



# SESSIONS AND SAIL 2019 - VOYAGE NOTES

## The Trip



Join us aboard the Lady of Avenel for **Sessions and Sail 2019 – Wester Ross**.

This two-masted, Brigantine-rigged tall ship will be your home for the week as we step aboard in Kyle of Lochalsh and sail the waters around Skye, the Inner Sound and The Minch. The ship will be your base for a voyage of exploration and music with sessions, workshops, sailing and more.

Visit the home of the famous Gaelic bard Sorley MacLean at Raasay, sail the spectacular coast of the West Highlands and experience views of the spectacular coastline from the sea.

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.

In Plockton on the last night of the trip we will host a grand concert and dance, open to the wider public – if you wish, you may choose to demonstrate some of the music you have learned this week and take the stage to join the performance.

Later, as the floor is cleared and a Highland Ceilidh bands strikes up, you can dance the night away.

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.

## Applecross



(Photo: River Walk at Applecross, Martin Cotter. CC BY-SA 2.0)

Home to just a few hundred residents, the Applecross peninsula is accessed only by two roads, one of which is the famous Bealach Pass.



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## Raasay



(Photo: Isle of Raasay, Nick Bramhall. CC BY-SA 2.0)

Raasay lies off the east coast of Skye, and was home to the famous bard Sorley MacLean, described by the Scottish Poetry Library as ‘one of the major Scottish poets of the modern era’. The famed Calum’s Road, built by hand and commemorated in the tune of the same name by Donald Shaw, is found on Raasay.

## Shieldaig



(Photograph: Shieldaig From the North, Jim Barton. CC BY-SA 2.0)

The picturesque village of Shieldaig is on the shores of Loch Shieldaig, an offshoot of Loch Torridon, forming a strip between the sea and the mighty mountains that rise behind. The tune ‘The Camerons of Shieldaig’ may give some musical context!



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## Gairloch



(Photograph: Gaineamh Mhor (Gairloch Beach), Nigel Brown. CC BY-SA 2.0)

Gairloch boasts a small village centre with pub, B+B, shop and café; the wider area includes rocky shores and beaches on the edge of Loch Gairloch. And although we will arrive by sea, the tune ‘The High Road to Gairloch’ may be worth listening to.

## Plockton



(Photograph: Morning in Plockton, \*sax. CC BY 2.0)

Plockton is a real musical centre of the West Highlands. The village also boasts a stunning anchorage, with views across Loch Carron, and a cosy village hall where we will hold our final night ceilidh!



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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

You meet the 'Lady of Avenel' alongside the pier in Kyle of Lochalsh, 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 sail out to Applecross, 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 have the opportunity to walk ashore at Applecross.

Back aboard the ship, we 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.

We then pick up anchor and sail across to Raasay. We may eat aboard or join in a community barbecue, followed by tunes and sessions with local musicians.

### Day 3

We leave in the morning, crossing fingers for a fair breeze as we sail up Raasay Sound, past the rocky island of Rona, and across to Loch Shieldaig. 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 Shieldaig, our second tutor will join us and will lead a workshop session in the Lady's saloon.

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



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## Day 4

A 20 mile sail takes us round the coast to Gairloch. There we will recap and work through some of the tunes and techniques we have been taught over the past three days, under Barry's guidance.

There will be time to walk ashore and explore the shore and village before dinner; later, the community at Gairloch will be ready for our visit and some more tunes.

## Day 5

In the morning we sail on, and 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 over the sea to Skye.

Arriving at Portree, we will be joined by our third local tutor of the trip, who will give us further tuition and another unique take on the region's music.

## Day 6

After a walk and an explore ashore, then we sail from Portree towards Plockton for the final night party.

There will be opportunity to work through any tunes or pieces you may be considering performing at the concert, and guidance from Barry where needed.

The public ashore and the Plockton Hall are ready for the Sessions and Sail ceilidh; after an early dinner we join them there. The format is a traditional concert followed by a dance; the concert will feature items from the participants of the voyage, with potential visits from some of our tutors from the week.

The decks are then cleared and the dancing begins, to the music of one of the Highlands liveliest Ceilidh bands.

## Day 7

A short sail round the coast, and under the Skye bridge takes us back to the pier at Kyle of Lochalsh. A breakfast together on the way, and possibly one last tune before we pack up our bags, say our goodbyes and leave the Lady of Avenel.



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

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

## **Getting there**

Kyle of Lochalsh is connected by the no 917 bus daily from Inverness, or the 916 from Glasgow – see Citylink for more information <http://www.citylink.co.uk>;

There are trains from Inverness [www.thetrainline.com](http://www.thetrainline.com)/[www.scotrail.co.uk](http://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](http://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.



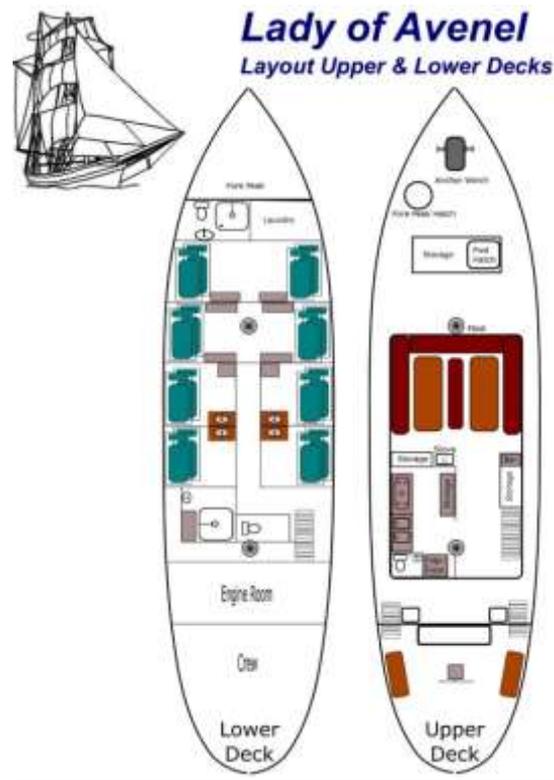
The galley aboard Lady of Avenel



A double cabin aboard Lady of Avenel.



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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](http://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.

