

Celebrating 70 years at Fawley – 1951 to 2021

Community Matters

Energy lives here™

The AGWI refinery
opened in 1921.

AGWI refinery paved the way for Fawley



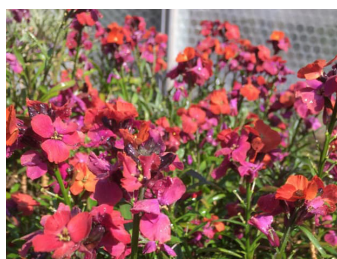
Laying the foundations

As Fawley celebrates its 70th anniversary, 2021 is also significant because it marks 100 years since the original Atlantic Gulf and West Indies refinery opened at Fawley. Find out more about the history of AGWI on page two.



Contribution for iPad project

A contribution from ExxonMobil Fawley is helping young people with a common eye condition to have vital testing at home after COVID-19 led to a backlog in clinic appointments. See the back page for more details.



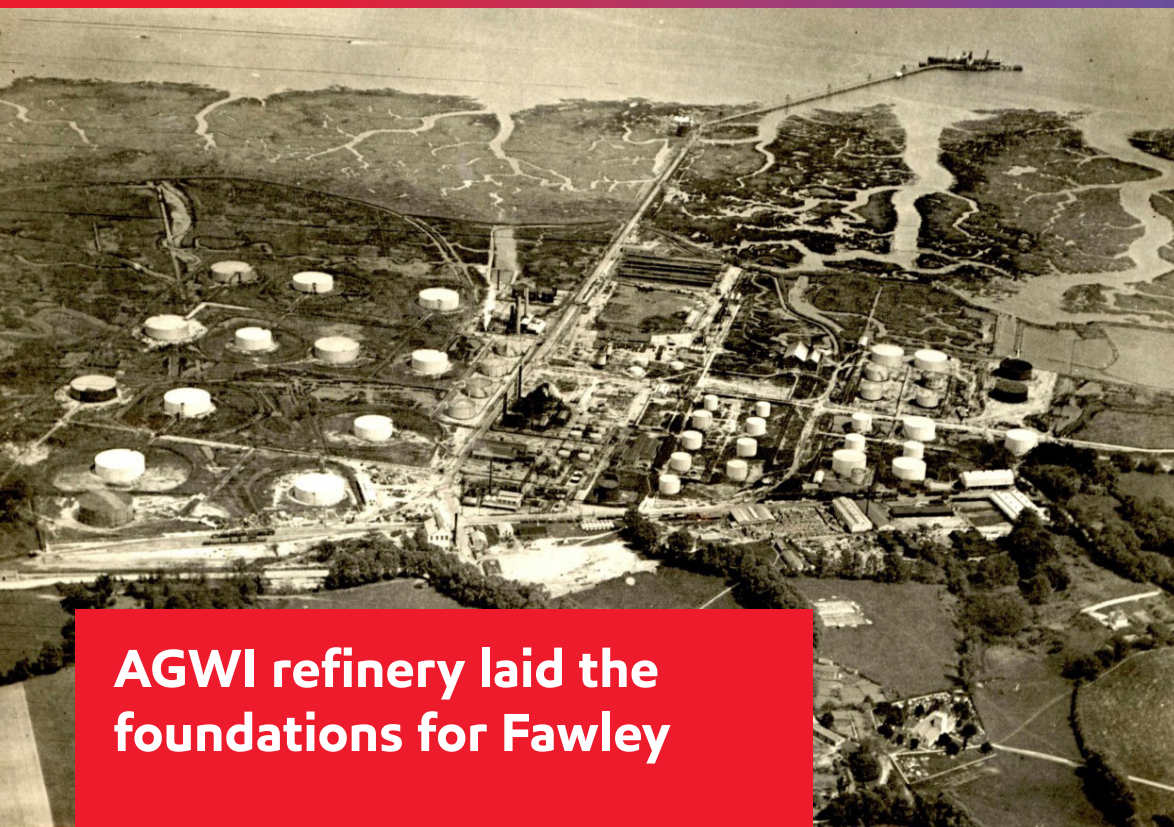
Ready to bloom again

A plant nursery that supports people with learning disabilities is looking forward to flourishing again after battling to keep going during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can find out more about Copthorne Nursery on page three.



Back in the saddle for cycling

An inclusive cycling group based in the New Forest is gearing up for a return, supported by a donation from ExxonMobil Fawley. Turn to the back page to read more about PEDALL and the vital service it provides.



AGWI refinery laid the foundations for Fawley

Although 2021 marks the 70th anniversary of Fawley Refinery, it should not be overlooked that another historic milestone will also be reached this year. That's because 100 years ago, in July 1921, the first-ever oil refinery to stand at Fawley was officially opened.

Work on the Atlantic, Gulf and West Indies (AGWI) plant had begun just less than a year earlier, in August 1920. The site was chosen ahead of many other potential UK locations because of its perfect position on the edge of Southampton Water, the "gateway to the world". The village of Fawley was small and sleepy back then, and it was clear that a huge workforce would have to be recruited to help build the new refinery. By the end of the first week of construction, work had begun in earnest and 186 men and boys had been employed. Among their many tasks was the construction of a sea jetty and berths, a series of storage tanks for crude oil and fuel oil, and a cracking plant. Vast amounts of pipework also needed to be laid.

Although the intention was that most of the AGWI oil would move by sea, it was recognised that some would need to go by land from the refinery. At the time, local roads were often primitive, and some were not much better than forest tracks suitable only for a horse and cart. With little prospect of early improvements, a railway line was deemed to be the best solution.

Agreement in principle was reached for a new railway line to be built, and that the route should be via Hythe, Marchwood and Totton. However, it was to be some years later, in July 1925, that the new line officially opened with the first passenger train arriving at Fawley with a party of VIPs on board.

Since the refinery was mostly reliant on seaborne imports and exports, the jetty was the focus of operations. Although the plans had originally been for four berths, it was decided to only build one ocean berth for initial operations. In fact, this proved sufficient for AGWI's needs until the "new" Fawley refinery was built in 1951. The first ship to arrive was the tanker SS "Agwilake" on June 18, 1921. She had come from Mexico with a cargo of crude oil, fuel oil, and gas oil. And so, with her arrival, the AGWI refinery came into operation, eventually paving the way for the modern-day Fawley that we are so familiar with today.

The refinery at war

When the Second World War was declared, AGWI was already well prepared. As it turned out, the refinery received little direct attention from the German bombing missions. One theory for this is that the site was deliberately spared so that it could be used by the enemy in the event of a successful invasion.

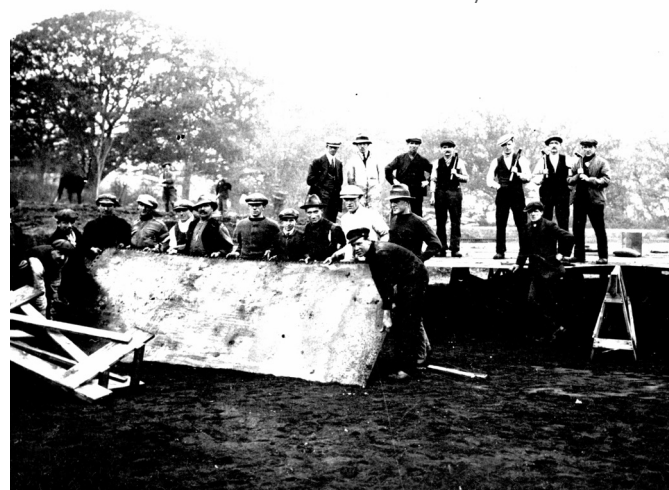
Despite this, around 30 bombs did land in the refinery at various times, most notably on the night of November 30, 1940, when tank 202 was completely destroyed. A bomb went through the roof and exploded. Strangely, the first that anyone knew of the incident was when the control room cat was found covered in oil. On further investigation, tank 202 was found to have been obliterated.

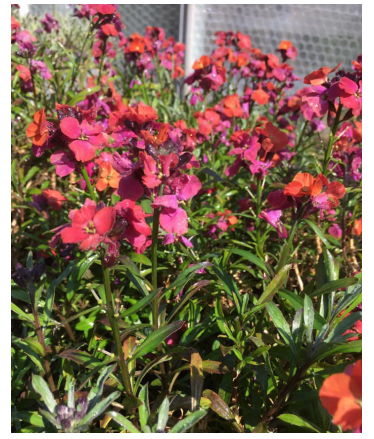
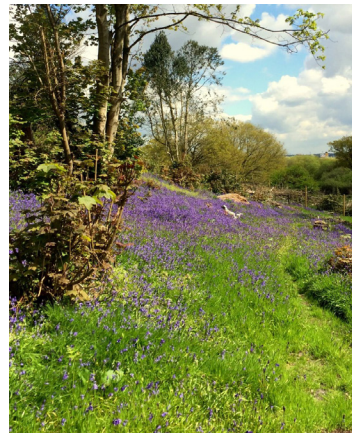
As the war progressed, refinery operations became more difficult and began to slow. With a shortage of manpower to contend with too, the plant became more of a storage depot and, in March 1943, most of the refinery was shut down.

However, as a strategic site, the AGWI plant still had a part to play in the war effort as it was connected by underwater pipeline to the country's wartime oil pipeline system. Later, the refinery also served as a depot for the PLUTO pipelines, making sure there was a vital supply of fuel to enable the invasion of the Normandy beaches in 1945.

Above: AGWI refinery.

Below: Some of the AGWI workforce building Tank 201 in 1920-21.





Nursery is enjoying a growing reputation

Tucked away at the end of a lane in Fawley is Copthorne Nursery, a place where they nurture not just nature, but people too.

The nursery, set in 11 acres of mixed woodland and landscaped gardens, is a working business with the dual purpose of supporting adults with learning disabilities. The sweeping plot is licenced from ExxonMobil Fawley for a peppercorn sum. Mandy Leigh, who manages the nursery and oversees the service in her role with Hampshire County Council, said: "Copthorne is very much self-sufficient in terms of funding and so it's important that we grow and sell produce to help keep us running. Last year was our 30th anniversary and, although COVID-19 meant we couldn't celebrate that milestone as we would have liked, we have managed to keep going and will hopefully will come out the other side."

As part of Romsey and Waterside Day Services, Copthorne usually hosts around a dozen adults with learning disabilities every day, assisted by a number of staff and volunteers. Those who attend develop horticultural skills, increase their independence, learn new skills, and enjoy activities that help to build confidence and a sense of achievement. Mandy said: "The last 12 months or so have been challenging for everyone. For us, it's meant that instead of having around 20 people here we've had just a handful. We're really looking forward to getting back to normal as soon as possible."

The nursery, which is in Copthorne Lane, grows and sells a variety of plants, shrubs and vegetables. It also offers planted pots and hanging baskets, as well as wooden planters and other handcrafted goods. Mandy said: "We can't compete with commercial garden centres in terms of how much we can grow, so I like to be a bit creative and offer plants that you might not necessarily find in a big outlet. That's if we can stop the deer from eating everything of course!"

As well as the visiting wildlife with an appetite for its produce, the other challenge facing Copthorne is selling enough goods to cover the cost of running. The nursery usually has two or three open days a year and has a Facebook page to help showcase its work. Online sales were a big plus last summer and Mandy hopes this is an area the nursery can build on in future. She said: "We had some terrific support last year and I like to think that we earned a lot of goodwill with our customers."

Goodwill is certainly something that Copthorne shares with ExxonMobil Fawley. The refinery has an active outreach programme and, in recognition of the importance of the services provided at Copthorne, undertook a major refurbishment of Copthorne House in 2015/16 to ensure its safe and continued use. Mandy, who herself celebrates 28 years as nursery manager this summer, said: "Our land was originally part of the Cadland Estate that was purchased by the Atlantic Gulf and West Indies oil company 100 years ago. Esso then took it over when the new refinery was built in 1951. We have had a fantastic relationship over the years with Fawley, they are always incredibly supportive of what we do here."

As we move through summer, the staff and volunteers at Copthorne are hopeful that life at the nursery will return towards something resembling normality. There have already been some weekend open days and there are plans for a big garden party. Mandy said: "As well as welcoming back all our service users, we are also looking forward to seeing some of our regular customers and hopefully meeting some new ones too."

- You can find out more about Copthorne Nursery, and keep in touch with upcoming events, on the nursery's Facebook page.

You can see what is happening at Fawley and across our organisation

From time to time, ExxonMobil Fawley will experience operational events that may affect the wider community, for example increased noise or flaring. Where possible, the site will endeavour to notify residents of these events and to provide regular updates. You can find this information on **fawleyonline.org.uk**. The website also gives details about the Control of Major Accidents and Hazards (COMAH) regulations.

exxonmobil.co.uk - Our UK website

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Right: Children like Maisie will be among those using an iPad at home as part of the research project.

Fawley supports Gift of Sight iPad project

A contribution from ExxonMobil Fawley is helping young people with a common eye condition to have vital testing at home after COVID-19 caused a backlog in clinic appointments.

Amblyopia, otherwise known as lazy eye, affects many children in the UK. To improve their vision, treatment needs to be completed by the time they reach eight years of age. Patients with amblyopia usually attend hospital for six weekly reviews and are examined in the outpatient clinic as per standard of care. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a backlog in clinic appointments, which could have a serious impact on these young patients.

Dan Osborne, a research orthoptist in the children's clinic at Southampton Eye Unit, has been awarded a research grant to undertake a two-year study to investigate whether testing children's vision at home using an app on an iPad would match or improve the outcomes for patients. After having visual acuity measured by one of the clinical team in the outpatient clinic, the parent or carer would be taught to test the measurement at the same visit. This idea was suggested by some parents who, in normal times, need to take significant periods out of work – and take their children out of school – to bring them to hospital. The app mitigates that disruption.

As part of its ongoing support of the Gift of Sight appeal, ExxonMobil Fawley has donated £1,000 towards the purchase of two iPads to be used for this



project. Once a patient achieves the desired visual result, the iPad will be returned to the hospital for cleaning and redistribution to the next patient with the greatest need.

Jay Self, an eye consultant and scientist, is Dan's supervisor for the project. He said: "We know our young patients will be actively involved in testing their eyes in this novel way. We believe that using modern technology will be preferable to making a trip to hospital and, importantly, improve outcomes and life-long vision for our youngest patients."

He added: "We feel sure that the children involved in this project will join us in thanking the team at ExxonMobil Fawley for their generous support."

Angharad Vaughan, ExxonMobil Fawley's Community Affairs Adviser, said: "We have a long association with Gift of Sight and have sponsored the organisation's newsletters for the last 12 years. As well as committing to do that for another year at a cost of £1,500, we were also delighted to contribute a further £1,000 towards the purchase of two iPads. We hope that the project is a success for all those involved."

- Eye conditions affect people of all ages and can cause devastating sight loss. Gift of Sight scientists are determined to develop new treatments to help patients in the future. To find out more about Gift of Sight, and how you can help, go to giftofsight.org.uk.



Back in the saddle

An inclusive cycling charity is gearing up for a return to activities, helped by a contribution from ExxonMobil Fawley.

PEDALL provides opportunities for people of all ages with a disability or learning difficulty to enjoy cycling in the New Forest, no matter what challenges they face. The charity is supported by the New Forest National Park Authority and has successfully secured funding from The National Lottery Community Fund to operate for another three years.

The funding will enable the charity to extend rides to more people and expand its services to welcome older people with dementia and young people with mental, physical, and behavioural challenges. It also plans to offer "confidence rides" to help support people in the post COVID-19 recovery.

However, the secured funding is only half of what is needed to successfully run the project. Match funding is required to ensure the charity continues to support health and wellbeing by enabling people to get outside, become active and enjoy nature. Like most other charities, PEDALL had to postpone its 2020 fundraising events due to COVID-19, and so donations from the public and local businesses are even more crucial than ever. ExxonMobil Fawley has been a regular supporter of PEDALL and its latest contribution of £2,500 will help the project to make much-needed improvements to its fleet of specialised bikes.

Donna Neseyif, PEDALL Inclusive Cycling Project Manager, said: "We would like to thank ExxonMobil Fawley for this latest generous donation. The continued support from the local community and businesses is absolutely crucial to making sure we reach those in need and help them to access cycling in the New Forest."

Alison Jones, ExxonMobil Fawley Community Affairs Manager, said: "PEDALL is a fantastic charity and ensures that anyone who wants to ride in the New Forest can do so safely and without barriers. This brings many benefits including physical health, social interaction, and mental wellbeing and we are delighted to hear the project has expanded to support even more people. We look forward to following the progress of PEDALL over the next three years and wish everyone involved every success."

- The PEDALL team is based in Burley in the New Forest, but rides take place in various locations. Find out more about the charity at pedall.org.uk.