

TOP RMHT Stage 06: Blackrod to Entwistle

↔ 10.7 mi | ⌚ 4:55 h | 🏔️ 1598ft | 📏 1355ft | Difficulty moderate



Base Map: outdooractive Cartography; ©OpenStreetMap (www.openstreetmap.org)

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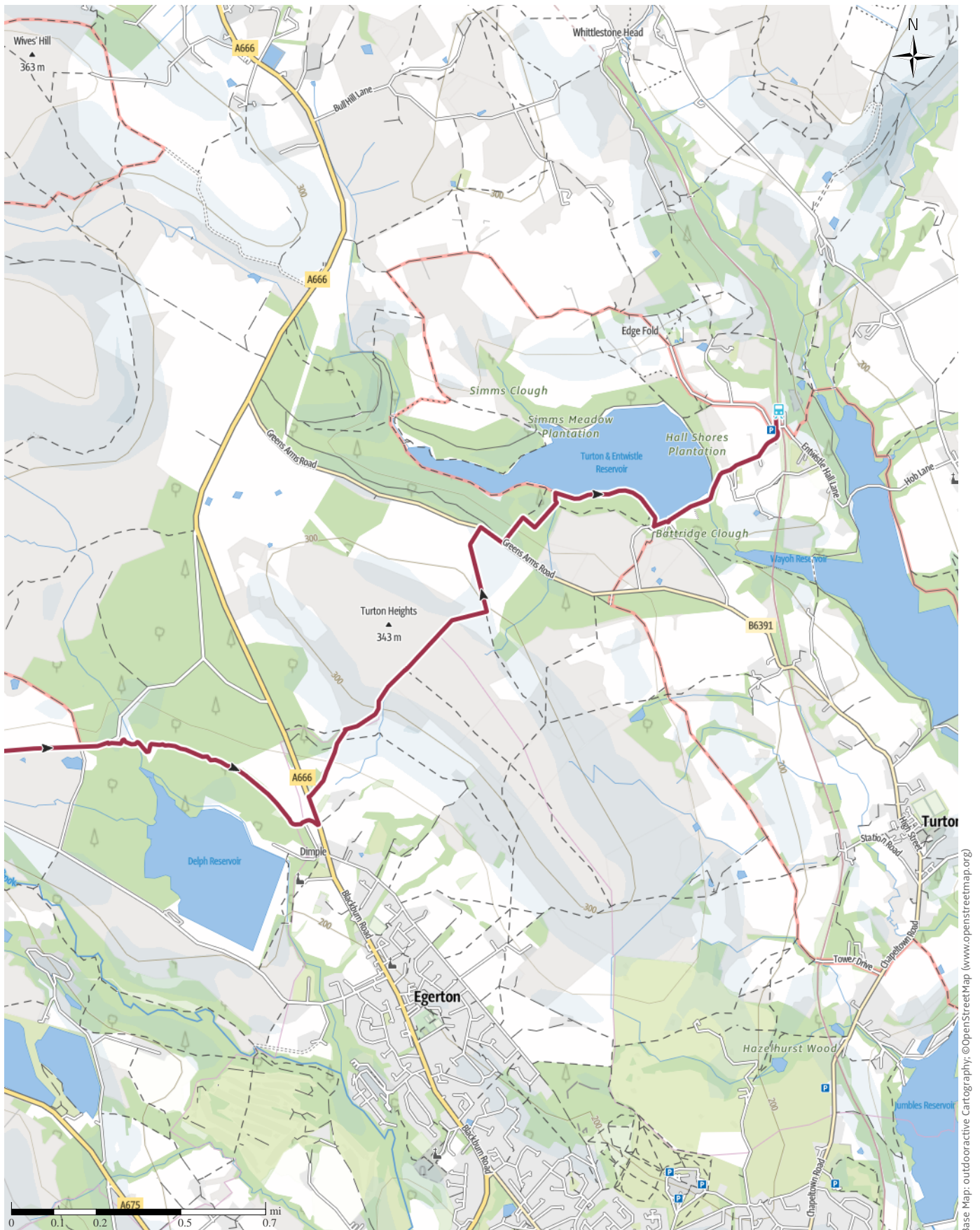
🕒 4:55 h

▲ 1598ft

▼ 1355ft

Difficulty

moderate



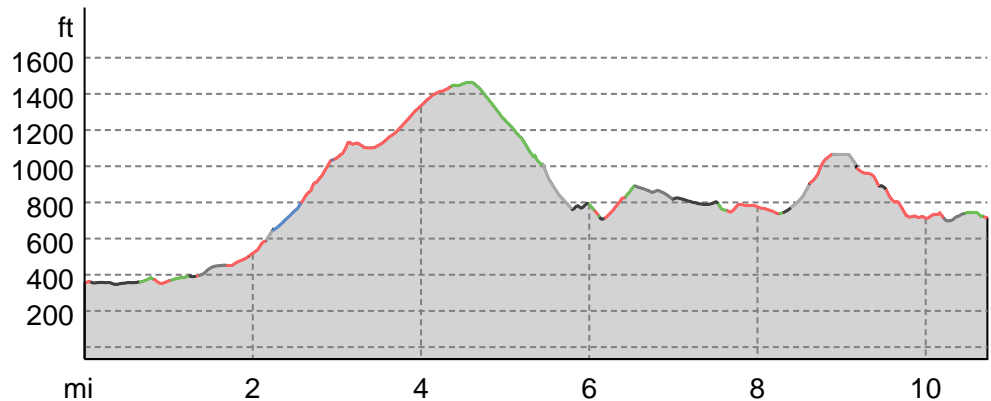
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Road surface

Asphalt	1 mi
Dirt road	0.4 mi
Way	2.1 mi
Path	4.7 mi
Street	1.6 mi
Unknown	0.9 mi

Elevation profile



route data

Hiking route

Distance ↔ 10.7 mi

Duration ⌚ 4:55 h

Ascent ▲ 1598 ft

Descent ▼ 1355 ft

Difficulty moderate

Stamina ●●●●●

Technique ●●●●●

Altitude



Best time of year

JAN | FEB | MAR
 APR | MAY | JUN
 JUL | AUG | SEP
 OCT | NOV | DEC

Ratings

Authors

Experience ●●●●●

Landscape ●●●●●

Community

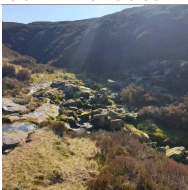
More route data

Properties

Public-transport-friendly Linear route

Multi-stage route Scenic

Summit route



Matthew Ball

Update: September 16, 2021

Stage 6 of the Round Manchester Hiking Trail:

Blackrod to Entwistle via Winter Hill

Starting from Blackrod Station, we head out north-eastwards towards The Tower at Rivington Pike, climbing steeply past Rivington's Japanese Gardens on the way. Then we cross a boggy stretch to reach the summit of Winter Hill, an altitude of 450m above sea level. After passing the television transmitter we pass to the northern side of the moor, from which there are

great views of Belmont Reservoir with its Island, and this is where I plan to stop for an early-ish lunch break. From Belmont, we head east to Dimple through rolling farmland and then wooded country. Finally, we head northeast across the wide moorland of the Turton Heights, before dropping down again to reach a working forest where we might have to dodge logging operations (although it is open to the public). We then proceed along the shore of Turton & Entwistle Reservoir to finish the walk at Entwistle Station - where we also find the Strawbury Duck, which normally has plenty of outside space that can accommodate walkers (the inside is a posh restaurant, which might not be so suitable for a large group of walkers).

Author's recommendation

This route was walked by Manchester Weekend Walkers (a branch of the Ramblers) on Saturday 15th May 2021.

As well as being a walking route in its own

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right, it is also Stage 6 of the Round Manchester Hiking Trail, a 13-stage long distance walk that completely encircles the city of Manchester. The Trail is designed to be accessible by public transport, and to take in a varied selection of the best scenery in the Manchester area. It is 157 miles long in total and has about 6,000m of ascent.

The Trail starts in Macclesfield, and then proceeds in a clockwise direction via the other twelve staging points (Wilmslow, Knutsford, Lymm, Leigh, Blackrod, Entwistle, Rawtenstall, Todmorden, Marsden, Hadfield, Edale, and Buxton) before the last stage takes it back to Macclesfield again to complete the loop.

Since 2019, Manchester Weekend Walkers (a branch of the Ramblers) have been walking each of the stages in order roughly once every four weeks (pandemic permitting), which results in the full loop being completed once every year. The first five stages cover mostly lowland territory, and so are walked in the winter months, leaving the sunnier parts of the year in which to tackle the hills that otherwise nearly surround Manchester on three sides.

As of the summer of 2021, it is intended that the Trail will at some point be registered with the Long Distance Walkers Association as an "official" long distance path, although this hasn't yet happened at the time of writing. However, all 13 stages are available on the Outdoor Active website and can be downloaded as GPX files.

Safety information

Take care crossing the main roads, especially if in a group.

Equipment

Good walking boots and otherwise sensible hiking gear.

Additional information

Tips and hints

Assembly Points:

Once the train has departed you will have the platform

on the railway station all to yourself.

Stiles:

7 on the route, mostly in good condition.

Toilets:

None at the walk start, although there will be at Victoria, Salford Crescent and Bolton railway stations, as well as on the trains. The first facilities that we meet along the way are at the Black Dog in Belmont. After that, there are none till the end at the Strawbury Duck, although there are plenty of wooded areas along the way that provide cover.

Obstructions:

None known as of May 2021.

Timings:

0:25 - The River Douglas

1:30 - Rivington Pike

2:20 - The TV Transmitter at Winter Hill

3:30 - The Black Dog, Belmont

4:30 - The A666 at Dimple

5:00 - The Turton Heights

6:00 - The Strawbury Duck, Entwistle

Bail-Out Points:

The obvious bail-out point is at Belmont, from which there actually buses (although only once every two hours on a Saturday) back to Bolton. Taxis would also be available and the Black Dog provides somewhere to shelter. The next point would be the A666, which you could follow southwards for a short distance to Egerton, an outer suburb of Bolton, from which there would be regular buses and also shelter.

Alternative Routes:

If conditions were very boggy, then I you could follow Brown Hill & Rotary Way to approach Winter Hill instead of the Japanese Garden & Rivington Pike. In the final descent to the reservoir through the forest, there are numerous off-road possibilities, which might come in useful if logging seriously blocks the indicated path.

Lunch Stop:

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This will depend on weather conditions. If good weather, then the path from Winter Hill to Belmont has plenty of ridges in the grass that will make for a good place to sit down. If bad weather, then you are best off trying to grab some shelter at the Japanese Garden – and if very bad then it might be best to try and lunch in the Black Dog.

Pub Stops En Route:

We reach Belmont just after the half-way point of the walk. I have only visited The Black Dog once, in 2018, so I can't vouch for how good it is now, but it was excellent then and it is also a Holts pub, which is surely a guarantee of quality. It has no outdoor space and carpets inside, so they may want you to take your boots off, but it is large enough for a group.

Post-Walk Refreshments:

The Strawbury Duck is basically a gastro-pub, but has a large outdoor space and did use this space very well to cater for walkers in May 2021, when indoor opening was still not allowed. There is anyway nowhere else, so you are looking at the railway platform with 1 hour in between services otherwise.

Turn-by-turn directions

Starting point / trailhead

Blackrod Railway Station

Coordinates:

DD: 53.591057, -2.569723

DMS: 53°35'27.8"N 2°34'11.0"W

UTM: 30U 528480 5938110

w3w: ///turntable.forklift.increases

Point of arrival

Entwistle Railway Station

Turn-by-turn directions

From Blackrod Railway Station, head north-east along Station Road under the M61 and then continue along Crown Lane into Horwich. Staying on the left-hand pavement, look for the turning left onto James Street, about 2/3 mile in to the walk. Instead of following James Street, cross it and find Back Crown Lane running parallel to the main road but slightly to the left of it. Follow this for about 300 yards past allotments on your left before reaching a 90 degree left turning for a public footpath.

The footpath leads away from the housing before bearing slightly rightwards and keeping playing fields away to our right before reaching the River Douglas. We

take the footbridge across the river before turning right to follow it upstream, passing a waterfall on the way. We are now following the Rotary Way, which we continue to follow northwards to Jepson's Bridge. On the way we meet the A673 main road between Horwich and Adlington - the best way to navigate across this is to turn right (keeping the road to your left) at first and then cross it by the entrance to the football club. Then carry on westwards before immediately bearing left to join Dryfield Lane, heading northward and crossing the River Douglas again at Jepson's Bridge.

About 50 yards after the bridge (i.e. not the immediate left turn that follows the line of the river) turn left to follow a bridleway northward into a heavily wooded area. After about 100 yards, bear right at a junction along another bridleway that heads past a car park to your right. Go past the car park and then turn right on a broad track leading to a road. Go straight across the road and follow the narrow, muddy track on the other side that leads upwars through another heavily wooded area. You may have to divine the path at times, but if you do lose it then it is possible to pick it up again by making an improvised path through the trees, bearing in mind that the objective is to keep heading uphill through the wood until we reach Roynton Road. If you do manage to stick with the path you will find that it bends round gradually to the left before taking a 90 degree right turn and heading northward and steeply uphill and crossing another broad track, before joining Roynton Road.

Roynton Road is a broad track that bears leftward and upwards, taking us out of the heavily wooded area. After about 300 yards up (and about 2.4 miles into the walk) there is a clearing on the left from which there are great views of Bolton, Blackrod and Adlington. This is a good spot to stop for a refreshments break, as there is plenty of climbing ahead. We carry on up Roynton Road for about a further 300 yards, at which another track joins us from our right. Carry straight on here but then immediately turn right to follow the staircase up towards the Japanese Garden. On reaching the Lake, follow it around to the right until you reach another flight of steps heading away from the Lake to your right. From the top of the steps, keep heading East North East and uphill for another 200 yards (including another staircase) until you reach another large track, Georges Lane.

Here we perform a left-right shimmy to join the direct path to Rivington Pike at a 45 degree angle to the Lane. After yet more steps, this finally gets us to the Pike, at 363m above sea level and a good place for a well-earned rest and some more appreciation of the views. From the Pike, you will in most weather be able to see the next objective, viz: Winter Hill TV Transmitter. If you

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can't see it, then look for the broad track heading down off the plateaux around the tower and heading north-east, until it comes towards another large track slightly below it - which we cross to reach a stile to continue east-north-east across the moors. These can get very boggy, and we cross the River Douglas one last time near its source. It is only 1.2 miles from Rivington Tower to the TV Transmitter, but it can feel longer than this in wet conditions.

Head straight for the perimeter fence of the Transmitter complex, and then head around the fence to the right to join the service road that leads you north-eastward right past the main TV mast. Shortly after this the road reaches the highest point of the walk, at 446m above sea level, and then reaches a crossroads. We take the straight-on option, although this actually veers slightly rightward to head due east. We are now heading downwards along a broad track that leads us across an area known as Folds Pasture. In good weather this is a suitable area for a lunch stop as there are plenty of hillocks in the grass people can sit on (if not then maybe wait until we reach the Black Dog in Belmont for some shelter).

Anyway, we follow this track for just under a mile from the crossroads till we reach our turn off, which is quite easy to miss. The narrow path turns about 60 degrees left to head downhill towards the left hand side of a small patch of water you can see in front of you, Spring Reservoir. After just over 100 yards, we reach a stile that takes straight across another track to follow the same trajectory. This time you will have to divine the path through a field with broken vegetation, but if you lose it, just head due north across this ground, keeping Spring Reservoir to your right and entering a wooded area near Hill Top Clough. The path by the side of the clough takes us to the A675, which we immediately cross to join the pavement and follow the road to the left to head for the Black Dog.

From the pub, head eastwards along the minor residential road Maria Square, before carrying on along a footpath to join the busier Egerton Road. We are fortunately not on this road for long before we take another footpath turning to the left through a narrow entrance in the dry stone wall stone and heading uphill into wooded territory. This takes us through Lower Whittaker Farm and on to Longworth Road North, which we follow eastwards for about 700 yards before reaching a cross-roads, at which we turn left to join Stones Bank Road, which promptly bends around to the right to carry on heading eastwards for another half a mile, until we reach a crossroads at the entrance to some more woods.

At this point we can leave tarmaced roads and use a

proper footpath, in the shape of the Witton Weaver's Way, which we now follow all the way up to the Turton Heights. From the crossroads, follow the path eastwards (parallel to the road at first, but soon bending away from it rightwards and downwards) to Stones Bank Brook, which we cross over on the footbridge before heading uphill again and carrying on for another 700 yards to the main road between Bolton and Blackburn, the A666. The WWW now turns left and follows the A666 for 150 yards, before taking the signposted footpath turning to the right and uphill. This path can get really boggy, but just keep following it up the hill, keeping the fence immediately to your left, for about 300 yards. Then you will reach a stile leading leftwards into a small enclosed space from which another stile across to the right leads you out again. From here you should be able to see an old Peak and Northern signpost which will direct you to the Turton Heights along the path following the hill behind the sign round to the right. When we reach the top of the Heights after another 500 yards, the Witton Weavers Way heads off to our right, but we leave it to head straight on and carry on over to the other side of the Heights.

From the top of the Turton Heights it should take an average group about 1 hour and 15 minutes to get to the finish point at Entwistle Railway Station. It is worth bearing this in mind as train services are generally once an hour on Saturdays, so you may want to either speed up or slow down from this point in order to manage your arrival time to minimise your wait at the station.

On the way down from the Heights we come across a line of electricity pylons, and we have to bear right here to go around a raised earthwork that would otherwise block our progress. We go just to the right of a pylon to do this, before joining another more straight and distinct downhill path heading north towards more woods. The path through these takes us to Green's Arms Road, which we now follow to the right for about 250 yards till there is a signposted footpath 90 degrees left of the Road, leading downhill into a logging area. We are allowed to go through this, but it is possible the best path to follow might vary due to logging operations. Our objective is the shoreline of the Turton & Entwistle Reservoir, so as long as we are going downhill then we will be heading in fundamentally the right direction. As of May 2021 the ideal path took a right about 200 yards from the road, crossed a very muddy tractor-churned path, and then headed left again to reach the shore.

However you get there, once you reach the Reservoir shoreline it is all plain sailing back to the finish point. Just follow the shore path eastwards, turning left at the car park to keep along the shore line. About a quarter of a mile after this there is a fork in the road at which

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the right track leads away from the shore and uphill towards Entwistle. This is the track that we take for the final 700 yards to reach the Strawbury Duck and Entwistle Railway Station, which, most conveniently, are right next to each other.

Getting There



This route is conveniently accessible by public transport.

Public transport

Trains go to Blackrod Railway Station from Manchester rail stations quite frequently on Saturday's, normally every 30 minutes. Journey time from central Manchester is generally about 35 minutes.

Getting there

From Entwistle Station, Saturday services are generally once per hour and take about 35 minutes to reach Manchester Victoria.

Parking

If you are using the car for part of the journey then the best place to park would be Bolton town centre, as both the outward and return trains pass through Bolton.

Takeaway route for iPhone and Android



Scan QR code, save this route offline, share with friends and more...

Website

<https://out.ac/IljE3Z>

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Winter Hill Television Transmitter

Photo: Matthew Ball, Community

Legend

Topography

	Wood, forest
	Moor, swamp, marsh
	Moorland
	Residential building area with single building
	Industrial real estate with single building
	Cemetery
	Golf course
	Sportsfield, stadium
	Stadium
	Open-air pool
	Vineyard
	Petrograph
	Country border
	State border
	District border
	Contour line
	Special use area
	Nature reserve

Topographic single signs

	Summit cross
	Elevation point
	Rock
	Cave
	Church
	Chapel
	Cemetery
	Palace/Castle
	Abbey
	Monument
	Ruin
	Mine
	Cairn
	Broadcasting tower
	Windwheel
	Water-/windmill
	Viewpoint

Streets and ways

	Freeway with number
	Highway with number
	State, country, district street
	Village road
	Main agricultural road
	Agricultural road
	Trail
	Via Ferrata

Lifts, Railway

	Ropeway lift
	Gondola lift
	Chairlift
	Ski-, draglift
	Aerial ropeways
	Railway
	Suburban train
	Subway
	Tram
	Railway station