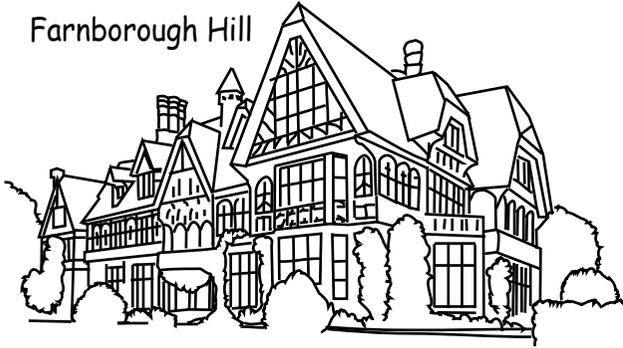


## Farnborough Hill



From 1881 to 1920 this was the home of the Empress Eugenie, widow of Napoleon III of France. She died in 1920, and in 1926 it was sold to the nuns of the Hillside Convent School who used it at first as dormitory accommodation. The

Second World War saw the whole school moved to Farnborough Hill, and it has become Farnborough Hill School. Much has been added including a chapel designed by the architect Adrian Gilbert-Scott.

At the same time as the house was sold, the parkland to the west of the hill was sold and became housing, the Empress Estate, apart from the southernmost area which exists today as Queen Elizabeth Park. The road names reflect the origins of the estate, which the Empress used to call 'Compiègne'.

## The Abbey

Eugenie brought the bodies of Napoleon III and their son, the Prince Imperial Louis Napoleon, killed in the Zulu Wars in South Africa, to be buried in the church and mausoleum on the hill between St Peter's and Farnborough Hill. In 1903 this church became St Michael's Abbey. A Benedictine order of monks live in the monastery.

## Farnborough Place

After the title of Lord of the Manor was sold in 1883 the old manor house was lived in privately, and early in the 20th C it became a preparatory school for boys.

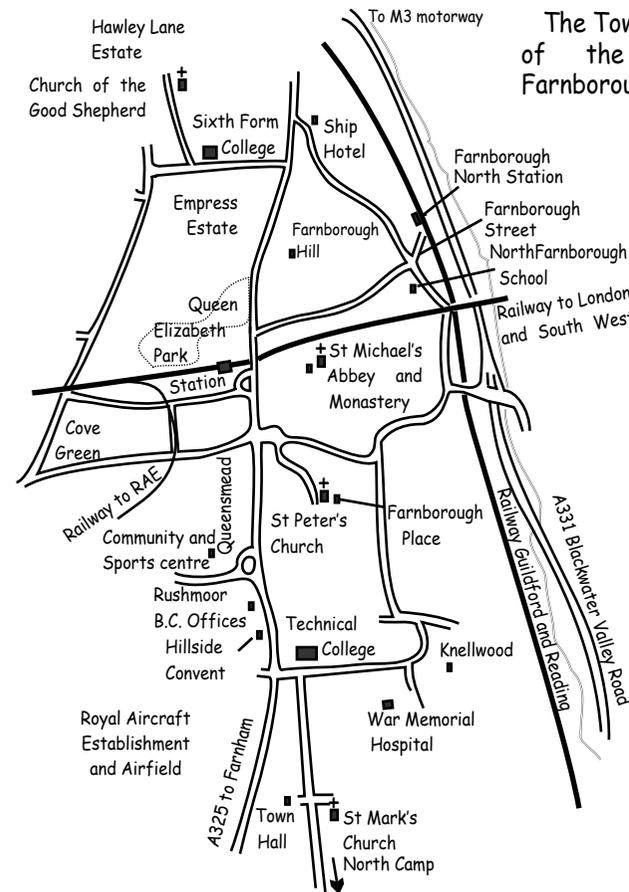
Then in the late 1920s it became a nursing home, after which it became a hotel much used by RAF and Army officers. In the 1950s it was used by Power Jets and was a base for the International Turbine School. From Power Jets developed the National Gas Turbine Establishment at Pyestock, to the west of Farnborough. In the late 1950s the house was threatened with demolition, but was saved to become in 1962 the home of St Peter's School, which moved from its old building near Farnborough Street.



# Farnborough Parish Church

## THE PARISH IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Change happened faster than ever, and the population of the town grew, until at the end of the 20th C. it had reached about 60,000. Not all of this was within the parish, but includes areas such as North Camp and Cove. This was fuelled by the aviation industry and the easier access by railway and road to London and other parts of the country. Farnborough became suburban, a commuter area. Many who lived in Farnborough worked in London, about an hour away by train, while Reading and Guildford were about 30 minutes away. Schools and other services followed. As well as several schools for each age range, Farnborough has a Sixth Form College on the site of the old Grammar School, and a large Technical College.



The Town Hall was built at the turn of the century, after the Farnborough Urban District Council had been formed, opposite St Mark's Church, at the North Camp end of the town. Rushmoor Borough Council, the new local authority formed in 1974, built its offices back in the parish. Rushmoor incorporated Aldershot within its area. The borough took its name from Rushmoor Arena, a military showground constructed at Rushmoor Bottom in 1923.

As traffic increased, 1994 saw the completion of the Blackwater Valley Relief Road linking the M3 to the north with Farnham to the south.



Airship Hanger

## Farnborough and Aviation

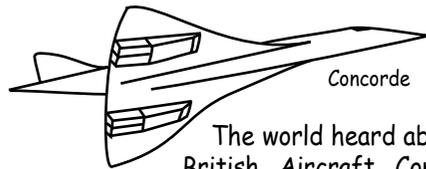
The army found the open common land of Farnborough ideal for testing its observation balloons, so moved the Army Balloon Factory here in 1905.

The work progressed to man-lifting kites with the chief instructor the American, Samuel Cody. He and others also worked on airships, and large hangars were built for them. While this work was going on Cody financed from his own pocket the first British powered aeroplane, which in 1908 flew a quarter of a mile across the common in 27 seconds. Unfortunately this flight ended in a crash, and the War Office ignored the work on the aeroplane and continued with airships. But after Geoffrey de Havilland, away from Farnborough, had built the successful BE1 in 1911 the Balloon Factory became the Army Aircraft Factory in 1913, the year Cody died in an air crash.

The Royal Flying Corps had been established by 1913 and Farnborough was building aeroplanes for civil and military use. The First World War meant that more and more aircraft were needed and by 1916, 5000 people were employed, 3000 of them women. This caused problems with accommodation, new cottages were built at Pinehurst, behind the present Rushmoor B.C. offices, and some of the larger local houses requisitioned for the duration of the war. A branch railway was built from the main line into the Factory, of which some track may still be found. In 1918 the Royal Aircraft Factory became the Royal Aircraft Establishment (R.A.E.).

By the late 1930s the common had been fenced in as more sensitive work was being done. 500 people worked there but this rose to over 6000 as the Second World War began. Much secret and innovative work was done here, and for many years after the war. In 1944, before the end of the war, the first successful jet aircraft, the Gloster Whittle, was being tested here. A large test

The Gloster Whittle jet

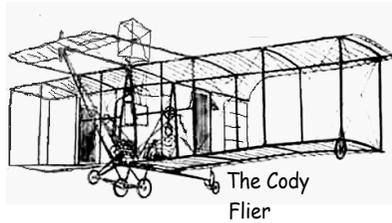


Concorde

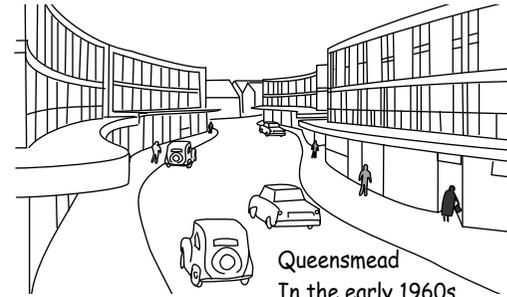
facility was built at the far end of the RAE to aid the development of the supersonic Anglo-French Concorde air-liner.

The world heard about Farnborough through the annual Society of British Aircraft Constructors Show from 1948 onwards, with thousands filling our roads for a week each year. Not only were British planes shown here, but those from overseas also, so the visitors were international.

In 1991, the R.A.E. became DERA, the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency, which was in 2001 split into two organisations: a commercial firm, QinetiQ, and the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl). QinetiQ moved to the other end of the airfield and is still a major employer in the area.



The Cody Flier



Queensmead  
In the early 1960s

## The town

As the military numbers declined in North Camp after the war, the shopping facilities there began to decline. There were also a few shops along Victoria Road leading to Cove, amongst them a blacksmith.

The 1950s saw increasing population in Cove and to the north of the town, and it was decided to build a new shopping centre, Queensmead. This was named after an old house which previously stood on the site, as was the second phase, Kingsmead, a covered shopping facility. While Queensmead began as a road with parking outside the shops, it was not long before it was turned into a pedestrian area, with big car parks to the west. The third stage, another covered facility, was called Princesmead. Other large stores developed around the main car parks. Meanwhile North Camp shops generally remained small.

Instead of building monuments, Farnborough converted a house into Farnborough and Cove Cottage Hospital as a War Memorial after the First World War. When the much bigger hospital at Frimley took over later in the century, this became Devereux House, a centre for the elderly. Similarly in 1947, Knellwood, the Victorian home of William Knell, which had for a while been a hotel, became a residential home as a memorial to those who died in the Second World War.

## The Church

As the century began the south aisle was being built, and it was ready in 1901. This added a lot more seating, but meant losing the original Norman south wall. The opportunity was taken to retain the old Norman south doorway as a feature on the outside of the new south wall. The dormer windows in the roof were also put in. By the 1960s yet more space was needed, and the two extensions at the east end were opened in 1964. The screen was moved to the north extension and the pulpit moved to its present position. A new vestry was added in 1975.

Beside the church a church hall was built in the 1950s, and this was replaced by the Parish Centre in 1998.

The growth of the Hawley Lane estate led to the opening of the Church of the Good Shepherd in 1950 as a daughter church. This daughter came of age in 1997 when it, like St Mark's before it, became a parish in its own right, after being completely rebuilt, and with its own vicar.

Church of the  
Good Shepherd,  
1950

