

# FAVERSHAM CREEK TRUST

REGENERATING FAVERSHAM'S MARITIME HERITAGE

NEWSLETTER 18 AUTUMN 2023



## SECOND ANNUAL SKIFFIE FEST - 6th August 2023



The weather and tide were just right for rowing on the first Sunday in August and a sunny day encouraged a big crowd to line the banks of the creek to watch the afternoon's fun.

As high tide was reached, three St Ayles Skiffs were launched from their new pontoon at the Town Jetty. Festivities began with a speech from Alan Thorne, director of Cinque Ports Rowing. Philippa Foster Back CBE, (in memory of her husband Simon Foster), accompanied by Faversham's mayor Trevor Martin, cut the ribbon to declare the pontoons open.

Most sportingly, both the mayor wearing his solid gold chain of office and Philippa (in a summer dress rather than sailing gear) took to the water in a skiff to row up to the bridge before the racing started.

Simon Picot from The Elephant pub team reports: *"My entry into rowing was last year's Skiffie Fest, though I had worked on boats and in buildings along the creek over the last 37 years. The creek was alive with cheering crowds, including three generations of my family and friends. The view of Faversham from the creek is magical and the rowing of skiffs is a good use of this under-used waterway."*

*Herne Bay rowing club's mostly teenager team had a competitive keenness that was inspiring and their Tuton Boatman won the contest with the fastest run at 3m 51s. An exhilarating day that has grown in size, organisation and quality from last year's brave beginnings."*

# FAVERSHAM SAFARI - 6th August 2023



Faversham Safari is an annual town-wide, street market held on the first Sunday in August. A £6 registration fee, payable to the Creek Trust, allows residents to appear on the list of those participating. Over 200 over 200 households signed up selling a variety of clothes, household goods, cakes and more. This year, Kathy West introduced a new element to the Safari with sponsorship by local businesses. Nine companies very kindly sponsored the event with their details included in the list. We will be highlighting the work of these businesses throughout the coming year..

A big thank you goes to the Alexander Centre for hosting the Safari providing information, lists, mini-market stalls, café and toilets - and taking donations for the Creek Trust! We are also grateful to Kathy West and her team for their support. Their energy and enthusiasm for the project has enabled the Safari to raise hundreds of pounds for us every year. Details can be found on their Facebook page 'Faversham Safari' and their website <https://favershamsafari.wixsite.com/kent>

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## A THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



Shoreway Marketing, run by Liz Jeffery, supports independent estate agents and is part of an umbrella of creative services including PR and website design. Contact: [hello@shorewaymarketing.co.uk](mailto:hello@shorewaymarketing.co.uk)



Liz is a long-time supporter of Faversham safari. She raised £50,000 to produce our very own Faversham Monopoly, ploughing the profits back into community events.



Harrison Homes is an independent estate agency based in Faversham with a high-street presence in Sittingbourne. On completion of a property sale they give £50 to their designated charities. Harrisons provides the signboards for the Safari.

## Allport Cars

LOCAL / AIRPORTS / SEAPORTS / DISTANCE

AllPort Cars specialise in home-to-airport transfers and long-distance journeys as far afield as Scotland. They are well known in Faversham and have a phenomenal 200 five star reviews on Google.

Contact: **Office@allportcars.co.uk**



Business over Breakfast ('BoB') helps smaller businesses to showcase their work and share expertise. The Faversham and Sittingbourne branch has 20 members, representing particular trades or professional services.

## ShapingWellness

Deborah Mulvaney, Treasurer of BoB, also runs Re-shaping Minds. A remedial hypnotist, she supports survivors of childhood abuse. Contact: **deborah@shapingwellness.co.uk** or **07773645714**



Judd's Folly Hotel hosts the BoB meetings. Hotel Manager, Jason Wolverson, is keen to have Judd's Folly better connected into activities in Faversham Town. Contact: **juddsfollyhotel@gmail.com** or **01795 591818**.



Faversham Flooring is a family business run by Kathy West of the Faversham Safari and her husband, John. If anyone is looking for flooring, please call John for a chat. Samples brought to you. Contact **john@favershamflooring.co.uk** or **07783131363**.



RK Plumbing & Heating run by Faversham-based Ryan Kidby based. He is a gas-safe plumbing and heating engineer taking on domestic and small commercial projects, helping develop the next generation of plumbers. Contact: **07479898900**.



Purifier Building, Morrisons Wharf, North Lane, Faversham. ME13 7DY  
[www.favershamcreektrust.com](http://www.favershamcreektrust.com)  
 Charity Number 1146660  
 Company Number 7667130



### **Simon Foster,**

barge owner and erstwhile titan of the motor industry, died suddenly last June. One of the co-founders of FCT, Simon secured our greatest prize to date

– the base for all

our activities, the gloriously restored Purifier Building, the launchpad for Mayhi and the St Ayles Skiffs. We owe a huge debt to this charismatic and inspirational figure and were deeply shocked and saddened by his death. Philippa Foster-Back writes: “Simon was familiar with the Faversham Creek, as his brother had joined Roger Jamieson in working on *The Beagle* and then the *Golden Cachelot*

at Tester’s Yard at Hollowshore. In 1993 we purchased our Dutch barge *Hoop op Zegen* from Edward Burrell and brought her from London to Faversham. Simon’s love affair with the Creek was rekindled and mine began! For him, that manifested itself in helping to establish the Faversham Creek Trust; to negotiate with Morrisons for the Purifier Building; to support Colin Frake, Simon Grillet and Alan Thorne to bring their skills; to invite the late Lord Boyce as Warden of the Cinque Ports to open the restored building; and finally to make great efforts to research options for an opening bridge, which included trips to Sandwich, Essex, France and Holland! ***He truly loved the Creek and fought for it.***”



### **Roger Ely** - We

were all saddened to learn of the death this year of one of our earliest Trustees and Directors, Roger Ely. Born in Court Street, the son of the

Head Brewer at Shepherd Neame, he was ***a true Faversham man and both knowledgeable and passionate about the interests of the town.*** With a background in advertising and

design, he took an active interest in overseeing the production of various artefacts which we sold as fund-raisers - tee-shirts, coasters and mugs - all of which proved extremely popular. He also took responsibility for the design of our logo and letterhead. We extend our warmest commiserations to Janice and the Ely family in gratitude for his unrelenting support and vision which inspired so many of us when we first formed the Trust.

# THE BOARD

## JAMES RUBINSTEIN

We wish to thank James Rubinstein for stepping in as Acting Chair in February 2022, when Sue Akhurst stood down to take care of her husband Bill in his final illness. Since joining the Board 11 years ago, he has contributed to our growth and development in many ways.

His legal and analytical mind helped us through difficult planning consents and managing the licenses for the Purifier-based maritime businesses. James was instrumental in ensuring the success of our BoatCamp with Abbey School which included rowing experience for the students. He was closely engaged with Alan Thorne's Cinque Ports Rowing and helped set up Faversham Rowing Club, now incorporated into CPR.

As Chair, James helped the Board to focus its activities on a number of issues relevant to our charitable objectives. We are deeply grateful to James for his many contributions to the Trust and we wish him a happy retirement with his wife Pippa.

## ANN HILL

Ann retired as a Board member in July but we are delighted she will continue to look after FCT's membership. We thank Ann for her dedication, hard work and unflappability as Treasurer and Membership Secretary for the last 9 years.

## NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Six new Board members joined in 2022-2023. In order of appointment, Andrew Sweeney, Joanna Wood, Liz Tootell, Orville Wright, Philippa Dickenson and Kristyna Hill. This gives us expertise in fundraising, project management, engineering and accountancy - the resources we need to meet the challenges represented by the ongoing campaign for a new opening bridge, re-generated Basin, improved water quality in the Creek and the safety of the Battery Energy Storage System at Cleve Hill Solar Plant.

We welcome Philippa Dickenson to the role of Chair following James's retirement, Liz Tootell as Vice Chair and Kristyna Hill as Treasurer.

# FOCUS ON WATER QUALITY

The Faversham Creek Trust was formed at a time when pressure for housing development seemed to threaten any possibility of reviving the economic fortunes of the Creek as a working waterway. Various people came together to fight for the Creek as a genuine heritage project - whereby the skills of boatbuilders and shipwrights could be passed on to young people; traditional boats such as sailing barges and the local bawleys would find a haven here, for overwintering; and where the Creek could be a resource for all the community. All of which requires an opening bridge, a regenerated Basin and clean water!

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## WATER QUALITY IN FAVERSHAM CREEK

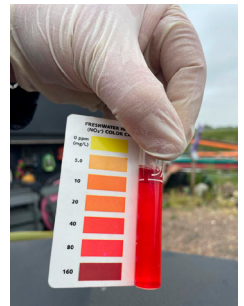
In recent years, the concern for the quality of water in our Rivers and Seas has grown. Any visions for the future of Faversham Creek had always been built on the assumption that water was safe enough for leisure and commercial activities, and able to support wildlife. A local group of individuals with the expertise and commitment, along with an active Green Party with Town and Borough representation, came together to form **FavWat**. The name was chosen as an expression of Faversham community's interest in water quality and also echoed the shortened version of Office of the Water Regulator, OfWat, writes Andrew Sweeney.

FavWat suggested that local activists would be able to care for the water quality in our Creek, something OfWat has failed to do. Their aim is

to improve the quality of water in the Creek by lobbying for cleaner water and influencing stakeholders to get involved. The first step is to get a clearer picture of levels of sewage, nitrates, phosphates and ammonia by conducting regular water tests. Data is showing the levels of chemicals in the water are higher than they should be. FavWat are looking into e-coli testing for the future.

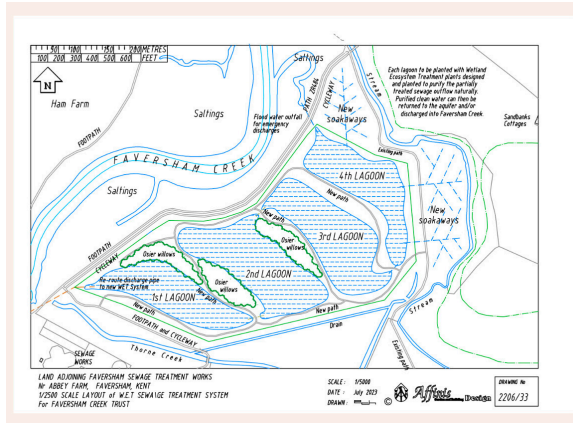
FCT and FavWat are also exploring the potential for large scale reed beds (see opposite page) as a secondary water treatment.

If you are interested in volunteering please contact: [membership@swale.greenparty.org.uk](mailto:membership@swale.greenparty.org.uk)





# WETLAND ECOSYSTEM OF WATER TREATMENT (WET)



Our proposal to divert the outfall from the Faversham sewage works into a reed bed system gained a lot of positive support, however further findings have shown some drawbacks, reports Eldon Hinchliffe. Reeds spread very quickly and clog up the system and therefore need to be managed.

Traditionally this was done by hand-reaping the reeds for thatch but we now doubt this is feasible. With the life span of a reed bed anywhere between 5-15 years, depending on the quantity of ‘nutrition’ in the water, we do not see this as sustainable.

Another plant based system that aims to remove contaminants from sewage is a Wetland Ecosystem Treatment. WET systems are designed to use natural processes involving wetland vegetation, soils and their associated microbes to purify polluted water and produce a usable and marketable end product such as willow wands for basket making.

Benefits of a WET system include:

- Biodiversity and wildlife habitats that will attract frogs, toads and newts, insects, pond life and birds that will also be of interest to walkers, bird watchers and other naturalists. We could use coppiced wood to form walkways through the site
- Cost savings once the system is established and electricity, gas or other types of carbon generating fuel are no longer required
- Secondary treatment of the water, allowing greatly purified water to be returned to the aquifer and/or Faversham Creek
- A Faversham-based cottage industry making baskets, hurdles and furniture from the willow wands.

We believe that with these benefits, a WET system would be more attractive than reed beds and much easier to manage.

# NEW PROJECTS

The Trust is looking into a number of maritime heritage projects to support. One exciting prospect is the restoration and re-floating of the bawley, *Thistle*. Thank you to Colin Frake for this suggestion.



## ***'Thistle'***

*Thistle* RR2 is the last of the Rochester bawleys, built by Gill in 1887. In 2017, the late Lena Reekie wrote (intheboatshed.net):

***"She has a 34ft keel, 13ft beam and 5ft draught. After a long working life out of Rochester and Gravesend, Phil Wilkinson found her sunk in Kingston-on-Thames. He acquired her in 1976 and began a thorough rebuild to get her back afloat and sailing again - a remarkable achievement by one man. With her loose-footed mainsail, very tall topmast and long bowsprit she was a beautiful sight and was often seen***

## ***sailing in the Swale, Medway and on the East Coast"***

About 15 years ago, she was finally sunk again. Shipwright Morgan Lewis, currently working on the restoration of *Gamecock* supported by the Whitstable Maritime Trust, now fully owns *Thistle* and is keen to restore her using traditional methods. He estimates he will need one other experienced boat-builder plus an apprentice for between two to three years. The Trust is working with Morgan to prepare a renovation and funding proposal. Detailed costings and timeframes will be put together initially with the help of the Whitstable Maritime Trust. We are grateful to one of our Member Volunteers, Libby Owen, who has offered to help gather this data.





# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

The Creek Trust runs a schools education programme, led by Gulliver Immink, to bring awareness and knowledge of Faversham Creek, its maritime history and heritage, to Primary Schools.

This was an initiative started in 2013 by the late much-missed Simon Foster. One of its core activities has been to bring 'Ottar', the half-sized copy of the Graveney Boat, to the local primary schools.



It gives children and staff an appreciation of boat building and what incredible explorers people were 800 years ago. It doesn't stop there. Modern boat building is demonstrated at the Purifier Building, and children have been able to board the iconic Thames barge 'Repertor' whenever possible. Ospringe School came to The Purifier Building in May and Ethelbert School in June.

On both occasions they were introduced to the superb St Ayles skiffs community boat building project by Alan Thorne, the gifted

master boatbuilder and initiator of the project, as well as taking a walk down the Creek to learn something of the history and activity that used to take place in the Port of Faversham.



Sharon Calzada, the lead teacher at Ethelbert, who is very supportive of what FCT is doing, wants her class (about 30 children) to learn about the maritime history and heritage of the Creek. She wants the children to stop at several places along the Creek, to learn a bit about the buildings, the jetties and quays, tides and to make drawings etc.

The children at Ethelbert school have since developed a Creek Project Board labelled 'Past, Present, Future'.



# OUR VOLUNTEERS

## BUILDING VOLUNTEER GROUP

The Building Volunteer Group were instrumental in transforming the derelict Purifier Building into a beautiful working space. We are delighted to welcome the group back! They have just finished redecorating the Arthur Percival room – our meeting room – and will soon move onto brightening up the communal areas. Our thanks to: Sixer, Ian Logan, Steve Chown, Brian Fellows and Harold Fyscher.

Our commiserations and good wishes go to Sixer who recently broke his leg. Although out of action for the moment, he is in good spirits. We wish him well in his recovery and look forward to his return.

## NEW VOLUNTEERS

We also welcome some newcomers to the Trust as Member Volunteers.

### **Christine Chaffin – Secretary to the Board**

Christine moved to Faversham in May 2022 following a varied career working in the civil service, as secretary to a millionaire, a Grants Officer for the Big Lottery and supporting community centres in London. Now retired, she is helping us with the administrative work of the Board.

### **Laura Hodgkins – Communications**

As a mum of two Laura enjoys writing poetry and blogs about her experience of motherhood. She is looking forward to expanding her knowledge of social media and digital marketing whilst helping us with newsletters, website and other social media

### **Libby Owen – Project research**

With a background in IT project and account management both here and abroad, Lib is well placed to investigate and shape proposals for new maritime heritage ventures. She is also involved in the community boat-building with Cinque Ports Rowing.

## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS – EVENTS

We welcome anyone who would like to be join us to organise or help with a range of events:

- The 2024 Nautical Festival
- Talks and guided walks
- Fund-raising events
- Supporting our junior schools programme
- Devising creative maritime-inspired activities for families in the school holidays

# NEWS

## **Creek Bridge**

The last Bridge Steering Group Meeting was held on 20th January 2023. We have been pressing our MP for another meeting ever since. We continue to campaign to secure an opening bridge while investigating alternative routes to break the deadlock over its replacement. There has been recent contact between the Town Council and officials from the Department for Transport plus correspondence between Baroness Vere, the Maritime Minister and Lord Palmer following questions in the House of Lords.

## **Faversham Creek Navigation Company/Creek dredging**

The FCNC holds the dredging licence downstream from the bridge. Directors Eric Green, Brian Pain and Bob Telford recently retired while Colin Frake continues as a director. He is joined by Philippa Dickenson (FCT), David Pollock (SB Repertor), Alan Thorne (CPR) and 'Wink' Walpole (Hollowshore Fisheries). Their first task is to renew the dredging licence with Peel Ports Ltd, aiming to resume dredging in 2024.

## **Planning Ordnance Wharf: 23/502647/FULL**

This application has now been

withdrawn following numerous objections from us, the Faversham Society and many others.

## **Land Ham Farm: 23/502113/OUT**

The Trust is also opposing this application to build 250 houses on land at Ham Farm, to the north of the Upper Brents and the Brents Shipyard. Ham Farm is a vital part of the rural and maritime setting of Faversham. Please consider submitting your comments on the planning portal.

## **Morrisons/Home Bargains: 23/504413/FULL**

T J Morris, parent company of Home Bargains, has bought Morrison's site, home of the Purifier Building. Our lease is secure until 2046 and we look forward to developing a good working relationship with the new owners. TJ Morris recently posted their development plans on the mid-Kent planning portal.

## **Cleve Hill solar park: 23/503812/SUB**

The Faversham Society posted its second Submission of Details to Discharge condition 3 – Battery Safety. Professor Sir David Melville, who prepared this thorough and considered submission, strongly urges that the proposal is rejected. Details at <https://favershamsociety.org/7178-2/>

# DATES FOR DIARY

We do not plan to run any regular events at the Purifier Building until the new owners have re-opened the store and we are confident of access to the Purifier Building.

We will confirm dates for the following events. Keep an eye on our website [www.favershamcreektrust.com](http://www.favershamcreektrust.com) for updates.

**Early December 2023** – Members' drinks evening at the Purifier Building 5-7pm

## Events in 2024

**May** – Faversham Creek Trust AGM at the Alexander Centre

**Mid-late May** - Plant Sale, at the Purifier Building 9.30-3

**Late May** - Transport Weekend

**July** – Swale Barge Match

**July** – Nautical Festival?

**August**, first Sunday - Faversham Safari, throughout the town

**August** – first weekend – Skiffie Fest on the Creek

**August** – Open Faversham

**What would YOU like the Trust to be offering in the next 12 months?**

We will be sending a short survey soon or email

[info@favershamcreektrust.com](mailto:info@favershamcreektrust.com) to let us know. There will soon be some new dates for the diary. Watch this space!



## FAVERSHAM CREEK TRUST

REGENERATING FAVERSHAM'S MARITIME HERITAGE

Patrons: The Countess Soudes, Sir David Melville CBE, Professor Christopher Wright

Registered Office: The Purifier Building, Morrisons Wharf, North Lane, Faversham, Kent ME13 7DY

Charity Number 1146660 Company Number 7667130 [www.favershamcreektrust.com](http://www.favershamcreektrust.com)