

# Memories of Faversham Rec



Cover image:

Faversham Recreation Ground by Sid Gates. This painting is held by Carol Boulton, who provided the following information.

Sid was born in 1906 in Gatefield Lane, Faversham and lived in Faversham all his life. He died as a result of a tragic accident in September 1987. He was a builder, decorator and sign writer by trade, and was well known around Faversham. His hobby was painting, and he was a prolific and talented artist. He had a studio just off Market Place. As well as his paintings, he created backdrops for Faversham Philharmonic Society and every year a large Christmas presentation on the bank at the top of Forbes Road. Unfortunately, we don't know when he painted this picture of the Rec.

## Memories of Faversham Rec

This Swale Borough Council publication brings to life the history of Faversham Recreation Ground. Told in the words of people who have an affection for this welcoming 20-acre green space, the stories provide a wealth of detail. There are delightful recollections of life in the park keeper's lodge, the annual fun fair, visits by the carnival queen and running with cattle along Whitstable Road. Some of the stories refer to landmarks that used to embellish the site but which have sadly gone, including an ornate drinking fountain, bandstand and First World War tank. There is mention of goal running, a team game based on 'tag' that used to be popular in Kent, but which has now completely died out. The massive Whit Monday barbecues organised with American Air Force catering staff in the mid-1950s are also still vividly recalled by many. Perhaps the most evocative stories are those associated with childhood: kickabout, kites, homemade go-karts on the hill, playing soldiers, hiding in the bushes, watching trains from the Long Bridge, and much more besides.

These stories were gathered in an oral history project launched in early 2020. This coincided with the first wave of Covid-19, and although initially it was felt that lockdown might discourage residents from contributing, it was found that the restrictions on going outside and on meeting friends encouraged reminiscing. For many of us, having to stay indoors also brought to the fore the vital role that parks and green spaces play in our lives.

Because of Covid-19 restrictions on social distancing, recordings had to be undertaken by phone. They were then transcribed and a copy posted or emailed to the contributor for them to check. Changes or additions were sometimes made at this stage, though everyone was encouraged not to over-tidy the text, to retain quirky phrases and the grammatical errors we all make when conversing. To provide context, the main subjects mentioned in the stories were also researched in local history books, journals and old newspapers, and this additional information is included at the end of the publication.

There are doubtless many more tales of the Rec that deserve to be told, and it would also be fascinating to discover more about businesses that used to operate in the area, such as Preston Malthouse, East Kent Packers, and the railway goods yard at the start of the former line to the Creek. If you can help in this continuing hunt for heritage, please contact the Activity Coordinator at [favrec@swale.gov.uk](mailto:favrec@swale.gov.uk)

### **‘Get off that bike!’**

Bob, a Faversham resident

The keeper who used to live in the house, the summer house, as far as I can remember, was Mr Abel. He lived there for quite a few years and then, I don't know whether it was promotion or anything, but he moved up to a house in the cemetery. And then a very nice man came: Dick Potter. Now that was probably about the '50s when Dick Potter took over. He was brilliant; he was a lovely fellow. And the old Sam Studds, you know Sam Studd? He was the groundskeeper, really, the head man of the labour force and all I remember of the labour force was Mr Boots, he used to live next to the fish shop in East Street, and Mr Mannouch who lived in Cyprus Road. They did all the groundwork, looked after the shrubbery and such things. None of them had uniforms. Sam Studd had a cap, I think. An official cap! There was another man, but I can't recall him. Sam Studd, he was a rule stickler! You couldn't ride a cycle, if you were lucky enough to have one, or anything like that. Yes, 'Get off that bike!'

It was my playground. I lived in 2 Cyprus Road. So, I had only to hop over the fence or go round the gates. Usually I climbed the fence, which was illegal, because you walked through the shrubbery! There used to be shrubbery all the way round the outside of the recreation ground.

What games? Mainly football but cricket as well. Anything. Flying kites, bows and arrows, you name it! The lads from Westgate Road, Cyprus Road, we were always out there, footballing or something. Playing soldiers because there was a lot of soldiers in the town at the time. No, we didn't have cap guns, we just had imitation, you know, made a gun ourselves sort of thing.

They used to keep it quite smart in those days. They didn't have many mechanical tools or anything, it was nearly all manual labour. They used to dig all round the shrubbery every so often, it was like the painting of the Forth Bridge, you know, once they'd finished, they'd start again. The drinking fountain. Yes, that was there, but it just vanished. The young lady or angel or whatever she was, it just vanished. Whether somebody - well, somebody must have stolen it, I should imagine. There was the tank on the corner by the



Market Inn, that was there. That was taken away, I think, for the metal, scrap metal, early in the war. And nearby there was a cannon. Just in the corner there is a triangular piece, paved now, with a nice seat on it, that was a shrubbery, a small shrubbery, but there used to be a cannon in there. But that vanished before the tank did, so I think it must have gone to a museum or something like that. It was like, when they fire a 21-gun salute for the Queen, it was similar to one of those.

Oh yes, the swings. There used to be the big swings and the smaller swings, about six swings on each of them, big frames. An old-fashioned roundabout, and a seesaw, a wooden seesaw. But on Sundays they were locked up. You weren't allowed to go on them on Sundays because in those days the church was the thing, you had to go to church or Sunday school or something like that.

The paddling pool. Yes. That was where the little basketball place is now. A little paddling pool. That was later, that came later, much later than when I was playing out there.

The bowling green, that was there, but there weren't any tennis courts. The bowling green, the hedge was, well, reasonable, about four-feet high, and the older men, people, used to lean on the fence and watch them play bowls, but now they have gone all secretive, haven't they, it's about eight-foot high now, the hedge.

After the war they used to play hospital cup cricket. It used to be a concrete strip out there, and they used to put a matting on it, you know, so they could play cricket.



An early photograph of the ornate drinking fountain. It was damaged in 1950 and today only the stone plinth remains.

First of all, when the war first started, they dug the zig-zag shelter, well, maybe six or seven-foot deep, a zig-zag anti-blast thing. Along the bottom of the Rec, about halfway along from the Market Inn to the Park Tavern - now a grocery store the bottom of Westgate Road. And then later on they built a proper air raid shelter, more or less the bottom of Westgate Road, big concrete one and covered with earth. And also up by the entrance in Park Road, halfway up Park Road. Underground, they dug out, and there was concrete underneath, you know. A great big mound over the top, it was partially underground, partially above, grassed over. Yeah, I used to go and play in them. They did flood because it was a bit damp down that end of the recreation ground. I don't know if they got used much for actual air raid shelters. But they were just demolished and flattened out after the war.

They used to have big race days and then they used to get good crowds out there. Just all sorts. Obstacle races, 100 yards, round and round the track. And I think just after the war they revived the old-fashioned game of goal running. You may have heard of that. And they used to do that at the top end, up near the summer house they used to have the goal running pitch. It was all right but a bit boring, it was just running! Most of us lads had a go at it, but you know it wasn't as good as football. I did have a go, yes. Well, there are points. There are two stakes put in, about 50 yards or 40 yards away from base and each team has one and you run round and round them and to score points you had to run round the opposing post and get back to your home without being touched. Then that scored so many points. It was a bit boring! Some lads used to run barefooted.

The Americans, I don't know if it was just after the war or at the end of the war, the Americans did a big hog roast out there. They dug a trench and made a great big fire and roasted pigs. That was a big attraction. They charged a few pence for a roll and pig, pork. That was quite a good event. A quite good crowd. In those days there wasn't much else to do and if there was anything on in the recreation ground, get out there, you know! Cycle racing. I do believe, yes, Mr Weaver used to ride a cycle, there used to be cycle racing at odd times, yes. Just on a special day they would have a cycle ride. And Maurice Weaver's father, he used to have a penny farthing which he used to ride, and it was quite comical. Yes, just exhibition, he used to ride it in carnival days and things, special occasions.

One thing that sticks out in my mind as a young lad: during the war they dug a trench from the top corner of the Rec, up by the malthouse, top of Park Road, right across to the opposite corner where the old market used to be, the cattle market used to be. They dug this trench and it was dug by Italian prisoners of war, and they were quite interesting. I don't know whether it was for electric cable or, you know, something like that. Dug a big trench and filled it in. No, no, no, not for an air raid shelter, just for cables. It took them a while, but they were quite good.

The cattle market down the corner on Whitstable Road, it's Bob Amor Close now. The cattle market, well, that's been closed a long, long time. We used to help drive the cattle down to the slaughterhouse, down at the back of Morrisons now, Flood Lane. We used to run in front, some of us, and stop the cattle or sheep turning, going down any of the side roads, and the policeman, there always used to be a policeman at the bottom of Preston Street directing the traffic, well, he would hold all the traffic up so as the cattle or sheep could go through. It used to be quite good fun!



Whitstable Road from the Rec in 2020



## Mainly hide-and-peek in the bushes

Margaret Ing



Margaret with her dad, brother Geoff and younger sister in the Rec.

I was born at 3 Park Road. I was about six when we moved but we still went back out to the Rec because it was our playground. We moved to Norman Road in Faversham, not far from Preston Street, really. Do you know where the Cottage Hospital is, and the Cenotaph? Well, if you go up by the Cenotaph it's the road off of there. We were still in town.

The park keepers in the lodge. I used to play with their children. Mr Gates was the first one I remember and if you know Mick and Tom Gates, councillors, it was their uncle. Margaret, Carol and Richard, his children, I used to play with them. And then after Mr Gates, I think he moved on, then it was Mr Kemp, and I played with his daughter Evelyn. After that it was Mr Potter, Lawrence Potter's dad, and I think he was the last park keeper. By then I was quite big, oh, it was at least late 1960s. No uniform, just brown overalls, that sort of thing. But everyone knew him. Behind the bowling green, that was all shrubbery and we used to hide in it and Mr Gates or Mr Kemp would chase us out, saying, 'You're not allowed up there!' They literally kept the park. I don't know how they did all the grass. Kept the shrubs tidy, all the pathways. I don't know if they had any other help. They just shouted at us, 'Come on you lot, get out!'

The malthouse was still working, malting barley. You know I don't actually know who ran it. It's a pity my parents aren't alive. I know we were friends with the people that lived there, they lived at the malthouse as well, so. The Gregorys. There was a smell. You grow up just knowing it's the malthouse, don't you. I should think it shut maybe late '50s, early '60s.



The tank. Have you ever been to Ashford, to see the tank at Ashford? It looked like the tank that is at Ashford. It's at the end of their High Street. I haven't got a clue why they took it. I don't know why the bandstand went either. Where the tank was there was a large concrete slab still there for quite a long time. It was round the bottom end, by East Street. On the corner of the site. Round the bottom we had railings and we had what they call a kissing gate to get in, one of the gates you had to swing, stand in and then swing back to get round. I was one of the instigators that wanted the railings back. I have been a trustee of Faversham United Municipal Charities but I retired in July. We always had the railings and I always felt they made the park a park.

The air raid shelters, I am going to have to ask my husband that! He might remember that. David, did they have air raid shelters in the recreation ground? Yes, he is saying. He is saying when you came in the side gate, in Park Road, there were two air raid shelters, he remembers that. Near the pavilion, in that area there. Concrete, covered over with earth. Dug out and got rid of when the new pavilion was built.

The only pit I can remember being dug was when the Americans came and did hog roasts at the Rec for some reason. I can't remember what the celebration was and I can't remember whether that was the same time as the Six-Five Special, which was a programme on the television with pop music. The Six-Five Special train was with Pete Murray and things like that. Yeah, we had quite a celebration. I don't remember if the Americans were there at the same time as that. Yes, David is saying it was a Whit Monday, we used to have things on a Whit Monday out there. Yeah, I do remember the hog roast! In fact, I remember our neighbour, Mr Sargent, went to help because his son-in-law was a Canadian Air Force man but somehow he seemed to be involved with it. And yes, I do remember the hog roast. Great big fire pits they dug out there. At the top. Near where the small children's playground is now. In that area. Everyone from what I would call old Faversham, everyone from Faversham, yes, exactly, we all went out there, yes, we did. Oh, it was a big event, yeah, yeah. Whether we paid for the hog roast or whether we just got it I can't honestly remember. Quite an unknown thing, none of us had seen that before.

The Weavers, Johnny Weaver, was always in the cycling club, they always did a cycle ride and things in the Rec. That was always once a year, they always had an event out the Rec. Cycle racing in the recreation ground.

I can remember the fountain, we used to drink from it, but I can't tell you when it got taken or broken or whatever happened to it. I was much older then and lost interest. A little pipe came out and we all just, the water came out and I think there was like a silver button you pressed. We all used to just hang our heads underneath and drank the water. Oh no, there wasn't a cup, nothing sophisticated like that! It was sort of peachy colour, I think marble. Do you know, I don't know what happened to it. I'm afraid I can't help you there.

Where the tennis courts are, just above that, there was a roundabout, a seesaw – I can't remember what else was there – oh, and swings. All the way down, not the top end of Park Road, but from the gate right down, there was a nice wiggly path and that was all shrubbery and things, where all the courting couples used to get in and hide! And the top bed, where the bandstand was, yes, that was really pretty beds. The park keeper had in his back garden his own greenhouses and things. Not very big ones, but he had greenhouses.

One set of kids would have their cricket bats and stumps, everyone went out there and played cricket or, yeah, it was literally our playground and we were sent out there. I couldn't have been very big so it must have been pretty safe. With my Shredded Wheat box with my sandwich and bottle of orange juice and we used to stay out there all day. And at weekends or special occasions, mum and dad would pack up a picnic and we would go up the Rec for our picnic, so. Shredded Wheat box because it had waxy paper she could wrap the sandwiches in! Mainly hide-and-seek in the bushes and things like that. Play on the roundabout and seesaw. And the boys in summer all took their cricket stumps and played cricket, in winter they played their football. Everybody in those days knew everybody in that area. So everybody just joined in with each other.

I've a funny little story, my brother and two mates they got caught, they were sitting under the long bridge in the Rec having a crafty smoke, they must have been about eleven. I think it must have been the park keeper found them, I know my brother was sent straight home saying he was smoking under the bridge! He got in trouble, oh yes, oh yes! And I don't know where he got the cigarettes from, either!



The former bandstand that stood in front of the lodge.

### That was when Faversham was Faversham

Gill Ellis

The park keepers, one of the park keepers was Sammy Studd. He ruled the children out there with, shall we say, a rod of iron. Kept his eyes on us.

In later years we had the sports, sports out there, which we don't get now. I mean, Thursday afternoons was cricket. And you see in those days Faversham had half day closing on Thursday afternoon and so you would get the various cricket teams like the Co-op and other shops would have their cricket teams. We would have - you have heard of goal running? Well, there would be goal running up there at weekends. There would be cycling racing in the bottom part of the Rec, on the grass. It was grass track. There was football in the winter. There wasn't rugby at that particular time.

There would be Roy Mason and his band playing and the Americans would come down from Manston, then it was an air force base, they would come down and they would dig pits along the side of the Rec, the top end at Park Road, dig pits there and do barbecues. Yes, we had a lovely time, actually. That was when Faversham was Faversham, not like it is now.

We had a beautiful flower garden at the top by Mr Abel. He lived in the summer house; he was the head gardener. Lovely gardens with the bandstand, we had a band playing there at one time. It brought back memories, about Sammy Studd, it was a great dare to be able to get through certain parts of the Rec without him catching us, you see! Then wintertime, when we had snow and everything, we would be out there even in the evenings, in the dark.

The cycle racing, I said they did the cycle racing. My father, I should have a photograph somewhere of my father in the 1930s playing some sort of game on bikes, some sort of football or hockey or something or other on bikes, kicking balls about. As I said, my brother also was in Faversham Cycle Club, I don't know if it's still in existence anymore, but they used to have cycle races out there, out the Rec on the grass.





This fascinating photograph taken around 1936 is thought to show two teams playing cycle-ball at the northern end of the Rec. Gill's father, Percy Ellis, is the player in the centre of the picture on the right.

## I just have more history for you!

Andrew Austen

The Faversham Tennis Club in the '70s played on what were fairly new courts at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School and then about 1978 or '79 they decided they had had enough, they wanted a home. I think the courts in the recreation ground were falling into a little bit of disrepair and so from what I am aware, some of the prominent members approached the council and an agreement was made for the tennis club to move to the recreation ground in 1979. They built their own club house in 1980 and the courts were all resurfaced and painted. Before they were just black tarmacadam courts and they were repainted in about 1980 to a red and green combination and it progressed over the years to different colours.



They sourced a clubhouse themselves from another tennis club who were rebuilding their clubhouse and they sort of cut theirs in half and we inherited half their clubhouse! It got flat packed and then rebuilt in the Rec and that was the original clubhouse which stood until about five years ago when we built our current one.

Originally there were plans for a fourth court on the site of the old paddling pool in the Rec, but it was decided eventually to turn it into what is now the basketball court. At the moment there are three full size tennis courts plus two mini courts that were built about five years ago. We are at maximum capacity for both adult membership, day membership and junior membership, and then we have a lot of pay and play public.

I just have more history for you! My father says there were courts out in the recreation ground in the present location in the 1960s. There was a club playing on those courts, which my father was a member of, called the 65 club, because the courts were brought back up to scratch in 1965, and the club established, but this gradually fizzled out.

Oh, I was about five when I first started to play tennis. My mum was one of the coaches who started up the junior section of the club in the early '80s so I lived most of my childhood life out at the tennis club! I am secretary of the club now and still play once or twice a week.

I was a pageboy in the carnival court in 1983. It was a very wet year and for some reason the carnival court had to be presented at the football pavilion in the Rec, and our converted caravan, the side and front panels removed, was hauled through the mud to get up to the football pavilion. I have quite a few photos of it being dragged through the mud back onto Park Road after the court had been presented! The carnival queen, princesses, the pageboys, that was known as the court. I was the pageboy to Miss Faversham that year. Miss Faversham got crowned, the princesses got crowned. For some reason that year they decided to do it at the pavilion instead of the Alexander Centre. So everyone was wheeled out there for the ceremony and then wheeled back in for the start of the carnival. It was a very muddy occasion! A quagmire!





I also remember going out and watching the royal helicopters in the Rec when both the Queen Mother and Princess Diana took off from the Rec. That was quite a gathering. We all left after school and went down to the Rec. The red helicopter landed and the Queen Mother and Princess Diana, on separate occasions had been doing appointments around Kent, were driven to the Rec and the red helicopter took off from there. And I think there was a third occasion when Prince Charles landed in the Rec as well. Beautiful huge red royal helicopters.



## I got this hot dog stall

Dick Frier

My father was a baker and I followed on. We did have a shop until the 2000s, a baker's shop and general groceries. Have you ever been through Ospringe? Do you know where the Maison Dieu is? Well, it was next door to that. In the wall facing Sittingbourne we used to have a sign up, 'Fetch it from Frier's!' Bread, cakes, puff pastry mainly, but I used to do pasties, vol-au-vent, cream horns, doughnuts.

I think it must have been about 1955 when I got involved in events at the Rec. I knew Councillor Ely quite well, in the old days you used to know people, nearly everybody knew everybody else. I got this hot dog stall, mainly I thought I would make a little money at the carnival, carnival night, I had the stall near the subway at the top of Preston Street. In fact, I did quite well the first night, much to my father's surprise, I sold nearly 600! He said you will never sell those; we managed to sell them and I got most of the money back for the trailer I bought. Apart from the actual food I bought, it nearly paid for the trailer on the first night!

I made up to 1,000 hot dogs for the Gala Day at the Rec. There was cycle racing and greasy pole, coconut shy, that sort of thing. It was a very successful event for years. I don't know why it packed up, I haven't got a clue. The Americans came up from Manston and did a hog roast, chicken wings, that sort of thing. That was the first thing I had memories of catering, then I was just sort of a spectator. I enjoyed it. They had a band, a jazz band come up from Whitstable and I went round on the lorry with the band playing around north Preston to attract the crowds along. Hot dogs were something we didn't normally eat, and still there were shortages during the war and after, rationing carried on quite a long time. I used to buy frozen pork sausages from the catering, the big firms that supplied us. I made the rolls, yes. It was a bit hectic. But then it was always slow to start. Then it was quite busy for two, two and a half hours and after that it faded off again. People had had their fill. I can't remember how much they were at the Rec, but when I started it was two shillings, old money, each.

## Out to the recreation ground in a very swish car

Pauline Miles née Wraight

The American barbecue, it's a very long time ago, it was the 7 of June 1954, and a photograph appeared in the local paper of myself and two friends being proffered a chicken on a stick, you know, a whole chicken! And that brought back memories to me. We were young and silly! It was just a sort of occasion. The excitement, something so unusual. All these Americans. A huge pit or pits, I think there were whole pigs. Oh yes, masses and masses of people. We were all young then, 1954. All three of us are still alive, one of the friends now lives in Berkshire and the other friend went to America, funnily enough. She married an American and she is still out there, lives in New Jersey. So, we all have memories of that day.



From left to right, Pat Collins (née Duckett), Pauline Miles (née Wraight) and Valerie Bove (née Taylor) at the barbeque in the Rec.

My grandparents lived in Whitstable Road and I remember the bandstand and I think the tank was there but I'm not one hundred percent sure, I may just remember it from seeing pictures and so on. But I certainly remember the drinking fountain with the lovely statue on the top.

I was carnival queen in 1956! I had to turn out loads of photograph albums, but I found a picture of that. There was a road race which was started in Court Street and I had to start that off and then later on, I don't know how long this race lasted, I was taken out to the recreation ground in a very swish car, it might have been a Rolls-Royce, with an open top. I have a picture of me standing in that and waving to the crowds and then the road race finished, and I had to present the prizes. But the pictures, the couple of pictures in the car, are quite good. Yes! In the recreation ground there were loads of children actually, loads of children! Little boys in caps! It was really thronged with people; I'm not kidding you! I was 21 then.

Overleaf: Carnival queen at the Rec in 1956.





### Home-made kites were quite common

Peter Stevens

I was born in Abbey Street and attended the District School as it was known, together with a load of other children from the roads which surrounded the Rec, namely Cyprus Road, Westgate Road, Minster Road, Luton Road, Park Road and St John's. In those days there were rather large families, so the Rec was the one place where the kids could go and play quite safely.

At the top of the Rec, as I remember, the machinery or whatever was there, there were two lots of swings. A large lot for the older children and small for the youngsters, and a seesaw and a quite a large roundabout on which all the kids could sit and the older children would rush it round, which could be rather frightening for the youngsters. And then on the grounds itself, the home-made kites were quite common and what I remember is, of course, the use of the cricket ground, which was very, very popular. There were loads of local teams. And also in the winter months there were loads of local football teams for the growing lads. No, there was no rugby, that's the funny thing. I don't know where they played. There were two other recreation grounds in Faversham: one was the Mall grounds, the other one was up at the Mount, but the Rec was the most used.

And the one man that I remember from the '30s and '40s was Sam Studd, who was the park keeper, and all the kids were in fear of Sam Studd because he kept order! Yes, as I recall, he had a uniform with a peaked cap, yes. He kept order by his sheer presence! The kids had a great respect for adults in those days. But the bandstand area was what I call hallowed ground. One daren't go on that. It was so well kept, because, in effect, it was the park keeper's front garden. No, Sam Studd never did live at the lodge, not to my knowledge. Who lived in the lodge? Well, Mr Abel was one, wasn't he? I can't put dates to this. It was very well kept. There were small gardens in it, circular gardens, as I recall. Well maintained and the grass was always immaculate. I don't recall the sheep, personally. There are photographs of sheep, but they date back to the turn of the century, I think.

Only kickaround football, take your coats off to make goal posts. You know, very small pitches, small children! You didn't climb trees. No, no, no, you didn't dare do that! Mr Studd would have been after you climbing trees! The trees were well established, of course, they were planted when the Rec was first created. Coming to the trees, quite a number of them were lost in the big blow, the big storm of 1987. Particularly along the Whitstable Road side.

Yes, I remember air raid shelters. The one I remember is the one intended, I suppose, for the people of Westgate Road area and St Saviour's Church, because it was on Whitstable Road side. I don't recall the one off Park Road. I never had occasion to go in them.

One thing I remember is, of course, was the big barbecue which was arranged by the Americans from Manston. Well, it just drew huge numbers of people, I think half the town must have turned out!

In 1950 there was an attempt to revive goal running. That drew quite large crowds. Just a lot of people doing a lot of running! I think the main team in the revival was from Oare, Oare Village. There were a lot of local football teams, you know, boys' clubs and, well, they had local leagues and the *Faversham News* printed the weekly results of the various divisions. Always good crowds along the line.

The lodge was always known to me as the summer house. There were seats, benches across the whole frontage, and it was well used.

The bridge over the railway lines. That's just the long bridge. The one big attraction to be seen from the long bridge was the turntable on which the railway steam engines could be turned to face the opposite direction. Oh yes, growing up in Abbey Street we used to go and play on what was called the cement works – well, it was the cement works – and the railway line came along from the station, across the Whitstable Road and right round to, almost to, Belvedere Road. As kids we used to go and climb on the goods trucks.

The tank. Oh yes, I remember it. I think it was disposed of because kids started to put newspaper in and lighting it. I do remember all the ornate gates and fencing which made the whole place fairly secure.

In those days there were a lot of small shops and the local shopkeepers, Thursday was early closing day in Faversham and Thursday afternoons was very popular for the cricket. The cricket pitch was concrete, a strip of concrete and this big mat was rolled out. You see, you can't have a very refined cricket pitch in a public recreation ground! It may have been tarmac, not concrete, but it was certainly a hard surface on which this mat was rolled.

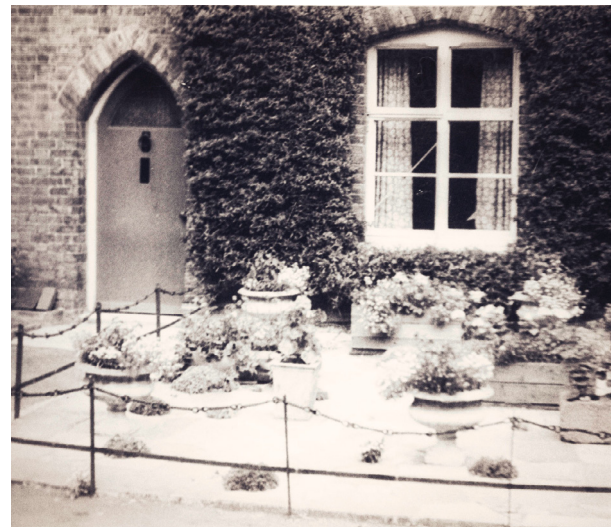


## We had birthday parties in the bathroom!

Carol Boulton

My dad Geoff Gates was known as Ike Gates in Faversham. He started off, I think, as a gardener for Mike Vinson who had some sort of fairly substantial residence on the outskirts of Faversham, and the story goes that he did help create the garden there. He would have only been quite young and then as the war started he must have joined up with the RAF. When I look at the photos we've got, my parents married in 1940 and dad was in civvies then, but when I was born in '42 he was already in the RAF and he became a drill sergeant. From the way his career developed he obviously had some sort of personality and was able to deal with people. I was four when we moved to the lodge in the Rec, and I think it was May 1946. I don't know what he did from the time when he was demobbed 'til he took over at the Rec. But he was then at the Rec for four years – we moved to Chilham in 1950 where he was head gardener at the Castle. We were only there for about 18 months when he returned to local authority employment. He eventually became assistant parks superintendent for the London Borough of Redbridge.

We had quite an impressive front door with a very big old-fashioned key, a big iron key, but I can't remember the actual layout inside the lodge. I think there were only two bedrooms, and my sister and I had the one that faced across towards the bandstand and the big tarmac area in front of the property. I just have this vision of the big bathroom, which presumably had originally been a bedroom, with the bath in the corner. I can't remember if there were any other facilities in the bathroom. I knew there wasn't a toilet there, and my sister said straight away the toilet was out in the backyard, she has a very good recollection of that.



The main entrance to the lodge, at the rear of the building.



In those days you had very simple kids parties and I think possibly because downstairs the accommodation was fairly cramped, with this big space upstairs we had birthday parties in the bathroom! Sandwiches and jelly, I think, with a covering on top of the bath! Certainly, the food was set out on the covered bath!

I have a very clear recollection of a brick-built copper in the kitchen. In the corner, a sort of semi-circular structure with a little fireplace underneath. I can remember on the Sunday night the fire would be lit, the water would be put into the copper, goodness knows whether that was all done by hand. And then I can remember the water being boiled up overnight and my mother with her copper stick stirring the washing. I can actually smell the smell of the soapy stuff! My recollection is that it was a large bowl, a permanent fixture, just for washing clothes. I don't know how the clothes were rinsed, presumably hoicked out from the copper to the sink to be rinsed. And then you know there was a mangle outside. My mother mangling the washing, I can see the sheets going through before they were put on the line to dry. It was hard work and Monday was washday.

My sister was 20 months younger than me, and then my brother, Richard, who was a baby, he was about 18 months old when we moved from Faversham and has no recollections about the Rec. My father was nominally the head gardener. Of course, in those days you had a lot of formal beds and we had a garden along from what we called the avenue, the driveway between the railway shrubbery and the top of the Rec. We had a garden that sort of ran along there. And there was a hedge, our garden was quite private. I think there was a potting shed in the garden and there must have been a greenhouse because the plants that were used for the bedding would have all been grown by my dad. The garden ran along sort of the side of the house, I'm a bit hazy about the geography. I think we had a fairly substantial garden but, of course, even though we were so young we just had the freedom to roam, we used to just wander. I had a wonderful childhood.

My father had to look after the bowling green and it was my sister said, you know, we didn't dare go near it, we would get chased away, it was his absolute pride and joy. I think he only had one person to help him. So presumably he did mowing and looking after flower beds. I can remember when the leaves came down, the man that helped him, maybe both of them, sweeping the leaves down the avenue with besoms. All by hand, hard work.

At the front of the lodge on each side was a long, long bench that went the whole length of the verandas. Oh yes, yes, used by the public. And as I said, courting couples used to come and sit there in the evenings! In the tarmac area there was also what seemed to be a very tall flagpole. The bandstand? Oh yes, the bandstand was there. I don't remember if it was used. My sister and I remember cattle going down the Whitstable Road on a Tuesday. My sister remembers hiding behind the Whitstable Road air raid shelter because she was afraid the cows would come onto the Rec! She was probably only six then, it just shows that we were allowed to wander! She reckons there wasn't a fence along Whitstable Road then, they would have taken the fences away during the war, wouldn't they?



The lodge in 2021.

## All ages can play, ladies can compete against men

Ken Neame



Front and rear views of the former bowling pavilion.

The bowls club was established in 1926 and prior to that there was uproar in Faversham because the then borough council, mayor and corporation, fenced off a piece of the Rec to form the bowls club, and the townsfolk of Faversham said the council were stealing their recreation ground! The bowls club was established in 1926 and there is a story that the first pavilion was a goods truck from the Davington Light Railway that used to run from where Admiralty Close is to Uplees, to take the gunpowder workers to their work every day at Uplees. An old railway wagon ended its life as the original pavilion for the bowls club! The story has been sort of handed down, I have been told that history and it was genuine

because when we demolished to rebuild in 2008, the Kent and East Sussex Railway wanted the wagon because of the bend of the arch of the wagon, they wanted to make a template or something, but nothing ever came of it. Things had been built onto it to make a bigger pavilion, it was only the centre of the old building. Swale Borough Council were responsible for the repairs of the old building but the roof got so bad.

Our committee did a survey of the building and found all the things that needed doing. So, we got onto Swale Borough Council and gave them the list and it was brought up in committee and it was decided to have a site meeting with us. This was in about 1998. It was said it was a waste of money repairing this pavilion, what you want is a new one. They did temporary repairs and negotiations started, we had loads of meetings and plans were eventually drawn up. It took 10 years from that first meeting until we got our pavilion as it is today. The last two or three years, the gents changing room was so bad that fungus grew in the pavilion. Inside. And we had to lock it and the smell was dreadful!

Some friends of mine, two of them, were members of the bowls club and they said, 'Why don't you come and join us?' The date I joined was about 1987, it's a job to remember when it was! I played in the Faversham Industrial Bowls Tournament in previous years, and I think that gave me a bit of an appetite. And gradually, being me, I got involved in the committee and so forth. I think there are between 65 and 70 members. That's men and ladies. During the summer months we have normal club matches, we play about 64 matches home and away, most places we play twice in a season though some clubs we play just once: this year home, next year away. It amounts to about 64 matches in a year. Then the ladies have some matches on their own and the men are in a tournament, a league called the Forest of Blean, FoB. There are seven teams in that league. We also do indoor bowling from the beginning of October to the end of March. We can lay down a short mat in the pavilion, and we have that on a Monday afternoon, Wednesday afternoon and Friday evenings. Before lockdown it was just getting going because more wanted to play on a Tuesday evening. Then at least once a month we have a social event on a Saturday evening. That could be a quiz but the popular thing, the easy thing to organise, are bingo evenings. We get about 40 people out there for a bingo evening. They love it! Some nights there are more and more! Members can bring their families and friends. And then of course you have the bar. The social events and the short mat pay for the upkeep of the green during the winter months.

The council relinquished responsibility for cutting the bowls green in 1997, I think it was. It may have been a bit earlier than that, the date escapes me. We negotiated with them, I wasn't involved, and we took over. The first year the council agreed to buy the mowers that we needed and all the consumables that go on the green in the first year. So, it was a good agreement, and we now have a management agreement with Swale Borough Council. So, what we did was employed the council greenkeeper to privately carry on doing it, and each year Swale Borough Council send in Sports Turf Research Institute to analyse the green and give a report, and they tell us what to do. Then we found a new contractor who we are still with today. The green is in good condition. We had a very good report last August.

We would take more members if we could get them, because we know we shall lose this year two members who are moving from Faversham, including the captain of the club. But we shall find a new captain. We shall have somebody. We keep a rink open for members of the public. If anyone comes and says can I have a go at bowling, we would say yes. We have to keep one rink open for the general public except on match days. If anyone is thinking of getting involved, joining, what normally happens is they speak to us and we say have a go and see how you feel, and we have a reduced membership fee for the first year. It's an equal sport, all ages can play, ladies can compete against men, it's a level playing field. The majority of our matches are mixed matches.



## It was good cricket with some good players

Nigel Mannouch

I grew up one street away, St John's Road, and spent a lot of time in the Rec. In school holidays we probably spent all day every day, certainly Monday to Friday, playing in the Rec. Football and cricket. When we were younger, hide-and-seek, climbing trees. Football matches, we would start congregating from about 9 o'clock in the morning starting with maybe five-a-side, within an hour it could have been ten, fifteen-a-side! As more kids turned up, one went on each side. Then about 12 o'clock the shipyard siren or hooter would go to signal the workers end of shift for lunch. When that sounded, most of the kids would disappear. Then back after lunch until teatime.

The park staff, one of them was Mr Longhurst who lived about six doors away from me. The main park keeper, I can't think who it was when we were really young. I can sort of half picture him, quite a slim man. Dick Potter came along a bit later.

Adults teams would be playing organised football and cricket. Until the early 1960s, mid '60s, the cricket pitch was a concrete base with a coir matting stretched over it and the pavilion was a little wooden pavilion between the present one and East Street. There was no rugby and before the rugby pitch there was a hockey pitch. I started playing hockey when I left school in '65, we probably started playing in the Rec about the late '60s.

Then a grass pitch for cricket was laid approximately when the new pavilion was built, squeezed in between the three football pitches. Now cricket isn't played at all in the Rec.



Nigel at the Rec.

The sports day was on Whit Monday. It was a bank holiday. I don't know how long those sports were going for, but certainly as long as I can remember. There was a track marked for running, cycling, surrounded by stalls. One year I'm sure they put a complete fence round it and charged people to go in. That was in the section where the football pitches are. Spectators stood behind a rope. Usually a big crowd and there used to be special attractions. One year there was a daredevil who would dive off a tall structure into a small tank of water. In the '50s the Americans from the air force base at Manston did a huge barbecue, they dug a large pit and roasted whole pigs.

The Preston Maltworks, built by Shepherd Neame, was certainly working. I can remember the brewery lorries. I am sure they had a steam lorry when I was very young that used to come to the maltings. I might have been mistaken but I don't think so.

I remember the air raid shelters. There were two in East Street, roughly opposite Westgate Road. The other two were adjacent to Park Road. One roughly where the pavilion is, then one on the other side of the path. They were horrible because there was rubbish inside and they smelt. So we didn't go in them, we tended to play on them rather than in them. I think when they built the new pavilion they removed them, but they might have gone before that. The pavilion was built mid '60s, might have been early '60s.

I remember the bandstand and I can remember when I was very young hearing a band play there. Which band, I don't know. We played on it as kids.

There was a raised section on the corner by the Market Inn, I think it might still be there. Between the wars there was an old First World War tank there. I think the tank was taken away during the Second World War to use the metal. When you just come into the Rec there is a triangle with a seat on it. The triangle area used to have a few shrubs on it and I seem to remember there was a big notice board with writing on it regarding the Rec. That was taken away, never to be seen again.

The swings were where the tennis courts are now, roughly level with the bowling green clubhouse. There was a roundabout and rocking horse. A paddling pool was added later but that was when I was a teenager or older. I can't actually remember when the tennis courts were built. My mum and her neighbour played tennis, but they played at the Mount.

When I was about nine or ten there were actually two concrete wickets. The second one was somewhere about the edge of the rugby pitch but that was removed when I was still at school. On carnival day there would be a ladies' football match which the carnival queen would kick off, after being crowned in the Market Place. It was usually EKP Ladies and Metal Pressings and there may have been others. In the summer there was an evening cricket



Cricket used to be very popular at the Rec, but today the sound of leather on willow is no longer heard.

competition called the Hospital Cup. It was played over two evenings, so one team would bat one evening for two hours, and then the other the next evening for two hours or for the same number of overs. We used to go out in the evenings and watch. Even my dad would go out and watch occasionally, and he wasn't really a cricket fan, but he knew some of the people who would be playing. It would be quite an evening; you would have people all round the boundary quite often. Especially finals night. Teams would come from Sittingbourne and other places. It was good cricket with some good players, but that gradually folded. It was replaced by a six-a-side competition and that gradually dwindled until it folded, which was a shame. I actually played in that Hospital Cup but the two-night affair was starting to fade. I played in the six-a-side. Someone would walk around with a collection box with the proceedings donated to the Cottage Hospital.

In the autumn, October sometimes November, a fair would come to the recreation ground. They still do now, for a week. Always in the top triangle, the railway end. In my days it was called Forrests. We used to walk round and look at some of the really nice caravans. As kids we used to watch them come in because sometimes they would have to back or unhitch some of the wagons to get them into the ground one at a time because of the tight turns. They would come up St John's or St Mary's Road because it was easier to get in. So sometimes they might have three trailers behind one lorry – two wagons and a caravan or two caravans.

I am sure at one time some of the gates would be locked at night. I can't really remember but I have a memory of being chased out sometimes at night. Whether it was just certain gates, I can't remember. I would not have thought totally, because using the bridge was a right of way. Maybe only the other gates. It was only the old right of way, the middle path, that was lit, as far as I remember.

Where the park keeper's lodge is, there is like a little shelter. Facing the Rec there were seats in there which you don't have any more.

As kids we occasionally watched the courting couples from the shrubs, couples sat on seats. As kids we used to get in behind, make noises and run away! These shrubs were around Park Road and East Street. There is a windy path that has always been there which went through the middle.

Then there is the hill going up by the malthouse where you can look into the railway sidings. Well, coming down there, on either roller skates or scooter, sometimes soapboxes, you often got stopped. In snow, toboggan down it and the park keepers tried to stop us if they could! They reckoned it was dangerous. There was always someone falling off, grazing an arm, knee, or something. The soapboxes, carts, were homemade, boxes on wheels with steering.

We even had running races round the Rec, starting at a point and run right round. I have a feeling we weren't allowed to cycle. I'm not sure about that, I certainly don't remember taking my bicycle into the Rec, except my tricycle when very young with my parents.



Another memory is of the gate at the top, near the malthouse. When Smedley's and East Kent Packers were in full swing, workers would use that gate and would walk diagonally across the Rec to the gate where the railway bridge was on Whitstable Road. Locals also used this shortcut, wearing a path right across, going through some of the cricket pitch and through two football pitches. Sometimes awkward ones who wouldn't go round the football or cricket pitches just continued walking and the games had to stop.

My long-time family friend Geoffrey who married one of my cousins has a photograph of his mum taken in August 1943 that shows the old pavilion in the background. Daphne is standing nearly opposite where she lived before marriage, at 3 Whitstable Road. Daphne and Ron were close friends of my parents, Kathleen and Les. The mums went "old tyme" dancing together for about 40 years.

From 1954 to 1958 I was in the 1st Faversham (Wheler's Own) Cub Pack, and with the scout group we met in a hall in Belmont Road. There were at least two other groups, the 6th and 13th, who used a hall in Solomons Lane and the Tin Church in Whitstable Road, but I am not sure which used which. Every year we had a cub sports day which was held in the recreation ground, with individual winners and pack winners, I think we won the pack event the most. I can remember running, three-legged race, egg and spoon, sack race, high jump and fill a container with water, which was a team event.



Daphne Hawkins (née George) at the Rec.

### **It went round, flying round, at an alarming rate!**

Tony Francis

Because my cousins were my age, we used to go to the Rec unaccompanied. I can remember going out there when I was sort of five, or six year old, just with other kids, you know. The earliest memories were shrubs all the way along the Park Road side and along the Whitstable Road side, which have long gone. The two air raid shelters that were either side of the entrance in Park Road, they were still there when I was young, and also the play equipment in the play area, that was round the back of what was the paddling pool. There was a swing boat there, climbing frame, a witch's hat-type roundabout and then the little swings, you know, for the younger kids, were in that area. And then around behind where the tennis court is now were the big swings for the older children. There was a paddling pool and sand pit, yes. The paddling pool was where now there is the basketball court. And then to the side of it there was the sand pit. I can remember playing in both of those. You know, bring out Dinky Toys to play in the sand pit. Sand there, what are you going to do? You are going to fill them up with sand, go digging! And of course, the shrubs were ideal territory for sort of exploring, we used to make our own paths through them. Some of the bushes lent themselves to be hideouts you know, for whatever games you were playing. All very, very good stuff! And being the next road over from where I lived, it was just natural, you know, we just went out there all the time.

The two games that we used to play were football and cricket, really. It was the usual, jumpers for goalposts type of thing. And then cricket, we didn't have wickets or stumps, or didn't until later years, and so we used to chalk them on a convenient tree! We didn't have a cricket bat, so my grandfather fashioned one from a piece of oak. It was very good until the day we used a cricket ball, not a tennis ball which was easy to hit. We used a cricket ball for the first time and then we found out why the cricket bat has so much padding on it! I can still feel those vibrations going through me now!

The air raid shelters. By the Park Road entrance, from my memory in the upper bit, where the fair currently goes, there was one, and there was one the other side, it might have been where the pavilion, the changing rooms, now is. I am absolutely convinced there were two out there. I could be wrong, but I seem to remember we used to play on them, they were covered in earth and grass, things you ran up and down. I don't remember any by Whitstable Road. But your memory does sort of, you know, it's 60 years ago now. No, I was never in them. They were all closed off, capped off, left there. It was only in the course of demolition that they took the grass off and the entrance got exposed. They were demolishing them and some of the older, braver kids ventured into them. I was certainly not brave enough for that!

So, on the Park Road side, on the same side as the existing changing rooms and toilets, there was a wooden changing room. It was a lot smaller than the one that is there now, the one that replaced it. Both were in existence for a while, the wooden one and the brick one. The brick one must have been built round about the early '60s, by about 1962, I think.



Football pitches by Whitstable Road in 2020.

There was a putting green, it wasn't anything formal, they just mowed the grass in the area to the south of the changing rooms. I think it was only about six or nine holes. They just used to mow the grass there, made some holes in the grass and had numbered flags in them. Very short-lived, but you know, it was certainly there for a little while. I think you used to hire the putters from someone who was in the pavilion. Mainly, you know, for the older children and their parents. A very small area. I do remember it.

For the crowning of the carnival queen they used to build a stage directly in front of the pavilion. It was probably provided by Shepherd Neame, good old wooden beer barrels topped off with, you know, planks or ply or something to make a stage for the ceremony. But it was only built like the day before. You used to be able to weave in and out of the barrels underneath, that was great fun! The crowning used to be in the afternoon, early afternoon prior to the carnival. But when you are a kid, five or six, you weren't interested in that, you were interested in scrambling around underneath the stage!



The arrival of the funfair is still exciting for youngsters.

The Forrest's funfair always seemed to occupy the bit that the fairs do now, the little bit next to the bowling green. Forrest's fair was the October one, but there used to be a fair for the Whit Monday sports and that used to be at the bottom, down in the Whitstable Road bit. Dodgems were always the sort of staple, and they used to have the galloping horses, the carousel with the horses going up and down. Chair-O-Planes, this was just chairs, basically, on the ends of chains, but you know, as it speeds up, they go out further and further. Centrifugal force used



to throw you out, not violently, it was quite gentle. Big wheel. Octopus. And my personal favourite was the skid cars, which was like a version of the Waltzer which was the one with individual cars that you sit in and the track goes up and down and the fair guys come round and spin it so you not only go up and down but the whole thing sort of goes round at 360 degrees as well. But the skid cars, or Whip was its other name, was horizontal but the big thing that you had as a kid was it had a brake, so you used to be able to, if you caught it right, make the car accelerate that much quicker because it stops, and when you released the brake it went round, flying round, at an alarming rate! That was great fun that was! I didn't like going on anything violent so to me that was the limit of my comfort zone, I think!

The Big Hill. In the scheme of things it's not big, but as everything else in the Rec is flat, I suppose it is big. In the winter it was a magnet for anyone with a sledge or toboggan or anything. I can't remember his name but one of the park's staff used to drive a Reliant three-wheel van and that used to cough and splutter as it went up the Big Hill as he made his way from Park Road up to the lodge. It was his own van. They used to have a tractor and big mowers behind that, and all the equipment was on site, kept up in the corner where that little car park is now, right by the railway embankment. Top end of Park Road.

The malthouse? I only remember it as a store, even in the early '60s I don't think it was used for malting. I don't know when it stopped malting. From 1963 I lived right next to it. I think for a while it must have been rented or leased off Shepherd Neame and it was used, I think, for clothing. I don't know if it was clothes donations, but clothes used to be there.

The railway bridge, oh well, I used to sort of live on that! We always called this the long bridge. I have always been interested in trains, my dad and two uncles were drivers and I used to stand on the bridge, we always called this the long bridge, and I was quite happy just to watch the shunting operations and the freight trains coming and going. There weren't that many of them but it was still interesting to see that they did roll up and depart. I can't remember steam; this was electric and diesel locos. They built some electric locos that operated off the conductor rail, as they still do, but in the sidings, they thought that was too dangerous, so they had overhead wires. The locomotives had a pantograph so when the train arrived and was backing into the yard the driver pressed a button and up went the pantograph and it was in contact with the overhead wire, and then when it departed he had to reverse the process.

The general freight disappeared but there were two things happening. There was what they called a preassembly depot down by the Creek where they set track up from sleepers and chairs and rail ready for renewing jobs, and the remaining freight traffic used to be for East Kent Packers, bringing imported fruit and vegetables. The wagons used to get unloaded at what was the old Faversham market and taken just up the road to where I live now, to what was the site of East Kent Packers, around by Edward Vinson Drive, and get packed for distribution to shops and supermarkets.

It was a gradient all the way down from the goods yard all the way down to the Creek and there were wagons that had been left, unsecured, on the Creek road, the Creek branch, and there wasn't sufficient handbrakes and they ran away and they collided with some wagons used for stores etc. They hit these wagons and they just demolished the buffer stops, went over the top of buffer stops and down into the Creek! Over the edge of Iron Wharf. I've pictures of it. I believe it was in 1964. The story used to go around that in those days you used to have a carriage or wagon examiner and his job was to go around to inspect wagons and make sure they were fit to run, had no defects. And if they weren't fit to run you nailed a card, or put it into a clip on the wagon. It said, 'Not To Go', which basically meant it was unfit to move. And the story was that the carriage wagon examiner was so enthusiastic about his job that when the wagons went into the Creek, he hired a rowing boat and put a red card on it! I can't vouch for the truth of that, though!



Wagons in the Creek in 1964.

## Acknowledgements

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## Notes

### **The lodge**

In 1859, the Trustees of Public Charities of Faversham acquired 20 acres of land to create the recreation ground and appointed John Marshall Hooker to design a lodge to accommodate the gardener and provide sheltered public seating in verandas. The lodge, known locally as the 'summer house', is now used by Faversham Rugby Club. In 2021, a kiosk was opened in the arched entrance between the verandas. Anon, Advertisement seeking tenders to erect the lodge, *Kentish Gazette*, 23 August 1859, p. 1; John Blackford, *The building of the new almshouses in Faversham 1860-1863* (Faversham: Printshop, 2013).

### **The bandstand**

An ornate metal bandstand was donated by Alderman H. R. Child, who was Mayor of Faversham in 1895 and 1905. In addition to providing an attractive sheltered space for bands, it is said to have acted as a platform for special events, pulpit for religious services and cricket pavilion. However, in 1954, tenders were requested for dismantling and clearing away the structure. Anon, 'Death of a well-known tradesman', *East Kent Gazette*, 15 March 1919, p. 6; Anon, 'No paint for bandstand', *East Kent Gazette*, 17 August 1951, p. 5; Anon, 'Public notices', *East Kent Gazette*, 31 December 1954, p. 8; Sydney Clark, 'Faversham's bandstand era (part one)' *Bygone Kent* 22 (2001) pp. 2-8; Sydney Clark, 'Faversham's bandstand era (part two)' *Bygone Kent* 22 (2001) pp. 58-63.

### **The tank**

In 1919, a First World War tank, number 258, was presented to Faversham by the National War Savings Committee in recognition of money raised by the town during the war and was driven to the Rec and parked in the NW corner of the site. In 1937, the tank and the heavy German gun that had also been displayed at the Rec were sold for scrap. Anon, 'Faversham's tank presented', *The Faversham and North East Kent News*, 2 August 1919, p. 3; Anon, 'Faversham Town Council', *The Faversham and North East Kent News*, 6 December 1919, p. 3; Anon, 'Faversham Town Council', *The Faversham and North East Kent News*, 30 October 1937, p. 2; Anon, 'Faversham's old war tank', *The Faversham and North East Kent News*, 19 February 1938, p. 4; Sydney Clark, 'A monster comes to Faversham' *Bygone Kent* 11 (1990) pp. 622-627.

### **Trenches**

Trenches were dug at the Rec in the prelude to the Second World War to provide shelter in the event of air raids, but were soon filled in. Anon, 'Trenches in recreation ground', *Faversham Times and Mercury and North-East Kent Journal*, 7 January 1939, p. 5; Anon, 'Air raid trenches', *Faversham Times and Mercury and North-East Kent Journal*, 28 January 1939, p. 1; Anon, 'The trenches', *Faversham Times and Mercury and North-East Kent Journal*, 11 February 1939, p. 5.

### **Goal running**

Goal running at the Rec is mentioned in the local newspapers around the latter part of the nineteenth century, and attempts were made to reintroduce the game in the early 1950s, though the revival didn't last long. Goal running involved two teams running in an area of grassland with flags as markers, and is thought to have derived from 'tag'. Anon, 'Goal running back', *East Kent Gazette*, 24 March 1950, p. 2; Anon, 'First goal-running match attracts crowd of 3,000', *Faversham News and East Kent Journal*, 12 May 1950, p. 1; Anon, 'Revival of Kentish game', *East Kent Gazette*, 29 June 1951, p. 4; Michael Satterthwaite, 'Goal Running', *The Faversham Magazine*, (Summer 1966) pp. 20-21.

### **Preston Malthouse**

The malthouse at the southern end of Park Road was constructed by Shepherd Neame shortly after the railway line to Faversham opened in 1858. It originally included a grain store, two growing floors, four kilns and a maltster's house. Two of the kilns have been removed though much of the structure remains and has been converted into housing. A plaque at the main entrance states that redevelopment for housing took place in 1986. Jane Wade (Ed) *Traditional Kent Buildings* Number 4 (Kent: Kent County Council, 1985) p. 25; Jim and Jamie Preston, 'Floor malting in Kent and the Faversham malthouses' *Bygone Kent* 23 (2002) pp. 164-8; John Owen, 'The malt and malt houses of the Shepherds' *Master Brewer* (Spring 2010) pp. 22-23; James Preston, *Malting and malthouses in Kent* (Gloucestershire: Amberly Publishing, 2015) pp. 24, 78-80.

### **Whit Monday gala days**

Whit Monday activities at the Rec in the '50s and early '60s were on a large scale. The contribution made by American Air Force catering staff from Manston airfield in 1954 and 1955, when pits were filled with green oak charcoal to form large barbecues, was particularly impressive. In 1954, 14 pigs and 300 chickens were prepared. In the following year the menu comprised 25 pigs, 250 chickens, 350 sausages, 250 hamburgers, slaw, hash and 110 gallons of special sauce. Anon, 'Biggest Barbecue', *East Kent Gazette*, 4 June 1954, p. 1; Anon, 'Britain's biggest barbecue', *East Kent Gazette*, 11 June 1954, p. 3; Anon, '30,000 people made it a barbecue holiday', *East Kent Gazette*, 3 June 1955, p. 2.

In 1958 the Whit Monday gala was attended by special guests Jo Douglas and Pete Murray, presenters of the popular TV show 'Six-Five Special'. Anon, '6.5 Special ran up record profit at Faversham gala', *East Kent Gazette*, 30 May 1958, p. 5.

### **Cricket**

For further information about the history of cricket at the Rec see: Fred Poynter, *A history of Faversham cricket*. Faversham papers number 35 (Faversham: Faversham Society, 1992).

### **Drinking fountain**

In 1884, the Mayor of Faversham wrote to the Trustees of Public Charities suggesting that a drinking fountain should be placed in the Rec. The Trustees supported the idea, and in 1888 the Rev. G. J. Hilton presented an elegant drinking fountain with a sculpture of a robed girl standing on a plinth in the act of emptying an amphora. The statue, which represented temperance, was damaged in 1950 and removed; today only the plinth remains. Anon, 'Proposed drinking fountain for the recreation ground', *East Kent Gazette*, 26 July 1884, p. 5; Anon, 'A drinking fountain for the Recreation Ground', *Faversham News and East Kent Journal*, 12 May 1888, p. 6; Anon, 'Trustees of Public Charities', *Maidstone and Kentish Advertiser*, 29 October 1889, p. 7; Anon, 'Vandalism in Rec', *Faversham News and East Kent Journal*, 10 March 1950, p. 1.

### **Bowling green**

The bowling green was constructed as part of an unemployment scheme, under the direction of the Borough Surveyor, and opened in August 1921. Initially, Faversham Bowling Club was resident, though in 1926 Faversham Recreation Bowling Club took over. Some authors refer to a story that the first pavilion was a railway carriage. Anon, 'Bowling green opened', *East Kent Gazette*, 13 August 1921, p. 8; Anon, 'Opening by the mayor', *Whitstable Times and Herne Bay Herald*, 20 August 1921, p. 3; Ernie Epps, 'Bowls in Faversham', *The Faversham Magazine* (Summer 1986) p. 12; Sydney Clark, 'Bowls in Faversham', *Bygone Kent* 15 (1994) pp. 186-193; Peter Stevens, *Rec. and roads remembered*, Faversham papers number 111 (Faversham: Faversham Society, 2010) p. 8.

### **Creek Railway accidents**

In January 1964, around 23 wagons, most loaded with coal or fruit, broke loose in the sidings near the goods yard. Gathering speed on the slope, they crashed through the buffers and the first three wagons fell into Faversham Creek. In April 1965, wagons again broke loose, though on this occasion none ended up in the water. Anon, untitled article, *Faversham News and East Kent Journal*, 24 January 1964, p. 1; Anon, 'Creek pile-up by runaway wagons', *Faversham News and East Kent Journal*, 30 April 1965, p. 1.





## Contact us

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### **For further information about the Rec:**

[www.swale.gov.uk/faversham-recreation-ground](http://www.swale.gov.uk/faversham-recreation-ground)

[www.facebook.com/FriendsofFavRecreationGround](http://www.facebook.com/FriendsofFavRecreationGround)

