



## Tim's Essential Clothing and Personal Equipment Guide)

### General information

The Antarctic Peninsula is not always the cold climate one might imagine. If anything the wind and wet is more problematic than the temperature but then the wind chill factor enters the equation. Summer temperatures are usually around  $0^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 10^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Being a maritime environment it is a difficult climate to live, work and sail in. The sea air warms the air around the coast, which increases the humidity. Rain, sleet or snow is not uncommon. The emphasis for clothing is therefore on how well a garment insulates when wet and how windproof a garment is. What is ideal at the South Pole or on the summit of Mount Everest will be far from ideal here.

Think foul winter Scottish weather as a good guide and start point for the Antarctic Peninsula in summer.

This is not proposed as 'The Definitive Guide' as everyone has his or her own preferences when it comes to choice of clothing. Initially written by Tim Hall, it has been refined and amended and is the collective experience and thoughts of several expeditions and expeditioneer's experience and advice and is provided as an aid to highlight the essential considerations for kit that you will need to get as well as to identify some items of kit that previous experience has proved to be invaluable. By all means question it and us.

Everyone is operating to a budget and you may well have to balance this carefully but 25% off in the sale for the wrong piece of kit will be of small consequence at 0300 when you are chilled to the bone and teeth are chattering. If your kindly grandmother offers to buy you a fleece, make certain that it's the right one and not her well intentioned but ultimately ineffective fashion item. If she can't afford what you really need then suggest you go halves, but get the right piece of kit. (This is not intended to be defamatory to grandmothers but they do have a track record of misguided generosity!!) One other thought, it is very unlikely that the sales rep has ever been to the Antarctic Peninsula, they are probably less well informed than you so don't be bamboozled by their agenda of meeting sales targets.

- Several layers of thin clothing are much better than two thick layers
- Loose clothing is better than tight clothing
- Ventilation is as important as wind and wet proof
- Don't use down insulated clothing in a maritime environment or down sleeping bags
- Place a high priority on quick drying and/or heat retention when soaking wet
- Do wear bright colours for visual safety



Expect to wear wet clothing; whilst drying is theoretically possible in the engine and generator rooms, it will be “maxed out” by 14 pairs of gloves, or socks. Whilst we will try to keep the boat warm enough for kit to dry we must plan in case this is not possible.

Commonality afloat and ashore... your base layer and your mid should be interchangeable; you can use the same base layers, fleeces etc for walking ashore as are suitable for the boat.

Maritime work demands two additional significant considerations:

- It is unlikely that you will be generating much body heat (although at times there will be heavy work that contradicts this generalisation). You may well have to be on deck in F7 plus winds and small boat work can involve very significant wind chill factors with no shelter or possibility of such.
- Expect to be in regular direct contact with seawater (although I hope you will concurrently be in direct contact with the boat as well).

## Detail – Clothing Kit List

### Oilskins

If you do not have or are buying your own oilskins then please get in contact with your size as you may be able to rent some (for a small fee) from other members of the trip. We have gathered a few spare sets already. Size is important as you must be able to comfortably wear 3 layers under them. (thermal base layer, mid layer, fleece). These layers must avoid the Michelin man syndrome and allow you space to move.

### Sea Boots

Expect these to be frequently awash and the outers wet... that way you may be pleasantly surprised. Boots range from top of the range Dubarry's to agricultural/industrial thermal wellingtons and both have been found suitable on the Antarctic Peninsula. Make sure you can get two pairs of thick socks on.

Dunlop Purofort Thermo Safety Wellies come recommended by people who have worked with small boats on South Georgia. They are available from amongst other places:

<http://www.brixworkwear.com/uk/dunlop-c661343-purofort-thermo-safety-wellington-orange.html>

### Sweater / Jumper / Jackets (below are some examples, you don't need all types)

- Big & baggy and made of a fibre such as Polarfleece which retains some of its insulating properties even when wet but more importantly dries out very easily. If you can find one with some wind proof properties then even better.
- Buffalo/paramo/montane windproof jackets are great and go over the top of oilskin trousers. Great for when it's cold but not totally gipping.



- A nice cosy jumper is lovely to sit down below in... I always have one less practical, more comfortable item.

## **Fleece/midlayers**

Great for over baselayer and under oilskins. Make sure they are good quality, light weight.

Recommendation: all in one thermal suits are not to be sneered at. They may look funny but some of them are very warm. Gill do a semi waterproof version that is great but some of the midlayer/baselayer versions have also been recommended.

## **Thermal base layer/vest and Long johns – (These can also be your pyjamas if you like).**

- The Army kit list also recommends 'Lowe Alpine' double weight and 'Helly Hansen Lifa' with long sleeve & high neck with half zip down chest or round neck. Polo necks were found too warm on hot days in the sun.
- Don't use cotton tracksuit bottoms, they are too slow to dry, choose something of similar material to your thermal vest.
- Clare and Colette have found that 'merino wool icebreakers' can be worn for around four days before they start to smell too bad.

## **Underpants**

Enough pairs for your normal changing routine... no-one is going to know if that's not every day. Merino wool ones are again great and will keep you warm, dry and not too smelly.

## **Socks**

Generally two pairs; probably a thin and thick pair and perhaps a thicker oversock. Make sure though that your boots will accommodate. Sealskin/Thurloe/Gortex. Ski socks are fine if you are not going walking.

## **Headband / Sweat Band**

Stops the sweat dripping onto the inside of your snow glasses and also keeps the tips of your ears warm on other occasions. Buffs are good.

## **Hat, Balaclava or Headover**

Fleece or wool. The right garment can serve as a scarf, hat and balaclava. My own preference is a ThermaFleece balaclava. Fancy animal skin hats that are worn in Siberia or Alaska do not work well in a maritime environment (unless you are on a cruise ship) so are best avoided. Have a spare. Lowe Alpine Mountain Caps aren't very photogenic but are really warm and windproof and kept Jon's head warm whilst driving skidoos in quite cold conditions.

## **Sun Hat**

Hopefully you might need one of these as well. Make sure it fits and won't blow off your head.



## **Face Mask (if walking on South Georgia or if you like wearing them)**

(Tim) "My own preference is for a neoprene ski facemask with Velcro fitting behind the neck. These are inexpensive, tough, light, very durable; excellent even when wet and they make you look like Darth Vader in the photos so they are good for your street credibility. These are also excellent for boat work in windy conditions and visits to the bank when you go to get the £ to pay for this lot!"

## **Snow Glasses**

Either wrap around or with side shields & cord. Snow blindness is not so much of a danger on the boat but there is a lot of glare off the water/ice so High Ultra Violet (UV) protection is very important in Antarctica. Without protection your eyes can sustain long term damage without you being aware of it. Consider taking a spare pair.

If you wear prescription glasses then consider using contact lenses. Alternatively your optician will manufacture you a pair of lenses and fit them into suitable frames. (Tim) "I recommend that you buy an ordinary pair of mountaineering glasses and get your optician to swap the lenses, this will reduce the overall cost of an otherwise expensive item of kit." A strap or lace so that you can hang your glasses around your neck helps ensure that you don't lose these.

## **Goggles**

Standard ski goggles are good though they must provide the same UV protection as your snow glasses. (Clare) "I wore my ski goggles only once on the Antarctic peninsula, helping in snow but I was glad of them".

## **Gloves**

The general principles of mountaineering gloves applies. Mittens can be successfully worn for watch duties or helping but not for deck work. Sailing gloves can be worn for rope handling but have very limited thermal properties. Insulated Fisherman's working gloves provide environmental protection and allow you to work but you may need to bite the bullet with bare hands for some jobs both to prevent kit from a drenching or to allow dexterity when knot tying. Divers neoprene gloves are good for boat work but expensive. However careful you attempt to be these will get wet, particularly when on the foredeck. (Clare) "Me and Cliggy had a few pairs of thin- non waterproof gloves we wore under bigger waterproof ones. That way if you get soaked you can put on a new inner layer whilst the old one dries/warms".

## **Other things**

- Favourite CDs (for onboard CD player) (alternatively bring a music player/ipod/pad/phone)
- Favourite DVD (for if there is ever time to play it on the passage over... no one will want to be watching them in Antarctica as the most interesting stuff is outside!)
- Torch



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*Antarctic and South Georgia*

*Kit List*

- Book (if you are prepared to leave it behind on our book shelf all the better)
- Knife/penknife (for anything from emergencies to opening bottles)
- Bottle of your favourite alcohol... though we don't drink at sea in general... a nice cosy anchorage is a different matter
- Shoes for when not in sea boots
- Shirt for when you leave the boat and you want to go to that restaurant in Ushuia not smelling
- Baby wipes for washing yourself with
- Toothbrush/floss/paste
- Girlie things (boys if you don't know what these are then don't worry you don't need them ☺)
- Towel (showers are possible on shore and towel is also useful for drying yourself after a nasty wave)
- Sea sickness tablets (if you take them)
- Mobile phone and charger
- Smart trousers, shoes and a shirt if you're travelling through Rio for when everyone has to clear customs
- Sun tan lotion and sun block/moisturiser for your lips
- Sleeping bag. Make sure that it's a synthetic one rather than down as down ones are useless when wet and there may be condensation inside the boat.
- Camera and plenty of memory cards. There are 12 V car charger points onboard and limited 240 V from inverters, so bring some spare batteries.