

RCC Guide to Organising a Club Trip

Introduction

A club trip is one that's advertised through RCC – for example on the website or through the 'Notes From Canalside' emails. Organising a club trip can be as easy as you want or as hard as you want. What follows are some guidelines that should help you organise a successful trip.

Basic Checklist

Below is a tick list of things you will need to consider when organising your trip. Further information about each point is outlined overleaf.

- Trip type (whitewater, surf etc.) and target (e.g. what grade of water or experience of participant)
- Location
- Accommodation type, e.g. hostel, bunkhouse, camping etc.
- Date
- Find & book accommodation
- Advertise trip, including cost and what's included.
- Obtain deposit (or full payment) from interested members
- Liaise with an experienced member of your trip to ensure the trip will run safely (see below)
- Send accommodation deposit to venue
- Find out who can drive, and who can pick up boats from the club (if club boats are needed)
- Match people to cars
- Ensure equipment is hired
- Decide catering arrangements
- Purchase food if applicable
- Check water levels, decide on the plan for the trip
- Have a backup plan

Your Role in Ensuring Your Trip Runs Safely

Ultimately, it is individual's own responsibility to ensure their safety on the river. However experienced or qualified members on the trip can advise organisers and participants about trip safety. As trip organiser you should consult experienced members and make decisions in liaison with them to keep the trip safe and enjoyable for everyone. For example, you will need to consider:

- The river (grade, water levels etc) and competency of the group as a whole
- How the trip will subdivide into groups – group leaders / ratios
- Individuals and their suitability to be on the river
- Logistics, e.g. shuttles
- Distribution of first aiders and safety kit within the groups
- It is also worth noting the location of the nearest Accident and Emergency (A&E) service, just in case. This website should help you find the nearest A&E - <http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/en/CheckSymptoms/FindYourNearest?>

Group Meeting

Often on trips, there might be a morning meeting to discuss things like river grade and levels, logistics of the day, a reminder to people to share information regarding medical conditions or other factors that their leader or paddling partners need to be made aware of, etc. Again this can be organised in conjunction with the experienced people on the trip.

More Detailed Information

1. Trip type & Date

Decide what kind of trip it will be, for example a white water river running trip, a surfing trip, a trip to a slalom competition, or something else. Similarly you will need to decide who you are targeting for the trip – this might be a group of people with a certain experience level, or it may be open to a broad range of people from within RCC.

Try to select a date that does not clash with an existing RCC Club event. You will need to liaise with the committee to ensure this.

2. Suitability - what ability level is required

Most trips organised by RCC are suitable for members that have at least completed the Introduction to White Water Kayak course in full, or have equivalent experience. It's always worth emphasising that white water experience is usually required on all Club trips.

Occasionally trips will be organised to more difficult rivers, meaning that only more experienced paddlers will be accepted on to the trip. If you don't know someone's ability, do ask them what rivers they've been on and what their experience is.

3. Advertise your trip

Decide how to advertise the trip. The usual method is to ask for a post to be included in the regular *Notes from Canalside* emails that are sent to all club members. In addition to the above info, you will need to include details of the approximate cost, where to send the deposit to, and rough location of the rivers you'll be paddling. Once the trip is full, please remind the *Notes from Canalside* writer to remove the advert from the circulation.

4. Location

There are many areas to kayak in the UK or further afield - if you want any ideas ask the committee, other club members, surf the web or look at kayaking publications.

If you are considering organising a trip to a location you've never been to before it's worth checking to see if any other Club member has been and what advice they can offer.

Alternatively check out the online rivers guide at <http://www.ukriversguidebook.co.uk/>. Make sure everyone has details of the location – e.g. get on and get off.

5. Accommodation

Decide what type of accommodation you intend to use and ensure it exists in the area. RCC tends to use youth hostels, bunkhouses, self catering or camping; generally ensuring it is affordable to all. The club has membership of the YHA. You can get details from the club Secretary. Once you have an idea of the number of members coming you can secure the accommodation. Some accommodation requires you to pay the cost up front. On occasion the committee will advance this – however, you will need to check in advance.

Ensure everyone knows whether they'll be sharing in mixed or single-sex rooms when using youth hostels or bunkhouse style accommodation.

- Cost: advertise what is included in the cost, e.g. is breakfast included
- What is provided: if using youth hostel or bunkhouse style accommodation, ascertain what bed linen, if any, will be provided. Sleeping bags will sometimes be required. Ascertain what other facilities are there for RCC use, e.g. kitchen, lounge etc.
- Arrival time: most journeys by road take at least 4 hours from London. Ensure you advise the proprietors that people may be arriving after midnight – this always happens.
- Departure time: have an idea of when you're leaving on both the day of departure from London and the day of departure from the river. Also it helps knowing the approximate time of arrival back home.

- **Catering:** when using youth hostels or bunkhouses there will be a need to cater for everyone. It's always easier to cater for all on the trip and set a cost rather than individuals looking after themselves. Evening meals can be in a local Pub, or provided by a few members who are happy to cook for everyone else. Try to cater for any special dietary requirements. You may need to ask others to help transport some food to the destination, but please do this well in advance.

6. **Numbers**

Always consider the number of members you can cope with on a trip. Consideration should be given for accommodation size, transportation and catering. Also consider how the paddling will be structured on the river (river running group sizes) with a good ratio of experienced paddlers to less experienced. On most weekends away there will be experienced paddlers willing to help others. However, this must never be taken for granted. If you are unsure about this, please seek guidance.

Similarly, even if you only have a core of 3 or 4 people wanting to go, you can still have a good trip (although less than 3 should never be on the river).

Once a trip is full, other members may wish to hire accommodation nearby and join the trip. This can make a trip much more complicated and can annoy other members who couldn't get on the trip. Don't feel pressured to allow such members to join the groups on the river. If need be, explain that they will have to do their own thing (assuming they have enough experienced members to paddle safely) and perhaps invite them to join you in the pub (but again, let them sort out their own meals etc).

7. **Money & Deposit**

Please make it clear what's included in the cost and what's not (e.g. breakfast, dinner etc). You should aim to make the trip break even, as RCC does not subsidise trips. It is a good policy to require a non-refundable deposit (or full payment) from club members wanting to go on the trip. Experience has shown that if you don't it will be difficult to finalise numbers. By parting with money, this shows a commitment to the trip otherwise you will get members who find the trip appealing, but then later on find they want to do something else or have other commitments. Cheque payments should be made payable to Regents Canoe Club.

8. **River details**

- **Description:** include the grade of the river and a very brief description of the whole river. You can refer to online resources at <http://www.ukriversguidebook.co.uk/> or <http://www.regentscanoeclub.co.uk/> if you are unsure
- **Access:** always to rivers can be a contentious issue, but where possible you should ensure we have legitimate access to the Rivers. Details of access officers, who are able to advise you, are available in the BCU handbook or at <http://www.canoescotland.com/Default.aspx?tabid=681>, <http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/riverinformationservice.aspx> (access may be harder to find for Wales – if unsure, ask a committee member). Some rivers have seasonal access (e.g. Dart) and others are free throughout the year (e.g. Tryweryn, subject to dam release) but many have no access rights at all. (<http://www.riveraccess.org>). Again the online Rivers guide is a good source of information (www.ukriversguidebook.co.uk) or speak to any experienced member of RCC. A number of white water sites (e.g. Mile End Mill, or the Tryweryn) hold competitions or training on a regular basis. Before organising a trip ensure the site is open for public use on the proposed dates.
- **River Levels:** in some instances you can find out up to the minute river levels by telephoning a phone messaging service or checking online. Most of these are also listed at <http://www.ukriversguidebook.co.uk/>. You can check water levels the week beforehand and if necessary, formulate a backup plan.

- Facilities: occasionally there will be changing facilities, cafes and shops near the river. Only highlight the fact that facilities exist if they do, otherwise members usually assume they'll be changing roadside.

9. Equipment Hire

Not everyone has their own gear, so remind trip participants that they should arrange to get to RCC to hire the equipment they need. You may need to liaise with the Equipment Officer.

10. Transportation

- Cars: ensure everyone has a lift to the destination and that all cars have roof racks and ideally uprights for carrying boats
- Petrol: in most cases it's best left for each car to sort themselves out. On longer trips, fuel costs may be pooled and shared out equally
- Directions: make them clear, we've had some interesting stories down the ages!

11. Membership

People coming on club trips should be members of RCC. If you have any unresolved queries about this, please ask the membership officer.

12. Backup Plan

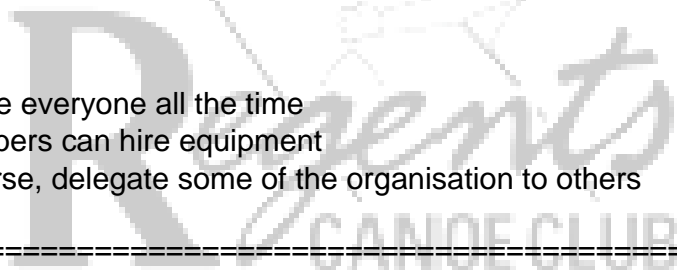
There are certain members of RCC who have the ability to ward off rain and ensure rivers are bone dry and no good for paddling. If you know these members are coming on a trip ensure you have a good backup plan. Walking is always a favourite, but do take a map of the area.

13. And Finally

- Newsletter article: either you or someone else should write a short article on the trip
- Pictures for website: send any digital photos of the trip to our website coordinator for publication

14. Remember

- You won't please everyone all the time
- Only RCC Members can hire equipment
- You can, of course, delegate some of the organisation to others



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This document is merely a guide to organising a trip; please do not be put off by the amount of information contained herein. Trips tend to naturally fall in to place as long as some ground work has been done.

If you require any help in organising a trip please ask a member of the committee and we will find someone to help you.