

Here you will leave the canal at the bridge. Turn left and continue past Clegg Hall which will now be on your right. The walk can be cut short by continuing forward and then along Little Clegg Road. Turn left at Smithy Bridge Road to return to Smithy Bridge station and the canal towpath, or call into the Smithy Bridge public house for refreshments.

⑥

Alternatively turn right 100 metres after Clegg Hall, and walk up Branch Road, a rough lane, eventually leading to the main road of Wild House Lane. Take care when crossing the road, walking straight ahead along the lay-by, past the small cluster of houses to your left and towards the fields behind. Climb over the stile into the field, continuing ahead towards the bottom corner. Again climb over the stile and continue straight ahead. The path which is stone flagged steepens and will climb a hill to the left to Bib Knowl, derived from Bible Knoll- thought to be a meeting place for religious dissenters in the 16th and 17th centuries. This section is perhaps the most testing of the walk however the views over Hollingworth Lake and Rochdale will make it all worthwhile.

⑦

Continue to follow this path until you drop down towards the lakeside. At the lakeside turn right and follow the lake in an anti-clockwise direction. Shortly you will approach the Promontory. Now a small shelter and picnic site, previously this site

was home to the Lake Hotel. Visitors to the lake could be ferried across to the hotel by steamer.

The lake and the area surrounding it is a haven for wildlife. The marshy area has been designated as a nature reserve and is prohibited to the public. However it is possible to call into the bird hide to view the wide variety of birdlife in the nature reserve.

⑧

At Bear Hill near Hollingworth Fold the overflow ensures that the lake never exceeds its capacity. The road from here to Rakewood was a toll road. The barrier and sign with details of the regulations are left as a reminder of the past.

Take the next right to return to the Visitor Centre, the perfect place to finish your walk. A year round programme of exhibitions and events tell the story of the Lake and the surrounding South Pennines area.

This walk forms part of a series of walks and trails developed by Manchester's Countryside. For more information on Manchester's Countryside, including downloads of the walks visit
www.manchesterscountryside.com
Telephone: 0161 253 5111
email: info@manchesterscountryside.com



THE SOUTH PENNINE WATER TRAIL

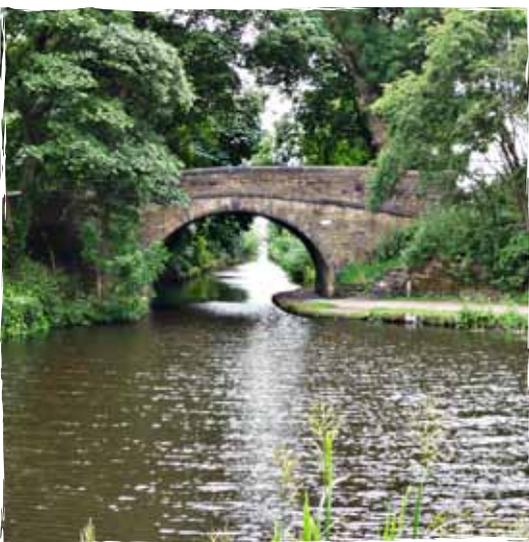
Manchester's Countryside

There's another side to Manchester

HOLLINGWORTH LAKE - EALEES VALLEY
 LITTLEBOROUGH - ROCHDALE CANAL
 CLEGG HALL - HOLLINGWORTH LAKE



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THE SOUTH PENNINE WATER TRAIL

DISTANCE:
5 miles/8km

STARTING POINT:

Hollingworth Lake Visitor Centre, Rakewood Road, Littleborough OL15 0AQ. Os map reference SD940153.

HOW TO GET THERE:

By Car - From Rochdale take the A58 for 2 miles. At lights turn right onto Smithybridge Road, follow this road to the lake, turning left onto Lake Bank. Follow the road round the side of the lake and turn right on to Rakewood Road at the Wine Press public house.

Parking - Outside Hollingworth Lake Visitor Centre.

By Bus or train - Direct bus and train services from Rochdale to Smithy Bridge and Littleborough stations

GREATER MANCHESTER PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION

0871 200 2233 www.tfgm.com

WALK SUMMARY

Discover Hollingworth Lake and Littleborough with this delightful 5 mile walk. With scenic views over the Pennines this circular route takes in some of the best countryside the area has to offer. The initial section of the walk offers easy walking through the Eales Valley, Littleborough and along the Rochdale Canal towpath. Whilst the final stretch is perhaps a little more testing the rewards are worth it with breathtaking views over Littleborough, Rochdale and beyond. Whether you choose to walk the entire route or split the walk into smaller sections, you will find no better way to explore the beauty of Littleborough and the South Pennines.

THE WALK

①

Start your walk at Hollingworth Lake Visitor Centre. Located at the foot of the Pennines, Hollingworth Lake was originally built to supply water to the Rochdale Canal. The lake now forms part of a popular Country Park with excellent opportunities for walking, cycling and water sports.

From the Visitor Centre entrance follow the track to the left side of the car park until it bears right. Continue along this path, through the gate, crossing the stream and into the field. Walk across this field to your left.

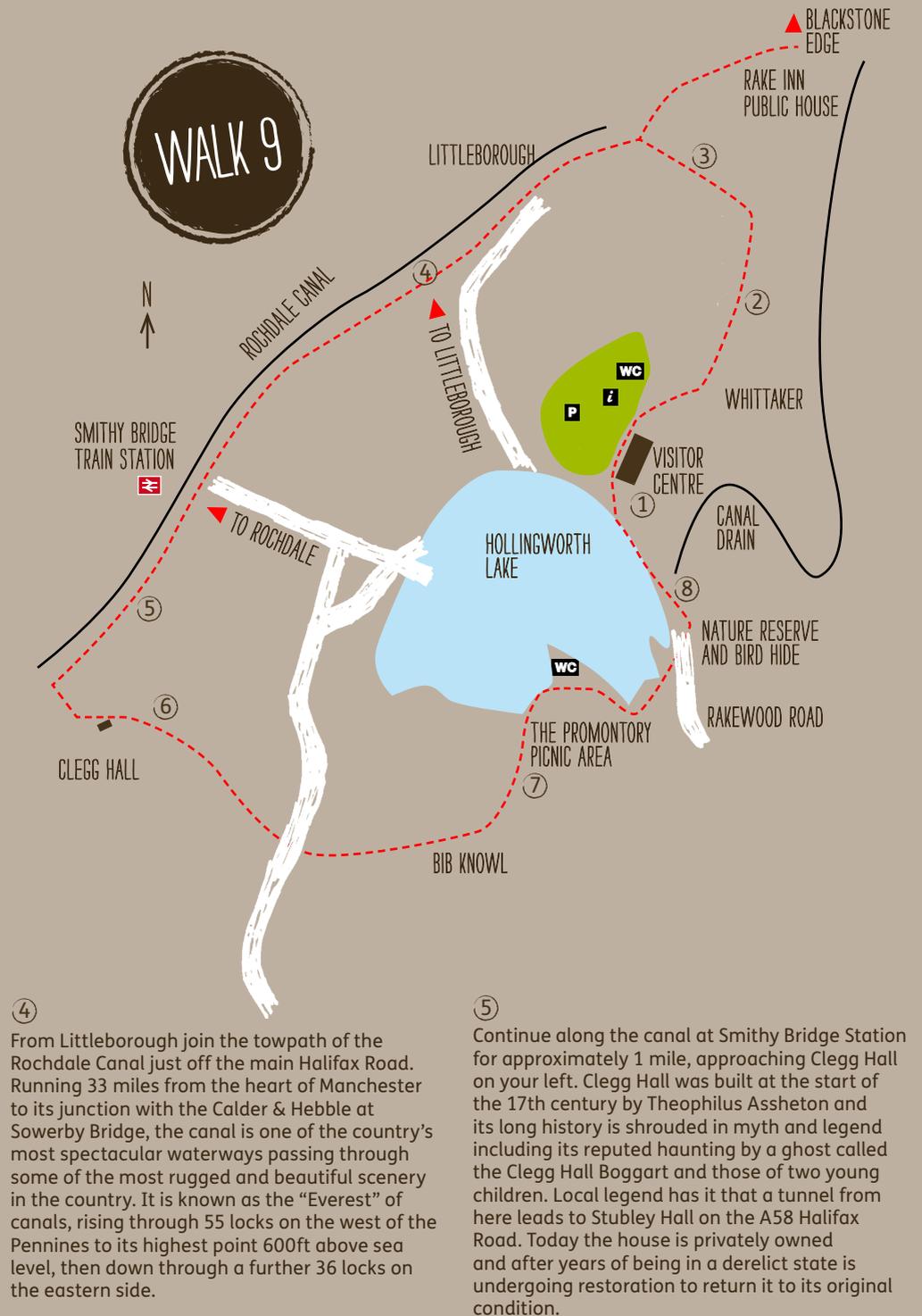
②

You are now entering the Eales Valley. High on the hill to your right you will see the small hamlet of Whittaker. This remarkable collection of stone built houses set out around a paved courtyard constitutes a distinctive isolated South Pennine settlement. If you look further you will also see the summit of Blackstone Edge, a dramatic escarpment of dark grit stone rock. Ancient trackways and distinct wheel groves, possibly from Roman times, can still be seen today.

③

Continue to follow the path straight ahead, bringing you to a flat bridge. Turn left and walk up the lane passing through a small hamlet of houses. Here you have two routes to choose from. For a refreshment break turn right onto West View. At the end of this road, turn right and you will find The Rake tapas restaurant and pub (open weekday evenings and all day at weekends), which many believe is haunted. Alternatively, continue forward on to Eales Road, over the canal bridge, and turn left to sample some of the delicious treats on offer in Littleborough town centre.

Take time to explore Littleborough. This small Pennine town has a history of both wool and cotton weaving. The stone built heart of the town has retained its character with many fine buildings including the Coach House Heritage Centre, the old Falcon Inn and the circular Wheatsheaf building. These days the town hosts a range of delightful little shops each selling unique speciality goods.



④

From Littleborough join the towpath of the Rochdale Canal just off the main Halifax Road. Running 33 miles from the heart of Manchester to its junction with the Calder & Hebble at Sowerby Bridge, the canal is one of the country's most spectacular waterways passing through some of the most rugged and beautiful scenery in the country. It is known as the "Everest" of canals, rising through 55 locks on the west of the Pennines to its highest point 600ft above sea level, then down through a further 36 locks on the eastern side.

⑤

Continue along the canal at Smithy Bridge Station for approximately 1 mile, approaching Clegg Hall on your left. Clegg Hall was built at the start of the 17th century by Theophilus Assheton and its long history is shrouded in myth and legend including its reputed haunting by a ghost called the Clegg Hall Boggart and those of two young children. Local legend has it that a tunnel from here leads to Stubley Hall on the A58 Halifax Road. Today the house is privately owned and after years of being in a derelict state is undergoing restoration to return it to its original condition.