



# FAVERSHAM

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## TIMES

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55p

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SEE NEXT WEEK

# I hit 20st to escape violent husband



New look: A slimmer Cathy Carthy



Before: Cathy Carthy at nearly 20 stone

## Mum of six piled on the pounds to drive away her abusive partner – and then dropped six dress sizes

Report by Dawn Kingsford

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A MUM who deliberately gained weight to escape a violent marriage has revealed her extraordinary battle to regain her figure and sanity.

At just 5ft 2in, Cathy Carthy ate until her 9st frame ballooned out of all recognition.

Her abusive husband then walked out on her, ending their 18-year marriage. It left her with another problem to solve: how to put her life back together and overcome her eating disorder. Cathy, 56, told the *Faversham Times*: "I was in a violent

marriage and knew if I ate and put on weight, one day he'd leave me – and that's exactly what he did.

"It was a relief, but it was just the start of many years fighting a battle with comfort eating."

At the time her typical daily diet included nearly a loaf of bread and a pound of sausages for breakfast, two Big Mac meals for lunch followed by bread and potatoes for tea.

While trying to turn around her life, the Irish mum of six moved into a women's refuge in Canterbury. She recalled: "The other girls tried to get me to join them for a night

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### Top stories

#### ■ Town End in sight for gas works

The company behind the extensive gas pipe replacement works in Faversham promise they will be completed by the new year. Southern Gas Networks admits the £175,000 project is over deadline, but blames the delay on other utilities.

Full report on page 2

#### ■ Town Tourism talks

Ideas for attracting tourists to Faversham were shared at a conference in the town on Friday. They included setting up a "food trail" leading visitors to the many top eating places in the area and publishing online guides in German as well as French.

Full report on page 3

#### ■ Town Carnival capers

Faversham Carnival takes to the streets on Saturday, with a host of fun activities promised by the organisers.

Full report on page 5

#### ■ Sport 'Bad day' for Town

Faversham Town skipper Tom Hickman admitted it was a "bad day at the office" after the team's performance against Corinthians on Saturday.

Full report on back page

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Conference spells out need the importance of visitors

# Tourism on the up in town

Report by Dawn Kingsford

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THE first tourism conference to be held in Faversham highlighted the importance of the town as a destination for visitors.

The conference on Friday, funded by the town council, brought Faversham Area Tourism Association together with representatives from Vis-it Kent and the area's parish councils.

Town councillor Ted Wilcox led the conference at the Guildhall, designed to reflect the town's success in attracting visitors over the last four years and to discuss the next steps in developing tourism.

He said: "Tourism is absolutely vital to Faversham. As a market town it is a little gem, but the surrounding villages are an equally important part of what the area has to offer. The conference brought together those involved in tourism and some fantastic ideas were put forward."

One idea that will be carried forward is the production of a food trail, promoting walks and places to eat in the town and surrounding villages.

Data will also be collected from existing attractions and tourist destinations to help quantify the success of recent tourism initiatives.

Cllr Wilcox said: "We will be looking to update our tourism strategy and getting evidence to support grant funding for further initiatives."

"The town council is very



Talking tourism: From left: Kimberly Campion, Brogdale Collections; Sally Roger, Brogdale Farm; Cheryl Mvula, Faversham Tourism consultant; Graham Hukins, Shepherd Neame Visitor Centre; and Faversham's Mayor Ted Wilcox

aware that time and money spent in developing tourism in the town in a sensitive way is time and money well spent."

He feels there could be room for a "grand" hotel, to bridge the accommodation gap, to

woo "empty-nesters" to stay longer.

What are your thoughts on developing tourism in Faversham? Email dawn.kingsford@krmmedia.co.uk, or add your comments to this story at www.thisiskent.co.uk

## In brief

### Elizabethans meet for dinner

FOURTEEN members of Faversham Elizabethans, the association for former pupils and staff of Queen Elizabeth's Grammar and related schools, met at the Old Wine Vaults in Preston Street for its annual dinner.

### Fairtrade talk

The Faversham Fairtrade Town Steering Group meets at the Railway Hotel at 7pm on Tuesday, with a talk by the chairman of the Thanet Fairtrade Island Initiative Tammy Stewart-Smith. Call Jo on 07932 656876 for more information.

### Staff training

STORE staff are being trained in preparation for the opening of Morrisons in Faversham.

Former Co-op employees and new recruits have been working at Morrisons in Canterbury to get on-the-job experience.

### Rubbish fire

FAVERSHAM firefighters were called to a bin alight on the rec at about 8.30pm on Friday. It took about 30 minutes to put out.

## Swine flu vaccines are on their way

Faversham GP Laurence Logan returns with his occasional swine flu "diary".

As I write this, there are 290 people in hospital with swine flu, 47 of them in intensive care. Ninety people have died since the summer. Although swine flu is still a relatively minor illness, it can be devastating.

Two vaccines have now been approved and should start to be distributed to practices in the three weeks from Monday. Each practice, regardless of size, will receive 500 doses in the first delivery. Patients will be invited in order of priority. Housebound patients will be vaccinated by the district nurses.

The first to receive vaccination will be medical staff with regular clinical contact with patients. They are being vaccinated first to prevent them giving the virus to patients. This is to protect you, not them.

The second group will be those aged over six months but below 65, with certain underlying medical problems such as heart, chest, kidney and liver disease. Patients with certain neurological conditions, diabetes or poor immune systems, either from disease or from treatment with chemotherapy or high dose steroids, will also be included. The youngest will be vaccinated first. Patients with asthma account for 25 per cent of admissions to hospital with swine flu, patients

with heart disease a further 15 per cent.

The third group is pregnant women. The vaccine is not a live vaccine and is safe to give during pregnancy. We still await details of exactly when during pregnancy it should be given.

The fourth group is household contacts of patients with poor immune systems and may not be known to their GP. If you think you may be in this group, let your practice know your details.

Finally, the vaccine will be offered to those aged 65 and over with the underlying medical conditions outlined above. Unlike seasonal flu, just being in the age group does not mean you will be offered the vaccine.

## Bypass surgery

From front page

out, but when I looked in the mirror I just cried."

Following a suicide attempt two years ago, Cathy was admitted to St Richard's Hospital in Chichester for gastric bypass surgery. She weighed nearly 20 stone.

Cathy said: "I was so low, all the diets I tried had failed. I wouldn't even go outside and relied on my children to pick up food for me. After surviving my suicide attempt, I realised my number wasn't up and decided to do something about it."

Speaking this week from her home in Thomas Neame Avenue in Faversham, Cathy - who has lost an amazing 5st 8lb and dropped six dress sizes since the surgery - said she no longer feels helpless and is looking for love again. She plans to celebrate her new slim look by travelling to Ireland for Christmas with her nine sisters and three brothers.

Cathy said: "I haven't seen them since 1992 when my mother died, but I'm so excited. I can't wait for Christmas - it will be the cherry on the cake of the best year of my life."

Following her irreversible surgery, which reduced her stomach to the size of an egg, Cathy's diet now comprises a small bowl of cornflakes for breakfast and slimming brand meals. Meat is off the menu.

She said: "The surgery has changed my life. I'm now hoping to get down to 9st again and to meet a man who is interested in sharing some quality time with me again."

Cathy's story will be featured at 9pm on November 10 on TV channel Discovery Home & Health.

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