

Macclesfield-Outdoors Walking Route: Macc Forest, Shutlingsloe, Wildboarclough

Start/Finish: Leather's Smithy pub, Langley. Distance: 7.5 miles (12.1 km). Difficulty: Medium to hard.

Time: 3 to 3½ hours

1. From the Leather's Smithy pub, cross directly over the road and follow the footpath which is adjacent to the dam at the end of the Ridgeway reservoir.
2. Bear left at the end of the reservoir and follow the path uphill into the forest, which is signposted to Shutlingsloe.
3. The path now descends to another dam. After leading across the top of the dam, the path goes uphill again, eventually meeting a road.
4. Bear left at the road. Walk up the road until you reach a small layby on the right.
5. Turn right off the road into the forest and up the bridleway (signposted to Shutlingsloe). Ignore the footpath (signposted Shutlingsloe and Trentabank) which also leaves this layby. Keep following this bridleway for some way now, which is part of the Macclesfield Forest network of bridleways. A small pond (on the right) and a viewing point (on the left) are passed.
6. Eventually, and just after a short downhill stretch of bridleway and a left-hand bend, there is a junction of bridleways. Just before this junction there is a seat on the right. Bear right to follow a path under trees, adjacent to a wall on the right.
7. The path follows the wall on the right until another path up from the forest bridleway joins from the left. Follow the path (past a seat) a little further now, until you reach a kissing gate through the wall.
8. A sign "To Wildboarclough via Shutlingsloe Farm" directs you up a paved path beyond the wall. The path up to the summit of Shutlingsloe is now mostly paved – this is obviously a well-trodden path that required paving before erosion caused too much damage.
9. Where a junction in the path is reached, after crossing a stile, turn right to follow the paved path (adjacent to a wall on the right). Cross over a wall and follow the path (up steep steps) to the summit of Shutlingsloe. The summit is marked by a white triangulation point.
10. When you have taken in the wonderful view (and got your breath back!), follow the path on the far side of the summit, which initially turns sharp right (as indicated by the faded yellow arrow) down towards Wildboarclough. The path is now narrow, steeply down-hill and not very firm in places – care should be taken here. Pity those who are walking in the other direction and having to walk up it!

11. Follow the path over two stiles and a bridge over a stream, until the path downhill reaches a driveway (which leads up to farm buildings to the left). Turn right down the driveway, until it meets the road through Wildboardclough.
12. Bear right along this road, which eventually passes the Crag Inn on the right.
13. Immediately after the Crag Inn, follow the footpath to the right, then bear left between gorse bushes. Bear right uphill, then follow the path around the contour of the hill. The path leads across open fields, and through gaps in several walls (five I think). Bear right, down to a stream. Cross the stream, and follow the path round to the right and uphill, and over a stile, until you have to climb over a wall to meet a lane (which actually goes up to the farm at Higher Nabb).
14. Turn left along the lane, which eventually meets a road (the same one that passed the Crag Inn – you’ve just cut off a corner by following the path).
15. Turn right along the road here.
16. After passing a driveway to buildings on the left, take the footpath on the right.
17. Follow the footpath (carefully observing the yellow arrows). The path goes uphill, then down to meet a stream. The path now follows the stream. It passes over a stile, across the stream twice, and follows the stream all the way uphill. As a house up to the right comes into view (at Oakencloough), cross the stream again, and walk uphill, over a stile. Pass a pond, then through a gate, and cross a driveway.
18. Turn left to follow the path uphill (adjacent to a wall on the right). Cross the stile at the top of the hill. The path now crosses open moorland. Keep to this path, which passes a pond to the left and eventually reaches a stile. Turn left over the stile, which leads down into a gully between two fields (which is part stream). The path now descends to a road.
19. Where the footpath meets the road there is a pub (the Hanging Gate) directly opposite. Turn right along this road.
20. Where the road bends sharply to the left, bear right along a narrow lane. Eventually this lane passes an even narrower lane to the left - ignore this and carry straight on. At a right-hand bend in the road you will be back to where you were at step 4.
21. Turn left along the path that follows the bottom of Ridgeway reservoir, back round to the Leather’s Smithy.