

Key Info

Start: Ash Lock, Government Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2PS

Finish: Reading Road Wharf, Fleet GU51 3LS



Scan or visit bit.ly/ash-lock-reading-trail to find the map in Mapometer and download the GPX file

Time: 1.5 - 3hrs (one way)
Distance: 5.5 miles or 11 miles out and back
Locks/Portages: None
OS Map: Landranger 186 Aldershot and Guildford

Enjoy a day out on this attractive, lock free section of canal, surrounded by wooded heathland. This trail can be taken on as a one way or out and back paddle.



- 1** Launch from the low bank above the lock and turn right towards Fleet. Before launching check the visitor information board on site, this shows a map of your route towards Fleet. Keeping track of the number of bridge crossings you pass is a handy guide to your progress.
- 2** Along the route you will pass 'flashes'. These are designated nature reserves, off to the side of the waterway and boats are requested to keep out.
- 3** Following the canal for 3 miles, you will come to your fifth bridge; Eelmoor Bridge. This is a good place for a break and if you get out and walk to the road you can get a good view of Farnborough airfield.
- 4** Just under a mile further is Norris Bridge, a high concrete structure. To your right is the National Gas Turbine Establishment.
- 5** After Norris Bridge the canal veers in a westerly direction for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile before passing under Pondtail Bridge. You are now entering the outskirts of Fleet.
- 6** A further mile brings you to the end or turning point of your route; Reading Road Bridge.

Find more
paddling trails at:
gopaddling.info

Farnborough Airfield, is home to the famous air show. Nearby, Eelmoor Flash is adjacent to the army ranges so don't be surprised to hear gunfire.

The Basingstoke Canal runs for 32 miles, from Greywell Village in Hampshire to Woodham in Surrey. It opened 1794 to aid the development of agriculture in central Hampshire. By the 1960s the canal was neglected and no longer navigable. In the 1970s, Surrey and Hampshire County Councils took the canal into public ownership, and funded a programme of restoration supported by volunteer work parties. The canal formally reopened in 1991.

The Basingstoke Canal is also a notable wildlife habitat. It has one of the largest varieties of aquatic plants and invertebrates in the U.K. 25 of Britain's 39 species of dragonflies and damselflies inhabit the canal. The entire length, except for a part through Woking, is a SSSI. Greywell Tunnel, which marks the end of the navigable section is an internationally important haven for bats.

It is a delightful canal to canoe on, as it feels quite remote, especially in the more western sections. There are many more pubs at or near the waterside than mentioned in the text. Further useful information can be found on the following websites:

Basingstoke Canal Authority - Telephone 01252 370073
Aldershot Military Museum
Airborne Forces Museum
Farnborough Air Sciences Museum

Visit our website
britishcanoeing.org.uk
for more information

Safety and Licenses

We want you to enjoy a safe trip, so here are a few tips for staying safe and paddling responsibly.

Paddle Safe:

Be prepared and take the right kit:

- Wear a correctly sized buoyancy aid
- Mobile phone – in a waterproof case
- Whistle – to attract attention in case of emergency
- Map and / or route description
- Appropriate clothing for the weather conditions + spares in a dry bag
- Food, drink & sunscreen!

Paddle Responsibly:

Respect the natural environment and other users:

- Respect other waterway users #sharethespace
- Be environmentally aware, minimise your impact
- Ensure you have the correct licence if required
- Observe navigational rules – keep right and give other users space
- Check, Clean, Dry after every trip!

License Information: The waterways in this trail are managed by Basingstoke Canal Authority and require paddlers to hold a licence. If you are an existing British Canoeing member your membership includes an annual licence for the waterways covered within this trail – please ensure you take your membership card with you on the water as this acts as your licence, if stopped with no licence, you will be at risk of being fined. You can buy a licence directly from Basingstoke Canal Authority for this waterway either online from their website or by giving them a call or by becoming a British Canoeing member you'll have a licence to cover you for a whole year.