

Frequently Asked Questions

What do I need to bring to a beginners session?

BCCC will supply all specialist equipment. You need to bring a complete change of clothes including underwear, footwear and a towel. Manmade fibres are better than cotton because they hold less water and dry quicker. In the summer a short sleeved top and shorts is sufficient. In spring and autumn you should add a fleece top, tracksuit bottoms and a lightweight waterproof cagoule, possibly a fleece or knitted hat as well.

What footwear is suitable for paddling in?

There are sharp stone and all sorts of rubbish in the canal. You need to protect your feet on the towpath and if you come out. Ideally a pair of neoprene beach shoes, you can buy these from the supermarket, Argos and HM Supplies in the summer months and from Marsport and White Water The Canoe Centre all year round. Alternatively an old pair of plimsolls will do. Please do not wear chunky trainers, wellies, Crocs or flip flops.

What happens if I fall in?

You will get wet! Before your lesson your coach will have advised you on the capsize drill for your craft. He or she will help you empty it so you can get back in and do more paddling. There are showers available in the Visitor Centre at Mytchett .

What is the water quality like?

Water quality is usually very good. The canal is a Site of Special Scientific Interest for most of it's length. Unlike the rivers there aren't any sewage or industrial waste outlets discharging into it, but you do get rainfall run off from fields and roads. All fresh, surface waters carry the risk of leptospirosis (Weils disease) This is an extremely rare, but serious, bacterial infection. We recommend that you cover all cuts and scratches with waterproof plasters, thoroughly clean any cuts or abrasions received during paddling. Wash your hands before eating or handling food and wash or shower promptly after watersports.

How do I join the Canoe Club

You can download a membership application form here <http://www.b3c.org.uk/membership/>

Which Class of Membership do I need?

Adult- For those over 18 years of age. Can borrow boats and vote at AGM.

Junior- For members aged under 18 but in school year 3 or above. Children need to be in year 3 or above to take part in activities unaccompanied by an adult. Parents are expected to take full responsibility for their child's participation in the Club. Children younger than school Yr 3 can only take part in activities as part of their family group. Can borrow boats, their parent/guardian can vote at AGM.

Family Membership.- For two or more family members living at the same address. Parents are still expected to take responsibility for their children's participation in the Club. Can borrow boats, up to 2 adults at the address can vote at AGM.

Affiliated Groups- For Youth groups and other voluntary organisations who wish to introduce their members to the sport of canoeing and kayaking. There are limitations regarding access to and use of equipment. The adult contact may vote at AGM . Members of Affiliated groups who wish to take part in club activities should take out the appropriate Adult, Junior or Family membership.

Associate- "Non Paddling" membership. Former members of the Club aged 18 or over who still wish to continue to support the Club and its activities. Cannot borrow boats. May vote at AGM

How much does it cost to borrow a Club boat?

It's free, but you have to be an adult, junior or family member. We do not hire out boats to non members of the Club. We do not give you the door code to let you borrow boats for unsupervised use until you have demonstrated your competence in them. We have a list of rules for using Club boats here <http://www.b3c.org.uk/docs/Boat%20usage%20policy%204.11.pdf>

What happens after my beginners lessons have finished?

You can join in with Club activities to get more experience and meet new people. A calendar of events is listed in our quarterly newsletter "Waterfront" <http://www.b3c.org.uk/waterfront/> forthcoming activities are also advertised on the home page of our website <http://www.b3c.org.uk/home/> contact the organiser to find out more, go along and have fun.

What can I do to help?

We are a volunteer organisation, members contribute their time and skills to the Club because they enjoy the sport of paddling. All members can help by making sure that they look after boats, returning it clean and dry to the correct rack; spray decks and buoyancy aids hung up to dry. Paddlers can consider getting some coaching qualifications and pass on their knowledge. Non paddlers can help with bank side organisation for events, this could be timekeeping, help with catering, car parking attendant

I have done some canoeing on holiday/with the Scouts, do I still need to do a beginners course?

No. If you can demonstrate that you are at a minimum of BCU 1 star standard then you do not need to do a beginners course. Please arrange with one of the coaches at a regular session to demonstrate your skills.

Can I use my own boat on one of the beginners courses?

Please discuss this with the coach running your course. We run beginners courses in general purpose kayak, open cockpit kayak and open canoe. Your boat may not be appropriate for some courses. You do however need to arrange a licence to paddle your own boat on the Basingstoke Canal and many other inland waterways. The cheapest way to do this is to become a member of "Canoe England" <http://www.canoe-england.co.uk/membership/>

Do you provide life jackets?

No! We provide buoyancy aids. These help you float, but not always in a “face up” position. We have sizes to suit most people from about age 8 upwards. If you are a Family member and wish to take your young children canoeing then you should buy them a life jacket suitable for their size, then if they fall in the canal they will float in a face up position.

How far do you have to be able to swim?

You need to be able to swim at least 25 m unaided to take part in Paddlepower and other courses. Swimming with clothes on in cold water is very different from swimming in a pool which is why you need to wear a buoyancy aid. Family members can take young children afloat under their own supervision who do not meet this requirement, however we strongly recommend they wear a correctly sized life jacket. Members of Affiliated groups, eg Scouts and Guides will have to meet the swimming requirements of their organisation