

TOP RMHT Stage 09: Todmorden to Marsden

↔ 13.6 mi

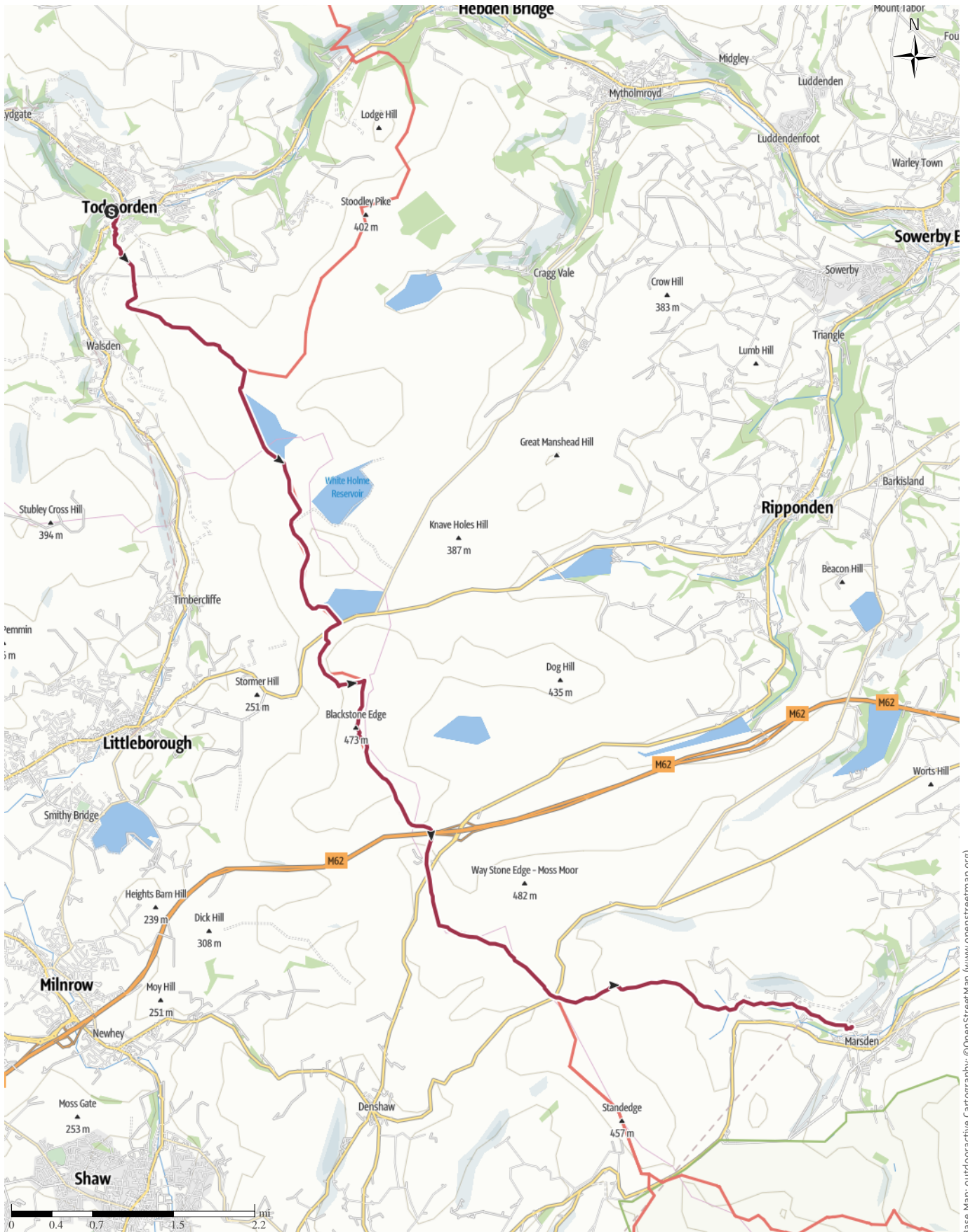
⌚ 6:00 h

▲ 1391ft

▼ 1214ft

Difficulty

difficult



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

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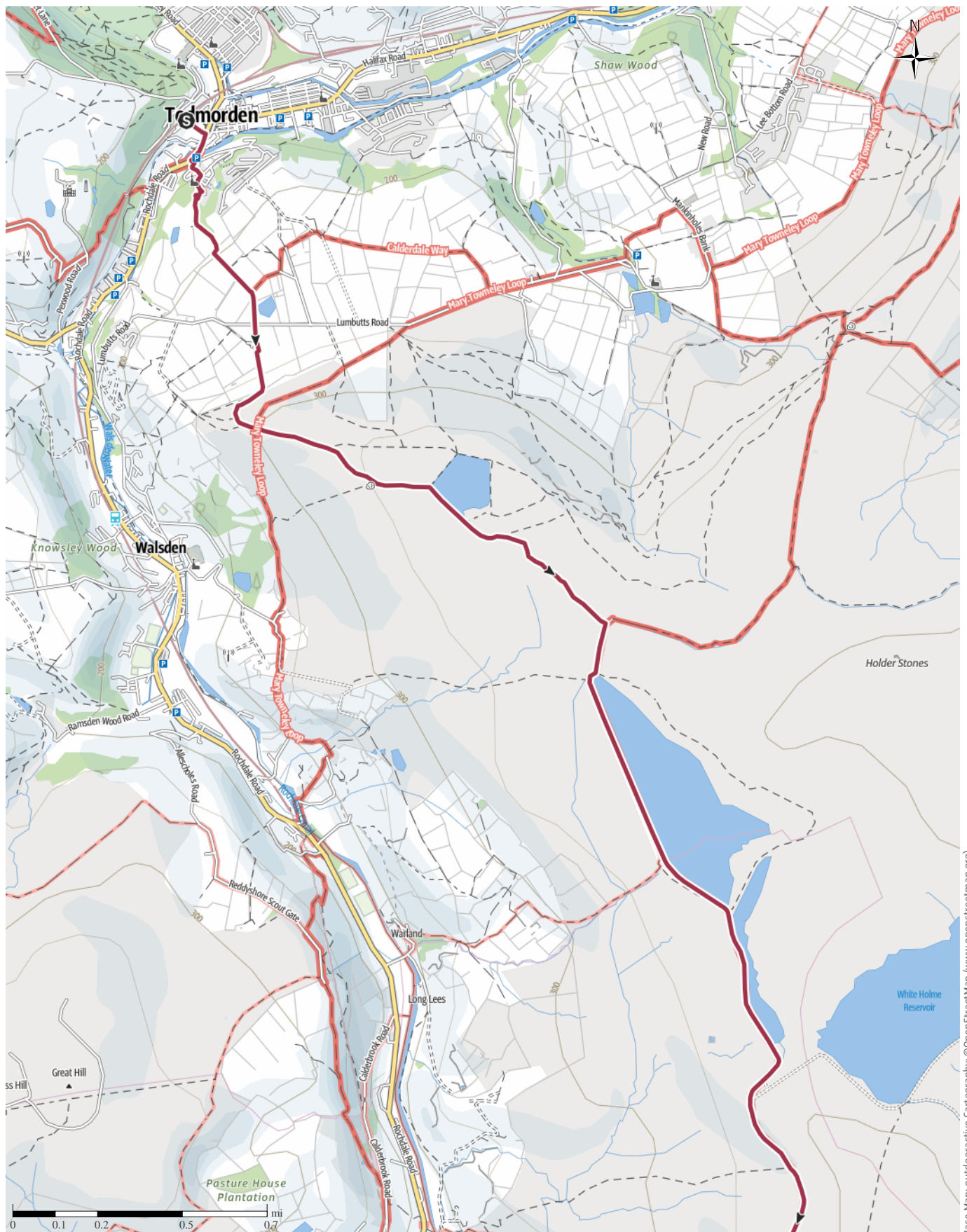
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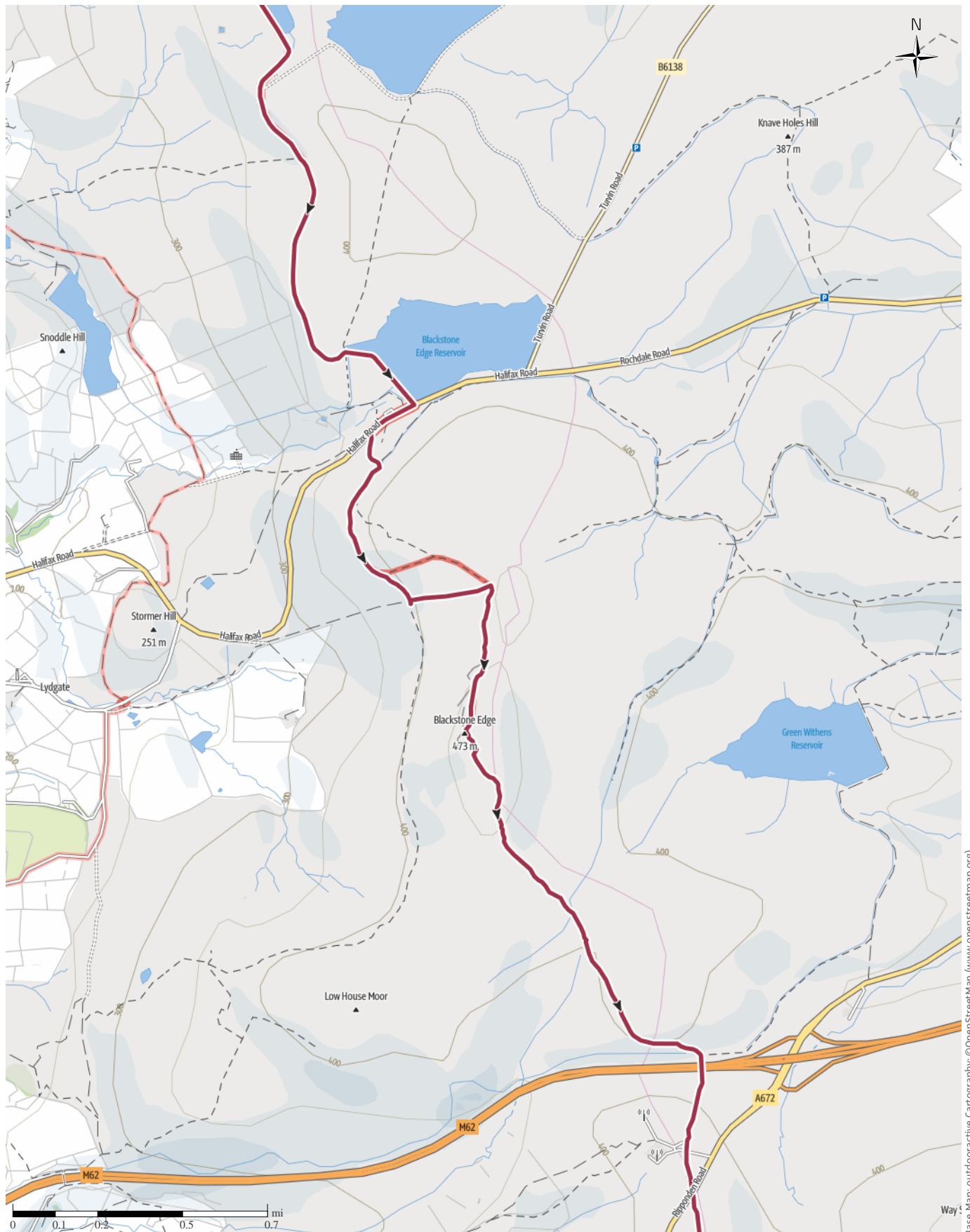
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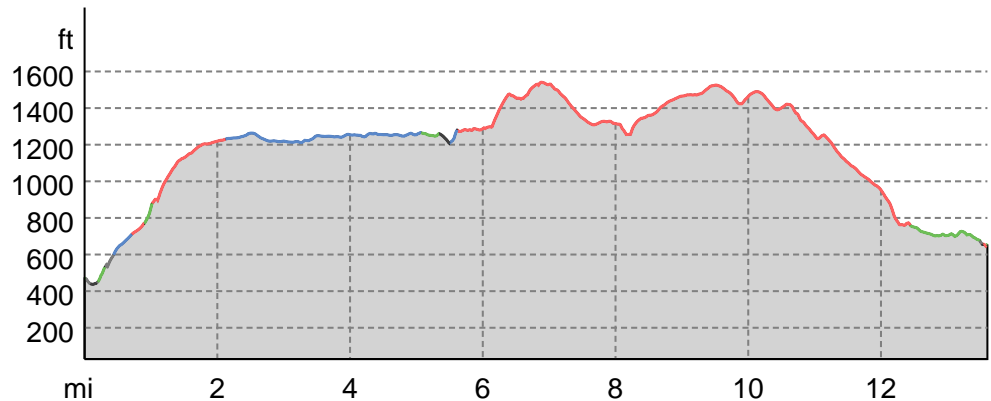
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Road surface

Asphalt	0.2 mi
Dirt road	3.3 mi
Way	1.6 mi
Path	8.2 mi
Street	0.3 mi

Elevation profile



route data

Hiking route

Distance	↔	13.6 mi
Duration	🕒	6:00 h
Ascent	⬆️	1391 ft
Descent	⬇️	1214 ft

Difficulty	difficult
Stamina	●●●●●●
Technique	●●●●●
Altitude	<div> <div></div> <div>1542 ft</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>436 ft</div> </div>

Best time of year

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

Ratings

Authors

Experience ●●●●●

Landscape ●●●●●

Community

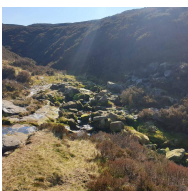
More route data

Properties

Public-transport-friendly	Linear route
Multi-stage route	Scenic
Geological highlights	Summit route

Awards

🍷 Refreshment stops available



Matthew Ball

Update: September 16, 2021

Stage 9 of the Round Manchester Hiking Trail:

Todmorden to Marsden via Blackstone Edge

Starting from the railway station, we head southwards and upwards through the suburb of Salford and past the Unitarian Church, and then up through wooded territory to the moors. We keep climbing steadily (most of the climb is in this early part of the walk) until we reach Gaddings Dam, at which point things flatten out.

We then join the Pennine Way, which is well maintained, so that progress should be relatively smooth till we get to the lunch break at the White House.

Soon after this we reach the highest point of the walk (472m above sea level) at the dramatic rocks at Blackstone Edge overlooking Littleborough. Then the Pennine Way takes us over the spectacular foot bridge across the M62, before (gently) ascending White Hill, in the borough of Oldham. We then cross another main road and the path then forks, and we are directed by a wonderfully robust signpost to turn left for Marsden, which we then do.

After descending the moors and exiting the open countryside at Close Gate Bridge we then have a gentle stroll back to Marsden for the last mile along Waters Road.

Author's recommendation

This route was walked by Manchester Weekend Walkers (a branch of the Ramblers) on Saturday 3rd July 2021.

TOP RMHT Stage 09: Todmorden to Marsden

As well as being a walking route in its own right, it is also Stage 9 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.

Equipment

Good walking boots and otherwise sensible hiking gear.

Additional information

Tips and hints

Assembly Point:

The car park immediately to the right as you come out

of the main entrance has plenty of space to rally the troops.

Toilets:

No toilets at walk start so use either Victoria or go on the train. The White House will be the only proper stop en route. At Marsden you will have to use whatever pub you go on or the return train once you have caught it, as there are no toilets at the station. On the plus side, the route is not crowded and is quite remote, so there are opportunities on the way.

Obstructions:

None known as of July 2021.

Timings:

1:00 - Gaddings Dam

2:30 - The White House (assume 30 min lunch stop)

3:45 - Blackstone Edge (trig point)

4:15 - Bridge over the M62

5:00 - White Hill (trig point)

6:15 - Close Gate Bridge

7:00 - Marsden Railway Station

Bail-Out Points:

From the White House, you can catch the 587 bus (which runs once an hour during daytime on Saturday) to either Littleborough or Rochdale to connect to rail services. Alternatively, you can simply walk straight down the A58 directly to the train station at Littleborough, making for a total walk distance from Todmorden of about 7.5 miles.

After the White House you would be looking at phoning for a taxi to pick you up from either the A672 or A640, as there are no bus services to these points.

Lunch Stop:

Either in or just outside the White House, where there is space in the car park to sit down. Alternatively, the summit of Blackstone Edge, where rocks can provide shelter from any winds as well as places to sit down.

Pub Stops En-Route:

The White House welcomes walkers and has excellent

TOP RMHT Stage 09: Todmorden to Marsden

food and drink.

Post-Walk Refreshments:

The Railway Inn is right next to the station at Marsden, but the best place to visit is about 200 yards away – the Riverside Brewery Tap, which has outdoor seating and also a great selection of real ales.

Turn-by-turn directions

Starting point / trailhead

Todmorden Railway Station

Coordinates:

DD: 53.713708, -2.099592

DMS: 53°42'49.3"N 2°05'58.5"W

UTM: 30U 559424 5952045

w3w: ///hotspots.given.projects

Point of arrival

Marsden Railway Station

Turn-by-turn directions

From Todmorden Railway Station, head straight on from the entrance downhill along Rise Lane to the main road (the A6033) before crossing the road and turning right to head southwards along it for about 150 yards. We then take a left turn on to Longfield Road, before turning right after 25 yards on to Honey Hoyle Road, which we now stay on through twists and turns uphill for another 200 yards, passing the Unitarian Church on our way.

We then turn right to head into parkland before hitting a cul-de-sac, still heading quite steeply uphill. We now head south into a wooded area before doing a right-left shimmy to resume heading south again. After another 200 yards on the fairly broad track we bend round to the south-east and follow the track through some more twists and turns through farmland for another 400 yards before we come to a three-way junction, this time taking the southern option.

The quality of the footpath now deteriorates, but it is still clearly signposted and heads due south toward the edge of the moors. crossing straight over a road and going past a farm in the process. After 500 yards we reach the edge of a steeper slope and turn right (but still heading uphill, ignoring the other rightward path that stays on a level). After a short while the path bends around back to the left again and comes to a big crossroads with the Pennine Bridleway (at a place called Rake End), at which we go straight across following the sign towards Gaddings Dam.

After about 400 yards we take a right fork that takes us onto a stone-flagged path across what is now boggy moorland - this leads us to the right of Gaddings Dam, the edge of which we then follow south-east. After passing the reservoir we keep heading south-east for about 1/2 mile across the relatively flat ground of Langfield Common until we reach our rendezvous point with the Pennine Way at Warland Drain. At this point a sturdy wooden signpost directs us rightward towards the White House.

We now follow the Pennine Way southwards, passing first the Warland Reservoir and then the Light Hazzles Reservoir, with views over Rochdale and Littleborough to our right. After passing Blackstone Edge Reservoir, we reach the A58, which we turn right to follow to the most obvious lunch stop, The White Hart. After lunch, we stay on the Pennine Way, which stays very briefly on the A58 before curving leftward and going uphill again before following Broad Head Drain around a long curve to the left, before turning left to head uphill again along the straight, cobbled Roman Road to reach the 4 foot high Aiggin Stone that marks the traditional boundary between Lancashire and Yorkshire.

At the Stone, we turn right to follow the Pennine Way over the top of Blackstone Edge (where the triangulation pillar marks 472m above sea level, the highest point on the walk). After passing the Edge, we then head across the M62 on the spectacular Pennine Way footbridge before climbing Windy Hill on the other side, and passing near the radio transmitter. After then crossing the A672, we head gently upwards toward White Hill, where the triangulation pillar marks 466m above sea level. From there it is another 1.5 miles south-eastwards across undulating moorland on the PW till we reach the A640, which we meet near a small car park.

After crossing the road, we head downhill on a gravel track to a robust green signpost that offers two options - leftward, towards Marsden; and rightwards, towards Edale (via Standedge). We are taking the leftward option, which takes us on some more stone flagging more or less due eastward across some mostly level but sometimes undulating ground for another 2 miles. At the end of this stretch, we head steeply downhill on a series of steps until we reach Close Gate Bridge, which we turn left to cross, and then follow the River Colne for another 250 yards before reaching Waters Road, which provides us with an easy and pleasant last mile eastward back to the Railway Station at Marsden.

Getting There



This route is conveniently accessible by public

TOP RMHT Stage 09: Todmorden to Marsden

transport.

Public transport

The best rail ticket to cover this route is a Saver Return to Brighouse, choosing the option to travel by "any permitted route". This will cost £15.90 from central Manchester stations. The GM wayfarer does not cover West Yorkshire so is no use, as both Marsden and Todmorden are in West Yorkshire. Although we are not going to Brighouse, it is a place you could get to on either of the two different lines you need to travel on to get there and back, and so covers this journey.

Trains to Todmorden from Manchester Victoria are about four times an hour on a Saturday morning, and take 30 to 40 minutes to get there,

Getting there

The return trains from Marsden go to Piccadilly and leave twice an hour on Saturday evening, and take about 40 minutes. to get there.

Parking

If using the car for part of the journey then your best bet for parking would probably be anywhere in Manchester that had good access to both Victoria and Piccadilly stations, as we go out via Victoria and then return to Piccadilly.

Takeaway route for iPhone and Android

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

Website

<https://out.ac/IIkWMV>

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Signpost towards Marsden

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