



# The Farnham Society

## 76<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting

### Heritage Open Days

HODs 2022 was planned to mark a return to normality, following the constraints which arose out of the Covid-19 pandemic. For the first time since 2019, we were able to include live indoor events, with illustrated talks and visits to buildings. We drew up a large programme, with a number of the events reflecting the National Trust theme of Inventions, Industry and Innovation. To accommodate all of our planned activities we added an extra day at the beginning of the ten day period declared by the National Trust. Farnham Mayor Alan Earwaker introduced the festival, which started with a talk on John Henry Knight, and how from his background in agriculture he became something of an innovator in agricultural equipment. This led him to build his petrol engined car, the first (or one of the first) to be built in England.

Towards the end of the first day came the sad news of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The hosts at some of the venues (the Castle and Masonic Centre) decided not to open, out of respect for our late queen. Under official protocol, civic buildings were closed for public events over the period of mourning. The Council Chamber thus became unavailable for two of our scheduled talks. The talk on Camouflage at Farnham Castle did not proceed – those who came to our last AGM will remember Roy Waight speaking on the topic. The presentation on another local industry, Abbott's of Farnham Coachbuilding, was relocated at short notice to Badshot Lea Kiln. Our thanks to Cliff Watts and the Badshot Village Hall committee.

Otherwise the programme went ahead as planned, with tours, walks and talks enjoyed by our many visitors. In a further reference to local industry, we featured a new venue, High Mill, one of many water mills that used to work along the River Wey. The mill building dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and still has the original wooden mill gear. A talk on the Westminster Hall roof – constructed in Farnham in the 14<sup>th</sup> century then transported 'flat packed' to Westminster – looked at a major innovation in building structure, and was topical, with the Hall used for the lying in state of the late queen.

Our thanks to all of the hosts who generously opened properties, and to the guides and volunteers who led visitors during the festival.

For the HODs committee, HODs is a year round task, with planning of the 2023 festival starting once the 2022 festival was over. This year's theme (2023) is Creativity Unwrapped, and work on the programme is well underway, to give some interesting activities this coming September. Brochures will hit the streets in July.

Shaping our future, protecting our heritage