Faversham Labour Party
1918-1994:

A Brief Introduction
to the
Microfilm Edition

by
Lawrence Black
London Guildhall University

Microform Academic Publishers
Faversham Labour Party, 1918-1994:

A Brief Introduction
to the
Microfilm Edition

by
Lawrence Black
London Guildhall University
© Lawrence Black, 1998
FAVERSHAM LABOUR PARTY (1918-1994): A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

‘The Best Organised Constituency in Britain’

Excepting London, Southern England has rarely proved a propitious territory for the Labour Party. Prior to the 1959 general election Labour held only four of the 19 Kent constituencies, though as The Times pointed out, this was four more than in any other south coast county. Nor has Labour’s adversity exercised the historical imagination. Whereas its weaknesses in certain cities – notably Glasgow, Liverpool and Birmingham – have been subjected to extensive historical scrutiny, Labour’s poor performance in the more rural, suburban and less industrial south, has been treated as unexceptional.

In part, the story of Faversham serves to subvert this narrative. For it had a vibrant and entrenched Labour culture and returned a Labour MP at every general election between 1945 and 1966. In 1964 with a membership of 5,629, Faversham was the third largest Labour Party in Britain – bettered only by Woolwich West and South Lewisham. On the basis of these figures, something approaching one in ten of the 60,000 electors in the seat, were Labour members.

At its acme, in 1964, the Party maintained eight Labour halls. Six of these – in Faversham, Sittingbourne, Upchurch, Minster and two in Sheerness – existed for much of the period covered by the records. The Party’s gross income was around £25,000 in the early 1960s. The 1957 Annual General Meeting (AGM) heard that the Tote – the Party’s lottery scheme and main source of income from which its agent was paid – had brought in £19,706. Some 150 members acted as Subs and Tote collectors. When Tony Benn, MP visited the constituency in May 1964 to speak for the by-election candidate Terry Boston, he described Faversham as nothing short of ‘the best organised constituency in Britain.’

Critical to this vibrant party life was the Annual August Fete. This was a notable date on the local, as well as Labour calendar. Generally held on the Sale Field in Sittingbourne – in 1957 over 16,000 people attended. A variety of luminaries, from James Callaghan in 1958, to actresses Sandra Dorne in 1951 and Simone Silva in 1952, declared proceedings open. Regular acts included a motorbike display team and the Dagenham Girl Pipers. In 1960 Labour supporting jazz trumpeter Humphrey Lyttelton played at the fete. In 1963 a motorcade of six MPs toured the constituency prior to the opening. Indeed the fete gained national attention, for Reynolds News, the Labour and Co-op Sunday newspaper, ritually featured a page of photos of the previous days merriment through the 1950s. The fete, at least on this extravagant scale, died out in 1968.

The social aspect of politics is evident in Faversham’s jumble of archives, and, as more than a means to garner political goodwill. During the electoral truce of the Second World War and with depleted personnel, it was through social activities that the party maintained its organisation and kept its powder dry. At the 1942 AGM (where the Party Secretary W.D.G. Durant complained, ‘the political truce leaves much to be desired’ as it ‘prevented any form of propaganda of a political character’) Sheerness East branch reported, ‘social work is doing much to keep the section together.’ Its Women’s Section, for instance, met regularly on Wednesday’s to play whist. Moreover it told how ‘dances have been the means of forwarding a couple of nice cheques to Sir Walter Citrine’s ‘Help For Russia Fund.’ A social surplus
allowed a more than rhetorical expression of socialist internationalism. In 1959 then, donations were made to the Spanish Democrats Defence Fund and the South African Defence and Aid Fund.

The Party’s Annual Dinner was its most glittering social occasion. The meal would always start with a toast to the Queen. In 1961 when Hugh Gaitskell was to address the dinner, it proved impossible to find a venue in the constituency to accommodate all those party members who wished to dine in the presence of the Labour leader. The Party eventually took flight and held the dinner at Margate. Clearly it is an event which retains a certain allure, as guests in 1990 and 1991 respectively were Dennis Skinner, MP and Bryan Gould, MP.

Not the least reason why Faversham was so often visited by the Party’s higher echelons (Gaitskell also came in August 1959 and July 1962, Harold Wilson in September 1963 and April 1974) was that it was historically a deeply marginal seat. This, as much as effective organisers and skilled activists, accounts for the Party’s size and healthy culture – at least at mid-century. As the constituency was hotly contested at most elections, membership involved a greater sense of purpose than, ironically, in a Labour heartland such as Barnsley, where the Labour majority was 24,000, but membership a meagre 357. This would appear to have been a common Kentish phenomenon. Chislehurst, to the west of Faversham on the suburban borders of London, had a similar profile, enjoying a large membership through the 1950s by dint of suffering from a small Conservative majority.

At the 1955 general election Faversham was the most marginal seat in Britain. After two recounts and a bogus report on the BBC that the Conservatives had won the seat by 11 votes, Percy Wells finally held the seat for Labour by a mere 59 vote. Labour’s slogan for the 1959 election, predictably enough, was “Make it More than 59 in ’59”. This was achieved, though only just - Wells increasing his majority by 194 to 253, 0.6% of the vote. No wonder Benn, having lauded Faversham as ‘the best organised constituency’ added that ‘with a majority of only 253 it needs to be.

And here the Faversham records disclose the problems of apathy experienced by most local parties. The 1957 AGM heard how ‘complacency and apathy are constant dangers which we have to face.’ In 1965, seemingly at the peak of its powers, the Party condemned the indifference of its members ‘not only to voting, but even to voting’ for it. After the council elections, Bill Gray, the Party secretary and agent, was reported in the East Kent Gazette under the headline, ‘Labour Attacks its Apathetic Supporters’ despairing that ‘the window bill display by supporters was pathetic’. ‘If keen members do not bother to do a small job like showing a window bill’ he continued, ‘can we wonder if the ordinary elector is not very enthusiastic either?’ Labour’s infiltration of the local culture then was limited, not innate, but contingent upon its own efforts and the relevance of its appeal. When Attlee came to speak at Sittingbourne Football Ground on the eve of the 1955 poll, the Faversham Times suggested his audience of 750 would have been low for a football match.

The Divisional Labour Party was established under the provisions of Labour’s new constitution, adopted by the Party in February 1918, which created constituency parties and allowed individual members (i.e. those not in Trade Unions) to join for the first time. Branches were created at Sittingbourne, Sheerness, Faversham, Queenborough and Rainham. Initially the Party was very much under the wing of the Sittingbourne Trades and Labour
Council, which met at the Liberal Club and later at the Co-operative library. By 1924 the Individual Members Section could boast 1,100 members – including 200 in the women's section.

The implanting of the Labour Party was nourished by the pre-1918 labour and socialist movement in this part of north Kent. The Independent Labour Party and British Socialist Party (BSP) had affiliates on the Isle of Sheppey prior to 1914. The BSP had a branch in Sheerness, based on the docks from 1912 until the war. It met on Tuesday evenings in the Amalgamated Society of Engineers' Club Room at the Crown Hotel. Though formally no friend of the Labour Party, the BSP represented a socialist tradition on Sheppey. The branch secretary, Alf Coats, and at least one further member, Lew Nethercoat, joined the new Labour Party – indeed Nethercoat remained in it to the 1970s.

The Co-operative movement was a more pervasive part of local culture. As local lore tells it, the Sheerness and District Economical Co-operative Society is the oldest in Britain, founded in 1816. Labour accrued a good deal of financial expertise from Co-op managers who served as the Party's treasurer. It tends to go without saying, but Trade Unions too gave Labour a secure base. The link emits from the records long after its early bond with the Trades Council. In 1957, 48 Trade Union branches, including 13 from the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) and ten from the National Union of Agricultural Workers Union, were affiliated to Faversham. As late as 1992 the Party's Annual Report shows the attendance of 15 Union delegates and five from the Co-op.

In the December 1910 general election Faversham was contested by George Nicholls, until January 1910, Lib-Lab MP for North Northamptonshire. Nicholls was a radical Liberal, intimately involved with the formation of the Eastern Counties Agricultural Labourers' and Smallholders' Union in 1906. A Protestant lay pastor, Nicholls joined the Labour Party in 1918, but by 1922, when he contested Peterborough, had returned to the Liberal fold. He also served on Peterborough's town council from 1912 until 1920 and sat on the Agricultural Wages Board from 1917 to 1918.

Labour's first candidate was the Reverend Stanley Morgan. The most successful of Morgan's four elections was in 1923, when he was defeated by the sitting Conservative by just over 1,000 – 4.2% of the vote. Labour's best inter-war result came in 1929. On the back of a good by-election performance in January 1928, Major D. Leigh Aman (later Lord Marley) came within 944 votes of victory. The 1931 result, whilst devastating at the parliamentary level, was less catastrophic locally. Labour's vote fell by 2,000, but this remained its second highest in the seven contests waged since 1918. The scale of its defeat was accentuated by the absence of the Liberal Party, whose candidate in 1929, Professor Gerothwohl, had polled 7,782. Nonetheless, the increase of over 9,000 in the Conservative vote did give cause for worry.

Labour's recovery drew upon the resources of its burgeoning culture. Unity Theatre, a left-wing company formed in 1936, for instance, came to Sheerness late in 1938 to produce two plays at a cost of £8. The Workers Educational Association (WEA), so Elsie Brown a Labour member in Faversham has recalled, established itself through the 1930s and 1940s. At the 1935 election Norman Smith achieved Labour's largest vote to that point.
It was a member of the WEA that the Faversham branch proposed as the Party’s candidate for 1945. Alfred D’eath though was considered a fellow-traveller and rejected. Initially Faversham hoped to have John Belcher as its representative, but he chose to stand in Sowerby, West Yorkshire instead. In 1949 Belcher resigned both his seat and government position as a Junior Minister at the Board of Trade, following accusations that he had been unduly influenced by hospitality from a client. It was Percy Wells then that secured the nomination, winning Faversham for Labour for the first time with a majority of 2,465.

Wells held the seat until 1964 – though its marginality was signalled as early as 1951, when his majority was reduced to 562. Wells himself was saturated with the culture of the labour movement. Born in 1892, he left school at 13 to work in the cement mills at Sittingbourne and in 1911 joined the Navy. He served two years hard labour from 1916 as a consequence of opposition to the war. From 1920 he worked as a TGWU official, campaigning for agricultural workers firstly on the Kent Agricultural Wages Committee and later on the Central Agricultural Wages Board. Acknowledged as a skilled negotiator, Wells’ union credentials doubtless contributed to his position during the Attlee Governments as Private Parliamentary Secretary to Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin. In June 1992, Margaret Beckett planted a tree at Faversham to commemorate the centenary of Wells’ birth.

In 1961 Wells chose Terry Boston, a BBC producer, member of the National Union of Journalists and qualified barrister, as his successor. Designed to smooth Boston’s accession, the scheme backfired when Wells died in April 1964, triggering a critical by-election in the run-up to the general election. Three weeks earlier Labour had lost a similar test in Devizes. Faversham was a more welcome portent - Boston retaining the seat and extending Labour’s majority to almost 5,000. Four months later at the national election this fell back to under 4,600. Boston rose to the position of Assistant Government Whip in 1969, but lost the seat in 1970 to Conservative Roger Moate, who defended it until 1997.

In 1974 Sittingbourne South Ward could only survive by merging with Koman and Woodstock wards. In 1988 the branch at Oare collapsed. Finances nonetheless remained on a sound footing – the audit for 1985 showing a total of £36,974 in all accounts. The party, as Phil Dangerfield its secretary from 1987 to 1992 has told, was rent asunder in the 1980s by desertions to the Social Democratic Party (SDP) from 1981 and by divisions with the left – the supporters of Tony Benn and the Trotskyist entrists, Militant Tendency. Sittingbourne in particular was afflicted. Three members of Militant were expelled in 1985. The chair of the branch joined the SDP as did several councillors. The SDP parliamentary candidate in 1983 and 1987, E.M. Goyder, was an ex-Labour member and at both elections pushed Labour into third place.
Labour's nadir in Faversham was probably 1983, when Chris Bromley polled only 19.8% of the vote at the general election – Labour's lowest ever proportion of the Faversham vote.

Labour has yet to recover in Sittingbourne, where of 15 council seats Labour holds but one. The 1983-1986 Gordon Sutton affair, where Sutton's actions as manager of the Canterbury Family Support Centre, during a strike by his staff and questions over his membership of NALGO, called into doubt his right to membership of the Labour Party, serves as an exemplar of the embittered condition of the party in the 1980s. These records are a painful but absorbing chronicle.

Faversham's final parliamentary candidate then, was Helen Brinton in 1992. Brinton is now the New Labour MP for Peterborough. At the General Management Committee on 10 June 1994 Faversham CLP was wound-up and divided into Sittingbourne and Sheppey CLP and Faversham and Mid-Kent CLP. At the 1997 election Derek Wyatt won the former for Labour, defeating Roger Moate, but the latter remained in the Conservative hands of Andrew Rowe.

The old Faversham constituency was large at 144 square miles. It was bordered by Gillingham, Maidstone, Ashford, Whitstable and Canterbury and included at its outer reaches the villages of Stalisfield to the south, Upchurch to the north-west and the Isle of Sheppey. In administrative terms it constituted the boroughs of Faversham and Queenborough-in-Sheppey, the urban district of Sittingbourne and Milton and the rural district of the Swale, comprising some 42 villages and hamlets. There was little change to this structure over the years. In the 1948 redistribution Rainham passed into Gillingham and was followed by Upchurch in the 1970s. The borough of Queenborough-in-Sheppey was amalgamated in 1968 from the former urban district of Sheerness, the borough of Queenborough and rural district of Sheppey.

Being on the London to Dover mainline as early as 1861 and on the A2 road, Sittingbourne and Faversham did not suffer from isolation. Other parts of the constituency were more remote. During severe storms in 1953 the Isle of Sheppey was for a period cut-off from the mainland. The threat of this remained until the opening of the Kingsferry Bridge in 1960. The outlying hamlets also posed problems. At the 1965 council elections Bill Gray contacted 300 car-owning party members in an effort to cover the constituency. Of 125 replies, he reported 85 had 'good reasons for not being able to help.' Still, at its zenith, Labour was well organised in the villages. In 1957 its membership of 4,210 was distributed between Sheerness (1,120), Faversham (761), Sittingbourne (716), with 1,613 in other smaller villages.

Socially the region was diverse. Faversham itself and the surrounding agricultural areas of hop and fruit orchards, traditionally proved the most resistant to Labour's appeal. That many inhabitants in villages lived in tied cottages, restricted support for Labour. Brewers Shepherd Neame, brick and gunpowder plants, combined with trade at the small port in the Faversham Creek, which only really tailed off in the 1970s with the closure of the Shell-Mex and BP depot, provided most employment in Faversham.

Sittingbourne, by the 1970s the most populous town in the constituency, was more of a commuter base and suburban in character. Though with cement mills and the Bowater Paper Mills employing some 4,000 in the 1960s, it was not without a working class community.
Sheerness was more classically industrial and proletarian. Centred around its dockyard it was a bastion of Labour support. As early as 1919 there were four Labour councillors at Sheerness – Faversham elected its first only in 1948.

The closure of the dockyard in 1960 has affected Labour’s fortunes. Initially advantageously, for the impending closure was announced by the Conservative government prior to the 1959 election. This enabled Labour to hold the seat, where Faversham and Sittingbourne (and indeed other Kent seats) swung towards the Conservatives. The towns decline though hindered Labour. By 1964, when the average rate of unemployment in the south-east was 1%, it stood at 5.2% in Sheerness. Party membership declined rapidly – by 1988 there were only 36 Labour members registered. Around half of Labour’s members were by this stage based in Faversham – undeniably shifting the party’s social countenance and make-up. Still, the Labour voting habit was deeply held in Sheerness – to this day, 13 of the town’s 15 councillors are Labour.

Notwithstanding such social obstacles as Labour encountered in Faversham, its appeal was always fraternal and inclusive. Or, as Vickie Harris, secretary of South Ward in Sittingbourne put it in 1974, ‘the comradeship developed over many years will extend over boundaries for a long time to come’.

The Faversham records offer a useful insight into what was for a period a large and important Labour Party. For sure there are lacunae, notably the General Strike and there is little coverage of the social composition of membership. But the uses of the material for reconstructing a party culture and life, ways of performing politics, if also in exhibiting how this culture was somewhat discrete, apart from everyday culture, are substantial.
Notes

In writing this piece thanks are due to Simon Shaw, Editor at Microform Academic Publishers; Arthur Percival, the Director of the Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre, Faversham; Michael Carter and the staff at the Centre for Kentish Studies, County Hall, Maidstone; Phil Dangerfield, Secretary of Faversham Constituency Labour Party, 1987-1992 and the Faversham Times.

1 The Times (22 May 1959).

2 For a list of general election results see the appendix.


5 For instance see Reynolds News (30 August 1953, 26 August 1956).


7 Kent Messenger (23 March 1962)

8 These examples and figures are taken from the 1955 Interim Report of the Sub-Committee on Party Organisation, better known as the Wilson Report. See Labour Party Annual Conference Report 1955 pp.102-104.

9 For an account of this see News Chronicle 25 September 1959.

10 T. Benn, op.cit. p.114.


12 East Kent Gazette 22 April 1965. Gray was quoted from the Faversham CLP Newsletter.

13 Faversham Times 27 May 1955.

14 The inaugural minutes in the records date from 5 June 1918.

15 See the AGM of Sheerness Labour Party, 27 February 1925.


This case was investigated by the Lynskey Tribunal, see K. Harris, *Attlee* (1982), pp.427-428.


For an obituary see *East Kent Gazette* 9 April 1964.

See the GMC Minutes 20 September 1985. The records contain a considerable correspondence on this purge.

On rail developments see M.V. Searle, *Down the Line to Dover* (Tunbridge Wells, 1984).

*Kent Messenger* 6 February 1953.

For a note on which see *The Guardian* 22 April 1960.

*East Kent Gazette* 22 April 1965.


### Appendix: Parliamentary Election Results in Faversham, December 1910-May 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Candidate(s)</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>G.C.H. Wheler (Con)</td>
<td>6,897</td>
<td>57.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G. Nicholls (Lib-Lab)</td>
<td>5,111</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Con Majority</strong></td>
<td>1,786</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>G.C.H. Wheler (Coalition Con)</td>
<td>12,826</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rev. S.J.W. Morgan (Lab)</td>
<td>5,981</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Coalition Con Majority</strong></td>
<td>6,845</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>G.C.H. Wheler (Con)</td>
<td>13,675</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rev. S.J.W. Morgan (Lab)</td>
<td>11,096</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Con Majority</strong></td>
<td>2,579</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>G.C.H. Wheler (Con)</td>
<td>13,422</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rev. S.J.W. Morgan (Lab)</td>
<td>12,361</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Con Majority</strong></td>
<td>1,061</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>G.C.H. Wheler (Con)</td>
<td>14,432</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rev. S.J.W. Morgan (Lab)</td>
<td>9,180</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A.J. Soloman (Lib)</td>
<td>7,132</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Con Majority</strong></td>
<td>5,252</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td><strong>By-election (death of Granville Wheeler)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Maitland (Con)</td>
<td>12,997</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D.L. Aman (Lab)</td>
<td>11,313</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J.F. Dunn (Lib)</td>
<td>5,813</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E.A. Hailwood (Independent Con)</td>
<td>1,090</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Con Majority</strong></td>
<td>1,684</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>A. Maitland (Con)</td>
<td>16,219</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D.L. Aman (Lab)</td>
<td>15,275</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prof. M.A. Gerothwohl (Lib)</td>
<td>7,782</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Con Majority</strong></td>
<td>944</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1931  A. Maitland (Con)  25,568 (65.9%)  
H.N. Smith (Lab)  13,226 (34.1%)  
**Con Majority**  12,342 (31.8%)  
Turnout  72.2%  

1935  A. Maitland (Con)  22,881 (54.6%)  
H.N. Smith (Lab)  19,060 (45.4%)  
**Con Majority**  3,821 (9.2%)  
Turnout  74%  

1945  P.L. Wells (Lab)  23,502 (52.8%)  
Sir A. Maitland (Con)  21,037 (47.2%)  
**Lab Majority**  2,465 (5.6%)  
Turnout  73.1%  

1950  P.L. Wells (Lab)  23,620 (48.7%)  
J.E. Brooks (Con)  21,381 (44.1%)  
E.M. Graham (Lib)  3,486 (7.2%)  
**Lab Majority**  2,239 (4.6%)  
Turnout  86.3%  

1951  P.L. Wells (Lab)  24,884 (50.6%)  
C. Bossm (Con)  24,332 (49.4%)  
**Lab Majority**  562 (1.2%)  
Turnout  86%  

1955  P.L. Wells (Lab)  23,981 (50.1%)  
C. Bossm (Con)  23,922 (49.9%)  
**Lab Majority**  59 (0.2%)  
Turnout  83.2%  

1959  P.L. Wells (Lab)  24,327 (50.3%)  
E.M.S. Olsen (Con)  24,074 (49.7%)  
**Lab Majority**  253 (0.6%)  
Turnout  83.8%  

1964 (April)  **By-election (death of Percy Wells)**  
T.G. Boston (Lab)  24,749 (55.1%)  
E.M.S. Olsen (Con)  19,808 (44.1%)  
R.E. Eckley (Independent)  352 (0.8%)  
**Lab Majority**  4,941 (11%)  
Turnout  74.8%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Winning Party</th>
<th>Candidate 1</th>
<th>Votes 1</th>
<th>Percent 1</th>
<th>Candidate 2</th>
<th>Votes 2</th>
<th>Percent 2</th>
<th>Candidate 3</th>
<th>Votes 3</th>
<th>Percent 3</th>
<th>Turnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>T.G. Boston</td>
<td>24,243</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
<td>E.M.S. Olsen</td>
<td>20,279</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>P. Hayden</td>
<td>4,882</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lab Majority</td>
<td>3,964</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>T.G. Boston</td>
<td>26,375</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td>R.D. Moate</td>
<td>23,886</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>79.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lab Majority</td>
<td>2,489</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Con</td>
<td>R.D. Moate</td>
<td>29,414</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
<td>T.G. Boston</td>
<td>26,103</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>78.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Con Majority</td>
<td>3,811</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974 (Feb)</td>
<td>Con</td>
<td>R.D. Moate</td>
<td>26,316</td>
<td>42.2%</td>
<td>M. Freedman</td>
<td>20,909</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>P.J. Morgan</td>
<td>14,927</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Con Majority</td>
<td>5,407</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974 (Oct)</td>
<td>Con</td>
<td>R.D. Moate</td>
<td>25,087</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
<td>M. Freedman</td>
<td>22,210</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>P.J. Morgan</td>
<td>10,979</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Con Majority</td>
<td>2,877</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Con</td>
<td>R.D. Moate</td>
<td>33,513</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td>J.T.R. Sherwen</td>
<td>21,351</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>A.C. Aldeus</td>
<td>6,349</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Con Majority</td>
<td>12,162</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Con</td>
<td>R.D. Moate</td>
<td>29,849</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
<td>E.M. Goyder</td>
<td>15,252</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>C.M. Bromley</td>
<td>11,130</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Con Majority</td>
<td>14,597</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Candidate 1</td>
<td>Votes 1</td>
<td>Percentage 1</td>
<td>Candidate 2</td>
<td>Votes 2</td>
<td>Percentage 2</td>
<td>Majority</td>
<td>Turnout</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>R.D. Moate (Con)</td>
<td>31,074</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
<td>E.M. Goyder (SDP)</td>
<td>17,096</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>13,978</td>
<td>76.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P. Dangerfield (Lab)</td>
<td>12,616</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Con Majority</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>R.D. Moate (Con)</td>
<td>32,755</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
<td>H. Brinton (Lab)</td>
<td>16,404</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>16,351</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. Truelove (LibDem)</td>
<td>15,896</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Con Majority</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the 1997 election the old Faversham seat was divided into:

Sittingbourne and Sheppey: D.M. Wyatt (Lab), 18,273 (40.6%), R.D. Moate (Con), 16,794 (36.4%), R. Truelove (LibDem), 8,447 (18.3%), P. Moull (Referendum), 1,082 (2.3%). **Lab Majority**, 1,929 (4.2%) **Turnout** 72.3%.

Faversham and Mid-Kent: A.J.B. Rowe (Con), 22,016 (44.4%), A. Stewart (Lab), 17,843 (36%), B. Parmenter (LibDem), 6,138 (12.4%), R. Birley (Referendum), 2,073 (4.2%). **Con Majority** 4,173 (8.4%) **Turnout** 73.5%.
Contents of the Microfilms

Reel 1

SITTINGBOURNE LABOUR PARTY:

Sittingbourne Trades & Labour Council/Trades Council & Labour Party Minutes, 1918-1925

Sittingbourne Trades Council & Labour Party Minutes, 1929-1937

Sittingbourne Trades & Labour Council/Labour Party Minutes, 1937-1945

Sittingbourne Labour Party Minutes, 1951-1956

Sittingbourne Labour Party Minutes, 1957-1964

Reel 2

Sittingbourne Labour Party Minutes, 1965-1975


Sittingbourne Labour Party Women’s Section Minutes, 1959-1966

Sittingbourne Labour Party Women’s Section No. 2 Minutes, 1978-1982

Sittingbourne Young Socialists Minutes, 1964-1966

Sittingbourne Young Socialists Minutes, 1966-1967 (with Rules)

Reel 3

Secretary’s Petty Cash Book, 1953-1968/9

SHEERNESS LABOUR PARTY:

Sheerness & District Trades Council & Labour Party Minutes, 1920-1923

Sheerness Labour Party Festival Committee Minutes, 1928-1933

Sheerness Labour Party Minutes, 1930-1933, 1947-1950

Sheerness Labour Party Minutes, 1932-1936, July 5th 1939

Sheerness Labour Party Minutes, 1938-1947

Sheerness Labour Party Minutes, 1950-1952

Sheerness Labour Party Minutes, 1954-1957
Sheerness Labour Party Minutes, 1958

Reel 4
Register of Addresses/Subscribers, c.1930s
Sheerness Labour Party Account Book, 1923/4-1932
Sheerness Labour Party Account Book, 1932-1938/9
Sheerness Labour Party Account Book, 1939-1945

Reel 5
Sheerness Labour Party Account Book, 1959
Sheerness Labour Party Membership Subscription Book, 1923-1932
Sheerness Labour Party Membership Subscription Book, 1943-1953
Sheerness Labour Party Membership Subscription Book, 1953-1965
FAVERSHAM LABOUR PARTY:
Faversham Labour Party Minutes, 1935-1948
Faversham Labour Party Minutes, 1951-1959
Faversham Labour Party Business Meeting Minutes, 1953-1956

Reel 6
Faversham Labour Party Business Meeting Minutes, 1956-1964
Faversham Labour Party Minutes, 1970-1974
Faversham Labour Party Minutes, 1974-1983

Reel 7
Faversham Labour Party Social Committee Minutes, 1974-1983
Faversham Labour Party EC Minutes, 1980-1987
Faversham Constituency Labour Party Minutes, 1975-1982

Reel 8
Faversham Labour Party Meetings Attendance Register, 1949-1958

Reel 9
Faversham Labour Party Business Meetings, Social Events Attendance Register, 1958-1964
Faversham Labour Party Meetings Attendance Register, 1955-1972/3
Faversham Labour Party Meetings Attendance Register, 1962-1968
Faversham Labour Party Meetings Attendance Register, 1969-1974
Faversham Labour Party Meetings Attendance Register, 1974-1985
Faversham Labour Party Meetings Attendance Register, 1978-1986
Faversham Labour Party Membership Register, 1974-1979
Faversham Labour Party Membership Register, 1979/80

Reel 10

Reel 11
Faversham Constituency Labour Party Annual Reports, 1988-1993/4

Reel 12
Newsletters, 1957-62, 1968-72, 1975-86 (incomplete)
Branch & CLP “Rules” (various), 1930s-1980s
Reports re Selection Conference to select a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate, 1971/1975/1981/1985

Correspondence re controversial proposed expulsion of three Labour Party members for selling "Militant", 1985

Printed Historical Facts of Faversham CLP (various), 1950s-1980s

Miscellaneous items re Percy Wells, MP for Faversham from 1945 to 1964:

i) Copy of North East Kent Chronicle, April 1937 includes congratulations to County Councillor Percy Wells on his election at Sittingbourne

ii) "A Message … from Percy Wells" March 1950/Oct 1951 post-election appeal for new members

iii) Newsletter Supplement announcing death of Percy Wells, MP, April 1964

iv) Copy of East Kent Gazette, 9th April 1964 includes front page news of death of Percy Wells, with tributes and pictorial

Reel 13

Miscellaneous Correspondence:

1) Letter from Dowager Lady Marley dated 22/7/68 congratulating Faversham CLP on their Golden Anniversary & reply, including copy of 1929 General Election Appeal letter from her husband, Major Aman.

2) Two letters from early party activists in response to a request from Philip Dangerfield:

i) Letter from Bill Shepherd dated 29/9/77 detailing his involvement in the 1926 General Strike

ii) Letter from Lew Nethercoat dated 5/10/77 detailing his involvement with the Labour Party from 1912 to 1956

3) Copy letter from Tim Sherwen to the Editor of Faversham News regarding "the treasure trove of old papers and documents..." sitting in the cellars of Faversham CLP Headquarters

Election Specials, 1949-1974

Printed Material: General Elections, 1940s-1980s

Printed Material: Local Elections, 1930s-1980s

16
Reel 14

'The Torch', 1946-1951
'Faversham Torch', 1953(x2)
'Torch', Aug. 1955

'Town & Country Post', Oct. 1950, Feb./March 1951

'Faversham Post', 1951


Daily Herald Everyday Songs for Labour Festivals, 1929

The Labour Party Song Sheet, n.d.

Printed Pamphlets:

Notes on the Faversham Labour Party, c.1945
Fuel Crisis: The Facts, March 1947
Party Organisation, 1948
Re-Equipping Britain, 1949
Building Materials Profits, Feb. 1949
Labour Believes in Britain, April 1949
Rebirth of a Nation, c.1949
Just a Moment… c.1950
To Liberals from Sir Geoffrey Mander, c.1950
Labour and the New Society, 1950
The Daily Herald's Fifty Election Points for Labour, 1950
Labour Party Talking Points, Jan. 1950
European Unity, May 1950
Fifty Facts on Public Ownership, July 1950
Coal, Sept. 1950
Labour and the Countryside, Sept. 1950
Fifty Facts on Prices, Dec. 1950
This Cost of Living Business, Jan. 1951
Fifty Facts on Housing, Feb. 1951
A Policy for Secondary Education, June 1951
The Just Society: A Re-Affirmation of Faith in Socialism, by John Strachey, July 1951
Monopoly, Aug. 1951
Co-operative Financial Policy, Oct. 1951
Problems of Foreign Policy, April 1952
Our Daily Bread, July 1952
Recent Developments in British Socialist Thinking by The Rt. Hon Hugh Gaitskell, c.1956
Homes of the Future: Labour’s Policy for Housing, 1956
Advice and Help in connection with The Tory Rent Act (1957)
The Future Labour Offers You, 1958
Labour in the Sixties, 1960
Constitution of the Labour Party, 1960
The Labour Party and You: A guide for new members, 1975
Public Ownership, 1976
Campaigning for a fairer Britain, 1984
The Labour Party and the Militant Tendency, c.1985
The Real Conservative Manifesto, 1987

Reel 15
Newspaper Cuttings Files: 1951 (Local Elections)
  May 1955-June 1957
  July 1957-March 1959
  Feb-Oct 1959
  Oct 1959-May 1961
  May 1961-Jan 1963
  Feb 1963-Feb 1964
  Feb-Dec 1964
  May-June 1964 (By-Election)

Reel 16
Newspaper Cuttings Files: 1964 (General Election)
  Dec 1964-Nov 1965
  Dec 1965-Oct 1966
  1966 (General Election)
  Oct 1966-Aug 1967
  Aug 1968-Feb 1970
  1970 (General Election)
  Jan-April 1985
Reel 17  
Newspaper Cuttings Files: April-July 1985
  July-Oct 1985
  Oct-Dec 1985
  Dec 1985-Feb 1986

Reel 18  
Newspaper Cuttings Files: March-May 1986
  May-Nov 1986
  Dec 1986-June 1987