

Farnham is a community with a rich and unique past, much of which we know about from the work of archaeologists and historians over the years. Although its designation as a craft centre is recent, its history of industrial and artistic traditions – whether the Roman pottery industry, medieval tile-making or Georgian and later Victorian hop production which dominated the area – has much earlier origins and is just one of many aspects which sets Farnham apart.

A few of the artefacts or sites which lie beneath our feet:

Prehistory of the Farnham Terraces

W F Rankine with mammoth tusk from the Coxbridge sandpit
(© Farnham Herald)



The Farnham Terraces are the relics of former floodplains of the River Wey. As a result of heavy quarrying over a century ago, the gravel pits dug produced not only some of the best Palaeolithic hand-axes in Surrey, but remains of Ice Age mammals, including mammoths.

Local palaeoliths, including an Acheulian handaxe – the oldest known stone tool which is at least 200,000 years old – from Wreclesham on the right
(© Museum of Farnham)



Mammoth tusk from Badshot Lea sandpit found in the early 2000s
(Photo by David Graham)

Roman pottery industry

Roman potter from Alice Holt by Victor Ambrus



Most of the local Roman sites are associated in some way with pottery kilns which were part of the far-reaching Alice Holt pottery industry, which reached its height in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD.

Excavation of kiln at Country Market
(Photo by David Graham)



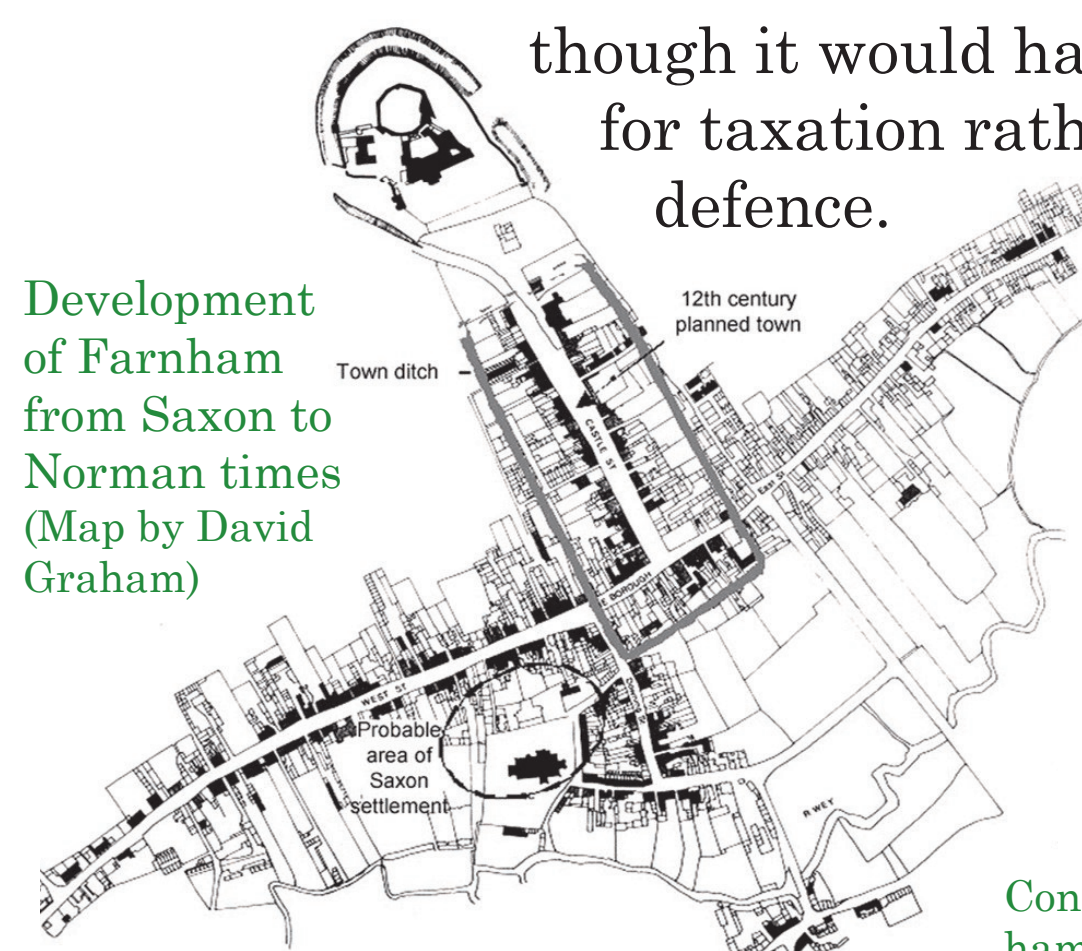
Alice Holt jar from Binsted
(Photo by David Graham)



Medieval planned town

The medieval town was laid out in the late 12th century along what is now Castle Street and the Borough, which shifted the settlement away from the Saxon core near St Andrew's Church. The town ditch which surrounded the houses would have been substantial, though it would have been a boundary for taxation rather than for real defence.

Development of Farnham from Saxon to Norman times
(Map by David Graham)



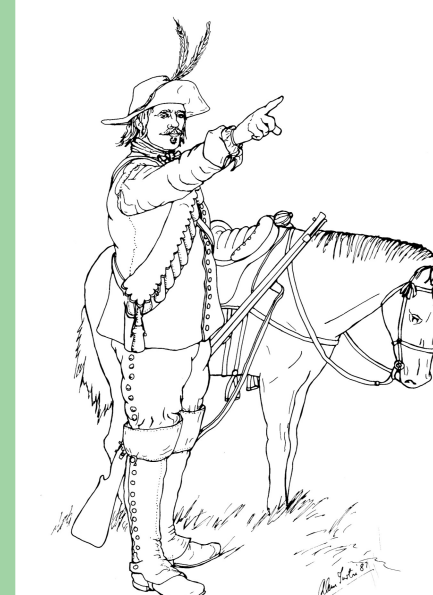
Excavation of town ditch at Bear Lane
(Photo by David Graham)



Construction of Westminster's hammer-beam timber roof by Victor Ambrus, which is believed to have been assembled in 1395 near The Hart

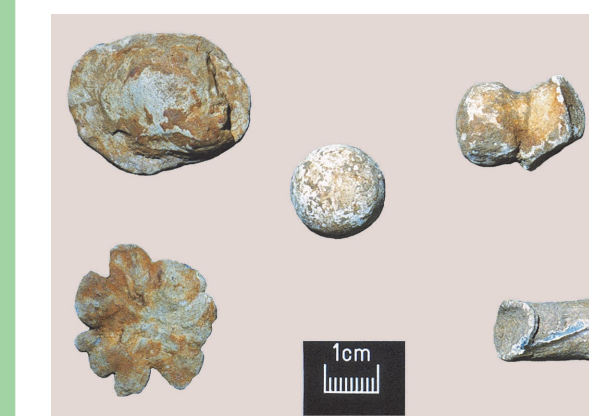


Civil War



Dragoon (mounted infantryman)
(Drawing by Alan Turton)

During the Civil War (1642-1651) the castle was strategically significant, due to Farnham's key position in the south-east. The Battle of Farnham took place on 16 November 1643, and its skirmish lines were able to later be traced through the musket balls and other battle debris left behind.



Munitons and powder caps from Park
(Photo by David Graham)

Civil War scene by Victor Ambrus



Learn more about the fascinating history of our town and the hidden heritage below our feet by exploring the Museum of Farnham, Farnham Castle and other local sites. Visit www.farnham.gov.uk for more information, including links to the town's informative guides and leaflet series.