

Shining Tor

· Admire the view from the highest point in Cheshire—see if you can spot Snowdon ·

About the walk

Shining Tor rises to the West of the Goyt Valley, and, if starting from the shores of Errwood Reservoir, gives a good 300 metres (1000 feet) of ascent. At 3¾ miles, the circuit should take 1¾ to 2¼ hours at a leisurely pace (though if you're slow on hills, allow extra time, as there's a fair bit of ascent and descent on this walk). The route shown starts from the Errwood Hall Car Park, and essentially circles around Shooter's Clough, visiting the top of Shining Tor (559 metres) before returning to the reservoir.

The views from the top are superb on a clear day. Looking out over the Cheshire Plain, you'll easily pick out the hills of the Clwydian Range in North Wales and the Wrekin in Shropshire (almost 50 miles distant), as well as numerous local landmarks, including Shutlingsloe, and the large Lovell radio telescope at Jodrell Bank.

Need-to-know

- Free parking (picnic tables close by, but no toilet facilities; no height restriction; no overnight parking or camping). Sadly, there's NO PUBLIC TRANSPORT to this location.
- 3¾ miles (6 kilometres) circular walk
- 1¾ to 2¼ hours at a leisurely pace (but allow longer if you're slow on hills)
- Mixed terrain (including moderately steep slopes, rough tracks and some boggy ground after rain); not suitable for wheelchair users or for pushchairs.
- No stiles

Bad weather alternative

If the weather's poor, the low-level walk around Fernilee Reservoir would be a better option.

Getting there

Start and finish at Errwood Hall Car Park (arrowed on the following map). The following may help if you use a satnav:

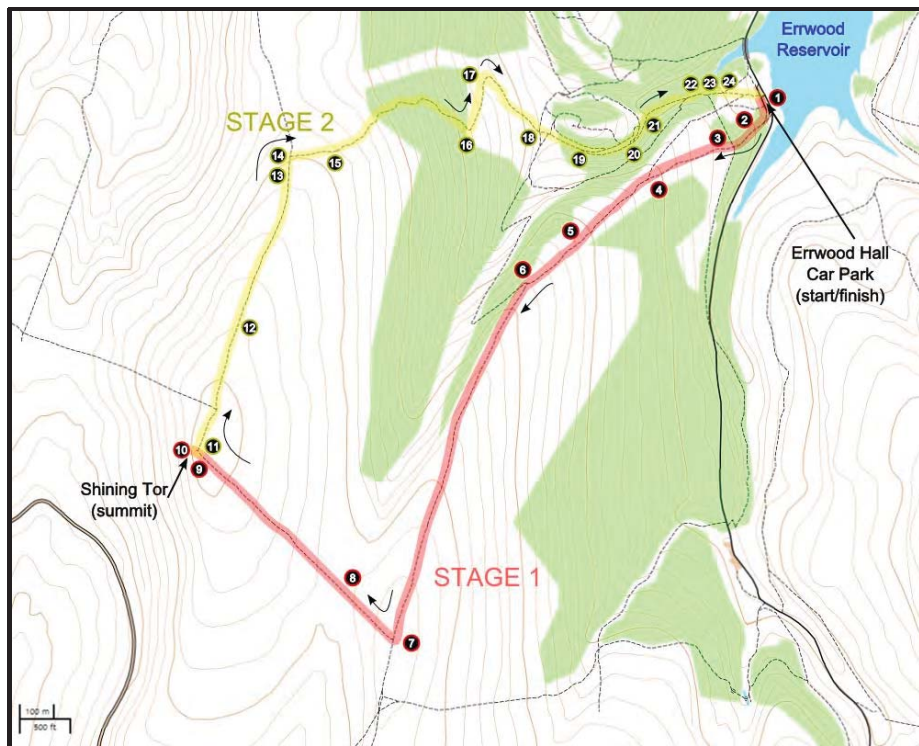
- nearby postcode: SK17 6GJ (this postcode is actually for the Errwood Sailing Club (private), which is just over 1 kilometre by road from Errwood Hall Car Park. You should enter the latitude/longitude or Ordnance Survey grid reference figures into your satnav for a more precise location).
- Latitude, Longitude: 53.270, -1.983
- Ordnance Survey grid reference: SK 012 748

Map & directions

This simplified map provides guidance for the route described. The numbers refer to the numbered steps in the walk description. This map is not suitable for detailed navigation, for which you should use a copy of the relevant Ordnance Survey map.

The Ordnance Survey map covers a bigger area along with important information such as place names, official rights of way, and areas of Access Land.

For this walk, the ideal map is the Explorer Series Number OL24: The Peak District - White Peak Area (Buxton, Bakewell, Matlock & Dove Dale), which includes the whole area of the walk at 1:25 000 scale (4 centimetres to 1 kilometre).



Contour interval: 10 metres; index contours, 50 metres. North at top (approximate).

Map data © OpenStreetMap and available under the Open Database Licence. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright & database right 2014.

Base map generated by OpenOrienteeringMap (created by Oliver O'Brien). OpenOrienteering map is supported by British Orienteering.

IMPORTANT Errwood Hall Car Park (and the road to it) is CLOSED on Sundays and Bank Holidays from 10:30am to 5:30pm. This closure applies from the start of May until the end of September every year. If you want to do this walk on a day when Errwood Hall Car Park is closed, you will need to park at The Street Car Park instead, which is 1 kilometre north of Errwood Hall Car Park, along a flat road beside the reservoir.

Stage 1: Errwood Hall Car Park to Shining Tor summit

1.

Walk to the far end of the car park (the south end) with the road and Errwood Reservoir on your left. At the edge of the car park, take the grassy path up the bank and to the right, through the trees. This can be a little muddy underfoot in places, after rain.



2.

Join the main path that comes up from the road, and turn right onto it, heading uphill through pleasant woodland.



3.

After 150 metres you'll reach the top edge of the woodland, and pass through an open gateway bordered by two stone pillars. Cross the track, and continue straight ahead (passing a signpost on your left that points you towards "Stakeside"), onto the open hillside.



4.

Now the hard work starts! Follow the obvious track as it ascends the open hillside, passing close to woodland on your left. Take your time on this ascent—there are lovely views back over Errwood Reservoir as you gradually gain height above the lower woodland. After about 500 metres distance, and 100 metres (330 feet) ascent, you'll reach a fence with a kissing gate across the track.



5.

Go through the kissing gate, and continue on up the track, now more grassy, aiming for a dry stone wall about 250 metres away.



6.

At the dry stone wall, there is another kissing gate and a signpost. Don't go through the kissing gate, but instead bear left to continue following the track uphill—less steeply now—keeping the wall on your right (the signpost points to "Cat & Fiddle" in this direction).



7.

You're now walking up Stake Side ridge. Continue to follow the obvious track, never far from the stone wall to your right, as it gradually gains height. There are good views left here to the open moorland of Goyt's Moss and Burbage Edge (the regular patterns on the ground are from controlled heather burning). To the right (over the stone wall), you can see Shining Tor itself. Eventually, after about 1 kilometre ($\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile) from the second kissing gate, you'll reach a path junction with a signpost on your left, and a kissing gate to your right. Turn right off the main track and go through the kissing gate, in the direction signed to "Shining Tor".



8.

A good path now takes you directly towards the summit of Shining Tor, about 1 kilometre distant ($\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile), which you can see ahead in clear weather. The path stays close to a stone wall on your left, and initially descends a little (about 20 meters/65 feet) before climbing the final 50 metres (165 feet) to the top of Shining Tor.



9.

As you approach the summit, pass a signpost and benches on your left (one of which is inscribed with a few lines of doggerel praising National Park Rangers), then go through a gate to reach the triangulation pillar (a square, white-painted concrete survey station, a little over a metre high). You are now in Cheshire, having crossed over from Derbyshire when you passed through the gate.



10.

In fair weather, with good visibility, it's well worth spending some time taking in the view from the summit. This is extensive to the West, looking out over the western fringes of the Peak District (Shutlingsloe is the most obvious nearby hill), and out across the Cheshire plain to the Clwydian Hills in north Wales. In very clear weather, the high mountains of Snowdonia may be visible on the horizon. Before you leave, wander over to the top of the small rock outcrops (just to the west of the triangulation pillar) for an excellent view down to the Cat & Fiddle road below.



Stage 2: Shining Tor summit to Errwood Hall Car Park

11.

Leave the top of Shining Tor by going back through the gate (noting the attached memorial plaque: "David McKillop 1951–2008 We clamb the hill thegither", a line taken from Robert Burns' poem, "John Anderson, My Jo"). Turn left onto the flagged path that heads roughly north away from the summit, with the stone wall to your left.



12.

Follow the flagged path as it gradually loses height along the ridge. There are great views all the way along here, including to the higher ground of the Peak District off to the right (Kinder Scout), and out over Manchester to the left. The hill directly ahead is Cat's Tor, but you'll be turning off the main flagged path before you get there.



13.

Continue along the flagged path for just over 1 kilometre ($\frac{2}{3}$ mile) from the top of Shining Tor, descending all the time. Just after a slightly steeper section of path, you'll notice that the flagged path make an obvious turn to the left just ahead, as does the fence and wall (as shown in the photo). This is only a couple of hundred metres before the low point on the ridge between you and Cat's Tor.



14.

Just before this turn to the left, look out for a faint grassy path that leaves the flagged path on the right—take that path. This faint grassy path is very easy to miss, and isn't signposted. If you are still on the main flagged path when it reaches its low point on the ridge and then starts climbing towards Cat's Tor, then you've gone too far, and will have to turn around and try and locate the grassy track.



15.

Once you're on it, the grassy track is easy to follow, though can get quite muddy in places after rain. Head along the track for about 200 metres, until it meets the turning area at the top of a forestry track. Drop down a small bank onto the turning area, and head downhill along the forestry track.



16.

Although the forestry track is quite steep and rocky in places, it's pretty easy going. Above the forest edge, the track has been dug into the hillside, with steep banks either side. As you enter the forest, the track steepens somewhat, and makes several turns back and forth as it descends. After about ¾ kilometre (½ mile), you'll pass a dilapidated wooden gate, and then should follow the track as it leaves the bottom edge of the forest and takes a sharp bend to the left.



17.

The track continues to lose height quickly (this section can get quite rutted after wet weather), with good views down into the Goyt Valley to your right. Continue for about 250 metres before following the track round in a sharp turn to the right.



18.

Continue to follow the track, as it gradually levels out after about 300 metres, and reaches a path junction with a signpost. Continue along the main track, signposted to "Errwood Car Park".



19.

In another 200 metres, you'll pass a track forking up to the left past a pair of stone pillars (an old entrance to Errwood Hall). Keep right and continue to follow the main track.



20.

After a further 200 metres, you'll reach another path junction, with a signposted track "Errwood Hall" heading off to the left. If you've time, it's an interesting diversion to take a look at the ruins of the hall, which are only a minute's walk away along the track to the left. To return to the car park, keep right and continue along the main track.



21.

The track continues downhill for another 100 metres from the last path junction, crossing a stream before starting a short easy climb up past swathes of Rhododendron bushes (very attractive when in flower in late May/early June).



22.

After another 200 metres, you'll reach the top of the rise, and pass a green-painted metal gate across the track.



23.

Just after the gate, take the path off to the left (next to a signpost which points back the way you've come, to "Errwood Hall"). Follow this earthy path for a few metres, and pass through a gap in a stone wall.



24.

At this point, you leave the trees behind, and the Errwood Hall Car Park is clearly visible at the bottom of the grassy slope ahead, just in front of the reservoir. From the top of the slope, it's just a final 200 metres back to the car park.

