

Frensham Ponds

Frensham Ponds were originally created in the 13th century to supply fish to the Bishop of Winchester whilst visiting [Farnham Castle](#).

Today the ponds (great and little) and the surrounding area is a sanctuary for wildlife and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Look out for reed bunting, sedge warbler and great crested grebe, as well as nightjars and woodlarks. The great pond is also the backdrop for an hotel and used for sailing and fishing.

Part of the Greensand Way that crosses Surrey, and once drained during WWII as they were visible landmarks for the enemy, Frensham Little and Great ponds provide a wonderful local location to discover. A perfect place to run, walk dogs, build sandcastles, sail and even paddle in the summer months. Both have cafe facilities.

Frensham Ponds are part of the [National Trust](#) network and managed by [Waverley Borough Council](#).

For a relaxing day whatever time of the year, Frensham Ponds are a great escape from the hustle and bustle. Follow a beautiful walk with a cream tea at [Frensham Pond Hotel](#), [Frensham Garden Centre](#) or the [Rural Life Centre](#).

Banner image © Julian Paynter

Waverley Abbey

About

England's first Cistercian abbey was built near Farnham. The now ruins of Waverley Abbey are situated in a peaceful loop of the River Wey and still give an impression of the solitude experienced by the monks who founded a monastery here almost 900 years ago.

The monastery at Waverley, the first Cistercian abbey to be established in England, was founded by William Gifford, Bishop of Winchester, in 1128. It was colonised with 12 monks and an abbot from Aumone in France. By 1187 there were 70 monks and 120 lay brothers in residence. In 1201 the abbey buildings were

badly flooded. This became a common occurrence and as a result the abbey was substantially rebuilt during the 13th century. It continued to grow in the 14th century. The monks and lay brothers farmed the surrounding land, were active in the Cistercian wool trade and provided shelter for pilgrims, travellers and an infirmary for the sick.

In 1536, with the dissolution of the monasteries, the site passed to Sir William Fitzherbert, treasurer of the king's household. Much of the abbey was dismantled and some of the stone was reused to build Sir William More's house at Loseley, a few miles to the east.

Today the site is managed by English Heritage and is free to visit. Only parts, some substantial, of the buildings remain standing, although archaeological excavation has recovered the complete ground plan.

Don't miss the graphic panels that tell the story of this important monastery.

Opening times:

Daylight hours

Please note: dogs on leads are allowed and limited parking is available.

How to find Waverley Abbey

Chawton House

Chawton House, near Alton, was known to Jane Austen as the 'Great House'. It was owned by her brother Edward. Jane lived in a cottage on his estate and would stroll up to 'dawdle away' many an hour in the grand Elizabethan manor and its picturesque gardens. The house includes many Austen heirlooms, such as the dining table at which Jane would have enjoyed family meals as well as an extensive collection of early women's writing.

The library, house and gardens are open to visitors 7 days a week – from March through to December – as well as groups and educational visitors when closed. There is a varied programme of events, from house and garden tours, study days and symposiums, to family days.

Farnham Castle Keep

Standing on the hill for nearly 900 years, Farnham Castle and the Keep is steeped in history. The Castle overlooks the historic town of Farnham and is now

a unique venue for events, meetings and weddings.

The impressive motte and shell keep of Farnham Castle was founded in 1138 by Bishop Henry of Blois. The accommodation in the keep was updated in the 1520s. The keep was abandoned after the Civil War.

The keep is managed by Farnham Castle in partnership with English Heritage and is free of charge to visit. See the [English Heritage website](#) for more information on access and facilities.

The Keep is open most weekdays (except over Christmas and New Year) from 9am to 5pm (or dusk, if earlier). The Keep is also open 10am to 4pm on Saturdays and Sundays. It is advisable to contact Farnham Castle before travelling, as opening days can vary, and admission may be weather dependent. Last entry is half an hour before closing.

For more information on opening dates and times call 01252 721194.

Hogs Back Brewery

The Hogs Back Brewery is a small craft brewery based in Surrey situated just north of the A31 Hogs Back road between Guildford and Farnham.

Take a brewery tour. Learn how they brew their beer. Sample a generous range of beers and collect your free Hogs Back half pint glass as a souvenir. See the hop garden and finish with a visit to the brewery shop, which stocks up to 300 beers. A visit to the Hogs Back Brewery is a fascinating experience. Booking in advance is required.

Opening times

Monday and Tuesday 9am – 6pm

Wednesday – Friday 9am – 8:30pm

Saturday 9am – 6pm

Sunday 10am – 4:30pm

Museum of Farnham

"The neatest spot on earth – all there is garden." William Cobbett describing Farnham.

Farnham is a town of outstanding Georgian architecture and a designated town of

craft with a lively and artistic atmosphere. The museum aims to reflect this in a varied programme of exhibitions and events for adults and children alike. The museum was founded in 1961 to provide the Farnham community with a collection dedicated to the history of the local area. The elegant Grade I listed Georgian townhouse retains many original features, including a beautiful walled garden perfect for picnics.

Displays include items from a large and eclectic collection; from archaeological artefacts to nationally important artworks by local artists and an extensive costume collection. The museum holds three major exhibitions per year which aim to please and surprise, from artistic collaborations to exhibitions designed for children and families.

Five things to see and do at the museum

1. Discover the history of a beautiful Grade I listed Georgian townhouse and its many occupants
2. Try the children's trail or one of the activity packs for all ages
3. Have a look at the exhibitions and find out if you are an adventurous archaeologist or a civil war buff
4. See the wonderful history garden spanning from Roman gardening to a working World War II allotment
5. Join in with brass rubbing or a crafty half-term activity for children or sign up for Museum Club

If you've got a bit longer...

6. Ask at the local studies library for assistance with your latest school project
7. Have a picnic in the garden
8. Enjoy one of the new temporary exhibitions
9. Join the hunt for the hundred year old biscuit!

Audio guides, tours and children's guides are available.

The Garden Gallery

A modern community venue for the town. The beautiful garden gallery in the museum garden is available for parties, conferences, exhibitions and weekly courses.

Hiring the Gallery

The gallery is self-contained and consists of a entrance hall, a main area, kitchen and toilet (disability accessible and baby changing). The building is fully wheelchair accessible and can accommodate up to 80 people. It is available for hire throughout the week, including evenings and weekends.

Opening times

Open Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-5pm

Admission FREE

Wheelchair access to ground floor, shop toilet, Garden Gallery and garden.



Museum of Farnham garden gallery



Museum of Farnham exterior



Bust of William Cobbett, Museum of Farnham

Museum of Farnham garden room

The Sculpture Park

There is always something new to discover, with over 300 artists showcasing 600 sculptures, almost everything is for sale and as a result the exhibits are forever changing.

The park is sited within ten acres of stunning arboretum and wildlife inhabited water gardens. It has been developed over the years, with a series of landscaping projects and the introduction of thousands of new plants, bulbs and specimen trees.

The natural contours of the rolling Surrey Hills have provided the perfect haven for the display of sculpture, with over two miles of paths meandering through mixed heathland and woodland in a natural valley enhanced by three lakes fed by two natural springs.

Opening times

Everyday 10am-5pm

Farnham Castle

Farnham Castle is set in stunning gardens with manicured lawns and combines 12th century history with 21st century style. The Castle offers a truly unique setting for private celebrations and meetings. The Norman keep and scheduled Ancient Monument, offer fabulous views over the town and Surrey countryside.

Responsibility for the castle lies with the Farnham Castle Charity. In collaboration with the Farnham Castle tenants, they have produced a [Management Plan](#) which outlines the charity's plans over the next ten years to conserve, protect and improve the fabric of the buildings, maintain public access and improve public awareness of the buildings and their history.

The Rural Life Centre

The Rural Life Centre is set in over ten acres of garden and woodland, housed in purpose-built and reconstructed buildings including a chapel, cricket pavilion and school room.

Numerous events are held throughout the year from donkey days out to Weyfest. See the museum's [events calendar](#) for details.

Opening times

Summer opening (March to the beginning of November) – Wednesday to Sunday plus Bank Holiday Mondays 10am-5pm

Winter opening – Wednesdays and Sundays only – 11am – 4pm.

Birdworld

Birdworld one of the largest bird parks in the country, located on the Surrey

border with Hampshire it is a great place to explore for a fun and informative day out. In addition to a walk around 26 acres of aviaries and beautiful landscaped gardens, visitors can admire over 800 birds and 180 species from around the world and take part in educational feeding sessions throughout the day. Popular exhibits include The Terry Pratchett Owl Parliament, Penguin Beach and Flamingo Cove whilst, Underwater World and The Jenny Wren Farm also prove to be a big hit with all who visit.

Opening times

Open daily from 10am until 6pm (30 March – 28 Oct inclusive) and daily from 10am until 4.30pm during the winter months.

Last admissions are an hour before closing.