



Hampton Canoe Club

NOTES FOR TOURERS: KIT

Introduction: Hampton Canoe Club does a lot of canoe (and kayak) touring. These notes set out what kit you might bring along. These notes have been prepared based on one person's opinions and experience; in time you will develop your own habits.

Kit:

These suggestions are for paddling on HCC's tours: if you're doing other types of paddling as well, you'll need to make different purchasing decisions.

The essentials:

For all trips, you should make sure that your **boat, paddle and buoyancy aid** are coming along. Likewise always bring **a snack** such as a cereal bar or banana, and usually a **drink**. Check if **lunch** is to be brought along or purchased on the spot.

Bring along a **full change of dry clothes and a towel**. Usually this stays in the cars or clubhouse; in some cases, such as paddling from A to B or if you want, the kit can travel in your boat in a dry bag.

For all paddling, those with specs are advised to wear **retainers** tight enough that the specs stay with you when you fall in (which you will, someday or sooner).

A small bottle of **hand sanitiser** is useful when you get out of the water and don't have the facilities or time to clean your hands. River and canal banks are favourite latrines for rats and wildfowl, and you really do want to avoid getting the diseases they can infect you with.

On sunny days, **sun oil, sun glasses** and **sunhat** are desirable or essential: that's your choice.

On cool or cold days, a **woolly or fleecy hat** is very handy: it can be put on or taken off very easily. HCC has club hats available to buy, or use something practical.

On cool, cold, wet or windy days, a **waterproof and windproof top** of any type is essential. Getting a specialist canoeing cagoule can come later.

For every trip, wear **waterproof shoes** which have some grip on wet surfaces, and fit into the boat. There can be sharp objects on the bottom of our waters, so you don't want to stand with bare feet in any shallows.

Equally essential: **avoid denim**, which is unsuitable for going afloat: it doesn't stretch easily, so hampers you; when wet, it's heavy; and it takes ages to dry.

The highly-desirables:

A canoeing **cagoule**, a top with lots of free movement for your arms, and which will be waterproof and windproof. Probably best are those designed for touring, as they can be opened at the neck if you get too warm. More expensive ones, optimistically called dry tops, are designed for paddlers who expect to get very wet.

Fleeces and underwear, all synthetic, can be as supplied for runners or hillwalkers, as well as specifically for canoeists. On cool or cold days, bring some spare clothing with you in the boat, you might feel cool, and if you do swim you'll have something dry to change into.

Pogies (i.e. covers which fit onto the paddle for you to put your hands in) are a popular choice for keeping your hands warm. Some people prefer **gloves** – be sure yours keep your hands warm when they're wet and it's windy.

Some paddlers like to wear both gloves and pogies if they suffer from cold hands. Paddlers have been known to use disposable latex gloves (as used by surgeons and house painters) or even Marigolds.

Shoes specifically designed for watersports. Neoprene is a common material for the upper. Check they have a grippy sole. Some people wear socks within them to reduce the odour that wet neoprene often has.

Waterproof trousers. are strongly recommended, especially for newer paddlers who are likely to have quite a bit of water dripping down their paddles.

Dry bags: one for essentials like your car keys, phone, cards, cash, sandwiches, etc.; a bigger one for your extra clothing, maybe with a small towel.

Spray Deck, suitable for our boats, to keep out some of the rain and the drips from your paddle; also very handy for keeping your legs and feet warmer.

Vbars to fit onto your car's roofbars, so you can come touring, and go home, when it suits you. Best to get 120° Vbars with demountable Vs, which are more suitable for our wider boats such as Tercels, Hobbies and Cirruses. Local supplier is the workshop of Lawler Engineering, School Road, East Molesey. Expect to pay £50-60 cash for each one (i.e 2 Vs and the bar connecting them, including the thingies to fit them onto your roofbars); card payments have never been heard of at Lawler's.

A **waterproof tough bag, or plastic storage box**, for the wet kit in the boot of your car.

The Optionals, for your consideration to purchase when you choose:

Paddle, one which suits you really well. Popular brands include Bracsa for wing paddles, and Lendal, Ainsworth and Werner for assymetrics.

Your own BA, (buoyancy aid) with pockets of your own choice. It's a good idea to add a whistle.

Your own Boat, of course. Remember there is rarely any spare rack space in the clubhouse: you'll probably have to house it yourself.

Popular and generally trusted brands for canoe kit include Palm; Peak; Yak; and Reed Chillcheater. Decathlon supply some own brand paddling kit

which is cheap and cheerful but not as high quality. But this may be a good choice especially if you are starting out and/or don't want to spend too much. Lomo is a brand I don't buy any more.

Trusted retailers include

Whitewater The Canoe Centre, on-line and in Shepperton Marina. They give Hamptoneers a 10% discount if you show them your card. They also sell on-line.

Marsport in Reading: knowledgeable, friendly but not always cheap.

Decathlon: internet sales or a few shops now in the UK.

Reed Chillcheater: internet-based.