

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:

Bronze and Iron Age hoards

A small number of bronze objects – from which the Bronze Age (2200-700 BC) gets its name – are known from small hoards and stray finds in the local area.

By c.150 BC gold begins to also be used, with coinage commonly exchanged.



Bronze caster
by Victor Ambrus



Late Bronze Age penannular ring from Crondall
(Photo by Barry Wood)

Iron Age gold staters c.55-45 BC found in north Farnham
(Photo by David Graham)



Six Bells Roman Villa

One of the best known Roman sites in Farnham is the 3rd-4th century AD 'villa complex' at Six Bells – now Roman Way – where a house, bath complex, aqueduct and possible pottery works were excavated in the 1940s by a team which included a group of POWs.

Excavation of bath building at Six Bells (Photo by AWG Lowther)



Selection of finds from Six Bells, including samian ware, oyster shells and painted plaster
(Photos by Anne Sassin and David Graham)



Waverley Abbey

In 1128 the first Cistercian monastery established in Britain was founded on the floodplain of the River Wey, although flood-damage was so bad that by c.1200 most had to be rebuilt. By 1278 the new abbey was completed, and most of the surviving buildings – which are of Gothic style – date to this period.

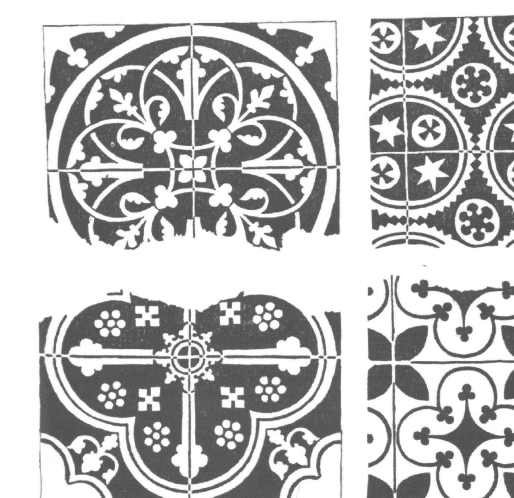


Waverley seal c.1310, showing image of Our Lady with the Holy Church and rose bush
(© Surrey Archaeological Society, photo by Anne Sassin)

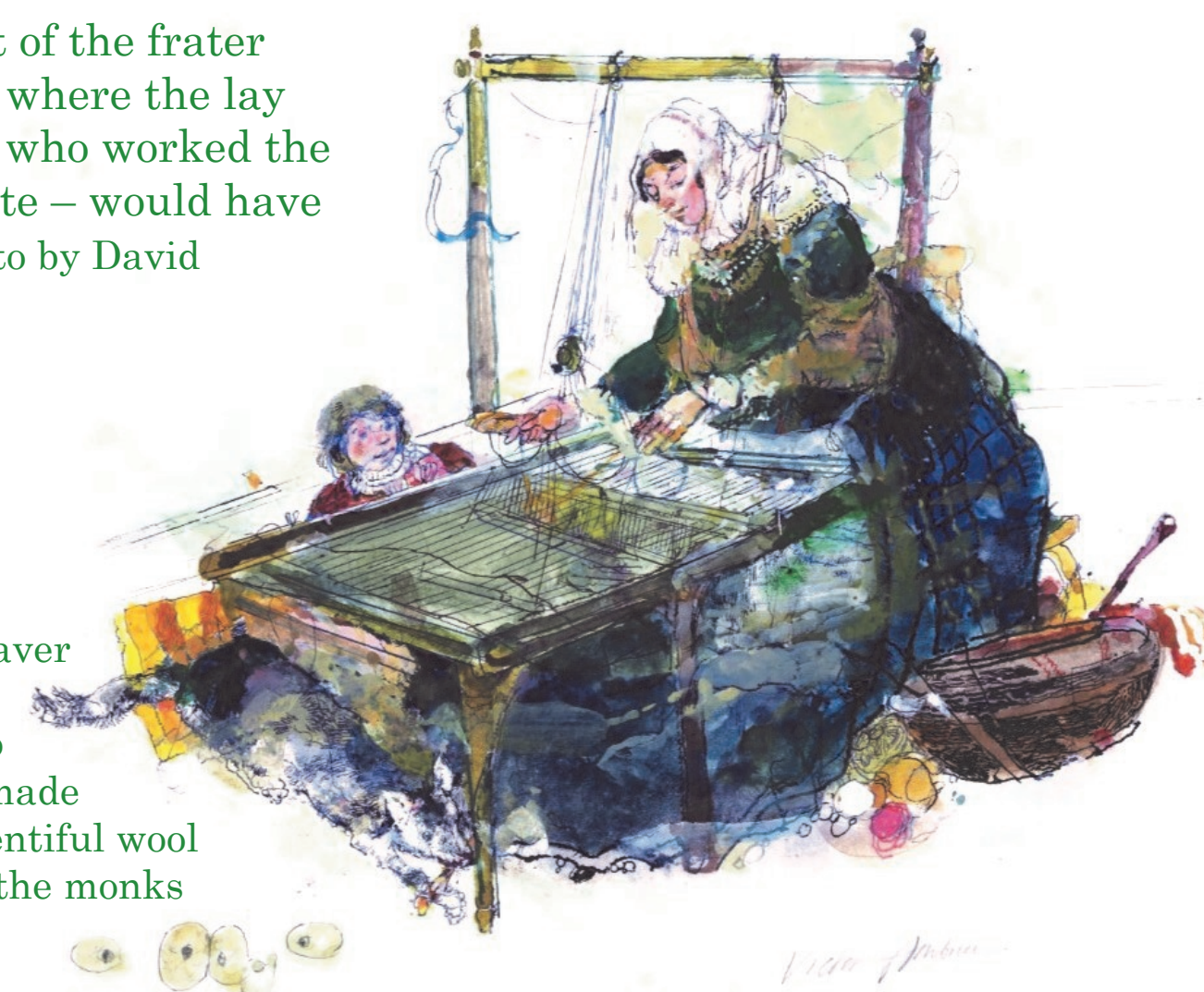


Undercroft of the frater (refectory) where the lay brothers – who worked the abbey estate – would have eaten (Photo by David Graham)

13th century encaustic tile patterns
(© Surrey Archaeological Society)



Medieval weaver by Victor Ambrus, who would have made use of the plentiful wool produced by the monks

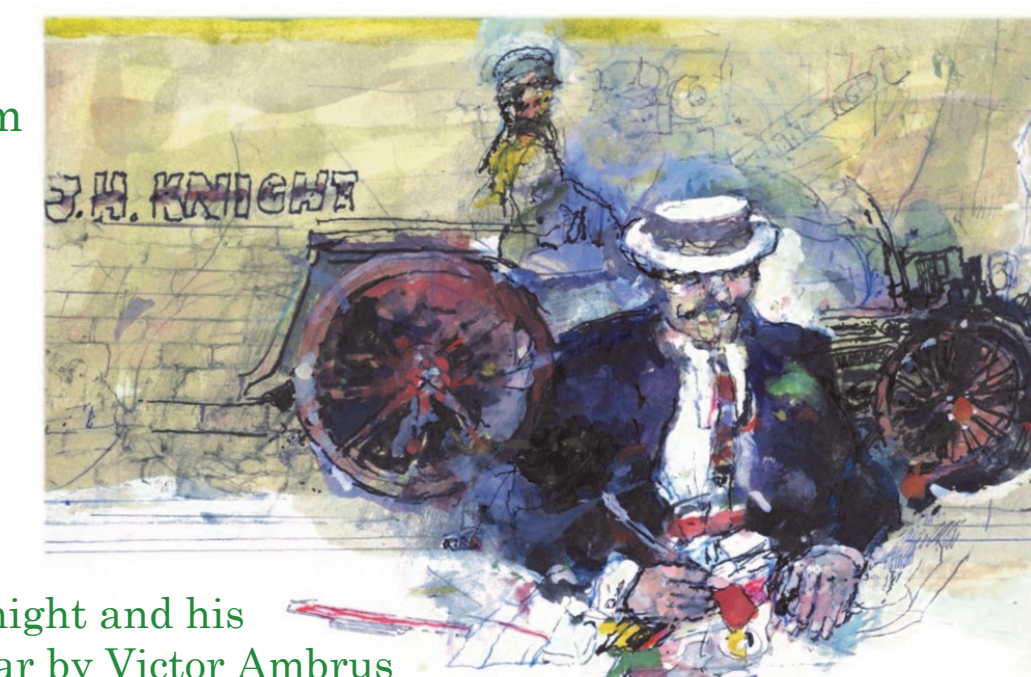


Victorian factories

In addition to breweries, 19th century Farnham was known for its many workshops and factories, which ranged from clock-making to corset production. One particularly famous invention was one of the first petrol-driven cars, designed by John Henry Knight and built at his West Street workshop.



Victorian sequin from Boots excavation
(Photo David Graham)



John Henry Knight and his petrol-driven car 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.