

The Farnham Society presents

FARNHAM'S GREEN SPACES

Heritage Open Days with a Difference

This leaflet covers the first 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.



Town Centre Parks and Gardens

This leaflet describes fifteen Farnham Town Parks and Gardens, while the second leaflet covers twenty-three Green Spaces around the town. They are open all the time unless otherwise stated.

The Victoria Garden

Brightwells Road off South Street, GU9 7RF

Map 1. The former open-air swimming baths on this site closed in 1981 and the space was converted into this award-winning, beautiful, small and almost secret garden. It is full of trees, herbaceous plants, bulbs, shrubs, climbers and with seating, an outdoor chess game, sculpture and plaques giving its history. The impressive entrance arch was designed by the architect Harold Falkner for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. Maintained by The Farnham Swimming Baths Trust and skilful volunteers. Open during daylight hours.

Haren Garden

South Street between the Council Offices and the river, GU9 7RN

Map 2. This small garden commemorates the help and friendship given by the people of Farnham to the town of Haren in the Netherlands. This happened at the end of WWII when we dropped food parcels by parachute, and again in 1953 following the North Sea floods. There is a good display of tulips in spring.

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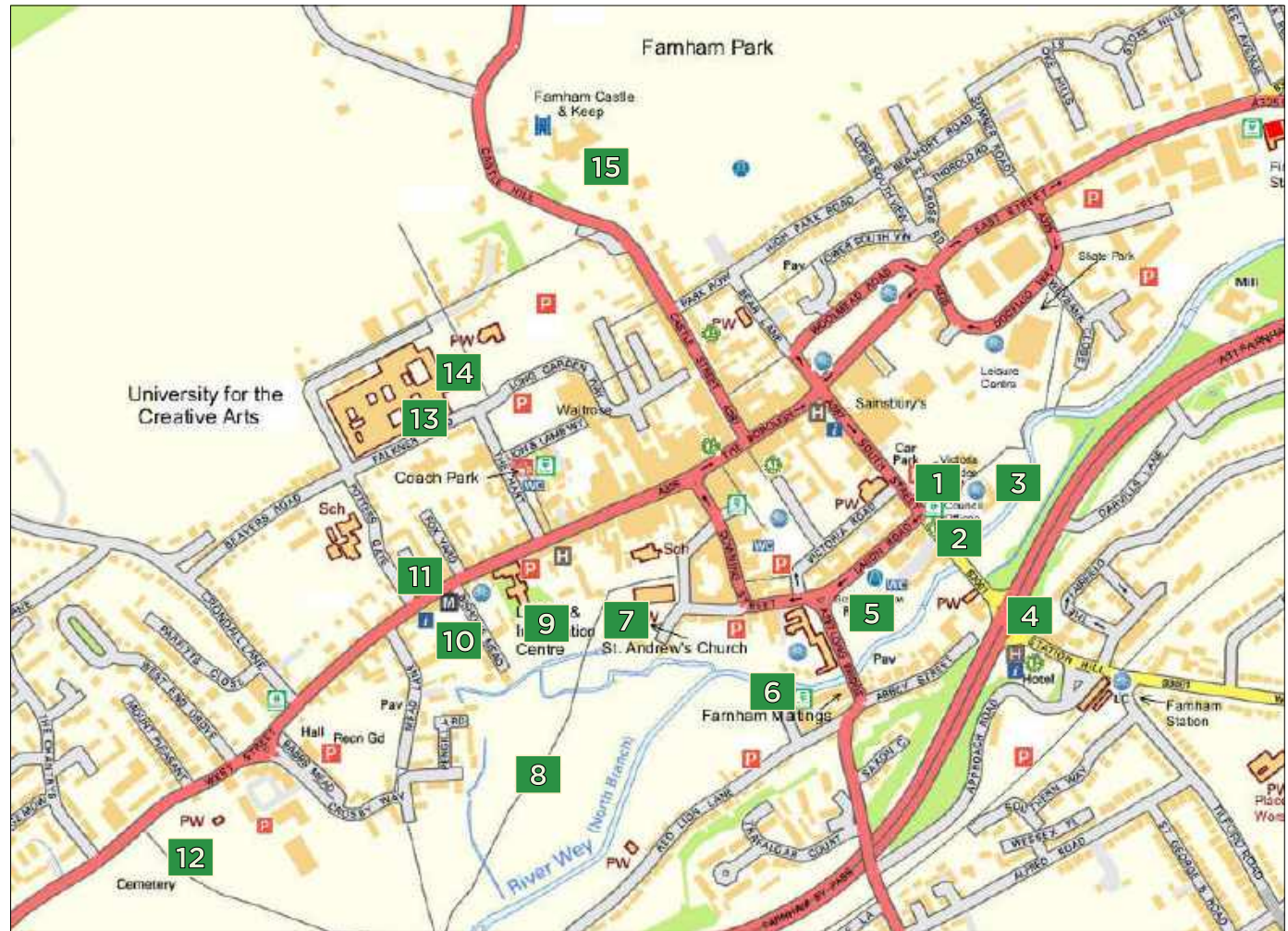


Borelli Walk
off South Street near A31 junction, GU9 7RN

Map 3. A 2.5 acre riverside park opened in 1953 and named in honour of Charles Borelli (1873-1950) a local businessman, councillor, conservationist and Chairman of Farnham UDC. The park contains a good range of trees, open grass areas and seating along the river. The peace and tranquillity of the park was shattered in 2018 when the Brightwells Yard construction traffic was diverted over a bridge to the by-pass, effectively cutting the area in two and causing a great loss of quality trees. The unattractive pedestrian tunnel will be there for a while yet. *Always open, unless closed for Brightwells construction work.*

North Downs Way
off Station Hill at Hickleys Corner, near GU9 8AA

Map 4. Starting at Hickleys Corner (the A31 traffic light junction) this National Trail covers 153 miles to Dover. It goes through the picturesque Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Kent Downs AONB. The first 11 mile section takes you to Guildford along the River Wey, past Moor Park and the villages of Seale, Putterham, Compton and Loseley Park.





Gostrey Meadow

Union Road/Longbridge, GU9 7PT

Map 5. This site once known as Gostreeds was at one time part of the grounds of the Bush Hotel, but in Victorian times was being used as a rubbish dump. It was converted into this 2.7 acre public park by the former Farnham Urban District Council in 1909. It is now a very popular place for people to meet and relax, with a full calendar of events run by Farnham Town Council.

All set by the river, there is a bandstand, a water fountain designed by architect Harold Falkner in 1910, and a children's play area. The town's main War Memorial (1919) is next to the South Street entrance. Trees include a good range of natives and exotics and an annual carpet bedding display, in 2020 featuring the 75th anniversary of VE Day.

Riverside garden, Farnham Maltings

Red Lion Lane, GU9 7QR

Map 6. This pretty little garden created and maintained by volunteers is delightfully situated by Farnham Maltings next to the footbridge, on the slope of the river bank. There is pedestrian access from the Waggon Yard car park, in the corner by the river.

Churchyard, St Andrew's Parish Church

The Church Lanes, GU9 7PW

Map 7. The ever-open grounds of the Anglican church (12th century and later) contain the usual rich history of graves and memorials, including two of particular interest. On the south side is a small enclosed garden, a memorial to local resident Alfred Hone, and by the main church entrance on the north side is the impressive family tomb of William Cobbett, (1763-1835) although, surprisingly, his birth year is incorrectly given as 1762! The churchyard has a good range of trees including two ancient yews and an upright Irish yew.

The Bishops' Meadow

between West Street and the A31, GU9 7PS

Map 8. The Bishops' Meadow is next to the River Wey and lies just to the south west of the town. Access is via a footpath from the south-west corner of St Andrew's churchyard. The Meadow is an important ancient agricultural wetland formerly owned by the Bishops of Winchester and now owned and run by the Bishops' Meadow Trust. The 35 acre site is mainly wet hay meadow and rough pasture and acts as a part of the flood plain defences for the town. It supports a rich flora and fauna and is designated a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI).

Garden of Vernon House

West Street (Farnham Library), GU9 7DR

Map 9. Surrey County Council owns and maintains the terraced gardens to the rear of the historic Vernon House in West Street.

This is a quiet oasis with a range of quality trees including an evergreen oak, a mulberry and young maidenhair trees. There is a good sumach tree to the front. Open during library opening hours.

Garden of Willmer House

West Street (Museum of Farnham), GU9 7DX

Map 10. The small walled garden to the rear of Willmer House is a delight with the Garden Gallery, a popular meeting room, a bust of William Cobbett, open grassed areas, herbaceous borders and an education/ kitchen garden.

Trees include a deodar cedar and a honey locust. Open during museum opening hours.

College Gardens

West Street (next to Guitar Village), GU9 7EN

Map 11. Blink and you will miss it, but what is now a small residential cul-de-sac in West Street was, as a plaque confirms, the site of the Royal Military College





1814 -1820. When it closed, it moved up the road to Sandhurst.
Two trees of note are a manna or flowering ash on the road frontage, so called as it is thought that it produced sugary substances on the bark which sustained the Israelites on the exodus from Egypt - manna from heaven. To the rear is what is probably a Japanese walnut.

West Street Cemetery
West Street, GU9 7AP

Map 12. This is one of four cemeteries owned and maintained by Farnham Town Council. The others are at Upper Hale, Badshot Lea and Green Lane. The West Street cemetery, the first to be established in Farnham, was opened in 1856 with an entrance lodge and two small linked chapels (now integrated as a single building) added in 1870. There is a Garden of Reflection and military graves maintained by the War Graves Commission. Notable names buried at West Street include the racing driver Mike Hawthorn and influential architect Harold Falkner. Author George Sturt is interred at the Green Lane cemetery. The trees reflect the sombre nature of the gardens with mainly dark green evergreen conifers, particularly yews which have been planted in burial grounds for thousands of years.



Crafts Study Centre
University for the Creative Arts, Falkner Road, GU9 7DS

Map 13. The very small garden to the front of the Crafts Study Centre contains two striking tree species. Firstly there are two specimens of a hardy palm from the Far East called the windmill or Chusan palm and secondly a Katsura tree, a small tree with heart-shaped leaves, good autumn colour and the falling leaves smell of caramel or burnt sugar.

UCA Sculpture Park
(Evelyn Borelli Garden of Rest)
Long Garden Way, GU9 7DS

Map 14. Opened as a sculpture park in 1998 this attractive green space adjacent to the foyer entrance to the University for the Creative Arts contains a range of sculptures set in grassed areas surrounded by trees. As well as common species like birch, maples and planes



there is the odd rarity such as a Kashmir rowan with marble-sized white fruit and a Persian ironwood tree.

Grounds of Farnham Castle
Castle Hill, GU9 OAG

Map 15. On high ground to the north of the town, the 5-acre grounds surround the Bishops' Palace and keep (12th century and later, with Grade I and Grade II Listed Buildings). The keep and surrounding area are classified as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Other features are Waynflete's Tower (15th century) and there are wonderful views over the town. The Bishop's Steps leading up from Castle Street are worth climbing to read a plaque describing its history. The grounds contain some interesting trees including large exotic conifers, an old topped maidenhair tree and, more unusually, a shagbark hickory introduced from the USA. Normally open except during wedding receptions.

For Green Spaces around Farnham, see the second leaflet.

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, Allan Arthurs 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. 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.