

Key Information

Start and finish: Hertford Union Canal, St Mark's Gate, London, E3 2NB
Portages: 7

Time: 1.5 - 3 hours
Distance: 6 miles
OS Map: Explorer 162 Greenwich & Gravesend and 173 London North



For more information scan the QR code or <https://bit.ly/306DwSn>

On waterways essential to the growth of Victorian London, the remnants of the past remain. Dodge phantom vicar's and canal dwelling beasts as you pass buildings brimming with ghoustly ghouls.

1. Park at St Mark's Gate car park (E9 5HT). Walk down the ramp and turn right, walking past Hertford Union Middle Lock No. 2. Put in and turn right. You will shortly arrive at the Top Lock where there is a short portage.

2. Upon reaching the junction with the Regent's Canal, paddle under the bridge and turn left, heading past Mile End Park. Here, at around 2 miles, you pass the Ragged School Museum. At times the cries of the destitute children once sent here can still be heard.

3. There are 4 sets of locks with short portages on the left before you emerge into Limehouse Basin at 2.5 miles. Beware here! The ghost of the Vicar of Ratcliff is seen to roam Limehouse. 200 years ago this murderous man would kill visitors to his church to steal their money.

4. Turn left into the basin, passing Moo Canoes boat hire on your right. Head straight on and into the Limehouse Cut and under a small footbridge. Take care of traffic using the tidal lock on your right hand side.

5. Keep your hands away from the water as you pass under the bridge carrying the DLR line above you! People have reported the swan population dropping here, and in November 2011 one witness watched a large Canada goose being quickly pulled under the water. Is there a monster lurking in the deep? turn back to your start point.

6. Continue under the A12 before arriving at Bow Locks. These locks link tidal Bow Creek with the Lee Navigation. Do not pass through these locks but continue your journey on the Lee.

7. As you pass under the A118 Bow flyover, keep an eye out for an elderly lady wearing slippers and a white apron. She was said to haunt a house on Bow Road and tamper with electrical items. Continue straight on the Lee Navigation.

8. At Old Ford Lock at 5.3 miles, the River Lea heads off to the right. You will need to portage the lock to continue straight. This can be a tricky portage due to the height of the locks. Back on the canal it's only a short paddle to a left turn back to your start point.

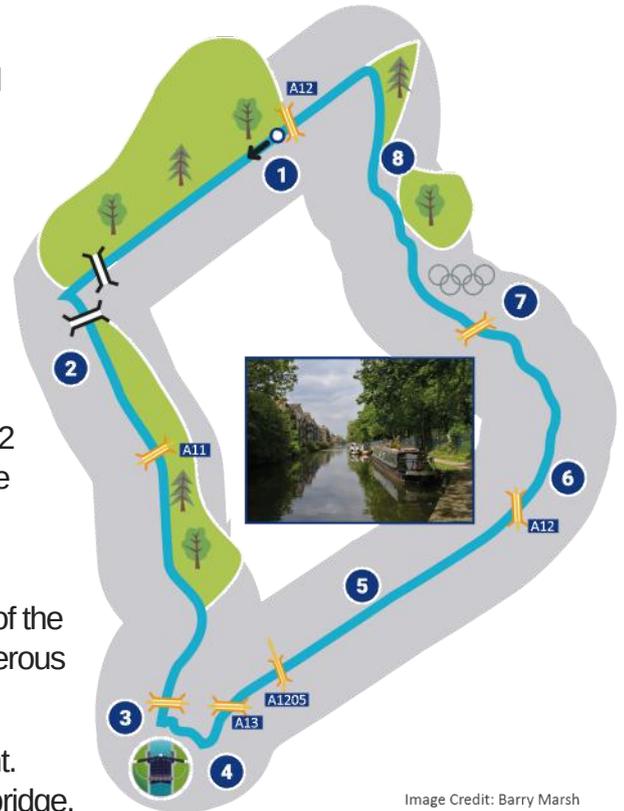


Image Credit: Barry Marsh



Find out more information at: gopaddling.info

Canal & River Trust waterways offer a range of opportunities for activities. From angling to country walks and from boating holidays to volunteer lock keeping. Visit their website to find out more.

Mile End park was constructed on industrial ground devastated after WW2 bombing and is now home to a leisure centre and climbing wall.

Moo Canoes in the Limehouse Basin is a great place to take part in your Start, Discover, and Explore Paddle Awards or hire a boat!

The Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park was built for the 2012 London Olympics where Team GB picked up 4 medals in canoeing events! You may also be able to see the Orbit, a steel tower which is the largest public work of art in the UK.

The River Lea is home to many different species of bird, but if you're lucky you may hear the distinctive booming cry of the Bittern, and maybe even see this elusive bird.

The upper stretches of the Lea are a major source of drinking water for London.

For more information about British Canoeing visit: britishcanoeing.org.uk

For more information about getting started in paddling visit: gopaddling.info

Our members and the wider paddling community can get in touch with us at: T. 0845 370 9500



Licence

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 & suncream!

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!

Licences: The waterways in this trail are managed by the Canal & Rivers Trust and require paddlers to hold a licence. British Canoeing membership includes a full annual licence for this waterway - please take your membership card with you as this acts as your licence. Non-members can either purchase a British Canoeing membership from www.britishcanoeing.org.uk or buy licenses direct from www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

**New to
paddling?**

Check out the
Paddle Awards!