



A Year in the Life of Faversham 2009-2010

Project Evaluation – Summary This document is a short version of the report

‘Something of a sensation!’

**Prepared for
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INTRODUCTION

Background

This summary is from the full evaluation report commissioned by Nathalie Banaigs, from Kent Creative Arts¹, 'A Year In The Life of Faversham' (AYITLOF) Project Manager. Kent Creative Arts is based at Creek Creative², art and design studios located in a freshly renovated building in Abbey Street, Faversham.

The report was produced for the main project sponsors, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)³. The evaluation work was undertaken by Fay Blair⁴, experienced in project evaluation, partnership and community engagement, who lives locally.

The aims of 'A Year In The Life of Faversham'

The stated AYITLOF aims agreed with Heritage Lottery Fund were:

- The project will aim to keep a historical record of life in Faversham showing a diverse town with its landscapes, architecture, history, events and people;
- To give an opportunity to town residents to take part, by submitting photographs, in a community project that is about their town. Through this they can express themselves and show what is important to them;
- The project will further present opportunities for residents and visitors alike to learn about the town and its history. Photographers when taking pictures and visitors at the exhibition and the events attached to it;
- To get photographers and residents to gain a sense and contribute to community pride in their town;
- Attract a wide and varied audience and motivate visitors to explore the town. A wide programme of events will be offered around the photography exhibition which will assist in learning about the town.

The purpose of the evaluation

¹ **Kent Creative Arts**, A Community Interest Company (CiC) <http://www.kentcreativearts.co.uk/>

² **Creek Creative Art Studios**: <http://www.creek-creative.org/> A CiC that is 'about forming a productive, commercially-viable, art and design community within Faversham by providing affordable studios, workshops, public exhibition space, and extended facilities...'

³ **Heritage Lottery Fund** <http://www.hlf.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

⁴ **Evaluator** profile <http://uk.linkedin.com/in/fayblair>

The purpose of this report is to provide an evaluation of the impact of 2010 project. This builds on the experience and success of first AYITLOF held in 2008. Details of 2010 AYITLOF experience can be viewed here:

[A Year in the Life of Faversham 2009-2010](#)

The impact of the project

Highlights of the evidence gathered to gauge the impact of AYITLOF are detailed in the full evaluation report. Extracts of the results, with highlights of the findings are presented in this summary. Essentially this is based on data collected from:

- The comment cards that all visitors to the exhibition were invited to complete (devised as an integral part of the exhibition); over 1,000 were completed and 400+ were collated and grouped into themed issues.
- Questionnaire surveys for:
 - Visitors to the AYITLOF exhibition, completed by visitors on the first two days, coinciding with the Hop Festival 4 & 5 September; a sample of 250 of which 200 completed forms were analysed.
 - Contributor/volunteers to the AYITLOF project, who completed a form at the start and a different one at end of the AYITLOF project; of the 70 volunteers, 32 completed the baseline forms, and of these 10 also completed the end of project evaluation form.

The full story of what took place, can be viewed on the Kent Creative Arts website.

The summary (below) provides a succinct overview of the project. It concludes that the impact of the project exhibition was very significant, 'something of a sensation'. Details of the methodology, full results, etc, are in the main report.

The evaluation clearly shows the project met all the Heritage Lottery Fund's key agreed aims (as featured above). The actual visitor comments make interesting reading; the sheer number and diversity are testimony to the innovation, creativity, of this unique and highly successful project. The breadth of contributor and volunteer community engagement was considerable. Many visitors appreciated and learnt new things about Faversham's heritage and culture. The outreach of the project continues to grow and extend, beyond the boundaries of Faversham, propelled and supported by the team at Kent Creative Arts.

SUMMARY OVERVIEW: Something of a sensation!

'A Year in the Life of Faversham', was a public display of 365 photographs, one for each day of the year. These were captured by local photographers and artists, many amateurs from the local community, who came forward with an established or new and growing interest in photography. Many (70+) local people contributed, in excess of 425 volunteer hours, in different ways to make this community project happen.

2,000+ visitors over the Hop Festival weekend (4-5 September) were logged at this exhibition; totalling in excess of 4,000 to the 12th September. Roughly half of these were locals and the other half included regular visitors with some new tourists from further afield. The focus of 'Faversham', built on the first AYITLOF exhibition held in 2008. Taken in its widest sense this theme - of people, place, the everyday, the artistic, extraordinary and historic - was clearly appealing. The Drill Hall, in Preston Street, former 'Assembly Rooms', was the venue for this free, open access, display which itself generated historic interest and appreciation. A linked programme of talks and activities run over the exhibition period was a new feature and well received.

The project appealed particularly to the older age groups (50+ years) but many family groups with young children also visited and enjoyed the exhibition. Visitors were invited to complete a comment card and to vote for their favourite picture. A free copy of 'Time Passes' book featuring the 'then and now' pictures from the display, was offered to visitors. It was extremely popular, generating more visitors.

The feedback was remarkable, in both the sheer number of positive comments, and in what it revealed about people's positive feelings towards the town and surroundings, its community, culture and heritage. Visitors were amazed by the amount of local creative and artistic photographic talent and the quality and diversity of the photos. Reflected was a strong sense of local pride in Faversham, its culture, and heritage, quiriness, beauty of the locality and appreciation of community spirit.

For some, photos revealed often little-known historical aspects or aspects that people had not noticed before or had taken for granted. Others were thrilled at recognising older relatives and friends in some of the pictures and the memories it evoked. Many remarked upon many new historical or contemporary facts and features they discovered, and they enjoyed the range of artistic approaches and challenges of 'the everyday portrayed as extraordinary'. The novelty and concept of this '365' project and uniqueness of this type of social record was remarked upon, as something of value, and that other communities might adopt.

People were excited by witnessing and being part of the 'spectacle' and celebration. The survey of contributors to AYITLOF showed that many got involved because it offered the chance for them to contribute to something local and 'to be a part of something' that built on their interest in photography, and enabled them to meet new people who share a fascination in the diverse features and flavours of Faversham.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FEEDBACK

a- What we know from the visitor comment cards

The visitor comment cards : over 1,000 were completed of which 400 were categorised and listed

~ number of comments grouped by theme

General thanks and congratulations (101)

Local pride (51)

Appreciation of the photographers and their work (49)

Bringing back memories (43)

The concept and idea (41)

The spectacle impact (28)

Doing 'A Year in the life of Faversham' again (27)

Learning and new appreciation (20)

Historical Record – things change (19)

Constructive Criticism (19)

Difficult to choose (15)

Community (14)

Better than last time (10)

Use of Lottery Money (6)

Young people (4)

The Drill Hall (3)

Doing 'A year in the life of' else where (3)

[The actual visitor comments are featured in appendix to the full report]

b- What we know from the visitor survey to the exhibition over the Hop Festival 4-5 September 2010

During the opening first two days of the exhibition, over the Hop Festival, in excess of 2,000 visitors were logged. A sample of 250 visitor survey forms were given out of which the results of 200 forms were collated and analysed with some of the highlight results featured below.

- A very large proportion (88%) said the exhibition was 'excellent' (61%) or 'very good' (27%). Nobody said that they didn't enjoy it all.
- A significant proportion, over a third, either found out 'a few new things' (17%) and an additional number of respondents said they found out (18%) 'lots of new things'.
- Just over a quarter (27%) felt their perception and or impression was unchanged.
- A small proportion (13%) said that they 'like to see and experience more'.
- A similar proportion (12%) of respondents said that, following the exhibition, they see Faversham more positively as a result.

A Year In the Life of Faversham

In terms of what visitors said about 'the most surprising or interesting they found out' from a visit to the exhibition, the results closely what visitors recorded on the general comment cards.

There was a clear demonstrated enjoyment, and sense of local pride in Faversham. This amounted to a celebration of its community spirit, heritage, social history and traditions, the countryside and surroundings. Many remarked upon a new-found appreciation of the range of local artistic talent and the diversity of their new impressions and challenging artistic perspectives of the area.

Visitor Survey: 'A Year In The Life of Faversham'

Number of comments (in brackets) on what visitors found most surprising or interesting from the exhibition

- (20) on artists talent and creativity
- (18) how diverse and nice Faversham is
- (17) historical facts/ aspects
- (17) new facts / discoveries
- (12) specific historical facts / events
- (12) contemporary facts or observations
- (11) amount of interest AYITLOF generated
- (09) recognising people in photos
- (05) general enjoyment of the exhibition

Date of visit

53%	30%	16%
Saturday	Sunday	Didn't
4 th Sept	5 th Sept	say

Audience

43%	10%	46%
Live in	Live	Further
town,	nearby	away

Age

Under					
14 yrs	14-17	18-35	36-50	51-65	over 65
0.05%	1%	12%	23%	35%	27%

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Gender

Male	Female
37%	63%

Disability

With	without	didn't say
8.50%	89%	

Main reason for visiting Faversham

8%	4%	90%	2%	3.50%	0.01%	
A day out	General shopping	Hop Festival	Part of holiday	specifically for AYITLOF	Work	other

How they find out about this event ~ AYITLOF

Leaflet/posters	Newspaper	Website	Someone told me to visit	I know someone involved	Radio/TV	Email	Yellow banner outside	Other
23%	23%	2.50%	25%	14%	0.05%	2%	18.50%	

Impact of the AYITLOF exhibition

How much did people enjoy the exhibition?

Not at all	1%	9%	27%	61%
	Reasonably	Good	Very good	Excellent

How has AYITLOF changed their perception of impression of Faversham?

Not at all	A little	I don't know	I see it more positively	It was as I aware	few new things	lots of new things	Like to find out more
2%	7%	2%	12%	25%	17%	18%	13%

c. What we know from contributor/volunteer survey

In addition to the project founders the people involved were 52 photographers taking pictures during the year 2009, people bringing in old photographs of the town, photographers re-shooting old photographs, volunteers from Vinvolved (age 16 to 25), jurors...

32 contributors/volunteers completed a baseline form. Of these respondents, below ranked in order as some of the headline statistics:

- 78% 'welcomed the reason/excuse to support something local and be a part of it'
- 78% 'wanted to make it happen' by 'lending' their support
- 74% were in the age range 35-65
- 66% got involved because 'they enjoy photography', and 'like taking photos'
- 66% liked 'the focus on Faversham'
- 63% were 'involved in taking pictures in 2009'
- 56% 'wanted to get involved in something fun but educational'
- 56% got involved as it was 'very local and easy to take part in'
- 56% got involved because they 'like heritage and finding out about the history of the town and surroundings'
- 53% like landscapes
- 53% like looking at photos
- 53% of the contributors/volunteers (who responded) were female
- 50% were involved as a helping hand/volunteer in their own right in welcoming guests/invigilation
- 44% got involved as it was a chance 'promote what you [they] can do and offer'
- 44% got involved via the 2008 event as a photographer
- 41% it was a chance to get involved as 'it was free and inexpensive to take part'
- 41% it was a chance to get involved as 'a person wanting to gain/extend experiences'
- 38% got involved via the 2008 event by visiting the exhibition
- 34% 'got involved by word of mouth via recommendation from someone who was involved in the last exhibition'
- 28% 'got involved by word of mouth via the organisers'
- 28% 'got involved by word of mouth via friends/associates'
- 28% got involved by website/email and invited to take part
- 28% were involved as it 'was a chance to 'promote what your club or society is about'
- 28% were involved as it 'was a chance to get more people interested to support your work, club or societies' activities
- 22% were involved as a photographic contributor by 'updating with new photographs for the book 'Time Passes'

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- 16% of contributors were over the age of 65
- 6% of contributors were in the age range 18-35.
- 3% of contributors considered that 'they have a disability'

The impact of the AYITLOF on the contributors and volunteers

What was your overall experience as a contributor/ volunteer of AYITLOF?

Of those volunteers/contributors that completed both baseline *and* post event evaluation forms (10 people), the experience was either 'excellent' or 'very good' for 90%.

60%	30%	10%
Excellent	Very good	Good

The thing you liked best?

- 'Being part of a community project'
- 'Taking photos and being part of it'
- 'Exploring new areas of Faversham that I had not seen before'
- 'Seeing the original way other photographers capture Faversham and made me look at the details of the town with a fresh eye'
- 'Recording significant events and changes too'
- 'That it was open for a whole week over 2 weekends, coinciding with the Hop Festival. The book 'Time Passes''
- 'The enthusiasm of the project organisers'
- 'Walking around and discovering lots of Faversham I hadn't noticed before'

Liked least?

- 'Being too ill this year to be of more help'
- 'Sometimes I felt the pictures I took on one particular day were better than those taken on the following days, but they couldn't be used'

Stated expectations of the contributors and their reflective additional commentaries:

- 'It will raise public interest in the town, its past, present and future'**

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'This exhibition was attended by visitors from all corners of Britain. The website has had visitors from Canada and the US. Books produced have been sent to Australia and Canada'

'My two children (30+ married) both live in the town but work in London. They were amazed by the exhibition – it taught them much more about the place they live in'

'Many people in the town are not aware of what is around them'

'Probably only amongst interested parties'

b. 'It will prompt people to care for it and its people (residents)'

'The exhibition raised awareness of the town's heritage and the need to protect remaining historic buildings and features'

'This is a very thing to achieve, and no single social event will have this much impact. But what impact it has, will be entirely positive'

'Hopefully people will recognise the heritage we have in the town'

'People either care or they don't'

c. 'I hope it will create more interest and pride in the locals of Faversham'

'We are very lucky to live in an area with so much beauty and diversity. From the fast rail link to the nature reserve, spring blossoms, to football. There is something for everyone here'

'Already much pride and interest!'

'I hope' is not the same question as 'I think'.

'Faversham is a lovely town but is often given bad press'

'If it results in the next generation being motivated, then it would have succeeded'

d. 'I hope will draw attract people from outside Faversham (to live, work, visit)'

'It will need to be available through visitor centres – online?'

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'Each the 365 exhibition is held, its attendance grows. People are learning about the advantages of Faversham and inviting others to visit'

'Again, I 'hope' it will'

e. 'That people will look at Faversham with a different eye and new artistic initiatives will be borne'

'There is a lot of creative talent here. Not just photography but all sorts of crafts are now being taught'

'Photography contributed many new visions of a seemingly familiar scene'

'I am beginning to have problems with the use of 'hope' in this questionnaire. How can anyone do other than strongly agree?'

'Faversham has unique architecture and history that should attract any visitor'

f. 'That this photographic concept can be extended and rolled out across Kent and the South East so more towns can be engaged with their history, present and all through the medium of photography'

'Yes – great idea'

'Exhibitions such as this can only help our town/area. Learning the history and visiting new areas creates awareness and pride in a locality'

'This is a correct use of 'hope''

'It would be enjoyable, useful and eye-opening, even in places less conventionally historic than Faversham'

'It was good that Faversham had the idea first'

g. 'To look back in 10-30 years' time with my children and remember this as part of our lives'

'And repeat it. How about a youth version – it would be a completely different perspective!'

'I will never be able to have children but will always remember'

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'This is totally unrealistic. No single event of this nature will be remembered as part of our lives 10-30 years hence. It could have an indirect impact on an individual if that person were stimulated by it to do something – to get involved in some aspect of the social/administrative life of the town and its surrounding villages'

Three most significant things that have improved your 'feel good factor' by AYITLOF giving you the chance to..

'Discuss the changes in the town with friends, neighbours and strangers'

'Give my photography a focus and purpose'

'Celebrating the good and unique things about Faversham'

'Being able to tell people my work was in a book'

'Seeing my image in the exhibition (good for art)'

'Being part of community-making new friends and contacts'

'I have explored new areas of Faversham'

'I have learnt more about the history of the area'

'I have met new and interesting people'

'It was a pleasure and privilege to participate'

'A chance to give a talk on the history of hops – entirely appropriate for the Hop Festival and not done before'

'A chance to meet people in Faversham who represent a different sub-set to those I normally meet'

'I liked very much the party to mark the end of the event and the award of prizes for winning photographs. I am impressed by what *Creek Creative* is doing'

'Meeting new people'

'Sharing images of the town I love'

'Seeing my own photos on display'

'Another interest involving the people of Faversham'

'Interest in other people's opinions of photography'

'An obvious buoyancy of those taking part'

'Stimulating'

'Making me feel I belong'

'Meeting other members of the community'

Other comments

'A wonderful initiative, faultlessly executed'

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'If the next AYITLOF takes place indoors (I understand that there is a possibility that it will be outdoors), then the organisers might consider making the exhibition room available for evening receptions for interested groups, eg The Faversham Society'

'Thoroughly enjoyed being involved'

'Very well done to all those that contributed so much of their time to make it successful.'