



## Leigh Park Gardens

The walk starts in the car park for Staunton Country Park. To reach it from Emsworth, head north up North Street and Horndean Road, following the road north to the top of the hill.

Take the junction on the left into Barton Road.

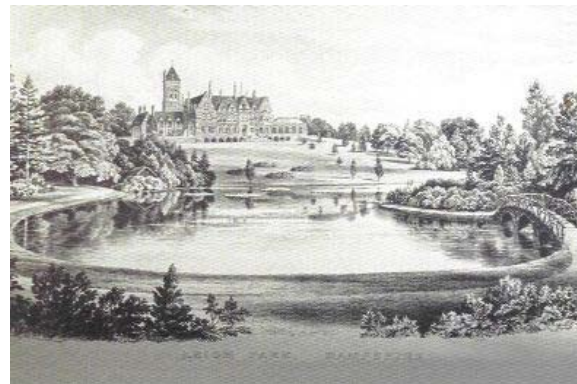
Heading west, follow Barton Road past the hospital and garden centre to its end. At the T-junction with Petersfield Road is a set of traffic lights where you want to turn right.

After about 1 kilometre, and just before you leave the built-up area, thurn left into Middle Park Way, then after about 150 metres turn left into the car park signposted for Staunton Country Park.

*From the car park, walk west through to the road and turn right and walk down to Middle Park Way. Carefully cross over the road and through the gates into Leigh Park Gardens.*

*Follow the footpath round for about 150 until you reach the remains of brickwork the terrace of the old house.*

This is the site of a house built in 1863, the second to be built on this site, and was built for William Henry Stone and designed by Richard William Drew. It was in Victorian Gothic style and was completed in 1865.



During the WW2, the building housed the Scientific and Trials section of the Mine Design Department of the Royal Navy, which was evacuated to Leigh Park House after part of a booby-trapped mine exploded at HMS Vernon (now Gunwharf Quays) on 4th August 1940 and killed five investigation personnel.

In 1944, Portsmouth City Council bought 1,672 acres of the Leigh Park Estate and a further 798 acres in 1946 to build a housing estate primarily for the bombed-out people of Portsmouth.

By 1957 the house had fallen into disrepair and was demolished, but the gardens were preserved as green space for the people of Leigh Park Estate. Today, demolition of the house would probably be seen as some sort of cultural vandalism – but times change.

*Turn right and head north east along the footpath that proceeds past the Ionic temple on your right (The Beacon built in 1830) and on into the woods.*

*Near the end of the woods, turn left onto the path marked with the yellow sign and follow this path until you reach a long footpath crossing your path. Here turn left into the Avenue.*

*After 150 metres turn right onto the first footpath on your right, which takes you in an anti-clockwise direction around the lake.*

*Follow the path round the lake and then up to the top of the hill where you re-trace your steps along the approach road, across Middle Park Way and back to the car park where you started.*