



Travel

Road: Exton is situated between Oakham and Stamford on the C9316, just north of Rutland Water. Parking is available around the village green.

Bus: 111A from Stamford and RF2 from Oakham. Contact Traveline for more information:
T: 0871 2002233 E: www.traveline.org.uk

Rail: The nearest railway stations are Oakham and Stamford.

Ordnance Survey Maps

Explorer 234 Rutland Water
Landranger 130 Grantham

If you require further information regarding this leaflet or require it in an alternative format please contact Rutland County Council Highways at the address below:

Rutland County Council Highways
28 - 34 Station Approach
Oakham, Rutland
LE15 6QW
T: 01572 771117
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W: www.rutland.gov.uk/row



Produced by Fitzpatrick Woolmer Creative - 0800 130 3630



Exton

Exton - meaning "ox farm" is mentioned in 1185 as Exton Park - 'a wooded farm, enclosed for hunting deer'. It was Rutland's largest park, at one time covering 1,500 acres and with a herd of 500 deer! Following the Norman Conquest the land was owned by the de Brus family, passing, by marriage to the Harringtons in the early 16th century. The Harringtons were the most important family in Rutland. The most powerful was Sir John Harrington, created Baron Harrington at the coronation of King James I of England. This elevation became a mixed blessing when he was made guardian of James' daughter, Elizabeth. The high cost of entertaining her, without a suitable allowance, ruined him. He minted his own money, made of brass, but this was valueless, leading to the saying "not worth a brass farthing".

After his death in 1613, the estate was sold to pay creditors, being purchased by Sir Baptist Hicks, a London Mercer, money lender and a contractor for Crown lands. His daughter married the 1st Baron Noel. The Noel family took over the estate and have kept it to this day. Sir Baptist Hicks purchased another estate, Campden in Gloucestershire, and was created Viscount Campden. This title is now bestowed on the Earl of Gainsborough's eldest son. The present Viscount Campden lives in Exton Hall.

This unique building was designed for Earl Gainsborough by Stamford architect William Legg in 1786. The brief was for 'a Gothic building by the pond'. Referred to in building records as 'the Pond House', the summerhouse soon became known as Fort Henry, although no one is sure of the origin of this name.

Fort Henry

By the 1950's the building was in decline with the roof propped and leaking and much of the internal plasterwork fallen. Despite this artist and writer Barbara Jones described the scene in the following terms.

'The path leads to a green clearing on the water's edge, facing east and shaded by high trees. Here stands Fort Henry, a pleasure-house of the most refined and elegant late eighteenth-century Gothic, and still exquisite, with the thinnest of ogival arches and feathery pinnacles outlined in white on dark green...



Church of St Peter and St Paul

No Gothic decoration anywhere at any time was better than this'. Then in 1981 a severe fire should have been the death knell for the building, but instead, thanks to the Gainsborough family's determination, it acted as a spur to restoration.

The parish church in Exton dates from the 13th and 14th centuries, but it was heavily restored in Victorian times. A storm in 1843 caused extensive damage including the demolition of the spire. As a result there is little inside the church to remind you of its function as a medieval church - only a late 14th century font, carved from single piece of stone and a small piscina (washing basin) in the south corner of the north transept showing where an altar once stood. The limited amount of stained glass dates from the later 1800s and the wooden screen across the tower arch from the 1930s. The most striking feature of the church however, are the many fine and detailed family monuments dating from the 14th to the 17th centuries.



Exton Walk Number 1

Start from the Fox and Hounds Inn.

- ① Standing with your back to the Fox and Hounds Inn follow High Street to the left of the Green. As you reach the top of High Street on your right you will see the brick piers and tiled roof of the Old Pump House on a small green. At the junction turn left on to West End. After only a short distance take a right onto the road to Home Farm. This leads you past farm buildings to a cattle grid and gate with a sign post for the Viking Way.
- ② Once through the gate turn right and follow the tarmac bridleway sign posted "Bridleway to Fort Henry" as it passes farm buildings and a cemetery.
- ③ On reaching a junction with another pathway turn right to continue along the Viking Way. The bridleway skirts the trees of Tunneley Wood as it starts to veer to the right.

- ④ Turn left at the sign post for the Viking Way footpath. The bridleway to Fort Henry continues on your right. After a short distance the footpath leaves the stone track and passes over a pasture field with stiles at either end before rejoining the track.
- ⑤ After climbing a short hill turn right when you reach a junction with another footpath. After about a mile the path passes through a plantation of young trees leading into Toll Bar Spinney.
- ⑥ Turn right when you reach a crossroads with steps descending on both sides. Take the path heading south that follows the course of the North Brook. You will soon reach two lakes.
- ⑦ Turn right to follow a path that passes between the lakes – lower lake on the left and Fort Henry Lake on the right.



- ⑧ After you pass the lakes there is a fork in the bridleway. Take the tarmac path on the right and continue straight ahead. After about a mile, with Tunneley Wood now on your left, the path curves to the left and rejoins the Viking Way. Now you will need to retrace your route back to the Fox and Hounds Inn.



Exton Walk Number 2

Start from the Fox and Hounds Inn.

- ① Starting with your back to the Fox and Hounds Inn follow Stamford Road around the right hand side of The Green. At the top of the road bear right and cross over on to New Field Road.

- ② At the end of New Field Road cross over a cattle grid and continue along a public bridleway through a grazed field set with large horse chestnuts.
- ③ Passing over another cattle grid the bridleway now curves to the left passing through a quarried area. During the 1960's and 70's ironstone was excavated here by 'Sundew', which at that time was one of the worlds largest dragline walking excavators.
- ④ Eventually you will reach a crossroads. Bridleways are sign posted to your left and straight ahead. You need to follow the tarmac footpath on the right.
- ⑤ Follow the footpath for almost a kilometre until you find yourself at a stile alongside a field gate. Pass over the stile and you will find yourself at the southern end of lower lake. After passing the lake on your left leave the tarmac path to join another footpath signposted to your right.

On either side of the footpath earthworks can now be seen that are all that remains of the medieval village of Horn.

- ⑥ Continue heading south and after a little under a mile you will reach Horn Mill. Turn right on to the road and follow it around the corner. In the distance you will soon see a footpath sign posted on the right.
- ⑦ Turn right and cross over a stile to follow the footpath. The path now roughly follows the course of the stream, heading west and back to Exton.
- ⑧ As you near the village you will reach a junction between two footpaths. On your left there is a path heading west and back to the road but you want the path on your right leading uphill along the edge of a field. Continue along this path which leads on to Garden Road. At the end of Garden Road turn right on to Stamford Road and this will lead you back to the Fox and Hounds Inn.

