

Farnham Town of Craft

England's Craft Town

From the [University for the Creative Arts](#) to major museum, exhibition and specialist retail outlets and craft-related businesses, Farnham is home to both world renowned craft artists and to the next generation of emerging makers. Craft sits at the heart of Farnham's distinctiveness and this special feature was acknowledged in 2013 when Farnham was designated as England's Craft Town.

The roots of Farnham's engagement with craft can be dated back to the time when Farnham exported white clay to the Romans. In the 16th century, potteries in Farnham were major suppliers of pottery to London. But its real emergence as a town with a special leaning towards craft is in the Victorian era and the establishment and great success of [The Farnham Pottery](#), Wreclesham, with its reputation for the distinctive style of work known as Greenware (so called because of the copper-green glaze).

The establishment of The Farnham School of Art in 1880 strongly promoted the education in craft subjects as part of its curriculum, and a powerful reputation was developed that has lasted throughout the 20th century and to the present day especially in courses in textiles and ceramics. Craft courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels are offered at the [University for the Creative Arts at Farnham](#), the successor institution to the Art School. Craft courses in jewellery, metalwork, glass as well as in textiles and ceramics offer today's emerging craft makers unrivalled opportunities in some of the best equipped studios and workshops in any specialist university in the country.

The opportunity to exhibit, sell and present contemporary crafts in Farnham is a significant feature of the town's creative programme. The emergence of the [Farnham Maltings](#) as an arts centre in the 1970s has been of especial importance to the cultural life of Farnham, and the crafts have very strongly featured in its contemporary programme: right at the heart of its diverse cultural offer. There are year-round exhibitions featuring young as well as world class craft makers. There is a particular focus on the craft fair, with an unrivalled series of events featuring everything from textiles to sugarcraft, drawing international audiences to the town and having a powerful and positive effect on the creative economy. Craft studios are established in the [Farnham Maltings](#) to sustain the craft infrastructure.

Craft across the centuries can be seen and researched from Farnham Greenware in the town's museum through to the unrivalled collections of the [Crafts Study Centre](#). [The New Ashgate Gallery](#) offers a diverse range of craft work for sale and is especially focused on creating opportunities for emerging makers.

Craft is embedded into the fabric, the homes as well as the cultural life of Farnham.

Steering Group

Farnham Craft Town celebrates the role of craft at the heart of the town and the following organisations sit on a steering group which aims to embed craft into the everyday life of the town by encouraging new audiences and visitors to

Farnham; supporting a vibrant marketplace of craft-makers and promoting the role of craft in improving health and well-being:

Crafts Study Centre

Farnham Maltings

Museum of Farnham

Farnham Pottery includes 318 Ceramics , Farnham Sculptors , Pugmill Bakehouse and West Street Potters

Farnham Town Council

New Ashgate Gallery

Surrey Cultural Services includes Adult Learning , Library , Heritage and Arts University for the Creative Arts

Waverley Borough Council

Other Craft organisations and venues in and around Farnham

The Sculpture Park

Established in 2003, the [Sculpture Park](#) specialises in the sale of 20th century modern and contemporary sculpture in a superb natural setting. It aims to boost the careers of some of the world's most talented artists in an environment that is sculpted and adapted to suit.

Watts Gallery and Watts Chapel

The [Watts Gallery](#) is dedicated to the work of the Victorian era painter and sculptor George Frederic Watts OM RA. With over 100 paintings and sculptures on permanent display, visitors can experience the Watts' collection in the historic galleries with its original decorative schemes.

The Surrey Guild of Craftsmen

[Surrey Guild of Craftsmen](#) members are selected professional craftsmen and designer makers of contemporary and traditional applied arts. Their work is distinguished by fine craftsmanship and innovative design.

Farnham Art Society

Records of an 'Art Club' in Farnham survive from the 1860s. In 1948, James Hockey formed the [Farnham Art Society](#) and arranged meetings and demonstrations as well as the high quality annual exhibition showing work from the prestigious membership. Among its membership of highly gifted amateur and professional artists, many are also members of the Wapping Group, the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolour, the Royal Institute of Oil Painters, the Society of Graphic Fine Art, the Society of Women Artists, the Pastel Society, the Society of Floral Painters , the Chartered Society of Designers and are Fellows of the Royal Society of Arts, keeping the standard of work exhibited at an annual exhibition to a high standard. A selection panel of professionals ensures the annual exhibition, held in the James Hockey & Foyer Galleries of the UCA, reflects the vitality and diverse ambitions of its membership. Around 4,000 visitors view the 400 paintings, ceramics and sculpture exhibited, giving them a great opportunity to access unique affordable art.