

## **STOKERS' COTTAGE, BALNAGOWAN LISMORE, BY OBAN, ARGYLL**

Lismore lies in the mouth of Loch Linnhe, off Oban. The island is approximately 12 miles long and has a population of some 180 people. The cottage is about two thirds up the island from the south end, on the east side. It lies in a sheltered position about 100 yards down a steep and rough tractor track, from the end of the nearest road, facing southeast across the Loch towards Benderloch. It is perched on rock about 10 yards from the sea beside a small shingle beach.



The cottage was renovated in 2023 but retains its distinctive rustic charm! It includes a sitting room with a double sofa bed, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a bedroom with two single beds, which can be linked to create a king size bed. The cottage is heated with a multi-fuel burning stove in the sitting room and electric heaters throughout. It is furnished simply. There is a toaster and a microwave, but we do not have internet, TV, washing machine or dishwasher. Duvets (one double and two singles) are provided, but we ask guests to bring their own linen (including sheets, bath towels, tea towels and bathmat).

Families with children usually love the cottage and its environment but those with toddlers and very young children should be aware that, being so close to the rocky shore, there are precipitous drops all around and that young ones will need to be closely supervised.

For further information about Lismore and details of ferry times, etc., look up the excellent community website [www.isleoflismore.com](http://www.isleoflismore.com). This site also has photos of the cottage.

### **HOW TO GET THERE**

#### **BY CAR**

Car ferries run from Oban to Achnacroish in the middle of Lismore. Times should be checked with the ferry operator - Caledonian MacBrayne, telephone 0800 0665000 or [www.calmac.co.uk/timetables/](http://www.calmac.co.uk/timetables/). The crossing takes 40 minutes and cars should be booked in advance. From Achnacroish pier drive up the steep hill. Follow the road past the school until a T-junction. Turn right.



Go past the island hall and the shop, and take the first turning to the right along a tarmac gated road, signposted to Balnagowan. Go to the road-end and leave the car beside the Mill Farm before walking through the gate down to the cottage by the shore. Do not be diverted by a sign to Balnagowan pointing up a track to the right before you get to the road-end.

#### **LEAVING THE CAR BEHIND**

From Achnacroish pier on Lismore one can either walk for 20 minutes along a boggy footpath by the sea to the cottage, or take a taxi, which should be arranged in advance. Robert Smith provides the taxi service (telephone 07578 646689).

A pedestrian ferry runs hourly (except over lunchtime), 7 days a week from Port Appin to Point, at the north tip of the island. <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/port-appin-point-lismore-ferry-timetable>. The ferry also takes bicycles. It may run on demand if requested in advance. This

crossing takes 10 minutes and can be followed by a five mile walk or taxi ride to the cottage (see above for taxi details). There is a train service from Glasgow to Oban, with bus connections to Port Appin.

Bicycles may be hired on the island or at Port Appin.

See the Lismore website for more info on getting around the island.  
<https://isleoflismore.com/useful-information/travelling-around-island>

If you have driven but want to leave the car on the mainland, there are public car parks and several garages with lock-up space in Oban. In Port Appin there is a small car park near the ferry, although it tends to fill up in the summer, so allow plenty of time to find a space.

## **ONCE THERE**

Anna Stewart of the Mill Farm (at the road-end) has the key to the cottage and can give any assistance. You should contact (i.e. telephone, email, text or WhatsApp) her before you go in order to arrange collection of the key (Mobile 07843 747189 or email [annastewart221@icloud.com](mailto:annastewart221@icloud.com)).

## **SHOPPING**

There is a Post Office and community owned shop on the island. It has an excellent supply of all the basics, but if you have a list, you are advised to give plenty of notice. If you want to place an order before your stay, telephone (01631 760028) or email [lismorecommunitystores@gmail.com](mailto:lismorecommunitystores@gmail.com) and they can arrange for it to be delivered to the Mill Farm for you to collect on arrival. Again, you are advised to give plenty of notice.

There is a source of delicious local beef and lamb on the island. If you would like a list of what is available, contact Roger and Gilly Dixon Spain at [rogerdixonspain@btinternet.com](mailto:rogerdixonspain@btinternet.com) For vegetables and herbs grown on the island, free range eggs and sourdough bread, email [eva.tombs@yahoo.com](mailto:eva.tombs@yahoo.com).

## **USE OF THE COTTAGE**

Arrival time is 2.00pm and departure time is 10.00am. Coal and electricity is included in the cost of renting the cottage. You may burn wood, but it is not plentiful on the island, and it is essential not to cut living trees. There are, however, supplies of driftwood and there should be some wood behind the cottage.

Saws, an axe, sledgehammer, wedges, etc., are kept in a shed by the cottage. We ask guests to please replace any wood they use and leave a full basket of wood and bucket of coal in the cottage for the next visitors.

It is very important to regulate the temperature of the wood and coal burning / multi fuel stove correctly. It easily overheats and can be damaged. Instructions for it are in the file in the cottage and should be read before lighting it.

The water for the cottage comes from a plentiful spring, but its flow into the storage tank beside the spring should be checked early on during your stay (again see the yellow file). There are occasional air locks in the water pipes - if the water stops open all the taps to let the air out



(making sure you stay in the house until the water starts) and contact Anna Stewart at the farm for any additional help.

We ask guests to please report any breakages, whether yours or any you notice which have already happened. The worst thing for us is to arrive to find something wrong and then to have to spend a day going to Oban to deal with it. If we know in advance we can buy the materials, or whatever, before we get to the island. Because of its location it is difficult to arrange cleaning, so we would be very grateful if you could leave the cottage clean (as you would like to find it), particularly the fridge, the kitchen floor and the stove. Additional information is in the file at the cottage.

### **USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Anna Stewart, key holder	07488 279215
Robert Smith (taxi - Lismore)	07578 646689
Appin Ferry	01631 730383
Caledonian MacBrayne (ferry operator to Lismore)	0800 0665000
Post Office & shop, Lismore	01631 760272
Thistle Taxis, Appin	01631 730373 / 07584 177132

Robert Smith offers tours of the island for visitors (07578 646689) [www.explorelismore.co.uk](http://www.explorelismore.co.uk) and email: [explorelismore@btinternet.com](mailto:explorelismore@btinternet.com).

Getting to Lismore and living there is a lot less complicated than it sounds. When you are there you will enjoy almost complete isolation - if you want - and lots of places to walk to, including three castles, bays on the west coast covered with fresh mussels and winkles, and views to Mull in one direction and Glencoe and Ben Nevis in another. Swans sleep on the beach by the cottage, and seals are often seen. There are dozens of varieties of birds and wildflowers. Otters are regularly seen from the cottage. Much of the island is used for sheep and cattle farming. The island has its own entertainments: ceilidhs, whist drives, and, in summer, a concert and sale of work.

Please do not bring dogs or any other animals to the cottage - and strictly no smoking, please. We hope you enjoy your stay.

**Robert Norgrove & Kate Murray (nee Norgrove)**  
[stokerscottagelets@gmail.com](mailto:stokerscottagelets@gmail.com)