

Graveyard Family Day

A Heritage Open Day in aid of The Farnborough Society's Victoria Road Funeral Chapel Restoration Fund

Dreadful weather failed to dampen enthusiasm for our Graveyard Family Day on September 10th, raising another £1000 towards our campaign to restore the funeral chapel and secure its future for generations to come. In spite of the setback we suffered as a result of the recent devastating fire, the people of Farnborough have once again demonstrated their love for the building and their support for our project, braving the rain to participate in a range of activities laid on by community groups including Fleet Beekeepers, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, Friends of the Earth, The Royal British Legion, the Urban Wildlife Group and Farnborough Air Sciences Trust Association.

Highlights included a beautiful horse-drawn hearse, a motorcycle hearse and funeral doves, provided by Cooperative Funeralcare, who served teas at their Victoria Road premises, ran a raffle and a competition to guess how many balloons were crammed into a modern funeral car. One of their Funeral Co-ordinators, a very talented lady called Lisa Bradley, astonished us all by creating, for raffle, a cake that was an exact replica of the funeral chapel as it once was, perfect in every detail.

St John Ambulance laid on a superb display of vehicles and equipment for people of all ages to explore and try, Hogg Robinson Group ran a children's tombola and The Farnborough Society sold plants and baked goods.

We again conducted tours of the graveyard, with local historian Jo Gosney focussing on key individuals in the history of Farnborough and Margaret Taylor on the imperial household at Farnborough Hill. Both proved extremely popular, confirming the enormous interest in our town's past.

The Mayor of Rushmoor, Cllr Jacqui Vosper, performed the opening ceremony, speaking of her personal support for our campaign to save the chapel, and made a point of visiting all the exhibits, showing a keen interest. She was particularly pleased to participate in the release of the funeral doves which brought the afternoon to a close. The symbolism of the ritual was unmistakable, especially as the birds made several circuits of the burned-out ruins of the chapel before heading south to their loft.

We are well on our way towards our target of £5000 towards the cost of the restoration and all contributions are very welcome:

Cheques, made payable to The Farnborough Society, should be sent to: Barbara Hurst, 6 High View Close, Farnborough, GU14 7QD.

Bank transfers to: The Farnborough Society Ltd. Sort code 40-35-45 Account 61615181 Reference 'chapel'

Online donations: <https://mydonate.bt.com/events/tfschapel/347630?>