



FAVERSHAM CREEK

Faversham owes everything to its creek. This modest, muddy waterway has been the town's heart and soul since the arrival of the first prehistoric settlers. It is the reason Faversham exists: the key to its identity. Today this meandering tidal channel makes Faversham a special place to live, work and visit. But down the ages it was a vital connection to the sea and a source of great prosperity, prestige and political power. For centuries, Faversham Creek was a major trading hub and ship building centre. Thousands of vessels were launched here and the town's economic fortunes depended upon creek-based industries.

The creek and its history are Faversham's family silver. Just a mile or so of creekside runs through the town. It is a finite resource. Yet much of it is crowded with new housing. And as planners continue to sacrifice the remaining waterfront to developers, property speculators profit from the community's loss.

Crowded out by houses, restaurants and shops, the creek will die. If we let that happen, Faversham's centuries-old maritime identity will be gone.

For ever.

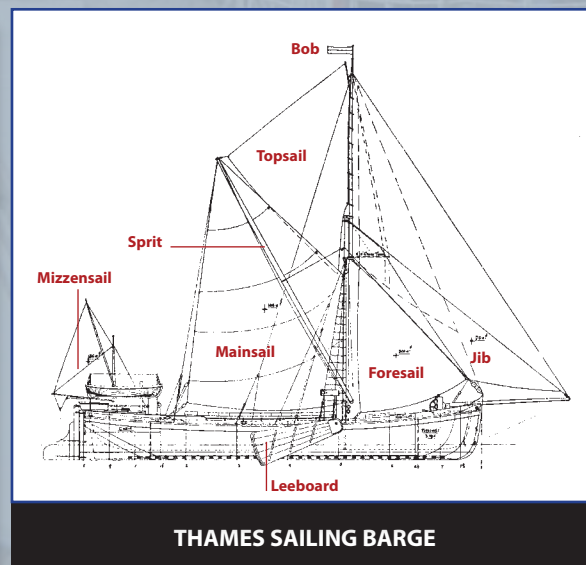


A WORKING CREEK

The creek carried the Romans here and brought French stone to build Faversham Abbey in 1147. By the 15th century Faversham was a Cinque Port, one of the few towns granted privileges by Royal Charter in return for ships and men in times of war. Faversham became a nationally important trading and ship building port. Cargoes of wool, wheat, gunpowder – and the bricks and cement from which swathes of London were built – were shipped from its quays. This created wealth still reflected in the town's rich architecture.



Faversham Creek leads directly into the heart of Faversham: it is tidal along its length. The basin is controlled by sluice gates under the swing bridge. Maintained correctly, the entire length of the creek is navigable for Thames sailing barges.



BARGE TURNING POINT
SWING BRIDGE
BRENTS JETTY

PURIFIER BUILDING
CREEK BASIN
ORDNANCE WHARF

T.S. HAZARD
TOWN QUAY



Standard Quay in the 1890s. Very little has changed visually from this view; barges no longer carry cargoes, but they do attract many visitors.



The Thames sailing barge *Swale* being completed at Standard Quay shipyard in 1894. Shipbuilding is recorded from the 16th century.



Oyster Bay House seen from Iron Wharf.

S.B. CAMBRIA
AND DRY DOCKS

GOLDFINCH'S YARD

OYSTER BAY HOUSE

IRON WHARF

STANDARD QUAY

ABBAY GRANARIES

THAMES BARGE BERTHS

NEW CREEKSIDE HOUSES



The last barge to carry cargo under sail, *Cambria* was restored at Standard Quay with £1.4 million of lottery funds by Faversham's highly-skilled shipwrights.

The latest threat is to Standard Quay – the most historically significant of Faversham's quays, and the best preserved. Still in use by traditional shipwrights, its centuries-old wharf and Grade II listed weatherboarded warehouses are precious physical links to a great maritime past. It is a rare example of living, working heritage. Yet these skilled craftsmen will be forced out in a few months' time as part of a developer's plan to open restaurants and shops on the site.

Faversham Creek is the heart of Faversham: a living link between town and sea.

The creek is home to successful maritime businesses with immense potential for future expansion.

Standard Quay's historic wharves and workshops are more than just a tourist attraction. Faversham's past wealth was built here, on skills still practised and passed on to apprentices today. Vessels on the National Historic Ships register are moored and maintained here.

Thousands of visitors come every year. Artists and photographers set up their easels and cameras; schoolchildren see local history still in action.

Given the space and security it needs, it could flourish and grow as a unique, profitable resource: a living, working attraction Kent can be proud of.

Already a national centre for the restoration and repair of traditional vessels, a revitalised Faversham Creek should be an internationally-recognised European maritime heritage site.

But tragically, the relentless development of creekside land threatens the very skills at the heart of this potential regeneration.

Faversham has built a reputation as a centre for traditional beer, good local food and successful events such as the Hop Festival.

Yet the town's greatest treasure, its priceless maritime legacy, is in imminent danger of slipping away. It could soon be gone for ever, tidied up and squeezed out of existence by housing, restaurants and shops.

Faversham Creek stretches from the basin at its head to Iron Wharf boatyard and the sea. At its heart is Standard Quay, a co-ordinated 'one-stop shop' offering full facilities for the mooring and repair of traditional craft.

It is one of the last strongholds for that British icon, the Thames sailing barge.

Fewer than 30 of these historic vessels are still seaworthy, and they rely on Standard Quay for maintenance – from overhauls to complete restoration.

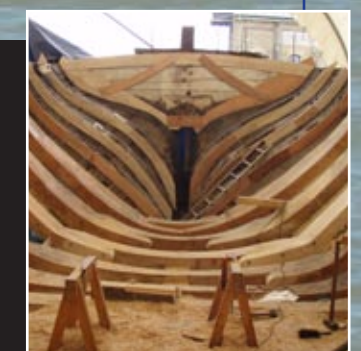
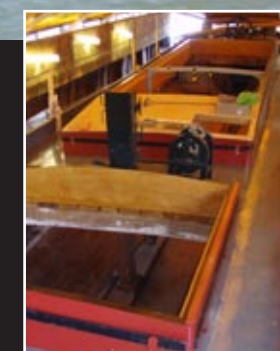
The quay's buildings are home to nationally-renowned maritime craftsmen with increasingly rare skills: an unparalleled pool of expertise. And the apprentice scheme pioneered here, which trains local young people without charging fees, remains the only one of its kind in the UK.

Standard Quay's shipwrights rebuilt the soon-to-be-relaunched Thames sailing barge *Cambria*, England's last seagoing vessel to trade under sail alone.

They hope to follow that ambitious £1.4 million project with the restoration of another sailing barge, *Westmoreland*.

The quay's ongoing success depends on space: space on the wharf, space for the versatile floating dry docks and space in the workshop buildings. The sail loft, for example, is needed for winter sail storage, indoor spar and rigging maintenance and 'lofting', where boat plans are laid out on the floor to guarantee accuracy. The quayside is used for heavy crane work, preparing timber and, for centuries, has been used for 'sail dressing'. This is the practice of waterproofing with a mix of oil and ochre that gives Thames sailing barges their famous brick-red sails.

SHIPWRIGHTS AND A WORKING QUAY



Standard Quay is perfect for ship building and repair – because it was built for them. But Standard Quay's enormous potential for expansion is already constrained by a lack of space. The lease expires in June 2011, the shipwrights have been given notice to quit by the site's property developer landlord, and the future looks uncertain for Faversham's working traditional boatyard.

Big flat-bottomed vessels, such as Thames sailing barges and the floating dry docks, shift mud just by sitting in the active waterway. This is what keeps the moorings at Standard Quay clear. Without them the creek will rapidly silt up. After decades of mismanagement and neglect by the responsible authorities, the creek now risks becoming less navigable.

We say enough is enough. It is time to *fight* for Faversham Creek.

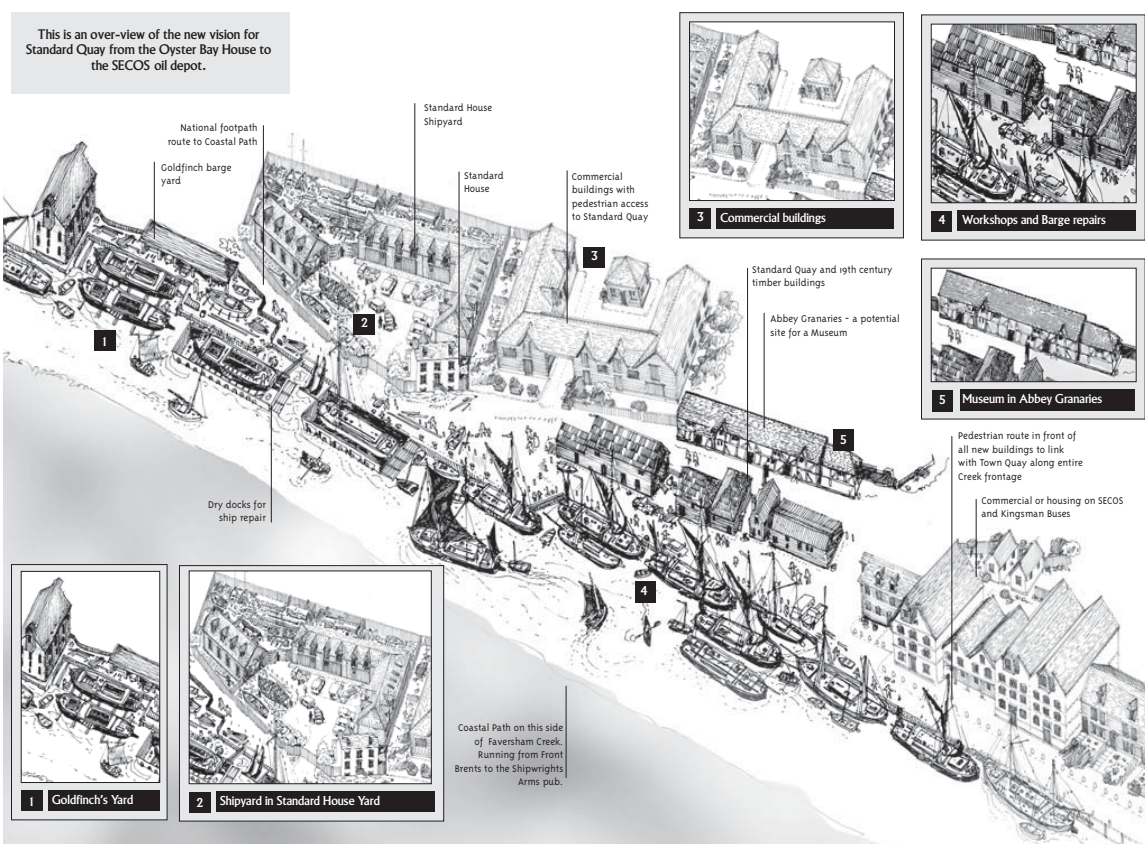
A VISION FOR AN

Our vision for the future: a regenerated maritime industry in Faversham and a vibrant, revitalised waterway to include slipways, dry docks, a dinghy building school, museum, apprentice shipwrights, sail loft, blacksmith's forge and an engineering workshop. Initiatives would include creek festivals, sailing events, educational facilities, training and extensive job creation.

Much of this is already here on the creek, right now. But imagine what could be achieved with our disappearing creekside protected from irresponsible development, a committed, coordinated body to speak out in the creek's interest and the co-operation of our local authorities. The possibilities are endless.

The drawings below illustrate the potential for Faversham Creek. Put into action, they could easily provide 50 skilled local jobs, making it once again a major local employer and a stable environment for a substantial apprenticeship programme.

STANDARD QUAY AND YARD



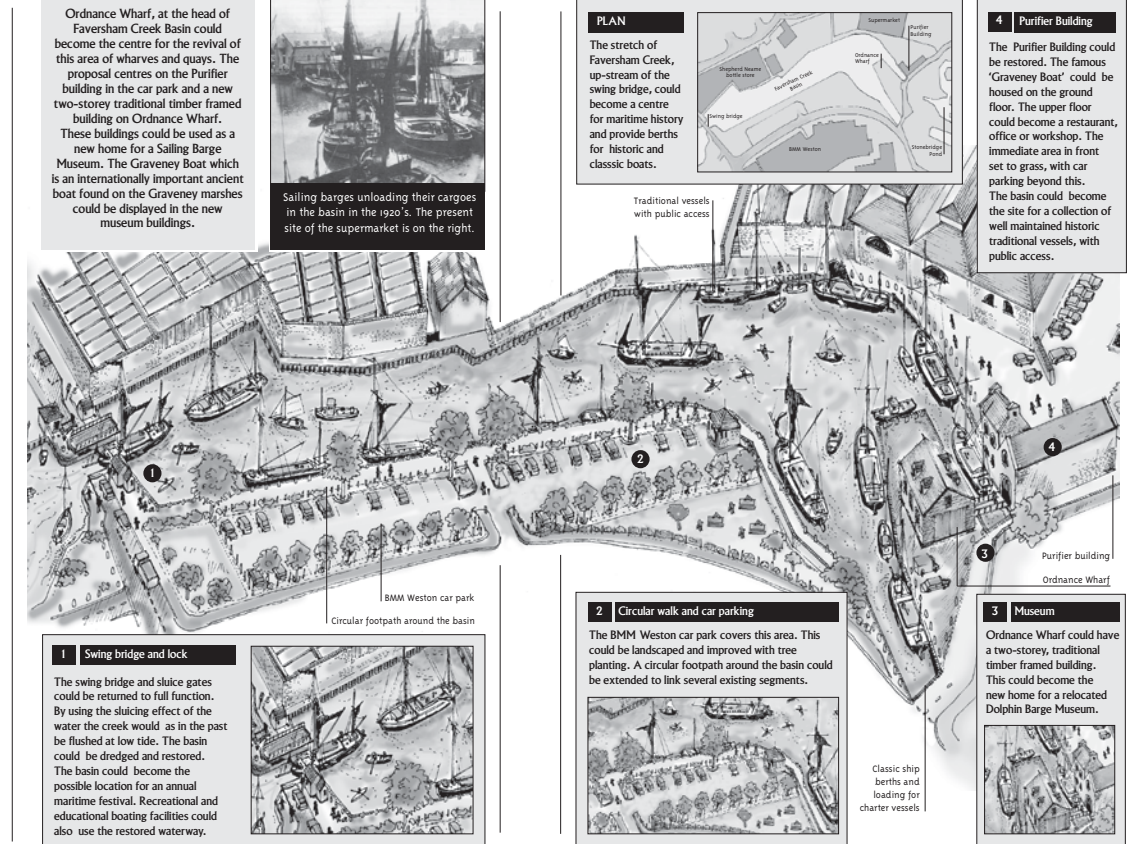
EXCITING FUTURE

Vessels come from London, South East England, France and the Netherlands to use Standard Quay's facilities every year, making Faversham a major centre for repairs and restoration.

True regeneration does not mean allowing property speculators free rein. It means creating an intelligent, sustainable vision that keeps the creek alive and working, creates secure employment, and continues to attract visitors. Living history belongs to the community and to future generations. It must be safeguarded, supported and celebrated, not swept away in the name of private profit.

The creek is our greatest natural asset. It gave Faversham a great maritime past. Looked after properly, with imagination and committed effort, it will help shape a culturally rich and prosperous future.

ORDNANCE WHARF AND THE BASIN





FAVERSHAM CREEK TRUST

The Faversham Creek Trust is a completely new, independent, non-political, non-profit organisation dedicated to building an exciting, sustainable future for Faversham Creek, its environment, jobs and heritage.

The creek has been a living, working waterway for thousands of years – but is under threat today as never before. This is a critical moment in Faversham's history as runaway development threatens to destroy the last pockets of traditional maritime industry.

The creek needs safeguarding **NOW**. Positive and sensitive regeneration are desperately needed.

If you share our vision and want to stop Faversham's waterfront being destroyed to make way for shops, restaurants, housing and hotels:

- Writing to Councillor Gerry Lewin, Chairman of Swale Borough Council
Local Development Framework Panel at
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT
– or email his assistant: JanetDart@swale.gov.uk

- Making your views known to:

Pete Raine, Swale's Officer in Charge of Regeneration – PeteRaine@swale.gov.uk
Faversham's MP, Hugh Robertson – staintonjamesa@parliament.uk

Please visit our website: www.favershamcreek.com for information about joining the campaign and follow the links to the petition and newsletter.

Visit also www.thequayfilm.net to find out about a documentary being made about Standard Quay. The film shows what Faversham could lose if local authorities give in to ill-considered development.

Contact : info@faershamcreek.com

*Faversham Creek Trust • Baltic House • Standard Quay
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