that make this part of the country so special.

Any model engineers?

WENDY CLARKE

The society's secondhand bookshop has been given a large collection of *Model Engineer* magazines.

There are several sets, mostly bound in folders, and date from the 1960s to the 1980s. Any reasonable offers will be considered.

Please phone me, Wendy Clarke, on 01795 529166 or inquire in the bookshop in Gatefield Lane. The magazines are rather bulky and stored elsewhere.

DIARY

30 June Open Gardens.

6,13, 20 July Open Houses.

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6-7 July The society will have a stall at Faversham Nautical Festival on the Front Brents by the bridge

20-21 July Hunt for the king's manor, Market Inn, Whitstable Road, 10am-4am



MINIDISC APPEAL
Does anyone have a minidisc player that they can lend to the society for a week or so? Please contact Harold Goodwin on chair@favershamsociety.org

FAVERSHAM SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



The Faversham Society Newsletter is edited by Stephen Rayner. Contributions are welcomed, and should be received by midday on the 15th of the month before publication, preferably by email to favnewsletter@gmail.com or at the Fleur de Lis, 10-13 Preston Street, Faversham, Kent ME13 8NS, marked for newsletter editor. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Faversham Society or of the editor. 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. If interested, please email the editor. Cheques should be made payable to the Faversham Society and sent to Jan West at the address above.

DIGITAL EDITION

Please consider saving the society printing costs by receiving your newsletter by email. Contact the membership secretary at fleurmem@hotmail.com.

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FAVERSHAM SOCIETY OPENING



The Fleur de Lis museum, 10-13 Preston Street, Faversham ME13 8NS, is open 10am-4pm Monday to Saturday; and 10am-1pm on Sunday. The gallery is open 10am-4pm Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday; 1pm-4pm Tuesday and Thursday; and 10am-1pm Sunday. 01795 590726
fleurmuseum@tiscali.co.uk

The Fleur de Lis visitor information centre and book and gift shop are open 10am-4pm Monday to Saturday and Sunday 10am-1pm. 01795 534542
ticfaversham@btconnect.com

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