

Haigh Country Park

(Numbers in the text refer to the map overleaf)

Start at the Stables Courtyard

(1). Pass through the archway with the clocktower and turn left. From the south side of the building, outside the Stables Cafe you can just see the Lily Pond with its central fountain. Follow any of the paths that lead towards it.

The oval Lily Pond **(2)** was overlooked by a long glasshouse, little of which now remains. Following the main path farther into the Estate you will pass the Stone Lion **(3)**. The lion was once part of a bridge on the estate of Atherton Hall in Leigh. The bridge collapsed in the early 1900s.

Continuing past the Stone Lion you will see the entrance to the Walled Gardens on your left **(4)**. Continue along the main path to enter a part of the Upper Plantations called the Arboretum **(5)**.

The Arboretum was established in the 1980s and in 1988 became part of a nationwide arboretum. Haigh specialised in maples collecting 80 varieties along with 200 other species of tree.

Continuing along the main route you will cross the miniature railway line and continue past Swan Pond on your left **(6)**.

The path heads deep into the Plantations. The trees were planted in the 1860s and provided employment for the local people of Wigan.

Where the path meets a junction follow the signpost left (saying Plantation Gates) to Mowpin Lodge, now a private residence. The main path from the Lodge goes past a field on the right that was once used as a cricket pitch **(7)**.

Farther along, lost in the undergrowth, are circular remains, possibly of the Estate's dog kennels. Park cottages once stood close by **(8)**.



Follow the route on the map until a clearing on the left indicates an informal path heading towards the canal. At the metal stile follow an improved path alongside the canal. Just before the bridge you will pass the location of a coal washing station **(9)**.

Continue and turn right across the bridge and join the canal towpath on the other side. From here there are extensive views across the Douglas Valley.

Rejoin the main drive where it crosses the canal and turn left. To the right is Hall Lane Lodge, another private residence; the path is now in the Middle Plantations. After the lodge look out for a smaller path on your left and follow it.

The predominant tree species is Beech. The dense canopies block a lot of light to the woodland floor, but rhododendron, originally planted for its ornamental value, is abundant here.

Eventually you rejoin the Main Drive at the bridge over the disused railway **(10)**. This is the old Whelley Loop Line which originally ran north towards Standish.

The walk now travels clockwise around a large geological outcrop called Monks Hill **(11)**, at the centre of which are several industrial remnants with varying degrees of accessibility. On your left, on the other side of Yellow Brook, is the outflow of the Great Sough **(12)**, where a tunnel drained water from the mines into the brook and then into the River Douglas.

The woodland on the south side of the brook is Bottling Wood **(13)**, eleven hectares of semi-ancient woodland which predates the establishment of the Plantations.

At the bridge take the path to the right and follow the course of the River Douglas **(14)**, there are several places where you can get to the river bank.

Continuing clockwise around Monk's Hill you will pass the quarry on your left **(15)**. Called Devil's Canyon, it provided stone for the Estate. The path comes back to the main drive at the railway bridge.

Over the railway bridge turn left and follow another smaller path through the trees. You will see several small ponds and marshy habitats. Arrive back at the Main Drive close to Hall Lane Lodge and turn left to head back towards Haigh Hall.

Shortly after crossing the canal bear left along a stony path that goes uphill through the trees. This brings you back to the Main Drive. Turn left.

The route brings you to the main entrance of Haigh Hall **(16)**, a Georgian building built between 1827 and 1840. The stone came from Parbold and the timber from the Earl of Crawford's estates in Jamaica.

Continuing past the Hall brings you back to the Stables Courtyard and a chance to catch your breath and have a drink in the Stables Cafe. And on your way out, take a moment to go to the main entrance to see the stocks next to the entrance gate **(17)**.

A brief history of Haigh Country Park

The name Haigh comes from the Anglo Saxon word Haga meaning an enclosure or a secure area to house livestock.

The earliest recorded inhabitants of the Hall were the Norreys family who lived there at least as early as 1193.

The Bradshaghes arrived at Haigh when Sir William married Lady Mabel Norreys (from the story of Mab's Cross) around 1295.

Sir Roger Bradshaigh died in 1770 without leaving an heir and the Estate passed to the Lindsays through his great niece Lady Elizabeth Dalrymple who married Alexander Lyndsay, 6th Earl of Balcarres.

Their son James built the current Hall between 1827 and 1840. It was eventually given over to Wigan Council in 1947.

WALK 1 - The Red Route

Haigh Country Park

ROUTE ●●●●●

Approximate distance: 9 kilometres (approx. 5.6 miles)

Allow 2-3 hours



Haigh Country Park is full of historic features and woodland habitats. This walk follows a circuit around the Park.

Most of the route is on hard surfaces, but one or two short sections can be soft underfoot after heavy rain.

Cyclists can join the circuit from the canal towpath or the cycle route along the disused railway line in the southern section of the Park. Again short sections of the route can be too soft or narrow to cycle along.

Bus services run through Haigh village to the north and stop at the Plantation Gates to the south.

1 Features described on the reverse of this leaflet

P Car parking (pay and display)

M Stables Cafe

WC Public toilets

+ First aid point

B Cycle route

BS Bus stop

V Viewpoint

The Stables Cafe serves a selection of meals, snacks and drinks and is open throughout the year except Christmas Day and Boxing Day.



A detour to see the Walled Gardens and Arboretum is worthwhile.

This is the Leeds Liverpool canal and connects to Wigan via Top Locks, just south of the estate.

Remains of park cottages and kennels (difficult to access)

Remains of coal washing station

Little remains of the coal washing station other than a large retaining wall next to the canal and fencing around the top.

Gate posts are visible at the side of the path. You can see the remains of the Estate kennels which are laid out in a circle.

Plantation Gates and gate houses

The Plantation Gates form the southern entry point to the estate. The two lodges were once occupied.

The southern part of the plantations contains Bottling Wood, an ancient woodland. The area close to the River Douglas was once home to a small community of houses, an inn, shops and corn mill.