



The Farnham Society  
presents

# Farnham's Green Spaces

Open Spaces Around  
the Town



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## FARNHAM'S GREEN SPACES

### Heritage Open Days with a Difference

This is the second part of the Farnham Society's programme for Heritage Open Days 2020, inspired by two events. One is the Heritage Open Days theme for the year, "Hidden Nature". The other is the Covid-19 pandemic which prevented indoor events – visits to buildings, talks and performances.

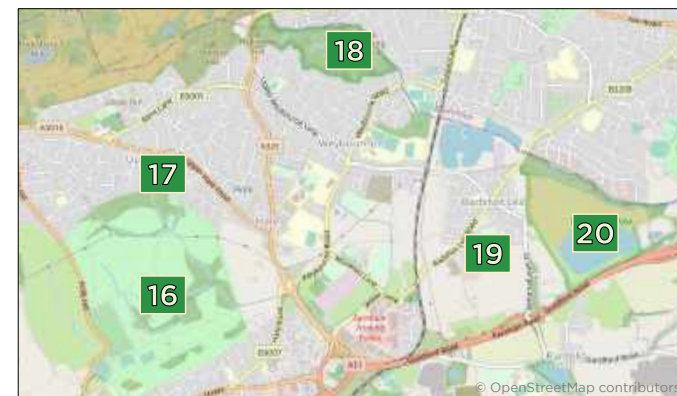
Instead of focussing on built heritage, the Farnham Society has directed the spotlight on to another kind of heritage, the treasured green spaces which give pleasure, relaxation and fresh air to us all, all the year round. But the great outdoors is not just for 2020, so two leaflets have been produced with the intention that they should continue to be available long afterwards.

The two leaflets together offer a collection of 38 fascinating self-guided tours of Farnham's Green Spaces, assembled and recorded by retired tree expert Peter Bridgeman who is well known to many people for his talks and guided walks. Some of the featured areas are quite familiar but others are tucked away in corners which few people know about.

### Green Spaces around Farnham

This leaflet, describing twenty-three Green Spaces around Farnham, follows on from the first, which covers fifteen Farnham Town Parks and Gardens.

The Green Spaces are listed roughly clockwise, north to east, south and west and are open all the time unless otherwise stated.



Sites to the north and north east of Farnham

### Farnham Park Folly Hill, GU9 0AE

**Map 16.** One of the great joys of Farnham, the very impressive 320 acre medieval deer park adjoins the Castle. Developed by the Bishops of Winchester, visited by Royalty and witness to Civil war battles. The northern half is more natural with recreational facilities to the south. There are open grasslands, woodlands, ponds and streams, ancient trees, sporting facilities, including a golf course with café, all maintained by Waverley Borough Council with the help of the Friends of Farnham Park. The Grade II Listed Rangers House is situated in the centre of the park.

There are pedestrian accesses all around the perimeter and car parking off Folly Hill.

### Hale Recreation Ground and War Memorial Wings Road (off Upper Hale Road), GU9 0HT

**Map 17.** Close to Farnham Park, this Waverley Borough Council-maintained public open space offers sporting activities including cricket, football and multi-use courts. There are some good quality trees around the perimeter, with one particularly important group at the Hale War Memorial. The oaks standing there were grown from seeds collected at the site of the Battle of Verdun in France in 1916.





## Rowhill Nature Reserve Cranmore Lane, Aldershot, GU11 3AP

**Map 18.** A 55 acre Local Nature Reserve on the borders of Farnham and Aldershot, owned by Rushmoor Borough Council and maintained by the Rowhill Nature Reserve Society. It is mainly deciduous woodland with chestnut coppice and pines, all managed for timber and wildlife. It was originally part of a private estate producing timber and bricks using on-site clay. There are natural springs which are the source of the Blackwater River. There is small car park off Cranmore Lane.

## Badshot Lea Pond The Green and Recreation Ground, Badshot Lea Road, GU9 9LB

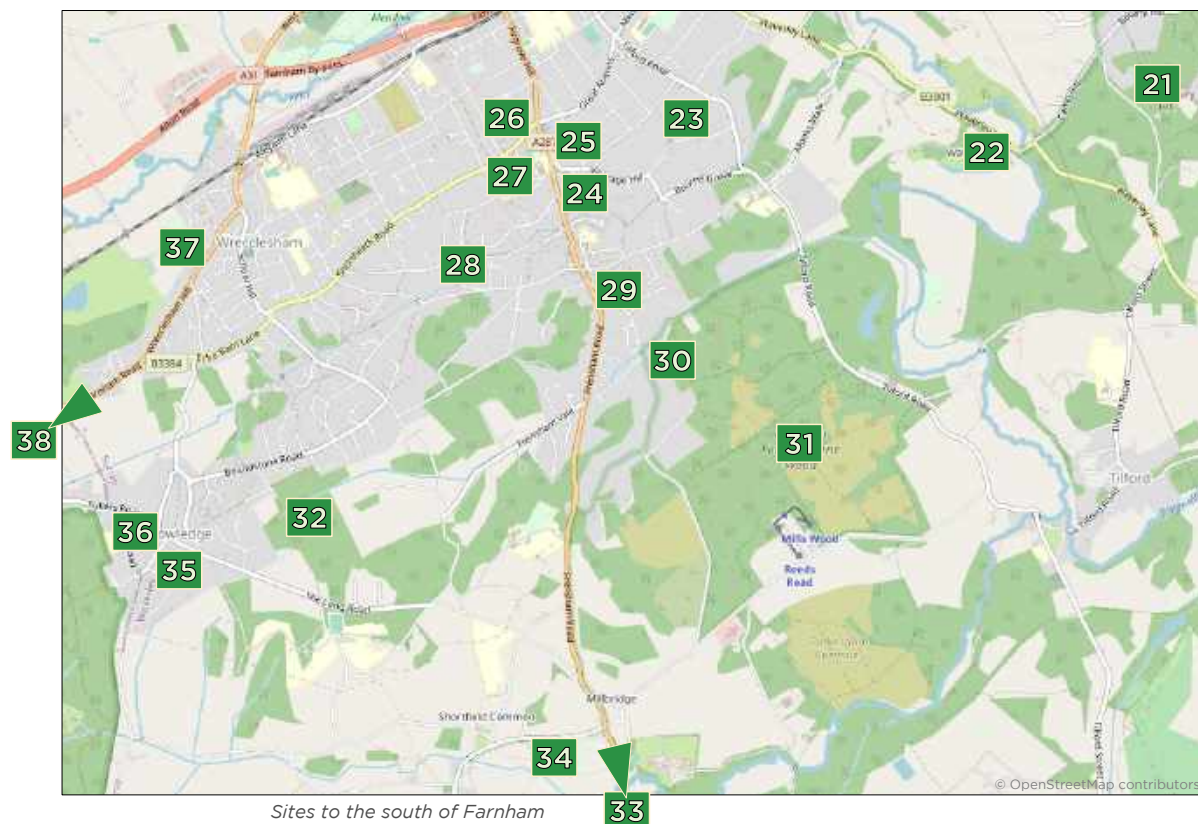
**Map 19.** The pond is a quiet, relaxing spot just a few feet from Badshot Lea Road and opposite the open grassed area of The Green with informal footie and a children's play area. Close by is the Recreation Ground with two football pitches and hard tennis courts.

## Tice's Meadow Nature Reserve Badshot Lea Road, GU9 9LS

**Map 20.** Created in the last ten years from a former sand and gravel quarry this 136 acre site is now an award-winning wetland nature reserve. It is on the borders of Surrey and Hampshire and owned by Hansons who extracted the minerals. However it was up for sale when this leaflet went to press and its future is uncertain. Although quite new, this important reserve has many rare and endangered species thanks mainly to the Tice's Meadow Bird Group. Part of the reserve is open to the public and accessed off Badshot Lea Road close to Aldershot.

## Crooksbury Hill Crooksbury Road, The Sands, GU10 1RF

**Map 21.** This 43-acre wooded hilltop is a hidden gem (hidden in plain sight) with a climb to one of the best views of South West Surrey, East Hampshire and to the South Downs, all set in the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding National Beauty. There is a small car park in Crooksbury Road. There is some more open heathland plus birch and pine woodlands. The public access is maintained by Surrey County Council and the conservation by the Surrey Wildlife Trust.



Sites to the south of Farnham

## Waverley Abbey Ruins Waverley Lane, GU9 8EP

**Map 22.** This is the site of the first Cistercian abbey in England, situated in a loop of the River Wey in what is now called a flood plain. This is perhaps not the best choice of site but despite regular flooding the abbey survived and prospered for over 400 years until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 16th century. Today it is a

very atmospheric peaceful place, steeped in history, owned and maintained by English Heritage. There is a lovely old yew tree which could be 400 years old. Today's links with the abbey include road names like Waverley Lane, Monks Walk, Monks Well and Abbots Ride.





## Paradise Wood

Greenhill Road (entrance next to No. 12), GU9 8JP

**Map 23.** Unless you live in the Greenhill Road or Leigh Lane part of the Bourne, you may well not have heard of this quiet extensive woodland given to the town in the 1920s by Madeleine Septimia Shaw-Lefevre. A popular open space which has become very overgrown which prompted Dr Stan Cockett (1942-2011) and others to form the Bourne Conservation Group to tackle the clearance work with Waverley Borough Council. There is a public footpath through the wood which is now named Stan Cockett's path and Surrey County Council donated a bench in his memory. The woods are mainly deciduous hardwoods with some pine and garden escapes. The clearance work should encourage natural regeneration of native species.

## The Old Churchyard

Vicarage Hill, GU9 8HG

**Map 24.** This small, almost hidden churchyard in Vicarage Hill was the site of the original church of St Thomas-on-the Bourne, built in 1861, which was deconsecrated and demolished when the nearby church was built in 1911. All that remains is the lychgate built in 1888, which is one of Farnham's designated Buildings of Local Interest. It was restored in 2009. The gravestones remain and it is a very quiet place in which to sit and contemplate. There is a small avenue of limes, including a small-leaved lime, plus old yews, cypresses and spring flowers. It is kept tidy by volunteers.

## St Thomas-on-the-Bourne Church Grounds

Frensham Road, GU9 8HA

**Map 25.** Built in 1911 the church has been extended over the last century but the original tree planting in the grounds was well planned, resulting in some stunning trees now over 100 years old. There are cedars to the front and rear, probably the best redwood in town, and a new memorial planting of a fragrant snowbell tree. There is no burial ground but ashes can be scattered in a Garden of Remembrance.

## Batting's Garden

Ridgway Road, GU9 8NN

**Map 26.** This house-plot-sized garden by the traffic lights in the Ridgway Road was donated to the town by Walter Batting, a local businessman and gentleman hop grower, in 1933. It is now maintained by Farnham Town Council. There is a smart new gate with a commemorative plaque. It is a simple open space for locals to sit and rest a while.

## Langham's Recreation Ground

Ridgway Road, GU9 8NS

**Map 27.** A good-sized open space between Ridgway Road and Aveley Lane, named after the founder of the Farnham Herald, E W Langham, who donated the land in 1892. It is a popular public open space but with that comes a litter problem and the Bourne Conservation Group have held litter clearance sessions and made other improvements. There is open grassland, an excellent enclosed children's playground and a wooded area towards Aveley Lane which is rich in wildlife.

## Middle Bourne Lane Community Wildlife Garden

Middle Bourne Lane, GU10 3ND

**Map 28.** This small plot was thought to have been part of a hop-growing area in the Bourne valley. It had become neglected and there were two unsuccessful planning applications for a bungalow. In 1997 ownership passed to Farnham Town Council which manages it with local residents as a community garden. In 2008 the Bourne Conservation Group offered to establish a wildlife garden. This was so successful that the Town Council now includes this garden in the annual Farnham in Bloom competition and it always scores well. It is rich in wildlife including plants, birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles. A brilliant example of community activity, local ecology and biodiversity.

## Bourne Green Recreation Ground

Old Frensham Road, Lower Bourne, GU10 3PU

**Map 29.** A tree-lined public open space maintained by Waverley Borough Council, with sports facilities including a cricket club, junior football, hard tennis courts and a children's play area. The Bourne Show is held here in July each year and is one of the best in town. Money has been donated to rebuild the cricket pavilion.

## Sable Wood

Old Frensham Road, Lower Bourne, GU10 3PT

**Map 30.** A privately owned 6-acre woodland just off Old Frensham Road in the Bourne. The owner has much improved the site in recent years for the benefit of wildlife and it is open to the public. The management has entailed the removal of invasive species and the planting of native trees. Another unique feature is the dead hedges, or linear stacks of dead trunks and branches to limit access to some areas and to provide shelter and habitats for wild creatures. A great example of sound management for wildlife, biodiversity and the public.







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## Bourne Wood and the RSPB Reserve at Farnham Heath

**Tilford Road, GU10 3RW**

**Map 31.** This land was acquired by the Forestry Commission in the middle of the 20th century to grow plantation trees for timber. Towards the end of the century large areas were ready for harvesting and were clear-felled. These now open areas attracted the film industry as from within the site no view of modern life can be seen. Many major films and TV programmes were filmed here and eventually full planning permission was obtained. In 2002 the southern half of the site, some 250 acres, was sold to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and they established the Farnham Heath Nature Reserve. The recreation of heathland entailed clear-felling - but remember this was the original intention. The heathland has already attracted birds like crossbills, nightjars, Dartford warblers and woodlarks plus a range of other creatures. The site is within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with far-reaching southerly views. Always open but with instructions to keep dogs on leads during the ground nesting season.

## Ten Acre Wood

**Clifton Close, off Boundstone Road, GU10 4TP**

**Map 32.** Like Paradise Wood this local nature reserve is little known other than to local residents in Boundstone. It is mainly a natural woodland with birch and other hardwoods. There are some invasive garden escapes and what management there is should be to control these. What may appear as neglected does however provide a great wildlife habitat. There are public footpaths around and through the woodland.

## Frensham Ponds

**Frensham, GU10 2QB and GU10 3BT**

**Map 33.** The two ponds just to the south of Farnham were constructed in the 13th century to provide fish for the Bishops at Farnham Castle. The vast areas of open heathland and woodlands are within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and are Sites of

Special Scientific Interest. They are owned by the National Trust and managed by Waverley Council.

The Great Pond is now a very popular, at times over-popular, attraction with beaches, a café, plus sailing and angling clubs. Parking is free except at weekends.

The Little Pond is more tranquil with lovely waterside walks and a wildlife reserve. No swimming for dogs or people but there is angling for club members. There is a medieval ironstone dam at the northern end to control water levels. There is one large and two small car parks plus a small café.

## Hollowdene Recreation Ground

**Shortfield Common Road, GU10 3BW**

**Map 34.** This delightful large green space was presented to Frensham Parish Council by Madame Dorothy Huitfeldt in 1948. It provides sporting facilities, run by clubs, for cricket, tennis and bowls. There is also a children's play area and occasional football. It is all set amongst very impressive trees including the best sycamore, if not the best tree, in the Farnham area. There are extended walks down through grazing land to the River Wey.

## The Square

**Rowledge, GU10 4AA**

**Map 35.** A tiny green in the centre of Rowledge but big enough for a couple of seats, a good-looking wooden bus shelter built for the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002 and some unusual trees including a strawberry tree and rare maples.

## Rowledge Recreation Ground

**School Road, GU10 4BW**

**Map 36.** Situated between Fullers Road and School Road with a well-equipped children's play area, including all-weather table tennis. It is the home of Rowledge cricket club and a bowls club as well as hard tennis courts. The Rowledge Village Fayre is held during the spring bank holiday.

## Wrecclesham Recreation Ground

**Riverdale, GU10 4QR**

**Map 37.** Off Riverdale, with cricket, football and several floodlit tennis courts. The Wrecclesham Village Fayre is staged here in late June. Adjoining is the Badshot Lea football ground.

## Alice Holt Arboretum

**Gravel Hill Road, GU10 4LQ**

**Map 38.** Alice Holt forest dates back thousands of years and is now part of the South Downs National Park. The Forestry Commission acquired some 850 acres of the land in 1924 as there was a huge demand for timber and in 1946 they opened their southern Research Station. Part of the early research was to evaluate a range of trees from all parts of the temperate world and these were planted in what is now called the Arboretum. This became neglected in the 1980s but is now being restored by the Alice Holt Community Forum. There is a good range of exotic conifers, hardwoods and a self-conducting tree trail. There is a small car park which is open all the time.

This survey of green spaces in and around Farnham has been researched and produced by Peter Bridgeman M.Hort(RHS) and members of the Heritage Open Days committee. Photos courtesy of Peter Bridgeman, Gillian Ward and David Lang.

The committee would also like to thank Cliff Watts of the Badshot Lea Community Association, Noel Moss of the Bourne Conservation Group, Rachel Audsley and Chris Bonner from Frensham Parish Council, and Mary Braddock from the RSPB.

Published by the Farnham Society, [www.farnhamsociety.org.uk](http://www.farnhamsociety.org.uk). The sites featured in this leaflet are all open to the public. Visitors enter at their own risk and are reminded that government advice and restrictions in force at the time should be observed. The information given here was correct at the time of going to press, July 2020.