

Dover - meet Faversham

report from John Husband

The original purpose of the visit was the proverbial tour of a brewery and indeed our thanks are affectionately due to our social secretary Joan Liggett for organising it. This was my first trip with the Society, and I was grateful for the welcoming friendliness which everybody showed me. In next to no time, the little coach got us there and though there was a fresh breeze, the morning was a sunny treat.

We found that in Faversham, life starts at 10 a.m. on a Saturday morning. The day of our visit and the next two Saturdays are a special 'Open House' event organised by the Faversham Society to allow access to a nucleus of interesting properties, 39 in number, which they have selected for viewing this year.



Faversham Parish Church

We were offered a tour of the town centre by Vicki Shepherd and the guide Kenton, both of the Faversham Society, while some of us took the option, others went under their own steam. Incidentally, the Faversham Society is run for profit, although it promises to plough the profit back into the community. The most notable attractions to me were the Abbey, the Alexander Centre and the Guildhall but these are just a few of an historical, architectural score.

Faversham is probably the centre of



Shepherd Neame Brewery Commemorative Stained Glass Windows

the Kentish building tradition. Faversham bricks, gunpowder production, Thames barges and a host of beautifully built and preserved buildings bear witness to Faversham's historic nature. All too soon, we had to leave the tour and continue with the main purpose of the trip: to view the brewery on our pre-booked tour.

The care and pride which the inhabitants show for their heritage reveals the true Kentish character, which is akin to that of John West, who only 'selects the best and rejects the rest'. This natural resistance to change, while nonetheless anticipating the effects of it, are epitomised by Shepherd Neame brewers. Shepherd Neame is now the only surviving Kentish brewer who distributes beer countrywide. The company has preserved the character and continuity of its brewing tradition, while adapting and improving their ability to make the beer. This is so skilful that many foreign breweries entrust them with their recipes and license them to replicate their beers for sale.

We had an extremely sociable and enjoyable tour with a young lady guide, culminating with the famous beer-tasting in

Town Regalia



the company bar, before it started to rain, as predicted by Michael Fish. However, the impression of the day was very good and we would like to extend more links to our fellow amenity society.



Our guide at Shepherd Neame