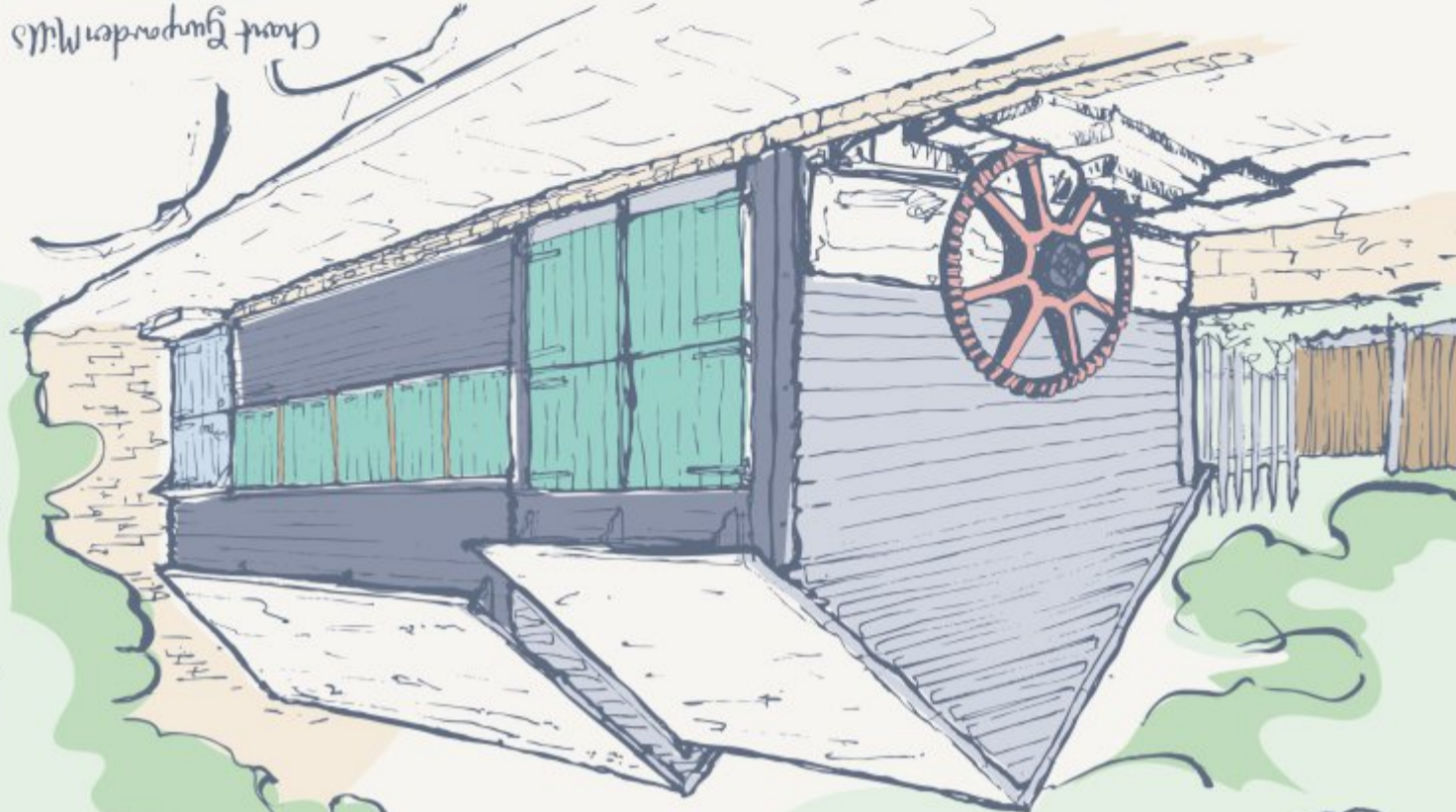


Faversham may have been the first place in England to make gunpowder. It was a good site for two reasons. Firstly, of the three raw materials (saltpetre, sulphur and charcoal), only charcoal was available in England; the others had to be imported, so a factory at a port made sense. Secondly, the main consumers were nearby, with the dockyard and Royal Engineers at Chatham and the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich. The early gunpowder works were in the town centre, but it was a dangerous industry and accidents were not uncommon. After serious explosions in the late 18th century, some processes were moved out of

town. This was the start of the Marsh Works, where the world's first gun-cotton factory opened in 1846. In the following year, two buildings blew up in quick succession with the loss of 20 lives, and after yet another explosion the works were completely remodelled and improvements made to the manufacturing processes. In 1873, the Cotton Powder Company built a factory on the marshes near Uplees, about 3 miles from Faversham. In 1874 the explosive 'Tonic' was patented by George Trench, the factory manager, and was

Chart Gunpowder Mills



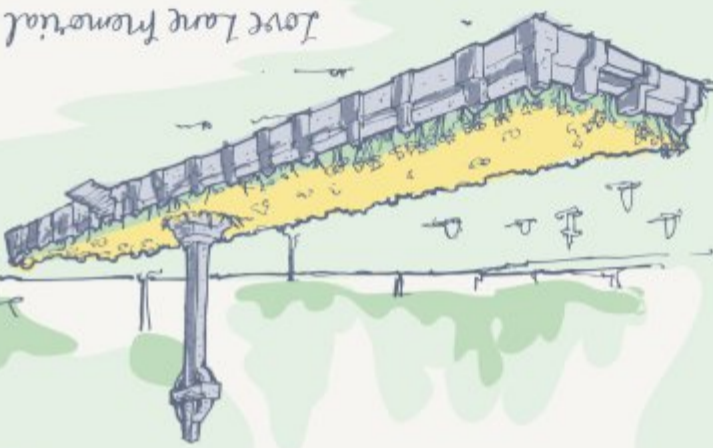
Gunpowder in Faversham

These two factories, working to capacity for munitions in World War I, were the site of a terrible explosion on Sunday 2 April 1916. 108 men and boys were killed and many others injured. Had it been a weekday there would have been many more casualties; there were more than 700 women on the workforce, but the law did not allow them to work on Sundays. A memorial to the victims can be seen at the Faversham Cemetery in Love Lane. If you would like to visit the memorial, the Visitor Information Centre will give you directions.

Despite the horrors of the explosion, the factories were rebuilt to continue the war effort. Production continued until 1933, when the remaining works were moved to Scotland, a safer location given the growing threat from Europe. The only remnant of the industry now is a small site on the eastern bank of Faversham Creek, which makes carbon dioxide cartridges for use in quarrying.

On an adjacent site, in 1912, the Explosives Loading Company opened a factory to produce there. On an adjacent site, in 1912, the Explosives Loading Company opened a factory to load TNT into shells and other munitions.




Love Lane Memorial



# FAVERSHAM Gunpowder Trail

The walk begins and ends at the Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre, where you can discover yet more fascinating facts in the Gunpowder Room at the Fleur de Lis Museum, which tells the story of Faversham from the stone age to the 20th century. There is also a shop with a variety of books on this and many other aspects of local history, and a Visitor Information Centre where you can find out more about Faversham and the surrounding area.

## Map Key

-  Gunpowder Trail Route
-  Places of Interest
-  Footpath

For further information go to [www.favershamsociety.org](http://www.favershamsociety.org) or contact Visitor Information Centre on 01795 534542 email [tcfaversham@btconnect.com](mailto:tcfaversham@btconnect.com)

This leaflet has been published by The Faversham Society with support from Faversham Town Council.

Information correct at time of going to press.



Faversham TOWN COUNCIL

## Around Faversham

### Oare Gunpowder Works Country Park

Just outside Faversham town centre, this is a hidden gem – a nationally important archaeological site, scheduled Ancient Monument and nature reserve. Interpretation panels guide you around. There is also a visitor centre – for information on opening times call 01795 534542 or email [tcfaversham@btconnect.com](mailto:tcfaversham@btconnect.com)

### Oare Marshes

The Oare marshes, north west of Faversham, were once the site of a huge manufacturing complex for explosives. Now wild and peaceful, they include an internationally important nature reserve known especially as a site for migratory birds.

### Judd's Folly

Daniel Judd became owner of the Gunpowder Works during the Commonwealth period. Against all advice, he built a splendid new house on Syndale Hill, just south of the London Road (A2) near Ospringe, from where he could overlook the town and his works. It was confiscated after the restoration of Charles II, hence the name Judd's Folly. In the 19th century it became the home of William Hall, the local gunpowder magnate. It is now a hotel.

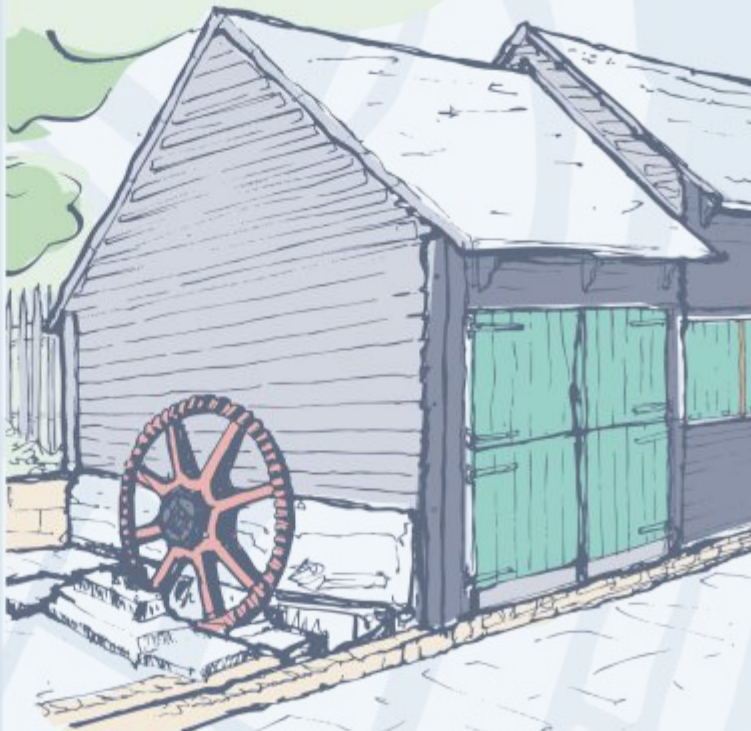
### Faversham Town Walks

This gunpowder trail is just one of many themed walks based on Faversham's rich and varied history. Regular guided walks are provided by the Faversham Society, starting from the Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre.

For current costs and timings, see [www.favershamtownwalks.org](http://www.favershamtownwalks.org) or [www.favershamsociety.org](http://www.favershamsociety.org).

Group walks available by arrangement. Contact [favershamtownwalks@gmail.com](mailto:favershamtownwalks@gmail.com) or telephone 01795 483289.

# FAVERSHAM Town Walk Gunpowder Trail

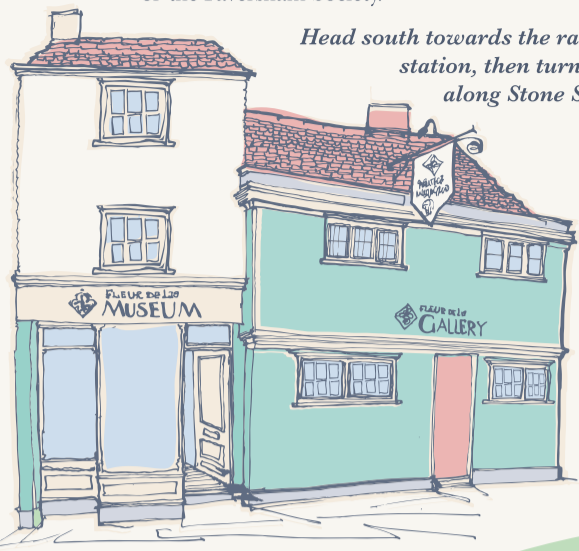


500 years of explosive history

# 1 Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre

Start outside the Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre, home of the Faversham Society.

Head south towards the railway station, then turn right along Stone Street.



# 3 Almshouses

Facing you at the junction with South Road are the Almshouses, built in 1863 of local brick but with a central stone-built chapel. Overlooking the Westbrook stream and Chart Gunpowder Mills at the rear, they housed many gunpowder workers and their families.

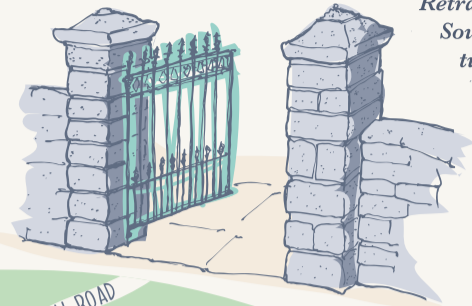
Turn left along South Road and cross Tanners Street.



# 4 Chart Mills

On the right is an old bungalow with an entrance way beside it, an old stone wall on either side. This was the original entrance to the early gunpowder works, Home Works. Pass through the entrance gates, turn left over the bridge at the end of the cul-de-sac and left again along the path of the Westbrook. You are now at Chart Gunpowder Mills. Open 2-5pm at weekends and Bank Holidays from April to October; they contain the original machinery, water wheel and 3-ton edge runners, and are well worth a visit.

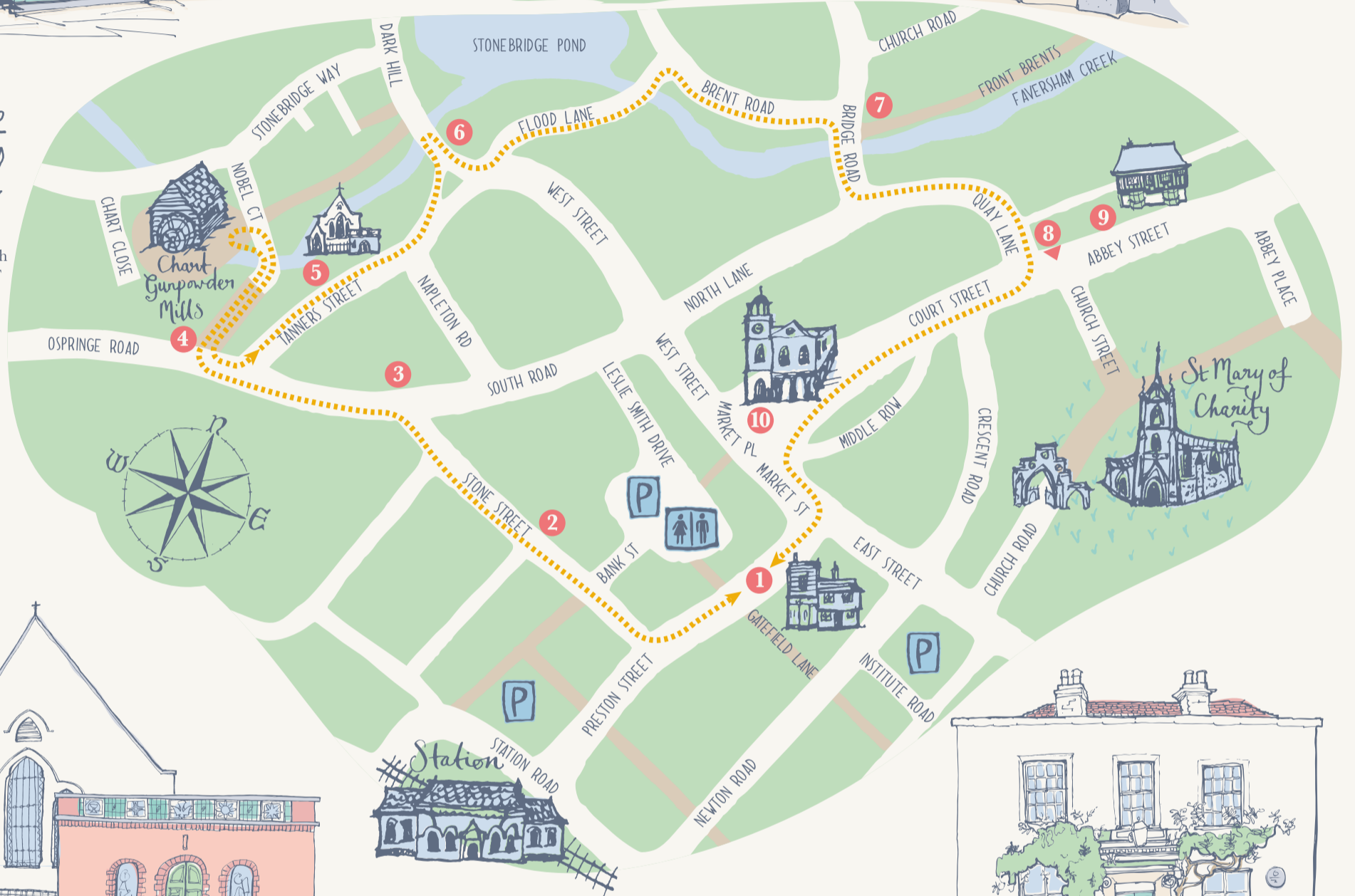
Retrace your steps to South Road and turn left along Tanners Street.



# 2 Cottage Hospital

On the right is the Cottage Hospital, opened in 1887, which was built by Mrs W T Townsend Hall as a memorial to her husband, a director of John Hall & Son, which owned several local gunpowder sites.

Continue to the end of Stone Street.



# 5 Shrine of Saint Jude

On the left is the Catholic Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the Shrine of St Jude, patron saint of lost causes. Built in 1861 by William Hall, owner of the Home Works, as a school for daughters of his employees, it was known as the 'British School' and run on the principles of the British and Foreign Society. In 1910 it became Faversham's first cinema, the Empire Picture Hall. It opened as a church in 1937.

Continue to the end of Tanners Street and turn left, crossing the small bridge over the Westbrook.

# 8 St Mary of Charity Church

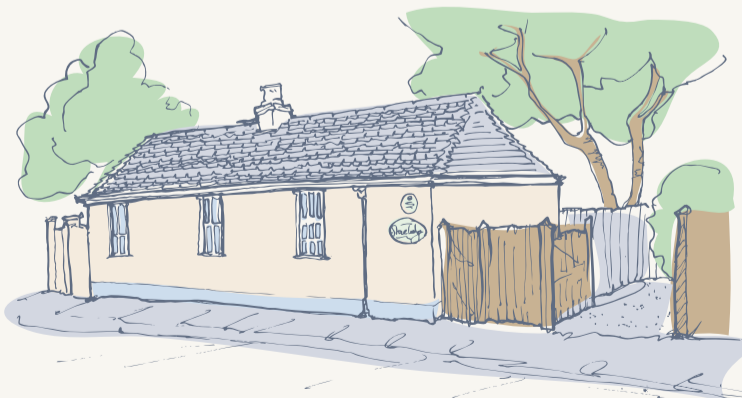
At the top of Quay Lane you see the magnificent spire of St Mary of Charity Parish Church. An earlier tower, smaller and more squat, was demolished in 1755 as it was in danger of falling after many 'blows' (accidents) from the gunpowder factories. The 'crown' spire, completed in 1797, is one of only eight in the UK and is based on St Dunstan's in the East, a Christopher Wren church in the City of London.



# 6 Stonebridge Lodge

On the right is Stonebridge Lodge, originally an armoury for the Powder Mill Volunteers in the Napoleonic Wars, and Stonebridge Pond. The pond provided a head of water for the gunpowder mills, and leats (water channels) for transport of powder without the risk of sparks from the iron-rimmed wheels and iron-shod horses used on dry land.

Retrace your steps towards Tanners Street and turn left along Flood Lane. Cross the bridge over the head of Faversham Creek and turn right along Brent Road.



# 9 Abbey Street

To the left is Abbey Street, one of the best-preserved medieval streets. Originally joining the town to Faversham Abbey, it is worth a visit in its own right (look for the plaque that commemorates George Trench, inventor of the explosive 'Tonite').

Walk along Court Street into the Market Place.

# 7 Bridge House

Facing you at the end of Brent Road is Bridge House, formerly the Brents Coffee Tavern, where workers from the powder mills, brickworks and port were encouraged to spend their leisure time drinking less intoxicating beverages than those available in the many hostelrys that Faversham was famed for. It was not a great success.

Turn right and cross the bridge, left along North Lane, then right up Quay Lane.

# 10 Market Place

Faversham's Charter market (nowadays on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays) is recorded at the time of the Domesday Book, but was undoubtedly in existence for many years before. The iconic Guildhall dates from 1574, but only the original Tudor pillars survive. The rest was rebuilt after a fire in 1814, allegedly caused by a firework during celebrations for the capture of Napoleon. Gunpowder workers almost certainly supplied the fireworks, while the local brewers supplied celebratory refreshments.

Turn left into Market Street, then right into Preston Street and back to the Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre.

