



If you have enjoyed your walk around the town and would like to know more about some of the places you have seen, you may like to join a Faversham Walking Tour led by an experienced guide.

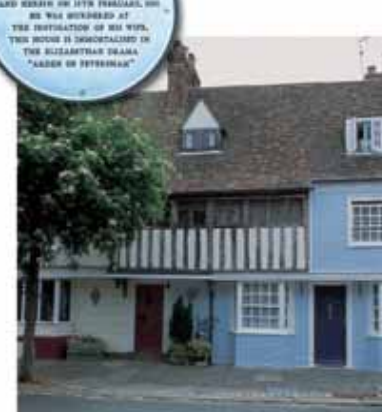
Tours operate every Saturday morning April to October inclusive. Meet at the Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre at 10.30am and for a nominal fee history will be brought to life as you are guided around the town.



# FAVERSHAM

MARKET TOWN OF KINGS

*A guide to its commemorative wall plaques & information panels*



## LOCATED IN THE BEAUTIFUL KENT

**COUNTRYSIDE** Faversham is an unspoilt, picturesque market town waiting to be discovered. Dating from pre-Roman times and mentioned in the Domesday Book, Faversham provides a perfect example of living history. With nearly 500 listed buildings and Britain's oldest brewery, the emblems of Faversham's colourful past are visible at every turn. Here Shakespeare performed, Elizabeth I and Charles II stayed, James II was imprisoned, and Wesley preached – and Faversham's historic heart has changed so little they would still recognise it today. One of the best ways to trace the town's past is to use this guide to stroll its streets in search of wall plaques and information panels.



The Guildhall



The Old Grammar School (left) & William Gibbs Court (right)



18 Court Street (Shepherd Neame brewery)

For further information contact:  
Faversham Tourist Information Centre  
Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre  
10-13 Preston Street, Faversham  
Tel: (01795) 534542  
Email: faversham@btinternet.com

The Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre has a museum, Kentish bookshop and Tourist Information Centre. A wide range of books and leaflets are in stock.

Swale Tourism Services  
Information and Accommodation Booking Line: (01795) 417478  
Email: tourism@swale.gov.uk Website: www.swaletourism.co.uk

**www.faversham.org**  
Official website of the town and rural area. Award-winning compendium of Faversham's life and times – community information, business directory, the essential guide for visitors.

This leaflet has been produced in association with:  
Faversham Town Council  
Swale Borough Council  
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Shepherd Neame  
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Origination by Suzanne Miles and Jack Salmon  
Additional text by Arthur Percival  
Design by Jane Hannath Design (email: jane@janehannathdesign.com)



Front cover clockwise: Plaque on Arden's House; 89 Abbey Street; Standard Quay; The Anchor, Abbey Street; 8 Market Place; replica of a Victorian post box; Town Pump.

Welcome to Faversham. Colourful people and dramatic events throughout the centuries have contributed to the heritage of the town and helped to make it the charming place you see today. Its history is brought to life through a series of wall plaques and information panels situated around the town. Use this guide to discover for yourself one of the country's best kept secrets, the captivating character of Faversham.







Court Street

*The map inside shows the location of some of the more significant wall plaques and information panels in the town. Use the numbers to devise your own routes or follow them for walks around the town centre and outskirts. The choice is yours – but don't forget to plan a well-earned stop in one of Faversham's many cafés, pubs or restaurants!*

## TOWN CENTRE

### 1. 12 Market Place (Stead & Simpson)

The site of a house where King James II was first detained after his attempt to escape to France.

### 2. Hugh Place 15 Market Place

In the 16th century Faversham was a major trading centre and Market Place was ringed with inns providing accommodation for visiting business people. Of these the Fleur de Lis was one. The timber-framed houses in Hugh Place formed part of the inn and overlooked its courtyard which served as an open-air theatre for visiting 'players' including Shakespeare. The Fleur de Lis dedication, a popular one, reflects that until 1820 the Kings and Queens of England also claimed to be Kings and Queens of France, whose emblem was the Fleur de Lis.

### 3. The Ship, Market Place

Faversham's principal inn in the 16th century and main centre of its coaching trade. John Wesley stayed here in 1743. No longer an inn, the building is now shops and apartments.

## SAINTS IN FAVERSHAM

Saints Crispin and Crispianus, much mentioned in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, were thought to be brothers, probably of Roman origin, who preached in Gaul and made their living as shoe-makers. Tradition has it that, fleeing persecution, they came to Faversham and plied their trade at a house on the site of the Swan Inn. As late as the 17th century local and foreign pilgrims visited the site. There was an altar in their honour in Faversham parish church.

### 4. The Swan Inn, Market Street

### 5. 10 Market Place

### 6. Royal Cinema, Middle Row

Faversham's wonderful 'Tudorbethan' cinema.

### 7. 8 Market Place

(Ward & Partners)

Erected in the 1920s, replacing an earlier building of about 1840.

The Swan Inn



## COURT STREET

### 8. The Old Fire Engine House (Shelter Charity Shop)

### 9. White House (Shelter Charity Shop)

The site of an old Guildhall where Queen Elizabeth I was entertained.

## BRITAIN'S OLDEST BREWERY

Faversham boasts the oldest brewery in Britain – Shepherd Neame, traditionally founded in 1698, but whose history probably goes back at least another 100 years. Still independent, and renowned for beers of distinctive Kentish character, it owes its continuing success to the use of local hops and pure water, drawn from its own well and naturally filtered through the underlying chalk. Always ahead of the pack, 'Sheps', in 1790, was the first brewery outside London to use steam power. Faversham has been a major brewing centre for centuries, and as long ago as 1327 no fewer than 84 of its 252 traders (exactly one-third) were ale wives.

### 10. 18 Court Street

In 1688 this was the home of the mayor, Thomas Southouse. James II was brought here from 12 Market Place and kept under house arrest until a military escort returned him to London.

### 11. 23 Court Street

### 12. INFORMATION PANEL – Court Street.

Haunt of Brewers and Monarchs

## ABBEY STREET

### 13. 4 Abbey Street (Frank & Whitome)

The beginning of one of Britain's finest medieval streets, saved from demolition in the 1960s when there were plans to use the area for council housing.

The Ship



### 14. 89 Abbey Street

Home of Michael Greenwood. Press-ganged in Market Place in 1748, Michael was serving on *HMS Lichfield* when she was wrecked off the coast of Morocco in 1758. He and other survivors were enslaved by the Moors until ransomed after 17 months by the British government. He kept a diary of his enforced exile, which is now in the possession of his descendants in Queensland, Australia. This is the house he lived in after his return.

### 15 & 16. Arden's House, 80 Abbey Street

Thomas Arden's house and the Faversham Abbey Outer Gateway.

## ARDEN'S HOUSE – SCENE OF A GRUESOME MURDER

The play *Arden of Faversham* immortalises Thomas Arden more than 450 years after his death in 1551. The first English 'docudrama' and comedy-thriller, the play tells the true and colourful tale of how he was the victim of an



Abbey Street

eternal triangle. A high-flying wheeler-dealer, Arden was more interested in making money than love to his wife, Alice (granddaughter of the designer of the *Mary Rose*). He was murdered in his own home at her instigation. First

published in 1592 and still in the repertory, the play may have been a joint effort to which Marlowe and Shakespeare contributed (Marlowe's father was from just outside Faversham, and Shakespeare, as an actor, appeared in the town). Arden's home survives, virtually unaltered, and with a garden big enough for open-air performances of the play – the only place in Britain where an Elizabethan drama can be performed in its original setting.

### 17. The Old Grammar School

Remarkably complete example of an Elizabethan school built in 1587-88. Founded in 1527 within Faversham Abbey, the Grammar School was lost in 1538 when the Abbey was dissolved, but was revived at the townspeople's request by Queen Elizabeth I. The school's modern buildings stand opposite.

**18. INFORMATION PANEL – Abbey Place. Faversham's Royal Abbey**

**19. 63 Abbey Street**

Faversham Abbey Inner Gateway.

**20. Site of 49 Abbey Street (now no. 42)**

A hundred years ago Faversham was the centre of the nation's explosives industry, with three gunpowder factories, a vast high explosives factory (the Cotton Powder Company), a fuse factory and a munitions loading plant. George Trench, the manager of one of these factories, lived in a house on this site.

**21. The Anchor Public House**

**22. The Monks' Granary, Standard Quay (Gillett Cook)**

One of the oldest surviving warehouses in Britain.

**NEAR THE CREEK**

**FAVERSHAM CREEK – ONCE THE TOWN'S LIFE BLOOD**

Without the Creek, Faversham would not exist. For early settlers it provided an easy route from Kent's fertile farmlands and forests to the North Sea and continental Europe. On the strength of it the town became prosperous, and a member of the Cinque

Ports Confederation. Where it joined the sea lay oyster beds, harvested until the 1930s by the Faversham Oyster Fishery Company, the oldest company in Britain, perhaps the world. In 1147 stone to build the Abbey was brought up the Creek from Caen in Normandy, then nearly 400 years later, when the buildings were dismantled, exported back to France to strengthen the defences of the Pale of Calais, then still an English possession. No longer viable as a commercial waterway, the Creek still welcomes leisure craft.

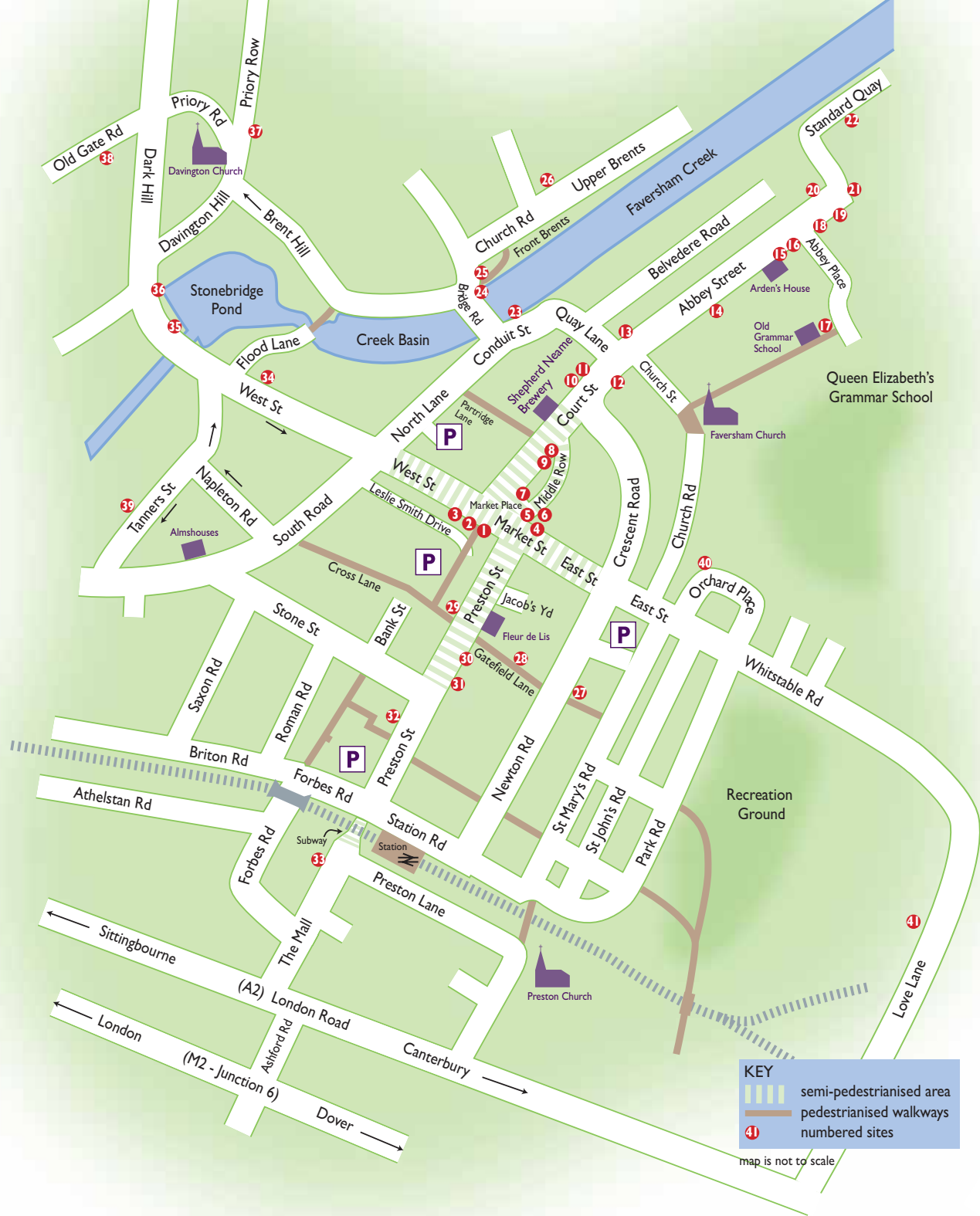
**23. TS Hazard**

A town warehouse named after the ship Faversham supplied to fight the Spanish Armada. The ship was probably an existing vessel converted to a warship and crewed by local men.

**24. INFORMATION PANEL – The King's Port – on Creek bank**



Information Panel at the Creek



**KEY**  
 semi-pedestrianised area  
 pedestrianised walkways  
 numbered sites  
 map is not to scale

Arden's House





## THE BRENTS – INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION SUBURB

In contrast to the busy Faversham scene on the east bank of the Creek, the west bank remained open farmland until the early 19th century. Then the town needed to expand and the area known as The Brents began to be developed for housing and industry. Most of the houses were small, built mainly for seamen, fishermen and brickfield workers, but Bridge House, rather grander, was the home of the harbour-master in the mid 19th century. Later local supporters of the Temperance movement converted the house into a 'coffee tavern' to try to wean addicts off the 'demon drink'. But with a brewery and half a dozen pubs within 400 yards, you can imagine how successful it was: it closed after just seven years.

### 25. Bridge House, The Brents

### 26. The Brents Tavern

## AROUND THE TOWN

### 27. Newton Lodge, 7 Newton Road

Home of Benjamin Adkins (c. 1831-1908), architect, who also designed 16-17 Court Street and Davington School.

### 28. Old Baptist Church, Gatefield Lane (*Faversham Club*)

Since 1884 the Faversham Club.

## PRESTON STREET

### 29. 76 Preston Street

Once the home of Edward Jacob, historian.

### 30. The Alexander Centre

About 150 years ago Faversham was surrounded by brickfields. This house was built on their profits by a 'brick baron', Henry Barnes.

## A PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF THE MOVIES

Three out of four of Faversham's cinema buildings survive – probably a record for a small town of about 18,000 people. One remains in daily use – the *Royal*, with the only surviving big screen in Kent. Opened as an Odeon in 1936, it was designed by Andrew Mather, prince of cinema architects. Planned to harmonise with nearby 16th century buildings it is one of only two 'Tudorbethan' cinemas left in Britain. Legacies of the first generation of cinemas are the florid-fronted *Gem*, now a shop, and the *Empire* in Tanners Street, built as a school in 1861, converted into a cinema in 1910, and then into the town's Roman Catholic Church in 1937. The *Argosy* (later called the *Regal*), now completely gone, stood at 72 Preston Street.



### 31. 19a Preston Street

Formerly the *Gem Picture Palace* from 1911 to 1935.

### 32. Drill Hall

Opened as a suite of Assembly Rooms in 1849.

### 33. Wreight's House 50 Preston Street – south side of subway

House formerly belonging to Henry Wreight, solicitor and benefactor.

## TO THE WEST

### 34. 74 West Street

Home of Albert Smith, an early Hollywood pioneer. His family emigrated to America in the late 1880s. He helped to develop a ciné camera and shot some of the first documentary footage.

### 35. Stonebridge Lodge, Stonebridge Pond

Originally an armoury for gunpowder workers.

### 36. INFORMATION PANEL – Stonebridge Pond, Powder & Priory

## DAVINGTON – PRIORY, CHURCH & COURT

Picturesquely overlooking Stonebridge Pond is the Norman Church of Davington Priory, founded in 1153. The former nuns' quarters were converted into a private house in the 16th century. On the same plateau, on the other side of Dark Hill, stood a large medieval mansion, Davington Court. Most of this was demolished in the 1630s, the rest in 1968. A relic is the imposing gateway in Old Gate Road, built in 1624 to give access to the mansion's walled garden. The Latin motto means "God made us this place of relaxation".

### 37. 1 Priory Row, Davington

### 38. The Old Gate, Old Gate Road, Davington

### 39. Roman Catholic Church, Tanners Street

At one time, one of Faversham's many cinemas.

## TO THE EAST

### 40. William Gibbs Court, Orchard Place – off East Street

## DISASTER RECALLED IN CEMETERY

A prominent and moving feature of the town's cemetery, opened in 1898, is the long memorial over the mass grave where 73 of the 108 victims of the Great Explosion of 2 April 1916 lie buried. With six factories, Faversham was the main centre of Britain's explosives industry. Despite safety precautions accidents still happened and the Great Explosion was the worst. Fifteen tons of TNT and 150 tons of ammonium nitrate blew up at Uplees, north west of the town centre. Though little damage was done in Faversham itself, because of the lie of the land, windows were blown out in Southend, 14 miles away, and the shock was felt as far away as Norwich.

### 41. Faversham Cemetery, Love Lane

It is a longish walk to the cemetery from the town centre. Visitors with cars can drive there and park outside.

