



SESSIONS AND SAIL 2020 - ARGYLL VOYAGE NOTES

The Trip



Join us aboard the Lady of Avenel for **Sessions and Sail 2020 – Argyll**

This two-masted, Brigantine-rigged tall ship will be your home for the week as we step aboard in Oban and sail the waters south of Mull and the coast of Argyll and the islands. The ship will be your base for a voyage of exploration and music with sessions, workshops, sailing and more.

See the spectacular Paps of Jura from the sea, feel the tide course through the Sound of Islay, visit Colonsay, Gigha and more.

You will learn tunes from the rich local tradition under the guidance of some of Scotland's best musicians in the bright saloon aboard Lady of Avenel; later, we will walk ashore to a local pub or village hall to play sessions with local musicians and meet the communities.

Throughout the trip we will enjoy locally sourced food, beautifully prepared by our on-board chef.

Some of our likely destinations are outlined overleaf. We look forward to having you join us!



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Who is the trip aimed at?



If you are a keen musician playing at any level - whether beginner, intermediate or expert - with an interest in the traditional and folk music of Scotland, this trip is for you. No sailing experience is necessary, but those keen to participate will be encouraged to join in the sailing of the ship should they wish to, whether steering, helping set and trim the sails, or even climbing the mast for the finest view of all.

Oban



(Photo: Oban Bay, Stephen Lee. CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The gateway to the isles, the bustling town of Oban is where you will join and depart the Lady of Avenel .



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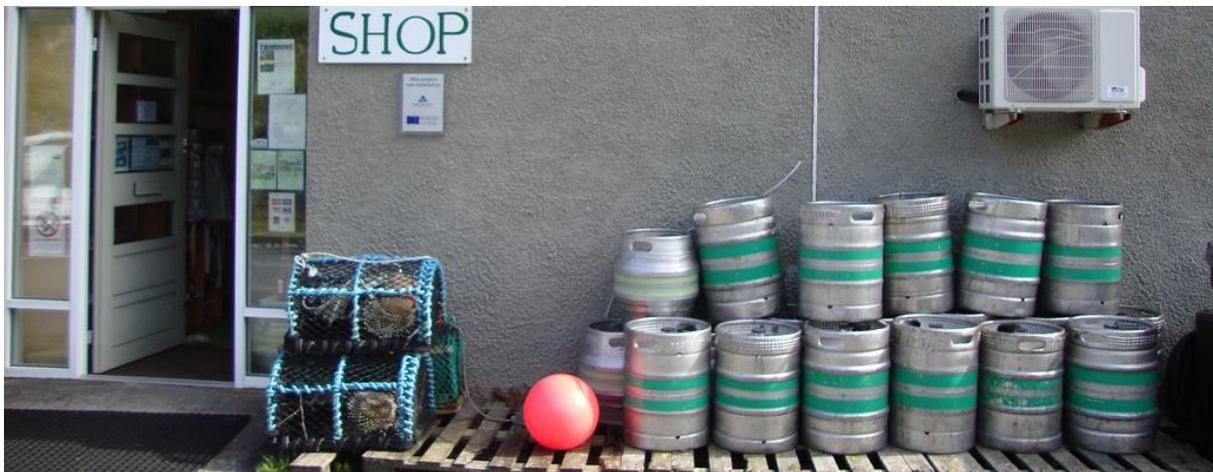
Garvellach Islands



(Photo: LofA at Garvellachs, Barry Nisbet)

If we are fortunate enough to have still weather, we may visit the rocky Garvellachs, home of a pre-St Columba Christian site and a remote haven for seals and wildlife.

Colonsay



(Photograph: Creels and Barrels, Simon Varwell CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Most visitors are attracted to Colonsay for its tranquility and unspoilt natural beauty. One of the smallest of the inhabited Hebridean islands, with a population of about 135, Colonsay's beaches and rocky inlets support colonies of ringed plover, terns, oyster catchers and eiders.



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Islay



(Photograph: Laphroaig Distillery, Islay – Helen Ratcliff. CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Islay, with its musical, maritime and whisky heritage needs no introduction. Anchoring in the bay at Port Ellen, we can explore this island town and enjoy all it has to offer.

Gigha



(Photograph: Gigha Ferry, easylocum CC BY 2.0)

Since the community buyout in 2002 the island of Gigha, the most southerly of the Hebridean Islands, has gone from strength to strength with a growing population that is sustainably developing its local economy. With silver beaches and beautiful bays, clear green seas as well as a plentiful variety of wildlife and birdlife, Gigha also boasts many archaeological and historic sites.



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Easdale



(Photograph: A Trip Around Easdale 28, ScrewJ CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Easdale, an island without roads, is the smallest permanently-inhabited island of the Inner Hebrides, and is home of an abandoned slate quarry, a community of small but-and-ben style houses, and the World Stone Skimming Championships.



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Likely Itinerary

The following itinerary is a suggestion of how the trip may take form; all destinations are subject to change, are weather dependant and are at the discretion of the Captain.

Day 1

We meet the 'Lady of Avenel' alongside the pier in Oban, where the crew will welcome you aboard; you are given a tour of the ship and a briefing from the Captain.

We leave the harbour and, if the conditions are still, sail out to the Garvellachs; if there is any wind or motion, we choose a more sheltered bay such as Ardencaple, anchoring there in time to enjoy a drink before dinner. After dinner is cleared away, the group gathers in the Lady of Avenel's upper saloon and gets to know each other over a few tunes.

Day 2

After breakfast, we sail on to Colonsay.

We drop anchor here and have our first tuition session. Whether fiddler, guitarist or piper, beginner or expert, you will find new inspiration in the music and will learn new tunes or techniques.

Day 3

We leave in the morning, sailing down the narrow Sound of Islay, and onwards to Gigha. You will be encouraged to join in as we set sails and manoeuvre the ship guided by the professional crew, although this is voluntary and some may prefer to sit back and watch the action!

Anchoring off Ardminish, we will gather for a workshop session with one of our tutors in the Lady's saloon.

In the evening, the community welcome us ashore and we play more tunes and enjoy the island hospitality.



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Day 4

We sail from Gigha this morning, heading west towards Islay, On the way we may recap and work through some of the tunes and techniques we have been taught over the past three days, under Barry or Carol's guidance.

Arriving in Islay in the early afternoon, there is time to walk ashore and explore the town before dinner; later, we head to one of Port Ellen's pubs for a sessions with some local musicians.

Day 5

In the morning we sail on; by now, some of the group may be quite adept at joining in the sailing on Lady of Avenel! Others may prefer to have a shot at steering the ship, look out for wildlife in the sea, the sky or on the shore or play over some tunes as we sail up the Sound of Islay and towards Jura.

Arriving at the beautiful, remote anchorage at Loch Tarbert, we may choose to take a wander ashore, play a session aboard the Lady or just enjoy the serenity of our surroundings.

Day 6

We sail north up the Firth of Lorn, past the ferocious tide race of Corryvreckan, arriving mid-afternoon at an anchorage off Easdale Island.

There will be opportunity to work through any tunes or pieces you may wish to perform ashore this evening, with guidance from Barry or Carol where needed.

Ashore on Easdale Island in the evening, we celebrate our last evening of music together with a concert and session.

Day 7

A 10-mile sail takes us up the Sound of Kerrera, into the south entrance of Oban harbour and the end of our trip. We have a breakfast together en-route and enjoy the scenery before arrival at the pontoon berth where we say our goodbyes.



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Equipment list: (We recommend you bring the following):

- Instrument
- Warm jumper/fleece
- Boots/waterproof footwear
- Towel
- Thermal layers
- Thick socks
- Sufficient cash to last the week
- Waterproof jacket and trousers
- Long trousers
- Sunglasses
- Proof of identification
- RYA logbook if you have one
- A soft bag (no suitcases please!)

Getting there

Oban is connected by the bus daily from Inverness and Glasgow – see Citylink for more information <http://www.citylink.co.uk>;

There are trains from Glasgow www.thetrainline.com/www.scotrail.co.uk

If you choose to drive, we can advise on parking in the area – please email.

We recommend confirming travel arrangements as early as possible to avoid price rises and availability problems.



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The ship



Lady of Avenel is a 102 foot Brigantine rigged ship, with 12 guest berths in addition to crew quarters. She was built in Poland in 1969 as a tug, but was converted to a sailing vessel in the Netherlands in 1992. She has been operating out of Maldon, Essex since 2012 and works with a number of different activities, from open water swimming to sea kayaking and paramotor trips.

To learn more about the ship you can visit www.ladyofavenel.com





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Accommodation on board

You will be allocated a berth in one of our six double cabins. For solo travellers, cabins will be allocated on a same-sex basis; if two people travelling together wish to share a cabin, we recommend booking early to ensure availability.

There are two showers and three toilets in the accommodation which are shared.

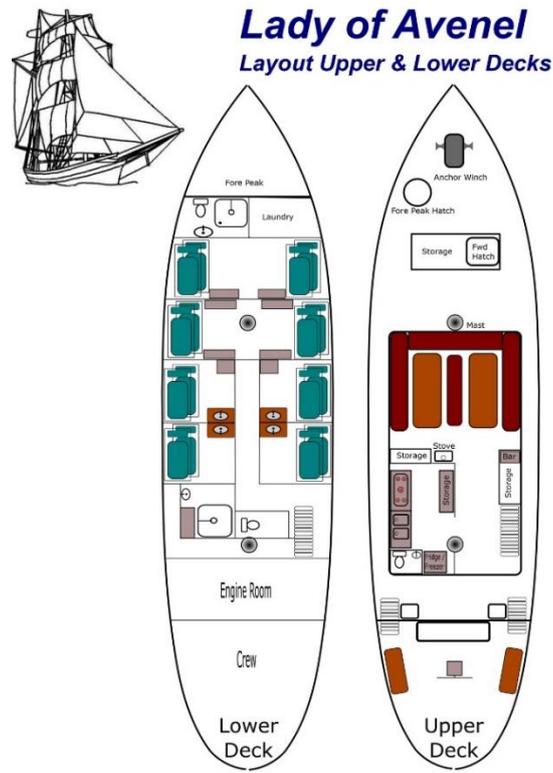
Meals are prepared in the modern upper deck galley; these are of a high standard and prepared by our own chef. Meals, tea and coffee are included in the price of the trip.



The galley aboard Lady of Avenel



A double cabin aboard Lady of Avenel.



The upper deck saloon provides an ideal place to socialise and, with the tables cleared away, will be the perfect session space for the evenings we spend aboard. Should the weather be fair enough, we may be able to play sessions on deck.



Drinks (Beer, wine, soft drinks) will be available from the ship's bar; this is run on an honesty system where drinks taken are marked down and the bill settled at the end of the trip.



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Barry Nisbet

The Sessions and Sail voyages were founded by Barry Nisbet, a tall ship sailor and musician from Shetland. Barry has been combining sessions and sailing for years, as captain of a variety of sailing vessels such as Søren Larsen, Pelican of London and Tenacious, and as a well-known fiddle player and songwriter.



(Photograph © Siobhan Diamond 2018)

More information on Barry's music career is available at www.barrynisbet.com



Barry will be on board throughout the Sessions and Sail trips to give guidance on music or sailing to any who need it.



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Other

There may be the times when we visit cafes, bars or attractions ashore. Cash machines may not be available in all the remote places we will be visiting, so it is recommended to bring along enough cash for the week.

If there is any further information you need regarding your trip, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us by email or telephone.

