Meet the makers

Meet some of the makers who have made Farnham their base.

Craft Town video

Watch our video celebrating craft in Farnham.

From a puppet maker to a weaver, meet some of the makers who are based in Farnham. Hear their stories and see what they do and be introduced to the town's leading art institutions.

Be inspired!

Craft News

Get the latest news

Sign up to receive our newsletter about all Craft Town news and Craft Month events.

You can also follow us on social media:

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Instagram
Twitter
Linked In

Media Releases

10 September 2020 – Celebrating Farnham’s World Craft Town status
October Craft Month

This October find out just what makes Farnham worthy of being a World Craft City.

Throughout the month, you can take part in a programme of activities designed for you to develop your crafting skills and interest, discover professional makers who work in the Farnham community and to see the work of some of England’s very best craftspeople.

A flavour of what’s happening

Surrey Artists’ Open Studios presents Makers in Shop Windows, these pop-up exhibitions are located in shops in the town centre from 3 to 31 October.

Travel the World Craft Town Trail to visit makers in their studios and find out more about their work.

From 7 October, see the new Farnham Sculpture in Waggon Yard which was
commissioned to celebrate Craft Town Farnham. The Craft Town Public Art Commission was awarded to David Mayne following a vote by the local community.

Take part in an hour-long Pottery History Tour for an exclusive view into the history of Farnham Pottery, the traditional production methods employed over the years and current activities.

Another Brick in the Wall is a whole community art installation, which will be built from bricks designed and created by the public.

Get out in the fresh air at Farnham Heath and enjoy Heathland Artworks – an inspirational trail of 12 installations by students from the UCA.

Make yourself a piece of silver jewellery or give it somebody as a special gift for Christmas in a jewellery workshop.

Programme of activities

See the full list of what’s happening.

You can also take a look at the special edition Craft Month supplements which were included inside the Farnham Herald on 10 September and 17 September.

Meet the Makers

Meet some of the makers who have made Farnham their home. You can see them at work in our new film.

Archive

Archive from past years

- 2019 October Craft Month Brochure
- 2019 Shop Window Trail
- 2019 SAOS Makers in Farnham
- 2019 UCA Artist in Residence Programme
- 2018 Programme
- 2017 Programme
- 2016 Programme
- 2015 Programme
Craft Organisations

Below is a table of Craft Organisations.

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<tr>
<th>Name of Craft organisation</th>
<th>Contact details</th>
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<tr>
<td>318 Ceramics</td>
<td>The Farnham Pottery Quennells Hill, Farnham GU10 4QJ, <a href="mailto:info@318ceramics.co.uk">info@318ceramics.co.uk</a></td>
<td>318 Ceramics is a community of artists and students working side-by-side in a friendly environment that encourages and inspires artistic growth, with a focus on providing practical skills. 318 runs a full programme of term time classes, one-off workshops, demonstrations and masterclasses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Craft Study Centre</td>
<td>University for the Creative Arts, Falkner Road Farnham GU9 7DS, <a href="mailto:craftscentre@ucreative.ac.uk">craftscentre@ucreative.ac.uk</a>, 01252 891450</td>
<td>The Crafts Study Centre is a specialist university museum open to the public as well as a research centre and home to internationally renowned collections of modern British craft. Its acclaimed collections include modern and contemporary calligraphy, ceramics, textiles, furniture and wood as well as diaries, working notes and photographs of makers of the 20th and 21st centuries. The Centre hosts inspiring exhibitions by leading artist-makers, lectures, symposiums and open days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Response</td>
<td>Vernon House 28 West Street, Farnham GU9 7DR, <a href="mailto:contact@creativeresponsearts.org">contact@creativeresponsearts.org</a>, 01252 716876</td>
<td>Creative response is a charity supporting vulnerable adults of all ages with mental health issues, including addictions, learning and physical disabilities. Creative Response provides sessions run by professional artists and makers with the aim of providing a safe, caring environment where vulnerable people in our community can explore their creativity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farnham Adult Learning Centre</td>
<td>25 West Street Farnham GU9 7DR, <a href="mailto:adultlearning@surrey.gov.uk">adultlearning@surrey.gov.uk</a>, 0300 200 1044</td>
<td>Farnham Adult Learning Centre presents a range of opportunities to learn about arts and crafts. Whether you are repairing clocks or cutting stained glass, arranging flowers or restoring furniture, their team of experienced artists and craftspeople, trained to tutor adults, will help you gain the skills you need to progress.</td>
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</tbody>
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**Farnham Arts Society**

Correspondence to: Millstream House Bowling Alley Crondall GU10 5RJ  farnhamartssociety@hotmail.com

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 which continues to this day, attracting thousands of visitors to view hundreds of pieces of unique, affordable art and craft.

**Farnham Library**

Vernon House 28 West Street Farnham GU9 7DR  contact.centre@surreycc.gov.uk  0300 200 1001

The Library in Farnham is a supporter of Craft Town England and welcomes the local community to make use of its facilities including lovely library gardens, books, online resources and a range of tutored courses.

**Farnham Maltings**

Farnham Maltings Bridge Square Farnham GU9 7QR  info@farnhammaltings.com 01252 745444

Farnham Maltings is a cultural organisation which believes that by being creative, connecting with others and articulating new ideas we will become happier, healthier and more inclusive. Set in the heart of Farnham this collection of buildings host a wide range of crafts makers including printers, picture-framers, jewellers and textiles artists.

**Farnham Pottery**

Quennells Hill Farnham GU10 4QJ info@thefarnhampottery.co.uk 07879667000

The Farnham Pottery is a carefully preserved example of a Victorian country pottery with a host of charming architectural features. The potters of the day delighted in demonstrating their skills in making ornate chimney pots, window frames and archways. The site retains its industrial heritage whilst making a perfect home for today’s makers and artists.

**Farnham Sculptors**

Quennells Hill Farnham GU10 4QJ

Farnham Sculptors is a friendly group of wood and stone carvers working from an attractive, well equipped studio within the Farnham Pottery. Members include both experienced carvers who exhibit and sell locally and beginners who enjoy being in creative, supportive company.

**Farnham Town Council**

South Street Farnham Surrey GU9 7RN  customer.services@farnham.gov.uk 01252 712667

The Town Council is an active supporter of Farnham’s designation as Craft Town England.
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<td>Museum of Farnham</td>
<td>Willmer House 38 West Street, Farnham GU9 7DX, <a href="mailto:museum@farnhammaltings.com">museum@farnhammaltings.com</a>, 01252 715094</td>
<td>The Museum of Farnham is a local history museum, located in a beautiful Georgian town house with original features and a delightful walled garden. Discover Farnham's history, from its prehistoric roots to its hop growing boom and Georgian grandeur. The Museum is also home to an extensive art and craft collection thanks to the many artists and crafts people drawn to Farnham over the years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Ashgate Gallery</td>
<td>Waggon Yard Farnham GU9 7PS, <a href="mailto:gallery@newashgate.org">gallery@newashgate.org</a>, 01252 713208</td>
<td>The New Ashgate Gallery Trust is a registered charity that organises exhibitions and projects in the gallery and the community. The Gallery champions the best of contemporary art and craft and supports emerging artists and delivers creative learning through talks, community and outreach workshops and free professional practice seminars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Life Centre</td>
<td>The Reeds Road Farnham GU10 2DL, <a href="mailto:info@rural-life.org.uk">info@rural-life.org.uk</a>, 01252 795571</td>
<td>The Rural Life Centre is an open-air museum and visitor attraction which collects and preserves objects associated with farming and goods used by local crafts people. Located just outside Farnham in Tilford, this museum of country life was originally assembled by Mr and Mrs Henry Jackson and is now run by a charitable trust. 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sculpture Park</td>
<td>Jumps Rd Churt Farnham GU10 2LH, <a href="mailto:info@thesculpturepark.com">info@thesculpturepark.com</a>, 01428 605453</td>
<td>Surrey Guild of Craftsmen members are selected professional craftsmen and designer makers of contemporary and traditional applied arts. The Guild aims to support its members and to raise public awareness of the quality and diversity of the work created by local designer makers. This is done through a programme of exhibitions and craft events at venues around the county and beyond.</td>
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<td>Surrey Hills AONB</td>
<td><a href="mailto:surreyhills@surreycc.gov.uk">surreyhills@surreycc.gov.uk</a> 01372 220650</td>
<td>Surrey Hills is committed to developing a sustainable, inclusive and adventurous programme of arts and crafts in the AONB. The area has inspired and been home to some of the UK’s most influential and acclaimed artists, novelists, musicians and performers. The Surrey Hills also has a rich heritage which can be discovered through the abundance of castles, settlements, stately homes and museums.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University for the Creative Arts</td>
<td>Falkner Road Farnham GU9 7DS <a href="mailto:info@uca.ac.uk">info@uca.ac.uk</a> 01252 722441</td>
<td>The University for the Creative Arts is a specialist art and design university with a long history in nurturing communities of artists, designers, makers, architects, writers, animators, filmmakers, illustrators, photographers and more… Founded in 1904, Watts Gallery offers a unique insight into the life and work of G F Watts and his wife, designer and artist Mary Watts. The Artists' Village carries on their legacy of 'Art for All' with its historic and contemporary galleries, Artist in Residence and conservation studios and extensive learning programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watts Gallery</td>
<td>Down Lane Compton Surrey GU3 1DQ <a href="mailto:info@wattsgallery.org.uk">info@wattsgallery.org.uk</a> 01483 810235</td>
<td>Founded in 1904, Watts Gallery offers a unique insight into the life and work of G F Watts and his wife, designer and artist Mary Watts. The Artists' Village carries on their legacy of 'Art for All' with its historic and contemporary galleries, Artist in Residence and conservation studios and extensive learning programme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Street Potters</td>
<td>The Farnham Pottery Quennells Hill Farnham GU10 4QJ <a href="mailto:weststreetpotters@btinternet.com">weststreetpotters@btinternet.com</a> 07918 666898</td>
<td>West Street Potters is a committed and friendly group, running day and evening ceramics classes for people of all abilities. Based at the Farnham Pottery, the group has built a strong reputation for quality of teaching. It aims to develop students’ creative abilities through the acquisition of practical skills and an appreciation of the broader aspects of ceramics whilst nurturing a creative community.</td>
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**Farnham – history & origins**

Farnham is a thriving and historic market town nestled within the Surrey Hills.
and located less than an hour from London and the coast. Sitting on the banks of the River Wey and surrounded by woodland, the town is crowned by a magnificent deer park and castle. Farnham has a vibrant community feel and combines a rich tradition of craft with a modern and innovative outlook.

A stroll through its central conservation area and charming network of passages reveals hidden parts of the town’s history and gives a glimpse into its heritage of craft and making. The area has been populated since the Ice Age – making it older than Stonehenge and the Pyramids. Evidence of a flint-knapping industry some 7,000 years ago was discovered a short distance to the east of the town, demonstrating the town’s prehistoric links with craft.

Farnham’s geographical position has made it an important crossroads for centuries. Bronze and Iron Age people used the town as a junction for their track-ways and occupation of the area continued to grow. During the Roman period, Farnham became a centre for pottery and known for its ‘whiteware’ due to the plentiful supply of gault clay, oak woodlands for fuel, and good communications via the Harrow Way, Pilgrim’s Way and the nearby Roman road from Silchester to Chichester. It is the local clay that provides the warm red brick and tiles, which give the town its distinctive character, together with the ironstone cobbles along its numerous footpaths and alleyways.

A Roman villa and bath were found on the site of Roman Way, now a residential estate and kilns dating from about AD 100 have been found throughout the area. The main centre of pottery was at Alice Holt Forest, created just seven years after the arrival of the Romans, and continuing in use, making mainly domestic wares, until about AD 400. This thriving tradition of pottery continues to this day.

A Saxon community then grew up in the valley by the river giving the town organised agriculture, its parish church (now St Andrews’) and also its name, ‘Fearnhamme’, roughly translated as ‘well-watered meadow by the ferns’. Most of the town’s local names are derived from the Saxon language and the town’s links with craft continued with the discovery of several Saxon weaving huts from circa 550AD in 1924 at Saxon Croft, just off Firgrove Hill.

By 803AD, Farnham had passed into the ownership of the Bishop of Winchester and so it remained (apart from two short breaks) for the next thousand years. By 1086, Farnham appears in the Domesday Book as Ferneham, one of the five great minster churches in Surrey. Its assets included 40 hides; one church, six watermills and 43 ploughs.

In 1138, Henry de Blois (grandson of William the Conqueror) started building Farnham Castle to provide accommodation for the Bishop of Winchester in his frequent journeying between his cathedral and the capital. The castle’s garrison provided a market for farms and small industries in the town, accelerating its growth. The palace and deer-park were added in the 13th
century, and remain treasured spaces to this day. The castle’s architecture
reflects changing styles through the ages and it has become one of the most
important historical buildings in the south of England. Monarchs and noblemen
became regular visitors to the town including King John, Queen Victoria and
Henry VIII. When Elizabeth I visited, she bought her Court along too and ran the
country from Farnham for six months. Later, during the Second World War, the
castle became the home of the Camouflage Development and Training Centre (CDTC)
of the Camouflage Branch of the Royal Engineers. Here, artists such as Roland
Penrose and Julian Trevelyan as well as the magician Jasper Maskelyne were
trained in the art and craft of military camouflage.

By the beginning of the 13th century the village of Farnham had grown into a
town and was awarded its town charter in 1249 by the then Bishop of Winchester.
Its location, midway between Winchester and London naturally led to trade and
the town’s weekly market and annual fair became so successful that they rapidly
developed into some of the largest in the area.

The Middle Ages saw people coming from all over Hampshire and Surrey to buy and
sell at a Farnham fair and we know that wool was being manufactured in Farnham
at this time. The Black Death hit Farnham in 1348, killing about 1,300 people,
at that time about a third of the population.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, the wool cloth industry in Farnham prospered and
became an important industry in the town. The wool was woven and then fulled.
Fulling involved pounding the wool in a mixture of water and clay to clean and
thicken it. The wool was pounded by wooden hammers worked by a watermill. The
pottery industry also continued to be important and by this time the town was
well known for its pots and was a major supplier to London.

In 1625 Farnham was again subject to an outbreak of the plague which, together
with a severe decline in the local woollen industry (the local downland wool
being unsuitable for the newly fashionable worsted) led by the 1640s to a
serious economic depression in the area. Local wool merchants were, like
merchants throughout the country, heavily taxed by Charles I.

Against this background the English Civil War began, with Farnham playing a
major part. The castle, continuing to stand guard over Farnham, was considered a
potential rallying point for Royalists, resulting in the installation of a
Roundhead garrison there in 1642. Farnham would continue to be garrisoned by
Parliamentary soldiers until the end of the First Civil War in 1646. In 1648
after the Second Civil War, the castle was ordered to be ‘made indefensible’ in
case it was seized by Royalist sympathisers, and the following year King Charles
stayed in the town (at Vernon House now the library) on his way to his trial and
eventual execution.

Wheat and hops also grew in the rich soil of Farnham Valley, bringing the town
further prosperity, particularly as drinking habits changed from ales to
bitters. Farnham’s hops were considered to be the very best, commanding a great premium on the London market. The wealth generated made the growers rich and they built the finest domestic-scale Georgian houses in the country. Castle Street remains one of the most striking Georgian streets in England with its imposing facades and impressive width, as it rises towards the castle. The small market at the foot of the street, near the old Corn Exchange, serves to remind the town of its past.

The Victorian era saw Farnham’s emergence as a town with a special leaning towards craft and the hugely successful Farnham Pottery in Wrecclesham developed a national reputation for its distinctive style of work known as Greenware (so called because of the copper-green glaze).

Farnham continued to change and develop in the 19th century with the opening of the railway station in 1849; the arrival of gaslight in 1834; the construction of the army camp at nearby Aldershot in 1854 and a network of sewers in the 1880s. These developments helped secure Farnham’s future as a market town.

Farnham School of Art opened in 1866 and was associated with the arts and crafts movement when architects such as Edwin Lutyens and Harold Falkner, painters such as George Watts and W.H. Allen, potters such as Mary Watts and landscape gardeners such as Gertrude Jekyll worked in the area. The school 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. Craft courses at 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 20th century saw the creation of a number of craft organisations which are thriving to this day and which continue the tradition of craft which began in Farnham all those centuries ago. The Museum of Farnham opened in 1961; the Farnham Maltings, previously a tannery and a brewery, was opened as a centre for creativity in 1969; the Surrey Institute of Art and Design was also opened in 1969; the Crafts Study Centre in 1970; the Rural Life Living Museum in 1973 and the The New Ashgate Gallery in 1976. Farnham is home to both world-renowned craft artists and to the next generation of emerging makers with craft continuing to sit at the heart of Farnham’s distinctiveness.

Buildings throughout the town now recall this rich history of making and illustrate how craft makes Farnham such a unique and distinctive place. Many of these buildings are brought to life in the industrial heritage and art trails. If you want to learn more about the history of craft within the town then try exploring the Museum of Farnham with its dedicated gallery for Greenware and the unrivalled collections of the Crafts Study Centre.
Farnham Craft Town

Information about Farnham Craft Town