

Loch Lomond Rally

2nd and 3rd of September 2017

Firstly, apologies for the late circulation of this information sheet regarding the Loch Lomond Rally 2017; it has been a busy summer for us this year and one, which has not included any sailing to date!

Anyway about the Rally, (if you have attended previous Loch Lomond Rallies the following text will be familiar): -

For those who have not yet enjoyed sailing on Loch Lomond this is an ideal opportunity to sail on the largest loch or lake in Great Britain (by surface area). Within the United Kingdom, it is surpassed only by Lough Neagh and Lower Lough Erne in Northern Ireland

Loch Lomond lies on the Highland Boundary Fault which demarks the boundary between the lowlands and highlands of Scotland's. The fault is the reason for the stark contrast in landscapes between the north and south ends of the loch and it is responsible for a number of the Loch's islands.

The planned cruising area for this year's rally is the area of loch to the north and west of Balmaha as this area contains nearly all of the thirty odd islands in the loch. For those wanting to embark on an extended sail the Loch is navigable for its full 24 mile length.

The following link takes you to a decent map of the loch – one that actually has the islands named on it.

https://www.viamichelin.com/web/Maps/Map-Loch_Lomond-_West_Dumbartonshire-United_Kingdom

Friday 1st September

As usual, a number of Drascombes will probably launch on Friday afternoon and spend the night amongst the many islands on the Loch – all going to plan I will launch early in the afternoon and will probably overnight to the north east of Inchmoan subject to the weather conditions. Others may moor off the south end of Inchconnachan – a popular area but one that can get a bit busy if the weather is nice

Saturday 2nd September

The plan is to meet at Milarrochy Bay (west side of the Loch just north of Balmaha) at 10.00hrs with all boats ready to launch / leave at 11.00hrs. Depending on the wind direction we will to sail around various islands stopping for lunch at a suitable location before sailing on to Inchmurrin Island where most of the boats will spend the night. For those sleeping ashore there is the option of numerous accommodations around the loch or there is self-catering accommodation and wild

camping available on Inchmurrin. The route to be sailed will make provision for any boats wanting to return to Milarrochy Bay later in the afternoon.

Saturday Evening

Repeating last year's successful meal we again plan to book a table at the Inchmurrin Hotel on the Island of Inchmurrin. The hotel has a small jetty immediately in front of it where last year we were able to moor overnight. The dinner which will be a pretty informal affair. Last year an excellent 3-course meal with coffee and mints cost 20 pounds per head.

Please let me know by return if you want to attend the meal and if so how many of you are there. Due to the uncertainty of the Rally, I have not yet contacted the hotel so until I do so (and I need numbers first) the meal is only provisional!

I will circulate a menu shortly (if available) for this year's dinner. It is hoped that all attending will attend the evening dinner.

For those not wanting to stay on board or to camp on the island the hotel offers an evening ferry service to take diners back to the west shore of the loch at a time to suit the meal. Further details of the hotel which also offers self-catering accommodation can be found at <http://www.inchmurrin-lochlomond.com/restaurant>

Sunday 3rd of September

Depending on the final attendees and the logistics of who is staying where overnight, we will set out from Inchmurrin around 10.00am or possibly slightly earlier if we are meeting anyone setting out from Milarrochy Bay.

Some boats usually launch on the Friday before the Rally and anchor between the islands on the Friday night. Anyone intending to do so please let me know and I will include this information on the Rally Contact sheet which I will produce before the event.

Safety

Loch Lomond while an inland body of water should not be underestimated when it comes to having a safe and enjoyable day afloat. With a length of over 24 miles and a width of up to 5 miles wide water conditions can easily become demanding if windy conditions prevail.

While the surface temperature of the loch may be inviting for those wishing to swim, the loch which reaches depths of over 600 feet, is known for catching people unaware as the water just below the surface can be much colder.

For the Rally some basic safety precautions should be observed and all participants are encouraged to read the Drascombe Associations Rally Organisation Document which can be found on the event's page of the DA website or by the link below

<http://www.drascombe-association.org.uk/vbforum/attachment.php?attachmentid=1310&d=1393451044>

Personnel Safety Equipment – All participants should have and wear a personal flotation device i.e. lifejacket or buoyancy aid.

Warm and waterproof clothing – with its surrounding mountains Loch Lomond can be prone to rapid weather changes

Communication – Mobile phone coverage around the Loch is generally quite good for most providers. VHF communication for those with radios will be on Ch 72

General Information

If you are interested in statistics:-

The loch is 39 kilometres (24 mi) long and between 1.21 kilometres (0.75 mi) and 8 kilometres (5.0 mi) wide. It has an average depth of about 37 metres (121 ft), and a maximum depth of about 190 metres (620 ft). Its surface area measures 71 km² (27 sq mi), and it has a volume of 2.6 km³ (0.62 cu mi).

Islands

The loch contains thirty or more other islands - depending on the water level. Several of them are large by the standards of British bodies of freshwater. Inchmurrin, for example, is the largest island in a body of freshwater in the British Isles. Several of the islands appear to be crannogs, artificial islands built in prehistoric periods. One of the loch's islands, Inchconnachan is home to a colony of wallabies.

English travel writer, H.V Morton wrote:

“What a large part of Loch Lomond's beauty is due to its islands, those beautiful green tangled islands, that lie like jewels upon its surface”.

Sailing in the National Park

All boats attending the rally will need to register with the Parks Authority. This is easy to do and can be done in advance of arrival. A number of posts have appeared over the last few years on the Drascombe Forum. I have attached a copy of the National Park Authority's "Mainsheet" newsletter to this briefing sheet. The newsletter gives details of boat registration etc. If you want to call the Park Registration Office to clarify anything or to register they are usually very helpful – Tel 01389 722030 e-mail info@lochlomond-trossachs.org

Launching

Boats can be launched from a number of sites around the Loch. The National Parks Authority operates two launching sites:-

- 1) The Duncan Mill Memorial Slipway at Balloch (South End of the Loch) – This is a twin slipway facility with toilets and car parking. I have left my own car and trailer here overnight on numerous occasions without any problem. Both slipways are in great condition and run into deep water. This facility is suitable for all Drascombes.
- 2) Millaroch Bay – This is a beach launch site. There is car parking and toilets available. Depending on the water level the beach can be quite flat in places making it a shallow launch site unless you go well into the water. Most Drascombes will be able to launch here without any problem. A number of 4 x 4 vehicles will be at the rally so there should be no insurmountable problems.

In addition to the Park operated launch sites there are a number of private slipways at Balmaha (McFarlane's Boat Yard) and at some of the campsites. If you launch at a private slipway you will still need to register your boat with the Park Authority.

Sailing Conditions

The varied landscape around Loch Lomond gives rise to very variable sailing conditions. While it can be flat calm with no wind when you launch it can be gusting force five with three foot waves a mile offshore as the launch point can easily be in the shadow of one of the many mountains which surround the Loch. Wind passing between the same mountains can give exhilarating gusts that can easily overpower the unwary. So saying that the upside is that normally no matter what the conditions there is always somewhere to sail no matter how experienced or inexperienced you and your crew are. The numerous islands provide good sheltered sailing in windier conditions.

Accommodation

There is a good selection of accommodation around the loch. I have listed below some campsites, the ones at Milarrochy Bay and at Cashel are probably the ones nearest to our launching spots, however some of the others may be of interest. You should obviously check their location before booking. In nearby Drymen and at Rowardennan there are a number of Hotels. If you are staying afloat for at night there are numerous sheltered anchorages and beaches around the islands which are ideal overnight spots.

Contact Information

If you want any further information please contact me via e-mail at david.mcwhirter76@gmail.com or kathleen.mcwhirter@ntlworld.com or call me on 07730394321 or 0141 578 6908. Kathleen can be contacted on 07505 318 608

Please let me know whether you wish to attend the Saturday evening meal as soon as possible.

Regards

David McWhirter